

EDITORIAL

The move to our new publisher, Edinburgh University Press, provides an opportunity to take stock of *Utilitas* after six years of publication. In the first number (May 1989) we called attention to several changes which would occur as the journal moved beyond the confines of the Bentham and Mill newsletters from which it was formed. Unlike the newsletters *Utilitas* was intended to include all aspects of utilitarian thought and its historical context. *Utilitas* continues to include the best in Bentham and Mill scholarship (including the bibliographies) and the link with the major editions of Bentham and Mill has not been broken. The review of the final volume of the great Mill edition in the current number testifies to this continuity. Furthermore, as the current number readily confirms, *Utilitas* has become the leading journal in the world on utilitarianism as a philosophical doctrine with a long and complex history.

Nevertheless, if *Utilitas* had remained only a journal of the history of utilitarian thought, we doubted from the outset that it would prosper. Even though many of the themes discussed by earlier utilitarians remain relevant to contemporary debates, it is important to link the two so that these dimensions of utilitarianism enrich each other. In volume 6 (1994), for example, a number of articles dealt with important debates about utility within contemporary moral philosophy. These included the discussions of 'repugnant desires' by Powers and Griffin and 'infinite utility' by Garcia and Nelson and Vallentyne. Oakley and Cocking contributed an important paper on the problems associated with the distinction between intended and foreseen consequences, Persson developed a conception of conventional rights which attempted to capture what is distinctive and important about natural rights, and McKerlie explored problems of equality in relation to utility.

These recent contributions and the appointment of new Associate Editors, Roger Crisp, Brad Hooker, and Paul Kelly, have set the stage for the further development of the journal in the direction of becoming an important forum for work generally in moral and political philosophy. The link with utilitarianism is still strong, but the current debates are not confined to stating the strengths and weaknesses of one or more versions of utilitarianism. As a philosophical tradition utilitarianism sets a long agenda for contemporary philosophers. A number of the contributions in the current number, including those by McMahan, McNaughton and Rawling, Skorupski, Persson, and Singer, are neither about utilitarianism in a narrow sense nor about problems

within it. But the choice of topic, the depth and breadth of analysis, and the relevance of the discussion to what Skorupski calls in his note, 'generic utilitarianism', reveals a framework of philosophical discussion which would be inconceivable without the utilitarian tradition. The main task of *Utilitas* in the next few years is to encourage these developments as well as to continue to explore the links between utilitarianism and many important issues in contemporary philosophy, jurisprudence, and economic and political theory.

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