

Re: "Godel got it all wrong"

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- *From:* "Jesse F. Hughes" <jesse@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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"Peter_Smith" <ps218@xxxxxxxxxx> writes:

I can see how people can get confused about the supposed implications of Gödel's First Incompleteness Theorem. What fazes me is the seemingly perennial temptation to say that there is something wrong with the Theorem itself. (When I was editing one of the philosophy journals for twelve years, there'd be another "refutation" submitted every four or five months.) The really odd thing is that the Theorem is in fact **easy**.

Of course, if you want to prove it Gödel's way (and there's other ways to choose from), there's work to be done, proving that primitive recursive functions are representable in Peano Arithmetic (and it requires a pretty bit of trickery with beta-functions to do that). But once the spade-work is over, the Theorem is indeed easily demonstrated. Which is not to belittle Gödel's achievement of course. As Kreisel says in his memoir, it was in fact very important to Gödel that the theorem was straightforward, **almost** obvious once one had got one's head around the philosophical point that truth and provability in this or that formal system are different concepts.

So why, I wonder, do people still get a bee in their bonnet about this?! Very puzzling.

I'm not surprised that Goedel's theorem faces animosity. The setting is technical and takes some time to understand. And there are many misinterpretations of Goedel's theorem in the literature. Folks may be reacting to parodies of the theorem and its consequences when they decide that it's wrong.

If Cantor's theorem faces daily "refutations", I don't see why I'd be surprised that Goedel's theorem does too.

Did you receive any papers refuting Cantor's theorem at that journal? Or is that activity limited to Usenet and other venues?

Re: "Godel got it all wrong"

Jesse F. Hughes

"Knowing about logic is not the same as being in touch with reality."

— David Kastrup

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