DISCUSSION:

COMMENTS ON BARTLETT'S REPLY

by

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Steven J. Bartlett advances two kinds of arguments against my review of *Reflexivity; A Source-Book in Self-Reference*, a collection edited by him. The first line consists in several statements *ad personam* focussing on my competence and knowledge. I will not comment on any of these matters save one. Bartlett formulates a rule of competence for reviews of publications in his favorite area. The rule is this: if a person *A* is not mentioned in the bibliography on reflexivity compiled by Professor Suber in 1987, he or she is not a competent reviewer in this field. In general, I regard this rule as ridiculous, but let us leave this question without further remark. However, I would like to correct a factual error made by Bartlett: as a matter of fact, I published something on self-reference (even in English) begfore 1987 and later.

Passing to substantial concerns, I would like to touch the following points: (1) Bartlett's collection has the ambitious subtitle *A Source-Book in Self-Reference*. In my opinion, this implies some serious self-commitments on the part of the editor. The readers of this volue can expect that they will find in it the material faithful to thje history of its subject. I claim that Bartlett's collection does not meet these expectations. The problem of self-reference first appeared in logic, and any source-book on this topic should respect this fact. Moreover, Gödel's and Tarksi's work opened a new chapter in the history of self-reference and

this matter should also be properly documented in Bartlett's selection. Since this is not the case, I felt that it was my obligation to point out this defect, the more so as I wrote the review for the journal with the title *Modern Logic*.

(2) Everybody has a right to introduce their own terminology, but it is a good rule that the received way of speaking should be respected, unless there are serious reasons to depart from it. Bartlett declares (see note 3 in his introduction) that he uses "self-reference" and "reflexivity" interchangeably, but he also informs us that there are other customs.In my review, I remarked that the explanations in his introduction did not clarify this point. In order to add something: if both terms denote the same concept, then two papers included by Bartlett in his anthology, namely those by R. M. Martin and by C. K. Grant, certainly are not about self-reference as it is customarily understood in logic and semantics. In the event, I should correct my former opinion that both of these papers are neither on reflexivity nor self-reference, because I see now that they provide a good counterexample against interchangeability of "self-reference" and "reflexivity". Thus, Bartlett's remark that he assumed some understanding of the relation between self-reference and reflexivity on the part of his readers is simply vacuous: there is nothing to be assumed in this question, because there is no common practice in usage until now. As to the adjective 'metalogical', it is Bartlett's business how he uses this word in "a series of numerous papers, research monographs, and books by him, published over a period of twenty years". However, this series did not convince logicians to depart from the usual understanding of metalogic as the study of logical systems by formal methods and adopt instead Bartlett's equation of 'metalogical' and 'transcendental' in this sense: "there is a special kind of relation between a truth-functional referring proposition and the set of conditions which are necessary in order for the proposition to be capable of referring at all" (S. J. Bartlett, "Introduction", in *Self-Reference Reflections on Reflexivity*, ed. by S. J. Bartlett and P. Suber, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987, p. 10). I felt that it was my obligation to point out that this use of 'metalogical' is incorrect from the point of view of logic, particularly if it occurs in a book subtitled *A Source-Book*.

(3) There are various criteria for evaluating papers from the past as "seminal" or "important". However, bibliographical criteria are relatively easy in applications. I looked at several monographs (except Bartlett's own productions) and I did not find any reference to papers by O'Conner, Cohen, Alexander, Duncan-Jones, Jørgensen, or Weiss, all included in Bartlett's volume. I checked the following sources: I. Copi,

The Theory of Logical Types (1971), C. Chihara, *Ontology and the Vicious Circle Principle* (1973), J. Cargile, *Paradoxes* (1974), D. Odegard, *Knowledge and Scepticism* (1982), T. Champlin, *Reflexive Paradoxes* (1988), and M. Sainsbury, *Paradoxes* (1988). These books investigate some more or less specialized problems of reflexivity and self-reference, but none of them refer to the papers mentioned. Thus I conclude that perhaps they are not as seminal or important as Bartlett is inclined to see them to be. In particular, I did not find any obvious traces that they very much influenced further investigations on self-reference and reflexivity, except perhaps for Weiss' paper, which provoked a discussion on the meaningfulness of Russell's theory of types (see S. Halldén, *The Logic of Nonsense*, Uppsala, 1948). I do not regard them as uninteresting, but I claim that, in a collection subtitled *A Source-Book*, they should be replaced by more seminal or important papers, unless the editor would replace *"A"* by *"My"*. Since Bartlett does not do this, and also for other reasons explained above and in my review, I feel myself entitled to repeat that my evaluation of Bartlett's selection as an editorial enterprise is "decisely negative".