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Lecture in English

Transitional Justice and the Problem of Guilt

Tuesday 15th December 2015

at 6.00pm

Simone WEIL amphitheater
5, allée Jacques Berque, Nantes

by

Alan NORRIE

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Alan NORRIE taught previously at the Universities of Dundee, Warwick and London. He was Edmund-Davies Professor of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice at King's College London (1997-2009) and held the Drapers' Chair in Law at Queen Mary and Westfield College (1994-7).

He returned to Warwick in 2009. His books include *Law, Ideology and Punishment* (Kluwer, 1991), *Punishment, Responsibility and Justice* (OUP, 2000), *Crime, Reason and History* (CUP, 2001), *Law and the Beautiful Soul* (Routledge, 2005), and *Dialectic and Difference* (Routledge, 2010). *Law and the Beautiful Soul* won the Hart/SLSA Book Prize (2006).

He has edited a number of books, King's Law Journal and Social and Legal Studies, and served on several editorial boards. He is President of the International Association for Critical Realism.

Theme

This lecture starts from the problem of war guilt raised by Karl Jaspers and pursued by Hannah Arendt after World War II. In *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt reflects upon the moral problem of punishing Eichmann, a man who does not understand that his actions might lead to a sense of guilt. Her conclusion is that he can be executed, but not on standard liberal presumptions about the moral quality of wrong actions.

Weighing up the debate between Arendt and Jaspers about guilt, I argue that Jaspers's account of metaphysical guilt might be used to address Arendt's concerns.

But this then leads to important questions about what it means to deploy a conception of metaphysical guilt today. Here I advance some ideas about what it means and how we might use it from a critical point of view.