

THE YOUNG FOUNDATION
BEYOND MERITOCRACY:
THE ANTHOLOGY



WHAT LIES BEYOND MERITOCRACY?



A personal journey to, through and beyond the meritocracy

A century from 1935 to 2034

by JON HUGGETT

1935

My mother is born in this basement flat in Paddington. Her mother, my grandmother, takes medicine for pain, which makes her deaf for the rest of her life.



1945

Michael Young writes the Labour Party manifesto: "Let Us Face The Future". It promises that Labour will build a "free, democratic, efficient, public-spirited country, with its material resources organized in the service of the British people".

Labour win a landslide.



1946

My mother fails the 11+ exam.



1948

Labour government launches the NHS.



1956

Oxford English Dictionary records first use of the word "meritocracy."

"1956 A. Fox in Socialist Comm. May 13/1 The 'meritocracy'; the society in which the gifted, the smart, the energetic, the ambitious and the ruthless are carefully sifted out and helped towards their destined positions of dominance."

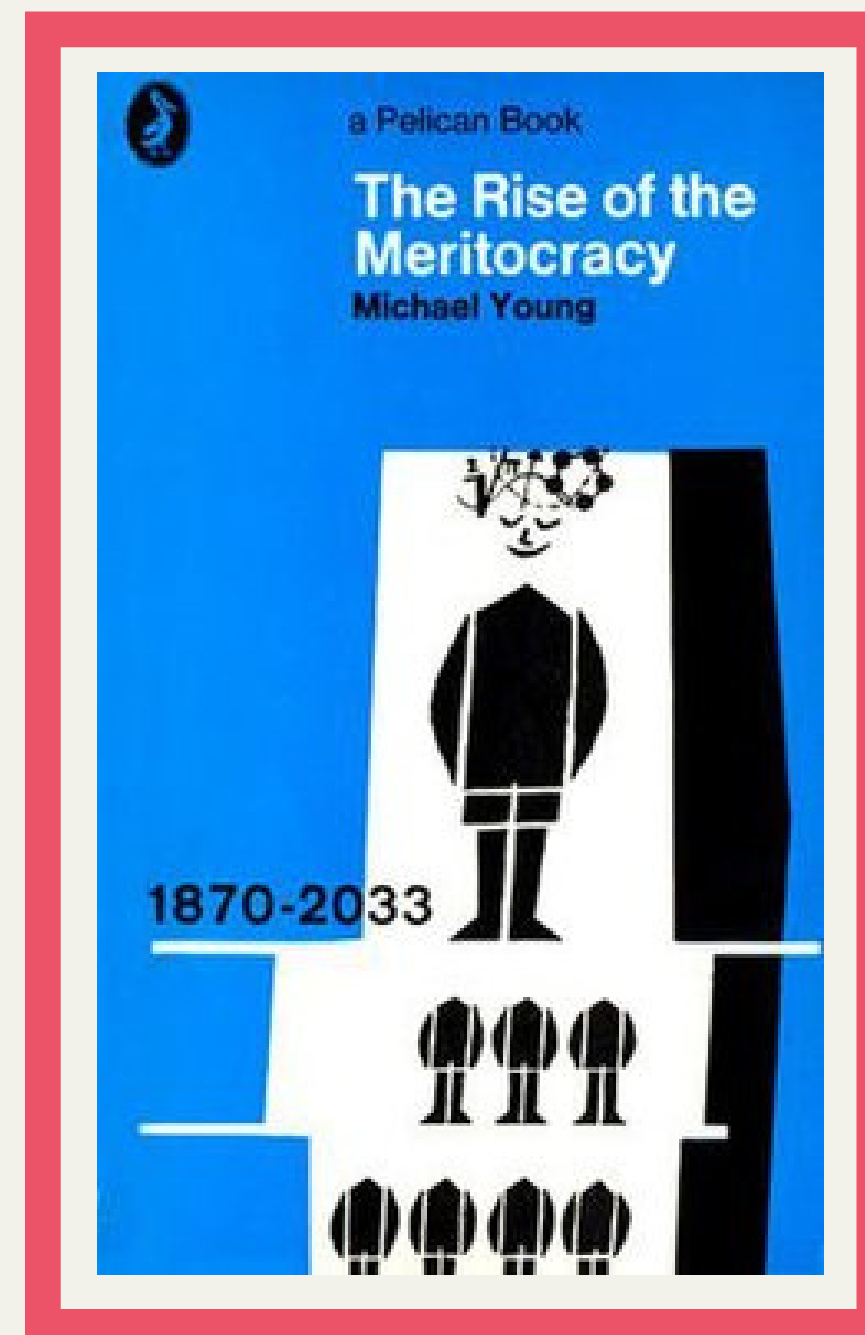
1957

I am born in an NHS hospital. My mother loses pints of blood. We both survive. We might not have, back in that basement flat in Paddington.



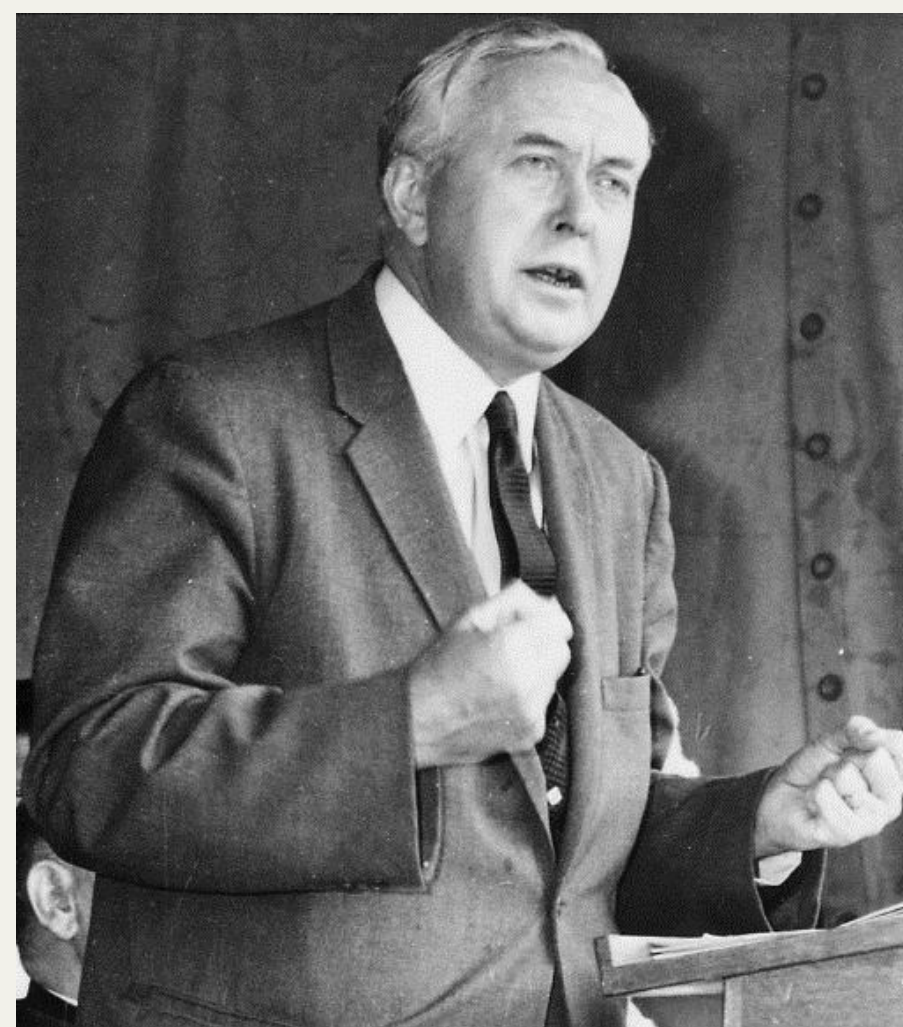
1958

The Rise of The Meritocracy
is published.



1964

Labour government is elected.



Source: [nationalarchives.gov.uk](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

1965

Influenced by “The Rise of the Meritocracy”, Tony Crosland, Labour Secretary of State for Education, starts to abolish the 11+ exam.

He says: "If it's the last thing I do, I'm going to destroy every fucking grammar school in England. And Wales and Northern Ireland."



Source: althistory.wikia.com

1968

I leave junior school, and join the first year of a brand new comprehensive: Whitchurch High School.

Had I been a year older, I would have had to take the 11+, and might have gone to Whitchurch Grammar School or Whitchurch Secondary School.

The new school proved tremendous. It helped me to get into university. It later nurtured Gareth Bale and Sam Warburton on their way to stardom.



1969

Labour government launches Open University. Michael Young had the vision for a university open to all.

PM Harold Wilson later described it as his most proud achievement. It later gave my mother the chance for education she had been denied.



1974

BBC runs low-budget school quiz called “What’s It All About”. For what we would now call “diversity”, they included a comprehensive: Whitchurch High School.

All the other teams we faced were grammar and private schools.

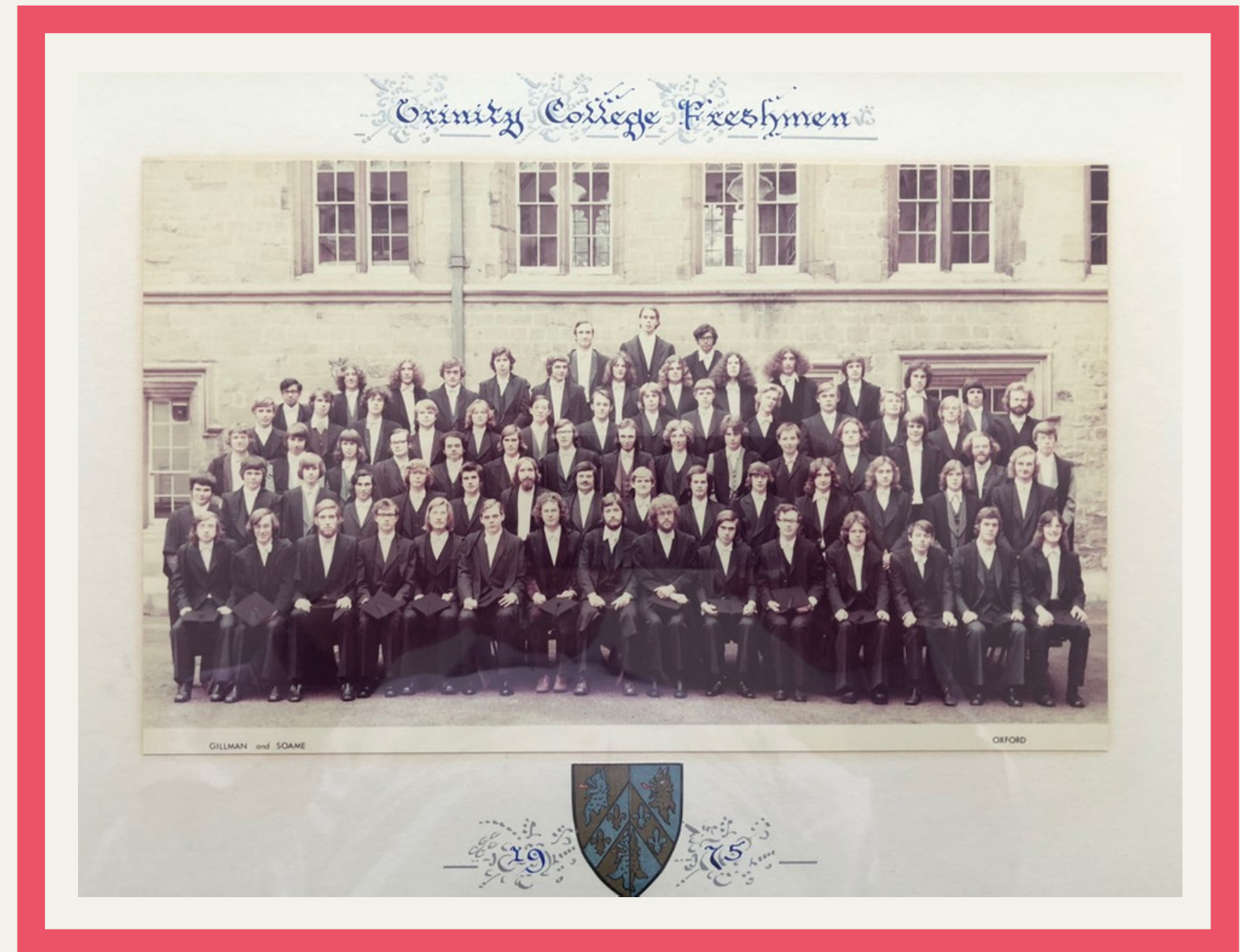


1975

I am the first member of my family to go to university.

As it happens, I got to Trinity College, Oxford, the alma mater of Tony Crosland, who started the abolition of the 11+.

I was proud to meet him there in 1977, just before he died.



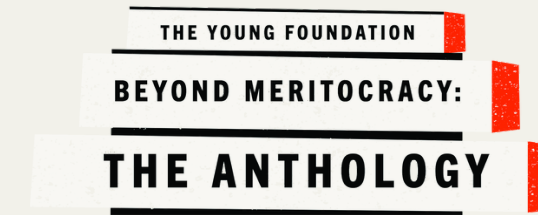
1983

When I left work to take up a full-time MBA, my friends bought me a subscription to The Economist.

I've now been reading it for half a century.



The
Economist



1984

I join the Boston Consulting Group, which proudly called itself a meritocracy.

BCG

THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP

1985

I graduate from Stanford University Graduate School of business. We love the information age. We all praise meritocracy.

Side note: for those interested, the man with his back to the camera, handing me my degree certificate, was the Dean, a distinguished Professor of Accounting. He was a great believer in meritocracy, and vetoed attempts to make ethics a mandatory course: “If you don’t understand now, you never will”. Two decades later he was Head of the Audit Committee on the board of Enron as it collapsed.



1991

I visit Japan for the first time. My great grandfather had visited when he was a stoker in the Royal Navy, before World War I, when the RN collaborated with the Japanese navy.



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1992

For the first time I
march in the LGBT
Pride parade.



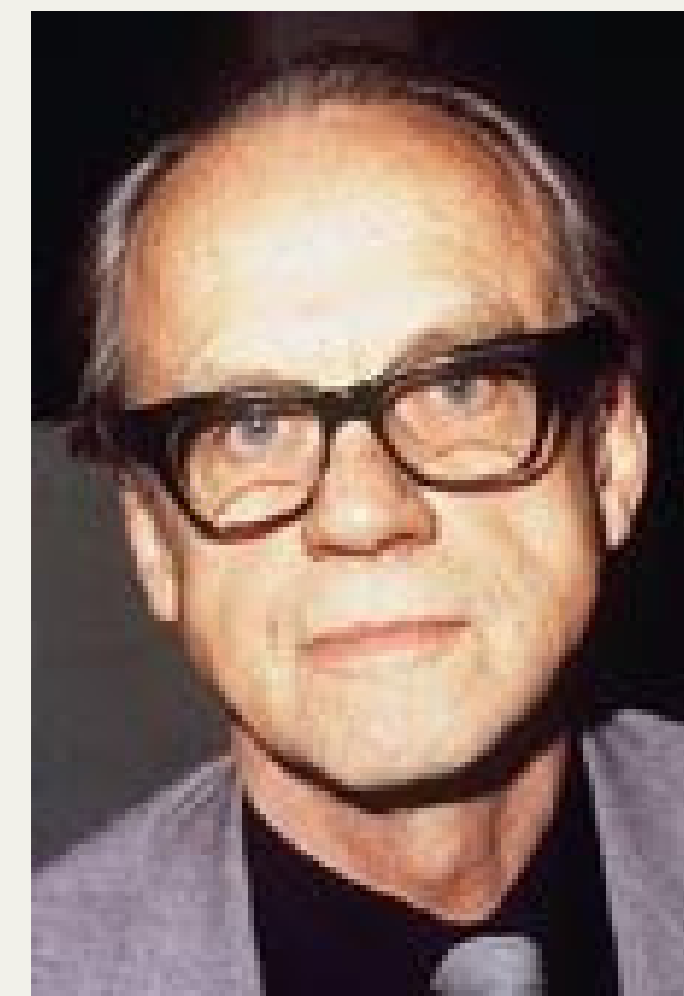
1997

Labour government elected with PM Tony Blair declaring “I want a society based on meritocracy.”

Michael objects: "I saw the meritocracy as becoming less and less concerned with the main body of people, establishing a sort of culture of their own, an elite culture with a good deal of arrogance in it. These things have largely happened.”



Source: bt.com



Source: bbc.co.uk

1998

Use of the word
“meritocracy” reaches
new high.



1999

My mother graduates from the Open University, receiving her degree from Bessie Braddock, a politician she had always admired.



2001

Wikipedia launched with the mission of bringing all human knowledge to all human beings for free. It becomes the fifth most visited site on the web.



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

2004

Facebook launched.

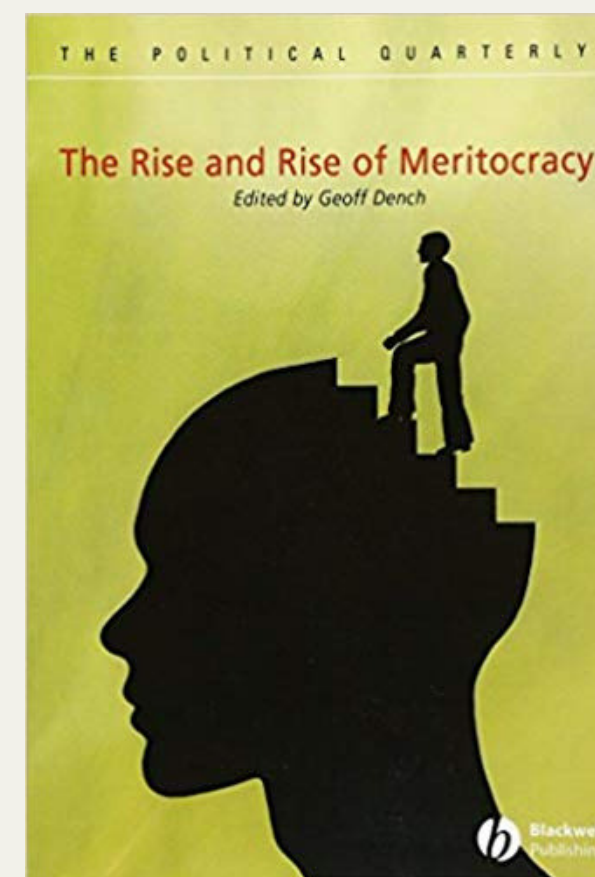


2007

The Rise and Rise of Meritocracy published and ponders a paradox:

“The story (The Rise of the Meritocracy) was intended to help turn Labour away from meritocracy, by reminding it of the importance of communitarian values.

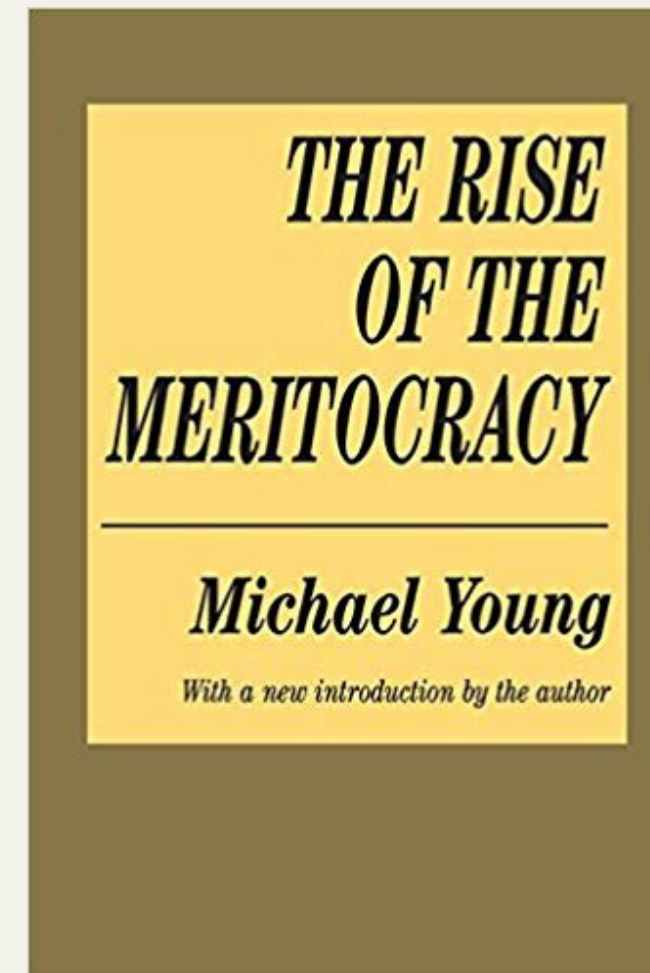
Curiously though, half a century later we have a Labour government declaring the promotion of meritocracy as one of its primary objectives.”



2011

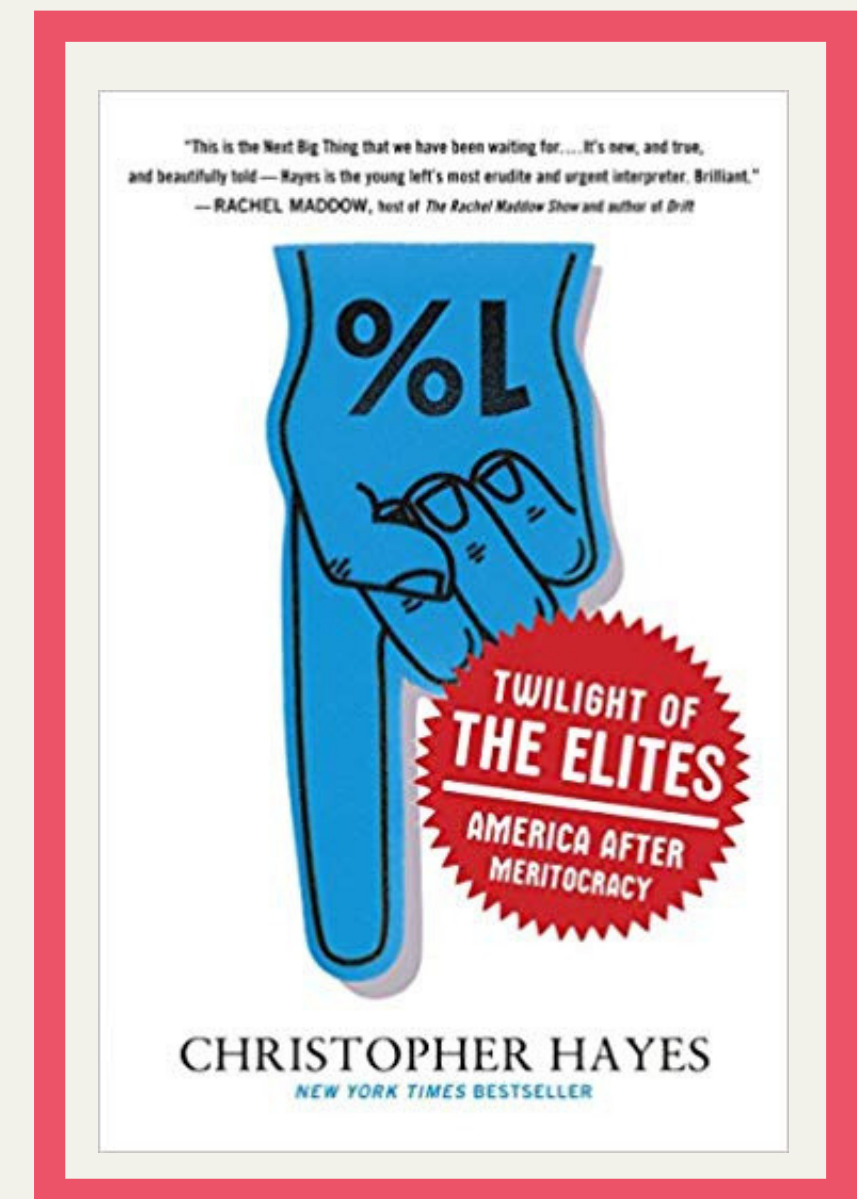
I finally read *The Rise of The Meritocracy*. I ponder:

"Am I a meritocrat, or am I not a meritocrat?"



2012

Chris Hayes publishes *Twilight of The Elites: America After Meritocracy*. He asks whether meritocracy is a Good Thing, as both Barack Obama and Mitt Romney say, or is it a Bad Thing, as Michael had predicted. He finds that most of Michael's predictions had come true, at least in the US. The new "meritocratic" elite has made itself rich and has hardened to outsiders. Social mobility has gone down, with the help of the education system. Colleges and universities have more and more students who are children of alumni or the well-off. Admission tests, such as SAT, correlate better to "background" than college grades or lifetime achievement. Meritocracy is now inheritable.

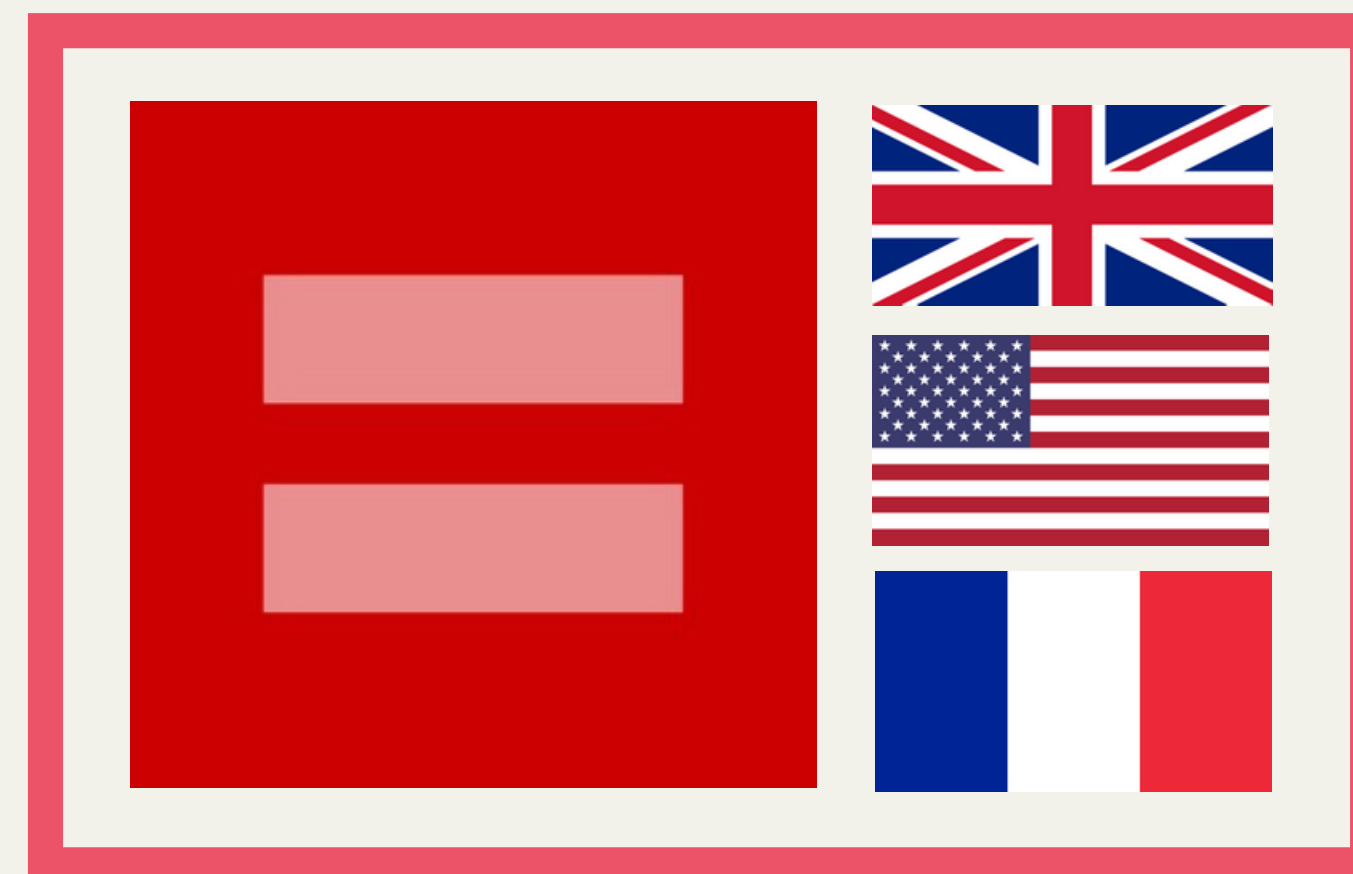


2013

Equal marriage becomes law in the UK, the US, and the US, and in France, all in the same year.

It was not a coincidence. The common factor was social media. Huge swings of support for equal marriage came from a big rise in the proportion of people who said that one of their friends was lesbian and gay. They had not realized until they saw on Facebook. And then they talked about marriage. The politicians followed.

We were people to be respected, rather than categorized, explained, cured, or tolerated.



2014

Amazon launches Echo. It's assistant Alexa becomes a member of many families. Always on, Alexa listens to everything you say, and reports it to Amazon, like the telescreen in George Orwell's 1984.

Unlike the telescreen in George Orwell's 1984, it is not provided by the government. You have to pay for it.



2015

Jeremy Corbyn wins the Labour Party leadership, with the support of a flood of new members, in the face of opposition from most of Labour MPs.

The meritocrats, the press, and the bookies are shocked.



Source: spectator.co.uk

2016

Populist revolts.

Meritocrats say that the
populists are revolting.



Source: telegraph.co.uk

2017

The power of attention defeats the power of the meritocracy.

Worldwide movement to unmask men that abuse women claims some impressive scalps, including Damian Green, Deputy PM, and Harvey Weinstein, Hollywood mogul. Respect became cool.



#ME
TOO ♀
STOP sexual ASSAULT and HARASSMENT

2018

The age of attention brings down another meritocrat.

Ironically, it's Michael Young's son, Toby.

He resigned as Director of the government Office for Students after a firestorm of protest about past tweets and his involvement with "progressive eugenics".

"Unlike my father, I'm not an egalitarian".

"I think the answer is more meritocracy. I approve of the principle for the same reason my father disapproved of it, because it helps to secure people's consent to... inequalities."



source: hamhigh.co.uk

2019

Failure of meritocracies commands attention.

Two organisations proud to call themselves “meritocracies” create chaos, in full view. The UK Civil Service and EU Commission get lost in detail.

Brexit rolls into chaos.
Meritocrats blame the people.



2020

Corbyn & Trump win elections on platform of peace and prosperity. They offer good relations with Russia and China, withdrawal from NATO, and no involvement in the middle east, in particular with Israel / Iran. They call for British / American jobs and pulling out of the EU / NAFTA. Corbyn & Trump dismiss any accusations of anti-semitism / racism and shady connections with terrorists / mafia as smears.

Javid & Sanders campaign for diversity and inclusion, and staying in the EU / NAFTA. They have the support of all traditional media.



Source: beta.parliament.uk



Source: fortune.com



Source: beta.parliament.uk



Source: wikipedia

2021

#AllVotesMatter goes viral after widespread revelations of electoral bad practice in the UK and US: some fraud, a lot of voter suppression, and poorly kept electoral rolls. Movement grows to question first past the post, the Presidential college, and more. Comprehensive list of electoral reforms gain popularity: limits on campaign spending, tracking of all sources of political information, exclusion of foreign participation, automatic registration of voters, voter rolls linked to tax and citizenship records, compulsory voting, free transport to polling stations, and the option of voting online. Banks license technology to make voting by phone easy.

#allvotesmatter

2022

China refines its “Social Credit System”, with help from Apple and Amazon. Apple sells facial recognition technology. Amazon licenses a mini-Alexa for every Chinese home. Chinese citizens sign-up for “prime” for assorted benefits and access to services. Chinese AI allocates points to reward behavior that is appropriately social. Other communist and fascist states copy “Social Credit System”. Digital authoritarian states collaborate, and create “the other G7”: China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey, North Korea, and Vietnam.



2023

#HowMuch? movement leaks information on pay and tax for wealthy individuals. Worldwide calls for “Transparency Charter” to mandate public access to all company ownership and all salary, pay, and tax information. You can make as much money as you want. You just cannot keep it secret.

; \$ € £ ¥ @ ?

2024

Female sweep of elections.

Megan Markle elected PM as first ex-Royal.

Prince Harry becomes Harry Markle and renounces right to inherit throne.

Oprah Winfrey elected President of USA.

Angela Merkel elected Chancellor of Germany for the 13th time, and voted “Honorary Dowager Empress of Europe” by the EU Parliament.



Source: people.com



Source: businessinsider.com



Source: TheTimes.co.uk

2025

PM Markle and President Winfrey initiate reforms for radical transparency and direct democracy.

Voting goes from “putting an X on a piece of paper” to “just like the X-Factor on the phone, but better more often and more fun.”



2026

Women demand that dating apps have data on a man's sperm count and income.

Collapsing sperm counts make many men unable to conceive.

Female wages now exceed male wages.

Straight women start to reject marriage.



2027

JH gets married on 70th birthday.

Straight friends shrug and ask
“why bother?”

Interested?

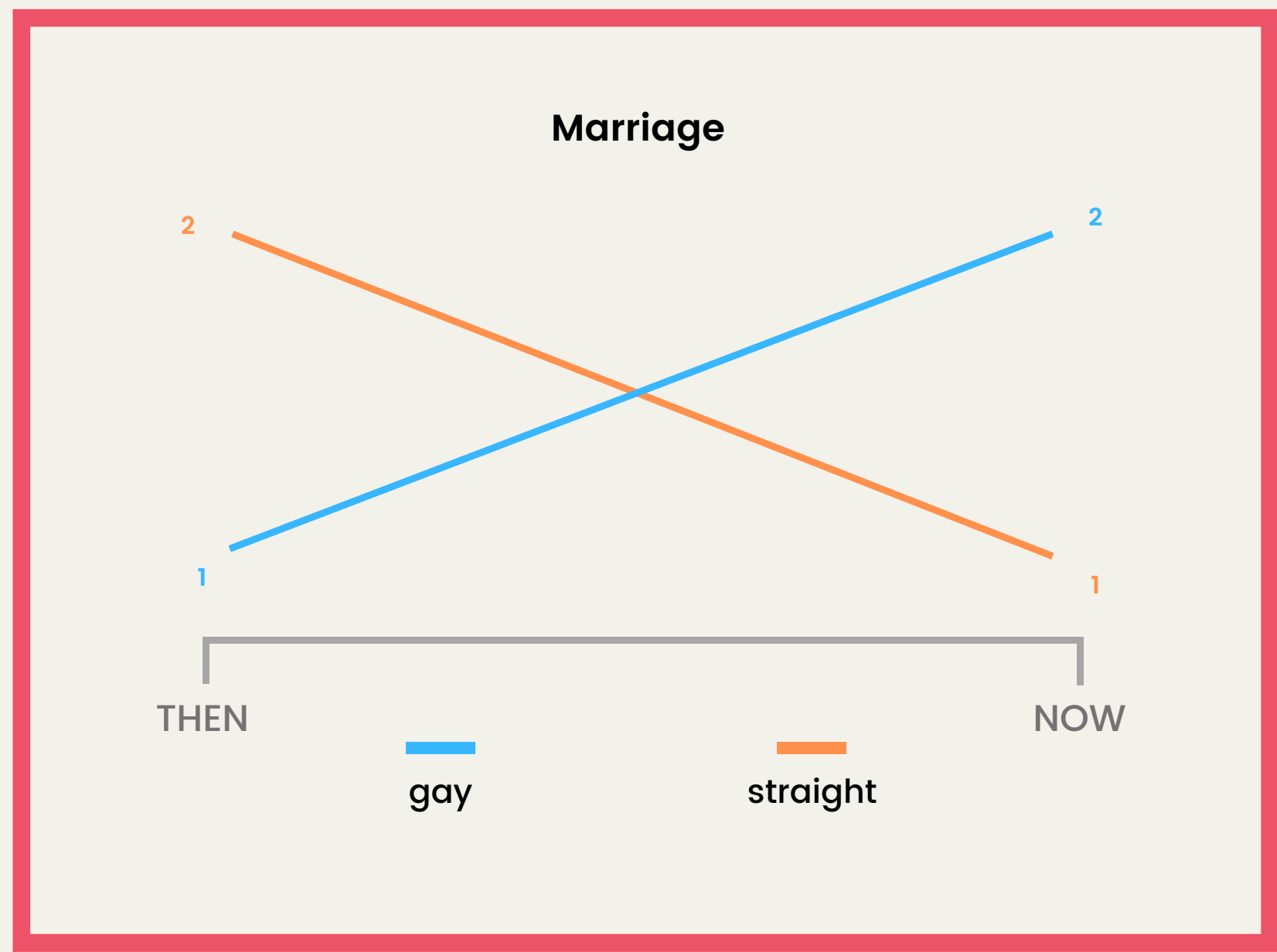
Call 07952780688



2028

More same-sex couples marry than different sex couples...

in democracies.



2029

Millions of spare straight men?
Looking for armies to join?



Source: lastingimpression.info

2030

Meritocracies, theocracies, and other male dominated states blame falling birth rates on female education, not falling sperm counts. Insist that the few women there obey men and make more babies.



Source: Handmaids Tale; Owners: Daniel Wilson Productions, Inc, The Littlefield Company, White Oak Pictures, MGM Television

2031

Parents implant digital chips into children.

Companies track digital chips of employees.

Churches track digital chips of members.

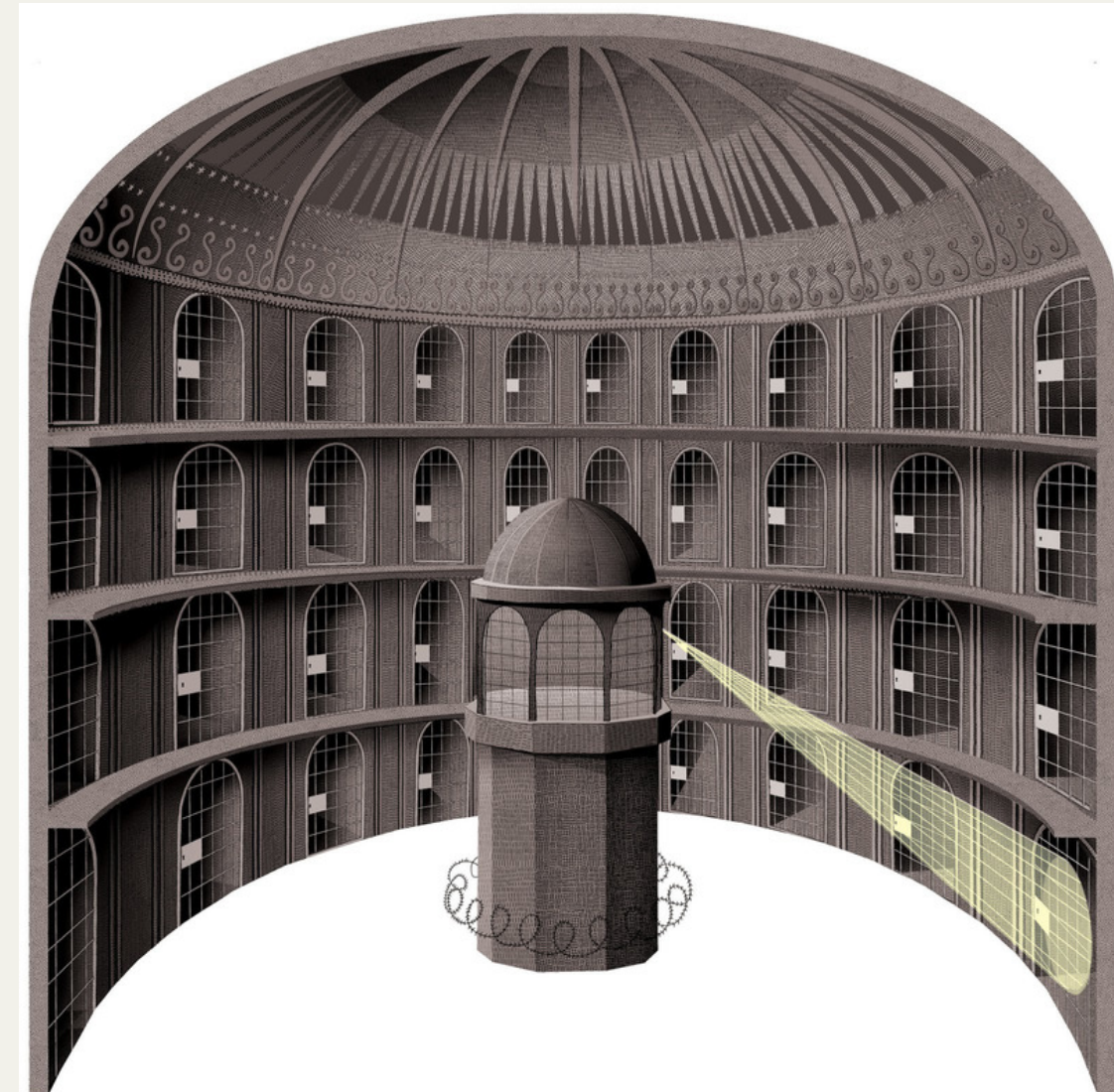
Digital autocracies track digital chips of "citizens."



Source: digitaltrends.com

2032

"Digital panopticons" hold more inmates than prisons worldwide.



Source: The New York Times

2033

The defining
equations of 21st
century society.

AI+Effort
for meritocracy,
digital autocracy

Respect+Effort
for democracy

2034

The defining question of this century:
which equation will win?

Respect+Effort

open democracy,
female leadership

or

AI+Effort
digital autocracy,
male domination