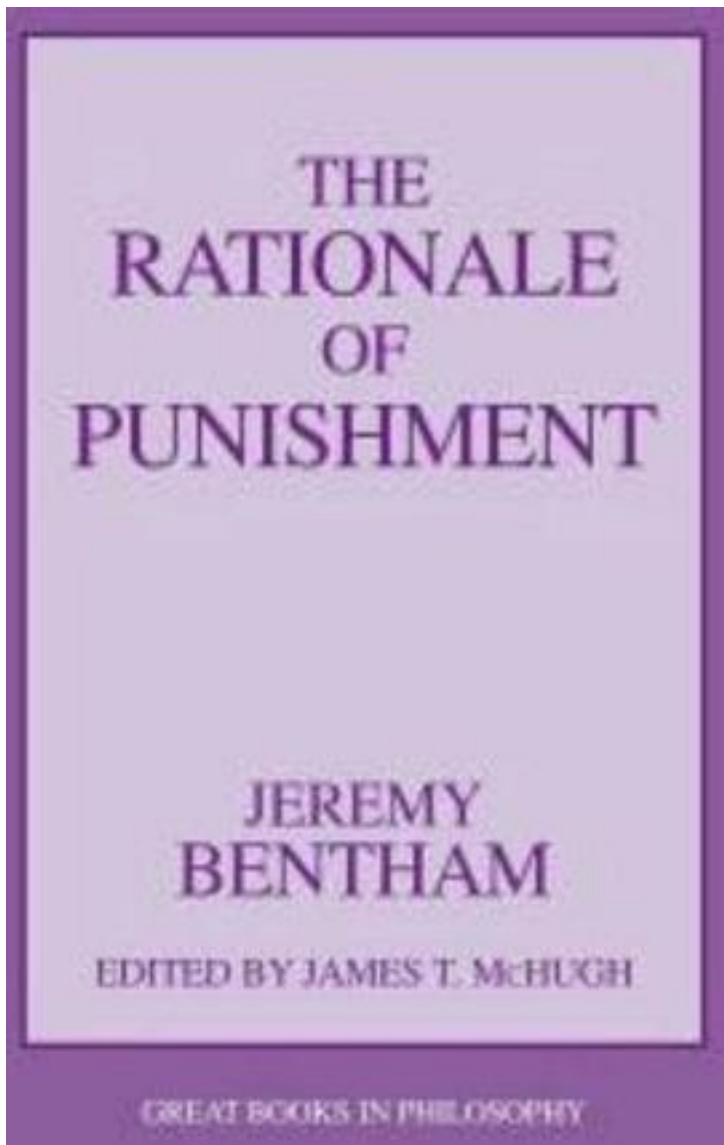


# The Rationale of Punishment



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This edition of Jeremy Bentham's "The Rationale of Punishment" is the first comprehensive version of this classic philosophical text since 1830. Editor James T McHugh approaches this important work on penology from a new perspective. Through a careful examination and comparison of original manuscripts - plus the 1818 French edition by Etienne Dumont and the 1830 edition by Richard Smith-McHugh reveals that Dumont and Smith were more than editors and translators. In fact, they were actual contributors to the final product in subtle, yet significant, ways. As McHugh notes, the two earlier editions augmented the original manuscripts to reflect a more idealized and, at the same time, more practically applicable understanding of utilitarian proportionality and justice in relation to penal law and policy. From this perspective, punishment should be proportional to the crime; it should alleviate the pain that the initial criminal act caused (or limit the potential for a repeat of the crime), but it should not be more painful than necessary, because, in Bentham's view, maximizing pleasure for as many persons as possible (if not for absolutely everyone) is the ultimate responsibility and goal of the state. A substantial editor's introduction provides a new thesis regarding this interpretation and its importance, especially for understanding the relevance of utilitarian thought upon current debates regarding punishment. McHugh argues that 'The Rationale of Punishment' is a model of applied philosophy that should be re-examined and adapted to the debates that continue regarding the desire to prevent crime, compensate its victims, avoid unattractive and potentially self-destructive tendencies of human vindictiveness, and promote the paramount vision of a truly good society. Additionally, this edition is placed within its broader scholarly context, drawing upon a considerable body of primary and secondary sources.

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