

A non-existent revision of "Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy"

In his article "Russell's Mathematical Logic" for *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, Gödel quotes Russell in the *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*:

Logic is concerned with the real world just as truly as zoology, though with its more abstract and general features.

Gödel cites the "edition of 1920, p. 169" and in a footnote remarks that "The above quoted passage was left out in the later editions of the *Introduction*." This remark serves to substantiate Gödel's observation that Russell's "[realistic] attitude has been gradually decreasing in the course of time...."¹

I examined several different printings² (or "editions" - there has been only one setting of type) and have not found that this passage has been left out in "the later editions". An enquiry to Gödel elicited no response. I shrugged, for hasn't Gödel much more important work to do than to correct what was probably a very minor mistake?

But I have now seen another book making exactly the same observation as Gödel's article. C.W.K. Mundle's *A Critique of Linguistic*

¹All the quotations from Gödel are on p. 127 of *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, ed. P.A. Schilpp (Evanston & Chicago: Northwestern University, 1944).

²The Russell Archives holds the following printings of *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1919): 1st (May 1919), "2nd edition" (April 1920 - sometimes erroneously given later as 1922), 3rd (May 1924), 5th (Feb. 1938), 10th (1960), 12th (1967). Since Gödel wrote his article in 1943, the only impressions of the *Introduction* to which he could be referring are the first five. I have examined all, including the fourth (Feb. 1930), which is in the library of John G. Slater.

*Philosophy*³ quotes the same lines, capitalizing "Logic" à la Gödel although the word isn't capitalized in the *Introduction* and although Mundle, unlike Gödel, doesn't require a capital to start off his quotation. Mundle comments:

This last statement was omitted from later editions of Russell's *Introduction*. This suggests that Wittgenstein's thesis released Russell both from the spell of Platonism and from a tendency to treat logical truths as *very* general empirical generalizations.

Mundle doesn't acknowledge Gödel's article, but it seems likely that his statements were influenced by it.

The problem has both bibliographical and philosophical aspects. Is there a copy of *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* with the alteration that Gödel and Mundle indicate? If so, that printing may contain other alterations.⁴ If Gödel and Mundle's alteration doesn't exist, their statements about Russell's decreasing Platonism are left unsupported. Probably, however, other support could be found, but it may not be as definitive as the piece of evidence Gödel and Mundle claim to have.

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³Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970. The quotations from Mundle are on p. 183. On the same page, in a footnote, Mundle quotes from a letter to him from Russell dated 20 Dec. 1968. This letter may contain Russell's last written remarks on philosophy.

⁴As late as 1967 Russell was ordering corrections in the *Introduction*. On April 17th his secretary, Christopher Farley, told Allen and Unwin that Russell had requested that on p. 115 line 8 the second 'x' should read 'z'. It is corrected in the impression issued that year and in the Simon and Schuster Clarion paperback published in 1971. The misprint derives from the original MS, although Russell corrected proofs. Folio 131 shows that Russell originally wrote 'x' but made it into 'z'. To anyone not following the argument, it could easily appear 'x'. The second and fourth impressions also contain alterations. Russell wrote to Stanley Unwin on Feb. 6th, 1920, enclosing a letter indicating "a small number of corrections". Unwin acknowledged receipt of these on Feb. 7th, and on the 16th acknowledged receipt of "further corrections". On Feb. 15th, 1930, Russell supplied Unwin with a half-sheet of "entirely trivial" corrections. There may well have been other occasions on which Russell altered the text of the *Introduction*. A Hinman collation of the first and latest printings would reveal them.

^{*}Overleaf is a photograph of the page of the manuscript of *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* containing the passage in question. The passage was printed exactly as Russell wrote it. Indeed the whole page was printed, with very minor exceptions, exactly as Russell wrote it. The fact that it was not altered at all during Russell's lifetime supports his statement (Russell 8, p. 14) that after the age of 30 he rarely changed anything he wrote. Still, it might be useful to know changes he did make in this book. The manuscript provides the means.

For want of the apparatus of propositional functions, many logicians have been driven to the conclusion that there are unreal objects. ^{It is e.g. by Meinong,} ~~They~~ argued that we can speak about "the golden mountain", "the round square", & so on; we can make true propositions of which there are the subjects; hence they must have some kind of logical being, since otherwise the propositions in which they occur would be meaningless. In such theories, it seems to me, there is a failure of ~~that~~-feeling for reality which ought to be preserved even in the most abstract studies. Logic, I should maintain, must not more admit a unicorn than zoology can; for logic is concerned with the real world just as much as zoology, though with its more abstract & general features. To say that unicorns have an existence in ~~beauty~~, or in literature, or in imagination, is a most pitiful & petty evasion. What exists in beauty is not an animal, made of flesh & bone ~~phantom~~, moving & breathing of its own initiative. What exists in a picture, or a description in words. Similarly, to maintain that Hamlet, for example, exists in his own world, named in the world of Shakespeare's imagination, just as if he was (say) Napoleon existed in the ordinary world, is to say something decidedly confusing, or else ~~to~~ confused ~~to~~ ^{degree which is} ~~to~~ ^{scarcely} credible. There is only one world, the "real" world.

(Not reduced.)