

HUMBOLDT CONVERSATIONS IN PHILOSOPHY

15:15-18:00
GWZ H2 1.16

APRIL 18



Charles Travis is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at King's College London, and Professor Afiliado at the University of Porto. He received his doctorate from UCLA, and has taught at a number of universities in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Scotland, and England. Besides perception he has written on philosophy of language, Wittgenstein, objectivity and the idea of forms of thought, and issues in philosophy of psychology, notably concerning propositional attitudes.

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CHANGING PLACES

Frege drew something like a categorial distinction - perhaps even a more profound gulf - between concepts and objects. His way of drawing it has inspired the idea that the nature of philosophical questions forces one to try to 'describe thought from outside it' - something comparable to jumping out of one's own skin, or observing oneself rushing forward.

The trouble is that on the concept-object distinction Frege was just wrong. He confused what are essentially, by his own lights, relational notions, or notions of roles, for notions of categories - as if in syntax one confused the notions noun phrase and subject. The confusion is easy to make, less easy to unravel. Doing this will involve tracing the pedigrees of the two central notions in Frege's thesis, objecthood and concepthood.

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