

## On the Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works

Why a Complete Revision of its Translation is Urgently Needed

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Time and again and for various reasons, I have been reading the Cambridge Edition ever since it was published, and have repeatedly discovered translation errors in it. Also the cases of serious errors discussed below<sup>1</sup> are not the result of systematic examination, but rather accidental discoveries. I found more and more of them during the last years, when I was writing an article on Kant in English and wanted to make use of the Cambridge Edition (= CE), for which I intended to quote from Kant's works. I finally decided to collect my findings.

The number of errors presented here is, to be sure, not very high in absolute terms. But they were discovered purely by chance, and not only in several, but in particularly important publications by Kant, above all in his most crucial work, the *Critique of pure reason*. That means: for each sentence, phrase, word, even if the probability is low, the reader has to consider the possibility, that it does not correspond to Kant's original; and this again means: the CE cannot be trusted; it is simply out of the question for serious Kant research. Only the comparison with the original would bring salvation, which, however, would make the translation of the CE superfluous.

A renowned Kant-review has refused my contribution with the argument, that the number of presented cases is not representative; it would need an overall proof of

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<sup>1</sup> I refer only to the German *Akademie-Ausgabe* of Kant's Works (= AA). The number before the colon refers to the volume, the number after it to the page; a full stop is followed by a reference to the line (example: 08: 211.10–13). For the *Critique of pure reason*, reference is made to the 1<sup>st</sup> (= A) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> (= B) edition. – My additions within quotations are in square brackets. Such brackets also indicate omissions.

For Kant's works I shall use the following abbreviations: EaD = The end of all things; KpV = Critique of practical reason; KrV = Critique of pure reason; KU = Critique of the power of judgement; MAM = Conjectural beginning of human history; MpVT = On the miscarriage of all philosophical trials in theodicy; MS = The metaphysics of morals; RezSchulz = Review of Schulz's attempt; RGV = Religion within the boundaries of mere reason; Refl = Notes; RL = Doctrine of right; SF = The conflict of the faculties; TP = On the common saying: That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice; ÜGTP = On the use of teleological principles in philosophy; V-Th/Pölitz = V-MP/Mron = Metaphysics lecture notes Mrongovius; V-MP-L1/Pölitz = Metaphysics lecture notes L1 (Pölitz); VNAEF = Proclamation of the imminent conclusion of a treaty of eternal peace in philosophy; VRML = On a supposed right to lie from philanthropy; WDO = What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking? ZeF = Toward eternal peace.

CE = Cambridge Edition; pmt = partly my translation; m/tr = my translation; m/it = my italics. Letters in bold are all mine.

the deficiency of the edition. Well, finding an error is the main step for correcting it. My intention is simply to demonstrate the need for an overall check-up. However, when I consider that the two translators and editors of the KrV, one of whom is also responsible for the KU and the other for the RGV, are also the general editors of the whole edition, then I understand the rejection of my contribution, but I also fear that a new edition is still a long way off.

Where it seemed necessary, the German original of a Kant passage is followed by an English translation in which that, which I considered to be wrong or at least not appropriate in the CE, has been changed by me.<sup>2</sup> For this, I have put priority on the highest possible correspondence with the original. That may sound (as my own English writing, of course, also might do) in places a bit awkward or even somehow “teutonic”. I have unfortunately just the great disadvantage that Kant’s mother tongue and not English is my native language.

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AA: “Das praktische Gesetz aus dem Bewegungsgrunde der *Glückseligkeit* nenne ich pragmatisch (Klugheitsregel); dasjenige aber, **wofern ein solches ist**, das zum Bewegungsgrunde nichts anderes hat, als die *Würdigkeit, glücklich zu sein*, moralisch (Sittengesetz).”<sup>3</sup>

pmt: “The practical law from the motive of *happiness* I call pragmatic (rule of prudence); but that, **if such law exists**, which has for its motive nothing but the *worthiness to be happy*, I call moral (moral law).”

In the CE the second clause reads: “but that **which is such** that it has no other motive than the *worthiness to be happy* I call moral (moral law).”

The CE thus withholds the fact that Kant explicitly leaves open whether there is such a thing as a moral law (Sittengesetz) at all. Only in the next paragraph Kant states: “I assume that there are really pure moral laws”.<sup>4</sup>

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AA: “[...] der Mensch, der die ganze Natur sonst lediglich nur **durch Sinne kennt, erkennt** sich selbst auch durch **bloße** Apperception und zwar in [Gesetzgebungs-] Handlungen und inneren Bestimmungen, die er gar nicht zum **Eindrucke der Sinne** zählen kann, und ist **sich selbst freilich** eines Theils Phänomen, anderen Theils aber, nämlich in Ansehung gewisser Vermögen, ein bloß intelligibeler Gegenstand, weil die **Handlung** desselben gar nicht zur Receptivität der Sinnlichkeit gezählt werden kann.”<sup>5</sup>

pmt: “the human being, who otherwise **knows** the whole of nature solely **through senses, recognizes** himself also through **mere** apperception, and indeed in [lawgiv-

<sup>2</sup> The translators of the CE-versions under criticism here are for: KrV – Paul Guyer / Allen W. Wood; KU – Paul Guyer / Eric Matthews; MS (RL), SF, TP, ZeF – Mary J. Gregor; MpVT, RGV – George di Giovanni; ÜGTP – Günter Zöllner; VNAEF – Peter Heath; WDO, V-Th/Pölitz – Allen W. Wood.

<sup>3</sup> KrV A 806 / B 834.

<sup>4</sup> KrV A 807 / B 835.

<sup>5</sup> KrV A 546 f. / B 574 f.

ing] actions and inner determinations which cannot be attributed at all to the **impression of the senses\***); and he is **to himself\*\***) **admittedly** in one part phenomenon, but in another part, namely in regard to certain faculties, he is a merely intelligible object, because the **action** of this object cannot at all be ascribed to the receptivity of sensibility.”

CE: “the human being, who **is** otherwise **acquainted with** the whole of nature solely **through sense, knows** himself also through **pure** apperception, and indeed in [law-giving] actions and inner determinations which cannot be accounted at all among **impressions of sense\***); he **obviously** is [...]\*\*) in one part phenomenon, but in another part, namely in regard to certain faculties, he is a merely intelligible object, because the **actions** of this object cannot at all be ascribed to the receptivity of sensibility.”

\*) Cf. KrV A 342 / B 400: the AA says: “dem Eindrucke der Sinne” (“from the impression of the senses”), the CE says: “from impressions of sense”.

\*\*) The “to himself”, corresponding to the “himself” (sich selbst) two lines before, is lacking in the CE. What Kant wants to make clear is that man is *aware* of these actions *as his own*.<sup>6</sup>

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AA: Kant spricht einmal von der Annahme, dass “unter den Naturursachen es auch welche [gibt], die [z. B. der Mensch!] ein Vermögen haben, welches nur intelligibel ist, indem die Bestimmung desselben zur Handlung niemals auf empirischen Bedingungen, sondern auf bloßen Gründen des Verstandes beruht, **so doch**, daß die *Handlung in der Erscheinung* von dieser Ursache allen Gesetzen der empirischen Causalität gemäß sei”.<sup>7</sup>

pmt: Kant once speaks of the assumption “that among natural causes there are also some [eg man] that have a faculty that is only intelligible, in that its determination to action never rests on empirical conditions but on mere grounds of the understanding, **though in such a way that** the *action in the appearance* of this cause accords with all the laws of empirical causality.”<sup>8</sup>

Instead of “though in such a way that” the CE says “**as long as**”.

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AA: “Ich hoffe beides dadurch zu leisten, daß ich mich so nahe als möglich am Transscendentalen halte und das, was etwa hiebei psychologisch, d.i. empirisch, sein möchte, **gänzlich bei Seite setze**. Und da ist denn zuerst anzumerken, daß ich mich **für jetzt** des Begriffs der Freiheit nur im praktischen Verstande bedienen werde und den in transscendentaler Bedeutung, welcher nicht als ein Erklärungsgrund der

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<sup>6</sup> See for this *Wolff, Michael*: Freiheit und Natur. Zu Kants architektonischem Programm von Philosophie, in: Waibel, Violetta L. et al. (Eds.): Natur und Freiheit. Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses, Berlin / Boston 2018, vol. I, 140.

<sup>7</sup> KrV A 545 / B 573.

<sup>8</sup> KrV A 545 / B 573.

Erscheinungen empirisch vorausgesetzt werden kann, sondern selbst ein Problem für die Vernunft ist, **hier als oben abgethan bei Seite setze.**<sup>9</sup>

pmt: “I hope to achieve both by keeping as close as possible to the transcendental and **setting aside entirely** what might here be psychological, i.e., empirical. And here the first thing to note is that **for the present** I will use the concept of freedom only in a practical sense and **set aside here, as having been settled above**, the concept of freedom in the transcendental meaning, which cannot be empirically presupposed as an explanatory ground of the appearances but is rather itself a problem for reason.”<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to the phrase “**set aside here, as having been settled above**” in the CE the “**here**” is lacking, and instead of “**settled**” it reads “dealt with”.

The second difference is the smaller mistake. Kant says ‘abgetan’, not ‘behandelt’. ‘Abgetan’ includes in this case, indeed, the meaning of ‘behandelt’ (‘being dealt with’), but at the same time the meaning, here more important, of ‘being finished’ or ‘being done with’. A page later Kant formulates accordingly: “about which there is already *sufficient* discussion in the *Antinomy of Pure Reason*”<sup>11</sup>.

But mind! Only *there* it is “settled” – for speculative reason; by no means in general. Rather, Kant says here with utmost clarity, that the concept of transcendental freedom is “itself a problem for reason”, and he adds a page later that it “remains a problem”<sup>12</sup>.

How important it is for avoiding a crucial misunderstanding, that the “here” is *not* omitted, is revealed by the fact that even the word “hier”, visibly given in the German original, did not prevent a German Kant ‘scholar’ to ignore it; – with the result that with reference to Kant’s formulations “set aside here, as having been settled above” and “there is already sufficient discussion”, he seriously asserts without further ado: “With full justification, Kant can therefore claim that he has already dealt with the question of freedom *completely* in the “Critique of Pure Reason”.”<sup>13</sup>

Kant proves in the *Dialectic*, that “freedom and nature, each in its full significance, would both be found in the same actions, simultaneously and without any contradiction”<sup>14</sup>, and that therefore freedom is conceivable and thus (logically) possible,<sup>15</sup> that a *theoretical* objection in this regard is dismissed<sup>16</sup> after “sufficient

<sup>9</sup> KrV A 801 f. / B 829 f.

<sup>10</sup> KrV A 801 f. / B 829 f.

<sup>11</sup> KrV A 804 / B 832 (m/it).

<sup>12</sup> KrV A 803 / B 831.

<sup>13</sup> *Ludwig, Bernd*: “‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft hat die Wirklichkeit der Freiheit nicht bewiesen, ja nicht einmal deren Möglichkeit.’ Über die folgenreiche Fehlinterpretation eines Absatzes in der Kritik der reinen Vernunft”; in: *Kant-Studien*, 106 [2015] 411; Ludwig’s emphasis).

<sup>14</sup> KrV A 541 / B 569.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. KrV A 558 / B 586. “this concept, however, [speculative reason] could put forward only problematically, as not impossible to think, without assuring it objective reality”. (KpV AA 05: 03) What has been removed here is the objective obstacle of impossibility, not also the subjective obstacle of incomprehensibility. For this V-MP-L1/Pölitz AA 28: 271.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. KrV B XXV (AA 03: 16.23–25); B XXVIII f.; A 558 / B 586.

discussion”<sup>17</sup>, and that the “question about transcendental freedom”, nevertheless still existing, as Kant states four times<sup>18</sup> in the *Canon*, is, as concerning “merely speculative knowledge”, *practically*<sup>19</sup> irrelevant. Here, and only here, Kant could set it aside. That is precisely why he rightly said this explicitly.

While practical freedom is recognized by the conclusion from practical necessity to practical possibility, the *speculatively conceived* transcendental freedom “seems to be contrary to the law of nature, thus to all possible experience, and so remains a problem”.<sup>20</sup> Hence, the proof of experience claimed for practical freedom does by no means extend also to transcendental freedom.<sup>21</sup> But the question directed to freedom, thus conceived, “concerns merely speculative knowledge”, and therefore this question can be “set aside as quite indifferent *if we are concerned with what is practical*”.<sup>22</sup> One *can* do it; for with the causality of reason in determining the will, that is, with the determination of the will according to the law of freedom, our intention, directed only to action or omission,<sup>23</sup> is fully met.

Kant's proof of compatibility of freedom and natural law causality is subject to the condition “that reason actually has causality in regard to appearances”.<sup>24</sup> Whether this condition is fulfilled remains a problem in the *Critique of pure reason* and must remain so for it.<sup>25</sup> Only the logical possibility of transcendental freedom is proved in the *Dialectic*. This is an important result of the first *Critique*, but also the only one that is 'speculatively' possible. Insofar the matter is “settled above [in the *Dialectic*]”, but – notabene – only for speculative reason. Referring to this, Kant writes in the preface to the second edition of the first *Critique*: In order to ascribe to a concept like transcendental freedom “objective validity (real possibility), [...] something more is required. This 'more', however, need not be sought in theoretical sources of cognition; it may also lie in practical ones.”<sup>26</sup> And it is precisely in these that Kant finds it; first already in the *Canon* and then, of course, in the *Groundwork* and in the second *Critique*.

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AA: “Gott also und ein künftiges Leben sind zwei **von der Verbindlichkeit**, die uns reine Vernunft auferlegt, **nach Principien eben derselben Vernunft nicht zu trennende** Voraussetzungen.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> KrV A 804 / B 832.

<sup>18</sup> KrV A 801–803 / B 829–831.

<sup>19</sup> With regard to “reason in its practical use” (KrV A / B 831).

<sup>20</sup> KrV A 803 / B 831.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. KrV A 803 / B 831; KpV AA 05: 94.02–07; MS AA 06: 226.19.

<sup>22</sup> KrV A 803 f. / B 831 f. (m/it); cf. RezSchulz AA 08: 13.20–26; V-MP/Mron AA 29: 901.01–04.

<sup>23</sup> See KrV A 803 / B 831.

<sup>24</sup> KrV A 548 f. / B 576 f. (AA 03: 372.12–14); likewise KrV A 551 / B 579 (AA 03: 573.17 f.).

<sup>25</sup> See KrV A 557 f. / B 585 f.

<sup>26</sup> KrV B XXVI.

<sup>27</sup> KrV A 811 / B 839.

pmt: “Thus God and a future life are two presuppositions that are **not to be separated from the obligation**, imposed on us by pure reason,\*) **in accordance with principles of that very same reason.**”

CE: Thus God and a future life are two presuppositions that are not to be separated from the **obligation that pure reason imposes on us\*) in accordance with principles of that very same reason.**

\*) The translation in the CE is **ambiguous, if not** wrong, for lack of punctuation.

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AA: “Dagegen wenn wir aus dem **Gesichtspunkte der sittlichen Einheit als einem nothwendigen Weltgesetze** die Ursache erwägen, die **diesem [dem Weltgesetz]** allein den angemessenen Effect, mithin **auch** für uns verbindende Kraft geben kann, so muß es ein einiger oberster Wille sein, der alle diese Gesetze in sich befaßt.”<sup>28</sup>

pmt: “On the contrary, if, from the **standpoint of moral unity as a necessary law of the world**, we assess the cause that can alone provide **this [the law of the world]** with the appropriate effect and thus **also** obligating force for us, then there must be a single supreme will, which comprehends all these laws in itself.”

CE: “On the contrary, if, from the **standpoint of moral unity**, we assess the cause that can alone provide **this [the moral unity]** with the appropriate effect and thus obligating force for us, **as a necessary law of the world**, then there must be a single supreme will, which comprehends all these laws in itself.”

**No comment.**

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AA: “Die Philosophie hat also keine Axiomen und darf niemals ihre Grundsätze *a priori* so schlechthin **gebieten**, sondern muß **sich** dazu **bequemen, ihre Befugniß** wegen derselben durch gründliche Deduction zu rechtfertigen.”<sup>29</sup>

pmt: “Philosophy thus has no axioms and must never simply **command** its a priori principles as such, but must **be prepared** to justify **its authority regarding them** through a thorough deduction.”

CE: “Philosophy thus has no axioms and can never simply **offer**\*) its a priori principles as such, but must **content** itself with justifying **their\*\*)** **authority** through a thorough deduction.”

\*) “to offer” means in German “**anbieten**”. Kant says “**gebieten**” = to command”.

\*\*\*) The term “ihre” in the German original is in this case a feminine singular, not a neutral plural. It is about the authority of philosophy, not of its principles. By the way, as every connoisseur of German grammar knows, in the latter case it should not have been “ihre” at all, but “deren”. The CE-translation is therefore wrong for both grammatical and philosophical reasons.

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<sup>28</sup> KrV A 815 / B 843.

<sup>29</sup> KrV A 733 f. / B 761 f.

AA: "1) Als allgemeine Logik abstrahirt sie von allem Inhalt der Verstandeserkenntniß und der Verschiedenheit ihrer Gegenstände und hat mit nichts als der bloßen Form des Denkens zu thun. 2) Als reine Logik hat sie keine empirische Principien, mithin schöpft sie nichts (wie man sich bisweilen überredet hat) aus der Psychologie, die also auf den Kanon des Verstandes gar keinen Einfluß hat. Sie ist eine demonstirte Doctrin, und alles muß in ihr **völlig a priori gewiß** sein."<sup>30</sup>

CE: "1) As general logic it abstracts from all contents of the cognition of the understanding and of the difference of its objects, and has to do with nothing but the mere form of thinking. 2) As pure logic it has no empirical principles, thus it draws nothing from psychology (as one has occasionally been persuaded), which therefore has no influence at all on the canon of the understanding. It is a proven doctrine, and everything in it must be **completely a priori**.

Michael Wolff makes the following critical remark about this:

"The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant leaves out 'certain [gewiß]' in Kant's text, and thereby eliminates the idea that the universal validity of general logic must a priori, i. e. independent of all experience, rule out uncertainty and wavering regarding its principles."<sup>31</sup>

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AA: "die angeführte nothwendige Verknüpfung der Hoffnung, glücklich zu sein, mit dem unablässigen Bestreben, sich der Glückseligkeit würdig zu machen, kann durch die Vernunft nicht erkannt werden, wenn man bloß Natur zum Grunde legt, sondern darf nur gehofft werden, **wenn eine höchste Vernunft, die nach moralischen Gesetzen gebietet, zugleich als Ursache der Natur zum Grunde gelegt wird**."<sup>32</sup>

pmt: "The above-mentioned necessary connection of the hope of being happy with the unremitting endeavor to make oneself worthy of happiness cannot be cognized through reason if one takes merely nature as a basis, but may only be hoped for **if a highest reason, which commands according to moral laws, is at the same time based on as the cause of nature**.

CE: "the necessary connection of the hope of being happy with the unremitting effort to make oneself worthy of happiness that has been adduced cannot be cognized through reason if it is grounded merely in nature, but may be hoped for only **if it is at the same time grounded on a highest reason, which commands in accordance with moral laws, as at the same time the cause of nature**."

No comment.

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AA: "Dieses moralische Argument soll keinen *objectiv*-gültigen Beweis vom Dasein Gottes an die Hand geben, nicht dem Zweifelgläubigen beweisen, daß ein Gott sei; sondern daß, wenn er moralisch consequent denken will, er die Annehmung dieses

<sup>30</sup> KrV B 78.

<sup>31</sup> Wolff, Michael: *Essay on the Principles of Logic. A Defense of Logical Monism*. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2023, p. VI n. 3.

<sup>32</sup> KrV A 810 / B 838.

Satzes unter die Maximen seiner praktischen Vernunft *aufnehmen müsse*. – Es soll damit auch nicht gesagt werden: es ist *zur Sittlichkeit* nothwendig, die Glückseligkeit aller vernünftigen Weltwesen gemäß ihrer Moralität anzunehmen; sondern: es ist **durch sie** nothwendig. Mithin ist es ein *subjectiv*, für moralische Wesen, hinreichendes Argument.<sup>33</sup>

pmt: “This moral argument is not meant to provide any *objectively* valid proof of the existence of God, nor meant to prove to the doubter that there is a God; rather, it is meant to prove that if his moral thinking is to be consistent, he *must include* the assumption of this proposition among the maxims of his practical reason. – It is also not meant to say that it is necessary *for morality* to assume the happiness of all rational beings in the world in accordance with their morality, but rather that it is necessary **through morality**. Hence it is a *subjective* argument, sufficient for moral beings.”

CE: “[...] – Thus it is also not meant to say that it is necessary to assume the happiness of all rational beings in the world in accordance with their morality *for morals*, but rather that it is necessary **through their morality**. Hence it is a *subjective* argument, sufficient for moral beings.”

Instead of translating Kant’s “durch sie [= morality]”) correctly into “through morality”, but rather into “through **their** morality”, where “their” refers to “all rational beings in the world”, the CE misses completely Kant’s argument.

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AA: “Diese formale **Beschaffenheit** meiner Handlungen (**Unterordnung derselben unter das Princip der Allgemeingültigkeit**), worin allein ihr innerer moralischer Werth besteht, ist gänzlich in unserer Gewalt”.<sup>34</sup>

CE: “This formal **property**\*) of my actions [**subordination of them to the principle of universal validity**]\*\*), in which alone their inner moral worth consists, is entirely in our power”.

\*) The German “Beschaffenheit” had for Kant rather the meaning of “quality”.<sup>35</sup>

\*\*) This part of the sentence is just missing in the CE.

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AA: “Daß es [eine Erkenntnis des Übersinnlichen] dagegen auf dem moralischen [Weg] (des Freiheitsbegriffs) gelingt, hat diesen Grund: daß hier das Übersinnliche, welches dabei zum Grunde liegt (die Freiheit), durch ein bestimmtes Gesetz der Causalität, welches aus ihm entspringt, [...] **auch als Thatsache seine Realität in Handlungen darthut** [...]”<sup>36</sup>

CE: “The reason that it [a cognition of the supersensible] succeeds in the moral route (that of the concept of freedom), by contrast, lies in the fact that in this case the super-

<sup>33</sup> KU AA 05: 450 f. note.

<sup>34</sup> KU 05.471 note.

<sup>35</sup> I owe this point to Manfred Baum.

<sup>36</sup> KU AA 05: 474.

sensible that is the ground (freedom), by means of a determinate law of causality arising in it, [...] **also demonstrates the fact of its reality in actions**\*) [...]"

\*) The correct translation would be: "**also as a fact demonstrates its reality in actions.**" The mistake in the CE-translation is philosophically of crucial importance. It misses the step Kant had done in his discussion of the concept of transcendental freedom from the first to the second *Critique*. For this see KpV AA 05: 05.24–27; 05: 06.07–12; 05: 31; 05: 42.04–19; 05: 47.27–37; 05: 48.06–16; 05: 49.07–13; 05: 50–57; 05: KU AA 05: 468.21–30.

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AA: "praktische Grundsätze [...], **die als Gesetze eine Causalität** der reinen Vernunft [...] **und** einen reinen Willen in uns **beweisen** [...]"<sup>37</sup>

pmt: "practical principles, **which, as laws, prove a causality** of pure reason [...] **and** a pure will in us [...]"

CE: "practical principles, **which are laws of a causality** of pure reason [...] **and prove** a pure will in us [...]"

No comment.

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AA: "Es ist nicht etwa die Erfahrung, durch die wir von der Maxime der Gewaltthätigkeit der Menschen belehrt werden und ihrer Bösartigkeit, sich, ehe eine äußere machthabende Gesetzgebung erscheint, einander zu **befehden, also** nicht etwa ein Factum, welches den **öffentlich gesetzlichen Zwang** nothwendig macht, sondern, **sie mögen** auch so gutartig und rechtliebend **gedacht werden, wie man will**, so liegt es doch *a priori* in der Vernunftidee eines solchen (nicht-rechtlichen) Zustandes, daß, bevor ein **öffentlich gesetzlicher Zustand** errichtet worden, vereinzelt Menschen, Völker und Staaten niemals vor Gewaltthätigkeit gegen einander sicher sein können [...]; man müsse [...] sich einem **öffentlich gesetzlichen äußeren Zwange** zu unterwerfen, also in einen Zustand treten, darin jedem das, was für das Seine anerkannt werden soll, *gesetzlich* bestimmt und durch hinreichende *Macht* [...] zu Theil wird [...]"<sup>38</sup>

pmt: "It is **by no means** experience from which we learn of the maxim of violence in human beings and of their malevolent tendency to attack one another before external legislation endowed with power **appears, thus** it is **by no means** some **fact** that makes **coercion according to public law** necessary, **but one may think men to be** as benevolent and law-abiding **as one pleases**, it still lies a priori [...]. [...] subject itself to an **external coercion according to public law** [...]"

CE: "It is not experience from which we learn of the maxim of violence in human beings and of their malevolent tendency to attack one another before external legislation endowed with power **appears, thus** it is not some deed that makes **coercion through public law** necessary. **On the contrary, however** well disposed and law-abiding **human beings might be**, it still lies a priori in the rational idea of such a con-

<sup>37</sup> MS AA 06: 221.

<sup>38</sup> RL AA 06: 312.

dition (one that is not rightful) that before a **public lawful condition** is established individual human beings, peoples and states can never be secure against violence from one another [...] it must [...] subject itself to a **public lawful external coercion**, and so enter into a condition in which what is to be recognized as belonging to it is determined *by law* and is allotted to it by adequate *power* [...].”

CUP 1991:<sup>39</sup> “It is **not** experience from which we learn of men’s maxim of violence and of their malevolent tendency to attack one another before external legislation endowed with power **appears**. **It is therefore not** some **fact** that makes **coercion through public law** necessary. **On the contrary, however** well disposed and law-abiding **men might be**, it still lies a priori in the rational idea of such a condition (one that is not rightful) that before a **public lawful condition** is established [...]. [...] subject itself to a **public lawful external coercion** [...].”

Kant’s crucial point is, that the necessity of a civil state does not follow from anthropological assumptions, in particular from empirical knowledge about the moral quality of mankind, but from pure juridical-practical reason. As if this would not be enough for his argument, he adds that with regard to that necessity nothing will change “one may think men to be as benevolent and law-abiding as one pleases”; – not just “however well disposed and law-abiding men might be”, since this again refers to the empirical and not to the purely rational level. Men in this context can be thought of as devils<sup>40</sup> and as angels.

In the CUP-version, the translator overlooks the fact, that Kant puts at the end of the phrase, which ends in English with “appears”, a comma, indicating that the sentence is not finished. Continuing with “thus” (“also”) and repeating “it is not” (German: “es ist nicht etwa”), he further indicates that he is going on with a conclusion from the first part of the sentence. After having said “nicht etwa” (“it is by no means”), Kant has to continue with “sondern” (“but”). The translator of the CUP puts instead a full stop after “appears” and thus produces a complete sentence, but one that is obviously wrong and definitely not Kant’s opinion. Accordingly, the following “therefore” loses its function. – After a hint by a colleague, the translator corrected her translation, when it was taken over by the CE, with regard to the criticized point. However, she also made a change that turned a correct translation (CUP) into a wrong one (CE): “fact” (AA: Factum) became “deed”. But in Kant, “Faktum” refers to “experience” and not to “violence” or “attack”.

It is difficult within the framework of Kant’s *Doctrine of right* to render his “öffentlich gesetzlicher Zwang” in English, because an adequate term for “gesetzlich” is lacking. The CE translates Kant’s formulation into “coercion through public law”. Strictly deviating from the usual Anglosaxon terminology, the CE always translates Kant’s “Recht” into “right” and his “Gesetz” into “law”. Accordingly, in the context of the terminology used in Kant’s *Doctrine of right*, one would not study “law” (lex, Gesetz, loi), but “right” (ius, Recht, droit). That means: what Anglosaxon **lawyers** (in

<sup>39</sup> *Immanuel Kant: The Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 123 f.

<sup>40</sup> Kant’s own famous example: “The problem of establishing a state, no matter how hard it may sound, is soluble even for a nation of devils (if only they have understanding) and goes like this: [...]” *ZeF AA*, 08: 366.

German: **Rechtsanwälte**) call “public law”, “national law”, “international law”, “penal law”, “private law”, “contract law” becomes in the CE “public right”, “right of the state”, “right of nations”, “right to punish”, “private right”, “contract right”. So, when it says “public law” here, it is insofar indeed a correct translation of Kant’s “öffentliches Gesetz” and not of “öffentliches Recht”.

But from a completely different reason “coercion through public law” is still not an appropriate translation of “öffentlich gesetzlicher Zwang”. The coercion, Kant speaks of here, *presupposes*, indeed, the existence of a public law. It is, however, not also *exercised through* this law as such. It requires, moreover, an *executive* and a *judiciary* bound by public law.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, I prefer the translation “coercion according to public law”.

I lack the competence to judge whether the other CE-translation of “öffentlich gesetzlicher Zwang”, namely “public lawful [...] coercion” is also appropriate. The same is true for the CE-translation of “öffentlich gesetzlicher Zustand”, namely “public lawful condition”. Certainly, however, they are appropriate only if by “lawful” one associates only “law” and by no means “right”. When, for example, the CE adds the adjective “lawful” to the following nouns: form, necessitation, constitution, force, relations, basis, freedom, money, supreme power, then that term always stands for “gesetzlich” as Kant himself used it.

A high-ranking politician of the German Federal Republic, when he was accused of what he had committed as military judge in Nazi-time, declared: “What was right then, cannot be wrong today.” Kant’s answer in the English terminology, used here, could have been: “What was public right then, is wrong today, as it was wrong already then.”

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Incidentally, it may be noted here that the CE of Kants *Doctrine of Right* is unfortunately not an English version of what is contained in the *Akademie-Ausgabe*, but rather of a mutilation of Immanuel Kant’s *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre* (ed. Bernd Ludwig), Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1986. – The culprit Bernd Ludwig speaks misleadingly of a ‘philological reconstruction’ (pp. XXIX, XXXI) – by which the philosophical essence especially of the part on Private Right is completely destroyed. The proofs for that, at least in Kant’s mother tongue, are overwhelming.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> I owe the reference to this objection to *Michael Wolff*.

<sup>42</sup> See: *Gerhard Buchda*: Das Privatrecht Immanuel Kants. Der erste Teil der Rechtslehre in der Metaphysik der Sitten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und zum System des Naturrechts. Jena: Frommann, 1929 – *Friedrich Tenbruck*: Über eine notwendige Textkorrektur in Kants “Metaphysik der Sitten”, in: *Archiv für Philosophie*, 3, 1949, S. 216–220 – *Burkhard Tuschling*: Das “rechtliche Postulat der praktischen Vernunft”: seine Stellung und Bedeutung in Kants “Rechtslehre”; in: *Hariolf Oberer / Gerhard Seel* (Hrsg.), *Kant. Analysen – Probleme – Kritik*, Würzburg 1988, 273–292 – *Hans Friedrich Fulda*: Kants Begriff eines intelligiblen Besitzes und seine Deduktion (“Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre”, § 6); in: *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik*, 5 (1997), 103–119, bes. 104, 117 – *Hans Friedrich Fulda*: Erkenntnis der Art, etwas Äußeres als das Seine zu haben; in: *Otfried Höffe* (Hrsg.), *Immanuel Kant, Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre*, Berlin 1999, 103 f. – *Jeffrey Edwards*: *Autonomy, Moral Worth, and Right*, Berlin/Boston: 2018, 131 – *Michael Wolff*: Julius Ebbinghaus, die rechtlichen Grenzen der Staatsgewalt und die Interpretation der Rechtslehre Kants, in: *Manfred Baum / Dieter Hüning* (eds), *Kants Staat der Freiheit. Zur Interpretation der Rechtslehre Kants durch*

For serious work on Kant's *Doctrine of Right* the CE is quite useless. It is therefore better to use the *first* translation of the *Doctrine of Right* by Mary J. Gregor (The *Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge 1991), in spite of the mistake just mentioned. Ludwig gave his 'reconstruction' the motto: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the *Doctrine of Right* in various ways; the point is to *change* it." (Bernd Ludwig, *Kants Rechtslehre*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1988, p. 1) The result demands a new motto: "Ludwig has only *changed* the *Doctrine of Right*; the point is to understand it."

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It is also worth noting that the CE translates Kant's "Zum ewigen Frieden" ("Toward eternal peace") into "Toward perpetual peace".<sup>43</sup>

When the peace, established by Augustus, was called "pax perpetua", eg on coins, and this formula was used throughout the Middle Ages and still with reference to the Peace of Westphalia, then duration was meant. This is precisely what Kant did not have in mind when he spoke – literally meta-physically – of "eternal" peace.<sup>44</sup> The time dimension does not play a role in this idea. "What is *in time* is *everlasting*, but not eternal".<sup>45</sup> "Eternal" peace is not to be understood as a temporal (permanent) state. The epithet "eternal" expresses the fact that with the establishment of a civil state the *principal* insolubility of lawsuits, characterizing the state of nature, is *completely* eliminated. Peace under the law,<sup>46</sup> thus established, is an ideal of reason independent<sup>47</sup> of all time,<sup>48</sup> an "eternal" (timeless) task, a priori posing itself to mankind.<sup>49</sup> In this –

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*Julius Ebbinghaus*, Stuttgart: 2020, 145–193 – *Michael Wolff*: Kant über das Recht des Privatgebrauchs des Erdbodens. Zugleich eine Beantwortung der Frage, warum § 16 der Metaphysischen Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre der richtige Ort für die fünf falsch gesetzten Absätze aus § 6 ist; in: *Kant-Studien*, 111 (2020) 67–103.

<sup>43</sup> See Zef AA 08: passim (more than 50 times); RL AA 06: 350; 06: 354 f.; KrV B 780 / B 805; RGV 06.34. In RGV 06.124 the CE says "eternal peace". Likewise VNAEF AA 08: 416; 08: 422; but in the rest, especially in the headings, it says "perpetual peace". See in contrast *Schwarz, Wolfgang*: Principles of lawful politics. Immanuel Kant's philosophic draft Toward Eternal Peace. A new faithful translation with an introduction, commentary, and a postscript "Hobbsism in Kant?", Aalen 1988.

<sup>44</sup> Incidentally, Kant's reference to the innkeeper's signboard, picturing a graveyard, also speaks for the reading "eternal" instead of "perpetual": on gravestones, one reads "eternal peace", not "perpetual peace".

<sup>45</sup> Refl 4134, AA 17: 429 (m/tr).

<sup>46</sup> As "the end of *all* hostilities"; only in this respect it makes sense that Kant calls the expression "eternal peace" "a suspicious pleonasm". (Zef AA 08: 343 [m/it]).

<sup>47</sup> One could also speak of a "duratio noumenon" (EaD AA 08: 327). "Eternal peace" is a purely juridical concept and belongs to the intelligible world, not, as "everlasting peace", to the world of appearances. Both dimensions are brought together by Kant in the following sentence: "The commandment: *Thou shalt not lie* [...], if most sincerely adopted into philosophy, as a doctrine of wisdom, would alone be able, not only to procure eternal peace therein, but also to assure it for all time to come." (VNAEF AA 08: 422) Unfortunately, the duration of even an "eternal" peace, once established on earth, can be short.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. above Kant's possible answer to the German politician. "All practical principles of right must contain strict truth" (VRML AA 08: 430). Such a practical truth is as completely independent of all time as the mathematical truth of the Pythagorean theorem within the framework of Euclidean geometry; – of course, notabene, under the condition that they are indeed

and only in this – sense Kant can, on the one hand, say: “the state must be regarded as eternal”<sup>50</sup>, and, on the other hand, in view of a “golden age” (“goldenes Zeitalter”), i. e. in historical, not in juridical perspective, speak of an “everlasting” peace.<sup>51</sup> The *juridical* perspective, crucial to Kant's *philosophical* doctrine of peace, is particularly well expressed in a passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason*: “What brings the quarrel in the state of nature to an end is a *victory*, [...] although for the most part there follows only an uncertain peace [...]; but in the state of law [“gesetzlicher Zustand”] it is the *verdict*, which, since it strikes here at the *very source* of the controversies,<sup>52</sup> must grant an eternal peace.”<sup>53</sup>

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AA: “Denn es folgt daraus, daß ein Wesen Vernunft hat, gar nicht, daß **diese ein Vermögen enthalte**, die **Willkür** unbedingt **durch die bloße Vorstellung** der Qualifikation ihrer Maximen zur allgemeinen Gesetzgebung zu bestimmen und also für sich selbst praktisch zu sein: wenigstens so viel wir einsehen können. Das allvernünftigste Weltwesen könnte doch immer gewisser Triebfedern, die ihm von Objecten der Neigung herkommen, bedürfen, um seine Willkür zu bestimmen; **hiez**u aber die vernünftigste Überlegung, sowohl was die größte Summe der Triebfedern, als auch die Mittel, den **dadurch** bestimmten Zweck zu erreichen, betrifft, anwenden [...]”<sup>54</sup>

pmt: “For it does not at all follow from the fact that a being has reason, that **this reason contains a faculty** of determining the power of choice unconditionally **simply by virtue of representing** its maxims as being qualified for universal lawgiving [as qualifying as universal law], and hence to be practical on its own; at least, as far as we can see. The most rational being of this world might, after all, always need certain incentives, coming to him from objects of inclination, to determine his power of choice; **for this**, he might apply the most rational reflection, both as to the greatest sum **of the incentives** and as to the means for attaining the end determined through **that sum** [...]”

CE: “For from the fact that a being has reason does not at all follow that, **simply by virtue of representing** its maxims as suited to universal legislation, **this reason contains a faculty\*** of determining the power of choice unconditionally, and hence to be “practical” on its own; at least, not so far as we can see. The most rational being of this world might still need certain incentives, coming to him from the objects of inclina-

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truths. The German politician was obviously not able or not willing to cognize that there was no truth in his statement about Nazi public right.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. ZeF AA 08: 386.27–33.

<sup>50</sup> RL AA 06: 367 (m/tr).

<sup>51</sup> See MAM AA 08: 122; cf. also RL AA 06: 347.29; 06: 355.7f. (“lasting peace”) + 06: 355.30 (“eternal peace”); CE: “perpetual peace”).

<sup>52</sup> In the CE, this subordinate clause reads: “since it goes to the origin of the controversies themselves”. Kant himself says: “weil sie hier die Quelle der Streitigkeiten selbst trifft”. The “selbst” does not refer to “Streitigkeiten” (controversies themselves), as the CE erroneously assumes, but to “Quelle” (source itself). Unfortunately, the error of the CE leads to a disappearance of Kant's decisive point. For only by striking the very source of the controversies is it possible to grant an eternal peace; – as long as the state of law exists and fulfills its task.

<sup>53</sup> KrV A 751 f. / B 779 f. (partly m/tr; last emphasis mine).

<sup>54</sup> RGVA AA 06: 26 note.

tion, to determine his power of choice. He might apply the most rational reflection to **these objects\*\***) – about what concerns **their** greatest sum\*\*\*) as well as the means for attaining the goal determined through **them\*\*\*\***) – [...].”

\*) Kant doesn't say that reason contains a faculty (...) by virtue of representing (...). It is about determining the power of choice (...) by virtue of representing (...).

\*\*\*) “reflection” does not refer to “these objects”, but to “determine his power of choice”.

\*\*\*\*) “greatest sum” refers to “incentives”, not to “these objects”.

\*\*\*\*\*) “them” refers again to “these objects”, but Kant's “dadurch” refers to “the greatest sum of the incentives”.

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The CE version of Kant's *Religion within the boundaries of mere reason* says once “**in this world**”, where Kant says “**in a world**” (“in einer Welt”); and four times “**in this world**”, where Kant says “**in the world**” (“in der Welt”).

Two of these errors<sup>55</sup> are rather harmless, although there is no good reason to say “this” instead of “the”, if Kant hasn't done it himself. The other three errors are extremely serious.

1) AA: “der Satz: mache **das höchste in der Welt mögliche Gut** zu deinem Endzweck! ist ein synthetischer Satz *a priori* [...]”<sup>56</sup>

CE: “the proposition, “Make **the highest possible good in this world** your own final end,” is a synthetic proposition *a priori* [...]”

2) AA: “Da Gott dem Menschen keine Kraft verleihen kann, übernatürlich zu wirken (weil das ein Widerspruch ist); da der Mensch seinerseits nach den Begriffen, die er sich **von guten in der Welt möglichen Zwecken** macht, was hierüber die göttliche Weisheit urtheilt, nicht bestimmen und also vermittelst des in und von ihm selbst erzeugten Wunsches die göttliche Macht zu seinen Absichten nicht brauchen kann: so läßt sich eine Wundergabe, eine solche nämlich, da es am Menschen selbst liegt, ob er sie hat oder nicht hat [...], nach dem Buchstaben genommen, gar nicht denken.”<sup>57</sup>

CE: “Since God can lend a human being no power to produce effects supernaturally (since that is a contradiction); since, on his part, according to the concepts that he forms for himself **of the good ends possible in this world**, a human being cannot determine how divine wisdom judges in these matters and hence cannot, by means of the wish that he nurtures in and by himself, make use of the divine power for his purposes, it follows that a gift of miracles, specifically one which is up to the human being himself whether he has it or not [...], is not, taken literally, in any way to be thought of.”

3) AA: “Ein göttlicher gesetzgebender Wille aber gebietet entweder durch an sich bloß statutarische, oder durch rein moralische Gesetze. In Ansehung der letztern kann ein jeder aus sich selbst durch seine eigene Vernunft den Willen Gottes, der seiner Re-

<sup>55</sup> See RGV AA 06: 07.07; 06: 185.06 f.

<sup>56</sup> RGV AA 06: 07.

<sup>57</sup> RGV AA 06: 196.

ligion zum Grunde liegt, erkennen; denn eigentlich entspringt der Begriff von der Gottheit nur aus dem Bewußtsein dieser Gesetze und dem Vernunftbedürfnisse, eine Macht anzunehmen, welche diesen **den ganzen in einer Welt möglichen, zum sittlichen Endzweck zusammen-stimmenden Effect** verschaffen kann."<sup>58</sup>

CE: "Now a divine legislative will commands either through laws in themselves merely statutory or through purely moral laws. As regards the latter, each individual can recognize by himself, through his own reason, the will of God which lies at the basis of his religion; for the concept of the Divinity actually originates solely from the consciousness of these laws and from reason's need to assume a power capable of procuring for them **the full effect possible in this world in conformity with the moral final end.**"

These errors make the *Dialectic* of the second *Critique* simply obsolete, and that means: the doctrine of the highest good and the doctrine of the postulates and thus also Kant's theology.

When Kant speaks of the necessity to assume "the existence of a moral author of the world,"<sup>59</sup> then he is thinking of a nature as the "the sum-total of all that exists as determined by laws, the world (as nature properly so called) taken together with its supreme cause,"<sup>60</sup> which in its specific causality necessarily agrees with the causality from freedom. Kant has therefore just not the phenomenal nature, let alone the human nature, in mind. He merely presents the idea of a (another) world, in relation to which alone a realization of the highest good is conceivable at all. The "kingdom of God" or "realm of grace", to which the "ideal of the highest good" refers, presupposes in its concept "an impossibility of considering the kingdom of ends and the kingdom of nature as the same kingdom [...]: indeed, the very *antinomy* in the thought of the connection of virtue and happiness is the ground of this ideal [...] For this very reason it is only the object of a *myth*"<sup>61</sup> – and of hope.

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AA: "Aber nicht so in Rücksicht der Moralität, **die da aufhört, wo die Menschheit aufhört** [...]."<sup>62</sup>

pmt: "But this is not the case with morality, **which ends where humanity ends** [...]."

CE: "But this is not the case with morality, **which comes into being along with humanity** [...]."

No comment.

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AA: "Nicht, als ob nur unter der Voraussetzung beider [moralischer Weltherrscher und künftiges Leben] der allgemeine Pflichtbegriff allererst "Halt und Festigkeit", d.i.

<sup>58</sup> RGV AA 06: 104.

<sup>59</sup> KU AA 05: 455.

<sup>60</sup> ÜGTP AA 08: 159 (pmt). In the CE it says: "taking together the world (as nature properly so called) and its supreme cause".

<sup>61</sup> Reich, Klaus: Kant und die Ethik der Griechen, Tübingen 1935, 46 (m/it); see also KpV AA 05: 145.

<sup>62</sup> SF AA 07: 70.

einen sicheren Grund und die erforderliche Stärke einer *Triebfeder*, sondern damit er nur an jenem Ideal der reinen Vernunft auch ein *Object* bekomme.”<sup>63</sup>

pmt: “It is not as if the universal concept of duty first gets “support and stability” only on the presupposition of both [a moral ruler of the world and a future life], that is, gets a sure basis and the requisite strength of an *incentive*, but only **in order that** it gets in that ideal of pure reason also an *object*.”

CE: “It is not as if the universal concept of duty first gets “support and stability” only on the presupposition of both [a moral ruler of the world and a future life], that is, gets a sure basis and the requisite strength of an *incentive*, but **rather that** only in that ideal of pure reason does it also get an *object*.”

No comment.

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AA: “Nun *bedarf* die Vernunft, **ein solches abhängiges höchste Gut und zum Behuf desselben eine oberste Intelligenz als höchstes unabhängiges Gut anzunehmen**: zwar nicht um davon das verbindende Ansehen der moralischen **Gesetze**, oder die **Triebfeder** zu ihrer Beobachtung abzuleiten (denn sie würden keinen moralischen Werth haben, wenn ihr Bewegungsgrund von etwas anderem, als von dem Gesetz allein, das für sich apodiktisch gewiß ist, abgeleitet würde); sondern nur um dem Begriffe vom höchsten Gut objective Realität zu geben, d.i. zu verhindern, daß es **zusammt der ganzen Sittlichkeit** nicht bloß für ein bloßes Ideal gehalten werde, wenn dasjenige nirgend existirte, dessen Idee die Moralität unzertrennlich begleitet.”<sup>64</sup>

pmt: “Now reason *needs* to assume **such a dependent highest good and, for the sake of it, a supreme intelligence as the highest independent good**: not, of course, to derive from this assumption the binding authority of the moral **laws** or the **incentive** to observe them (for they would have no moral worth if their motive were derived from anything but the law alone, which is of itself apodictically certain), but rather only in order to give objective reality to the concept of the highest good, i. e. to prevent it, **along with the entire morality**, from being taken merely as a mere ideal, if that should not exist anywhere, the idea of which accompanies morality inseparably.”

CE: “Now reason *needs* to assume, **for the sake of such a dependent highest good, a supreme intelligence as the highest independent good**; not, of course, to derive from this assumption the binding authority of moral **precepts** or the **incentives** to observe them (for they would have no moral worth if their motive were derived from anything but the law alone, which is of itself apodictically certain), but rather only in order to give objective reality to the concept of the highest good, i. e. to prevent it, **along with morality**, from being taken merely as a mere ideal, as it would be if that whose idea inseparably accompanies morality should not exist anywhere.”

No comment.

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<sup>63</sup> TP AA 08: 279.

<sup>64</sup> WDO AA 08: 139.

AA: "Das ist der Begriff der **Freiheit und das** von **dieser** abstammende **Gesetz** des kategorischen, d. i. schlechthin gebietenden Imperativs."<sup>65</sup>

pmt: "That is the concept of **freedom and the law** that derives from **this freedom**, of the categorical, i. e., absolutely commanding, imperative

CE: "That is the concept of **freedom and of the law** that derives from **this**, of the categorical, i. e., absolutely commanding, imperative."

No comment.

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AA: "Um aber dieser **Überzeugung** [bezüglich der "Möglichkeit eines Systems aller Zwecke"] **Gewicht und Nachdruck auf mein Herz zu verschaffen**, bedarf ich eines Gottes, der nach eben diesen ewigen unveränderlichen Gesetzen, mich der Glückseligkeit theilhaftig mache, wenn ich auf diese Art ihrer würdig bin."<sup>66</sup>

pmt: "But in order **to give to this conviction** [with regard to the "possibility of a system of all ends"] **weight and emphasis on my heart**, I have need of a God."

The CE-translation turns Kant's text into the following nonsense:

CE: "But in order **to provide my heart with conviction, weight and emphasis**, I have need of a God".

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<sup>65</sup> VNAEF AA 08: 416.

<sup>66</sup> V-Th/Pölitz AA 28: 1117.

