

Mostly Rational, Mostly Ignorant

I hear social commentators say that humans are mostly irrational, that they are way too often guided in their actions by emotion rather than by logic. While this isn't untrue, I don't think it means that humans are mostly irrational.

Rather, I think it means that humans are mostly ignorant. Since all purposeful behavior has as its aim the alleviation of felt uneasiness (see **praxeology**), what behavior we engage in will either help us reach that goal, or not. If it doesn't, then it's not because we are irrational, but because we are ignorant of true cause and effect. We are rational in the sense that we apply what we know (however correct) to the task at hand in a logical way (this leads to this leads to that).

You see, we think some behavior will alleviate the uneasy feeling in question, but we are often wrong. We behave in these ways that have the effect of not meeting this goal. Why do we do this? Because we don't know any better, ie. ignorance.

For many, maybe most, emotions guide what behavior we engage in, and sometimes it works. And as learning creatures we file those instances away in a memory drawer that's quite a bit closer to our active conscience than where we file the instances that don't work, it seems.

The more we manage to alleviate our felt uneasiness (which is caused by a thousand different things), the more wise we become. We are still just as rational as we ever were, but now less ignorant.