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The Fractured Republic: Renewing Americas Social Contract in the Age of Individualism

Yuval Levin

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THE FRACTURED REPUBLIC

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Renewing America's Social Contract
in the Age of Individualism



YUVAL LEVIN

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Yuval Levin : The Fractured Republic: Renewing Americas Social Contract in the Age of Individualism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fractured Republic: Renewing Americas Social Contract in the Age of Individualism:

81 of 87 people found the following review helpful. This is the book America most needs to read, from now through election day

By Jonathan Haidt
America seemed fractured when Levin started writing this book a few years ago. Just in the weeks since the book came out, the fractures are growing into canyons. I think all Americans should be reading this book, and then questioning the candidates on both sides who say they can take us back to the two "golden ages" that Levin describes. This book is fantastic. I'll repeat my endorsement from the book jacket: What on Earth has happened to our country? This is the question of the decade, and Levin offers the most compelling answer. His history and sociology are magisterial. Whatever your politics, after accompanying Levin on this grand tour, you'll leave behind failed partisan frameworks and see our recent past and therefore our future in a new and more hopeful light. This is the book America most needs to read in 2016.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The book is an excellent analysis and evaluation of the current situation in the ...

By Gehw
The book is an excellent analysis and evaluation of the current situation in the United States, and the conclusions are well developed and presented. What is lacking are suggestions or examples as to specific steps that could be taken to get from there to a solution. For example, Mr. Levin, I believe, very correctly presents the need to rehabilitate the "mediating institutions" between government and the individual, but how are we to do that?

73 of 80 people found the following review helpful. Clear-Eyed Optimism About Americas Future

By Charles
The Fractured Republic is a fantastically original book. It is very optimistic, yet clear-eyed, which is a rare combination. Most optimistic books about modern politics are also simplistic. They typically consist of vague and belligerent paeans demanding the recapture of Americas past. Yuval Levins book, on the other hand, is the very opposite. It is precise and even-handed. And far from demanding recapture of the past, Levin explicitly rejects any such attempt. At the same time, Levin believes that we as Americans, liberal and conservative, can jointly renew our society without retreading the past, and in this age, such optimism is no small thing.

Yuval Levin is a reform conservative, part of a loose group that includes such writers as Reihan Salam, Ross Douthat, Michael Lotus and James Bennett in "America 3.0," and (perhaps) Rod Dreher. Reform conservatives are one of the constellation of conservative sub-groups that has emerged as the Republican pseudo-consensus of the past several decades has shattered. I would say, without knowing all that much about him, that Levin is an applied political philosopher. He edits the journal National Affairs and is the author of the excellent The Great Debate, contrasting the philosophies of Thomas Paine and Edmund Burke. He has thought very deeply on the problems facing America, and this book is the result.

The Fractured Republic is a difficult book to summarize because its thought is densely original. But Ill try! And reviewing this book is helped by Levins writing skill. Each word is measured and precisely chosen. Not a single trace of sloppy writing or sloppy thinking mars this book. Yes, it the material can be a little dry, but thats in the nature of political philosophy, and I dont think any author could do better than Levin.

The first part of the book looks at the past century of American history through a new prism, criticizing both the modern Right and Left for a politics based on nostalgia, for focusing on a supposedly golden age they do not fully understand and which in any case cannot be recovered. Levin uses this bipartisan politics of nostalgia to explain both the emptiness and profitlessness of present-day politics, and also to explain many key modern social phenomena, especially the bifurcation of many aspects of economics and culture into two stratified groups. The second part of the book looks at the implications of this new understanding for, as the subtitle says, Renewing Americas Social Contract in the Age of Individualism. At its core, this is a sustained call for a new politics of subsidiaritythe revitalization of the middle, non-governmental structures of society.

Levin begins with the premise that since 2000, Americans have faced a frustrating time. Economically many Americans have not done well. Culturally there has been enormous division and problems. In response, both parties have tended to become openly nostalgic for an earlier time. For liberals, that time was about 1950 to the late 1960s, where high wages co-existed with growth, government and business cooperated, activism was au courant, and individual choices became vastly greater. For conservatives, it was the early 1960s, where there was a perceived societal consensus on social issues, increasing economic liberalization, and before everything came apart, in Charles Murrays words. Alternatively, for conservatives, it was the Reagan years, echoing the early 1960sand supposedly showing, after the awful 1970s, that we can, in fact, go back again.

Levin thinks much of this nostalgia is misplaced or exaggerated. But more importantly, he shows, in detail, that whatever else those past times were, they were unique. They were unique because they existed as part of a one-time transitionthat of a highly consolidated society as it liberalized across the board, such that for a time it was able to reap the benefits of consolidation while not facing the downsides of unfettered individual choice. That transition is over, and we can never return to that time, whether through more government or more tax cuts. The powerful nostalgia for the 1950s and early 1960s that so dominates our politics is, in essence, a longing for a safe and stable backdrop for various forms of liberalizationbe it toward a culture of expressive individualism or toward market economics.

Levin takes the reader on a history tour, noting that America was born largely decentralized and localized, with relatively little national cohesion. Post-Civil War, industrialization led to centralization and industrial consolidation, the Age Of Conformity. The resulting dislocations and problems led to political reforms that created more centralization, primarily under the progressive banner, with a consequent erosion in the intermediating institutions of society. The progressives argued that joint social action could only be effective at the national level They were far less interested in the mediating layers of societylocal authority, for instance, or private associationswhich they considered unequal to the task of helping

Americans handle the increasingly massive scale of the nations life. Technology reinforced this consolidation, from mass media to railroads. World War I further increased both centralization and national coalescence, and then the Great Depression, ensuing changes in constitutional interpretation allowing massive increases in federal power, and World War II brought the process to its high point. Then America began to unwind, and to seek some relief from the intense cohesion that had been building for so long. Conformity came under immediate and sustained attack from taste- and opinion-makers, from Benjamin Spock to J.D. Salinger. Nor was this a liberal thing conservatives, driven in part by opposition to Communism, similarly mostly lionized individualism in a way unthinkable even a decade earlier. The movement for black civil rights followed close behind. But, crucially, none of the downsides of individual choice, notably atomization and social isolation, had yet reared their heads. But as this unwinding progressed, economically and socially, America still seemed to have the best of both worlds. The 1950s economy was exceedingly regulated and constrained, as a result of decades of coalescence, yet due to Americas global position after the war, economic growth was very strong. Strong unions kept wages high (but low for women and black people), creating both overall prosperity and compressed wage bands (i.e., low income inequality). Individualism increased. But this happy medium of increased individuality with increasing prosperity was merely a happenstance, possible only during the unwinding of the old order. Americans in this time could therefore take for granted some of the benefits of consolidation . . . while actively combating some of its least attractive downsides. And what are those downsides? Levin points to two major areas fragmentation on the individual level, and (paradoxically) greater government power and reach. As to fragmentation, In liberating many individuals from oppressive social constraints, we have also estranged many from their families and unmoored them from their communities, work and faith. In accepting a profusion of options in every part of our lives to meet our particular needs and wants, we have also unraveled the institutions of an earlier era, and with it the publics broader faith in institutions of all kinds. And as to government power and reach, [A]dministrative centralization often accompanies cultural and economic individualism. As the national government grows more centralized, and takes over the work otherwise performed by mediating institutions from families and communities to local governments and charities individuals become increasingly atomized; and as individuals grow apart from one another, the need for centralized government provision seems to grow. In this latter insight, Levin is indebted, as he acknowledges, to Robert Nisbets prescient 1953 book *The Quest For Community*, which first pointed out that Leviathan grows as intermediary institutions decay, since people seek meaning, and when they cannot obtain meaning on the local level, they will turn to national meaning, thus strengthening the central state (while obtaining only counterfeit meaning). Levins response, throughout his book, is to call for a restoration of these intermediary institutions. The middle layers of society, where people see each other face to face, offer a middle ground between radical individualism and extreme centralization. . . . [We should] work toward a modernized politics of subsidiarity that is, of putting power, authority, and significance as close to the level of the interpersonal community as reasonably possible. But before Levin gets to his recommendations, he continues his history tour. The death of conformity brought on the Age Of Frenzy. The late 1960s and the 1970s showed the costs of the erosion of conformity, with economic chaos stagflation, unemployment coupled with social transformation resulting from the the me decade, accompanied by massive increases in crime, broken families, and overall narcissism and consequent alienation. At the same time, individual choice was undeniably increased, leading to at least potential fulfilment for many. A powerful sense of growing instability and unraveling, or growing individualism and liberalism, thus prevailed in the culture of the 1970s. While both Right and Left saw the problems, even if they did not necessarily agree on what were all the problems, neither pushed a return to conformity. Instead, new norms were rooted in the new ethic of individualism but geared to giving peoples lives some stability and structure. Over time, the upper segments of society re-normed, with strong wages and strong social and family structures. The lower segments did not, thus creating a bifurcation (one of Levins overriding themes, echoing Charles Murray, that society at the top and bottom is very different today, in undesirable ways). However, The Twentieth Century ended better than Americans in the 1970s would have had any reason to expect. In part this was because economic liberalization created enough prosperity that most people felt more secure. But socially, loneliness and isolation increased, as elective affinities failed to substitute for the older traditional ties. And society further bifurcated, with those at the top doing better not only economically, but socially and culturally. Although America recovered from the 1970s nadir, things have not continued their upward arc. After a period of stabilization, we entered the Age Of Anxiety, and we are in it now. Economic growth and productivity are stagnant; public institutions are sclerotic and unsuited for our diffuse and decentralizing society, and there has been a trend toward detachment from some core sources of social order and meaning, especially the family. Levin does not think it all uniformly dreadful the Internet is, in fact, well-suited to a diffuse and decentralizing society but, like other forms of elective affinity, the Internet encourages weak and shallow social bonds, a problem pre-existing the Internet, not caused by it. Bifurcation continues the upper segments of American society are richer and more stable; the lower segments poorer and less stable. He notes the middle class has mostly moved up; the problem is that those at the bottom are unable to rise. The Left blames economic instability. The Right blames cultural disintegration. Both predict cataclysm. Levin, ever the optimist, doesnt but he does argue that our current path is may not be compatible with human flourishing . . . we are stuck in a rut, and getting out of it will require understanding it.

No moment of change will be forced upon us, so if we are to revive the fortunes of the least among us, we will need to act. But we cant act by going back. [Our] society is a diffuse and still diffusing democracy, and this fact must help shape our understanding of both the problems we confront and any plausible solutions. . . . Any policy that relies on significantly counteracting [diffusion] is likely to prove foolhardy. (This also explains, although Levin doesnt mention it, why gun rights have become more popular in our country, while other socially conservative positions have foundered. Its because gun rights are philosophically aligned with a diffuse society focused on individual rights, unlike other socially conservative positions.) Levin then turns to his recommendations for reinvigorating human flourishing in our country. First, discussing *The Unbundled Market*, he addresses economics, rejecting again the politics of nostalgia. He notes that, whatever Arthur Laffer says, this is not 1979, and past prescriptions will solve little. Levin addresses the economic challenges of diffusion and specialization, specifically with respect to globalization, automation, immigration and consumerization, especially as those affect the bifurcated nature of modern society. He notes that, contrary to conservative myth, the data suggest that relative mobility has been remarkably stable and remarkably low for at least the past five decades in the United States. Levin therefore calls for a mobility agenda, consisting of ways to allow the lower segments of society to rise. Here, Levin rejects a larger government role he calls for reducing government barriers and increasing education, not through top-down mechanisms, but through decentralized solutions. The idea in each case is to channel power and resources to the mediating institutions of society and allow for bottom-up problem solving that takes a variety of specialized, adapted forms. Perhaps theres too much optimism here, and the Left will probably think this is too free-market oriented (although Levin would say thats merely nostalgia for the days of consolidated government and society, and also that part of his call is for public, i.e., governmental, options as competitive alternatives), but you dont know until you try. Levin's final chapter of analysis is *Subculture Wars*. Here he discusses, as the reigning spirit of this era, expressive individualism. It is a drive both to be more like whatever you already are and also to live in society by fully asserting who you are. This chapter is so packed with cogent, original analysis and thoughts that I cannot possibly do it justice. In brief, Levin ascribes our social transformation, in both its good and bad aspects (and, unlike many conservatives, he sees much good in this transformation), to this spirit. But the transformation, well-intentioned itself, broke a consolidated consensus that (contrary to common modern assumption) was itself well-intentioned, and the transformation had innumerable unintended bad consequences. Among them are fragmentation and alienation (citing Nisbet, and also Robert Putnam), the destruction of the nuclear family and consequent poverty and other ills, and, again, the bifurcation of society. Levin notes that conservatives are wrong to think that most people have fallen away from a core, and conservative, moral and religious consensus. Instead, most people were always merely fellow-travelers to what was the then-dominant consensus. And now they are not, for it is no longer the consensus. The same percentage of people are strongly religious and conservative as always were but there are fewer of them than those people believed. Yes, that norm was a source of great strength and stability. But its gone, and the new norm of expressive individualism does not provide the same strength and stability. Conservatives should not lament, nor should they predict a cataclysm that is unlikely to come (and Levin also thinks that the Left has reached its high tide); they will merely destroy what credibility with larger society they have left. Instead, both Left and Right should work on a positive argument for restoring cultural intermediaries (everything from church groups to bridge clubs to labor organizations), which will knit society together and, perhaps, move society in the direction that conservatives broadly want, if the results appeal to the larger society. (This is very much not the Remnant of Isaiah and Albert Jay Nock Levin's program is meant to reforge the country, not preserve virtue in sheltered corners until some distant future revival, which Levin would criticize as the worst type of politics of nostalgia.) Levin's vision, of course, has much in common with Rod Dreher's *Benedict Option*, which Levin specifically discusses. The idea is (roughly Dreher has a book coming out in 2017 that will clearly define his vision) that conservatives, and more broadly those dissatisfied with today's culture, should focus on local, small-scale activities and institutions, thereby providing both satisfaction and happiness for themselves and their families, and also showing an appealing way of life to the broader culture, by modeling appealing alternatives. This is not a physical separation, but a change of focus. This is a revival of community, not a political action. And such local action is in tune, rather than in opposition to, the spirit of the age, since it is decentralized and diffuse action based on individual choice (leaving aside the problem of increased government centralization and reach). Finally, in *One Nation, After All*, Levin brings together his analysis, his prescriptions, and his vision of freedom. He notes the dysfunction and polarization of modern politics, and focuses on two matters. First, such polarization is the historical norm. But second, today's polarization is created less by policy differences and more by nostalgia. If each side would offer constructive visions of the future, applying their insights to today's different circumstances, rather than policy prescriptions driven by nostalgia, the ineffectual nature of modern politics could change and a real movement, hopefully for the better and focused around subsidiarity and intermediary institutions, could begin. Levin notes that on a philosophical level, although this is the age of diffusion and individualism, we as a society must recognize (although he admits it is not a novel insight) that The liberty we can truly recognize as liberty is achieved by the emancipation of the individual not just from coercion by others but also from the tyranny of his unrestrained desires. . . . A fuller idea of freedom than the one we now incline toward turns out to be a precondition for the actual practice and preservation of freedom in our time. (Oddly, Levin nowhere mentions

Russell Kirk, the modern conservative philosopher of such ordered liberty, but I suppose tight writing requires few sidebar discussions.) Here Levin lays out his explicit case for subsidiarity, under which intermediaries can bridge and heal the bifurcation of society. Subsidiarity means no one gets to have their way exclusively. And that is what freedom means, too. Levin believes that we can have our cake and eat it too. We can have increased social good and still maintain individual choice in key matters. Of course, Levin is a conservative, and as he admits, his solution to modern problems resonates more with conservatives, especially in that it provides little or no role for the national government. While he invites liberals to join his incremental revival, he rules out a checklist of public programs and policy steps. Given how beloved modern liberals are of exactly those as the key to solutions, and of federal government action, it is not clear that his call will resonate with any great number of liberals. Levin explicitly believes that conservatives are more likely to lead a revival of the type he seeks but alone they can accomplish nothing. It seems to me Levin's even-handed approach is the only one likely to both heal, to some degree, the divisions of modern America, and to create a renewed society. All the alternatives are less appealing. That doesn't mean Levin's approach is likely to be the one taken. As a pessimist myself, I see more that Donald Trump and Crooked Hillary are harbingers of Toynbee's Time of Troubles, and I see the divisions as insurmountable by discussion. I think the Left wants, and will only ever want, intermediary groups in service to the state. But Levin's reasoned optimism is both refreshing and invigorating, and both conservatives, especially apocalyptic conservatives, and liberals can benefit greatly by reading this book with attention.

Americans today are frustrated and anxious. Our economy is sluggish, and leaves workers insecure. Income inequality, cultural divisions, and political polarization increasingly pull us apart. Our governing institutions often seem paralyzed. And our politics has failed to rise to these challenges. No wonder, then, that Americans--and the politicians who represent them--are overwhelmingly nostalgic for a better time. The Left looks back to the middle of the twentieth century, when unions were strong, large public programs promised to solve pressing social problems, and the movements for racial integration and sexual equality were advancing. The Right looks back to the Reagan Era, when deregulation and lower taxes spurred the economy, cultural traditionalism seemed resurgent, and America was confident and optimistic. Each side thinks returning to its golden age could solve America's problems. In *The Fractured Republic*, Yuval Levin argues that this politics of nostalgia is failing twenty-first-century Americans. Both parties are blind to how America has changed over the past half century--as the large, consolidated institutions that once dominated our economy, politics, and culture have fragmented and become smaller, more diverse, and personalized. Individualism, dynamism, and liberalization have come at the cost of dwindling solidarity, cohesion, and social order. This has left us with more choices in every realm of life but less security, stability, and national unity. Both our strengths and our weaknesses are therefore consequences of these changes. And the dysfunctions of our fragmented national life will need to be answered by the strengths of our decentralized, diverse, dynamic nation. Levin argues that this calls for a modernizing politics that avoids both radical individualism and a centralizing statism and instead revives the middle layers of society--families and communities, schools and churches, charities and associations, local governments and markets. Through them, we can achieve not a single solution to the problems of our age, but multiple and tailored answers fitted to the daunting range of challenges we face and suited to enable an American revival.

Chief Executive of HBO, Richard Plepler Yuval Levin's *The Fractured Republic*, which I hear is one of the smartest looks at how our current political landscape became such a mess. *Washington Post* He explains the illusory appeal of nostalgia-driven politics in the United States, the kind that Trump stokes in coarse, simplistic terms. More important, he offers a path forward for the American right after this campaign, whether it is adjusting to life in Trump's America or coping again with another electoral setback. *Washington Post*, Michael Gerson Instead of desperately trying to go back in time to recover lost unity, Levin urges citizens to look forward as well as downward, to improve the cultural patch around them. This future orientation may seem like an odd message for a conservative and it is all the more powerful for coming from one. The goal is not to make America great... again. It is to make America great in a distinctly 21st-century way. *Los Angeles Times*, Jonah Goldberg [B]rilliant. Representative Paul Ryan, Speaker of the US House of Representatives Yuval Levin is one of the most insightful and original thinkers of our time. In this book, he shows why conservatives are best-equipped to help Americans navigate this new and fragmented world we're in. This is required reading for anyone interested in saving the American Idea. Peggy Noonan, columnist, *The Wall Street Journal* Yuval Levin's thinking is serious, substantive, and deeply informed, yet his tone is always heartening and serene. His style itself is an element of his thought. *The Fractured Republic* helps us think clearly about this moment in the life of our country that almost refuses to be clearly understood. He finds solutions in the best of the American tradition. Our weaknesses, he says, are only the opposite side of our strengths. Anyone looking for a realistic source of hope will find it here. Jonathan Haidt, author of *The Righteous Mind* What on Earth has happened to our country? This is the question of the decade, and Levin offers the most compelling answer. His history and sociology are magisterial. Whatever your politics, after accompanying Levin on this grand tour, you'll leave behind failed partisan frameworks and see our recent past and therefore our future in a new and more hopeful light. This is the book America most needs

to read in 2016. The Corner, National 's blog As original, illuminating, and incisive as you'd expect. If you want to understand this moment in our politics, you have to read it. Washington Post's Acts of Faith blog [An] important new book. National , Online Every American citizen and anyone who is concerned about the future of America should be reading two books this summer: Mary Eberstadt's It's Dangerous to Believe and Yuval Levin's The Fractured Republic. Both are accessible reads that should be welcomed by people of good will of all ideological stripes. Powerline A brilliant analysis of the inability of both the left and the right to come to grips with the contemporary economic, social, and cultural reality. Kirkus s Refreshingly optimistic; in our diversity lies great strength, Levin writes, a strength that can be tapped once all the rancor is put aside. Highly recommended for readers of whatever political stripe. Karl Rove An important book for conservatives This may not be your typical beach book, but put it on your summer reading list if you're concerned about America's future and that of the conservative movement. American Thinker Fascinating The book is a well-written historical analysis of what has led to the fracturing of the nation. Thankfully, Levin does not resort to instant push-button solutions. Rather he recognizes the need to propose ways to mend and meld these fractures over the long term an important commentary on the present state of disunity and polarization. Levin has the courage to talk about the politically incorrect principle of subsidiarity. His work frames the debate where it should be framed around those institutions of moral formation that really matter. Time What remains of conservatism? I'm tempted to say: only the nasty bits nativism, isolationism, protectionism. But a broad swath of the Democratic Party is every bit as nasty. Bernie Sanders' supporters eschew nativism but adhere to the latter two isms, and socialism as well. For those of us unattached to either party, all these isms should be wasms a point made with courage and insight by conservative thinker Yuval Levin in his new book, The Fractured Republic. City Journal The Fractured Republic is exhilarating because Levin doesn't just demand that policymakers jettison nostalgia and come up with creative new approaches she walks the walk, offering a model answer of his own it's no small accomplishment that Levin manages to give readers a thorough diagnosis, a usable vocabulary, and a foundation to build from Agree or disagree with Levin's prescription, he has made the need for a novel and aggressive course of treatment impossible to deny. Real Clear Politics In these precarious times, Yuval Levin's The Fractured Republic: Renewing America's Social Contract in the Age of Individualism arrives not a moment too soon. With a rare mix of public policy expertise, historical and social analysis, and political philosophy, it presents a deft diagnosis of our predicament and outlines a package of reforms that takes seriously American circumstances and American character. Newsmax Characteristically brilliant Thomas Sowell has usefully reminded us of the damage wrought by intellectuals. If more of them were like Yuval Levin, the country would be in better shape. Commentary Superb... The Fractured Republic is not a manual or blueprint for reform, and it does not offer a checklist of repairs to make America whole again. Instead, it merges a deep philosophic understanding of the American experiment and a conceptual analysis of American history into a practical basis from which we can examine contemporary American problems with crystalline clarity. Levin calls his book an essay,' and it provides the bracing shock of illumination that is the hallmark of all great essays. Commentary In a bleak political year, there comes a shaft of light in the form of an extraordinary new book, The Fractured Republic [Levin] is among America's most important and humane conservative thinkers Yuval Levin's brilliant new book offers social conservatives a more effective approach to social engagement not only because it's more positive but because it's more true, because it appeals to people on a deeper level, because offering people a healing grace and hope is what is likely to be especially attractive and powerful in this time of disorientation, distemper, and confusion. New York Post It does more to illuminate the depths of our contemporary political and social rut than anything I've read in years the great power of The Fractured Republic, the most important book of 2016, comes from its diagnosis of our ills, not its proposed cure. National A rich, nuanced history of the last 70 years. It is a conceptually integrated guide for stepping back from the conventional conservative narrative Fifties good, Sixties bad, Eighties good, Obama a disaster and seeing afresh what has brought us to 2016 This marvelous book appears at the worst possible time. It is erudite at a moment when erudition is ridiculed; nuanced at a moment when simplistic idiocies win elections; motivated by a devotion to human flourishing at a moment when human flourishing' is calibrated in disposable income. But Levin deals in verities, and verities have a long shelf life. The Fractured Republic is an invaluable resource for understanding how America came to its present predicament and what must be done to rescue it. American Conservative An insightful, visionary book seeking a way forward for American politics through the ruins [a] hugely important new book. The Federalist, John Stonestreet Certainly, The Fractured Republic is not the first book to point to the collapse of the institutions of civil society, nor the first to call all who care to turn their focus locally to rebuilding our social lives together. But, it is among the most compelling cases and the timing is perfect. Hopefully, the realities of our cultural moment will feed a felt need, which is in fact a real need, to take his diagnosis and prescription seriously. The Federalist, Gracy Olmstead There are plenty of books out there trying to determine the root cause(s) of the pessimism and populism we've seen this election year. But Levin's contribution to the discussion is exceptional, and well worth the read If you want to understand why our public discourse has gotten so messy and fractured and if you want to help fix the problem consider reading Levin's book this summer. The Federalist, Jonah Goldberg Yuval Levin is one of the most important conservative intellectuals of his generation, so his books are worth reading almost regardless of the topic.

But *The Fractured Republic* stands on its own as an indispensable piece of work. *The Federalist*, Ed Whelan. No matter their politics, all readers will both learn from and be challenged by Yuval's framework and insights. *The Week*. It's a testament to Levin's intelligence and (lamentably rare) commitment to civil debate about our nation's public life that his book is very much worth reading and pondering, despite the fact that it doesn't so much as mention the name of Donald Trump. [Levin's] distance from the anxieties of the present moment is actually a virtue, since it helps to provide us with much-needed perspective on the populist passions roiling the Republican Party and the nation. There is far more to Levin's historical analysis than my thumbnail sketch can convey. On almost every page that he devotes to elaborating on it, fair-minded readers from all points on the political spectrum will find fruitful provocations. *Weekly Standard*, the Must Reading section. [This book] couldn't have come out at a better time. *The Fractured Republic* is half diagnosis and half prescription. And both halves are essential reading, especially as we contemplate what the current election means for our body politic. *Politico* 50 Reading List. *Wall Street Journal*.