

Note on Russell and the Materialist Principle of Logically Possible Worlds

JAN DEJNOŽKA¹

This note would be best placed at the end of my seventh comment (my 2018, 273) on Vacek's second doubt (Vacek 2017, 265) about my book (my 2016). But as a stand-alone note, there is no need to keep track of that. The question is how or whether new or hitherto "alien" objects can come into being in any possible world, or at least in the actual world.

Possible worlds are defined by which objects are in them, past, present, and future, and by their interrelationships. Although within many worlds, objects begin or cease to exist from the temporal viewpoint (*sub specie temporis*) of temporal observers within those worlds, *by definition* of any possible world, all of its objects are already there. They are included in the very definition of that world. For a possible world is not identifiable except in terms of all (and only) the objects it includes and their interrelationships. We may, if we wish, say that the definition of a world takes a timeless viewpoint (*sub specie aeternitatis*). But what is important is not that the viewpoint is timeless, but that the inclusion of objects in a world is purely definitional. (That is the reason *why* it is a timeless viewpoint.) This already solves the problem of new objects for Russell and Leibniz. Namely, by definition of "possible world," there are not and cannot be any new objects "coming into" any possible world, either by moving from one possible

¹ ✉ Jan Dejnožka

Union College
2877 Burlington Street
Ann Arbor MI 48105, U.S.A.
e-mail: dejnozka@juno.com

world into another one (as if we were carrying a chair from one room to another, and perhaps somehow also still leaving the chair in the first room), or by simply coming into being out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) in the possible world in question, or in any other way. We may, if we wish, say that the temporal viewpoint is limited, relative, and illusory compared to looking at spacetime as a whole. But what is important is that this is a definitional matter. To change the objects (their existence, their properties, or their relationships) in the slightest is by definition to change the possible world into a different possible world. And as is often noted, this is so regardless of whether we finite humans are able to state the complete definition of any possible world. To criticize this solution is to criticize Russell (and Leibniz), not my book. (Russell wrote a book on Leibniz.)

References

- DEJNOŽKA, J. (2016): *Bertrand Russell on Modality and Logical Relevance*. Second Edition. Ann Arbor, MI: CreateSpace.
- DEJNOŽKA, J. (2018): Russell and the Materialist Principle of Logically Possible Worlds. *Organon F* 25(2), 265-278.
- VACEK, M. (2017): Review of Dejnožka (2016). *Organon F* 24(2), 261-266.