

1 What are possible worlds?

Possible worlds are situations rather like ours, except that some things that are actually false, but metaphysically possible, are true there. For example, some are worlds which are the same as ours except that Clinton won the recent US election, instead of Trump. *Impossible* worlds are situations rather like ours, except that some things that are actually false, but metaphysically *impossible*, are true there. For example, some are worlds in which Hobbes squared the circle (a mathematical impossibility). Worlds of both kinds are represented by certain mathematical structures in the semantics of modal logics, conditional logics, other logics. INCL, ch. 2. TNB, ch. 9.

2 Why is the idea of possible worlds so important in philosophy?

They are important because they (or at least their mathematical representation) deliver an understanding of the semantics of modality, conditionals, intentionality, fictional truth, and other difficult notions. INCL, part 1. TNB, part 1.

3 Is our world more real than possible worlds or is it just one of them?

Our world is the only one that exists. The others are a certain kind of non-existent object. TNB, 7.3.

4 Which are the most interesting theories of possible worlds?

There are many different theories of the nature of worlds: that they are existent concrete entities (such as our own world), that they are existent abstracts entities (such as sets of propositions), that they are non-existent objects (like the objects of fiction). Debate between the different versions of these theories continues. INCL, 2.5-2.8.

5 Would you say that Cicero and Tullius is the same persons in every possible world?

In every possible world, perhaps; but in every world. Some impossible worlds are ones where Cicero is not Tully. INCL 23.6, 24.6.

6 Is there such a possible world in which 2 plus 2 does not equal 4?

No, but this is certainly true at some impossible worlds. TNB, ch. 9.

7 Is there a possible world in which I have my counterpart/alterego?

‘Counterpart’ is a technical term in David Lewis’ account of worlds. He required the notion because he thought that an object can exist at only one world. I do not subscribe to this theory; so I have no use for the notion. A person can exist in more than one world. Of course, I can have different properties at different worlds; and a different person can have properties at a different world, very similar to mine at this world. INCL chs. 15, 16, 17.

8 Can we say that virtual reality is one of the possible worlds?

A virtual reality is a sort of fiction. It can be true at some world, just as much as the fictions concerning, e.g., Sherlock Holmes be true at some worlds. TNB, ch.6.

9 Do you agree with Leibniz that our world is the best possible world?

Absolutely not. I have no idea whether any world is the best possible, but this world is certainly not it. In such a world, there would be nothing like concentration camps, Alzheimer's disease, President Trump, etc.

10 (Our standard last question) Do you think philosophy needs popularizing? Why yes (or why not)? Or maybe philosophy doesn't need that but our societies do?

Many philosophical issues (such as this one) are somewhat arcane, and probably of little popular interest. But many philosophical issues are extremely important, such as those concerning, religion, ethics, politics. And an enormous amount of bullshit is talked about all of these things—by politicians, the media, various religious leaders. Philosophers have a duty to help their students think critically, and so to see through much of the bullshit. They also have a duty to get out into the public domain and do the same for the general public.

References

INCL: G. Priest, *Introduction to Non-Classical Logic*, 2nd ed, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

TNB: G. Priest, *Towards Non-Being*, 2nd ed, Oxford University Press, 2016.