Rationality: From AI to Zombies

Eliezer Yudkowsky

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What does it actually mean to be rational? Not Hollywood-style "rational," where you forsake all human feeling to embrace Cold Hard Logic. Real rationality, of the sort studied by psychologists, social scientists, and mathematicians. The kind of rationality where you make good decisions, even when it's hard; where you reason well, even in the face of massive uncertainty; where you recognize and make full use of your fuzzy intuitions and emotions, rather than trying to discard them.

In "Rationality: From AI to Zombies," Eliezer Yudkowsky explains the science underlying human irrationality with a mix of fables, argumentative essays, and personal vignettes. These eye-opening accounts of how the mind works (and how, all too often, it doesn't!) are then put to the test through some genuinely difficult puzzles: computer scientists' debates about the future of artificial intelligence (AI), physicists' debates about the relationship between the quantum and classical worlds, philosophers' debates about the metaphysics of zombies and the nature of morality, and many more. In the process, "Rationality: From AI to Zombies" delves into the human significance of correct reasoning more deeply than you'll find in any conventional textbook on cognitive science or philosophy of mind.

A decision theorist and researcher at the Machine Intelligence Research Institute, Yudkowsky published earlier drafts of his writings to the websites Overcoming Bias and Less Wrong. "Rationality: From AI to Zombies" compiles six volumes of Yudkowsky's essays into a single electronic tome. Collectively, these sequences of linked essays serve as a rich and lively introduction to the science—and the art—of human rationality.

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