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**Alberto Vanzo**

***Kant on Truth-Aptness***

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**Abstract**

Many scholars claimed that, according to Immanuel Kant, some judgements lack a truth-value: analytic judgements, judgements about items of which humans cannot have experience, judgements of perception, and non-assertoric judgements. However, no one has undertaken an extensive examination of the textual evidence for those claims.

Based on an analysis of Kant's texts, I argue that:

- according to Kant, only judgements of perception are not truth-apt. All other judgements are truth-apt, including analytic judgements and judgements about items of which humans cannot have experience.
- Kant sometimes states that truth-apt judgements are actual bearers of truth or falsity only when they are taken to state what is actually the case. Kant calls these judgements assertoric. Other texts ascribe truth and falsity to judgements, regardless of whether they are assertoric.

Kant's views on truth-aptness raise challenges for correspondentist and coherentist interpretations of Kant's theory of truth; they rule out the identification of Kant's crucial notion of objective validity with truth-aptness; and they imply that Kant was not a verificationist about truth or meaning.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Many scholars claimed that, according to Immanuel Kant, some judgements lack a truth-value: analytic judgements (*Sentrout 1911*, pp. 132–134; *Steinbüchel 1913*, p. 401; *Heckmann 1981*, pp. 45–47),<sup>2</sup> judgements about items of which humans cannot have experience (*Prauss 1969*, pp. 180–182, 1971, pp. 86–90; *Wettstein 1980*, e.g. pp. 18, 62; *Heckmann 1981*, pp. 43–44; *Rohden 1988*, p. 87; *Ertl 1998*, p. 77 n. 99; *Hanna 2000*, p.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Critique of Pure Reason* is cited with the page numbers of the first edition of 1781 ('A') and of the second edition of 1787 ('B'). Other writings by Kant are cited with the abbreviation of the title, the volume number of the Academy edition (*Kant 1902–* ), the page number, and, eventually, subscripted line numbers. Citations from *Reflexionen* also indicate each *Reflexion*'s number and the dating established by Adickes. The *Logik Bauch* is not included in the Academy Edition. It is cited with the abbreviation of the title, followed by the page number and, eventually, the line number of *Kant 1998*. The following abbreviations have been used:

*E*        *Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll*

*F*        *Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnizens und Wolfs Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat?*

*JL*       *Immanuel Kant's Logik: Ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen ('Jäsche Logic')*

*KpV*     *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*

*KU*       *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*

*LBa*     *Logik Bauch*

*LBu*     *Logik Busolt*

*LD*       *Logik Dohna*

*LPh*     *Logik Philippi*

*LPö*     *Logik Pölitz*

*MA*       *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*

*ML<sub>1</sub>*     *Metaphysik L<sub>1</sub>*

*ML<sub>2</sub>*     *Metaphysik L<sub>2</sub>*

*P*        *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*

*PE*       *Vorlesung philosophische Enzyklopädie*

*R*        *Reflexionen from Kants Handschriftlicher Nachlaß*

Translations from those of Kant's writings that have been translated into English are from the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. All other translations are my own. The following datings are assumed for the lectures on which the lecture transcripts are based. *LD*, *LPö*, and *ML<sub>2</sub>* are based on lectures given from the early 1780s onwards. *LPh*, *ML<sub>1</sub>*, and *LBa* are based on lectures given in the 1770s, with the exception of the marginalia of *LBa*. They are not referred to in this essay. *PE* is based on lectures given between 1777 and 1782. The dating of the lectures on which *LBu* is based is controversial.

<sup>2</sup> See *Bell 2001*, p. 16, for a variation on Kantian themes along similar lines.

230, 2010, §1.3; *Svensen 2001*, pp. 848–849; *Barth 2004*, pp. 162, 170–173, 193; *Höffe 2004*, pp. 60, 118),<sup>3</sup> judgements of perception (*Savile 1974*; *Schulz 1993*, p. 146), and non-assertoric judgements (*Capozzi 2001*, p. 448; *Hanna 2000*, p. 230; *Underwood 2003*, p. 5). However, no one has undertaken an extensive examination of the textual evidence for the claim that Kant admits truth-valueless judgements.

Whether Kant admits truth-valueless judgements bears on a number of issues: the disputed question of what theory of truth Kant endorsed,<sup>4</sup> the interpretation of his notions of analyticity and objective validity, and the plausibility of the interpretation of Kant as a verificationist about truth (*Putnam 1981*, pp. 54–74; *Posy 1986*, pp. 20, 24, 26, 30, 2000, pp. 161–171) or meaning (*Strawson 1966*, p. 16; *Bennett 1966*, pp. 22, 24, 1974, p. 27; *Stroud 1984*, p. 161).

Unlike some of the authors who regard Kant as a verificationist, I will not discuss whether he *should have* admitted the existence of truth-valueless judgements. I will not be concerned with whether present-day Kantians should admit the existence of truth-valueless judgements either. I will only focus on whether, based on Kant's texts, we have good reason to believe that Kant regarded any kind of judgements as lacking a truth-value. I will only consider Kant's views during the Critical period, understood in a narrow sense, as the period starting with the publication of the first *Critique* in 1781 and

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<sup>3</sup> *Healy 1988*, p. 270, endorses this view for judgements about objects; *Höffe 1976*, pp. 319–321, for synthetic truths. For closely related claims, see *Cramer 1982*, p. 25; *Cicovacki 1995*, p. 202. Some of these authors refer to judgements about items of which humans cannot have experience as judgements lacking objective validity. Others refer to them as judgements which do not conform to the laws of transcendental logic. I will comment on the notion of objective validity in §3.1. Prauss makes an exception for judgements of perception: they are true whenever one utters them sincerely (*1971*, pp. 198–253).

<sup>4</sup> Candidates include: correspondence theories (e.g. *Schulz 1993*; *Barth 2004*, pp. 107–195), coherence theories (e.g. *Mohanty 2000*; *Mensch 2004*), verificationist theories (e.g. *Posy 1986*, 2000), and pluralist theories (e.g. *Svensen 2001*; *Höffe 2004*, pp. 158–164).

ending with Kant's death in 1804.

I will argue for the following claims:

- According to Kant, judgements of perceptions are not truth-apt (that is, they are not possibly true or false). All other judgements are truth-apt. These include analytic judgements, as well as judgements on items of which humans cannot have experience (in Kant's terms, judgements lacking objective validity).
- Kant sometimes states that truth-apt judgements are actual bearers of truth or falsity only when they are taken to state what is actually the case. Kant calls these judgements assertoric judgements [*Sätze* or *assertorische Urtheile*], as opposed to merely problematic judgements (A74/B100; *ML*<sub>2</sub>, 28:554<sub>5-11</sub>; *LBu*, 24:662<sub>18-26</sub>; *LJ*, 9:108<sub>19-20</sub>).<sup>5</sup> Other texts ascribe truth and falsity to judgements, regardless of whether they are assertoric or problematic.

I will start by arguing that Kant regarded analytic judgements as truth-apt (§2). I will then focus on judgements lacking objective validity (§3), judgements of perception (§4), and assertoric judgements (§5).

I follow Kant (A294/B350; *LPö*, 24:527<sub>12</sub>) in calling truth-bearers judgements. Another term that Kant employs to designate truth-bearers is 'cognition' (A58/B83). I will not discuss in detail the nature of Kantian truth-bearers. This is a complex issue which would require a paper on its own. However, §3.1 provides some explanations on Kant's notion of judgement. Small caps are used for concepts and judgements, quotation marks for sentences. Thus,

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<sup>5</sup> Kant does not use the term "Satz" to refer to the semantic content associated with a judgement (*pace Hanna 2010*, §1.2), but to refer to an assertoric judgement. Kant sometimes uses "Satz" in a loose sense as a synonym of "judgement". To avoid misunderstandings, I will not follow the standard translation "Satz" as "proposition". I will translate "Satz" as "assertoric judgement" or (when it is used as a synonym of "Urtheil") as "judgement".

CROCODILE

refers to a concept,

ALL CROCODILES ARE HAPPY

refers to a judgement, and

‘all crocodiles are happy’

refers to a sentence.

## **2. Are only synthetic judgements truth-apt?**

Interpreters advanced two arguments in support of the claim that analytic judgements are not truth-apt for Kant. The first argument applies to judgements of the subject-predicate form. It goes as follows. Only judgements about objects are true or false for Kant. Analytic judgements are not about objects, but about their subject concept (*Shaffer 1962*, pp. 310, 312–313; *Gram 1980*, p. 179). Therefore, analytic judgements are not true or false for Kant (*Sentrout 1911*, pp. 132–134; *Steinbüchel 1913*, p. 401).

The second argument goes as follows. Kant discusses two types of truth (and falsity): empirical truth and transcendental truth. Analytic judgements cannot be empirically true (or false): if they were true at all, their truth would be independent from experience. Analytic judgements cannot be transcendently true either. This is because the judgements that are transcendently true are those that state Kant’s conditions for the possibility of experience. Those judgements are not analytic, but synthetic a priori. Since analytic judgements can be neither empirically true (or false), nor transcendently true, they cannot be at all true or false for Kant (*Heckmann 1981*, pp. 43–47).

A passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason* proves the conclusion of both arguments false, because it mentions true analytic judgements:

[1] one can also make a positive use of [the principle of contradiction], i.e., not merely to ban falsehood and error (insofar as it rests on contradiction), but also *to cognize truth*. For, *if the judgement is analytic*, whether it be negative or affirmative, *its truth* must always be able to be cognized sufficiently in accordance with the principle of contradiction. For the contrary of that which as a concept already lies and is thought in the cognition of the object is always correctly denied, while the concept itself must necessarily be affirmed of it, since its opposite would contradict the object.

Hence we must allow the *principle of contradiction* to count as the universal and completely sufficient *principle of all analytic cognition*; but its authority and usefulness does not extend beyond this, *as a sufficient criterion of truth*. (A151/B190–191, italics added)

Additionally, a passage from Kant's work against Eberhard ascribes truth to analytic judgements: '[o]f an assertoric judgement I can very well say that it has the reason (the logical reason) for its truth in itself; since the concept of the subject is something other than that of the predicate, and can contain the reason thereof' (*E*, 8:198, trans. modified).

In the same work, Kant ascribes truth to an analytic judgement:

[2] That all bodies are extended is necessarily and eternally true whether they exist now or not, and whether that existence is brief or lengthy, or goes on throughout all time, i.e., eternally. The judgement [*Satz*] says only: these truths do not depend upon experience (which must occur at one time or another), and are therefore not limited by temporal conditions, i.e., they are cognizable as truths *a priori*, which is completely identical with the proposition: they are cognizable as necessary truths. (*E*, 8:235, trans. modified)

Kant provides an example of a false analytic judgement in personal note (*Reflexion*) from 1792–1794: 'if one says: a body in quiet is in motion, then that means: it is in motion, in so far as I think of it as being in quiet, and the judgement would be

analytic and false' (*R* 6327, 18:648, *pace Brittan 1974*, p. 96).

If analytic judgements can be true or false, the two arguments spelled out above must be unsound. The first argument is unsound because its second premise is false: for Kant, analytic judgements are not typically about concepts, but about objects (*Cramer 1998*, p. 67; *Allison 2004*, p. 91). For instance, the analytic judgement ALL BODIES ARE DIVISIBLE is about the objects which fall under the concept of body, rather than being about the concept of body:

[3] Judgement is therefore the mediate cognition *of an object*, hence the representation of a representation of it. In every judgement there is a concept that holds of many, and that among this many also comprehends a given representation, which is then related immediately *to the object*. So in the judgement, e.g., 'All bodies are divisible,' the concept of the divisible is related to various other concepts; among these, however, it is here particularly related to the concept of body, *and this in turn is related to certain appearances that come before us. These objects* are therefore mediately represented by the concept of divisibility. All judgements are accordingly functions of unity among our representations, since instead of an immediate representation a higher one, which comprehends this and other representations under itself, is used for the cognition *of the object*, and many possible cognitions are thereby drawn together into one.<sup>6</sup>

The second argument starts with a correct remark: Kant never employs expressions such as 'analytic truth' or 'analytically true'. However, this does not imply that Kant does not ascribe truth-values to analytic judgements. The upholders of the second argument may be right in suggesting that Kant's philosophical framework only allows for the ascription of truth-values to empirical judgements (empirical truth) and to judgements describing the non-empirical conditions for experience (transcendental

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<sup>6</sup> A68–69/B93–94 (*italics modified*). In *Reflexionen* from the 1760s and 1770s, Kant analyses the judgement ALL BODIES ARE DIVISIBLE as follows: 'to every  $x$  to which the concept of body ( $a+b$ ) belongs, belongs also extension ( $b$ )' (*R* 3127, 16:671, on which *JL*, 9:607, is based; see *R* 4634, 16:616<sub>28</sub>–617<sub>1</sub>). On this account, ALL BODIES ARE DIVISIBLE is about the objects (' $x$ ') which fall under the concept of body.



truth). However, this only means that Kant should not have ascribed truth-values to analytic judgements. It does not follow that he did not ascribe truth-values to them. The above quotations show that, as a matter of fact, Kant did ascribe truth-values to analytic judgements. Analytic judgements are truth-apt for Kant.

### 3. Are only objectively valid judgements truth-apt?

Many scholars hold that only judgements about objects that humans can experience are truth-apt for Kant. They often make this claim by stating that only *objectively valid* judgements are truth-apt. Kant uses the expression ‘objective validity’ ambiguously and he sometimes regards objective validity as a feature of all judgements. Therefore, before assessing whether only objectively valid judgements are truth-apt, it is necessary to explain the notion of objective validity and its relation with Kant’s notion of judgement.

#### 3.1. Judgements and objective validity

Kant’s Critical texts often state a traditional definition of judgement. They state that a judgement is the conscious representation of a relation between concepts (*R* 3049 [ca. 1776–1789], 16:632; *LPö*, 24:567<sub>36</sub>, 577<sub>5–6,10–11</sub>) or representations (*LD*, 24:763<sub>25–30</sub>; *LBu*, 24:662<sub>30–34</sub>).<sup>7</sup> Consider for instance the sentence ‘all crocodiles are happy’. The terms ‘crocodiles’ and ‘happy’ express the concepts CROCODILE and HAPPINESS. According to Kant’s definition, the judgement ALL CROCODILES ARE HAPPY expresses a mental

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<sup>7</sup> Kant calls judgements ‘relations’, without specifying what the relata are, in B410. A similar definition is: a judgement is the conscious representation of the *unity* of certain representations (*P*, 4:304<sub>30–31</sub>; *F*, 20:271<sub>35–37</sub>; *R* 3050 [ca. 1776–1789], 16:632; *R* 3060 [1790–1804], 16:635; *LD*, 24:762<sub>34</sub>; *JL*, 9:101). Here Kant is using ‘unity’ in a very broad sense, as a synonym of ‘relation’. Kant writes that judgements can be united as cause or consequence (in hypothetical judgements), or as members of the subdivision of a higher concept (in judgements like ‘every number is odd or even’: *R* 3060 [1790–1804], 16:635).

representation of a certain relation between the concepts CROCODILE and HAPPINESS. For Kant, however, judgements are not typically about concepts, but about objects. For instance, the judgement ALL BODIES ARE DIVISIBLE relates the concepts BODY and DIVISIBLE. Yet passage [3] states that this judgement is about bodies, and not about the concept BODY. Accordingly, we can say that judgements are mental representations of the relations in which we place concepts in order to convey information about the objects that fall within the extension of those concepts. When we utter the sentence ‘all crocodiles are happy’, we relate the concepts CROCODILE and HAPPINESS in order to form a mental representation (a judgement) that is the speaker’s meaning of that sentence.<sup>8</sup>

A famous passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason* criticizes the traditional definition of judgement and introduces a new definition:

[4] I have never been able to satisfy myself with the definition [*Erklärung*] that the logicians give of a judgement in general: it is, they say, the representation of a relation between two concepts. Without quarrelling here about what is mistaken in this explanation, that in any case it fits only *categorical* but not hypothetical and disjunctive judgements (which latter two do not contain a relation of concepts but of judgements themselves) [...], I remark only that it is not here determined wherein this *relation* consists.

If, however, I investigate more closely the relation of given cognitions in every judgement, and distinguish that relation, as something belonging to the understanding, from the relation in accordance with laws of the reproductive imagination (which has only subjective validity), then I find that a judgement is nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the *objective* unity of apperception. [...] Only in this way does there arise from this relation [of given representations] a *judgement*, i.e., a relation that is *objectively valid*, and that is sufficiently distinguished from the relation of these same representations in which there would be only subjective validity, e.g., in accordance with laws of association. (B140–141, trans. modified).

This passage distinguishes ways of bringing ‘given cognitions to the *objective* unity

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<sup>8</sup> For the distinction between literal meaning and speaker’s meaning, see *Grice 1989a, 1989c*.

of apperception' from relations between representations 'in which there would be only subjective validity'. The former are judgements and Kant regards them as objectively valid. The latter are not judgements and are only subjectively valid. To understand these claims, we must turn to the notion of objective validity.

Kant employs the expressions 'objective validity' and 'objectively valid' with reference to judgements, concepts (Bxxxvi n., A239/B298), the intuitions of space and time (A28/B44; A156/B195), and even a 'represented event' (A788/B816, trans. modified). When he uses 'objective validity' and 'objectively valid' with reference to judgements, he sometimes uses them as synonyms of 'objective truth' and 'objectively true'. A judgement will be objectively valid in this sense if it is about objects and true (A125; *P*, 4:298, 300). If Kant uses 'objectively valid' in this sense in passage [4], he is introducing a narrow, honorific meaning of 'judgement', according to which only true judgements about objects should be properly called 'judgements'.<sup>9</sup>

Passage [4] states that judgements are ways of bringing 'given cognitions to the *objective* unity of apperception' (B141). According to Kant, we are given cognitions only through the senses. Therefore, on this interpretation of 'objective validity', objectively valid judgements will be true judgements about objects on which we can have information based on sensory perceptions. Kant calls those objects 'phenomena' [*Phänomena*], 'appearances' [*Erscheinungen*], and 'objects of possible experience'. Judgements about items of which we cannot have sensory perceptions, such as God and the soul, are not objectively valid in this sense.<sup>10</sup> Given Kant's new definition of

<sup>9</sup> See the discussion between Ralf Bader and Andrew Roche in the comments section of *Bader 2006*.

<sup>10</sup> The *Critique of Pure Reason* lays out a set of conditions that judgements must satisfy to be true of objects of possible experience. They cannot represent atemporal objects, or objects which are not extended in an Euclidean space, or are not aggregates of parts, or without qualitative properties which can vary by degree, or whose changes do not follow the causal law, or which do

judgement, they should not be called judgements in the first place.

Some interpreters hold that a broader notion of objective validity can be found in Kant's texts (A125; B137; A202/B247; *KpV*, 5:12–13). A judgement is objectively valid in this broader sense if and only if it is about objects of possible experience, regardless of whether it is true or false.<sup>11</sup> In what follows, I shall use 'objective validity' in the broader sense, because this is the sense that scholars employ when they claim that, for Kant, only objectively valid judgements are truth-apt.

Before assessing their claim, it is worth pointing out that Kant's new definition of judgement does not completely replace the traditional notion of judgement as a relation between concepts or representations. Kant uses the term 'judgement' in connection with sentences such as 'God is omnipotent' (A595/B623) and 'the world is either infinite or finite' (A504/B532). However, God and the world are not objects of possible experience. Hence, Kant needs a broad definition of judgement to account for the fact that he regards items such as GOD IS OMNIPOTENT as judgements. The new definition is too narrow for this aim. The old definition of judgement is sufficiently broad for Kant's purposes. It is not surprising, then, that one can find the new as well as the old definition of judgement in Kant's Critical writings.

### 3.2. *Objective validity and truth-aptness*

The claim that only objectively valid judgements are truth-apt is incompatible with three sets of Kantian texts.

First, the sentences '[t]he world has a beginning in time, and in space it is also

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not have interactions with any other simultaneously existing object.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. *Prauss 1971*. Other scholars regard only true judgements as objectively valid: e.g. *Sentrout 1911*; *Steinbüchel 1913*; *Fleischer 1984*, pp. 89, 91; *contra: Hanna 2000*, pp. 230–231; *Savile 2005*, pp. 51, 87, 135.

enclosed in boundaries’, and ‘[t]he world has no beginning and no bounds in space, but is infinite with regard to both time and space’ (A426–427/B454–555) do not express objectively valid judgements. This is because the world is not an object of possible experience (A334–336/B391–393). Yet according to Kant, those judgements have a truth-value. They are both false (A504–505/B533–534, A520/B548, A531/B559; *P*, 4:341–343; as noted in *Stuhlmann-Laeisz 1976*, p. 30, and *Mohanty 2000*, p. 344).

Second, the judgement A HIGHEST ARCHITECT OF THE WORLD EXISTS is not objectively valid because a highest architect of the world is not an object of possible experience. However, Kant does not think that this judgement is truth-valueless. He thinks that this judgement is true, but unprovable. The following passage is hardly compatible with the claim that A HIGHEST ARCHITECT OF THE WORLD EXISTS is not true: ‘if one asks [...] whether there is anything different from the world which contains the ground of the world order and its connection according to universal laws, then the answer is: *Without a doubt.*’<sup>12</sup>

Third, if only objectively valid judgements were truth-apt, Kant’s conditions of truth for analytic judgements should be modified. Kant holds that an affirmative analytic judgement of the subject-predicate form is true if and only if its predicate term expresses a constituent concept of the concept expressed by the subject (A6/B10; A151/B190; *E*, 8:228–230, 232<sub>21–23</sub>; *P*, 4:267<sub>10</sub>). For instance, BACHELORS ARE

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<sup>12</sup> A695–696/B723–724; see *Roche 2010*, pp. 679–680. To oppose this conclusion, one could emphasize the passages in which Kant is more cautious on this point. *Walsh 1975*, pp. 238–240, does this, quoting A817/B847, *KpV*, 5:134, 135, and *KU*, 5:143. Yet even Walsh, asking if Kant’s pronouncement that there really is a God is intended to convey a truth, admits: ‘There can be no doubt that Kant’s official answer is “yes”’ (p. 238); but see *Rauscher 2007*. On Kant’s distinction between a highest architect of the world and a creator of the world, see A627/B655.

UNMARRIED is true because the concept of unmarried is a constituent of the concept of bachelor. Every analytic judgement is true if and only if its negation violates the law of contradiction (A151/B190–191). If only objectively valid judgements were truth-apt, Kant should make statements along the following lines:

- an analytic judgement is true if and only if its negation violates the law of contradiction *and it is objectively valid*;
- an affirmative analytic judgement of the subject-predicate form is true if and only if its predicate term expresses a constituent concept of the concept expressed by the subject *and it is objectively valid*.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> These are the conditions of truth that Kant ascribes to analytic judgements and tautologies according to Gordon Brittan. He backs his interpretation with the following arguments. (1) It ‘certainly accords with Kant’s characterization of analytic propositions generally as “empty” and “merely formal”’ (Brittan 1974, p. 96). (2) Brittan’s interpretation of analytic judgements ‘is suggested by such passages as the following at B16 of the first *Critique*’: the analytic propositions present in geometry ‘only serve, as identical propositions, for the chain of method and not as principles [...] and yet even these, although they are valid in accordance with mere concepts, are admitted in mathematics only because they can be exhibited in intuition’ (ibid.; see 1978, pp. 62–63). (3) Kant writes: ‘[i]f I cancel the predicate in an identical judgement and keep the subject, then a contradiction arises; hence I say that the former necessarily pertains to the latter. But if I cancel the subject together with the predicate, then no contradiction arises; for there is no longer anything that could be contradicted. To posit a triangle and cancel its three angles is contradictory; but to cancel the triangle together with its three angles is not a contradiction’ (A594/B622). For Brittan (1978, p. 63), Kant is saying that, ‘if a triangle is not posited, then no judgement about “it” is either true or false’. (4) Brittan’s interpretation is in line with Kant’s statement (e.g. in A155/B194) that non objectively valid judgements are without objective truth-values and even meaningless (1978, pp. 64–66; see Guyer 2002, p. 27; I do not discuss Brittan’s further remark on mathematical truth). Against the first argument, Kant’s works post-1780 never state that analytic judgements as such are empty. Kant calls only tautologies empty, but he does not mean that tautologies are meaningless. Tautologies ‘are empty *virtualiter*, or *empty of consequences*, for they are without value or use. [...] Judgements that are empty of consequences must be distinguished from ones that are *empty of sense*, which are empty in meaning [*leer an Verstand*]’ (JL, 9:111, trans. modified; see A709/B737; WL, 24:937). As far as I know, Kant does not write that analytic judgements as such are merely formal either. He writes that logic and its laws are merely formal, but this does not imply that logical laws have no truth-value. Brittan’s second argument is not compelling for the following reason. Mathematical judgements must have intuitive content because mathematics studies objects which can be constructed a priori in pure intuition. A judgement which does not have intuitive content will not belong to mathematics, but it may have a truth-value nevertheless. This is the case for the

However, Kant never includes objective validity among the conditions of truth for analytic judgements. For instance, expanding on passage [1], Kant claims that conformity to the law of contradiction is sufficient to guarantee the truth of *every* analytic judgement (A151/B191), thus including the analytic judgements that are not objectively valid. Moreover, GOD IS AN ETERNAL, ATEMPORAL BEING is a true analytic judgement (A641/B669; *KpV*, 5:123), yet it lacks objective validity.

One might object that non objectively valid analytic judgements, like non objectively valid analytic tautologies (e.g., GOD IS GOD), are only ‘miserable’ truths.<sup>14</sup> They do not convey information on objects located in space and time. They do not extend our knowledge of the spatio-temporal world we live in. They only have thin or non-experiential truth and meaning. Yet Kant was interested in judgements endowed with thick or experiential truth and meaning. Only the latter was authentic truth for Kant. Although non objectively valid analytic judgements and tautologies are truth-apt in the thin sense of the term, they lack the thick, experiential, authentic truth-aptness that Kant was mainly interested in.

This objection correctly highlights the main focus of Kant’s concerns. It also raises the question as to whether Kant was operating with multiple notions or kinds of truth. Even if this were the case, non objectively valid analytic truths and tautologies would still be truths. Although Kant was mainly interested in judgements that are truth-apt in the thick sense, he still ascribed truth to some miserable or non-experiential analytic judgements that lack objective validity. He did not equate truth as such with thick or

judgements about a highest architect of the world and the world discussed above. Brittan’s third argument rests on a unconvincing interpretation of Kant’s text. Kant only states that one will not contradict oneself, if one denies the existence of a triangle and the existence of its three angles alike. Against Brittan’s fourth argument, see my explanation of the sense in which non objectively valid judgements are meaningless in §3.3.

<sup>14</sup> Kant uses the terms ‘miserable’ and ‘mere’ to refer to tautologies, for instance in A597/B625.

experiential truth. Accordingly, he did not equate objective validity with truth-aptness.

### 3.3. *Objective Validity and Meaning*

We have seen that Kant ascribes truth-values to several judgements lacking objective validity. Why, then, did scholars hold that judgements lacking objective validity are not truth-apt? The following passages have been quoted in support of that claim:

[5] [The synthetic principles of pure understanding] are not only true a priori but are rather even *the source of all truth*, i.e., of the agreement of our cognition with objects, in virtue of containing the ground of the possibility of experience, as the sum total of all cognition in which objects may be given to us [...] (A237/B296, italics modified; see A146/B185)

[6] [...] outside of [the conditions of all possible experience] no document of truth is ever to be encountered [...] (A750–751/B778–779)

[7] The part of transcendental logic [...] that expounds the elements of the pure cognition of the understanding and the principles without which no object can be thought at all, is the transcendental analytic, and at the same time a logic of truth. For *no cognition can contradict it without at the same time losing all content, i.e., all relation to any object, hence all truth*. (A62/B87, italics added)

Passages [5] and [6] refer to judgements which do not conform to the synthetic principles of pure understanding. According to Kant, those principles state conditions that a judgement must satisfy in order to be true of objects of possible experience. Judgements which do not satisfy those conditions are not about objects of possible experience (they are not objectively valid), or they are false of those objects.

However, passages [5] and [6] only imply that judgements lacking objective validity are not true. They neither claim nor imply that those judgements lack a truth-value. They are compatible with the view that those judgements are false, and



hence truth-apt.

If we take Kant's conditions of truth for analytic judgements seriously, we should hold that [5] and [6] only apply to synthetic judgements. This is because Kant ascribes truth-values to analytic judgements, regardless of whether they are objectively valid. If this is so, then the phrase 'all truth' in [5] is misleading.

Alternatively, one might want to take the phrase 'all truth' seriously and modify Kant's conditions of truth for analytic judgements. One could still regard analytic judgements which lack objective validity as false, rather than truth-valueless.

On the face of it, passage [7] is more problematic than [5] and [6]. It states that cognitions which do not conform to the laws of the Transcendental Analytic do not have any content. Gerold Prauss (1969, p. 182) and Gordon Brittan (1978, pp. 64–65) take this to mean that cognitions which do not conform to the laws of the Transcendental Analytic have no *meaning*. Judgements without meaning can be neither true, nor false.

Other texts appear to support this interpretation. They state that judgements without objective validity are empty (A62/B87) and they lack sense [*Sinn*] and significance [*Bedeutung*]:<sup>15</sup>

[8] If a cognition is [...] to have significance and sense in that object, the object must be able to be given in some way. [...] To give an object, if this is not again meant only mediately, but it is rather to be exhibited immediately in intuition, is nothing other than to relate its representation to experience (whether this be actual or still possible). (A155–156/B194–195; see *MA*, 4:478)

Passages like this explain why many scholars were convinced that judgements lacking objective validity also lack a truth-value. It is because, in their view, they have no

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<sup>15</sup> Kant often uses 'sense' and 'significance' together, in the expression 'Sinn und Bedeutung' (e.g. A84/B116, B149). Roche (2010, p. 669) suggests that, for Kant, these two terms pick up the same property.

meaning. This limitation on the meaningfulness of judgements appears to be in line with Kant's aim in writing the first *Critique*: to restrict the domain of knowledge to objects of possible experience (Bxxvi n., B146, A146/B185), in order to make space for faith in what exceeds those limits: God's existence, human freedom, and the immortality of the soul (Bxxx).

If this interpretation is correct, then – one might argue – the texts which ascribe truth-values to judgements about God or the world should not be taken too seriously. They only show that Kant violated those very limits on our knowledge that he drew so forcefully. This should not be surprising, given the magnitude of Kant's philosophical revolution. Many philosophers, starting from Kant's early readers, held that he only initiated that revolution, but he did not draw all of its wide-ranging consequences.

However, if judgements lacking objective validity were utterly meaningless, long sections of the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and of the Dialectic of the *Critique of Practical Reason* would not be intelligible. Those sections discuss judgements which lack objective validity, like GOD EXISTS, THE SOUL IS SPIRITUAL, and THE WORLD HAS A BEGINNING IN TIME. Kant takes some of those judgements to be the object of faith, but 'there is hardly room for faith in what is demonstrably lacking in sense' (*Van Cleve 1999*, p. 69). Hence, declaring judgements without objective validity meaningless would hardly help Kant's cause. It would undermine the possibility of rational faith in view of which Kant limited our knowledge claims.

Kant denies that we can have knowledge of God or the soul. At the same time, he acknowledges that the domain of thought is broader than that of knowledge. Every mental representation that does not entail a contradiction is a legitimate object of

thought (Bxxxvi n.; *E*, 8:195<sub>6-7</sub>). As a consequence, many judgements about God and the soul are legitimate objects of thought, and therefore they must be meaningful (*Walker 1983*, p. 159; *Hanna 2010*, §1.3).

This prompts us to favour an alternative interpretation of Kant's statements that judgements lacking objective validity have no sense and significance. I suggest that Kant is referring to *empirical* sense or significance.<sup>16</sup> If a judgement lacks empirical significance, it represents states of affairs of which we cannot have sensory perceptions and we cannot establish its truth-value on the basis of sensory perceptions.

This does not imply that judgements lacking empirical significance are utterly meaningless. It does not imply that they lack a truth-value either. States of affairs belonging to the noumenal world and inaccessible to human perception may determine the truth or falsity of synthetic judgements which lack objective validity, like GOD EXISTS. Analytic judgements which lack objective validity, like GOD IS OMNIPOTENT, may be true in virtue of the relations between the concepts which compose them and of the fact that their negation entails a contradiction.<sup>17</sup>

I am not denying, nor do I claim, that Kant's admission of the existence of judgements which are truth-apt, but not objectively valid, is coherent with all the presuppositions and the general orientation of transcendental idealism. The view that

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<sup>16</sup> See *Hanna 2010*, §1.3. Kant also employs the notion of empirical significance in A696/B724, where he declares certain theological questions meaningless (*contra Underwood 2003*, p. 54). On the sense and significance of concepts, see *Roche 2010*.

<sup>17</sup> *Brittan 1974* and *Loparic 2000*, pp. 114–118, take Kant's principle '*non entis nulla sunt praedicata*' (A793/B821) to mean: no predicate can be truly ascribed to that which is not an object of experience. I take the expression '*non entis*' to refer to what Kant calls '*nihil negativum*' (e.g. in A291/B348). On this reading, Kant's principle means: no predicate can be truly ascribed to those impossible 'objects' which have contradictory properties at the same time and under the same respect (*P*, 4:341<sub>1-11</sub>). According to *Wolff 1995*, p. 292, that principle implies that every judgement about nonexistent objects is false. This clashes with Kant's account of analytic truth.

Kant *should* have endorsed may be that only objectively valid judgements are truth-apt. However, the above discussion shows that, on the view that Kant actually endorsed, objectively valid judgements are not the only truth-apt judgements.

#### 4. Are judgements of perception truth-apt?

The claim that, for Kant, judgements of perception are not truth-apt is correct. The account of judgements of perception in the *Prolegomena* supports it, although some interpretative work is needed to make this apparent.

A judgement of perception describes ‘a relation of a perception to a subject’, whereas a judgement of experience describes ‘a property of an object’ (*P*, 4:298). A judgement of perception is: IN TOUCHING THE STONE I SENSE WARMTH. A judgement of experience is: THE STONE IS WARM (*R* 3145 [1790–1804], 16:678; *JL*, 9:113). Judgements of perception are only ‘subjectively valid’. ‘[T]hey are valid only for us, i.e. for our subject’ (*P*, 4:298). After formulating judgements of perception,

[9] we give them a new relation, namely to an object, and intend that the judgement should also be valid at all times for us and for everyone else; for if a judgement agrees with an object, then all judgements about the same object must also agree with one another, and hence the objective validity of a judgement of experience signifies nothing other than its necessary universal validity. (*P*, 4:298)

When we relate a judgement of perception to an object, we transform that judgement into a judgement of experience. We do this by applying the categories.

Passage [9] implies that judgements of perception are not valid for everybody and that they are not valid at every time. A judgement of perception is valid only for the subjects who think of it or utter it, provided they had perceptions of the type that the

judgement mentions.

Passage [9] also implies that judgements of perception are not related to objects. Other passages state this, contrasting judgements of perception with judgements of experience. A judgement of perception ‘is merely a connection of perceptions within my mental state, without relation to the object’ (*P*, 4:300). A judgement of perception ‘is merely subjectively valid and [...] contains in itself no basis for necessary universal validity and, thereby, for a relation to an object’ (*P*, 4:299 n.) Only judgements of experience are related to objects for Kant.

These statements may sound wrong. Surely, one might claim, the judgement of perception IN TOUCHING THE STONE I SENSE WARMTH is related to objects: namely, the stone and myself. A judgement of perception, like every other judgement, is related to the objects which its singular terms refer to.

In order to make sense of Kant’s statement that judgements of perception are not related to objects, it is necessary to understand the peculiar notions of object and relation to objects that Kant employs in passage [9]. When Kant states that judgements of experience, but not judgements of perception, are about objects, he is contrasting the mental states of perceiving *subjects* with the experience of external *objects* in space and time. Kant is using the term ‘object’ in such a way that one’s perceptual states do not count as objects. Moreover, Kant uses the expression ‘relation to objects’ to designate a form of cognitive reference (*Westphal 2003*, pp. 155–158). To say that a subject-predicate judgement of the form ‘*S* is *P*’ is related to objects, in this sense, is to say that the objects falling within the extension of *S* are objects:

- which we either perceive,
- or which we have perceived,

- or whose existence can be inferred by applying the laws of logic and the basic laws of physics (most notably, the causal law) to statements about objects which we perceive or have perceived.<sup>18</sup>

Kant holds that mental representations can relate to objects only if they are subsumed under the categories,<sup>19</sup> and when we formulate a judgement of perception, we are not employing the categories. This explains why Kant claims that judgements of perception are not related to objects.

Passage [9] employs the term ‘valid’, but does not explain his meaning. As Kant sometimes equates objective validity and truth, one might think that passage [9] uses ‘valid’ with the meaning of ‘true’ and ‘is valid for...’ with the meaning of ‘is true relatively to...’.<sup>20</sup> If this were the case, then judgements of experience would be true at all times and for all cognizing subjects. Judgements of perception, being only subjectively valid, would be true only relatively to specific times and subjects.

Texts from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Prolegomena*, *Reflexionen*, and lecture notes rule out this interpretation of the meaning of ‘valid’. Those texts imply that only judgements about objects can be true or false. Subjectively valid judgements have no

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<sup>18</sup> Kant spells out the basic laws in question in the Analytic of Principles of the first *Critique* and in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*.

<sup>19</sup> The categories are ‘the elements of the pure cognition of the understanding [...] without which no object can be thought at all’ (A62/B87; see A111). If we did not apply the categories to perceptions, they ‘would [...] be without an object, and would be nothing but a blind play of representations, i.e., less than a dream’ (A112). For instance, the category ‘of the reciprocal sequence of the determinations of these things simultaneously existing externally to each other is required in order to say that the reciprocal sequence of perceptions is grounded in the object, and thereby to represent the simultaneity as objective’ (B257).

<sup>20</sup> Kant uses the verb ‘to be valid’ or ‘to hold’ [*gelten*] as a synonym of ‘is true’ with reference to those judgements that are principles or laws. The typical form of such sentences is ‘... is valid for...’. The expressions filling the second blank designate the items of which a principle or law is true (e.g. A151/B190, A202/B247, A272/B328; *E*, 8:195, 213 n.) Kant uses the adjective ‘valid’ [*gültig*] with the meaning of ‘true’ in B4 and *P*, 4:314<sub>14</sub>, 368<sub>24</sub>.

truth-value. Let us review those texts.

A passage from the first *Critique* contrasts subjective validity with truth:

[10] Persuasion is a mere semblance [*Schein*], since the ground of the judgement, which lies solely in the subject, is held to be objective. Hence such a judgement also has only private validity [...]. Truth, however, rests upon agreement with the object, with regard to which, consequently, the judgements of every understanding must agree (*consentientia uni tertio, consentiunt inter se*). (A820/B848)

This passage distinguishes mere subjective (or in Kant's terms, 'private') validity from truth. If a judgement is true, it will not only be subjectively valid. This implies that judgements of perception are not true, because they are only subjectively valid.

A passage in the *Prolegomena* ascribes truth and falsity to objective judgements, contrasting them with subjective appearances [*Erscheinungen*]. Although it does not mention judgements of perception, this passage relates truth to a kind of objectivity that judgements of experience possess and judgements of perception lack:

[11] The course of the planets is represented to us by the senses as now progressive, now retrogressive, and therein is neither falsehood nor truth, because as long as one grants that this is as yet only appearance [*Erscheinung*], one still does not judge at all the objective quality of their motion. Since, however, if the understanding does not take good care to prevent this subjective mode of representation from being taken for objective, a false judgement can easily arise, one therefore says: they seem [*scheinen*] to go backwards; but the seeming [*Schein*] is not ascribed to the senses, but to the understanding, to which alone it belongs to make an objective judgement out of the appearance [*Erscheinung*]. (*P*, 4:291, echoing *Meier 1766* [2005], §16; trans. modified; see *PE*, 29:14–15)

Finally, a *Reflexion* from the 1760s and two lecture notes from the 1770s suggest that only objective judgements can be true or false. According to *Reflexion* 2127, a 'true judgement must not exhibit my own sensation, i.e. my state, but the constitution of the object, and hence [it must] be universally valid' (16:245). The transcript of a

metaphysics lecture that Kant probably gave in the mid-1770s calls subjective appearances ‘seeming’ [*Schein*], and it claims that they are expressed by truth-valueless judgements. ‘Seeming precedes experience, for it is a provisional judgement by the understanding on the object of the senses. Seeming is not true and also not false’ (*ML<sub>I</sub>*, 28:234). According to a logic lecture of the early 1770s, ‘in general, that which is valid for everybody is true; that which has only a private validity is only a seeming’ (*LPh*, 24:289 = *LBa*, 78). This passage implies that subjective judgements are either truth-valueless or false.

One should not rely heavily on the last three quotations to reconstruct Kant’s official position. They were written before Kant’s Critical philosophy reached its final shape, and they are not the type of texts that Kant intended to be published (*Conrad 1994*, pp. 46–52). However, these passages show that Kant considered subjective judgements truth-valueless in the 1760s and 1770s. This strengthens the assumption that passages [10] and [11] from the first *Critique* and the *Prolegomena* reflect Kant’s actual thought, because they express the same position. Judgements of perception, being a kind of subjective judgements, are truth-valueless.

Two comments on Kant’s view of subjective judgements are in place. First, my claim that subjective judgements have no truth-value rests in part on passages on judgements of perception. Kant does not use the expression “judgement of perception” in the works that he wrote and published after the *Prolegomena*.<sup>21</sup> For several scholars (e.g. *Allison 2004*, pp. 148–153), the doctrine of judgements of perception is not part of transcendental idealism in its official or definitive form. It should be omitted from a systematic reconstruction of transcendental idealism. In their view, Kant’s claim that

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<sup>21</sup> *JL* mentions judgements of perceptions (9:113), but it is not a work written by Kant (*Boswell 1988*).



judgements as such are objectively valid in passage [4] implies that Kant denied the existence of judgements of perception in 1787. Others hold that Kant's views in 1787 are compatible with the existence of judgements of perception (*Longuenesse 1998*). Additionally, two *Reflexionen* written from 1790 onwards and a lecture delivered not earlier than in the late 1780s still mention judgements of perception (*R 3145–3156, 16:678–679, source of JL, 9:113; LD, 24:767<sub>31,35</sub>*). The question of whether judgements of perception are part of Kant's considered views would require a lengthy discussion and cannot be settled here.<sup>22</sup>

Second, whether he admits or denies the existence of subjective judgements, Kant has to deal with substantive questions, to which his texts do not give any explicit, satisfactory answer. If Kant's official position is that there is no subjective judgement, Kant will have to explain what I FEEL COLD and the like could possibly be. Kant mentions subjective judgements in his writings on ethics (6:401; 8:268) and aesthetics (20:224). The denial of their existence is in contrast with those writings.

If Kant regards judgements of perception as genuine judgements, it is unclear why they should lack a truth-value. If you were feeling cold on 10 November 2010 at 10.15am, and you judged: I FEEL COLD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2010 AT 10.15AM, it would intuitively seem more correct to say that your judgement is true, instead of saying that it lacks a truth-value. One should provide explicit arguments in order to explain this intuition away.

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<sup>22</sup> According to Stuhlmann-Laeisz (1976, pp. 57–59) and Nuchelmans (1983, p. 248), Kant's formal logic allows for objective and subjective judgements (such as judgements of perception), because it is concerned with every object of conscious thought. Transcendental logic allows only for objective judgements, because it is concerned with cognitions of objects in space and time.

## 5. Are only assertoric judgements truth-bearers?

So far we have seen that not every judgement is truth-apt for Kant. Judgements of perception are not truth-apt. Analytic judgements and judgements lacking objective validity are truth-apt, that is, they can possibly be true or false. Two *Reflexionen* and a lecture transcript suggest that those judgements will be either true or false only if they are taken to state what is actually the case, or to use Kant's terms, only if they are assertoric.

According to *Reflexion* 2259, written after 1780 and probably also after 1790, 'truth and falsity do not lie in concepts, but in judgements [*Urtheilen*], namely as assertoric judgements [*Sätzen*]' (16:288). An addition from 1776–1779 to *Reflexion* 2142 makes the same claim (16:240).<sup>23</sup> The transcript of a lecture from the 1770s mentions provisional judgements, which are a type of problematic (i.e., non-assertoric) judgements.<sup>24</sup> It claims that provisional judgements are neither true, nor false: '[t]hese judgements are experiences, so far as they are true; but if they are provisional judgements, then they are a seeming [*Schein*]. Seeming precedes experience, for it is a provisional judgement by the understanding on the object of the senses. Seeming is not true and also not false' (*ML*<sub>1</sub>, 28:234).

In addition, a passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason* suggests that problematic judgements, as such, have no relation with truth:

[12] I must never undertake to have an opinion without at least knowing something by means of which *the in itself merely problematic judgement acquires a connection with truth* which, although it is not complete, is nevertheless more than an arbitrary invention. Furthermore, the law of such a connection must be certain. For in regard to this too I have

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<sup>23</sup> Additionally, *R* 2211 (1780–1804?), 16:272, might suggest that only assertoric judgements have a truth-value, but its meaning is not entirely clear to me.

<sup>24</sup> On provisional judgements, see *La Rocca 2001*.

nothing but opinion, then it is all only a game of imagination *without the least relation to truth*. (B850, italics added)

This textual evidence for the claim that only assertoric judgements are truth-apt for the Critical Kant is not very strong. Among the quoted texts, only the passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason* and one of the *Reflexionen* have been written after 1780. The two other texts have been written before Kant's Critical philosophy had reached his final shape. Kant did not regard the *Reflexionen* as official sources of his thought, nor did he ever think of publishing them.

One could make two more remarks in support of the claim that only assertoric judgements are truth-apt. First, Kant sometimes mentions the word 'truth', in a schematic fashion, in connection with assertoric judgements (e.g., A74–75/B100; *F*, 20:278<sub>14</sub>; letter [1789], 11:45<sub>19–20</sub>; *R* 2167 [1776–1778? 1790–1804?], 16:257). This may suggest that Kant ascribes truth only to assertoric judgements. However, the connection between assertoric judgements and the word 'truth' may be motivated just by the fact that one will assert a judgement only if one believes it to be true.

Second, Kant regards the logical principle of sufficient reason as the principle of assertoric judgements (e.g. in *E*, 8:194<sub>36–37</sub>, 239<sub>3–5</sub>; *F*, 20:277<sub>26–29</sub>), as well as a criterion of truth (e.g. in a letter [1789], 11:45<sub>11–25</sub>; *F*, 20:278<sub>8–17</sub>; *R* 2167, 2176, 2178, 2185 [all between 1776–1804], 16:257–261). One may take this to mean that (a) all true judgements have a reason and that (b) all judgements which have a reason are assertoric. It follows that only assertoric judgements are true. However, this inference is not convincing because (a) and (b) are about different kinds of reason. The reason why a judgement is asserted is a reason of which the subject who asserts that judgement must

be aware. The reason why a judgement is true may be unknown to anybody. One could have a reason to assert a false judgement, and there could be reasons to ascribe truth to a judgement that nobody ever asserted.

One could make three remarks in favour of the claim that, for Kant, problematic judgements can bear truth-values. To begin with, a *Reflexion*, four lecture passages, and the *Jäsche Logic* mention true or correct provisional judgements (*R* 2540 [1780–1789; less probably: 1776–1779], 16:409; *LPö*, 24:548<sub>8</sub>; *LPh*, 24:426<sub>12</sub>; *LBu*, 24:640<sub>27</sub>; *PE*, 29:252<sub>9</sub>; *JL*, 9:75<sub>34</sub>). Since provisional judgements are problematic judgements (*JL*, 9:74<sub>20–21</sub>), those passages ascribe a truth-value to problematic judgements. However, only one passage (*LPö*, 24:548<sub>8</sub>) can be safely taken to be based on Kant's lectures from the Critical period.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, Kant's distinction between falsity and error suggests that problematic judgements are truth-apt. 'The opposite of truth is *falsehood*, which, insofar as it is taken for truth, is called *error*' (*JL*, 9:53; see *R* 2259 [1780–1804?], 16:288<sub>8</sub>; *LPö*, 24:526<sub>26–27</sub>). This implies that a judgement can be false, even if it is not asserted and thereby taken to be true.

Finally, Kant states that one can employ false judgements, without asserting them as true, as premises in a proof (e.g. in a *reductio ad absurdum*; A75/B100–101). If this is so, a problematic judgement can be false.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Critical Kant holds that analytic judgements and objectively

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<sup>25</sup> Another passage (*LPh*, 24:426<sub>12</sub>) is based on lectures given before the 1780s. Two more passages may be based on lectures given, or notes written, before the 1780s (*PE*, 29:252<sub>9</sub>; *JL*, 9:75<sub>34</sub>). The *Reflexion* (*R* 2540) may have been written before or after 1780. As for *LBu*, 24:640<sub>27</sub>, the dating of this transcript is controversial (*Capozzi 2001*, pp. 164–166).

valid judgements are truth-apt, whereas judgements of perception are not truth-apt. According to some texts, only assertoric judgements are determinately true or false. Other texts take judgements to be true or false, regardless of whether they are assertoric or merely problematic.

Kant's views on truth-bearers have implications for a number of issues: the vexed question of what theory of truth Kant endorsed, the meaning of the notion of objective validity, and whether Kant was a verificationist about truth or meaning.

Not only does Kant claim that analytic judgements are truth-apt. He also claims that there are true analytic judgements on nonexistent items in passage [2] (see also *E*, 8:235). This raises problems for the view that, according to Kant, the truth of a judgement is the correspondence of a truth-bearer with the object(s) it is about, or with a fact involving actual objects. The truth of those analytic judgements which are not about any actual objects cannot be their correspondence with an actual object or with a fact involving actual objects.

Correspondentist interpreters could reply either that the correspondence account only applies to synthetic truths (*Hanna 1993*, p. 19 n. 19), or that Kant admits a realm of somehow actual, but nonexistent objects, or that he admits negative facts, or that his claims are inconsistent as they stand.

The first reply implies that Kant does not have a correspondence theory of truth *tout court*, and hence he must be a pluralist about truth. This is a claim that correspondence interpreters rarely make. Moreover, Kant's nominal definition of truth (A58/B82) makes clear that he is not a pluralist about the *concept* of truth (*Vanzo 2010*, pp. 161–166). Kant's position would then combine monism about the concept of truth with pluralism about the property of truth. Proposals along these lines can be found in

the recent literature on truth (e.g. *Lynch 2001*). However, significant theoretical and interpretative work would be needed to flesh out a theory along these line and to ascribe it to Kant.

The second reply – admitting nonexistent objects – is at odds with a widespread interpretation of Kant's views on existence. Kant famously claims that existence is not a real predicate (A598/B626). According to several interpreters, this implies that, for Kant, all objects as such are existent (*Barnes 1972*, p. 46; *Van Cleve 1999*, p. 188; *Reicher 2008*, §1). One of the main advantages of the Kant-Frege-Russell view of existence (assuming that these three authors really shared the same view) is usually taken to be that it makes it unnecessary to postulate a realm of somehow actual but nonexistent objects. The second reply would offset this advantage of Kant's view of existence.

The third reply – admitting negative facts – would seem unpalatable to many for philosophical reasons. The fourth reply should only be accepted if none of the other replies were viable.

The ascription of truth-values to analytic judgements also raises difficulties for some coherentist interpretations of Kant's views of truth; namely, those which claim that a judgement must cohere with the laws of transcendental logic to be true (e.g. *Mensch 2004*). The difficulty is that, given Kant's conditions of truth for analytic judgements, GOD IS AN ETERNAL, ATEMPORAL BEING is a true judgement (A641/B669; *KpV*, 5:123). However, that judgement is not coherent with the laws of transcendental logic because it is about an atemporal object, but only objects with a temporal location can be objects of experience.

Coherentist interpreters could reply that Kant has a coherence theory of truth for

empirical judgements and another theory of truth for other types of judgements (*Walker 1983*). This would make Kant a pluralist about truth and would raise the challenge mentioned above.

Judgements like GOD IS OMNIPOTENT and THE WORLD IS INFINITE IN SIZE are meaningful and truth-apt for Kant, but they lack objective validity. This rules out that, for Kant, ‘objective valid’ roughly ‘means and implies [...] “capable of having a determinable truth value”’ (*Cicovacki 1995*, p. 202). It also implies that Kant does not identify the meaning of a statement with its empirical verifiability (*pace Strawson 1966*, p. 16; *Bennett 1966*, pp. 22, 24, *1974*, p. 27; *Stroud 1984*, p. 161), and he does not identify its truth with its empirical verifiability either (*pace Putnam 1981*, p. 64; *Posy 1986, 2000*). Kant was not a verificationist about truth or meaning.

Providing a comprehensive account of Kant’s views on truth and meaning is a challenging interpretative task. By reconstructing Kant’s views on truth-aptness, I ruled out some answers and highlighted some challenges that any such account must meet.

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