

Passages from "Concept and Object" [1892]

The concept (as I understand the word) is predicative. On the other hand, a name of an object, a proper name, is quite incapable of being used as a grammatical predicate. [43]

Surely one can just as well assert of a thing that it is Alexander the Great, or is the number four, or is the planet Venus, as that it is green or is a mammal? If anybody thinks this, he is not distinguishing the usages of the word 'is.' In the last two examples it serves as a copula, as a mere verbal sign of predication.... We are here saying that something falls under a concept, and the grammatical predicate stands for this concept. In the first three examples, on the other hand, 'is' is used like the 'equals' sign in arithmetic, to express an equation. [44-5]

An equation is reversible; an object's falling under a concept is an irreversible relation. [45]

We have here a word 'Venus' that can never be a proper predicate, although it can form part of a predicate. The reference of this word is thus something that can never occur as a concept, but only as an object. [45]

Kerry ...gives the following example: 'the concept "horse" is a concept easily attained,' and thinks that the concept 'horse' is an object, in fact one of the objects that fall under the concept 'concept easily attained.' Quite so; **the three words 'the concept "horse" ' do designate an object, but on that very account they do not designate a concept**, as I am using the word. This is in full accord with the criterion I gave-that the singular definite article always indicates an object, whereas the indefinite article accompanies a concept-word. [45]

It must indeed be recognized that here we are confronted by an awkwardness of language, which I admit cannot be avoided, if we say that **the concept horse is not a concept**, whereas, e.g., the city of Berlin is a city, and the volcano Vesuvius is a volcano. [46]

one would expect that the reference of the grammatical subject would be the concept; but the concept as such cannot play this part, in view of its predicative nature; it must first be converted into an object, or, speaking more precisely, represented by an object. [46]

When I wrote my *Grundlagen der Arithmetik*, I had not yet made the distinction between sense and reference and so, under the expression 'a possible content of judgment,' I was combining what I now designate by the distinctive words 'thought' and 'truth-value.' [47]

A concept is the reference of a predicate; an object is something that can never be the whole reference of a predicate, but can be the reference of a subject. [48]

in my way of speaking **expressions like 'the concept F ' designate not concepts but objects...**[48]

If he thinks that I have identified concept and extension of concept, he is mistaken; I merely expressed my view that in the expression 'the number that applies to the concept F is the extension of the concept *like-numbered to the concept F* ' the words 'extension of the concept' could be replaced by 'concept.' [48]

I have said that to assign a number involves an assertion about a concept; I speak of properties asserted of a concept, and I allow that a concept may fall under a higher one. I have called existence a property of a concept. [48-9]

This will be surprising only to **somebody who fails to see that a thought can be split up in many ways, so that now one thing, now another, appears as subject or predicate.** The thought itself does not yet determine what is to be regarded as the subject. If we say 'the subject of this judgment,' we do not designate anything definite unless at the same time we indicate a definite kind of analysis; [49]

In the sentence 'there is at least one square root of 4' it is impossible to replace the words 'square root of 4' by 'the concept *square root of 4*'; i.e. the assertion that suits the concept does not suit the object. Although our sentence does not present the concept as a subject, it asserts something about it; it can be regarded as expressing the fact that a concept falls under a higher one. But this does not in any way efface the distinction between object and concept. [49]

[T]he behaviour of the concept is essentially predicative, even where something is being asserted about it; consequently it can be replaced there only by another concept, never by an object. Thus the assertion that is made about a concept does not suit an object. Second-level concepts, which concepts fall under, are essentially different from first-level concepts, which objects fall under. **The relation of an object to a first-level concept that it falls under is different from the (admittedly similar) relation of a first-level to a second-level concept. (To do justice at once to the distinction and to the similarity, we might perhaps say: An object falls *under* a first-level concept; a concept falls *within* a second-level concept.) The distinction of concept and object thus still holds, with all its sharpness.** [50-1]

...not all the parts of a thought can be complete; at least one must be 'unsaturated,' or predicative; otherwise they would not hold together. [54]

We now get the same difficulty for the relation that we were trying to avoid for the concept. For the words 'the relation of an object to the concept it falls under' designate not a relation but an

object; and the three proper names 'the number 2,' 'the concept *prime number*,' 'the relation of an object to a concept it falls under,' hold aloof from one another just as much as the first two do by themselves; however we put them together, we get no sentence. It is thus easy for us to see that the difficulty arising from the 'unsaturatedness' of one part of the thought can indeed be shifted, but not avoided. **'Complete' and 'unsaturated' are of course only figures of speech; but all that I wish or am able to do here is to give hints.** [55]