



Written by [Staff](#) on December 5, 2023

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The Review

Counterattacking the Agenda of Social-justice Advocates

Social Justice Fallacies, by Thomas Sowell, New York: Basic Books, 2023, 210 pages, hardcover.

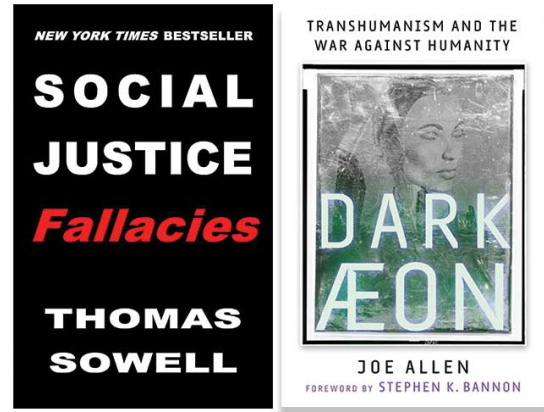
You know you're in a cerebral encounter when, right in the first sentence, French philosopher Rousseau throws a notional airball with his social-justice vision of equality, with everybody having equal chances, leading presumably to equal outcomes.

Then almost immediately, in two swift paragraphs, there's a dunk on the other end with a sports allusion that leaves Jean-Jacques with his posterized mouth agape. The shrewder author has driven to the goal with real facts, slamming claims that racism is universally to blame for group-performance disparities — by vividly pointing out that blacks are very overrepresented in professional basketball, whites in professional tennis, and Hispanics in Major League Baseball.

Zing.

Granted, the scholarly author of the book under review didn't put matters exactly in this fashion, but that's the gist — and we're just calling 'em like we see 'em.

Indeed, the author broadens his sports-related confrontations about group differences by blasting what he terms "equal chance" fallacies in contests on the ice. Specifically, he alludes to the National Hockey League — noting that there are more hockey players from distant Sweden in the NHL than from California, even though the Golden State has nearly four times the population of Sweden.





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Cultural differences or racism? Sowell points out that the overrepresentation of certain ethnic or racial groups in different sports is due to cultural and physical differences, not systemic racism. (AP Images)

In short order, it's game over. The losing social-justice advocates are left standing still on their feet, or sneakers, looking like their vehicles (no doubt electric) have been repossessed.

Don't misunderstand. There's plenty of erudite reasoning and clear language in this succinct volume, but it is thankfully terse when that is what is needed. If you want to dig into even more history, geography, philosophy, and free-market (and other types of) economics, there are almost 60 pages of endnotes — including many references to some of the 50-odd books written by Dr. Thomas Sowell, the author of *Social Justice Fallacies*. Renowned economist and social commentator Sowell, now age 93, is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

And, yes, to emphasize his point, Sowell revisits a sports comparison not too long later, employing a typical media gripe about purported prejudicial statistical differences, as it appeared in an accusatory headline from a San Francisco newspaper: "Why are Black and Latino people still kept out of tech industry?"

Sowell scores with a simple question of his own: "Are Asians 'kept out' of professional basketball or Californians 'kept out' of the National Hockey League?"

His opinions are inevitably buttressed by specific evidence, such as when Sowell observes that it is difficult to make the case — as do many social-justice advocates — that inequalities of outcome can automatically be blamed on discrimination by dominant majorities against subordinate minorities. He recalls, for example, how Turks were *not* the bankers and stockbrokers when Turks ruled the Ottoman Empire (the capital assets of large industrial firms were largely owned by Greeks and Armenians). As is his wont, Sowell lays out more proofs, with copious footnotes, then comes to the point. As he writes, racial or ethnic minorities

who have owned or operated more than half of whole industries in particular nations have included the Chinese in Malaysia, Germans in Brazil, Lebanese in West Africa, Jews in Poland, Italians in Argentina, Indians in East Africa, Scots in Britain, Ibos in Nigeria, and Marwaris in India.[Each of these has its own footnote.]

By contrast, we can read reams of social justice literature without encountering a single example of proportional representation of different groups in endeavors open to competition — in any country in the world today, or at any time over thousands of years of recorded history.

As Sowell demonstrates, an ounce of facts can be worth more than a ton of ungrounded arguments.

Assertions vs. Evidence

In a strong section about racial fallacies, the author does not attempt to argue against the charge that racial discrimination has had a long, and often vile, history. To do so would be foolish — and wrong. But Sowell makes distinctions about *assertions* being different from *evidence*.

For example, the author asks if group income disparities — which have been evident for decades



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between black and white Americans — differ particularly from other groups in the United States (or among groups in other nations). Statistics show, he notes, that since 1947, the family-income disparity has not been as large as 2:1 among whites and blacks in any year. Rather than attributing this phenomenon to “genetic determinism” — which progressives in the United States did blatantly in the last century — he cites facts of other groups. In the United States (with figures that come from the U.S. Census Bureau), Sowell looks at Asian groups such as those of Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Korean ancestry, and finds that those groups have “*more than twice*” (his emphasis) the median per-capita income of Mexican Americans.

In addition, according to the official statistics, these

Asian groups also have higher median per capita incomes than the median per capita income of white Americans. Asian Indians have nearly *three times* the median per capita income of Mexican Americans, and a median per capita income more than \$15,000 a year higher than the median per capita income of white Americans. Among full-time, year-round male workers, Asian Indian males earned over \$39,000 *more than* white male full-time, year-round workers. [Emphasis in original.]

Is this, asks Sowell with a sardonic touch, “the ‘white supremacy’ we are so often warned about in some quarters?”

In *Social Justice Fallacies*, we are reminded about those who pushed genetic determinism and its offshoot, eugenics. The list is extensive. A prominent Harvard economics professor (Frank Taussig), for example, offered this about people he considered inferior: If it were not feasible to “chloroform them once and for all,” then “at least they can be segregated, shut up in refuges and asylums, and prevented from propagating their kind.” Top university leaders in the United States, as well as organizations such as the American Economic Association and the American Sociological Association, were among the founders of such movements. Famed economist John Maynard Keynes was one of the founders of the eugenics society at Cambridge University in England.

As Sowell emphasizes, those “who led the crusade for genetic determinism in the early twentieth century were *not* ill-educated, lower-class people. They included some of the most intellectually prominent people of that era, on both sides of the Atlantic.” (Emphasis in original.)

In the early part of the 20th century, Sowell goes on, “race was everything” when it came to describing group differences in economic and social outcomes. By the end of the century, differences were largely said to be the result of “racism.” After noting some differences among so-called progressives over the years, Sowell also comments on similarities, especially when “dealing with empirical evidence.” Both generations “remained largely impervious to evidence or conclusions contrary to their own beliefs.”

Abstract ideas, however, can play havoc with the real world. Many philosophers prefer the former realm.

Sowell brings this home in his discussion of the U.S. housing boom and bust early in this century — when a common left-wing grievance was that white and black mortgage applications had different rates of approval. (Why was this? Average credit rates were different.) Yet, political and media pressure to “do something” was immense. The government responded. The “net result,” writes Sowell,



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was that it forced mortgage lenders to lower their lending standards. This made mortgage loans so risky that many people, including the author of this book, warned that the housing market could “collapse like a house of cards.” When it did, the whole economy collapsed.

Also not surprising (at least to those with common sense): “Low-income blacks were among those who suffered.”

Treating People as Chess Pieces

Those who have previously read Sowell’s treatises will bump into a few familiar (and some lesser-known) names in his brief for those with different visions, such as Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, and Milton Friedman. Let’s put them on one side; we’ll call them the “shirts.” On the other side are the “skins” — and Sowell effectively undresses them just as they have tried to skin us — figures such as British Fabian socialist George Bernard Shaw, 18th-century Marquis de Condorcet, and Professor John Rawls (author of *A Theory of Justice*, 1971, considered a social-justice classic). (We are reminded that Shaw considered the working class as being among the “detestable” people who “have no right to live.”)

The name of one chapter (“Chess Pieces Fallacies”) comes from Adam Smith’s opposition to those who seem to imagine that they can “arrange the different members of a great society with as much ease as the hand arranges the different pieces upon a chess-board.”

Among the issues analyzed here are redistribution of wealth, tax rates vs. tax revenues, price controls, the inflation “tax,” and minimum wages. After all, as Sowell puts it, the confiscation and redistribution of wealth “is at the heart of the social justice agenda.” While “taxing the rich” usually drives such proposals, those who are “rich” are not, as the author explains, inert chess pieces when it comes to raising rates or lowering revenues. The author refers to instances when higher taxes led to less revenue (in Maryland and Oregon, among other states) and times when corporate tax rates were reduced (such as in Iceland) and tax revenues actually tripled over a decade.

Economics can be complicated. But Sowell tends to make matters easy to comprehend. He describes why pols like to pretend to offer something for nothing — only to find that inflationary price increases pay for this in a roundabout way. If readers wonder what’s really going on when Fed officials and abstruse financial commentators muddle around evasively about, say, QE2, here is Sowell’s straightforward take:

Politicians cover their tracks by calling the key mechanism — the Federal Reserve’s creation of money to buy government bonds — by the obscure insider phrase, “quantitative easing,” instead of saying it in plain English that the government is producing more of its own money, in order to pay for things it is giving away “free.” Sometimes a technical-sounding term — “QE2” — is used, to designate a second round of creating money. That sounds so much more impressive than simply saying “producing more money for politicians to spend.”

Well, at least these progressives, social-justice activists, Marxists, and Fabian socialists are looking out for the little guy. Isn’t that true?

Well, they undoubtedly want you to swallow that line, but Sowell knows better and lays it out candidly. Rousseau pushed for society to be guided by “the general masses,” but left details to the elite. And why



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not? After all, as you may not have read in class (but Sowell does recall), that French philosopher likened the masses to “a stupid pusillanimous invalid.”

How about other collective champions? Sowell has them covered in a chapter about “Knowledge Fallacies.” Here’s Karl Marx’s view from his own correspondence: “The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing.” In other words, as Sowell clarifies, “millions of fellow human beings mattered only if they carried out the Marxist vision.”

Let’s be frank. A key problem with the economy is that nobody really in charge wants to economize.

Suppressing Alternative Views

Making matters worse are the people who are making the decisions. This is an age-old issue, going back to (among others) William Godwin’s treatise in 1793 titled *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*. Sowell digs deep for this, citing Godwin’s call for the “just views of society” in the minds “of the liberally educated and reflecting members” of society that will enable them to be “to the people guides and instructors.”

Our presumed betters on the Left want to be calling the shots for “society” to “arrange” outcomes. This was, as we read in *Social Justice Fallacies*, the vision of John Rawls for social justice. That was “preceded by Progressive-era philosopher John Dewey’s similarly vague reference to ‘social control’ to replace ‘chaotic’ and narrowly ‘individualistic’ decisions in market economies. Before that, back to the eighteenth century, there was Rousseau’s vague ‘general will’ for making decisions for the sake of ‘the common good.’”

Are you comfortable with that? Sowell clearly is not. He sees a threat of intrusive government when Rawls makes comments about things that “society” should “arrange.” Dr. Sowell rightly recognizes that “The innocent-sounding word ‘arrange’ cannot be allowed to obscure those dangers. Interior decorators *arrange*. Governments *compel*. It is not a subtle distinction.” (Emphasis in original.)

The author is also concerned that the “prevailing social vision does not have to produce any factual test, when rhetoric and repetition can be sufficient to accomplish their aims.”

Meanwhile, “alternative views can be ignored and/or suppressed.” As Sowell also acknowledges, “suppression” is already “a large and growing factor in academic, political and other institutions in our own times.” He is not exaggerating when recognizing that it is possible, “even in our most prestigious educational institutions at all levels, to go literally from kindergarten to a Ph.D. without ever having read a single article — much less a book — by someone who advocates free-market economies.”

An even larger issue, in Sowell’s view, is why education has so often become indoctrination. And for whose benefit?

Readers will have to answer that for themselves. Should we be ruled by Rousseau’s “general will,” and his call for absolute authority over the individual? We’ve faced this question before. Back in 1791, conservative Edmund Burke identified Rousseau as the touchstone of the French Revolution, even as he prophesied its worst excesses. Today, the elitists’ goals may not be expressed in French, but they come with a similar social-justice vision.

— William P. Hoar



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The Dark Side of Transhumanism

Dark Aeon: Transhumanism and the War Against Humanity, by Joe Allen, New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2023, 504 pages, hardcover.

Transhumanism is generally understood in terms offered by Klaus Schwab, the founder and chairman of the World Economic Forum. Schwab proclaimed the Fourth Industrial Revolution would encompass “merging the physical, digital and biological worlds,” creating “both huge promise and potential peril.” Don’t be fooled, warns Joe Allen: Transhumanism will turn life for all of us into hell on earth.

The prefix *trans* is derived from a Latin word meaning “across,” “beyond,” or “through.” When added to a word, it often indicates movement or change from one state or place to another. Think *transport*, *translation*, *transplant*, and *transgender*. In this sense, *transhumanism* will, according to the global technocratic elites, allow us to surpass our human limitations.

Noting the “electro possession” of global political elites from Beijing to Silicon Valley and from Moscow to Davos, Allen maintains that “there are many proposals for a global trajectory, and countless more on the local level, making any general sketch inadequate.” Yet, a keen observer notices “recurring themes radiating out of tech culture and the bio-medical establishment like gamma rays from a leaky reactor,” to include adoption of a technocratic worldview on the one hand and advancement of transhumanist technologies on the other. While the term “transhumanism” may not readily surface in political forums and tech conferences due to the stigma it has acquired over the past decades, Allen contends that it is, in fact, the most apt descriptor for the prevailing spirit of our era, and he provides a compelling rationale for this assertion.

A remarkable and commendable aspect of Allen’s new book, *Dark Aeon: Transhumanism and the War Against Humanity*, lies in its thorough exploration of transhumanism as a distinct mindset that encompasses the philosophical, religious, and ideological orientations of both political and corporate elites as well as the general populace. This mindset fundamentally replaces the traditional concept of a monotheistic deity with technology as the supreme power. As elucidated by Allen in an interview with *The New American*, transhumanism adopts key religious elements — the narrative of origins, the moral framework of good and evil, ideas about the end of the world, and the quest for salvation — and inserts technology into the spiritual void in a godless society. Consequently, the human soul shifts its orientation away from a transcendent God and toward worldly materialism. This perspective leads Allen to a pessimistic view of any transhumanist technology, which he considers a blasphemous abomination. That includes seemingly well-intentioned advancements such as brain chips promoted by, among others, Elon Musk’s Neuralink as a means for keeping up with, controlling, and, hopefully, preventing ever-evolving artificial intelligence from going homicidal.

Another belief common to technocratic elites is that the “masses are there for their use.” While it is true that, compared to our Chinese counterparts, we Americans are free to “go where we want, say what we want, and arm ourselves with the latest weaponry,” “the pandemic response made [it] obvious [that] when public unrest threatens power, authorities will use any tool at their disposal to keep the rabble in line,” says Allen. It’s hard not to agree with his observation: Pandemic policies made the totalitarian inclinations of the Western political establishments crystal clear. In the blink of an eye, millions of employed Americans were deemed “non-essential workers”; those who refused irreversible medical interventions were excluded from the workforce, education, and other social spaces; and those who



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criticized this descent into totalitarian dystopia were banished from online public forums. Believing that these same elites will employ technological progress for purposes other than creating what Allen describes as an “electric antfarm” in which the masses would be “wired for control” and directed by algorithms is, at best, naïve. Its infrastructure, for now, consists of smartphones, smartwatches, and smart homes; sophisticated methods of propaganda and censorship; social media, electric vehicles, AI chatbots, and digital currency; and various forms of surveillance that, as put by the World Economic Forum’s Yuval Noah Harari, now go as far as getting under your skin.

While it may sound far-fetched and unrealistic, the only conspiracy, as put in the book, is “the insistence on making science fiction a reality.” Truly, the chapters devoted to the examination of cutting-edge technologies read like science fiction and evoke a sense of unease, if not profound horror.

A notable example is the creation of what Allen calls “designer babies.” Since 1978, millions of couples struggling to conceive have turned to in vitro fertilization. Today, this can involve the production of multiple embryos that are pre-screened for chromosomal abnormalities and obvious biologic markers such as sex. Any embryos deemed defective or undesirable are tossed into a biohazard bin, resulting in “mass abortion before the children ever feel the warmth of the womb” — an evil, unspeakable deed in itself. As elaborated on in the book, such technology is rooted in eugenics, which, in turn, rests on the idea that civilization relaxed the selective pressure once put on humans by nature. As a result, the “unfit” could survive, passing their “defective” genes on to future generations and thus muddying the pool of “fit” bloodlines. But the “negative” eugenics of discarding undesirable embryos may soon be paired with “positive” eugenics that will allow for altering the human genome to produce smarter, stronger, more beautiful humans — or monsters, as the consequences of messing with DNA, aka the “language of life,” can be unpredictable even by the most advanced AI.

Nothing about this is “conspiratorial.” One of the actors pursuing “synthetic biology” is the Biden administration, which last year authorized \$2 billion for the National Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative. “We need to develop genetic engineering technologies and techniques to be able to write circuitry for cells and predictably program biology in the same way in which we write software and program computers,” says Biden’s Executive Order 14081.

Considering the brutality of evolutionary competition, the unmatched effectiveness of “enhanced” humans and automated android workers run on AI threatens to turn “unenhanced” humans into “the useless class.” Dynamics of social eugenics will not be merciful to them, acknowledge transhumanist ideologists and enablers. But does it mean that the post-human future is inevitable, and that one must “adapt” to survive, even if it means engaging in slavery and navigating from one QR checkpoint to another?

While some of the facets of techno-hell are already here, “godlike” AI and “humanity 2.0” — our merger with machines — have not yet materialized, “and may never be,” believes Allen. Averting this dystopian future envisioned and built for us by powerful elites will be challenging, he warns, describing “hard choices” that individuals, communities, societal institutions, and governments will have to make. Regarding the latter, Allen correctly notes, “Never trust your government will protect you. Strengthen your own communities.” He also urges, “Learn the Bill of Rights. Learn American history.... Learn the Constitution.... Preserve what Republic we’ve left.”

This insightful conviction that our knowledge of the Constitution and our rights can shield us from the



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existential threat of transhumanism, in which humans will no longer exist, highlights the enduring importance of preserving and actively carrying out the values and principles enshrined in our founding documents.

— *Veronika Kyrylenko*



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