



On Human Rights (Oxford Amnesty Lectures)

By Stephen Shute, Susan Hurley

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Are there any human rights that apply to all women and all men in all cultures at all times? Can we ground human rights in an abstract rationality possessed by every human being? Or, as some philosophers have claimed, are attempts to ground human rights doomed to failure? Do human rights in any case need such grounding? *On Human Rights*, the second book in the Oxford Amnesty Lecture Series, presents the opinions of seven distinguished contributors who approach the problem of universal human rights from a variety of perspectives using a wealth of contemporary and historical material. The essays make a significant contribution to the theory and practice of human rights. They grapple with the hard questions that confront anyone concerned with responding appropriately to the numerous violations of human rights that surround us.

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In the second volume of this new series, essays by seven renowned political philosophers focus on the fundamental question of human rights. Four of the writers present their position, using a theoretical paradigm; the others posit an idea with historical and contemporary events such as Bosnia as backdrop. Using terms like utilitarianism, communitarianism, proletarianism, libertarianism, and egalitarianism, Stephen Lukes challenges the reader to think of these philosophies in a societal context. John Rawls identifies liberal and hierarchical societies to test the efficacy of human rights. Catherine MacKinnon counters the universal premise that only men suffer human rights violations, pointing out that women continue to be exploited even in peacetime. Recommended for scholars, students, and all citizens.

- Kevin Whalen, Montville P.L., N.J.

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About the Author

Stephen Shute is a fellow and tutor in law at Corpus Christi College, Oxford University.

Susan Hurley is a fellow and tutor in philosophy at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford University, and author of *Natural Reasons: Personality and Polity*. She has been elected to a chair in political and ethical theory at the University of Warwick.

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