

Intellectual Helplessness in America: Thinking Clearly and Acting Rationally

Steven A. Danley

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Intellectual Helplessness in America is a good guidebook to overcoming current intellectual malaise.

Steven A. Danley's *Intellectual Helplessness in America* sets out to accomplish a Herculean task: to positively impact the ways in which everyday Americans think. More specifically, Danley wants Americans to think more rationally and not be so easily guided by their political prejudices.

The book is an extended essay complete with diagrams, charts, and far too many bullet points. However, despite disparate subheadings, the overall point is simple: critical thinking in America is rapidly declining because too many people are being led astray by what Danley terms an "elite minority."

Danley has no fear in labeling this elite minority as leftist, and he says that their control over Hollywood, academia, and the news media is not conducive to intellectual debate. Moreover, Danley invokes America's deteriorating culture, with its over-sexualized imagery, crude language, and lack of refinement, as another impediment to true education.

This book is designed almost like a long PowerPoint presentation, and is not formatted in a standard way. While somewhat distracting, the organization makes sense given the book's common sense intentions.

While the introduction claims that the text seeks a middle path, it is clear that the perspective is conservative and Protestant. A strong argument is made that the United States was founded by temperamentally conservative men who came from Protestant backgrounds, as well.

When it comes to the facts, though, several passages only present surface-level depictions of history, politics, and philosophy. G. K. Chesterton is quoted quite frequently in this book that supports liberal capitalism and the protestant ethos, though Chesterton was a Roman Catholic who saw capitalism as opposed to Christianity. Similarly, the book holds up for praise people like Martin Luther and Gandhi without even bothering to bring up the uglier sides of their personalities.

The book invokes history quite a bit, with its main focus on contemporary America. Here, the book shines as a level-headed rebuttal to the current political climate. It notes frequently that our politicians, media personalities, and celebrities are rarely held accountable for their misdeeds or crimes, and sagely points out that a media-academia complex focused on debasing American history is, in a sense, laying the seeds for future violence and civil strife.

Intellectual Helplessness in America is a good guidebook to overcoming current intellectual malaise, rationally tackling topics that have become imbued with irrational moralism.

BENJAMIN WELTON (October 12, 2018)

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