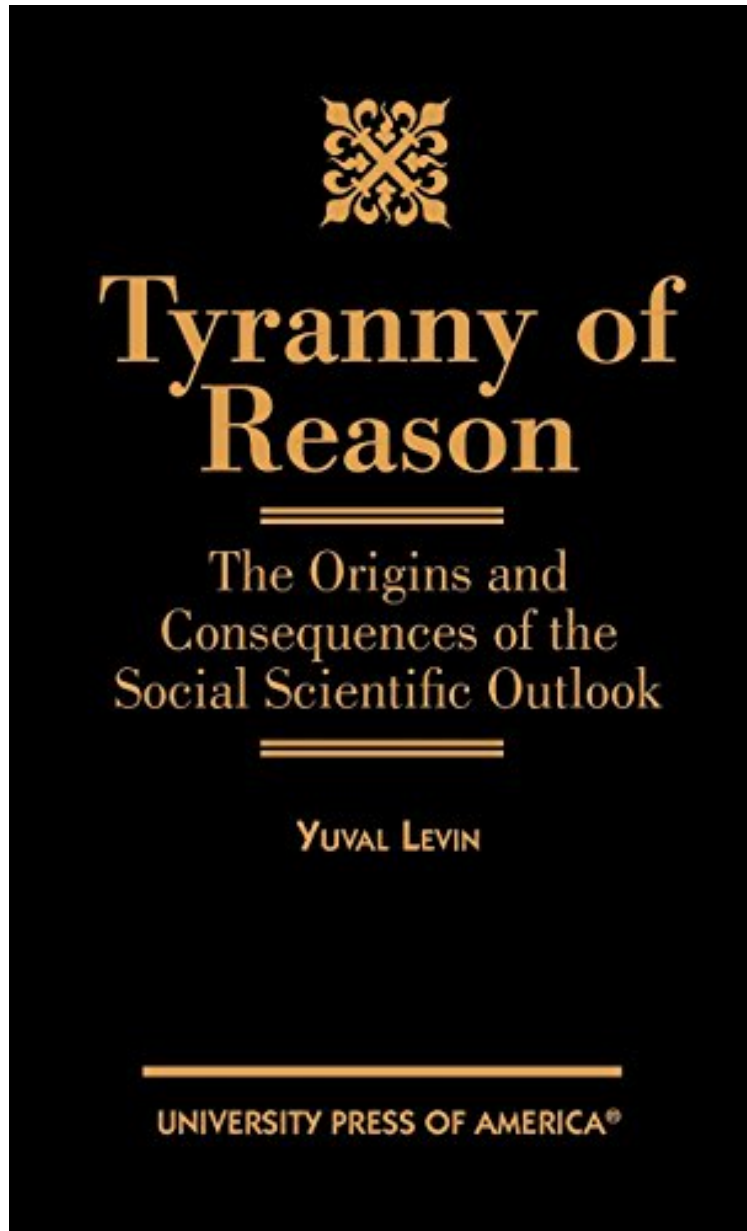


(Ebook pdf) Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook

# Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook

*Yuval Levin*

*ePub | \*DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1574557 in Books University Press of America 2000-12-06 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.80 x .94 x 5.50l, 1.09 #File Name: 0761818723344 pages | File size: 50.Mb

**Yuval Levin : Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook:

6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Book  
By D. Reed  
I can't say enough about how much I enjoyed this book. Levin explores western thought from Plato and Aristotle all the way through the 20th century, but his theme is the same all through - man's arrogant mistake of thinking his understanding of the physical world can be applied to man himself, and the terrors resulting from this mistake. Succinct but complete. I loved it.  
15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Good on history, criticism, weak on constructive philosophy  
By Spencer Case  
Tyranny of Reason is a good book, but one that leaves the reader hoping for more.  
Yuval Levin, an ascendant conservative intellectual, correctly identifies one of the most insidious dogmas of our time: the idea that the social world is knowable by the scientific method, just as the natural world is. Sometimes Levin seems to be saying the thesis is positively false. Other times, he seems to be making the weaker claim that it hasn't been positively established. Despite this ambiguity, Levin is quite consistent in articulating why blind faith in this idea is dangerous. It gives us false hopes that deliberative politics can be overcome, that decisions can be made for us by impartial experts. This is the great hope of Comte's positivism, and the progressive movement of the early 20th century. It was a necessary component of the Bolshevik doctrine that led to the suffering of so many. Levin does a remarkable job summarizing the broad sweep of Western philosophy. Granted, some nuances are passed over in the process, but Levin is best at showing us the big picture. Sometimes we need microscopes, other times we need aerial surveillance. This book is definitely an example of the latter. Yet some of it seems quite distant from the thesis. We don't really need separate chapters on the rise of monotheism, the ancient Greek philosophers, and the Christian synthesis. One summarizing chapter would have sufficed. More of the book should have been devoted to the problem of the Tyranny of Reason itself. The book seemed to end right when things were really getting interesting. Levin thinks that human decisions are not bound by law in the way that inanimate matter is bound by law. He locates values in the realm of human creativity. At times, he sounds like he's endorsing some form of subjectivism, relativism, or existentialism about values, but I doubt that reflects his actual position. His philosophical alternative to scientism is painted in broad strokes only, and is not entirely clear. It's also unclear whether Levin thinks that the reason the tyranny of this sort is to be resisted has only to do with epistemic concerns (the people implementing it as "neutral experts" would not actually know what they think they know) or whether he thinks there is something inherently wrong with implementing scientific social plans -- even if the experts really do know what they are talking about. Levin's critique of the tyranny of reason is sort of scattershot throughout the book. He never really puts all the pieces together in one chapter to explain why the tyranny of reason should be rejected, and what its rejection commits us to philosophically. In short, Levin points to a dangerous assumption and deftly explains its role in philosophy and in politics, but he fails to deliver on developing a systematic criticism. Nor does he do a particularly good job at presenting an alternative worldview. Readers interested in going beyond this book should have a look at Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge*.  
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A must-read for human scientists  
By Bernd Jager  
A terrific, unconventional look at the way a natural scientific perspective came to dominate, and ultimately to replace, all other academic perspectives and ways of thinking about the human condition. The book offers encouragement to researchers to explore the ways of humanity outside the prescribed, narrow academic prism of the modern human sciences.

The astonishing success of the natural sciences in the modern era has led many thinkers to assume that similar feats of knowledge and power should be achievable in human affairs. That assumption, and the accompanying notion that the methods of modern science ought to be applied to social and political questions, have been at the heart of a number of prominent philosophical schools in the modern age, and much of the politics of the past century. Is the application of scientific logic to the study of human affairs philosophically defensible? Does it aid or hinder our efforts at a genuine understanding of the human world? Why have so many modern ideologies, including those responsible for some of the greatest atrocities of the 20th century, advanced themselves under the banner of science? Why, in other words, do we assume that modern science holds the key to an understanding of human affairs? Are we right to make this assumption? And what does the assumption mean for contemporary society and politics? *Tyranny of Reason*, which is designed for the interested lay reader and for undergraduate or beginning graduate students in the social sciences, attempts to answer these important questions in the context of the history of philosophy.

Yuval Levin has written a remarkable and profound book. His vast, encyclopedic research has led to a sustained, vigorous, and methodical attack on traditional views of the social science. (Dr. John Shosky)  
About the Author  
Yuval Levin is an Associate Director at The Center for the Study of Technology and Society in Washington, D.C.