

CRITICAL NOTICE

Ludwig Wittgenstein

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Given that this book is part of an ever growing series entitled 'Critical Lives', devoted to a wide range of individuals in varying spheres who are classified by the publisher as 'cultural figures', the reader should not be surprised to find that the series also includes volumes about James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Frank Lloyd Wright, Noam Chomsky, Pablo Picasso, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Edward Kanterian's book is for the most part biographical, and he duly acknowledges his debt to the 'seminal biographies' of Brian McGuinness and Ray Monk (*Introduction*, 9), whilst differing from them slightly in stressing certain discontinuities, rather than continuities, between Wittgenstein's personality and philosophy.

It is also part of Kanterian's aim to correct an imbalance which he detects between the character of Wittgenstein's actual work and his 'present-day public persona' (*Ibid.*, 8). Remarking that Wittgenstein has come to be associated in the public mind with 'postmodernism, art, poetry, mysticism, ethics, even politics', he issues a corrective to Terry Eagleton who takes the 'co-ordinates' of the *Tractatus* to be fixed by Joyce, Schonberg and Picasso instead of by Russell and Frege (*Ibid.*, 8 & 74). Eagleton also comes under attack later on for relating Wittgenstein's ideas to the Marxist aesthetics of Mikhail Bakhtin, on the grounds that Wittgenstein had an affinity with his brother Nikolai Bakhtin, the philologist with whom he happened to re-read the *Tractatus* during the 1940's (*Ibid.*, 160).

Kanterian offers correctives of this kind from time to time throughout the book. Wittgenstein's main interest during the period of *Notes on Logic*, for example, was the foundations of logic and not, 'as it has become fashionable to claim', ethics and mysticism (*Ibid.*, 50). Ethics and mysticism come later, and are connected with his experiences during the Great War. Referring to the School Spelling Dictionary of 1926, which illustrates how seriously in Kanterian's eyes Wittgenstein approached any field of activity in which he was engaged, Kanterian ridicules J. Hintikka's suggestion that certain aspects of his work may be attributable to his having suffered from dyslexia (*Ibid.*, 102).

Kanterian also stresses, in the course of realising his project of separating the work from the life where he deems it appropriate, that during his period as a soldier Wittgenstein's concern with questions about life and death was personal in nature. This is illustrated by the fact that the diary entries which express this concern are coded, unlike the extensive entries relating to language, the foundations of logic and ontology (*Ibid.*, 65):

This needs to be stressed to counter those exaggerated if fashionable interpretations that claim that his ethical and his logical concerns were two sides of the same coin. When he came under enemy fire or plunged into the immense suffering of his inner abyss, Wittgenstein did not seek salvation through the solution of Russell's Paradox, and did not pray to the Muse of Logic or the Great Quantifier, but to the God of Tolstoy's *Gospel* (*Ibid.*, 66).

In Kanterian's view, to relate his logical investigations directly to his religious problems is to 'romanticize the former and trivialize the latter'. Much later in the book, when describing a period towards the end of his life, a conversation is mentioned in which Barry Pink, a fellow lodger in Anscombe's house, asks Wittgenstein whether his philosophy is connected to his homosexuality, occasioning the reply 'Certainly not!' Kanterian makes it clear that he regards as plain nonsense Colin Wilson's idea that homosexual tendencies could underlie the craving for certainty said to be integral to the creation of the Tractarian system (*Ibid.*, 194 *et seq.*).

Wittgenstein's attachment to religious belief appears to have been brought about by his experiences in the Great War, because he is described as having to some degree previously shared with Russell during the early years in Cambridge a certain anti-religious zeal. He is said, for example, to have attacked in the presence of others during his first year in Cambridge an undergraduate who was a monk. This is understood by Kanterian to have been done because he disapproved of the dishonesty he took to be integral to all forms of organised religion, telling the undergraduate to 'read some book on exact science to see what honest thought really is' (*Ibid.*, 46). Wittgenstein certainly had at that time,

and to some extent always retained, a frankness of expression, together with a 'quick tempered and overbearing nature' (*Ibid.*, 46). Whilst this may have mellowed through time, it certainly did not endear him to everyone.

Yet this was taking place at a time when Russell found Wittgenstein to be 'perhaps the most perfect example I have ever known of genius as traditionally conceived, passionate, profound, intense and dominating' (*Ibid.*, 38). The story is recounted of Wittgenstein's adverse reaction to Russell's essay 'The Essence of Religion' (1912), which he found to be inexact and fuzzy about 'intimate' issues. This disturbed Russell profoundly, even if he found Wittgenstein 'so unhappy, so gentle, so wounded in his wish to think well of me' (*Ibid.*, 46). Then follows the often recounted visit to the boat race, a form of afternoon entertainment which Wittgenstein found so vile that he ought not to live because all that really mattered was producing great works or enjoying those of others, something which he himself had not yet achieved; and this led to an almost inevitable despair that occasionally had Russell worrying over Wittgenstein's potential suicide.

This familiar notion of genius verging on madness emerges again earlier on in the book in Wittgenstein's account of how he would be awakened at three in the morning to find his brother Hans, with a manic concentration, playing one of his own compositions on the piano. Sweating, totally absorbed, and oblivious of Ludwig's presence, the image as Wittgenstein later reported it to Rush Rhees, remained a paradigm of what it was like to be possessed of genius (*Ibid.*, 16). A similar image is offered in another context by Wittgenstein when describing Beethoven. Hans is certainly said to have been a pianist of genius, and to have given public performances as a child, yet along with another two of Karl Wittgenstein's five sons, he committed suicide. In Hans's case, this tendency towards suicide was perhaps exacerbated by the conflict that arose between his sense of duty to a father who wished his sons to play a part in the family steel-making business, and the irresistible demands that his talent made upon him. Ludwig's three sisters had more balanced lives because they were not subject to the same pressures from their father. Nevertheless, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that something more sinister lay behind these events. Indeed, this story of a family of great wealth and extraordinary

talent, bordering on and even displaying genius, yet at times verging on madness, and moving in the highest cultural circles of its time, would to many readers be the very stuff of fiction, were it not a plain matter of fact. Wittgenstein's sister, Margarete, who married into the wealthy American Stonborough family, became the subject in 1905 of one of Gustav Klimt's most famous paintings. Kanterian describes how the family later on, and after the *Anschluss*, agreed to transfer 1.7 tons of gold to the Nazi state - 2% of Austria's gold reserves - in order to ensure the safety of Hermine and Helene, two of Wittgenstein's sisters, who had 'perversely' wanted to stay in Austria despite the anti-Jewish policies of the regime (*Ibid.*, 148).

Kanterian begins his second chapter on 'Cambridge, Norway and Philosophy, 1911-14', by asking exactly when Wittgenstein became interested in philosophy. Following an early reading of Schopenhauer, and a later encounter with the writings of Boltzmann and Hertz, Wittgenstein's work in aeronautics is said to have led to an interest in higher mathematics and so to the theory of mathematical analysis, and this eventually led him to look into the foundations of mathematics itself. There follows an account of Wittgenstein's approach to Frege, the eventual encounter with Russell, and a brief description of Frege's logicism together with a page devoted to Russell's Theory of Descriptions. This is all very well presented, and leads into Wittgenstein's involvement with the kinds of logical problems he shared with Russell, whose daily letters to his lover, Lady Ottoline Morrell, capture in some detail Russell's feelings about the protege whom he came to regard as his successor. Russell must have come to have a high regard for Wittgenstein relatively quickly, because Wittgenstein's sister Hermine was astonished to hear from Russell on a visit to Cambridge that the next big step in philosophy would be taken by her brother (*Ibid.*, 38).

One can but wonder how Ludwig von Ficker, a potential publisher for the *Tractatus*, must have reacted to Wittgenstein's claim that whilst the point of the work is ethical, the book actually exists in two parts, the written part and the Ethical part, delimited from within, that is *not* written. If we are bound to be sceptical about what this can possibly have meant to a down to earth publisher,

it must render doubly ironic Kanterian's suggestion, towards the close of his chapter on the *Tractatus*, that Wittgenstein in making this claim is exaggerating the ethical aspect of the book, presumably in order to make it more presentable to a literary publicist. It is only on reading the book in detail that von Ficker could have gained any appreciation of what this claim might have meant. Kanterian's point, of course, is that he again wishes to insist, against the kinds of readings of the work to which he objects, that its main focus is on logic and metaphysics, and not on ethics:

One could even argue that the ethical ending of the book is parasitic on the main part dealing with logic, since he develops the distinction between saying and showing in the main part and then makes use of it in the passages on ethics (*Ibid.*, 85).

In writing to Russell in the same year, Wittgenstein makes the point that the distinction between what can be expressed by propositions and what can only be shown, captures the main point of the book, and this leads Kanterian to suggest that 'we could understand the logical part without the ethical one, but not vice versa.' On this view, the fundamental movement of the work is 'from the foundations of logic to the nature of the world, and further to mysticism, but only in this order' (*Ibid.*)

This will not sit well with 'New' readers, but Kanterian is not in the business of providing a detailed justification for his viewpoint in a chapter that is intended to do little more than give a rough outline of the content of this 'breathtakingly ambitious book' (*Ibid.*, 76). He succeeds in doing this rather well, arguing that the account of language is the book's central topic, with the atomistic ontology providing, in his terms, the book's metaphysical underpinning (*Ibid.*, 76). Most readers coming to the work for the first time, even those with some background in philosophy, are not without prior guidance going to find it at all easy to grasp, and this is not helped by the fact that Wittgenstein's intention was, in Kanterian's view, not to satisfy an academic audience but to achieve a kind of 'crystalline beauty' (*Ibid.*, 75), which would have been spoiled by the provision of mere argument. Since Wittgenstein fails to define many of his key ideas, let

alone indicate how he has arrived at them, Kanterian is of the opinion that in the absence of the notebooks, scholars would have been at something of a loss to discern where he was coming from (*Ibid.*, 74). Nevertheless, the fact that he was pursuing a certain aesthetic ideal which demanded that nothing he said should be superfluous, and that his writing should have the character of a poetic composition, does not mean in Kanterian's view that it is purely a work of art, a 'poem', given the nature of its logical subject matter.

Neither Frege nor Russell, the two major philosophers of the age as Wittgenstein perceived them, reacted to the book in a way which showed to him that they understood it. This, together with the difficulty in finding a publisher, plunged Wittgenstein into despair and thoughts of suicide. This cannot have been helped by the self-inflicted misery and humiliation that came to accompany his decision to train as a primary school teacher. He believed that he had solved all the problems of philosophy, despite having a disdain for the academic world. The dispersal of his fortune amongst his brother and sisters, and his decision at this time to teach children, cannot be understood in terms of the kinds of motivations that would drive a more conventional human being.

Perhaps one is tempted here to say that there was an internal logic to Wittgenstein's actions after the Great War: something made it necessary, after the extraordinary amount of energy that went into the *Tractatus*, to spend some time in the wilderness before emerging to properly achieve anything else. Kanterian provides us with an account of the years up to 1929, including some background to the publication of the *Tractatus*. Ramsey believed that Wittgenstein's career as a schoolteacher was a 'ridiculous waste of energy and brain'. Kanterian mentions the thought that despite its sorry ending, this career had some significance for the development of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. He argues plausibly that it must be a wild exaggeration to suggest that the career as a school teacher is shown on every page of the *Philosophical Investigations*, as at least one writer has proposed (*Ibid.*, 101), although it is not implausible that the practical experience of teaching children did shift his focus away from the abstract mathematical approach to language of Frege and Russell (*Ibid.*).

Had Wittgenstein's 'career' followed a more conventional pattern, and had he indeed been a rather more conventional human being, then perhaps the *Tractatus* might have been the great work of his youth that established his reputation as a philosopher, the content of which might have come to be little more than tinkered with here and there in succeeding years. As Kanterian presents it, however, 'Wittgenstein's relation to philosophy is more comparable to a comet, which is initially attracted by the sun, approaches it, begins to glow, is then hurled away, and finally returns again, this time glowing even more intensely' (*Ibid.*, 112). The increasing attention which the *Tractatus* received between the wars, especially from the members of the Vienna Circle, came at a time when his outlook began to radically change, at first ever so slowly after his period as a schoolmaster, and then towards the end of the 1920's ever more rapidly on his return to Cambridge.

That, at least, is the conventional account of events, and at one level it is an accurate rendering of the historical record, regardless of how 'unified' his philosophical outlook throughout his life as a whole may in certain other respects be portrayed. Kanterian mentions that whilst the Vienna Circle voiced their veneration for a work expressing in their eyes the scientific world view, in doing so they chose to neglect that Wittgenstein took metaphysical truths to be ineffable rather than 'nonsensical' in the strict sense to which they adhered. This does not mean, of course, that those 'New' readers who would also agree that Wittgenstein on writing the *Tractatus* 'really' took metaphysical truths to be strictly 'nonsensical', as distinct from being ineffable, are doing so because they in any way could be said to share the Vienna Circle's outlook.

Kanterian also reminds us that in treating the *Tractatus* as some form of manifesto which manages to express their ideas about the application of a truly scientific method in philosophy, the Vienna Circle had radically misconstrued Wittgenstein's aims in yet another respect. His real outlook was instead totally pessimistic about modernity and social progress by means of science. Quoting what is usually regarded as the lengthy preface for *Philosophical Remarks*, Kanterian mentions Wittgenstein's statement that the spirit in which he writes is different from that prevailing in Western Civilisation, an attitude that was to remain dominant for the rest of his life (*Ibid.*, 114).

Despite his radical difference in outlook from that of his admirers in the Circle, Kanterian describes the level of admiration for Wittgenstein that prevailed: 'these scientifically minded philosophers were so much under Wittgenstein's spell that sometimes their meetings had the character of a session between a guru and his disciples' (*Ibid.*, 115). This captures an aspect of Wittgenstein's personality that makes itself felt again later on. Because he personally despised academia and possessed a rather unrealistic, romantic conception of the 'simple' life, he managed to convince some of his students to abandon their academic careers. But this was in favour of taking up often repetitive industrial work that by any normal standards was a waste of their talents. This is manifestly true of Wittgenstein's intensely personal relationship with Francis Skinner:

It was as if Wittgenstein was trying to recreate his younger self in Francis. Understandably, the young man's parents, knowing how promising his initial results in mathematics had been, were outraged and completely opposed to this choice and Wittgenstein's influence on their son. But Francis accepted only Ludwig's authority, and thus entered an apprenticeship as a mechanic at a company in Cambridge, which did not make him very happy (*Ibid.*, 135).

The tale does not have a happy ending. Wittgenstein and Skinner lived together as a couple in Cambridge during 1938, but during 1939 Wittgenstein found reason to distance himself emotionally and physically from the 'overly devout love of the younger man'. Wittgenstein was totally devastated by Skinner's death from polio, at the age of 29, in 1941, and in the following years must have reproached himself many times for being 'often loveless and, in my heart, unfaithful to him. If he had not been so boundlessly gentle and true, I would have become *totally* loveless towards him.' (Wittgenstein, as quoted *Ibid.*, 135 *et seq.*) If Wittgenstein does not emerge in a particularly good light from this story, there is no hint that his choice of a career for Francis did in itself give rise to any pangs of conscience later on. Kanterian offers a form of corrective to this adverse picture by pointing out elsewhere that even although one may be justified in asking what

right Wittgenstein had to use his authority in this and in other ways, Maurice Drury, who became a psychiatrist under Wittgenstein's tutelage, regarded him as 'the most warm hearted, generous and loyal friend anyone could wish to have' (Drury, as quoted, *Ibid.*, 123).

Wittgenstein's romantic conception of the simple life is also manifested in his desire to settle in the Soviet Union, ideally with Francis, 'where they would take up medical training or work as simple labourers' (*Ibid.*, 139). Whilst in the long run one may question just how seriously this wish was entertained, he did learn the Russian language and even went on a reconnaissance visit in 1935. However, one is left with the impression that Wittgenstein had allowed himself temporarily to be carried away by a romantic whim which in the final analysis could not stand up to his experiences of the reality of life in Stalin's Russia, even although there is no obvious criticism on his part of the totalitarian regime which prevailed. Indeed, he is even quoted as showing sympathy with a Stalin who, charged with having betrayed the Russian Revolution, had genuine internal problems to face plus external threats to Russia itself, which his critics failed to appreciate (*Ibid.*, 140). Kanterian remarks that this apparent understanding of mass-murderer Stalin is frankly incomprehensible, and closes his discussion, surely rather lamely, with the comment that at least Wittgenstein did not make a fool of himself, unlike some intellectuals like George Bernard Shaw, who saw Stalin as an honest man who ensured his people were well fed 'just when they were suffering the most terrible famines' (*Ibid.*, 140).

This was not the only occasion in which Wittgenstein appears to have adopted a bizarre attitude to world political events. His unsympathetic view of the West and its idea of technical progress led him to adopt towards the end of the war what must seem a rather weird apocalyptic vision: the 'hysterical fear over the atom bomb' shown by the public at large might indicate that 'something really salutary has been invented'. This 'really effective bitter medicine' offers the prospect of 'destroying an evil', *viz.*, 'our disgusting soapy water science' (*Ibid.*, 164). It is difficult to take this way of thinking seriously. Kanterian understandably questions the sanity of what can by any normal standards only be put down to a temporary bout of extreme pessimism and despair

of a kind from which Wittgenstein would appear to have not infrequently suffered.

‘A diversion from this gloomy mood’ took place through meeting a man 35 years younger than Wittgenstein: Ben Richards, a student at King’s College. Kanterian describes Ben as having been like Francis: kind, gentle and good looking, and Wittgenstein fell deeply in love with him. Since his secret infatuation in 1940 with Keith Kirk, a friend of Francis Skinner - an infatuation of which Kirk was apparently totally unaware - there had been no one else in his life, and we are advised that his relationship with Ben lasted for several years. Kanterian intriguingly tells us in an endnote that whilst Wittgenstein’s diaries are currently the sole source of information about the time with Ben, 20 of Ben’s letters to Wittgenstein are actually deposited in the Austrian National Library, inaccessible before the year 2020 (*Ibid.*, 165, and Footnote 37, 215).

Feelings for Ben notwithstanding, life in the academic surroundings of Cambridge had become increasingly unbearable, and Wittgenstein is quoted as being repelled by the stiffness, self-satisfaction and artificiality of those surrounding him. English civilisation is ‘disintegrating and putrefying’ (Wittgenstein, as quoted, *Ibid.*, 167). In 1947 Wittgenstein resigned his Cambridge chair and left for Dublin in December of that year. Barely four years of his life remained. Kanterian has provided an extraordinarily absorbing account of perhaps the most interesting period in Wittgenstein’s life, one which led to the production of the *Philosophical Investigations* in what was to all intents and purposes its final form. There are many other interesting aspects to Wittgenstein’s life during the period 1929 - 47, including, for example, his contacts with Keynes and Sraffa, which are more than adequately and interestingly surveyed in Kanterian’s account.

The chapter ‘Nothing is Hidden: *Philosophical Investigations*’ concerns a book which, as Kanterian describes it, is the result of 16 years of hard work. Whilst he has no intention of offering more than a relatively brief outline of its methodology and aims, it will come as no surprise to the perceptive reader that he should find it ‘a systematic and argumentative work in theoretical philosophy’. This is illustrated by his choice of ‘reliable’ commentators: Peter Hacker, Anthony Kenny, and Severin Schroeder (*Ibid.*, 174 & Endnote 9, 216). The *Philosophical Investigations* is

nevertheless a book which conveys 'a radically austere, disillusioning conception of philosophy with no precedent', one which shows that 'the way philosophy has been done for the past 2500 years is to a large extent misconceived' (*Ibid.*, 173 *et seq.*) Whilst it is an open question whether this is overstating the case, which to some extent it must be if Wittgenstein's philosophy is really as 'theoretical' as Kanterian believes, he succeeds very well in describing the character of the book and providing some examples of how philosophy is done in it (*Ibid.*, 174 *et seq.*):

Language is not just the clothing of thought, as Frege and the young Wittgenstein believed, but actually a presupposition for being able to have the articulate thoughts that we humans can have. The limits of thought are the limits of its possible expression.

To put it in the extreme: there can be no thought without language (*Ibid.*, 185).

Whilst this is uncontroversial, the reference already made to Wittgenstein's notion of thinking as a 'widely ramified concept' (*Ibid.*, 184) would tend to support the claim that whilst we cannot talk about human beings at all in a philosophical context without considering their possession of language, there are many instances in which our notion of *thinking* would also apply to expressive behaviour. This may indeed be a derivative notion of *thinking*, but it is one which we can apply both to human beings and, where appropriate, to animals who do not possess language if we exclude the most primitive, and sometimes perhaps not quite so primitive, forms of communication which we take them to possess. But this merely shows that the concept of *language* is also widely ramified if we are tempted to extend its application to new cases of this kind. If someone were to regularly proclaim in a rather boastful tone, 'I can think without language!', as if he were presenting some unique form of achievement, Wittgenstein's response would be that these concepts are not used like that.

On the other hand, when Kanterian takes the neuroscientist to task for asking *where* thinking is occurring, before concluding that it occurs in the brain (*Ibid.*, 184), we can be fairly sure that his neuroscientist has made the mistake of concluding that because certain mental processes can be

shown to be causally dependent on certain occurrences in the cerebral cortex, human thinking can be understood to be *identical* with events in the brain. But if one adopts this view, one might as well argue that whilst science reveals that ‘common sense’ is correct after all to talk about thinking as something that ‘goes on in our heads’, it has nevertheless been proved to be wrong in reflecting the thought that our emotions ‘take place in our hearts’. Yet in both cases, Wittgenstein’s response is that all we are dealing with here are figures of speech. The tendency to take these expressions *literally*, where this is indicated by the ways of speaking Kanterian attributes to his neuroscientist, results from a primitive interpretation of the use of some of our most basic concepts. To talk of a person’s thinking is not to talk, as Kanterian puts it, of an activity which is going on inside him, or, indeed, of one which is going on anywhere at all. *Thinking* is not the *name* of a *process*, and this raises the question whether we even have a genuine conception of what it would be for this to be the case. When Wittgenstein remarks that of course he *means* it when he says that ‘in my heart I understood when you said that’, he cannot be thought to be conveying the idea that whatever activity may be going on in his heart at that moment, it could have anything to do with what he is saying: he is merely using what he calls a figurative expression (*Investigations*, Pt. II, iv, 178).

A penultimate chapter on Wittgenstein’s life from 1947-51, includes accounts of his time in Ireland, and of his visits to Vienna and the United States. It ends with a description of the final burst of philosophical activity in his last couple of months, when he produced the second half of what is now published as *On Certainty*. A final short chapter entitled ‘The Aftermath’ begins with the treatment given to the 20,000 pages of the *Nachlass* by his literary executors, Anscombe, Rhees and von Wright, and makes the familiar point that just as Wittgenstein’s work became more and more accessible, the influence of his ideas began to decline amongst ‘mainstream’ academic philosophers within the analytic tradition (*Ibid.*, 199): ‘new metaphysics and scientifically inspired philosophy’, associated with Quine, Davidson, Lewis, Kripke and Chomsky, together with developments in ‘computer science, molecular and evolutionary biology, neuroscience and cognitive psychology’, all conspire to reveal, as ‘a glance at the leading philosophy journals will show’ (*Ibid.*) that the work

of Wittgenstein is being relegated to the margins of the discipline.

The paradox, if it is a paradox, is that Wittgenstein is nevertheless almost universally regarded as one of the great philosophers of all time, to be ranked with Aristotle, Hume and Kant, at a period when, in Kanterian's view, the flourishing of Wittgenstein scholarship is accompanied by a withering of his philosophical influence. Kanterian does not provide a particularly flattering account of the extraordinary volume of scholarly output on Wittgenstein which is regularly appearing and which, to admirers of his oeuvre, cannot be other than welcome:

But the 'Wittgenstein industry' goes beyond what is necessary and almost obscures access to Wittgenstein's thought by producing countless competing interpretations, philological debates, new 'readings', introductions, textbooks for students, collections of papers, conference proceedings, dissertations etc. This industry produces with remarkable regularity titles such as *The New Wittgenstein*, *Wittgenstein's Poker*, *Wittgenstein's Ladder*, *The Third Wittgenstein*, *Wittgenstein in 90 Minutes*, *Wittgenstein Flies a Kite*, etc. (*Ibid.*, 200 et seq.)

Although this 'industry' does have its amusing aspect insofar as it would appear to sanction, as Kanterian indicates, the attachment of Wittgenstein's name by publishers to books about almost any subject you please in the hope of creating a saleable commodity, he correctly argues that this is totally at odds with Wittgenstein's aim of creating a revolution not only in philosophy, but also in the way we live, and in the nature of Western society with its aspirations towards further progress. But Wittgenstein's relationship to his times raises complex and difficult questions. Edward Kanterian has produced a lively and readable biography of Wittgenstein as a philosopher, and as a 'cultural figure', which occupies a welcome niche between, on the one hand, the relatively brief, potted accounts of his life that accompany most books on his philosophy, and the more detailed 'official' biographies of his mentors Brian McGuinness and Ray Monk. The book is well produced with a quality of paper above the norm. Unusually, the text throughout is justified left hand only, and there is no index.

As do most philosophers, Derek McDougall fondly remembers the publication of his very first paper. This was in MIND in 1972. He has, however, continued to worry whether Gilbert Ryle's comment that "the matter is stated well and almost interestingly" referred more to the quality of its treatment rather than to Ryle's aversion to the nature of its subject (religious belief). Other papers have appeared in organs including PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH, PHILOSOPHIA, THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH (2008) PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS (2010) and ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY (forthcoming late 2012-13).

