
E. Weber, J. Van Bouwel, L. De Vreese, *Scientific Explanation* (Berlin: Springer, 2013), pp. 98.

The topic of scientific explanation resides at the centre of attention of philosophers of science for more than the last sixty years. Although its roots reach the Antiquity, the intense discussion of its conceptual and empirical character has commenced by Carl G. Hempel's papers on models of scientific explanation—especially his *Studies in the Logic of Explanation* (1948), co-authored by Paul Oppenheim. Where Hempel and his established critics stopped, the authors of a new book *Scientific Explanation* try to continue, as they announce.

The concise book *Scientific Explanation* is published under the edition “Springer Briefs in Philosophy” which is a modern introductory format discussing the state of the art of various philosophical topics. It is always a challenge for authors of such a format to come with a comprehensible, fresh, and not too oversimplified account of the area they present in such a limited space. In case of *Scientific Explanation*, I would say that Erik Weber, Jeroen Van Bouwel, and Leen De Vreese did their best.

Besides Introduction, their presentation of the explanatory project in the philosophy of science covers four chapters on no more than one hundred pages.

Chapter One, *Theories of Scientific Explanation*, begins with an outline of one of the most systematically developed conceptions of scientific explanation—that of Carl Hempel. The clear exposition of his two basic models—the Deductive-Nomological model (DN) and the Inductive-Statistical model (IS)—is accompanied with an overview of some of the reactions to several problems arising in those accounts. The authors proceed yet further and examine critically two other influential conceptions: Philip Kitcher's Unification Account and Wesley Salmon's Causal-Mechanical Model. Although the authors' introduction to these explanatory conceptions is dressed in a bit short-spoken language, the particular explanations they use are helpful for a practical appraisal of the theories.

The authors' own philosophical project of answering the question of *how to study scientific explanation* is the topic of Chapter Two. First, the authors reconstruct the explicata of explanation-concept in Hempel's, Kitcher's, and Salmon's conceptions. Second, they claim that neither Hempel, nor Kitcher, nor Salmon provide enough evidence for their (quite general) descriptive and normative claims about the explanatory practice in science. Finally, building on the method of explication, the authors argue for their own moderate methodological project of studying and displaying

(the forms of) scientific explanations. They call it “A Pragmatic Approach to Explanation”. It is an approach employing three simple principles: i) make context-dependent *normative* claims and argue for them; ii) make context-dependent *descriptive* claims and argue for them; and iii) in doing i) and ii), take into account the epistemic interests (of scientists seeking an explanation). Though the underlying idea of their approach is attractive, the format of the book is a clear limitation for its proper development.

However, the authors try to come close to some of the details of their project in Chapter Three, where *a toolbox for describing and evaluating explanatory practices* is provided. They discuss several types of explananda-questions as well as various possible formats of answering such questions. Moreover, they try to introduce the tools for evaluation of explanations in form of clusters of (evaluative) questions. Nonetheless, what their evaluating-part-of-the-project misses the most is a clear statement of what counts as the adequate answer to such evaluative questions. And it is just after such a statement that we could say of the normative part of their project how it stands to other methodological conceptions.

The last chapter of the book, called *Examples of Descriptions and Evaluations of Explanatory Practices*, contains more elaborated examples of explanations from various scientific and research fields—starting with Feynman’s investigation of Challenger Disaster and ending with Merton’s explanation of success and failure of propaganda. Although presented in a very rough form, it is these examples of particular explanations that authors use to test their pragmatic approach to explanation. And it is this very feature of the book that makes it an original, interesting and stimulating contribution to the up-to-date methodological discussion on models of scientific explanation.

Now, one general comment is in order. The particular instances of scientific explanations presented by authors—and, especially, the explananda of the discussed explanations—are (almost ever) expressed in terms of some particular theory or theories. Then it is an understanding of the vocabulary of theory what seems to be a necessary condition for attaining an understanding of a given explanation. In other words, we can be consumers of scientific explanations without really understanding them. In case we do not understand some of the key concepts (and their relations to other concepts in a conceptual network of a theory), in which the explanandum of an explanation is expressed, we are unlikely to understand the explanans of that explanation. And it is this point, I suppose, where explanation comes close to understanding, yet is utterly missing in authors’ account.

It seems fair to say that the authors of *Scientific Explanation* resigned of the grand project of a general explanatory account, such as Hempel’s

theory. It is this moment which diverges them most from the previous philosophical efforts. Nevertheless, *Scientific Explanation* brings for various audiences not only an updated and concise summary of the most influential philosophies of explanation but also a fresh and incentive contribution to the descriptive and normative aspects of this fascinating topic.

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Filozofski leksikon, uredio Stipe Kutleša (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2012), 1299 str.

U širokoj lepezi izdanja leksikona Leksikografskog zavoda Miroslav Krleža, nakon *Pomorskog leksikona* (1990), *Medicinskog leksikona* (1992), *Ekonomskog leksikona* (1995), *Hrvatskog općeg leksikona* (1996), *Općeg religijskog leksikona* (2002), *Filmskog leksikona* (2003), *Nogometnog leksikona* (2004), *Hrvatskog obiteljskog leksikona* (2005), *Zagrebačkog leksikona* (2006), *Tehničkog leksikona* (2007), *Pravnog leksikona* (2007), *Hrvatskog biografskog leksikona* (projekt je u tijeku), *Leksikona Marina Držića s Bibliografijom* (2009), *Hrvatskog franjevačkog biografskog leksikona* (2010), *Ekonomskog leksikona* (2011²), *Leksikona Ruđera Boškovića* (2011), na red je došla i filozofija te je 2012. godine objavljen *Filozofski leksikon*.

Opsežan projekt pripreme i izdavanja leksikona posvećenog filozofiji započeo je Danilo Pejović (1928–2007), a nakon njegove smrti započeti posao je kao glavni urednik završio Stipe Kutleša. Leksikon sadrži 3500 leksikografskih natuknica. Na njegovu nastajanje radilo je 154 autora iz četrdesetak različitih institucija iz Australije, Bosne i Hercegovine, Crne Gore, Hrvatske, Japana, Mađarske, Makedonije, Njemačke, Slovenije, Srbije i Ukrajine. Valja napomenuti kako su u *Leksikonu* surađivali zaposlenici gotovo svih institucija u Republici Hrvatskoj koje se bave filozofijom: Instituta za filozofiju, Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci, Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta