

# The Kantian Copula

Ligerz, “The Nature of Existence”

Philipp Blum, November 9, 2017

In some works, though not in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant makes a distinction between two types of judgment, i.e. two ways in which a predicate and a subject concept can be mentally combined in an act of endorsement.

In contrast to judgments of experience (JE), judgments of perception do not require a pure concept of the understanding, but only the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject (*Prolegomena* §18). The step to the JE is that “beyond the perception is added the understanding’s concept of a cause, which connects *necessarily* the concept of sunshine with that of heat, and the synthetic judgment becomes necessarily universally valid, hence objective, and changes from a perception into experience” (§20, fn.). In the *Mrongovius Metaphysik* (early 1780s), Kant says that for a judgment to have more than subjective validity, the sequence of perceptions [expressed by it, PB] “must be determined according to rules, i.e., be necessary”, and this in turn means it must be necessitated by being grounded in how the world objectively is (AA 29: 815-16).

Not all pairs of concepts can be combined in both types of judgments: “body” and “heavy” can be combined both in a JE, “the body is heavy”, and in a JP, “when I carry the body, I feel it to be heavy [einen Druck der Schwere]”, but “sugar” and “sweet” only get together in a JP, “the sugar is sweet”. It is thus clear that Kant did not have a syntactic difference in mind. Though the details are murky, the crucial difference seems to lie in the claim to validity: judgments claiming objective validity are JE, judgments claiming only ‘subjective’ validity are JP. But what could subjective validity be?

Are judgments of perception merely problematic?

Are judgments of perception synthetic existence judgements?

The question of parallelism:

- “...the same function which gives unity to the various ideas in a judgement also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various ideas in an intuition” (A79-80/B105-106)
- “Imagination is intuition even without presence of the object, and the object is then called a phantasm, which can be a production (invention) or reproduction (recollection) of an intuition that was had previously.” (R6315, 18:618)
- Can we predicate of intuitions? “Da keine Vorstellung unmittelbar auf den Gegenstand geht, als blos die Anschauung, so wird ein Begriff niemals auf einen Gegenstand unmittelbar, sondern auf irgend eine andre Vorstellung von demselben (sie sei Anschauung oder selbst schon Begriff) bezogen. Das Urtheil ist also die mittelbare Erkenntniß eines Gegenstandes, mithin die Vorstellung einer Vorstellung desselben. In jedem Urtheil ist ein Begriff, der für viele gilt und unter diesem Vielen auch eine gegebene Vorstellung begreift, welche letztere dann auf den Gegenstand unmittelbar bezogen wird.” (A59/B93)
- “We know any object only through predicates that we can say or think of it. Prior to that, whatever representations are found in us are to be counted only as materials for cognition but not as cognition. Hence an object is only a something in general that we think through certain predicates that constitute its concept. In every judgment, accordingly, there are two predicates that we compare with one another, of which one, which comprises the given cognition of the object, is the logical subject, and the other, which is to be compared with the first, is called the logical predicate.” (R4634, dated to 1772 to 1773)