

The Non-Governing Conception of Laws of Nature

Two camps:

1. Anti-Humean, David Armstrong: laws are relations of necessity between universals.
2. Humean (does not postulate any necessary connections), Ramsey-Lewis: laws are those generalizations which figure in the most economical true axiomization of all the particular matters of fact that obtain.

Theories of Lawhood:

1. Ramsey: "If we knew everything, we should still want to systematize our knowledge as a deductive system, and the general axioms in that system would be the fundamental laws of nature"
2. Lewis: "a contingent generalization is a law of nature if and only if it appears as a theorem in each of the true deductive systems that achieves a best combination of simplicity and strength."
3. Armstrong: Laws of nature are necessary relations between individuals. The connection between lawhood and necessity is pretty obvious- laws just *are* physically necessary relations.

Descriptive vs. Governing

1. Anti-Humean: Laws govern what the particular matters of fact are.
 2. Humean: Laws are purely descriptive of the particular matters of fact.
- > Beebee considers previous objections to be begging the question against Humeanism.
 - > Our intuitions about laws are based in non-humeanism, therefore Carroll's examples use anti-humeanism to beg the question against Humeanism
 - > Prescriptive laws are laws of nature, sports, or civil law. These kinds of laws only tell us what we OUGHT to do, but don't specifically govern us beyond the fact that we will be punished if we don't follow them. We are technically prohibited from breaking prescriptive laws, but we still CAN break them.
 - > Physical laws govern us because it is literally impossible for us to break them. They are only prescriptive because they are impossible to break, not because they tell us something true about how we ought to act.
 - > Laws of nature are "vacuously prescriptive". They are descriptive and describe situations in the world, but Beebee argues it might be better not to call them "laws" at all.

Free will and determinism

Beebee discusses Compatibilism, which claims that determinism need not interfere with free will. We can be free even if future events are determined. This is obviously problematic.

1. Laws of nature can be deterministic.
2. Humeans and anti-humeans can be determinists.