

## Positioning the *Tractatus* within the Transcendental Tradition

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### Abstract

My paper argues that the debates concerning the foundations of Mathematics during the late 19th century influenced the trajectory of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, more than is generally acknowledged. Towards this end, it proposes that the concerns for the foundations of Mathematics was not merely the force responsible for the shift in Wittgenstein's career choice, as is well-recorded, but more importantly, it systematically informed Wittgenstein's own philosophical orientation as it came to be articulated in his *Tractatus*. Though the influence of Frege and Russell during the formative stages of Wittgenstein's philosophical journey is well attested, what is often underemphasized is the influence that the trajectory of the history of mathematics has itself had on Frege's formulation of the realm of *thought* (*Der Gedanke*), and on Russell's persistent attempt to chalk out and articulate the atomistic foundations for his version of realism. What can be traced as the central underlying axis to the ventures of Frege and Russell is the manner in which they sought to reproduce the movement in Mathematics that began in the 16th century and sought to detach Mathematics foundationally from the realm of the empirical, thereby, enabling the redefining of its boundaries. This paper tries to foreground this aspect, and subsequently argues that the *Tractatus* bases itself precisely upon this axis that is common to both Frege's and Russell's philosophical ventures. Consequently, the paper tries to frame the *Tractatus* as positioning the question concerning language by detaching it, foundationally, from its empirical manifestations in order to discover the most general *form* of the proposition.

Further, the paper underlines the fact that an admittance of such an influence upon the *Tractatus* leads us to present a much clearer alternative picture of the division of the three central *forms* that pervade the *Tractatus*: the logical form (*die Logische Form*), the pictorial form (*form der Abbildung*) and the representational form (*form der Darstellung*). Such a framing, it will be shown, helps us foreground the distinction between the notions of *Darstellung* and *Vorstellung* that is operative in the *Tractatus*. In doing so, the paper presents the alternative possibility of construing the Tractatarian quest as an attempt to sketch out the very possibility of a representational language through the construction of the realm of the *logical* by squarely equating the *logical* with the *transcendental*.

Through such a positioning of the *Tractatus*, the paper, thereby, highlights the larger context of intersection of the *Tractatus* with the Transcendental tradition.