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**KANT'S ARGUMENTATION
IN THE SCHOLION
TO THEOREM VI
IN *NOVA DILUCIDATIO*:
A NEW INTERPRETATION**

This article deals with Kant's objection to the ontological argument in his early work "A New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition". The author offers a new interpretation of Kant's argumentation.

Key words: *ontological argument, pre-critical period, "Nova dilucidatio".*

Kant's argument against Cartesian (ontological) proof in the scholion to Theorem VI in his thesis "*A New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition*" has been repeatedly subjected to scrutiny. However, many researchers have declared it incorrect — Kant's argument seemed to them contradicting his own Theorem. They offered alternative interpretations of Kant's argument in order to make it "logically coherent". In our view, Kant argued quite consistently, but it is a new interpretation of the scholion which makes this consistency visible.

Before taking a fresh look at Kant's arguments in the scholion to Theorem VI, we will consider the scholion to the next Theorem. This makes sense because according to the proposed interpretation, Kant's argument against Cartesian proof starts in one scholion and finishes in another one. Only both of them taken together give a comprehensive representation of Kant's argument.

**I. Kant on the relationship
between the existence of God
and his possibility:
Argumentation in scholion to Theorem VII:**

The problem of Cartesian proof is questioned by Kant in the scholion to Theorem VII. The Theorem states: "There is a being whose existence precedes the very possibility of itself and of all things in general, and its existence is said to be unconditionally necessary. This being is called God" [5, p. 278].

The proof of the Theorem is an early version — or, rather, an outline — of proving the existence of God, which Kant later developed into EmBg, is based on the analysis of the notion of possibility and goes as follows: possibility of a thing is the same

as non-contradictiveness of its notion; non-contradictiveness of a notion presupposes a comparison of its elements; it is only possible to compare elements when they are something that is related to something in reality (not empty), hence the assertion of the possibility of something or based on the assertion that there are some realities: "... You can think of something as possible only when what is real in every possible notion does exist..." [ibid.].

Thus, the existence of realities precedes all possibilities. These realities merged into one being. Removing it will take away both everything existing and everything possible – in other words, there will be only the impossible, which, however, cannot take place by definition; therefore, something that underlies any possibility cannot be eliminated – it necessarily exists.

In the scholion to the Theorem, comparing his argument with the reasoning of Descartes, Kant says:

I know, of course, that Cartesius borrowed his proof of God's existence from the innermost of the notion, but the extent, to which his result is misleading, it is clear from the scholion to the previous paragraph. Of all the beings God is the only one in whom existence precedes possibility, or, if you will, is identical to it. And we won't have any idea about it [the possibility of God] as soon as we abstract from his existence [5, p. 280]¹.

In the abstract given above Kant again touches upon the Cartesian proof. At first, he refers to the arguments of the previous paragraph. Then, in the final two sentences, the philosopher formulates new argument, connected to Theorem VII: any possibility suggests something real, which is God. The Theorem shows that the Cartesian proof begins with the notion of a possible thing, is erroneous. Claiming that a thing is possible, it thereby asserts the existence of the source of any possibility, that is, God. The proof becomes circular: the statement that super-real thing is possible assumes the very existence of this thing. Kant does not clearly express this idea, but the context of the argument makes this conclusion rather obvious.

It is important to eliminate the ambiguity: Kantian Theorem VII, like the Cartesian proof, shows that the assertion of the possibility of some thing asserts the existence of God. However, the structure of Kant's argument is entirely different. If Cartesian proof begins with the statement "God is possible", Kant relies on the premise "something is possible", which, according to Kant, is logically true, is an axiom, and thus is differs from the premise of the Cartesian proof. Kant bases his argument not upon a statement about the possibility of a certain thing, but upon a statement of the existence of the possible as such. Therefore the objection that he raises against the Cartesian proof can't be applied to his own reasoning.

So, the Cartesian proof begins with the statement of the possibility of God, and proceeds to the conclusion about his existence. Kant, on the contrary, believes that the assertion of possibility of God is impossible, unless his existence is established.

This argument against Cartesian proof seems to be quite consistent. However, T. Pinder finds two latter statements of scholion "somewhat unexpected" [12, S. 88]. He is perplexed by the fact that the assertion of the intimate connection

¹ Перевод уточнен по оригиналу: [AA, I, S. 396].

between the existence and the possibility of God, which ends the scholion, is also the “nerve” of the Cartesian proof:

This [meaning the last two assertions of the scholion] is also the nerve of the Cartesian proof. Perhaps Kant was going to say that the Cartesian proof contained the true thought, which, however, could not hold as a proof by itself and so would presuppose his own (Kant’s) proof. After Kant emphasized the fallacy of Cartesian proof and didn’t provide a single word to indicate the change of direction of his own argument, the reader would have expected some further clarification to non-sustainability of such proof; it is the natural way of thinking since Leibniz (see “Monadology” 44/45). This kind of interpretation [based on the opposition between the Cartesian and Kantian ideas of a necessary being: “eine solche, ganz entgegengesetzte Interpretation”] is not excluded *a limine*. The fact, that according to Kant’s conception, the existence of God precedes his possibility, already opposes the Cartesian proof, which makes the existence of God follow from his possibility. But this is the very contrast which Kant shaded by adding “*vei, si mavis, identica*” [ibid.].

T. Pinder, in our view, exaggerates the importance of adding “or, if you prefer, it is identical with it [possible]”. The discrepancy between Kantian and Cartesian proof remains irrelevant of whether it recognizes the existence of God as primary to his possibility or identical with it. Anyway, asserting the possibility of God requires, in Kant’s view, the knowledge of his existence. This requirement becomes incompatible with the Cartesian proof, which, instead, tries to establish the possibility of God prior to any evidence of his existence. Therefore, the interpretation, voiced by T. Pinder as an assumption, sounds very reasonable.

G. Sala also notes, that in the scholion Kant contrasts his view of the God’s possibility to the one which is the background of the Cartesian proof. However, he does not see anything unexpected in this turn of the argument, considering that Kant simply displays here a consequence of Theorem VII. Kant’s comment on the “equality” between the possibility and the existence of God is left without comment [14, S. 79].

According to the traditional interpretation of the argument in the scholion to Theorem VI, the situation is as follows. Along with the argument based on the distinction between “ideal” and “real” judgments, Kant uses another one, based on Theorem VII. He doesn’t place this argument in the corollary, but rather at the end of scholion, since the issue of the Cartesian proof is not an independent one – it arises in connection with the discussion of the necessity of all beings which, in turn, is of secondary importance (Kant views it as a possible objection against Theorem VII). Out of these two arguments, one (in the scholion to Theorem VI) is independent of the provisions of Kant’s dissertation. Kant is sure to give it more importance and present it in more detail: this argument should be considered even by those who don’t agree with the provisions of ND. The second argument (at the end of the scholion to Theorem VII) less of a refutation, but rather a metaphysical explanation of why one cannot conclude from the notion of God to his existence. The relation between these above-mentioned arguments is almost the same as that between pre-critical and critical ones in KrV: the former arguments prove the impossibility of rational theology from “within”, based on the logical and metaphysical ideas, the latter arguments explain this impossibility from the “outside”, based on transcendental idealism.

This view on the correlation of the arguments in scholia to Theorems VI and VII suggests the traditional interpretation of the first of these arguments. However, it seems possible to merge the two into a single argument and consider the

remark made in scholion to Theorem VI as a preparation to proof refutation in scholion to Theorem VII. According to this interpretation, ND hosts only one refutation of the Cartesian proof, but Kant develops this refutation in two stages — in scholion to Theorem VI, then in scholion to Theorem VII.

New interpretation: merging the arguments in scholion to Theorems VI and VII into one argument

1. Exposition of the interpretation.

The problem of interpretation of the terms "thing" ("being") and "true notion".

According to the traditional interpretation, in the scholion to Theorem VI Kant uses logical objection (distinguishing between "ideal" and "real" judgments), and the scholion to Theorem VII demonstrates the impossibility of the Cartesian proof based on the content of Theorem VII. We noticed though that such interpretation of the arguments in the scholion to Theorem VI is not fully satisfactory [2–4]. Below we offer a new interpretation of this argument, which we call a "unifying" one. According to it, Kant's argument in scholion to Theorem VI is not at all a separate, complete, and serves only as a preparation to the refutation contained in the scholion to Theorem VII.

The principal difference between this interpretation and the traditional one consists in understanding of the two expressions of the scholion to Theorem VI: "if some being connects all realities without any gradation" ("si in ente quodam realitates omnes sine gradu unitae sunt") and "if a notion produced in such connection is true" ("si vera praeconcepta notio")². According to the traditional interpretation, the former expression should be understood as follows: "If all realities are merged in some real being without any gradation", and the latter — "if a notion, created this way, corresponds to some real being". Under such interpretation, these phrases turn into a tautology: "If some actual being combines without any gradation all realities, then it exists", "if the notion (God) created this way corresponds to some real being, then He (God) exists. These phrases can become meaningful, if we assume that this is not about real, but only possible being. In the first case, we will have the statement, "if all-real being is possible, then it exists", in the other case "if the concept of God created this way, corresponds to some possible being, then it (this being, i.e. God) exists".

In this interpretation, the two phrases get clear meaning — they are the expression of the major premise of the Cartesian proof (according to the version corrected by Leibniz). The minor premise states that all-real being is possible or that we created the concept of God which refers to a possible thing. That is the premise which Kant rejects in the scholion to Theorem VII — not because he thought it was false, but because, in his view, there was no reason to accept this statement as long as we do not prove the existence of God: "Out of all the creatures God is the only one in whom existence precedes possibility, or, if you will, is identical with it. And the possibility of [God's] will not make any sense, as soon as we distract from his existence" [5, p. 280].

² См.: [5, с. 277–278]. Текст схолии приведен в работе [3]. В перевод были внесены некоторые уточнения, которые в данной статье не оговариваются.

Thus, the Cartesian proof cannot be right, because one of its premises presupposes the conclusion — this is Kant's main and only argument, which, however, is represented in two stages (in the scholia to Theorems VI and VII). The first scholion states that without the minor premise the proof only takes a conditional form: "if all-real being is possible, then it exists" (here the philosopher reproduces the famous argument by Leibniz). In the second scholion Kant shows that the minor premise of the Cartesian proof can only be derived from its conclusion. Such a split in the argument can be explained by the fact that Kant proceeds to a discussion of the Cartesian proof (in the scholion to Theorem VI), without yet possessing the affirmation of Theorem VII. And only by proving that the existence of God is prior to his possibility, he can accomplish his argument against the Cartesian proof (in the scholion to Theorem VII).

The proposed interpretation of Kant's argument makes it clear and consistent. In addition, it explains quite an unexpected sentence at the end of the scholion to Theorem VI. Concluding his argument, the philosopher says, "All this is said to those who agree with the proof of Cartesius" [5, p. 278]. The laconic spirit of the whole work makes the addition seem redundant. But it becomes justified if we suppose that Kant considered his argument logically significant only to the supporters of the Cartesian proof, or rather to those who accepted its major premise (the ability to infer from possible to real existence). Kant's own attitude to this assumption, however, remains uncertain: it is not clear whether Kant accepts this premise only conditionally, to build an argument upon it, or he believes it to be correct.

Conclusion of the scholion to Theorem VII also becomes more consistent. According to the traditional point of view, Kant starts with mentioning the preceding argument ("I know, of course, that Cartesius borrowed his proof of God's existence from the innermost of the notion; but to what extent his result is misleading is clear from the scholion to the previous paragraph"), and then, without any transition, he formulates a new refutation of the Cartesian proof: "Of all the beings God is the only whose existence is primary to possibility", etc.

This inconsistency attracts attention of T. Pinder who writes about it in his thesis. According to our interpretation, however, the conclusion of scholion makes a single argument. By saying "the extent to which his result is misleading, is seen from the scholion to the previous paragraph", Kant reminds that the Cartesian proof (in his interpretation) consists of two premises, and then he shows (using Theorem VII), that the supporters of the Cartesian proof have no right to use the minor premise that asserts the possibility of God, for "the possibility of God will not make any sense, as soon as we distract from his existence".

2. Justification of the accepted interpretation of the terms "thing" ("being") and "true notion".

Before discussing possible objections to the "unifying" interpretation, let's consider how it is justified from a historical point of view.

In classical metaphysics being or thing (*ens, ein Ding*), is understood as a possible being (possible thing):

Everything that can exist irrelevant of whether it is real or not, is called a thing. — Alles was seyn kan, es mag wirklich seyn oder nicht, nennen wir ein Ding [15, S. 9]. A thing is everything which can exist or is possible. — Ein Ding nennet man alles, was nur seyn kann, oder was möglich ist [11, S. 210].

Clarifying the notion of being or thing, Crusius distinguishes between the thing in broad and narrow senses, or, in other words, between possible and real:

The word "thing" is used in two meanings, as it should be remembered, if nobody wants to make an error. In a broad sense, it means the same thing as something, and it is opposed to nothing. According to this "a thing" is everything of which a thinking spirit has an idea in some way and shapes a concept, and since he has... Possible thing, therefore, is what is thought and why it is thought. The real thing is something that is somewhere and irrelevant of any thinking... In a narrow sense, the name is given only to real existing things... [8, S. 20–21].

Thus, the main meaning of the word "thing" (*Ding*) – thing as something conceivable is something in relation to which its existence is not necessarily presupposed. This is the same "objective thing" (*res objectiva*), which S. Verenfels speaks about (see [3]).

This interpretation of the word "thing" (*Ding*) and "being" (*ens*) correlates quite well with the Kantian text. When Kant says: "Make up a notion of some being which holds full reality..." [5, p. 277], he obviously has in mind the notion of a certain possible being, regarding which it is not known in advance, whether it exists or not (this opportunity is only supposed, but not yet proved). Kant agrees that "according to this notion this being should be ascribed existence" [ibid.], in other words, existence is supposed to be among the predicates of this possible being. Then comes the key line: "If any being combines without any gradation all realities, then it exists..." [5, p. 277–278]. According to our interpretation, it is possible being that we keep in mind, the antecedent phrase suggests that a combination of all realities is consistent and therefore forms a thing (in the broad sense of the word), that is some possible being. This assumption at this stage is not justified, so to clarify the meaning of the accepted assumption, it is necessary to formulate an alternative: "If they only thought of as being combined in it, then its existence is conceivable only in thought [as an idea]" [5, p. 278]. This addition, in our opinion, has the following meaning: if the combination of all the realities, without limitation, is contradictory, it does not produce a thing, or any possible being, then the argument which refers to the concept of an all-real thing is meaningless (it is done at the level of "ideas" or opinions, but has no objective value).

Let us proceed to the conclusion of the scholion and consider the expression "true concept" (*notio vera, ein wahrer Begriff*). Just like the term "thing", this expression is ambiguous: it can mean, first, the notion, corresponding to an object in general, i.e. related to some possible thing, and secondly, it can denote a notion which corresponds to some real thing. In a well-known textbook by Feder the notion true in the former sense, is called metaphysical truth, as for the latter, Feder suggests the term "physical truth" [10, S. 119].

Reimarus in his "Doctrine of the mind" identifies the "true" (*wahr*) and (logically) "right" (*richtig*). "Right" also refers to a notion, which is formed in accordance with the laws of identity and contradiction [13, S. 74–75]. Thus, the "truth" in his understanding coincides with the idea that Feder calls "metaphysical truth": "So the truth in thinking has to do with the essential truth in the things themselves (metaphysical truth), that is why they are something, and are not no-thing, nothing, or a chimera. – Demnach bezieht sich die Wahrheit im Denken auf die wesentliche Wahrheit in den Dingen selbst (Veritatem Metaphysicam), vermöge welcher sie ein Etwas, nicht aber ein Unding, Nichts, oder Schimäre sind" [13, S. 11].

As for Crusius, he usually uses the term "true notion" to refer to a notion corresponding to a real object. However, in the definition of the term he admits

that a notion may refer to something possible: "A notion is true when there's something in the object that is actual or possible and so represented in the concept – Die Wahrheit der Begriffe bestehet darinnen, wenn in dem Objecte eben das wirklich oder möglich ist, was in dem Begriffe also vorgestellet wird... [9, S. 325].

Moreover, in one of the paragraphs of "Metaphysics" Crusius mentions that the "impossible cannot be in the divine mind, as any true thought must still be thought of something", clearly suggesting here that such something is not necessarily real [8, S. 495–496].

These examples show that the term "true notion" was often used to refer to a consistent notion, corresponding (due to its consistency) to an object in the "world of the possible". Thus, the proposed interpretation of Kant's phrase "if the notion created this way is true" is corroborated fairly well by the historical context.

The most immediate source of the Kant's criticism of the Cartesian proof in ND (as interpreted in this vein) could be found in a famous article by Leibniz "Meditations on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas" published in 1684 in the journal *Acta Eruditorum*. In the article Leibniz writes:

We often mistakenly believe that we have ideas of things in our mind, assuming that we have already explained to ourselves some of the terms we are using... <...> because we can have understanding of a sort even when our thinking is blind or symbolic and doesn't involve ideas. When we settle for this blind thinking, and don't pursue the resolution of notions far enough, we may have a thought that harbours a contradiction that we don't see because it is buried in a very complex notion.

Leibniz notes that he "was led to consider this point more clearly by an old argument of the existence of God that Descartes revived". In Leibniz's words this proof goes the following way:

Whatever follows from the idea or definition of a thing can be predicated of the thing. God is by definition the most perfect being, or the being nothing greater than which can be thought. Now, the idea of the most perfect being includes ideas of all perfections, and amongst these perfections is existence. So existence follows from the idea of God. Therefore existence can be predicated of God, which is to say that God exists.

Leibniz objects to this:

But this argument shows only that if God is possible then it follows that he exists. For we can't safely draw conclusions from definitions unless we know first that they are real definitions, that is, that they don't include any contradictions. <...> Similarly, the fact that we think about a most perfect being doesn't entitle us to claim that we have an idea of a most perfect being. So in the above demonstration – the one revived by Descartes – in order properly to draw the conclusion we must show or assume the possibility of a most perfect being. It is indeed true – nothing truer! – that we do have an idea of God and that a most perfect being is possible, indeed, necessary.

Keeping in mind the aforesaid, Leibniz distinguishes between "nominal definitions, which contain only marks that distinguish the thing from other things" and "real definitions, from which the thing can be shown to be possible".

Leibniz also gives the definition of true and false ideas: "an idea is true when it is a possible notion, and false when it includes a contradiction".

A priori the possibility of a thing is determined by analysis "when we resolve a notion into its requisites, i.e. into other notions that are known to be possible

and to be compatible with one another, and that are required if the notion is to apply. <...> ...if an analysis is brought to completion with no contradiction turning up, then certainly the analysed notion is possible". Leibniz calls it into question if it is possible to accomplish such an analysis: "For men to produce a perfect analysis of their notions would be for them to reduce their thoughts to basic possibilities and unanalysable notions, which amounts to reducing them to the absolute attributes of God — and thus to the first causes and the ultimate reason for things. Can they do this? I shan't venture to settle the answer to that now."

Apparently, such similarity in Kant's and Leibniz's considerations has not been noted so far. But it seems quite likely that both in the criticism of the Cartesian proof (in ND) and in his own proof of the existence of God (from the analysis of the notion of "the possible") Kant rests upon the mentioned above thoughts of Leibniz. Actually, his proof of the existence of unanalysable notions, or ultimate realities, represents what is known in mathematics as "pure existence proof". Kant does not give an example of an accomplished analysis of any notion and, accordingly, any examples of unanalysable notions, but asserts that such notions do exist. Thus he makes a conclusion that realities corresponding to these notions are united in one essence and this essence is God.

It is also remarkable that there are similarities between Kant's arguments in the scholion to Theorem VI and the considerations of Gaunilo, who was the first to criticize St. Anselm's argument. Gaunilo's formulation is very close to that of Kant's; and it is obvious from the following examples:

For it should be proved first that this being itself really exists somewhere; and then, from the fact that it is greater than all [i.e. "than which a greater cannot be conceived" — the essence which existence Anselm is trying to prove], we shall not hesitate to infer that it also subsists in itself.

Whereas in the first place it should be in some way proved that a nature which is higher, that is, greater and better, than all other natures, exists; in order that from this we may then be able to prove all attributes which necessarily the being that is greater and better than all possesses.

These considerations of Gaunilo are as ambiguous as Kant's. "A nature" can apparently be understood as an existing entity and as a possible one. Still from other remarks of Gaunilo it can be seen that he meant the very distinction between the nominal and real definition of "the being which is greater than can be conceived".

Hence, I am not able, in the way in which I should have this unreal being in concept or in understanding, to have that being of which you speak in concept or in understanding, when I hear the word *God* or the words, *a being greater than all other beings*. For I can conceive of the man according to a fact that is real and familiar to me: but of God, or a being greater than all others, I could not conceive at all, except merely according to the word. And an object can hardly or never be conceived according to the word alone. For when it is so conceived, it is not so much the word itself (which is, indeed, a real thing — that is, the sound of the letters and syllables) as the signification of the word, when heard, that is conceived. But it is not conceived as by one who knows what is generally signified by the word; by whom, that is, it is conceived according to a reality and in true conception alone. It is conceived as by a man who does not know the object, and conceives of it only in accordance with the movement of his mind produced by hearing the word, the mind attempting to image for itself the signification of the word that is heard. And it would be surprising if in the reality of fact it could ever attain to this.

Nor do I concede to it any other existence than this (if it should be called existence) which it has when the mind, according to a word merely heard, tries to form the image of an object absolutely unknown to it. <...> For I should still deny this, or doubt your demonstration of it, to this extent, that I should not admit that

this being is in my understanding and concept even in the way in which many objects whose real existence is uncertain and doubtful, are in my understanding and concept.

The meaning of the given remarks (in the Wolffian school terminology) seems to be the following: the definition, with which Anselm begins his proof, is purely verbal; it does not even guarantee the possibility of the defined object, i.e. its existence *in se ipso*. Only after the actual existence of this object has been proved, it will be possible to say that it exists in possibility. This argument from Gaunilo, as it can be easily seen, is very similar to Kant's reasons interpreted above.

3. The discussion of possible objections. Final remarks

There may be three serious objections to the proposed interpretation, namely:

(i) the terms "ideally" (*idealiter*) and "really" (*realiter*) used by Kant in the scholion to Theorem VI clearly demonstrate that he opposes the possibility of an object to its reality;

(ii) Kant's purpose is to demonstrate the insufficiency of the Cartesian proof as an argument in favor of the notion of *causa sui*; if Kant in the scholion to Theorem VI only specifies the Cartesian proof, without refuting it, then he does not accomplish his purpose;

(iii) the remark in the scholion to Theorem VI ("how much his [Cartesian] result is deceptive can be seen from the scholion to the previous paragraph") shows that in the scholion to Theorem VI Kant refutes the Cartesian proof.

Let us consider the listed objections one by one.

The terms "*ideal*" and "*real*" are very widely used by Crusius in his "Path to Certainty and Reliability in Human Knowledge". He opposes the ideal definition (sentence, conclusion) to the real one; and he connects the "reality" with the existence of the object in question. This circumstance seems to be contradicting the proposed interpretation. However, giving thorough consideration to the matter it turns out that it is possible to find arguments of the opposite character in Crusius's "Path to Certainty and Reliability in Human Knowledge". They are rather indirect, but still demonstrate that the words *idealiter* and *realiter* could be understood in accordance with our interpretation.

Speaking about ideal and real definitions (sentences, conclusions), Crusius opposes the really existing to the objectively possible. Moreover, in his work we can come across the opposition of a seeming possibility (*die bloss anscheinende Möglichkeit*) and a true possibility (*die wahre, metaphysische Möglichkeit*). He also calls the seeming possibility "a purely verbal possibility" and defines it as the one "owing to which it seems only at first glance that this thesis cannot be refuted conclusively, though further considerations demonstrate that it is not so". The difference between what the thought contains and what objectively exists, at least as possible, is implied here. A true thought (idea) corresponds to its (possible or real) object, while a false one does not.

The truth in general is defined by Crusius as such a relation between a thinking mind and an object of thought owing to which the object thought to be existent (or non-existent) or possible (or impossible) exists (or does not exist) or is possible (or impossible) beyond our thought as well. Therefore, a true thought (notion, opinion) may have something non-existent (only possible) as its object. The main requirement is that the thought would correspond to its object. Speci-

fying this requirement, Crusius uses the same words (*idealiter* and *realiter*) as Kant: "Thus, the truth implies that the thought contains precisely what the object contains, and vice versa, namely: what is *realiter* in the object is *idealiter* in the thought, i.e. is understood in the thought itself".

This passage shows that the terms "ideally" and "really" are used by Crusius where the content of the thought is opposed to its object. In order to express this opposition he also uses the terms "ideally" and "objectively". Thus, Paragraph 123 deals with the notions which can be differentiated objectively (*obiective*) or ideally (*idealiter*):

Objectively differentiated notions are those which... denote different things, for example a man and a beast, love and hatred. Ideally differentiated notions are those which beyond the thought have the same object, but represent it by means of different properties... for example a sentient being and a being bound to aspire to virtue and created for bliss.

In Paragraph 127, where the similar problem of differentiation of notions is discussed, Crusius uses the terms "ideally" and "really": "Therefore, perfect abstract notions [*die vollkommenen Abstracta*] may be conceived without each other and are ideally separable [*idealiter separabilia*], though it is possible to give other reasons why they are still not really separable [*realiter separabilia*]" . Apparently, in this case it is also admissible to consider the notions which are possible objects (for example, it is possible to discuss, as Kant does in his "Universal Natural History and Theory of Heaven", the connection between the notions of "rational inhabitants of Jupiter" and "longstanding beings"). That is why the notions belonging to "the world of the possible" can also be really inseparable.

These examples demonstrate that Kant's phrase "[it happens] only ideally, but not really" can be interpreted in the way that the word "ideally" would mean "a purely verbal possibility" (possibility in the domain of thought as opposed to the domain of objects), and the word "really" would mean a true, metaphysical possibility (in the domain of objects). Under this understanding it turns out that we are talking about something which is usually called nominal and real definitions in logics. This terminology is used by Crusius who divides all the definitions into verbal (nominal) and real in the broad sense. He divides the latter into ideal definitions, which assume only a possibility of a thing, and real ones in the narrow sense, which assume the real character of the defined thing:

In a concrete notion, which is to be defined [*Definitum*], only some probable thing is imagined, to which existence is not attributed [*doch nicht darauf Acht hat*], – and then such a definition can be called a real definition of a probable thing, or an ideal definition, which should not be confused with the nominal definition proper, where the word is defined... Or they wish to turn a concrete idea about some existing thing, considered to be namely existing, into an abstract and adequate one, for example when giving definition to fire or air. I shall call such a definition a real definition of an existing thing, or a real definition in the narrow sense.

Kant notes in his comments to Meier's "Vernunftlehre" that real definitions in contrast to nominal ones "contain the probability of the thing itself". He mentions the same in "Logic":

By mere nominal definitions we understand those definitions, which contain the signification that we have chosen to give a certain name arbitrarily, and which therefore denote nothing but the logical being of its object or serve merely to distinguish it from other objects. Real definitions, on the other hand, are those definitions, which suffice to the cognition of the object, in point of its internal determinations, as they show the possibility of it (the object) from internal marks.

Thus, it seems quite plausible that, reasoning about the arbitrarily formed notion of God, Kant uses the term "really" in the sense meant by the opposition of nominal and real definitions ("to define something really" means in this case not only to indicate the signs of the thing, but also to justify its internal possibility).

We shall now turn to the second objection. Obviously, proceeding to the discussion of the Cartesian proof, Kant is intending to refute it (this follows from the context). However, according to the proposed interpretation, Kant in the scholion to Theorem VI does not refute the proof, but following Leibniz requires only to formulate the articulated premise about the truthfulness of the concept of the universal real thing (i.e. that the universal real thing is possible). Thus, the criticism of the notion of *causa sui* remains incomplete. We do not think that this may be a valid objection against the proposed interpretation. Paragraphs 6 and 7 of the ND should be considered as a united (cohesive) fragment. When sequentially reading it, it seems perfectly natural that the criticism of the Cartesian proof begins in the scholion to Theorem VI, and culminates in the scholion to Theorem VII. Kant carries out his intention to show the fallacy of the Cartesian proof (and that of the notion of *causa sui*), but he does so not in one but in two steps. The logic of his argument is as follows: having indicated that the Cartesian proof should include a separate premise about the possibility of the universal real thing, in Theorem VII Kant argues that the existence of this thing is preceded by its own possibility and the possibility of all things in general. Then (in the scholion to Theorem VII) he concludes his argument against the Cartesian proof with a note that it is possible to assert the possibility of the universal real thing only after having proved its existence.

From this point of view, one can reproach Kant with the fact that having corrected the wording of Cartesian proof he did not add: "However, the truthfulness of the universal real thing can be established only by proving the existence of this thing, as is seen from this Theorem". Such an addition would make the logic of his argument quite transparent. We believe that besides this main omission in Kant's text it is also possible to encounter some more negligence (e.g. the usage of the term "ideally" instead of "nominally"). But Kant's formulations turn out to be so imprecise in any interpretation.

As regards the third objection, Kant's words from the scholion to Theorem VII ("the extent to which his (Cartesian) result is deceptive is seen from the scholion to the previous paragraph") can be interpreted as follows: the scholion to Theorem VI shows that the Cartesian proof provides only a nominal definition of the universal real entity, but not a real one. This circumstance itself is certainly not indicative of the fundamental impossibility of the Cartesian proof – it merely shows its "fallacy". But in conjunction with Theorem VII, the scholion to Theorem VI forms a complete refutation of the Cartesian argument.

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