

Reviews of the first edition

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The Scotsman

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Jonathan Glover
Inquiry

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Norman Care
The New Republic

This is a classic book transformed by a foremost philosopher at his strongest. It is an enlarged and developed edition of the best-known philosophical book on theories taken as showing that punishment by the state is morally right. Can punishment be justified by looking back to a crime committed – by desert or retribution? What do such ideas actually come to? The book remains true to its original realism about talk of desert. But it takes this realism forward. Can punishment be justified by a utilitarian or a like proposition about preventing crime? Or by the proposition that it reforms or rehabilitates? Do these theories presuppose a free will and responsibility that is an illusion because of the truth of determinism? Are mixtures or combinations of several theories of punishment the answer? The last chapter, like others, is new. It is not more of the same. It has to do with the decent society, and with our societies. It dismisses the question asked by almost all the theories of the justification of punishment. This book is a work of arresting analysis, by a radical philosopher also internationally known as a philosopher of mind. It is clearly, sharply and informally written. It is sometimes funny. It is the most important work on our reasoning behind our punishment, and how it has to be judged.

TED HONDERICH is Grote Professor Emeritus at University College London and a visiting professor at the University of Bath. He is author of numerous books on philosophy, including *Conservatism* (Pluto Press, 2005), *Terrorism for Humanity* (Pluto Press, 2003), *After the Terror* (Edinburgh University Press, 2002) and *How Free are You?* (Oxford University Press, 2001). He is also the editor of the Oxford Companion to Philosophy.

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TED HONDERICH PUNISHMENT *The Supposed Justifications Revisited*

PUNISHMENT

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