

Abstract

In this research report, the author defends Peter van Inwagen’s modal skepticism. Van Inwagen accepts that we have much basic, everyday modal knowledge, but denies that we have the capacity to justify philosophically interesting modal claims that are far removed from this basic knowledge. The author also defends the argument by means of which van Inwagen supports his modal skepticism. Van Inwagen argues that Stephen Yablo’s recent and influential account of the relationship between conceivability and possibility supports his skeptical claims. The author’s defence involves a creative interpretation and development of Yablo’s account, which results in a recursive account of modal epistemology, what the author calls the “safe explanation” model of modal epistemology. The defence of van Inwagen’s argument also involves a rebuttal to objections offered to van Inwagen by Geirrrson and Sosa.

Keywords: Epistemology, skepticism, modality, modal epistemology, Yablo, van Inwagen.