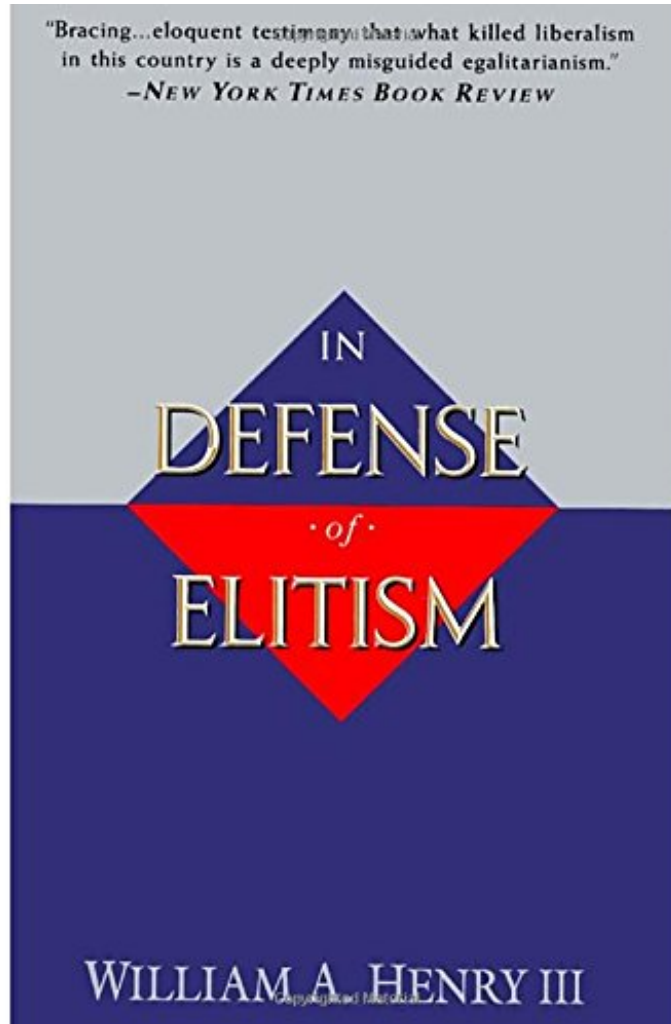


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In Defense of Elitism

William A. Henry III

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#832559 in Books William A Henry 1995-08-01 1995-08-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .50 x 5.20l, .40 #File Name: 0385479433212 pages In defense of elitism | File size: 72.Mb

William A. Henry III : In Defense of Elitism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Defense of Elitism:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Surprisingly shocked to read a modern day Democrat speak out ...By Daniel Lyle Surprisingly shocked to read a modern day Democrat speak out against the demeaning and degrading effects of egalitarianism that so many in his party have overlooked in the modern euphoria surrounding egalitarianism. While he is definitely more liberal than a conservative or libertarian, it is refreshing to know that elitists, that is those who believe in the allowing people to both succeed and fail a well as rise to the level they can and want to attain, have still existed in both major political parties even if their numbers have dwindled. For a more libertarian view on the vanities of egalitarianism read Murray Rothbards essays in "Egalitarianism, a Revolt against Nature". The one point

that I remember disagreeing with William A Henry on was his support of establishing equality of opportunity. I believe in equality in terms of the law being applied as equally as possible, but equality of opportunity seems a dangerous slippery slope to advocate. Sure I want everyone to have opportunities and succeed, but when we as a society try to level the playing field for one little thing in order to try to create more equal opportunity, how do we know when to stop? It becomes a heap problem in philosophical terms: when does another grain of the sands of egalitarianism become a heap that really marks the promotion of equality of outcomes? I don't think William A Henry argued against this danger. Yet he does argue strongly against egalitarianism and the resulting sickness of obsessing over equality of outcomes in all walks of life from workplace salaries and hiring practices to education and sports. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Dangers of "all are created equal" By D. Tafe W.A. Henry III is saying what everyone - especially educators - need to hear: we are NOT all equal. We deserve equal opportunity, yes; we expect equal treatment under the law, yes; we are equally endowed with a right to make our own way in the world, yes. But we are NOT equally entitled to success in that world. Jefferson said we are equally endowed with the right to the PURSUIT of happiness, not to happiness itself. The fact is that in this world there will always be winners and losers; otherwise being a winner has no special meaning, and even worse, being a loser has no impact, no lesson to be learned. The Greeks, who invented democracy and rights for the individual, were also keenly aware that all men were not equal. What are the Olympic Games if not a testament to the Greeks' belief in each individual striving to be the best - not to be equal to the rest, but to be better than the rest. We seem to have lost this idea in many of our schools, when we insist that everyone get a trophy, that there be fifteen valedictorians instead of one, that the best in the class be rewarded only by being required to help the less able (a great idea, by the way, but only if accompanied by due recognition of their excellence) W. A. Henry perhaps strays a bit wide of the mark when he goes after universities for creating departments of African-American Studies or Women's Studies, etc., but he does make excellent points about some the absurdities in education that result from a misguided application of the equality principle. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. SHOULD BE READ BY EVERYONE! By Frank M. Hudson Wm Henry lays out exactly how this country has gone off the rails in the last couple of generations. He traces the history of political correctness and its devastating effects on education, social mores, and politics. He lays out specific examples, examines both sides of the various related issues, and exposes the corruption that has crept into all our major institutions as a result of a simplistic view -- and horrendous misunderstanding of -- the seductive concept that "all men are created equal." By far the most important book I've ever read. I'd give it six stars if I could.

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning culture critic for Time magazine comes the tremendously controversial, yet highly persuasive, argument that our devotion to the largely unexamined myth of egalitarianism lies at the heart of the ongoing "dumbing of America." Americans have always stubbornly clung to the myth of egalitarianism, of the supremacy of the individual average man. But here, at long last, Pulitzer Prize-winning critic William A. Henry III takes on, and debunks, some basic, fundamentally ingrained ideas: that everyone is pretty much alike (and should be); that self-fulfillment is more important than objective achievement; that everyone has something significant to contribute; that all cultures offer something equally worthwhile; that a truly just society would automatically produce equal success results across lines of race, class, and gender; and that the common man is almost always right. Henry makes clear, in a book full of vivid examples and unflinching opinions, that while these notions are seductively democratic they are also hopelessly wrong.

From Publishers Weekly Pulitzer Prize-winning cultural critic Henry debunks ideas of inherent equality, arguing that not all achievements are the same. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal The late Henry (he recently died of a heart attack) was a Pulitzer Prize-winning culture critic for Time and a self-described white, Yale-educated, suburban, registered Democrat. One guesses he spent his youth being a liberal but, judging from this book, became another neoconservative in middle age because of the excesses of affirmative action, feminism, multiculturalism, etc. What the United States needs now, argues Henry, is elitism, which he never defines but which seems to mean a social system that rewards only competence, not skin color, gender, disability, etc. Henry never seems to appreciate fully how much talent was going unrewarded before affirmative action, feminism, etc., or that any human activity, no matter how worthy, is liable to silly or dangerous excesses. Unfortunately, this book may attract the attention of reactionaries like Henry, so academic and public libraries should consider it for purchase. --Jeffrey R. Herold, Bucyrus P.L., Ohio Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sA liberal tries to straddle the fence, in a harsh, often trite polemic geared to enrage multiculturalists, feminists, affirmative activists, and others. Even liberals who secretly harbor doubts about whether a lack of ethnic pride is what underlies the difficulties of black children in school will find little succor from Henry (a Pulitzer Prize winner and a columnist for Time who died this summer at the age of 44). Even those who criticize the belief that all values and ideas are equally worthy will be offended by his writing, regarding the relative worth of cultures, "It is scarcely the same thing to put a man on the moon as to put a bone in your nose." In defending elitism as an individualist philosophy that demands the best from each person and rewards those with the greatest achievements, Henry slaughters every sacred cow of the left.

Affirmative action, he claims, is as unfair to its beneficiaries as it is to white men, breeding doubt in minority employees whether they were hired for their abilities or to fill a quota. As for feminism, "forty-six percent of the nation's financial managers are women," so what are they still griping about, he wonders. Educated mothers should stay home: "A live-in nanny clearly represents an intellectual step down for the child," since she is probably not college-educated. (But even card-carrying feminists will relish his quotes from some rather laughable scholarly feminist works, for instance, one about the impact of "masculinism" on the study of geography.) The gaps in Henry's logic are often glaring. He believes in equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome, but he wants less academically successful students to be tracked into vocational education at an early age. And in espousing Oregon's health-care reform package--which even the Bush administration rejected as discriminatory against the disabled--on the grounds that some lives are more valuable to society than others, Henry begs the whole question of the worth of human life. An infuriating screed that will alienate even those liberals seeking a coherent and well-argued defense of intellectual rigor and reward for merit. -- Copyright 1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.