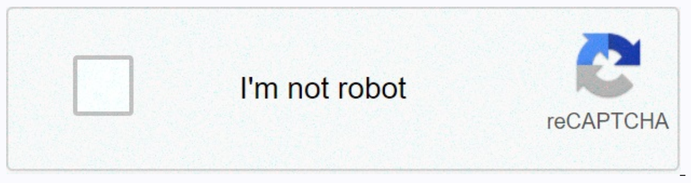

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In defense of a liberal education sparknotes

[Montana Professor 25.2, Spring 2015] In defense of liberal education <http: mtprof.msun.edu=>Fareed Zakaria New York: W.W. Norton, 2015 208 pp., $16.00 hc Marvin Lansverk, PhD for English literature Montana State University Bozeman I understand that we need to extricate the number of philosophers, I understand that it is important that we have a learned number of people who study history. At the moment, however, we are not creating many jobs in these areas. So we need to look at what the learning plans really need... People who graduate philosophy and history, God bless them, it's wonderful that they are critical thought. Now they're going back to tech college to get a life skill for a job. – Brian Schweitzer, Governor of Montana, 2005-2013 (Hechinger Report, June 27, 2012) — Marvin Lansverk Perhaps I should start with a comerable warning: I went to the University of liberal arts. I teach English literature. I like liberal arts, whether it's as a principal or part of a broad-based undergraduate education. And I am terrified by the recent rhetorical reversal in the media, along with legislative and political initiatives, away from liberal art – as if they are suddenly passé or something to be afraid that your child will be interested, such as drugs, especially when such terms are accompanied by statements that mean that liberal arts do not lead to employable skills. As an antidote, I like to read the defense of liberal education, be it John Henry Newman's nineteen-century classic Idea of the University, or the articles of the current E.E.'s that explain why they actually prefer to hire liberal arts majors, or the statistics of 2007. So even before I picked it up, I expected to wish Zakaria had recently in defense of liberal education, and I do so: but not just because it confirms his own views. In fact, I don't agree with the number of his views and I'm bothered by some of his analysis, which seems too dazzling. But I particularly like Zakaria's modest book that it's not just another jeremiad about the diseases of American higher education, nor the uninformed calls for radical change that too often throw the proverbial baby with bathing water, nor the ideological naps with more ideology than information. </http:>Instead, this is a welcome call to balance, written with balance: balancing data, personal stories, social policy, and understanding the history of liberal education in America and the multiple purposes of higher education that have been done inzakari's deep knowledge of the current social and political global landscape. The book began as an introductory title on advocating liberal education at the Sarah Lawrence College graduate class in 2014 - certainly preaching to the choir. Ten months later, the well-received title was extended to this book, the best audience that could now be said to be skeptics, or cold-blooded global realists, who wonder whether our students still have time for Chaucer when our global competitiveness is at stake. Zakaria says yes, liberal art is important, using our own life story as an important perspective of material, making the book partly a personal memory, partly a history of higher education, and partly a call for more informed and data-based education policies, especially by our leaders, who should know better whether President Obama can promise you, people can do much more potentially , through skilled manufacturing or trading as you could with a degree in art history, or governors from Texas, Florida, North Carolina and Wisconsin with their recent attempts to de-fund liberal arts at their state universities, with Rick Scott from Florida: Is it the state's vital interest to have more anthropologists? I don't think so. Zakaria's answer is this book. It is actually a collection of six essays (six chapters of the book) with a fairly broad emphasis. But what connects the chapters is Zakari's personal story and his ongoing ethical authority on the subject: as someone who draws every day from his liberal education and the life skills she put on. Chapter 1, Dolaska u America, Witness Zakaria's personal witness that he is reeling in India in his system for you, focused on the pamte, content and tests (focusing on boys, boys in particular, almost exclusively u science and business), but then found herself on the radar of the Indian). Zakaria then tells how he discovered the power of liberal education at Yale and also discovered his future path in international politics and economics, graduating with a degree in history (then a Doctorate in Government from Harvard). The story is powerful and contemporary, it's a version of the classic American story, in its global 2.0 incarnation of an individual who works well with hard work, determination and exposure to the American higher education system. And the story itself is now a necessary reminder of policymakers who are properly concerned about America's global competitiveness and statistics, which show that we are lagging behind in the educational file of our population. And the moral story is that our education system, with all its problems, still envys the world. And he's still giving exceptional results. Chapter 2, Short liberal education, albeit briefly, covers 2000-00-nu history, from The Greek, osmjehing through the establishment of middle school, overlooking Britain, on the review of the American system, with a focus on Harvard's curriculation innovation, the rise of selection goals, and the emergence of our standard liberal mental curriculum – sa basic curriculum, a lot, i healthy dosage of research and free selection. Zakaria has throughout the theme that societies have always struggled to balance competitive needs in their education systems, that the curricula in this country are always changing, that they are not frozen in the medieval past (which some critics still claim). Nevertheless, Zakaria acknowledges that there is still a need to improve: especially in increasing the scientific literacy of all students. Zakaria again offers a personal example of change, Yale's recent joint venture (where Zakaria became a confidante) with the National University of Singapore to establish a new liberal arts institution in Asia, Yale-NUS College, which opened its doors in 2013. Acknowledging Singapore's own need to develop more of the kind of creativity and critical thinking and entrepreneurship that characterises American higher education, and more self-discovery, has recently bet on more liberal education, not less. Indeed, the value of this Chapter 2 lies in its cooling. It's not that the history that Zakaria says here, new, I develops the higher details of the care u origins to which Zakaria attracts (remember the origins from this first book from his 2012. the water of the citation scandal, for which we have seen that the ings of other public intellectuals how to write so u speedu with employees uma, so i not so much the quotation on how to demand the standards of academic research). But reviews also have a role to play. And many current skeptics, or other working people who pay only occasional attention to higher education debates, will not take the time to read the vast history of liberal arts (such as Wesleyani's President, Michael Roth's 2014 Erudite Beyond University: Why Liberal Education Is Concerned, as Zakaria also cites). Therefore, there is value in the quick storytelling that reminds us of how we came here and reminds us what liberalism means in liberal education, which seems particularly important for those who have been ai],, because they had any connection to a term that also serves as a political label (Zakari's own political views were variously characterized as centrist, moderate, liberal and/or conservative). In this case, Zakaria reminds readers that a liberal in liberal education has its roots in the two-thousand-year history of liberation and freedom - and not in 21st-century American politics. Chapter 3, Learning to Think, Finally Gets defence of liberal education. And the leading question is: what about jobs? Thus, the arguments zakaria makes at the same time both philosophical and practical, thus matching the balance that character is characteristic of the book. His specific arguments about why liberal education should continue to be valued are not new, but they are examples and current pages. In short, what liberal education means and what it has done to him personally are three things: 1) teaches you to write, 2) to think, and 3) to learn. This bald summary is not so interesting, but makes the balance of examples, anecdotes, quotes from E.K. and data that Zakaria composes for convincing reading. And one of the more interesting threads that Zakaria is pulling is the paradox of international test scores, such as the International Assessment Programme (PISA), in which the US and other nations with education systems are more like ours, which are badly ed, which reveals a growing lack of preparation and competence in the various subjects of our students, whose results do not follow actual global competitiveness and success. While it is a very complex issue, one of the lessons that is important at a time of increasing testing regimes is that it is not possible to measure everything that is important. Citing singapore's former education minister, who compares our system to theirs, Zakaria reports comparative comments from Tharmana Shanmugaratnama: Your is a meritocracy of talent, ours is exam meritocracy. There are certain parts of the intellect that we are not able to test well – such as creativity, curiosity, sense of adventure, ambition. Above all, America has a culture of learning that challenges conventional wisdom, even if it means demanding authority. These are the areas where Singapore needs to learn from America. Chapter 4, Natural Aristocracy, is an eclectic chapter that continues Zakari's theme of meritocracy and capitalism as effective and necessary for our education system (the term natural aristocracy takes away from Thomas Jefferson, suggesting a meritocratic system based on talent rather than birth, wealth and privilege). And he starts with a meditation on the fathers of the founders and especially ben franklin as a poster child for the American system. Interestingly, this is also a chapter in which Zakaria addresses some of the problems that address higher education, including costs that continue to outsmarite inflation and further shift costs from public sources to individuals, leading to an increase in individual debt. Zakaria doesn't have a single solution to offer, but – experienced in the power of mass media to reach all parts of the world as it is – is, like many others, impressed by the promises of technology and distance delivery courses, especially MOOCs (still new enough to require identification of the acronym: Massive Open Online Courses). Still in the news, already expanding access to information to great teachers and to American liberal education. One thing Zakaria seems interesting about MOOCs is that students around the world aren't just looking for engineering and technical courses in this online environment; they are also interested in liberal art. Chapters 5 and 6, Knowledge and Strength, and In Defense of Today's Youth, they turn to even broader themes, even though they are each short chapters. Chapter 5 deals with the power of knowledge to change the world, and Chapter 6 is Zakaria's attempt to address the value of liberal education in the development of individual life of the mind and us as human beings. Though worthy of objects, both read slightly more like newspaper columns than chapters of the book at the moment – and not surprisingly, the most common reference source in these recent chapters is New York Times columnist David Brooks, from whom Zakaria sees herself in dialogue with it. Finally, Zakaria wishes to promote informed dialogue with this book. And his method is to provide a zoomed out Google Earth look at American higher education, which – to make the map's metaphor somewhat work – acts as a kind of Mercator projection with the meaning of liberal education at its core. And as such, it is successful because it carries the pros and cons of such a thing. He effectively uses Zakari's compelling success story, making his story emblematic of our times; provides a good overview of issues in higher education; offers a useful survey of a number of recent good books on the same subject (from Andrew Delbanc College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be (2012) to academic adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses (2010) and Excellent Sheep (2014)– all previously reviewed in Montana Professor, the latter in this case); It is written in a windy journalistic prose that offers a lot of concrete information that would contradict the recent public narrative that we have outgrown or can no longer afford to care childishly with liberal education. As for its weaknesses, such as an unsymping essay, perhaps, the book tries to do too much, thereby covering the territory too quickly, occasionally relying on too many generalizations in the meantime. As such, it is not always possible to say what generalisations mean (e.g. Like many books on higher education, there is a tendency to focus and continue our culture's obsession with our so-called elite or best schools, when a lot of information is actually important to the entire educational infrastructure – including the Montana University System. And sometimes Zakaria drags a survey of complex questions with a simple question like Is It So Bad? However, this method is a good indication of the purpose of the book. Its focus is on reason, from someone with an unusual biography who criticises what is becoming too common: taking for granted the importance of liberal education in this country, which we not only can afford, but cannot afford without. [Montana Professor 25.2, Spring 2015 <http: mtprof.msun.edu=>] Content | </http:>Home Home

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