

The Importance of Explaining How Possible

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Abstract

How possibly explanation plays a critical role in evolutionary theory, for we seek to reconstruct the deep past from only a few extant traces. More precisely, such explanations inform inquiry by restricting what counts as biologically possible. Here I will sketch an account of how possibly explanation and the roles these explanations play in evolutionary science. One important role involves constraining the likelihoods necessary to assess evidential favoring. I will connect this account to a version of the reference class problem for estimating the probabilities of past events.