

## Reflections on Kurt Gödel

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BRADFORD BOOKS, THE MIT PRESS, SECOND PRINTING, 1988

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Except for a few minor corrections this second printing is identical to the first ([Wang 1987]). The book is meant to be a first attempt to consider G's life and work as a whole within an inclusive context that, except maybe for chapters 6, 10, and 11, is accessible to most thoughtful people. The many personal contacts that W had with G during the later years of G's life makes him an important source of information about G, particularly when one realizes that G was a rather private person, was reluctant to publish, and left a wide range of unfinished projects. W decided, for reasons of organization, to separate the private sayings for inclusion in a later book entitled *Conversations with Kurt Gödel*. The current volume, less dependent upon unpublished material, is subdivided into three parts.

Part I, consisting of chapters 1 through 4, presents facts about Gödel's life and work.

Chapter 1 contains a discussion of G's life from the perspective of his dedication to fundamental theoretical work. W quotes and discusses three documents relevant to G's life and work. These documents are a letter from G's brother Dr. Rudolf Gödel in 1985, in response to an inquiry of W; the Grandjean questionnaire of 1974, a specially designed questionnaire that was answered by G, but never sent; and an evaluation of G's work, compiled by W and approved by G, on the occasion of G's receiving an honorary degree from The Rockefeller University in 1972. W makes a preliminary attempt to compare G with Einstein, and reports on their relation.

Chapter 2 contains a brief account of G's life and work, as told to W in 1976. W also examines G's relation to the Vienna Circle using a reply of G to a letter from Karl Menger in 1972, and using some notes by Carnap. W mentions Hilbert's programme and G's response, and makes a comparison between G and Wittgenstein. G distanced himself from the ideas of the Vienna circle, as he did not consider himself a positivist, and never accepted more than a few of their theses. G knew Wittgenstein and his work only superficially, but believed that his later work was a step backwards compared to his earlier work.

Chapters 3 and 4 contain a chronological account of G's life, divided into the Vienna period (through 1939) and the Princeton period (from 1940).

Part II, consisting of chapters 5 through 9, is about G's thoughts, and W's preliminary attempts to sort out his agreements and disagreements with G.