



March 1992

Self-Annihilating Sentences: Saul Gorn's Compendium of Rarely Used Clichés

Saul Gorn
University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.upenn.edu/cis_reports

Recommended Citation

Saul Gorn, "Self-Annihilating Sentences: Saul Gorn's Compendium of Rarely Used Clichés", . March 1992.

University of Pennsylvania Department of Computer and Information Science Technical Report No. MS-CIS-92-25.

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. http://repository.upenn.edu/cis_reports/501
For more information, please contact libraryrepository@pobox.upenn.edu.

Self-Annihilating Sentences: Saul Gorn's Compendium of Rarely Used Clichés

Abstract

This report was originally issued January 1985. Due to the sudden and untimely loss of Dr. Saul Gorn, the department (CIS) has re-issued this paper for its' 1992 series of reports.

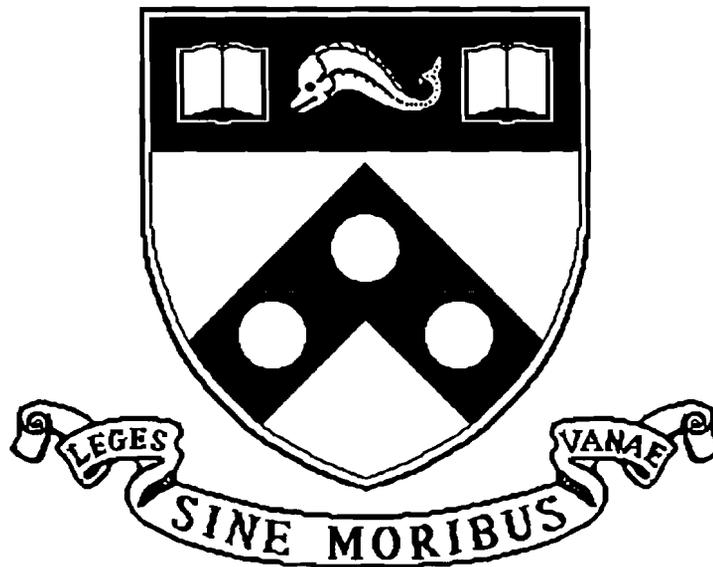
Comments

University of Pennsylvania Department of Computer and Information Science Technical Report No. MS-CIS-92-25.

**Self-Annihilating Sentences:
Saul Gorn's Compendium of Rarely Used Cliches**

MS-CIS-92-25

Saul Gorn



University of Pennsylvania
School of Engineering and Applied Science
Computer and Information Science Department
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6389

**Originally Issued
January 1985
Reissued
March 1992**

SELF-ANNIHILATING SENTENCES

Saul Gorn's Compendium

Of Rarely Used Cliches

First Revised Edition

Saul Gorn

Technical Report MS-CIS-85-03

January 1985

**Department of Computer and Information Science
The Moore School
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104**

Table of Contents

1. Judgments	1
2. Attitudes	2
3. Complaints	4
4. Decisions	5
5. Commands	7
6. Advice	8
7. Ethical Truths	9
8. The Way of the World	10
9. Descriptions	11
10. Definitions	13
11. Eternal Truths	13
Index	15

1. Judgments

This book fills a much-needed gap.

People who like this sort of thing will find it just the sort of thing they like.¹

Oh, the majesty of French Justice, which forbids rich and poor, alike, to sleep on park benches!²

I enjoy your company most when I am by myself.

This man's work cannot be underrated.

Way down deep he's shallow.

Before they made him they broke the mold.

Anyone who goes to a psychoanalyst should have his head examined.³

That's a real step forward into the unknown.

Right or wrong, it's a message!

I feel a lot more like I do now than I did when I came in.

This is generally useful, but not especially.

For every honest man he names, I can name another who tells the truth.

That was a typographical error,-it should have been a blank space.

Only unsolvable problems are worthy of artificial intelligence.

The UFO's show than our worst fears were groundless.

You don't think so, eh? That's your trouble! You don't think!

He's a unique type.

The future isn't what it used to be.

You have the distinction of being the only one who is not exceptional.

¹Abraham Lincoln

²Anatole France

³Samuel Goldwyn

I am certain of it, but I may be wrong.

You have one choice.

This report contributes a lot to the problem.

Anyone who reads this is illiterate.

Acupuncture is pointless.

"*Essentially*" is essentially meaningless.

The solution makes the problem more difficult.

At the moment your suggestion has a permanent place.

It's 90% too late.

It's probably a lot worse than it is.

She ran the gamut of emotions from A to B.

He's being pruned for the job.

You've outdone yourself, as usual.

It was the only undistinguished wine in the lot.

The Avant-Garde is Passe.

While these results may seem rather trivial, their importance cannot be underestimated.

Our product is best because all the others are average.

Even though I don't say so, I think you stink!

There's more to photography that meets the eye.

If you think about it long enough, you'll see that it's obvious.

She's genuinely bogus.

2. Attitudes

Anyone who always tells the truth is a big liar.

The main trouble with impossibility is that it is never total.

If there's anything I can't stand, it's intolerance!
How can anyone show so little understanding as to be indignant?
I want to hear the voice of the great silent majority.⁴
There is no other language but French.
I am going to be healthy if it kills me.
My only reason for mentioning it is that it is irrelevant.
I didn't hear that.
The only attitude I trust is skepticism.
Every Tom, Dick and Harry is called John.
Our lack of cooperation is mutual.
I'd give my right arm to be ambidextrous.
If I don't see you again, auf wiedersehen!
Life should have a purpose, however meaningless.
We will hear from one person at a time, and that means me!
Always expect to be disappointed, and you won't.
Anyone who can make a shot like that doesn't deserve it.
If everything goes perfectly, something's wrong.
Suicide is a way of life.
What keeps me going is my inertia.
There's nothing new in originality.
Down with propaganda!
I am surrounded by paranoiacs!
Thinking is the last thing on my mind!
Activity is a waste of time!
I have become more optimistic and now believe that things could get worse.

⁴Richard Nixon

English is the Lingua Franca par excellence!

If it involves me, I want nothing to do with it.

I absolutely refuse to be assertive.

A little pain never hurt anyone.

3. Complaints

I am a firm believer in optimism; because if you don't have optimism, what else is there?

Public transportation is so shocking to the individual that it should only be done in private.

Why should I consider your questions, when you don't even know the answers?

The trouble with you is that there's nothing wrong with you.

The only subway car fit to travel is a private one.

Just because I have nothing to say is no reason why you shouldn't listen.

How do you expect me to do something original if you won't tell me what?

The last time I took advice, it only worked because I changed it.

How do you expect me to ignore you when you're never around?

Health foods make me sick.

I've told you a million times not to exaggerate.

Please - I can only ignore one thing at a time.

At the last technical meeting I attended, so much went on that I was underwhelmed.

Every man who owns one borrowed it.

None of my close friends has a close acquaintance.

I don't want to do whatever I want!

The last time I saw him, he wasn't there.

I can't stand people who look down on people who look down on people.

If he were alive today, he'd turn over in his grave.

If a man can't get away from himself, from whom can he get away?

If everybody is to be heard, we must hear from one person at a time, and that means me.

The trouble with him is that I don't have anything against him.

I may be omniscient, but don't expect me to know everything.

Our advance is so rapid that we are falling farther and farther behind.

All our emergencies are normal.

Whenever I look for something, it's always in the last place I look.

We have worked ourselves into a frenzy of lethargy.

How disagreeable of you to agree with me!

If God intended man to understand the human mind, he wouldn't have given him one!

If I had known how successful I was going to be, I wouldn't have worked so hard when I was young!

He neglected to disregard the problem.

I gave you an unlimited budget, and you have already exceeded it!

He hasn't a single redeeming vice!⁵

I can tell those twins apart only when they're together.

I am not contradicting you.

The discerning eye is a pain in the neck!

You'll live to regret this when I have you shot!

I'm never at my best.

4. Decisions

Just tell me what you need, and I'll see to it that something ought to be done!

This subject is so important that I'd like to see it deserve considerable study.

⁵Oscar Wilde

This presents us with an insurmountable opportunity.

Let's decide right now whether you or I will be competitive.

I won't hesitate for a moment to avoid answering!

I am myself, and I'm going to continue to play that role!⁶

I have something to say, but I don't know what.

Let's decide right now whether I will adapt to you or you will adapt to me.

The executive committee proposes the following compromise: make it optional for those who want it, and required for those who don't.

You don't stand alone. I also stand alone!

I'm an atheist, thank God.

I swear to make no promises I cannot keep.

The time has come to rise above principles.

Include me out!⁷

Let us do for a second time what we refused to do at first. This will avoid setting a precedent.

I would much rather prefer to be non-committal.

We can't get a volunteer army unless we draft it.

We must find a general representative for the mavericks.

Having lost sight of our goal, we must redouble our efforts.

Since the quorum lacks five members, we must adjourn this meeting.

Our inequities must be equally shared.

We will proceed on the assumption that nothing will be done.

I will now predict an unanticipated result.

Emergency service provided only with twenty-four hours notice.

The answer is maybe, and that's final!

⁶Richard Nixon

⁷Samuel Goldwyn

Before I begin my speech, there's something I want to say.

All emergencies will henceforth be deferred!

We will keep on fighting until the violence ends!

I'm not leaving the party until I get home!

He won thumbs down.

5. Commands

Hips on shoulders, place! -- As you were! Can't be done; hips down!

Do as much as you can! But you probably won't be able to.

Ignore this sign.

Be consistent, or be inconsistent; but don't vacillate.

We have a general rule that each case be handled differently.

We must be decisive, but on the other hand ...

Your job is to discover independently and prove scientifically that my product is the best on the market.

You *will* do original basic research, and you'll do it in the area I tell you to, or I'll know the reason why!

Don't forget to return before you leave.

Destroy before reading.

When I want your opinion, I'll tell you what to say.

What transpires at this meeting must not leak out.

Wake up, it's time for your sleeping pill.

You may steal this from me.

Henceforth, you will keep your communications to yourself.

This bridge must be gapped!

Authorized parking is forbidden!

Be brief, no matter how long it takes.

Get with it! Become alienated!

Men, women, and children first.

A preposition must not be used to end a sentence with.

This exercise demands intense relaxation.

Be different, conform!

Disregard any further announcements; disregard any further announcements.

In restrictive clauses, "*that*" is that word which should be used instead of "*which*".⁸

Never say "never."

To be read by unauthorized people only.

6. Advice

Whether you mean it or not, be sincere!

No one can complain who has not been lost and never heard of again.

It pays to buy things you dislike. They last much longer.

If you don't know, why ask?

Be realistic! Ask the impossible!

Research administrators should support artificial intelligence. After all, what have they to lose?

Food ration cards must be tasteful.

Don't give up hope. There's a chance the inevitable won't happen.

If you want to be certain about the unpredictable, use statistics.

The probability is one, but don't count on it.

The best time to do a full day's shopping is in the morning.

⁸see also *Definitions*

The best cure for insomnia is to get a lot of sleep.⁹

If you want to think independently, you must imitate me.

It's a great activity for someone who doesn't have to do it.

Precision is a fuzzy concept.

Every ambitious man should be modest.

No more wine or women, but you may sing all you want to.

If anything is on your mind, get it off your chest.

If you must do it inadvertently, at least do it right.

We should utilize the word *use* more often.

Survival is important, but don't stake your life on it.

It's about time we returned to the status quo.

Always use *rather than* instead of *instead of*.

Don't be so proud of your humility!

You should get in on the ground floor before the program gets off the ground.

7. Ethical Truths

If you don't say no, it doesn't matter to whom.

Every man has the right to quote himself - provided he gives himself due credit.

If you're going to be idealistic, it might as well be about something that's practical.

You're confused? What presumption! Only important people have the right to be confused.

One shouldn't be naive without a good reason.

An insane asylum cannot be a success if it is run by sane people.

If you are not prejudiced, you just don't understand.

⁹W.C. Fields

Only crooks deceive themselves into thinking they are a tiny minority.

Superstition brings bad luck.

8. The Way of the World

If people could be paid to die for us, they'd get rich.

All men are brothers; like Cain and Abel.

Graduate work is not so important as it used to be, and never was.

A good set of vital statistics can affect one's whole past.

A good system can transform complexity into chaos.

Like everybody else, I'm different.

If you knew what was going on, you'd be very confused.

Some of my best friends are prejudiced.

It is my opinion that there is no such thing as thought.

Any truth doesn't tell the half of it.

Religion loses its meaning as soon as it's explained.

Reasons for existence are usually provided for things which do not exist; they would be wasted on things which do.

It's frightening to think of how many things were completely useless until they were discovered!

Any dope can have a high I.Q.

In absolute monarchy, any leader can be a fool, but in absolute democracy, any fool can be a leader.

Confusion is understandable; it is understanding that is confusing.

We have developed a tradition in the arts in which every worth-while work is ground-breaking.

Only variables remain constant.

Whatever the reason, that's why they do it.

A profession is stable only if its problems are unsolvable; otherwise it gives way to technological obsolescence.

He claims he knew her before she was a virgin.

Statistics show that statistics can't be trusted.

No University can maintain a shred of unity unless its professors continue to argue.

An unexpected effect that universal education has on the labor market: ignorance has become so rare that it commands a high salary.

In the U.S. the only ones who know their place are at the top.

When it comes to giving, some men stop at nothing.

It's amazing how we can do things simultaneously, like talking and not listening.

If you're not behind in your work, you're just not moving ahead.

Every outstanding person is misunderstood.

Competition for the apathy prize is keen.

Everybody is discriminated against equally.

Nostalgia is the wave of the future.

I saw him do it when no one was looking.

Transience is here to stay.

In the U.S. the people not in a minority are in a minority.

If you expect to sell what you make, you must also fabricate information about it.

The only certainty is that there is nothing certain.¹⁰

9. Descriptions

This fact is clear to those who know it.

The pirate skeletons at Disneyland are very life-like.

He's a real patriot. He fearlessly enters any patriotic competition that offers a prize.

¹⁰Pliny, the elder

Not having to get there is as good as a day in the country.

He's better in general, but not particularly.

Half the lies they tell about me are true.

I used to be conceited, but now I'm perfect.

It's the sort of place you wouldn't think twice about passing without a second glance.

As long as I live I'll never forget what's-her-name.

Words are incapable of describing what I am about to tell you.

It is no illusion that wide ties make the face look wider.

No one goes there anymore; it's too crowded.

He's a nut about mental health.

We're home at the usual time, for a change.

This species has always been extinct.

He knew everything, but that's all.

He's deliberately unconscious.

Every once in a while it never stops raining.

From here on down it's up hill all the way.

He's a specialist in everything.

He's a typical man of distinction.

He turned up missing.

Nickels are a dime a dozen.

I remember exactly when I forgot it.

He survived a terminal illness.

No sounds much more positive than *negative*.

They are unscrupulously honest.

...., to coin a cliché.

It will go on ad infinitum for a while.

He disappeared from nowhere.

He was cured posthumously.

The bubble has burst to some extent.

The proper physical view of the universe is as a conservative system, but it began with a big mistake.

We Scorpios don't believe in astrology.

Yesterday tomorrow was the day after tomorrow.¹¹

In our law school malpractice is of academic interest.

The word "modern" is dated.

10. Definitions

A formalist is a man who can't understand a theory unless it is meaningless.

Monism is the theory that anything less than everything is nothing.

A reactionary is a man who wants to face the past with confidence.

That is that word which should be used instead of *which*.

Inflation is an economic device by which each man can make more than the next.

A University is a community in which people make a living by taking in each other's brain washing.

Data is plural.

The objectives of a system are the features one objects to.

11. Eternal Truths

No man can die properly without experience.

No matter where you go, there you are.

No two things are the same, no matter how you look at them.

¹¹see also "eternal truths"

Show me an honest man and I'll show you a man who tells the truth.

An artist without paints can't paint unless he has a canvas.

Everything that exists has a good reason for existence - which has long since disappeared.

All simplifying assumptions are too complicated.

If your father was sterile, the same is probably true of you.

A sway-backed horse doesn't have to sag.

Any truth is an under-exaggeration.

The impossible is cumulative.

Tomorrow, which isn't even here yet, will never be the day after tomorrow again.¹²

Death is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

If you remember something too long, you might as well forget it.

Social Entropy: (1) Progress is doomed to failure because we have become immune to it.

Social Entropy: (2) Failure must progress because we become used to it.

To distinguish the real from the unreal one must experience both.

Science vs. Technology: We should know why things must act as they do, to make them act as we want them to.

Determinism vs. Free Will: We should know why we must act as we do, to make us act as we want us to.

Reality is an illusion.

Things are more like they used to be than they are now.

¹²see also "Descriptions."

Index

- Absolute democracy 10
 Absolute monarchy 10
 Academic interest 13
 Activity 3
 Acupuncture 2
 Adaptation 6
 Advice 4
 Alienation 8
 Ambidextrous 3
 Ambition 9
 Anatole France 1
 Announcements 8
 Answers 4
 Any dope 10
 Apathy 11
 Argue 11
 Artificial intelligence 1, 8
 Artist 14
 Assertiveness 4
 Astrology 13
 Asylum 9
 Atheist 6
 Auf wiedersehen 3
 Authorized parking 7
 Avant-Garde 2
 Average product 2
- Bad luck 10
 Big mistake 13
 Bogus 2
 Brain washing 13
 Brevity 8
 Bridge 7
 Brothers 10
 Budget 5
- Cain and Abel 10
 Certainty 2, 8, 11
 Chaos 10
 Choice 2
 Clauses 8
 Cliches 0
 Close acquaintances 4
 Close friends 4
 Commitment 6
 Communications 7
 Company 1
 Competition 6, 11
 Complaint 8
 Complexity 10
 Compromise 6
 Conceit 12
 Conformity 8
 Confusion 9, 10
 Conservative system 13
 Consistency 7
 Constants 10
 Contradiction 5
- Cooperation 3
 Crooks 10
- Data 13
 Dated 13
 Day after tomorrow 13
 Death 13, 14
 Decisiveness 7
 Democracy 10
 Determinism 14
 Difference 10
 Disappointment 3
 Disneyland 11
- Emergencies 5, 7
 Emergency service 6
 Emotion 2
 English 4
 Entropy 15
 Essentially 2
 Estimate of importance 15
 Exaggerate 4
 Exaggeration 3, 14
 Extinction 12
- Failure 14
 Fears 1
 Features 13
 Feelings 1
 Fields 9
 Fighting 7
 Food ration cards 8
 Formalist 13
 Free Will 14
 French 3
 French Justice 1
 Frenzy of lethargy. 5
 Friends 10
 Future 1
 Fuzzy concept 9
- Gap 1, 7
 General rule 7
 Genuine 2
 Getting away 5
 Giving 11
 Goal 6
 God 5, 6
 Goldwyn 6
 Graduate work 10
 Grammar 8
 Grave 4
 Ground floor 9
- Health 3
 Health foods 4
 Honest man 14
 Honesty 1, 12
- Hope 8
 Human mind 5
 Humility 9
- I.Q. 10
 Idealism 9
 Ignore 4
 Illiteracy 2
 Illusion 12, 14
 Imitation 9
 Impossibility 2
 Impossible 8, 14
 Inequities 6
 Inertia 3
 Inevitable 8
 Inflation 13
 Insane 9
 Insomnia 9
 Instead of 9
 Intolerance 3
 Involvement 4
 Irrelevance 3
- Job 2
- Knowing one's place 11
- Labor market 11
 Language 3
 Lateness 2
 Law school 13
 Leader 10
 Lies 12
 Likes 1
 Lincoln 1
 Lingua Franca 4
 Luck 10
- Malpractice 13
 Mavericks 6
 Maybe 6
 Mental health 12
 Message 1
 Minority 11
 Modern 13
 Modesty 9
 Monarchy 10
 Monism 13
- Naivety 9
 Need 5
 Never 8
 Nixon 6
 Nostalgia 11
- Oaths 6
 Obvious 2
 Off the ground 9

- Omniscient 5
 One's best 5
 Only 4
 Opinion 7, 10
 Opportunity 6
 Optimism 3, 15
 Original basic research 7
 Originality 3, 4
 Oscar Wilde 5
- Pain 4
 Pain in the neck 5
 Paranoia 3
 Park benches 1
 Parking 7
 Party 7
 People who look down on people 4
 Perfection 12
 Photography 2
 Pliny, the elder 11
 Practicality 9
 Precedent 6
 Precision 9
 Prejudice 9, 10
 Pride 9
 Principles 6
 Probability 8
 Problem 5
 Profession 11
 Progress 5
 Promises 6
 Propaganda 3
 Pruning 2
 Psychoanalysis 1
 Public transportation 4
 Purpose of life 3
- Questions 4
 Quorum 6
 Quote 9
- Rain 12
 Rather than 9
 Reactionary 13
 Real 11
 Reality 14
 Reason 10
 Reasons for existence 10
 Redemption 5
 Regret 5
 Relaxation 8
 Religion 10
 Report 2
 Research administrators 8
 Restrictive clauses 8
 Revised edition 0
 Richard Nixon 3
- Samuel Goldwyn 1
 Sanity 9
 Science 14
- Scorpius 13
 Secrecy 7
 Shopping 8
 Silent majority 3
 Simplifying assumptions 14
 Sincerity 8
 Skeletons 11
 Skepticism 3
 Sleep 9
 Social Entropy 14, 15
 Solutions 2
 Song 9
 Specialist 12
 Standing alone 6
 Statistics 8, 10, 11
 Status quo 9
 Steal 7
 Success 5
 Suggestions 2
 Suicide 3
 Superstition 10
 Survival 9
- Technical meeting 4
 Technological obsolescence 11
 Technology 14
 Terminal illness 12
 That 8
 The discerning eye 5
 Thinking 1, 3
 Thumb 7
 Tom, Dick and Harry 3
 Tomorrow 14
 Tradition 10
 Transience 11
 Trivial results 15
 Truth 1, 2, 10, 14
 Twins 5
 Types 1
 Typographical error 1
- UFO 1
 Unanticipated result 6
 Unauthorized people 8
 Unconsciousness 12
 Understanding 3, 10
 Underwhelmed 4
 Universal education 11
 Universe 13
 University 11, 13
 Unpredictable 8
 Unreality 14
 Unsolvable problems 1
 Unvoiced thought 2
 Usefulness 1
 Uselessness 10
 Utilize 9
- Virgin 11
 Vital statistics 10
 Volunteer army 6
- Want 4
 Which 8
 Wine 2, 9
 Women 9
 Work 1