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Thinking in an Emergency (Norton Global Ethics Series)

Elaine Scarry

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Elaine Scarry : Thinking in an Emergency (Norton Global Ethics Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thinking in an Emergency (Norton Global Ethics Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Book had a lot of good points of interest By Kindle Customer The author has some really good points but some of it seems to be just bashing America. I think comparing our country to a country the size of Texas (that may be off but you get the picture) is not feasible. This book does bring to light many facts about where America is heading and where we are currently. It certainly supports the notion that the country is run by an oligarchy. 14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Surprising book; It may change how you view

our world today

By Phil (not) in Magnolia purchased this book thinking that it would provide insight into how decisions are made in emergency situations. It does do that, to a certain extent, but the main thesis of the book is actually quite different than the title alone might suggest. This book is focused on explaining how modern societies, in particular the eight nuclear weapons states (the U.S. plus seven others) have come to live in a state of "chronic emergency", and "with more and more powers ceded to the countries president or prime minister", rather than being decided through deliberation involving either the legislature or the public, or both. Right off the bat, the book challenged my view of our democracy, stating that we in fact do not any longer have a full democracy because of the extent to which power has been delegated by statute to the President. It cites as examples, from recent years, the decisions to sanction torture, detention without charge, and decisions involving use of our military without a formal declaration of war. These are all actions we are familiar with and have lived through, but the observation that these represent a real shift away from true democratic decision making is thought provoking. For me it was stunning and I am still absorbing the whole shift in paradigm that results once you absorb the authors arguments. The book is strongly pro democracy and anti nuclear weapons, and as the reviewer in "Times Higher Education" has pointed out, Scarry writes from a deeply humanitarian standpoint. It is not overly discouraging in how it presents our countries present situation but it does make it clear that we need to make changes in America if we want to check and hopefully reverse this shift that has been moving us more and more to a non-democratic rule. With our preoccupation today on economic matters, this is not what people want to be thinking about, but the long term implications are very important and serious. There is also a very interesting interview with the author, on the Boston Review website, discussing the book and posted on July 13, 2011. My discovery of this book has also made me aware of the Amnesty International Global Ethics Series, of which this is the first volume. To date there has been one other book published (Can Intervention Work?), one scheduled for publication later this year (Universal Rights Down to Earth), one for release February, 2012 (The Human Right to Health), with further books by John Broome, Sheila Jasanoff, Martha Minow, Philip Pettit, and John Ruggie planned. I recommend this book very highly. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. stunningly good

By Lawrence M. Hinman Scary presents a nuanced, historically well-informed and conceptually sophisticated argument in support of our constitutional restrictions on the power to wage war. I couldn't put it down! A pleasure to observe Scarry thinking! One of the two best books I've read this year.

Award-winning critic Elaine Scarry provides a vital new assessment of leadership during crisis that ensures the protection of democratic values. In *Thinking in an Emergency*, Elaine Scarry lays bare the realities of emergency politics and emphasizes what she sees as the ultimate ethical concern: equality of survival. She reveals how regular citizens can reclaim the power to protect one another and our democratic principles. Government leaders sometimes argue that the need for swift national action means there is no time for the population to think, deliberate, or debate. But Scarry shows that clear thinking and rapid action are not in opposition. Examining regions as diverse as Japan, Switzerland, Ethiopia, and Canada, Scarry identifies forms of emergency assistance that represent thinking at its most rigorous and remarkable. She draws on the work of philosophers, scientists, and artists to remind us of our ability to assist one another, whether we are called upon to perform acts of rescue as individuals, as members of a neighborhood, or as citizens of a country.

Written with passion from a deeply humanitarian standpoint . . . a mind-blowing canter around some difficult topics conflict, democracy and nuclear war. . . I will give this book the ultimate accolade I will buy copies as gifts for others. --Patrick Tisington

About the Author Elaine Scarry is the Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value at Harvard University. Her book *The Body in Pain* was a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.