



## Editorial

*Contemporary Political Theory* is a distinctive new journal that aims to reflect the breadth of political theory and to serve as a lively forum for articles that express the wide range of the subject, and whose common denominator will be the high quality of their argument.

Political theory is a vibrant subject with a distinguished past. The scope and viability of political theory were questioned in the aftermath of the Second World War, however, amidst Western affluence and an advertised end to ideology, notably by Peter Laslett, in his introduction to an influential book, *Philosophy, Politics and Society* (1956). In addition, Weldon in *The Vocabulary of Politics* (1953) made an eloquent case for restricting the scope of political philosophy to that of elucidating concepts in a piecemeal way, rather than engaging in constructive normative theory. Notices for the death of political theory or philosophy, though, were premature. Serious, abiding and highly ambitious political theory was actually being undertaken in the post-war world by a diverse and distinguished array of theorists that included Michael Oakeshott, Isaiah Berlin, Simone de Beauvoir, Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas and John Rawls, among others. This list highlights a number of persisting features of political theory. Political theory is a rigorous and unsettling discipline that attracts a diversity of practitioners who, in drawing upon different traditions and developing individual ways of theorising, account for the character of politics and evaluate political practice in distinct, profound and disturbing ways. Political theory remains the serious, heterogeneous subject that it has been in the recent and remote pasts and *Contemporary Political Theory* aims to publish articles that contribute to its practice of dialogue and debate, and thereby to demonstrate the strength and vitality of the subject.

*Contemporary Political Theory* will reflect and promote the diversity of political theory by encompassing a wide range of approaches, including analytical political philosophy, radical and post-structural political thought, feminist political theory, international relations theory and the philosophy of social science. Its focus will be upon publishing contributions to contemporary theory broadly understood. It recognises, however, that all theory is informed by past traditions and the journal welcomes submissions on past thinkers and theories where they bear upon current philosophical and political concerns. The breadth of the journal's approach is also reflected in its international scope, in that it will publish and aims to bring together anglophone, continental European and other forms of theory. Its commitment to quality



will be secured by the fact that all articles appearing in the journal will have been subject to a rigorous process of peer refereeing.

The journal aims to publish articles which are sensitive to the variety of traditions and styles of political theory and which make connections across boundaries. Each issue of the journal will contain a Reviews Section that will feature reviews of a variety of kinds of political theory and will publish occasional in-depth reviews of a number of related books. Two regular features of the journal reflect its commitment to explore the practical significance of political theory and the ways in which past traditions and contributions impact upon the present. *Theory and Practice* is a feature that is dedicated to bringing a theoretical perspective to bear upon practical issues and *Political Theory Revisited* features contributions that re-examine classic contributions to or debates on the subject. Both of these features will also contribute to another aim of the journal, which is to stimulate debate amongst political theorists.

The first issue of the journal demonstrates the journal's rationale, scope and objectives. It contains articles from different continents, drawing upon continental European and anglophone theory. It contains two feature articles. David Held launches the *Theory and Practice* feature with an article throwing light on the charged issue of the relationship between global politics and business. Conal Condren's article, opening the *Political Theory Revisited* feature, reconsiders the golden age of political satire. Other contributions in this first issue show the range of the journal.

Martin Leet undertakes a considered analysis of Habermasian critical theory and suggests a return from a communications-theory perspective to a subject-centred one. Vincent Geoghegan offers a fresh perspective on the interconnections between religion, Marx, and the Marxist tradition via Bloch and Derridean critique. We have already received submissions to the journal from five continents, and which reflect a rich selection of styles. The quality and variety of the submissions promise to ensure that future issues fulfil the promise of this first issue. We see political theory as a dynamic and catholic discipline that can do justice to a subject that itself deals with justice and so much else.

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