

Publications

Lewy published very little after his return to Cambridge in 1952. This was in part, due to the time that he spent as literary executor of C.D. Broad and G.E. Moore; and because of his devotion to teaching his students.

Lewy's main philosophical interest was in logic, especially modal logic. In particular, he worked on the concepts of meaning, necessity and logical consequence. His only book *Meaning and Modality*, was published in 1976. It was the result of the lectures that he first gave in Cambridge during the war.

"Wittgenstein once said to me that 'to publish' means 'to make public', and that therefore lecturing is a form of publication."

Casimir Lewy, preface to Meaning and Modality

Career

After gaining his PhD, Lewy lectured in the Faculty of Moral Sciences for the next two years. His next appointment was as Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Liverpool. But he missed Cambridge, and returned in 1952 as University Lecturer in Moral Sciences. He became a Fellow of Trinity College in 1959 and remained at Cambridge for the rest of his career. He retired in 1982.

"His pupils worshipped him and even if some of them would practice imitating his voice and his manner that would be the homage of the admiring fan, quite untouched by any thought of ridicule."

Edward Craig

Timeline

1919 – Born February 26 in Warsaw, Poland
1927-1936 – Studied at Mikolaj Rej school in Warsaw
1936 – Arrived in Cambridge to study English. In the same year he matriculated in Moral Sciences (Philosophy)
1939 – Awarded First Class Honours in Moral Sciences
1939 – Began work on his doctorate under the supervision of G.E. Moore
1943 – Awarded his PhD
1943-45 – University Lecturer at Cambridge
1945 – Married Eleanor Ford
1945-1952 – Lecturer at Liverpool University
1952 – Returned to Cambridge as a University lecturer in Moral Sciences
1955 – Appointed Sidgwick Lecturer
1968 – Elected to an Honorary Fellowship of the Polish Society of Arts and Sciences Abroad
1972 – Became a Reader in Philosophy
1976 – Published his only book *Meaning and Modality*
1980 – Elected a Fellow of the British Academy
1982 – Retired from his lectureship
1985 – Festschrift *Exercises in Analysis* is published
1991 – Died February 8 in Cambridge

Legacy

Lewy was a charismatic teacher who influenced many of his students to become academics. These included Simon Blackburn, Edward Craig, Ian Hacking, Roger Scruton and Crispin Wright. They also contributed to his Festschrift *Exercises in Analysis*. (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Lewy was commemorated at Cambridge on 23 September 2000 by having the Philosophy Faculty Library named after him.

Further information

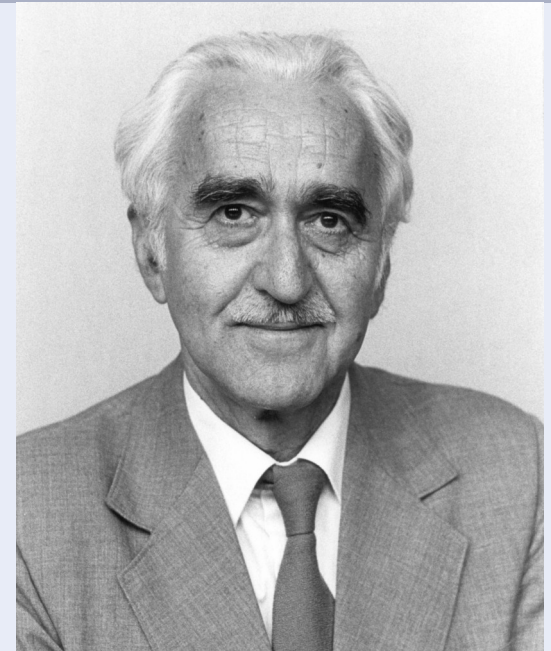
Casimir Lewy: www.phil.cam.ac.uk/library/lewy
Faculty of Philosophy: www.phil.cam.ac.uk

*Images courtesy of Trinity College
February 2017*

Casimir Lewy

Philosopher

1919-1991



**Remembering Casimir Lewy:
the man, his life and his philosophy**

Casimir Lewy (1919-1991)

Background

Casimir Lewy (Polish: *Kazimierz Lewy*) was born on 26 February 1919 in Warsaw, Poland to Ludvik Lewy, a doctor, and Izabela, *née* Rybier. His father died while he was an infant so he was brought up in his mother's large family.

Early life

Lewy attended the Mikolaj Rej school in Warsaw from the age of eight. This private school attracted ambitious students from across Warsaw. It was considered an honour and privilege to be a pupil there.



Casimir became interested in philosophy as a teenager after reading an article by Polish philosopher, Tadeusz Kotarbiński. Lewy read more of his works and also attended his lectures at Warsaw University.

Arrival in Cambridge

Lewy travelled to Cambridge in July 1936. He originally intended to stay for a year to improve his English. But he soon decided to study Moral Sciences (Philosophy) as well, and matriculated at Trinity College.

At this time, many notable philosophers were active in Cambridge including G.E. Moore, John Wisdom and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Lewy attended most of Wittgenstein's lectures but "never fell fully under the spell of Wittgenstein" (Ian Hacking in *Exercises in Analysis*). He completed his studies at Cambridge in 1939 and graduated with First Class Honours.

Long vacation 1938

Lewy returned to Poland in 1938 to spend the Long Vacation. While he was there he visited the famous studio of the artist Stanisław Witkiewicz (known as Witkacy) in Zakopane in the Tatra Mountains to have his portrait painted. This was to be the last time he would spend any significant amount of time in the country of his birth. The portrait, shown below, was given by Lewy to Trinity College.



Portrait of Lewy by Witkacy

Outbreak of World War II

Lewy had intended to return to Poland after obtaining his degree. However, the political situation was rapidly deteriorating during the Summer of 1939. After Germany invaded Poland in September of that year, he realised that returning would be impossible.

Instead he decided to complete his PhD in Cambridge, with G.E. Moore as his supervisor. During the war he also assisted Moore with editing the journal *Mind*.

Doctorate

From 1939 Lewy began to work for his doctorate - 'On some philosophical considerations about the survival of death' - under the supervision of G. E. Moore. He achieved his PhD in 1943, and in the same year, after presenting the core ideas of his dissertation to the Aristotelian Society, the work was published in the Society's *Proceedings*.



Trinity College

Polish accents

Lewy rarely returned to Poland after the war. The Lewy family were Jewish, and most of his relatives died in the Holocaust.

But his interest in his homeland was shown by the contents of his personal library which included numerous works on Polish history and literature. According to his friends and students, Lewy in many ways identified with English life and regarded himself as British, even pronouncing his name in an English way. He remained however, proud of his Polish origins. In 1968 he accepted with a great satisfaction his election to an Honorary Fellowship of the Polish Society of Arts and Sciences Abroad.