

# EDITORIAL

Jetlag has not dimmed happy memories of the 'Utilitarianism Reconsidered' conference, from which I returned yesterday. The conference, held under the auspices of the International Society for Utilitarian Studies in New Orleans on March 22 and 23, brought together over a hundred scholars with overlapping interests in those issues in which utilitarianism has been prominent. David Lyons opened the conference with a paper which returned to the themes broached in his seminal book *The Forms and Limits of Utilitarianism*. There were simultaneous sessions over the two days on the following topics: Equality; Punishment; Humean Themes; Deontology; the Natural Law Tradition; Building Blocks of Utilitarianism; Acts, Rules, and Cooperation; Virtue; Environmental Issues; Mill on Liberty; Conceptions of Value; Game Theory; Morality and Maximization; Utility, Psychology, and National Character; Duties and Consequences; Griffin and Critics; Population Policy; Religion; Power and Rights; Utility, Evolution, and Practical Judgement; Preference Utilitarianism; Forms of Utilitarianism; Impartiality and Unanimity; Egoism and Universalism; Moral Mathematics; Contractualism; Mill's Utilitarianism; Integrity; the Nature of Good; Liberalism; Duty and Truth; Economics and Government; Friendship and Hypocrisy; Formulating Utilitarianism. Most simultaneous sessions included three papers and a commentary. There were, in addition, two plenary sessions: Brad Hooker and Ray Frey on act and rule utilitarianism, and Ken Binmore (standing in for John Harsanyi, whom illness sadly prevented from attending) on game theory and ethics. The level of papers was extremely high, and it was especially pleasing to note the number of good papers given by graduate students. The French Quarter of New Orleans provided, both architecturally and climatically, an ideal environment for ethical discussion: utilitarianism was found to mix well with both beignets at the Café du Monde and Hurricane cocktails in Bourbon St. This conference proved to all that there is a considerable body of philosophers across the world working on issues of mutual interest within the utilitarian tradition (another fifty papers could have been given, had time and space permitted). Organizer Jonathan Riley and the Murphy Institute of Political Economy have the gratitude of all who attended. Meanwhile, the programme for the next conference, to be held in pleasant surroundings at Wake Forest, North Carolina in the year 2000, is already under discussion.

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