

WITTGENSTEIN ON RUSSELL'S THEORY OF TYPES

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Although the principal concern of this paper* will be to examine Wittgenstein's criticisms of Russell's theory of types, I will argue that the criticisms would apply to any theory of types, given the metaphysics and the theory of logic in the *Tractatus*. Choosing between a theory of types and an approach similar to the *Tractatus* may have significant consequences for one's philosophical theories. If successful, this paper will delineate at least one of these consequences.

Russell constructed the theory of types to handle a number of paradoxes among which were (1) Russell's paradox, (2) Burali-Forti paradox, (3) "The Liar," and (4) Richard's paradox. Speaking about the paradoxes, Russell says:

In each contradiction something is said about *all* cases of some kind, and from what is said a new case seems to be generated, which both is and is not of the same kind as the case of which *all* were concerned in what was said.¹

Since Wittgenstein only considers Russell's paradox in the *Tractatus*, the remarks here will be restricted to it. The resolution of the paradox revolves on the construction of types, which are defined as "the range of significance of a propositional function."² With the rule, "Whatever involves all of a collection must not be one of the collection,"³ Russell constructs his levels of language or hierarchy of types.

Here, perhaps a rehearsal of the developments which gave rise to Russell's paradox may be in order. We may recall that Russell's paradox is a result of the Laws, Definitions, and Rules which Frege set forth in the *Grundgesetze*. Frege was duly proud of his achievement as he states:

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