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Forskningsenheden for analytisk erkendelsesteori, metafysik og kognitionsfilosofi

**Helen Stewart, University of Leeds**

*Laws Loosened: How to make Way for Freedom in a Law-Governed World*

*An Instrumentalist Explanation of Pragmatic Encroachment*

**Abstract:** In this paper, I shall consider a number of different ways in which philosophers in recent years have attempted to offer conceptions of natural law which in various respects suggest that the grip of law on reality might be less tight than has been traditionally supposed. One such loosening is represented by the suggestion that many laws might be best thought of as probabilistic rather than deterministic. A second kind of loosening has been the admission that some laws (perhaps even all laws) might hold only *ceteris paribus*. Yet a third is the suggestion that laws form a 'patchwork', not a pyramid, with the cover of law only "loosely attached to the jumbled world of material things" (Cartwright, 1999). How, though, are these different suggestions related to one another? Which kinds of loosening might entail which other kinds? And which, if any, might be most promising as regards making room in the universe for free will? In this paper I shall try to suggest that the first and second strategies are far less useful than the third in making the kind of space which would be required to subserve the reality of free will; and that a fourth kind of loosening – from laws as dictators to laws as constrainers might yet be more useful than any of the other three in this respect.

Please contact Johanna Seibt for the Zoom link.