

America's normality can sometimes be very strange

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Before we start anything, I would like to dedicate this week's column to Josh, a man who truly understands insanity. Josh, if you're out there, (and I know you are), this one's for you, man.

Well, well, well, - I wonder how many articles I've started that way. The world will never know. This is finally, and at last, our final exploration into the topic of insanity. This week, you will see a plain college student tie the seemingly unrelated topics of sanity, reality, and American society together, as if by magic. Watch closely as he explains this simple slight of hand illusion step by step and use it to amaze your friends. It's great fun at parties.

Let's begin. To start with, we need a statement.

STATEMENT #1:

In American society, there accepted codes of behavior of varying degrees depending on several variables.

For instance, in public places, (schools, restaurants, shopping malls, etc.etc.), there are certain things that one just does not do. One does not talk to strangers, not even a simple hello, for example. Why? Don't ask me.

You really want to shake someone up? Just walk over to any anonymous human in a shopping mall, smile, introduce yourself, and offer your hand. People just don't know what to think about this sort of thing. It's so...what's the word...ah, yes, "unusual."

It has been said that man is a social creature. This is true in that we tend to congregate together in huge milling masses. Yet despite

'Did I piss a few of you off? God, I hope so. At least I still have the right to do that...'

this fact, on the whole, no one talks to each other. We generally do not mingle outside of our own segregated tribe of friends and relations. Why? I don't know. I personally think it's some kind of mass paranoia.

We'll delve a little more into mass paranoia later. Right now, I'd like to inform those of you that haven't already guessed, that we are now going to discuss the dread "Code of Social Rules and Regulations."

Onward.
One does not speak his mind if one's thoughts are considered rude. If you're talking to someone and this person is really annoying you, chances are you're not going to say, "I find conversing with you to be annoying. It is making me feel rather unpleasant, and I think I'd like to avoid that, thank you."

Instead, you'd probably either excuse yourself politely, of just sit there and take it, especially if you're a businessman, 'cause it could

mean that "big deal." If this is the case, you're not only going to take it, you're going to take it and smile.

Politeness, ugh! It's so ingrained into some people it makes me sick. When this happens and you finally do escape, most likely you'll go and bitch about it to someone else. Very few people have the guts to complain to the person who actually should be hearing it. Why? Don't even ask.

Let's list a few more of these rules, just off the top of my head. One does not discuss unacceptable topics openly, such as farts or burps, which one also does not do in public. One does not sing and dance in public for no apparent reason. One does not look blatantly at others. One should follow the accepted dress code. Men should not display emotion. Yet, women can, and I would even go so far as to say that they are expected to be emotional. Men can be rude and crude as they want openly. It's just considered part of being male. Yet, women are expected to be quite the opposite, at least in public. Any of you who actually believe things are this way are really hurting and should begin seeing an analyst right away.

STATEMENT #2:

Some of the things society calls "normal" are really and truly weird.

Unfortunately, I don't even have enough room to elaborate on all the things I'm about to list. So, I'll have to be as brief as possible. I hope you understand. Anyhow, here's an in-

complete list of examples of "normality."

We build missiles for peace. Oh, that was a good one. Every time I hear it I end up rolling on the floor. We are committed as a nation to stopping communism because we simply believe it's wrong, dangerous, and generally not a good way to think (Oh, no! The commies are coming, the commies are coming.). Yet, haven't we been just a little brainwashed against them? Our money says "In God We Trust." We call the police "peace officers." Yet, these "peace officers" have stopped me and questioned me on several occasions for merely being out, walking at 9:00 p.m. "Uh, just in case." These same peace officers have also told me that if I were to dress differently, or "not look so suspicious," that this wouldn't happen so often. Excuse me, but last I heard, this was the democratic United States - actually, it's a republic, but who's counting?

-land of the "free." We have an electoral process where the president who got the most popular vote could conceivably be defeated because he/she didn't get the most electoral votes. Something is wrong here. During W.W.II, we imprisoned all Japanese-Americans in a fit

Tons of surplus food rots in warehouses while millions across the globe die of hunger. People fear death by AIDS, and so they stop having sex?!!

WAIT A MINUTE! NOW THAT'S GOING TOO FAR!!! THIS HAS GOT TO STOP!!!
Double standards, double-

obey this Code of Social Rules and Regulations. To me that is insane. I don't enjoy supressing myself for anyone, anytime. I don't think you should have to.

But, where does the topic of reality fit in, you ask. Well, as you recall, there were three realities. The third was the definite reality, free from all outside influence and biases. Now then, try taking a step back. Be objective and take a good look at what's really going on. As usual, not a pretty sight.

Another good thing to remember is that you are over eighteen. When someone tells you, "You can't do that," ask why, and if they can't give you an answer that satisfies you, do it anyway. Like a great British philosopher once said: "We are ruled by none. Never, never, never."

Finally, I would like to point out, once again, the whole point to this little series on insanity: "Insanity is a perfectly logical reaction to an insane world."

grey Matter
pudding by t.k.

of government inspired patriotic panic. When our "enemies" stage an attack, it's called terrorism, but when U.S. backed "freedom fighters," (a.k.a. contras), do it, it's known as a *low intensity conflict*. A bit of a contra-diction, yuk yuk yuk. Our government helps to keep the Iran/Iraq war going to insure low oil prices.

As a society, we continually practice self-denial and supression in many aspects of our life to

speaking, too much like 1984 for me. Well, there you have it. This is my definition of insanity. Did I piss a few of you off? God, I hope so. At least I still have the right to do that, (even if it isn't safe for me to walk the streets at night any longer).



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