

people would prefer to ignore.

Brilliant things have happened before. Scarry was living in Berlin as the Cold War was ending, and during that time she wrote an article with a remark that the Berlin Wall might soon open. When her article appeared in German, though, the remark had been removed; the editors considered the idea, as she puts it, "hopelessly naïve and hopelessly American." Yet within a few months of publication, crowds of protesters had torn the wall down.

The nuclear arsenal could still go the way of the wall, Scarry says. "I think it is possible that it could just suddenly be gone."

*Nathan Schneider is the author of Thank You, Anarchy: Notes From the Occupy Apocalypse and God in Proof: The Story of a Search From the Ancients to the Internet, both published by University of California Press. He is also editor at large of WagingNonviolence.org.*

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**jcoopern** · 2 days ago

Schneider's captures well the brilliant eccentricity of Elaine Scarry, one of the most original thinkers of this generation. For the sake of all the living, we may pray that her earlier concepts of "solidity" and "radiant ignition" propel her unlikely reading of this 2nd Amendment proposal beyond idealism to reality-- otherwise it may be time to repeal it.

1  |  · Reply · Share >**11144703** · 2 days ago

"As an undergraduate, Barack Obama once wrote an article calling for nuclear abolition, but when his administration announced plans to build a new generation of such weapons, the outcry was mainly among those at the margins, like Dear and Rice."

Nathan's excellent insight here frames his fine story on Elaine. Unfortunately Elaine's book doesn't seem to speak truth to the present power, as Nathan's superb article does.

I did a word search of Bush and Obama in the Amazon version of Elaine's new book. Only certain passages are available, of course. Nevertheless, 16 references to Bush, 3 to Obama. Granted, a few of the references were to Bush the son's father, but why the otherwise great disparity? I hope Elaine doesn't ignore speaking truth to the present power in the rest of the book. Perhaps she does: I'll have to borrow a copy of the book and confirm.

Naturally Elaine's historical perspective will have to focus somewhat on Bush's disastrous presidency. But I hope she also focuses on Obama's perhaps equally disastrous presidency in speaking truth to the present power since she could still convince Obama of the errors of his catastrophic decisions before his lame duck term is finished in a few years.

1  | 1  · Reply · Share >**katisumas** → 11144703 · a day ago

You decide on the content of a few extracts of a book on the basis of a word search? Have you ever heard of context, of full sentences, even of grammar? One sentence often speaks more strongly than a dozen references. I suggest you read and digest the book. I haven't read it yet but I have read Scary's "The Body in Pain" and I can tell you there are many sentences in there that pack more punch than all the superficial political statements in the world!

THE BODY IN PAIN came out in 1985, yet it sure didn't stop the Bush administration from expanding torture on a vast scale and calling it by creative euphemisms (water boarding is a torture technique with a long history. It is also at times referred to as the "bathtub" because victims were submerged in one to the point of almost drowning. As Scarry describes, the "bathtub" has at times have been filled with horrible substances in addition to water --I dont have Elaine Scarry's courage so I can't even bring myself to name them. I suspect waterboarding also at

