Review of Guillermo E Rosado Haddock, *A Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Gottlob Frege*

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Guillermo E. Rosado Haddock's critical introduction to the philosophy of Gottlob Frege is based on 25 years of teaching Frege's philosophy at the University of Puerto Rico. It developed from an earlier publication by Rosado Haddock on Frege's philosophy which was, however, only available in Spanish. This introduction to Frege is meant to steer a path between the two main approaches to Frege studies: on the one hand, we have interpretations of Frege which portray him as a Neo-Kantian and thus as some kind of Idealist, on the other, we have writings like those of Dummett in which Frege is portrayed as a type of "philosophical Adam", i.e. as completely separated from his philosophical tradition. Rosado Haddock succeeds in placing Frege's thinking into a (slightly) broader philosophical context – mainly by reference to his contemporary Edmund Husserl – while also avoiding a (Neo-) Kantian reading of Frege's work.

The structure of the book (which contains less than 150 pages of prose) follows chronologically Frege's writing. In this way, Rosado Haddock leads the reader through the whole of Frege's philosophy while highlighting important changes and developments in Frege's thought from the *Begriffsschrift* to his *Grundgesetze* and other later writings. Chapter 1 introduces us to the core philosophical themes of Frege's *Begriffsschrift* with a special emphasis on Frege's notions of "conceptual content" and "judgeable content". Here, Rosado Haddock, anticipates further discussion and points towards changes and developments of Frege's core notion of "identity", "function" and "content". Chapter 2 and 3 focus on Frege's *Grundlagen der Arithmetik*. Chapter 2 discusses Frege's methodological principles as outlined in Frege's introduction and his criticisms of psychological, naturalistic and Kantian approaches to the philosophy of mathematics. Chapter 3 focuses exclusively on Frege's own Logicist account of arithmetic while emphasising differences between Frege's views and Kantian or Neo-Kantian views. Chapter 4 and 5 are concerned with Frege's highly influential papers published in 1891-2, "Funktion und Begriff", "Über Sinn und Bedeutung" and "Über Begriff und Gegenstand" while also drawing on other relevant material from Frege's Nachlass, his correspondence and his magnum opus *Grundgesetze der Arith-*

metik. Chapter 4 includes a number of critical remarks about Frege's crucial notions of sense, reference and content. Chapter 6 focuses more specifically on the core philosophical claims of *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* discussing Frege's attack on Psychologism in the Introduction, suggesting that a less sarcastic (which isn't too difficult) and an (even) more convincing response is offered by Husserl. Frege's rejection of Formalism in mathematics and his views on definition are also discussed. The last chapter entitled "Some remaining philosophical issues" discusses briefly Frege's response to Russell in his afterword to the *Grundgesetze* and in a last act, Frege's own rejection of a Logicist foundation of arithmetic.

Rosado Haddock's account of Frege's philosophy is clear and accessible. In places, however, it reads very much like lecture notes and sometimes it is a little too close to the original text thereby offering little more than a paraphrase of Frege's original. The author provides plenty of references to the original and, when quoting Frege's work, places the German original in a footnote, which is good practise for a more scholarly introduction as this is meant to be. Often Frege's views and Frege's criticisms of others are merely reported rather than discussed and evaluated but then, I guess, something has to give when offering a short and condensed introduction to Frege's whole philosophy. There are a few typos (from the fairly minor one where "Carl Stumpf" turns into "Carl Sumpf" (p.17), or where "*gleichbedeutend*" becomes "*gelichbedeutend*" p.103 and others, to the possibly more unfortunate one where "to derive the mathematical axiom" should better be rendered as "to derive the mathematical theorem") and there are some passages that are ungrammatical (cf. p.94, p.105 and others). The typesetting of Frege's judgement stroke is not ideal since it looks exactly like the single turnstile which is used as such (p.4/5). Finally, there are passages that remind the reader that Rosado Haddock is not writing in his mother tongue – passages of this kind may well be found in this review – none of this however has a major effect on the accessibility of the introduction.

Of more concern to a Frege scholar should be that Rosado Haddock offers his own translation of Frege's text which, although mostly accurate, is in places non-standard. Apart from the case of "Bedeutung" where he states his reason for translating it with "referent"(!), no explanation for his choice of translation is offered. So for example, Frege's "Satz" is sometimes rendered by "sentence", sometimes with "statement", while "proposition" a word often used to translate Frege's "Satz" is identified with the thought expressed by a sentence. "Merkmal" which is usually translated with "mark" or "characteristic mark" is translated with "trait". Frege's core claim of §46 that "die Zahlangabe eine Aussage von einem Begriffe enthält" is rendered (without it being an actual translation) by "predications involving numbers assert something about concepts". I would have preferred: "a statement of number contains a predication about a concept". Be this as it may: a brief translation manual with a short explanation would have been enough

to cause less confusion and saddle a young scholar of Frege – presumably the main target of this book – with more sensitivity to the technical terms in German.

There are a number of interpretative claims made by Rosado Haddock which are interesting but not always convincing. Let me briefly discuss three of them. The author seems to suggest that Frege's demand for a sharp demarcation of concepts is the main culprit for Russell's paradox (see, e.g. "the seed of the Zermelo-Russell Paradox lies hidden precisely in this requirement", p.57; "Here lies the Achilles' heel of Frege's logical system", p.99; "The ground for the contradiction lies in Frege's requirement that functions – and thus, concepts and relations – be defined for all objects ..."). Now, it is true that one way out of the paradox – an option Frege himself considers and rejects in the afterword – is in effect to loosen this very requirement (and combine it with a view in which we regard value-ranges as improper objects which, in turn, will lead to a resolution of the paradox involving types). Yet, only because one possible resolution of the paradox involves a rejection of the requirement, does not mean that the "culprit" is that very requirement. Moreover, there are plenty of consistent systems and consistent fragments of Frege Arithmetic that hold on to this requirement. It appears that Rosado Haddock puts too much emphasis on the requirement of sharp demarcation as the main problem in Frege's logical system.

Rosado Haddock emphasises Frege's distinction between judgeable and conceptual content and suggest correctly that these notions play an important role in the development of Frege's theorising. The author goes further in that he argues that Frege's earlier notion of conceptual content continues to play a role in Frege's later philosophy as "omnipresent philosophical ghost" (p.4), that is even after having introduced the sense-reference distinction. By appeal to different quotations he develops the idea that Frege entertained a notion of sense that seems closer to the earlier notion of conceptual content in his letters to Husserl (1906) and, possibly, in "Der Gedanke". This much is interesting, yet, I think, the author goes too far when he claims that Frege himself is very much confused ("almost schizophrenic", p.126) about the notion of sense and that he conflates the two notions in his *Grundgesetze*. Moreover, none of the quotations offered on p.124 are sufficient to bolster his interpretation of such confusion.

Lastly, Rosado Haddock argues that Frege not only had no use for the context principle post 1891 but that there are passages in the *Grundgesetze* that are incompatible with the context principle. Unfortunately, the discussion of this core claim is too brief and not backed up by a sufficiently detailed discussion of the proponents' view that a version of the context principle remains upheld in the *Grundgesetze*. E.g. that it plays a role in §29-31 of *Grundgesetze* is acknowledged but seemingly not a problem for his interpretation since "the result of such use [of CP in §29-31] was, in any case, not very illuminating and certainly unnecessary" (p.73) – dialectically

not the most convincing response.

There are some other minor criticisms one may have with the introduction, e.g. there is not enough emphasis on certain core passages of Frege's thinking (such as *Grundlagen* §46 and §62), some technical terms could have received more explanation if the book is intended for undergraduate students, and the role of Platonism in Frege's philosophy is only covered superficially. Although, less-known literature (mainly that of Rosado Haddock's students and colleagues written in Spanish) is referenced, more of the most influential commentators, most notably Dummett, and other more recent interpreters could have, or even should have, found its way into this introduction.

Professor Rosado Haddock writes in his introduction about the difficulties of working as a Frege scholar in Puerto Rico. More recently he has written about worrying developments at the University of Puerto Rico that make working at the University even more difficult.[1] Yet, despite the difficult situation he found himself in, he has produced a concise and well-balanced introduction to Freges philosophy which, one hopes, will help to continue the tradition of Frege studies at his University and which offers interested students an accessible introduction to Freges ideas.

[1] See http://leiterreports.typepad.com/blog/2011/01/update-on-the-situation-at-the-university-of-puerto-rico.html