

A PRESENTATION WITHOUT AN EXAMPLE?

by Arnold Zuboff

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IN A DREAM someone said to me, 'Any general thesis which is put forward without a concrete example is therein badly presented'. That was all he said, and I was about to point out the irony that in merely putting forward this thesis by means of a general statement the speaker had failed his own requirement of providing an example when it suddenly occurred to me, as I exclaimed to him, 'Ah, I see. Your putting forward this thesis without an example is itself the concrete example'. But when I awoke I realized there was a problem here. If indeed the speaker is credited with having given me a concrete example of an example-less bad presentation, then that credit must be immediately withdrawn, because what he has given me is not an example of an example-less bad presentation. But if it is not an example, then it must once again be received as an example of example-less presentation, but then it once again is not an example, and so on forever.

This is another paradox of inclusion, like Russell's paradox. What I think may make this one especially interesting is that it could turn out to be resistant to certain popular treatments of such paradoxes. This paradox arises involving natural predicates in a natural expression of a natural - if somewhat exaggerated - thesis.'

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