



Voltaires Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West

By John Ralston Saul

Simon & Schuster. Paperback. Condition: New. 656 pages. With a new Introduction by the author, this erudite and brilliantly readable book (The Observer, London) masterfully dissects the political, economic, and social origins of Western civilization to reveal a culture cripplingly enslaved to crude notions of rationality and expertise. The Western world is full of paradoxes. We talk endlessly of individual freedom, yet we've never been under more pressure to conform. Our business leaders describe themselves as capitalists, yet most are corporate employees and financial speculators. We call our governments democracies, yet few of us participate in politics. We complain about invasive government, yet our legal, educational, financial, social, cultural, and legislative systems are deteriorating. All these problems, John Ralston Saul argues, are largely the result of our blind faith in the value of reason. Over the past 400 years, our rational elites have turned the modern West into a vast, incomprehensible, directionless machine, run by process-minded experts/Voltaires bastards whose cult of scientific management is empty of both sense and morality. Whether in politics, art, business, the military, entertainment, science, finance, academia, or journalism, these experts share the same outlook and methods. The result, Saul maintains, is a civilization of immense technological...



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