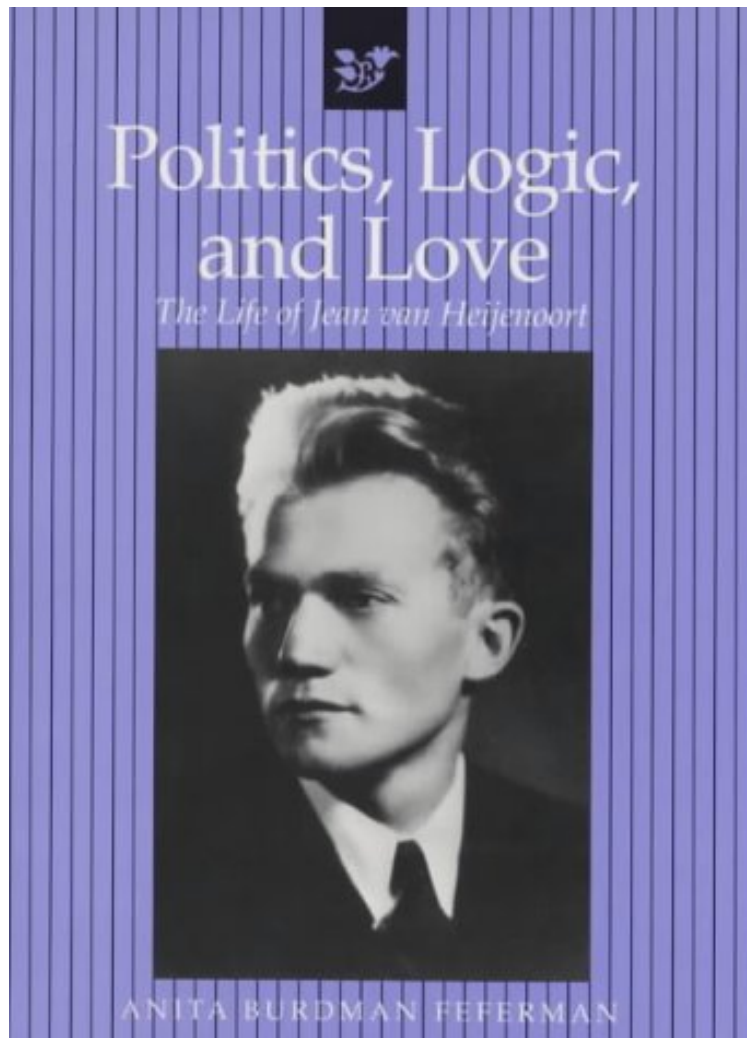


(Free read ebook) Politics, Logic, and Love: The Life of Jean van Heijenoort

Politics, Logic, and Love: The Life of Jean van Heijenoort

Anita Burdman Feferman

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Anita Burdman Feferman : Politics, Logic, and Love: The Life of Jean van Heijenoort before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Politics, Logic, and Love: The Life of Jean van Heijenoort:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "The Heart has Reasons that Reason Does not Know"By Clay GarnerFacinating story of a world class logician, who is also a world class emotional disaster. What a combination!Van Heijenoort, a French scholar, was "a close and constant reader of Blaise Pascal's Penses, he understood and identified deeply with its insights even though he knew Pascal was thinking of another kind of belief. Comrade Van knew all about the 'hearts reasons that reason knows nothing about'. . . . However, when van Heijenoort did finally come to talk about the personal forces which shaped his choice, he never ommited the statement: 'I believe

in strong feelings. Without that, there is nothing.' " (81) This is from a world class mathematical mind! Pascal's insight come to life. Feferman provides a touching tale of a tortured soul. Starts with van Heijenoort watching his father vomit blood, leading to his death. She does not flinch from saying that this vision controlled van Heijenoort until his death. Sadness, pain, injustice, abandonment were constant companions. His childhood spent with his aunt, for years seeing his mother only on Sundays, with fits of anger each time, is recalled throughout the book. He never stopped throwing tantrums. Many other such psychological connections are made. This work is really a psychological biography, though without being pretentious, since Feferman recognizes her limits. Adds clarity and interest, even if not proveable. Van Heijenoort's connection to Trotsky is fascinating. From explaining van Heijenoort's belief in Marxism, to his choice of Trotsky over Stalin, to abandoning French academia, to following Trotsky around the world and then leaving him, each step seems logical, rational and then - really - emotionally driven. How true for us all! The years spent in Mexico with Trotsky, his wife and son, Diego Rivera, Frieda Kahlo and others is a highlight of the book. Feferman provides detail of the affairs, jealousies, affection of this small group. The personalities of each is clearly drawn. Trotsky and Rivera finding a deep and intimate friendship, to finally being bitter enemies, is unforgettable. Frida and her compelling character is vivid. Stunning beauty, brilliant mind, independent spirit, affect everyone. Van Heijenoort talks about her in a special tone for the rest of his life. This book includes photographs throughout that adds depth to the text. Trotsky and his family, Rivera, Frida, van Heijenoort and his wives and son, mother, etc. Another revealing aspect is the description of Van Heijenoort's travel from devoted Marxist to opposer. The logical, persuasive, overwhelming appeal to a brilliant French scholar of a new system that will save the world is clear. The experience of really practicing Marxism (Trotskyism) is enlightening. "The reality of van Heijenoort's profound experience of alienation in New York and his estrangement from the leadership of the fourth international drove him to a reevaluation of all that he held holy. Rereading Marx and Engels and reexamining the mathematics Engels invoked to validate the theory of dialectical materialism, he found the attempted justification weak, shallow, and already fifty years out of date in 1848, when the manifesto was written. But finally, and most significantly, culminating factor in his rejection of Marxism was the postwar revelation of what had occurred in the Soviet detention camps: the sheer, unbelievable numbers of people imprisoned and annihilated." "Facing the horrifying facts, van Heijenoort came to the conclusion that it was not Stalin alone but the Marxist system as a whole that had created potential for the tragedy, and that had Trotsky been in power, he might have committed similar atrocities. Nor could he avoid one further step in his reasoning: if Trotsky might have committed atrocities, what would the loyal comrade Van, eager to do whatever his leader thought right and necessary, have done? The answer terrified him." (215) He wrote an article repudiating Marxism in 1948. "The article took a scientist's analytical stance and examined the 'Manifesto's' fundamental hypothesis, "that the proletariat can and must take the fate of society into its hands, snatch it from the catastrophe into which the bourgeoisie is leading it, and guide it toward communism. . . To Marxist commentators this premise seems as solidly based, or nearly so as the laws of motion heavenly bodies." (216) Van Heijenoort, in 1948, observed that the facts of history confirmed Newton and repudiated Marx. So did he. "Guilt and shame were Van's bosom companions; he embraced them to the point of speechlessness for having persisted in error as long as he did." (217) A heavy burden. Van Heijenoort went on to write famous books on the history of logic and the work of Godel. His love life went from one disaster to the next. What a contrast! Feferman includes this epigraph for chapter sixteen: "We run carelessly to the precipice after we have put something before us to prevent us from seeing it." Blaise Pascal, *pense* 183. Clear connection to the life of Van Heijenoort. Murdered by ex-wife. Includes appendix on his scholarly work, an index and reference of names mentioned in the text. Easy to read with a clear story. I was left with a picture of a fascinating man and insight into important events. I enjoyed it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. OK I admit it, I read books about people ... By jigme OK I admit it, I read books about people I almost knew but didn't get a chance to know, being too young. I read biography as a way to understand history. I will read this book again. Jean van Heijenoort lived for a time just a few miles from my parents house but if I met him, he would have been just another 'grownup' to me. How I wish I had known more about the world and asked more questions of all those grownups. Now I have to read books about them to make up for it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Logician and Poet By D. J. Leedham Van was one of my professors at Brandeis. A very quiet but very intense man. A logician with the soul of a poet, I thought at the time. This short biography is clearly written and covers all the main aspects of this remarkable man's life. He was a very private individual and it is unlikely anyone will ever make a definitive account of his extraordinary life. But Feferman offers enough detail and a some insight. Enough to make this a worth while account.

This practical handbook on independent game development offers expert tips on how to make successful games on your own terms. Readers will learn best practices for choosing the right game ideas, developing them efficiently, making gameplay fun, polishing a game for release, and taking games to market. Top indie game developers provide their advice, tips and tricks, and post-mortems of their experiences in hopes of encouraging more aspiring game makers to create innovative and fun games on their own.

From Book News Van Heijenoort became a member of the exiled Trotsky's inner circle at the age of 20, following and living with Trotsky until his assassination in 1940. In 1948, van Heijenoort renounced Marxism and entered academia in the US. Feferman interviewed him over the course of three years and here recounts the events of his life and evolution of his thinking. Available from AK Peters, Ltd., 289 Linden Street, Wellesley, MA 02181. Annotation copyright Book News, Inc. Portland, Or.