

The Counterexample to the Proof-Theoretic Conjecture for Self-Referential Paradoxes

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14th Jan 2021

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Dag Prawitz(1965, p. 95) investigated Russell's paradox in natural deduction and discovered that the derivation formalizaing Russell's paradox falls into a non-terminating reduction sequence.



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Neil Tennant(1982, 1995, 2015, 2016, 2017) has regarded the non-terminating reduction sequence as the primary feature of paradoxes and proposed the proof-theoretic criterion for paradoxicality.



Tennant(1982) sets his criterion for paradoxicality such that the derivations formalizing paradoxes in natural deduction are distinguished by having non-terminating reduction sequences of the derivation of an absurdity (\perp) involved. He called a non-terminating reduction sequence a ‘looping reduction sequence.’



While investigating a non-self-referential paradox suggested by Stephen Yablo(1993), Tennant(1995) has extended his criterion by embracing a spiraling reduction generated by Yablo's paradox. He thought that a looping reduction sequence is the main feature of the self-referential paradoxes but not that of Yablo's paradox. He claimed that the non-terminating reduction sequence enters into loops if the self-reference is involved; otherwise it does not. We interpret his claim as an informal conjecture for self-referential paradoxes that every derivation formalizing a self-referential paradox in natural deduction generates a looping reduction sequence but not a spiraling reduction sequence.

The Proof-Theoretic Criterion for Paradoxicality(*PCP*): Let \mathcal{D} be any derivation of a given natural deduction system S . \mathcal{D} is a *T-paradox* if and only if

- (i) \mathcal{D} is a (closed or open) derivation of \perp ,
- (ii) *id est* inferences (or rules) are used in \mathcal{D} ,
- (iii) a reduction procedure of \mathcal{D} generates a non-terminating reduction sequence, such as a reduction loop.

The Proof-Theoretic Conjecture for Self-Referential Paradoxes(*PCSP*):

Let \mathcal{D} be any derivation satisfying *PCP*, i.e. a T-paradox. \mathcal{D} generates a looping reduction sequence if and only if \mathcal{D} formalizes a self-referential paradox.

Counterexamples and Suggestions

The Aim: To find a correct proof-theoretic structure of self-referential paradoxes.

The Counterexample to *PCSP*: There is a derivation of a self-referential paradox, e.g. the Liar paradox, which satisfies *PCP* but generate a spiraling reduction sequence.

Suggestion: It should be discussed which reduction procedure is admissible in order to find a correct proof-theoretic structure for (self-referential) paradoxes.

- **Language:**

Functions and constants: the constant 0 , the unary function symbol s for successors, the binary function symbol $+$ for addition.

Logical operators : \rightarrow , \perp , and \forall for implication, absurdity, and universal quantification respectively.

Formulas(predicates) : φ , ψ , and σ for arbitrary formula. Also, the binary predicate $<$ for less-than-relation, and $=$ for equality.

Negation (\neg) : $\neg\varphi$ is defined by $\varphi \rightarrow \perp$.

- **Derivation symbol:** \mathcal{D}

Preliminaries

- Rules:**

$$\begin{array}{c}
 [\varphi]^1 \\
 \mathcal{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\psi}{\varphi \rightarrow \psi} \rightarrow I,1
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{D}_2 \\
 \frac{\varphi \rightarrow \psi \quad \varphi}{\psi} \rightarrow E
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\varphi[y/x]}{\forall x\varphi(x)} \forall I
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{D}_2 \\
 \frac{\forall x\varphi(x)}{\varphi[t/x]} \forall E
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 [\neg\varphi]^1 \\
 \mathcal{D} \\
 \frac{\perp}{\varphi} CR,1
 \end{array}$$

- Reductions:**

$$\begin{array}{c}
 [\varphi]^1 \\
 \mathcal{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\psi}{\varphi \rightarrow \psi} \rightarrow I,1
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{D}_2 \\
 \frac{\varphi}{\varphi} \rightarrow E
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \triangleright_{\rightarrow}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{D}_2 \\
 \varphi \\
 \mathcal{D}_1 \\
 \psi
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\varphi(y)}{\forall x\varphi[x/y]} \forall I \\
 \frac{\forall x\varphi[x/y]}{\varphi[t/x]} \forall E
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \triangleright_{\forall}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{D}_1 \\
 \varphi[t/y]
 \end{array}$$

Preliminaries

Definitions

- A derivation is in **normal** if it has no **maximum formula**.
- A **maximum formula** is a conclusion of I-rule and a major premise of E-rule.

$$\frac{\frac{[\varphi]^1}{\mathcal{D}_1} \quad \psi}{\varphi \rightarrow \psi} \rightarrow I,1 \quad \frac{\mathcal{D}_2 \quad \varphi}{\varphi} \rightarrow E}{\psi} \text{ reduces to } \frac{\mathcal{D}_2 \quad \varphi}{\psi} \rightarrow E$$

Definition

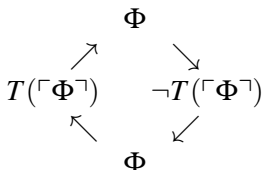
A sequence $\langle \mathcal{D}_1, \dots, \mathcal{D}_i, \mathcal{D}_{i+1}, \dots \rangle$ of derivations is a *reduction sequence* relative to \mathbb{R} iff $\mathcal{D}_i \triangleright \mathcal{D}_{i+1}$ relative to \mathbb{R} where $1 \leq i$ for any natural number i . A derivation \mathcal{D}_1 is *reducible* to \mathcal{D}_i ($\mathcal{D}_1 \succ \mathcal{D}_i$) relative to \mathbb{R} iff there is a sequence $\langle \mathcal{D}_1, \mathcal{D}_2, \dots, \mathcal{D}_i \rangle$ relative to \mathbb{R} where for each $j < i$, $\mathcal{D}_j \triangleright \mathcal{D}_{j+1}$; \mathcal{D}_1 is *irreducible* relative to \mathbb{R} iff there is no derivation \mathcal{D}' to which $\mathcal{D}_1 \triangleright \mathcal{D}'$ relative to \mathbb{R} except \mathcal{D}_1 itself.

Definition

A derivation \mathcal{D} is *normal* (or in *normal form*) relative to \mathbb{R} iff \mathcal{D} is irreducible relative to \mathbb{R} , i.e. \mathcal{D} has no maximum formula. A reduction sequence *terminates* iff it has a finite number of derivations and its last derivation is in normal form. A derivation \mathcal{D} is *normalizable* relative to \mathbb{R} iff there is a terminating reduction sequence relative to \mathbb{R} starting from \mathcal{D} .

The Proof-Theoretic Criterion for Paradoxicality(PCP)

- **Formalizing the Liar Paradox in Natural Deduction:** We use an unary truth-predicate $T(\ulcorner x \urcorner)$ which states that x is true. Let us define Φ be a sentence $\neg T(\ulcorner \Phi \urcorner)$. We call Φ a liar sentence. The so-called liar sentence says: “This sentence is not true.”



The Proof-Theoretic Criterion for Paradoxicality(PCP)

- Formalizing the Liar Paradox in Natural Deduction:** We use rules for $T(\ulcorner x \urcorner)$ which states that x is true.

$$\frac{\varphi}{T(\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner)} TI \qquad \frac{T(\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner)}{\varphi} TE$$

- The standard reduction procedure for $T(x)$ is as below.

$$\frac{\mathfrak{D}}{\frac{\varphi}{T(\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner)} TI} TE \qquad \triangleright_{T(x)} \qquad \frac{\mathfrak{D}}{\varphi}$$

The Proof-Theoretic Criterion for Paradoxicality(PCP)

- Formalizing the Liar Paradox in Natural Deduction:** For formulating the Liar paradox, S_L has a Tennant's rules for the liar sentence Φ from Tennant(2016, 2017).

$$\begin{array}{c}
 [T(\ulcorner \Phi \urcorner)]^1 \\
 \mathfrak{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\perp}{\Phi} \Phi I_{,1}
 \end{array}
 \qquad
 \begin{array}{c}
 [-T(\ulcorner \Phi \urcorner)]^1 \\
 \mathfrak{D}_2 \\
 \frac{\Phi \quad \varphi}{\varphi} \Phi E_{,1}
 \end{array}$$

- The reduction procedure for Φ as follows.

$$\begin{array}{c}
 [T(\ulcorner \Phi \urcorner)]^1 \\
 \mathfrak{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\perp}{\Phi} \Phi I_{,1} \\
 \hline
 \varphi
 \end{array}
 \qquad
 \begin{array}{c}
 [-T(\ulcorner \Phi \urcorner)]^2 \\
 \mathfrak{D}_2 \\
 \frac{\varphi}{\varphi} \Phi E_{,2}
 \end{array}
 \quad \triangleright_{\Phi} \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 [T(\ulcorner \Phi \urcorner)]^1 \\
 \mathfrak{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\perp}{-T(\ulcorner \Phi \urcorner)} \rightarrow I_{,1} \\
 \mathfrak{D}_2 \\
 \varphi
 \end{array}$$

The Proof-Theoretic Criterion for Paradoxicality(PCP)

- Formalizing the Liar Paradox in Natural Deduction:** First, we have an open derivation Σ_1 of \perp from $[T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]$ below left. With Σ_1 , there is a closed derivation Σ_2 of $T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)$ below right.

$$\frac{\frac{[T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]^1}{\Phi} TE \quad \frac{[\neg T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]^2 \quad [T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]^1}{\perp} \rightarrow E}{\perp} \Phi E_{,2} \rightarrow E \qquad \frac{[T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]^1}{\Sigma_1} \frac{\perp}{\Phi} \Phi I_{,1}}{T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)} TI$$

- Then, we have a closed derivation Σ_3 of \perp .

$$\frac{\frac{[T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]^1}{\Sigma_1} \frac{\perp}{\neg T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)} \rightarrow I_{,1} \quad \Sigma_2}{\perp} T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner) \rightarrow E$$

The Proof-Theoretic Criterion for Paradoxicality(*PCP*)

The Proof-Theoretic Criterion for Paradoxicality(*PCP*): Let \mathcal{D} be any derivation of a given natural deduction system S . \mathcal{D} is a *T-paradox* if and only if

- (i) \mathcal{D} is a (closed or open) derivation of \perp ,
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- (iii) a reduction procedure of \mathcal{D} generates a non-terminating reduction sequence, such as a reduction loop.

The Conjecture for Self-Referential Paradoxes

- **Formalizing Yablo's paradox in Natural Deduction:** Yablo's paradox begins with an infinite sequence of sentences S_1, S_2, S_3, \dots , each to the effect that every subsequent sentence is not true.
 - (S_1) for all $u > 1$, S_u is not true,
 - (S_2) for all $u > 2$, S_u is not true,
 - (S_3) for all $u > 3$, S_u is not true, ...

The Conjecture for Self-Referential Paradoxes

- **Formalizing Yablo's paradox in Natural Deduction:** we define S_v as $\forall x(x > v \rightarrow \neg T(\ulcorner S_x \urcorner))$.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & T(\ulcorner S_u \urcorner) & \\ & \swarrow \quad \searrow & \\ \forall x(x > u \rightarrow \neg T(\ulcorner S_x \urcorner)) & & \forall x(x > u \rightarrow \neg T(\ulcorner S_x \urcorner)) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ u + 1 > u \rightarrow \neg T(\ulcorner S_{u+1} \urcorner) & & \forall x(x > u + 1 \rightarrow \neg T(\ulcorner S_{u+1} \urcorner)) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \neg T(\ulcorner S_{u+1} \urcorner) & & T(\ulcorner S_{u+1} \urcorner) \end{array}$$

The Conjecture for Self-Referential Paradoxes

- Proposition 2.4.** There is a closed derivation of \perp in S_Y with respect to \mathbb{R}_Y , which initiates a non-terminating reduction sequence and so is not normalizable.

$$\begin{array}{c}
 [T(\ulcorner S_w \urcorner)]^1 \\
 \theta(w) \\
 \perp \\
 \hline
 \neg T(\ulcorner S_w \urcorner) \rightarrow I_1 \\
 \hline
 w > v \rightarrow \neg T(\ulcorner S_w \urcorner) \rightarrow I_{\emptyset} \\
 \hline
 \forall x(x > v \rightarrow \neg T(\ulcorner S_x \urcorner)) \quad \forall I \\
 \dots \dots \dots \quad def \\
 \hline
 S_v \\
 \hline
 T(\ulcorner S_v \urcorner) \quad TI \\
 \hline
 \theta(v) \\
 \perp
 \end{array}
 \qquad
 \begin{array}{c}
 [T(\ulcorner S_w \urcorner)]^1 \\
 \theta(w) \\
 \perp \\
 \hline
 \neg T(\ulcorner S_w \urcorner) \rightarrow I_1 \\
 \hline
 w > v + 1 \rightarrow \neg T(\ulcorner S_w \urcorner) \rightarrow I_{\emptyset} \\
 \hline
 \forall x(x > v + 1 \rightarrow \neg T(\ulcorner S_x \urcorner)) \quad \forall I \\
 \dots \dots \dots \quad def \\
 \hline
 S_{v+1} \\
 \hline
 T(\ulcorner S_{v+1} \urcorner) \quad TI \\
 \hline
 \theta(v + 1) \\
 \perp
 \end{array}$$

- Tennant called the abovereduction sequence a spiraling reduction sequence.

The Conjecture for Self-Referential Paradoxes



I shall make so bold as to suggest that it is precisely when the non-terminating reduction procedures enter loops that self-reference is involved. And when they don't enter loops - as with Yablo's example - then self-reference is not involved. (Tennant(1995, p. 207).)

The Conjecture for Self-Referential Paradoxes

The Proof-Theoretic Conjecture for Self-Referential Paradoxes(*PCSP*):

Let \mathcal{D} be any derivation satisfying *PCP*, i.e. a T-paradox. \mathcal{D} generates a looping reduction sequence if and only if \mathcal{D} formalizes a self-referential paradox.

The Counterexample : There is a derivation which generates a spiraling reduction sequence but formalizes the Liar paradox.

The Counterexample to *PCSP*

- An additional reduction procedure for *classical reductio* introduced by Gunnar Stålmarm (1991, pp. 131-132).

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \frac{[\neg\varphi]^1}{\mathfrak{D}_1} \\
 \frac{\perp}{\varphi} CR_{,1} \quad \frac{\mathfrak{D}_2}{\psi} \circ E \\
 \hline
 \sigma
 \end{array}
 \quad \triangleright_{CR(\circ)} \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \frac{[\neg\sigma]^2}{\perp} \quad \frac{[\varphi]^1 \quad \psi}{\sigma} \circ E \\
 \hline
 \rightarrow I_{,1} \\
 \mathfrak{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\perp}{\sigma} CR_{,2}
 \end{array}$$

Proposition 3.1. *There is a closed derivation of \perp in S_{CL} with respect to \mathbb{R}_{CL} , which generates a non-terminating reduction sequence and so is irreducible.*

Proof. Two claims will verify the result.

Claim 1. There is a closed derivation Π_3 of \perp .

There is an open derivation Π_1 of \perp from $[\neg\Phi]$ as left below. With Π_1 , there is an open derivation Π_2 of \perp from $[\neg T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]$ as right below.

$$\frac{\frac{[\neg\Phi]^2 \quad \frac{[T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]^1}{\Phi} TE}{\rightarrow E}}{\frac{\perp}{\Phi} \Phi I_{1,1} \rightarrow E} \quad \frac{\frac{[\neg\Phi]^2 \quad \frac{\perp}{\Phi} CR_2}{T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)} TI}{[\neg T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]^3 \quad \perp} \rightarrow E$$

Having Π_1 and Π_2 , there is a closed derivation Π_3 of \perp .

$$\frac{\frac{[\neg\Phi]^4 \quad \frac{\perp}{\Phi} CR_{4,4} \quad \frac{[\neg T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]^3 \quad \Pi_2}{\perp} \Phi E_{3,3}}{\perp} \Phi E_{3,3}}{\perp} \Phi E_{3,3}$$

Claim 2. Π_3 generates a non-terminating reduction sequence and so is irreducible with respect to \mathbb{R}_{CL} .

Π_3 is reducible to the following derivation Π_4 by $\triangleright_{CR(\Phi)}$.

$$\frac{\frac{[\neg\perp]^5 \quad \frac{[\Phi]^6 \quad \frac{[\neg T(\ulcorner\Phi\urcorner)]^3 \quad \Pi_2}{\perp} \Phi E_{3,3}}{\perp} \rightarrow I_{6,6}}{\neg\Phi} \rightarrow I_{6,6}}{\perp} \rightarrow I_{6,6} \quad \frac{\perp}{\perp} CR_{5,5}$$

have the following infinite reduction sequence.

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \vdots \\
 \frac{[\neg\perp]^i \perp}{\perp} \rightarrow E \\
 \frac{[\neg\perp]^i \perp}{\perp} \rightarrow E \\
 \frac{\perp}{\perp} CR_i \\
 \vdots \\
 \frac{[\neg\perp]^9 \perp}{\perp} \rightarrow E \\
 \frac{[\neg\perp]^9 \perp}{\perp} \rightarrow E \\
 \frac{\perp}{\perp} CR_9 \\
 \frac{[\neg\perp]^5 \perp}{\perp} \rightarrow E \\
 \frac{[\neg\perp]^5 \perp}{\perp} \rightarrow E \\
 \frac{\perp}{\perp} CR_5
 \end{array}$$

where $i = 4j + 1 (j > 0)$. Therefore, Π_3 initiates a non-terminating reduction sequence and is irreducible with respect to \mathbb{R}_{CL} . \square

The derivation Π_3 initiates a non-terminating reduction sequence which is not so much a looping reduction as a spiraling reduction. The problem is that Π_3 formalizes the Liar paradox. Since the Liar paradox is a self-referential paradox, Proposition 3.1 shows that *TCSP* is false.

The Counterexample to *PCSP*

- An additional reduction procedure for *classical reductio* introduced by Gunnar Stålmarm (1991, pp. 131-132).

$$\begin{array}{c}
 [\neg\varphi]^1 \\
 \mathcal{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\perp}{\varphi} CR_{,1} \quad \mathcal{D}_2 \\
 \frac{\psi}{\sigma} \circ E \\
 \hline
 \sigma
 \end{array}
 \quad \triangleright_{CR(\circ)} \quad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{D}_2 \\
 \frac{[\varphi]^1 \quad \psi}{\sigma} \circ E \\
 \frac{[\neg\sigma]^2}{\perp} \rightarrow I_{,1} \\
 \mathcal{D}_1 \\
 \frac{\perp}{\sigma} CR_{,2}
 \end{array}$$

HAPPY WORLD LOGIC DAY!!