

**PHILOSOPHY IN HAO WANG'S CONVERSATIONS
WITH GÖDEL**
Review of
**HAO WANG, *A LOGICAL JOURNEY. FROM GÖDEL
TO PHILOSOPHY***

Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1996
xiv + 391 pp. ISBN 0-262-23189-1

FRANCISCO RODRÍGUEZ-CONSUEGRA

This is a long-awaited book. It contains Hao Wang's records of his conversations with Kurt Gödel (1906 -1978) from 1971 to 1976, ordered by subjects, and some reflections by Wang about Gödel's life, personality and ideas. The contents of the conversations are mainly philosophical in nature, which is very understandable; although Gödel almost never dared to make his philosophical ideas public, he sometimes felt the need of some philosophical interchange. Consequently, I will consider only the philosophical side of the book, though some other interesting things about Gödel can be found here.

The review is divided into seven sections. The first and second of these are devoted to the origins of the book, as it was actually published, and to the origins of the conversations themselves. The third tries to present a global scheme of Gödel's more general philosophical conceptions. Sections 4-6 will sum up the main ideas of what he thought about philosophy of mind, of mathematics and of logic and set theory. Finally, I will attempt some assessment of the book itself, and also of some of the philosophical ideas appearing here for the first time, in the context of Gödel's well-known ideas available in his previous publications, including the recent ones containing his philosophical unpublished manuscripts [1, 2]¹.

1. THE ORIGINS OF THE BOOK.

For many years Wang did not find a satisfactory way to publish the records of his conversations with Gödel. He told me in the early

© 2001 *Modern Logic*.

¹The first of Gödel's philosophical manuscripts to be published appeared in my "Un inédito de Gödel contra el convencionalismo: historia, análisis, contexto y traducción," *Arbor* **CXLII**, 558-559-560, 1992: pp. 323-348.