

is close to Lewis', as Mary here only acquires a new ability. But it crucially relies upon accepting representationalism. Given the many problems it encounters, this will leave many unconvinced. This open-endedness is however a fitting conclusion to a volume that ably demonstrates the philosophical richness of its topic.

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**Doris Olin**

*Paradox.*

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Doris Olin's *Paradox* is a well-researched, and up-to-date analysis of some of the major paradoxes that have exercised philosophers and logicians over the past several decades. It is clearly written and thoroughly examines the debates that surround the different approaches and 'solutions' to the paradoxes that can be found in the literature today. Like much of the current work in this area, the chapters in this book can sometimes be technical, but Olin does an admirable job summarizing those results so that they are easily understandable, appealing to technical devices only when necessary.

*Paradox* consists of eight chapters. The first chapter, which is introductory in character, provides a framework by which we can define and classify the paradoxes (veridical or falsidical, controversial or uncontroversial, etc.). This framework is used in the last six chapters, each of which is devoted to analyzing a particular paradox, and examining the current debates that surround it. But *Paradox* is not a mere survey of the literature. Part of Olin's aim in this book, though not explicitly stated, is to separate out 'radical' from 'conservative' approaches and solutions to the paradoxes. A radical solution to a paradox is one that somehow suggests that the paradox is so pervasive that our logical system, traditionally understood, is itself in need of change. These sorts of solutions vary, but in general they call for the replacement of our logical scheme with a system that rejects bivalence and/or the principle of excluded middle. A conservative solution is one that preserves as much of classical logic as possible. In every case, Olin strongly suggests that these radical

approaches are untenable as the rejection of classical logic is too high of a price to pay.

In Chapter 2, Olin directly addresses one of the more notorious 'radical' approaches to be found in recent literature: dialetheism — the doctrine that some contradictions can be true. According to dialetheism, and its resulting paraconsistent logic, we are in possession of three truth-values (true, false, and both-true-and-false), which entails that the sentential connectives alter in meaning (e.g., a conjunction is true when both conjuncts are true, false if one conjunct is false, and both-true-and-false otherwise). In order to avoid the possibility of true contradictions entailing the truth of every possible sentence, several well-known principles of inference, such as disjunctive syllogism, modus ponens, modus tollens, and reductio ad absurdum must be rejected (28). Olin convincingly argues that dialetheism is too radical of an approach to the paradoxes and she forcefully argues that once we reject bivalent classical logic, in which the two truth-values are exhaustive and exclusive, we will be forced into an infinite regress of logics with an increasing number of truth-values (35-6).

Each of the remaining six chapters is devoted to a different paradox: the Surprise Exam paradox, the Preface paradox, the Lottery paradox, Newcomb's Problem, the Prisoner's Dilemma, and the Sorites paradox. In each case, Olin meticulously outlines the premises and conclusion of these paradoxes, and uses her classification system from Chapter 1 to exactly identify the kind of paradox we are dealing with. Once the paradox has been analyzed, she summarizes, clearly and fairly, the different sorts of attempts to solve those paradoxes and points out, when she can, where potential problems arise.

Her treatment of the Preface Paradox is typical. According to this paradox, you are asked to imagine that you have just written a book in which you are justified in believing each proposition ( $B_i$ ) asserted in the book. However, as you recognize that no one is infallible, you assert in the preface that there is likely some error in the book. In other words, you are justified in believing that each proposition asserted in your book is true ( $B_1, B_2, \dots, B_n$ ), and you are also justified in believing that not all of those propositions are true ( $(\neg(B_1 \& B_2 \& \dots \& B_n))$ ). So, from warranted and justified beliefs we are able to derive an inconsistent claim. According to the radical position, the conclusion of the above argument is indeed correct, and these theorists attempt to show how and why we are sometimes justified in holding inconsistent beliefs. One such account offered by the radical is the Epistemic Probability argument whereby we do not assign the values True and False to each of our beliefs, but rather a numerical value between 0 and 1 which indicates the degree of confirmation or support in light of the total available evidence. We are warranted in believing a proposition when the epistemic probability is sufficiently high. Conjoining a large number of beliefs that each has a high degree of epistemic probability yields a conjunction with a low degree of probability — low enough that its negation is actually warranted (71). Although this seems to offer a neat and intuitively plausible solution, Olin, the conservative, rejects this approach as it is at the same time a rejection of



classical two-valued logic. As in her criticism of dialetheism, and of radical approaches in general, Olin points out that once we reject bivalence, we are on the road to rejecting long-held principles like *modus ponens* and *reductio ad absurdum*, and ultimately, to a logic in which any statement whatsoever can be derived (77-8).

Her treatment of the remaining paradoxes takes a similar course: conservative, yet thorough, careful and methodical. Many paradoxes not addressed in a separate chapter are given brief mention in a helpful appendix (191-8)

The only problem with *Paradox* is that there should be more of it. Of course, one cannot achieve everything in one book, and there are too many paradoxes deserving the sort of careful treatment Olin offers, but a philosophical work that addresses the paradoxes, yet omits any treatment of *The Liar* is wanting. If this is the only book you pick up in order to learn about how philosophers think about paradoxes, you are going to be missing a large piece of the picture, a piece much larger than if Olin had decided to omit her chapter on, say, *Newcomb's Problem*. Nevertheless, Doris Olin's *Paradox* is a very helpful book for those who want to be introduced to the philosophical treatment of paradoxes, or for those who already have knowledge of the general area and would like to have a helpful resource book. In that respect, it can be recommended for senior undergraduate and graduate students who are studying paradoxes, or for professional philosophers who want a concise introduction to the topic.

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**Franklin Perkins**

*Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light.*  
New York: Cambridge University Press 2004.  
Pp. 242.  
US\$65.00. ISBN 0-521-83024-9.

It would be no exaggeration to say that increased contact with the world beyond Europe's borders, picking up rapid speed after 1492, was the single most important factor in Europe's transition into modernity. By the seventeenth century, European thinkers were consumed by questions about the inhabitants of the rest of the world, and by the way in which their customs, technologies and beliefs compared with their own.

This possibility of comparison with independently emerging, radically different cultures is responsible for many of the genuinely new developments

in early modern philosophy. Yet most scholars remain content to treat this period's philosophy as though it emerged in a vacuum. When non-European cultures play an indispensable theoretical role — such as that of the American savage in social-contract theory — they are duly acknowledged. But the curiosity that European thinkers had about the attainments of other cultures in science, mathematics, and technology goes largely unacknowledged. One does not have to be all that enthusiastic about multiculturalism to find this neglect unfortunate. For to consider Europe in relation to the rest of the world in the seventeenth century, whether one is interested in philosophy or in the spice trade, is not necessarily to engage in cross-cultural comparative study. Such consideration is also a fundamental part of understanding early modern Europe itself.

As Franklin Perkins notes in his fine new book, *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light*, the lack of acknowledgement among scholars has something to do with the self-presentation of at least some early modern thinkers themselves. Descartes, for example, does not dwell on the Persians or the Chinese (though he does mention them more often than the index to the English edition of his writings would lead us to believe). The world outside Europe, Descartes may have thought, could only provide complicating and messy evidence against the universality of his claims, and, more damagingly, against the a priori method of producing claims about what sort of entity a human being is. This, as Perkins notes, is why far-away cannibals were, if a potential embarrassment to Descartes, celebrated by skeptics such as Montaigne.

Cannibals and other so-called savages threatened to disconfirm universalizing claims made by Europeans about humanity. But the Chinese presented a very different sort of problem: their advanced civilization (advanced, that is, according to all the indices that interested Europeans) threatened European claims to particularity. Some thinkers, though, were happy to move beyond European particularism. One particular early modern universalist — namely, the optimist who is the subject of Perkins's book and who believed that every human being, not to mention every substance, constitutes a unique representation of the same harmonic order of co-existence — did not perceive Chinese civilization as a threat at all, but as an opportunity for mutual benefit. As Perkins shows, attention to Leibniz' engagement with China reveals the philosopher at his best, employing the method and principles familiar to us from other, better known aspects of his work in a creative way. In Perkins' account, we also learn quite a bit about the state of knowledge of the Far East in Europe in the seventeenth century. Finally, because of Perkins' impressive command of the intellectual traditions of both sides of this story, we gain extensive familiarity with the philosophical and scientific life of China during the period we, in another expression of our regional bias, think of as 'early modern'.

Perkins' picture of early modern Europe's contact with China is more nuanced than the common emphasis on the contemptfulness and aggression of Christian missionaries vis-à-vis the indigenous people they sought to