

Russellian act-type theories of propositions*

Thomas Hodgson

School of Philosophy and Sociology, Shanxi University

6 October 2020

Abstract

Act-type theories of propositions say that propositions are types of act. Fregean act-type theories say that these acts are directed at senses. Russellian act-type theories say that these acts are directed at objects and properties. I present an argument against Fregean act-type theories. I then distinguish two types of Russellian act-type theory, and show how an argument related to the one against Fregean theories extends to one of these types. The type of Russellian act-type theory that avoids the objection is the one which is most similar to the traditional Russellian theory of propositions. In making this argument I motivate a particular view about predication in act-type theories. I then argue that a Russellian act-type theory faces the problem of empty names. I conclude that the Russellian act-type theory most similar to the traditional Russellian theory of propositions is the best type of the act-type theory of propositions, and that this means that the best type of the act-type theory of propositions inherits a main problem for the traditional Russellian theory of propositions.