Two Concepts of Freedom in Schelling's Freedom Essay

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Abstract

In this paper, I shall argue that in *Philosophical Investigation into the Essence of Human Freedom (*Henceforth referred to as the *Freedom Essay)*, Schelling oscillates between two incompatible concepts of freedom: radical and limited. Radical freedom is spontaneous and identical to the agent's own act. It is founded on undetermined intelligibility and stands outside the theological system's domain. Limited freedom is a decided intelligibility that one-sidedly determines human actions. It is located within the domain of the theological system and meets its requirements. I will make the case that these two concepts of freedom are vulnerable to the charge of arbitrariness. First, I shall argue that equating radical freedom with the agent's own act does not provide determinacy for this concept of freedom. Second, I shall contend that the agent's decision on her intelligibility in limited freedom is undetermined, which consequently renders this freedom undetermined. I will suggest the source of Schelling's oscillation in the *Freedom Essay* is the existence of two incompatible tendencies: a commitment to provide a concept of freedom with unlimited power, and to indwell that freedom in an ordered theological system. I maintain that the simultaneous fulfilment of these two tasks is impossible.

Keywords: Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, two concepts of freedom, radical freedom, limited freedom, Kant, system, arbitrariness, determination.

Contents

Introduction

> [C]onnection of the concept of freedom with the whole of a worldview will likely always remain the object of a necessary task without whose resolution the concept of freedom would teeter while philosophy would be fully without value (SW VII, 338).[1]

In *Philosophical Investigation into the Essence of Human Freedom* (henceforth referred to as *Freedom Essay*), Schelling maintains that freedom is "fundamentally unlimited power" (SW VII, 339). However, the concept of freedom must be investigated in relation to a holistic worldview, in which freedom is "one of the system's ruling center points" (SW VII, 336). This confronts Schelling with an old objection that upholds the incompatibility of freedom and the system (SW VII, 336). Therefore, Schelling attempts to reconcile the individual's unlimited freedom with "some kind of system … in the divine understanding" (SW VII, 337). I suggest that this attempt arises two inconsistent tendencies in the *Freedom Essay*, namely, to account for a concept of spontaneous and unlimited freedom, and indwell that freedom within the order of a theological system. In this paper, this is my main contention that the existence of those two inconsistent tendencies causes Schelling to oscillate between two incompatible concepts of freedom: radical and limited. Radical freedom is spontaneous and identical to the agent's own act. It is founded on undetermined intelligibility and stands outside of the order of the theological system. Limited freedom determines the agent's action. It is based on determined intelligibility and stands in the domain of the theological system.

Schelling's discussion on freedom shares two beliefs with German idealist philosophers, originally established by Kant. First, freedom is intelligible. It is spontaneous, which means an agent is the cause of action and can do what she wills. Thus, freedom cannot be affected by the natural causal order, in which

[1] I will bring Schelling's quotes from F.W.J. Schelling, 2006, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essense of Human Freedom*, Translated by Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt, (Albany: State University of New York Press). To refer to different book sections, I will use the section name in parenthesis, e.g., (SW VII, 338).

everything or every event, including actions, is necessarily determined by preceding things or events. In the contemporary philosophy of freedom, this character is known as the capacity "to do otherwise." This feature of freedom makes the agent morally responsible. Second, freedom cannot be undetermined because that would make freedom arbitrary and contingent. Thus, free will must be determined. However, as the first belief denies external causal determination, free will must be self-determined.

A concept of freedom that is both spontaneous and determined seems contradictory and needs argumentation to justify the nature of that determination. For Kant, free will is rationally determined and leads to morality: the existence of moral law in human life, and its commands for being a better individual, requires an individual to be capable of choosing. Conversely, the existence of freedom results in morality. Thus, there is a reciprocal relation between freedom and morality. Kant maintains that a rational agent would inevitably be moral and determines the categorical imperative as her moral law. Therefore, a free agent is a rational moral agent. This concept of freedom upholds that a moral evil-doer cannot be rational and is, therefore, not free. This means the Kantian concept of freedom does not allow an agent to commit evil freely, and this, consequently, annihilates the agent's moral responsibility; if one is not free to choose, she is not morally imputable. Kant was aware of this deficiency and, in his book, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (henceforth referred to as *Religion*), made a radical shift to argue that freedom can also embrace the possibility of evil. An agent acts according to her maxim. The latter results from her intelligible moral disposition, and the agent is responsible for choosing her moral disposition. However, Kant could not explain how an agent primarily chooses her moral disposition, either good or evil. It remains incomprehensible how a rational agent can choose an evil disposition when rationality inevitably leads to morality. Therefore, Kant's attempt to accommodate freedom with the possibility of evil was unsuccessful.

The Freedom Essay was written against such a background, and idealism is Schelling's backdrop in his investigation into freedom. Schelling endorses the Kantian formal concept of freedom while criticising it for not providing a "real and vital" concept of freedom to accommodate the possibility of evil. In the *Freedom Essay*, Schelling shows his commitment to three main characters of freedom. First, freedom is "the possibility of good and evil" (SW VII, 364). This means that genuine freedom must be open to the possibility of radical evil, an evil rooted in human essence: radical evil exists positively. It is neither the defect or absence of good nor the effect of empirical desires, inclinations, and external incentives. Thus, Schelling refutes the equation of freedom with morality, which abolishes moral imputability. Second,

freedom is spontaneous with "unlimited power." In this sense, it is radical.[2] External causes cannot empirically determine free will. Instead, freedom is intelligible and the cause of human actions. Thus, Schelling affirms the formal concept of Kantian transcendental freedom. Third, freedom must be a "system's ruling centre;" it should stand within the domain of a system. For Schelling, God's understanding is a system. Thus, freedom must meet the requirement of a theological system. In other words, freedom must be saved within God's understanding. Therefore, on the one hand, Schelling embraces the main elements of Kant's idealist formal concept of freedom: intelligibility, self-determination, and spontaneity. On the other hand, he distances himself from Kant and criticises him for reducing freedom to a concept of rational self-determination, which does not accommodate the possibility of evil.

Schelling's first commitment requires the existence of radical evil. However, radical evil should not contradict the concept of immanence. This is the old problem of theology: God is not responsible for evil even though nothing is outside God. Schelling does not follow the tradition that equalises evil with the absence or the defect of good. To accommodate the source of evil in God without attributing evil to God, Schelling renders an ontology of ground as the principle of darkness and unconsciousness, and existence as the principle of light and understanding. In God, the force of the will of existence (universal love) permanently suppresses the force of the will of ground (self-love); therefore, evil cannot emerge. In humans, this is not the case; imbalance or disorder in forces of wills in favour of self-love is possible, which elevates evil. Thus, humans are born with the dark principle, which can never be exhorted. This entails that a source of unconscious propensity to evil is embedded in the human essence. Schelling's ontology provides a satisfying base for radical evil and introduces a concept of evil that "is largely absent in Western tradition."[3] A freedom that encompasses such a possibility of evil is genuine.

However, Schelling's simultaneous commitments to the second and third characteristics of freedom, encompassing radical freedom within a system, are problematic. In Schelling's ontology, divine understanding is a system that suppresses the ground to elevate the universal will, the good. But the ground as the source of evil, and therefore the possibility of freedom, is the *condition* of understanding and ineliminable. Therefore, on the one hand, radical freedom aims to break the domination of the system, and, on the other hand, the system needs to limit radical freedom to promote the good. This relation

[2] In using the adjective 'radical', I seek to denote a kind of freedom that is not determined by the system.
[3] Jason M. Wirth, 2003, "Evil," In The Conspiracy of Life, by Jason M. Wirth, 155-190, (Albany: State University of New York Press), 169.

between radical freedom and the system is the source of tension in Schelling's ontology, resulting in two incompatible concepts of freedom: radical and limited.

In what follows, I will show that in Schelling's first concept of freedom, the Kantian formal concept of freedom combines with the Fichtean concept of self as own act. This is Schelling's novel supplementary to the notion of freedom in German idealism. In radical freedom, the intelligible being of an agent, which is her moral disposition, coincides with her own act. The agent has a concept of her selfhood, which is manifested in her actions, while reciprocally, the self, as a non-isolated being, is identical to the agent's action: what one does is what one is. Furthermore, in this concept of freedom, Schelling's theology provides space for human agency: the human dependence on God mobilises her with freedom, which is God's main character. Human independence from God manifests in unlimited freedom to choose without being constrained by the system of God's understanding. This concept of freedom, firstly, is spontaneous and provides the possibility for good and evil. This way, Schelling distances himself from Kantian rational self-determination, which equates freedom with morality. Therefore, Schelling successfully justifies the first belief of German idealism in freedom. Secondly, Schelling's answer to the manner of determination of free will, the second common concern of German idealists' philosophers, is the unification of one's moral disposition with one's own action. However, I suggest Schelling's first concept of freedom is vulnerable to the objection of arbitrariness, and Schelling's justification for the second belief of German idealism is unsatisfactory. This is because the agent's actions manifest her moral disposition but do not constitute and determine it. We never know why and how an individual chooses to be good or evil, and the notion of self-determination remains unexplained.

In addition, I will argue that Schelling presents the second concept of freedom, limited freedom, in the framework of his theological commitment. The agent's intelligibility, which is her moral disposition, is eternally decided by the agent, and this decision is together with the act of creation. The decided moral disposition determines the agent's moral life and does not change throughout her life; therefore, the moral conversion from fundamentally evil to good, or vice versa, is impossible. Thus, Schelling's second concept of freedom does not meet the condition of spontaneity. However, it seems that the decided intelligibility determines limited freedom. However, I argue the mechanism of the agent's eternal decision on her moral disposition, which is simultaneous with the initial act of creation, is unknown. We don't know how and why an individual chooses her moral disposition as evil or good. Thus, the charge of arbitrariness to the second concept of freedom is also acceptable.

The complexity and inconsistency of Schelling's discussion on the formal concept of freedom raise controversial interpretations of freedom in the *Freedom Essay.* Sebastian Gardner,[4] Markus Gabriel,[5] and Bernard Freydberg[6] interpret Schelling's freedom in the framework of what I identified as the first concept of freedom.[7] Gardner and Gabriel do not elaborate on those passages in the *Freedom Essay* that evoke the second concept of freedom. Freydberg, on the other hand, does engage with those passages and tries to interpret them within the framework of the first concept. Velkley,[8] who interprets the *Freedom Essay* mostly in the domain of the first concept of freedom, criticises Schelling for not being consistent on the subjects of predestination and moral conversion. O'Connor[9] criticises Schelling for reducing freedom to a fixed intelligibility, which is compatible with what I identified as the second concept of freedom. Michelle Kosch[10] argues that Schelling oscillates between compatibilism and incompatibilism. In my discussion of the tension in Schelling's thoughts on freedom, I am indebted to Kosch's interpretation. However, my detailed analysis of Schelling texts and their assortment in order to present two concepts of freedom cannot be found in Kosch's valuable book. In addition, I maintain Schelling's concepts of freedom do not fully coincide with compatibilism and incompatibilism, as suggested by Kosch. In this paper, I will focus in large part on criticising Freydberg's interpretation insofar as he makes a case for the consistency of Schelling's freedom while engaging with those passages that I maintain evoke the second concept of freedom. I criticise his reading for not providing a convincing argument to justify consistency in the *Freedom Essay*. I believe my identification of two incompatible concepts of freedom through a detailed analysis of the complex and obscure passages of the *Freedom Essay* can contribute to elucidating the nuanced discussion of freedom by Schelling.

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[4] Sebastian Gardner, 2017, "The Metaphysics of Human Freedom: From Kant's Transcendental Idealism to Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25 (1): 133-156.

[5] Markus Gabriel, 2020, "Schelling on the Compatibility of Freedom and Systematicity," in *Schelling's Philosophy: Freedom, Nature, and Systematicity*, edited by G. Anthony Bruno, 137-153, (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Markus Gabriel, 2014, "Aarhus Lectures-Schelling and Contemporary Philosophy," *SATS* 15 (1): 75-98, doi:10.1515/sats-2014-0005.

[6] Bernard Freydberg, 2008, *Schelling's Dialogical Freedom Essay,* (Albany: State University of New York press).

[7] I emphasize that the classification of Schelling's thought on freedom into two inconsistent concepts of freedom in the *Freedom Essay* is my interpretation and should not be wrongly attributed to Schelling's scholars.

[8] Richard Velkley, 2020, "The Personal, Evil, and the Possibility of Philosophy in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*," In *Schelling's Philosophy: Freedom, Nature, and Systematicity*, edited by G. Anthony Bruno, 154-167, (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

[9] Brian O'Connor, 2013, "Self-Determination and Responsibility in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*," *Studies in Social & Political Thought* 21: 3-18.

[10] Michelle Kosch, 2006, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); and Michelle Kosch, 2014, "Idealism and Freedom in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*." In *Interpreting Schelling*, edited by Lara Ostaric, 145-159, (Cambridge: Cambridge university press).

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the first chapter, I examine the Kantian concept of freedom and radical evil. I do this because Schelling's discussion of freedom is a confrontation and development of the Kantian notion of freedom and evil in *Religion*. In the second chapter, I will focus on those passages where Schelling discusses evil and freedom. In the first section of this chapter, I will examine Schelling's ontology of ground and existence which aims to justify the presence of two opposing forces in the human spirit. This ontology explains the propensity to evil in human essence and shows how freedom as the possibility of good and evil can be reconciled with the existence of an omnipotent God. In the second section, I will show how Schelling's ontology provides a theoretical base for the existence of radical evil. In the third section, I will discuss Schelling's formal concept of freedom, which is mostly compatible with the formal concept of freedom in idealism. In the third chapter, I will proceed to defend my thesis that the *Freedom Essay* oscillates between two incompatible concepts of freedom. To do this, I focus on examining the first concept of freedom in the first section. In the second section, I examine the second concept of freedom and criticise rival interpretations that deny the inconsistency in Schelling's concept of freedom. Notably, I criticise Freydberg's interpretation that argues for consistency of the *Freedom Essay*. In the third section of this chapter, I will spell out the nature of the inconsistency in Schelling's *Freedom Essay*. I will argue that this inconsistency arises from Schelling's tendency to reconcile a radical concept of freedom with a theological system. I will show that Schelling's ontology embraces such a contradiction. I conclude this paper by summarising the discussion before proposing that any philosophy of freedom bears the contradiction of the incompatibility of freedom and the philosophical system. Schelling is aware of this, but maintains that "without the contradiction of necessity and freedom not only philosophy but each higher willing of the spirit would sink into the death" (SW VII, 338). Therefore, Schelling's investigation into the essence of freedom discloses layers of "truth" about freedom without claiming that it achieves the final answer on freedom, which, I suggest, is an unachievable task for philosophy.

1

Kant's Account of Freedom;

Background of Schelling's Investigation on Freedom

Schelling's main discussion in the *Freedom Essay* is the analysis, extension, and development of Kantian freedom and the notion of radical evil in *Religion.*[11] In this chapter, I will demonstrate the essential features of Kantian freedom while summarising five characteristics of this freedom that Schelling confronts in the *Freedom Essay*.[12]

Kant's theoretical reasoning is restricted to the realm of phenomena. Our experience is shaped by applying a priori concepts and categories to the manifold of sensual data, which are ordered by space and time as the forms of our intuitions. The world of phenomena or appearances is determined by natural causal orders. However, things in themselves, or noumena, are atemporal. Therefore, they are not intuited in time and do not belong to the domain of natural causal order. For Kant, freedom is a noumenon and is not determined by empirical causes. Instead, intelligible free will is the cause of an agent's actions and determines them. Thus, Kantian intelligible freedom is transcendental and a "kind of causality."[13] It means the agent has absolute spontaneity, and her free will is undetermined. This kind of freedom is known as Kantian negative freedom because it negates the effect of natural causal order on freedom.

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[11] Therefore, I agree with Gardner that "Schelling's central claims in the *Freiheitsschrift* [*Freedom Essay*] can be regarded as the product of a complex and extended development arising out of Kant's theory of freedom" (Sebastian Gardner, "Kant's Transcendental Idealism," 1.) Regardless of how Schelling presents the *Freedom Essay* as a reply to Spinozism, Schelling's investigation is primarily an encounter with Kant's *Religion*, as Gardner, Kosch, and Loncar, among others, acknowledge: Kosch, *Freedom and Reason*; Samuel Loncar, 2013, "Converting the Kantian Self: Radical Evil, Agency, and Conversion in Kant's Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason," *Kant Studien* 104 (3): 346-366, doi:10.1515/kant-2013-0023.

[12] In doing so, I follow the interpretation that is put forth by Kosch in *Freedom and Reason*, Gardner, "Kant's Transcendental Idealism," Michael Rosen in 2009, *Freedom In German Idealism*, (Harvard University Press); Loncar "Converting the Kantian Self." Furthermore, I demonstrate those problematic issues of Kantian freedom, which are of significance for my discussion of Schelling's concept of freedom.

[13] Immanuel Kant, 2015, *Critiqe of Practical Reason*, Edited by Mary Gregor, Translated by Mary Gregor, (Cambridge: Cambridge university press), A445/B473.

For Kant, the agent's spontaneity is a necessary condition of freedom, but it is not sufficient. Freedom needs to be determined and lawful. However, as freedom is noumenon, its existence and determination cannot be theoretically argued, but it must be justified by practical reasoning. Moral laws exist and are essential to human lives. However, if an agent wants to act morally, she must have freedom. In other words, an agent's freedom is the condition of being a moral agent. As Kant writes, "if the moral law commands that we *ought* to be better human beings now, it inescapably follows that we must be *capable* of being better human beings."[14] This means "ought implies can." In addition, freedom is the faculty of the agent who uses reasoning to choose; In using reasoning, an agent must have the spontaneity of freedom. This means that a rational agent is inevitably free. Furthermore, Kant maintains that an agent commits to the moral law when she follows reasoning. In other words, rationality inescapably sets the categorical imperative as the agent's law; in this sense, an agent is self-legislated or self-determined. Thus, for Kant, a free moral agent commits to morality. This is autonomy in Kant's philosophy of freedom, which Kosch calls "rational self-determination."[15] This is the Kantian positive concept of freedom, which expands the content of freedom from mere spontaneity (or being causally undetermined) to autonomy (or being rationally self-determined).

Kantian concept of freedom is problematic: Kant maintains that the result of rational self-determination is morality. Such a reading entails that an immoral agent should inevitably suffer from a deficiency in reasoning which prevents her from following moral law. Since freedom and morality reciprocally entail each other, such an immoral agent is morally unfree. This eradicates the possibility of freely deviating from good and doing evil. Furthermore, such an agent is not responsible for her actions because moral imputability requires the existence of freedom. One can additionally claim that if rationality necessarily leads to morality, a moral agent does not deserve praise for being moral. One can conclude that the Kantian concept of freedom, or autonomy, eradicates the concept of moral responsibility and, consequently, it abolishes freedom because freedom without the possibility of doing evil is not freedom.

Kant was aware of these objections to his concept of freedom, and, in *Religion*, he tried to provide a solution for the aforementioned dilemma so that freedom accommodates the possibility of evil too. In *Religion*, Kant maintains that an agent chooses her moral maxim based on her fundamental moral

[14] Immanuel Kant, 2018, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Edited by Allen Wood, Translated by Allen Wood, (Cambridge: Cambridge university press), 6:50.
[15] Kosch, *Freedom and Reason*, 22.

disposition (*Gesinnung*).[16] In addition, a good or evil maxim (intelligible good or evil) leads to acting good or evil (empirical good or evil). Therefore, the agent's imputability depends on whether she is the author of her moral disposition. One cannot ascribe moral responsibility to an agent if the agent inherits her moral disposition or the social environment constitutes it. Therefore, Kant must maintain that the agent is the author of her moral disposition to save freedom and moral responsibility. To justify it, Kant suggests two German words discussing the will: *Willkür* and *Wille*. *Willkür* is the agent's power of choice and shapes one's moral disposition (*Gesinnung*). *Wille* is the agent's commitment to the moral imperative as her maxim, which allows her to enjoy full freedom as a moral agent. Kant contends that, because of *Willkür,* an agent can choose her moral disposition as good or evil and, therefore, she is responsible for it. In other words, being evil is the agent's own choice. Kant writes:

> The human being must make or have made *himself* into whatever he is or should become in a moral sense, good or evil. These two [characters] must be an effect of his free power of choice, for otherwise they could not be imputed to him and, consequently, he could be neither *morally* good nor evil.[17]

Evil, as the elevation of human desire, is a negative evil that is not a human's choice but a lack of sufficient reasoning. Kant, in *Religion*, goes further and argues for a positive evil that is not the result of irrationality but is an intelligible power besides and opposed to the power of good in human essence. In this way, Kant preserves the agent's spontaneity or the power of choice (*Willkür*) on the one hand, and equates freedom (*Wille*) with the rational choice of the moral law on the other hand. This raises a set of questions. First, if *Willkür* is not determined but is rather contingent and accidental, how can a lawful, rational, and self-determined *Wille* result from a lawless, undermined, contingent and accidental *Willkür?*[18] Second, if an agent's actions are the result of the agent's maxim, and the latter is the outcome of her moral disposition, chosen by herself, then how does an agent, without having a maxim, choose to be good or evil?[19] Third, and most importantly, if a rational agent inevitably legislates moral law as her maxim (the effect of the *Wille*), how can she choose to be evil (the effect of the *Willkür*)? The *Wille* abolishes the possibility of the *Willkür*. Therefore, it is crucial to have an explanation to know how an

[16] Dennis Van den Auweele refers to Stephen Palmquist, who proposes translating this German word as "either disposition, attribute, or conviction." (Dennis Van den Auweele, 2019, "Kant and Schelling on the Ground of Evil," *University of Groningen*, (International Journal for Philosophy of Religion), doi:10.1007/s11153-019-09701-6: 247. In this paper, I interchangeably use disposition or moral disposition for *Gesinnung*.
[17] Kant, *Religion*, 6:44.
[18] Kosch, *Freedom and Reason*, 62.
[19] Loncar, "Converting the Kantian Self," 354.

agent is capable of choosing an evil moral disposition. Kant's answer to these questions is disappointing. He writes:

> The rational origin, however, of this disharmony in our power of choice with respect to the way it incorporates lower incentives in its maxims and makes them supreme, i.e., this propensity to evil remains inexplicable to us.[20]

In the Kantian concept of freedom, it remains unfathomable how an agent, without a defect of reasoning, can commit evil. Therefore, even after *Religion*, Kant cannot demonstrate the possibility of evil as a condition of freedom.

Here I summarise five characteristics of Kantian freedom so as to illustrate the background that informs Schelling's reflections on the philosophy of freedom.

1-Freedom is *intelligible*, not empirical.
2- Freedom cannot be *arbitrary*. It leads to contingency and accidentality. Freedom must be *self-determined.*
3-Freedom is *rational self-determination*. This concept of freedom cannot explain the possibility of evil. It fatally leads to moral good. This is known as the objection of "intelligible fatalism."[21]
4- Radical evil exists because a genuine concept of freedom must be open to the possibility of evil (as discussed in *Religion*). The *Willkür,* an agent's power to choose, aims to provide the possibility of choosing an evil disposition. However, a free rational agent inevitably chooses good as her disposition and legislates moral laws as her maxim. Thus, she cannot fundamentally choose evil as her moral disposition. In Kantian philosophy, the *Wille* abolishes the *Willkür,* and the question of choosing an evil disposition remains unanswered.
5-Kant commits to *moral conversion.* A belief in the agent's moral responsibility must establish moral conversion. The existence of *Willkür* justifies the possibility of moral conversion if the *Wille* does not abolish the possibility of the *Willkür.*

In confronting the Kantian concept of freedom and radical evil in *Religion,* Schelling aims to provide the appropriate answers to the dilemmas that Kant dealt with. Schelling must justify the existence of radical

[20] Kant, *Religion*, 6:43.
[21] Loncar, "Converting the Kantian Self," 351. Loncar and Kosch emphasize that the term "Intelligible fatalism," as a charge to Kantian freedom, was initially brought by Carl Christian Erhard Schmid.

evil in order to save freedom as the possibility of good and evil and avoid the objection of intelligible fatalism. Such a concept of freedom must be determined and resistant to the charge of arbitrariness. Furthermore, Schelling, as opposed to Kant, aims to formulate freedom within a theological system. In the next chapter, I will discuss Schelling's real and formal concept of freedom to show how Schelling deals with the aforementioned subjects and whether his solution to those dilemmas is satisfactory.

2

Schelling's Real and Formal Concept of Freedom

In the *Freedom Essay*, Schelling aims to investigate the "correct concept of freedom" in relation to "the whole scientific worldview," which, for Schelling, means a system of philosophy (SW VII, 336). Thus, taking freedom as the "system's ruling centre" arises the typical problem that each philosophy of freedom deals with, namely the compatibility of freedom and the system. As Schelling commits to theodicy in the *Freedom Essay*, the problem of freedom and system for Schelling is translated to showing how to save genuine individual freedom within the system of God's understanding (SW VII, 337).[22] In the theological framework, the question is how human freedom can be reconciled with the existence of an omnipotent God. In the first section, I will show that in order to solve this problem, Schelling puts forth an ontology of ground and existence that provides a simultaneous dependency and independency in the relationship of humans with God. The source of humans is in God's ground, and this guarantees human dependence on God. However, humans are separated from God's existence, and this leads to their independence from God.

As noted, while praising idealism for the formal concept of freedom, Schelling criticises it for not accommodating freedom with the possibility of evil. As I noted before, this is the main objection to the Kantian concept of freedom. However, Schelling is aware that proposing evil as the possibility of freedom confronts him with a seemingly contradictory task. On the one hand, everything is in God; therefore, evil must be supposed to reside in God, something that undermines "the concept of a most perfect being." On the other hand, if evil is denied, the real concept of freedom becomes vacuous (SW VII, 353). This is an old problem in traditional theology that seeks to justify the existence of evil without making God responsible for it. In the second section, I will show that Schelling's ontology aims to concede the source of positive evil in God without attributing evil to God. The source of evil in humans is the principle of

[22] Marcus Gabriel, in "Schelling on the Compatibility of Freedom and Systematicity", rightly maintains that "the entire discussion of "God" in the *Freedom Essay* is an exercise of rational theology rather than some kind of theistic musing about the mental life of the monotheistic deity" (141). However, I add that Schelling's loyalty to theology in the *Freedom Essay* confronts him with the problem of the compatibility of freedom with God's understanding, and Schelling's treatment of this concern produces inconsistency. I will demonstrate this in the third chapter.

ground. In God, the principle of ground is suppressed by the principle of existence and unified in God's absolute. This means that in God, the two principles are inseparable. In humans, the principles of ground and existence are divisible, and the elevation of the force of the ground principle produces evil. Schelling's ontology provides a theoretical base for the reality of evil and, therefore, the reality of genuine freedom. An agent can decide to promote her good or evil disposition.

In the third section, I will expose Schelling's condensed discussion on the formal concept of freedom in order to answer the question of how an undetermined intelligible free will is determined. Schelling follows idealism's main belief regarding the intelligibility of free will and its abandonment from causal order determination. However, recalling the second belief of German idealism, the intelligible being of an agent cannot remain undetermined. Schelling aims to present how the intelligible being is determined, and what its relation with empirical actions is.

I
Schelling's Ontology of Ground and Existence

As Schelling says, according to an old tradition, the reconciliation of freedom and an omnipotent God would be unachievable because, in that view, "freedom, a fundamentally unlimited power, is asserted *next to and outside* of divine power" (SW VII, 339, emphasis added). A concept of freedom, located outside of God and irrelevant to it, is inconsistent with the concept of an omnipotent God. In order to prevent the inconsistency, Schelling suggests that human "is not outside of, but rather in, God and that his activity itself belongs to the life of God" (SW VII, 339). This concept of immanence shows that Schelling embraces a kind of pantheism. However, according to Schelling, what he advocates differs from Spinoza's pantheism. The latter, though monistic, treats God, humans, and other creatures, as "things"; therefore, it does not distinguish spiritual beings from other beings. According to Schelling, Spinoza even "treats the *will* also as a thing" (SW VII, 349, emphasis added). A world of things is ruled by mechanistic laws, which naturally leads to determinism. Spinoza's pantheism, according to Schelling, is "fatalism," and it suffers from "the lifelessness of … system, the sterility of its form, [and] the poverty of concepts and expressions" (SW VII, 349). Schelling maintains that his philosophy is "Spinoza's basic concept when infused by spirit (and, in one essential point, changed) by the principle of idealism" (SW VII, 350). By Idealism, Schelling refers to Kantian and Fichtean idealism, in which freedom as a "fundamentally unlimited power" is intelligible and unaffected by empirical causal order. Therefore, Schelling offers a "higher idealism," which combines the monistic realism of Spinoza with the idealism that commits to the genuine concept of freedom as the centre of philosophy.

In doing so, Schelling maintains an ontological distinction between two aspects of the essence:[23] "being [essence] in so far as it exists and being [essence] in so far as it is merely the ground of existence" (SW VII, 357). In Schelling's ontological classification, God's ground is nature, and its existence is understanding. Although ground and existence are fundamentally inseparable and unified, they are distinguishable because of their different features. God is the source of everything, and nothing can stand outside it. Thus, God "must have the ground of his existence within itself" (SW VII, 357). Ground is the locus of existence revealment. Thus, the ground is beyond existence and the condition of its being, though the word "beyond" should not be understood as the temporal priority of ground over existence. On the other hand, the ground depends on the existence of God because nothing, including the ground, can exist without God's existence. "[i]t is no contradiction that that through which [God's ground] the One [God's existence] is generated may itself be in turn begotten by it [God's ground]" (SW VII, 358). Schelling ontology of God's ground and existence maintains that there is no "precedence according to time nor as priority of being." He uses the analogy of a circle to illustrate the relation between ground and existence. In a circle, there is no first and last. Everything is beyond the other while simultaneously succeeding it. In the same way, ground and existence mutually presuppose each other. Schelling also uses the analogy of gravity and light to attribute the feature of darkness to the ground and the property of light to existence: "Gravity precedes light as its ever dark ground, which itself is not acuta [actual], and flees into the night as the light (that which exists) dawns" (SW VII, 358). This analogy is misleading as it seated on the physics of Schelling time, which was wrong.[24] Schelling maintains that in the same way that darkness' contraction leads to the emergence of light, the ground's contraction gives birth to existence. The will of birth is hidden in the ground, demonstrating itself as "yearning." Schelling states that ground or nature is the realm of anarchy, chaos, disorder, unconsciousness, and darkness, and, therefore, its will should be comprehended as an unconscious will. Hence, an unconscious will gives birth to the conscious will, the will of understanding.

Schelling's ontology is monistic and unifies nature and intelligibility. On the one hand, the revelation of intelligibility from nature can remind the theory of natural evolution: consciousness emerges from a long-time natural development of unconscious beings. Nature is the ground of intelligibility. On the other hand,

[23] Love and Schmidt in Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated the German word *Wesen* as "being." Marcus Gabriel noted that the translation as the "essence" is accurate. Therefore, I use "[essence]", besides "being."
[24] Love, and Schmidt oddly find Schelling's analogy elucidating. However, it is doubtful whether this vague analogy based on the false understanding of the physical relation between gravity and light can help demonstrate the relation between ground and existence. Schelling's remarks about the contraction of the dark as the expansion of light better illustrates the yearning of ground and the birth of existence.

the epistemology of nature presupposes the birth of intelligibility. Without the latter, there is no comprehension of nature, and the concept of the natural world does not exist. One may say that nature is timewise prior to intelligibility. However, the mere expression of that proposition is a confession to the conceptual priority of intelligibility over nature. If intelligibility is the product of nature, then the concept of nature should be extended in a way that encompasses intelligibility. Thus, Schelling's monistic philosophy of nature denies the duality between nature and intelligibility.[25]

God and things have different genera. God is infinite and eternal. It is a being, not a becoming. However, things as God's creatures are temporal and finite, and "the concept of becoming is the only one appropriate to the nature of things" (SW VII, 359). Things are the creatures of God and cannot be separated from it. Yet, they are distinguishable because of their different genera and, therefore, have a kind of independence. This seeming contradiction "can only be resolved by things having their ground in that which in God himself is not He Himself, that is, in that which is the ground of his existence" (SW VII, 359). By locating the beings of things in God's ground, Schelling preserves the connection of things with God in a way that things are "in God." Furthermore, by separating things from God's existence, Schelling assures their independence and distinction. As Schelling says, the traditional concept of immanence mistakenly supposes the same genera for God and things and assumes that they merely differ in their degree of completeness. Schelling finds the source of that mistake in misunderstanding the law of identity: a proposition with the form of A is B does not mean that the subject (A) is the same as the predicate (B). The law of identity does not entail the "sameness" of the subject with the predicate. Schelling puts forth two interpretations. Firstly, the subject and predicate of an identity proposition are two aspects of one thing. "[F]or example, the proposition, "This body is blue," does not have the meaning that the body is, in and through that in and through which it is a body, also blue, but rather only the meaning that the same thing which is this body is also blue, although not in the same respect" (SW VII, 341). Secondly, the relation between the subject and predicate of an identity proposition is the relation of an antecedent or ground to a consequent. This entails that the consequent is dependent on the ground, but it is not the same as the ground, and so, in this sense, has independence too. Schelling writes:

[25] My interpretation of the relationship between intelligibility and nature owes to Markus Gabriel, in "Schelling on the Compatibility." Gabriel finds two compatible accounts of the "bottom-up" and "top-down" explanation of the world-whole in Schelling philosophy. The former is a metaphysical explanation of the world and asserts the priority of nature in shaping the mind. The latter is the epistemological explanatory of world structure and asserts for priority of intelligibility over nature. In this way, Schelling's monistic philosophy is distanced from the "mystery of consciousness" that alludes to the unsolvability of the problem of mind-nature (137-143). In addition, in *Freedom and Reason*, Kosch offers a similar interpretation when she writes, "while the ground produces the understanding in the sense of bringing it into being, the understanding produces the ground in the sense of making it thinkable" (103).

> Dependence does not abolish independence, it does not even abolish freedom. Dependence does not determine its being and says only that the dependent, whatever it also may be, can be a consequence only of that of which it is a dependent; dependence does not say what the dependent is or is not (SW VII, 346).

Therefore, Schelling's ontology provides a base for the possibility of human freedom within the system of God. Humans depend on God because of the principle of ground they share. Humans are independent of God because of their separation from God's existence. This is a twofold relation of human dependence on and independence from God. Therefore, Schelling's ontology justifies the possibility of human freedom within the concept of immanence.

II
Radical Evil

Schelling criticises Kant for equating freedom with morality. He maintains that genuine freedom must accommodate the possibility of evil besides good. He aims to argue for radical evil while avoiding the traditional problem of the incompatibility of evil with immanence. Two approaches to avoid this problem are the *absence theory of evil and* the *privation theory of evil*. In the absence theory of evil, the existence of evil is denied. It is argued that it is true that everything is God's creation, but there is a difference in the completion or perfection of creatures. That which we call evil is the less perfected thing. This means that evil is the lack of some feature, character, and capability of things. Therefore, genuine evil does not exist, and therefore, no evil is attributed to the concept of immanence. However, one can contend that if the degree of incompletion or imperfection can cause the most malicious actions, the creator, in the final analysis, would be responsible for it: "The difficulty would be removed only one step farther, but it would not be abolished" (SW VII, 355). To avoid this problem, the privation theory of evil maintains that all things as creatures of God are essentially good and that an individual through "its own fault fell away from the primal being." However, the affirmation of the existence of evil in the world and denial of its source in God leads to dualism in the concept of immanence (WS 354). Schelling maintains that "For the simple reflection that only man, the most complete of all visible creatures, is capable of evil, shows already that the ground of evil could not in any way lie in lack or deprivation (SW VII, 367-368).

Schelling's ontology offers a solution to this problem. He designates a dual base for human beings: the principles of ground and existence. The human spirit is the locus of unification of the forces of those two

principles. This unification does not dissolve one in the other in the same way as it occurs in God. In God, the existence permanently suppresses and dominates the ground. However, in humans, the ground is an "indivisible remainder, that which with the greatest exertion cannot be resolved in understanding but rather remains eternally in the ground ... [and] could break through once again" (SW VII, 359-360). Therefore, the human spirit is the locus of permanent tension and contradiction between two forces of ground and existence. Schelling writes, "in man there is the whole power of the dark principle and at the same time the whole strength of the light. In him there is the deepest abyss and the loftiest sky or both centra" (SW VII, 363).

Corresponding to the forces of ground and existence, there are two wills in the human spirit. The will of ground is characterised by disorder and destruction. It is the self-will and promotes self-love. The will of existence is characterised by order and unity. It is the universal will and promotes universal love. The force of universal will opposes self-will and strives to subordinate it. However, transfiguration is also possible, which is the domination of the force of the dark principle. When the force of self-will is kept in harmony with the universal will, it is under control. Schelling compares evil with disease and states that in the same way that disease is not a lack of health but an imbalance or disorder in the human body, evil results from disharmony in the relation of two forces of principles. Evil is produced when the balance of forces changes, and the force of ground principle overcomes that of existence. In this way, the destructive nature of self-will dominates. The "elevation of self-will is evil" (SW VII, 365).

Therefore, evil is the effect of an "indivisible remainder" in humans. As the source of humans is in the ground from the initial act of creation, "all who are born are born with the dark principle of evil within" (SW VII, 388). Thus, an unconscious and irresistible propensity to evil is embedded in the human essence or her intelligible being. Schelling calls it radical evil or original sin. The locus of radical evil is the human spirit, and so it differs from empirical or normative evil. Thus, human's "passions in themselves do not constitute evil, nor do we have to struggle just with flesh and blood but with an evil in and outside of us that is spirit" (SW VII, 388). Desires can only function as incentives, not evil. If the propensity to evil is in human nature, self-love also is part of the human essence and cannot be characterised as negative.[26] Evil is the result of our own actions. Humans should freely take action to restrict it and promote good. This makes the concept of freedom vital and real.

[26] "All creatures share this propensity for self-love. The creaturely, as children of the dark ground, have a propensity (Hang, propensio) towards toward their creatureliness. All creatures Have a … propensity for inertia, and such a propensity is not just a formal or negative characterization of all things qua things" (Wirth, *Conspiracy of Life*, 177).

One can interpret evil as prioritising one's selfish interest over others. This aims to elevate one's particular will over the universal will of a community. While living in a society demands to reflect universal interests, an individual or a social institution may strive to destroy the relation of forces of principles and use her will against others. It is worth noting that Schelling talks about the balance or harmony between the universal will and the self-will. It means that Schelling does not promote the annihilation of the self-will. It is merely necessary that the self-will stands in harmony with the universal will and its bonds are not torn. This leads to good. In Schelling's philosophy, the annihilation of the self-will is intrinsically impossible because ground constitutes an essential part of human essence. Therefore, I suggest that, for Schelling, good can be achieved when self-love harmonises itself with the universal will, not scarifying the self-love in favour of the universal will.

Schelling criticises Fichte for his philanthropism. Fichte finds the root of the radical evil "in the lethargy of human nature" (SW VII, 388). It means that for Fichte, radical evil is the matter of indolence and laziness in human nature that prevents an individual from pursuing good. This is the denial of the presence of radical evil in the human spirit as an intelligible being. Fichte reduces evil to some personal inclination, which can be remedied if one can overcome one's lethargy.

In addition, Schelling criticises the idea that relates evil to sensibility and equates it with the domination of human desire over reason. He writes that this idea,

> is a natural consequence of the doctrine according to which freedom consists in the mere rule of the intelligent principle over sensual desires and tendencies, and the good comes from pure reason; accordingly, it is understandable that there is no freedom for evil (in so far as sensual tendencies predominate)-to speak more correctly, however, evil is completely abolished (SW VII, 371).

This refers to Kant's philosophy of freedom: As I noted in the first chapter, for Kant, freedom is identical to the authority of reason, and the latter inevitably entails morality; thus, freedom has no room for evil. Freedom and evil are inconsistent, and a subject cannot positively and willingly engage in moral evil. In Kantian freedom, there is "only one will," the will to the good (SW VII, 371-372). Therefore, Schelling distances from the common notion of German idealism, which equalises freedom with rational self-determination. However, as I discussed earlier, Kant tried to remedy this deficiency in *Religion* and argued for a radical concept of evil in order to accommodate the possibility of evil in the concept of freedom. Schelling admires Kant for exposing the radical evil in *Religion* and writes:

> It is remarkable how Kant, who had not raised himself in theory to a transcendental act that determines all human Being, was led in his later investigations [*Religion*], merely by faithful observation of the phenomena of moral judgment, to the recognition of, as he expressed it, a *subjective ground of human actions preceding every act apparent to the senses but that itself must be nonetheless an actus of freedom* (SW VII, 388, emphasis added).

For Kant in *Religion* and Schelling in the *Freedom Essay,* radical evil precedes empirical evil and is part of human essence. Its existence and intelligibility are a condition of real freedom. Therefore, Schelling's concept of radical evil is close to what Kant realised in *Religion.*[27] However, they differ in that whereas Kant achieves it by observing empirical facts, Schelling argued and deducted it based on his ontology. Thus, Schelling successfully provides a theoretical foundation for radical evil, while for Kant, radical evil is inaccessible by theoretical reasoning. In addition, Schelling reconciles evil with the concept of immanence: the source of evil, as the principle of ground, is in God. However, evil itself is not in God because the principle of existence suppresses the principle of ground, and the ground's force cannot be revealed. In contrast, the human principle of ground is severable from the principle of existence, and its elevation leads to evil.

III
The Formal Concept of Freedom

Schelling's ontology justifies radical evil by vindicating the divisibility of two principles in humans. The existence of the force of positive evil, besides good, in human essence, realises the genuine concept of freedom as the possibility of good and evil. Schelling writes:

> Were now the identity of both principles in the spirit of man exactly as indissoluble as in God, then there would be no distinction, that is, God as spirit would not be revealed. The same unity that is inseverable in God must therefore be severable in man—and this is the possibility of good and evil (SW VII, 364).

However, we still do not know "how in each individual the decision for good or evil might now proceed" (SW VII, 382). Furthermore, although we know that an individual spontaneously chooses evil and good, we do not know how an undetermined intelligible free will is determined. Determination of freedom, the second common belief of German idealist philosophers, is needed to

[27] This is the fourth characteristic of Kantian freedom that I noted in the first chapter.

avoid the charge of arbitrariness in freedom. An investigation that aims to answer those questions concerns the formal concept of freedom. It is important to restate that in this investigation, Schelling cannot refer to internal desires or external incentives as the cause of free will because it leads to empirical determinism. Furthermore, Schelling cannot appeal to reason as the source of an individual's self-determination because Kantian rational self-determination abolishes freedom. Schelling also has another restriction: his discussion of freedom should meet the requirements of his theological commitment. In this section, I elaborate on the second question, which is the determination of intelligible will. Schellinfs' solution for the first question is the subject of the next chapter.

In discussing the formal concept of freedom, Schelling tendentiously follows Kant and strives to develop it. He acknowledges that, for the first time, idealism made the concept of freedom essentially comprehensible by setting it outside of natural causality. Schelling endorses the Kantian notion of intelligible freedom that conceptually precedes all other things (SW VII, 383).[28] Free will pre-exists, and all "free action follows immediately from the intelligible aspect of man" (SW VII, 384). However, a question arises: how is a transition from undermined (human's intelligible being) to determined (human's free action) formed, if possible? This is a common problem in philosophy, specifically German idealism, and demands an argumentation. Schelling maintains that the intelligible being cannot "determine itself out of pure, utter indeterminacy without any reason" because indeterminacy leads to "the system of the equilibrium [Gleichgultigkeit] of free will" (SW VII, 384). Let's examine this assertion.

According to Schelling, freedom is commonly badly understood as a totally undetermined capacity to willingly choose between two options. He contends that when such an understanding is applied to the empirical world, it leads to inconsistency: if there is no reason to choose between A and ~A, one's choice would be contingent and random. This is a situation of "undecidedness." This concept of freedom "introduces a complete contingency [Zufalligkeit] of individual actions." However, contingency "contests reason as well as the necessary unity of the whole" (SW VII, 383). It does not save freedom. Thus, an intelligible being cannot be determined out of pure indeterminacy. On the other hand, if the selection between two choices is determined by incentives of the empirical world, in which each event is causally predetermined by the preceding one, there remains no room for choice, and consequently, freedom is abolished.

[28] This is the first characteristic of Kantian freedom that I noted in the first chapter.

Thus, following Kant, Schelling denies arbitrariness[29] or contingency as the character of freedom.[30] The concept of the intelligible being should not be determined out of either pure indeterminacy or causal order of the world if it wants to serve and save freedom. It remains, Schelling says, that the intelligible being "be determined in itself … it would have to be its determination itself as its essence, that is, as its own nature" (SW VII, 384). If the intelligible being is determined by its own nature, it is self-determined. It provides the inner necessity for freedom. From this aspect, free will is self-legislated; therefore, the agent's actions become necessary. From the other aspect, as the agent's actions are not determined by causal orders but ruled by the agent's authority, they are free. Thus, freedom is guaranteed while the necessity is fulfilled. This suggests that freedom and necessity are identical.[31] In other words, the intelligible being is the locus "at which necessity and freedom must be unified" (SW VII, 385)—a place where spontaneity and necessity coincide without falling into the well of arbitrariness. Therefore, Schelling endorses the German idealist's notion of freedom as self-determination that maintains "free is what acts only in accord with the laws of its own being and is determined by nothing else either in or outside itself." Schelling claims that by committing to intelligible self-determining will, the "inconsistency of the contingent … [is removed] from individual action" (SW VII, 384).

However, although we know that free will is intelligible and is self-determined, not arbitrary, we still are unaware of the answer to the question that Schelling brings forth: "How in each individual the decision for good or evil might now proceed—this is still shrouded in complete darkness and seems to demand a specific investigation" (SW VII, 382). I elaborate on Schelling's solution to this question in the next chapter and put forth my own interpretation. However, for the time being, I intend to emphasise that Schelling does not commit to *rational* self-determination as Kant and Hegel did, albeit in different forms.[32] By avoiding conceding rationality as a feature of self-determining will, Schelling opens room for

[29] This is the second characteristic of Kantian freedom that I noted in the first chapter.
[30] O'Connor writes, "Schelling's view is that the conception of freedom offered by his idealist predecessors can explain choice only as arbitrariness" (O'Connor, "Self-Determination and Responsibility in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*," 4). It is more accurate to say that the charge of arbitrariness to Kantian *Willkür* in *Religion* is correct (Refer to the first section of the first chapter). However, Kant's *Wille*, or rational self-determining will, is not arbitrary, but determined. When Gardner, among many, argues that Kant denies arbitrariness, he alludes to Kant's autonomy (Gardner, "Kant's Transcendental Idealism," 8).
[31] As I discussed before, for Schelling, the law of identity describes two aspects of the same thing. It does not entail that subject and predicate are the same.
[32] Hegel maintains that self-determination as freedom is rational. However, he deviates from Kant when he argues that "desires and drives are the content of the concrete will insofar as their immediacies and contingencies are sublated by the mediation of thought, and they are purified and universalised as the concept of freedom. This rational process, which negates the particularities of desires and rationally preserves their relevant features in the concept of freedom, is not exercised in an isolated space but in a society where other individuals shape their concept of freedom and demand it accordingly. Thus, an individual's rational concept of freedom involves the recognition of

evil as a possibility of freedom while committing to the transcendental notion of freedom. Thus, Schelling bars the charge of intelligible fatalism on his concept of freedom, which is rightly applied to Kantian freedom.[33]

the demands of others for freedom, which is objectified in the form of social institutions of society as the locus of compromised intentions and interests of citizens. Here, I suggest that Hegelian concrete freedom as self-determination encompasses the reflected, purified, and conceptualised human desire, derives, inclinations and interests as its content that relies on human rationality" (See my essay "Rationality and Desire in Hegel's Freedom").

[33] The objection of intelligible fatalism to Kantian freedom was noted as the third characteristic of Kantian freedom in the first chapter.

3

Two Concepts of Freedom in the *Freedom Essay*

In this chapter, I will aim to expose Schelling's answer to two interconnected questions: how does an individual make a decision for good or evil? And what is the nature of the determination of an intelligible being? Schelling's discussion of these questions is complex, obscure, and controversial. Through a close reading of the relevant sections of the *Freedom Essay*, I argue that Schelling's answer to those questions is inconsistent, and that he oscillates between two incompatible views on the formal concept of free will, which I call radical and limited freedom. Whereas the first concept of freedom establishes a reciprocal relation between the agent's undetermined intelligibility and her own act, the second one maintains that the agent's intelligibility is eternally decided and one-sidedly determines the agent's action.

In the first section of this chapter, I will show how certain passages in the *Freedom Essay* evoke the first concept of freedom. In the second section, I will demonstrate the existence of the second concept of freedom that is incompatible with the first concept. I shall criticise a rival interpretation by Freydberg which denies an inconsistency in the *Freedom Essay*. In the third section, I contend that Schelling's oscillation between these two concepts of freedom arises from an inconsistency in the *Freedom Essay*, which is to defend a radical concept of freedom while also locating that freedom within the domain of a theological system. I will show that Schelling's ontology bears the source of that inconsistency: radical freedom, a "fundamentally unlimited power," cannot be restricted within the system, and a concept of freedom that functions within the order of the system cannot be radical.

I

The First Concept of Freedom: Radical Freedom

The mere *possibility* of good and evil manifests a situation of undecidedness and indeterminacy. Humans cannot remain in indeterminacy but should decide whether to be good or evil. The act of decision determines the agent's intelligible moral disposition, and the latter, consequently, determines the agent's

actions. Thus, the agent's intelligibility cannot be externally given as it eradicates the agent's moral responsibility. Schelling writes:

> Were this being a dead sort of Being [ein totes Sein] and a merely given one with respect to man, then, because all action resulting from it could do so only with necessity, responsibility [Zurechnungsfähigkeit] and all freedom would be abolished (SW VII, 385).

If the moral disposition is not given, and "only man himself can decide" his disposition, then the nature of the agent's act of decision on her moral disposition must be elucidated (SW VII, 385). To meet this requirement, Schelling writes:

> The act, whereby his life is determined in time, does not itself belong to time but rather to eternity: it also does not temporally precede life but goes through time (unhampered by it) as an act which is eternal by nature (SW VII, 385-386).

This act is not temporal but conceptual; in this sense, it is eternal and precedes all things. This conceptual decision is unhampered by daily action because, if it was not the case, it was empirically constituted, which contradicts its nature. On the other hand, it is not a separate being beyond human action but "goes through time" and manifests itself in human actions. To know the exact relation between human intelligibility and her actions, Schelling, in a crucial passage, equates the essence of human moral disposition, which is the result of the act of decision, with her *own act*. He writes:

> [T]his inner necessity is itself freedom; *the essence of man is fundamentally his own act*; necessity and freedom are in one another as one being [Ein Wesen] that appears as one or the other only when considered from different sides, in itself freedom, formally necessity (SW VII, 384-385, emphasis added).

This is a Fichtean concept, in which the I posits itself as its own act. Schelling acknowledges this fact and writes:

> The I, says Fichte, is its own act; … the I is nothing different from this self-positing, rather it is precisely self-positing itself. … it is a primal and fundamental willing, which makes itself into something and is the ground of all ways of being [Wesenheit] (SW VII, 385).

However, for Fichte, the self-positing I is the consciousness, while for Schelling, the I primordially and fundamentally is the will. It stands beyond everything, including consciousness. Thus, Schelling,

while endorsing the Fichtean concept, expands its domain. In Zizek's language, "Schelling is 'more Fichtean than Fichte himself': while he fully endorses Fichte's thesis according to which the very essence of man is his own act, he does not confine this act to self-consciousness [but] an unconscious primordial act of decision" of the will."[34]This concept of freedom results from merging the Kantian concept of intelligible being with the Fichtean notion of self-positing I. Gardner alludes to this fact when he writes, "the Kantian element of spontaneity and transcendental freedom is conserved in Schelling's Fichteanized version of the doctrine of intelligible selfhood, in so far as the 'I do—' is contained within the act which I am."[35] This is what Schelling adds to the formal concept of freedom within the German idealism tradition: reconciliation of Kantian transcendental spontaneity with the Fichtean doctrine of subjectivity as self-positing.

The key to understanding the equation between intelligible moral disposition and the agent's own act is Schelling's interpretation of the law of identity, which entails that the intelligible being and the agent's own act are two aspects of one thing. The intelligible being is the individual's self-law. It is the agent's fundamental moral disposition, manifested by her free action. There is a mutual relation between intelligibility and actions. On the one hand, an individual knows that she has a kind of moral disposition and conceptually comprehends herself. She has a sense of self and is aware that she acts according to her selfhood. What she acts follows from what she is. Her action follows from her intelligible free will. On the other hand, the self is not an isolated entity. The agent's self does not differ by how she lives and the act she performs, which means her free actions are what she asserts as her moral disposition. What she is, is what she acts. Therefore, by having a reciprocal relation, freedom, as an atemporal and conceptual intelligibility, is the agent's own temporal act. There is no precedence of one over the other. *What one does is what one is*. One's essence is one's act. The eternal act of decision is the act of self-disclosure. An individual is aware that he is not "compelled … but rather performs his actions in accordance with and not against his will" (SW VII, 386). By "acting on their own," an agent exercises her freedom to choose her fundamental disposition as good or evil. In this way, Schelling discharges the objection of intelligible fatalism because he makes intelligible causality identical to the agent's own action.[36] If one's actions are

[34] Slavoj Zizek, 2007, *The Indivisible Remainder*: *On Schelling and Related Matters*, (London: Verso), 18.
[35] Gardner, "Kant's Transendental Idealism," 11.
[36] Gardner in "Kant's Transendental Idealism," rightly writes "the solution to the problem of intelligible fatalism, according to Schelling, is therefore to reject the assumption that the self-determining agency [the intelligible causality] of the agent is anything separate from the agent's intelligible character [the fundamental moral disposition]" (11-12).

one's essence, or conversely, if one decides one's essence and through actions realises one's self, then an agent is morally responsible for her actions and deserves moral imputability.[37]

In this concept of freedom, the agent's essence is not decided by an alien authority but is the agent's own choice. Thus, it is not located in and dominated by God's understanding. This brings the question that whether this concept of freedom contradicts the concept of immanence. Schelling refutes it. For Schelling, such a question raises from misinterpreting the law of identity.[38] As Schelling argues, according to the law of identity, although humans are "in God" and are the consequence of God, their beings are different as two separate genera. It means humans' dependence on God does not annihilate their independence. Schelling uses the analogy of the relation of an organism to the body, in which the organism has "its own life for itself, indeed, its own kind of freedom," to illustrate the relation of human dependency on God to her independence from God. Human dependence on God mobilises her with freedom, and her independence from God entails that he actualises her free being with her own act. Such independence gives a lively personality to the beings (SW VII, 346-347). Schelling writes:

> Were all beings in the world but thoughts in the divine mind, they would have to be living already for that very reason. Thoughts are thus probably generated by the soul, but the thought generated is an independent power, continuing to act on its own, indeed, growing within the human soul in such a way that it restrains and subjugates its own mother (SW VII, 347).

Thus, human freedom is not constrained by God's understanding as a system, and Schelling's theology provides enough room for the authority of the agent to enjoy her freedom. This is what I identify as the radical concept of freedom: the agent's free will equates with her own act, and they reciprocally entail each other. She does what she is. She is what she does. The agent is not constrained by the theological system.

Schelling's first concept of freedom is close to what in the contemporary philosophy of freedom is known as an incompatibilist account of freedom. The similarity is that the Schellingian concept of free will is intelligible and not determined by causal order. It is itself the cause of other things. However, Schelling

[37] In the first chapter I showed that Kant deals with the same problem in *Religion*, and his argument for accountability of moral freedom is problematic because Kantian freedom inevitably leads to morality.
[38] I refer the reader to the first section of the second chapter, in which I elaborate on Schelling's idea of the law of identity.

differs from incompatibilists in this aspect: for incompatibilism, free will one-sidedly stands beyond human actions and determines them. However, in Schelling's first concept of freedom, there is a reciprocal relation between the being of will and the agent's action, and there is no precedence of one over the other.

By radical freedom, Schelling suggests a concept of freedom that meets the first common belief of German idealists philosophers, mentioned in the introduction of this paper: freedom is the cause of everything, not the effect of natural causal order. In fulfilling the second belief, the determination of freedom, Schelling claims that equating free will with the agent's own act provides the determination needed for a true concept of freedom, and, therefore, the charge of arbitrariness has been avoided.

However, I argue Schelling's first concept of freedom cannot remedy the arbitrariness charge because radical freedom has remained undetermined. On the one hand, Schelling cannot claim that the empirical actions constitute and determine the agent's intelligibility, which is an atemporal being. The equation of self with the agent's own action cannot go further than this claim that the agent's intelligible being is inferred from her deeds. On the other hand, Schelling cannot assert that free will is an already-made and "given" intelligibility beyond the agent's action because, in this case, the "responsibility [Zurechnungsfähigkeit] and all freedom would be abolished." Therefore, it is still unclear "how in each individual the decision for good or evil might now proceed" and how the determinacy for one's moral disposition is achieved. An undetermined intelligible being, in Schelling's philosophy of freedom, leads to "the system of the equilibrium [Gleichgultigkeit] of free will," which he regards as "complete contingency." Thus, I suggest Schelling is unsuccessful in providing determinacy for the first concept of freedom, and the objection of arbitrariness to Schelling's radical freedom is acceptable.[39]

[39] In "Self-Determination and Responsibility," O'Connor maintains that Schelling determined the undetermined Kantian transcendental spontaneity by implying the Fichtean concept of the I as own act. He writes:

> The Kantian account of personality leaves the intelligible self with insufficient determinacy; …Schelling contends that any act we categorize as a free act is necessarily the act of a determinate character. Were an act to be understood as the product of an indeterminate character it could not be explained why that act was preferred over any other by the agent. An indeterminate character would be quite indifferent to the choices in front of her (6).

As I argued in the first chapter, it is accurate to say that Kant remedies the indeterminacy of transcendental spontaneity by arguing that the agent's reasoning stands beyond her will and determines it. This is Kantian autonomy. As I showed, equating intelligibility with action does not bring determinacy to Schelling's first concept of freedom.

II
The Second Concept of Freedom: Limited Freedom

Schelling does not fully commit to the first concept of freedom. In various parts of the *Freedom Essay*, he shows a strong tendency to reconcile the concept of freedom within the order and authority of a theological system. In this section, I will spell out the second concept of freedom, which maintains that the intelligible will is a determined and decided being and is the cause of human actions. This relation between intelligibility and human actions is one-sided and human actions do not mutually affect the essence of intelligibility. In addition, I will criticise a rival interpretation by Freydberg that aims to interpret Schelling's second view in the framework of the first one. I will show that it is an unsatisfactory interpretation.

To begin with, I emphasise that Schelling's commitment to a theological system inevitably confronts him with the subject of predestination: how human's apparently contingent actions can be justified within an ordered system, which Schelling regards as God's understanding. Schelling aims to accommodate the spontaneous action in unity with the system of God's understanding so that "neither the prescience of God nor genuine foresight can be relinquished" (SW VII, 387). Schelling criticises the traditional concept of predestination, which maintains that by an "utterly groundless decision of God … one would be predestined to damnation, the other to blessedness" (SW VII, 385). This approach annihilates human freedom. However, this objection does not mean that Schelling abandons any kind of predestination. He affirms:

> We too assert a predestination but in a completely different sense, namely in this: as man acts here so has he acted from eternity and already in the beginning of creation. *His action does not become, just as he himself does not become as a moral being, but rather it is eternal by nature* (SW VII, 387-388, emphasis added).

This echoes a one-sided relation of the human intelligible being and her action, in which human actions are not identical to the agent's moral being, but the latter determines the former. Bernard Freydberg, in his valuable book, *Schelling's Dialogical Freedom Essay: Provocative Philosophy Then and Now*, maintains the existence of one consistent concept of freedom in the *Freedom Essay*, which is mainly compatible with what I identified as the first concept of freedom. Therefore, he interprets Schelling's thought on predestination in the framework of the first concept of freedom. He argues that Schelling presents the act as being, not becoming, because, in this way, he "inverts the scholastic understanding in which being is the end in fullness, and the act of humanity is seen as a coming to be toward the end already contained in

being."[40] He means that in the traditional concept of predestination (what Freydberg calls "scholastic understanding"), the human being is assumed determined and fixed ("end in fulness"), and therefore, her action would be actualisation ("coming … toward the end") of that being. He argues that Schelling inverts that relation in the passage above. The inversion logically means that there is no fixed intelligible being but a constituted one. In Freydberg's language, the "temporal order [human's action], is coextensive with the …atemporal choice [intelligible being]."[41]

Freydberg's interpretation does not reflect what Schelling says in the quoted passage. This is because when Schelling writes that an agent's action "does not become" but is "eternal by nature," he means that human actions are the result of eternal intelligibility and, therefore, the actions are determined by it. In this sense, the actions are eternal; otherwise, empirical actions are not eternal but temporal. Schelling emphasises this idea when criticising the traditional concept of predestination and writes that determination of human action should be sought "in the eternal act contemporaneous with creation that institutes the being of man itself" (SW VII, 387). Thus, Schelling's predestination differs from the traditional one in the fact that for the latter, all human actions are determined from eternity. However, for Schelling, human intelligibility is eternally formed, and the actions are the determination of that formed necessity. Furthermore, and this is crucial, for Schelling, an agent decides her moral disposition in an act that is contemporaneous "with the act of creation" (SW VII, 385).

However, one can still doubt whether the force of Schelling's expression in the quoted passage is adequate to establish a determined and decided intelligible being. However, I will show that Schelling considers a more fundamental role for a decided and determined intelligible moral disposition, and there is more support in the *Freedom Essay* for my interpretation. In an important passage, immediately before discussing predestination, Schelling writes:

> Because there is the highest harmony in creation, and nothing is as discrete and consecutive as we must portray it to be, but rather in what is earlier that which comes later is also already active, and everything happens at once in one magic stroke, accordingly, man, who appears *decided and determinate here, apprehends himself in a particular form in the first creation and is born as that which he had been from eternity since through this act even the type and constitution of his corporeal formation is determined* (SW VII, 387, emphasis added).

[40] Freydberg, *Dialogical Essay*, 73.
[41] Freydberg, *Dialogical Essay*, 73.

Here, Schelling claims that the human's decided and determined being relates to the first act of creation. This means that an agent possesses a particular eternal being from birth. In addition, Schelling advances the strong claim that the human's determination is not limited to the human's intelligible being but extends even to her embodiment. Human corporeal is constituted by one magic stroke act of creation. Here, we can recognise a second concept of freedom, where the human's intelligible being is beyond the agent's act and "unhampered [or untouched]" by the agent's action. Human actions result from the decided being, not vice versa. Therefore, when Schelling writes about the eternal nature of human intelligibility, he not only alludes to the conceptual nature of intelligibility but also means that intelligibility has a decided and determined nature.

In interpreting the above quotation, Freydberg argues that human corporealisation, "which allows and compels his act to occur in time … belongs to the primal act according to the *law of identity* in which all things burst forth in one, and simultaneously, *as will*."[42] Freydberg does not refer to a specific passage in the *Freedom Essay* that exposes his interpretation. However, as Freydberg refers to the primal being of will, I think he may have the following controversial passage in mind:

> In the final and highest judgment, there is no other Being than will. Will is primal Being [Ursein] to which alone all predicates of Being apply: groundlessness, eternality, independence from time, self-affirmation (SW VII, 350).

In view of the quoted passage, one could read Freydberg's claim as suggesting that human corporealisation is the other "predicate" of primal will; therefore, it is eternal in the same way that the will is eternal. To evaluate Freydberg's claim, it is important to restate that for Schelling, the subject and predicates of the law of identity are two aspects of the same thing. When Schelling lists the conceptual features such as "groundlessness, eternality, independence from time, [and] self-affirmation" as the predicate of will, he means that will is a primal being and therefore, it is groundless, atemporal, and self-legislative, and nothing can stand beyond it. All those features demonstrate other aspects of the primal will. Comparing the temporal corporealisation, asserted by Freydberg, with the conceptual predicates, noted by Schelling, shows that Freydberg's interpretation is not compatible with Schelling's thought. In addition, if we read Freydberg's claim literally, we conceive it as a repetition of Schelling's assertion. That is when we read Freydberg's remarks that corporealisation, like "all things burst forth in one … as will ", we do not learn any more than when Schelling vividly writes that "everything happens at once in one magic stroke" of creation. As such, Freydberg's argument does not show how the "decided and

[42] Freydberg, *Dialogical Essay*, 72, emphasis added.

determined" intelligibility (Schelling's belief) can be identical to human actions (Freydberg's assertion). Thus, Freydberg's argument is not convincing.

I can support my reading on the second concept of freedom by presenting its logical consequence: if the intelligible being is not empirically determined, an agent's moral disposition cannot be affected by the feedback she might receive from her social environment. Thus, an agent's moral disposition or essence, either good or evil, has no chance to be changed when it is shaped by the initial act of decision. If this is true, one can object that Schelling's concept of freedom denies the possibility of moral conversion. Schelling admits the validity of this objection and writes that "there seems to be only one argument [Ein Grund] to advance against this point of view: that *it cuts out all turning of man from evil toward good, and vice versa, at least for this life"* (SW VII, 389, emphasis added).

Schelling does not refute that objection but concedes the impossibility of moral conversion. He explains that a chance for moral conversion from evil to good is conditioned on whether the agent's moral disposition was already and primarily formed as good in the initial act of decision. He writes:

> Suppose now that human or divine assistance—(man always requires some assistance)—may destine an individual to convert to the good, then, *that he grants the good spirit this influence and does not positively shut himself off from it, lies likewise already in the initial action whereby he is this individual and no other* (SW VII, 389).

One can conclude that if the agent's intelligible being is determined, and the moral conversion is impossible, the inherited intelligibility also must be unchangeable during life. Schelling agrees with this conclusion too. He maintains that an individual who "from childhood ... shows a propensity [*Hang*] to evil …brings to ripeness the wicked fruit that we had foreseen in the earliest sprout [Keim]" (SW VII, 386-387). Van den Auweele reads Schelling's idea on moral conversion as historically indefensible because "some of the most inspiring individuals in history, and many stories in the literary canon, are all about moral growth and change."[43] We can assume Schelling's answer: those moral conversions occurred because the fundamental moral disposition of each individual was already decided "in the initial creation" in a way that she was "this individual and no other" (SW VII, 389). Schelling's commitment to the decided and determined intelligibility of the will, which occurred in the "initial action," is firm.

[43] Van den Auweele, "Ground of Evil," 251.

Freydberg is aware of the objection to the impossibility of moral conversion in Schelling's philosophy of freedom. However, he does not accept that Schelling fundamentally refutes the possibility of moral conversion. According to Freydberg, Schelling denies that moral conversion can happen at the level of actions, although it can happen at the level of intelligibility. This is why Freydberg writes that moral conversion is "meaningless" if "the eternal character of man is left out of account." Freydberg argues that moral conversion in Schelling's philosophy is possible *if* any change in "the ordering of principles" in the "eternal character" of an agent occurs.[44] However, this is a big *if*. As I spelt out, Schelling vividly denies the possibility of any change in the "ordering of principles," to use the terminology employed by Freydberg. Schelling maintains that the moral disposition or "principle" is decided in the initial act of decision, and due to that determined "ordering of principles," an agent " *is this individual and no other."* Therefore, Schelling argues that change in an agent's moral attitude is possible if that change is compatible with the "ordering of principles" an agent already has. Freydberg interprets the problem of the impossibility of moral conversion of a determined and decided intelligibility to the possibility of change in the "order of principles" to justify the possibility of moral conversion in Schelling's philosophy. This interpretation fails to find textual support in Schelling's expressions.

To emphasise this more, it is important to highlight that Schelling not only concedes that inherited propensity to evil "brings to ripeness the wicked fruit that we had foreseen in the earliest sprout" but also brings the example of Judas, the betrayer of Christ, to say that "neither he nor any other creature could change" his disposition in a way that he would not betray Christ. Furthermore, in the case of a "good individual," Schelling writes that he is not arbitrarily good and "no compulsion, not even the gates of hell themselves, would be capable of overpowering his basic disposition [*Gesinnung*]" (SW VII, 386-387).

Therefore, the fundamental moral disposition is formed with the initial act of decision and is unchangeable during the agent's life. By committing to this concept of freedom, Schelling abandons the Fichtean doctrine that holds the identity between the I and the agent's own act.[45] In addition, Schelling opposes Kant in his denial of the possibility of moral conversion.[46]

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[44] Freydberg, *Dialogical Essay*, 75.
[45] Kosch in *Freedom and Reason*, argues about the existence of an inconsistency in Schelling's philosophy of freedom and writes that Schelling cannot embrace the view of "the self as radically self-constituting" because humans are creatures, and, as created beings, they "can be responsible for how they use their agency, but they cannot be responsible for the fact that they are agents to begin with without ceasing to be created agents" (96-97).
[46] The possibility of moral conversion is the fifth characteristic of Kantian freedom, noted in the first chapter.

Giving priority to one's determined intelligible will over her action makes the second freedom less powerful. The order of the system reduces it to limited freedom. This new concept is described in the following passage:

> It is true in the strictest understanding that, given *how man is in fact created*, *it is not he himself but rather the good or evil spirit in him that acts*; and, nonetheless, this *does no harm to freedom*. For precisely the *allowing-to-act-within-himself* [das in-sich-handeln-Lassen] of the good and evil principles *is the result of an intelligible act whereby his being and life are determined* (SW VII, 389, emphasis added).

The agent knows he cannot be different from her moral disposition as her inner necessity. However, the agent feels free, voluntarily acts, and is not compelled by external or empirical determinations.[47] In this way, necessity and freedom coincide. Schelling thinks that each individual experiences the necessity of determined moral disposition with the feeling of freedom.[48] He writes:

> As incomprehensible as this idea may appear to conventional ways of thinking, there is indeed in each man a *feeling* in accord with it as *if he had been what he is already from all eternity and had by no means become so first in time*…. [and each individual] surely *appears to himself not in the least compelled* (because compulsion can be felt only in becoming and not in Being) *but rather performs his actions in accordance with and not against his will* (SW VII, 386, emphasis added).

This concept of freedom is close to what in the contemporary philosophy of freedom is known as compatibilism. According to this doctrine, an agent's actions are determined by causal order, either natural or social. The agent is free as long as her actions are the product of her will, not imposed by external authorities. However, in Schelling's second doctrine of freedom, the agent is not determined by empirical causes but by a determined and decided intelligible will.

Yet, there is an important difference between Schelling's determined will and what compatibilists claim. In a naturalist account of compatibilism, the causal order determines the action and the latter results from the natural laws. In addition, in some versions of theological compatibilism, the divine

[47] "That Judas became a betrayer of Christ, neither he nor any other creature could change, and nevertheless he betrayed Christ not under compulsion but willingly and with complete freedom. It is exactly the same with a good individual; namely he is not good arbitrarily or by accident and yet is so little compelled that, rather, no compulsion, not even the gates of hell themselves, would be capable of overpowering his basic disposition [*Gesinnung*]" (SW VII, 386).

[48] O'Conner, in "Self-Determination and Responsibility," denies that everyone might have such an experience.

order determines human action. In both cases, the agent's freedom is defined in the domain of those determinations. An agent is free in so far as she is not compelled or restricted by external authorities. However, for Schelling, one's fundamental moral disposition is the result of the *agent's* eternal act of decision, which wholly determines her moral disposition and is unchangeable. This is a conceptual and *one-time atemporal act of decision* and, therefore, is simultaneous with *the initial act of creation.* This is an obscure claim. We do not know how such a decision is primarily taken. We do not know how and why one individual chooses to be evil, whereas the other decides to be good. Schelling, at the beginning of the investigation on the formal concept of freedom, alluded to this obscurity:

> Evil remains always an individual's own choice; the ground cannot make evil as such, and every creature falls due to its own guilt. *But just how in each individual the decision for good or evil might now proceed—this is still shrouded in complete darkness* and seems to demand a specific investigation (SW VII, 382, emphasis added).

Schelling strived to clarify this through the formal concept of freedom but could not suggest a fathomable explanation. Therefore, Kosch fairly ascribes an arbitrariness to Schelling's freedom. She writes that in Schellingian freedom, the agent's "essential character is defined by an arbitrary choice for good and evil."[49]

I suggest that Schelling's ambiguity regarding the act of decision on intelligibility comes from two tendencies in Schelling's thought on freedom. Schelling neither embraces the traditional theological position, in which human essence is determined by God, insofar as he is keen to provide room for human decision in her moral disposition, nor does he like to abandon the theological standpoint and admit unlimited freedom because he maintains that freedom must be reconciled with God's understanding as a system. This makes the charge of arbitrariness in Schelling's second concept of freedom acceptable.

Therefore, as I argued, the *Freedom Essay* evokes two kinds of freedom that are inconsistent.[50] The reason for such oscillation is the existence of two strong tendencies in the *Freedom Essay*: a commitment

[49] Kosch, *Freedom and Reason*, 96.

[50] In recognising two incompatible views in the *Freedom Essay*, I am indebted to Michelle Kosch's valuable book, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard*. Kosch maintains that Schelling has two motivations. First, she maintains that Schelling is driven "to add a more traditional liberation model of freedom to the self-determination model of freedom" developed by Kant's intelligible choice of fundamental disposition. Second, she maintains Schelling is keen to reconcile "such an account of the radical choice of moral disposition

to provide a concept of radical freedom with "unlimited power" and, simultaneously, to accommodate such freedom in an ordered system. Simultaneous fulfilment of those two tasks is impossible. In the following section, I expose the nature of this inconsistency and will show that Schelling's ontology does not allow radical freedom indwells in the theological system.

III
The Incompatibility of Radical Freedom and the System

In Schelling's ontology, God's understanding is the system. It permanently suppresses the will of ground in favour of God's universal will of love. In order to promote good in humans, the domination and control of the will of understanding over the ground is required. However, genuine freedom, as the possibility of good and evil, is the locus of "two oppositional wills that do not admit of reconciliation."[51] Freedom needs to encompass the equal possibility of actualisation of the will of the ground with the will of the system if it wants to be genuine. Thus, a source of tension and contradiction between the system and freedom exists in Schelling's ontology. In other words, the system of God's understanding wants to elevate the universal will of love, a "Good beyond the duality of good and evil."[52] It promotes a kind of human freedom that enthrone Good. However, the victory of Good is the result of overcoming an indivisible remainder, which "with the greatest exertion cannot be resolved in understanding" (SW VII, 359): Freedom, as a system of Good, cannot encompass the freedom as the possibility of good and evil. In Wirth's language, "there is a potency within the freedom [as the Good] that moves to obliterate freedom [as the possibility of good and evil]."[53] The system tends to restrict, control, and dominate a kind of freedom that, conversely, tends to be unlimited and escapes from the order of the system. The system wants to determine radical freedom. However, radical freedom wants to render the fundamental equal possibility of good and evil and breaks the restriction of the system.

(libertarian model added to the self-determination) with a philosophical system along the lines mapped out in the third critique." Kosch contends that simultaneous fulfilment of these two tasks is impossible. She categorises those views under the compatibilism and incompatibilism doctrine of freedom and criticises Schelling for oscillating between those doctrines in the *Freedom Essay*. However, my detailed discussion and argumentation to identify radical and limited freedom based on undetermined and decided intelligible beings cannot be found in Kosch's book and is my contribution. Furthermore, as I made clear, I have some reservations about attributing incompatibilism and compatibilism to the first and the second concepts of freedom, respectively.

[51] Wirth, *Conspiracy of Life*, 180.

[52] Wirth, *Conspiracy of Life*, 180.

[53] Wirth, *Conspiracy of Life*, 180.

These contradictory tendencies manifest themselves as two inconsistent views in Schelling's *Freedom Essay*: to argue for radical evil and simultaneously preserve such a concept of evil in the domain of a theological system. In other words, Schelling wants to propose a genuine freedom in which the possibility of evil is positive and unlimited, and a system whose existence entails the suppression of evil. There are two flows of thought in the *Freedom Essay*, each promoting one of those tendencies. In one, free will is undetermined, radical, and not restricted by God's understanding. In the second one, free will is limited and determined by the requirement of the system. Thus, the *Freedom Essay* presents two incompatible concepts of freedom.

Martin Heidegger, in his influential essay, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom,* from a different standpoint, argues that Schelling's ontology cannot accommodate freedom in a system. He contends that from the moment that Schelling equalises God's understanding with the system, he excludes the ground, the condition of freedom, from the system. Excluding the opposing force from the system, Heidegger says, means that the "system is no longer system with regard to being as a whole."[54] Heidegger calls Schelling's tendency to reconcile freedom with the system an "impasse" in Schelling's philosophy of freedom.

However, the contradiction between freedom and the system is unavoidable and unescapable because such a contradiction has roots in reality. Human essence bears the indivisible remainder as the source of tension and contradiction, and human life is the realm of that contradiction. Therefore, Schelling's philosophy inevitably represents that contradiction, given its preoccupation with human life. I suggest that the indivisible remainder of Schelling's philosophy is his radical concept of freedom, an "unlimited power" not encompassed in his theological system. This excess, as the source of tension, causes Schelling's oscillation in the *Freedom Essay* between two concepts of freedom; a concept of freedom that wants to be unlimited, voluntary, and in this sense spontaneous, and a concept of freedom that admits the requirement of the system and is, therefore, limited within the order of the system. The first concept of freedom is incompatible with the system and cannot be reconciled by God's understanding. The second one is compatible with the system and is determined by it but not radical.

[54] Martin Heidegger, 1985, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, Translated by Joan Stambaugh, (Athens, Ohio, London: Ohio University Press), 161.

Each true philosophy of freedom suffers from this inconsistency.[55] Philosophising, nevertheless, is an aim to provide a system, and so, from the beginning, it is in contradiction with freedom. Radical freedom cannot be encapsulated in a system. Schelling is aware of the impossibility of avoiding such a contradiction between necessity and freedom. This contradiction is a fundamental feature of philosophy and life. Schelling writes, "without the contradiction of necessity and freedom not only philosophy but each higher willing of the spirit would sink into the death" (SW VII, 338). By quoting from Kant's *Religion*, Velkley reminds us that Kant is aware of these contradictions:

> For if all the world proceeded in accordance with the precept of the law, we would say that everything occurred according to the order of nature, and no one would even think of inquiring after the cause.[56]

Thus, as Velkley writes, "Kant states, like Schelling, that this contradiction provokes the mind to philosophise.… For Kant, also, the obliteration of the contradiction of personality would mean the death of philosophy."[57] The value of the work of great philosophers, such as Kant and Schelling, is not to prevent confrontation with contradictions that reflect the reality of life but to expose some layers of truth about freedom.

[55] Richard Velkley in 2020, "The Personal, Evil, and the Possibility of Philosophy in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*," In *Schelling's Philosophy: Freedom, Nature, and systematicity*, edited by G. Anthony Bruno, 154-167, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), alludes to the same dilemma and writes, "the difficulty of Schelling's God thus reveals the conditions of Schellingian philosophy, or what makes it possible. But if philosophy is possible only because there is difficulty or aporia, then the difficulty of Schellingian philosophy exposes perhaps the essence of all philosophy. Its difficulty is then not merely a defect or inconsistency of a certain systematic program" (159-160).
[56] Kant, *Religion*, 6:59.
[57] Velkley, "Personal, Evil," 165.

Conclusion

For Schelling, freedom, "the one and all of philosophy," is genuine, real, and vital if it accommodates the possibility of good and evil (SW VII, 351). A considerable part of the *Freedom Essay* is an attempt to provide an ontology that justifies the existence of radical and intelligible evil, albeit in the framework of Schelling's theological system. Schelling successfully provides an ontological base for the positive concept of evil, which is neither the absence or privation of good nor the result of the authority of desires. Humans inherit the principles of ground and existence from God. The principle of ground, a principle of darkness, chaos, and anarchy, is the source of evil in humans. The principle of ground is an indivisible remainder that cannot be eradicated and remain untouched. This assures that evil is radical; it fundamentally constitutes parts of the human essence and is a positive tendency in the human spirit. Being good or evil results from the struggle between the dynamic opposing forces of the principles of ground and existence in the human spirit that determines the human's moral disposition. Humans are free to decide their moral disposition. Therefore, Schelling distances himself from Kant, who equates freedom with morality.

Schelling should investigate the formal concept of freedom to know how one decides on one's moral disposition. Following Kant, Schelling acknowledges that genuine freedom must meet two formal conditions: to be neither empirical nor arbitrary. Therefore, in pursuing the common belief of German idealism, Schelling endorses the formal concept of intelligible freedom to satisfy the former condition of freedom, not being empirical. In fulfilling the second condition, he affirms that freedom should be determined to avoid arbitrariness. However, as Schelling intends to accommodate the possibility of evil in freedom, he avoids committing *rational* self-determination that equates freedom with good. Instead, Schelling makes human moral disposition identical to the agent's own act. This combines Kantian freedom with the Fichtean theory of the I as own act. An agent's moral disposition determines her actions, while reciprocally, the self is nothing more than an agent's actions. Our essence is our actions. A free agent's act of decision is the act of self-disclosure. Such an agent is morally responsible for what she does. This freedom is not limited by theological or empirical systems and, in this sense, is radical. I called it the first concept of freedom. As this concept of freedom is not determined, as opposed to what Schelling claims, the first concept of freedom is vulnerable to the objection of arbitrariness.

However, Schelling's tendency to indwell this radical freedom within a theological system brings an inconsistency insofar as this leads to a second concept of freedom that is incompatible with the first one. The second concept of freedom is based on decided intelligibility. It is limited and determined by the theological system. The human essence is determined at once by the act of decision. This act is eternal, coincides with the act of creation, and determines the agent's moral disposition. Therefore, the agent's moral disposition is eternally good or evil, and there is no chance for the agent's moral conversion. The agent's intelligible moral disposition stands beyond her actions and one-sidedly determines it. However, the agent has a feeling of freedom because her actions follow the inner necessity of her intelligibility, and the external sources do not compel her to act. The limited freedom seems determined and, therefore, not arbitrary. However, it cannot be convincingly asserted because Schelling insists that this is the agent that eternally, at once, and unchangeably decides on her moral disposition. That decision is taken together with the magic stroke act of creation. This is an obscure assertion. We never know how and why one individual decides to be good and the other evil. Thus, the second concept of freedom is also vulnerable to the charge of arbitrariness.

My study on Schellingian freedom was restricted to Schelling's *Freedom Essay*. As Schelling's commentators suggest, Schelling's later philosophy of freedom is not wholly compatible with what he argues in the *Freedom Essay*. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of Schelling's position regarding freedom requires an investigation encompassing all of Schilling's writings. This is not the scope of my paper and demands further investigation.

However, even in the framework of the *Freedom Essay*, Schelling is aware of the contradiction between freedom and the system in each possible philosophy. He knows that "without the contradiction of necessity and freedom not only philosophy but each higher willing of the spirit would sink into the death" (SW VII, 338). However, such as all great philosophers, he embraces that contradiction and, through a "dialogical"[58] essay, "investigates" and discloses some layers of "truth" regarding freedom and human essence without being able to provide a final answer to the problem of freedom because such a final answer does not exist. The *Freedom Essay*, as a "dialogical" discussion, like every genuine dialogue, does not propose a closing result. Instead, it brings forth genuine questions, exposes the difficulties of the subject of freedom, and unconceals some parts of the subject of discussion while avoiding the claim that it

[58] Schelling states that In the *Freedom Essay*, "everything arises as a sort of dialogue," although "the external form of a dialogue is lacking." Schelling writes "Many things here could have been more sharply defined and treated less casually, many protected more explicitly from misinterpretation. The author has refrained from doing so partially on purpose" (SW VII, 409-410).

provides an all-encompassing answer to the question of the essence of freedom. We learn from Schelling's success and failure. He successfully argues for freedom as the possibility of good and evil and demonstrates a radical, non-empirical concept of evil in human essence that is ineradicable. His failure to reconcile necessity and freedom in the *Freedom Essay* should be read as a general philosophical failure for such reconciliation.

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