

A philosophical guide to chance

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Abstrak

It is a commonplace that scientific inquiry makes extensive use of probabilities, many of which seem to be objective chances, describing features of reality that are independent of our minds. Such chances appear to have a number of paradoxical or puzzling features: they appear to be mind-independent facts, but they are intimately connected with rational psychology; they display a temporal asymmetry, but they are supposed to be grounded in physical laws that are time-symmetric; and chances are used to explain and predict frequencies of events, although they cannot be reduced to those frequencies. This book offers an accessible and non-technical introduction to these and other puzzles. Toby Handfield engages with traditional metaphysics and philosophy of science, drawing upon recent work in the foundations of quantum mechanics and thermodynamics to provide a novel account of objective probability that is empirically informed without requiring specialist scientific knowledge.