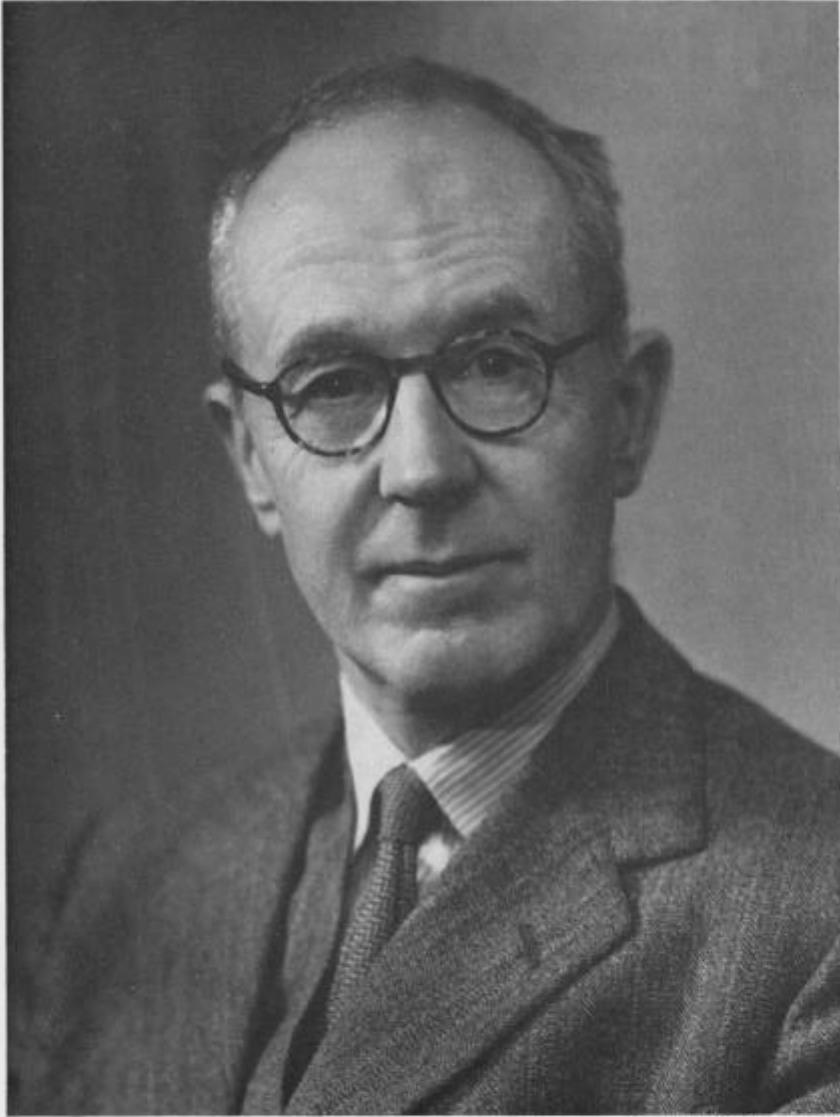


PLATE XXXVIII



Photograph by Walter Stareman

ALFRED CYRIL EWING

ALFRED CYRIL EWING

1899-1973¹

ALFRED Cyril Ewing died in early old age on 14 May 1973 after a short illness. His relatively early death was unexpected. Throughout his life his health had been excellent, and shortly before his final illness he was, as always, mentally alert, quick in his movements, and enjoying life to the full. There seemed every reason to expect him to live for many years. But early in 1973 he suffered a stroke which partially paralysed him, although his mind and speech were not affected. A second stroke two months later was immediately fatal.

Alfred Ewing was born on 11 May 1899, the only child of H. F. Ewing, a Leicester shoe mercer and his Swiss wife Emma. The family were not well off and his parents were not highly educated in any formal sense. But they were evidently intelligent people, who read and thought, and were well endowed to encourage and stimulate the abilities of their only son. Ewing held them in the greatest respect and affection until the end of his life, and his final and posthumous work *Value and Reality* is dedicated to the memory of his father. The topic of the book is the Philosophy of Religion and the dedication a tribute to the discussions he had had on religious questions with his father from his earliest years.

From Wyggeston Grammar School, Leicester, Ewing passed to University College, Oxford, with an Open Exhibition. From that point his early academic career was of almost unparalleled brilliance. Firsts in Classical Moderations and *Literæ Humaniores* (which he obtained despite a quite lukewarm interest in ancient history) were followed by the Bishop Fraser Scholarship at Oriel College in 1920 and a Senior Demysip at Magdalen College in 1921. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1923, the John Locke Scholarship in Mental Philosophy in 1921, and the Green Prize in Moral Philosophy in 1926. By the time

¹ In writing this memoir, I have had help, for which I am very grateful, from Professor R. I. Aaron, Miss Dorothy Alderson, Professor R. B. Braithwaite, Professor H. D. Lewis, Professor N. A. Nikam, Professor Ch. Perelman, Professor A. J. D. Porteous, Professor H. H. Price, and Miss Marion Sargent.

he was 30, he had published two substantial and distinguished philosophical works, *Kant's Treatment of Causality*, which was based on his D.Phil. thesis and appeared in 1924, and *The Morality of Punishment*, which was a revised version of the essay which won the Green Moral Philosophy Prize, and was published in 1929. As if to cap his early brilliance he applied for and was awarded the Cambridge degree of Doctor of Letters at the extraordinarily early age of 34.

After leaving Oxford, Ewing held, for brief periods, temporary lectureships at Michigan University and Armstrong College, Newcastle. He became an Assistant Lecturer at University College, Swansea in 1927. In 1931 he moved to Cambridge as Lecturer in Moral Science, becoming Reader in 1954 and retiring, as Reader, in 1966. It is a paradox requiring explanation that, after so brilliant a start, Ewing's subsequent career, at least in the eyes of many of his contemporaries and juniors, fell short of being entirely successful. Certainly, he never attained many of the outward and visible signs of success: he was never appointed to a Chair (although he held from time to time several Visiting Professorships in the States); he was never offered a Gifford Lectureship which often crowns the career of a successful philosopher; and although he taught at Cambridge for 35 years, he was not elected to a Fellowship of a Cambridge College until four years before he retired. It is true that he became a Fellow of the Academy in 1941, the year in which he gave the Annual Philosophical Lecture, and that he was elected to an Honorary Fellowship of Jesus College, Cambridge on his retirement, but, despite these considerable distinctions, the range of honours which came his way matched neither his early promise nor his continuing and very real contribution to philosophy. These failures of recognition in his own country are not a case of a young man of brilliance fading, after his early years, into a comfortable, secure, and academically idle obscurity. Nothing could be further from the truth. Ewing was a dedicated philosopher who was active, and intensely active, in controversy and construction right down to the time of his final illness. His output of philosophical articles and books is exceeded by very few twentieth-century philosophers.

I recall Ewing saying on one occasion in the early sixties 'I wish they'd read my books'. The words were spoken sadly but without any touch of rancour. He knew that his work was relatively little read by professional philosophers and relatively

little recommended to students. It is a hard fact that the majority of philosophers placed little value upon his work; a hard fact which is reflected in the lack of honours which came his way. This tendency grossly to underestimate him is the result of complex causes. It was due partly to his being wholly out of sympathy with the predominant philosophical movement in England which began with Wittgenstein's return to Cambridge in the early thirties—just the time at which Ewing himself moved to Cambridge from Swansea. But this is not enough to explain it. It was partly due also to his admirable qualities of character, especially his utter philosophical integrity and his refusal to resort to anything other than *argument* in the attempt to make a philosophical point. It does not require much imagination to see a philosopher of Ewing's views and superlative critical faculty poking delightful fun at his opponents. But it would never have occurred to him to mock another philosopher nor to make any man look silly; it was not in his nature to be scathing about positions he rejected nor the men who held them. Still less—to turn for a moment to the outward signs of success—would it have occurred to him to pursue his advancement by manœuvring behind the scenes or intriguing in corridors. He was essentially a simple and honest man who believed (wrongly) that anything he really deserved would come to him, and that if it did not come to him he did not deserve it. But his failure of recognition was also due partly, and perhaps most importantly, to certain defects of personality. It is true beyond doubt that if one's first acquaintance had been with the public person rather than his work one would not thereby have been encouraged to read his work. He did not cut a good public figure. It is not generally known that this impediment was the result of certain incurable physical defects with which he had been afflicted from birth.

The Revolution in Philosophy really was a revolution. This does not imply that what emerged was in any respect better than what it emerged from. Ewing thought it was substantially worse: in the early fifties he remarked, to the dismay of an undergraduate audience in Cambridge, that he thought Moore was a far better philosopher than Wittgenstein. But the fact that it was a revolution in thought, with which Ewing was out of sympathy, begins to explain why his work has not been recognized at its true merit. One's failure to appreciate his writings is roughly in proportion to one's bewitchment with linguistic philosophy. But to say that Ewing was out of sympathy with

Logical Positivism, and the Linguistic Philosophy to which it gave place, is to understate the case. Ewing was a fair-minded man: he was out of sympathy with it *because* he saw himself as having refuted its central doctrines. The central doctrines of Logical Positivism are the Verification Principle and the Linguistic Theory of *A Priori* Propositions. No sooner had these doctrines received clear expression in Ayer's *Language Truth and Logic* than Ewing was in print with criticisms, and, as he saw it, refutations of them. His paper 'Meaninglessness', in which he attacked the Verification Principle, appeared in *Mind* in 1937; and the Linguistic Theory of *A Priori* Propositions was attacked in a paper bearing that title in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* for 1939-40. Many evidently thought that these criticisms, particularly in the case of the second paper, were not successful. Some no doubt think that the two doctrines are susceptible to more far-reaching criticism than even Ewing lavished upon them. But these points are not immediately relevant. The first important point to be made is that Ewing was convinced, and remained convinced until the end of his life, that his arguments were decisive. In the introduction to his *Non-Linguistic Philosophy* (1968), a collection of some of his most important papers, in which the 'Meaninglessness' article is reprinted, he writes, referring to it, 'I use the argument that the verification principle is on its own showing meaningless since it cannot be verified by sense-experience. The reply has been made that the verification principle is not itself a factual statement and the conditions as to meaningfulness laid down by it were intended to apply only to factual statements. I accept this reply but almost all of the argument of the article still stands. . . .' Here, incidentally, is revealed his straightforward fair-mindedness. One should notice also the very gentle implied criticism of those whom he saw as having dismissed the article on account of one mistake. But the important point is that Ewing never accepted that his criticisms had been answered, either of the Verification Principle or, much more significantly, of the Linguistic Theory of the *A Priori*. Had he done so, I have no doubt that he would have become a philosopher of a very different kind. But this leads into the second point of importance which is to be made in this connection.

The second point is that these doctrines, if one holds them, determine one to hold a certain conception of philosophy, and that Ewing, who rejected them, has a quite different conception of the subject from most of his contemporaries and juniors. In

this regard, the Verification Principle is, at this stage of history, less important than the Linguistic Theory of *A Priori* Propositions. The Verification Principle gave way, some time ago, to the doctrine that the meaning is the use (or, alternatively, to the recommendation to ask for the use instead of the meaning). As Ewing points out, the principle, in the form in which he attacked it, '... still lingers on as an implicit assumption in much that is said about philosophy . . .', and he gives as an example the attitude of those who deny the possibility of objective truth to religious 'statements' because they cannot be empirically verified. It lingers also, as he was well aware, in more subtle forms than this. But it is of less importance than the Linguistic Theory in sustaining the conception of philosophy which he consistently and vigorously attacked.

Ewing speaks, again in the introduction to his *Non-Linguistic Philosophy* of '... the assumption that, since philosophers are not disputing about what can be settled empirically, they must be disputing about language'. This assumption rests on the Linguistic Theory of *A Priori* Propositions: if philosophers are not disputing about empirically settleable propositions, it follows that they are disputing about *a priori* propositions; and if *a priori* propositions are linguistic, as the theory holds, it follows that philosophical disputes are linguistic in the sense in which *a priori* propositions are linguistic. Thus the Linguistic Theory of the *A Priori* generates, with no delay at all, Linguistic Philosophy—that overall conception of philosophy which holds that it is in some sense a linguistic investigation. The idea that the meaning is the use is incidental; the general conception of philosophy as linguistic can be combined with any theory of meaning.

A few philosophers are now showing signs of rejecting the Linguistic Theory while remaining wedded to the linguistic conception of philosophy. Just before his final illness, I commented to Ewing on this remarkable phenomenon, and he quite clearly thought it a ludicrous position for anyone to get himself into. Once the Linguistic Theory of the *A Priori* is abandoned one has no basis at all for thinking that philosophy is a linguistic investigation and one is committed to rethinking the nature of the subject. Ewing had no need to rethink his conception of philosophy because he had never embraced the theory: he accepted it as true of some uninteresting *a priori* propositions but as false when held universally of all *a priori* propositions. To use the jargon, he accepted that some *a*

priori propositions are analytic, but others he held to be synthetic, and these the most interesting ones to the philosopher: he held that philosophy was a study of the world, an attempt to approach, without much hope of reaching, the truth, in a quite straightforward sense, about reality.

It may seem that Ewing should have been struck by the strangeness of his own conception of philosophy. It does seem odd, on the face of it, that two radically different methods of investigation, *a priori* on the one hand and empirical on the other, should end, if they end, in achievement of the same kind, namely knowledge of reality. The only difference that Ewing would have recognized is in the degree of generality of the conclusions. But the point to be made and stressed is that Ewing did hold this conception of philosophy and that it is worlds apart from the linguistic conception. In view of this it is not in the least surprising that those who had been converted to the linguistic conception, and, even more, those who had been reared into it, should fail to find value in Ewing's work. Philosophers of the Linguistic School have sometimes been heard to say that he was intellectually naïve. As a man he was indeed naïve in the sense that he was simple and straightforward in character, and that he placed an unquestioning trust in his friends and acquaintances. But intellectually he was not. Anyone possessed of this idea would do well to read *The Morality of Punishment*, which, of all his works, is most easily seen against the pre-linguistic background. It comes through as a work of great subtlety and sophistication, written by a man of penetrating and acute intellect. The appearance of intellectual naïvety which Ewing had to a Linguistic Philosopher is due to the fact that he had no need to develop the particular sophistications required to engage in and defend the kind of philosophy he had already rejected. As judged by those who shared his own conception of philosophy, he was sophisticated enough.

Ewing saw Logical Positivism as a clear-cut mistake. He saw Linguistic Philosophy as an aberration. He saw the later Wittgenstein as an aberration. He saw as absurd the idea that the sole function of philosophy was to remove muddles which arose when language 'went on holiday'. His attitude to this group of theories was not typical of his general attitude to philosophical positions. In general, he was anxious to find what was good in competing positions. Outright rejection was not at all characteristic of him. It is a recurrent theme of his work that neither of two competing theories is likely to be possessed of the

whole truth, and that the work of a philosopher, acquainted with both and committed to neither, should be, so far as it is possible, to reconcile them. This theme appears again and again in his work, from his earliest books to his last. Thus, in *The Morality of Punishment*, writing of the retributive and utilitarian theories of punishment, he says 'The present book is among other things an attempt to reconcile these two theories in a way which will do justice to the elements of value in both' (p. 1). In his massive work *Idealism: A Critical Survey*, which appeared in 1934, he wrote, 'The need for . . . an evaluation of idealism is all the greater because so many prominent philosophers . . . now seem to think that there is nothing to be learnt from it . . . Such philosophers must themselves realize that it is most unlikely that the school which dominated thought in this country for so long . . . has nothing to give that its opponents have overlooked. . . . At the present time there is great danger of the philosophers of this country falling asunder into two groups . . . the so-called Cambridge school on the one hand and on the other the school more in sympathy with what might be named the classical rationalist tradition in philosophy. Since I think on the whole that the former argues better but that the latter arrives at wiser conclusions, it seems to me that some of the contentions of the latter should be restated more clearly than was possible before the former had done its work of criticism. Perhaps the fact that I am not definitely a member of either . . . party . . . may increase my chances of making some slight contribution in this direction that will be of help to the more moderate members of both' (pp. 1-2). Again, in his posthumous book *Value and Reality* published in 1973, he wrote, 'Contending philosophers have each a message with something positive in it of truth, and as the controversy develops they tend . . . to incorporate more and more of the qualifications that are needed . . . but usually not enough . . . to bring the controversy to a conclusion. I believe that the true philosophy, if it could be produced, would synthesize differences . . . and (that) every noteworthy philosopher has done something which could be described as giving an, in some degree original, partial aspect of the truth. Usually the same philosopher will find it psychologically impossible to give an even relatively adequate account of both the complementary opposites to an issue—a great philosopher may indeed very well be more one-sided than those who are scholars rather than original thinkers—and for this reason it is particularly valuable to study different types of philosophers' (p. 38).

These extracts make Ewing's views about what he ought to be doing abundantly clear. From time to time he put forward original views on a wide range of philosophical questions, but they tended to be isolated from each other. He did not have the comprehensive originality which belongs only to the great philosophers. His original theories issue, in the main, in the course of his attempts to synthesize competing positions, and I think it is true to say that, in terms of the distinction he draws in the third extract, he saw himself as a scholar rather than an original thinker.

A good example of Ewing's originality within the general aim of synthesis is the development of his thought in ethics. His first work within the general area of moral philosophy was *The Morality of Punishment* (1929) which contained, towards the end 'Some Suggestions for a General Theory of Ethics'. In 1947 he published *The Definition of Good* in which he described himself as putting forward 'a more or less original theory in moral philosophy'. This was followed twelve years later by the book which he regarded as his best, *Second Thoughts in Moral Philosophy*, a title which signifies a change in his position which is further explained and defended in the ethical sections of *Value and Reality*. In ethics, Ewing began and ended as a non-naturalist. But he sees it as a central merit of the definition he offered in *The Definition of Good* that it makes concessions to naturalism; and he clearly hoped that these concessions might carry the naturalist with him. A naturalist holds that ethical concepts can be defined in terms solely of empirical concepts such as interest or approval, while a non-naturalist holds that they are indefinable in such terms; ethical concepts, he holds, are at best definable one in terms of the other. In *The Morality of Punishment*, Ewing had held that there were two ultimately indefinable moral concepts 'good' and 'ought'. But in the later book he proposes a definition of 'good' in terms of one non-natural concept and one natural (in this case, psychological) concept, thus going something like half way to meet the naturalist. The non-natural concept is, as it used to be called, the 'ought' of fittingness. It occurs in a sentence such as 'One ought to feel sympathy with a mother who has just lost a child' in which one seems to be saying that sympathy, rather than say, loathing, is the fitting or appropriate emotion in such circumstances. The psychological concept is that of an attitude. Thus, Ewing proposes the definition that to say that something is good is to say that one ought to have a favourable attitude towards it;

not that one *does* have such an attitude, as a naturalist might say, but that it is *fitting* or *appropriate* to have it. He subsequently proposes a definition of the moral 'ought' in terms of the 'ought' of fittingness, although he declares himself less than entirely satisfied with it. He does not have such doubts about his definition of 'good', and he thinks that in it lies some part of the explanation of the seductiveness of naturalism; it is, after all, easy enough, as he says, to forget about the fittingness and to define 'good' in terms of the attitude alone, which is just what a naturalist does.

In *Second Thoughts in Moral Philosophy*, Ewing seeks rapprochement with the New Subjectivism as represented principally by Ayer, Stevenson, and Hare. He was himself, and remained to the end, an objectivist in that he thought moral judgements could be objectively justified. But in his previous works he had thought that if morality were to be objective, moral judgements must describe something; and since, being non-natural concepts, they could not be held to describe the natural characteristics of things, they must be held to describe non-natural characteristics of things. This view about objective theories of ethics had been held by objectivists and subjectivists alike, and the alleged presence of mysterious non-natural characteristics in the world had been urged by subjectivists as an objection to objective theories. Ewing now proposes to make, to use his own words, 'a very important concession'. He abandons the premiss that moral judgements *describe* something, and, once this is done, the thesis that there are non-natural characteristics gracing reality is rendered otiose. He then faces the task of showing how moral judgements can be objectively justified even though they are no longer held to describe non-natural characteristics. He develops with his customary ruthless honesty a theory of which the very least that can be said is that it is highly plausible.

Ewing's attempts at rapprochement in ethics deserve the highest praise both for the motive that lies behind them and for the skill and ingenuity with which they are pursued. But there remains a stumbling-block to the acceptance of his theories, namely his reliance upon intuition—which is closely connected with his rejection of the analytic theory of inference. In talking about intuition he had the unfortunate and persistent habit of using the word 'see' which inevitably suggests that he conceives himself to be offering an *explanation* of non-empirical knowledge in describing it as intuitive. He did not really think he was doing any such thing, and he published more than one

disclaimer. Moreover, as his treatment of the matter in *Value and Reality* shows, his views about intuition were very much more sophisticated than many thought them to be.

Ewing was always ready to give ground when he came to see his opponents' arguments on some question as more powerful than his own. He was a fair-minded man. But there remain many theories on which he gave never an inch; as examples, the regularity theory of causation, phenomenalism, and behaviourism, naïve or sophisticated. I suspect he saw such theories merely as manifestations of a deep seated empiricist prejudice. But lest it should be thought that he was anxious for rapprochement only in ethics, it is worth mentioning the theory of the nature of physical objects which he presented in *Idealism* (1934). It is a strange theory to modern ears, but in his notes to the third edition (1961) he declared his continued allegiance to it. He combines a Russell-type class of sensa theory with a representative theory of perception: 'The most defensible view of physical objects is that they consist of "groups of unsensed sensa", representatively perceived . . ., having both primary qualities and at least some of the sensible qualities we call secondary' (p. 441). The point behind this theory is that Ewing took sensed sensa to be mind dependent and physical objects to be independent of mind. He could not therefore reduce physical objects to sensed sensa, as he half thought Russell was doing in *Our Knowledge of the External World* and as he thought the 'New Realists' were doing unequivocally. At the same time he saw no reason to introduce into the world anything over and above 'the only two kinds of being we immediately experience, sensa and minds' (p. 358) (although he added that material objects may include varieties of sensa well beyond anything we can imagine). Thus he took physical objects to be groups of unsensed sensa representatively perceived, this being 'the most defensible view' and obtained by bringing together positions previously opposed.

Ewing wrote several books besides those already mentioned: *A Short Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (1938) which has helped several generations of undergraduates making their first acquaintance with Kant; *The Individual, The State and World Government* (1947), *The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy* (1951), and a volume of selections, *The Idealist Tradition* (1957). He also wrote the *Ethics* volume in the Teach Yourself Series (1953). But special place must be given to his last book *Value and Reality: The Philosophical Case for Theism*.

Ewing, unlike most present-day philosophers, was by nature sympathetic to the religious view of the world. But he was also a man of searching critical intellect. It would be hard to imagine anyone better equipped to discuss the question whether there is a philosophical case for theism. He had wrestled with the problems involved for most of his life; he had started writing for *Value and Reality* twenty-five years before its publication, and it had been his central concern for the last five years of his life. Despite his natural sympathy, he had, as I believe, suspended judgement on substantive questions of religion throughout the greater part of his life. Although he was a church-goer, he never became a church member until, in his retirement in Manchester, he joined the Unitarian Church. But in his last years, his mind was made up. He had come to believe that theism could reasonably be accepted.

The view he takes is that the existence of God is a metaphysical hypothesis which better explains the available data than any alternative. In much the same way he had held, forty years earlier in *Idealism*, that the existence of physical objects was a metaphysical hypothesis. Metaphysical hypotheses are explicitly compared in *Value and Reality* with scientific hypotheses and he devotes a chapter to arguing that the criterion of truth for both kinds of hypothesis lies in their explanatory power. As compared with a scientific hypothesis, however, a metaphysical hypothesis is answerable to a wider variety of data; it has the nature of a very general hypothesis 'for explaining and organizing the most general features of the world and of human life and knowledge' (p. 41). Thus, certain belief in God is not justified any more than certain belief in the truth of a scientific hypothesis is justified. He holds that there is no deductive argument which will establish God's existence: of the metaphysical arguments, he rejects the ontological argument, despite its recent revival, as worthless; he finds considerable value in the argument from design and in the cosmological argument, but he says of them that, while they obviously contain deductive elements, '... they partake rather of the nature of the postulation of explanatory hypotheses than of straightforward deductive argument' (p. 180). In regard to the cosmological argument and the question 'What is the cause of God?' he puts forward an interesting but difficult thesis that the only possible ultimate explanation of the world is an explanation in terms of values (p. 157). Besides the metaphysical arguments, he finds weight in the moral arguments and in the widespread intuitive conviction of God's existence,

which he examines with great care in a lengthy chapter.

This book shows a wholly admirable capacity to stand aside from that conception of the world engendered by the natural sciences. It must be seen as the crowning work of Ewing's philosophical life which extended, from his first book to his last, over a period of fifty years. His long and sustained battle with logical positivism and subjective ethical theories may be seen as clearing the way for it, and his earlier work in metaphysics and epistemology as a preparation. But it is no good concealing that it is strong stuff for the current philosophical temper, to which it makes no concessions. There is no mention of the conception of religion as a Wittgensteinian 'form of life' nor any trace of Wittgenstein's influence. This is as one would expect, but it is to be feared that it will lead, as with his earlier works, to neglect by the body of contemporary philosophers.

The relative neglect of Ewing's work is due in part to his being out of sympathy with contemporary modes of thought. But it is due also to the personality defects to which reference was made earlier. To know him personally was to know a friendly man who was always interested in what one was doing and always willing to be helpful. He was always popular among his colleagues. But his public personality was, for a philosopher, unfortunate. He was small and unimpressive in physical stature, and he dressed chaotically, often with a jumper revealing his waistcoat beneath. He had a curious, wandering, way of walking. But the main trouble was his manner of speech, and the apparent incongruity between what he was saying and the way it was being said. Often, at this conference or that, when making a perfectly serious point, he reduced his audience, quite contrary to his intentions, to laughter. He was well known for his belief in *synthetic a priori* propositions. That there are such things may be false, but it is not ridiculous: it means only that some *a priori* propositions are not true by definition, and that is not ridiculous. But the way Ewing said '*synthetic a priori*' made it *sound* ridiculous. He was a serious and considerable philosopher, but his public appearances transformed him, in the eyes of some, into a figure of fun.

People might have been more understanding if they had known, as he reveals in his last book and as his friends had known for a long time, that he was completely tone deaf. He once told me that he could not tell the difference between the tunes of 'God Save the Queen' and 'Three Blind Mice', and, although this sounds like exaggeration, he was not given to

exaggeration. He was also quite devoid of any sense of rhythm. In the light of these facts, it is not surprising that his speech departed from the standard patterns. He had also from birth suffered from a lack of muscular coordination—a degree of spasticity—which sufficiently explains his curious walk, the lack of fluency in his movements, and his inability to do much with his hands. These physical deficiencies greatly upset him, although few outside his circle of relatives and close friends knew this. In particular, he was distressed at his incapacity to take part in games. When he was at Swansea, he made determined attempts to learn to play cricket. It is said that he never scored a run but displayed great talent as a stonewaller. Relatively late in his life he discovered, to his joy, that he could play ping-pong and he turned indeed into a very good player of that game.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment of Ewing's life was his failure to be elected to the Knightbridge Chair of Moral Philosophy when it fell vacant on Broad's retirement in 1953. He was, at that time, well set up for a Chair, even a Chair at Cambridge: he was the author of two distinguished books on moral philosophy and must have ranked among the world's leading moral philosophers. It would not be true to his character to say that he expected the Chair to come his way, but he did hope that it might. In the event, it went to Braithwaite, and I think most philosophers agreed at the time, taking everything into account and bearing in mind the diverse qualities which a professor needs, that the appointment was the right one. It is greatly to Ewing's credit that he never showed any bitterness over Braithwaite's election although his disappointment was acute. This same quality of his character was revealed when, four years before he retired, he was belatedly elected to a Cambridge Fellowship by Jesus College. He received the news with simple pleasure and with no hint that he thought it long overdue.

Ewing's moral character was of the finest. Neither disappointment, nor isolation, nor lack of recognition deflected him from his single-minded dedication to philosophy. He believed that with diligence, good will, and a fair mind one could move towards the truth, and these qualities informed his life. For the greater part of his time at Cambridge, he watched one generation of young men after another become captivated by a conception of philosophy which he believed to be mistaken and against which he had argued, in his view, decisively. It must have been a heartbreaking life. Yet such was his integrity that he

would employ no weapon other than argument even though the weapons trained upon him were more varied. He would criticize an argument, but he could never be induced to say a critical word of any philosopher as a person. It is a tribute to the sterling stuff of which he was made that he remained, despite everything, an essentially happy man.

It must have been some consolation to him for his failure to get a Cambridge Chair that he held, from 1949 onwards, a series of Visiting Professorships. He was at Princeton and Northwestern Universities in 1949, at the University of South California in 1961, the University of Colorado in 1963, the State College of San Francisco in 1967, and the University of Delaware in 1971. The pleasure of these appointments was enhanced by his love of travelling; with one or two possible exceptions, he was the most widely travelled of British philosophers. He had twice visited India, once in 1950 as the British delegate to the Indian Silver Jubilee Congress in Calcutta, and again in 1959 to take part in the Joint Symposium between the Indian Philosophical Congress and the International Institute of Philosophy at Mysore. He visited practically all the universities in India which had postgraduate students. He had been honorary treasurer of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies since 1953 and was an active member of the International Institute of Philosophy, regularly attending meetings and contributing to the volumes of proceedings. Just before he died he presented a philosophical autobiography to the meeting of the Institute in Berne.

As a young man at Swansea, Ewing had wished to marry but he was disappointed and he remained subsequently, to his regret, a bachelor. He was not, however, denied the comfort of a home. After his father's death, his mother moved to Cambridge where they shared a house for many years. When she died, his cousins Miss Marion and Miss Ethelwyn Sargent moved from Manchester to make a home for him. It is typical of Alfred Ewing's thoughtfulness that when he retired, rather than stay in Cambridge where he had spent most of his working life, he moved to Manchester, the home town of his surviving cousin, Miss Marion Sargent. He was deeply grateful to his mother and his cousins for the comfort with which they had provided him.

Ewing's great interest, apart from philosophy, was walking. He would regularly turn out with his Rambling Club in all weathers and for walks of all distances. He loved roaming the

hills. He was a very strong walker even to within a few months of his death, and could out-walk people far younger than himself. He maintained, despite his ungainly manner, an even speed and seemed oblivious of changes in the terrain. Even very steep slopes had no noticeable effect upon his rate of progress. He seemed also to be quite unaware of physical discomfort: he would not notice, even in pouring rain, that his mackintosh had slid half way down his back, following his rucksack; and even an unplanned dip in a river left him apparently unperturbed. The other members of his Rambling Club were amazed at his unworldliness. The story goes that he turned up on one occasion with a new walking stick—a white one. He had no idea that a white stick had special significance and spent the weekend trying to peel the paint off. But, despite his unworldliness, he displayed on these walks an extensive knowledge of geography, not only of countries and counties but of the routes of roads, paths, railway lines, and air routes.

Ewing was a remarkable man, both as a person and as a philosopher. In the words of Professor Brand Blanshard, he was 'one of the finest minds in England who was never valued at his true worth'. It is difficult to predict the fate of his philosophical work. Reading it as a whole, it is impossible to avoid the impression of a very considerable philosopher; an impression which is independent of one's own philosophical views and should not be seriously damaged by the suspicion that he had blind spots on a small number of questions, even if they were crucial questions. And even on these points one should seriously ask whether the blind spots were not on the other side. The really crucial question which separates him from his opponents is his rejection of the analytic theory of inference, and if the body of his work is to be appreciated at its true value, judgement must be suspended on this question. But, rightly or wrongly, philosophy has moved in a different direction from Ewing's philosophy and it is not possible to predict whether his work will have, at some time in the future, the attention which it should have had in the past. If he could have known that it would, he would have been well satisfied.

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