

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Paul A. Roth

In the Beginning

If one were to construct a type of genealogical chart, it would show analytic philosophy of history as the runt of a litter of topics sprung from philosophy of science in its youth.¹ Birth could plausibly be dated with the publication of Carl Hempel's classic article, "The Function of General Laws in History" (Hempel 1942). There Hempel stipulates as a condition for the scientific/logical adequacy of historical explanations that they contain a covering law. Absent some law or law-like connection between the explanandum statement and those serving as explanantia, historical explanations constitute at best "explanation sketches." Notoriously, this did not just imply that historians simply needed to logically tidy up their presentations. Rather, inasmuch as historians had no laws to insert, they had no genuine explanations on offer.

Hempel's and related models of (scientific) explanation result in a *de facto* exile of academic history from the realm of legitimate sciences. An ensuing debate about explanatory form thus initially serves as an important impetus for analytic philosophers to examine what counts as explanation in histories. As Louis O. Mink notes, "It could be said without exaggeration that until about 1965 the critical [i.e. analytic] philosophy of history was the controversy over the covering-law model" (Mink 1987a, 169). Since that time sea changes have ensued in philosophical fashion regarding accounts of explanation and all of those related topics that at first estrange historiography from consideration within philosophy of science. As it happens, an almost total neglect of historical explanation within philosophy of science turns out to accompany these philosophical shifts, a neglect that persists largely unabated to this day (see especially Danto 1995).

But why does philosophy of history suffer this peculiar fate? Consideration of some of the epistemological concerns that underlay debates inspired by Hempel's models suggests a reason that helps account for its persistent orphaned status. Exercises in analysis such as Hempel's focus on identifying formal criteria that would also be normative for what could count as an explanation. But as debates around Hempelian models lapse into epicycles in the 1960s, emphasis in historiography comes to fall on narrative form as the salient characteristic of historical explanation. (For a canonical overview, see Salmon 1990.) By the mid-1970s there had been a basic shift *away* from consideration of Hempel-like models of explanation and a movement towards consideration

of narrative as the *sui generis* form of historical explanation. Indeed, discussion of narrative achieves in that moment an ascendancy within historical theory under the powerful influence exerted by Hayden White's work that it has yet to relinquish.² But this focus on narrative form proves inhospitable to epistemic analysis. For narrative theory does not yield criteria, formal or otherwise, that holds any promise of providing what analytic philosophers desire—normative benchmarks for goodness of explanation (see Vann 1995 and Mink 1987a). Thus the “rise of narrative” and its related seeming resistance or indifference to epistemic interests accounts for, I suggest, the “parting of the ways” between philosophy of science and historiography.

However, this timing proves to be quite ironic. For just as discussion of historical explanation within philosophy of science effectively ceases, Thomas S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* begins to exert its important and ongoing influence on philosophical views about science (see Roth 2013). The irony concerns the fact that inasmuch as history did not achieve even *prima facie* scientific status by the philosophical standards prevailing in the early 1960s, it should have been impossible for a history of science to challenge accounts of scientific rationality. Nonetheless, Kuhn's historical practice here trumps philosophical dogma. Indeed, Kuhn helps create within philosophy a powerful and (for some) unsettling historicized view of scientific (and ultimately philosophical) rationality. Alan Richardson aptly characterizes subsequent debates as offering competing “histories of reason,” albeit non-Hegelian and non-Whiggish ones (see Richardson 2002 and 2003; Domski and Dickson 2010; and Zammito 2004).

More generally, while disputes about the nature of science and logic based on differing histories prove ongoing, what makes for the goodness of historical argument remains unexamined and unexplicated. But this continuing neglect of historical explanation imperils and impedes philosophical self-understanding. For a concern with history as a systematic form of empirical inquiry inevitably links analytic philosophy of history and philosophy of science. And inasmuch as philosophical developments starting in the 1960s fundamentally alter the relationship between history and philosophy of science, a dilemma arises. If philosophers of science deny explanatory legitimacy to narratives, they fail to account for why differing histories of science exert a critical influence on a *philosophical* understanding of science. If philosophers of science accept narratives as explanatory, they still owe an account of why. In short, failure to accommodate narrative explanations marks an important deficit in philosophical self-understanding. There needs then to be a refounding of how philosophy of history and philosophy of science interconnect, one that recognizes if not a priority of the former vis-à-vis the latter, then at least their near parity. Moreover, this dilemma holds *a fortiori* for how philosophy of history relates to other areas of philosophy as well (see Roth 2011 and Kuukkanen 2015).

If philosophy of science cannot escape engagement with philosophy of history and the topic of historical explanation, then that means taking up once again narrative as a form of explanation. For narrative must be recognized as not simply a characteristic form of histories, but also an inescapable one as well (Little 2010). And any philosophic quest regarding the epistemic and explanatory characteristics of narrative best begins, I suggest, by taking a renewed look at what Arthur Danto and Louis Mink had to say decades ago about narrative form and its role in historical explanation. Each identifies epistemic factors unique to narrative form. In addition, Mink long insisted that history ought to serve as a test case for any theory of knowledge. Specifically, he maintained that history cannot be assimilated to any other discipline that claims to provide empirical knowledge due to its characteristic form as narrative.

The claim of a narrative history is that its structure is a contribution, not just a literary artifice for the presentation of a series of factual descriptions. Yet classical theories of knowledge have never even formulated the problem of the relation of statements of fact to narrative structure, as they have formulated and discussed in detail the relation of statements of fact to the structure of scientific theories.

(Mink 1987a, 168)

But given the philosophical *Zeitgeist* prevailing when they wrote, neither Danto nor Mink were paid any heed.³ And indeed philosophical orthodoxy remains wedded to the view that analyses of narrative prove orthogonal to epistemic interests.⁴ Yet as shall be shown, their insights remain invaluable to any serious consideration of this topic.

The Logic of Narratives: Three Theses

This sets a basic philosophical challenge for those interested in the “logic” or “form” of narrative explanations. Daniel Little offers the following helpful gloss of what ‘narrative’ means: “it is an account of the unfolding of a series of events, along with an effort to explain how and why these processes and events came to be. A narrative is intended to provide an account of how a complex historical event unfolded and why. ... So a narrative seeks to provide hermeneutic understanding of the outcome ... and causal explanation” (Little 2010, 29). Mink helps fill out what this holistic characterization of narrative implies by what I shall call the *non-detachability thesis*. “But despite the fact that an historian may ‘summarize’ conclusions in his final chapter, it seems clear that these are seldom or never detachable conclusions The significant conclusions ... are ingredient in the argument itself ... in the sense that they are *represented by the narrative order itself*. As ingredient conclusions they are *exhibited* rather than *demonstrated*” (Mink 1987b, 79; see also Mink 1987a, 172; Fay et al. 1987, 11). In a sense elaborated below, events explained by histories exist *qua* events only as constructions of those histories. Primarily as a consequence of this feature narratives explain only by virtue of the narrative order itself.

Danto, I believe, coins the phrase ‘narrative explanation’ (Danto 1965, 237).⁵ Subsequently it comes to name that form of explanation specific to history, and has come to capture those differences already in play prior to Hempel’s article. What makes ‘narrative explanation’ something other than an oxymoron by Danto’s own lights concerns how the term ‘narrative’ figures in his justly famous *Gedankenexperiment* regarding an Ideal Chronicle and so the role Danto attributes to narrative sentences (another Danto coinage) (see Danto 1962). Danto’s narrative sentences demonstrate that all statements true of a time *t* could *not* be known true at time *t*, even by a being with perfect apprehension of all that happens as it happens. For truths about *t* continue to accrue after *t*; e.g. (A): “The Thirty Years War began in 1618.” Danto observes that (A) is true *of* 1618 but not knowable as true *then* even by a being with perfect knowledge of all that happens at each moment in 1618. Knowledge of this truth has *nothing* to do with some notion of correspondence between statements and states of affairs, since *ex hypothesi* no “facts” alter regarding any moment in question. So much the worse then for any hope of an Ideal Chronicle.

Danto terms sentences like (A) ‘narrative’ because they relate a later event to an earlier one in a way that indicates a *conceptual/theoretical* connection. Narrative sentences reveal something known true of an earlier time *in light of* a later. Additional truths continue to accrue to past

times just because the passage of time reveals what *antecedents* of later happenings were latent in earlier ones.

Put another way, narrative sentences create new events under novel descriptions.⁶ *Historical events only exist as events under a description, and descriptions continuously emerge and change retrospectively.* In short, historians look to explain an event as it exists under a particular description, a description that ties to a retrospective and so what I am here terming a “narrative perspective.” As Danto puts it:

Completely to describe an event is to locate it in all the right stories, and this we cannot do. We cannot because we are temporally provincial with regard to the future. ... The complete description then presupposes a narrative organization, and narrative organization is something that we do. Not merely that, but the imposition of a narrative organization logically involves us with an inextinguishable subjective factor. There is an element of sheer arbitrariness in it.

(Danto 1965, 142)

Here we find the beginnings of a philosophical rationale for the metaphysical plurality and epistemic legitimacy of *competing* narratives. (For a development of this view, see Roth 2012.)

Narrative sentences do *not* constitute a *narrative* in any theoretically relevant sense of that term, but typically they imply one. Danto takes such “antecedents revealed in retrospect” as a defining mark of the historical. The *implied* narrative would develop an account of how that later time shapes our understanding and significance of earlier, one that that period of time has now but could not be known to have then.

Moreover, narrative sentences do not determine the *content* of an implied connection, but only broadly demarcate events for narrative fashioning. As Mink observes (Mink 1987c, 184), Huizinga’s *The Waning of the Middle Ages* by its very title adumbrates a narrative sentence, i.e. one that creates an event by postulating a conceptual connection between earlier and later points. Put in the context of the theory of narrative explanation that I am elaborating, Huizinga’s title conjures into existence a large-scale event, one naming a historical transition about which more can then be known. Fashioning this macro-event then makes it possible to specify truths about some earlier times knowable only as a result of later developments.

Yet Danto’s use of the term ‘narrative’ invites confusion between, on the one hand, *conceptually* relating an earlier time to some later one and, on the other hand, offering an *actual* narrative that develops that relation. Only the latter counts as what theorists in this area think of as a narrative. Even more, Danto’s still important analysis of temporal language and his coinage of the term ‘narrative explanation’ does *not* signal any interest or basis in his own work for a defense of narrative as itself a legitimate form of historical explanation. Rather, his notion of a narrative sentence makes vivid and compelling a reason why our human relationship to history will always be dynamic and not static. For the passage of time inevitably reveals truths about the significance of past times not knowable at those moments. In short, *Danto contributes importantly and insightfully to an epistemic and not any narratological understanding of histories.*

Mink expands and enhances some basic insights regarding the metaphysics and epistemology of histories left implicit and unrecognized in Danto’s own account of narrative sentences and the attendant impossibility argument regarding an Ideal Chronicle. His elucidations underwrite the previously noted “non-detachability” thesis regarding historical explanations in connection with those narratives that present them. Mink’s reflections also tell against any assumption

that human history has a natural or intrinsic structure and so against any idea that there exists just one human past. More specifically, in addition to the aforementioned “non-detachability thesis,” I add two others as defining characteristics of narrative as a form of explanation. One of these I term the non-standardization thesis and the other the non-aggregativity thesis.

Regarding the non-standardization thesis, Mink introduces a version of this idea when he notes:

And such ‘narrative sentences’ belong to stories which historians alone can tell. ... A present event may belong to indefinitely many stories, none of which can be told until it is completed. The description of the past does not come closer and closer to an Ideal Chronicle but departs further and further from it as more descriptions become available which were not earlier available even in principle.

(Mink 1987d, 138–39)

This brings to the fore two striking disanalogies between historical events and those that scientific theories target for purposes of explanation. One is that historical events do not exist as constructs within some articulated theory. Indeed, on rough analogy with Davidson’s discussion of anomalous monism, there exists at present no reason to believe that the sort of events that interest humans for purposes of historical elucidation will be captured by any theory that utilizes anything like laws.

In short, there exists no analog in history to what permits “normal science” in Kuhn’s sense. Nothing answers to normal history, because there exists no theory that normalizes historical events in this respect. “Danto’s argument depends on bringing out with maximum forcefulness the point that there are many descriptions of an event, and no standard or complete description” (Mink 1987d, 139). Indeed, non-standardization underwrites non-detachability at least in the following way. Because there exists no standardized way of demarcating either event types—e.g. revolutions—or specific historical events—e.g. The American Civil War—these become non-detachable from histories that discuss them. No prior theories function to “standardize” such events, and neither do they constitute natural kinds. Thus, historical events “exist” only as part of some narrative or other.

The other disanalogy that Mink discerns emerges with regard to what he terms a conceptual asymmetry. By “conceptual asymmetry” Mink means “Descriptions possible only after the event because they depend on later conceptual modes of interpretation and analysis, e.g., ‘the unpropertied citizens of Rome constituted the first urban proletariat’” (Mink 1987d, 140) This importantly complicates any understanding of the process just noted by which historical events become constituted for purposes of inquiry. Conceptual asymmetries represent a further principled barrier to any hope of normalizing descriptions of historical events. Danto emphasizes the *temporal* asymmetries that narrative sentences produce and how these frustrate any hypothesized Ideal Chronicle. But he does not comment upon conceptual asymmetries, and so overlooks a related critical limitation on historical knowledge. Critical race theory and feminist perspectives serve as examples here. Later concepts do not standardize events, but bring to light relations previously unobservable.⁷

But in addition to the non-standardization thesis, Mink also brings into view what I term the non-aggregativity thesis. This builds on observations that Mink makes regarding the very intelligibility of Danto’s thought experiment. Mink notes that Danto’s setup for the Ideal Chronicle seems plausible because one finds nothing obviously unimaginable in the initial suggestion of an

Ideal Chronicle as a totality of the historical record. "To say that we still presuppose ... a concept of universal history, means: we assume that everything that has happened belongs to a single and determinate realm of unchanging actuality" (Mink 1987c, 194). So while Danto offers a *reductio* of the possibility of any such chronicle, Mink discerns an additional important epistemological consequence. This involves an assumption that histories can or should *aggregate*. Aggregation presupposes that all the events could belong to some one narrative, an implied unifying perspective. But there can no more be a single story than there can be an Ideal Chronicle, for new and different events and new and different stories constantly come into being (Mink 1987c, 197). Moreover, in order to *aggregate*, events would have to be detachable and standardized, but narratives allow for neither.

"The Past" cannot as a result exist as a static object about which one may hope to know more and more, as in Kuhn's image of normal science. For nothing now licenses an assumption of The Past conceived as an untold or partially told story, but always nonetheless the *same* story, a human past narratable *sub specie aeternitatis*. Rather, one confronts the fact that what these various histories "have in common is *the impossibility of being gathered together under any rubric of 'universal history.'*" ... Instead of the belief that there is a single story embracing the ensemble of human events, we believe that there are many stories, not only different stories about different events, but even different stories about the same event" (Mink 1987c, 193–94, emphasis mine). Absent a "master narrative," no One True History lies waiting to be discovered in what evidence provides (see also Roth 2008 and Roth 2012). As the non-standardization thesis implies, histories rather create pasts by the way in which particular events come to be fashioned and accounted for. Non-aggregativity adds that these histories cannot therefore be expected to cohere, to theoretically aggregate into one seamless account of The Past.

Histories of Reason

A case for taking narrative as a form of explanation thus builds on the fact—and it is a fact—that philosophers pervasively use narratives to explain and that these exhibit the three previously noted defining features of historical narratives—the non-detachability of conclusions, the non-standardization of events explained, and the non-aggregativity of narrative explanations. Absent, then, some demarcation criterion, it would be more plausible to simply admit narrative histories to any list of legitimate forms of explanation rather than to continue to exclude them in theory while honoring them in practice. Examining some well-known "histories of reason" provides test cases illustrating how narratives function as a *sui generis* type explanation. In this regard, I briefly consider some well-known work by Thomas Kuhn and Michael Friedman, including as well writing by Friedman on the history of analytic philosophy.

Kuhn's work generates disputes persisting to this day regarding the relation of the history of science and the philosophy of science. A great if unintended irony regarding philosophical reception of *Structure* can be glimpsed in the following remark by Danto: "Kuhn advanced a view of history so powerful that, rather than being an applied science as Hempel holds history to be, history came to be the matrix for viewing all the sciences" (Danto 1995, 72). *Danto's remark gives voice to the important albeit still unacknowledged fact the Kuhn's great work effectively reverses the received order of epistemic authority.* In particular, Kuhn can be read as upending philosophical views that true science moves by an inexorable logic that transcends time and place. He replaces

this with a history of reason, where what counts as good reasoning even within science will vary with the theory in disciplinary ascendance.

Kuhn worries about how history relates to science, but never satisfactorily resolves his concerns on this score (see Roth 2013). The title of Kuhn's famous book adumbrates a narrative sentence, inasmuch as what counts as a revolution (scientific or otherwise) appears only in retrospect. One can attempt to date its beginning after the fact, but that becomes a fact true of the earlier time only when seen in retrospect. The title is of course also ironic, since Kuhn's argument shows that changes in theoretical fashion have a "structure" only in a somewhat hand-waving sense of the term. This follows from his challenges to both Hempelian and Popperian orthodoxies regarding the rationality of scientific change insofar as neither verification nor falsification can explain historically significant theoretical transitions in what passes as a science.

What persistently escapes notice, however, involves just how Kuhn's book itself embodies a form of explanation that neither Hempel nor Popper could accommodate. Note in this regard that even what to count as a science appears known retrospectively. That a discipline has successive paradigms related in a certain way—has a particular history—creates a lineage for physics and chemistry as sciences but not, e.g., for astrology and alchemy. Kuhn's narrative also exhibits that what passes as scientific rationality has a history. The "argument" for his history of reason consists in showing how different cases of theoretical transition also alter what makes for proper procedures within a science. Kuhn's emplotment of these successive transitions shows them resistant to any over-arching analysis of scientific rationality.

Indeed, *Structure* manifests exactly those characteristics of a narrative explanation sketched above. For the argument regarding the *general* significance of paradigm shifts cannot be detached from how Kuhn narrates key episodes within his history of science. The events discussed do not exist in any standardized form, and so the endless complaints regarding how Kuhn uses the term 'paradigm'. And one of the most notorious consequences he draws from his argument—the inability to make clear sense of any notion of scientific progress—instantiates the inability of histories to aggregate, at least with respect to some story of progress. (Kuhn endorses Mink's work here. See Roth 2013 for details.) In addition, his narrative does not aggregate either as a history of a stable something known as "science," or with traditional histories in this area.

In important work over the last fifteen years, Michael Friedman challenges Kuhn's history of science but has done so using specifically narrative means. Commenting on Friedman's *The Dynamics of Reason*, Richard Creath remarks, "Friedman's historical narrative is, in effect, an explication of the role of reason within the particular historical context in which these [mathematical and scientific] revolutions take place. ... So the historical narrative does real work for Friedman's account. The history is not an illustration of his argument ... it is the argument itself—a powerful one" (Creath 2010, 504). Friedman emphatically endorses this characterization of his "argument" (Friedman 2010, 792, n. 317; see also 712ff.). "Whatever the fate of this new philosophy of science may be, it is clear beyond the shadow of a doubt, I think, that careful and sensitive attention to the history of science must remain absolutely central in any serious philosophical consideration of science" (Friedman 1993, 37). Friedman also did early and well-known work on explanation. Like Kuhn, he cannot be charged in this regard with a lack of familiarity with philosophical debates about explanation, or an ignorance of scientific theories and mathematics, or an inability to work in those terms. Yet, also like Kuhn, although Friedman self-consciously uses historical narrative to reshape thinking about what science is, he does not explicitly reflect on how narratives explain.

Such contested histories of reason extend as well to questions about the status of logic and mathematics. Consider in this light Friedman's *A Parting of the Ways* (Friedman 2000). For Friedman offers there a specifically historical narrative explanation in the sense rehearsed above. For the purpose at hand, his explanation holds important implications for contemporary debate regarding the state and content of what has come to be called analytic philosophy (itself, of course, now the topic of multiple conflicting histories). Here what is at stake is nothing less than how analytic philosophy should be understood. This essay does not answer the question of which history to accept. What matters is that Friedman provides a *narrative* explanation, one that shapes and influences not only how one conceives of what philosophers did and but also what they ought to do.

Although not a necessary feature of a narrative explanation on my configuration of that term, Friedman's title connotes the sort of narrative sentence that Danto teaches us to attend to. For on Friedman's telling, the conference at Davos comes to mark a parting of the ways. Friedman roots his tale of that encounter in two very different and influential ways in which the Kantian project has been appropriated at that time. Having thus situated his narrative, he can then locate the confrontation at Davos between Cassirer and Heidegger as a critical moment in a much broader intellectual story. But these "facts" can be apprehended only retrospectively; those at Davos could not have used some model of explanation available then or now (or ever, I would venture to speculate) to explain what happens then as marking the origins of a "continental divide" (see Gordon 2010).

This narrative proves fraught with great significance regarding how to understand those who gave our discipline much of its current shape, and so determinative of our own professional self-understanding. As Friedman puts it, he proposes to "show" (his term, having in context the connotation of 'prove' or 'explain')

that the Davos encounter between Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger has particular importance for our understanding of the ensuing split between what we now call the analytic and continental philosophical traditions. Before this encounter there was no such split I further hope to show that carefully attending to the very different ways in which the thought of all three philosophers evolved in sharply diverging directions from a common neo-Kantian core can greatly illuminate the nature and sources of the analytic/continental divide.

(Friedman 2000, xi)

Friedman means to account for how a present unanticipated in the past nonetheless came to be the intellectual and professional space that we inhabit.

This conforms, I take it, with exactly the points on which Danto and Mink insist. Historical explanation *qua* narrative explanation concerns itself with a *developmental* or *innovative* process that emerges only in retrospect, and that the purpose of a narrative is to trace that path of development, a path not defined or marked by any known laws or the like. The event emerges as an event only because our interests call it into being; events so constituted do not represent or embody some natural kind. Following that path might well and perhaps even should change our perception of how to proceed on the basis of an altered understanding of that past. As Friedman writes, "We have now arrived at the beginning of our own particular story, and also at a fundamental intellectual crossroads" (Friedman 2000, 147). One need not agree with Friedman in all the particulars to share his sense that philosophy does stand at a

crossroads, one rooted in divergent and deeply contested ways of understanding the legacies of Frege, Russell, Carnap, Wittgenstein, Quine, and Sellars. As another distinguished historian of analytic philosophy has put it, "On the story I tell, the central strand of the analytic tradition in philosophy decisively shaped by our three figures [Frege, Carnap, and Quine] has, I think it is fair to say, no salient continuation among those who name themselves the heirs of that tradition" (Ricketts 2004, 182). No less than the history of science, the history of analytic philosophy has given rise to deeply conflicting narratives, ones that cannot aggregate or be made to agree. Indeed, these competing narratives prove unrecognizable as histories of the same topic to contending authors.

As noted earlier, the complexities and complication manifest in the relationship of the philosophy of history and the philosophy of science can be readily extended to other areas of philosophy as well. Histories of reason exemplify why philosophy of history ought to be regarded as both important to and unavoidable for any ongoing effort to understand the role and scope of philosophical inquiry. The issue cannot be whether or not to consider attending to the nature of historical explanation, but rather why philosophers have for so long avoided doing so.

Notes

- 1 A terminology specific to debates about historical explanation invokes a distinction between nomothetic and idiographic modes of explanation. The former explains by regimenting statements of fact into explanatory patterns so as to reveal how such patterns instantiate laws or law-like connections. The latter mode explains by elaborating those contexts in which things happen; on this account, the specifics of a situation provide what is needed by way of explanation. A distinction between explanation and understanding evolves in tandem with these differing notions of explanation, the suggestion being that nomothetic explanations provide causes, and idiographic accounts engender understanding. That is, causal explanatory accounts imply underlying scientific laws or at least their simulacra, and so do not depend on time and context. Understanding ties to context typically by seeking to comprehend what counts in a particular situation as good or sufficient reasons for action. No claim is made that the goodness of the reasons generalizes; such matters will be specific to time and place. For good summary overviews of this aspect of the debate, see Habermas 1988. For an updated extension of this traditional debate, see Stueber 2006. For an account of how "critical" or "analytic" philosophy of history evolves, see Mink 1987a.
- 2 The absence of discussion of Hayden White's work in this chapter in no way implies a lack of appreciation of it regarding the development and discussion of philosophical issues attached to historical narratives. See especially his importantly innovative and enduringly influential 1973 or any of the volumes of his collected essays. But as I have elsewhere elaborated, White does not directly engage the issues of narrative *qua* explanation; see Roth 1992. For helpful overviews of the impact of White's works, see Vann 1995 and Vann 1998.
- 3 For example, Salmon 1990 provides only the briefest mention of the controversy occasioned by Hempel 1942. He does cite in his bibliography an early and still interesting article by Danto defending narrative for purposes of historical explanation. See Danto 1956. But narrative as a possible counter-example to Hempel receives no consideration.
- 4 In a recent survey article, Kosso 2011 begins by observing, "The philosophical issues in the analysis of knowledge are almost entirely epistemological" (9) and concludes by stating flatly, "Narrative explanation suits the situation of historiography, but not science" (24). Velleman 2003 offers a quite negative assessment for the prospects of epistemically disciplining narrative. Survey articles by historians manifest the dissociation of discussions of narrative and epistemic concerns inasmuch as epistemic issues simply receive no mention. See, e.g., Rigney 2013.
- 5 The context suggests that it is Danto's own coinage. *Inter alia*, his use of this term occurs as part of his explicit defense of narrative as a form of explanation. Close anticipations of Danto's term can be found

- in Popper and Gallie, and one might well read Collingwood as suggesting this as well (Gallie 1964, 113–24, but esp. 124; Popper, 1957, 143–44. Hayden White brought these to my attention.
- 6 Danto borrows G. E. M. Anscombe's celebrated phrase "under a description" to characterize what makes random facts into an event of a certain sort, e.g. one described as "the beginning of the Thirty Years War." I term a connection formed by a narrative sentence "conceptual" in order to highlight the point that while "the facts" (however one wishes to understand what those are) may not be of human making, events comprised by them are.
- 7 Hacking in effect rediscovers this point and exploits it in his own work. Regarding the philosophical significance that Hacking attaches to the notion of events as existing under a description, see Hacking 1995, esp. ch. 17. For a discussion of Hacking on this point, see Roth 2002 and Roth 2013, n. 1.

References

- Creath, R. (2010) "The Construction of Reason: Kant, Carnap, Kuhn, and Beyond," in M. Domski and M. Dickson (Eds.) *Discourse on a New Method: Reinventing the Marriage of History and Philosophy of Science*, Chicago: Open Court.
- Danto, A. C. (1956) "On Explanations in History," *Philosophy of Science* 23: 15–30
- (1962) "Narrative Sentences," *History and Theory* 2: 146–79.
- (1965) *Analytical Philosophy of History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1995) "The Decline and Fall of Analytical Philosophy of History," in F. Ankersmit and H. Kellner (Eds.) *A New Philosophy of History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Domski, M. and M. Dickson (2010) "Introduction," in M. Domski and M. Dickson (Eds.) *Discourse on a New Method: Reinventing the Marriage of History and Philosophy of Science*, Chicago: Open Court.
- Fay, B., E. O. Golob, and R. T. Vann (1987) "Introduction," in B. Fay, E. O. Golob, and R. T. Vann (Eds.) *Historical Understanding*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Friedman, M. (1993) "Remarks on the History of Science and the History of Philosophy," in P. Horwich (Ed.) *World Changes: Thomas Kuhn and the Nature of Science*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- (2000) *A Parting of the Ways*, Chicago: Open Court.
- (2010) "Synthetic History Reconsidered," in M. Domski and M. Dickson (Eds.) *Discourse on a New Method: Reinventing the Marriage of History and Philosophy of Science*, Chicago: Open Court.
- Gallie, W. B. (1964) *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*, London: Chatto & Windus.
- Gordon, P. (2010) *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Habermas, J. (1988) *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hacking, I. (1995) *Rewriting the Soul*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hempel, C. G. (1942) "The Function of General Laws in History," *Journal of Philosophy* 39: 35–48.
- Kosso, P. (2011) "Philosophy as Historiography," in A. Tucker (Ed.) *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kuukkanen, J.-M. (2015) *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Little, D. (2010) *New Contributions to the Philosophy of History*, New York: Springer.
- Mink, L. O. (1987a) "The Divergence of History and Sociology in Recent Philosophy of History," in B. Fay, E. O. Golob, and R. T. Vann (Eds.) *Historical Understanding*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- (1987b) "The Autonomy of Historical Understanding," in B. Fay, E. O. Golob, and R. T. Vann (Eds.) *Historical Understanding*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- (1987c) "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument," in B. Fay, E. O. Golob, and R. T. Vann (Eds.) *Historical Understanding*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- (1987d) "Philosophical Analysis and Historical Understanding," in B. Fay, E. O. Golob, and R. T. Vann (Eds.) *Historical Understanding*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Popper, K. (1957) *The Poverty of Historicism*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Richardson, A. (2002) "Narrating the History of Reason Itself: Friedman, Kuhn, and a Constitutive A Priori for the Twenty-First Century," *Perspectives on Science* 10: 253–74.
- (2003) "Conceiving, Experiencing, and Conceiving Experiencing: Neo-Kantianism and the History of the Concept of Experience," *Topoi* 22: 55–67.

- Ricketts, T. (2004) "Frege, Carnap, and Quine: Continuities and Discontinuities," in S. Awodey and C. Klein (ed) *Carnap Brought Home*, La Salle, IL: Open Court.
- Rigney, A. (2013) "History as Text: Narrative Theory and History," in N. Partner and S. Foot (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Historical Theory*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Roth, P. A. (1992) "Hayden White and the Aesthetics of Historiography," *History of the Human Sciences* 5: 17–35.
- (2002) "Ways of Pastmaking," *History of the Human Sciences* 15: 125–43.
- (2008) "Philosophy of Science after Quine," in S. Psillos and M. Curd (Eds.) *The Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Science*, New York: Routledge.
- (ed.) (2011) "What Does History Matter to ..." *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 5(3) [whole issue].
- (2012) "The Pasts," *History and Theory* 51(October): 313–39.
- (2013) "The Silence of the Norms: The Missing Historiography of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 44: 545–52.
- Salmon, W. C. (1990) *Four Decades of Scientific Explanation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Stueber, K. R. (2006) *Rediscovering Empathy*, Cambridge, MA: Bradford.
- Vann, R. T. (1995) "Turning Linguistic: History and Theory and *History and Theory*, 1960–1975," in F. R. Ankersmit and H. Kellner (Eds.) *A New Philosophy of History*, London: Reaktion.
- (1998) "The Reception of Hayden White," *History and Theory* 37: 143–61.
- Velleman, D. (2003) "Narrative Explanation," *Philosophical Review* 112: 1–25.
- White, H. (1973) *Metahistory*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Zammito, J. H. (2004) *A Nice Derangement of Epistemes: Post-Positivism in the Study of Science from Quine to Latour*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

THE ROUTLEDGE
COMPANION TO
PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL
SCIENCE

Edited by
Lee McIntyre and Alex Rosenberg

2017

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK