

# Editorial: Styles and Stamps

Advice to the aspiring author is offered by schools of journalism, creative writing courses, literary agents and the *Writer's and Artist's Year Book*. All these sources agree that there are special requirements for specialist writings, and there was accordingly a gap waiting to be filled by the American Philosophical Association's new *Guidebook for Publishing Philosophy*, of which a revised edition has now appeared. The editor is Janice M. Moulton and the book is obtainable from the American Philosophical Association at a price of \$7.00.

One of the improvements in the new edition is the coverage of a number of additional journals, including *Philosophy*. The entry on each journal begins with a statement made on behalf of the journal itself. In the case of *Philosophy* this includes much that is already familiar to our readers and contributors: it incorporates the statement of policy that we print on the inside front cover of every issue and the 'Information for Authors' that is printed on the inside back cover. There is further information, drawn from answers to a questionnaire, not all of which will until now have been generally known to members and subscribers. Few authors know that when they offer an article for publication it is competing with eleven other articles for the same pages in the journal. Some do not know that *Philosophy* does not accept unsolicited book reviews. By an alarming transposition of figures the *Guide* declares that invited papers outnumber unsolicited papers by a ratio of 9 to 1. Some other statistics are out of date now that *Philosophy* has increased its number of pages to 144 per issue.

The *Guide's* general pages contain much useful information and sound advice on book and journal publishing of philosophy. They remind authors not to send the same article to more than one journal at the same time; not to become impatient and hector an editor with anxious letters unless an unreasonable or at least a reasonable time has elapsed; and not to expect editors to serve as unofficial supervisors of dissertations. In the guidelines offered to authors and to journals there is some tendency to seek uniformity and not to see that the best possible service to the philosophical community, authors and readers alike, requires great variety not only of philosophical approach and style but also of methods of selection. Refereeing is sometimes necessary or desirable, but it is of no clear advantage—at least of none clear enough to outweigh the extra work and extra delay that it involves—in a journal that can operate effectively without it.

There is one point of international financial importance on which we can confirm the implications of a passage in the *Guide*. We have learned by repeated experience that some American philosophers believe that U.S. stamps are valid in all countries of the civilized world—unless perhaps they believe that the United Kingdom is the 51st State.