



End of Discussion: How the Left's Outrage Industry Shuts Down Debate, Manipulates Voters, and Makes America Less Free (and Fun)

Mary Katharine Ham , Guy Benson

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They want to shut you up. But don't let this be the *End of Discussion*.

In this fresh and provocative new book, Mary Katharine Ham and Guy Benson, dynamic Fox News and Townhall Media duo, expose how the Left exploits fake outrage to silence their political opponents—in public, on social media, at work, and even in their own homes. You've felt it and “End of Discussion” can help you fight it.

The political correctness born on college campuses has mutated into a new hypersensitivity. It's weaponized in Washington, D.C. by a network of well-trained operatives, media, and politicians, and proliferated throughout the country. The new Puritans of the Left are quick to ban comedians and commencement speakers alike for the sin of disagreeing with them. They demand “safe spaces” while making dissent increasingly dangerous for Americans.

Ham and Benson demonstrate just how dangerous the outrage industry—a coalition of mostly liberal blowhards and busybodies—is to America. The media frenzy they create is designed to disqualify opposing viewpoints on everything from health care to education by labeling them racist, sexist, and evil. They punish speech that makes them uncomfortable, demanding boycotts, censures, and people's jobs. They seek to win political and cultural debates by preventing them from happening.

And if you think this behavior is relegated to political fights or politicians, think again. The same activists are ready to foment outrage over *your* association with the “wrong” fried chicken joints, Internet browsers, breast cancer charities, pasta, children's toys, Halloween costumes, TV shows, schools, and even comedians' jokes.

With Ham and Benson's help, readers can cut through the noise and find their voices again, fighting back against the rampant self-censorship and hair-trigger apologies that always make things worse, not better. With fresh reporting and insightful, occasionally tongue-in-cheek analysis, *End of Discussion* is a timely handbook for anyone who wants to make sure debate doesn't meet an ugly death during the 2016 election. Despite President Obama's frequent declarations to the contrary, the time for debate is not over.

End of Discussion: How the Left's Outrage Industry Shuts Down Debate, Manipulates Voters, and Makes America Less Free (and Fun) Details

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From Reader Review End of Discussion: How the Left's Outrage Industry Shuts Down Debate, Manipulates Voters, and Makes America Less Free (and Fun) for online ebook

Jim says

Freud taught the defense mechanism of *projection*, in which people defend themselves against their own bad qualities by putting them on other people instead. I think that's what this book is about. Is it possible that conservatives are so disgusted by themselves that they have to take their own worst qualities and pretend that's what liberals are like? The subtitle of this book perfectly describes the right.

This book actually does what it accuses liberals of doing. It completely shuts down any sort of (liberal) response. First, it stops liberals replying to these accusations by accusing liberal of what conservatives do. And second, it spends so much time on liberal outrage that to react to any of the boldface lies, offensive statements, and downright insults will look like you're just sharing what they say is run-of-the mill liberal outrage. I applaud the mind fuck which is this book. Being Orwellian while calling your detractors Orwellian is most impressive.

What a glorious fiction. A perfect primer on how the right / Republicans / conservatives spread lies in creating a liberal opposition. How they can effectively shut down reasoned and factual opposition to their arguments. To turn the intolerance of intolerance upside down is truly a feat.

Or is this how conservatives are being lied to? By leaders and spin doctors and media pundits who have a financial stake in this thing?

Yes liberals get outraged - over treating people like shit.

These people - political pundits, right wing politicians, and anyone who makes money off of being on the right are lying to their constituents. They're painting a false view of the world to get people to have "conservative outrage" and side with them.

It's this kind of thinking that makes people say things like "I like Bill O'Reilly because he's fair and shows both sides." I find it hard to fathom something less true. And I want to question the intelligence of people who say such things. (I actually heard someone utter those words live.)

But you can see from the beginning how these writers are using words to attempt to make their point before they've made it. In the first chapter alone there's the "increasingly aggressively thought police" and "Outrage Circus" the "right's mythical war on women".

Consistent use of words that make liberals look like liars and oppressors and lunatics without actually calling them that, or without actually giving evidence for it. It's very effective.

They also make liberals look like they make a concerted effort to control people's thoughts by creating a conspiracy to get people to think in a certain way. But that's what conservatives actually do! It's the wealthy .1% who are controlling media, taking people's freedoms, and getting them to think in a certain way. Google Grover Norquist and find out how he has organized the right wing and re-written conservative dogma. Liberals and progressives don't have a similar institutional effort. These authors suggest that conservatives

are individualistic and are Liberals are institutionalistic. The exact opposite is true. These authors are boldface lying.

End of discussion: How the Right's bullshit industry shuts down debate, manipulates voters, and makes America less American.

But deep down, these authors are tone-deaf to real life. They don't care that not allowing gay people to marry is actually using a religious opinion to take away rights other people take for granted. They don't care that people of color are targeted by the "War on Drugs". They think that "dog whistles" don't exist, that racism is a thing of the past, and that no one has privilege. Rape culture doesn't exist, sexual assault isn't as prevalent as feminists say.

This book continuously uses double-speak to make it sound like things that are documented facts don't exist. How do you argue with that? They coin so many derogatory terms that are intended to make anyone on the left sound and look stupid, and put in quotes phrases the left might use to make them look like they're not really things that exist. They often refer to general leftist outrage that they don't quote it.

Now, they do quote some - and I won't suggest that the left doesn't have their issues. But to suggest that the left as a whole has a concerted effort is trying to shut down discussion is laughable.

They continually refer to unsubstantiated stories to prove that Democrats are liars and hypocrites - that they don't live by the same laws they tout. Like suggesting that Elizabeth Warren definitely forwarded her career by claiming she was part Native American, even though she definitely is not. (Neither of which can be proven.)

And great statements like, "Exactly zero conservative or Republican politicians have attempted to ban birth control anywhere in the United States of America." Maybe on the surface that sounds great - but trying to shut down organizations that provide birth control, allowing corporations to decide whether or not insurance covers birth control seem dangerously close to it. And actually, some do try to ban certain types of birth control (and I'm not talking about pills that perform abortions).

Let us repeat: abortion and gay marriage are not linked in the public's mind, except, apparently, among the pundit class. Wow - so I guess all the people that I know that base their voting primarily on these two issues must all be pundits.

At the end they have some advice.

To their fellow conservatives: "Ask yourself, "Might I fit the lefty stereotype of a close-minded conservative?" I'm sorry, but I was conservative most of my life, and even though everybody tends to be "some kind of political hybrid", the number of conservatives I know personally that *tailor their media consumption habits such that they almost exclusively consume viewpoints with which they're heavily disposed to agree and that believe their ideological canon is infallible* and think their "side" is right about **everything** is pretty extensive. And maybe we all have a bit of echo chamber going on in our consumption of media. But to suggest that this is merely a "lefty stereotype of a conservative" is kind of crazy - I know too many conservatives whose sole source of info is FOXNews and conservative talk radio. And who think that since the Bible has framed all their opinions they are infallible and right about everything.

I guess in the end, it really seems like they suggest that many of these issues have two sides. But, does racism have two sides? Does sexism have two sides? Does homophobia have two sides? Does the problem of

denying the prevalence of sexual assault have two sides? Does white supremacy have two sides? Does hate have two sides?

Because some people (like the authors) are claiming these are the actual issues - by trying to say that racism doesn't exist, sexism doesn't exist, hate for gay people doesn't exist, sexual assault doesn't exist (ok, it's rare), that white supremacists can be fine people. I'm sorry. These issues don't have two sides. And books like this that try to deny these issues even exist are what we're outraged about. Because if we deny they exist, we can't fix them.

Derek Neighbors says

I ran across Mary Katharine Ham watching an episode of Politically Incorrect (Don't ask). I really like her style and her humor. I put the book on my list. A friend read it and mentioned it was good so I moved it up to the top. It was well worth the wait. I listened to the audiobook and it felt more like a podcast between the two authors than book. I was sad when it came to an end. The content is SO relevant to the world we live in and coming election cycle. We seem unable to actually have conversations anymore. Any meaning discussion gets shut down, often before it is started with name calling and mud slinging. The book certainly has a conservative bent, but I think it can be stomached by a moderate liberal on a good day. The criticisms from the authors certainly spare no party from guilty behavior. I encourage you to pick it up and read if 1. Political posts on your facebook stream are pissing you off. 2. You want to stay sane through the coming election cycle.

Jeff Raymond says

I mean, this one's obvious, right?

If you've spent any time on the internet lately, you know the types. They shut down discussion before it starts, they're trying to keep things from being discussed at all, and it's getting to the point where college policies, government rules, and so on are being dictated by a sort of heckler's veto. *End of Discussion* is a book that sort of charts that recent rise and provides some examples along the way.

The book is far from perfect, but it is necessary. The problem, as is with a lot of books in this sort of subgenre, is that there's no way the people who need to read this will see it. The result, instead, is a sort of preaching to the choir as opposed to being a vehicle for the necessary change in this area before it's perhaps too late.

As a political conservative, though, it's interesting to see a lot of these stories compiled into one place. I just wish I knew how to get this into the hands of the people who need to read it.

Dennis says

Five stars. The two authors are people I immediately want to hang out with. Why? Simple: they would let me talk, and even when we disagree they would still listen.

This book is laugh-out-loud hilarious, wonderfully written, significant, astute, and I could go on. My takeaway is pretty to the point: the civic discourse in America has become too fraught with divisiveness, rancor, and political correctness to the point that people are no longer speaking to each other. Even on social media the slightest provocation can unleash a torrent of manufactured outrage that nowadays half the country has more or less been cowed into keeping their opinions to themselves.

Just this week, one week before Halloween, the thought police are telling us that white girls dressing up in Moana costumes -- yeah, that Moana the character from the Disney movie -- is "cultural appropriation" and to do so is insensitive and harmful.

Whatever.

There is a reason the polls, the punditry, the media, and just about everybody in between was wrong about predicting the election of Donald J. Trump as U.S. president, something that occurred after *End of Discussion* was written. As this book demonstrates, because of the shaming, blaming, and intimidating tactics of the Left, a whole lot of people are not speaking up for themselves anymore and are tired of the oppressiveness of liberal bullies. But that doesn't stop them from acting out and voting for a bully, their own bully. Indeed, voter anger over this phenomenon fueled the election of a Bully in Chief who vowed to fight fire with fire.

Mary Katherine Ham and Guy Benson recount example after example of how actors on all sides of the political spectrum (but mostly the Left) participate in shutting down the other side rather than discussing important issues calmly and civilly. The media is perhaps the biggest player in purveying smear campaigns giving voice to the loudest bullies and silencing those who disagree. Again, this helps to explain the Trump presidency. Half the country is fed up with it, and that is having dire consequences, namely a reality TV-based leader whose most prominent qualities include crassness, vulgarity, and a petty willingness to indulge in personal insults and intimidation tactics. And he gets away with it "because he's a fighter," meaning people have given up on civility if it means perpetually losing.

Fight fire with fire, who cares if we all get burned in the process.

Hence this book's message is more timely and more needed than ever before. At least in my lifetime. I'll probably read it again, if for no other reason than it's really, really funny, and again, it's really, really well written.

MK and Guy, give me a call next time I'm in D.C. Let's hang out.

Corinne Wasilewski says

Disclosure: I had absolutely no interest in the 2016 American election until the results were announced. It wasn't Trump's victory that piqued my interest, although, that was certainly intriguing. No, it was the reaction of the left to his victory; the way the left demonized Trump supporters by labeling them "racists", "rednecks", etc; the way the left tried to shut out the voice of Trump supporters via ridicule and the maligning of character rather than through the debate of actual ideas; the self-righteousness of the left and the way they seemed to perceive themselves as the voice of absolute moral authority; and last, but, certainly not least, the extreme intolerance of the left for anyone who doesn't think the same way they do. These were my impressions, post-election results, and they inspired me to dig a little deeper into present day American

politics.

End of Discussion is the first book on my list. It was published well before the American election and there is not a single mention of Trump in the book. Nonetheless, it would appear the left-wing tactics I listed above are not new as they are clearly described in this book with specific examples and in great detail. Even when the information presented is taken with a grain of salt, there is more than enough material here to tip the political scales and restore some credence to the right. I finished this book thinking I have a more balanced view when it comes to America and the rights of women and minorities. I also have a better understanding of the issues around health insurance and political correctness.

The book raises some interesting points including concerns around the limits of free speech, freedom of religion and where the reasonable protection of one's person's rights cross a threshold into the trampling of another's.

You might think a book like this would be boring, but, I found it quite entertaining. The writing is conversational and often amusing, the tone always respectful. There are always two sides to every story and this book contributes to the conversation. Recommended.

Negin says

This book is a wonderful read and an important one. There were many parts that got me extremely frustrated – those were the parts that were truly eye-opening. The authors are intelligent and have a great deal of common sense, which is quite refreshing in today's world. As with anyone, I didn't agree with them on every single issue and they don't expect you to. We're never going to agree with anyone on every single issue, although it would be nice if we did! Their chapter on rape culture was fabulous and enlightening, as was most of the book. I loved the "co-exist" part (quoted below).

The authors also have a lovely sense of humor, making it an entertaining read as well. Unfortunately, as is usually the case, those who need to read this the most, probably won't. I really like these authors and am going to look into their blogs/articles. This book is definitely a must read for everyone.

There are so many great quotes in this book.

"We must picture hell as a state where everyone is perpetually concerned about his own dignity and advancement, where everyone has a grievance, and where everyone lives the deadly serious passions of envy, self-importance, and resentment." —C. S. Lewis, Preface to *The Screwtape Letters*, 1960

"Let's talk about 'Coexist' bumper stickers for a second. You've definitely seen them around. They're those blue strips with white lettering that assemble a collection of religious icons and mystical symbols (e.g., an Islamic crescent, a Star of David, a Christian cross, a peace sign, a yin-yang) to spell out a simple message of inclusion and tolerance. Perhaps you instinctively roll your eyes at these advertisements of moral correctness. Perhaps you find the sentiment worthwhile, but you're not a wear-your-politics-on-your-fender type of person. Or perhaps you actually have 'Coexist' bumper stickers affixed to both your Prius and your Beamer. Whatever floats your boat, man; far be it from us to cast stones. But we bring up these particular morality minibillboards to illustrate a bothersome dichotomy. If we were to draw a Venn diagram of (a) the people who flaunt their socially responsible "coexist" values for fellow motorists, and (b) the people who believe that, say, an evangelical Christian who owns a local flower shop ought to be sued and shamed for politely declining to provide floral arrangements for a same-sex wedding, the resulting circles would more or

less overlap.

The coexist message: You people (i.e., conservatives) need to get on board and start coexisting with groups that might make you uncomfortable. It says so right here on my highly enlightened bumper sticker. But don't you dare ask me to tolerate the 'intolerance' of people with whom I disagree. Because that's different."

"If you start having a society where people are policing their own thoughts, now we're back in Salem, Massachusetts, where literally, they didn't do anything for fun, and then that pressure built up and they all went nuts."

Ruth says

Many thanks to Crown Publishing and Netgalley for the ARC!

I don't generally enjoy reading about modern partisan politics, and this would have been regular a three-star read if not for the fabulous turns of phrase appearing throughout: describing a political figure who hung up during an interview as "having run out of intellectual runway"; describing Beyoncé as "a tour de force of preternatural pipes and stems, a stunning combination of bodacious body and businesswoman"; recalling when Robertson supporters "melted down social media"; relating a legal story and then referring to a "sad conga line of similar cases snaking its way through the courts"; and--perhaps my favorite--after recounting a particularly hysterical media circus, commenting, "We're all the way through the looking glass, guys."

Whether or not the authors are completely fair in their overall assessment, I don't know, since I don't keep up with American politics as well as I should. I will say, though, that they build a logical argument and deliver it with flair, making for an entertaining and stimulating read.

Mama K says

confirmed exactly what I've thought all along--everyone in this country whether democrat, republican, independent, or whatever, needs to grow up and put their big boy/big girl pants on and (as the authors succinctly said) "chill the hell out." we've given power to the offended in this country, so this country is now replete with people FINDING things to be offended by. What's happening is that our freedom of speech is being overtly eroded by all the hoopla over every PERCEIVED (emphasis on "perceived") offense. Though this is heavily right-wing, I have to confess though I lean slightly to the right, I really have very little political affiliation. The only vote I cast every year is the vote of confidence to myself that I can get through this life by being as fair to everyone as possible without giving up my own freedom of speech and my own belief system. But what has happened, and it has happened mostly due to extreme leftists, is that people with their own agendas don't want only to have their side acknowledged; they want us all to think THE SAME as they do. It's not enough for us to "accept" them; we have to "applaud" them. Any time we say we "disagree" with something, they start name calling, getting people fired for having/expressing an opinion, and refusing to acknowledge anyone else's opinion. While they're SCREECHING for their rights and demanding "tolerance", they want to take away everyone else's rights.....yet, interestingly, they see NOTHING wrong with their INTOLERANCE for others' opinions, nor do they see anything wrong with their taking away everyone else's rights. Whatever happened to "agreeing to disagree"? Whatever happened to the United STates of America where you were allowed to have dissent with discussion? instead, now we have attacks,

firings, violence because of differences of opinion. Our freedom of speech is being eroded daily by those who sit at home, or those who work in the media, and FIND reasons to be offended and create a firestorm where one doesn't really need to exist.

Doichin Cholakov says

The ways social media changes the quality of the political debate is a fascinating topic. A partisan perspective could be quite refreshing as it potentially does neither need to establish highbrow credentials nor to drown in political correctness disclaimers. Much like the marketing tell-it-all opus *Trust Me, I'm Lying: Confessions of a Media Manipulator*.

But there could also be a temptation to use an already popular topic as a vehicle for partisan attacks and in this case – also as a catalogue of the authors' and supposedly house speaker Paul Ryan's breed of tea party positions on a variety of topics. Which again was not necessarily a bad thing, if only it was imaginative or at least as funny as the authors insistently and intensely claim throughout the short volume.

Actually you can see all of it coming already in the title. I just wanted it to be a more meaningful contribution to a topic which will soon loom large.

Christine says

I'll start this review saying I'm on the left politically, so this book was not written to me, necessarily. That said, I agree with the message to a certain extent. I do think that many people shut down discussion too quickly because they take offense. And I do agree that behavior leads to self-censorship.

However, this book was not written as an analytical discussion of this behavior. It was written in a propagandist style, like a talk show speaking to the choir. I wish it had been a more serious discussion of how the tendency towards outrage and resulting self-censorship is damaging our political debate and traditional defense of free speech. Instead, it was right-wing outrage at a stereotyped image of liberals. Rather than seriously looking at the problems caused by this worrying tendency, this book spent too much time pointing out inconsistencies. It was basically a book equivalent of a conservative John Oliver episode.

Jim Brown says

CALLING IT LIKE IT IS!

This is a great read if you are a political Independent, Conservative or Republican. It is also a great read if you are a Liberal or Democrat with an open mind. It really does tell it like it is and regardless of your political affiliation you are probably not going to like what you read about. I happen to believe it is the truth. The book clearly demonstrates how political debate in America is being diminished by people (the Left primarily) who call people who think and speak contrary with what they believe in as racists, women haters, anti-immigration, etc even before they actually hear what is being said. This country was founded on political debate as compared to arguments and when that debate is stifled regardless of the reason our Democracy is in jeopardy. The book gives example after example of the attempts to stifle debate/discussion about politics on the main stream news media, print, public speaking, essays, and especially on college

campuses. I love this book, maybe because I agree with what was written but more importantly because it provides a ray of hope that the one-sided political debate in America may be at a tipping point and may in fact be changing. Let's hope so.

Judith says

I am uncomfortable reviewing this book. I was uncomfortable reading this book. But the authors are too self-aware, too smart, and too obsessed with statistics to ignore. Their assessment of the Left's "outrage industry" eerily mirrors my own conclusions after listening to my parents live through the recent NODAPL protests and contrasting it with the mainstream news' coverage of the same.

I have this longstanding confusion after listening to NPR and reading NYT or WIRED: their stories all fit together like pieces of a puzzle to present me with a coherent picture. Isn't that wrong? Shouldn't their journalists be different and true enough to their inherent biases or espoused beliefs to offer up puzzle pieces that just don't fit? Smart people shouldn't agree that beautifully. It feels...coerced. If Ham and Benson are accurate about the outrage industry and the homogenization of media in order to toe the line and avoid the "Outrage Circus," it certainly does explain my confusion.

So, although there's much in the book I was shaking my head over, it was certainly eye-opening. And incredibly freeing. They said to not shy away from, within reason and after reflection, posting what I actually want to say on Facebook. Ha, if even. But it still makes me feel good to imagine a reality where I would.

Among their other conclusions after hitting hard social topics like gun control, feminism, the radical/violent Right, gay rights, and campus speech policies, is to create a "Coalition to Chill the Hell Out"; to "stop narcng on each other"; "don't allow yourself to be coerced into silence"; and "don't be afraid to NOT have an opinion on something" (for, as they deftly explained, we are not all politicians, we don't all make a living by having opinions, and we don't all need to take a stance on everything).

Now really, aren't those words to live by?

Brandon Henke says

That the modern Left avoids the toils of genuine discussion by employing expedient and hyperbolic verbal embroidery is a surprise to nobody. Those who find themselves beyond the ballooning sphere of progressive demagoguery and its psychological resentment are aware of the manufactured hysteria that has come to dominate our cultural milieu. And while the frequent and frantic appeals to racism, sexism, etc. are often attempts at peremptory delegitimisation, it's difficult for most to pinpoint how we've reached a point in which any hashtag activist can contribute to the collective hyperventilation. End of Discussion traces, in detail, dozens of such instances. Subject matter ranges from the faux-outrage of Democrats in their pretend quest to reduce monetary influence in politics (<https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/list...>), to the insufferable hypocrisy of Senate Democrats during the filibuster of Miguel Estrada's nomination and their subsequent steering of media narratives during Sotomayor's ascent. End of Discussion is a simple, straightforward book by two young Conservative upstarts, whose tongue-in-cheek writing offers a look at the front lines of political punditry. However, if you are looking for a book on why the Left is particularly fond of logical fallacy (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affir...>), or hoping to dive deeper into the origins of their perpetual

philosophy of aggrieved conceit, I would advise that you look elsewhere.

Daniel says

Since goodreads provide no parameters for this box, I'd thought I'd offer a personal reflection rather than an actual review, albeit a reflection related to one of this book's themes, that developed in Chapter Five--on policing speech at college campuses.

There, the two authors, blogress pundit Mary Katharine Ham and the fetching Guy Benson address the issue of "Triggers," "Words, phrases, or topics that may offend an observer's sensibilities". Unbeknownst to the two, the included some anecdotes which opened up an old (and still festering) wound. I cringed as I felt the pain, but then manned up, bore it, read on in the book and moved on with my life.

But that is the nature of life, that oftentimes something someone else says can trigger a memory (or series of memories) without knowing that that will prove painful to their interlocutor. And nowadays, it seems some of us are (for basically good reasons) trying to prevent people from feeling pain.

But, doing that often curtails the things one can say. Now, to be sure, we should discourage people for saying truly hateful things, but some people define "hate speech," as speech as odds with their views.

Now, I don't find the book's "triggering" paragraphs "hateful," just (momentarily) painful. I know it was not their intent to wound. Indeed, I would dare say neither imagined those particular paragraphs could wound. But they did. Through no fault of their own.

In short, what I am saying is that anything can (given the right* circumstances) trigger someone else's pain. And the only way to prevent that from happening would be to require all of us to be silent.

And if you take some of (what the authors call) the outrage industry's arguments to their logical end, that's what you'd end up doing, silencing us all.

So, accept the fact that some people are going to disagree with you--or might say things that trigger a painful memory--learn to argue with your ideological adversaries and to articulate the reason certain "triggers" prove painful.

Or you could just read this book and consider the very smart "advice sort of" (as the authors put it) they offer at the end.

*or should I say, "wrong."

Robert Owens says

"With Ham and Benson's help, readers can cut through the noise and find their voices again, fighting back against the rampant self-censorship and hair-trigger apologies that always make things worse, not better."

I took that to mean that the book was going to instruct its readers how to respond to the opposition's charges.

"The correct approach entails striking an appropriate balance, wherein the Right declines to cede the playing field altogether without needlessly escalating the outrage wars, which would threaten to officially push our national conversation over the "beyond repair" Rubicon."

That was the payoff! The entire book was to impart that advice. Sad.

The book walked the reader through the outrages of the last several years and how the political left manipulates the issues to extract political points from the right. Ham and Benson spin unabashedly from the right. Many of the notes I took throughout were about their feigned outrage.

"While both major political coalitions have their respective chains of outrage, Democrats have mastered the process."

Again: both parties do it, but the Democrats are better at it so deserve our wrath.

Another familiar note was:

"Rockefeller and his ilk"

More loaded language. Wouldn't the argument be stronger absent the cheap shots?

Of course, there was plenty I agreed with.

In the end, I was left disappointed. Three hundred-plus pages rehashing crappy politics with no practical solutions. This book is just more noise, I am afraid.
