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there are no chairs, but he should see himself as correcting a metaphysical error embodied in vulgar usage. What moral should be drawn about other attempts that have been made to reconcile apparently revolutionary metaphysical theories with ordinary language is a topic that I must leave for discussion on another occasion.⁹

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⁹ I am grateful to several people at Oxford with whom I discussed an early version of this paper (especially Robert Frazier, who also commented on a later draft) and to Joan Mackie for comments on the penultimate draft. Some material in §§ 1 and 2 is reproduced, with permission from Blackwell Publishers, from my Critical Notice of van Inwagen, *Material Beings*, *Philosophical Books* 34 (1993) 75-83.

Paradox without Self-Reference

STEPHEN YABLO

Why are some sentences paradoxical while others are not? Since Russell the universal answer has been: circularity, and more especially self-reference.¹

Not that self-reference *suffices* for paradox. Such a view is refuted by the work of Gödel and Tarski, and by various commonsense examples, such as 'For the last time, stop that racket!' and 'So dear Lord to Thee we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise'. What many *do* seem to think is that some sort of self-reference, be it direct or mediated, is *necessary* for paradox. So one often hears that the surest way of keeping a language paradox-free is to impose an absolute ban on all self-reference. 'This may be using a cannon against a fly,' it is said, 'but at least it stops the fly.'

Except that it does *not* stop the fly: paradoxes like the Liar are possible in the complete absence of self-reference. Imagine an infinite sequence of sentences S_1, S_2, S_3, \dots , each to the effect that every *subsequent* sentence is untrue:

- (S_1) for all $k > 1$, S_k is untrue,
- (S_2) for all $k > 2$, S_k is untrue,
- (S_3) for all $k > 3$, S_k is untrue, ...

¹ Some semantical paradoxes, for instance Grelling's, trade not on self-reference but on circularity of other kinds. Self-reference *has* seemed essential to Liar-like paradox, however. This note gives an example of a Liar-like paradox that is not in *any* way circular.

Suppose for contradiction that some S_n is true. Given what S_n says, for all $k > n$, S_k is untrue. Therefore (a) S_{n+1} is untrue, and (b) for all $k > n+1$, S_k is untrue. By (b), what S_{n+1} says is in fact the case, whence contrary to (a) S_{n+1} is true! So every sentence S_n in the sequence is untrue. But then the sentences *subsequent* to any given S_n are all untrue, whence S_n is true after all! I conclude that self-reference is neither necessary nor sufficient for Liar-like paradox.

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The Earliest Unexpected Class Inspection

ROY A. SORENSEN

Memo: From the Chairman to new faculty

Now that you have settled into your new post, I am required to evaluate your teaching performance. The semester is well under way, so the sooner this is done, the better. If we were being scientific about sampling your teaching, the class observation would be a surprise inspection. Thus reason dictates that the visit should occur on the first day that you do not believe it will occur. But on reflection, this is an impossible demand. Could I give the inspection next Monday? No, because you would realize that Monday is the first available unexpected day. What about the next class on Tuesday? Well the previous elimination would make Tuesday the first available unexpected day. Hence, it falls prey to the previous reasoning. And indeed, parallel reasoning would eliminate all of the remaining days. Hence, the earliest unexpected inspection is impossible. Since we hired you in a buyer's market, you have obviously noted the resemblance to the surprise examination paradox. But you may have not noticed that the elimination proceeds in the reverse direction. It is odd that such a reversal could be effected by substituting a definite description ('The event will occur on the first unexpected day') for an existential generalization ('The event will occur on an unexpected day'). But that's logic for you. Thus I am compelled to take refuge in philosophy department's custom of asking you to propose a day for the class visit.

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