



Ethics for Disaster (Studies in Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy)

By Naomi Zack

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Ethics for Disaster addresses the moral aspects of hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, plane crashes, Avian Flu pandemics, and other disasters. Naomi Zack explores how these catastrophes illuminate the existing inequalities in society. By employing the moral systems of utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics to analyze the consequences of recent natural disasters, Zack reveals the special plight of the poor, disabled, and infirm when tragedy strikes. Zack explores the political foundations of social contract theory and dignitarianism and invites readers to rethink the distinction between risk in normal times and risk in disaster. Using both real life and fictional examples, Zack forcefully argues for the preservation of normal moral principles in times of national crisis and emergency, stressing the moral obligation of both individuals and government in preparing for and responding to disaster..

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Editorial Review

Review

Naomi Zack's *Ethics for Disaster* is, in fact, about a lot more than the ethics of disasters-she also covers important parts of the political philosophy of disasters and their management. Her dedication to the situation of the disadvantaged in disasters and her meticulous analysis of it is admirable. Zack's focus is on disaster preparation, a subject sometimes overlooked in this discussion. The book is very accessible and includes insightful comments on lessons to be learned from literature and popular culture. This is highly commendable in a book whose subject matter will be of interest to many readers outside the academic community. (Per Sandin, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm)

This book tackles the hard questions about our collective responsibility to plan for and respond to disasters. Zack brings insights from contemporary moral and political philosophy to address the difficult question of who counts when disaster strikes. This book will introduce humanities scholars to the large literature in disaster studies, and it will introduce experts on disaster relief to some philosophical tools that are helpful for analyzing the moral dilemmas and political chaos that disasters create. (Laurie Shrage, Florida International University)

Naomi Zack's *Ethics for Disaster* is a welcomed and needed examination of the ethical issues related to the impact of disasters on human life. In clear and lucid language she explores the need to rethink how we understand, address, plan for, and respond to disasters. This book should be required reading for anyone concerned with ethical and human dimensions of disaster planning and response. (Bill E. Lawson, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of Memphis)

This welcome work significantly fills a vacuum in disaster studies and emergency management literature. Taking a no-nonsense approach using real-life and fictional examples, Zack highlights the moral and ethical obligations that citizens and governments have in preparing for and responding to the results and aftermath of disasters. . . . This very thought-provoking book may serve as a template to those charged with the responsibility of planning for, responding to, and minimizing the deleterious effect of disasters. It should be required reading for anyone concerned with the ethical and human aspects of disaster planning and emergency management. Scholars, practitioners, and the general public will greatly benefit from reading it. Highly recommended. (*CHOICE*, December 2009)

This is a remarkable book. . . . Naomi Zack's writing blends rigor, clarity, and relevance. *Ethics for Disaster* can productively be used in public policy, homeland security, and emergency management classrooms across the country. I recommend this book to anyone concerned with what it means to do the right thing before, during, and after a disaster. (Christopher Bellavita, director of academic programs at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security)

Naomi Zack has written an intriguing treatise that challenges conventional thinking about planning for disaster response. Using the language of human rights analysis, she questions why our response to disaster continues to be so problematic. (*International Journal Of Intelligence Ethics*)

Ethics for Disaster is a very valuable work in that it begins the project of thinking about an ethics for disaster. It also lends itself to use as a teaching text, at least with some additional materials, for an upper-division course on ethics and contemporary issues...[This book contains] some interesting aspects of a

common topic searching for an overall architectonic structure to guide the reader to some conclusions. (*Journal of Value Inquiry*)

About the Author

Naomi Zack is professor of philosophy at the University of Oregon. She has authored several books, including *Inclusive Feminism* and *Thinking About Race*.

Users Review

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