Piotr Warzoszczak. *Fikcjonalizm modalny* [Modal Fictionalism]. Warsaw: Centre for Philosophical Research, 2014.

Until the second half of the twentieth century, modal logic had a serious problem with the concept of "actuality" that we use in everyday life—as when one says: "Actually my car is blue, but it could have been the same colour as yours." The situation changed with the emergence of the concept of possible worlds developed, above all, by Saul Kripke, who offered another way of thinking about possibilities. This can be expressed as follows: "In *the actual world* my car is blue, but there is *a possible world* in which my car is the same colour as your car is in *the actual world.*"

From then until today, the discussion concerning possible words, their existence, their relation to the actual world, and the veracity of possibilities, has continued in a lively manner. Piotr Warzoszczak's book *Fikcjonalizm modalny* [Modal Fictionalism] invites the reader into a journey through various ideas, debates, philosophers and arguments related to the problem of possible worlds. The argumentation of the book falls into three stages: (i) an introduction to the concept of possible worlds that aims to consider its merits, (ii) a presentation of the approach known as modal fictionalism, together with the main alternatives to this, and (iii) a demonstration of some arguments for modal fictionalism—and especially for one type of the latter, called object fictionalism—combined with a critique of alternative approaches.

At the outset, Warzoszczak presents a distinction between ontological dependence and ontological independence, showing through detailed analysis that the latter deserves the attention of philosophers while the former remains entangled in various metaphysical and logical difficulties.

A discourse is said to be ontologically dependent when it includes a theory that grounds the veracity of its existential claims on facts that constitutively involve a set of objects counting as fundamental elements of reality. The principal merit of such a discourse lies in an intuition to the effect that there is a reality that makes certain claims true, and not the other way round. However, its disadvantage is that it requires such a set of objects to

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exist. On the other hand, ontological independence can be defined simply as a negation of the commitment to the existence of the relevant objects as a condition for acknowledging claims to be true, as when, say, we discuss whether Sherlock Holmes was indeed a great detective—something which, of course, no one would doubt, even though we can certainly wonder whether there is any sense at all in which he may be said to exist.

The idea that the veracity of a claim depends on the existence of what it refers to (or the way in which it exists) can be characterised in many ways. Warzoszczak pursues his analysis in considerable detail in order to show that each of them exhibits some theoretical difficulties. Let us take, for example, David Armstrong's concept of truthmakers, which assumes that for every true claim there exists something that *makes true* this claim. As Warzoszczak shows, this notion raises a number of problems: for example, what is the nature of facts, is it just one fact that makes a claim true or a set of facts, and, if the latter, can we accept any antinomies that arise? Similarly, he shows that David Lewis's theory that *truth supervenes on being* does not really provide an explanation of what it means for something to be true, but rather only describes why negative existential claims are true, with reference to other commonly accepted negative claims (e.g., "It is not true that unicorns exist, because there is nothing like unicorns in our world on which this claim can supervene"), where this in fact simply begs the question. Finally, he considers the idea that *truth is grounded on being*, set forth by Gideon Rosen: i.e. the idea that a claim's being true is grounded on the fact (or facts) that constitute its veracity. Analogously to the previously proposed solutions, this idea requires that we presuppose the existence of a set of facts which are true in virtue of being grounded in one another. This then means that the difficulties already mentioned relating to negative existential claims (or accidentally true universal claims) apply to this theory as well. Thus, Warzoszczak argues, it would seem to make sense to appeal instead to ontologically independent discourse. This then leads to the concept of possible worlds.

What do we need a theory of possible worlds for? Warzoszczak presents three arguments: that it provides a conceptual device for capturing the subtlety of ordinary language, that it systematises a great many notions in modal logic (and significantly more than other accounts of modal logic do), and that it can be useful for reducing the proliferation of objects for which a criterion of identity is hard to formulate (in that such putative "objects" as properties or relations can be replaced with set-theoretical notions). On the other hand, the strongest argument against possible worlds theory is that it requires us to admit that unicorns (or any other counterfactual

beings) *exist*—albeit only in a possible world. This is a tension that has been present in philosophy for over fifty years: possible worlds show how modal notions work, but at the cost of granting some form of existence to too many objects. Although there have been attempts to eliminate the difficulty by limiting possible worlds to only actually existing objects, as the author shows, so-called "moderate realist" positions lead to unacceptable conclusions. Finally, it seems that the solution could be some sort of modal fictionalism: that is to say, accepting the existence of possible worlds with the restriction that all possible worlds must already be set out in detail—meaning that every claim will be either true or false in the world that it exists in (i.e. a so-called "Kripke semantics.") This avoids a situation where one is able to create an infinite number of objects and grant existence to each and every one of them. According to the author, modal fictionalism makes counterfactual analysis possible while steering clear of an ontology of possible worlds.

Further on, Warzoszczak introduces us to a distinction between two types of modal fictionalism: meta-fictionalism and object-fictionalism, before inviting the reader into a debate between these two alternatives, presenting arguments for and against each of them. Meta-fictionalism assumes that one is really asserting that, according to a certain fiction, X is so-and-so. On the other hand, object-fictionalism assumes that what one is really asserting is that the world is in a certain condition: one which it needs to be in to make it true in the relevant fiction that X is so-and-so. The difference might initially seem trivial, but may in due course also prove crucial. The former holds that something is true in accordance with a certain fiction, while the latter holds that something is true within a certain game of make-believe. Warzoszczak provides various examples which can seem problematic for both meta-fictionalists and object-fictionalists, before finally showing that object-fictionalism fits better with a description of our everyday language-involving practices. While he does not offer any argument of his own such as would bring something new to this debate, he does give us a highly detailed map of the discourse surrounding modal fictionalism. The reader will certainly benefit from following the arguments and examples that Warzoszczak analyses step by step. One has the impression of joining in a historical debate on modal logic, starting with W. V. O. Quine and Saul Kripke and then moving on to Stephen Yablo and Gideon Rosen. Collecting all of those views together and exploring the tension between them in one volume is surely a striking merit of the book.

What also makes this work significant is the author's analysis of alternative conceptions to that of modal fictionalism. Accepting the idea

of possible worlds need not necessarily lead to modal fictionalism—there
are also other conceptions that are free from ontological commitments.
Warzoszczak presents two such ideas: instrumentalism and modalism. The
former accepts the idea of possible worlds, but as a tool to express some
of the premises involved in reasoning. The latter consists in changing the
expression "there is a possible world in which…" to "it is possible that…"
The author presents us with discussions of both of these, showing that they
run into further difficulties, where this then makes modal fictionalism seem
rather more attractive than the alternatives.

   Piotr Warzoszczak's book thus deserves a very positive evaluation. Sum-
ming up, we may say that firstly it presents a wide panorama of problems
and discussions pertaining to modal logic and philosophy that are inter-
pretable using Kripke's conception of possible worlds. Secondly, it shows
how attempts to address some issues in modal logic can also be applied to
other philosophical areas, such as ontology. Thirdly, it systematises many
diverse ideas from philosophy and logic in a very detailed way, surely
making it urgent reading for anyone struggling with questions about truth,
fictions, possible words and the existence of unicorns. Last but not least,
it has a special value for Polish readers, given that the majority of books
on modal fictionalism have been published exclusively in English, while
this one includes ideas from many other significant works on that subject,
making it an excellent introduction to the topic.

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