Ostertag, *Definite Descriptions: A Reader* (MIT, 1998) has many of the classics.

**Quantifier domain restriction**

Stanley and Szabó, “On Quantifier Domain Restriction”, *Mind and Language* 2000. See also the commentaries by Bach and Neale and Stanley and Szabó’s reply in the same issue.

**Presupposition**


**The *Principles of Mathematics* theory of “denoting concepts”**

A *term* is any entity whatsoever. *Things* are “the terms indicated by proper names” and *concepts* are the terms “indicated by all other words” (44).

The *terms of* a proposition are those terms that the proposition is *about* and that *occur in* (are constituents of) a proposition. Things occur in propositions only as terms of them, concepts can sometimes occur in propositions as terms of them, and sometimes not.  

*Example.* Socrates and humanity *occur in* the proposition that Socrates is human, and in the proposition that humanity belongs to Socrates, and Socrates is a *term of* both, but humanity is only a *term of* the latter—the proposition that Socrates is human is not *about* humanity (45). (In Frege’s terminology, Russell is in effect claiming that a concept is sometimes an object.)

Among the constituents of propositions are *denoting concepts*.

A concept *denotes* when, if it occurs in a proposition, the proposition is not *about* the concept, but about a term connected in a certain peculiar way with the concept. If I say “I met a man,” the proposition is not about [the denoting concept] a man: this is a concept which does not walk the streets, but lives in the shadowy limbo of the logic-books. What I met was a thing, not a concept, an actual man with a tailor and a bank account or a public-house and a drunken wife. Again the
proposition “any finite number is odd or even” is plainly true; yet the concept “any finite number” is neither odd nor even. (53)

And similarly with definite descriptions: the proposition that I met the present Pope is not about the denoting concept *the present Pope*, but about a term connected in a certain peculiar way with the concept.

This “peculiar way” is the denoting relation. In the case of definite descriptions:

> The denoting concept *the present Pope* denotes the present Pope.

And:

> If Francis is the present Pope, then *the present Pope* denotes Francis.

In the case of, say, the denoting concept *some man*, “what is denoted is essentially not each separate man, but a kind of combination of all men” (62). “Peculiar” doesn’t quite do it justice.

**The Gray’s Elegy Argument**

The dominant contemporary interpretation seems to be that the argument’s principal target is the theory of denoting concepts, not Frege’s theory.

See:


Related helpful material:

