

**Jean-Pierre Dupuy:
Rationality and Self-Deception**

§ [Case Studies]

1. the club membership example – sunk cost
2. the TV example – sunk cost
3. smoking and the lethal gene example
4. the divine decree problem
5. the case of Peter and Mary
6. the toxin puzzle

Q: Is imitating others a rational thing to do?

Q: Can we ever change the past? In what way?

§ Terminology

[Allais's Principle]

___ When it comes to rationality, the fundamental maxim is: *only the future matters.*

[Sunk Cost]

___ In principle, rationality requires that I not take into account the cost of the investment when I make this choice. This expense is a sunk cost, it will always belong to the past and “only the future matters.”

[The Golden Rule of Rational Choice]:

___ Always act so that you maximize your mathematical expected utility.

[Backward Induction]

___ Backwards induction consists in first solving the last step of the problem, the one which, by hypothesis, has no future implications. Then, sticking to the solution thus determined, a decision is made on the next-to-last step, which at this point in the reasoning has no *undermined* future. Working backwards in time, step by step, the complete solution is in principle reached.

[the Temporality of History]:

___ the principle of the fixity of the past

[the Temporality of Projected Time]:

___ *C* is the *inscription* in the past of the agent's future free action ("future contingent"). Everything is already "written." The agent acts according to a previously prepared scenario, but because she is free, she can raise herself to the level at which this scenario is written and exercise a kind of *counterfactual power* over it.

[Rational Path]:

___ any path in a decision tree that satisfies the two following conditions:

- a) It is temporally consistent.
- b) It is compatible with the assumption of rational expectation.

[Causal Rationality]:

___ The rational principle proposed by the orthodox view.

[Evidential Rationality]:

___ The rational principle proposed by the evidentialist.

§ Two Competing Theories

<Smoking and Lethal Gene>:

[The Orthodox View] ⇒ the Causal Decision Theory

[The Heterodox View] ⇒ Evidentialism

<Divine Decree and Salvation>:

[The Orthodox View] ⇒ Fatalism

[The Heterodox View] ⇒ The Calvinist Doctrine

< Peter and Mary: Rational Path>:

___ There are two candidates to the status of rational path: (Peter, D), and (Peter, C; Mary, C).

[The Orthodox View] ⇒ (Peter, D)

[The Heterodox View] ⇒ (Peter, C; Mary, C).

<The toxin example>

[The Orthodox View] ⇒ no reason to drink the poison

[The Heterodox View] \Rightarrow drink the poison

§ Dupuy's View

Dupuy:

___ My thesis is that there are two forms of rationality that are irreducible to one another. These two types of rationality correspond to two different, though inseparable, conceptions of time – better expressed as two authentically human experiences of time.

In Dupuy's view, the Calvinists can be said to have the following two beliefs, which are not (necessarily) incompatible.

- (1) The Calvinists believe that they did not place themselves among the elect because they believe God chose them;
- (2) The Calvinists believe that they were free to choose x or Not- x when they chose x .

Q: What is the significance of free will in the theory of rationality?

[The Case of Peter and Mary]

___ To show: that reciprocal exchange is both rational and possible.

1. the issue of promise
2. the issue of trust
3. Pre-commitment

The four plans for Mary:

- Plan 1: intends to reciprocate; defects;
- Plan 2: intends to reciprocate; reciprocates;
- Plan 3: intends to defect; defects;
- Plan 4: intends to defect; reciprocates

Suppose that Mary's intention before the game begins is transparent. Which plan is the best one for her?

Dupuy: The Projected Time Solution (Plan 2)

(Peter, C at t_1) \Rightarrow (Mary, C at t_2)

[the fact that Peter cooperates at t_1 is the "writing" in the past of the future fact ("future contingent"): Mary will cooperate at t_2 .

This is the option that allows counterfactual questions regarding the rationality of choices to be reduced to factual question concerning the rational path.

§ [The toxin example]

Dupuy: A Kantian Promise

___ the ability to limit one's individuality by giving oneself a transcendent, fixed law or rule, and following it.

Dupuy's Solution:

There is a way out for he who considers that, he has the right to the million only if he pays what seems to him to be the price: the discomfort caused by ingesting the toxin. A world in which he does not drink the toxin at noon is a world in which there is no possibility he will have received the million.... This is his reasoning when his intentions are detected, thus *before* he knows if he has passed the test. Since now he has good reason to drink, he is able to form the intention to do so, and thus pocket the million.