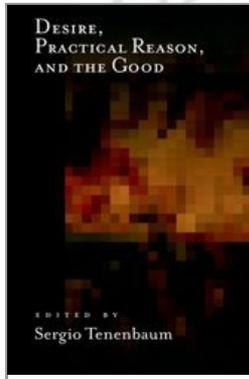


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Desire, Practical Reason, and the Good

Sergio Tenenbaum

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The Form of the Will

Rödl Sebastian

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[–] Abstract and Keywords

She who is doing something intentionally represents doing it as good. The chapter argues that this describes the logical form of a practical representation. A practical representation is, formally, a conclusion of practical reasoning; it is practical in that it is a representation according to which its subject acts. The thesis, then, expresses the unity of practical reasoning and acting according to a representation. This explains why it has met with incomprehension: It articulates a conception of reason as practical that is out of reach of the empiricism that strangles much of contemporary philosophy.

Keywords: will, practical reason, causality of the will, form of predication, good

I shall seek to expound the meaning of the proposition *Doing something intentionally is representing doing it as good*, or, *Acting intentionally in a certain way is representing acting in this way as good*. It will transpire that this proposition unfolds the concept of a distinctive power to act: the will.

I. Introduction

1. *Good* Signifies a Form of Predication

Let us consider the logical form of our proposition. First, the values of the variable *doing such-and-such*, or *acting in such-and-such a way*, are action forms: drinking a glass of milk, peeling an apple, honoring one's parents. An action form is something general, a unity of an indefinite manifold. The representation of an action form is a representation of something general, a general representation, a concept. So, if doing something intentionally is representing doing it as good, then doing something intentionally is *applying a concept*.

Next, *good*, in our proposition, may appear to be an adjective, predicatively employed, and said of the action. Then representing as good would be judging that something is something: the action good. But then our proposition would be false. For it says that acting is representing as good; and acting is not judging. So perhaps representing as good is not judging that something is something.

It may help to think of an analogous proposition, namely, *Judging something is representing it as true*. Here, too, it may seem that *true* is an adjective, used predicatively, and said of the thing judged. But only for a moment. For it is obvious that that cannot be right. It entails that judging something is judging something else, namely, that the thing judged is true. And judging something cannot be judging something else. Frege concluded that the concept *true* relates to judgment in a different way from that in which any other concept does so. He suggested that *true* is not part of a predicate and does not contribute to the content of (p.139) a representation, but signifies its form, a form of predication, *the form that is judging*. Perhaps this is how it is in our case, as well. Representing doing something as good is applying a concept, an action form concept. It may be that *good* signifies the manner in which this concept is applied. Then *good* is not part of a predicate and does not contribute to the content of a representation. Instead, it signifies its form, a form of predication, a form of applying a concept, *the form that is acting intentionally*. This is the idea I aim to develop in this chapter.

2. *Good* Signifies the Formal Object of the Will

I described a conception of the logical character of the concept *true* suggested by Frege, and am proposing that the concept *good* has the same logical character, relating to action as *true* relates to judgment. That account of *true* does not originate with Frege, and the parallel account of *good* is not my invention. It is an ancient thought that the true is the formal object of the intellect, and the good the formal object of the will. That the true is the formal object of the intellect means that *true* signifies the form of an object of the intellect, that is, the character that an object of the intellect exhibits insofar as it is an object of the intellect. The intellect is the power of judgment, and its object is something represented in judgment. So *true* characterizes the object of the intellect solely with regard to its being represented in the manner of representing that is judging. Analogously, that the good is the formal object of the will means that *good* signifies the form of an object of the will, that is, the character that an object of the will exhibits as an

object of the will. The will is the power to act intentionally, and its object is something represented in acting. So *good* characterizes the object of the will solely with regard to its being represented in the manner of representing that is acting intentionally.

If *good* and *true* signify a form of predication of an act of the will and the intellect or, equivalently, the formal object of the will and the intellect, then this explains the philosophical interest of these concepts. If they signified properties, it would be obscure why they should be a topic of philosophy. (Thinking that they signify properties, one will find these to be very special properties—a sign that one is on a path to nonsense.) According to the account I am suggesting *good* and *true* are a priori concepts by which the will and the intellect represent their object purely, according to the form that it bears as an object of the will and the intellect. Thus these concepts are original acts of the will and intellect, in which they represent their own nature, constituting themselves as self-conscious powers.

3. An Account of the Concept *Good* Is an Account of the Will

It is a principle of Aristotle's psychology that there is an a priori unity of a power of the soul and its object, wherefore one inquiry is of the power and its object. In our case, one inquiry is of the intellect, or judgment, and (p.140) the true, and one inquiry is of the will, or intentional action, and the good. Following this principle, we are departing from a usual manner of discussing our proposition. It is usually assumed that it speaks of a judgment of value that predicates goodness of an action. It is taken to be clear (or to be clarified elsewhere) what a value judgment is and what it is to think something good. Then it is found that intentional action bears no essential relation to that. But we cannot exclude that the primary application of the concept *good* is to action and that the primary manner of applying the concept *good* to action is the one our proposition describes. Then we have no prior understanding of what it is to think something good in the light of which we could assess the truth of our proposition. Rather, our proposition is the source of that understanding. We shall leave it open whether all use of the concept *good* depends on the one of which our proposition speaks. In any case, if in our proposition *good* signifies a form of predication, the form that is acting intentionally, then that use of *good* can only be elucidated by reflecting on the nature of intentional action.

Thus there is a sense in which expounding the meaning of our proposition is to establish its truth. Independently of our proposition we know neither what it is to represent an action as good in the relevant way nor what it is to act intentionally. Our proposition identifies a certain manner of representing an action, namely as good, which is acting in a certain way, namely intentionally. If we can give an account of a form of representation that is representing as good and is acting, that account will supply a concept of goodness and a concept of acting intentionally that make our proposition true. Moreover, as this is how we arrive at these concepts, we shall be assured of their philosophical dignity. For, as we noted above, they are, so understood, a priori concepts through which the will, the power to act intentionally, represents its own nature.

We first consider the proposition analogous to the one that is our topic, namely, *Judging*

something is representing it as true (II). Then we describe the form of predication that the concept *good* signifies, the form that is acting intentionally (III to V).

II. Judgment and the True

4. Judgment as Synthesis

Doing something intentionally is representing it as good appears to be analogous to *Judging something is representing it as true*. I am suggesting that the analogy is this: *Good* and *true* signify the form of an object, of the will and the intellect, respectively. They signify a form of predication, the form of an act of the will and the form of an act of the intellect, respectively. So let us consider the nexus of judgment and the true. If the analogy holds, the same nexus joins action and the good. I shall not aim to establish that the true is the formal object of the intellect. I only want to say something about what it means.

(p.141) We can take our departure from the thought that *It is true* is a sentence variable, a prosentence.¹ What distinguishes the values of a given variable is their matter; what they share is a form. Thus Wittgenstein says that a variable signifies a formal concept, the concept of a form, namely, of the form that the values of the variable as its values exhibit.² *It is true*, a sentence variable, signifies the general form of what is said with a sentence.

Frege says as much when he remarks that *It is true* signifies what the declarative sentence form signifies.³ A sentence is composed of words. It is not a heap, but a unity of words. The form of a declarative sentence, the declarative sentence form, is the unity of its words. What holds for the sentence and its words holds for what is said with them: What is said with a sentence is a unity, namely a unity of what its words signify. This unity is not signified by any of the words of the sentence, but by their unity, the sentence form. Frege says, *true* signifies that: what otherwise is signified not by a word, but by a unity of words, or the sentence form.

An elementary sentence joins a name and a concept word. The unity of what is said with such a sentence is the unity of the sense of a name and the sense of a concept word; this is the unity of an elementary thought. When we say a thought is a unity of elements, we are saying something that she who thinks the thought knows. She who thinks a thought knows its articulation, and knows it not in a separate act, but in thinking the thought. Therefore, we cannot distinguish the thought's being articulated from the thinking subject's knowing it to be articulated. We cannot distinguish its parts' being together from their being held together by her who is thinking it. This can be expressed by saying that thinking is synthesis and that this synthesis is the unity of the thought.⁴ The synthesis is predication: It is joining the sense of a name and the sense of a concept word in such a way as to bring the object signified by the name under the concept signified by the concept word.⁵

We said *true* signifies the form of what is said with a sentence, the form of a thought. The form of a thought is its unity, the manner in which one conjoins its parts in thinking the

thought. So, *true* signifies the unity of representations in a thought and thus the object of thinking as such. It signifies the form of the object, the formal object, of thought. As the intellect is a power to think, the true is the formal object of the intellect.

5. Force and Content

The proposition above—the one that is analogous to the one that is our topic in this essay—was slightly different. We said *judging* something was representing it as true and that the true was the formal object of *judgment*. According to Frege, we must distinguish, in a judgment, grasping a thought and acknowledging it as true. Every judgment is an act of thinking a thought, but not every act of thinking a thought is a judgment. One may suppose that such-and-such is true, thinking a thought without acknowledging it as true. It follows that the true is the formal (**p.142**) object not specifically of judgment, but of an act of thinking common to judgment and, say, assumption and supposition.

If this were an essay on judgment, I would argue that this is wrong. As it is not, I confine myself to explicating what someone would think who thought it was wrong. He would think: We cannot comprehend judgment as composed of force and content as independent elements. For, we cannot comprehend the unity of the content independently of the force of judgment. *The force of judgment is the unity of its content.*

According to the Fregean doctrine, the act of acknowledging the thought as true is external to the unity of the thought acknowledged as true. Kant holds the opposite view. He holds that the force of judgment is the unity of its content. A judgment, Kant says, is a synthesis of representations according to the objective unity of apperception. The objective unity of apperception is the unity of representations in virtue of which they are represented as united in the object.⁶ This unity, and so the act of judgment, carries generality and necessity: Representations joined according to the objective unity of apperception have not come together in the subject per accidens; they must be together. Equivalently, they belong together in every subject, or generally. So Kant says: The synthesis is the judgment. The force of judgment is the unity of the thing judged.

I said that *true* signifies the form of what is said with a declarative sentence. And according to Frege, this is the form of a thought, which is a content to which various forces may attach. The unity of such a content is provided from elsewhere; the source of its unity is not any of the forces that may join it. By contrast, according to Kant, there is not, on the one hand, the form of a content and, on the other hand, the force attaching to a content of this form. The force is the form. The force of judgment is that manner of holding together representations by which they constitute a content of judgment. The Kantian doctrine can be expressed by saying that the true is the formal object specifically of judgment.

I shall not defend this doctrine here. I expounded it because I want to put forth a parallel doctrine of the will and its object. An argument for the claim that the force of judgment is the unity of its content would, first and negatively, establish that it is not possible to understand the force of judgment if it is external to its content. Second, and positively, it would give a different account of the relation of judgment to, say, assumption and

supposition, and of the unity of these acts. It is true that they have something in common and fall under a genus. But species and genus need not be related in such a way that the species is defined by the genus and a specific difference. What unites the species need not be an element contained in all of them (the content) to which another element, which is different in different species, is added (the force). It may be that the genus is defined by one of its species and the other species by reference to this, first and central, species. The unity of the species would then reside in the various relations other species bear to the primary species. (Such is, according to Aristotle, the unity of what is.)

(p.143) III. The Will as Practical Reason

6. Two Marks of Our Form of Predication: Productive and Necessary

Kant says there is a kind of synthesis that is judging. It is the unity of an object of judgment. The declarative sentence variable *It is true* signifies this unity. It signifies the formal object of the intellect, the power of judgment. I am suggesting that, analogously, there is a manner of applying a concept that is an act of the will. It is the unity of an object of the will. *Good*, in our proposition, signifies this unity. It signifies the formal object of the will, the power to act intentionally. Our proposition says about the relevant manner of applying a concept: Applying an action form concept in this way is acting, and it is representing so acting as good. That is, an act of the will is productive and conceives of itself as necessary.

Applying an action form concept in an act of the will is acting in such a way as to realize this concept. Applying the concept, here, is instantiating it. This defines the will in contrast to judgment. The form of judgment is the objective unity of apperception: a unity of representations in virtue of which they relate to an object. The form of the will, too, is the manner in which it relates to an object. However, its way of relating to an object differs from that of the intellect. The act of applying a concept, when it is an act of the intellect, does not account for the existence of the object that is known through the concept. Therefore the object must be given to the subject, and the intellect relates to an object in virtue of the subject's being affected by the object. An act of the will, by contrast, is an act of applying a concept in such a way as to instantiate it. Thus, here, the act of applying the concept is sufficient for the existence of that which is known through the concept. Therefore an act of the will does not receive its object through sensory affection. It relates to its object by being productive of it. Using "thought" as a term for any kind of conceptual representation, we can say that the will is a power of productive thought.⁷

In this formal character of our form of predication another is contained: A productive thought is a first-person thought and productive predication is self-predication. A first-person thought, by nominal definition, is such that, not per accidens, but in virtue of the manner of thinking it, the subject thinking it is she of whom she thinks. Or, it is a case of applying a concept such that, in virtue of the manner of applying the concept, she who applies it is she to whom she applies it. If the identity of the thinking subject with the subject of whom she thinks were not internal to the manner of thinking the thought, then the subject would not know that it was herself ("herself," here, being a first-person

pronoun) of whom she was thinking just by thinking the thought. She would know this only in a further act of the mind, an identity judgment "I am the one of whom I am thinking." Now a productive predication of a concept satisfies this nominal definition of self-predication. For applying a concept (**p.144**) productively is exemplifying it, and this is a character of the manner in which the concept is applied and, hence, something she who applies it understands not in a further act of the mind, but in applying the concept. As she applies the concept in this way, she represents herself, her who applies the concept, as exemplifying it. She self-applies the concept: She who applies the concept is she whom she represents as exemplifying it not per accidens, but in virtue of the way in which she applies the concept. The will, as a power to act, is a power to self-predicate action form concepts.

An act of the will is a productive and therefore a first-person thought. But this is not all. Our proposition says that doing something intentionally is representing it as good to do or as something one ought to do. *Good* and *ought* signify a kind of necessity. So an act of the will conceives of itself as necessary. It shares this character with judgment. Therefore, like a judgment, an act of the will is the kind of act to be the conclusion of an inference.

Inferring something from given premises is not just thinking it because one holds to the premises. It is thinking it on account of one's recognition that the premises provide sufficient grounds for thinking it. This recognition is not (cannot be) a further premise. Rather, it is the consciousness of the unity of the premises and the conclusion, which is constitutive of this unity as the unity of an inference.⁸ So the conclusion contains a consciousness of itself as resting on the premises and as necessary on that account, and this consciousness is not part of its content, but is its form as the conclusion of an inference.⁹ Therefore an act can be the conclusion of an inference only if it is such as to contain a consciousness of its own necessity; and an act that contains an understanding of itself as necessary is such as to be the conclusion of an inference. *Ought* and *good*, being concepts of necessity, designate the form of an act that may be the conclusion of an inference. As that inference concludes in an act of the will, it is a practical inference.

Our proposition describes the form of an act of the will as follows: It is a productive representation conceiving of itself as necessary. Reason is the power of inference, the power to represent the kind of necessity just described. So according to our proposition acts of the will are not only acts of productive thought, but acts of reason, which is productive, or practical, in those acts. The will is practical reason, says our proposition. If we are to understand it, we must see how the power of practical inference (practical reason) is a power to act (the will).

7. Practical Inference and the Causality of the Will

Doing something intentionally is representing doing it as good. This describes the form of an act of the will. It says that an act of the will applies a concept in such a way as to act (it is productive) and represents so acting as good (it contains a consciousness of its own necessity). Now the will would not be a distinctive power to act, and acting intentionally would (**p.145**) not be a distinctive manner of acting, if an act of the will were a

productive representation that also happened to conceive of itself as necessary. The will is a distinctive power to act only if its consciousness of necessity is the form of its productivity. That the will is practical reason must mean that its causality is constituted by practical reasoning. This is how Kant explains it.

Ein jedes Ding der Natur wirkt nach Gesetzen. Nur ein vernünftiges Wesen hat das Vermögen, nach der Vorstellung der Gesetze, d. i. nach Prinzipien, zu handeln, oder einen Willen. Da zur Ableitung der Handlungen von Gesetzen Vernunft erfordert wird, so ist der Wille nichts anderes, als praktische Vernunft.
(*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 412)

Kant defines the will as a power to act according to the representation of laws. We shall see that this is exactly right. But it will be helpful to be less specific at first. A law is something general, something that actions according to the law exemplify. So let us say, more generally, that the will is a power to act according to general representations, or concepts. As those concepts are instantiated in acting, they are action form concepts. Now Kant says this power is nothing other than practical reason because reason is required for the derivation of actions from action forms. This shows that the will is nothing other than practical reason if and only if acting according to the representation of an action form is nothing other than deriving the action from this form. Acting according to an action form concept (an act of the will) is deriving the action from the represented action form (an act of reason). So an act of the will is productive in this way: Its subject derives actions from the predicated action form, that is, reasons practically from the form to actions realizing it. An act of the will is the cause of action through practical reasoning.¹⁰ In order to develop the meaning of our proposition, we must describe the structure of practical reasoning in such a way as to show how it constitutes a consciousness of its conclusion as necessary. And we must explain how that structure is the causality of the will so that its consciousness of necessity is the form of its productivity. We shall do the former in the next section, the latter in section V.

IV. Practical Reasoning

8. Its Conclusion

The conclusion of a practical inference is a productive representation. This is what makes the inference *practical*. As the conclusion of an *inference*, the representation is conscious of itself as necessary. *Good* and *ought* express that consciousness.¹¹ Thus, “I should do A,” “I ought to do A” can express a conclusion of practical reasoning, as can “It is good to do A.”¹²

As productive, the conclusion of a practical inference is a first-person thought. *Ought* and *good*, signifying its form, signify its first-person character. Therefore, expressing the conclusion of a practical inference, “I ought to do A” is not equivalent to “It ought to be the case that ... [I, do (p.146) A] ...,” and “It is good to do A” not to “It would be good if it were the case that ... [I, do A]...” (The brackets indicate that the proposition contains the first-person concept and the concept *do A* and perhaps further material, leaving it open how these materials are conjoined.) A sentential operator does not affect the form of

predication of the sentence to which it is applied. Hence, a subject that represents a state of affairs as necessary is not, in virtue of representing it in this way, identical with a subject that figures in that state of affairs. If the first person figures in the articulation of the relevant state of affairs, then this is incidental to that state's being represented as something that ought to be. Within the scope of "It ought to be the case that ..." or "It would be good if it were the case that ..." I refer to myself as other.¹³ It follows that the necessity that these sentential operators express is not the necessity of a productive representation, and thus not the necessity the consciousness of which is the formal character of the conclusion of a *practical* inference. Perhaps "It would be good if it were the case that ..." expresses a judgment of value. "It is good to do A" does not; it expresses an act of the will.

Reasoning practically is determining what to do or how to act by deriving it from something general. What is derived is specific in relation to that from which it is derived. Reasoning practically is specifying the general. For a reason I shall give in section V, I call the general item from which an action is derived an end. There are two kinds of general item from which an action may be derived, two kinds of end. Corresponding to them are two forms of deriving the specific from the general.

9. Finite End

The first kind of end is signified by a verb that is predicated under the contrast of perfective and progressive aspect, the contrast of being under way and being complete. An example is "getting the camera": It is something one may be doing ("He is getting the camera") or may have done ("He has got the camera"). Such an end conforms to Aristotle's definition of "kinesis." A kinesis may be said to be a finite end because it comes to a limit: I want to get the camera only as long as I have not got it. Once I have got it, my desire to get it dies. Having got the camera, I may want to get it again (having dropped it, perhaps), but this will be pursuing a different end.

Reasoning practically, I derive from a finite end what is preparatory for, or a part of, it. (It may be, or turn out to be, an improper part; that is, having done what I derived from the end, I may find that I need to do no more.) In my example, thinking that my camera is upstairs, I derive going upstairs as a part of getting the camera. "My camera is upstairs. So let me go upstairs," I think. From a given finite end, a potentially infinite number of actions can be derived as preparatory for, or parts of, it. A finite end does not limit the number of actions that may be derived from it in the manner described. In this way, notwithstanding its finitude, a finite end is **(p.147)** a unity of a potentially infinite number of actions derived from it. As the idea of the general is the idea of such a unity, a finite end is general in relation to the actions derived from it. Deriving an action from a finite end is a manner of specifying something general.

Thinking that the camera is upstairs and wanting to get it play distinct roles in my inference. Getting the camera is the general item from which I derive going upstairs as to be done. I derive it recognizing the logical nexus of going upstairs and getting the camera: The former specifies the latter. It specifies it in the manner in which something

specifies a finite end: It is a part of getting the camera. My recognition of this nexus is my knowledge that the camera is upstairs as this knowledge is put to the service of my end of getting the camera. I shall call the representation of the end the first premise of a practical inference. And the thought that mediates first premise and conclusion, revealing the object of the latter to specify the general item given by the former, I call the second premise.

Reasoning practically, I derive from something general something that is specific in relation to it, which, so deriving it, I represent as to be done, or as good to do. It follows that not only the conclusion of a practical inference, but its first premise, as well, represents something as to be done or as good to do. That going upstairs is a part of getting the camera can show that I should go upstairs only if I should fetch the camera. If indeed I conclude that I should go upstairs because this is a way to fetch my camera, then this shows that I represent getting the camera as good to do.

The first premise and the conclusion of a practical inference share the same form. Indeed, this form is in the first instance exhibited by the first premise and only on that account, and in this sense derivatively, by the conclusion. Both the conclusion and the first premise of a practical inference are acts of the will. By contrast, the second premise, which conjoins those acts of the will, is not an act of the will, but an act of the intellect. Thus we can call the first premise practical, and the second theoretical.

As the conclusion of a practical inference bears the same form as its first premise, it may be the first premise of another practical inference. There can be a series of practical inferences that interlock in such a way that the conclusion of one is the practical premise of the next. Such a series is the self-specification of the will (of which, alas, it is only capable with the help of the intellect).¹⁴ Of any act of the will occurring in such a series, we can call the ultimate practical premise of the series its *principle*. According what I just said, the principle of an act of the will is an act of the will.

10. Infinite End

The first kind of end we considered was signified by a verb predicated under the contrast of perfective and progressive aspect. A second kind of end is signified by a verb the predication of which does not exhibit a contrast of aspect, but represents the act as always already complete. Such an end conforms to Aristotle's definition of *energeia*. Examples are: living (**p.148**) healthy, honoring one's parents, and being true to one's word. In the representation of these ends there is no opposition of progressive and perfective aspect: as I am living healthy, I have lived healthy; as I am honoring my parents, I have honored them; as I am being true to my word, I have been true to my word. Hence, these ends do not come to a limit. It is not that, at some time, I am done with living healthy, or honoring my parents, or being true to my word. My wanting to live healthy does not expire. I may give up on it, and so my wanting to live healthy may come to an end; I may no longer want that. But that it comes to this is not internal to its logical character. Therefore we may call such an end an infinite end.

When I said that, reasoning practically, I derive what to do or how to act, I was, using

these variables, *doing something* and *acting in a certain way*, looking forward to the distinction of finite and infinite ends, kinesis and energeia. It is natural to hear *doing something* as standing for verbs designating a kinesis, defined by a terminus, a result, an outcome, which is reached when the thing is done. The variable *acting in a certain way* does not suggest a terminus; it is natural to hear it as standing for verbs that designate an energeia. I want to live healthy; I want to honor my parents; I want to be true to my word. Here I do not want to produce a result that then would be the limit of my end. I want to act in a certain manner. When I derive an action from such an end, I determine what to do, not with a view to doing something else, but with a view to acting in a certain way.

This is a different form of specification from the one pertaining to finite ends, corresponding to the different form of generality of an infinite end. The action is not preparatory for, or a part of, the end. It cannot be, as the idea of lacking completion does not apply to infinite ends. Rather, the action *exemplifies* the manner of acting from which it is derived. Thinking that I have promised Frederik to help paint his apartment, I derive going over to his apartment at the designated time. “I should go over because I promised to help,” I may think. In fact, this form of words leaves open the logical character of the end; it may still be that the fact that I promised to help Frederik reveals helping him to serve a finite end I am pursuing: I may have a scheme in which my act of fidelity is an element, or perhaps I want to be well regarded by Frederik with a view to unspecified advantages. Then “I am helping Frederik because I promised to do it” is formally like “I am going upstairs because my camera is upstairs.”¹⁵ But it may be different. I may think that the fact that I promised Frederik shows that I should go over, by revealing going over—not to be a part of a finite end, but—to exemplify an infinite end: being true to my word.

I described the roles of thinking the camera is upstairs and wanting to get it in practical reasoning. Wanting to be true to my word plays the role that wanting to get the camera played there, and thinking that I promised plays the role that there was played by thinking that the camera is upstairs. Being true to my word is the general item from which I derive going over. I derive it recognizing the logical nexus of going over to being true to my **(p.149)** word: The former specifies the latter. It specifies it in the manner in which something specifies an infinite end: Going over, I give an example of acting in such a way as to be true to my word. My recognition of this logical nexus is my knowledge that I have promised as it is put to the service of my end of being true to my word.

Again, the general item from which I derive the action is represented in the same way as the action I derive from it: It is represented as a way in which to act, or else, as a way acting in which is acting well. That going over to Frederik is what it takes to be true to my word only shows that I should go over if one should be true to one’s word, or else, if being true to one’s word is acting well. And if indeed I think I should go over on the ground that I must do so in order to be true to my word, then I represent being true to one’s word as a way in which to act, or as a way acting in which is acting well.

In a series of practical inferences, the predication of a kinesis verb can be derived from the predication of a kinesis verb (as when I reason from getting the camera to going upstairs). And the predication of an energeia verb can be derived from the predication of an energeia verb. (I may reason from being just to being true to my word.) But whereas the predication of a kinesis verb can be derived from the predication of an energeia verb (in my example I reason from being true to my word to helping paint an apartment), the converse is not possible. For something temporally unlimited cannot be subsumed under something temporally limited.

11. Principle and Outcome of Action

Kant defines the will as the power to act according to the representation of laws. Now I said (in section 7) seemingly more generally that it is a power to act according to concepts. Then I distinguished two kinds of such concepts, kinesis concepts and energeia concepts. The application of a kinesis concept is not a representation of a law, for a law sets no temporal limit to its applicability, whereas there is a temporal limit to the manifold united in a kinesis. By contrast, the application of an energeia concept is a representation of a law; a law according to which one acts is a manner of acting. Now the power to act according to energeia concepts includes the power to act according to kinesis concepts as the latter are needed to specify the former. Therefore, my description of the will as a power to act according to concepts differs from Kant's only in that it does not rule out that a will may be confined to kinesis concepts. However, as we shall see now, there is no such thing as a will that applies only kinesis concepts. There is no such thing because an act of the will is conscious of itself as necessary. The greater generality of our definition is spurious, and Kant's definition is more precise.¹⁶

A power to act only according to kinesis concepts is exercised in thoughts of the form "It is good to do A," "doing A" being a kinesis verb. However, such a thought necessarily rests on another thought of goodness. **(p.150)** For, a kinesis is such as to bring itself to an end. And it is not intelligible that something is in itself good insofar as it brings itself to an end. Something good cannot be such as to go out of existence. For what is represented in an act of the will is represented as possible through this act, and insofar as an act of the will, being a representation of something as good, contains a consciousness of itself as necessary, its object is conceived as existing, if it does exist, necessarily. But something that is such as to go out of existence denies itself necessary existence. A kinesis can be thought good only in relation to something it specifies and for the sake of which it is. A principle of an act of the will (the last practical premise in the relevant series of practical inferences) cannot be the self-predication of a kinesis verb.

This may seem to be too quick. Surely a kinesis cannot be considered good in itself, one might say. But it is wrong to conclude that it is considered good only in relation to its principle. Instead, it may be considered good in relation to its outcome.¹⁷ Now it is certainly possible to think it would be good if p were the case and on that account do something with a view to bringing it about. In familiar cases, thinking it good if p were the case is relating its being the case to an end—doing something or acting in a certain way—as necessary for, facilitating, or in some other way serving this end. Then the goodness of

achieving the outcome derives from the goodness of the action that the outcome serves; the outcome mediates a nexus of action and action. This explains what, in those cases, it means that an outcome is good. It explains it by hanging this use of “good” on its use as a mark of the form of the will. However, the objection requires that there be such a thing as thinking it would be good if *p* were the case, where thinking this is not relating its being the case to an action as serving it. Thus it supposes that there is an application of *good* to states of affairs that stands on its own feet. Furthermore, although this use of *good* is not to depend on its application to action, the latter must be able to depend on it: A thought that it would be good if *p* were the case must be capable of being the ground of an act of the will, a thought that it is good to do something as a result of one’s having done which it will be the case that *p*. Unless the idea of a good state of affairs is related to willing in this way, it is irrelevant to an account of the will, and anyway empty. So, whereas I said a last premise of practical reasoning is the representation of a law, the practical application of an *energeia* concept, the objection holds that a last premise may represent an outcome, a state of affairs, as good.¹⁸

However, the fact that it would be good if *p* were the case need not speak in favor of thinking it good to bring it about. Even if it would be good if *p*, it may be that I must not bring it about. Perhaps it is someone else’s office, or duty, or privilege to bring it about, or perhaps its goodness depends on its not being brought about by anyone. This may seem to show that we must include in the outcome not only what in a strict sense is the result of the act, but furthermore the fact that I am producing or **(p.151)** have produced it. The thought from which I derive an act of the will is not “It would be good if *p*,” but “It would be good if ... [I, see to it that *p*]...” However, I cannot reason from this premise to “It is good to see to it that *p*” or “I should see to it that *p*.” For while “It would be good if ... [I see to it that *p*] ...” is not originally a first-person thought, “It is good to see to it that *p*” is. And without further premises, an originally first-person thought cannot be derived from a thought that is not originally first personal.¹⁹ Adapting an example from Anselm W. Müller,²⁰ we can bring this out by turning to the second person. “You must drink this glass of water” addresses a demand to you: In virtue of its form, it presents itself as capable of determining your will. By contrast, “It must be the case that you drink this glass of water” refers to you and to the glass in the same manner; it no more addresses a demand to you than it does so to the glass. There is no way to derive a demand from it without relying on a demand already in place.

An act of the will *in virtue of its form* is productive and therefore first personal. The alleged thought that it would be good if *p* were the case is not. This remains so no matter what is plucked into the content of “*p*.” Hence, this alleged thought never provides a self-standing basis for a thought about what is good to do.²¹ This shows that there is no self-standing use of *good* in application to states of affairs. An illusion of intelligibility arises when we unwittingly give the relevant phrase a sense that we do understand: relating a state of affairs to a given end. It is easy to fall prey to this illusion. It is well-nigh impossible not to fall prey to it when one does not even notice the difference between the use of *good* or *ought* as indicating a form of predication (which is productive and therefore first personal) and as a sentential operator.²²

My aim in this essay is to elucidate the concept *good* as signifying the form of an act of the will. I say nothing about its content, which is given by a true ultimate practical premise of practical reasoning. But my reflections place formal constraints on its content. First, it can only be an *energeia*. Second, this *energeia* must be internal to the will in the sense that representing it as good must constitute the will as the will that it is, so that the idea of a further act of the will on which it may be based is empty and no question arises as to why it is good to act in this way. For an ultimate act of the will—a principle of the will—understands itself as such, and that is, as not depending on any other.²³ Kant argues that only the representation of the form of a law of the will satisfies this condition. Once it is recognized that whether it is good to do something cannot, ultimately, rest on the goodness of the outcome of one's having done it, it may well appear that Kant's view is the only viable one. However, Kant is not alone in rejecting the notion that the goodness of a will resides in its consequences. Aristotle, St. Thomas, and Hegel, for example, do so as well, as does anyone writing in their tradition. The conception of the will and practical reason developed here is common to them all.

(p.152) V. Acting according to a Representation

12. The Unity of Causality and Recognition of Accord

The will is a distinctive power to act only if the order described in the preceding section, in which one act of the will depends on another in such a way as to contain a consciousness of its own necessity, is nothing other than the causality of the will. I shall now seek to show that this is so.

Practical reasoning is the causality of the will if acting according to the representation of an end is deriving an action from this end. Thus we must consider what it is to act according to a representation. When someone is acting according to a representation, then the representation causes her action. Explaining why she is doing what she is doing, or why she is acting in the way that she is, we refer to this representation: She who is doing *A* according to her representation of doing *B* is doing *A* because she wants to do *B*. And she who is doing *A* according to her representation of a certain manner of acting, is doing *A* because she wants to act in this manner. However, this does not suffice. Someone's wanting to do something may cause all manner of movement on her part, which is not on that account a case of acting according to the representation of doing that. For example, someone may be falling ill because he wants to lose weight in this way: He has been wanting to lose weight for a long time, nothing he tried worked, at last his anxiety gives rise to somatic symptoms. As he is falling ill, he is not acting according to his representation of losing weight. It seems obvious what is missing: If he is to act according to his representation, he must recognize that his action accords with the represented end. He must subsume his action under the end as a part of or as exemplifying it. In order for someone to act according to the representation of an end, there must be not only a causal nexus of the representation and the action. Moreover, the subject must be conscious of the logical nexus, the accord of the action with the end. However this, again, does not suffice. We can embellish our example and add that our man recognizes that he will lose weight if he falls ill and welcomes his illness on that ground. We do not therewith

represent him as acting according to his representation in falling ill.

That our two conditions on action according to a representation—the causal nexus of representation and action and the subject’s consciousness of the logical nexus of action and represented end—are not jointly sufficient may appear to oblige us to search for further conditions. However, it is not that we lack and must seek to identify further conditions; rather, we lack and must seek to articulate the *unity* of those that we have.²⁴ In our example, causality and recognition have come together *per accidens*. The explanation “He is falling ill because he wants to lose weight” leaves open whether he recognizes that falling ill will further his end of losing weight. His recognizing this is *an independent reality* from the one that the explanation records. “He is falling ill because he wants to lose weight” represents one reality; “He thinks he should fall ill in order to lose weight” (p.153) represents another. Consider by contrast her who is going upstairs because she wants to get the camera. We may be able to concoct a story in which someone is going upstairs because she wants to get her camera, in such a way that the causal nexus exists independently of her recognition of the logical nexus. Absent such a story, we understand the explanation to depict the subject to act according to her representation of getting the camera. And if it so depicts her, then it is true only if she is aware that going upstairs is a way to get the camera. Here, “She thinks she should go upstairs in order to get her camera,” representing her as deriving going upstairs from her end of getting the camera, and “She is going upstairs because she wants to get the camera,” explaining her going upstairs by her representation of getting the camera, record *the same reality*. Her deriving the action from the end is an act of *practical* reason as it constitutes the causality of her representation of the end. Practical deriving, deriving an action, is acting.

It may be objected that we failed to observe a distinction made in section 8. Our sad man does not think “I should fall ill” or “It would be good to fall ill.” Rather, he thinks “It should be the case that ... [I fall ill] ...” or “It would be good if ... [I fall ill]...” By contrast, our photographer thinks, not “It should be the case that ... [I go upstairs] ...,” but “I should go upstairs.” This is correct and is a way to make my point. “I should go upstairs” differs from “It should be the case that ... [I go upstairs] ...” in that it bears the form of a conclusion of practical reasoning. A representation of necessity is not external to, but constitutes the causality of an act of the will only if it bears that form.

The concept of acting according to a representation signifies a special kind of causality: the causality of a representation constituted by the subject’s deriving the action from the represented end. The subject’s recognition of the accord of the action with the representation that is its cause is not added to an independently constituted causality; it is *the form of the causality*. Practical reason is not a term of causal relations of a kind that also characterize the movements of nonrational or even inanimate substances. Practical reason is a causality, which therefore is characteristic of movements of the rational subject.

13. A Representation That Possesses This Kind of Causality Is Productive

Kant says that acting according to the representation of an end is deriving the action from the represented end. Deriving something from something general is an act of reason. It is an act of practical reason when deriving the action is acting; and deriving the action is acting when it is the causality of the representation from whose object the action is derived. For when someone acts according to a representation, then “She is doing *A* because ...,” explaining the action by the representation, represents the same reality as “She thinks *A* is to be done because ...,” depicting her as deriving the action from the represented end.

(p.154) A subject acts according to a representation if the representation causes her action in such a way that her deriving the action from the represented end constitutes the causal nexus of representation and action. An act of the will is a representation that exhibits this causality: It causes actions derived from it in such a way that the causal nexus is the subject’s deriving the action. It follows that such a representation relates to its object as productive of it. If I want to get the camera, and am acting according to this representation (perhaps going upstairs), then it will be true that *I am getting the camera*, doing what I do. And if I want to be true to my word, and act according to this principle (perhaps going over to Frederik), then it will be true that *I am true to my word*, acting as I do. In general, if someone is doing *A* because she wants to do *B*, and the causality of her act of will is constituted by her deriving doing *A* from her end of doing *B*, then she is, in fact, and not per accidens, doing *B*. Not per accidens, for it is not per accidens, but a character of the causality that what the representation causes is its object. In this way, an act of the will is the cause of the existence of its object.

I spoke of the object of a representation according to which its subject acts as an end. I can now justify this way of speaking. An end is, as Kant says, the object of a concept insofar as the latter is regarded as the cause (the real ground of the possibility) of the former.²⁵ Now, when a subject acts according to a concept (if the action form concept causes the action by way of the subject’s deriving the action from the represented action form), then she is instantiating the concept. Hence, a concept according to which its subject acts is the concept of an end.

14. A Metaphysical Dogma

The proposition *Doing something intentionally is representing it as good* describes the form of an act of the will. It describes it as a power of productive representations that contain a consciousness of their necessity, and thus as a power of representations whose causality in respect of their object is constituted by reasoning. Now it is a widespread dogma that causality is the same everywhere, governing the movements of inanimate substances as well as the actions of subjects of reason. This dogma makes our proposition incomprehensible, for it puts the concept of the will, which the proposition articulates, out of reach.

The concept of causality is a category; it represents a unity, the unity of something and the sufficient ground of its existence. It is not inconceivable that this category should admit of different specifications, that there should be different forms in which one thing

may be the sufficient ground of another. Nor is it inconceivable that metaphysical distinctions between inanimate, sentient, and rational substances should signify differences in the form of causality to which changes and movements of those substances are subject, and that so should distinctions of corresponding kinds of movement, animal locomotion, say, and rational or intentional action. **(p.155)** It is remarkable, then, that many appear to think it reasonable not to consider this possibility, but to proceed on the assumption that the concept of causality that is part of the concept of intentional action is one that is equally applicable outside the sphere of action. They then seek the nature of intentional action not in a form of causality, but in special causes. This sets off a dialectic that has sustained and is sustaining philosophical production in the field. We shall follow it a few steps.

We considered someone who wants to lose weight, which desire makes him fall ill. He does, we imagined, recognize that he will lose weight in consequence of falling ill. Still, we reasoned, he does not act according to his desire because his recognition of the logical nexus of the action and his end is external to the causal nexus of the desire and the action. The desire causes the action in such a way that it remains an accident that the subject of the action so caused is aware of its accord with the object of his desire. It seems, then, that the subject's awareness of the logical nexus must not lie idly alongside the causal nexus, but must in some way inform it. Now if a causal nexus cannot be an act of reason, then the subject's recognition can figure in the causal explanation of her action only as a further cause. Thus we arrive at the idea that an action is caused by a desire and a belief.

But just as a desire, so can a desire and a belief cause all manner of movement on the part of the subject, who is not on that account acting according to the desire. In our example, it is not implausible that the man's recognition that falling ill would further his end of losing weight joins with his desire to lose weight in weighing him down until he is falling ill. It is not enough that a belief and a desire cause an action, even if belief, desire, and action are logically related in such a way that the belief reveals the action to further the desired end. Rather, the subject must recognize this relation. And not only this: Her recognition must enter into the causal account of the action, lest the belief and the desire cause the action in a way that leaves it an accident that the action so caused is known by its subject to accord with the end she desires, in which case she would not be acting according to her desire. Christine Korsgaard writes:

Neither the joint causal efficacy of the belief and the desire, nor the existence of an appropriate conceptual connection, nor the bare conjunction of these two facts, enables us to judge that a person acts rationally. For the person to act rationally, she must be motivated by her own recognition of the appropriate conceptual connection between her belief and her desire. We may say that she herself must combine the belief and the desire in the right way. A person acts rationally, then, only when her action is the expression of her own mental activity. ("The Normativity of Instrumental Reason," in G. Cullity et al. (eds.), *Ethical and Practical Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 215–54, here 221)

This seems exactly right, but we must seek to explain what it means that the action *expresses* the subject's recognition, or, equivalently, what it means that the subject is *motivated* by her recognition. It is natural to (p.156) think that what motivates an action causes it. But Korsgaard cannot mean that we must include the subject's recognition among the causes of her action. Korsgaard must intend the word "motivate" to signify a special kind of causality, which can only be the one I described.²⁶

Davidson makes a suggestion that anticipates Korsgaard's appeal to "mental activity":

Beliefs and desires that would rationalize an action if they caused it in the right way—through a course of practical reasoning, as we might try saying—may cause it in other ways. ("Freedom to Act," in *Essays on Actions and Events*, 63–82, here p. 79)

When Davidson says, "we might try saying," he means that saying it would be useless. And so it is as long as causality is thought to be uniform across rational and nonrational substances and their movements. Davidson speaks of the way in which belief and desire cause the action and thus may seem to distinguish *what* causes the action from *how* it causes it, the cause from the causality. However, for him, specifying the way in which *x* causes *y* is specifying a causal chain that links *x* and *y*, a chain whose members are joined by the one and uniform nexus of causality.

An agent might have attitudes and beliefs that would rationalize an action, and they might cause him to perform it, and yet because of some anomaly in the causal chain, the action would not be intentional in the expected sense. ("Intending," in *Essays on Actions and Events*, 83–102, here 87)

If this is how we distinguish saying what causes something and how it causes it, namely as specifying a cause and specifying intermediary members of a causal chain that link it to its effect, then saying that the desire causes the action through a course of practical reasoning is representing that course of practical reasoning as a member of the causal chain. Davidson is right to insinuate that saying this is useless.

It is possible to follow the dialectic further. But it is not necessary, for its principle is transparent. We see it if we attend to a structural analogy that it bears to the regress into which Achill is led in his attempts to answer the tortoise.²⁷ A regress arises when we try to represent a unity of elements as a further element. There, the relevant unity is that of premises and conclusion, which Achill seeks to represent as a further premise. Here, it is the unity of a cause and what it causes, the unity of a causal nexus, the causality. The subject's derivation of the action from the representation is this unity; it constitutes the causal nexus. This is why all attempts to represent it as a further cause come to grief.

15. The Reality of the Concept of the Will Unfolded in Our Proposition

Doing something intentionally is representing doing it as good describes the form of an act of the will, articulating the concept of a power to act that (p.157) is proper to the subject of reason as it is an application of reason, which, so applied, is practical. It may be granted that, so interpreted, our proposition is impeccable, but does not express

knowledge, for the power it describes has no reality. However, no one can fail to know that the will is a reality. For, thinking “I should do that,” “That is good to do,” he is an example of its reality.²⁸

Notes

Notes:

(1) . Cf. Dorothy Grover, Joseph Camp, Nuel Belnap, “A Prosentential Theory of Truth,” *Philosophical Studies* 27 (1975): S73–S125; Robert Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, 285–98.

(2) . Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984, 4.1271.

(3) . Gottlob Frege, “Der Gedanke,” in *Logische Untersuchungen*, Günther Patzig (ed.). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2003, 41: “In der Form des Behauptungssatzes sprechen wir die Anerkennung der Wahrheit aus. Wir brauchen dazu das Wort “wahr” nicht. Und selbst, wenn wir es gebrauchen, liegt die eigentlich behauptende Kraft nicht in ihm, sondern in der Form des Behauptungssatzes, und wo diese ihre behauptende Kraft verliert, kann auch das Wort “wahr” sie nicht wieder herstellen.”

(4) . This idea is misunderstood when it is thought to mean that a synthesis produces the thought. But thinking is no act of production. A product is separable from the act of producing it. It is there when the act of producing it has come to completion and is past. When I am placing the blue cube on top of the red cube, then, as long as I am doing this, the blue cube is not yet on top of the red cube. When finally the blue cube is on top of the red cube, as I have placed it there and am no longer placing it there. I was placing it there, but this is past, and now I am done. Conjoining the parts of a thought in thinking it is not like this. It is not that I am thinking, am putting the parts together, and then, as I have thought, have put the parts together, there is a thought, which I am no longer thinking, as my thinking, my putting together, is completed and past. Thinking does not admit of the contrast of progressive and perfective aspect, of being doing something and having done it. If thinking is synthesis, then this holds of its synthesis: There is no contrast of being conjoining and having conjoined the elements of a thought. Therefore, it does not matter whether we say that the synthesis is the source of the unity of the thought or that the synthesis is the unity of the thought. There is no difference.

(5) . It would be a distraction to pursue the matter here, but I do not think that Frege can deny any of this.

(6) . Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Werkausgabe Band III*, W. Weischedel (ed.). Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1968, §19.

(7) . My account may appear to be close to, but in fact is completely different from, a view David Velleman criticizes in “The Guise of the Good” (in *The Possibility of Practical Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 99–122), that desiring something is regarding it as good in the sense that the direction of fit of desire can be articulated by

saying that desiring something is regarding it—not as being true, but—as to be made true. This represents desire as a force attaching to the same kind of content to which the force of judgment may attach. And this makes it impossible to think of *good* as signifying the form of the object of desire.

(8) . The terms “reasoning” or “inference,” practical or theoretical, do not primarily signify mental processes, but a form of dependence among acts of the mind, the one described above. Cf. Matthew Boyle, *Making Up One’s Mind*, unpublished manuscript.

(9) . This shows what is right about the notion that the conclusion of practical reasoning “I ought to do *A*” means as much as “There is sufficient reason to do *A*.” This is misleading insofar as it appears to specify the content of the conclusion of a practical inference, whereas, in fact, it articulates its form. The concept of a reason is a formal concept; it describes to what it applies with regard to its role in reasoning. A reason for acting is something from which one may reason to an action; it is something that may serve as a premise of a practical inference. Hence, saying that practical reasoning concludes in the thought that there is sufficient reason to do *A* is saying that the conclusion of a practical inference represents itself as a conclusion of sound reasoning. And this is right.

(10) . It has been noticed that our proposition describes the causality of the will as constituted by practical reasoning. But one cannot comprehend this idea if one thinks one independently understands causality and practical reason, and sets out to ascertain whether they come together in intentional action. As our proposition describes a unity that informs the elements it unifies, one will find it muddled approaching it with ideas of reason and causality not developed from it. Ever since Anscombe ridiculed accounts of practical reasoning that represent it to be like mince pie reasoning—about a special topic, as opposed to a special manner of reasoning—there has been sympathy for the aim of giving a formal description of practical reasoning that justifies calling it practical. But few people have had qualms over treating action explanation as mince pie explanation: representing special causes, as opposed to a special kind of causality. However, “action” in “action explanation” determines “explanation” in the manner in which “practical” determines “reasoning” in “practical reasoning”: It signifies not the content of the explanation, but its form. Indeed, an account of practical reasoning that justifies calling it practical is an account of a causality that justifies calling its terms acts of the will.

(11) . Kant describes the relation of imperatives and thoughts of what is good to do as follows: “[Imperatives] say that to do or to omit something would be good, but they say it to a will that does not always do something just because it is represented to it that it would be good to do that thing” (*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Akademieausgabe 4, 413). The difference between *good* and *ought* does not lie in the act of mind they express, which in both cases is an act of the will. Rather, expressing its act by an imperative, a will acknowledges its liability to be affected by something other than reason. It is liable, on account of such affection, to hold to wanting to do something against its knowledge of what is good to do. Even then, the subject’s representation of something as good to do is an act of the will. Otherwise there would in such a case be no conflict within the will, and that is, there would be no conflict. For there is no conflict between any

act of the intellect, no matter what its content is, and an act of the will.

(12) . In ordinary language, all kinds of phrases are used to express acts of the will, and our phrases may on occasion express a different kind of act. This is irrelevant. We are not interested in words, but in a form of representation. To this end, we stipulate that certain words shall express representations of this form.

(13) . John Broome uses the formula “I ought that such-and-such is the case” (“Normative Requirements,” *Ratio* 12 (1999): 398–419). I do not know what this means. Broome frequently writes “I ought to see to it that such-and-such is the case,” and this is intelligible, for it bears the form “I ought to do A”: It says that I ought to do something the result of my having done which will be that such-and-such is the case. But Broome says that “I ought to see to it that such-and-such is the case” does not give the meaning of “I ought that such-and-such is the case,” but is a manner of writing it that avoids its grammatical awkwardness. This leaves us without any idea of what “I ought that such-and-such is the case” might mean. I surmise that Broome is led to a meaningless form of words because he seeks to signify the productive character of the representation, which requires the first person. This yields an empty expression because a productive representation is the self-application of an action form concept, not a statement reporting that one bears a certain relation to a proposition.

(14) . In this lies the finitude of the will as it indicates its dependence on material conditions that are not its own deed. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, “Die Idee des Guten,” in *Wissenschaft der Logik*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986.

(15) . Cf. Michael Thompson, *Life and Action*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009, 93–96.

(16) . In his book *The Form of Practical Knowledge* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), to which the present essay owes a tremendous debt, Stephen Engstrom isolates from the will a power that he calls the power of practical thought, whose acts are productive and therefore first personal, but do not contain a conception of themselves as necessary. It follows that they are not acts of a power of practical inference, and indeed, Engstrom, although he credits practical thought with instrumental rationality, never speaks of practical thought as engaged in instrumental reasoning. Conversely, that in us the conception of something as a means to an end can take on the form of an inference and thus of a representation of taking the means as necessary reveals that we possess a will, and not just the power of practical thought.

(17) . The objection could be formulated as one against my use of the term “end.” I distinguished two kinds of ends; both are actions, falling into the category of either kinesis or energeia. I argued that in the primary instance an end is an energeia and that derivatively, as specifying such an end, a kinesis may be an end. But it may be said that, properly speaking, not the action is the end, but its outcome.

(18) . If we define consequentialism as the thesis that the primary use of *good* is its

application to states of affairs in “It is good that p is the case” or “It would be good if p were the case,” and that its application to action in “It is good to do A ” rests on that one, then the objection is an expression of consequentialism.

(19) . Cannot I reason from “He should do A ,” “I am him” to “I should do A ” (for example, “The person who is responsible for X should do A ,” “I am responsible for X ,” to “I should do A ”)? Yes. But in this case, “I am him” shows me that I can derive that I should do A from the same general practical premise from which I derived that he should do A . And then neither “He should do A ” nor, therefore, “I am him” enters as a premise. The general practical premise will be an original first-person thought.

(20) . *Praktisches Folgern und Selbstgestaltung nach Aristoteles*, Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1982, p. 301.

(21) . David Velleman represents our proposition as saying: “[Someone] acts intentionally only when he acts out of a desire for some anticipated outcome; and in desiring that outcome, he must regard it as having some value” (“The Guise of the Good,” 99). But the concept *good* used in our proposition does not signify a character of an outcome of action, the manner in which an action form concept is applied in an act of the will, which may be expressed by saying “It is good to do such-and-such,” or “It is good to act in such-and-such a way.”

(22) . There is an objective use of *good* and related concepts in the description of living beings. However, the same logical difference obtains there: “This bush needs water” is not the same as “It needs to be the case that this bush has water.” Thus, the illusory notion that there are objectively good states of affairs receives no succor from this logical character of the living.

(23) . In this ultimate act of the will, the contrast of power and act collapses: This ultimate act of the will is the will. This shows the will to be self-constituting.

(24) . If this is right, then it is not possible to define acting according to a representation in terms intelligible independently of what they define. As conditions of acting according to a representation, both the causality and the subject’s recognition of the logical nexus of its terms are of a special kind, the kind being defined by their unity, which unity is acting according to a representation.

(25) . Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft, Werkausgabe Band X*, W. Weischedel (ed.). Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1968, §10.

(26) . Although I do not fully comprehend her exposition of it, it seems plain that in Korsgaard’s “Acting for Reasons” (in *The Constitution of Agency*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 207–29), which sets out to explain what it is for something to motivate an action, and how motivation relates to causation, Korsgaard defends a position that is very similar to, if not identical with, the one I have sought to lay out.

(27) . I am grateful to Kelly Dean Jolly for pointing this out to me.

(28) . Someone who did not possess the will could not have the concept of the will. In this way our possession of the concept of the will attests to its reality in us. (Andrea Kern, in *Quellen des Wissens* [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2006] argues that the same holds of the power of knowledge and its concept.)



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