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THEORIA

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DISCUSSIONS

A note on Professor Törnebohm's article 'On truth, implication, and three-valued logic' (Theoria XXII). By Mats Furberg and Tore Nordens t am (University of Gothenburg).

In a recent article in *Theoria* (Vol. XXII, 1956, pp. 185—198), Prof. Törnebohm states a truth-condition for statements "of the type 'Aa'", i.e. (at least some) singular subject—predicate statements where the subject expression has a uniquely referring use:

"T: 'Aa' is true if the individual denoted by the argument expression 'a' has the property connoted by the predicate 'A'."

This truth-condition "seems to be quite plausible", he says, although it engenders certain paradoxes. He then elaborates a three-valued logic, especially designed for avoiding these difficulties.

We shall argue that T is not a sufficient truth-condition for statements of the type 'Aa' where 'a' is a definite description; and that Prof. Törnebohm treats T as a necessary and sufficient condition, thus introducing a new and unnecessary sense of 'true' which fosters the paradoxes.

Consider the statement 'The man over there with a blue neck-tie is a carpenter' (S). This statement cannot be true unless the man referred to is a carpenter, as T rightly says. But this truth-condition is not sufficient, for normally we would not say without qualms that S is true if the man does not wear a blue neck-tie. We will make this evident by considering an example: Suppose that somebody (P) utters S and that the man referred to really is a carpenter but that he wears a black neck-tie instead of a blue one. In that case, as Prof. Törnebohm rightly points out, we are not likely to retort: 'What you say is false, for that man does not wear a blue neck-tie'. But — contrary to what Prof. Törnebohm implies — from this it does not follow that we would say that what P said is true. The assumption underlying this fallacious argument is that every statement is either true or false. But in everyday life we often hesitate to tag either of these labels to a statement; and this is a case in point. If pressed to use one of the two labels here, we should prefer 'true', but we should feel that we were straining the word improperly.

Now a speaker may succeed in making clear to his hearer which person he wants to say something about, although he misdescribes him; it is

exactly such cases Prof. Törnebohm considers in his article. To return to our example: P wanted to convey to somebody that a certain person (C) was a carpenter. To identify C he used the referring expression 'the man over there with a blue neck-tie' which slightly misdescribed C. But nevertheless P managed to point out C to his hearer. Since P wanted to say something about C, not to describe C correctly, the communication was so far effective. Furthermore, what was communicated (= what P said about C) happened to be true. This explains why we should prefer 'true' to 'false' if forced to attach one of these words to S.

If we replace T by

T': 'Aa' is true if and only if the individual denoted by the argument expression 'a' has the property connoted by the predicate 'A', as Professor Törnebohm seems to do in his argument, we get a watered-down sense of 'true'. (The negation of a statement which is true in the extended sense of 'true' is, however, said to be false in the ordinary sense.) This rather fishy sense of 'true' constitutes the third truth-value in the calculus which is worked out in the latter part of Prof. Törnebohm's article.

If the statement S is true (in the ordinary sense of 'true'), then it follows logically that the following statement is true, too: 'The man over there has a blue neck-tie' (S'). But if we say that S is true although its subject expression misdescribes the individual referred to, then we get the paradoxical result that the truth of S is compatible with the falsity of S'. And this is the difficulty which Prof. Törnebohm tries to surmount. Now the best way to avoid the paradoxes seems to be to stick to the ordinary sense of 'true'. For the fishy sense of 'true' engenders difficulties and seems to have nothing to recommend it.

Non-cumulative Generalizations. By R. Harré. (Birmingham University).

Wittgenstein said¹ "The interesting case of generality is this: we often have a means of ascertaining the general proposition before considering particular cases: then we use the general method to judge the particular case.

We gave the porter the order only to admit people with invitations, and we count upon it that this man, who has been admitted, has an invitation". I suggest the following remarks as both exegesis and example.

The paradigm for the generalizing procedure has, in the past, been

¹ L. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, IV § 50; pg 156 e.