



# Four Decades of Scientific Explanation

*Wesley C. Salmon*

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As Aristotle stated, scientific explanation is based on deductive argument--yet, Wesley C. Salmon points out, not all deductive arguments are qualified explanations. The validity of the explanation must itself be examined. *Four Decades of Scientific Explanation* provides a comprehensive account of the developments in scientific explanation that transpired in the last four decades of the twentieth century. It continues to stand as the most comprehensive treatment of the writings on the subject during these years.

Building on the historic 1948 essay by Carl G. Hempel and Paul Oppenheim, "Studies in the Logic of Explanation," which introduced the deductive-nomological (D-N) model on which most work on scientific explanation was based for the following four decades, Salmon goes beyond this model's inherent basis of describing empirical knowledge to tells us "not only *what*, but also *why*." Salmon examines the predominant models in chronological order and describes their development, refinement, and criticism or rejection.

*Four Decades of Scientific Explanation* underscores the need for a consensus of approach and ongoing evaluations of methodology in scientific explanation, with the goal of providing a better understanding of natural phenomena.

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