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ON THE ISSUE OF THE LIAR ANTINOMY

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I justify a non-logician speaking of the liar antinomy by Peano view that semantic antinomies are linguistic issues. The remarks I formulate below follow Alfred Gawroński's idea, namely, that the liar antinomy is an apparent antinomy.

Accepting "the liar sentence" as an antinomy, perhaps results from the fact that logic operates only on expressions with complete sense explication and neglects the fact that some content in sentences of a natural language, which is the only existing language, is sometimes communicated not explicitly.

Further considerations are based on three theorems:

1. Under a silent agreement, independent sentences that are true in a natural language express explicitly only the propositional content (or more strictly: the propositional content with its possible temporalization), while the truth content is given not explicitly (in other words: is expressed by a zero exponent) — is understood on the basis of a lack of the exponent of negation or the exponent of suspension of assertion. Thus, every indicative affirmative sentence is, in a natural language, a proposition which is true. From the point of view of logical value, such sentences are equal to sentences with an explicit truth exponent, cf.:

Snow is white = It is true that snow is white / It is thus that snow is white / The sentence <<Snow is white>> is true.

Let's point out, for the sake of avoiding misunderstanding, that sentences on both sides of the equation are not to be regarded communicatively

equal. Sentences following the equality sign are meant only to (artificially) explicate their truth content. Thus, if sentences of the type *Snow is white* are symbolized by *a*, then the symbol can be used only as in *a is true* (*a means <<a is true>>*). However, the symbol mustn't be used as in *a is false*.

2. The truth predicate, similarly to other predicates that are part of the category of epistemic modality, is a predicate of a higher order (a propositional predicate) of one propositional argument with an inherent argument of the first person. On the grounds of semantics, we express this by saying that the argument of the truth predicate is a proposition (propositional content). In sentences of the type *Snow is white*, only the propositional content is explicitly expressed, which is the argument of non explicit truth predicate.

Sentences with the explication of the truth predicate of the type *It is thus that snow is white / That snow is white is true* (= *a is true*) can in turn be used as exponents of the propositional argument, and thus as exponents of the argument implied by the modal predicate, e.g.:

It is not thus that / It is not true that snow is white is true (= <<*a is true*>> *is false*).

There is no antinomy in such sentences: they are a rejection (negation) of the proposition made as true, which is expressed in a natural language by means of a reduced form:

It is not thus that snow is white / It is not true that snow is white etc.

The falsity predicate *it is not true that / it is not thus that* refers not to the proposition expressed by the sentence *Snow is white*, but to the propositional argument admittedly expressed by the sentence *Snow is white*, but having the value *It is thus that snow is white*. Obviously, under the convention of a natural language, the sentence *It is not thus that snow is white* stands for a true proposition, namely

(*It is true that*) *it is not thus that snow is white (is true)*.

Brackets in this notation mark the fact that the truth content is expressed not explicitly. These notations could be simplified if negation were regarded as a predicate separate from the truth predicate and able to co-occur with

it. Here, however, it is not adopted because of logical tradition which treats truth and falsity as two opposite predicates.

3. Sentences which are within the scope of the truth predicate and are exponents of propositional arguments need to be differentiated from sentence names, which refer to other sentences. On account of co-occurrence of either one or the other type of expressions, J. L. Pollock differentiates between the operator use of "truth" and the predicate use. The first is the use with proposition exponents, the other — with "exponents" (names) of sentences. It seems that there are no reasons to differentiate between two variants of "truth". The difference lies not in the predicate (identical in both uses) but in the form of arguments co-occurring with it. In the case of co-occurring with the proposition exponent, the truth predicate is asserted directly about the content of proposition, e.g.:

It is thus that / It is true that snow is white.

It is thus that / It is true that Aristotle was a student of Plato.

It is thus that / It is true that Columbus discovered America etc.

In the case of co-occurring with "exponents" of sentences (names of sentences), the truth predicate cannot refer to the content of these names (have it as an argument) because they are not proposition exponents. For example, in sentences such as:

What I said is true.

What I think / what John thinks is true.

It is thus as I said / as John said.

It is thus as I think / as John thinks.

John's statement is true.

John's opinion is true etc.

the truth predicate about the content of the components *what I said; what I think* etc. is not asserted because these components are not sentences, do

not represent the propositional content, and hence cannot have a semantic-syntactic relation with the truth predicate. The relation can occur only between the propositional content expressed by sentences which refer to the content. A superficial co-occurrence of such names of sentences with expressions indicating truth is possible only due to their reference function.

Such names of sentences, as quoted above, can have the reference function because they are names characterized by absorption. Namely, they absorb the position opened by a predicate for a propositional argument, causing a necessity to explicate the position externally, e.g.:

John said that the Prime Minister of Serbia had been killed.

John said p (something).

p, which (what) John said ...

Let's point out again that "truth" in the predicate use (according to Pollock's terminology) is not and cannot be asserted about expressions (more strictly: about the content of expressions) together with which it functions as the grammatical predicate.

On the basis of the above theorems it becomes clear that the liar antinomy is apparent (or illusory in A. Gawroński's words). For illustration let's analyze its simplest version that originated in ancient times.

What I am saying now is not true.

Let's notice by the way that this version is semantically inaccurate — it is not possible to simultaneously say something and say that this something is being said. A more semantically accurate would be a perfective version of the type:

What I have just said is not true.

But let's stick to the original version. The sentence in this version will not tell us what the falsity predicate refers to. However, we know that it does not refer to the name "what I am saying now," but to the propositional content which is external to the sentence and which has just been communicated by the speaker or is going to be communicated in a moment. It is this content that the speaker asserts to be not true. If it is so indeed, then what the

speaker says is true, but truth does not refer to the propositional content to which the name "what I am saying now" refers to. The falsity predicate is asserted about the name, while the truth predicate, which is expressed implicitly in the sentence, is asserted about the speaker, or more strictly: about that the speaker lied asserting a proposition which the speaker knew was not true. Thus, there is no contradiction in sentences of the type, the assumed antinomy is apparent: the truth and falsity predicates have different arguments (are asserted about different propositions), in particular the truth predicate is asserted about the proposition constituted by the falsity predicate (the falsity predicate is within the scope of the truth predicate, and thus has a different syntactic position). The situation can be explicitly illustrated by:

It is thus that what I am saying now is not true.

It is true that what I am saying now is not true.

The same applies to sentences which refer not to one utterance, but to an open series of utterances, that is sentences with a non-actual (time unspecified) verb form of the type that logicians quote e.g. *I am true, I am false*. Their semantic structure *mutatis mutandis* is the same as the structure of the sentences analyzed above.

There is no significant difference in structure between one-sentence and multi-sentence versions of "the liar antinomy." Let's use the variant quoted by Herzberger. Let's assume that Socrates says *Plato speaks falsely*, and Plato reacts with *Socrates speaks truly*. Both sentences are obviously true. One asserts truly about Plato's utterance(s) that it is (they are) inconsistent with truth, the other asserts truly that Socrates's utterance about Plato is consistent with truth. Both sentences have the above mentioned zero exponent of affirmative modality, which can be (artificially) shown, e.g.:

It is true that Plato speaks falsely.

It is true that Socrates speaks truly.

Let's follow A. Gawroński's conclusion here that there are no sentences which say that they themselves are not true. Thus there is no semantic reasons to accept the liar antinomy. What can be expressed is only bewilderment that so much effort was put into solving the antinomy which cannot

be solved because it does not exist.

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