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Subject: Re: temporary() problem

Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Tue, 24 Sep 2013 21:29:08 GMT

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On 09/24/13 16:32, David Fanning wrote:

> spluque@gmail.com writes:

>

>> I'm not sure I understand why the variable 'a' below gets undefined after calling a procedure using temporary():

>>

>> IDL> a='a, b, c'

>> IDL> help, a

>> A            STRING    = 'a, b, c'

>> IDL> .run "test.pro"

>> % Compiled module: TEST.

>> IDL> test, a

>> IDL> help, a

>> A            UNDEFINED = <Undefined>

>>

>>

>> The contents of test.pro:

>>

>> PRO TEST, str

>>    ostr=strsplit(temporary(str), ' ', /extract)

>> END

>>

>>

>> Why is temporary() messing with the top level environment?

>

> Because variables are passed by reference in IDL, not by value (copied  
> into the procedure). In this case, you are working with the variable str  
> itself, not a copy of the variable.

I would go with the explanation that temporary() is "messaging" with the top level environment because that's what the programmer wrote it to do.

"Why is the computer doing what I told it to do, not what I want it to do?"

:o)

For the OP, try this for some obfuscatory fun:

```
IDL> a=['qwerty','a,b,c']
```

```
IDL> help, a
```

```
A            STRING    = Array[2]
```

```
IDL> print, a
```

```
qwerty a,b,c
```

```
IDL> .run "test.pro"  
% Compiled module: TEST.  
IDL> test, a[1]  
IDL> print, a
```

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