

Modern Moral Philosophy

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EDITED BY

Anthony O'Hear



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Preface

The papers contained in this volume are based on the Royal Institute of Philosophy's annual lecture series for 2002–3. Many readers will be aware that the title of the series refers to a famous paper by Elizabeth Anscombe with the same title, which was itself published, appropriately enough, in the Royal Institute's own journal *Philosophy* in 1958. While this collection is not a commentary either on 'Modern Moral Philosophy' or on Anscombe's work more generally, it is a testament to the influence and potency of that article. Many of our contributors acknowledge its influence on them, and several take up the challenges Anscombe threw down in her original piece. In some quarters and in some ways moral philosophy was changed by Anscombe's article and, in the opinion of many, for the better. The collection as a whole reflects this state of affairs.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the contributions of all those who gave lectures in the series, and who, collectively and unintentionally, have produced a remarkable, coherent volume. On behalf of the Royal Institute, I thank them all. But I am sure that no one would think it invidious if I were to single out one contribution in particular, that, namely, of Philippa Foot. Mrs Foot has herself been a towering presence in moral philosophy over several decades, and, as she herself acknowledges, particularly in the early days, was greatly influenced by Anscombe. It was, therefore, especially fortunate for the Institute that she gave us considerable help in organising the series in the early stages. But over and above that, her own lecture was not just a model of what such a lecture could be; it was, she assures us, the last public lecture she will give. The Royal Institute considers itself privileged to have provided the setting for so significant an event.

Anthony O'Hear

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