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This volume distinguishes between two main traditions in the philosophy of science - the aristotelian, with its stress on explanation in terms of purpose and intentionality, and the galilean, which takes causal explanation as primary. It then traces the complex history of these competing traditions as they are manifested in such movements as positivism, idealism, Marxism and contemporary linguistic analysis. Hempels's theory of scientific explanation, the claims of cybernetics the rise of an analytic philosophy of action and the revival of hermeneutics are all discussed. The volume also deals with causal explanation, intentionality and teleological explanation, and explanation in history and the social sciences. The author concludes that explanation of human actions cannot be reduced to simple causality, and discusses the implications of this conclusion for the disciplines of history and sociology.