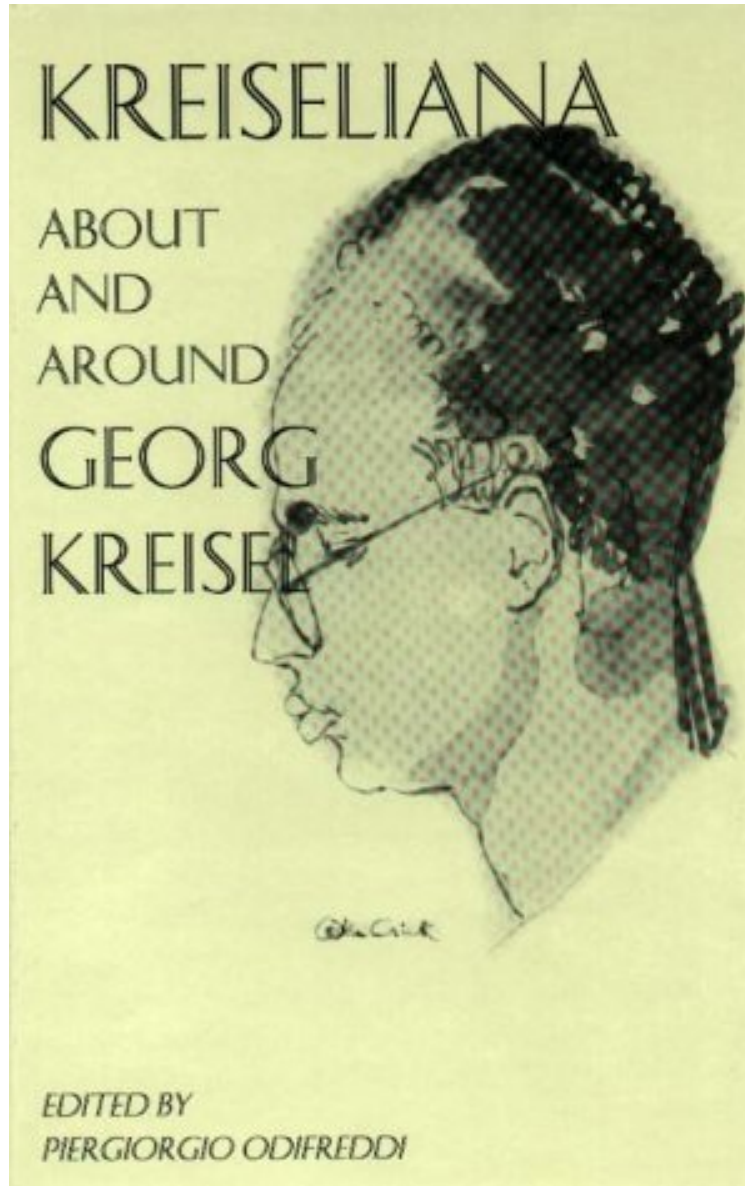


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Kreiseliana: About and Around Georg Kreisel

Odifreddi

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Odifreddi : Kreiseliana: About and Around Georg Kreisel before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kreiseliana: About and Around Georg Kreisel:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Wittgenstein called Kreisel the most able philosopher he had ever met who was also a mathematician. By James Klagge Kreisel was a mathematical logician who knew Wittgenstein during his student years. Through a cosmic coincidence, Kreisel died today! As I was preparing to write this review, I

checked Wikipedia to confirm that he was still alive (in which case I would have begun the review: "Kreisel IS a mathematical logician"), only to discover his passing on March 1, 2015. Wittgenstein called Kreisel the most able philosopher he had ever met who was also a mathematician. This book is a collection of essays honoring him on his 70th birthday (1993), so it is quite a coincidence I happened to finish reading it on the day of his death. Some of the essays are reminiscences, some are philosophical reflections on his work, and some are purely logical or mathematical. I skipped the latter. I first knew of Kreisel from his contribution to a collection on Philosophy of Mathematics that was an optional book in a undergraduate course I took on "Advanced Logic" in 1974. That course, in which I did quite well and which certainly inspired me, deluded me into thinking I could do work in logic at the graduate level. My first term in graduate school at UCLA I took a course in Mathematical Logic from the Mathematics Department, and only escaped by the skin of my teeth. I've continued to have an affection for mathematical logic, but now only as an amateur and on-looker. Kreisel is a sort of rebel figure in logic, motivated as much by inspiration as by calculation. He is also apparently a singular figure in life, inspiring people and repelling them--often the very same person. It is this sort of combination of interesting work and interesting life (like Wittgenstein) that attracts my interest. And, of course, he knew Wittgenstein. He had a rather irreverent view of Wittgenstein (which seems to have pleased Wittgenstein, who perhaps tired of being revered). He went to lectures and became friends with Wittgenstein in 1941-43, when he was an undergraduate. Then he did war work 1943-46. And he attended Wittgenstein's last year of lectures 1946-47. His mathematical prowess led to his assignment to work in hydrodynamics and naval engineering during the war. Francis Crick, who first came to know him at that time, reports (p. 26): "I believe that one of his first efforts was to apply the methods of Wittgenstein to the problem of mining the Baltic." However, that sounds apocryphal to me. Another of the contributors to this volume was his "significant other" for 2 or 3 years in the early 1960's. She says (p. 69); "Ludwig Wittgenstein's ghost kept haunting us throughout our time together." Kreisel was apparently equal parts loving and cruel. But this made him fascinating to many people, including non-academics. He is known to have had a long-standing relationship with Iris Murdoch, and she is thought to have modeled some of her characters on him. Perhaps even the (anti-)hero in "A Fairly Honorable Defeat." The contribution to this collection I most enjoyed was the paper (pp. 365-388) "Mathematical Logic: What Has It Done for the Philosophy of Mathematics?" This gave (me) a fine overview of certain large issues, placed Kreisel's work in relation to them, and briefly reignited my unrequited love affair with logic. Kreisel was famous for his extensive correspondence with fellow logicians. This provided my one and only contact with the man. I wrote to him in 1999 asking permission to translate from German and republish a short essay that he wrote about Wittgenstein and his work. I sent the letter to his last known address at Stanford (though he had retired from there in 1983). I soon received a hand-written reply from Salzburg, Austria, telling me in no uncertain terms that I did not have his permission. And, for good measure, he repeated that I did not have his permission, in case the previous paragraph was in any way unclear. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Interesting book about an interesting man By A Customer It is false that this book is ONLY for "mathematician fans and armchair philosophers" as the review insinuates. The book contains many mathematical and serious philosophical articles as well as invaluable personal information about one of the most interesting logicians of all times... Useful and inspiring. A good antidote against dessicated academics!

This multifaceted collection of essays, reminiscences and professional papers combine to create a tribute to Georg Kreisel, the influential logician and mathematical philosopher. The book aims to communicate to a wider circle his personal and intellectual influence. The contributors include Verena Huber-Dyson, Sol Feferman and Francis Crick.