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The Nature of Reflexive Paradoxes: Part II

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A number of unsolved problems were left hanging in Part I. In particular, there is the problem of finding precise formulations of the general condition for a formula to be a reflexive contradiction C_1 and of the corresponding general condition for a resolution R_1. Secondly there is the question of what exactly a resolution amounts to since the removal of the contradictions cannot change paradoxical items such as the Russell class, the barber, the catalogue, etc. from inconsistent concepts to consistent concepts. Thirdly there is the question of what would count as a minimal resolution and whether such a resolution is possible. These are the main points, though there are a number of related subsidiary questions. I shall first take up these questions in a general way and then apply the conclusions to the familiar paradoxes and to the problem of constructing a consistent set theory.

1 The general criterion for a reflexive contradiction It was argued in Part I, Section 2.4, that a formula QA of quantification theory is a reflexive contradiction in case A entails an inequality condition and the quantifier arrangement is such that permissible instantiation cases of QA presuppose the denial of that condition. In the special case where QA contains just two distinct variables and is of the form $(\exists x)(y)A(y,x)$, the criterion can be given precisely: the formula is a reflexive contradiction in case $A \supset (y \neq x)$ is a thesis (condition C). In the general case, however, not only is the intuitive criterion C_1 imprecise,

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