[This is additional commentary on the Rational Utility Maximizer. It was excised from the work because it appeared repetitive. - Robert Von Stricker Beresford]

I would like to take this opportunity to rip into this conception of human beings as much as I possibly can before proceeding any further. I feel I need to do this for a number of reasons. Firstly, human beings are not rational utility maximizers. Secondly, though human beings are not like this, many, if not most, economists still insist we are, mathematicians get PhuDs in 'political science' because of it, governments and companies often make incredibly cruel decisions because of this, and we get all annoyed when people aren't "rational."

We are not rational creatures.

> There are a number of reasons why assessment of human actions in terms of rationality...is often doubtful, useless, or impossible. The most obvious reason amounts to the simple fact that all of us, both in politics and private life, pursue various independent objectives, irreducible to each other, inexpressible in homogeneous units, and unattainable jointly; the means we employ to achieve one objective usually limit, sometimes even destroy, the hopes of achieving another (Kolakowski 1990, 193).

Just observe yourself (if you can) for a few minutes, a few hours, a few days. Look at what you do, how you do it, and so forth. And then look at the why. The why isn't rational the majority of the time. I am not rationally maximizing my utility as we speak. I know I'm not. I'm sure someone can come up with an argument that says I am rationally maximizing my utility by writing this book. But I can tell them that they're utterly wrong. Certainly the amount of procrastination I get up to doesn't qualify as rationally maximizing my utility. Neither does the huge amount of time I am spending today on coming up for an excuse to take a day off on Thursday. And as any cursory reading of this book can tell you, "human beings exhibit an inborn tendency to carelessness, irregularity and unreliability in their work" (Freud 1989, 47). Rather than act rationally, we pretend we act rationally. We rationalize: we create "rational" reasons after the fact for our semi-rational or irrational actions.

We would be shocked to see someone behaving like a computer; we would think the person daft, or anti-social, or something like that. But that's what this notion of rational utility maximizers requires of us: we should calculate everything, what suits us best. Is sitting here at my new computer

on a Wednesday evening day-dreaming about an utterly unobtainable girl I can't even say hello to because I'm a gutless piece of shit, while I am supposedly hard at work on this book thing...is this a rational maximization of my utility? If it is, then I am made of spaghetti. That is as likely true of me, or another human, as any of us being rational utility maximizers. We don't do things that way. So it makes no sense to decide that we do, or to think that, under ideal circumstances, we would behave in this way – how would we know, anyway? I can't help but think that all rational choice or utilitarian theories are fundamentally wrong. If the premise is so stupid, how can the rest of it be right? That's what goes through my head. Of course, that isn't the right attitude either. We should look at the theories we reject for any good ideas, as good ideas are often hard to come by. But we can't retain these old premises. So if we have found good ideas in theories we reject, we need to come up with new premises that fit these ideas. I know that's not particularly good form, but we might as well try, if the end result is something good. What I mean is we don't need to spend our lives worrying about consistency, as only rational utility maximizers would. Of course, if we can't defend these ideas with new non-utilitarian premises (or what have you), maybe we should throw them out. I may be an animal but I am not a computer.

  "To be rational is not the same as to be reasonable" (Barrett 1958, 270). In fact, rationality, that is following logic to its conclusions, leads to all kinds of problems, beyond setting totally unrealistic standards for humanity. Logical conclusions don't work out well. I can't help but think of the fIREHOSE lyric, "Try to prove this song." Of course you can't. And it's ridiculous to think you can apply some kind of hybridized form of mathematics to anything outside of things governed by mathematics. Human behaviour does not fall under that heading. But I shouldn't obsess about logical consequences because moderation will probably involve rejecting most if not all of the logical consequences of rational ideas. We take theories that work initially, but reject the end of logic of any such theory. Why must we follow them to their ends just to satisfy theoretical consistency?

Consistency has its place, but certainly it is not everything, especially in the face of mass-murder.[1]

Is it the nature of theory to logically lead to some unacceptable consequence? It probably is the nature

of pushing things to their extremes.

Nozick criticizes Rawls conception of justice, quite rightly... Nozick's alternative to Rawls'

justice-as-fairness welfare state, which is not very well developed and which barely deserves the name

state,[2] is based upon such a nice, happy view of human computers, that it is almost as absurd as

anarchy. Nozick pretends to discuss emotions, but treats them in such an abstract, calculating way, that

they cease to be emotions.

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1   Translator's Note: As far as can be ascertained, this is an allusion to the twentieth century doctrine of M.A.D.: Mutually
    Assured Destruction.
2   That in itself throws the whole enterprise into doubt anyway, given what we have learned, together, about the state.