Re: A missing definition in "Gödel's Proof" by Nagel & Newman (open letter)

Source: http://sci.tech−archive.net/Archive/sci.logic/2007−11/msg00007.html

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- *From*: David C. Ullrich <ullrich@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
- *Date*: Thu, 01 Nov 2007 06:42:09 −0600

On Wed, 31 Oct 2007 20:20:29 +0100, G. Frege <nomail@invalid> wrote:

> On Wed, 31 Oct 2007 15:55:11 −0000, translogi <wilemien@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
> wrote:
>
> > > Without this definition the exposition of the system
> > > (described in the
> > > book) is simply incomplete (for example, without it not even
> > > p −> p
> > > can be derived); and hence imho it should be added to the
> > > text.
> > >
> > > Actually, a footnote by the Ed. would do.
> >
> > Send an private email to Douglas Hofstadter
> > Hope he will respond
>
> Thanx for your support. Actually, I already got a slap in the face by
> Hofstadter. His reply to my email was as follows:
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> ~~~~~~
>
> Hello, and thanks for your note. I appreciate
> your interest in "Gödel's Proof" and your
> thoughts. There are always things that one
> person or other would like to see "fixed", but at
> this point the text is "fixed" (in another sense
> of the word) and unlikely to be changed. But
> thanks for the suggestion. −− Douglas Hofstadter.

You should really get a grip − that's not a slap
in the face, it's a perfectly polite reply. He

even thanks you.

Anyway: Can you tell us exactly what the axioms
and rules of the system in the book are?

> ~~~~~~
>
> Thus I decided "to go public". My point (which Hofstadter kindly decided to ignore) is that several distinguished claims by Nagel & Newman (made in their book) are _false_ without explicitly stating the missing definition _as part of the system described_.
>
> This is especially unfortunate because they spend a whole chapter (chapter V) to _rigorously prove_ that the system in question is /consistent/. This proof relies on the (alleged) "theorem" 'p −> (~p −> q)'. But this "theorem" is _not_ derivable in the system as described in the book.*)
>
> Actually, they write/claim:
>
> "Now, it happens that 'p −> (~p −> q)' (in words_ 'if p, then if not−p, then q') is a theorem in the calculus. (We shall accept this as a fact, without exhibiting the derivation.)"
>
> Well, actually, it's NOT a fact, since 'p −> (~p −> q)' cannot be derived in the system /as described/.
>
> If THIS is not something that SHOULD be "fixed" (at least by mentioning the missing definition in a footnote) what then?!
>
>
> F.
>
> ______________________
>
> *) In chapter V Hilbert & Ackermannn's variant of Russell & Whitehead's system for propositional logic (in PM) is introduced. Even the formation rules for wffs are given. The ONLY thing that is missing is the _crucial_ information that 'A −> B' means '~A v B' (where A, B are wffs).

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David C. Ullrich
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