

Oxford Moral Philosophy.

G. E. M. Anscombe.

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Category:Letter to the editor

Letters to the Editor

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Oxford Moral Philosophy

Sir,—I won't sue Mr. Hare for suggesting I give lecherous talks on the wireless; I realise the cause is just a classical education. But I should quite like to sue whoever told him that I believed calumny did not matter so long as it was indirect, and that all lying deserved hell. He has been misinformed.

I was glad to read his letter and Mr. Nowell-Smith's. They show that what I want to go for is really there. Mr. Hare is openly a consequentialist. It should be stated clearly that this means, and he has implicitly stated, that there is no sort of action whatever of which it is correct to say 'One doesn't have to consider whether to do this or not, in any circumstances; it is simply excluded'. Mr. Nowell-Smith points out the

colossal difficulty of making out the character of an act which is at once (a) sending chocolates through the post, (b) poisoning your aunt, (c) securing a legacy. I have varied the example because he got his (c) wrong; the Japanese example is not really good for his purposes. He says he is not a consequentialist. I know the passages in his book that he is referring to and am not impressed by the claim.

I don't accuse the Oxford moralists of believing that it is good to have a law like the one by which certain proceedings of local authorities can't be challenged on grounds of fraud on their part—or any of those other things. I say that they teach a philosophy which is in keeping with a time of which such things are characteristic. Someone believing their philosophy is at

liberty to justify such things; and no one believing that philosophy can hold that there is any solid certainty as to their badness.

I don't think I need say anything about those parts of Mr. Hare's letter which are obviously just expressions of rage.—Yours, etc.,
Oxford G. E. M. ANSCOMBE

The Secondary Modern School

Sir,—Mr. Blishen said in THE LISTENER of February 21 that the pupils in his secondary modern school have a common distaste for the analytical and generalising approach to life. My own limited experience tempts me to believe that this is true of all, or nearly all, schools of this kind, but it seems to me that Mr. Blishen goes on to confuse the issue by suggesting that the gulf

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