



Rationality and Freedom

By Amartya Sen

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Rationality and Freedom By Amartya Sen

Rationality and freedom are among the most profound and contentious concepts in philosophy and the social sciences. In two volumes on rationality, freedom, and justice, the distinguished economist and philosopher Amartya Sen brings clarity and insight to these difficult issues. This volume--the first of the two--is principally concerned with rationality and freedom.

Sen scrutinizes and departs from the standard criteria of rationality, and shows how it can be seen in terms of subjecting one's values as well as choices to the demands of reason and critical scrutiny. This capacious approach is utilized to illuminate the demands of rationality in individual choice (including decisions under uncertainty) as well as social choice (including cost benefit analysis and environmental assessment).

Identifying a reciprocity in the relationship between rationality and freedom, Sen argues that freedom cannot be assessed independently of a person's reasoned preferences and valuations, just as rationality, in turn, requires freedom of thought. Sen uses the discipline of social choice theory (a subject he has helped to develop) to illuminate the demands of reason and the assessment of freedom. The latter is the subject matter of Sen's previously unpublished Arrow Lectures included here.

The essays in these volumes contribute to Sen's ongoing transformation of economic theory and social philosophy, and to our understanding of the connections among rationality, freedom, and social justice.

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Editorial Review

Review

Sen's mastery in the fields of social choice, the foundations of welfare economics, and, more broadly, distributive ethics and the measurement problems associated with these fields is unquestioned. (Kenneth J. Arrow)

Amartya Sen occupies a unique position among modern economists. He is an outstanding economic theorist, a world authority on social choice and welfare economics. He is a leading figure in development economics, carrying out pathbreaking work on appraising the effectiveness of investment in poor countries and, more recently, on famine. At the same time, he takes a broad view of the subject and has done much to widen the perspective of economists. (A. B. Atkinson *New York Review of Books*)

Sen brings a hard-edged intellect to regions of thought usually regarded as slushy and amorphous...Anyone interested in the topics of freedom, equality, or justice would profit from a close reading of this book. (Richard J. Arneson *American Political Science Review*)

A work of striking intellectual ambition and unusual intellectual patience, tensely engaged in many different struggles and on a wide variety of levels. What it offers is not a set of simple and readily portable conclusions, or a means for reconciling the reader to a devastatingly imperfect historical world, but a sustained effort to clarify where the main imperfections come from, and what could, in principle, be done to alleviate them. (John Dunn *Times Higher Education Supplement* 2003-07-25)

One of the most attractive qualities of *Rationality and Freedom* is an extraordinary intellectual good nature. Whenever he can express gratitude, Professor Sen does so; whenever he criticizes it is gently--and save on very rare occasions it is only after he has expressed his appreciation for the stimulus provided by the error he uncovers. It would be a poor return for what he offers us here to pretend that everything he writes is equally persuasive; for even when he is unpersuasive he provides intellectual pleasures that few writers can match. (Alan Ryan *New York Review of Books* 2003-12-04)

Sen's arguments about social choice are important. The first chapter of the book offers a straightforward and comprehensive account of the social choice approach and this discussion is extended in the Nobel Lecture that forms the second chapter of the book... [I]t should be widely consulted by social development scholars who need to understand rational choice liberalism and its relevance to social development. (*Social Development Issues*)

Review

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About the Author

Amartya Sen, winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economics, is Lamont University Professor at Harvard University.

Users Review

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Mary Torres:

Book is to be different for every grade. Book for children right up until adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for all of us. The book Rationality and Freedom ended up being making you to know about other information and of course you can take more information. It is very advantages for you. The book Rationality and Freedom is not only giving you more new information but also to get your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship together with the book Rationality and Freedom. You never experience lose out for everything in the event you read some books.

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Ralph Scott:

The book untitled Rationality and Freedom contain a lot of information on this. The writer explains the girl idea with easy means. The language is very clear to see all the people, so do not necessarily worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was compiled by famous author. The author provides you in the new period of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book in anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can start their official web-site in addition to order it. Have a nice examine.

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