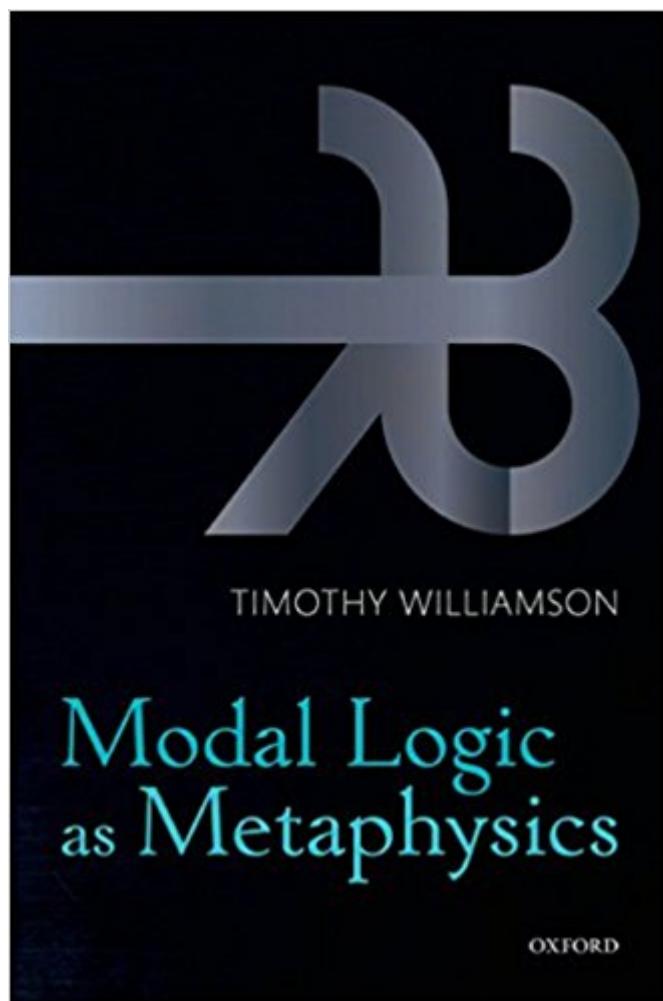**The book was found**

Modal Logic As Metaphysics

Synopsis

Are there such things as merely possible people, who would have lived if our ancestors had acted differently? Are there future people, who have not yet been conceived? Questions like those raise deep issues about both the nature of being and its logical relations with contingency and change. In Modal Logic as Metaphysics, Timothy Williamson argues for positive answers to those questions on the basis of an integrated approach to the issues, applying thetechnical resources of modal logic to provide structural cores for metaphysical theories. He rejects the search for a metaphysically neutral logic as futile. The book contains detailed historical discussion of how the metaphysical issues emerged in the twentieth century development of quantified modal logic,through the work of such figures as Rudolf Carnap, Ruth Barcan Marcus, Arthur Prior, and Saul Kripke. It proposes higher-order modal logic as a new setting in which to resolve such metaphysical questions scientifically, by the construction of systematic logical theories embodying rival answers and their comparison by normal scientific standards. Williamson provides both a rigorous introduction to the technical background needed to understand metaphysical questions in quantified modal logic andan extended argument for controversial, provocative answers to them. He gives original, precise treatments of topics including the relation between logic and metaphysics, the methodology of theory choice in philosophy, the nature of possible worlds and their role in semantics, plural quantificationcompared to quantification into predicate position, communication across metaphysical disagreement, and problems for truthmaker theory.

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Customer Reviews

Timothy Williamson's *Knowledge and Its Limits* was *the* book of analytic philosophy in the 2000s. Williamson's cleverly constructed "real analysis" of knowing, which took the concept of knowledge as primitive and rigorously presented standard epistemological problems from that perspective -- often reaching counter-intuitive conclusions about what we don't know we know, or can't know by definition -- set many a young philosopher their tasks in the field. In the 2010s Williamson would like to do it again for metaphysics, using the modal logic developed in the second half of the 20th century to clearly set out a fundamental metaphysical debate between "necessitists" (who claim everything that is necessarily has the structure it has) and "contingentists" (those who view the way our actual world is as a relatively brute fact not underwritten by a larger metaphysical structure) and partially resolve it. It is not to be.*Modal Logic as Metaphysics* discusses many interesting logical systems and their possible metaphysical significance, but the clarity Kripkean model theory initially lent to modal issues in the propositional and first-order cases does not carry over to the baroque systems of Williamson's fancy, which combine so many complicated and poorly-defined features that they are no more useful than a Rorschach blot in determining "what there is". Quantified modal logic appeared *de novo* in the papers of Ruth Barcan Marcus in the 1940s, and one particular formula is associated with her formalization, a "Barcan Formula" that indicates that if it is possible that there is *something* which has a property F, there is something which *possibly* has the property F. This law and its converse, which permit the "exportation" of modal operators like possibility and necessity in and out of quantificational contexts, simplify first-order modal logic considerably; however, they have raised the hackles of metaphysicians over the decades for seemingly Scholastic quasi-precision about things we hardly know anything about.Williamson's discussion of the various forms of the Barcan Formula and its converse is the most rewarding part of the book, but he continues on to vastly more complicated issues without maintaining the initial rigor. The first problem is Williamson decreeing S5 to be the "One True Logic",

the doubting of which was formerly regarded as the beginning of wisdom in modal logic research (the tensions between this characterization and Williamson's advocacy in *Knowledge and Its Limits* of the simpler logic T as the logic of knowing go unexplored). He goes on to claim inspiration from Richard Montague's higher-order intensional logic, found in Montague's papers "Proper Treatment of Quantification in Ordinary English" and "Universal Grammar", without noting that Montague stated clearly he viewed "IL" as inessential to his purposes as a theoretician of language from a purely formal standpoint and also as settling almost *no* metaphysical issues (Montague introduces many "meaning postulates" in PTQ to stipulate metaphysically desirable properties). Williamson also borrows from more obscure efforts in "philosophical logic", trying to derive new consequences from already rarefied efforts by Robert Stalnaker and Kit Fine in a process he -- in trying to win a properly "scientific" status for metaphysics -- calls "abduction".However, the way in which operations like lambda abstraction and a "hybrid" logical operator fixing the circumstances of evaluation at a single "possible world", or Henkin's problematic semantics for second-order logic, are introduced and "used" is slipshod at best, making it almost impossible for the reader to carry over the insights of Carnap or Prior to the problems Williamson sets himself, while he precisely misses the point of logical inquiry by his pursuit of something rather obviously outside its remit in trying to win converts for "necessitism". Perhaps Williamson can be charitably described as creating a "disciplinary matrix" where similarly minded philosophers will follow on and make something more of this type of writing; it isn't what he wants it to be yet.

Purchase as a Christmas gift for my grandson who is studying Philosophy in college.

for my best friend, recommend it to my friend. great, It's perfect. awesome and very well.

I just finished reading the first two chapter. As the author said in the preface, the topic will not interest all philosophers. Indeed, he used the world "dull". It is technical and metaphysical. Hope those who need reading the book enjoy.

Modal Logic as Metaphysics A Critical Introduction to the Metaphysics of Time (Bloomsbury Critical Introductions to Contemporary Metaphysics) A Visual Guide to Scales for Tenor Banjo in CGDA: A Reference Text for Classical, Modal, Blues, Jazz and Exotic Scales (Fingerboard Charts for ... Scales on Stringed Instruments) (Volume 38) Mastering German Conversation Modal Verbs, Unit 1 Modal Counterpoint: Renaissance Style Modal and Tonal Counterpoint: From Josquin to Stravinsky

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