



Essays on Paradoxes

By Terence Horgan

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This volume brings together many of Terence Horgan's essays on paradoxes: Newcomb's problem, the Monty Hall problem, the two-envelope paradox, the sorites paradox, and the Sleeping Beauty problem. Newcomb's problem arises because the ordinary concept of practical rationality constitutively includes normative standards that can sometimes come into direct conflict with one another. The Monty Hall problem reveals that sometimes the higher-order fact of one's having reliably received pertinent new first-order information constitutes stronger pertinent new information than does the new first-order information itself. The two-envelope paradox reveals that epistemic-probability contexts are weakly hyper-intensional; that therefore, non-zero epistemic probabilities sometimes accrue to epistemic possibilities that are not metaphysical possibilities; that therefore, the available acts in a given decision problem sometimes can simultaneously possess several different kinds of non-standard expected utility that rank the acts incompatibly. The sorites paradox reveals that a certain kind of logical incoherence is inherent to vagueness, and that therefore, ontological vagueness is impossible. The Sleeping Beauty problem reveals that some questions of probability are properly answered using a generalized variant of standard conditionalization that is applicable to essentially indexical self-locational possibilities, and deploys "preliminary" probabilities of such possibilities that are not prior probabilities.

The volume also includes three new essays: one on Newcomb's problem, one on the Sleeping Beauty problem, and an essay on epistemic probability that articulates and motivates a number of novel claims about epistemic probability that Horgan has come to espouse in the course of his writings on paradoxes. A common theme unifying these essays is that philosophically interesting paradoxes typically resist either easy solutions or solutions that are formally/mathematically highly technical. Another unifying theme is that such paradoxes often have deep-sometimes disturbing-philosophical morals.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This collection of Horgan's papers is a welcome addition to philosophical literature. He has published an amazing amount of work on a very interesting range of issues, and many of his papers have influenced and continue to influence contemporary discussion. The volume will be attractive to scholars working on these problems."

--Diana Raffman, Professor of Philosophy, University of Toronto

About the Author

Terence Horgan has published widely (and often collaboratively) in several sub-fields of philosophy including philosophy of mind, meta-ethics, philosophy of psychology, metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of language. His work often bridges these sub-fields, pursuing connections among them. He also has published many papers on paradoxes, a number of which are collected in this volume (along with some new material published here for the first time).

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