



## Irrationality must temper rationality



Connor Stangler

I think we've got it guys: the Earth isn't flat. Rationality is on the rise. There are obvious signals — compared to centuries ago, our perception of nature and its phenomena is more grounded in scientific fact. Except for a few pockets of proud stalwarts, we now blame earthquakes on tectonic plates not vengeful deities, we've established the shape of the Earth, and we've won — all right, we're winning — the evolution debate. Reason's day in the sun started a few hundred years ago, and the sun seems to be nowhere close to setting.

But like most other good things, can there be too much rationality? Can we tend toward excess? Or does the ideal state not lie somewhere in the middle between rationality and irrationality but instead on the extreme end, where we are all calculating machines who appeal to reason before all else and make livings out of dispelling myth, falsehood and imagination? Such a state, void of the irrational, is colorless.

Granted, too much irrationality and certain versions of it are dangerous. Irrationality has fostered war, destruction, murder and the justifications for them. We encounter it daily in the news: religious fanaticism, denials of climate change and prejudice.

However, ever since the Enlightenment made the individual the hero of society and reason his or her weapon of choice, we've prescribed rationality as the social cure-all. We hope that if everyone just thinks like we do, if we apply the laws of logic and reason in every situation, if we abandon faith for fact, then we'll come that much closer to a sane society.

Too often, though, rationality is the party pooper of the intellectual world. It's the annoying friend who always points out the flaws in your casual logic or spots the impossibility in your joke or story that's supposed to be hyperbolic. It's the atheist picking on the pious believer for not adhering to the demands of rationality. Besides, how could they believe in something so irrational when reason has given them all the answers? Sometimes, myth matters to individuals and communities. It's what sustains or bonds them. It's how they make sense of the world and animate their lives. Even though the rational explanation of the universe's origins is just as beautiful as the religious one, why supplant the wonder of one for that of the other? Rationality tends to eliminate mystery, the stuff of legend and lore.

Rationality can foster an exclusive cult just as irrationality once did. We no longer have the papal courts condemning Galileo and his reason. Today, we have colleges dangerously favoring the rational sciences over the irrational humanities, according to boston.com. During 2011, Florida Gov. Rick Scott said he preferred the state giving tax dollars to the STEM fields — science technology, engineering, and mathematics — rather than the humanities, according to a 2011 Herald-Tribune article. If irrationality can't produce a machine, make something more efficient, be put to use in a board room or mechanized in a manufacturing plant, then why support it?

Like most things in life, we need a balance. Irrationalism can do things rationalism never imagined. It can bend reality and think outside the box while rationalism still is pondering the geometric dimensions of its cubic prison. It teaches us how to make and take jokes and how to express something artistically rather than mechanically. It gives meaning to our lives when all rationalism does is give us the answers. It tells us to love even when the costs outweigh the benefits. It clouds the mysteries of our lives when increasingly everything is illuminated for us. Once in a while, a Faulkner novel can do you better than a Sudoku puzzle.

Nobody knows what the balance looks like. At what point does myth become dangerous and truth necessary? If rationalism is becoming the bully irrationalism once was, if we start to discriminate against those who hold a myth dear to their soul, then maybe we've reached that point.

Connor Stangler is a senior English and history major from Columbia, Mo.

## Drug legalization poses risks



Jeremy Busch

During the last several years, more and more states have voted to legalize marijuana as a medicine. However, two states made the decision this November to legalize the drug for recreational uses.

Colorado and Washington, the two states that approved the laws, have stepped beyond national law. Currently, marijuana is considered illegal by the federal government. However, these states chose to defy this in what they feel is a violation of their state rights. The question remains about who truly is right: should states legalize marijuana, or is the federal government correct about their laws? Although there are many arguments for the legalization of marijuana, there also are many adverse effects that lead me to think that legalizing marijuana is inappropriate during the current situation.

To describe the circumstances across Colorado, ABC reported Nov. 7 that Amendment 64, the legalization of marijuana, would permit adults older than 21 to possess the drug and be able to grow

up to six marijuana plants in their home. The public use of marijuana is forbidden, limiting marijuana use to private sectors. In essence, this should keep marijuana from causing much harm. However, as we all have seen, many people defy laws and do as they please. With a law about marijuana in action, I think it will not deter those younger than 21, the age when the most experimentation occurs, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

On the surface, there is an immediate downside of legalizing marijuana. Even though many people choose to ignore the law, the law deters others. Some will not partake in something because it is illegal. Now that Colorado and Washington have made the legal age 21, there is no longer this deterring factor in those people's lives. Therefore, they might not stay away from marijuana, such as the case for alcohol.

This brings up the argument as to why marijuana itself is bad for you. Many say there are no long-term effects. However, it is proven that the use of marijuana has several negative components, proving why marijuana is not ready to be legalized.

First of all, there are many arguments to explain why marijuana should be illegal while alcohol remains legal to those older than 21. Marijuana usage has been scientifically proven to be a gateway drug. A 2010 Yale study showed marijuana use is associated with increased abuse of prescription drugs in men ages 18 to 25. In addition, those using marijuana were 2.5 times more likely to abuse prescription drugs, whereas alcohol and

cigarette users were only 1.25 times more likely. Therefore, I feel it is irresponsible to legalize an activity with a correlation to worsened actions.

Furthermore, the legalization of marijuana poses a hazard for driving while under the influence. After using marijuana, drivers are 1.25 times more likely to have an accident than if they were in their normal state, according to NORML, a pro-marijuana non-profit public interest lobby. Of course, there are problems with driving after consuming alcohol. However, the problem lies with police officers in the testing of marijuana for the driver. Currently, there are no quick methods of testing how high someone is, whereas for alcohol there are breathalyzers. The current ways to test for marijuana are through a person's urine, blood and a few other abstract methods. This poses a situation where drivers can get away with being under the influence with no legal consequences.

With Washington and Colorado approving these amendments, they are paving the way for more states to follow. This causes concerns of the legalization occurring throughout Missouri. In a state infamous for meth labs, it is frightening to see the possibility of even more drug abuse here. I hope we do not have to face this predicament, and all in all, it would not have a positive nor beneficial impact.

Jeremy Busch is a freshman communication major from St. Louis, Mo.

## What are the advantages or disadvantages of going to college in a small town?

"It's advantageous because it creates a greater sense of community within the students and faculty and you feel like you're actually a part of the campus."

Cody Hagan senior

"The disadvantage is there isn't a lot to do for fun. But an advantage is there aren't a lot of people. Bigger schools like Mizzou are overwhelming in their population size."

Tori Smith sophomore

"The disadvantages are there isn't a lot of nightlife. The advantages though are you can't get in trouble. You learn to find things to do with friends. It's easy to find cheap entertainment."

Nichole Wellhausen sophomore

"The first advantage is you get to know a lot of people which is really helpful. I don't really think there are any disadvantages about a small college town."

Zenith Shrestha junior



### AROUND THE QUAD

## Small towns offer ideal college communities



Dan Mika

I spoke with a friend that goes to school in Milwaukee during Thanksgiving Break and we quickly delved into a debate of going to college in a small town versus going to one in a large city.

I was born in Chicago, home to deep-dish pizza, people who use "da" as a definite article and that one baseball team whose name I probably shouldn't mention while I'm in Cardinals territory. Although

I spent most of my life near a major metropolis, I've realized small towns are superior to the big city when it comes to college location.

The biggest argument against my theory, according to my buddy, is that there's nowhere near enough to do in a small college town. Take Kirksville, for example. It can't compare to my hometown when it comes to concerts, sporting events or age-appropriate nightlife unless SAB gets a budget increase of gargantuan proportions.

But therein lies the greatness of the small college town. It brings people from all sorts of different cultures and life experiences together into a relatively small area. It's almost as if, college towns are a sort of melting pot, a community that simultaneously creates a vibrant new culture out of a smaller one while serving as a handy metaphor for fourth-grade social science teachers everywhere.

College towns also are much more peaceful than the city. They say New York is the city that never sleeps, but nobody

ever bothered to tell that to the denizens of the Chicagoland area. I was working on this column at night in Chicago whilst battling a short bout of insomnia and I counted how many times I heard an engine rev loudly at three in the morning. The count totaled at 18. Eighteen drag races happened within the span of an hour. I'm not entirely sure how many people enjoy hearing the soothing sound of a modified Honda Civic without mufflers on a week-night, nor do I know anyone who loves the sound of car horns constantly beeping in the streets of a city. I'll take the relative calm of a Kirksville night any day.

Living in a semi-isolated town like Kirksville has one more perk that, in my mind, trumps anything a large city can offer. If you were to drive five minutes away in any direction from Truman's campus and wait for nightfall, you can look straight up and stare into the vast depths of space with all of its heavenly objects. Look straight up in Chicago at night and you'll see office buildings and

a few planes scattered amongst a sky clouded with light pollution.

As we return from Thanksgiving break, I think we should all give some thanks to the small college town. I'll agree, Kirksville and other small cities across the nation can't offer as many attractions as Chicago, Milwaukee or Minneapolis can. But because so many students come to college, all sorts of cultures are crushed together into a small space. In that sense, college towns are like very tiny cities and they can be just as entertaining as big towns.

As my first-ever collegiate week approaches, I'm thankful most of all for the college town's quietness. If my idea of finals are anything similar to an actual finals week, then it'll be fantastic to get that four hours of sleep a night without being interrupted by a drag race on Franklin Street.

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