Études Ricœuriennes / Ricœur Studies
ERRS

The Convergence of Ricœur's and von Wright's Complex Models of History

Linda L. Cox

Austin Community College

Abstract:

The relationship between the structural identity of narrative and the truth claim of the historical narrative work is one of importance to Ricœur. He considers the attempts of two interwoven models of history emerging from analytic philosophy—explanatory and narrative—to articulate this relationship. This paper explores the trajectories of these models as well as the epistemological and ontological crises culminating from the "simple" theses of each model. The solution to these crises requires a more complex method to account for the nature of the *connections* underlying historical understanding. Georg Henrik von Wright's provisional or "hybrid" model of explanation and understanding revises the simple explanatory model and is foundational for Ricœur's own complex revision of narrativist models through his notion of questioning back. The present paper argues that the structure of this hybrid model was unsatisfactory for von Wright, and leads in the direction of Ricœur's own narrative method.

Keywords: *Ricœur, von Wright, Narrative, History, Questioning back.*
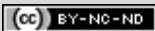
Résumé:

La relation entre l'identité structurale du récit et la prétention à la vérité de l'œuvre de récit historique est fondamentale chez Ricœur. Il considère que les deux modèles historiographiques de provenance analytique – le modèle explicatif et le modèle narratif – peuvent s'articuler. Cet article explore les trajectoires de ces modèles autant que les crises épistémologiques et ontologiques qui culminent dans chacune des thèses prise dans un sens unilatéral. La solution pour remédier à ces crises requiert une méthode plus complexe pour tenir compte de la nature des liens qui sous-tendent la compréhension historique. Le modèle d'explication et de compréhension, provisoire et "hybride," de Georg Henrik von Wright permet de réviser le simple modèle explicatif. Ceci est fondamental pour comprendre la révision complexe que Ricœur apporte aux modèles narrativistes à travers la reprise de la notion de "questionnement à rebours." La présente contribution fait valoir que la structure de ce modèle hybride n'est pas satisfaisante pour von Wright, et débouche dans le sens de la méthode narrative proposée par Ricœur.

Mots-clés: *Ricœur, von Wright, Narrative, Histoire, Questionnenement à rebours.*

The Convergence of Ricœur's and Von Wright's Complex Models of History

Linda L. Cox

Austin Community College

In his preface to *Time and Narrative, I*, Paul Ricœur writes:

[A]t stake in the case of the structural identity of the narrative function as well as in that of the truth claim of every narrative work, is the temporal character of human experience. . . [T]ime becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience.[1]

Outside of hermeneutic theory, this status of the truth value of narrative models of history has been debated from its first introduction in the mid-twentieth century, and attempts to articulate narrative models have been tightly interwoven with attempts to provide explanatory models within analytic philosophy. Ricœur examines the pathways of both explanatory and narrative models of history and the epistemological and ontological crises emerging from each. He suggests a point of contact between the two trajectories in the work of Georg Henrik von Wright, an analytic philosopher who shared Ricœur's understanding of the interrelationship between causal and teleological dimensions of historical explanation. I trace some of the interwoven origins of these explanatory and narrative models of history within analytic philosophy, the philosophical crises that emerge, and the convergence with Ricoeur's complex or hybrid narrative theory. Ultimately von Wright later found his own provisional hybrid solution unsatisfactory, and he revised his thesis to one of "understanding explanation." I will argue that the notion of understanding on which von Wright's revised thesis rests depends upon a definition of intelligibility in terms of narrative which has not been examined in his work. While pointing to a convergence between hermeneutic and analytic philosophy, his thesis also reveals several potential weaknesses in Ricoeur's own complex narrative theory.

One of Ricœur's working hypotheses is that historiography does genuinely belong in the field of narrative fiction. In contrast to, but in many ways building on, the methodological approach to history offered by the Annales school as well as the epistemological approach of analytic philosophy, Ricœur insists on the necessity of narrative in historiography. He writes that if history "were to break every connection to *our basic competence for following a story* and to the cognitive operations constitutive of our narrative understanding. . . it would lose its distinctive place in the chorus of social sciences."[2] This claim itself—especially its notions of following a story and narrative understanding—depends heavily on concepts derived from his engagement with analytic philosophy, especially the theories of Dray, Gallie, and von Wright, whose contributions to Ricœur's narrative theory I will sketch below. After providing an overview of the successive stages of these explanatory and narrative models, I will outline the epistemological and ontological crises in historiography arising from these trajectories. I will argue that Ricœur's

solution of questioning back, while borrowed from Husserl, is closely aligned with von Wright's attempt to distinguish between explanation and understanding in history.

"Simple" Explanatory and Narrative Models of History

In his 1942 essay, "The Function of the General Laws in History," C. G. Hempel applied the "covering-law model" of scientific explanation to historiography, arguing that general laws were necessary to prevent "empirically meaningless terms" from corrupting the scientific validity of historical science.[3] This nomological approach came, of course, at the cost of the explanatory value of history. In sharp contrast to Hempel's scientific approach to historiography, W. H. Dray argued in 1957 that for a law to have explanatory value in the field of history, such a law would have to become so specific that there would be the equivalent of "'law' for a single case."[4] For Dray, historical events were seen as unique and laws inappropriate; historiography instead depended upon the intentionality of the historiographer who must gather dispersed and dissimilar events and judge them rationally according to their inductive and pragmatic merits. He was effectively substituting a rational explanation of events for a nomological one. Ricœur concluded that Dray's rejection of the covering law model seemed to return to a conception of the event as unique, but the greater limitation of this rational approach, according to Ricœur, was that it did not account for historical events not explainable at level of the individual agent. A gulf remained between the individual's reasons and historical explanation in terms of the social forces influencing those reason.[5]

French Annalists had offered an alternative methodology based on probability and statistics that was at once social-scaled and a rejection of both the covering law model and the subjectivism of rational explanation.[6] But Ricœur objected to the Annalists' elimination of the individual event altogether (by calling for a "nonevent history").[7] His emphasis was on the locations where *narrative* status of history was at stake; namely, analytic explanatory and narrative models of history.

In the 1960's Anglo-American philosophers offered another alternative to Hempel's and Dray's conceptions of history: that narrative was a logic for contextualizing history. W. B. Gallie argued in his 1968 *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* that explanation and understanding of history "must be assessed in relation to the narrative forms which arise and whose development they subserve."[8] Unlike scientific laws, narrative forms do not eliminate contingencies and do not permit prediction; instead, he contends, they allow a kind of understanding that permits one to *follow* unexpected circumstances. The followability of a story, Ricœur believes, indicates that a story is explained (directed causally) while, at the same time, the outcome is (teleologically) understood. Hence "understanding and explanation are inextricably mixed together in this process."[9]

Arthur Danto proposed another teleological approach in arguing that narrative occurs at the level of the sentence but can't be known until after all sentences have been collected and connected by the historian "as parts of a temporal whole."[10] Narrative therefore "mentions only the significant events"[11] with an eye toward this teleological explanation of history. But Ricœur found that Danto's sentence-level analysis left significant gaps in attempting to tie together the events: Gallie's notion that narrative exists at the level of the text (rather than the sentence) as what is "followable," he believed, surpassed Danto's theory that narrative sentences mention only the events which are significant. For, Ricœur asks, "is not the narrative organization which

confers on events a meaning or an importance (the two connotations of the term 'significance') simply an expansion of the narrative sentence?"[12] First, Ricœur is pointing out that events are not necessarily significant prior to their narrative organization, since the process of narrative organization is itself what confers significance on them. And secondly, he is implying that the creation of meaning is the goal of narrative, not only its method

But if narrative confers significance on events, then what justifies this signification? Could a fictive "historical" narrative, then, create historical meaning or importance? We can now hear the rumblings of an ontological crisis emerging in the trajectory of the narrative model of history. Louis O. Mink argued that historical understanding, while not using prediction, falsifiability, or other scientific methodological tools, served as its own support for explanation.[13] He attempted to reassert the essential distinction between fiction and history by agreeing that both are narratives of events or actions, but also stating that fiction makes no claim to *truth*.[14]

The belief that narrative is supplementary to text—that an historical context is ontologically prior to its narrative embodiment and that we have access to that authentic reality through research—found its strongest opponent in Hayden White, who argued in *Metahistory* that history is a "verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of *explaining what they were by representing* them."[15] His arguments are based on the idea that "tropes by which historians write history, including formal argument, organicist, mechanistic, etc., and their ideological explanations, including conservative, liberal, anarchist, radical, etc., are all techniques which precede the data they describe."[16] White develops his argument in *Tropics of Discourse*, claiming that all discourse must be analyzed on three levels—the description of the data *(mimesis)*, the argument or narrative *(diegesis)*, and the combination of the two, which includes the level of self-reflective and ironic comprehension.[17] Because historical science, unlike the natural sciences, occupies the realm of discourse, it can only be framed in the tropes of discourse, and so lends itself to a type of understanding vastly different from scientific understanding. He writes,

> The historically real, the past real, is that to which I can be referred only by an artifact that is textual in nature. The indexical, iconic and symbolic notations of language, and therefore of texts. . . create the illusion that there is a past out there that is directly reflected in texts.[18]

By drawing our attention to the "meta" of history, the reflection of things rather than the things reflected, White believes such a semiological approach to intellectual history "fixes us directly before the process of meaning production that is the special subject of intellectual history."[19] But, like other types of structuralism, White attempts to consider his own analysis outside historical time. Paul Connerty notes that White's argument prioritizes his own type of history, intellectual history, which employs self-reflexive critique: "Rhetoric itself does not exist 'outside' history, and therefore a tropological model cannot be made the basis of a wholly immanent analysis."[20] Ricœur writes that the historian's structures are not "inert rules" but are instead "the forms of a cultural heritage."[21]

Hence, in the absence of a viable rhetorical structure in which to construct narrative, historical text thus appears to have lost all connection to an extralinguistic context. Analytic philosophy had introduced narrative theory into historiography in an attempt to resolve the

dilemma between covering laws over against disparate, unique events, but, in the process, a new crisis of authenticity emerged. Connerty states the problem as such:

> Thus, in historiography we are faced with a dilemma: any analysis that emphasizes context and characterizes its narrative representation as supplementary only invokes the narrative text that blocks the way to the context; this is White's criticism of traditional historiography. But conversely, any analysis that foregrounds narrative without reference to context, or negates or erases that context, as White's semiological history does, only invokes the context that it argued could not be reached [since rhetorical structures are always historical].[22]

The simple narrative thesis, Ricœur writes, thus brought historiography to the "brink of a major difficulty," and its self-defeating nature had no chance of replacing the explanatory model.[23]

Ricœur's "Complex" Narrative Thesis and Questioning Back

Ricœur has thus been preparing us for his own complex narrative thesis, which he compares to a similar trajectory occurring from the other direction, an analysis of the explanatory model of history that Henric von Wright had been pursuing.

Von Wright's work on explanation and understanding in history intersects with Ricoeur's work on the circular nature of time and narrative precisely at this point. Ricœur's (confoundingly) "complex" thesis concerning narrative introduces a method of "questioning back" borrowed from Husserl but influenced by von Wright's theory. I will provide an overview of Ricœur's method, and then look closely at its points of contact with von Wright's explanatory model.

In *Time and Narrative, I*, Ricœur discusses three temporal elements involved in narrative: prefiguration (the pretextual reality, or mimesis[1]), configuration (the emplotting of the pretextual reality by giving it a narrative structure, or mimesis[2]), and refiguration (the reception of the emplotted reality by the reader, or mimesis[3]). When a reader encounters a text through mimesis[3] (and this is always the initial encounter), he or she finds that pretextual reality is already configured into "plot." For Ricœur (following Husserl), meanings accumulate and settle, as this written plot is read or heard, its reception adds a dynamic dimension which surpasses authorial intention.[24] The act of reading shakes up the sedimented layers of narrative that have accumulated through the years—including the paradigmatic layers of forms and genres—transforming them through innovation. Thus, in this sense, questioning back is the method refiguration uses to revise and innovate the (previously) configured world of the text and the prefigured world of action. But unlike Husserl's phenomenological questioning back which occurs at the individual level, Ricœur's questioning back "applied to historiographical knowledge, refers to a cultural world that is already structured and not at all to immediate [individual] experience."[25]

As discussed above, we can follow a story because, first, we assume that there exists a complete teleological understanding, and, second, because there is a gap in our knowledge that drives us causally toward that understanding. For example, as I write the present study, the world is in the midst of a search for missing Malaysia flight 370 and the reasons for its disappearance. We assume that there exists a complete understanding of the actual events

surrounding this disappearance, and our lack of understanding drives us toward finding it. Questioning back, for Ricœur, is a method that introduces provisional procedures, entities, and temporal divisions to mediate the epistemological break between historical knowledge and "our ability to follow a story."[26] These mediations or "relay stations" between time and narrative become known as quasi-events, quasi-characters, and quasi-plots, respectively. The method maintains the individual characteristics of the (real) singular event, plot, and concrete agent (with reference to the three levels of mimesis) without reducing them to heterogeneous events or subjective analyses that lose explanatory value. This is the "real" sphere of characters, actions, and causal relationships between events which he calls "first-order entities," and the sphere to which they refer he calls "participatory belonging."[27] As history "questions back" toward these actual practices, quasi-plot and quasi-characters serve as "relay stations" *en route* toward participatory belonging. These second-order entities are points along the circular path connecting prefiguration, configuration and refiguration. Depending on the reception of the reader who configures the entities, they can be more or less singular or universal. He describes singular causal imputation as the "explanatory procedure that accomplishes the transition between narrative causality… and explanatory causality, that, in the covering law model, is not distinguished from explanation by laws."[28] This aspect of questioning back addresses the epistemological break within the realm of the procedures of history.

Some critics have pointed to weaknesses in Ricœur's overall thesis at this point. I will address two criticism of his solution of questioning back—one which views it as a failed project of reciprocity, and one which aligns it with dangerous elements in Heideggerian theory. Semiological and linguistic theories, "reject as a postulate of their method the idea of an intention oriented toward the extralinguistic."[29] These readers find evidence in Ricœur's questioning back approach for a model of reciprocity between the text and context that does not prioritize one over the other. Paul Connerty writes:

> Ricœur's argument that the structure and context of historical narrative are in a reciprocal rather than a hierarchical relationship allows him to draw a very important conclusion— that there exists a kind of speculative discourse, quasi-narrative, that is neither fiction nor theory. And yet at the very moment when he makes this point, he finds himself forced to reaffirm the hierarchical nature of the relationship between history and its context.[30]

Importantly, Ricœur accepts an ontological distinction between the pre-figured and configured realms in arguing that "only history can claim a reference inscribed in empirical reality, inasmuch as historical intentionality aims at events that have actually occurred."[31] Hence Connerty finds that while Ricœur is on the verge of developing a true reciprocity between narrative and ontological history, his method, "still presumes the prior existence of the historical 'real,' which distinguishes this 'quasi-narrative' from narrative fiction."[32] Connerty argues that Ricœur is hesitant to support his own theory of reciprocity to the extent that Bakhtin's dialogism, for example, does. Bakhtin found the literary text both a representation of reality and an independent rhetorical structure that "has 'refracted' (or *configured*) any pre-textual real."[33]

In response to this criticism of the structural dimension of Ricœur's thesis (the reciprocity of text and context), I believe that Connerty overlooks Ricœur's larger project stated in his preface—which clearly includes upholding the *truth claim* of the narrative work. Indeed, the Bakhtinian dialogic principle (both in the literary text and as a phenomenological principle) of co-experience is something Ricœur at first "rejoices" to find.[34] But Ricœur ultimately questions

whether dialogism does not deconstruct itself by undermining its own function of emplotment: "My second reaction is to ask if the dialogical principle, which appears to crown the pyramid of the principles of composition governing narrative fiction, does not at the same time undermine the base of the edifice, namely, the organizing role of emplotment."[35] For if dialogism substitutes itself for the general structural principle of narrative, it is prioritizing its own form over the context rather than maintaining the reciprocity of text and context.

Hence the post-structuralist answer to the question of which is ontologically superior, a narrative's context or its text, is that they mutually presuppose each other. Connerty finds Ricœur's reciprocity project unfulfilled so long as he exercises a preference for context. But reciprocity itself could not be a solution for Ricœur insofar as it renders ahistorical the rhetorical structure of the dialogue. In fact, he finds it impossible to apply dialogism to historiography simply by virtue of the fact that history does not reciprocate dialogue: "The encounter with history is never a dialogue, for the first condition of dialogue is that the other *answer*; history is this sector of communication without reciprocity."[36] Insofar as context is aligned with the prefigured realm in Ricœur's terminology, and text is the configured realm, we can see that for Ricœur, dialogue occurs largely within refiguration, as configured narrative is often locked in place. Dialogue between text and context can never be the structural methodology of history, then, and can never be a solution to problems raised by the linguistic turn in historiography. The reciprocity Connerty finds in Ricœur's work (similar to forms such as Bakhtin's dialogism or de Manian undecideability) focuses on *upholding* the epistemological gap between the prefigured and configured dimensions of narrative. But Ricœur does not believe that historiography seeks to maintain itself as a gap between the text and context. On the contrary, the gap functions historically to connect us to by driving us toward understanding, just as we seek to understand reasons for the disappeared Malaysian flight. Ricœur locates the dialogue or reciprocity of questioning back as the responsibility of the situated reader within the realm of refiguration to shake up the sedimented texts to allow the prefigured action to emerge. Hence the epistemological gap between the prefigured and configured realms is not a formal dialogism to be revered in itself; instead, this non-discursive, pre-narrative world of action seeks to be understood, a phenomenon Ricœur calls "action in quest of narrative."[37]

Ricœur explored the idea of historical action in his article on Hannah Arendt (published the year prior to *Time and Narrative, II*). Here, he calls on Arendt's description of action to support his views. Arendt writes:

> Because of [the] already existing web of human relationships, with its innumerable, conflicting wills and intentions. . . action almost never achieves its purpose; but it is also because of this medium, in which action alone is real, that [the medium] "produces" stories with or without intention as naturally as fabrication produces tangible things. These stories may then be recorded in documents and monuments, they may be visible in use objects or art works, they may be told and retold and worked into all kinds of material.[38]

As Robert Caserio points out, the autonomous nature of action ensures that it will exceed our intellectual, moral, and material grasp on it, while "the fabrication process is what we can get—and keep—a hold on," and hence not only does narrative fail to grasp the full pre-narrative world of action, but actions themselves "escape even their most responsible intentions."[39] Arendt concludes that our response must be forgiveness, "in order to make it possible for life to go on by

constantly releasing men from what they have done unknowingly,"[40] a suggestion akin to Ricœur's call for trust in the concordance of language in new narrative forms which will "bear witness to the fact that the narrative function can still be metamorphosed. . . For we have no idea of what a culture would be where no one any longer knew what it meant to narrate things."[41] Danto's later theory, Caserio points out, follows along these lines in the sense that actions in the present, according to Danto, have an unknown future, and call for understanding by a later narrative action: "The knowledge available of the historian is logically outside the. . . events he describes."[42] Unlike the double bind logic of theories of reciprocity, Danto, like Ricœur and Arendt, argues that a world of action does exist outside the world of narrative, and that this world of action is in quest of narration, which can never quite grasp it. Perhaps, then, mystery and paradox are the perennial subject and form of literature not just because they self-reflexively recognize the semiological nature of action, but because action itself is infinite and therefore beyond our ability to manage conceptually or textually.

Because action is in quest of narrative for Ricœur, his reformulation of Husserlian questioning back traces an "indirect" relationship between narrative and historical events. Narrative configuration, he says, "*emerges* out of the break that sets up the kingdom of the plot and splits if off from the order of real action. On the other hand, it refers back to the understanding immanent in the order of action and to the prenarrative structures stemming from real action."[43] At this point, the claim that narrative configuration emerges seemingly without an agent brings his thesis precariously close to the dangerous water of Heideggerian historicity, and requires a further clarification of his thesis on the role of prefiguration in questioning back.

In his 1980 essay, "Narrative Time," Ricœur examines the role of narrative repetition in fiction and history and its mediating role between the contingencies of individual fate and the abstractions of communal destiny. In this essay, he describes prefiguration as a primordial, pre-linguistic sense of history that exists as a dream-like space accessed by folk tales. We have a sense of going "back" to this history through these oral tales, and experience a preliminary disorientation of linear time when experiencing them. Next, configuration appears, as legends and chronicles "recount" tales that are an already-established part of a heritage. The primordial constituting of history thus becomes naively passed on as legends and chronicles. Refiguration in narrative serves as the act of repeating legends and chronicles into writing as we attempt to form and understand them and then by critically rewrite them in historiography. It is in this final dimension, Ricœur says, that history and narrative get confused, for temporality and narrative get rewritten and critically analyzed. It is important to note that for Ricœur this history of narrative is not a literal, chronological history, but is an analysis of time, and therefore history, whereby all three modes of time coexist. Like memory, narrative repetition retrieves inherited potentialities that already exist. His theory of time and narrative thus takes its cue from Heidegger in arguing that "the ordinary representation of time as a linear series of 'nows' hides the true constitution of time,"[44] but his metaphorical division is an inversion of Heidegger's theory of time, which is divided into three levels. First, the level closest to the ordinary representation of linear time Heidegger calls the notion of "within-time-ness," the notion of time as a structure "in" which events take place. It is datable, public, and measurable, and depends on point of reference in the world. Next, time is seen as "historicality," a term which emphasizes the weight of the past and the "power of recovering the 'extension' between birth and death in the work of 'repetition'."[45] Heidegger's deepest sense of time, that upon which his entire theory is based, is the notion of a plural unity of future, past, and present, rooted in the notion of "care,"

particularly as the concern of an individual reflecting on his or her own mortality. Here, an individual's being-toward-death drives all other levels of temporality. For Heidegger, the impulse toward the future is limited by the individual's being-toward-death, his sense of his own mortality. Repetition of the past is thus limited as individual fate, the character of being "thrown into" a state of affairs. What Ricœur and other theorists find troubling about Heidegger's theories is the sense of the inevitability of historical outcomes that they entail. Heidegger writes, "Fate is that powerless superior power which puts itself in readiness for adversities."[46]

Ricœur finds Heidegger's analysis of time useful, but, as described above, essentially inverts his hierarchy of the levels of time by revising the role of narrative in historical questioning back. First, he argues, narrative repetition allows the reader to read the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end, so that the "plot" establishes human action "in" time, and also in memory: the course of events stretches along time between a beginning and an end, and we are able to read that course backwards and forwards. But repetition has another level of interpretation for Ricœur:

> It means the "retrieval" of our most fundamental potentialities, as they are inherited from our own past, in terms of a personal fate and a common destiny. The question, therefore, is whether we may go so far as to say that the function of narrative—or at least of a selected group of narratives—is to establish human action at the level of authentic historicality, that is, of repetition.[47]

The problem with Heidegger's notion of destiny is that it has the potential to use narrative repetition to bind people to a potentially misleading idea. Heidegger starts with the idea of individual fate, a personal, incommunicable awareness of one's own mortality, and he subsequently imposes a sense of communal time on this fate through narrative. Hence a result of Heidegger's philosophy is that individual, misleading worldviews have the power to be repeated as communal destiny. But Ricœur argues that narrative is communal *from the outset* in its sense of time. As a social transaction, narrative has this public, communal dimension built into its very structure: "After all, is not narrative time a time that continues beyond the death of each of its protagonists? Is it not part of the plot to include the death of each hero in a story that surpasses every individual fate?,"[48] a question echoed by J. Hillis Miller in *Ariadne's Thread*: "All narrative is a species of epitaph, a memoir or memorial, an oblique act of mourning. Someone is dead and someone has survived that death to mourn and to narrate the dead person's story."[49] Narrative repetition is thus a communal act:

> It is always a community, a people, or a group of protagonists which tries to take up the tradition—or traditions—of its origins.
> It is this communal act of repetition, which is at the same time a new founding act and a recommencement of what has already been inaugurated, that 'makes history' and that finally makes it possible to write history… Repetition… is always articulated in a narrative mode.[50]

Narrative is a process whereby a non-discursive primordial history has been emplotted and is repeatedly re-enacted and analyzed by a community of people. According to Ricœur, then, individual self-consciousness, whether *Dasein*, or a Husserlian isolated ego, cannot be the starting

point for inquiry into the philosophy of history, since any inquiry will begin as a refiguration by a situated reader or community.

Having put to rest concerns that questioning back, with its (already) configured dimension, might be conflated with Heideggerian destiny, as well as concerns that questioning back is a failed attempt at reciprocity, we can now return to Ricœur's analysis of the relationship between historical time and narrative. Ricœur writes that, on one hand, narrative is distinct from the world of action and must be drawn forward through plot, but on the other hand, narrative requires prior understanding "immanent in the order of [prenarrative] action."[51] Precisely *how* an already-communally-configured plot is refigured, however, is the primary problem raised by considering the interaction among refiguration, configuration, prefiguration. Ricœur's struggle with the mediation between history and narrative parallels, in a sense, von Wright's struggle with the logical schema underlying understanding and explanation. It is at this point that we may examine von Wright's work on the distinction between explanation and understanding. Ricœur acknowledges that he owes a debt to analytic philosophy for providing "some sureness and rigor" to his own reconstructive method.[52]

The "Complex" Explanatory Thesis of von Wright

While Ricœur was examining the method by which an already-configured world of action becomes reconfigured from a hermeneutic perspective, von Wright was grappling with a similar dilemma from a logical perspective. He devoted his career to an exploration of a new type of logic—the logic of obligation, or "deontic" logic. Consider the following deontic sentence which concerns a statement about an obligation: "You may not park your car this side of the street." Such a sentence, of course, may be read prescriptively or descriptively. In the prescriptive sense, the sentence cannot be said to be true or false: von Wright refers to this a "norm." In the descriptive sense, the sentence *can* be said to be true or false, and is referred to as a norm-proposition. Since the norms themselves cannot be true or false, how are statements about them to convey meaning? At first, von Wright argued that they are verifiable if they are consistent and doable (achievable through human action). But, without designations of true and false, how are they to be considered consistent or inconsistent on this ground? "One cannot answer by saying that they cannot both be true, since truth-value does not apply to them. The only acceptable answer I can think of must make reference to the purpose or rationale of norm-giving activity."[53] But rationality, in traditional logic, is defined in terms of consistency and entailment. Hence he was forced to become a "lone wolf" in his field[54] and to suggest an expanded view of logic itself. While the logic of propositions rely on consistency and entailment, the logic of norms relies more fundamentally on their *doability* and their *rationality*, concepts which he says "have no place in pure, traditional logic."[55] He concludes:

> One could on this ground say that norms, after all, *have* no logic, that deontic logic is an impossibility. But since the definitions given make the logical notions of consistency and entailment applicable to genuine norms *in what seems a very natural and convincing way* [my emphasis], one could also say that this shows that logic, in fact, *has* a wider reach than truth. I leave it to the reader to decide which attitude is wiser.[56]

In his work on deontic logic, he found that the laws of propositional logic were not sufficient to account for the reasons underlying human action. What makes these norms seem consistent and

coherent, then? In this passage, I believe that his appeal to reasons which are "natural and convincing" parallels his work on "understanding explanation," and, while he never describes it as such, he essentially calls for a *narrative* definition of rationality. I will return to this notion of von Wright's underlying narrative thesis, but first we must explore his difficult and sometimes painful search to articulate the relationship between human actions and their causes and reasons.

Von Wright continued to expand his research on the nature of the connection or "tie" between norms and normative propositions to the realm of the "tie" connecting reasons and actions in historical explanation. In *Explanation and Understanding* (1971), von Wright was concerned with historical "explanation," and, like Ricœur, he found that simple models of explanation were insufficient. Simple causal explanations, particularly Hempel's subsumption theory, may account for behavior, he thought, but they do not account for human *action*, which necessarily involves intention. A causal explanation of a behavior might justify the action in terms of behavior (the light was turned on because my arm reached up and turned it on), but not in terms of intention (did I intend to turn on the light, or was I perhaps sleepwalking?). In causal theory, the reason is necessarily independent of the action. But von Wright believed that the reasons are mutually dependent on the actions. Consider the following schema, or set of propositions, called the practical inference:

> A intends to bring about *p*.
> A considers that he cannot bring about *p* unless he does *a*.
> Therefore A sets himself to do *a*.[57]

The first two premises describe the person's intentions. The conclusion describes the action performed. If the intentions can be empirically verified, and the conclusion can also be independently verified, have we then determined that the tie between them (the causal relationship) is also empirically verifiable? If so, then the reasons and the actions are independent and Hempel's causal theory of explanation holds firm. But, as we shall see, von Wright believed that the three propositions are not independent, but are instead mutually dependent. We could write the practical syllogism in one of two forms—an "if. . . then" statement or a "because" statement: "If A intends to bring about p, and A considers that he cannot bring about p unless he does *a*, then A sets himself to do *a*," or, "Because A intends to bring about p and considers that he cannot bring about p unless he does *a*, A sets himself to do *a*." Both of these forms articulate the "tie" between the premises and conclusion—the intention and the action—that is implied in the syllogistic form. Von Wright questioned the nature of this implied connection between the intention and the action and assumed that it took one of two forms: either the connection was causal and *empirical* (which he defines as being subsumable under general laws)[58] or the tie was one of *logical* entailment. Each action in the premise and conclusion seems to be empirically verifiable. But does that require that *the connection* between the premises and conclusion is also empirical?[59] His answer is that there is a logical, rather than empirical, connection between premises and conclusion (the Logical Connection Argument).

> The verification of the premises of a practical argument again presupposes that we can single out some recorded item of behavior as being intentional under the description accorded to it either by those premises themselves ("immediate" verification) or by some other set of premises which entail those of the argument under discussion ("external" verification).

> In this mutual dependence of the verification of premises and the verification of
> conclusions in practical syllogisms consists, as I see it, the truth of the Logical Connection
> Argument.[60]

How do we verify someone's intentional behavior? Only by reference to whether the behavior is actually completed. This crucial insight into the circular or mutually dependent nature of causal explanation in history opened him up to criticism and led to a lifetime of adjustments and attempts to articulate and re-articulate the relationship he sensed between reasons and actions.

The first version of the mutual dependence relationship was the "logical entailment solution." From a logical perspective, he appears to argue for the analytic mutual presupposition of the verification of the premises and conclusion: verifying the *intention* of a behavior (the first premise) can only be accomplished by singling out a "recorded item of behavior"—and this means ultimately referring to the premise itself. Thus, the argument appears to be analytic (and thus not falsifiable/empirical/causal) or even tautological, despite the empirical nature of the premises.

While von Wright in the above passage accepts the possibility of external verification of the premises, Rex Martin points out that basing the verifiability of the premises on any "recorded items of behavior" other than the actual action performed could mean that "we would have the possibility of verifying von Wright's intention without respect to whether he actually does or does not do A."[61] Using von Wright's example, if he intended to go to Copenhagen, he will buy a ticket before departure time; he will not fly to Beijing two hours before departure. But, Martin notes, any other recorded behavior besides his actually going to Copenhagen (the conclusion) would not in fact verify the truth of his intention. "If this is so," Martin states, "the verifiability argument does not support the logical entailment thesis" after all.[62] Hence, while arguing for the structural truth of the Logical Connection Argument, von Wright is also arguing against the ontological necessity of entailment:

> Thus, despite the truth of the Logical Connection Argument, the premises of a practical
> inference do *not* with logical necessity entail behavior. They do not entail the "existence"
> of a conclusion to match them. The syllogism when leading up to action is "practical" and
> not a piece of logical demonstration. It is *only when action is already there* and a practical
> argument is constructed to explain or justify it that we have a logically conclusive
> argument.[63]

Martin argues that Von Wright himself abandons the logical entailment (or analytic) solution in 1976: "[I] think it a mistake—of which I myself and others have been guilty—to understand the intentionalist view to mean that there is a relation of logical entailment between the premises and the conclusion of a practical argument."[64] Yet he recognized the "truth" of the argument itself and was not prepared to abandon hope for a nomological approach to the problem.

Throughout *Explanation and Understanding*, he upholds faith in the structural truth of the logical connection between premises and conclusion, even while refusing to accept a covering law model to explain this formal schema. He attempts a second explanatory model—a hybrid solution that is teleological rather than analytic at the formal level of the schema, but empirical within the parameters of the individual events and agents. Von Wright notes that historical

understanding could ultimately be achieved only by the state of full description—an ideal state of full understanding similar to a *Tractatus*-world envisioned by Wittgenstein.[65] But if we cordon off a segment of this full understanding community and examine any particular state system within it, we find that in any state system, the intention of the agent and the act performed make up two known facts. And within this mediating or hybrid system, causal rules do apply. He uses the example of the shots fired at Sarajevo as a "cause" of the war, so long as we are remaining in the closed state system we have isolated to study.

> And to call the explanation "causal" is also quite in order so long as we do not assimilate it to explanations which fit the covering law model. To call the explanation "teleological" would certainly be a misnomer, although teleology essentially enters into the practical inferences which link the *explanans* to the *explanandum.* When, *faute de mieux,* I call it quasi-causal this does not imply any value judgment or imperfection of it as an explanation. I use the term because the explanation does not depend for its validity on the truth of general laws.[66]

This hybrid solution is important for Ricœur's development of the mediating or "quasi" character of events in his theory of questioning back. For Ricœur, von Wright's quasi-causal explanation was valuable in historical explanation for allowing us to include the conviction of the agent in causation. The "tie" between the intention and the action for von Wright begins with the "doability" of the act—the agent must assume that he can accomplish the action.[67] The decision to do something (the basic action itself, rather than the bringing about of something else), generates the closure of the system and sets in motion the causal relationships of that system. In Ricœurian terminology, we might say that, emerging from the prefigured world of action, the agent acts (does something or questions back), and in the process of acting, a world is closed off or configured. Within the sphere in which the agent now finds himself, causal, explanatory relationships apply.

The hybrid solution allows for covering laws to apply in a state system, but not to the world of full understanding. In *Norm and Action*, von Wright had also relinquished norms (which, as we recall, have no truth value) to a hybrid position in logic. However, as a logician, von Wright was dissatisfied with his hybrid solution to the point of torment.

> Now the question arose: Was deontic logic, after all, not a logic of norms but of norm-propositions? In *Norm and Action* I opted for the second alternative—on the ground that the application of sentential connectives to prescriptively interpreted deontic sentences seemed problematic. But at the same time I also thought that the axioms and theorems of deontic logic reflected genuine logical properties of the norms themselves. I thus attributed to deontic logic, as it then existed, a kind of "hybrid" status in relation to norms and norm-propositions. This, obviously, was not a very satisfactory position. No wonder, therefore, that the problem to which it had suggested a solution continued to torment me.[68]

Again, we might ask, *how* do the reasons and actions relate to one another if not through covering laws? Is it possible for nomological rules to apply in this hybrid fashion only within a norm-proposition or a causal state system? The question that kept plaguing him was the deeper relationship of the "tie" or connection between these elements.

Searching for the ground of these connections, he turned to higher logical principles themselves—logical consistency (the obligation of a contradiction-free system) and coherence (the normative obligation of a gapless system).[69] According to von Wright in *Explanation and Understanding*, if we receive consistent and comprehensive descriptions for the connection between one state and another, then we have explained the action, and within the closed system, causal rules apply.

But, as Rex Martin points out, the logical consistency of descriptions alone is not sufficient for causal explanation. For example, if we attempt to understand the cause of one event by consistently inserting the same facts in the practical inference syllogism, above, then we could obtain a case such as the one Martin describes: an American journalist in China asks a factory owner how Mao's ideas could have increased production in his factory. Rather than receiving an answer as to how or why the ideas related to his output, he is instead repeatedly shown examples of efficient production.[70]

Martin points out that missing from these types of answers, however consistently described, is the notion of *intelligibility* in the connection between the question and the answer.[71]

The Convergence of Ricœur's and von Wright's Theses: Intelligibility as Narrative Understanding

In von Wright's 1999 retrospective view of his work on deontic logic, he reviewed his appeal to consistency and asked what could ultimately be the justification for the appeal to this higher order principle of consistency. "The only acceptable answer" he can supply is that of rationality itself, for "it would be irrational, contrary to reason, if a law-giver enjoined or allowed things which cannot be done."[72] Martin notes that von Wright recognized the limitations of his thesis on understanding as expressed as a "hybrid" theory, even with an emphasis on the higher principle of consistency, and that his definition of understanding evolved in his later writings to reflect this limitation and thereby account for rationality in terms of intelligibility. In his 1984 lecture, "Of Human Freedom," von Wright, as Martin points out, first uses the term "understanding explanation" to account for the intelligible dimension of explanation not considered in his previous theory of understanding.[73] The concept of "understanding explanation" included two parts—(1) the formal schema I have been describing in the practical inference syllogism, above,[74] and (2) the notion of intelligibility captured in the idea of understanding. An "understanding explanation" is an explanation given in terms of reasons, and reasons, in turn, must "be sieved through the medium of the understanding" in order to become a reason for the agent.[75] Understanding as intelligibility seems to be self-justifying. Consistency is certainly not sufficient to justify intelligibility, as we have shown, so von Wright ultimately appeals to the notion of self-coherence of the system, the mutual dependency of the premises and conclusion in an intelligible manner. I have argued that he ultimately finds that reasons must apply "in what seems a very natural and convincing way," in essence arguing that reason requires *narrative* intelligibility.

While von Wright does not refer directly to narrative, I believe that his thesis on intelligibility, which is the ground for his thesis on understanding explanation, relies on a definition of intelligibility as narrativity in Ricœur's more complex sense. Ricœur recognized the parallel in *Time and Narrative, I,* but I am not aware that von Wright nor any his commentators

have explored this thread in von Wright's own theory. First, we may consider how von Wright himself describes and justifies rationality. In *Explanation and Understanding*, he proposes the "shocking" answer that efficacious reasons (those which contribute to an explanation of an action) "are those in light of which we explain the action. . . the truth of the action explanation has no basis in facts other than the understanding itself of the action in the context of its reasons."[76] Here, to review, he is making a case for the mutual dependency of the premises and conclusion, an ostensibly tautological argument. The agent could thereby justify his or her own intentions, but how does one justify the "tie" between reasons and actions from an outside perspective? When two people disagree, we must appeal to rational argument:

> The *rational* arguments which the outsider could use would. . . for example, try to make the agent see his present action *in the setting of a larger fragment of his life-history* [my emphasis]. He would point to incidents in the agent's past which are "public knowledge" and which the agent would not deny. He would also hold up for him the image of his character which others have formed and ask the agent to ponder the facts which led to the formation of this image and to compare it with his self-image. He may warn him of his own future actions, ask him to watch himself better.[77]

We might note that in this passage, von Wright's *first* example of a rational appeal is to the action's place within a larger setting of the agent's "life-history," suggesting the primacy of a narrative dimension in understanding. This life-community can be further defined by reference to the action's characteristics of coherence within a life-community, of temporal continuity and of consistency. The premises therefore seem to imply the conclusion in a teleological manner, and the action is thus understood only within a "life-community" in the same way, von Wright argues, that we consider language to be invested with meaning only within a linguistic system.[78]

The justification for von Wright's Logical Connection Argument would seem to depend, then, on *narrative* intelligibility, which views actions both as a public context and from a particular perspective, echoing Ricœur's description of narrative: "It is this communal act of repetition, which is at the same time a new founding act and a recommencement of what has already been inaugurated, that 'makes history'. . . Repetition. . . is always articulated in a narrative mode."[79] Refiguration is the act of repeating what is already (publicly) known, and asks the reader to shake sedimented layers, as von Wright is asking us to establish intelligibility by holding up images of one's character, pondering and comparing these images to one's self-image. Repetition (or consistency) in logic was not enough to establish intelligibility, and repetition (as a consistently repeated story) is likewise insufficient to understand history, or else a false ideology could become established as destiny in a Heideggerian sense. Instead, as von Wright and Ricœur make clear, one's life-community must take on this task of repetition together with the self-aware agent in order to arrive at an intelligible explanation that exceeds a merely consistent one.

Von Wright's commentators unintentionally bring the narrative dimension of his thesis of "understanding explanation" to light even further. Martin describes von Wright's "understanding explanation" thesis as his "most considerable and. . . durable contribution to the philosophy of history" for its combination of the nomological schema of the practical inference with the notion of intelligible connections among each element of the schema. But note in the following passage the language Martin uses to describe von Wright's intelligibility which, perhaps unintentionally, assumes this narrative dimension:

> I think a distinction between explanation and understanding begins to emerge. The explanation so achieved [that of the fully described state world] is a minimal one; it is an explanation of sorts but it fails to satisfy the standard of understanding. This standard does not rule out the explanation as an explanation; it does however, indicate a deficiency in an important respect. For an action-explanation should tell us something more than that the facts cited satisfy the standard schema. An explanation should yield understanding*: it should provide a factual narrative that we can follow* [my emphasis].[80]

Martin here seems to be equating "yield[ing] understanding" with "provid[ing] a factual narrative that we can follow." Later in his article, he argues that "if it is true. . . that a merely causal account of narrative understanding (of intelligible connection) cannot be given, then it follows that all proper action explanations are indelibly noncausal."[81] Here, narrative understanding is again equated with intelligible connection and echoes Ricoeur's thesis on the epistemic dimension of narrativity: "Time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative."[82] I believe that these passages support an interpretation of von Wright's own complex thesis in *Explanation and Understanding* that the mutual dependency of the premises and conclusion in historical explanation are *narrative* in nature.

Conclusion

Von Wright's analytical evaluation of explanation and understanding thus parallels and points to limitations of Ricœur's evaluation of time and narrative in several important respects. *First*, like Ricœur, von Wright rejected the simple covering law thesis of historical explanation but was concerned with the reciprocal or circular nature of the relationship between general schema and singular events. Von Wright approached the problem as a question of the nature of the relationship between singular events and found that neither causal models (which he equated with covering law model) nor logical entailment models sufficiently accounted for the relationship between intentions and actions. Ricœur approached the problem of the epistemological gap between historical context (the world of action) and historical text from a narrative perspective but found that current (simple) narrative models did not sufficiently account for this schism. *Second*, both proposed a provisional or hybrid answer located between covering law and singular, unique event. Von Wright envisioned a potential world of full understanding that extended beyond the scope of causal explanation, but nonetheless allowed the introduction of human action to isolate provisional state-systems in which causal rules do apply. In this way, he hoped to explain the means by which *logical* rules could connect *empirical* events. Ricœur's narrative theory was influenced by this hybrid solution, and he introduced concepts of quasi-characters, actions, and causal relationships that serve as "relay stations" *en route* to full historical understanding, or "participatory belonging." Through this hybrid solution, both von Wright and Ricœur could argue for the mutual presupposition of abstract form and unique context in historical narrative and its involvement of the reader/historian in a new discourse between fiction and theory. Ricœur describes this in temporal terms as a "healthy circularity"[83] and in narrative terms as a "living dialectic."[84]

But von Wright was not content with the hybrid solution that Ricœur would adopt—for he did not accept that causal relationships could hold in particular instances but not full systems. He thus explored the notion of higher order conditions of rationality—consistency and coherence. *Third*, consistency or repetition, an important part of Ricœur's theory of questioning

back was logically untenable for von Wright, as it did not account for the reason why an intention entailed an action. For Ricœur, the prefigured (and ontologically superior) realm of action remains in quest of narrative in concert with the agents articulating and configuring the texts. This claim has the potential to open Ricœur's thesis to the possibility that a misleading idea (patriarchy or white supremacy, for example) could be repeated as the destiny of the people repeating it.

Fourth, to avoid the problems inherent with repetition, both Ricœur and von Wright employ a systems approach to the problem of repetition or consistency. Von Wright's solution was ultimately a non-causal, dual model he termed "understanding explanation," which consisted of a formal schema and a criterion of intelligibility defined in terms of coherence. Coherence, as von Wright defined it, was a higher order condition of rationality, but, as I have pointed out that, in the absence of merely repetitive consistency, it can be interpreted in terms of narrative intelligibility. The hermeneutic and analytic models of explanation and understanding thus converge in the notion of understanding as narrative intelligibility. As we seek answers to the reasons why Malaysian flight 370 disappeared, then, we might consider the shortcomings of some of the alternative models of explanation: merely repeating a story does not make the reasons for its disappearance intelligible; our goal is clearly not to treat competing texts as equally valid, nor is it to maintain the epistemic gap by failing to fully understand the event; probabilistic theories may be useful, but ultimately do not lead to understanding (especially to the people whose family members have been lost). Rather, the actions do indeed seem to move in quest of narrative, driving us as a world community to understand the events based on the intelligibility of the emerging story.

[1] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*. Translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 3.

[2] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*., 91.

[3] Carl Gustav Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History" (1942; reprint: *Aspects of Scientific Explanation and Other Essays in the Philosophy of Science*. New York: Macmillan Press, 1965), 231-243.

[4] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 124.

[5] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*., 131.

[6] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*., 103.

[7] See Cecilia Tohaneaunu, "Historical Knowledge as Perspectival and Rational: Remarks on the Annales School's Idea of History," *Metaphilosophy* 31: 1-2 (January 2000), 178.

[8] W. B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), xi.

[9] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 150.

[10] Arthur Danto, *Analytic Philosophy of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 183; qtd in Ricoeur *Time and Narrative, I*, 147.

[11] Arthur Danto, *Analytic Philosophy of History*, 132.

[12] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 148-49.

[13] Mink Louis O. "The Autonomy of Historical Understanding," *History and Theory*, 5, 1 (1966), pp. 46: "A common theme runs through all six of the characteristics of historiography on which I have tried at least to focus attention: the idea of 'historical synthesis' or 'interpretative history;' and it is the special character of this as a mode of understanding which a theory of historical knowledge must recognize if the methodological autonomy of history is to be justified or preserved."

[14] Mink Louis O., "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument," in *The Writing of History*, edited by R. H. Canary and H. Kozicki (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978). Qtd in J. P. Connerty, "History's Many Cunning Passages: Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*," *Poetics Today*, 11:2 (Summer, 1990), pp 387.

[15] Hayden White, *Metahistory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1973), 2.

[16] White, *Metahistory*, 5.

[17] White, *Tropics of Discourse*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978).

[18] White, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 209.

[19] White, *The Content of the Form*, 209.

[20] Connerty, "History's Many Cunning Passages: Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*," 390.

[21] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 168.

[22] Connerty, "History's Many Cunning Passages: Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative,*" 391.

[23] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 179.

[24] Connerty, "History's Many Cunning Passages: Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative,*" 393.

[25] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 180.

[26] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 175.

[27] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 181-2

[28] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 182.

[29] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 78.

[30] Connerty, "History's Many Cunning Passages: Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative,*" 396.

[31] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 82.

[32] Connerty, "History's Many Cunning Passages: Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative,*" 396.

[33] Connerty, "History's Many Cunning Passages: Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative,*" 401.

[34] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, II*, 96.

[35] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, II*, 96-97.

[36] Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 373.

[37] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 74.

[38] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition,* [1958] reprint (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 184.

[39] Robert Caserio, "Story, Discourse, and Anglo-American Philosophy of Action," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 17.1 (1987), 9.

[40] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 240.

[41] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, II*, 28.

[42] Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 356.

[43] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 180, my emphasis.

[44] Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," *On Narrative,* Ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 166.

[45] Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," 167.

[46] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Press, 1962), 436.

[47] Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," 183-4.

[48] Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," 184.

[49] J. Hillis Miller, *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 248-49.

[50] Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," 185.

[51] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 180.

[52] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 181.

[53] Georg Henrik Von Wright, "Deontic Logic: A Personal View," *Ratio Juris* 12:1 (March 1999), 34.

[54] Von Wright, "Deontic Logic: A Personal View," 31.

[55] Von Wright, "Deontic Logic: A Personal View," 35.

[56] Von Wright, "Deontic Logic: A Personal View," 35.

[57] Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1971), 95. Note: This simple schema could be augmented by additional criteria—other possible courses of action, that he has the means to accomplish A, that he knows how to accomplish A, etc.—but these embellishments do not alter the present considerations.

[58] Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, 15.

[59] Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, 107.

[60] Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, 115-16.

[61] Rex Martin, "G. H. Von Wright on *Explanation and Understanding: An Appraisal*," *History & Theory,* Vol. 29 Issue 2 (May 1990), 211.

[62] Martin, "G. H. Von Wright on *Explanation and Understanding: An Appraisal*," 211.

[63] Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, 117, my emphasis.

[64] Von Wright, "Determinism and the Study of Man" (1976), From *Practical Reason. Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 41. Qtd in Martin, 214.

[65] Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, 44.

[66] Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, 142.

[67] Ricoeur notes that in the addition of the concept of the concept of "doing something" to the practical inference syllogism lies von Wright's whole theory of interference: "[The idea of cause] has its roots in the idea of doing something and of intentionally interfering with the course of nature" (*Time and Narrative*, *I*, 135-6). "Doability" implies for von Wright (borrowing from Danto) "doing something"—an intrinsic and logical relationship—not a causal relationship as we find implied in the action of "doing something." (*Ibid.*, 136).

[68] Von Wright, "Deontic Logic: A Personal View," 32.

[69] Von Wright, "Deontic Logic: A Personal View," 33.

[70] Martin, "G. H. Von Wright on *Explanation and Understanding: An Appraisal*," 216-17.

[71] Martin, "G. H. Von Wright on *Explanation and Understanding: An Appraisal*," 217.

[72] Von Wright, "Deontic Logic: A Personal View," 34.

[73] Von Wright, "Of Human Freedom," *The Tanner Lectures On Human Values*, *May 16 and 17, 1984, 136..*

[74] Martin finds that von Wright's formal schema (on which the practical schema is based) are not dissimilar enough to general covering laws to warrant a class distinction: "Both belong ultimately to the family of nomological truth." But even if we consider the schema to be nomological, it does not follow that understanding explanations are also causal, since the second requirement would also have to be nomological/causal (230).

[75] Von Wright, "Of Human Freedom," 129.

[76] Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, 137.

[77] Von Wright, "Of Human Freedom," 35.

[78] Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding*, 114.

[79] Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," 185.

[80] Martin, "G. H. Von Wright on *Explanation and Understanding: An Appraisal*," 218.

[81] Martin, "G. H. Von Wright on *Explanation and Understanding: An Appraisal*," 221.

[82] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 3.

[83] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 3.

[84] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, I*, 67.