Truthmakers for Modal Truths: You could be going for a walk right now. This seems true—but what *makes* it true? Many have proposed that it is true in virtue of the existence of some possible world (beyond the actual world) where you *are* going for a walk now; or else, because there is some abstract, representational entity which *represents* you as going for a walk now. I think this is mistaken. I take a more common-sense approach, arguing instead that the modal truths (i.e., truths about metaphysical possibility and necessity) are made true by the *capabilities*, or *dispositional properties*, of actual objects. For instance, in the case just stated, it is true that you could be going for a walk right now so long as you have the *ability* to do so.

In my dissertation, I argue for this conclusion as follows:

(1) **Possibilities:** Some things could have been different: I could have been a truck driver; Germany could have won the war; the universe could have expanded more quickly. These are some of the other *ways things could be*; i.e., they are some of the *metaphysical possibilities*. In chapter one, I lay out desiderata for an analysis of metaphysical possibility, and then distinguish that variety of possibility from two others (logical and nomological). Next, I introduce the notions of possible worlds, truthmakers, and in particular *modal* truthmakers, and then provide an exhaustive list of five mutually exclusive positions regarding the *nature* of modal truthmakers.

(2) **Truthmakers:** There are no unicorns. This is very sad, but true. But, what *makes* it true? An absence? Absences aren't *things*, though. There doesn't seem to be *any* thing which makes that proposition true (i.e., it seems to lack a *truthmaker*). In light of the difficulty of finding suitable truthmakers for these sorts of negative truths, many have rejected that theory called *truthmaker maximalism* (the thesis that *all* truths have truthmakers). In chapter two, after distinguishing the notion of truthmakers from truth conditions and analyses (two closely related terms), I then provide a defense of maximalism, arguing that it has certain compelling advantages over its competitors.

(3) **The New Actualism:** In chapter three, I provide a systematic refutation of four of the five possible views regarding the nature of modal truthmakers. I then argue that only the entities proposed by the *fifth* view—i.e., that view which locates the modal truthmakers in actual, non-ersatz entities—are suited to the task of modal truthmaking. Finally, I argue that any actual, non-ersatz ground of true modal propositions must be a causal one (e.g., causal dispositions).

In light of this conclusion, in the remaining three chapters, I then argue for the following:

(4) **Origin Essentialism:** First, an essential property of each individual is its unique origin. For instance, the table in front of me, which originated from a particular hunk of pine wood, could not have originated from, say, a block of ice. I provide a defense of this view about the origin essentialism by responding to its primary criticism, the recycling problem, and argue that origins are individuated by their causal histories.

(5) **Metaphysical Possibility is De Re Possibility:** Second, metaphysical possibility in general takes a branching structure very similar to that of the structure of *de re* possibilities for individuals. For instance, when considering what you could possibly have been doing at this very moment, we hold the timeline of your life more or less fixed until a few moments ago, and consider the various diverging paths that you could have taken, given your abilities. I argue that possibility has this structure, not just for you, but for the world as a whole, such that metaphysical possibility is really just a (very important and unique) species of *de re* modality.

(6) **The Necessary Origin:** Finally, I argue that the above conclusions entail that an essential property of the actual world is its unique origin, such that all of the metaphysical possibilities must share some initial, causally potent entity or entities in common. In short, either some causally potent necessary being exists—e.g., God— or else there is necessarily a beginningless series of contingent causes.