

Meritocracy

The argument of the book is that if the soil creates castes the machine manufactures classes — classes to which people can be assigned by their achievement rather than ascribed by their birth.

In so far as this has happened, social inequality can be justified, and, to avoid too blatant a contradiction, such justification is almost always needed in a democratic society which has bowed to equality as far as elections are concerned.

Otherwise the people who exercise power are going to be undermined by self-doubt and people over whom the power is exercised become indignant and subversive because they deny that the others have any right to lord it.

**Michael Young,
The Rise of the Meritocracy**