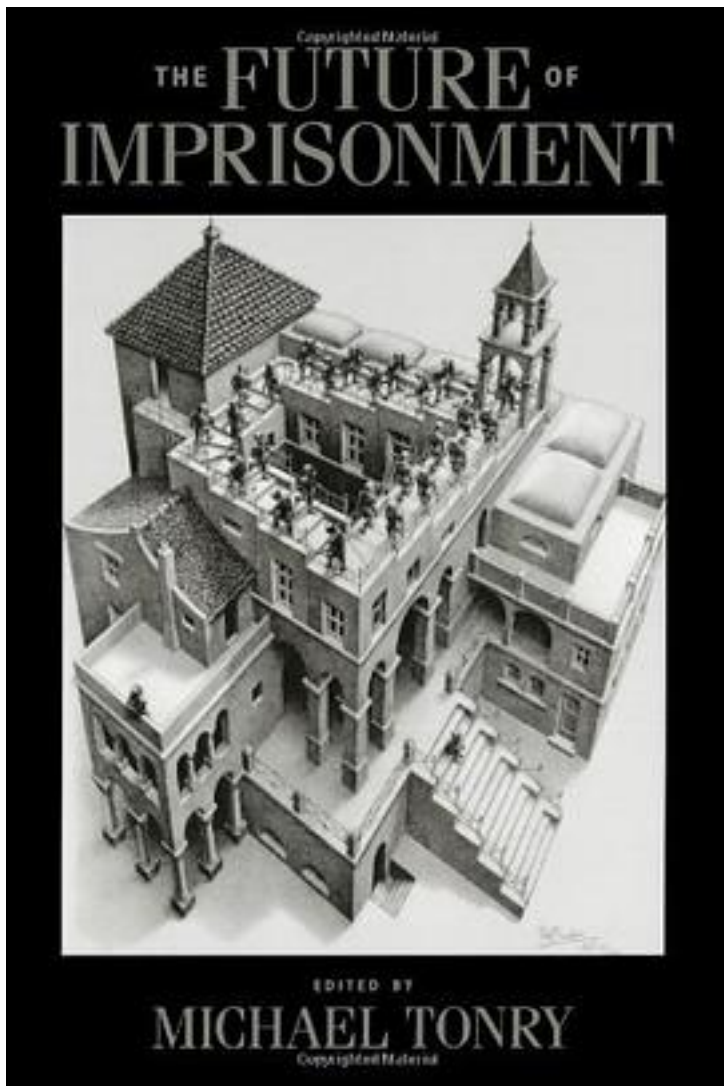


The Future of Imprisonment



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著者: Tonry, Michael 编

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The imprisonment rate in America has grown by a factor of five since 1972. In that time, punishment policies have toughened, compassion for prisoners has diminished, and prisons have gotten worse—a stark contrast to the origins of the prison 200 years ago as a humanitarian reform, a substitute for capital and corporal punishment and banishment. So what went wrong? How can prisons be made simultaneously more effective and more humane? Who should be sent there in the first place? What should happen to them while they are inside? When, how, and under what conditions should they be released? The Future of Imprisonment unites some of the leading prisons and penal policy scholars of our time to address these fundamental questions. Inspired by the work of Norval Morris, the contributors look back to the past twenty-five years of penal policy in an effort to look forward to the prison's twenty-first century future. Their essays examine the effects of current high levels of imprisonment on urban neighborhoods and the people who live in them. They reveal how current policies came to be as they are and explain the theories of punishment that guide imprisonment decisions. Finally, the contributors argue for the strategic importance of controls on punishment including imprisonment as a limit on government power; chart the rise and fall of efforts to improve conditions inside; analyze the theory and practice of prison release; and evaluate the tricky science of predicting and preventing recidivism. A definitive guide to imprisonment policies for the future, this volume convincingly demonstrates how we can prevent crime more effectively at lower economic and human cost.

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