



Physics and Chance: Philosophical Issues in the Foundations of Statistical Mechanics

By Lawrence Sklar

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*****. Statistical mechanics is one of the crucial fundamental theories of physics, and in his new book Lawrence Sklar, one of the pre-eminent philosophers of physics, offers a comprehensive, non-technical introduction to that theory and to attempts to understand its foundational elements. Among the topics treated in detail are: probability and statistical explanation, the basic issues in both equilibrium and non-equilibrium statistical mechanics, the role of cosmology, the reduction of thermodynamics to statistical mechanics, and the alleged foundation of the very notion of time asymmetry in the entropic asymmetry of systems in time. The book emphasises the interaction of scientific and philosophical modes of reasoning, and in this way will interest all philosophers of science as well as those in physics and chemistry concerned with philosophical questions. The book could also be read by an informed general reader interested in the foundations of modern science.



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