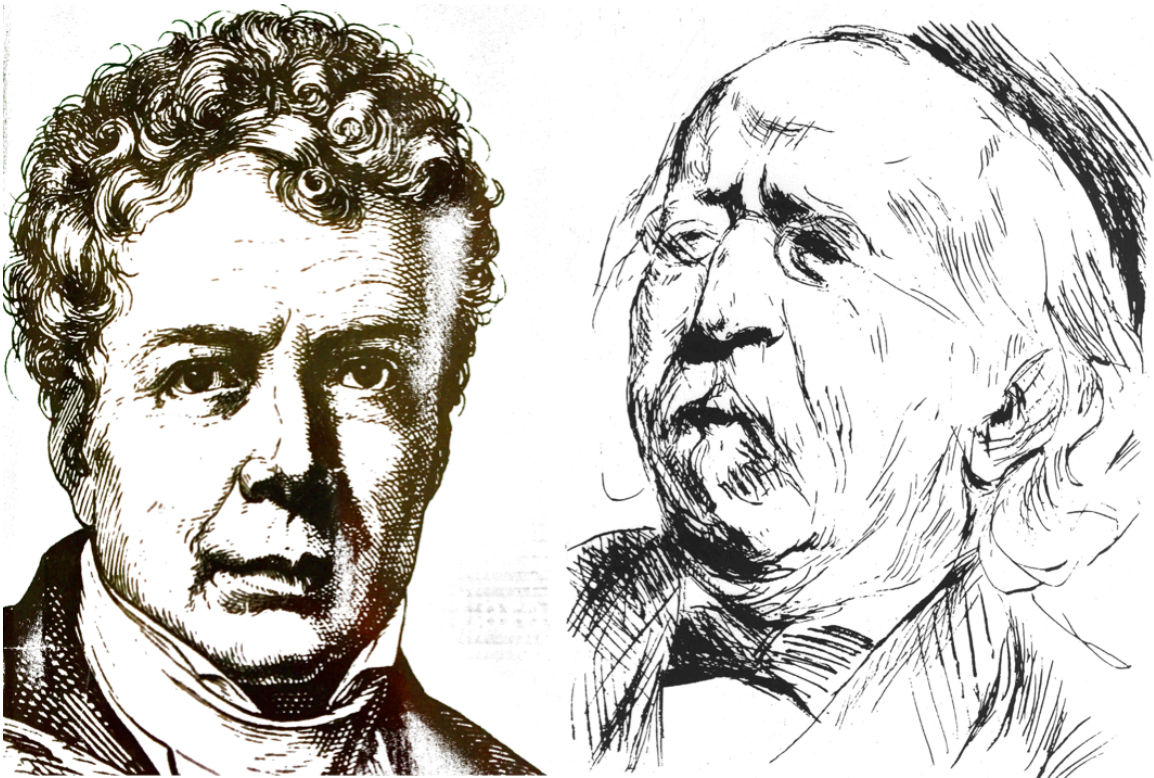


# Beyond the Formal Will

A research into concepts of the will in Kant, Schelling, and Cohen



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## Introduction

In this thesis I will make a critical assessment of the Kantian formal conception of the will in light of Schelling and Cohen. My research question is twofold: how to assess the Kantian concept of will, given its notorious 'formality'? And under which conditions could Schelling's and Cohen's conception of the will meet the (assumed) flaws of the Kantian notion of the will?

How could we evaluate Kant's concept of the will in terms of its 'formality'? What is the strength of Kant's concept of the will and what is its weakness? Kant has provided us with a theory of how every rational human being can be ethical. We universally derive our ethical obligation, Kant claims, from the pure form of reason. This form of reason, motivating our will to act well, keeps our will formal. How can we assess this formality? On the one hand, the form of reason ensures that the individual can autonomously will and correspond to the ethical laws of a rational subject. This is the strength of Kant's formal ethics. On the other hand, the form of reason makes our will lifeless, because Kant eliminates everything material. According to Kant, the will ought not be motivated by emotional inclinations nor serve a material purpose. Kant is not concerned with the matter of the action or what is to result from it, but solely with the form and the principle from which it does itself follow (Kant, 1984, 61).

Kant's morality is based on the presupposition that there ought to be a purely formal disposition to do good. Is there also a practical and vital disposition to do good? In other words, what would make the will dynamic? Could Schelling and Cohen perhaps solve the issue raised here? The problem of the lifelessness of the will lies in its theoretical nature. The faculty of thinking and willing are united in Kant's practical philosophy. In both Schelling and Cohen a new road is opened for a will that is not limited by reason. They both permit the power of the spirit a role as motivator of the will, rather than reason. They also allow a dynamic power that has a disposition towards this spirit of the will. Both philosophers have a concept that replaces Kant's formal concept of disposition, namely the concepts of Yearning and tendency. These concepts are not a motive of thinking but purely a motive of willing. Under the condition of making the will independent of the faculty of thinking, Schelling and Cohen are able to meet the flaws of Kant's notion of the will.

In chapter one I will evaluate Kant's formal concept of the will. I will analyze Kant's concept of the autonomous will and the disposition to do good in *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785). I will compare Kant's concept of the will to his ideas in *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (1798), in which Kant offers an informal concept of disposition, namely enthusiasm or affect. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is considered to be one of the most important philosophers in the history of western philosophy. He reinvigorated the position of idealism in times that empirical philosophy invalidated the claim that knowledge had its source in ideas. In Kant's famous *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, he argued that our knowledge is grounded in synthetic a priori ideas – ideas that are independent of the natural world of appearances. The principles of his practical philosophy, which I evaluate

in the first chapter, are also grounded in rational thought. I will assess whether practical rational thought can be the ground of the good will. Practical reason grants the will its independence from the natural world of desires. The independence from the chaos of instincts remains important for the idealism of the will. It is the one condition for the will not to be a simple desire. In chapter one, I will analyze the principles of Kant's formal will and work out my critique to the limitation of the will by practical reason. Two problems caused by the limitation of the will are central to my research, namely the lack of moving power and the problematic form of practical reason itself.

In chapter two I will explain Schelling's concept of the will, as worked out in *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände* (1809), also called the *Freiheitsschrift*. In this chapter I will answer the questions, under what condition does Schelling's concept of the will overcome the flaws of Kant's formal notion of the will, and what makes Schelling's will a dynamic will? Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854) is often perceived as the midpoint of the development of German Idealism from Kant to Hegel. However, his mystic philosophy from the *Freiheitsschrift* shows that Schelling takes a path into a whole other direction than the philosophy of Hegel. Schelling's mystic thought discusses a spirit that is different from Hegel's concept of spirit. Schelling discusses a spirit of love that ensures to the dynamism of the will. Schelling's reformulation of freedom leads to the reformulation of the will. Instead of practical reason, the spirit becomes the new form of the will.

In chapter three, I will analyze Cohen's concept of the pure will in *Ethik des reinen Willens* (1904). Hermann Cohen (1842-1918) is considered to be the father of Neo-Kantianism. Cohen returns to the philosophy of Kant, but renews it. Kant's knowledge was grounded in the synthetic a priori ideas of the empirical world. Cohen's knowledge is not grounded in absolute ideas, but in hypothetical ideas that are formed without the data of the empirical world. Cohen claims in his practical philosophy that the will is pure, because of a pure affect that moves the will and an ideal that motivates it. I will inquire how Cohen materializes the will through the notion of affect, and will inquire whether the concept of the ideal overcomes the formalism of Kant's practical reason. Again, I begin this chapter with the question: under what condition could Cohen meet the flaws of Kant's concept of the formal will. I will clarify how Cohen's ethical interpretation of truth changes our perspective on the will. Under this condition, Cohen is able to introduce a pure will that begins to move through an affect and keeps moving towards an ethical act.

In chapter four, the final chapter, I will reassess the visions of Schelling and Cohen in relation to Kant's formal will. Consequently, I will conclude on the ultimate being of a dynamic will. Schelling makes a division of two wills: a *Wille der Grund* and a *Wille der Liebe*. Cohen makes a subdivision of the will: a pure will is grounded in the motoric power of an affect and the motivation of self-consciousness. Why can't they conceive of one will with one ground that overcomes the formality of Kant? I will analyze the diverging ideas on the composition of a dynamic will and draw conclusions on the ultimate being of a

dynamic will. Consequently I come to the conclusion that it is the spirit (of love) that makes the will ultimately dynamic. In terms of this spirit we can overcome Kant's formalism and conceive of a philosophy that deals with a creative, revelatory and redemptive character in human beings.

## The Formality of the Will

### I. Evaluating Kant's formal concept of the will

How can we evaluate the formality of Kant's concept of the will? In the introduction I suggested that there is both a negative and a positive side to Kant's formal will. Kant believes that there is only a positive side to the formal will. What is this positive interpretation of the formal will? Kant conceives of the will as a will that is limited by the faculty of reason and its representations of moral law. The will is independent because of practical reason and the exclusion of lustful desires and other inclinations. The limitation of the will entails that the will cannot be motivated by any material inclination or goal, but by the principles of universal law alone. Kant values the independence of the will or our autonomy highest. Be that as it may, my natural reaction to limitation is negative. Kant also says that we cannot conceive of anything good as limited. Nevertheless, he makes an exception for the will (Kant, 1984, 28). Kant thinks it is good (or appropriate) that the will is limited. I think differently about the limitation of the will. I claim that it makes the will lifeless. A limited will may be good from Kant's perspective, as it is independent of any external inclination. Yet, as I will show, a limited will turns out to be impractical, as it has no moving power and it is unsustainable in regard to changing social conditions.

In this chapter, I will elaborate on Kant's formal concept of the will in the *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. I will explain what, according to Kant, grounds the good will, or in other terms, what Kant believes to be the source of goodness. I will claim that Kant implicitly accepts that the formal will is lifeless in *Der Streit der Fakultäten*. He implicitly accepts this claim when he introduces the concept of *Affekt*. This concept solves the problem of the limitation of the will, but not sufficiently. Kant is unable to reformulate the form of the will and unable to incorporate the affect within a pure concept of the will. Chapters 2 and 3 address these issues.

There have been many people before me that have taken issue with the formality of Kant's concept of the will. The Phenomenologist and Neo-Kantian philosopher Max Scheler has critiqued in *Formalismus in der Ethik und die materielle Wertethik* (1913) Kant's formal will for its exclusion of matter: emotional inclinations and material purposes. Kant is not concerned with the matter of the action or what is to result from the will, but solely with the form and the principle from which it does itself follow (Kant, 1984, 61) Scheler claims that a will needs emotional feeling of value (*Wertgefühl*). The concept of the will needs to include the concept of *pathos*. I will argue in this chapter that Kant's formal will lacks an emotional affect to move the will into actual action.

One way of challenging the formality of the will is to critique the lack of pathos; another way is to disagree with the form or principle of the will. There

have been many philosophers, like Hegel<sup>1</sup> and Nietzsche<sup>2</sup>, all the way to Horkheimer and Macintyre that have criticized Kant's universalizing principles of the will. Kant's will is guided by a categorical imperative, which is a principle that man develops by means of practical reason. If this principle is right, it is always right, and if it is wrong, it is always wrong. Horkheimer and Macintyre critique this form of reason of the enlightenment, because it cannot account for the social changes that take place throughout history.<sup>3</sup> Categorical imperatives are inflexible to social changes and differences. I will argue in this chapter that the inflexibility of categorical imperatives puts a check on the dynamism of the will.

The static character of Kant's will is, on the one hand, a result of the confinement of the will to the sphere of the morality of practical reason, and, on the other, a result of the period in which Kant lived: the Enlightenment. Kant was a typical representative of the Enlightenment. He believed in the power of reason and in the effectiveness of reforming institutions (Macintyre, 1968, 190). Kant believed that man could be a moral individual, independent of the existing social order. He sympathized with the French revolution, "hated servility and valued independence of mind. Paternalism, so he held, was the grossest form of despotism." (Macintyre, 1968, 198) A core belief of the Enlightenment is that man has a free will, and therefore has the autonomy to be a moral agent. For Kant, man's goodness does not lie in God, but in one's individual will. Goodness is not to be found in any hypothetical end, like happiness, one's altruistic nature or self-interest, but in one's will and the duty of the categorical imperative alone.

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<sup>1</sup> Hegel is one of the first to critique Kant's moral philosophy for its 'empty formalism'. Hegel calls Kant's categorical imperative (the good will) formal and empty because it is adopted for the sake of its universal form and not for the sake of the content that the law addresses (Hegel, 2009, 117-118). The formula of universal law (the law has to take into account the question 'what if everybody did it?') neglects the desires and interests that the maxim advances. Hegel says, "So wesentlich es ist, die reine unbedingte Selbstbestimmung des Willens als die Wurzel der Pflicht herauszuheben, wie den die Erkenntniß des Willens erst durch die Kantische Philosophie ihren festen Grund und Ausgangspunkt durch den

<sup>2</sup> "Manch Anderer, vielleicht gerade auch Kant, giebt mit seiner Moral zu verstehn: 'was an mir achtbar ist, das ist, dass ich gehorchen kann, - und bei euch soll es nicht anders stehn, als bei mir!" (Nietzsche, 1980, 107) Nietzsche critiques Kant's morality for the universalizing principles, because man obeys a law that is external to him, as the law neglects historicity and the needs of the body.

<sup>3</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno critique enlightenment philosophy for the creation of a culture industry in which "every branch of culture is unanimous within itself and all are unanimous together." (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, 94) Macintyre, on the other hand, critiques Renaissance and Enlightenment (moral) philosophy for neglecting the history of the subject. He argues that moral concepts cannot be understood as "timeless, limited, unchanging, determinate species of concept, necessarily having the same features throughout their history." (Macintyre, 1968, 1)

## II. *Die Grundlegung*: the ground of the good will

Kant's concept of the will in the *Grundlegung* is a moral concept. It is a concept that presupposes the existence of moral laws. Kant says that the will makes man a moral being, but only because the will makes moral laws. In the *Grundlegung*, Kant does not answer the question 'what makes man a moral being?', but he answers the question 'why has man respect for the law?', in which the question of 'why man is moral' is implied. Kant assumes that every thing in nature works according to laws (Kant, 1984, 56). A moral being consequently also works in conformity with laws. Therefore, Kant presupposes that morality is part of a system of laws. Kant does not justify this claim in the *Grundlegung*. For that reason I want to evaluate whether morality belongs to the formal world of laws. In other words, the lack of a justification demands an evaluation of the formality of the will.

In the *Grundlegung*, Kant tries to find the ground of our respect for moral law. He explains that man respects the law, because he is rational. Practical reason is not a means of the will that makes the will good. Practical reason is the same as the good will. Thus, practical reason does not make the will a good will, because there is only one type of will for Kant, namely a good will. The ground of the good will is man's autonomy or disposition to goodness. On that account, Kant concludes that man's autonomy or disposition to goodness is the source of our moral behavior or the respect for moral law. Let's say that man's morality has three levels. The top floor is man's respect for law. Under it is the first floor of practical reason by means of which we legislate. The first floor is not just the floor of practical reason, but also of the good will. As is said, Kant equals practical reason to the good will. The capacity to practically think is the same as the capacity to will. Practical reason or the good will constitutes the first floor. The first and second floors have their foundation in the ground floor of autonomy and disposition. The good will is grounded in autonomy. Practical reason is grounded in the disposition to goodness. I will later demonstrate why autonomy and disposition are the same thing and constitute the foundation of Kant's building of morality.

The formality of Kant's concept of the will is based on the laws of morality. Kant's moral idealism is Platonic, as the will represents an idea, form, or law. In the *Grundlegung*, Kant asks why man has respect for the law. The first section of the book gives an empirical explanation. Man respects moral law because he is rational. Kant's moral idealism is grounded in the Aristotelian idea that man is a rational animal, taken by Kant to be empirically true. A rational being "hat das Vermögen, nach der Vorstellung der Gesetze, d.i. nach Prinzipien, zu handeln, oder einen Willen." (Kant, 1984, 56) A rational being has the capacity to act according to principles or to the will. For Kant, the will is nothing other than practical reason (Kant, 1984, 56). "Der Wille ist ein Vermögen, nur dasjenige zu wählen, was die Vernunft unabhängig von der Neigung als praktisch notwendig, d.i. als gut, erkennt" (Kant, 1984, 56) The will is a rational choice for that what is practically necessary, that is, what is cognized to be good. Our practical reason that represents the universal moral law is Kant's concept of the will. The moral



law, which is represented by practical reason, is the reason why Kant's will is a formal will.

What kind of reason makes us moral beings? Kant says that practical reason makes us moral beings. Kant discerns practical reason from theoretical reason. The first is directed towards the good (principle of ethics), while the latter is directed towards the right (principle of logic). The ground of practical reason is the goodness of the will. Kant, therefore, argues in the second section of the *Grundlegung* that people with practical reason have a good will. Man respects the law because he has a will that is directed towards the good. How does the will make us moral? The will is able to make us moral because of its independency. "Der Wille wird als ein Vermögen gedacht, der Vorstellung gewisser Gesetze gemäß, sich selbst zum Handeln zu bestimmen." (Kant, 1984, 77) The will can determine itself to action, because it is motivated by a categorical imperative that tells us what we ought to do, irrespective of any (im)personal inclination. The categorical imperative of practical reason makes the will an end in itself, and not a means to an end. This means that by willing goodness, that is, by the practical idea of goodness alone, we are respecting the moral law.

What does Kant mean with willing goodness? First of all, the will and goodness are inseparable in Kant's philosophy. Goodness is the being of the will. "Der Wille ist schlechterdings gut, der nicht böse sein, mithin dessen Maxime, wenn sie zu einem allgemeinem Gesetze gemacht wird, sich selbst niemals widerstreiten kann" (Kant, 90) The will is always a good will when it is pure, when practical reason is absolute and not contaminated by other interests (Kant, 1984, 124-25). An impure will does not exist in Kant's dictionary. The will as 'Vermögen' would become another kind of capacity when it is not motivated by practical reason, e.g. a desire or inclination. Therefore, the will is grounded in the practical idea of goodness.

What does Kant mean with goodness? "Das Wesentlich-Gute besteht in der Gesinnung." (Kant, 1984, 61) The ground of our goodness, or good will, is the disposition to goodness. The disposition to goodness is "was die Vernunft unabhängig von der Neigung als praktisch notwendig erkennt" (Kant, 1984, 56) The disposition to goodness is a state of mind. It indicates that man has a capacity to be independent from other natural inclinations. However, Kant does not specify what kind of capacity it is. He rather describes the disposition to goodness as that what makes our practical reason or our will an end in itself. The disposition to goodness is the independency of the will, as it is not concerned with the result of the will, either good or bad, but it is concerned with that what motivates the will. The disposition makes the will good by itself. The effects of the will cannot be a condition for the goodness of the will.

Kant speaks of the effects of the will, and separates them from the disposition of the will. The being of this will consists not in the effects that arise out of the will, but consists in the disposition. The disposition is the maxim of the will, and reveals itself in its action, that is, in the act of legislating (Kant, 1984, 88). Willing goodness means that man legislates his own law. This entails that man respects no other law than the law he at the same time gives himself. In

creating one's own law, man reveals his disposition to goodness. Man does not create law for another purpose than for the dignity of creating the law by himself. All 'Würde' [dignity] of making law, that is, goodness, lies in the fact that we obey our own law and not the law of someone else. The ground of goodness is not just our disposition, but also our autonomy (Kant, 1984, 89).

How do disposition and autonomy relate to one another? Autonomy means that man makes his own law. Yet, it also implies that man obeys his own law, and not the law of someone else. Kant talks more specifically about the autonomy of the will and not about the autonomy of man. The "Autonomie des Willens ist die Beschaffenheit des Willens, dadurch derselbe ihm selbst (unabhängig von aller Beschaffenheit der Gegenstände des Willens) ein Gesetz ist." (Kant, 1984, 95) This 'Beschaffenheit' or quality of the will is the disposition to goodness. Disposition means that our practical reason is independent of any other inclination. The disposition of the will and the autonomy of the will are therefore one and the same quality of the will.

When autonomy and 'Gesinnung' are one and the same thing, it means that the disposition is formal. Kant talks about the disposition as a state of mind. Yet, it is not a state of mind, which we can understand in psychological terms. The disposition is a form or principle that is derived from moral law. The state of mind that makes us moral is completely fixed and static. It cannot move, as it is unrelated to the 'Materie der Handlung' (Kant, 1984, 61) Kant disconnects the will from the act. This disconnection makes the will lifeless, I think, because there is no more feeling (both internal and external) for the will to act. Kant does not explain to us how the will moves, because it could compromise the independence of the will. For him, the will has to be completely disinterested. Disinterestedness entails two things. On the one hand, it entails that the will is universal by means of the maxims of law. On the other hand, it means that the will blocks intervening inclinations. Kant claims that disinterestedness, the formal disposition of man, is the precondition for morality.

A good will that does not result in an act and has no pathological influence of inclination is in my view a lifeless will. As an enlightenment thinker, Kant disconnects the will from nature. I would take it further and claim that Kant disconnects the will from life – spiritual life.<sup>4</sup> My assessment of Kant's concept of

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<sup>4</sup> Tom Sorell claims in his analysis of Kant's concept of the good will that man's good will is also man's good nature. Yet, I have just argued that the good will excludes everything in nature, even our altruistic and other virtuous sorts of behavior that are not grounded in duty. Our good will is always a result of the duty alone. A man is not naturally virtuous, but only by abiding by his moral laws. There is nothing else that moves an ethical person than duty, that is, a categorical imperative. Nonetheless, Sorell argues that a duty can go together with other inclinations, like juridical ones. For instance, the moral law not to steal from someone can go together with the self-interested idea that the punishment after stealing makes it futile to steal (Sorell, 84). Similarly, Sorell claims that our good will, which is guided by duty, can go together with our virtuous nature. Our virtuous natural inclinations are, however, never a motive of the good will. The

the will is that the limitation of the will is negative. On the one hand, the limitation of the will excludes the matter of the action or what is to result from the will. On the other hand, the limitation of the will to the form of practical reason is exclusive. Practical reason limits our spiritual and dynamic relation to the world to the categorical imperative.

### **III. *Der Streit der Fakultäten*: enthusiasm as informal disposition**

In *Der Streit der fakultäten*, there is no actual concept of the will, except for the notion of enthusiasm. I believe that the notion of enthusiasm is of help to the problem of the limitation of the will. In a way, Kant shows the shortcomings of his own moral thought in the second section, which is called 'Der Streit der philosophische Fakultät mit der juristischen'. The faculty of philosophy is to grant independence to the juridical in times of oppression. That's why Kant wants to demonstrate from a philosophically historic point of view that there is always enthusiasm for moral progress, even when the legislative and judiciary powers have lost their independence. In contrast to the *Grundlegung*, Kant does not discuss morality in the strict moral terms of law, but rather in the historic terms of progress. While the *Grundlegung* offers a strictly moral concept of the will, here Kant offers a possible historic concept of the will. The notion of enthusiasm shows that our moral capacity needs an affect.

Kant's main idea in *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, that an affect, rather than reason, drives our moral capacity and urge to moral progress, has awakened new interest in many modern philosophers. The postmodern philosopher Lyotard wrote a whole book about the affect enthusiasm called *L'enthousiasme; La critique kantienne de l'histoire* (1986). Lyotard is concerned with the perception of history, whose 'reality' is not conceived in terms of reason, like Hegel does, but in terms of the unreasonable. Lyotard, who wrote a lot about the esthetic feeling of the sublime, is also interested in enthusiasm as a phenomenon of the transition from nature to freedom. Enthusiasm is, on the one hand, a natural (pathological) affect, and is, on the other hand, directed towards moral progress, that is, freedom. The transition from nature to freedom is, according to Lyotard, an effect of the sublime (Lyotard, 21). Lyotard puts the notion of enthusiasm within a critique of history that belongs to a political and esthetic discourse. Lyotard does not look at the notion of enthusiasm in relation to the will and Kant's practical philosophy. My goal is to inquire the phenomenon of enthusiasm, as discussed by Kant in *Streit der Fakultäten*, and evaluate whether it could solve the problems inherent to Kant's practical thought.

In *Der Streit der Fakultäten* Kant talks about the phenomenon of enthusiasm for goodness, which he observed in the behavior of French revolutionaries. Their universal and disinterested enthusiasm for goodness appears to be a mystery in relation to the formal will. How can it be that

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good will remains grounded in a formal disposition. The good will remains lifeless, even though there are lively virtues that accompany the good will.

something irrational like enthusiasm causes man to be moral? In *Der Streit der Fakultäten* Kant raises the question, 'is the human race continually improving?' He is, in this work, not looking at the improvement caused by law, but at improvement as a general phenomenon throughout history. In *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, Kant explains that there two ways of looking at history. First of all, we could look at history as determined and constant. Consequently, things are eternal and unchanging, just like the Platonic laws are. Our moral behavior would accordingly continually deteriorate, improve, or eternally stand still. Yet, "unter euch ist nichts beständig als die Unbeständigkeit!" (Kant, 1916, 395) Kant quotes abbot Coyer, "nothing in history is constant among us but inconstancy." Is continual progress therefore an illusion? According to Kant, one can dictate freely acting beings what they ought to do, as we have seen in the *Grundlegung*, but one cannot predict what they actually will do (Kant, 1916, 395). Kant shows the weakness of his concept of the formal will here implicitly. He says that we can have a moral law, but still do evil. Kant therefore suggests another way of looking at history. He proposes that we look at an undetermined history, one without laws, in order to assess whether man is continually progressing.

In *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, Kant is dealing with the will of an undetermined history, a history without laws. In this history, there are signs and not actual occasions that prove man's moral progress. Kant does not concentrate on the deeds of man that caused moral depravation or purification, but he concentrates on a certain attitude in man. Kant focuses on a certain disposition in man, rather than on man's actual behavior. He is concerned with a historical sign that indicates human progress, rather than a specific historical moment. Not the French Revolution itself, but the attitude of French revolutionaries prove man's moral progress.

Kant explains that the problem of progress cannot be solved directly from experience. It is our own free moral action that determines the progress of the future (Kant, 1916, 396). Yet, there must be some experience of a historical event that shows a tendency towards free moral action. There must be a historical sign that prophesizes the constant progress the human race makes. The attitude of French revolutionaries and their supporters is Kant's historical sign. Kant says,

"es ist bloß die Denkungsart der Zuschauer, welche sich bei diesem Spiele großer Umwandlungen öffentlich verrät und eine so allgemeine und doch uneigennützigte Teilnehmung der Spielenden auf einer Seite gegen die auf der andern, selbst mit Gefahr, die Parteilichkeit könne ihnen sehr nachteilig werden, dennoch laut werden läßt, so aber (der Allgemeinheit wegen) einen Character des Menschengeschlechts im Ganzen und zugleich (der Uneigennützigkeit wegen) einen moralischen Character desselben wenigstens in der Anlage beweiset, der das Fortschreiten zum Besseren nicht allein hoffen läßt, sondern selbst schon ein solches ist, so weit das Vermögen desselben für jetzt zureicht." (Kant, 1916, 397-98)

The state of mind [‘Denkungsart’] of the French revolutionaries is one of disinterested and universal enthusiasm for moral goodness. I call enthusiasm an informal disposition to goodness, as it is disinterested, universal, and an affect that wills the moral. Despite its informality, “daß wahrer Enthusiasm geht nur immer aufs Idealische und zwar rein Moralische, dergleichen der Rechtsbegriff ist, und nicht auf den Eigennutz gepfropft werden kann. (Kant, 1916, 399). The ‘Affekt’ is the life-based, informal disposition that makes man moral. Kant does not say that the ‘Affekt’ moves the will, as he is solely speaking about the ‘Affekt’ itself. Nevertheless, he demonstrates here a lively element that apart from the will makes man a moral being. He puts forward a solution for the lifelessness of the formal will. Yet, he does not put the notion of affect or enthusiasm within the concept of the will. Kant merely suggests that enthusiasm is directed at the moral. In respect to his practical philosophy, this would mean that enthusiasm directs us to the freedom of the will.

How does enthusiasm relate to autonomy and the disposition to goodness? The concepts of autonomy and disposition are the same in the *Grundlegung*. In *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, they are very different, because there has come into being another concept of disposition. I have earlier called the disposition disinterested and universal in character. Enthusiasm, as Kant discusses it, is also disinterested and universal. On the one hand, enthusiasm is directed to the moral and is never self-interested. Thus, enthusiasm is disinterested. Furthermore, Kant believes enthusiasm to be a universal phenomenon, observable for instance in the behavior of the French revolutionaries.

Enthusiasm is a disposition, but an informal one, because it is irrational. Therefore, we cannot equate enthusiasm to autonomy. Enthusiasm is not the intellectual motivation of the will, but it is an affect. Enthusiasm reveals itself in the activity of the French revolutionaries, and not in the process of legislating. Kant’s concept of enthusiasm as affect has to be distinguished from the intellectual motivation of practical reason. Enthusiasm is different from autonomy because it is different from practical reason. Enthusiasm is the affect and not the will that legislates. Enthusiasm is not the source of law, but the source of human progress and man’s moral character. Kant does not yet seem to understand the consequences of the introduction of enthusiasm within his moral philosophy. He says that enthusiasm is idealistic and directed at a concept of right, but he cannot yet relate it to our autonomy and power to legislate. Kant cannot relate enthusiasm to freedom in his own system of thought.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In this chapter I wanted to evaluate Kant’s formal concept of the will. I have largely focused on the lifelessness of the formal will. The lifelessness is a result of the limitation of the will by practical reason. This limitation takes with itself the lack of matter and the danger of its form. On the one hand, the will, as described in the *Grundlegung* has no affect that moves it into action. On the other hand, the

will is limited by practical reason, of which the categorical imperatives are inflexible and possibly clash with changing social conditions.

Let's repeat to what conclusions I have come in this chapter. Kant's *Grundlegung* serves as an example for formal ethics. Kant tells us that the will is motivated by practical reason, which represents moral law. The moral law represented by practical reason makes the will a formal will. The formality of the will is grounded in man's capacity to create his own law, independent of any inclination and the effect of the will. The formality of the will is grounded in man's 'Gesinnung'. In legislating we can notice the structure of the 'Gesinnung': firstly, in legislating we are not concerned with the effect of the will, and, secondly, in legislating the will is purely rational by making representations or maxims of law. The 'Gesinnung' does not represent a real capacity that moves the will, but is a notion used to describe a 'Beschaffenheit' or quality of the will. The will lacks moving power, because the disposition excludes every form of feeling that belongs to the will. Furthermore, practical reason makes the will inflexible. Therefore, I argue that the will, according to Kant's conception, is lifeless.

In *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, Kant describes a capacity that desires goodness. Kant counts it as a condition for moral improvement and calls it enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is a 'Gesinnung', as it is universal and disinterested, but an informal one, as it does not motivate us to legislate. This brings our inquiry outside the perspective of law. The phenomenon of enthusiasm among the French revolutionaries shows us that man makes moral progress without the rule of law. In *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, Kant is for once interested in what makes man moral regardless of law. He says that we can dictate man to be moral, but we cannot predict what he will actually do. Kant shows the weakness of his concept of the formal will here. He implicitly says that we can have a moral law, but still do evil. It is therefore not our capacity to independently legislate (our autonomy), but our enthusiasm that makes us moral beings. The presupposition in the *Grundlegung* that everything works according to laws is therefore unfounded, which disqualifies the formality of the will.

Shortly it seemed that Kant solved his own problem. Enthusiasm may count as the force that makes us moral beings. Enthusiasm is directed towards the moral and excludes any self-interest. It is the power that the formal will needs to move. Why do I still need to look at Schelling and Cohen in the following chapters? Why is Kant's notion of enthusiasm insufficient to the vitalization of the concept of the will? When we throw the notion of enthusiasm into Kant's practical philosophy of the *Grundlegung*, we find out that it is incommensurable to the form of the good will, which excludes every form of hypothetical power like enthusiasm. As a result we deal with two problems. Firstly, we do not yet have a concise idea of the problem of the form of Kant's will. We do not know how to think of a formless will or a newly formed will that is other than practical reason. Secondly, we do not yet understand how to incorporate the affect within a pure concept of the will. Schelling and Cohen help us with both. Schelling helps us to critique the transcendental form of the good will and introduces a twofold solution. Cohen helps us to incorporate the *affect* within the concept of a pure will. Schelling and Cohen materialize and vitalize Kant's formal concept of the

will, which is empty of material power and action, and is infected by the inflexibility of practical reason. In the second and third chapter, I will elucidate the critique Schelling and Cohen would give to Kant's concept of the will. Furthermore, I will tell how they address the problems of matter and form of the will.

## Schelling's Concept of the Will

### I. Reinventing Idealism

In this chapter we arrive at the core of my research, where we start to find solutions for the flaws of Kant's concept of the will. In this and the following chapter we begin to find out what a lively or vital will philosophically has to look like. In this chapter I will answer the question: under what condition could Schelling's concept of the will meet the flaws of the Kantian notion of will?

Before I will answer that question, we have to pin down the flaws of Kant's moral philosophy and explain how Schelling can tackle these problems. Also, we have to be aware that I use a text by Schelling, the *Freiheitsschrift*, in which Schelling defends a concept of freedom that is completely different from Kant's concept of autonomy. As a result there comes into being a new concept of the will, which I believe to be a concept that has overcome Kant's formality. To clarify why Schelling's concept of the will should replace the one by Kant, I have to elaborate on the flaws of Kant's concept and the possible critique Schelling gave to it. I want to avoid any incommensurability between Schelling's concept and that of Kant. Therefore I will focus in this chapter on one of the two elements of Kant's will that have to be fixed, namely the form of the will. I will address the element of the matter of the will, which Kant's concept of the will is lacking, in chapter 3.

The difference between Schelling and Kant is maybe best symbolized by the idea of an end of idealism, which Dale Snow proclaims in his book *Schelling and the End of Idealism*. I want to emphasize his claim in order to distance Schelling from Kant and to stress the point that Schelling's concept of the will overcomes the one by Kant. Schelling's critique of Kant's Enlightenment thought, or the Enlightenment view of reason is fruitful, but Schelling's own view of reason remains unclear sometimes, says Snow (Snow, 1996, 143). I must agree that Schelling's approach to Kant's practical reason is sometimes vague. On the one hand, he fully supports practical reason by asserting, "no system can be completed other than practically" (Snow, 1946, 31). On the other hand, he rejects it completely. I believe that Schelling rejects Kant's formal approach to practical reason in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Nevertheless, he animates practical reason by means of the power of the spirit.<sup>5</sup> Schelling's mystical approach to practical understanding is, I believe, of huge importance for the reformulation of the will.

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<sup>5</sup> Schelling says, "Denn so hoch wir auch die Vernunft stellen, glauben wir doch z.B. nicht, daß jemand aus reiner Vernunft tugendhaft, oder ein Held, oder überhaupt ein großer Mensch sei; ja nicht einmal, nach der bekannten Rede, daß das Menschengeschlecht durch sie fortgepflanzt werde. Nur in der Persönlichkeit is Leben; und alle Persönlichkeit ruht auf einem dunkeln Grunde, der also allerdings auch Grund der Erkenntnis sein muß." (Schelling, 2011, 85) Here Schelling rejects formal reason and claims the mystical ground of understanding.



The reformulation of the concept of freedom is the beginning of the approach to practical reason. The dialectic between freedom and the system of reason exemplifies the troublesome relation to practical reason. I want to make clear that Schelling aborts the dialectic in the *Freiheitsschrift* when he reunites freedom, not with the system of practical reason, but with something that is alive, becoming, and has a will. The unification of freedom with the will, rather than with reason, marks the end of Kantian idealism, and the beginning of a new and informal one.

## II. Deformalizing the will

In contrast to Kant's moral concept of the will, Schelling has a naturalistic (human) and mystic one. This can be seen in his division of *Wille der Grund* (will of the ground) and *Wille der Liebe* (will of love). The will of love is man's mystical will, and the will of the ground man's natural. Schelling's goal in the *Freiheitsschrift* is to align nature to freedom. Kant already found a way to link nature with freedom in *Streit der Fakultäten* by means of the notion of enthusiasm. Schelling knows to link both by reformulating freedom. The reformulation of freedom is important for the reformulation of the will, as freedom is the being of the will.

Kant's concept of freedom is a formal or transcendental one. Kant uses a concept of autonomy, through which our will wills goodness alone. Kant's will is limited to goodness. On the contrary, Schelling conceives of a will that has the freedom to will evil also. For Schelling, freedom entails that there can be no limit at all, not even the limitation of the will by practical reason. Schelling has a concept of freedom that represents the nasty reality of nature: man has a capacity to will both good and evil. Snow says, "In *of Human Freedom*, the acknowledgment of the reality of evil presents the most radical challenge conceivable to systematic philosophy. Schelling's handling of that challenge is what sets him apart from every other thinker of this time." (Snow, 1996, 146) The crux of this chapter is thus: Schelling attacks the transcendental form of Kant's will and replaces it firstly with a naturalistic (human) form: man has a will of the ground that is able to will both goodness and evil. He secondly replaces it with a mystic form, which I will explain later.

Let's discuss Schelling's concept of freedom shortly and the concomitant critique of Kant's formal concept of the will. Let's start with saying that Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* is an assessment of freedom foremost and only secondarily an assessment of the will. Schelling offers a critique of formality in the *Freiheitsschrift*, which is a critique of the formal concept of freedom. This critique is directed towards the 'dogmatism' of Spinoza's pantheism, which makes an attempt to find the unconditional in the absolute. Only hastily does Schelling mention and critique Kant's concept of the will. Schelling says that Kant's idealism of the will allows freedom a role in Spinoza's pantheism, but fails to give the will an exact and decisive role in idealism. Let me explain Schelling's problem with Spinoza first and his problem with Kant second.

Schelling finds Spinoza's pantheism dogmatic, because it does not do justice to the first cause of the rational system of efficient causes. Spinoza does

not allow a first cause in an infinite system of efficient causes. There is no place for a God to have the freedom to create and to be the first cause. The idealism of Kant, on the other hand, provides scope for freedom in Spinoza's pantheism through a concept of the will. Schelling says, "Wollen ist Ursein, und auf diesen allein passen alle Prädikate desselben: Grundlosigkeit, Ewigkeit, Unabhängigkeit von der Zeit, Selbstbejahung." (Schelling, 2011, 23) Schelling conceives of Kant's will as the primal being, the first cause in a pantheistic system. Nonetheless, Schelling declares Kant's formal concept of freedom as useless: it leaves us helpless in the doctrine of freedom (Schelling, 2011, 23). Kant's negative concept of freedom as a thing-in-itself, independent from time, does not fit in the world of things or appearances. Schelling argues, in the footsteps of Fichte, that we are required to show "daß alles Wirkliche (die Natur, die Welt der Dinge) Tätigkeit, Leben und Freiheit zum Grund habe." (Schelling, 2011, 24)

Why is Kant's concept of the will not showing that everything real (in the world of things) has activity, life and freedom as its ground? Kant's concept of the will only belongs to the practically thinking being and not to the natural world. It is precisely Schelling's purpose to show that man belongs to the natural world. Kant's concept of things-in-themselves, e.g. freedom, should not only belong to the transcendental world, but also to things in general (Schelling, 2011, 24). This does not mean that a thing, like a stone, has freedom, but it means that man as a natural being and not as a transcendental being has freedom. Man as a natural being is different from things of the transcendental world. Therefore, Schelling makes a difference between the freedom of man and the freedom of God. This entails that there is a difference between the will of man and the will of a transcendental world. While the transcendental will can will goodness alone, the will of man can will both goodness and evil. Man's freedom is his capacity for good and evil (Schelling, 2011, 25). This is Schelling's 'vital' concept of freedom.

How can the will will evil? This is an essential question, as Kant explained that the will can only will goodness. Kant claimed that the will is necessarily rational, and practical reason is always directed at goodness. According to Kant, evil could only be a result of lustful behavior, but never an effect of a rational will. Schelling, on the contrary, argues that the will is not necessarily rational. The will has also an evil capacity. At this point, Schelling de-formalizes Kant's formal will. Yet, Schelling also re-formalizes the will. The new form of the will is not the form of practical reason and the representations of moral law. The new form is naturalistic (human) and mystic. Unlike Kant's formal will, the naturalistic and mystic forms respond to the issues of the natural and spiritual world. Consequently, Schelling's concept of the will is not like Kant's concept – empty.

What is, according to Schelling, the form or being of the will? Schelling discerns between two types of will, namely the will of the ground and the will of love. The will of the ground is not conscious (rational), but neither fully unconscious (irrational). What does this mean? It is neither conscious like God, nor completely unconscious like nature, which moves according to blind, mechanical necessity (Schelling, 2011, 67). The will of the ground is of an intermediate nature. The will of the ground is of a human nature. It is a desire to

do goodness, even though it cannot yet do so completely. The will of the ground is neither good nor evil, but is a prophetic power that foresees goodness.

Why does Schelling call the will of the ground a will when it is not purely rational? In the will of the ground there is no unity. The will of the ground is neither fully rational nor fully irrational. Why is something in between still a will? Schelling says that the will of the ground is a will "in dem kein Verstand ist, und darum auch nicht selbständiger und vollkommener Wille, indem der Verstand eigentlich der Wille in dem Willen ist." (Schelling, 2011, 32) Schelling says that the will of the ground is a will in the will, which is nevertheless still a will of the understanding, as a yearning for understanding. The will of the ground is an 'ahnender Wille' that moves towards understanding and foresees goodness (Schelling, 2011, 32). In foreseeing understanding and goodness, the will of the ground is a will.

The will of love, on the other hand, is complete understanding and therefore the will that wills pure goodness. The will of love is the spirit of God. Unlike practical reason, the spirit of love is able to overcome evil completely, because it sees unity rather than the disunity of rational or binary oppositions. The spirit is the Word or God's understanding, as it can be found in the Bible. Yet, Schelling merely offers a mystical approach to the spirit, which is the understanding of the ground of existence. By means of the will of love and its spirit, man is able, like God, to control the ground of existence. Controlling one's ground of existence means freedom for Schelling. It is the feeling of being in one's element. As such, Schelling has a second concept of freedom, which I regard to be radically modern for the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Schelling offers two concepts of freedom and sets them apart from the formal concept of autonomy of Kant. The first 'vital' concept of freedom is man's capacity for good and evil (Schelling, 2011, 25). It is the freedom of the will of the ground. Another vital concept of freedom is man's capacity to control the ground of existence. It is the freedom of the will of love. These two types of freedom describe a new form or being of the will. These vital concepts of freedom ensure the dynamism of the will.

Schelling sets the vital concept of freedom apart from the formal concept of freedom, and thus also from Kant's concept of autonomy. Schelling says that the formal concept of freedom consists of "der bloßen Herrschaft des intelligenten Prinzips über das sinnliche und die Begierden." (Schelling, 2011, 18) As I explained above, Kant's formal concept of the will is a will that is necessarily rational and is necessarily independent from sensuality and desire. Accordingly, man can independently legislate by means of maxims of law. Schelling critiques the formal concept of freedom in terms of Spinoza's pantheism. In terms of pantheism, the freedom of God is the capacity of causing Himself and being an infinite and omnipotent being. As man is in the same substance as God, his freedom is the freedom of being in God, while being unfree outside of God. Schelling argues that man is always different from God in the totality of their natures. Does this mean that man is never free? No, not necessarily. To understand this, we have to understand Schelling's reinterpretation of pantheism.

Then we can find out how our human freedom of the will of the ground and the will of love can go together with the freedom of God.

### **III. Under what condition does Schelling meet the flaws of Kant's formal will?**

Under the condition of reinterpreting pantheism and the concept of identity, Schelling meets the flaw of the limitation of the will by practical reason. Why do we have to reinterpret pantheism? Schelling puts Kant's concept of the will into Spinoza's pantheism. The will is the primal being of the infinite line of efficient causes. The will is the first cause. It creates and opens up a system of things that relate to one another as cause and effect. As a romantic thinker, Schelling argues that these things have a will, rather than only a capacity to think. Schelling puts the will into a rational system and encounters two problems. Firstly, reason alone cannot explain the first cause in an infinite system of efficient causes. Secondly, practical reason limits the will. A system of reason, like pantheism, does not allow freedom. The freedom of God and his omnipotence compromise the freedom of man. Under the condition of reinterpreting pantheism, Schelling is able to solve these two problems.

Schelling says that Kant's system of reason does not allow freedom. Under what condition could freedom be permitted in the system of reason, according to Schelling? Schelling elucidates the problem of the reality of freedom within Kant's idealism through an evaluation of pantheism and its concept of identity. Schelling endorses the claim that pantheism is the only possible system of reason that can grasp unity or identity. Yet, pantheism is eventually inevitable fatalism because it does not permit the reality of freedom (Schelling, 2011, 11). Therefore, Schelling explains in the *Freiheitsschrift* another interpretation of pantheism, through which a vital concept of freedom is allowed within an all-encompassing rational system. The vital concept of freedom purports that one can will both goodness and evil, which opposes itself to a formal concept of freedom as autonomy, that is, the independence to impose one's own law upon oneself, that is, of willing goodness alone. There is also another vital concept of freedom, which purports that man can overcome evil and control the ground of his existence. In what follows, I will first explain how Schelling reinterprets pantheism and the place freedom attains within this system. Thereafter, I will explain how a vital concept of freedom makes the will dynamic. It remains my goal to demonstrate how Schelling's concept of freedom adapts the form of the Kantian will and why it makes the will dynamic instead of lifeless.

Pantheism proclaims the unity of God, man and other things. What is this unity or identity? Schelling describes three interpretations of the identity of things in pantheism. First of all, identity is "der Immanenz der Dinge in Gott." (Schelling, 2011, 11) God is everything and everything is in God. Schelling critiques that despite the unity of man and God, God's omnipotence determines man completely and, consequently, man loses his freedom (Schelling, 2011, 12). God's omnipotence is his freedom to create the world. If God would withhold his omnipotence, man would immediately cease to be. Therefore, we have to

maintain the determinism of this interpretation, and accept that man cannot be free. This is unacceptable for Schelling. The fact that man cannot be free within this form of pantheism disqualifies the interpretation for Schelling.

Secondly, identity consists in “einer völligen Identifikation Gottes mit den Dingen, einer Vermischung des Geschöpfs mit dem Schöpfer.” (Schelling, 2011, 12-13) God is everything and every thing is God. In this interpretation, Schelling identifies the problem of two opposing natures: God is infinite whereas man is finite. If we take into account the infinite difference between God and individual things, we have to conclude that all individual things together cannot amount to God, in so far as no sort of combination can transform what is by nature derivative into what is by nature original (Schelling, 2011, 13). Spinoza solves this problem by claiming that an individual thing is a modified form of God. However, Schelling insists that it cannot circumvent the objection that individual things and God are different *ex toto genere suo*. How does Schelling solve the problem that God, the first cause in an infinite system, is different from individual things, and simultaneously still in identity with individual things? Schelling offers us a radically new interpretation of identity, by means of which he solves the inevitable fatalism in Spinoza’s pantheism. Under this condition, Schelling permits freedom in a system of determinism and unity. Under this condition Schelling can develop a new concept of the will that meets the flaws of the Kantian notion of the will.

Schelling’s reinterpretation of the law of identity starts with a study of logical judgments, in which subject and predicate are equated, for instance, the body is blue. According to Schelling, it is problematic that the identity of body and blueness is understood as sameness, even though body and blueness are two different things *ex toto genere suo*. Schelling argues that traditional philosophy has been ignorant of the nature of the copula (Schelling, 2001, 14). As such, Schelling’s theory of identity prefigures Heidegger’s phenomenological understanding of Being. Schelling, however, explains the nature of the copula, or the relation between subject and predicate, in a different manner than Heidegger. He precedes Heidegger in saying that subject and predicate are not the same in identity, but differs from Heidegger in saying that the relation of subject and predicate has to be understood as *antecedens et consequens*. The relation between subject and predicate is, for Schelling, not one of being, but one of becoming. The relation of becoming does not entail that the body was transparent and has become blue. Such a naturalistic and reflective mode of understanding the relation of becoming does not do justice to the metaphysical ground of the relation, which is unperceivable and unreflective. Schelling explains the relation of becoming as a relation of potency and actuality. The body is potentially blue, but could also have another color, as we cannot perceive and reflect on the nature of the body yet. Subsequently, the body attains actuality and shows itself as blue. Schelling returns to the Greeks, whom he believed to have surpassed the immaturity of the law of identity immediately through a logical differentiation of subject and predicate as what precedes and what follows (*antecedens et consequens*), or, as what is enfolded to what is unfolded (*implicitum et explicitum*) (Schelling, 2011, 15).

Schelling argues that defenders of the foregoing claims could now offer a third interpretation of pantheism, which does not speak at all about the fact that God is everything, but rather that things are nothing and have lost individuality (Schelling, 2011, 16). God is everything and individual things are nothing. God is only God, and is not identified as being the same as individual things. Schelling doubts whether this interpretation can be attributed to Spinoza. He says that Spinoza does not attribute a negative concept to individual things. Individual things may be modifications, but they still have a positive meaning. Schelling attributes a positive meaning to the individual things by looking at their independence. He demonstrates that not only God is free, but man too, although in a different way. Pantheism now envelops the idea that God and man have the same ground (or substance), but they 'become' differently. The dependence of man on God does not imply that man cannot be independent.

“Aber Abhängigkeit hebt Selbständigkeit, hebt sogar Freiheit nicht auf. Sie bestimmt nicht das Wesen, und sagt nur, daß das Abhängige, was es auch immer sein möge, nur als Folge von dem sein könne, von dem es abhängig ist; sie sagt nicht, was es sei, und was es nicht sei. Jedes organische Individuum ist als ein Gewordenes nur durch ein anderes, und insofern abhängig dem Werden, aber keineswegs dem Sein nach. Es ist nicht ungereimt, sagt Leibniz, daß der, welcher Gott ist, zugleich gezeugt werde, oder umgekehrt, so wenig es ein Widerspruch ist, daß der, welcher der Sohn eines Menschen ist, selbst Mensch sei.” (Schelling, 2011, 18-19)

It is no contradiction that the son of man is also a man himself. The son is not only a son, but also a man because he has his own free will. The independence of the son derives from the concept of man's will, which differs from the formal or transcendental will. Pantheism is the only possible system of reason that does not have to be inevitable fatalism. Schelling demonstrates in the *Freiheitsschrift* that pantheism not only allows a transcendental freedom of God, but also a quintessentially human and non-formal freedom. Man's will does not move dependently on his father's will, but moves independently in its own way.

Both the freedom of God and the freedom of man are based on Becoming, which is the Being of being or the nature of the copula (*Wesen des Seins*). Freedom of God is ultimately still one of Being, because he is pure or absolute identity. He never becomes difference. The reconceptualization of identity or pantheism does not change the perspective on God's freedom, which remains transcendental: God is omniscient. His will is complete because of his pure understanding, by means of which he controls his ground. Man's freedom is essentially one of Becoming, because his Being is not in identity. Man does not have pure understanding. Therefore, man's will is not complete. Man cannot fully control his ground and remains a finite being, in contrast to God, who is an infinite being.

The reinterpretation of pantheism or the identity of man and God by Schelling makes it possible to overcome the two problems: (1) reason alone cannot explain the first cause in an infinite system of efficient causes; and (2) practical reason

limits the will. A system of reason, like pantheism, does not allow freedom. The freedom of God and his omnipotence compromise the freedom of man. Through the reconceptualization of identity, Schelling has come to the conclusion that identity is, on the one hand, not sameness. God and man are not the same in pantheism. The identity of God and man is potential and can become actuality. God, as infinite being, is the first cause in an infinite system of efficient causes. Man, as finite being, is only an efficient cause. Reason cannot explain the first cause. The will, as the force that turns the potential into actuality, can explain the first cause. The first cause is initially potential and cannot be reflected upon by reason or observed by science. God is hidden in the darkness of potentiality. Through the actualization of the potential, the first cause comes into being. God says there is light and unfolds himself in the widening openness. On the other hand, identity is not immanence. Man's freedom is not the freedom of being in God. The saying, the son of man is also a man himself, explains lucidly the independence of man. Man has his own free will, which does not compromise the free will of God. Man and God have their own will and are both becoming in their own way.<sup>6</sup>

Freedom is put in a coherent system of reason – pantheism. Yet the coherent system of pantheism is no longer a formal system of reason. Pantheism has become a system in which things are not static, but dynamic. Schelling's new concept of freedom fits in a new pantheistic system in which God and man are lively beings. We no longer speak of causes and effects, but rather about ground and existence. God and man are beings with an existence and a ground to that existence. If there is a non-ground, God's existence is potential. If there is a ground, man's existence is potential. The will of the ground and the will of love actualize the ground and existence of man and God. In the next section of this chapter I will make it more concrete how man and God become. As a result, it becomes clear how man's will is dynamic.

#### **IV. How is the will dynamic?**

Schelling's philosophy in the *Freiheitsschrift* is a mystical form of pantheism. The world's substance is constantly becoming: it is of ground and then of existence, of *antecedens et consequens*, of potency and then of actuality, of being enfolded and then of being unfolded, of *implicitum et explicitum*. There is, however, a beginning to becoming. It all starts in a mystical non-ground, a darkness in which God is hiding.<sup>7</sup> In this darkness, God has not yet revealed

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<sup>6</sup> "Zuerst ist der Begriff der Immanenz völlig zu beseitigen, inwiefern etwa dadurch ein totes Begriffensein der Dinge in Gott ausgedrückt werden soll. Wir erkennen vielmehr, daß der Begriff des Werdens der einzige der Natur der Dinge angemessene ist." (Schelling, 2011, 31) The death concept of things in God, the concept of immanence, has to be eliminated, because it does not do justice to the concept of becoming for each individual thing in nature.

<sup>7</sup> Schelling adopts his interpretation of the non-ground from the German mystic Jakob Böhme. Böhme claims that there is an initial state of magia in which

himself to himself, the world, and to us. Yet, God is there. He exists and has a ground for his existence. God always controls his ground, which makes him eternal. This also means that God's ground and existence are in absolute identity. However, God's ground and existence are hidden in the darkness of the non-ground. Schelling calls the absolute identity of God indifference, because his ground and existence are potential (Schelling, 2011, 30). Hidden in the darkness, God has neither an actual ground nor actual existence. The absolute identity of God is a totality of being before all ground and before all that exists, thus generally before any duality (Schelling, 2011, 78). God's absolute identity is not an identity of opposites, but an identity as the indifference of opposites. Indifference has its own being, separate from all opposition. The indifference of ground and existence means that both are in a state of non-being. Both ground and existence are potencies.

God controls His ground eternally, because he is completely rational. In line with the tradition, God is the omniscient being, which, for Schelling, translates in his pure understanding. By means of his pure understanding God controls his ground. God's becoming, which is still the nature of Being in Schelling's pantheism<sup>8</sup>, is always in unity. God wills his existence eternally because his will is pure understanding. By means of pure understanding he controls his ground eternally. The ground or the material world is controlled, and thereby Schelling excludes the material world from the good will, like Kant did. God's will is in these terms a 'Gesinnung' and seems at first to be in conformity with Kant's concept of the will.

However, Schelling argues that God cannot be a logical abstraction. God cannot have a formal will. "Wäre uns Gott ein bloß logisches Abstraktum, so müßte dann auch alles aus ihm mit logischer Notwendigkeit folgen; er selbst wäre gleichsam nur das höchste Gesetz, von dem alles ausfließt, aber ohne Personalität und Bewußtsein davon. Allein wir haben Gott erklärt als lebendige Einheit von Kräften." (Schelling, 2011, 66) Even though Schelling conceives of God as a lively unity of powers, with personality and an awareness of this personality, he cannot deny that God did not have this personality and self-

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something is created out of nothing, but what is created is still a nothing. "The non-ground is an eternal nothing but forms an eternal beginning as a craving [Sucht]. For the nothing is a craving for something. And since there is also nothing that may give something, the craving is itself the giving of that which is indeed also a nothing as merely a desiring [begehrende] craving. And that is the eternal primal state of *magia* which forms in itself since there is nothing. It forms something from nothing, and that just in itself and, since indeed the same craving is also a nothing as only a mere will, the will has nothing and is also nothing that may give itself something,; and it has also no place where it could find or rest itself." (Schelling, 2006, 85)

<sup>8</sup> I call Schelling's philosophy a pantheism. Schelling agrees to this classification himself: "Wer endlich darum, weil in bezug auf das Absolute schlechthin betrachtet alle Gegensätze verschwinden, dieses System Pantheismus nennen wollte, dem möchte auch dieses vergönnt sein." (Schelling, 2011, 81)



consciousness in the non-ground. God remains motionless before his self-revelation and revelation to the world. This brings me to the question: from where does God derive his self-awareness and lively character? According to Schelling, Being can only become aware of itself through Becoming (Schelling, 2011, 75). This means that God (world, and man) must first by a certain will power be actualized.

In Schelling's pantheism, God and man are of the same substance, but they become differently. To mark the difference between man and God, man must become in a ground that is other than God. "Die Dinge haben ihren Grund in dem, was in Gott selbst nicht Er Selbst ist, d.h. in dem, was Grund seiner Existenz ist. Wollen wir uns dieses Wesen menschlich näher bringen, so können wir sagen: es sei die Sehnsucht, die das ewige Eine empfindet, sich selbst zu gebären. Sie ist nicht das Eine selbst, aber doch mit ihm gleich ewig." (Schelling, 2011, 31) Man has his ground in that what is the ground of His existence, but in that in which God is not Himself. Man has his ground in *Sehnsucht* (Yearning), which is coeternal with God. Yearning wants to give birth to God, but in wanting the birth of God it is not yet able to. Yearning is in disunity. It is the will that foresees understanding, the understanding by means of which man could be in control of the ground of his existence. The difference between man and God is that God has his ground in himself, while man does not. God can beget the ground of his existence, because he is omniscient. Man does not have his ground in God or in himself, but in Yearning, which is coeternal with God, but in disunity (Schelling, 31). Therefore, man cannot beget his own ground. For that reason, man is a finite being.

Yearning is in disunity, but regardless still a will. Yearning is a will that yearns understanding and goodness. It is an *ahnender Wille*. It is a will that has no understanding yet, and for that reason it is not an independent and complete will, in terms of the features Kant ascribed to the will (Schelling, 2011, 31-32). Schelling calls it nevertheless a will in a will. I believe that Schelling has found here the dynamic character of the will. The Yearning is that what moves the will. The Yearning shows itself as a dynamic will, in constant struggle with evil for the sake of goodness. It is the first stirring of divine existence, says Schelling. It is the primordial power that tries to unfold God that hid in the non-ground. However, instead of giving birth to God, it gives birth to the ground. The potential ground in the non-ground becomes actual ground through Yearning, also called the will of the ground. The will of the ground is neither a fully conscious nor a fully unconscious will. It moves with the urge to unfold nature, neither fully involuntary nor fully out of compulsion. The will of the ground gives birth to the ground, the ground of God's, man's and world's existence. Despite the intentions, the will of the ground cannot guarantee fully and eternally the goodness of their existence.

"Aber entsprechend der Sehnsucht, welche als der noch dunkle Grund die erste Regung göttlichen Daseins ist, erzeugt sich in Gott selbst eine innere reflexive Vorstellung." (Schelling, 2011, 33) Another equally eternal beginning besides Yearning is the development of spirit. In God there is a primal will – the will of understanding – that is unlike the Yearning a complete will. It is complete, because it is completely understanding. By means of the primal will God

becomes aware of himself as eternal existence. The primal will establishes a reflexive image of God. The reflexive image of God “ist zugleich der Verstand – das Wort jener Sehnsucht, und der ewige Geist, der das Wort in sich und zugleich die unendliche Sehnsucht empfindet, von der Liebe bewogen, die er selbst ist.” (Schelling, 2011, 33) The primal will is a becoming that makes God aware of his being, that is, awareness of his pure and eternal existence. The primal will actualizes God’s existence as spirit. The spirit is the breath of love through which God can beget the ground of His existence. It is the Word together with the infinite Yearning that makes the primal will a freely creating and all-powerful will (Schelling, 2011, 33). Schelling has thus come to a new conception of an idealistic and dynamic will, the Word/Understanding making it idealistic and the Yearning making it dynamic.

Out of the non-ground have arisen an actual ground and actual existence. In God these two principles are united through the primal will. The primal will stands above the two principles, as God is pure love/understanding and therefore the absolute identity of both principles. The primal will is a free will, being free from the two principles (Schelling, 2011, 36-37). In man, the principles of ground and existence are not in unity. Man does not control the ground of his existence, except when the will of love overcomes the evil in nature. The will of love is man’s version of the primal will, even though dependent on the two principles. Man has to deal with the dark and evil principle of the ground and has to deal with the light and good principle of existence. The will of the ground wills the ground and the will of love wills our existence. The will of love is inherently good, as it purely understands nature and its will. The will of the ground is neither inherently a good and light principle, nor an evil and dark principle. The freedom of the will of the ground is different from the freedom of the will of love. The freedom of the will of the ground is quintessentially human. The will of the ground is the yearning to give birth to life, which is not immediately and necessarily evil in itself (Schelling, 2011, 71). Yet, it is neither necessarily good in itself, as it cannot exclude evil. The will of the ground yearns goodness, but goodness cannot go without evil. The freedom of the will of the ground is man’s freedom or capacity to do both good and evil (Schelling, 2011, 25).

I interpret Schelling’s will of the ground as neither good nor evil, because I believe that the choice for good and evil still has to be made. Others however, like Michelle Kosch, would argue that the will of the ground is the dark and evil principle (Kosch, 2014, 155). I agree with her that Schelling posits these claims in the *Freiheitsschrift*, including the idea that the subjugation of the will of love to the will of the ground results in the egoism of the individual. However, it neglects the positive character of the will of the ground, and its independence from the will of love. It neglects that the will of the ground foresees understanding and goodness. It does not pay proper attention to the search for goodness by the will of the ground.

Similar to the will of the ground, the will of love is also an independent power, though independent in a different way. The will of love is a freer and more understanding will (Schelling, 2011, 67). Kosch again neglects the independence of the will of love. She says, “anything existing must incorporate the principle of

the ground. Only an omnipotent being could fully subordinate the ground to the understanding.” (Kosch, 2014, 154) In this way, Kosch denies man’s power of love. As a result, she can only subscribe the position that man has a freedom to do good and evil, and not the freedom to control the ground of existence. I want to emphasize that Schelling also subscribes the position of man’s freedom to control the ground by a will of love. I want to stress Schelling’s claim that man has a will of love. The will of love is not a capacity of mathematical necessity, and has neither mere pure reason in itself, but it is a capacity with personality and spirit “(wie wir den vernünftigen Autor vom geistreichen wohl unterscheiden).” (Schelling, 2011, 67) The act of the will of love is the revelation of the spirit of God.

How does Schelling distinguish the purely rational from the spirit? The spirit makes the will of love ultimately dynamic, because the will of love, through the spirit, begets the one ground of existence. Reason on the contrary cannot make the will dynamic, because it can only distinguish, and see the world in opposites. For instance, God has infinite attributes while humans have a finite amount of attributes. Another example, life can only be understood in terms of one’s eventual death. Reason cannot grasp the positive nature of life; it cannot grasp the eternal ideal of life. Human reason cannot grasp what we share with God – eternity – and in that sense cannot understand what it means to be created in his image. The spirit, on the contrary, is able to understand the unity of the world, because it observes the world from the perspective of love. Love gives birth to existence forever. Through love, God gives birth to Himself, and man gives birth to man.

The purpose of the will of love is to raise goodness out of the darkness, and ultimately separate evil from goodness by putting it back into the non-ground. It is the goal of the will of love to make evil a mere potency and goodness pure actuality. After the non-ground has divided into two equally eternal beginnings, both ground and existence become actual. As such, darkness and light, the real and ideal or nature and ideal, and evil and goodness are actual for us as dualities. The will of love links these two dual forces that can exist for themselves, but cannot exist in themselves or without the other. The will of love has the same purpose as the primal will: controlling the ground and creating an identity of ground and existence. In other words, the final purpose of love is to take away the difference between goodness and evil. This does not mean that love creates a new absolute identity or state of indifference, because goodness will stay actual, and evil becomes non-actual. The will of love creates a ‘general unity’, and not actual absolute identity (Schelling, 2011, 80). God is love and thus absolute identity. God reveals the spirit to man, which is the breath of love. Through revelation human beings have the capacity to love and through love they have the capacity to redeem the world by creating a general unity.

The dynamics of the will is grounded in, on the one hand, the Yearning and, on the other hand, the will of love that perpetuates the will. The eternity of the will is a result of the eternal perpetuation of both will of the ground and the will of love that counter and support one another. Schelling symbolizes this eternal phenomenon by the ouroboros, a snake that is eating its own tale: “In dem Zirkel,

daraus alles wird, ist es kein Widerspruch, daß das, wodurch das Eine erzeugt wird, selbst wieder von ihm gezeugt werde. Es ist hier kein Erstes und kein Letztes, weil alles sich gegenseitig voraussetzt, keins das andere und doch nicht ohne das andere ist." (Schelling, 2011, 31) The will of ground and love are one (indifferently) in the primal will. The will of the ground ensures that no thing is another thing (there is always difference), and the will of love ensures that no thing is without another thing. The will of the ground, or Yearning, is the beginning of the circle by begetting the One, while the will of love, or Spirit, closes the circle by begetting the beginning of the circle. In that sense the primal will is eternal because of the two equally eternal beginnings that eternally perpetuate the cycle. As such there is an eternal cycle of the will of the ground that wills different existence and the will of love that wills one ground of those different existences.

The dynamic will consists of Yearning, which is the motoric power, and of the will of love, which is the understanding by means of which we beget the eternity and purity of existence. The dynamics is grounded in the freedom of both wills. The freedom of Yearning, or the will of the ground, corresponds to the nature of the human being. Man has a capacity to do both good and evil. This constitutes man's personality and a will towards goodness, in order to overcome our evil characteristics. The freedom of the will of love corresponds to the nature of our existence. We have to love our existence in order to continue existing in eternity. Both will of the ground and will of love are dynamic, because they are not limited by practical reason. Simultaneously, they are dynamic, because they respond to the practical needs of ground and existence.

## **V. Conclusion**

What is according to Schelling wrong with the formal concept of the will? Schelling would have said that the formal will belongs to the transcendental world, and not to the natural world. Therefore we cannot prove the reality of Kant's idealistic concept of the will, and we cannot prove that man, who is according to Schelling primordially a natural being, has a moral disposition. What are the flaws of the transcendental concept of the will? First of all, the transcendental will can only will goodness and not evil. Kant's will is limited by reason, and is according to Schelling not a free will. Freedom means that there is no such limit, and thus that one can also will evil. In the *Freiheitsschrift*, Schelling wants to demonstrate that within the boundaries of the idealism of the will there is still place for the reality or the feeling of freedom (Schelling, 9). Secondly, man is according to Schelling primordially a natural and not a transcendental being. According to the formal concept of the will, a natural being does not have a will, which belongs to the transcendental world only. This entails that outside the transcendental world, or outside God, our will means nothing. Does this mean that man, as a natural being, is necessarily or inherently evil? In the *Freiheitsschrift*, Schelling wants to prove that there is no original sin. Evil remains always a choice. Schelling wants to prove that natural man has a free will to make a choice for evil or for goodness. Nevertheless, Schelling also proves that

man has a higher natural capacity, namely the power of love. Through loving, man can attain a higher form of freedom.

In this chapter I wanted to explain under which conditions we could meet the flaws of Kant's formal concept, according to Schelling's mystic and pantheistic philosophy. First of all, the new interpretation by Schelling of identity or the Being of the copula as Becoming has helped us eliminate the dead concept of identity as sameness and immanence. The relationship of ground and existence or potentiality and actuality allows an understanding of being dependent and independent at the same time. Man is both dependent on and independent of God. Independent of God we have a free will to do good and evil, and dependent on the revelation of God we can freely control the ground of our existence.

According to Schelling, the will is not limited by reason. First of all, there is the will of the ground. The will of the ground, or Yearning, is a will that is never completely conscious nor completely unconscious, and thus not limited by reason. The will of the ground is the motoric power that yearns for goodness, but is nonetheless unable to prevent the evil in our world. Yearning is that what makes the will primordially dynamic. Secondly, there is the will of love. The will of love, and the primal will, are complete understanding. This does not mean that they are limited, like in the original sense of Kant's formal will. The will of love and the primal will are limited by the spirit, but not by reason. Reason understands the world in negative terms, that is, in oppositions. Spirit understands the world in positive terms, that is, in unity. The spirit of the will of love wills the one pure ground of existence, that is, existence understood in its eternity. The will of love makes the will also dynamic, because it can beget a new ground for existence, and thus a new will of the ground.

By means of a new understanding of the nature of identity, Schelling has brought us to an idea of becoming that has changed the conception of the will. Under this condition, Schelling has given us an idea of a will that is not limited by reason. Schelling's mystic pantheism is a system of unity that still allows the feeling of freedom. This freedom exhibits itself in the dynamism of the will of the ground and the will of love. The freedom to do good and evil belongs to the capacity of Yearning that wants goodness, but cannot prevent evil. Perhaps we can understand the Yearning as the feeling of the need to be more responsible: the feeling of the need of goodness. This feeling or gravitating power of responsibility is the radical freedom of our capacity to do both good and evil. On the contrary, there is also the feeling of actually being responsible. This is man's freedom of controlling the ground of pure existence, which is the feeling of love, and the result of the will of love.

## Cohen's Concept of the Will

### I. The Idealism of Neo-Kantianism

In this third chapter I proceed to inquire the conditions under which we could philosophically meet the flaws of the Kantian formal will. In this chapter I will focus on Cohen's concept of the will. Unlike Schelling's treatise, which is largely focused on freedom, Cohen has a whole treatise on the will, called *Ethik des reinen Willens*, published in 1904. It is the second book of his system of philosophy, which consists of three books on logic, ethics, and aesthetics. Cohen imitates Kant's critical system of philosophy. Yet, Cohen's critical idealism diverges from that of Kant. Cohen does not validate ethical knowledge in the absolute ground of practical reason, but in the hypothetical ground of moral ideas. Moral ideas are always hypothetical and have to prove themselves to be practical. A moral act must demonstrate whether a moral idea was just or unjust.

Cohen's *Ethik* is not a critique of practical reason, but an ethics of the pure will. The biggest difference between the Neo-Kantian philosopher Cohen and the German Idealist Kant is Cohen's foundation of ethics in a hypothetical ideal, rather than in practical reason. A pure concept of the will is not a concept of practical reason, but a concept independent of the faculty of thinking. Practical reason is directed at an object. The will, on the other hand, is directed at a moral act. Every concept that Cohen develops in *Ethik des reinen Willens* is related to the moral act.

Cohen is the father of Neo-Kantianism, a stream of philosophy that he developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. Cohen makes a return to Kant. In *Ethik des reinen Willens* Cohen develops a Kantian ethics, which claims that a will is a will through the representations of law by practical reason. This does not entail, right away, that Cohen's ethics is formalistic in the same way as Kant's. Cohen develops his own kind of philosophy in which the will is an independent and dynamic capacity. Cohen makes the will dynamic through the concept of *Willensgefühl* or *Affekt*. A will requires not just an intellectual motivation, but also an affect to move.

How does Cohen return to Kant and how does he dissociate himself from Kant? According to Cohen, the pure will and pure understanding are the same thing. This resembles the Kantian formula that the will is the same thing as practical reason. Cohen argues that practical reason makes the will part of ethics. In the sphere of ethics, we can rationally know the will, while outside of it we cannot know how to will goodness. Practical reason sets ethics apart from religion, mythology and psychology. While mythology and religion tell us what we have to believe in, in order to become good and free in this 'dangerous' natural world, ethics gives us knowledge of goodness and freedom (Cohen, 1904, 47). Ethics also distances itself from Psychology, which begins with the naturalistic presupposition that man is an animal. Cohen agrees that man has animal-like tendencies, but argues that man has also a moral disposition and becomes

distinctively man through the ethical concept of *Sein des Sollen* (Cohen, 1904, 21).

Cohen returns to Kant by adopting the division of *Sein und Sollen* (of Being and what we ought to). *Sein* is the Being of the natural world and does not belong to the world of ethics. *Sollen* or that what ought is that what instructs the will. The ethical will is grounded and enabled in *Sollen* (Cohen, 1904, 27). So far does Cohen align Kant. However, Cohen opposes naturalism, which brings ethics under the denominator of Being. Through naturalism we conceive of our passions and acts as mathematical lines and physical substances (Cohen, 1904, 15). Consequently we derive what we ought to do from what naturally is. Cohen argues that *Sollen des Seins* can never be the principle of ethics. *Sollen* cannot be subjugated to *Sein*. On the contrary, Cohen wants to understand ethics purely rationally, that is, without any sensible data from nature. He therefore looks at the *Sein des Sollens* or the Being of what ought. The Being of what ought is an ideal, an ideal of what we ought to do. Here, Cohen combines Kant with Plato. Cohen returns to Plato, because he thinks that ethical knowledge derives its basis solely from ideas and not from sensible data. “Es ist der Weg des Idealismus, der von dem Gängelband der Natur und von der Tyrannei der Erfahrung sich frei macht.” (Cohen, 1904, 13) Kant’s critical philosophy has its ground in sensible data. Cohen’s ethical philosophy is critical in a different way. Cohen does not validate ethical knowledge in the absolute ground of practical reason, but in the hypothetical ground of moral ideas. “Thought is thought of the origin’ and remains so in all pure knowledge. That means that borrowing from Plato’s concept of *hypothesis*, all thought is conceived of as a *foundation*. Knowledge derives the basis of its validity solely from thought and not from a ‘given’ to which thought would have to refer.” (Holzhey, 2005, 16) The reintroduction of Plato’s hypothesis sets Cohen’s Neo-Kantianism apart from Kant.

## II. Purifying and materializing the will

Cohen’s Neo-Kantianism allows a new concept of the will. This will is not guided by practical reason, but by ideals. I will shortly introduce how Cohen purifies Kant’s concept of the will by the ideal. The reformulation of the will by the ideal also allows the affect to be incorporated in the concept of the will. Cohen is, consequently, able to materialize the will by the affect. The affect is the moving power of the will and ensures that the will results in an act. The ideal ensures that the act inspires a new will, which moves by the affect. The ideal, in other words, ensures that the affect becomes a *Tendenz*. The ideal of eternal moral labor motivates our will and goes together with the eternal tendency to act morally.

Cohen is dealing with two problems in Kant’s concept of the will. Firstly, the will is equated to practical reason. Secondly, the will excludes any kind of affect that moves the will. Therefore he has to purify and materialize the will. The purification of the will is a result of the concept of *Sein des Sollens*. “Das Sein des Sollens ist das Sein des Wollens, das Sein des Willens” (Cohen, 168) What is the *Sein des Sollens*? Is Kant’s practical reason, as the being of the will, the same as Cohen’s *Sein des Sollens*? Cohen says that the *Sein des Sollens* is a

practical ideal, but not a practical idea. Ethical being finds its reality in the ideal (Cohen, 1904, 423) Holzhey stresses the historical reality of the *Sein des Sollen*. The reality of ethical being does not lie in nature, to which ideas relate, but lies eternally in the future, to which the ideal relates (Holzhey, 2004, 29) The ideal is different from the idea, because it is directed towards the future. Kant's will is always connected with a *Gegenstand* (rational object). Cohen's will, on the contrary, is always connected with a *Handlung* (act) (Cohen, 1904, 177). The act in the future always leads to a new will. The act is a sort of Kantian judgment that evokes a new motivation for the will. Cohen's concept of the will is therefore dynamic, as it lives on through a 'Tendenz' or 'Ideal'. Whether the effect of the will may be bad, there is still a tendency to goodness or an ideal that gives new impetus to the eternal work of morality. Kant's formal concept of the will could never be dynamic, because the law limits it. Cohen's concept of the will, on the contrary, is dynamic, because it is unlimited by the eternal task of moral labor. Kant's law is made for the sake of the law and its universalism. Cohen's moral law is made to be acted upon, and if bad, to be renewed. There is an ideal of an eternal task of labor to attain the unachievable – goodness.

Cohen separates the will from thinking by disconnecting the will from the *Gegenstand* (rational object), and by reconnecting it to the *Handlung*. Cohen critiques Kant's concept of 'Gesinnung', which he calls a 'Bedingung'. He says that Kant's will is conditioned by thinking, while it should be conditioned by the ideal. Through the ideal the 'Gesinnung' becomes a 'Gesinnung der Ewigkeit' (Cohen, 1904, 404). The disposition of the will is not the limitation by practical reason and the representations of moral law. The disposition of the will is the eternal ideal. What does eternity mean, according to Cohen? Cohen does not interpret eternity in terms of time, as never-ending time. Cohen explicates eternity in terms of the will and our moral activity: "Die Ewigkeit, von der Zeit Abgelöst und auf den reinen Willen bezogen, bedeutet nur die Ewigkeit des Fortgangs der sittlichen Arbeit." (Cohen, 388) Eternal moral labor is our ideal, the goal of our will. At the same time is our eternal moral labor our will. The will is the being of our ideal, and the ideal is the being of our will. "Wollen ist Sein des Ideals." (Cohen, 1904, 403) The ideal is, for Cohen, the pure form of the will.

Cohen further critiques Kant's formal will for its lifelessness. The Kantian good will, which is purely reason, has no moving power and is not directed at an act. The pure will, according to Cohen, moves because of an affect and always results in an act. The act tests whether our laws are good or bad and gives us a new 'Willensgefühl' and motivation for a new will. The feeling and the cognition of the result of a moral act, either bad or good, evokes a new affect and new idea for a new will. The constant evocation of an affect is understood in terms of a tendency for goodness. The purification of the concept of affect, as tendency, allows it to be incorporated into the concept of the will. The purification of the concepts permits the materialization of the will.



### III. Under what condition does Cohen meet the flaws of Kant's formal will?

What is the philosophical ground of the purification of the will? Cohen's *Ethik* begins with a chapter on the principle of truth. His approach to truth yields a whole new perspective on the will. Under the condition of reinterpreting 'truth', Cohen permits the formation of a vital concept of a pure will. Cohen argues that truth is not a fixed idea, but a hypothesis in search of clarity. Under this condition we arrive at the concept of a pure will that functions through a dynamic ideal, and not through a fixed rational idea. The ideal is the hypothesis. Moral goodness has to be tested, and can only be searched for. In the eternal task of moral labor we are guided by this search for truth.

What does truth mean? Traditionally philosophy has understood truth in terms of the logical formula of *adaequatio rei et intellectus* – the agreement of object and intellect. For Cohen, the source of an agreement does not lie in the faculty of thinking, but in the faculty of the will. The agreement must be understood in purely ethical terms. As a result, there is not an agreement of object to intellect, but an agreement of the subject's moral act and an ideal. Truth is the will to truth. It is our moral act that enacts the ideal or the search for truth. However, truth cannot be understood solely in ethical terms. It needs logic in order to methodologically explain the relation between the ideal and the moral act. Logic therefore complements and sustains ethics. Logic explains the being of what we ought to do. Logic explains the *Sein des Sollens*. Logic explains the relation of *Sein* to *Sollen*. Even though ethics and logic cannot go without each other, ethics is still independent (Cohen, 1904, 79). Ethics still determines the content of the *Sein des Sollens*. The idea of what we ought to do does not belong to metaphysics or to the empirical sciences, but belongs to the practical understanding of ethics.

“Die Idee ist das Sollen. Die Ideen bedeuten nichts Anderes als Vorschriften des praktischen Vernunftgebrauchs, welche im Sollen zusammengefasst werden. In diesem Sollen liegt der Seinswert der Ethik. Dieses Sollen beschreibt und bestimmt das Wollen, welches den Inhalt der Ethik bildet. Nichts Anderes bedeutet das Sollen als das gesetzmässige Wollen; das Wollen gemäss den Vorschriften, den Gesetzen der Ethik, welche die Ethik zur Ethik machen; welche daher auch das Wollen selbst bedingen und ermöglichen. Denn nur im Sollen besteht das Wollen. Ohne Sollen gäbe es kein Wollen, sondern nur Begehren. Aber durch das Sollen volzieht und erobert das Wollen ein wahrhaftes Sein.” (Cohen, 1904, 26)

Logic is the traditional sphere that explains being ['Sein']. Ethics, on the contrary, is the traditional sphere that explains what ought ['Sollen']. Cohen argues that they are autonomous spheres, but still inseparable. For Cohen, the principle of truth is the connection of the theoretical with the ethical problem (Cohen, 1904, 83). On the one hand, the theoretical problem deals with the

relation of being to what ought. Cohen explains that being has a hypothetical relation. The idea of what we ought to do is hypothetical and has to be tested by the act. Cohen's logic explains that *Sollen* is never in service of *Sein*. Ethics is not about what ought to be. Ethics is not concerned with physical beings. It is rather concerned with the being of what ought – “Die Idee ist das Sollen.” Cohen inverts Fichte's ‘Sollen des Seins’ into a ‘Sein des Sollens’. On the other hand, the ethical problem deals with *Sollen*, and determines that the *Sein des Sollens* is ethical. It determines that the idea of what we ought to do is practical and directed towards goodness.

What is Cohen's understanding of logic, the traditional locus of being? According to Cohen, logic can explain being in terms of the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments (non-empirical principles), but only in the sphere of mathematics. This means that logic has no function in the physical sphere, which Kant metaphysically tried to ground by synthetic a priori judgments. The empirical sciences are confined to physical being, while ethics, the center of philosophy, is confined to moral being. In other words, ethics deals with the being of what ought, and not with the being of the natural world, which is the concern of the empirical sciences. Logic explains the relation of being to these different spheres of nature and morality. In respect to *Ethik des reinen Willens*, Logic has a methodological function for ethics. At this point, Cohen diverges from Kant's philosophy and introduces the completely new idea of the hypothesis. The ground of what ought is not an absolute (and physical) ground, but it is a hypothetical ground. “Die Grundlagen sind Grundlegungen. Die Tätigkeit des Legens eines Grundes setzt das Objekt voraus, dem der Grund zu Legen sei.” (Cohen, 1904, 81) Logic has a methodological function towards the being of what ought. Logic helps us to lay the ground of truth by means of hypothesis (ὑπόθεσις is *Grundlegung*).

Truth is never the agreement of object to intellect. Truth is never a finished product of logic. Truth is never the treasure, but always the treasure seeker, says Cohen (Cohen, 1904, 87). Truth is always a search for truth. This is what logic and ethics share with one another. Logic makes our understanding pure, while ethics makes our will pure. The quest for purity is the reason why things appear to our understanding. Only in unclarity and search for clarity are things given to our intellect. “Sie sind nur scheinbar gegeben. Die Reinheit erst bringt sie an den Tag. Nur im Dämmerlichte des Problems und des Vorwurfs scheinen sie gegeben zu sein.” (Cohen, 1904, 89) All things come to the foreground because of their unclarity. In terms of ethics, it is the concept of man that appears unclearly and non-distinctly. The pure will, in search of truth, has to clarify the concept of man. It has to reveal a pure concept of man that was initially impure. The purity of a concept can only be willed by a will that is itself pure. The purity of the will lies in the reconceptualization of truth to the will to truth. In logical terms, the pure will is a will to truth. As such we can infer that the pure will is truth, as a search for truth.

If we want to understand truth, we depend on the certainty of the existence of a hypothesis. It is certain that truth is something yet unclear, but willed to become clear. It is certain that our understanding depends on a hypothesis by

means of which we are able to breach unclarity or impurity. It is certain that there is a will to or search for truth. Truth is not what is clear, but what becomes clear or what is willed to be clear.

The hypothesis that guides our will opposes the absolute idea that guides Kant's formal will. Cohen's understanding of practical reason is different from Kant. Cohen agrees with Kant that practical reason is always directed towards the 'good', but the idea of the good is never a fixed and a universal maxim. The idea of the good is always a hypothesis. What is good is unclear, but is willed to become clear. Under the condition of reinterpreting the understanding of truth, Cohen meets the flaw of Kant's formal will, that is, the will being limited by reason. The hypothesis becomes an alternative to a fixed rational product, i.e. a maxim, which limits the will to a truth that is itself a fixed object. Cohen argues that the truth is never fixed, and always a search for truth.

#### **IV. What is Cohen's concept of the will?**

Cohen gives in *Die Ethik des reinen Willens* a concept of the pure will, by describing a whole array of elements that make the will pure. I will describe the most important ones, namely the *Handlung* (act), the *Tendenz* (tendency), the *Vorsatz* (intent/motivation), the *Affekt* (affect), and *Selbstbewusstsein* (self-consciousness).

According to Cohen, pure understanding and pure will are the same. The pure will is prescriptive or prophetic. It does not say what its goal is going to be or what is going to result/occur, but it says how something is going to begin. The understanding inspires our will. It is the source of the intention to do something good. Cohen agrees with Kant on the prescriptive character of the understanding. For Kant, the goodness of the will lies in the *Gesinnung* (disposition), the categorical imperative to do good, while the result can be whatever it may be. Cohen argues that the understanding is not rational or descriptive, and does not say what its object is. For Cohen, the will differs from thinking as thinking always results in an object, while willing always results in an act. This is the reason why Cohen disagrees with Kant's *Gesinnungsethik*, which is not concerned with the result of the will. Kant's disposition is only focused on an object, while Cohen claims that the will should be connected to an act (Cohen, 1904, 177). Kant's will is a will towards a universal moral law, while Cohen's will is a will towards a moral act.

The method of purity or hypothesis produces our concept of the pure will. This method is not invented by our faculty of thinking and consequently implemented by our will. It is rather the character of the will itself, a will that anticipates purity. Instead of a disposition to do good, Cohen talks about a tendency to do good. Kant himself discussed in *Der Streit der Fakultäten* the question whether the human race is constantly progressing. He argues that there is a universal moral tendency among man towards the ideal and moral. The French Revolution had shown to Kant that proponents and opponents alike share a universal and disinterested enthusiasm for a better future (Kant, 1916, 397). Cohen argues in line with Kant's ideas that there is a tendency towards

goodness, which is the origin of our moral will. When Cohen explains that a pure will requires an affect (that moves our will) and an understanding (that motivates our will), he comes to the conclusion that the affect and understanding are initially a result of our will. The origin of our will therefore lies in something different than affect and understanding. The origin of our will lies in the tendency towards goodness. The tendency is the origin of the movement of the will (Cohen, 1904, 127). The tendency is not just an uncontrollable passion or affect, but it is a pure affect. According to Cohen, the fact that this tendency anticipates goodness is the prime condition of all purity (Cohen, 1904, 134).

What is the pure affect that wills our moral progress? “Es ist kein fremdes Element des Denkens welches diese Mehrheit an ihr hervorbringt; sondern es ist ihr eigener Trieb und der Begriff dieses Triebes, der diesen Fortschritt in ihr hervorruft.” (Cohen, 1904, 133) There is a concept, being part of the inclination that anticipates goodness. This concept reveals itself in the act of the will. The fact that a concept, a sort of intuition of goodness, is hidden in the tendency makes the tendency a pure affect, and the precondition of all purity (Cohen, 1904, 134). The tendency is continuous. If it would not be continuous, we would call the inclination to goodness only a desire and not an affect. A desire for goodness fulfills itself in a one-time act. A pure affect or tendency, on the contrary, fulfills itself in its continuity. The act that follows the tendency always re-awakens the tendency.

The tendency moves us from within, but there is also a movement that externalizes itself in the act that follows the will. This externalized movement establishes both a *Willensgefühl* (feeling) and a *Vorstellung* (representation) of what we have willed. In other words, it establishes an affect and a motif, which stimulate and motivate a new will. The affect is that what moves our will. It comprises all our *Gemütsbewegungen*, that is, all manifestations of our pathos. The affect is an independent faculty, independent from the thinking faculty and independent from that what motivates the will (Cohen, 1904, 111). Cohen proceeds to adduce the traditional terminology to describe the character of the will, namely the Latin word *Voluntas*, which he equates to Kant's *Gesinnung*. By *Gesinnung* Cohen means the sole element of thinking in the faculty of willing. Cohen wants to make sure that the will is not the same as thinking. He wants to be sure that thinking does not determine the will. It is not our thinking that determines the will, but our action. The goal of the moral act motivates our will. “Der Vorsatz geht über die Absicht hinaus, und in die Richtung der Tat über.” (Cohen, 1904, 117) The *Vorsatz* that motivates the will is not simply the same as the rational plan or the *Absicht*, because the *Vorsatz* is directed at the act.

Both affect and motif constitute the will, and make sure that it results in an act. According to Cohen, the act makes us conscious of the will. This is simultaneously also a consciousness of the ‘I’ or the subject that wills. Cohen argues that consciousness of the subject is self-consciousness. This self-consciousness does not belong to the sphere of thinking, but merely to the will, as it is not a logical self-consciousness of the self as object, but self-consciousness of the self as subject. This subject is not opposed to an object, but initially opposed to the other. The other is the ‘not-I’ that is the origin of our

self-consciousness. Although similar to Fichte's formula, the 'not-I' is always another subject, and never a natural or physical thing external to us. The ethical other is the condition for our ethical self (Cohen, 1904, 201). Our self-consciousness is according to Cohen always a consciousness of our self as man that is part of the state. Our conception of the 'I' always symbolizes the 'I' of everyone: of me and my neighbor. Self-consciousness is consciousness of the pure concept of man.

Our self-consciousness is according to Cohen grounded by the other, and is that what motivates a new pure will. It is not the love for the other (love for thy neighbor) that is the prime cause of our pure will. For Cohen, love is an affect that might stimulate our pure will, but never motivates our will. Only that what motivates our will makes our will autonomous and therefore pure. It is this motivation that makes ethics different from religion (Cohen, 1904, 205). For religion love is the most important expression or judgment. But religion does not transform love into a concept. Love is for Cohen an affect by means of which there can arise a hypothetical concept of man, that is, a man of the state that loves his neighbors. Religion believes that love unites one with the other. Cohen demonstrates that systematic ethics, guided by the pure will, is different from religion, because it has self-consciousness that unites one with the other instead of faith.

Cohen conceives of a will that is pure by the tendency that moves it and by the self-consciousness that motivates it. The tendency, as the pure form of the affect, materializes the will. Self-consciousness, as pure understanding of the will, purifies the will. Yet, I am struggling with Cohen's concept of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness makes man, according to Cohen, autonomous. Does autonomy make the pure will formal? In the next section, I will explain how the autonomy of self-consciousness is grounded in the freedom of the will. As such, self-consciousness is dependent on, but not the same as the freedom of the will.

## **V. What is the relation of religion to ethics, and freedom to autonomy?**

In "Autonomie und Freiheit", a short essay published in the *Jüdische Schriften*, but written in 1900, four years before the publication of *Ethik des reinen Willens*, Cohen distinguishes autonomy from freedom, as autonomy is the principle of ethics and freedom the principle of religion. Religion and ethics have in common that they are about morality. Morality is their nature. Yet, ethics makes morality scientific, while religion does not. As a result there arises a distinction between autonomy and freedom, which is "der historische Ursprungsbegriff der Autonomie." (Cohen, 1924, 37) Autonomy belongs to the newly developed sphere of ethics, a scientific sphere. Autonomy has its origin in the concept of freedom, as the independence of the soul from the material world. For Kant, it signifies the independence of our consciousness, or thinking capacity, from the material world. For Cohen, autonomy denominates our self-consciousness. The autonomy of self-consciousness enables us to independently motivate the will. In *Ethik des reinen Willens*, Cohen adapts the

interpretation of autonomy by Kant. For Kant, autonomy or *Selbstgesetzgebung* is the imposing of a fixed rational law on oneself. Autonomy is the principle of our thinking capacity or our consciousness. For Cohen, autonomy or *Selbstgesetzgebung* is the act of imposing a law on oneself. The law is never a finished product, but always a law that is hypothetical and still has to become. The law has to be willed. The willing of law requires a free will. Autonomy is grounded in freedom.

While autonomy develops itself out of the strains of religion into the scientific sphere, freedom remains a principle of religion. Freedom is the freedom of the soul, that is, the freedom of the will (Cohen, 1924, 39). Freedom is limited to the will. It is an ideal and not a physical reality. This does not entail that freedom does not exist. Freedom is for Cohen a Messianic idea. This means that freedom is an eternal task. Freedom has to be willed, and in being willed the hypothetical becomes an ideal truth. Freedom is the eternal task of willing. Freedom is a power and at the same time a task (Cohen, 1904, 298). The reality of freedom is not in the represented idea, but in the process of idealizing, in which we build the content of the love for God. "Und die Selbidealisation ist es, welche die Freiheit vollzieht." (Cohen, 1924, 41)

Autonomy only relates to our self-consciousness, and thus to that what motivates the will to create law. Autonomy is the source of the creation of law for oneself. Freedom relates to the will in its complete form, that is, it relates to the pure will that is motivated by self-consciousness and stimulated by an affect. Freedom is the source of the act (Cohen, 1904, 302). Freedom is the absolute source of all ethical behavior. Cohen hangs on to both autonomy and freedom in *Ethik des reinen Willens*. As a result, the fine line between ethics and religions seems to dissolve. Yet, the religious concept of freedom and of God can never be presupposed in ethics. Ethics has to develop its own concept of freedom and God (Holzhey, 2004, 30). Cohen, thereby, maintains the differences between religion and ethics. For religion, God is the source of morality. Therefore, morality belongs to another world than that of man. Furthermore, for religion, the affect of love unites one with the other. On the contrary, for ethics, man is the source of morality. Not the affect of love, but man's self-consciousness, in which one is already united with the other, motivates the will to be moral. Self-consciousness is the primal motif of ethics and must be the primal motif of the pure will (Cohen, 1904, 202).

In *Ethik des reinen Willens*, Cohen brings the two spheres of autonomy and freedom together. He speaks of two levels. There is the first level of ethics – of the pure will together with the act and self-consciousness. To this level belongs the autonomy of self-consciousness. Furthermore, there is the ground floor, or the foundation on which ethics is built. This is the level of freedom (Cohen, 1904, 368). Freedom, as I said, is the freedom of the soul or the freedom of the will. For Cohen, freedom is a messianic ideal. What is an ideal? Cohen explains that the ideal is not the same as an idea or *ideatum*. The idea belongs to the faculty of thinking. The ideal, on the contrary, belongs entirely to the faculty of the will. The ideal is the being of the will, and the will is the being of the ideal. In other words, the ideal and the pure will are the same (Cohen, 1904, 402-403).

The ideal is the being of what ought, or the *Sein des Sollens*. It is not the Being of a natural being, but the Being of ethical man. The ideal is the hypothesis. It is a request that is directed at the eternal. It is a request at the eternity of the will and its act. It is a request for eternal moral behavior. The ideal is a messianic goal, not one that we are going to realize by means of our will, but one that is a goal in itself. The ideal is realized in the eternal project of the will. The messianic goal is not an object, but it is the will itself, directed at an act (Cohen, 1904, 404). In that sense, Cohen's will is part of a *Gesinnungsethik*. The ideal is the disposition of the will. This disposition distinguishes itself from the formal disposition of Kant, which is limited by reason and directed at an object, namely the law. Cohen's disposition is informal as the will is purely will and is not limited by reason. The will is not directed at an object, but at an act. The act makes the will a pure will.

The ideal is directed at the future. How are we going to realize the ideal in the future? To answer this question we need to reinterpret the meaning of the future. Realization of the ideal in the future does not mean that we are, for instance, going to realize world peace and eternal life. Eternity does not have the meaning of a future of unending time. Eternity has an ethical meaning for Cohen. It relates to the will, which may never come to an end. Eternity is for Cohen the unending progress of ethical work (Cohen, 1904, 388). The reality of the eternity of the ideal is the act. The act or the ethical work is the ideal. Cohen compares it to a work of art. Art cannot solely be an imagination or an impression. The imagination has to be worked out. It has to be transformed into a work of art. This work of art is not the idea of the artist anymore, but it is the ideal. Similarly, the work of ethics is the ideal. In the act alone the ideal attains reality. Even though we realize the ideal, the work of ethics remains always unfinished. The ideal remains an eternal task.

To conclude this section, the autonomy of self-consciousness is grounded in the freedom of the will. The freedom of the will consists in the ideal. It is the ideal that purifies the form of the will. Together with the tendency, the ideal is the being of the pure and dynamic will.

## **VI. What makes the will dynamic?**

First of all, the will has become dynamic through a *Willensgefühl*, which becomes the affect of a new will. The affect that Kant mentions in *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, has now made its entrance into the system of philosophy, in Cohen's *Ethik des reinen Willens*. The affects are all manifestations of feeling that stimulate our will. They are the motor of our will. They are simply that what make the will dynamic.

Cohen talks more philosophically about the affect, namely in terms of a pure affect, that is, a tendency. The tendency signifies the continuity of the affect. The tendency is not just a one-time stimulant, but the power that enables our eternal moral labor. The pure affect is also a disposition, as it is not concerned with the realization of an idea. The tendency of the will is only concerned with the willing itself. By willing man realizes the ideal of eternal moral work. The pure affect is

the ideal, the pure concept of the affect. The pure affect is the being of the will, the *Sein des Sollens*. It is the continuity of the tendency, or the eternity of the ideal of moral work that makes the will dynamic. It makes the will dynamic in philosophical terms, as the dynamism is not simply the power of one affect, but the continuous power of the will. This continuous power of the will signifies our freedom, or our responsibility to be moral.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Under the condition of the reinterpretation of truth, there comes into being a concept of the ideal that replaces the concept of a practical idea. It is not the idea (intellectus) that agrees with the object (res), but the ideal (the will) that agrees with the act of the subject. The agreement of will and act is a continuous project, made possible by the tendency, the pure affect of the will. The concept of tendency makes Cohen's concept of the will a vital one. The will has not just become a will that moves through an affect, it has become a pure will that moves towards an act. This act evokes a feeling and a representation that stimulate and motivate a new will. In other words, there is a tendency towards goodness, or a continuity of the power of the will. It is this power of the will and the eternal task of the will that make the will free and dynamic.



## The Spirit of the Will

### I. Beyond formality?

Have Schelling and Cohen properly solved the flaws of Kant's concept of the will? I believe they have. Yet, some issues have popped up along the way and have to be taken away in this chapter. One of these issues is Schelling's concept of the will of the ground, which may not be classified as a pure will. Another issue is Cohen's concept of self-consciousness and its relation to the ideal. To what extent can self-consciousness be part of a pure concept of the will? In this chapter I will reassess the visions of Schelling and Cohen in relation to Kant's formal will. Consequently I will be able to draw some final conclusions on how we can truly overcome formalism. I will conclude that the ultimate being of a dynamic will is the spirit. This conclusion has consequences for the discipline of philosophy. I will shortly discuss these consequences and suggest some themes that I believe should be further inquired.

### II. Evaluating Schelling and Cohen

I want to assess Schelling and Cohen in relation to their ideas on that what stimulates and motivates the will. In this thesis I have also referred to the distinction between matter and form of the will. The formal will of Kant lacks the matter to come into action. In other words, it lacks the power that stimulates the will. The formal will of Kant also has a form that appears obstructive to the dynamism of the will. The form of the formal will is practical reason. Practical reason motivates the formal will, but also limits it. In other words, the formal will of Kant needs another form that allows the motivation of the will unlimitedly. In *Ethik des reinen Willens*, Cohen has introduced the division of motor and motivation. The motivation of the will constitutes the content of the will and the motor the affect. "Die Aufgabe bildet den geistigen Inhalt; den seelischen Schwung gibt der Affekt" (Cohen, 1904, 190) Similar to Cohen, Schelling has identified two types of will. The will of the ground, or Yearning, could be seen as that what moves the will without understanding. The will of the ground is pure power, pure motor. The will of love, on the contrary, is pure understanding and could be seen as that what motivates the will.

What are the merits and failures in the analysis of the will by Schelling and Cohen? In the preceding two chapters I have dealt with Schelling's and Cohen's solutions to Kant's formal concept of the will, and therefore with the merits of their analysis. In this chapter I first want to focus on Cohen's identification of two different grounds (*Motor und Motiv*) of the will and Schelling's identification of two different wills. Why couldn't they identify one will with one ground? The philosophical will to truth directs my search for a concept of the will that demonstrates the ultimate unity of the pure will.

Why do Schelling and Cohen make the division? I believe that the division can be explained by Cohen's drive to incorporate Kant's concept of affect, and by Schelling's drive to solve the theodicy. I cannot prove the influence of Kant's *Streit der Fakultäten* on Cohen's *Ethik des reinen Willens*. For me it is however evident that the introduction of the notion of affect in *Streit der Fakultäten* demanded a complete incorporation of this notion in a pure concept of the will. Schelling's division functions to solve the problem of the theodicy. Schelling believes he can answer the question, 'why does a good God permit evil?', by reinterpreting freedom and the will. Schelling describes the will of love, corresponding to God's primal will, which can only do goodness. He also describes man's will of the ground, which cannot avoid doing evil. God's freedom and omnipotence would never allow this evil. Yet, man's freedom to do good and evil does not compromise God's freedom and omnipotence. In other words, Cohen's incorporation of the notion of the affect, and Schelling's solution to the theodicy are the advantages of the division.

What are the disadvantages of identifying two different wills or two features of the will? The problem of Schelling's identification of two wills is the inability to establish the qualifications of the will. If the will of love meets the qualifications of the will, the will of the ground may contradict these characteristics and be disqualified as will. I question whether we could qualify the will of the ground as will. How can the will of the ground be a will if it has nothing to do with understanding? Schelling and Cohen have both defended the claim that a will without understanding is simple desire. The will of the ground is not a desire. Schelling claims that it foresees understanding. However, the will of the ground lacks the purity of the Yearning. The Yearning, which is the same capacity as the will of the ground, is coeternal with God (Schelling, 2011, 31). It is this eternity that makes the Yearning philosophically classifiable as will. The purity of the will is grounded in the principle of eternity. This can also be seen in the continuity of Cohen's concept of tendency. As the will of the ground is not eternal, it does not meet the qualifications of the pure will. The same counts for Cohen's concept of the affect, which is in itself impure, as it has nothing to do with understanding. It is the continuity of the affect however, which makes it a tendency, and therefore qualified to be the ground of the pure will.

The purification is partly a solution for the impurity of the will of the ground and the affect. The function of the will of the ground and the affect is largely to demonstrate the source of dynamic power of the will. By grounding the will of the ground in the Yearning, and the affect in the tendency, both Schelling and Cohen allow a pure or philosophical concept of that what makes the will dynamic. Both Yearning and tendency have a lot in common with the will of love and the ideal. What do they all share with one another and what is the ultimate being of the will? What do the will of love and the ideal share? What is the relation between Yearning and Tendency? What do will of the ground and will of love share, or the affect and the motif? Nothing, but what do will of love and Yearning, or Ideal and Tendency share? I will answer these questions in the second section of this chapter, and come to the conclusion that spirit is the ultimate being of the dynamic will.

A second problem in the analysis of the will is Schelling's concept of freedom to do good and evil. Freedom is only related to the will. How is this freedom connected to the will of the ground, if the will of the ground does not meet the qualifications of the will? True, the will of the ground has the capacity to will both good and evil. Yet, the will of the ground has no understanding. There is no pure understanding in the will of the ground. Neither is the will of ground self-conscious. I will argue that consciousness of the capacity to do good and evil does inhibit the will of the ground and results in an absolute non-will. Only logically speaking could I call the will of the ground free in its capacity to do good and evil. Ethically speaking, the will of the ground lacks the understanding that makes a will free. Ethics should deal with a pure concept of the will, and for that reason also a pure concept of freedom. As I will show in the second section of this chapter, freedom is grounded in the spirit.

A third problem is Cohen's concept of self-consciousness. Cohen claims that self-consciousness is pure understanding and motivates the pure will. I believe that only the ideal can motivate the pure will. Self-consciousness inhibits the pure will. It can only formally speaking be the cause of our autonomy and the capacity to legislate. Non-formally speaking, self-consciousness does not contribute to the pure and dynamic will, but only inhibits it.

### **III. The ultimate being of the will**

Both Yearning and tendency have a lot in common with the will of love and the ideal. What do they all share with one another and what is the ultimate being of the will? Let's start with comparing the ideal to the will of love. The ideal is like the will of love pure understanding. This understanding is not the rational understanding of the world of binary oppositions or understanding in terms of self-consciousness, but understanding in positive terms, that is, an understanding of unity.

The will of love is a free and understanding will. Its act is the revelation of the Spirit of God. The will of love is not a capacity of mathematical necessity, and has neither mere pure reason in itself, but it is a capacity with personality and spirit "(wie wir den vernünftigen Autor vom geistreichen wohl unterscheiden)." (Schelling, 2011, 67) How does Schelling distinguish the purely rational from the spirit? The spirit makes the will of love ultimately dynamic, because the will of love, through the spirit, begets the one ground of existence. Reason on the contrary cannot make the will dynamic, because it can only distinguish, and see the world in opposites. It can only distinguish ground from existence. Another example, reason would conceive of life in terms of one's eventual death. Reason cannot grasp the positive nature of life; it cannot grasp the eternal ideal of life. Human reason cannot grasp what we share with God – eternity – and in that sense cannot understand what it means to be created in His image. The spirit, on the contrary, is able to understand the unity of the world, because it observes the world from the perspective of love. Love enables us to control the ground of existence. Love gives birth to existence forever. Through love, God gives birth to

Himself, and man gives birth to man. Love permits the unity of ground and existence.

The ideal, as the being of the pure will, is the same as the will of love and its spirit. The ideal is the messianic spirit. Cohen's Jewish background makes him conclude that the Messiah is still to come, and that His arrival is an ideal that will never be a reality. The meaning of messianism lies in the unity of mankind, that is, the ideal our moral activity is always directed at. The meaning of Israelite monotheism is founded on this messianism (Cohen, 1904, 214). The unity of God means, according to the Jewish prophets, the unity of mankind. Cohen calls it messianism, because the unity of mankind is an ideal that will never be realized. The messianic ideal remains a goal forever. Ideally the Israelite God will be universal, and not just a God of the Israelites. However, the image of the people of Israel, being separated from the rest of the world, suffering from the injustice that is done to them, is inseparable from the ideal to be freed from this suffering, their sinfulness, and detachment (Cohen, 1966, 312). Messianism is the search for the spirit and the unity of mankind. It is never the realization of redemption. In that sense, the Messiah or ideal is only a promise, prophecy, or a sign of what is going to happen.

The difference between Schelling and Cohen becomes apparent in their religious thought. Schelling's Christian background permits the idea of the fulfillment of redemption. In his philosophy we see how the will of love can overcome evil and establish a ground for pure existence. Through the will of love man is able to control this ground. "Das Ende der Offenbarung ist daher die Ausstossung des Bösen vom Guten, die Erklärung desselben als gänzlicher Unrealität." (Schelling, 2011, 77) The end of revelation would indicate the coming of redemption. And we could argue that Schelling anticipates redemption when he talks about the end of revelation as the moment when evil becomes completely non-actual. Evil becomes separated from goodness and no longer exists as evil. Evil remains behind as a desire that wants to become actuality, but always remains potentiality (Schelling, 2011, 77). Ultimately, the will of love will enable man to attain the spirit (the Holy Ghost) completely, which before was only a promise, as the Yearning is merely a will that foresees the spirit. The will of love is the will guided by the spirit. The will of love installs our redemption. It separates evil from goodness forever. It enables us to control the ground of existence.

Cohen's idea of redemption in messianism is different. Firstly, redemption is never fulfilled. For Cohen there is the messianic ideal and its eternal task of moral labor. Freedom is to be willed rather than being a moment of controlling one's ground of existence. Secondly, Cohen's idea of redemption is the idea of unity of mankind. Schelling's will of love does not establish this unity of mankind, but only establishes a unity of one's individual existence with the ground of existence. As such there is a difference between the ideal and the will of love. The will of love and the ideal share the spirit or pure understanding with one another. The spirit is the being of the will of love, and the spirit is the ideal and the being of the pure will. The will of love and the ideal differ in terms of what the idea of redemption looks like. Schelling's will of love establishes a one-time

redemption for the individual, and the ideal never realizes redemption of mankind, but keeps on idealizing the redemption.

What is the relation between Yearning and tendency? Yearning and tendency are both capacities of the will towards understanding, which is not yet there. Yearning cannot create unity, like the will of love. Yearning rather exemplifies the lack of unity of ground and existence, and thus the lack of understanding that enables this unity. Yearning is a yearning for understanding. Yearning is an 'ahnender Wille'. It is a 'will in a will' that foresees understanding. Both Yearning and tendency are eternal capacities. Schelling defies that the Yearning is coeternal with God (Schelling, 2011, 31). Tendency would not be coeternal with God, but is in ethical terms a continuous capacity. Tendency is like Yearning also a desire for understanding. Cohen explains that the tendency is a pure concept of the affect. The affect is pure because there is understanding hidden in the tendency. There is a concept, being part of the desire, that anticipates goodness, and reveals itself in the act of the will. The fact that a concept, a sort of intuition of goodness, is hidden in the tendency makes the tendency a pure affect, and the precondition of all purity (Cohen, 1904, 134).

A desire for goodness fulfills itself in a one-time act. A pure affect or tendency, on the contrary, fulfills itself in its continuity. A tendency does not really fulfill itself, but in its continuity. Similarly, Yearning does not realize its goal of gaining understanding. Yearning is also an eternal process. In that sense, Yearning and the tendency share the Jewish messianic character of the promise of redemption. Yearning and tendency share the promise of understanding. In both cases does the spirit or understanding still have to reveal itself.

What do will of the ground and will of love share, or the affect and the motif? Nothing much. They signify the distinctions that Schelling and Cohen made, and which I find problematic. Yet, we can conceive of affect and will of the ground in pure concepts, as tendency and Yearning. What do will of love and Yearning share? And what do Ideal and Tendency share? They all share the aspect of spirit or understanding. While tendency and Yearning foresee the spirit, the will of love and the Ideal are the manifestations of spirit. Yearning and tendency are both capacities in which the spirit is still potential. There is nothing that precedes or grounds a potential. There is only the will of love and the primal will that succeed the Yearning, as they actualize the power of love. The ideal, similarly, is an actualization of the spirit.

#### **IV. How should we understand the spirit?**

The spirit cannot be understood in terms of thinking and self-consciousness. Above, I have already described how Schelling takes distance from the negative philosophy of reason, and how the will of love and its spirit belong to a positive philosophy that is able to think in terms of unity. In *Ethik des reinen Willens*, Cohen takes self-consciousness out of the logical sphere of rational thought and connects it to the will. Still, Cohen's concept of self-consciousness is different from the (messianic) spirit. Cohen describes self-consciousness as consciousness of the self, as having a pure concept of the self.

According to Cohen, self-consciousness arises when the will results in an act. In the act we become conscious, not of the self as logical object that thinks, but of the self as an ethical subject that wills. The origin of our self-consciousness is not the (Fichtean) objective non-I, but the subjective non-I, that is, the other, or our neighbor, who puts a check on us. The other makes us aware of what we may do and may not do. Our self-awareness is consequently an awareness of the subject that is part of the state, the subject that acts morally in relation to the other.

Cohen tells us that self-consciousness makes us autonomous. Through a pure concept of the self, man is able to legislate. Even though I do not disagree with this theory, I do want to note that self-consciousness does not make us free. Freedom is the essence of the spirit, as Schelling has demonstrated in the concept of the will of love and Cohen in the concept of the ideal. Both Schelling and Cohen tell us that freedom has nothing to do with self-consciousness. First of all, Cohen disconnects freedom from self-consciousness, and connects it to the will and the messianic ideal. Freedom of the will is the freedom of eternal moral labor. Self-consciousness is instead connected to the concept of autonomy. Second of all, Schelling shows that we cannot connect self-consciousness to freedom. For Schelling there is the freedom of controlling the ground of existence, and the capacity for good and evil. The first concept of freedom could have nothing to do with self-consciousness, because the controlling of the ground of existence is a result of the will of love and its spirit.<sup>9</sup> Self-consciousness, in the German Idealist terms, belongs to the sphere of thinking and not to the will. The second concept of freedom has neither anything to do with self-consciousness. In chapter two I connected the freedom to do good and evil to the will of the ground, which has the freedom to will good and evil. Yet, the will of the ground is not self-conscious of this capacity. If man would be conscious of his capacity to do good and evil, he would not have a will of the ground anymore.

If I would become aware of my capacity to do good and evil, my will of the ground would immediately cease to be free. Self-consciousness is an obstruction to the will. Logical self-consciousness makes us unfamiliar with the external world. Think for instance of making a next step down the stairs. What happens is that one will feel uncomfortable with making a next step. Heidegger has explained this phenomenon in *Sein und Zeit*. He explained that we do not need thought and self-consciousness, because we are already familiar with taking the next step. The staircase is *zuhanden* (ready-at-hand), and we don't have to consider the nature of the steps of the staircase. On the other hand, ethical self-consciousness makes us unfamiliar with our existence and the existence of others. In this chapter, I want to explain what it means to be unfamiliar and familiar with our existence and the existence of others. I want to show that self-consciousness makes us unfamiliar, while the spirit makes us familiar with our

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<sup>9</sup> Hegel's rational concept of spirit allows the connection of spirit with self-consciousness and freedom. Schelling's mystical concept of spirit, on the contrary, does not allow this connection.

existence and the existence of others. Our ethical self-consciousness does not motivate our pure will to act good towards the other; it rather inhibits the pure will, because one becomes uncertain. Isn't it frightening to have a tendency to do good, but simultaneously also a capacity to do evil? I believe that a state of ethical self-consciousness turns our radical freedom or moral openness into a moral emptiness. It turns our will into a not-will.

What does it mean to will the ground of our existence and to will the eternal task of moral labor? In other words, what does it mean to have a will of love and to have an ideal? It means that we have faith in our own existence and have faith in the existence of others. While Heidegger and Levinas explain in logical terms the already familiarity with the surrounding world and the Other, I explain the already faithful relationship with my self and others. This faithful relationship shows how we are different from any other being. Some philosophers (Schopenhauer and Rosenzweig) have argued that our capacity to commit suicide makes us different from any other being.<sup>10</sup> In that sense we could also argue that our radical freedom to do evil (and also good) makes us different from any other being. I believe that the spirit of the will makes us human and different from any other being, because it is the capacity by which we choose to will goodness rather than evil. Schelling's will of love and Cohen's ideal exemplify the spirit of the will. Schelling's will of love shows how we have faith in our self. To have a will of love means that one has faith in one's ground of existence. Cohen's pure will shows how we have faith in the other. To have an ideal means that one has faith in the establishment of an agreement, one has faith in the establishment of ethical truth, between people. The ideal is the faith in moral unity of mankind.

I interpret the word spirit in terms of subjective and intersubjective confidence. Confidence, or human faith, is the ground of our ethical behavior. The confidence in the ground of our existence is the foundation of ethical behavior. Christians would say that the biggest commandment is the love for God, and the second commandment, equal to the first, the love for your neighbor like you love yourself. Here they take for granted that we all love our self. The precondition for the love for the other and the love for God, is self-love. Man first needs the will of love to have faith in the ground of his existence. Then he is able to idealize and have faith in the other. Yet, the ultimate ground of the spirit of the pure will is the love of my parents or custodians, who are the first to have faith in me and the ground of my existence. The faith in oneself is grounded in the faith

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<sup>10</sup> "Der Selbstmord ist nicht der natürliche Tod, sondern der widernatürliche schlechtweg. Die grauenhafte Fähigkeit zum Selbstmord unterscheidet den Menschen von allen Wesen, die wir kennen und die wir nicht kennen" (Rosenzweig, 1976, 4) Schopenhauer, likewise, claims that suicide is the highest step a human being can make. However, the act of committing suicide is a confirmation of the will-to-live, which rather should be denied. The freedom to destroy oneself in order to free oneself from suffering is an illusion. From that standpoint, Rosenzweig argues that man's freedom lies in the affirmation of life, and to rise up out of the suffering. I support that argument.

of the other in you. The faith of your parents puts a check (*Anstoß*) on you. This check does not inhibit the desires and powers of a child, but actualizes the child's will of love, that is, the faith in one's self.

## V. Everyday examples of the spirit of the will

The spirit of the will is not something that we simply experience and take heed of. It rather guides our will unnoticed, or is to be experienced as the power that defeated its opposite – the non-will. I have considered the spirit of the will as the power that has taken me out of my anxieties, nervousness and other moments of chaos in which there is absolutely no will. "Aber die Philosophie leugnet diese Ängste der Erde. Sie reißt über das Grab, das sich dem Fuß vor jedem Schritt auftut. Sie läßt den Leib dem Abgrund Verfallen sein, aber die freie Seele flatter darüber hinweg." (Rosenzweig, 1976, 3) The free spirit floats off in the wind, above the ground where anxiety and chaos rules. We experience the spirit of the will when we observe from the heights of the sky the anxiety and chaos that is below and behind us.

As I explained above, the ultimate foundation of the will is the spirit. The will is grounded in man's confidence in the ground of existence. This confidence may not be noticed when it is there. The lack of confidence, on the contrary, will be noticed, because the disunity of the soul, or the disunity of ground and existence, will result in the trembling of the body. The lack of confidence entails the stagnation of the will. In fear and loathing there is lack of confidence. Therefore, I have experienced moments of fear and chaos as moments of the non-will. There may still be a Yearning or a tendency that urges us to do something, but our lack of spirit makes the will completely motionless. The energy of the Yearning and the tendency will clash with the lack of spiritual motivation. In heavy trembling, my body and mind, ground and existence, split in two.

I have also experienced that modern life is full of pressure from the need to be active. Moments of emptiness, such as boredom express themselves different in modern times. We can try to relax, but still feel a need to do something useful, whatever that illusion may be. In modern times, passivity can be felt as a hardship. The emancipated individual needs to do something to overcome the neuroticism of the passive individual. Reason can absolutely be of no help. Neither can modern entertainment and technology be of enduring help. Only the pure will of love is able to get us out of this nothingness. The pure will of love constantly regenerates and helps us to be active, constantly in a renewed way.

Passivity shows that the will needs constant regeneration. Only the will of love and the pure will can guarantee this regeneration. The will of love perpetuates the will by willing the one ground. The pure will is continuous because of the ideal and the tendency. An example of the dynamism of the will of love is its capacity to overcome the emptiness of fear, in which there is no confidence in one's self. The will of love, although grounded in the love of others, overcomes the lack of confidence. The will of love has faith in the ground of



existence. Another example is the pure will, which has the capacity to overcome the emptiness of chaos. The pure will searches for truth and in willing the eternal task of moral labor it reveals constantly anew an agreement between people.

The spirit of the will of love and the pure will establishes the unity of the individual with the self and the other. The will of love establishes the unity of the individual with the self. The will of love establishes the freedom of being in your element. The pure will, on the other hand, establishes the unity with the other. It establishes the freedom of feeling at home in an environment with other people. The spirit is the embodiment of unity, willed by the will of love and the pure will.

## **VI. Consequences for philosophy**

Modern philosophy had to leave traditional idealistic philosophy behind, because its idea of truth and being was too static and tyrannical. Schelling and Cohen, however, have demonstrated possibilities for a totally vital idealism. Schelling's idea that being or identity is grounded in the becoming of potential into actuality, or ground into existence, has disqualified the static idea of being as immanence and sameness of object to intellect. Schelling has furthermore brought idealism into the sphere of the will. The will has the power to turn the potential into actuality. Cohen, on the other hand, has shown that truth cannot be grounded in the sphere of logics alone, in which truth is thought to be the correspondence of intellect to object. Truth is brought into the sphere of ethics, in which truth is to be willed, rather than to be thought. The monopoly of thinking over truth has been overcome by the ethical idea that truth is the ideal of the eternal search for truth. Logic has only a methodological function in this search; truth becomes hypothetical and its object becomes man and his moral activity.

Idealistic philosophy that starts from these principles will interpret the role of man in this world differently. Let me discuss a few themes for future research. Schelling's new concept of the identity of pantheism could lead to the reinterpretation of creation. In love for the ground of existence, man creates his own soul, that is, the unity of ground and existence. Idealistically speaking, man does not create the world and physical things, but he creates another kind of substance, namely the soul. The human capacity of the will of love is able to will one ground of existence. The faith in the ground of existence means the unity of existence and ground. The soul, the substance man creates, is the unity of ground and existence. The feeling of being in one's element – in one's substance – is the feeling of the soul after creation.

Furthermore, Cohen's concept of truth may lead to a human concept of revelation. In accordance with Cohen's concept of truth, man does not reveal absolute truth, but he reveals the ideal. Man reveals his search for truth in his eternal moral labor. Ethical truth is not a result of rational or scientific thinking, but a result of the pure will. Willing truth is revelation. We do not reveal an absolute concept of what something is, but we reveal an ideal: the search for an agreement. In this search we start with a hypothesis and end with confidence in this hypothesis. In the phenomenon of the will to truth something potential becomes actual. A potential ideal (hypothesis) becomes an actual ideal.

Something unclear (hypothesis) becomes clear. A hypothesis becomes an ideal, that is, belief in the hypothesis. The phenomenon of the becoming of an ideal is the phenomenon of revelation. Man reveals the spirit, that is, the belief in a hypothetical ground for truth.

Moreover, the concept of freedom by Schelling and Cohen allow a new concept of redemption, also in human terms. According to their concept of freedom, man does not redeem the world of its sins and physical hardships. Man does not install redemption in terms of world peace. But he redeems himself in creation and redeems the other in revelation. Redemption is the freedom of the spirit. It is the freedom of the will of love and the pure will. On the one hand, the will of love establishes the freedom of man that has faith in the ground of his existence. This freedom entails the moment of being in one's element. Freedom is here also the moment of being free of the need to be free. On the other hand, the pure will wills its freedom eternally. The pure will establishes the freedom of man that believes in an ideal, an ideal of willing the eternal task of moral labor. Here it is not the individual, but mankind that is redeemed in the eternal ideal. In relation to mankind, freedom becomes a necessity.

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