

AGPhil 3: Probability and Chance

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Raum: SR 113

Hauptvortrag AGPhil 3.1 Mo 17:45 SR 113
Good just isn't good enough – Humean chances and the foundations of statistical physics — •CLAUS BEISBART — Institut für Philosophie, Universität Bern, Länggassstr. 49a, CH-3012 Bern

Statistical physicists assume a probability distribution over microstates to explain thermodynamic behavior. The question of this paper is whether these probabilities are part of a best system and can thus be

interpreted as Humean chances. I consider two strategies, viz. a globalist as suggested by Loewer, and a localist as advocated by Frigg and Hoefer. Both strategies fail because the system they are part of have rivals that are roughly equally good, while ontic probabilities should be part of a clearly winning system. I conclude with the diagnosis that well-defined micro-probabilities under-estimate the robust character of explanations in statistical physics.