



[Triumph of Rationalization: Today's
GOP](#)



The triumph of rationalization is how the modern GOP has gone so far astray. It's why they seem confused, their positions are contradictory, and they operate sans reason. Rationalization is what keeps their heads from exploding in cognitive dissonance.

What do they rationalize? Fear certainly plays its role, but fear has always been a defining characteristic of conservatism. No, it's *Greed* and *Hate*. Two of the oldest and most pernicious human emotions, greed and hate twist their thinking process into Gordian knots and Möbius strips which defy logic.

One morning a few months back, I stopped at the corner store, a family owned and operated place like the ones our parents and grandparents patronized, to fill up with gas. The store owner, a Jordanian immigrant and dedicated Progressive, was locked in a fruitless debate about the Affordable Health Care Act (ACA)—AKA ObamaCare—with an Applebee's franchisee, a self-described Libertarian, opponent of President Obama and the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and avid Tea Party fan.

I came into this world with pre-existing conditions, and my wife has had four spinal surgeries, the last being a hardware removal from the third which failed. As you can imagine obtaining health care has been a nightmare. I used a staff leasing company for payroll, in my previous business so we could get into a group policy. Of course, eight years of W's colossal incompetence was more than my company could stand. The final blow came when a municipality for which were executing a \$600,000.00 contract went bankrupt at the height of the Great Recession. I was stuck for nearly \$200,000.00. I and twenty employees were cast out into the thronging masses of the unemployed. By the time of my encounter with the Applebee's teabilly our overpriced COBRA had long since been exhausted. So being able get affordable health care coverage under President Obama's ACA was

important to both of us.

I presented my situation to this teabilly and posed the question: "Shouldn't my family be able to get health care in despite pre-existing conditions?"

Of course, he responded, "No."

"So if I get sick it's my problem then?" I responded.

Of course, he replied: "Yes."

So as far as this guy is concerned I can just die in misery, I thought to myself. This, as you might imagine, got my temper up a bit. Though I tried not to let my anger show my friend the shop keeper sensed it and changed the subject to the minimum wage.

Suddenly our self-described Libertarian possessed a different perspective on government largesse. Naturally, he was staunchly opposed to raising the minimum wage.

"If the minimum wage is increased," he argued, "we'll have to increase prices and that would be devastating to our business. People don't want to spend that much."

My friend and I countered with this: "But due to the inadequate pay, your employees have to use food stamps to feed their families and Medicaid for health care. We're subsidizing your labor."

"That's good because it helps us keep prices low," he responded.

At this point, the only thing I wanted to learn about this mendacious right-wing hypocrite was how far his ass would slide across the shop's floor after my right connected with his chin, so I left.

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Recently, my next door neighbors moved further into the countryside and put their house on the market. Unable to sell, they eventually found a renter who moved in this past week. On hearing them in the back yard, I poked my head over the fence to introduce myself.



The first thing we discussed was work. He's a "maintenance engineer"

at the nearby Hewlett Packard facility. (I believe we used to call them janitors. He can thank liberals for the euphemistic title.) Despite the fact the topic of politics hadn't been broached he took the opportunity to complain about the economy and President Obama.

I responded: "It's getting better." Then observed: "I've found I always I do better when a Democrat is in office."

He quickly let me know: "I'm a Republican."

Here we go again.

I pointed out there had been recessions under Nixon, Reagan, and both Bushes. And that W was responsible for the most recent economic calamity, the worst since the Great Depression.

He argued, "We had a great economy under Reagan," which is a patently false statement based on the Reagan myth rather than the Reagan reality. I could have pointed out Reagan merely created the illusion of a good economy by writing three trillion dollars' worth of hot checks, but Right Wingers don't respond to facts. Indeed, they repel facts like Thompson's does water.

"So you liked the eleven tax increases Reagan enacted against working families," I commented. But my remark may as well have been smoke; for it passed over him as if it didn't exist.

Rather, he moved to the next teabilly gambit, and said, "Obama has increased welfare. Democrats are takers and Republicans are makers," he continued.

Two more patently false statements, I thought. I could have pointed out welfare enrollment has increased due to over thirty years of failed Republican economic policy, especially trickle down, and the recent Republican created economic collapse. But this would only lead to further fruitless discussion.

Instead, I countered: "Obama has made no changes to welfare, and Clinton cut welfare." Besides, I continued, "If you want to talk about welfare let's talk about the welfare the rich receive. On average, the Fortune 500 companies each received two hundred million in subsidies last year."

"But that puts food on MY table," he responded with absolutely no recognition of his mendacity, self-contradiction, or blatant selfishness.

"Well, it takes food off mine!" I replied and ended the encounter. After all, I do have to live next to the guy.

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And there you have it: the Right's twisted perspective. I'm amazed when their heads fail to explode like rotten fruit struck by a 12 gauge shotgun blast at point blank range. . . .

My friend suggested it's due to a complete lack of critical thinking, introspection, or outright stupidity. I don't buy it. All appearances to the contrary, they are not stupid. At least not that stupid. Even a child can smell its own shit.

No! They've mastered the art of rationalization. They have become

experts at lying to themselves as long the lie serves their own means. When an action favors them, it's good; when it favors someone else it's bad, especially if that person happens to be black, brown, gay, or speaks a foreign language. One need only look at their popular pundit's behavior.

Sean Hannity's fawning support of welfare rancher, domestic terrorist, race relations expert, and aficionado on the merits of cotton picking Cliven Bundy provides an excellent case in point. (Watch [Jon Stewart's scathing rebuke](#). Catch [race expert Cliven Bundy holding forth on the merits of cotton picking](#).)

When an illegal immigrant breaks the law, Hannity shrieks: "Everybody should obey the law." Yet Bundy has been violating the law for two decades and has even gone as far as making armed threats against Federal employees doing their jobs.

When an atheist group complains about losing a lawsuit, Hannity shouts: "You lost," yet Bundy has lost every court action in his dispute with the Federal government for two decades.

When Hannity speaks to the "welfare surfer," he cries: "I want you to realize you're taking other people's money. And you're living a selfish life." Yet, he defends wealthy rancher Bundy's self-serving theft of the People's pasturage.

The difference? Bundy's one of them: the real Americans. . . .

Real traitors is more like it.

Is it moral to let disabled veterans, the elderly, and children go hungry so that those who have far more than they need can have even more?

From the Republican perspective it depends on whether it's your disabled veteran, senior, or child.

The Right's avarice is only exceeded by their hypocrisy. They insist the Constitution be interpreted by its creators' intent and vision. Until it comes to their cause, that is. Then the rationalizations take over and their mendacious minds spin the issue to their favor. For instance, in the case of guns, I think strict interpretation of the Constitution is a grand idea. The creators' envisioned a well-regulated militia armed with muskets, not a bunch of out of control rednecks toting arsenals capable of spraying bullets like a fire hose. So let's only allow the guns the framers of Constitution intended and let the gun nuts have muskets. But only if they're a member of a well-regulated militia.

And they have only their Bronze Age Book, their bigotry, and the Rove – Norquist concocted myth of Reagan to support their unfounded conclusions. The truth is Ronald Reagan ruined the USA. He was the father of trickle down–voodoo economics–the more than 200 billion a year prison industrial system created by a faked and hyped cocaine epidemic/plague that never existed, the regular invasions of privacy committed by same said drug war as tests of purity–purity tests being a staple of fascist regimes–excessive defense spending and the

corruption it brings, resulting in a threefold increase of the national debt in his two terms. Four if you count Pappy Bush's trillion dollar spending spree. The Reagan legacy is the world's largest per capita prison system, unconscionable inequality, a broken and battered economic system, a decrepit and failing infrastructure, rampant intolerance and bigotry. It's time to take Reagan off the pedestal and send him to Dante's 9th circle where he belongs with the betrayers, the vile, venal, vulgar, and vacuous.



At every opportunity they love to trot out their arguments about personal responsibility and self-reliance, refusing to acknowledge society's contributions to their success. Yet self-reliance was a myth long before Emerson wrote about it. If the 91% tax rate the rich paid in the 60s hadn't existed, there would have been no huge expansion of higher education, no Interstate Highway System, no modern electrical grid, no computers or internet. If these things hadn't happened, the USA would be a typical third world economy and many—if not most of the 21st century robber barons would be living in destitute poverty. They were able to move up the social ladder and become wealthy because wealth was redistributed—NOT IN SPITE OF IT. And it doesn't matter they believe they built it. All that matters is what actually happened. To have robust middle class and upward social mobility, wealth has to be spread around. They've fervently embraced comfortable lies in lieu of uncomfortable truths for so long they don't even know what the truth looks or sounds like. As mental midget and Friend of Fox Craig T. Nelson stated: "I was on welfare and nobody helped me!"

WAKE UP & EAT the RICH! They've been eating us since Reagan took office and began the long, slow rape of the American Middle Class. As far as the modern day Robber Barons are concerned, our function is to make them richer, a means to their end, nothing more. They epitomize

two of the seven deadly sins: avarice and gluttony. It doesn't matter how much they have: cars, houses, yachts, planes, money, power. It's never enough.

The Right's anti-government mantra is a call to anarchy. There is no "virtue of selfishness." Altruism, cooperation, and collectivism are the pillars of human civilization. Libertarianism, then, is an assault on civilization. You use government every day. Every time you turn on light, run the water, drive down the road you're using the government. If it weren't for government we'd be living in thatched roof hovels, fighting off raiders, and dying from bacterial infections, famine, and a host of other ills. If not for government our lives would be just like the caveman's: short, brutish, and painful.

We're all dependent one another whether you like it or not. Grab Melville's *Moby Dick* and read the "Monkey Rope" chapter—often interpreted as a response to Emerson's *Self Reliance*. In the 19th century when a whaling vessel killed a whale they would rend it on the spot. First they would pull the whale up alongside the ship and tie it to the boat. Then cutters would be lowered down on ropes to cut the blubber off the whale. As they cut off the blubber it would be hoisted aboard and cooked down into whale oil. While the men on the monkey ropes were cutting the blubber, sharks—often great whites—in a feeding frenzy ravaged the whale carcass. If the men holding the monkey rope dropped the cutter into the water, the sharks ate him as well.

In our modern interconnected society we're all on the monkey rope. If the immigrant doesn't pick the crops, the trucker bring them to town, and the grocer sell them, we'd all starve and quickly. We're all dependent on the other members of society doing their part so we all keep living. The GOP has come to stand for the rich and greedy at the expense of everyone else. I spent many years in the school of hard knocks and the schools of higher learning and I have extensive knowledge of history and social change. I have watched with horror the decline of this once great nation into a third rate, oligarchic society. The avaricious and gluttonous have left the rest of us to fight for scraps falling from their overburdened tables. They use religion, racism, misogyny and every other dirty trick they can conjure to keep the rest of us fighting amongst ourselves while they steal everything they can.



17th Century Venice

Capitalism fails when labor is taken for granted. There are only two possible outcomes to the current course: Venetian or the French. Either way the destruction of the 1% is insured. When 14th Venetian oligarchs enacted La Serrata, the closure, and created the *Libro d'Oro*, Book of Gold, closing their shipping market to newcomers and ending social mobility, their robust economy withered and died. And we should all be familiar with the violent upheavals of the French and Bolshevik revolutions: extreme violence against the moneyed and ruling classes by the starving masses who were often run down in the streets by the speeding carriages of the wealthy.

The wrath of the hoi polloi is here now. The course must change and soon. For while there is no reason to long for the inevitable tumult, there is good reason to sound the alarm all along the watchtower. The French Revolution offers valuable lessons for the peril which awaits us if our direction is not effectively altered. For while the attribution of the phrase "Let them eat cake" to Marie Antoinette is likely inaccurate, a modern day parallel would be McDonald's management advising employees, most of whom make minimum wage, how much to give personal trainers, dog walkers, hairdressers, au pairs, and other personal service providers for Christmas.

The class warfare conceit used by the defenders of avarice is tripe. The current extractive ruling class began the latest offensive in the class war over 30 years ago when they shifted the tax burden from those who have far more than enough to those who have just enough and began the decades long assault on the living standards of middle and working classes and the labor unions and other organizations erected to defend them. While, initially, ending the single wage earner family model destroyed community cohesiveness by ensuring the middle and working classes didn't have the time and resources to maintain strong community bonds and organize against the predatory 1%, the internet has resolved this disadvantage and the middle and working classes have built communities to resist once again.

Never do the defenders of wealth and privilege give any cogent defense of trickle down "voodoo economics" or provide any evidence it

works for all the people. Rather they utter loud protestation they're victims of class warfare and use every imaginable subterfuge from racism to homophobia to misogyny to attacks on the poor and downtrodden to divert and divide those who may challenge their economic hegemony. They proclaim allegiance to a Jesus made in their own image—one who worships wealth, fetishizes firearms, objectifies women, and denigrates the downtrodden—and make vivid public displays of piety to their ideology reminiscent of the Pharisees of the Gospels. They engage every available form of deceit, distortion, and semantic skullduggery to change the subject and thus avoid defending the indefensible: their selfishness. Their unquenchable avarice has driven every war and every genocide since the beginning of human civilization. And they have learned nothing.

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