

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR OF *Philosophy*

DEAR SIR,

By a lamentable sin of omission or commission I have let a number of copies of the *Proceedings* of the Seventh International Congress of Philosophy go out to members of the Congress with a note against the name of Professor S. Alexander referring to the footnote "Since deceased."

Professor Alexander is, of course, happily still with us.

I owe to him and to the philosophical public—which is his public—a sincere apology, and I very much hope that no one has been taken in by the misinformation.

The note was, of course, intended to be attached to the name of Dr. Wildon Carr, whose death we so much deplore.

Yours sincerely,

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD,
December 1931.

GILBERT RYLE,
Editor of the *Proceedings*.

TO THE EDITOR OF *Philosophy*

MR. B. M. LAING AND THE SECONDARY QUALITIES

SIR,

In *Mind and Matter*, Mr. G. F. Stout says that, according to the traditional view, the secondary qualities do not qualify matter. Mr. B. M. Laing, who reviews this book in the current number of *Philosophy* (January 1932), questions Mr. Stout's statement, alleging that Locke "certainly" held that the secondary qualities do qualify matter.

It is true that in the special sense in which Locke used the name "secondary qualities" (as meaning the powers of objects to produce colours, sounds, tastes, smells, etc.) he did hold that they qualify matter. But, though true, the point is irrelevant to Mr. Stout's statement. What is important is that in the common usage of the name (as meaning the qualities colour, sound, taste, smell, etc., themselves, *not* the powers of objects to produce them) Locke clearly denied that the secondary qualities qualify matter. Mr. Stout makes it perfectly plain that he adopts the common usage of the name—and, incidentally, that he is well aware of Locke's different usage. Hence he is fully justified in including Locke among those who hold what he calls the "traditional" view.

It is perhaps curious that the name "secondary qualities" should now be commonly used in a sense quite different from that in which it was used by Locke, who was the first to employ it. But we must not suppose that wherever there is a difference in the use of words there is a difference in doctrine. The view that the secondary qualities do not qualify matter is precisely Locke's view, though Locke expressed it in different language.

Mr. Laing also says that Descartes probably held that the secondary qualities qualify matter. Where shall we find any evidence that Descartes (except when "judging inconsiderately") ascribed colour, sound, taste, heat, etc., to material things? Not, one imagines, in the sixth of his *Meditations*, or in the second or fourth part of his *Principles*!

I am,

THE UNIVERSITY, ABERDEEN,
January 5, 1932.

Your obedient servant,
REX KNIGHT.