ACTIONS AND THEIR RESULTS

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I. In his interesting and important *Norm and Action* [1] Professor G. H. von Wright uses as his notation for the (generic) act of changing a world where p is true to one where ~p is true,

'd(pT~p)' .[2]

A generic act can of course have many individual instances. Thus, someone's act of closing the window (a certain window, this window) might take place every evening at 6 p. m. for a number of years, in which case we might have the generic act

d (The window is open T The window is closed).

instantiated by, among others, the act-individual

d (The window is open T The window is closed), at 6 p.m. on November 1st, 1964.

Just as events take place on occasions, so acts are performed on occasions.

> When we say that an individual event happens on a certain occasion we may regard this occasion for the happening of the event as constituted by two successive occasions for the obtaining of certain states of affairs ... Similarly, when we say that an individual act is done on a certain occasion we may regard this occasion for the doing of the act as constituted by the two successive occasions for the corresponding individual event [3].

And just as a concrete or individual event (or *change*) of a certain occasion instantiates a generic event (or change) so a concrete or individual act of a certain occasion instantiates a generic act.

Now, two logical conditions for d(pT~p) to be done at t are that

[1] (New York, The Humanities Press, 1963).

[2] I shall normally use this as the example in terms of which to make my points though there are actually four different kinds of acts, corresponding to the four different kinds of changes, namely d(pT~p), d(pTp), d(~pT~p), and d(~pTp).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 37. I understand the notion of an occasion constituted by two successive (extended) occasions to be the same notion as that of an instant (of time).

p be true immediately prior to t and that the change pT~p not take place «of itself» at t.

Von Wright is very careful to define this expression, 'of itself'. It might seem natural to suppose that if a change concerning which a certain act (by a certain agent) is envisaged takes place «of itself,» then it takes place regardless of whether the envisaged act (by the agent in question) is performed; and vice versa. But, as our author takes pains to make clear, that is *not* his notion of a change's taking place «of itself.» He gives the example of two people, A and B, shooting a third, C, simultaneously. Now, given that each shot would have been fatal by itself, we must, — he tells us — say that each of A and B killed C *individually*, and not just that A and B killed C *collectively*. So, each of A and B performs the act

d(C is alive T C is not alive)

on the same occasion. Notice, however, that even if A had not acted C would still have died on that occasion, as a consequence of B's shot; and even if B had not acted C would still have died on that occasion, as a consequence of A's shot. So, if this example is to be countenanced, together with von Wright's necessary conditions for the performance of an act, then the above conception of a change's happening «of itself» must be rejected; for if it were accepted then, as a result, neither A nor B in the example would perform the act of killing C individually, but only perhaps both collectively. Hence, von Wright concludes,

> [we] must... think of the changes the not-happening of which are conditions for the performance (performability) of an act [those which make the change or event corresponding to that act take place «of itself,»] that they are changes *in nature*, i.e., such changes as happen independently of the interference of agents ([4]).

Thus,

> [if] a person shoots at another at the very moment when the latter dies *of a stroke* the first person cannot be rightly said to have killed the second. [For the death takes place «of itself.» My underlining.] ([5]).
> ... [if] ... two persons at the same time shoot at a third, and... each shot individually would have killed him... [the] right thing

([4]) *Ibid.*, p. 45.
([5]) *Ibid.*, p. 44.

to say is ... that he was killed by each of the two murderers ... [that *both*] did it, not 'jointly', but 'individually'. ([6])

Every act, moreover, has an intrinsically or logically connected *result*, and extrinsically or causally connected *consequences*. Thus, the act

$$d(pT \sim p)$$

when performed on a certain occasion has as its result that

$$pT \sim p$$

on that occasion, and, perhaps, as one of its consequences that $qT \sim q$ on a later occasion. ([7])

In order to complete the set of basic building materials needed for a logic of action von Wright believes he needs, beside the notion of an act (and its result), the notion of a *forbearance* (and *its* result). On his view, elementary acts and forbearances «correspond to» or are the «correlatives of» each other. ([8]) And he uses as his notation for the (generic) forbearance of changing a world where p is true to one where $\sim p$ is true,

$$\text{'}f(pT \sim p)\text{'} \ ([9]).$$

A generic forbearance can of course have many individual instances. Thus, someone's forbearance of opening the window (a certain window, this window) might take place every morning at 6 a.m. throughout a whole winter, in which case we might have the generic forbearance

$$f(\sim oTo)$$

instantiated by, among others, the individual forbearance

$$f(\sim oTo), \text{ at 6 a. m., on Nov. 1st, 1964.}$$

The question now arises of how we are to speak about

$$f(pT \sim p)$$

if it is the «correlative of» or «corresponds to»

$$d(pT \sim p) \ ?$$

That is, the question now arises of what the «mirror image» is, vis-à-vis the former, of the latters's being «performed or not» ? Are

([6]) *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

([7]) As an example, substitute for 'p', 'The window is open', and for 'q', 'The temperature in the room (of the window) is 65°'.

([8]) *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

([9]) I use $f(pT \sim p)$ as an example, but there are actually four different kinds of forbearances, corresponding to the four different kinds of acts, namely $f(pT \sim p)$, $f(pTp)$, $f(\sim pT \sim p)$, and $f(\sim pTp)$.

we to say that it is the former's being «forborne or not» ? But can forbearances be forborne ? No more, surely, than acts can be acted. ([10]) My suggestion here is that we say not only of acts but also of forbearances that they are «performed or not,» allowing always for the translation of our perhaps more convenient and symmetrical talk into von Wright's longer and more natural expressions; so that to say of

$$f(pT\sim p)$$

that it is «performed», is simply to say of

$$d(pT\sim p)$$

that it is «forborne». And vice versa.

There are, according to our author, two logical conditions for $f(pT\sim p)$ to be performed by someone, S, at t: that S be able to perform $d(pT\sim p)$ at t, and that he as a matter of fact *not* perform $d(pT\sim p)$ at t. These in fact together give us the definition of «an agent's forbearing the doing of an act on an occasion».

> An agent, on a certain occasion, forbears the doing of a certain thing if, and only if, he *can do* this thing, but *does* in fact *not* do it. ([11])

Which, by our translation schema of just a few lines above, also gives us a definition of «an agent's performing a forbearance on an occasion».

And, finally, von Wright contends that just as acts have results and consequences, so do forbearances. Thus, for example, the performance of the forbearance,

$$f(\sim oTo) \text{ at } t_1$$

has as its result

$$\sim oT\sim o \text{ at } t_1.$$

Then, on p. 49, he provides us with a table based upon some of the foregoing claims.

([10]) Loosely speaking, there is perhaps a sense in which a forbearance *can* be forborne, but it does *not* capture the concept we are now after, i.e., the 'mirror image' of: to perform an act. For, the most natural thing to equate with $f(pT\sim p)$'s being forborne is $d(pT\sim p)$'s being performed !

([11]) VON WRIGHT, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

Condition of action	Act or forbearance	Result of action
$pT\sim p$ p is but vanishes, unless preserved	$d(pTp)$ p is preserved	pTp p remains
Same	$f(pTp)$ one lets p vanish	$pT\sim p$ p vanishes
pTp p is and remains, unless destroyed	$d(pT\sim p)$ p is destroyed	$pT\sim p$ p vanishes
Same	$f(pT\sim p)$ one lets p remain	pTp p remains
$\sim pT\sim p$ p is not and does not happen, unless produced	$d(\sim pTp)$ p is produced	$\sim pTp$ p happens
Same	$f(\sim pTp)$ one lets p remain absent	$\sim pT\sim p$ p remains absent
$\sim pTp$ p is not but happens, unless surpressed	p is surpressed $d(\sim pT\sim p)$	$\sim pT\sim p$ p remains absent
Same	$f(\sim pT\sim p)$ one lets p happen	$\sim pTp$ p happens

II. Later on von Wright lays emphasis on the point that, given the ability to perform an act, the performance and forbearance of that act are jointly exhaustive.

... doing and forebearing are two *jointly exhaustive* modes of action. If an agent can do a certain thing, then, on any given occasion when there is an opportunity for him to do this thing, he will either do it or forbear doing it. ([12])

... [the] ... correct answer to the ... question concerning the jointly exhaustive character of the eight elementary acts and forbearances, answering to a given state of affairs, therefore is as follows:

Only on condition that the agent *can* produce *and* suppress *and* destroy *and* preserve a given state of affairs, is it the case that he necessarily will, on any given occasion, either produce *or* forbear producing, suppress *or* forbear suppressing, destroy *or* forbear destroying, *or* preserve *or* forbear preserving this state of affairs.

In the subsequent discussion it will be assumed that this requirement as regards ability it satisfied and that consequently the eight types of elementary acts and forebearances may be treated as not only mutually exclusive but also jointly exhaustive. ([13])

Now, our author recognizes quite explicitly that his notion of forbearance is an extremely broad and *basic* one.

The notion of forbearing ... is the logically *weakest* member of a series of progressively stronger notions of forbearing. On our definition, forbearing to do something which one can do does not presuppose *awareness* of the opportunity. In a stronger sense of 'forbear', an agent forbears only such actions as he knows he can perform on the occasion in question. In a still stronger sense, an agent forbears only such action as he knows he can perform but decides (chooses, prefers) to leave undone on the occasion in question. If, in addition, he feels an inclination or temptation to do the action, which he chooses not to do, then he is in a still stronger sense forbearing it. Of this strongest sense of 'forbear' we also use such words as 'abstain' or 'forsake'. ([14])

([12]) *Ibid.*, p. 52.
([13]) *Ibid.*, p. 58.
([14]) *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

However, he is unfortunately not nearly so explicit on his notion of an act. There are passages, nevertheless, which suggest that it is not quite so broad as that of a forbearance. Thus, he writes

> When an act fails of its *intended result* [my underlining] the agent *has tried* to do something which, in fact, he failed to accomplish (to do). ([15])

If some acts be essentially intentional, however, then either forbearances have no results or the performance and forbearance of an act are not in general jointly exhaustive. In such intentional act cases there would either be no result to the forbearance, or else there would be a middle ground between performance and forbearance, namely non-intentional bringing about. Performing the act $d(oT \sim o)$ at t_1, for example, would be intentionally bringing it about that $oT \sim o$ at t_1. And forbearing $d(oT \sim o)$ at t_1 would mean having the ability to intentionally bring about $oT \sim o$ at t_1; and ... now we have a choice: Do we add 'not *intentionally* bringing it about that $oT \sim o$ at t_1' or 'not bringing it about that $oT \sim o$ at t_1' ? If we choose the first alternative then (performance and forbearance could still be jointly exhaustive given ability, but then) forbearance would not have a definite result. In particular, to perform $f(oT \sim o)$ at t_1 would not have the result that oTo at t_1. For by unintentionally bringing it about that $oT \sim o$ at t_1 one would forbear $d(oT \sim o)$ at t_1 and it would by the logic of change be false that oTo at t_1. If we chose the second alternative, on the other hand, then we leave a middle ground between performance and forbearance, that of unintentionally bringing about the change in question.

It would seem to me the better part of wisdom at this point to remove essentially intentional acts from our purview and to restrict ourselves to possibly unintentional acts. And, if we do, it would also surely be wise to recognize that our usage of 'act' (or 'performing an act') represents at least a restriction, perhaps even a complete shift of the ordinary philosophical notion of an act. On our usage an act is nothing more than a (quite possibly unintentional) bringing it about that something is the case. Furthermore, the same argument I have used above to show this, to show, i.e., that von Wright's acts should be taken as never necessarily intentional, can similarly be used to show that they should also be taken as never necessarily voluntary and as never necessarily requiring that the agent be aware of what

([15]) *Ibid.*, p. 42.

he is doing. Habitual action, accidental action, reflex action, and even turning over in one's sleep and knocking over a glass on the night-stand would all therefore qualify as acts. It is on this notion of an act that von Wright's acts and forbearances are «correlative to» each other. And it seems to me that it is only in these very weak senses of 'forbearance' and 'act' that von Wright gives us a «logic of action (a logic of acts and forbearances)». But let me hasten to add that I do not mean this observation as in any way pejorative but rather only as clarificatory. ([16])

III. Let us now try to make a bit more precise the notions of act, forbearance, and result. Von Wright conceives of $pT\sim p$, for the purpose of his study, as a change from one state of affairs to another state of affairs. And he calls such changes «events». Since, further, according to him at any moment either p holds or $\sim p$ holds, the change from p to $\sim p$ must take place instantaneously. ([17]) Thus, when we read that the result of an act $d(pT\sim p)$ is $pT\sim p$ surely this means that if act $d(pT\sim p)$ were performed (or instantiated) at t then necessarily event $pT\sim p$ would happen (or be instantiated) at t. And then surely when we say that the result of performing forbearance $f(pT\sim p)$ is pTp this means that if forbearance $f(pT\sim p)$ were performed (or instantiated) at t then necessarily event pTp would happen (or be instantiated) at t.

If the reflections in the preceding paragraph be acceptable, however together with von Wright's logical conditions for the performance of an act and his definition of forbearance, then pTp at t is never the result of a performance of $f(pT\sim p)$ at t, and the above table collapses. Consider again our «window opening» example. The performance by someone of

$$f(\sim oTo), \text{ at } t$$

supposedly has as its result that:

$$(\sim oT\sim o) \text{ at } t.$$

Given only our author's logical conditions for the performance of an act, ([18]) however an agent can do something on a certain occa-

([16]) The above discussion dictates a completely non-intentional sense to my 'performs' both as applied to acts and as applied to performances. Indeed it dictates a sense of 'performs' on which 'S performs A' can always be translated into the extensional context 'S brings it about that p'. Cf. pp. 13-14, above.

([17]) And, as we saw above, his remarks on the «occasions» of events and acts indicate that he is well aware of this. See the quotation on p. 2, *supra*.

([18]) VON WRIGHT, *op.cit.*, pp. 44-45, and p. 6 above.

sion even through someone else does also do that thing on that occasion. In our example:

It is possible that someone, S, performs

$$d(\sim oTo)$$

at t, even though someone else, S′, also performs

$$d(\sim oTo)$$

at t. Suppose then that S *can* perform

$$d(\sim oTo)$$

at t_5, even though

S′ as matter of fact does perform $d(\sim oTo)$ at t_5. (*)

Suppose, moreover, that S does *not* perform

$$d(\sim oTo)$$

at t_5. It follows, by the definition of 'an agent's performing a forbearance on an occasion', that S performs

$$f(\sim oTo)$$

at t_5. And yet, because of (*), it is the case that

$$\sim oTo$$

at t_5, which by the logic of change yields that at t_5

$$\sim(\sim oT \sim o).$$

As it happens, von Wright foresees this objection and offers a reply

> There is a prima facie objection to... [my] ... way of arguing, which has to be answered. The result of my forbearing to open a certain window, say, is that I do not open it. But what if someone else opens it ? Cannot, in spite of my forbearance, the change from 'window closed' to 'window open' take place as the result of some *other* agent's interference with the state of the world ? The answer seems to me to be this:
> At the very moment when another agent opens a window, which I have up to this moment forborne to open, the *opportunity* for (continued) forbearing gets lost. What I may forbear to do, when the window is being opened by another person, is to keep the window closed or to prevent the other person from opening it. But I *can* no longer forbear to open the window. Thus, my forbearance to do this will necessarily be 'reflected' in the fact that the window remains closed. ([19])

Here von Wright makes use of the fact that S's performing $f(pT \sim p)$

([19]) *Ibid.*, p. 47.

at t presupposes that p is true immediately prior to t. ([20]) And he appeals to the fact that once someone performs d(pT∼p) at t no one can any longer — so long as things remain as they are as a result of that act — forbear d(pT∼p) or perform f(pT∼p). Now we can certainly agree with him that after someone does d(pT∼p) at t this is so; that is, *after* t. But what happens after t is not at issue in our objection, which makes the above reply an *ignoratio elenchi*. What matters there is whether S can still perform or forbear d(pT∼p) *at* t.

Clearly, moreover, the act in question can be performed by someone (in the abstract) at t for, by hypothesis, it *is* performed by someone, other than S, at t. But if someone else can perform d(pT∼p) at t, why not S ? Given von Wright's claim that two agents can on the same occasion perform acts resulting in the same change, there is surely no *a priori* way to settle the issue whether S can or cannot perform d(pT∼p) on a certain occasion, even though that occasion be one on which someone else does perform d(pT∼p). It follows that someone's forebearing d(pT∼p) or performing f(pT∼p) on a certain occasion does not entail that pTp on that occasion.

It so happens that von Wright can again easily adjust this position to meet my objections, and again I have a proposal to make in that regard. My proposal here concerns the set of (logically) necessary conditions for the performance of an act by an agent S. That set as it stands in *Norm and Action* has at least two members. That is to say, there the performance of (for example)

d(pT∼p)

by some agent, S, at t, requires

1. that p be true or hold immediately prior to t; and
2. that pT∼p not take place at t «of itself»;

where 'of itself' means 'without the interference of human agents'. As we have seen, this set of conditions permits multiple individual action with the same result (on the same occasion), as exemplified by A and B's simultaneous killing of C. And as we have also seen, it is this precisely that precludes the entailment of the statement that

pTp at t

by the statement that

someone performs f(pT∼p), at t.

My proposal is now simply that we consider all cases where more

([20]) See *Ibid.*, p. 43.

than one agent's efforts are efficacious (if only partially) in bringing about a change, as cases of *collective* action, so that multiple individual action with identical result (on the same occasion) be impossible. Hence I would add to the above conditions

3. that no other agent's efforts be efficacious (even if only partially) in bringing it about that pT∼p at t.

Even this expanded set of conditions won't quite do, however, in view of the following counterexample. Suppose a certain door, with a strong spring, would close of itself at t were it not for the efforts of S′. Cannot S nevertheless perform the act of closing that door at t, if, say, he is stronger than S′ ? That he can is evident; and yet our set of conditions makes it impossible.

The simplest way to take account of this counterexample is, it might seem, to relativize 'of itself' to a particular agent so that it reads «of itself vis-à-vis S», say. A change takes place «of itself vis-à-vis S» if and only if it takes place regardless of whether S exerts any efforts bearing on it. However, the resulting set of necessary conditions for the performance of an act would still fall foul of certain counterexamples. Consider the following.

S opens a door on a certain occasion, with no one else placing a hand on it, and if no one at all had placed a hand on it the door would not have opened on that occasion. Yet the opening of the door *does* take place «of itself vis-à-vis S», since if S had not opened it on that occasion someone else would have done so. Even so surely we must agree that S *does* perform the act of opening that door on that occasion.

Therefore, complicated as it is, the simplest way to actually circumvent these counterexamples, as I see it, is the following.

S performs d(pT∼p) at t only if:

1. p is true immediately prior to t;
2. S's efforts bearing on pT∼p at t, as things stand, are sufficient for the occurrence of pT∼p at t, and are *ceteris paribus* necessary for it; that is, if nothing were changed in the situation beyond the exchange of S's exertion of efforts bearing on pT∼p at t for his non-exertion of such efforts, then pT∼p would not occur at t.
3. No one else's efforts are even partially efficacious in bringing it about that pT∼p at t, except remotely. (Of course if his parents had never been married, say, then S would never have been born, etc.; but S's mother and father's marrying one another would have causal efficacy on the occurrence of pT∼p at t only remotely.)

It may be thought that conditions 1 and 2 are really enough

and so that 3 is superfluous. That, however, would be a mistake for anyone who, with von Wright, wants to allow for collective action, distinguishing it from multiple individual action ([21]); since if we were to stop with the second condition, collective action could never take place. But let me now try (briefly) to ground this.

Consider the example which von Wright gives us as a paradigm case of collective action, that of a table too heavy to be lifted by any one of a group of men but which is lifted at t_1 «by joint efforts.» Let us add, for the sake of simplicity, that the table could not be lifted by any subgroup of that group. Now suppose the group to be made up by agents S_1, S_2, ..., S_n. Notice then that if we apply only our first two logical conditions for the performance of an act it turns out that each of the S_i performs the act of lifting the table at t_1 by himself or «individually». For of course, by hypothesis, immediately before t_1 the table is not lifted; and, furthermore, *ceteris paribus* without S_i's efforts it would not be lifted at t_1 either. And, finally, the exertion of his efforts at t_1 does result in the table's being lifted. In order to distinguish between individual and collective action I therefore suggest that we do retain the proposed third (logical) necessary condition for the performance of an act on an occasion.

One gets the impression, however, that Professor von Wright would not be entirely happy with that third condition [22]. I would therefore like to say a few words in its defense.

([21]) I am assuming that multiple individual and collective action exclude one another, so long as we consider the same act, whatever it may be: killing a man, lifting a table, etc.

([22]) See VON WRIGHT, *op.cit.*, pp. 44-45, where we read:

> The question may be raised what we shall say of the case when some *other agent* beside the agent in question effects the change, which must not happen 'of itself', if we are to say truly that the agent in question has *done* it. Shall we say, then, that neither agent does the act? Or shall we say that both do it? If a person shoots at another at the very moment when the latter does die of a stroke the first person cannot be rightly said to have killed the second. The second died, but was not killed. The first did not commit murder, although he may have attempted to do so. Suppose, however, that two persons at the same time shoot at a third, and that each shot individually would have killed him. Obviously, we must say that the third man was killed, i.e., that this death was a result of action. But by whom was he killed? If the assumption is that each shot individually would have killed him it is not correct

In fact there are a number of different possibilities with respect to the necessity of the individual efforts of several agents whose «combined» efforts (bearing on pT∼p, on the occasion on question) bring it about that pT∼p on a certain occasion ([23]). Since we have supposed that their «combined» efforts do bring it about that pT∼p on that occasion, it follows that the efforts of *each, given those of the others,* are sufficient for pT∼p on that occasion. But there still remain several possibilities concerning the necessity or non-necessity of the efforts of each, given those of the others. Let us take the case of two agents as an example. We have the following table (where 'N' stands for 'Are necessary').

A's efforts	B's efforts	
N	N	A and B collectively perform d(pT∼p) on that occasion.
N	∼N	?
∼N	N	?
∼N	∼N	? (This is the general case an instance of which is envisaged by Von Wright.)

to say that the two murderes killed him 'jointly' or 'by joint efforts', and that therefore the agent, technically speaking, was a collective agent. The right thing to say is, in my opinion, that he was killed by each one of the two murderers, i.e., that his death was the result of an act of the one murderer *and* of an act of the other murderer. *Both* did it, not 'jointly', but 'individually'.

([23]) By the use of «combined» here I do not mean to prejudge the question I raise a little further along. Here the term means nothing more than «pooled».

The fact is (concerning these four cases) that such distinctions are never of moment in ordinary life, as is reflected in the fact that ordinary language provides no easy way to make them. Thus, when the flag went up at Iwo Jima, people did not stop to ask whether some of the men in the patrol (say those in the positions of greatest leverage) could have raised it by themselves (with the efforts they exerted) during the same time, the other men's efforts having been completely superfluous; though this may well have been so. No, the whole group was credited with the raising of the flag.

Similarly, if in the Chicago of the twenties, big Moose Gangster and little Tiny Mobster had together thrown someone in the river with a one-hundred-pound weight, and had later been caught, no one, in distributing responsibility, would have thought to ask whether Moose's efforts might have been sufficient by themselves; not even Tiny's lawyer ([24]).

My reason for using this law-court example is the possible counter to the first example that, after all, the intentions of each of the soldiers were quite as worthy as those of the others and that they had all of them gone through hell, and so on; meant to explain the fact that people spread their praise evenly over them though «only some *really* did that for which they were all praised». The court-room example offers us a clear-cut case where the societal consequences for the agent(s) follow (ideally) not just from his (their) intentions. Mr. Mobster, I submit, would have gotten off not a whit lighter than Mr. Gangster, even if his efforts had been known to have been superfluous.

In the case just considered the efforts of one of (a totality of) two agents involved are necessary *and* sufficient, even given those of the other, whereas the efforts of the other, while sufficient given those of the first, are *not* necessary given those of the first. And we have found that ordinary language seems to support saying in such cases that the two agents still act together or collectively. Now if we do adopt this way of talking, isn't it a natural step to saying, in cases where the efforts of each are sufficient though not necessary, given those of the other, that there too they act collectively ? ([25]) Especially

([24]) The case I envisage here is not one where Tiny's efforts are totally irrelevant or unconnected with the man's being thrown in the river. Rather, it is one where Moose need not exert so much of an effort in order to dump the man in the river, since Tiny's efforts do have some «positive bearing» on the man's being thrown in the river.

([25]) I assume that «Moose did it by himself, or individually» is not compatible with «Moose and Tiny did it together, collectively». And I am claiming

since there seems to be, in those cases also, little or no practical value to the distinction between the two agents acting individually and their acting collectively. The judge confronted with the case of the two killers who shot a third man simultaneously would surely be little influenced in his verdict by whether he considered their action as multiple individual or as collective. This shows that ordinary situations at least do not preclude such a notion of collective action. If therefore the preservation of the results of forbearances and of the mutual exclusiveness and exhaustiveness of collective and individual action requires it that may be good reason for adopting it ([26]).

To sum up. In this paper I have tried to do three main things. First, to present the essentials of von Wright's logical theory of action. Second, to clarify the fundamental notion of an act, as it occurs in that theory. Third, to suggest that the theory as it stands in *Norm and Action* runs afoul of a number of difficulties involving especially the concept of a forbearance; and to propose an amended set of necessary conditions for the performance of an act which help it to evade those difficulties.

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that in the example given above, to say the latter and not the former is the more natural course. Clearly, one could take another course by claiming that while individual action and collective action are mutually exclusive they are not exhaustive. In the table above, only the first case, where both the efforts of A and of B are necessary, would count as collective action; the rest would count only as non-collective joint action. Joint action would then come in two varieties: collective and non-collective. And then essentially the same points I have made in the text with respect to collective vs. individual action can be made with respect to *joint* vs. individual action.

([26]) It should be noted before leaving this topic that my proposed necessary conditions for the performance of an act also entail a change in the notion of an opportunity. (Cf. von Wright, *op.cit.*, p. 37).