



Ockham's Razors: A User's Manual

Elliott Sober

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Ockham's razor, the principle of parsimony, states that simpler theories are better than theories that are more complex. It has a history dating back to Aristotle and it plays an important role in current physics, biology, and psychology. The razor also gets used outside of science – in everyday life and in philosophy. This book evaluates the principle and discusses its many applications. Fascinating examples from different domains provide a rich basis for contemplating the principle's promises and perils. It is obvious that simpler theories are beautiful and easy to understand; the hard problem is to figure out why the simplicity of a theory should be relevant to saying what the world is like. In this book, the ABCs of probability theory are succinctly developed and put to work to describe two 'parsimony paradigms' within which this problem can be solved.

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