



## **Utilitarianism and Other Essays**

John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham

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One of the most important nineteenth-century schools of thought, *Utilitarianism* propounds the view that the value or rightness of an action rests in how well it promotes the welfare of those affected by it, aiming for 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) was the movement's founder, as much a social reformer as a philosopher. His greatest interpreter, John Stuart Mill (1806-73), set out to humanize Bentham's pragmatic Utilitarianism by balancing the claims of reason and the imagination, individuality and social well-being in essays such as 'Bentham', 'Coleridge' and, above all, *Utilitarianism*. The works by Bentham and Mill collected in this volume show the creation and development of a system of ethics that has had an enduring influence on moral philosophy and legislative policy.

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