

THE DANGERS OF IRRATIONALITY

If you have something good, you need to maintain it. If you don't, you deserve to lose it.

Introduction

Western Civilization is in decline and this decline is accelerating. Most commentators believe the decline started 50-70 years ago. So how do civilizations fall? In the past, external forces were the main cause of the fall of civilizations. However, for the Western Civilization the decline comes from within; with citizens knowingly or unknowingly eroding the foundation stones of this civilization.

The Age of Reason

One of these foundation stones was the establishment of rational thinking. With universal education, which started in Scotland, all people were taught to identify facts from fallacies, myths from reality, and to use logic instead of irrational or emotional reasoning.

This had a dramatic effect, particularly in science, medicine, and technology. Our knowledge base exploded and, when correctly used, contributed to the massive advances seen in the past 200 years which have benefited all mankind. There have never been so many significant improvements made in such a short period before.

Unfortunately, Western citizens are now progressively losing their ability to have open and inquiring minds, and to use their brains to think critically. In the past, the “masses” might not have had these skills, but the ruling elite did and, consequently, they minimized the damage that was caused by irrational thinking. Today however, all levels of our society are contributing to this decline in reasoning, and the damage is growing.

Most don't realize this is happening, while a small, but influential, number of citizens are happy to publicly announce that they no longer “believe” in facts and logic [1]. There is a trite, but accurate, saying that the first step in solving a problem is to recognize that there is a problem – which is the aim of this website.

The Method

The initial thinking when the website was being designed was to present a ‘potpourri’ of examples of society's irrationality. This approach was abandoned because of the difficulty for a reader to check each example, and the difficulty of aggregating the cost of the damage of irrationality for all these examples.

A single issue of irrationality could provide a much better estimate of the costs, both in time, effort, and money, but could be dismissed as a “one off” example with people considering it an aberration and not a trend. Consequently, the irrationality used in say preventing holiday road deaths or the Y2K problem were discarded although we had wasted millions on the former example and billions on the latter issue [2].

Finally, one issue was chosen. The irrationality within this issue has lasted for forty years which supports an earlier assertion that the decline in rationality is accelerating. Previously, similar issues had died when rationality had overcome the shallow and emotive thinking used to defend the seriousness of each former issue.

The example chosen was Man Made Catastrophic Global Warming. Because this issue is still with us and the irrationality behind it is continuing to survive, it appeared to be the best example.

The issue is replete with hundreds of examples of irrationality and that number is growing each week. This makes it difficult to argue that the irrationality in this issue is a “one off” and not a trend. Finally, the damage being caused is major, and the waste in energy, time and money is measured in trillions of dollars ^[3].

While on this website, keep reminding yourself this is only one issue showing our growing irrationality, affecting just one foundation stone of Western Civilization. There are many other areas of irrationality and other foundation stones that can be used to convince you of the decline in our Western Civilization.

Irrationality

At no stage in human history has everyone been either totally irrational or rational. Our societies sit on a continuum between these two extremes. With the advent of the Enlightenment’s “The Age of Reason”, Western societies were significantly moved on this continuum towards “total” rationality.

This took considerable effort as rationality had to be taught, understood, and then used by all citizens. The resulting benefits ^[4] obtained easily outweighed the ‘cost’ of teaching rationality.

In contrast, irrationality and emotive thinking does not have to be taught. It seems to be natural default condition of all humans. If we cease to embrace and teach rationality, the natural tendency of Man to be irrational and emotive will drive us all back along the continuum towards the irrational extreme.

That will risk everything that we have gained in the past 200 years.

The Damage Caused by Irrationality

The damage, although accelerating, will not happen in one generation. Irrationality must “breed out” all those who have any rationality left. The result is certain even if the timeline is uncertain. The only way to stop or slow the growth of “irrationality” is to teach and use rationality.

Eventually, we could lose everything we have gained in the past 200 years. In practice this will not happen suddenly – instead, we will increasingly misuse the benefits we have, and these will be eroded over a longer period of time.

For example, we are presently building new power systems created out of an irrational fear of an imagined problem (**See page 3 of “Our Response”**). Even with our growing irrationality we appreciate the benefits of electricity and wish to maintain it.

However, our irrationality has convinced us that conventional power stations need to be replaced – all based on an imaginary problem.

Our irrationality then damages us again as we build a replacement power system. The replacement system is awfully expensive, inefficient, unreliable, and uncontrollable. To add 'salt to the wound', the replacement system has failed to achieve the aim of building the new system – nearly the same amount of CO₂ will be released into the atmosphere.

All these faults are not recognised because of our growing irrationality. Yet we blindly and unthinkingly convince ourselves that we are doing a good job and our behaviour is rational. It isn't.

The damage is hard to imagine but it can be understood if you take one area, say medicine, and then imagine it is under a sustained attack of irrationality. You can then see how the benefits in that area can be eroded and eventually lost. This is the path that we are on today.

Conclusion

Rationality has brought us tremendous benefits in the past 200 years. Without maintaining rationality, irrationality will gradually grow and undermine all these benefits. Unfortunately, we must work hard to remain rational. In contrast, irrationality needs no effort to be embraced which will undermine all the benefits we have today. By not maintaining rationality, we deserve to lose all these benefits.

Notes.

1. **Most Post Modernists in the universities.**
2. **Ten billion dollars were spent in Australia on the Y2K 'non-problem', 50 billion pounds in the UK, and a frightening amount in the US.**
3. **In the Kyoto period from 1995-2010, European countries alone wasted 15 trillion dollars of taxpayers' money achieving extraordinarily little positive results.**
4. **First came an explosion in knowledge followed by that knowledge being used in a variety of ways that resulted in the health, wealth and wellbeing of all humans to rapidly increase that could not have been conceived 200 years ago.**