



Manhunts: A Philosophical History

Grégoire Chamayou

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Touching on issues of power, authority, and domination, *Manhunts* takes an in-depth look at the hunting of humans in the West, from ancient Sparta, through the Middle Ages, to the modern practices of chasing undocumented migrants. Incorporating historical events and philosophical reflection, Grégoire Chamayou examines the systematic and organized search for individuals and small groups on the run because they have defied authority, committed crimes, seemed dangerous simply for existing, or been categorized as subhuman or dispensable.

Chamayou begins in ancient Greece, where young Spartans hunted and killed Helots (Sparta's serfs) as an initiation rite, and where Aristotle and other philosophers helped to justify raids to capture and enslave foreigners by creating the concept of natural slaves. He discusses the hunt for heretics in the Middle Ages; New World natives in the early modern period; vagrants, Jews, criminals, and runaway slaves in other eras; and illegal immigrants today. Exploring evolving ideas about the human and the subhuman, what we owe to enemies and people on the margins of society, and the supposed legitimacy of domination, Chamayou shows that the hunting of humans should not be treated ahistorically, and that manhunting has varied as widely in its justifications and aims as in its practices. He investigates the psychology of manhunting, noting that many people, from bounty hunters to Balzac, have written about the thrill of hunting when the prey is equally intelligent and cunning.

An unconventional history on an unconventional subject, *Manhunts* is an in-depth consideration of the dynamics of an age-old form of violence.

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