

# Models and Modals

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## Abstract

Pragmatists recommend that in approaching a problematic concept in philosophy, we should begin by examining the role it plays in the practical, cognitive and linguistic lives of the creatures who use it. This paper stems from an interest in pragmatic accounts, in this sense, of the various modal notions we encounter in science. I propose that pragmatists about these notions should avail themselves of the vocabulary of theoretical models. This vocabulary brings to the foreground the issues of function, use and role in practice, on which pragmatists want to focus; while downplaying the naive representationalism that pragmatists see as an impediment to good philosophy. I show how this framework may be used to delineate a kind of pragmatic perspectivalism about probability, and argue that the same template offers a promising way to make sense of the link between causation and manipulability.

**Keywords:** models, probability, causation, pragmatism, perspectivalism, modality

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