The major objections to the view so far presented would center around the charge that it is subjectivistic, commits the genetic fallacy, is, in fact, anthropomorphic, is guilty of the intentionalist fallacy, and perhaps of a romantic "nature nostalgia". Against such charges from certainty-oriented philosophies like neo-Thomism, transcendental phenomenology, and some versions of Marxism, we would argue that explanations as such are partial, and the difference among philosophies is not that one of them has complete explanations and the others do not, but rather that one recognizes that explanations are partial and the others do not. This is but to reaffirm the importance of contextualism from another point of view.

Let us pursue the issue in detail by taking up the question "What constitutes an explanation, as opposed to a description?" More specifically, what makes an explanation "scientific", as opposed to "historical?" This question has been made famous by Carl Hempel in writings like 'Studies in the Logic of Explanation'.¹ For Hempel, science does go beyond mere description and explains phenomena. Scientific explanation consists in the sentence describing the phenomenon being deduced from the sentence(s) containing the laws and antecedent conditions. The \textit{explanandum} must be a logical consequence of the \textit{explanans}; the \textit{explanans} must contain general laws, not just descriptive sentences. These general laws must actually be those required for the derivation. Note that this solves the problem of relevance in explanation but it does not limit relevance to a single law. The issue of how one selects among competing conceptualizations of the universe, when these are not distinguishable by reason alone, will resurface shortly. Finally, for Hempel, the \textit{explanans} must have empirical content, i.e., it cannot be just a collection of tautological statements. If it were, it would not be capable of being \textit{tested} by experimentation. It is essential that an explanation be testable if it is to be termed a "scientific" explanation. This requirement would, of course, render many of the so-called explanations in Thomism-Aristotelianism and Marxism inadequate, since they are compatible with any conceivable state of affairs.

¹ T. Rockmore et al., \textit{Marxism and Alternatives}
Also, Hempel initially required that the *explanans* be *true*. However, he encountered the difficulty of how logically to say that a scientific law was *once* true and now is not true. This, remarks Hempel, does not accord with common usage; it seems illogical. Hempel decided that it is better to say that the law was never true. This avoids one problem but raises another. How is it that a law which was never true, was nonetheless used, and in some cases is still used, successfully? Hempel does not answer this in the article, though he later abandons the requirement that a law must be true.²

For our purposes, the important point to realize is that Hempel’s logical model of scientific explanation is a very static model. The issue of truth becomes problematic because a correspondence theory is presupposed; truth is somehow supposed to be an antecedent. For the pragmatist, as we shall see, truth does mean agreement of an idea with reality, but agreement is not defined exclusively in terms of copying. Truth is not a relationship wherein a static idea copies a permanent, unchanging reality. As James will say, truth is *made*: the truth of an idea is its *process* of verification. For Hempel, on the contrary, time cannot appear in his logical model as an important item. The model applies equally well to predication and to retrodiction.

Hempel believes that his model of scientific explanation is *necessary*. For example, he says that the “observation of similarities has explanatory value only if it involves at least tacit reference to general laws”.³ Going further, Hempel believed that explanation outside of the physical sciences, e.g., in biology and history, and the social sciences, takes place only to the extent that it employs his model. Since many of the laws in these areas cannot be formulated with precision and generality at present, what one has is an “explanation sketch”.

What the explanatory analyses of historical events offer is . . . in most cases not an explanation . . . but something that might be called an *explanation sketch*. Such a sketch consists of a more or less vague indication of the laws and initial conditions considered as relevant, and it needs “filling out”, in order to turn into a full-fledged explanation. This filling out requires further empirical research, for which the sketch suggests the direction.⁴

Going further, for Hempel, scientific explanation has nothing to do with empathetic understanding or with familiarity with the topic involved. This is clearly an attempt to separate the subjective and the objective dimensions of experience; psychological aspects of explanation are, in his opinion, neither necessary nor sufficient.

. . . in history no less than in any other branch of empirical inquiry, scientific explanation