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TBA

Almost all of our reasoning is defeasible: that is, our inferences go through only other things equal, and there are always more of them – the list of things that might go wrong is open-ended, and doesn’t run out. Most work on defeasibility (or non-monotonic reasoning, if you’re in the AI world) is focused on how to represent it, but I want to take a step back, and ask why it’s there. I will argue that defeasible inference is a hard-to-avoid design feature of certain kinds of boundedly rational agents, that the openendedness is genuine, and that we need to understand defeasibility from an engineering – rather than a formal – perspective.