

## Editorial: Little Ludwig

April is not the cruellest month, in spite of rumours to that effect started by the late great Mr Eliot. At best, the issue is void for uncertainty, like many a question that lawyers and philosophers have to deal with. But it is not hard to assemble facts and phenomena that count on one side or the other in the reckoning. When the defendant month stands at the bar, prosecuting counsel can truly and weightily declare that Adolf Hitler was born in April. The defence may reply that Charlie Chaplin was also born in April, and in the same April of 1889. We philosophers can add a substantial makeweight in the form of Ludwig Wittgenstein.

The Wittgenstein Centenary is being widely celebrated in the philosophical world and on its fringes. This year's annual Wittgenstein Conference at Kirchberg in Austria will amount to a centenary festival. A Wittgenstein Centenary Symposium has already been held at Girona in Catalonia. Some of the same speakers and some others will take part in similar events in Rome and Mexico City. A colloquium in North Carolina, planned for the late summer, has now had to be postponed. The journal *Philosophical Investigations* has marked the occasion with a special Wittgenstein issue. The Royal Institute of Philosophy's lecture series for 1989–90 will be fully devoted to Wittgenstein's work. BBC2 Television has twice broadcast a pictorial biography of Wittgenstein entitled 'A Wonderful Life'. ('Tell them', he is reported to have said on his death-bed, 'I have had a wonderful life.') A reporter from Austrian Radio spent a few days of this special April seeking information, opinion and controversy in the courts and streets of Cambridge. It had to be confessed to him that the Faculty of Philosophy and the University had not planned any conference or lecture or other academic event in honour of its hundred-year-old alumnus and professor. Until a few short months ago it seemed unlikely that Cambridge would mount or even accommodate any relevant celebration. Then an initiative was taken by the Austrian Institute in London which has resulted in the announcement of a concert to be given on 26 April—the exact anniversary date—in the Chapel of Trinity College. The programme consists of two Bruckner motets to be sung by the Trinity College Choir, together with piano music by Schubert, Brahms and Josef Labor, played by Ernst Peter Brezovsky. Before the music there will be some Introductory Remarks by Professor G. E. M. Anscombe. After the music there will be a party in the Old Kitchen. We know from Plato that philosophy is the highest music. By implication

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some music is philosophy. That leaves open the question whether music is the highest philosophy.

On an anniversary occasion it is customary to recall events in the life of the celebrand. People with first-hand memories of Wittgenstein have already reached a fairly high average age. He died on 29 April 1951. On some other occasion we may give our own direct recollections of his last year or two in Cambridge. As a birthday tribute we offer now a reminiscence from one who (as his story will show) has passed or failed to reach his own hundredth birthday, probably without recording his testimony.

During the Spring Quarter of 1967 we were visiting the University of California at Berkeley and giving a weekly seminar on Wittgenstein. A retired Professor of Oriental Studies knocked on the visitor's office door in Moses Hall because he had noticed the name 'Wittgenstein' on the card that announced particulars of the seminar. 'I wonder', he said, 'whether the Wittgenstein you are dealing with is connected with some Wittgensteins I knew in Austria before the first World War, in my early childhood.' After some brief exchanges about names and dates it became clear that in his childhood he had played with young Ludwig and other children of the Wittgenstein family. He had no idea that any member of the family had become famous, and was astonished at what he was told about the later life of Ludwig. Half delighted, half bemused, he slowly departed along the corridor, saying as he went, 'To think of it. Little Ludwig. Little *Ludwig!*'