A GENERAL APPROACH TO REVENGE PARADOXES

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Alfred Tarski once remarked: "The appearance of an antinomy is for me a symptom of disease." It has been a common goal among philosophers working on the liar paradox to provide, in addition to an identification of the bad premises in a derivation of the liar paradox, some kind of diagnosis or characterisation of this disease. It has widely been assumed that this must take the form of a classification of sentences into the healthy (such as 'snow is white') and the diseased (such as the liar sentence.) In this talk I argue that this assumption is fundamentally misguided: assuming only classical logic one can show that any theory of healthiness will prove some of it's own theorems to be unhealthy, provided it proves all healthy sentences satisfy the T-schema. Most attempts to diagnose the paradoxes fall victim to this form of "revenge" paradox because they attribute the disease to the language or the linguistic items in which the paradoxes are expressed. In the latter half of the talk I evaluate the prospects of a non-linguistic solution to the paradoxes.