



What is a Law of Nature? (Cambridge Studies in Philosophy)

D. M. Armstrong

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This is a study of a crucial and controversial topic in metaphysics and the philosophy of science: the status of the laws of nature. D. M. Armstrong works out clearly and in comprehensive detail a largely original view that laws are relations between properties or universals. The theory is continuous with the views on universals and more generally with the scientific realism that Professor Armstrong has advanced in earlier publications. He begins here by mounting an attack on the orthodox and sceptical view deriving from Hume that laws assert no more than a regularity of coincidence between instances of properties. In doing so he presents what may become the definitive statement of the case against this position. Professor Armstrong then goes on to establish his own theory in a systematic manner defending it against the most likely objections, and extending both it and the related theory of universals to cover functional and statistical laws. This treatment of the subject is refreshingly concise and vivid: it will both stimulate vigorous professional debate and make an excellent student text.

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