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978-0-521-10965-9 - Exercises in Analysis: Essays by Students of Casimir Lewy

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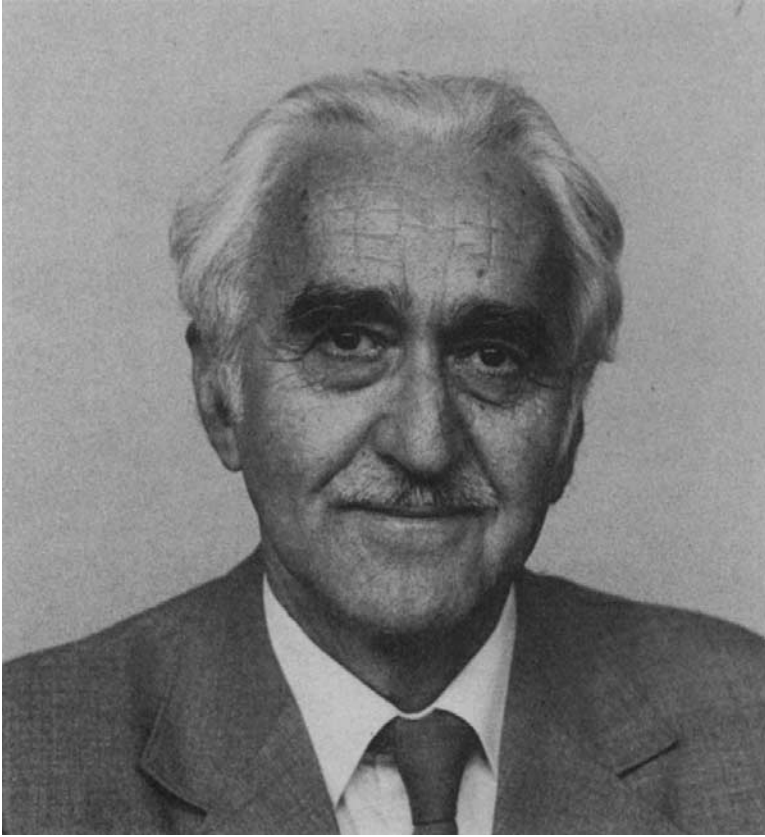
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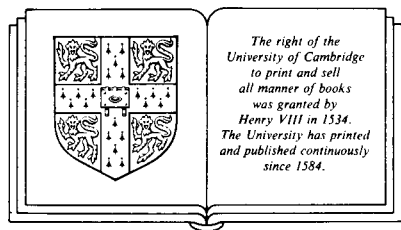
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Preface

Casimir Lewy taught each of the contributors to this book. Some were his undergraduate pupils, some were research students, and many were both. An undergraduate supervision occurred weekly. The pupil wrote an essay, posted or delivered it, came at the appointed time to discuss it for an hour, and left with a new topic and reading to do for next week. Research students met less often for longer sessions. It is widely believed that such teaching is a luxury to be afforded by only a few universities. In fact, it means that the teachers work long hours. This book is a token of gratitude for, among other things, those long hours.

We also thank Eleanor Lewy, whose help with the biographical note reminded us once again that we owe a great deal to her also.

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Biographical note

Casimir Lewy was born in Warsaw on 26 February 1919 of Ludwik Lewy and Izabela Lewy (née Rybier). His father, a medical doctor, died when Casimir was a child, and he grew up with his mother's family, which was large, warm and talented (especially on the musical side). As a boy he enjoyed and profited from the advantages of living in a charming and lively capital city where the intellectual life was vigorous and tolerant.

From the age of eight he attended the Mikolaj Rej school, a fashionable private school owned by the Lutheran congregation, where he was fortunate to have a number of gifted friends, some now prominent in Poland and the West, who shared his passion for literature, particularly poetry, and history. At the age of 15 his interest in philosophy and logic was aroused by an article in a literary weekly about the philosophy of T. Kotarbiński. He thereupon bought a copy of Kotarbiński's university textbook on the theory of knowledge, logic and scientific method, and found it of such absorbing interest that, besides continuing his reading in philosophy, he attended lectures at Warsaw University.

Lewy came to England in July 1936 a few weeks after leaving school. His primary purpose was to learn English, and he intended to stay for not more than one year. Although he had of course heard of Broad, Moore, Russell and Wittgenstein he wished to return to Poland to read philosophy at Warsaw University, though he was not sure that he wanted to make a career in the subject. But in the meantime he decided that a whole year just learning English would be too boring, and he matriculated at Cambridge with the idea of learning philosophy at the same time, this he then found so congenial that he decided to stay for two more years to take the B.A. degree, which he obtained with First Class Honours in 1939.

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In any case, the international situation, as well as the political situation in Poland, was rapidly deteriorating during this period. Lewy spent most of the Long Vacation of 1938 in Poland, returning to Cambridge just before the Munich crisis. But it was not until the defeat of Poland in September 1939 that he realised that he would not be able to go back to his native country.

Lewy now began to work, under the supervision of G. E. Moore, towards the doctorate. His dissertation, on 'Some Philosophical Considerations about the Survival of Death' was accepted and he proceeded to the Ph.D. degree in 1943.

Lewy attended all the lectures given by Wittgenstein between 1938 and 1945 and had a large number of private discussions with G. E. Moore; these discussions were to continue until shortly before Moore's death in 1958. He also assisted Moore for a time during the war in editing *Mind*. He took a vigorous part in the discussions of the Cambridge Moral Sciences Club, a habit which he was to continue for some 15 years after his return to Cambridge. He lectured in the Faculty of Moral Sciences from January 1943 and continued to do so until June 1945.

In these early years at Cambridge Lewy established a friendly personal relationship with all the members of the Faculty's teaching staff, and counted himself particularly fortunate in his friendship with Wittgenstein, Moore and Broad, and latterly with Russell.

In July 1945, Lewy married Eleanor Ford, then a student at the London School of Economics, just before taking up an appointment as Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Liverpool. This he held until 1952; during this period Eleanor Lewy also held a lectureship, in Economic History, at the same university. In that year he was appointed to a University Lectureship in Moral Sciences at Cambridge. He became Sidgwick Lecturer in 1955, and in 1959 he was elected to a Fellowship at Trinity. It was during the next dozen or so years that the majority of the contributors to this volume passed through his hands. In 1972 he became Reader in Philosophy which post he held until his retirement ten years later.

During his career Lewy three times held Visiting Professorships in the philosophy departments of various universities in the United States: in the University of Illinois in 1951–2, in the University of Texas at Austin in 1967, and at Yale University in 1969. In 1968 he was elected to an Honorary Fellowship of the

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Polish Society of Arts and Sciences Abroad, and in 1980 to a Fellowship of the British Academy. From 1962 onwards he was a member of the Advisory Editorial Board of *The Monist*. He and Eleanor have three sons, Nicholas, Sebastian and John Dominic.

Casimir Lewy was an inspiring teacher, both in the privacy of 'supervisions' and in his lectures, where his passion to find and convey the truth of the matter in hand could reach an enthralling intensity without the slightest loss of rigour. By his own example, he taught one to think hard, and above all to think honestly: never to deceive oneself into believing that a half-grasped thought was clear, nor to be content with what was still obscure. The standards he inculcated are as vivid in our minds as is the painful realisation that we usually fall short of them. His pupils, many more than those whose names appear in this book, will always think of his powers of mind with admiration and respect, and of him with warmth and gratitude.