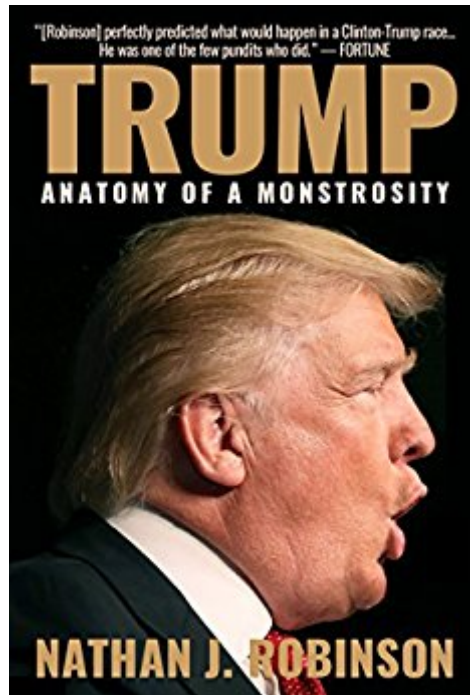




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Trump: Anatomy Of A Monstrosity



Synopsis

This is the ultimate book for understanding what Donald Trump's election means for the United States and the world. Much more than just a book about Trump himself, it is about the forces that led to his existence, and it is a guide for how to create a Trumpless world. *Anatomy of a Monstrosity* looks closely at why progressives failed to stop his election, and develops a series of proposals for how ordinary people can fight back against Trumpism and win. Carefully sourced, comprehensive, witty, and biting, *Trump: Anatomy of a Monstrosity* is the single book everyone opposed to Trump should read.

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Customer Reviews

Towards the end of last summer, just as the presidential election cycle was heading into the final homestretch, Nathan Robinson — a Yale law graduate, current sociology Ph.D. student, author of several illustrated children's books, and recent founder of the terrific culture-and-politics magazine *Current Affairs* — released *Superpredator*, a damning re-evaluation of Bill

Clinton's policies impacting black Americans and their devastating long-term impact. Despite several glowing reviews (most notably Noam Chomsky), the book was inevitably buried amidst election hype and preoccupation with the two nominees; a shame, since its penetrating critique was hardly irrelevant to the vulnerabilities that continued to plague the Democratic Party and its chosen candidate in 2016. Only two months after the election, Robinson dropped his follow-up *Anatomy of a Monstrosity*, an in-depth treatment of Donald Trump and the factors behind his successful bid for the presidency. Anyone fortunate enough to have witnessed the cover of *Superpredator* will already appreciate Robinson's grasp of the principle that a picture can be worth a thousand words. On the front of *Anatomy*, the reader is treated to an evocative mug shot of Trump in all his terrible glory. But where the earlier book was largely devoted to exposing Clinton as the very same man depicted in the cover photo, here the goal seems to be to get beyond "Trump the human being" as quickly as possible so that we can address more pressing matters; the photo almost screams, "OK, we get it. Trump is awful. Now let's move on!" As he explains at the outset: "This is not really a book about Donald Trump as a human being. It is about Donald Trump as a phenomenon—how Donald Trump was elected President of the United States. Yet even this qualification only goes partway towards delineating Robinson's project, which is ultimately less about Donald Trump as a human being or even as a broader cultural and political phenomenon, than the failure to stop this person and phenomenon of Donald Trump" and a scathing indictment of the political culture that engendered this failure. In this respect, the book's analytical and thoughtful treatment of the Trump phenomenon also functions as a pointed critique of the mainstream Left: we could and should have done better, and there are important lessons to be learned from this recent debacle if we wish to not just prevent the ascendancy of people like Trump in the future, but build a better society in general. *Anatomy*, then, is as much an explication of a certain kind of vision for politics and an inspirational primer on becoming a more politically engaged and effective citizen, than a book about Trump or his success per se. Robinson advances a number of specific arguments to support this thesis, many of which on their face might not appear all that different from what is heard from some of the more intelligent and perceptive commentators and better websites out there: those on the left must examine their own complicity in Trump's success and engage in serious soul-searching before pointing the finger; the liberal media, including many of their "best and brightest," completely dropped the ball and have been largely discredited; the outcome cannot be simplistically attributed to single factors or aesthetically appealing explanations; Trump's unique personality and appeal demands equally unique strategies; the left needs a stronger, more

coherent vision in order to move forward. What elevates the book above mere high-quality punditry is that 1) he hits pretty much *all* of these intelligent arguments, while carefully differentiating them from each other; 2) he writes with uncommon flair and dry wit, even as he keeps his sophisticated analysis accessible and deceptively simple (no small feat in this line of work); 3) he goes beyond armchair analysis in laying out a comprehensive set of concrete prescriptions for what to do and how to prevent such failures going forward, in a surprisingly powerful and inspiring final section. But perhaps most special is how Robinson's overarching concern with parsimony and accessibility represents a distinct personal ethos and guiding value in its own right, as the backbone for a passionate meta-critique of academic insularity and elitism, abstract language, preoccupation with minutiae, and intellectual arrogance—all central failures of the left. Finally, it should be noted that unlike many other analyses, *Anatomy* is a bona fide book: a thoroughly fleshed-out, integrated treatment of the various themes, carefully structured and meticulously researched, which goes into far more depth than any standalone article or blog post possibly could. (It also has nearly 1000 footnotes, many of which are not of the sterile "ibid" type but provide entertaining reading on their own.) In this respect, the title is more than apt. I often felt as if Robinson is literally dissecting his subject as he offers up a detailed schematic, even metaphysics, of Trump and Trumpness. This is a remarkable effort and genuine call to arms.

I hesitate to write this review since I feel I might not give it the comprehensive review it deserves, and it deserves a damn good one. tldr; I purchased the book because of the author, who I feel is someone worth listening to. This book is largely about the political and socioeconomic climate that made Trump a realistic and compelling presidential candidate. He analyzes Clinton's campaign, the mainstream media, Trump's tactics, and so much more. Why I bought this book: Robinson created the magazine *Current Affairs* which has solid journalism. Robinson and I went to college together, though we didn't share the same social circles (I was STEM, he was something not STEM). We have mutual friends, two of which I respect highly and were involved in the magazine. I purchased this book more so because Robinson wrote it than because I was looking for a book on Trump. Had he not published this book, I wasn't going to buy another book about Trump in its place. Trump: *Anatomy of a Monstrosity* is not necessarily a book about Trump inasmuch as it is about Trumpism, the political and socioeconomic aspects that made candidates like Trump appealing. It's about a lot of other things, too, like why the Clinton campaign was such a disaster, how Trump manipulated the unwitting mainstream media, why Trump was totally impervious to his scandals and offensive comments, how the democratic party has fallen out of touch with most of America and fails to

communicate it's message in a compelling way, how the mainstream media is failing us, and what we can do about all of this going forward. It's about more, but that's just what came to mind. The contents of this book are beyond insightful. What Robinson is saying you aren't going to hear elsewhere and it's going to resonate. You're going to read a book like this and think that Robinson is a guy worth listening to. This is true of his other writing, so if it seems like I'm overselling his book (more, his writing), then you can pull up other articles written by Robinson and get an idea of what I'm talking about. The best article to read to get a feel for this is Unless The Democrats Run Sanders, a Trump Nomination Means a Trump Presidency, written BEFORE Trump was the primary nominee.

Enjoyed the book. It was insightful. Made me think about things I had not considered.

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