Singular Concepts:
Propositions, Concepts, and Sets

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Abstract

Alonzo Church proposed a powerful and elegant theory of sequences of functions and their arguments as surrogates for Russellian singular propositions. Church's proposed theory accords with his Alternative (0), the strictest of his three competing criteria for strict synonymy. The currently popular objection to strict criteria like (0) based on the Russell-Myhill antinomy is misguided. Russell-Myhill is not a problem specifically for Alternative (0). Rather, it is a disproof of unrestricted concept comprehension. Unrestricted comprehension is also inconsistent with facts about sets of properties. Criteria more lax than (0) are philosophically inadequate. The principal rival conception of propositions as classes of possible worlds is subject to a fatal philosophical collapse: It follows on that conception, given that each of us is fallible, that everyone believes everything. Although it is far superior to its principal rival conception, Church's proposed theory is vulnerable under (0) to Russell's notorious *Gray's Elegy* objection.

Alonzo Church and Nathan Salmón, 1970s