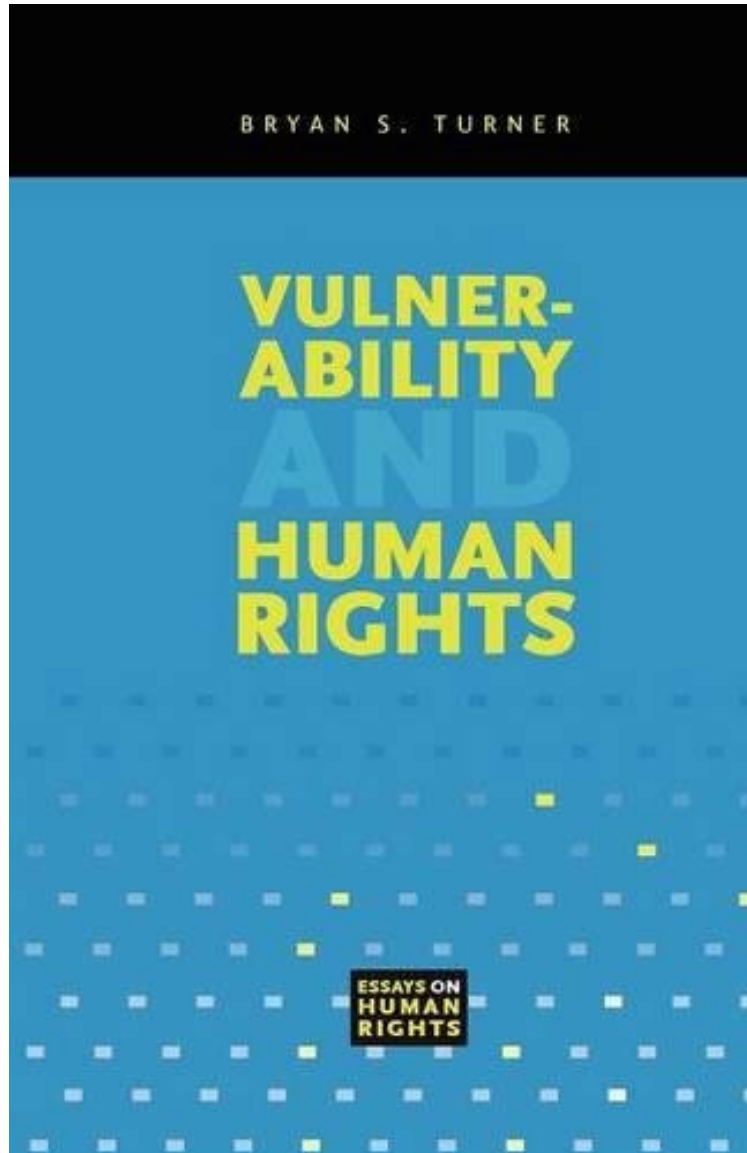


[Read download] Vulnerability and Human Rights (Essays on Human Rights)

Vulnerability and Human Rights (Essays on Human Rights)

Bryan S. Turner

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



#2581934 in Books 2006-08-11Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .63 x 5.50l, .49 #File Name: 0271029234160 pages | File size: 63.Mb

Bryan S. Turner : Vulnerability and Human Rights (Essays on Human Rights) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vulnerability and Human Rights (Essays on Human Rights):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Literate, elegant, and persuasiveBy Kevin FinneyVulnerability and Human Rights is a literate, elegantly written, and persuasive little book. Turner packs a lot of interesting discussion of

cutting edge themes into a mere 141 pages. While sustaining a core argument about the grounding of universal human rights in the shared nature of human vulnerability, Turner also manages to draw on economics, philosophy, sociology of the body, literature, religious thought, and other sources to explore a range of current human rights issues. Turner also discusses how his approach draws on, but differs from the approaches of other contemporary thinkers, such as Habermas and Foucault. It would be a good book for undergraduate human rights courses, but also for graduate level and advanced readers without a lot of background in contemporary debates in the theory of human rights. Some readers may find, as I did from time to time, that very interesting concepts were introduced, but not explicated as fully as they may have liked. This was especially true for me in Bryan Turner's discussions of Malthusian theory, which plays an important role in some discussions within this book. Similarly, references to his views of citizenship in the modern state were more intriguing than they were fully developed. This probably due to the effort to make this a shorter introductory work, and easily corrected, I am sure, if one is willing to refer to longer or more scholarly works by this same author. I was more impressed with the opening discussion of how this work was rooted in part in a neo-Hobbesian approach. Recall that Hobbes thought our shared vulnerability in a state of nature gave us good reason to establish a powerful ruler to maintain order. Similarly, Turner argues that our vulnerability, as children, as aging seniors, when seriously disabled, or in a context of new warfare, gives us a common interest in maintaining strong international institutions that can foster peace, prevent failed states, and, most importantly, protect a broad array of human rights. Unlike Hobbes, however, Turner continues to support a range of citizenship and human rights that would support democratic participation within national states and would limit the authority of actual governments. This leads to an interesting discussion as well of the limitations of classical citizenship theory in a globalizing era. This approach of grounding human rights in our shared vulnerability would be particularly appealing to those arguing for health care as a human right, as Turner explicitly discusses in the Chapter on rights of the body. Bravo!

The mass violence of the twentieth century's two world wars followed more recently by decentralized and privatized warfare, manifested in terrorism, ethnic cleansing, and other localized forms of killing has led to a heightened awareness of human beings' vulnerability and the precarious nature of the institutions they create to protect themselves from violence and exploitation. This vulnerability, something humans share amid the diversity of cultural beliefs and values that mark their differences, provides solid ground on which to construct a framework of human rights. Bryan Turner undertakes this task here, developing a sociology of rights from a sociology of the human body. His blending of empirical research with normative analysis constitutes an important step forward for the discipline of sociology. Like anthropology, sociology has traditionally eschewed the study of justice as beyond the limits of a discipline that pays homage to cultural relativism and the value neutrality of positivistic science. Turner's expanded approach accordingly involves a truly interdisciplinary dialogue with the literature of economics, law, medicine, philosophy, political science, and religion.

Bryan Turner's *Vulnerability and Human Rights* is a concise but wide-ranging discussion of cutting-edge themes in sociology, seen through the prism and oriented toward the realization of the human rights paradigm. Avoiding foundationalist fallacies, it seeks to establish a grounding for the idea of human rights in our unavoidable vulnerability. The book will make a major contribution to the growing contemporary discussion in the field. John Torpey, CUNY Graduate Center Professor Turner's work stands as a genuine contribution to an area of human rights analysis much written about but little felt as a problem for individuals in microscopic no less than macroscopic dimensions. He examines how the process of life-taking is the perverse reverse of life-giving. It thus merits thoughtful reading and analysis by those for whom such weighty matters still form part of the sociological vocabulary. Irving Louis Horowitz, *Contemporary Sociology* This short and often sparkling book brings together many of the intellectual themes with which the followers of Bryan Turner will already be familiar. The book skilfully links questions related to human rights and citizenship and the sociology of the body and religion. Nick Stevenson, *Sociology* About the Author Bryan S. Turner is Director of the Committee for the Study of Religion and Presidential Professor of Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center, as well as Director of the Centre for the Study of Contemporary Muslim Societies and Professor of Social and Political Thought at the University of Western Sydney. Among his many publications are the *Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, *Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, and *Sage Handbook of Sociology*.