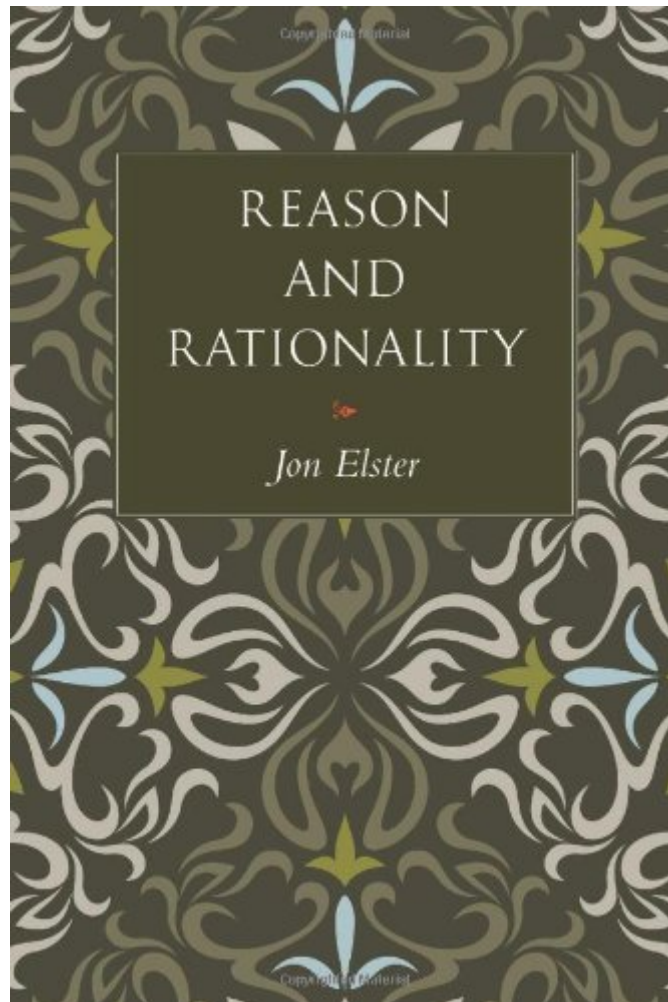# Reason And Rationality

Synopsis

One of the world's most important political philosophers, Jon Elster is a leading thinker on reason and rationality and their roles in politics and public life. In this short book, he crystallizes and advances his work, bridging the gap between philosophers who use the idea of reason to assess human behavior from a normative point of view and social scientists who use the idea of rationality to explain behavior. In place of these approaches, Elster proposes a unified conceptual framework for the study of behavior. Drawing on classical moralists as well as modern scholarship, and using a wealth of historical and contemporary illustrations, Reason and Rationality marks a new development in Elster's thinking while at the same time providing a brief, elegant, and accessible introduction to his work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm usually a huge fan of Elster, but not this book. It is a tiny thin volume (79 pages in total and the size of a mass paperback). I don't even know why it should be published. It was his inaugural lectures at the CollÃ¨ge de France. I imagine the audience must be pretty sophisticated. It is way

too skimpy for the topic. I can hardly see any reason nor rationality in offering such appetizers.I'm waiting for his fuller treatment of the topic.

I read this book as an important contribution to the call for a reappropriation of reason and rationality (and philosophy in general) by progressives and communitarians.The book can get a bit technical, but an important pointer that helped me gain footing is to read it as a critique of the model of rational agency employed by right-wing economists. The right-wing economist begins from the assumption that rationality consists only in the strategies an agent employs to satisfy his subjective preferences, without recognizing her own normative role in applying such a model and in refusing to engage the question of (the objective) reason in the formation of preferences.The author briefly and gracefully explains the work of Sartre (and by implication most of postmodernist existentialism, poststructuralism, etc) as a self-understood irrational dead-end, an impasse, for progressives and communitarians which can bring no help or critique in addressing the right-wing appropriation of rationality.

This tiny book (literally tiny) was the first book I read from Jon Elster. It seems it's a short hand intro text, and it is just that. Ideas aren't developed, examples aren't that compelling, and the overall description of reason and rationality is unsatisfying. I'm guessing some of his other texts are much better than this.

Reason and Rationality In Praise of Reason: Why Rationality Matters for Democracy (MIT Press) Retaking Rationality: How Cost-Benefit Analysis Can Better Protect the Environment and Our Health Rationality and Religious Theism (Ashgate Philosophy of Religion Series) (Ashgate Philosophy of Religion Series) Game Theory 101: The Rationality of War Unconditional Parenting: Moving from Rewards and Punishments to Love and Reason Between Authority and Interpretation: On the Theory of Law and Practical Reason Wisdom in the Face of Modernity: A Study in Thomistic Natural Theology (Faith and Reason: Studies in Catholic Theology and Philosophy) Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason since 1945 (Experimental Futures) Fresh Air: Faith, Reason and Doubt Sleep, Interrupted: A physician reveals the #1 reason why so many of us are sick and tired Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen Writing To Reason: A Companion for Philosophy Students and Instructors Summary: The Victory of Reason - Rodney Stark: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and

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