

Preface

This is a collection of most of the essays on Kurt Gödel that I have authored or co-authored. In their publication over the past decade, these essays have been dispersed, as they address various topics for various primary audiences: philosophers of logic and mathematics, phenomenologists interested in science, and historians of modern philosophy. The rationale for bringing them together here is that, not so much in spite as because of this variety, they show a coherence predicated on that of the many-sided project of Gödel's that they collectively analyse: the project of using Husserl's phenomenology to reconstruct and develop Leibniz' monadology as an axiomatic metaphysics, and then to provide a Platonistic foundation for classical mathematics starting from the metaphysics thus obtained. Brouwer's intuitionism serves as a foil. In choosing the title of this book, I have preferred descriptive accuracy to other, perhaps greater, qualities.

At times these essays go into issues internal to Leibniz', Husserl's, or Brouwer's thought that Gödel made few explicit comments on, or none at all. But in an evaluation of Gödel's reception of other philosophers this is only to be expected: A judgement to what extent the various ideas Gödel appeals to fit together and suit the purpose he has for them depends not on the web of Gödel's remarks, but on the web of ideas to which those remarks point.

I have chosen to leave the papers in their original form, and not to rework them into one continuous narrative. Naturally, this entails some repetition and overlap, but I hope that this at the same time facilitates access to the book as a whole. My consideration has been twofold. First, the continuous narrative would have been the form of choice for the more organic and comprehensive analysis that an intellectual biography of Gödel calls for; but, although the essays collected here may be read as preparatory steps for a biography of that type, they cannot, in their limitation to this one particular project, be more than that, and more should not be suggested. (In the Introduction, I give some examples of how these essays refrain from establishing connections to other parts of Gödel's life of the mind.)

Second, it is intrinsic to Gödel's project to be of interest from different perspectives and to different audiences; a form of presentation that explicitly responds to these differences is therefore not inappropriate.

For the occasion of their reprint in this volume, the essays have been recast in a uniform format, including uniform bibliographical references, and citations and translations have silently been added where missing. Spelling and punctuation have been standardised to British where appropriate. But otherwise I have followed what I consider to be the good practice of not revising papers when collecting them. Occasionally I have added a content footnote to these reprints, flagged as such; and the citation footnotes that were required by some journals have been deleted in favour of citations in the main text. As a consequence, the footnote numbering in these reprints in general diverges from that in the original publications. To be able to make the chapters available separately, as is required for the electronic edition, each comes with its own list of references; with an eye on the paper edition, a cumulative bibliography has been added, as well as a subject index and an index of authors and citations. In quotations, translations are my own, while emphasis stems from the author quoted, except where noted otherwise.

The acknowledgements specific to each chapter, the details of its original publication, and an acknowledgement of the permission to reprint it in this volume are included in the chapters themselves. Words of thanks that do not have a natural place there are those to my co-authors Robert Tragesser and Juliette Kennedy; it was a pleasure to write the two respective joint papers included here with them. Also, I am indebted to William Howard for his generous and good-spirited email letters about Gödel and related topics, in an exchange that occurred after most of the essays had been written.

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are actually held, for their efficiency and kindness. Gabriella Crocco gave access to her copy of the microfilm edition of the Gödel Papers, while Cheryl Dawson, Robin Rollinger, and Eva-Maria Engelen provided me with numerous transcriptions from Gödel's shorthand. Without their generosity, the research reported here would never have been. My gratitude to them is profound.

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Without the love and patience of my wife and son, this book could not have been completed.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Leen Stout, who, in his history class at the Erasmiaans Gymnasium in Rotterdam, oversaw my first writing on Gödel.

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