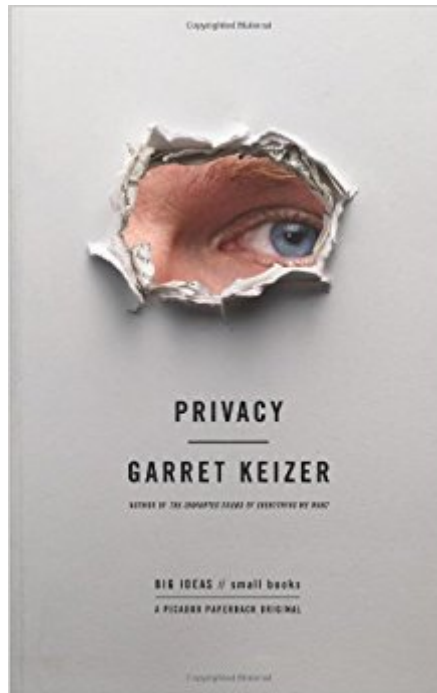


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Privacy (BIG IDEAS//small Books)



Synopsis

American essayist and Harper's contributing editor Garret Keizer offers a brilliant, literate look at our strip-searched, over-shared, viral-videoed existence. Body scans at the airport, candid pics on Facebook, a Twitter account for your stray thoughts, and a surveillance camera on every street corner -- today we have an audience for all of the extraordinary and banal events of our lives. The threshold between privacy and exposure becomes more permeable by the minute. But what happens to our private selves when we cannot escape scrutiny, and to our public personas when they pass from our control? In this wide-ranging, penetrating addition to the Big Ideas//Small Books series, and in his own unmistakable voice, Garret Keizer considers the moral dimensions of privacy in relation to issues of social justice, economic inequality, and the increasing commoditization of the global marketplace. Though acutely aware of the digital threat to privacy rights, Keizer refuses to see privacy in purely technological terms or as an essentially legalistic value. Instead, he locates privacy in the human capacity for resistance and in the sustainable society "with liberty and justice for all."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“[PRIVACY is] a series of provocative juxtapositions and suggestive arguments. It encourages its readers to reframe how they think of privacy before it's too late. Read it to jolt your imagination into new territory, and to understand why the privacy that many of us sacrifice so readily

ought to be held more dear. ... there's an abundance of nutritional thought in 'Privacy.' Keizer has a way of turning lazy notions inside out to exhibit their fallacies.

— Laura Miller, Salon

“Keizer ably describes the disturbing and ever-diminishing expectations of privacy...and makes a cogent analysis of the threats to privacy that accompany smartphones and other digital devices. Keizer's commentary reaches deeply into the fabric of post 9/11 America and finds a landscape that has compromised the fundamental human need for privacy, and argues passionately for the value of privacy in a democratic society

— Publishers Weekly

“Acclaimed essayist and Harper's contributor Keizer conducts a philosophical meditation on the nature of privacy and finds that the 'right to be let alone' is a lot more complex than many may think.... With unyielding analytical scrutiny, Keizer raises plenty of doubt about the primacy of so-called private lives.... The consequences of such revelations are vast, and readers will be left considering the implications long after the last page is turned. A provocative and unsettling look at something most take for granted--but shouldn't.

— Kirkus Reviews

“[A] thoughtful examination of the concept of privacy... Though debates over privacy tend to be driven by technological developments-Facebook and the like-Keizer reminds us that our personal and cultural "privacy settings" or lack of them have political, environmental, and even spiritual valences that are ignored at the expense of democracy and social justice.... Keizer's cautionary wisdom is informed by a deeply felt humanism and presented with eloquence and wit.

— Brendan Driscoll, Booklist

“Privacy brings Garret Keizer's spirited, reflective, whip-smart and incisive analysis to this far-ranging yet elusive concept.

— Concord Monitor

“We all know about airport security, strip searches, racial profiling, and the increasingly sophisticated ways that corporate America uses to track our every interest for marketing purposes. Mr. Keizer digs much deeper than that well plowed ground. . . . This is a dense, thoughtful, and deeply researched (the bibliography is 11 pages) little book that covers a lot of ground, makes one think, and explores a variety of aspects of the general theme, some more easily substantiated than others. . . . This is a book to be read slowly, thoughtfully, and probably more than once.

— Barton Chronicle (Vermont)

“Privacy has become one of the defining issues of our time, and Garret Keizer is now its most searching interrogator and publicist. He is vast of reference, bracing of clarity, and graceful of expression. What an invigorating instruction: to follow an engaged intelligence as it hits its marks, one after the next.

— Sven Birkerts, author of *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*

“Garret Keizer is a very serious thinker and a good writer, much concerned with fundamental realities and fundamental problems. As with any good essay, reading *Privacy* is not the

end of it; it calls for serious contemplation. — John Lukacs, author of *Five Days in London: May 1940* — “Very few writers combine thoughtfulness and rage as satisfyingly as Garret Keizer. This is not just a book about noise; it is a profound meditation on power—its painful absence and its flagrant abuse. — Naomi Klein, author of *The Shock Doctrine* on *The Unwanted Sound of Everything We Want* — “This is a masterpiece of social reportage and—wondrously, given all its burning indictments—of decency and affirmation. — Ron Powers, author of *Mark Twain: A Life* and coauthor of *Flags of Our Fathers* on *The Unwanted Sound of Everything We Want*

Garret Keizer is the author of six books, mostly recently of *The Unwanted Sound of Everything We Want: A Book About Noise*. He is a contributing editor of *Harper's Magazine*, a contributing writer to *Mother Jones*, and a recent Guggenheim Fellow.

One of the most enlightening books I have read on Privacy - something we all think we get but don't. I am writing this review at the time when our digital privacy is being eroded by governments spying on its citizens. The view that "those who have nothing to hide have nothing to fear" is a fallacy. Privacy is a precondition to the many things we enjoy in a civic society. The author brings up many surprising revelations about privacy in the context of the individual, community, state and digital life. Privacy is far more than just solitude or what is expected when you place the sign "privacy please" on your hotel room door. The author sets the tone early in the book: "Privacy is important and worthy of preservation because people are important and worthy of preservation." The book is filled with some of the best prose on the subject. This is a must read.

There is much to like about this creative defense of privacy as a social and legal concept. This is an incisive, alarming, and well-reasoned call for Americans to wake up to the erosion of our right to privacy--along with a compelling explanation of why we should care. Sadly, however, I was continually put off by the author's sarcastic tone and asides, which he seems to consider charming and funny, but which are more often buffoonish and insensitive, if not downright offensive. For example, his callous discussion of the death of Tyler Clementi, the young gay man who died by suicide after his roommate posted a webcam of Tyler with a male partner online, almost made me throw down my Kindle in disgust. Still worth a read, but for any reader with a progressive bent, brace yourself to be distracted and annoyed along the way.

This is my first exposure to the work of Garret Keizer, who apparently enjoys a considerable following and whose publishing credentials are impressive. I was therefore disappointed as I tried to follow his thread of argument in this slender volume. Some of his observations are valid, but there is a good deal of riffing, as it were, and one has the sense of the author's random stitching together his various complaints about the loss of privacy, vague efforts to describe what privacy is, and how the elite somehow have greater access to it than those less privileged. All interesting enough but hardly breaking news. Some of his observations seem oddly arrived at and some sentences make no sense in the context of what precedes them. This is a labored effort with little new thought offered, and it could have benefited from rigorous editing down to an op ed piece.

This book is sure to enlighten. Even if you've thought about the concept of privacy and how it may or may not apply to you, I would recommend this book. Is it possible you're selling someone else out for your own personal gain: find out after engaging in this wonderfully written book.

Interesting read. Opens the door to some new thinking. Could have been a bit more clear in some of his ideas. Had a tendency to not finish a thought.

I don't know why Keizer's book hasn't gotten more attention, more play in the media. "Privacy" is an awesome book, a must-read in this period where even the word privacy appears to have been routinely debased, laughed at in conversation, debunked. Who cares about privacy, anyway? It's gone. Perhaps forever. So what? Everything is known about each and every one of us, thank you very much. Keizer puts all of this into historical context, charting the course we've traveled, how we got here and why. He does this with an analytical eye, a historian's appetite for digging up the sordid details of the past. And he writes about the loss of privacy as a loss of humanism, what makes us who we are, what enables us to advance collectively as a society. Perhaps, if his text were more argumentative, breathing fire and outrage when discussing this loss, the book might get more readers worked up, like reading Ralph Nader on corporate and consumer abuses, ready to jump into action with a 17-point plan. Keizer is not writing a polemic, nor taking necessarily taking an advocacy position; he's scholarly, reasoned, thoughtful. This is why his book is better reading the second time through, as you see how he enlightens you with discussions on this loss. Privacy, can there be anything more important as an individual right? If you read "1984," the most chilling parts have to do with the all-pervasive "telescreen" and the power of the Thought Police who are eager to erase the past and prosecute those who engage in "thoughtcrimes." Are we there, yet?

only took 1 page for him to start making non sequiturs about rich and poor people. this is junk.he poisoned his own well.isn'tthe

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