

# The Physicists, the Chemists and the Pragmatics of Explanation

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## Abstract

In this paper I investigate two views of theoretical explanation in quantum chemistry, advocated by John Clarke Slater and Charles Coulson. Slater argued for quantum-mechanical rigour, and the primacy of fundamental principles in models of chemical bonding. Coulson emphasised systematic explanatory power within chemistry, and continuity with existing chemical explanations. I relate these views to the epistemic contexts of their disciplines.

**Subjects:** [Specific Sciences: Chemistry](#)

**Conferences and Volumes:** [\[2002\] Philosophy of Science Assoc. 18th Biennial Mtg - PSA 2002: Contributed Papers \(Milwaukee, WI; 2002\): PSA 2002 Symposia](#)

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