

Some Laws of Nature are Metaphysically Contingent

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Abstract

Laws of nature are puzzling because they have a 'modal character'—they seem to be 'necessary-ish'—even though they also seem to be metaphysically contingent. And it is hard to understand how contingent truths could have such a modal character. Scientific essentialism is a doctrine that seems to dissolve this puzzle, by showing that laws of nature are actually metaphysically necessary. I argue that even if the metaphysics of natural kinds and properties offered by scientific essentialism is correct, there are still some metaphysically contingent truths that share the modal character of the laws of nature. I argue that these contingent truths should be considered laws of nature. So even if scientific essentialism is true, at least some laws of nature are metaphysically contingent.

Keywords: Laws of nature; essentialism; scientific essentialism; counterfactuals

Subjects: [General Issues: Laws of Nature](#)

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