The Stupidity of Logic

James F Welles*

East Marion, New York, USA

***Corresponding Author:** James F Welles, East Marion, New York, USA.

Although the labels "Intelligence" and "Stupidity" are easy to apply in everyday life, efforts to elucidate the underlying schematic process have yielded little but confusion for centuries on end. Perhaps it is time to consider the possibility that something is wrong if not with the questions being asked then with the questioners asking them. One obvious problem is that the questioners have human minds, which means that analysis tends to be both linear and biased. When using words, as most of us do, people can think of, at most, only one thing at a time [1]. This is the source of logic–thinking in ordered steps, and it puts us at a disadvantage when trying to understand the complexities of nature. Of course, our triumphs in unraveling the secrets of the physical universe have been possible because we can hold all other conditions constant while we selectively alter one variable at a time and observe dependent reactions. However, this approach is clearly of limited value in the study of the living world, in which the dynamic interdependence of systems is really the proper subject for investigation. On the other hand, when we use mathematical symbols rather than words to facilitate complex, computerized thought, the resultant models fail to reflect the entirety of the human condition because of our inability to quantify social values, psychological vagaries and spiritual intangibles.

We would be most successful in understanding ourselves if we not only asked the right questions correctly but had no predetermined criteria for shaping our answers. Nevertheless, this investigation of how the human mind works will emphasize stupidity. Why stupidity? Because it is ubiquitous! Because it is eternal! Because it has been neglected and ignored! Because it is found in overwhelming abundance in every phase and facet of the human experience, except as a topic in psychology texts and journals where it is overwhelming by its inexplicable but notable absence.

Thus, this will not be a balanced account of human behavior but rather an attempt to redress an existing imbalance. We will consider people not only as problem solvers but as problem creators. We will analyze not only how people succeed but how they fail. We will examine why people do not learn some lessons by favoring some over others. We will examine how human behavior can be simultaneously both adaptive and maladaptive, and our profoundest discovery of all will be that intelligence and stupidity are not opposites but siblings-that they contrast with one another like two faces on a coin. Indeed, a normal, not quite idiot savant may be incredibly intelligent in one way (e.g. math or music) and equally stupid in others (finance or romance): if a specific example serves to make the same point, Bill Clinton was both super smart and super dumb [2]. Put another way, any magician good enough to make the two-faced coin disappear knows that the more intelligent a person is, the easier it is to deceive him/her [3].

Bibliography

1. Pitkin W. "A Short Introduction to the History of Human Stupidity". Simon and Schuster; New York. Put another way: Logic will get you from A to Z; to get anywhere else, you need imagination (A. Einstein) (1932).

2. Leuchtenburg W. "The American President". Oxford University Press; New York (2015): 796.

3. Young Mark J. "Personal communication from a retired shrink and an excellent amateur magician" (2016).