

Incompleteness, Reflection, and Implicit Commitment

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The slides are here:



This is partially joint work with Riccardo Bruni and Andrea Cantini.

The plan

1. Internal soundness
2. Other Versions of the Implicit Commitment Thesis
3. Preliminary Answers
4. Examples
5. My best answers

Internal soundness

Let S be a recursively axiomatized system extending Q and, for all φ , $\text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner})$ be provable in S whenever $S \vdash \varphi$. Assume also that S proves its own soundness:

$$(\text{Rfn}(S)) \quad S \vdash \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner}) \rightarrow \varphi \quad \text{for all } \varphi \in \mathcal{L}_S$$

$$S \vdash \gamma \leftrightarrow \neg \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \gamma \urcorner}) \quad \text{diagonalization}$$

$$S \vdash \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \gamma \urcorner}) \rightarrow \neg \gamma$$

$$S \vdash \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \gamma \urcorner}) \rightarrow \gamma \quad \text{Rfn}(S)$$

$$S \vdash \neg \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \gamma \urcorner})$$

$$S \vdash \gamma \quad \text{first line}$$

$$S \vdash \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \gamma \urcorner}) \quad \text{first derivability condition}$$

Thus, S is inconsistent.

Theorem

With minimal assumptions, no consistent system S proves all instances of $\text{Rfn}(S)$.

Only necessitation for $\text{Bew}_S(x)$ is used.

By Löb's theorem, a consistent S cannot prove *any* instance of $\text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner}) \rightarrow \varphi$, except for the trivial instances with $S \vdash \varphi$. This requires stronger assumptions on S and $\text{Bew}_S(x)$.

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THE MYSTERY OF REFLECTION

If you accept S , you should better believe in its soundness and thus accept all instances of $\text{Rfn}(S)$.

This assumes that $\text{Bew}_S(x)$ expresses provability in S and $\text{Rfn}(S)$ expresses the soundness of S (at least partially).

$$S_1 := S \cup \{ \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner}) \rightarrow \varphi : \varphi \in \mathcal{L}_S \}$$

S_1 satisfies the assumptions above. By the above principle, you should also believe in the soundness of S_1 , which leads to S_2 and so on.

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Turing 1939, p. 161

The well-known theorem of Gödel [...] shows that every system of logic is in a certain sense incomplete, but at the same time it indicates means whereby from a system L of logic a more complete system L' may be obtained. By repeating the process we get a sequence $L, L_1 = L', L_2 = L'_1, \dots$ each more complete than the preceding. A logic L_ω may then be constructed in which the provable theorems are the totality of theorems provable with the help of the logics L, L_1, L_2, \dots

Turing makes some qualifications. Turing (1939) used also $\text{Rfn}(S)$.

Feferman 1991, p. 1

To what extent can mathematical thought be analyzed in formal terms? Gödel's theorems show the inadequacy of single formal systems for this purpose, except in relatively restricted parts of mathematics. However at the same time they point to the possibility of systematically generating larger and larger systems whose acceptability is implicit in acceptance of the starting theory. The engines for that purpose are what have come to be called reflection principles. These may be iterated into the constructive transfinite, leading to what are called recursive progressions of theories.

ICT

If a subject P accepts a system S , P is committed to accepting also statements expressing the soundness of S . This can be iterated into the transfinite.

The commitment to the soundness statements is implicit in the sense that they are not deductive consequences of S .

Thus, there are two kinds of consequence of a system S .

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1. To which systems S (if any) does ICT apply?
2. What does it mean to accept a system in the relevant sense?
3. What are the statements of soundness?
4. How exactly can we come to accept them?
5. Where does the reflection process lead?

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Overthinking objection against ICT

By accepting a reasonable system S , you may implicitly commit yourself to accepting all sentences. Thus, ICT precludes you from accepting certain reasonable systems. Thus, ICT should be rejected.

If ICT is correct, we should not only check S for its consistency but also for the consistency of the autonomous progression of reflection based on S .

I try to sharpen ICT by applying it to different systems S , following the recent trend in looking at general versions of ICT.

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Other Versions of the Implicit Commitment Thesis

Dean's version of ICT · Dean 2015, p. 32

Anyone who accepts the axioms of a mathematical theory S is thereby also committed to accepting various additional statements Δ which are expressible in the language of S but which are formally independent of its axioms.

Dean mentions proof-theoretic reflection principles. These principles need not be independent of S . There are decidable theories such as Presburger's arithmetic for which ICT fails because there are no independent sentences in the language whatsoever. Moreover, there are theories that are not decidable, but incompatible with their own consistency statement. Dean thus imposes the following restriction on S before stating ICT:

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Let S be a recursively axiomatizable ω -consistent theory extending Elementary Arithmetic (EA) [...].

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The Implicit Commitments Thesis (ICT) states that in accepting a formal theory S , one is implicitly committed to additional statements, such as S 's consistency.

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Horsten's version of ICT

In the course of the debate about implicit commitment generated by acceptance of a theory, it has been claimed that in certain circumstances where you know a mathematical theory S and nothing more, you can come to know proof theoretic reflection principles for S without justifying them. Let us call this the Implicit Commitment Thesis (ICT). This thesis is a bold claim because if S is sufficiently strong (and consistent), then proof theoretic reflection principles for S are logically independent of S .

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The claim is *too* bold: $PA + Bew_{PA}(\overline{\perp})$ is consistent, but inconsistent with its own consistency statement. Cf. also $S + \{\exists x \neg Px, P\bar{0}, P\bar{1}, P\bar{2}, \dots\}$ plus $RFN(S)$.

Preliminary Answers

1. To which systems S (if any) does ICT apply?
2. What does it mean to accept a system in the relevant sense?
3. What are the statements of soundness?
4. How exactly can we come to accept them?
5. Where does the reflection process lead?

To which systems S does ICT apply?

By 'system' I mean a specific presentation of a theory (with a specific logic calculus and a specific axiomatization).

S must contain a theory of syntax and be essentially incomplete (not Presburger arithmetic). S contains $I\Sigma_1$ or PA and may be formulated in an expansion of the language \mathcal{L}_S of arithmetic.

Any conditions on S must be *transparent* in the sense that P must be able to determine whether S satisfies the conditions. The implicit commitment can be made explicit.

Therefore, I do not restrict ICT to systems that are consistent, ω -consistent, or sound in some sense. Example: $PA + Bew_{PA}(\overline{\perp})$

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What does it mean to accept a system?

By ‘accepting’ I mean *using*, not just *mentioning*. I never really *use* the theory of group theory. I must be able to say that the system is sound in an unrelativized way.

We must accept S as able of expressing syntax theory. I exclude acceptances of PA as the theory of *all* or *nonstandard* models of PA. Maybe one can correctly accept $PA + \text{Bew}_{PA}(\overline{\ulcorner 1 \urcorner})$ as a theory of some nonstandard model.

I use $I\Sigma_1$ as a theory of syntax, namely the theory of strings of strokes. I don’t believe in a separation of syntax theory from arithmetic. There are also no differences in determinacy or indeterminacy (Picollo and Waxman 2025).

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The following are not precise definitions:

$$\text{(Con(S))} \quad \neg \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \perp \urcorner})$$

$$\text{(Rfn(S))} \quad \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner}) \rightarrow \varphi \text{ for all formulæ } \varphi$$

$$\text{(RFN(S))} \quad \forall x (\text{Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \varphi(\dot{x}) \urcorner}) \rightarrow \varphi(x)) \text{ for all formulæ } \varphi(x)$$

$$\text{(GRfn(S))} \quad \forall x (\text{Bew}_S(x) \wedge \text{Sent}_T(x) \rightarrow Tx)$$

Con(S) is the *consistency statement*, Rfn(S) the *local reflection principle*, RFN(S) the *uniform reflection principle*, and GRfn(S) the *global reflection principle* for the given (representation of) the system S.

In the presence of the derivability conditions, the Gödel sentence γ is equivalent to Con(S).

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Con(S) is weak and a minimal condition of soundness.

Rfn(S) expresses soundness as a ‘schema’.

RFN(S) is not obviously a statement of soundness and makes use of ‘*de re* provability’. It adds a formalization of the ω -rule. Over PA, RFN(S) is equivalent to $\forall x \text{ Bew}_S(\overline{\ulcorner \varphi(x) \urcorner}) \rightarrow \forall x \varphi(x)$ (Feferman 1962). There are rule versions and versions with partial truth predicates.

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The consistency statement implies via the formalized completeness theorem the existence of a model.

See (Kreisel and Lévy 1968, p. 101) for proof-theoretic vs. set-theoretic reflection and, for incompleteness with relative interpretability and formalized completeness (Friedman 2023).

Kreisel and Lévy (1968, p. 98)

By a “reflection principle” for a formal system S we mean, roughly, the formal assertion stating the soundness of S :

If a statement φ (in the formalism S) is provable in S then φ is valid.

Kreisel and Lévy (1968, p. 98):

Literally speaking, the intended reflection principle cannot be formulated in S itself by means of a single statement. This would require a truth definition T_S , with a variable a over (GÖDEL' numbers [*sic*] of, or, simply, over) formulas of S , and a definition of the proof relation $Prov_S(p, a)$ (read: p is (the GÖDEL number of) a proof of a in S). The reflection principle for S would be

$$(*) \quad \forall p \forall a [Prov_S(p, a) \rightarrow T_S(a)].$$

Such a truth definition T_S does not exist (TARSKI [...]). What is, trivially, possible is to express the reflection principle by means of the schema

$$(R_S) \quad \forall p [Prov_S(p, \ulcorner \varphi \urcorner) \rightarrow \varphi], \text{ for every sentence } \varphi \text{ of } S,$$

where $\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner$ denotes GÖDEL number of φ . (Since we use “denotes” we have in mind an interpretation of S ; in this case $\ulcorner \varphi \urcorner$ denotes the formal object φ of S , namely, the GÖDEL number of the intuitive object φ — and φ itself denotes, of course, its interpretation.) We shall refer to (R_S) as the *local reflection principle* for S . We use the word “local” here to distinguish the principle (R_S) from the principle $(*)$ above, which we shall call the *global reflection principle* for S .

Global reflection principle

$$(GRfn(S)) \quad \forall x (Bew_S(x) \wedge Sent_T(x) \rightarrow Tx)$$

$Sent_T(x)$ expresses that x is a sentence.

In contrast to $Rfn(S)$ and $RFN(S)$, $GRfn(S)$ is a single sentence.

$GRfn(S)$ brings in a new concept, which can be axiomatized or defined.

Cf. (Dean 2015) on stability.

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If only $\text{GRfn}(S)$ fully expresses the soundness of S , we should use it as the main reflection principle.

Its strength depends very much on the axioms for T . Rule of thumb: Typed disquotational axioms for T will give us only the strength of $\text{Rfn}(S)$ or $\text{RFN}(S)$. If we move from PA to $\text{CT}(\text{PA})$, we can prove $\text{GRfn}(\text{PA})$ from the truth-theoretic axioms.

These observations do not so easily generalize to other systems. For some S , $\text{GRfn}(S)$ (with uniform disquotation) is stronger than $\text{CT}(S)$.

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Why confined ourselves to approximations to soundness if we can have the full global reflection principle?

Over PA, global reflection is much stronger than uniform reflection:

Theorem (Feferman??)

The autonomous progression of $\text{RFN}(S)$ based on PA is arithmetically equivalent to $\text{RT}_{<\omega}$ (or ω -times iterated ACA), while the autonomous progression based on truth yields $\text{RT}_{<\Gamma_0}$.

Horsten (2021, p. 741)

A proof theoretic reflection principle for a mathematical theory S says that, or approximates saying that everything that S asserts, i.e., everything that is provable in the theory, is true (Kreisel and Levy 1968, p. 98). By Gödel's incompleteness theorems, proof theoretic reflection principles for S are under very general circumstances logically independent of S . A proof theoretic reflection principle for S can be said to be a presupposition of the cognitive project S .

According to Horsten (2021), one can come to be epistemically entitled to believe $\neg \text{Bew}_S(\overline{\perp})$ without a justification in the sense of a soundness proof (although quite a few cognitive steps are involved such as change of notation and self-awareness).

Consistency is easier than other reflection principles.

Soundness proofs are not trivial. People have made bad mistakes already in the formulation of logical calculi (Pelletier 1999).

I will not accept Leon's trick instead of an inductive soundness proof in any logic exam.

The commitment to the soundness statements in ICT arises only if we can become committed to a notion of soundness and truth (or other notions). Otherwise S may be stable (Dean 2015). Cf. Isaacson's thesis.

Just expressing the full soundness claim requires a truth predicate. See (Feferman 1964, 1987, 1991). See (Kreisel 1967) above. The initial reluctance to expand the language of arithmetic has some technical motivations (re finite axiomatizability etc).

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Definition (CT(S))

The system CT(S) is given by all the axioms of S with schemata expanded to \mathcal{L}_T and the following axioms:

$$\text{CT1 } \forall s \forall t (T(s=t) \leftrightarrow s^\circ = t^\circ)$$

and analogously for other predicate symbols other than T.

$$\text{CT3 } \forall x (\text{Sent}(x) \rightarrow (T(\neg x) \leftrightarrow \neg Tx))$$

$$\text{CT4 } \forall x \forall y (\text{Sent}(x \wedge y) \rightarrow (T(x \wedge y) \leftrightarrow T(x) \wedge T(y)))$$

$$\text{CT5 } \forall v \forall x (\text{Sent}(\forall v x) \rightarrow (T(\forall v x) \leftrightarrow \forall t T(x(t/v))))$$

Sent(x) expresses that x is a sentence without T.

If the signature of the language is finite and S axiomatized with finitely many schemata, CT(S) will prove all proof-theoretic reflection principles.

Instead of adding a primitive T , we can add second-order quantifiers (or do something else). For PA arithmetical comprehension ACA is a natural theory. Iterations give Ramified Analysis. Ramified truth theories avoid awkward infinitary rules (limit generalization rule). I prefer to add only what is needed.

At any rate I don't know how to obtain reflection principles without invoking additional resources.

Traditionally, the reflection process is continued into the transfinite. The process is restricted by an autonomy restriction. When we start with PA, we can iterate at least up to all levels lower than ϵ_0 .

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Examples

It is not that difficult to find consistent systems that become inconsistent when reflection principles, truth theories etc. are added. But are there any such systems that are also *reasonable*?

Overthinking objection against ICT

By accepting a reasonable system S , you may implicitly commit yourself to accepting all sentences. Thus, ICT precludes you from accepting certain reasonable systems. Thus, ICT should be rejected.

The system $S_{\perp} := \text{PA} + \text{Bew}_{\text{PA}}(\overline{\perp})$ is inconsistent with its own consistency statement $\neg \text{Bew}_{S_{\perp}}(\overline{\perp})$.

Assuming ICT, accepting unreasonable theories carries the risk of implicit commitment to inconsistency. Cf. (Cieśliński 2017).

S_{\perp} is ω -inconsistent and unsound. $\text{CT}(\text{PA}) \vdash \neg \text{Bew}_{\text{PA}}(\overline{\perp})$. S_{\perp} is thus unreasonable and, therefore, not an example for the Overthinking Objection.

Example II: Full compositionality of truth

The following system $FS_{-1}(S)$ is the obvious theory for proving the soundness of logic, if a little induction in \mathcal{L}_T is available.

Definition (FS_{-1})

The system $FS_{-1}(S)$ is given by all the axioms of S with full induction in \mathcal{L}_T and the following axioms:

$$FS2 \quad \forall x \left(\text{Sent}_T(x) \rightarrow (T(\neg x) \leftrightarrow \neg T x) \right)$$

$$FS3 \quad \forall x \forall y \left(\text{Sent}_T(x \wedge y) \rightarrow (T(x \wedge y) \leftrightarrow T(x) \wedge T(y)) \right)$$

$$FS4 \quad \forall v \forall x \left(\text{Sent}_T(\forall v x) \rightarrow (T(\forall v x) \leftrightarrow \forall t T(x(t/v))) \right)$$

$\text{Sent}_T(x)$ expresses that x is a sentence possibly with T .

I will use $FS_{-1}(PA)$ as an example of a base theory S about which we will reflect.

$FS_{-1}(PA)$ proves $GRfn(\emptyset)$, that is, global reflection (and thus soundness) for logic (without identity) in the full language with T .

Lemma

$$FS_{-1}(PA) \vdash \forall x (\text{Bew}_{\emptyset}^-(x) \wedge \text{Sent}_T(x) \rightarrow Tx)$$

It also proves that deducibility in Natural Deduction preserves truth under all substitutional interpretations (Halbach 2025).

This lemma is required for stating the *universality of logic*, e.g., $\forall x (\text{Sent}_T(x) \rightarrow T(x \forall \neg x))$.

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Example II: The harmless theory $FS_1(PA)$

$FS_{-1}(PA)$ has ω -models and is thus ω -consistent.

$FS_{-1}(PA)$ is conservative over PA and thus arithmetically correct.

To me $FS_{-1}(PA)$ looks reasonable.

$$\text{RL}(0) := \text{FS}_{-1}(\text{PA})$$

$$\text{RL}(n+1) := \text{RL}(n) + \forall x (\text{Bew}_{\text{RL}(n)}(x) \wedge \text{Sent}_{\text{T}}(x) \rightarrow \text{T}x)$$

$$\text{RL}(\omega) := \bigcup_{n \in \omega} \text{RL}(n)$$

This doesn't really define $\text{RL}(\omega + 1)$, but you know what I mean.

Example II: Reflecting too much on logic

Lemma

RL(1) proves the uniform T-sentences, i.e.,

$\text{RL}(1) \vdash \forall x (\text{T}(\overline{\varphi(\dot{x})}) \leftrightarrow \varphi(x))$ for $\varphi(x) \in \mathcal{L}_{\text{PA}}$.

Proposition

For all $n \in \omega$, RL($n + 1$) proves uniform reflection for RL(n) for arithmetical instances (but not necessarily for instances with T).

Proposition

For all $n \in \omega$, RL(n) proves only true arithmetical statements. Thus RL(ω) is arithmetically sound.

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Proposition

$RL(\omega)$ is ω -inconsistent; $RL(\omega + 1)$ is inconsistent.

Cf. (McGee 1985, Halbach and Horsten 2006, Halbach 2014) $RL(\omega)$ is FS without co-necessitation (or, possibly, also with it).

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$RL(\omega)$ is inconsistent with uniform reflection $RFN(RL(\omega))$.

One could also give a version with proofs for global reflection.

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Reflecting too much on logic leads to doom!

Overthinking objection against ICT

By accepting a reasonable system S , you may implicitly commit yourself to accepting all sentences. Thus, ICT precludes you from accepting certain reasonable systems. Thus, ICT should be rejected.

Is $FS_{-1}(PA)$ reasonable? It is ω -consistent, arithmetically sound, and the natural theory for proving the soundness of logic.

Suspicion: The source of the inconsistency result is the use of a type-free truth predicate.

If we can prove only the truth of sentences without T , we are safe.

Example III: IRT

Definition

The language $\mathcal{L}_{>n}$ is the language \mathcal{L}_{PA} expanded with all truth predicates T_i for finite ordinals $i > n$.

Definition

The theory $IRT_{\leq n}$ is given by all axioms of Peano arithmetic with full induction in \mathcal{L}_T and the following axioms:

$$IRT1 \quad \forall s \forall t (T_n(s \doteq t) \leftrightarrow s^\circ = t^\circ)$$

$$IRT2 \quad \forall x (\text{Sent}_{>n}(x) \rightarrow (T_n(\neg x) \leftrightarrow \neg T_n x))$$

$$IRT3 \quad \forall x \forall y (\text{Sent}_{>n}(x \wedge y) \rightarrow (T_n(x \wedge y) \leftrightarrow T_n(x) \wedge T_n(y)))$$

$$IRT4 \quad \forall v \forall x (\text{Sent}_{>n}(\forall v x) \rightarrow (T_n(\forall v x) \leftrightarrow \forall t T_n(x(t/v))))$$

$$IRT5 \quad \forall t (\text{Sent}_{>i}(t^\circ) \rightarrow (T_n(T_i t) \leftrightarrow T_i t^\circ)) \text{ for } i > n$$

Each system $\text{IRT}_{\leq n}$ axiomatizes T_n as a compositional or ‘Tarskian’ truth predicate for $\mathcal{L}_{>n}$.

Proposition

$\text{IRT}_{\leq n} \vdash T_n \overline{\varphi} \leftrightarrow \varphi$ for all sentences $\varphi \in \mathcal{L}_{>n}$.

Proposition (cf. McCarthy 1988)

Each system $\text{IRT}_{\leq n}$ has an ω -model. All $\text{IRT}_{\leq n}$ and thus $\text{IRT} := \bigcup_{n \in \omega} \text{IRT}_{\leq n}$ are arithmetically sound.

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$IRT_{>0}$ is IRT only without the topmost predicate T_0 . It contains all T_i with $i > 0$ and the axioms for these T_i .

IRT is $CT(IRT_{>0})$.

Proposition

$IRT \not\vdash \forall x (BeW_{IRT_{>0}}(x) \wedge Sent_{>0}(x) \rightarrow T_0x)$

Under weak assumptions Tarskian truth $CT(S)$ proves $GRfn(S)$, as long as S is axiomatized with finitely many schemata only (but here we have infinitely many). The Tarski-schema is not a schema!

If S is not axiomatized with finitely many schemata, we cannot always arrive at $\text{GRfn}(S)$ via $\text{CT}(S)$.

Reflection may require more in such cases. Of course $\text{IRT}_{>0}$ is still recursively axiomatized.

Since we cannot prove global reflection

$\forall x (\text{Bew}_{\text{IRT}_{>0}}(x) \wedge \text{Sent}_{>0}(x) \rightarrow \text{T}_0x)$ for $\text{IRT}_{>0}$ in IRT , we add it as an axiom:

Proposition

IRT is inconsistent with global reflection

$\forall x (\text{Bew}_{\text{IRT}_{>0}}(x) \wedge \text{Sent}_{>0}(x) \rightarrow \text{T}_0x)$. IRT is also inconsistent with uniform reflection $\text{RFN}(\text{IRT})$.

This follows from (Visser 1989).

We have another example for the Overthinking Objection. Compositional truth can be added to $IRT_{>0}$, but not global (with uniform disquotation) or uniform reflection .

Typed truth predicates do not protect us from the Overthinking Objection. Cf. also $CT(PA + \neg Bew_S(\overline{\perp}))$.

We have an example of an arithmetically sound theory IRT that is a classical Tarskian theory for $IRT_{>0}$ that is inconsistent with global reflection for $IRT_{>0}$.

Thus, in some cases, global reflection is stronger than compositional truth. In such cases compositional truth is not an adequate way to establish soundness.

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I am looking for 'natural' examples of theories S that become inconsistent after only a good number of iterating $\text{Rfn}(S)$ or $\text{RFN}(S)$.

Of course, at any step new theorems are added, so less natural examples are easily found.

My best answers

1. To which systems S (if any) does ICT apply?
2. What does it mean to accept a system in the relevant sense?
3. What are the statements of soundness?
4. How exactly can we come to accept them?
5. Where does the reflection process lead?

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S needs to contain some arithmetic, say EA at the very least.

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What does it mean to accept a system?

We must accept S as able of expressing syntax theory in a realist sense, willing to apply truth to its sentences. Otherwise we could not assert soundness.

What are the statements of soundness?

Unclear. Saying that $\text{GRfn}(S)$ is the full statement of soundness isn't helpful, because we still need a definition or axioms for truth.

$\text{CT}(S)$ may not suffice to prove soundness in the sense of $\text{GRfn}(S)$ or $\text{RFN}(S)$.

If S is axiomatized with finitely many schemata, $\text{CT}(S)$ is sufficient for reflection for proving $\text{GRfn}(S)$ and $\text{RFN}(S)$. If not, we may not be able to prove the truth of all S -axioms and $\text{GRfn}(S)$ and $\text{RFN}(S)$ can be stronger than $\text{CT}(S)$. $\text{Rfn}(S)$ and $\text{RFN}(S)$ are not schemata in this sense, although we can prove their truth in $\text{CT}(S)$ under weak assumptions.

How exactly can we come to accept them?

Stating soundness requires already truth (whether defined or primitive). $CT(S)$ is sufficient for proving soundness as long as S is given by finitely many schemata *without* T . It may also be sufficient in other cases.

In other cases where S is recursively axiomatized, $CT(S)$ is insufficient (cf. IRT). More resources will be required to establish the truth of all axioms and thus soundness ($Rfn(S)$, $RFN(S)$, $GRfn(S)$). It's unclear what these resources should be.

Where does the reflection process lead?

We may arrive at any level of $RT_{<\epsilon_0}$ or $RT_{<\Gamma_0}$ when we start from PA.
Beyond that we don't have suitable well-orderings.

Progressions are obtained via diagonalization. We need to iterate along some well-founded ordering; otherwise we will be in an IRT-like situation.

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The plausibility of the objection depends on many decisions:

One could claim that $FS_{-1}(PA)$ and IRT are as unreasonable as $PA + \neg Bew_S(\overline{\perp})$. But then what makes a system unreasonable?

If reflection proceeds via the truth theory CT, there is no problem with IRT.

We need more examples and a sharper version of ICT to assess the Overthinking Objection.

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Implicit commitment is a delusion.

We are very quick to postulate the existence of a structure satisfying our system or to accept also a theory of truth for our accepted system. Then we piece together a soundness proof in an informal way, forget the additional resources and accept reflection principles.

When we consider more precarious systems, the confidence fades away, and it is not even clear what the additional resources should be, how we can prove soundness, and, e.g., whether we should accept $\text{GRfn}(S)$ when we cannot prove $\text{GRfn}(S)$ from $\text{CT}(S)$.

Results on the reflective closure of a system S merely make explicit how far we can get with a specific kind of resource, not what is already implicit in the acceptance of S .

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