USE OF THESES

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STUART BROCK
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ABSTRACT

Modal fictionalism is the thesis that possible worlds and possible individuals are fictitious entities of some kind or other and that the fictions about such entities are useful in so far as they are an aid to the analysis of our modal idioms. This essay should be seen as an attempt to defend a particular variety of modal fictionalism, a defense that falls into two main parts.

The first—comprising chapters two and three—examines the different varieties of modal fictionalism put forward by Armstrong (1989) and Rosen (1990) and defends a modified version of the thesis. I conclude that there are problems associated with both theses. I then defend a modified version of Rosen's thesis that overcomes the qualms raised in the previous chapter.

The second part—comprising chapters four and five—contrasts modal fictionalism with modal realism. I conclude that both the fictionalist and the realist face certain irresolvable problems. It is my contention, though, that the problems associated with the realist's thesis are far more worrying than those associated with the fictionalist's thesis.

I have also included a discussion of a paper by Harold Noonan (1994) in an appendix to this thesis. Noonan provides an alternative solution to some of the problems I raise in Chapter 2.
PARADISE FOR NOTHING?
A Critique of Modal Fictionalism

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