THE PROBLEM OF SINGULAR JUDGMENTS IN KANT

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF SINGULAR JUDGMENTS

In the well-known Table of Judgment Forms, in *Critique of Pure Reason* (A70/B95), Immanuel Kant mentions three forms under the title "Quantity," namely, universal, particular and singular (B95). Kant explains in *The Critique* and in *Jäsche Logic* that, in universal judgments, the extension, or "sphere," of the subject concept is entirely contained in the extension of the predicate and in particular ones only partly (B96, AA IX:102).[1] The interpretation of the third form, singularity, involves special problems. From the examples Kant gives, it seems obvious that, by "singular judgments," he means judgments in which the predicate is predicated of a single individual.[2] It is not clear how this is supposed to happen. It seems that, according to Kant, judgments consist solely of concepts, which by his definition are general representations.[3] Intuitions, on the other hand, are singular representations, but it seems that they cannot be constituents of judgments. This is the problem of singular judgments in Kant: how are we able to pick up one individual for predication by using concepts alone?

In this paper, we survey several ways to explain the possibility of singular thoughts. The first is perhaps the most straightforward and most tempting from the modern point of view, namely, that subjects of singular judgments are not, after all, concepts but intuitions. It seems that the ability to predicate a property of an individual thing, that is, the ability to make singular judgments, requires us to be able to make judgments that have singular representations as their subjects. Since concepts are by definition general and intuitions singular representations, subjects of singular judgments cannot be concepts but must be intuitions. We discuss this possibility in section 2 and argue that this view, which, in fact, is rarely explicitly made in Kant literature, is not a

correct reading of Kant. Intuitions are not the right type of representation to be able to be constituents of judgments.

If subjects of singular judgments cannot be intuitions, they must be concepts. This means that singularity, reference to one individual, must be achieved by using general concepts in some appropriate way. In section 3, we consider whether Kant could have accepted the Leibnizian view of singular concepts as forming the lowest level in the hierarchy of concepts and whether he could mean that such concepts are subjects of singular judgments. The suggestion can be refuted by textual evidence, since Kant explicitly denies that there could be lowest concepts. But still, although there are no lowest concepts in Kant's system, it seems possible that there are concepts under which, by accident, only one object falls and which thereby are singular in another sense. We argue in section 4 that singularity of singular judgments cannot be explained with such contingently singular concepts either. At this point, it becomes clear that the whole approach of trying to give an account of the singularity of judgments in terms of singularity of their subjects is misguided. In section 5, we consider a different approach inspired by Kant's comment that, although concepts are essentially general, they can nevertheless be *used* singularly. Is the subject of a singular judgment perhaps a general concept that is used in this way?

We put forth our own explanation in section 6. The basic idea, based largely on the important passages in the beginning of *Analytic of Concepts*, is that, when we make a judgment, we do more than just relate the predicate of a judgment to its subject. Namely, we also relate or apply the subject concept of a judgment to other representations. This notion of application, in our view, is the key to the correct understanding of what Kant means with singular judgments: in universal and particular judgments, the subject is applied generally, whereas in singular judgments, it is applied singularly to one intuition. This is what makes a judgment singular.

2. ARE SUBJECTS OF SINGULAR JUDGMENTS INTUITIONS?

Perhaps the most direct way to explain how singular judgments in Kant are made is to hold that subjects of singular judgments are not concepts but intuitions. At the outset, this suggestion appears plausible, perhaps almost inevitable. We can say, generally, that, in a judgment, the role of the subject is to represent that of which the predicate of the judgment is predicated. Since, according to Kant, concepts are essentially general representations (see, for example, AA IX:91, LL:289),[4] it seems that the only possibility is to hold that intuitions, which by definition are singular representations, are subjects of singular judgments.

Although this explanation is at least superficially incompatible with Kant's claim that understanding is the faculty of concepts, it is difficult to find conclusive textual evidence against it. Kant does say, of course, that understanding "cannot intuit anything" (A71/B95), but this does not necessarily mean that it cannot operate with intuitions given to it by the sensibility. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the beginning of *The Transcendental Clue for the Discovery of all Pure Concepts of the Understanding*, Kant says that "the cognition of every, at least human, understanding is a cognition through concepts, not intuitive but discursive" (A68/B93); but, again, it is unclear what conclusions we are to draw from this. As a matter of fact, Kant continues this latter passage in a way that could be taken as evidence for the claim that intuitions are subjects of singular judgments. He says that "[i]n every judgment 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" (ibid.). If in this passage we take the "concept that holds of many" to refer to the predicate of a judgment and "a given representation" to its subject, Kant appears here to suggest that intuitions can indeed be subjects of judgments, since only intuitions are immediately related to objects (A68/B93). This seems to be how Moltke S. Gram, for example, reads the passage (1980, 178). According to him, "All this shows, however, is that we can make judgments about concepts as well as intuitions."

It is surprising, then, that a solution so simple and attractive has hardly ever been explicitly suggested. A few can, however, be found. Jaakko Hintikka has argued that only singularity, not immediacy or sensibility, is an essential feature of Kantian intuitions and that it is primarily this feature that separates them from general representations, general concepts (Hintikka 1974, 162). Although he admits that, according to Kant, the only source of intuitions (for us humans) is in the sensibility, he argues that this does not affect the nature of intuitions as representations: intuitions are nothing but singular concepts, concepts of individuals (Hintikka 1972, 342). If this is correct, Kant is referring only to the source of intuitions and not their role in the understanding in the passages in which he emphasizes the inability of understanding to intuit anything (for example, A51/B75, quoted above). The sensibility is the faculty with the help of which we acquire intuitions, but once we have got them, their role in the understanding is not, singularity notwithstanding, different from that of concepts. Under this interpretation, there is no obstacle against accepting the suggestion that subjects of singular judgments are intuitions. This is presumably also Hintikka's conclusion since he characterizes intuitions as being close to singular terms: "An intuition is for Kant a 'representation'—we would perhaps rather say a symbol—which refers to an individual object or which is

used *as if* it would refer to one" (Hintikka 1968, 43). One may ask what other role such "singular terms" might have but to be subjects of singular judgments.

Hintikka's view is accompanied by that of Gram who argues that the traditional interpretation according to which only concepts can belong to contents of judgments leads to insurmountable difficulties in our efforts to try to explain how synthetic singular judgments are possible. The only way out, he claims, is to accept that subjects of synthetic singular judgments are intuitions and not concepts (Gram 1980, 172).[5] In addition to solving the problem of syntheticity of singular judgments, this interpretation solves the more general problem of how we are able to make singular judgments in the first place.[6]

A similar suggestion, that there are judgments that have intuitions as subjects, has more recently been made by Robert Hanna. He argues that the act of applying a concept to an intuitively given sensory content—that is, the act of predicating a concept of a perceived individual—happens by making a judgment, which has the intuition as its subject term (Hanna 2001, 60–61).[7] A judgment of this kind "consists in a representation of the predicative relation *between* the intuition of the object and a concept" (Hanna 2001, 62, his emphasis).[8]

There are good reasons that so few have suggested this. Kant argues in the *Metaphysical Deduction* that, from the standpoint of syllogistic theory, there is no difference between singular and universal judgments (A70/B96). The explanation at hand would, in the words of Charles Parsons, "make nonsense of Kant's assimilation" (Parsons 1983, 143). This is because, in all four modes of the second figure, the subject of a universal major premise is the predicate of the conclusion. If, in the place of a major premise, we put a singular judgment, which has an intuition as its subject, the same intuition should be the predicate of the conclusion as well. But even if one were willing to accept that an intuition could be the subject of a judgment, it is inconceivable that it could be a predicate. According to Kant, a concept can be a predicate of a judgment just because "other representations are contained under it by means of which it can be related to objects" (A69/B94). This is not true of intuitions since they are related to objects immediately; they are the wrong kind of representation to be used as predicates and, thus, it seems, as constituents of judgments at all.

3. ARE SUBJECTS OF SINGULAR JUDGMENTS LOWEST CONCEPTS?

If subjects of singular judgments cannot be intuitions, they ought to be concepts. But what kind of concepts? We saw above that, in the *Meta-*

physical Deduction, Kant argues that singular and universal judgments are similar from the standpoint of the syllogistic theory and his claim seems to be based on the features of their subjects. He says that, because singular judgments "have no extension (*Umfang*)," their predicates cannot be related "to some of what is contained under the concept of the subject while being excluded from another part of it" (A71/B96). In this, singular judgments are exactly like universal ones. In both, the predicate "holds of that concept [the subject concept] without exception, just as if it were a generally valid concept with an extension and the predicate holds of its whole meaning (*Bedeutung*)" (ibid.).[9] This explanation is, of course, somewhat perplexing to a modern reader, since we are used to thinking of the extension of a concept as the set of objects to which the concept applies. One would then expect that subjects of singular judgments have an extension that consists of one individual only, namely, that of which the predicate of the judgment is predicated. But Kant claims that they have no extension at all![10]

This perplexity is due to Kant's use of the terms *Umfang* or *Sphaera*.[11] In the *Vienna Logic*, in the section concerned with logical division of concepts, Kant is explicit in that the extension or sphere of a concept consists not of things that fall under it but of concepts that are subordinated to it, that is, concepts that in a hierarchy of concepts are its *species*:

> A universal concept has a *sphaera*, and has lower concepts under itself. . . . In the case of division, I distinguish the manifold under the concept, i.e., the *sphaera*. . . . I do not analyze the concept itself, but rather I only divide the *sphaera*, the lower concepts, insofar as they are contained under the universal. (AA XXIV:925, LL 366)

For example, the extension of the concept of "mammal" consists of its subordinate concepts, namely, of the concepts of human, ape, cat, dog, etc. This definition of extension was common in German logical texts during Kant's time and after.[12]

In a genus-species hierarchy of concepts, ordered by the relation of subordination, at the top is the highest concept, *summum genus*, that is, the concept that is not subordinate to any concept. At the bottom level are lowest concepts that themselves have no subordinate concepts, thus no extension in Kant's sense. Gottfried Leibniz, about a hundred years before the first *Critique*, considered what he called complete individual concepts, namely, concepts that are completely determined and, as such, identify exactly one possible individual substance. In Leibniz's view, God identifies individual things through their complete concepts. In some sense, we also are related to individuals through these concepts, although, for us finite thinkers, it is not possible to have a distinct grasp

of such a concept because of its infinite complexity.[13] This background suggests one way to understand Kant's description of singular judgments referred to above. If the extension of a concept in Kant's sense consists of its subordinates, his claim that singular judgments have no extension seems to mean that their subjects are lowest concepts in a hierarchy of concepts.

Unfortunately, this suggestion turns out to be rather obviously wrong as an interpretation of Kant's view. In several places, he explicitly denies that there could be lowest concepts.[14] The reason for this denial is that, no matter how complex a concept is, we can always determine it further by adding more constituents to it. This new concept is then subordinate to the original one, which indicates that it was not a lowest concept after all.[15] In *Jäsche Logic*, Kant summarizes the discussion by formulating a universal principle: *"There is a genus that cannot in turn be a species, but there is no species that should not be able in turn to be a genus"* (AA IX:97, LL 595).

4. ARE SUBJECTS OF SINGULAR JUDGMENTS CONTINGENTLY SINGULAR CONCEPTS?

There is, however, a nonabsolute sense in which a concept can be considered to be the lowest in a hierarchy. It is natural to think that, when a concept is determined by specifying it more and more, fewer and fewer objects fall under this more-determinate concept, until at some point there is only one (actual) object that falls under it. Because of this, Kant presumably did not mean by the generality of concepts that *in fact* more than one object always fall under them; rather, the generality claim is to be read as saying that it is always *conceivable* that more than one object falls under a concept. At the same time, however, it can be said that some concepts are singular in the sense that *in fact* only one object falls under them. We call such concepts *contingently singular*.

Maybe, then, Kant's view is that singular judgments have contingently singular concepts as subjects. This suggestion is not so far-fetched as it may seem. Bernard Bolzano discusses this possibility in his *Wissenschaftslehre* and eventually rejects it after formulating two objections (Bolzano 1837/1929–31, §72). The first is that it is not even certain that there are contingently singular concepts. If there are infinitely many objects, he argues, it is likely that always more than one object falls under every concept, without regard to their degree of determination, that is, without regard to how many constituent concepts they have. Bolzano's second objection is that, even if contingently singular concepts existed, we would have no use for them since we would never know whether a concept that we think is contingently singular, in fact, is such.

Especially Bolzano's latter point hits the target. Kant's *Table of Judgment Forms* lists all the different ways the understanding can combine concepts to form judgments. It seems to be a natural assumption that the understanding has full authority over its own actions so that it can freely decide which type of judgment it makes. However, if the singularity of a judgment depended on the contingent singularity of its subject concept, the understanding would lose its authority since, if the subject concept turned out not to be contingently singular after all, the judgment would not be singular but universal. What is even worse is that the lack of authority would concern universal judgments as well. Suppose that someone tries to make a universal judgment, but, unbeknown to him, the subject of his judgment is contingently singular. Is this enough to make his judgment singular? For example, suppose that in the late seventeenth century someone makes a judgment that every dodo has feathers. It cannot be so that the form of his judgment depends on whether there is more than one dodo left.

Accordingly, contingent singularity of the subject concept is hardly sufficient to make a judgment singular. It is doubtful whether it is necessary, either. Suppose that someone sees a person running and reports this by saying: "A man is running." This judgment is undoubtedly singular, although its subject is not contingently singular. In *Vienna Logic*, Kant uses "this house is plastered so and so" as an example of a sentence that expresses a singular judgment (AA XXIV:909, LL 352). Isn't this quite like our example "a man is running" since they both have a subject that is not contingently singular? This shows that the interpretation that according to Kant a judgment is singular if and only if its subject is contingently singular is almost certainly false.[16]

5. Singular Use of Concepts

All the suggestions about the nature of singular judgments we have brought up so far concentrate on the properties of the subject representation of a judgment. As the discussion at the end of former section already revealed, the singularity of the subject, at least its contingent singularity, and the singular judgment form are independent of each other. So it seems that this approach was mistaken from the start, since the properties of the subject, like its singularity, should have no effect on the form of a judgment. In sum, the problem is to find a way a concept can pick up an object for predication without endangering the authority of the maker of the judgment.

In *Jäsche Logic*, Kant seems to offer a way of doing just this. Kant argues that "[i]t is a mere tautology to speak of universal or common concepts—a mistake that is grounded in an incorrect division of concepts

into *universal, particular*, and *singular*. Concepts themselves cannot be so divided, but only *their use*" (AA IX:91, LL 589). In *Vienna Logic*, he says essentially the same: "For if a representation is not a *repraesentatio communis*, then it is not a concept at all . . . [b]ut the use of a *conceptus* can be *singularis*," and he continues that "I think of a man *in individuo*, i.e., I use the concept of man in order to have an *ens singulare*" (AA XXIV:908, LL 352). Thus, Kant holds that concepts are general representations, but we can use them to think about singular things. On the basis of this, it seems obvious that, by singular judgments, Kant does not mean judgments whose subjects *are* singular but whose subjects are *used* singularly.[17]

It is an open question how far this reference to the use of concepts takes us in our attempt to understand the nature of singular judgments. The important new insight here is that we can now see that there really is no need to put any constraints on subjects of singular judgments. Any concept, the concept of man, for example, is a possible subject of a singular judgment.

However, for this suggestion to have any use, we need an explanation of what it means to use a concept singularly, and this is not an easy task to accomplish. In the passage quoted above, Kant mentions universal and particular uses of concepts in addition to their singular use. What are these? Should we perhaps think that we use a concept universally when we think of everything that falls under it and particularly when we think only of some objects that fall under it? But this suggestion, innocent as it sounds, leads to trouble. It seems to follow that, in particular judgments, just like in singular and universal ones, the predicate is predicated without exception of all those objects that we think of when we use the subject particularly, and thus there should be as little reason to make a difference between universal and particular judgments as there is between singular and universal. This is clearly wrong

Perhaps, then, Kant does not explain the nature of singular judgments by a singular use of concepts after all but, *vice versa*, tries to explain different uses of concepts by the corresponding judgment forms. According to this, we should say that a concept is used universally when it is the subject of a universal judgment, that it is used particularly when it is used as the subject of a particular judgment, and, finally, that it is used singularly when it is used as a subject of a singular judgment. Kant's further comment in *Vienna Logic* makes this order of explanation credible: "We do not divide concepts into *universales, particulares, singulares*, then, but instead judgments, as we shall soon hear." (AA XXIV:909, LL 352.)

If the sole criterion for a singular use of concepts is that they are concepts used as subjects of singular judgments, singular use of concepts cannot, of course, be used to explain singular judgments. What is needed is an explanation of singular use of concepts, which is independent and precedes singular judgments. In the next section, we argue that such explanation can indeed be given and that singular judgments are judgments in which subject concepts are applied to intuitions in a particular way.

6. THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF SINGULAR JUDGMENTS

In *The Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection*, Kant writes that "in the case of two drops of water one can completely abstract from all inner difference (of quality and quantity), and it is enough that they be intuited in different places at the same time in order for them to be numerically different" (A264/B320). What this amounts to is that intuitions have a role in picking up objects in empirical singular judgments. This should not come as surprise since only intuitions are singular representations and since it was clear already from the start that there must be some interplay between intuitions and concepts. Since intuitions cannot be subjects of singular judgments, the relation between them must be something other than that between subject and predicate.

In the important first section of the *Transcendental Clue* (A67–69/B9–94), Kant mentions a relation between concepts and intuitions, which seems to be what we are looking for. He begins the section by emphasizing that human understanding is a faculty of concepts and not a faculty of intuitions and goes on to argue that concepts can never be related directly to objects but only to their representations, which may be either concepts or, which is particularly interesting to us, intuitions:

> Since no representation pertains to the object immediately except intuition alone, a concept is thus never immediately related to object, but is always related to some other representation of it (whether that be an intuition or itself already a concept). (A68/B93)

The role of this relationship in making judgments becomes clear in the next few sentences of the section. After having made the obscure claim that, because of this, judgments are representations of representations of objects, Kant argues that in every judgment there is a concept, which is related to several representations, presumably in the above sense, since he says that some of these representations are given and immediate representations of objects, that is, intuitions:

> Judgment is, therefore, the mediate cognition of an object, hence the representation of a representation of it. In every judgment there is a

concept that holds of many, and that among this many also compre-
hends a given representation, which is then related immediately to
the object. (ibid.)

From this alone, it cannot be read out whether Kant is referring to the
subject or the predicate of a judgment, but it becomes clear from the sub-
sequent sentences of the passage that the former must be the case. He
says that, in the judgment that every body is divisible, the predicate, the
concept of divisibility, is related to the concept of body and that this, in
turn, has a relationship to certain appearances, that is, to empirical objects:

> So in the judgment, e.g., **"All bodies are divisible"** the concept of
> the divisibility 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 (A68/B93).

Presumably the relationship, which the concept of body is to have to
objects in the example, is the one mediated by intuitions, since in Kant's
own copy of the first edition of the *Critique* he has changed the word
"appearances" to "intuitions" (AA XXIII:45). Accordingly, the relation-
ship between concepts and intuitions seems to be exactly what we need
to explain singular judgments, since it makes it possible to predicate
properties of objects without intuitions being subjects of judgments.

We call this relation, which concepts have to intuitions, *an application*
of a concept to an intuition due to Kant's use of the same term (*Anwen-
dung auf*) in §22 and §24 of *The Transcendental Deduction* (B146–47,
B150–56) when he talks about the conditions under which categories
can be related to—can be applied to—intuitions.[18]

We are now ready to present our reconstruction of Kant's conception
of singular judgments. His general characterization of *a function of the
understanding* is that it is "the unity of the action of ordering different
representations under a common one" (A68/B93). A little later in the
same section he says that "[t]he functions of the understanding can
therefore all be found together if one can exhaustively exhibit the func-
tions of unity in judgments" (A69/B94). It is easy to be mislead by these
characterizations that the only function of the understanding is that
which relates the predicate of a judgment to its subject. This seems to
be, for example, how Allison (2004, 148) reads Kant since he says that
"the 'action' in question is judgment and its 'unity' is the underlying rule
in accordance with which the different representations are connected
in judgment." Since it is the subject and predicate that are connected
in a judgment, Allison seems to be saying that this is the only action or
function of the understanding when it makes a judgment. But according

to the first section of the *Clue*, it seems that, when making a judgment, the understanding performs two actions, which both are in accordance with Kant's characterization of a function as "ordering different representations under a common one": the understanding applies the subject concept to representations and also relates the predicate to the subject. However, the former of these actions, *an application*, is not itself an act of judging since, in a judgment, two concepts are related and not a concept and an intuition, as we have argued in section 2 above.

Differences between universal, particular, and singular judgments can be explained by referring to these two functions of the understanding. Universal and particular judgments are alike in respect to the application of their subjects since in both the subject concept is applied to everything to which it is applicable. They, however, differ in the other function, the act of predication, since, in a universal judgment, the predicate is related to everything that the subject is applied to, whereas, in a particular judgment, the predicate is related only to some. A singular judgment differs from both universal and particular ones in application since, in it, the subject is applied only to one intuition. The predication function, on the other hand, is the same in universal and singular judgments since. in both of them. "their predicate is not merely related to some of what is contained under the concept of the subject while being excluded from another part of it" (A71/B96), as Kant expresses it with regard to singular judgments. Schematically, the differences and similarities are represented in the following table:

Judgment form	The application function: (The way the subject is applied)	The predication function: (The way the predicate is predicated)
Universal judgment	subject is applied *generally*, i.e., to everything it is applicable.	predicate is predicated *universally* of everything the subject is applied to.
Particular judgment	subject is applied *generally*, i.e., to everything it is applicable.	predicate is predicated *particularly* of something the subject is applied to.
Singular judgment	subject is applied *singularly*, i.e., to one particular intuition.	predicate is predicated *universally* of everything the subject is applied to.

The explanation given here has a lot in common with the one Hanna has given since, in both, singular judgments result from two actions of the understanding (Hanna 2001, 63).[19] Two important differences are that, first, according to Hanna, the act, which in his explanation corresponds

to what we call *the application* of the subject, is itself a judgment; and, second, the intuition to which the subject is applied belongs to the content of a singular judgment. We disagree with both of these. The reason for not taking the application of a subject to be an act of judgment has been discussed at length above: subjects of judgments cannot be intuitions. The reason to deny that the intuition to which the subject is applied would be part of the content of a judgment is as straightforward. If the application of the subject of a singular judgment were part of its content, should not this be true of universal and particular judgments as well? It is, however, clear that this cannot be the case. Since concepts can be applied both to intuitions and concepts, there is no limit to possible applications of concepts. And even if they could be applied only to intuitions, it is not very likely that it is Kant's view that, for example, the content of the judgment that every human is mortal contains every intuition to which the concept of "human" is applicable. As far as we can see, there is no reason that singular judgments would be different from universal and particular ones in this respect. Therefore, there is also no reason to hold that an intuition to which the subject of a singular judgment is applied would belong to its content.

An obvious consequence of an intuition's not belonging to the content of a perceptual singular judgment is that its subject does not identify the object of which the predicate is predicated. Because of this, singular judgments with the same content can in different contexts predicate a property of different individuals. When we make a judgment, which we express with the sentence "this house is plastered so and so," we make a judgment with exactly the same content as Kant does when he uses the same sentence, although Kant and we are not talking about the same house. There is nothing strange in this. After all, expressions of most of our perceptual judgments are indexical, and it should not come as a surprise if someone suggests that judgments, which they express, are indexical as well.

We conclude with a problem whose solution will not be possible in the limits of this paper. Our proposal would seem to work nicely with what we could call perceptual singular judgments, singular judgments about objects we are presently perceiving and of which we, thus, have an intuition to which the subject concept can be applied. Not all singular judgments, however, are perceptual. We do not, for example, have a perceptual intuition of Kant, and still it seems that we are able to make a singular judgment of him. Similarly, we do not have an intuition of the first dog born at sea, and still we seem to be able to make singular judgments concerning it. One could ask whether Kant's account of singular judgments is able to explain these kinds of nonperceptual judgments. Kant himself, in any case, uses the judgment that Caius is mortal as an

example of a singular judgment (for example, in AA IX:102, LL 599), and this judgment is not perceptual (when made by us or by Kant, anyway).

There seems to be more than one way to develop the view we have above ascribed to Kant to meet nonperceptual cases. The first would be to expand the core view with a sort of descriptivist account and to argue that, although the subject concept of a nonperceptual singular judgment is not related to an intuition as a whole, it still has a constituent that is so related. Perhaps we have never seen the man who wrote the book before us, but we can still make singular judgments about him because we have intuitions of the book and we can use the concept "the author of *this book*" as the subject concept of our judgment, applying the concept of a book to an intuition. In doing this, the individual our singular judgment is directed to, of which we do not have perceptual intuitions, is identified by relating it to objects of which we have intuitions. A suggestion somewhat similar to this was, in fact, made by Bolzano. According to him, intuitions are simple and singular representations that emerge in us when we are perceptually related to objects. Such intuitions can be combined with concepts, and these complex or mixed representations can then constitute the subjects of many singular judgments (Bolzano 1837/1929–31, §§73–75). Although we have argued that Kant's theory does not allow intuitions to be subjects of judgments, it might still be possible to think that one can apply a part of a complex concept to an intuition, which then fulfills pretty much the same role as an intuition as a constituent of the subject.

There is also another way to generalize Kant's theory. *Imagination* is, according to Kant, a faculty of our mind "for representing an object even *without its presence* in intuition" (B151). The exact role of imagination in Kant's theory of judgment is a large and difficult question we shall not enter into here. But imagination seems to have for Kant features that may help to solve the problem we have here posed for his theory of singular thoughts. By imagination, we are able to recall intuitions of objects we have perceived before and also, it seems, able to form intuitions of objects we have not perceived at all. Imagination has a peculiar place, as a faculty that is sensible but still to some extent similar to understanding in its capacity to be spontaneous in producing representations.[20] Applying this to our present problem, we could say that we can, after all, have an intuition of Caius even though we have never perceived him. This opens up the possibility of explaining singular judgments generally as judgments in which the subject is applied to a single intuition. In perceptual singular judgments, the intuition is caused immediately by an object, and in nonperceptual ones, it is reproduced or produced by the faculty of imagination.

If the intuition, to which the subject is applied, is produced by the imagination, the question remains as to how the object of predication is identified, that is, how do we decide which object is the object of the produced intuition or whether it has an object at all? If the intuition is produced in perception, it seems that it is the object causally responsible for the intuition that is also the object of predication. But what makes it the case that my intuition of Caius is an intuition of Caius and not of some other individual? Just because the singularity of a judgment does not, according to our interpretation, depend on the number of objects that fall under its subject, it is at this point possible to return to a suggestion we already have rejected earlier, namely, to contingent singularity. Although contingent singularity of a subject cannot be used as a criterion for the singularity of a judgment, it can well be used to identify the object of predication as long as the singularity of a judgment depends on something else. This condition is fulfilled here because the singularity of a judgment is due to its subject being applied singularly to an intuition. We can say that the object of this intuition is determined by the concept, which our imagination follows in constructing the intuition. We are, then, free to argue that the object of which the predicate is predicated in this singular judgment is determined by the subject concept: it is the only object that falls under it. It is, of course, possible that the determination fails, since either more than one object falls under it or none does. In such cases, the predication has no object, and the judgment is unsuccessful. Its singularity is not, however, thereby endangered.

That the object of predication is determined by the subject concept is by no means the only possibility. A kind of causal theory is also compatible with Kant's view. It could be argued that not only in perceptual singular judgments but, generally, in all singular judgments the intuition, to which the subject is applied, is caused by an object. In nonperceptual judgments, one could claim, the intuition is caused indirectly by a Kripke-style causal chain ending in some earlier perceptual singular judgment. In some cases, this explanation is even more plausible than the descriptivist one given above. We have seen that Kant sometimes has examples of singular judgments in which the subject concept is clearly not contingently singular. Our own example was the judgment that a man is running. Suppose that someone making this judgment wants somebody who does not perceive the man to entertain the same judgment. In this case, the intuition the second person produces by her imagination is naturally taken to be an intuition of the object that caused an intuition in the person who sees the man running. The nonperceiver might have the description of the object as the object of which the other person is talking about, but on the assumption that she makes the same judgment (or a judgment with the same content) as that other person, namely, that a man is running, this

description cannot be the subject of her judgment. It is plausible that the perceiver, in saying that a man is running, causes the listener's imagination to produce an intuition to which she then can apply a concept and make singular judgments about the man. If this kind of solution can be made to work we, are able to draw the conclusion that, according to Kant, in both perceptual and nonperceptual singular judgments, the subject concept is applied to an intuition, which the object has caused either directly through perception or indirectly through imagination.[21]

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NOTES

1.   See section 3 and the discussion about the concepts of extension and sphere.

2.   For example, "This house is plastered so and so" (AA XXIV:909, LL 352), "Caesar is mortal" (AA XXXIV:931, LL 371), "Caius is mortal" (AA IX:102, LL 599).

3.   Kant emphasizes that understanding, the faculty of concepts, and sensibility, the faculty of intuitions, are separate mental faculties: "[t]he understanding is not capable of intuiting anything and the senses are not capable of thinking anything" (A51/B75).

4.   In The *Blomberg Logic*, Kant uses the expression *conceptus singularis* of singular representations of immediate experience (AA XXIV:257, LL 205), but presumably he means by *conceptus* not concepts (*Begriffe*) but representations generally, as Hanna points out (2001, 209n54).

5.   It is possible that we have misinterpreted Gram, since, at the end of the article, he specifies his position that an intuition is not "a literal part of the content of judgment" as the relation between an intuition falling under a concept is not the same as that between the subject and predicate of a singular judgment even if the judgment were about an intuition falling under the predicate (1980, 180n37). The gist of this specification eludes us. It is obvious that, according to Gram, there are two kinds of judgments, namely, those that relate two concepts and those that relate an intuition and a concept. Presumably universal and particular judgments are of the former and singular of the latter type. If the intuition, which we in a singular judgment relate to its predicate concept, is not, after all, "literally" the subject of a singular judgment, it must have a concept as its subject. And now the question arises: how do we relate the intuition to this concept? Since intuitions are related to concepts by singular judgments, we should have another judgment that relates the intuition to this concept and so on, *ad infinitum*, unless we at some point have a singular judgment, which has the intuition as its subject. If this is not possible, we cannot make singular

judgments; but if it is possible, why claim that intuitions are not "literal" parts of judgments?

6. Henry Allison seems to agree with Gram's view. see Allison 1973, 72.

7. Hanna writes that, "[i]n Kant's Critical formulations, the logical subject of a judgment is not the object itself but rather an intuition that immediately delivers an individual object as the referent of the subject term" (2001, 61).

8. To be fair, it is not quite clear that this really is Hanna's view, since later in the same monograph he seems to suggest that subjects of singular judgments are, in fact, somewhat like definite descriptions (Hanna 2001, 208). On the other hand, in an article "Kant and Nonconceptual Content," he writes that "[j]udgements are higher-order self-consciously unified complex representations . . . that are systematically composed of concepts, intuitions and logical forms . . . " (2005, 256), which seems to confirm that our reading of what he says is correct after all.

9. We have translated, following Guyer and Wood, the term *Umfang* as "extension." This can be criticized, since it is not clear whether, according to Kant, the *Umfang* of a concept consists of the objects that fall under it. Robert Hanna's translation, by contrast, in *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy* is "comprehension" (2001, 52), which is even more problematic. The comprehension of a concept, according to the *Logic of Port Royal*, consists of its constituent concepts (Arnauld and Nicole 1662/1996, pt. I, ch. 6), which is true of the *Inhalt* of a concept but not by any means of its *Umfang*.

10. The same idea can be found elsewhere as well, for example, in *Jäsche Logic* (AA IX:102, LL 598).

11. In *Vienna Logic*, Kant says that "[t]he extension (*Umfang*) of a concept is a sphaera (*Sphaera*)" (AA XXIV:911); and in *Jäsche Logic*, he seems to be using them interchangeably: "The more the things that stand under a concept and can be thought through it, the greater is its extension (*Umfang*) or sphere (*Sphäre*)" (AA IX:96). By this warrant, we take them to be synonyms.

12. In G. F. Meier's *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre* (§262; AA XI:72), one finds the following: "Der Inbegriff aller Begriffe, die unter einen abgesonderten Begriffe enthalten sind, ist der Umfang desselben (*sphaera notionis*)." Moritz Wilhelm Drobisch, in the nineteenth century, still uses essentially the same concept of *Umfang*: "Die Gesammtheit der in bestimmter Ordnung durch Determination mit einander verbundenen Merkmale eines Objectbegriffs heisst seine Inhalt (*complexus*); die geordnete Gesamtheit aller einander beigeordneten Arten desselben sein Umfang (*ambitus*)" (*Neue Darstellung der Logik*, 29).

13. See, for example, *Discours de la Metaphysique*, §8 (Leibniz 1989, 40–41).

14. See, for example, the following: *Jäsche Logic*, §11 (AA IX:97: LL 595); *Dohna-Wundlacken Logic* (AA XXIV:755, LL 488; *Vienna Logic* (AA XXIV:911, LL 354).

15. A more profound reason for Kant not to accept the existence of lowest concepts is his view that purely conceptual individuation of at least empirical objects is impossible. Kant's most elaborate discussion of this issue occurs in

the *Amphiboly* in connection with his argument against the principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles (A264/B320).

16.   Hanna also considers the suggestion that what he calls "accidentally individual concepts" function as subjects of singular judgments (Hanna 2001, 204). He rejects the view, but his reasons seem to be somewhat different from ours (and Bolzano's). For Hanna, the essential point is that "the application of [accidentally individual concepts] to objects is always logically parasitic upon the existence of intuitions." This could still mean that the presence of accidentally individual concepts is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for singularity, and thus a part of the account of singular judgments. We think that the whole issue of contingent singularity is, in the end, irrelevant for Kant's view of singular judgments.

17.   Reference to the concept of use in connection with singular judgments has been made by Manley Thompson (1972, 317), Houston Smit (2000, 262n46), and Robert Hanna (2001, 208), to mention just a few. That concepts can be used singularly despite their generality recalls Keith S. Donnellan's notion of referential use of definite descriptions. Before Kant, George Berkeley introduced a comparable view in his criticism of John Locke's theory of abstract ideas. We thank the editor/referee for pointing out these connections.

18.   There appears to be a close relationship between what we are trying to catch and what Kant calls the *positing an object in relation to a concept* (for example, in B627), since it seems that, to be able to predicate a property of an existent object, one needs at least to *posit* it, that is, to take it to exist. We are not able to decide whether the act of *positing* an object really is the relation between a concept and an intuition about which Kant discusses also in B92, so we have decided to go for *application*. In *Vienna Logic*, Kant himself uses the term *to apply* in a very similar sense as we do: "For what holds of many things [a concept] can also be applied to [*angewendet*] an individual case" (AA XXIV:908, LL 352).

19.   Another recent writer who suggests something close to this is Michael Wolff. He makes a distinction between predicative and nonpredicative use of concepts in judgments (Wolff 1995, 81).

20.   This is what Kant calls *productive imagination*; see, for example, B152.

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