

CAN MEN BE RATIONAL

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- Russell thinks himself to be a rationalist. It is difficult to define what actually rationality means. The question of rationality has two sides, theoretical and practical: what is a rational opinion? And what is rational conduct? Pragmatism emphasizes the irrationality of opinion, and psycho-analysis emphasizes the irrationality of conduct. Different people have different ideal or concept of rationality. So where there are lots of opinions, it is useless to argue with others to prove right one's own opinion. According to Russell the ideal of rationality remains unaffected and it keeps all the importance as a guide to thought and life.
- Russell defines rationality in his opinions as the habit of taking account of all relevant evidence in arriving at a belief. When certainty is not able to be reached, a rational man will give importance to the most probable opinion while keeping other opinions in his mind as alternatives which subsequent evidence may show to be preferable. This is an objective method to find out the same result or conclusion among different opinions.
- More erudite authors such as the pragmatist philosophers say that there is no such thing as objective fact to which people ought to conform if opinions are to be true. They hold opinions as weapons in their struggle for existence and the opinion which supports and helps man's existence are considered to be true.
- A pragmatist always believes in objective truth. A rational man will be the same who is in a jury or a scientist. If someone is deciding a judicial matter as a judge or if a scientist is researching about something both will weigh the evidence to get the fact. Irrationality means disbelief in objective facts. It arises mostly from the desire to assert something for which there is no evidence, or from the desire to deny something for which there is sufficient evidence.
- Philosophers have created confusion about the objectivity of fact in people's mind. When some facts available indicate the improbability of something, common people have a general tendency of believing on it. So, the theoretical part of rationality will consist in basing the people belief as regards matter of fact upon evidence rather than upon wishes, prejudices or traditions.
- Russell has deep respect for psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis can prove very useful in the cultivation of a technique by which we are enabled to see ourselves as others see us. But people have lost sight of that purpose which has mainly inspired Freud and his followers. Their method is primarily one of therapeutics, a way psychoanalysis proved to be the most potent treatment for war neuroses, like River's Instinct and Unconscious, and they were largely non-intellectual treatments. Delusions lunatics are treated by mental means, where a patient is made to recollect facts from his period of sanity, even those facts that he wishes to forget. It is the exact opposite of lazy acquiescence of irrationality urged by those who know psychoanalysis. A similar mental treatment can be used to cure

irrationalities on submission to a delusion-free practitioner but Presidents, Cabinet Ministers and Eminent Person do not fulfill this condition.