Modality and Inquiry

by

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Abstract

The possibilities we consider or eliminate in inquiry are *epistemic possibilities*. This dissertation is mainly about what it is to say or believe that something is possible in this sense. Chapter 1 (‘Epistemic Contradictions’) describes a new puzzle about epistemic modals and uses it to explore their logic and semantics. Chapter 2 (‘Nonfactualism about Epistemic Modality’) situates the work of chapter 1 into a larger picture of content and communication, developing a broadly expressivist account of the language of epistemic modality. Chapter 3 (‘Content and Modal Resolution’) argues that states of belief should be understood as relativized to an inquiry, understood formally as a certain way of dividing up logical space.

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