CIRCULAR AND NON-WELLFOUNDED PROOFS: EXPRESSIVENESS AND SEMANTICS I

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Centre Paul-Langevin, Aussois, France, 22nd May 2025. 1 Types with fixed points

2 Circular proofs

3 Some results on expressivity





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SIMPLE TYPES

Types:

$$\sigma, \tau, \dots ::= \perp \mid 1 \mid X \in \mathsf{Var} \mid \sigma + \tau \mid \sigma \times \tau \mid \sigma \to \tau$$

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Example

- B := 1 + 1 represents the Booleans.
- $N := \mu X(1 + X)$ represents the natural numbers.
- $S_{\tau} := \nu X(\tau \times X)$ represents infinite streams over τ .
- $W := \mu X(1 + \nu Y(X \times Y))$ represents the (ω -branching) well-founded trees.

Sequents: $\sigma_1, \ldots, \sigma_n \Rightarrow \tau$ (interpret as $\sigma_1 \times \cdots \times \sigma_n \to \tau$)

Each type can be constructed and destructed. E.g.

$$\xrightarrow[]{\sigma \Rightarrow \tau} \sigma \Rightarrow \tau \qquad \xrightarrow[]{\sigma \Rightarrow \sigma \Rightarrow \tau} \frac{\sigma \Rightarrow \rho \quad \sigma \Rightarrow \tau}{\rho \to \sigma \Rightarrow \tau}$$

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Curry-Howard viewpoint: proofs as programs.

Fixed point rules:

$$^{\mu_{r}} \xrightarrow{\Rightarrow \sigma(\mu X \, \sigma(X))}{\Rightarrow \mu X \, \sigma(X)} \ ^{\mu_{l}} \frac{\sigma(\tau) \Rightarrow \tau}{\mu X \, \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau} \ ^{\nu_{r}} \frac{\tau \Rightarrow \sigma(\tau)}{\tau \Rightarrow \nu X \, \sigma(X)} \ ^{\nu_{l}} \frac{\sigma(\nu X \, \sigma(X)) \Rightarrow \tau}{\nu X \, \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau}$$

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$${}^{\mu_r} \frac{\Rightarrow \sigma(\mu X \, \sigma(X))}{\Rightarrow \mu X \, \sigma(X)} \; {}^{\mu_l} \frac{\sigma(\tau) \Rightarrow \tau}{\mu X \, \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau} \; {}^{\nu_r} \frac{\tau \Rightarrow \sigma(\tau)}{\tau \Rightarrow \nu X \, \sigma(X)} \; {}^{\nu_l} \frac{\sigma(\nu X \, \sigma(X)) \Rightarrow \tau}{\nu X \, \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau}$$

Definition ([Cla09])

 $\mu {\sf LJ}$ is the extension of usual ${\sf LJ}$ by the fixed point rules above.

Computational theory given by cut-reduction.

Examples: natural numbers and streams

$$\underline{\mathbf{O}} := \frac{N := \mu X (1 + X)}{\underset{\mu_r}{\Rightarrow} \frac{1}{\underset{N}{\Rightarrow} 1 + N}} \qquad \underline{\underline{n+1}} := \frac{\underbrace{\underbrace{n}}_{\mu_r}}{\underset{\mu_r}{\xrightarrow{\underline{n+N}}}} \\ \underbrace{\frac{N}{\underset{N}{\Rightarrow} N}}_{\mu_r} \underbrace{\frac{N + 1}{\underset{N}{\Rightarrow} N}}_{\mu_r}$$

Examples: natural numbers and streams

$$\underline{N} := \mu X(1 + X)$$

$$\underline{0} := \prod_{\mu_r} \frac{\Rightarrow 1}{\Rightarrow 1 + N} \qquad \underline{n+1} := \prod_{\mu_r} \frac{\Rightarrow N}{\Rightarrow N}$$

$$\underline{add} : N \times N \to N$$

$$\underline{id} \qquad \underbrace{N \Rightarrow N}_{\mu_r} \frac{N \Rightarrow 1 + N}{N \Rightarrow N}$$

$$\underline{1 + N, N \Rightarrow N}_{\mu_l} \frac{1 + N, N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N}$$

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} add(0, n) = n \\ add(m + 1, n) = add(m, n) + 1 \end{array}\right)$$

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EXAMPLES: NATURAL NUMBERS AND STREAMS

$$\underbrace{N := \mu X(1 + X)}_{\substack{N := \mu X(1 + X)}} \\ \underline{0} := \underbrace{\frac{\Rightarrow 1}{\Rightarrow 1}}_{\mu_r} \underbrace{n + 1}_{\Rightarrow N} \xrightarrow{n + 1 :=} \underbrace{\frac{\Rightarrow N}{\Rightarrow N}}_{\mu_r} \frac{\underline{\Rightarrow 1 + N}}{\underline{\Rightarrow 1 + N}} \\ \mathbf{hd} := \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow N}}_{\nu_l} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow N}}_{\substack{N \times S \Rightarrow N}} \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tl} :=} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{S \Rightarrow S}}_{\substack{N \times S \Rightarrow S}} \frac{\underline{\mathrm{tl}} :=}{\underline{s \Rightarrow N}}_{\underline{N \times S \Rightarrow N}} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow S \Rightarrow S}}_{\substack{N \times S \Rightarrow S}} \underbrace{\mathrm{tl} :=} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow S \Rightarrow S}}_{\substack{N \times S \Rightarrow S}} \frac{\underline{\mathrm{sl}} := \underbrace{\mathrm{id}}_{N \times S \Rightarrow S}}{\underline{S \Rightarrow S}} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow N}}_{\underline{N \times S \Rightarrow N}} \xrightarrow{\mathrm{tl} :=} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow N}}_{\underline{N \times S \Rightarrow S}} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow N \Rightarrow N}}_{\substack{N \Rightarrow 1 + N \\ \underline{1, N \Rightarrow N}} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow N}}_{\substack{N \Rightarrow 1 + N \\ \underline{N \Rightarrow N}} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow N}}_{\underline{N \Rightarrow N \times N}} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow N \times N}}_{\underline{N \Rightarrow N \times N}} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{id}}{N \Rightarrow N \times N}}_{\substack{N \Rightarrow N \times N \\ \nu_r, \frac{N \Rightarrow N \times N \times N}{N \Rightarrow S}}} \underbrace{\frac{\mathrm{add}(0, n) = n}{\mathrm{add}(m + 1, n) = \mathrm{add}(m, n) + 1}$$

ASIDE: INTERPRETING TYPES WITH FIXED POINTS

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \bot^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \varnothing \\ 1^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \varnothing \\ (\sigma + \tau)^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \sigma^{\mathfrak{S}} \uplus \tau^{\mathfrak{S}} \\ (\sigma \times \tau)^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \sigma^{\mathfrak{S}} \times \tau^{\mathfrak{S}} \\ (\sigma \to \tau)^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \{f : \sigma^{\mathfrak{S}} \to \tau^{\mathfrak{S}}\} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \bot^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \varnothing \\ \mathbf{1}^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \varnothing \\ (\sigma + \tau)^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \sigma^{\mathfrak{S}} \oplus \tau^{\mathfrak{S}} \\ (\sigma \times \tau)^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \sigma^{\mathfrak{S}} \times \tau^{\mathfrak{S}} \\ (\boldsymbol{\sigma} \to \tau)^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & \{f : \sigma^{\mathfrak{S}} \to \tau^{\mathfrak{S}}\} \\ (\boldsymbol{\mu}\boldsymbol{X}\boldsymbol{\sigma}(\boldsymbol{X}))^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & ? \\ (\boldsymbol{\nu}\boldsymbol{X}\boldsymbol{\sigma}(\boldsymbol{X}))^{\mathfrak{S}} & := & ? \end{array}$$

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No interpretation of, e.g., $\nu X X$ and $\mu X((X \rightarrow \sigma) \rightarrow \tau)$.

A computability theoretic model Interpret τ as a set $\tau^{\mathfrak{K}} \subseteq \mathbb{N}$:

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Q: what do B, N, S_{τ}, W denote in \Re ?

 $\mapsto \sigma(A)^{\mathfrak{K}}$

Structure meets power: a question of expressivity

Curry-Howard viewpoint relates logic and computation

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System	Computation	Logic
simple types	Extended Polynomials	Pure FO Logic
+N	HO Primitive Recursion (T)	FO Arithmetic (PA)
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What do fixed point type systems compute?

This may be model-sensitive, but is *robust* for type 1 functions.

Types with fixed points

Circular proofs

3 Some results on expressivity



Non-wellfounded typing

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Replace μ_l and ν_r by unfoldings:

$$\mu_{l}^{\prime} \frac{\Gamma, \sigma(\mu X \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau}{\Gamma, \mu X \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau} \qquad \qquad \nu_{r}^{\prime} \frac{\Gamma \Rightarrow \sigma(\nu X \sigma(X))}{\Gamma \Rightarrow \nu X \sigma(X)}$$

Replace μ_l and ν_r by unfoldings:

$$\mu'_{1} \frac{\Gamma, \sigma(\mu X \, \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau}{\Gamma, \mu X \, \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau} \qquad \nu'_{r} \frac{\Gamma \Rightarrow \sigma(\nu X \, \sigma(X))}{\Gamma \Rightarrow \nu X \, \sigma(X)}$$

- A coderivation is generated *coinductively* from rules of $\mu'LJ$.
- It is **progressing** if every infinite branch has an infinite progressing thread. (Precise definition is beyond the scope of this talk.)

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NB: cyclic proof checking is decidable, reducing to universality of Büchi automata.

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$$\begin{array}{c|c} \underline{add} : \underline{N} \times \underline{N} \to \underline{N} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{id} & \frac{1}{N \Rightarrow N} \\ \underline{il} & \frac{\mu_{1}'}{N, N \Rightarrow N} \\ \underline{id} & \frac{N}{N, N \Rightarrow N} \\ \underline{il} & \frac{N}{N, N \Rightarrow N} \\ \mu_{1}' & \frac{1 + N, N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N} \\ \bullet \end{array} \\ \begin{array}{c} \underline{id} & \underbrace{n}_{N, N} \\ \underline{n}_{N, N} & \underline{n}_{N, N} \\ \underline{n}_{N, N} & \underline{n}_{N} \\ \underline{n}_{N, N} \\ \underline{n}_{N, N} & \underline{n}_{N} \\ \underline{n}_{N, N} \\ \underline{n}_{N, N} & \underline{n}_{N} \\ \underline{n}_{N, N} \\ \underline{n}_{N,$$

Iteration to cycles:

 μ_l

$$\frac{\sigma(\tau) \Rightarrow \tau}{\mu X \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau} \qquad \rightsquigarrow \qquad \sigma \underbrace{\sigma_{\text{cut}}^{\mu_l'} \frac{\overline{\mu X \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau}}{\overline{\sigma(\mu X \sigma(X)) \Rightarrow \sigma(\tau)}} \sigma(\tau) \Rightarrow \tau}_{\mu_l' \frac{\sigma(\mu X \sigma(X)) \Rightarrow \tau}{\mu X \sigma(X) \Rightarrow \tau}} \bullet$$

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ACKERMANN FUNCTION

$$A(0, n) = n + 1$$

$$A(m + 1, 0) = A(m, 1)$$

$$A(m + 1, n + 1) = A(m, A(n + 1, m))$$

$$\stackrel{i}{\underset{cut}{\longrightarrow}} \underbrace{\frac{N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N}}_{wk} \underbrace{\frac{N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N}}_{cut} \underbrace{\frac{N, N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N}}_{v_{1}', \frac{N, N, N \Rightarrow N}{c}} \underbrace{\frac{N, N, N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N}}_{(N, N, N \Rightarrow N)} \bullet$$

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$$\vdots$$

$$cut \xrightarrow{N \Rightarrow N}_{wk} \underbrace{\frac{N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N}}_{w'_{1}} \bullet \underbrace{\vdots}_{v'_{1}} \underbrace{\frac{N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N}}_{\mu'_{1}, s} \underbrace{\frac{N, N, N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N}}_{cut} \underbrace{\frac{N, N \Rightarrow N}{N, N, N \Rightarrow N}}_{c \underbrace{\frac{N, N, N \Rightarrow N}{N, N \Rightarrow N}}} \bullet$$

NB: The function *A* requires iteration at type 1 in finitary derivations.

THE 'BROTHERSTON-SIMPSON CONJECTURE'

Some observations

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The 'Brotherston-Simpson conjecture'

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A metamathematical approach

- Second-order arithmetic can formalise *metatheory* of infinite proofs.
- Computational interpretations allow us to extract finitary proofs thence.

Types with fixed points



3 Some results on expressivity



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- A circular preproof $P: \Gamma \Rightarrow \tau$ represents a partial functional $P^{\mathfrak{S}}: \Gamma^{\mathfrak{S}} \to \tau^{\mathfrak{S}}$.

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 T_{n+1} and CT_n interpret each other.

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Proposition ([Das21])

T and CT represent the same functionals in \mathfrak{S} .

Proof sketch.

Let P_0 be a coderivation of $\Gamma_0 \Rightarrow \tau_0$.

- Suppose not P_0 total, and let $\vec{a}_0 \in \Gamma_0^{\mathfrak{S}}$ s.t. $P_0^{\mathfrak{S}} \vec{a}_0 \uparrow$.
- Each rule preserves totality, so we can build an infinite branch $B = (P_i)_{i < \omega}$ and inputs \vec{a}_i such that $P_i \vec{a}_i \uparrow$.

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NB: this proof is highly non-constructive! How can we extract induction invariants?

Before dissecting these results, let us set up our toolbox:

Proof theoretic ingredients:

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Textbook interpretations:

- SO theories are conservative extensions of appropriate FO ones.
- *Computational interpretations* allow T to realise FO theorems.

PUTTING THINGS TOGETHER

For f of type 1:



- formalised abstraction requires a careful partial evaluation result.
- Confluence of CT in $RCA_0 \implies$ determinism.
- formalised totality arithmetises the totality argument for CT.
 - Reverse mathematics of ω -automaton theory [KMPS19, Das20].
 - Must formalise totality argument in a HO computability model | · |.
- program extraction is textbook.

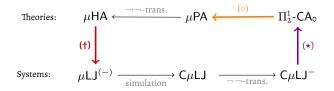
What about (C) μ LJ?

Theorem ([CD23])

 μ LJ and C μ LJ define just the functions provably recursive in Π_2^1 -CA $_0$.

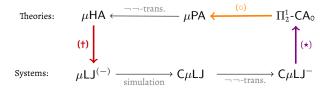
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- (*) Formalisation of semantics by fixed points as fixed points:
 - Novel reverse mathematics of ordinal and fixed point theory, building on [Das21, DM23].
- (•) A complex black box result due to [Mö02].
- (†) Realisability interpretation by fixed points as SO types.
 - (Considerable) specialisation of HA2 \rightarrow F.

Types with fixed points

Circular proofs

3 Some results on expressivity



Metamathematics provides a **powerful toolbox** for understanding circular proofs.

SUMMARY AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS

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- Classifying absolute and relative expressivity of circular systems.
- Exposing new connections with classical topics.
- Fuelling new results of independent interest.

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- Further development of the model theory of circular proofs.

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THANK YOU.

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