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Negation and Judgment in Joseph Geysler

Aristotelian Research in the 19th Century

Abstract: At the beginning of the 20th century the Neo-Scholastic philosopher Joseph Geysler attempted to reform logic through a return to an Aristotelian point of view, in full recognizance and explicit rejection of both the phenomenological approach and that of Frege and Russell. Geysler gives Aristotelian analyses of judgment, negation, and of the role of the copula. ~~In a judgment it is said that a state of affairs belongs to a conceptually determinate object.~~ In this chapter Christian Pfeiffer goes through Geysler's arguments and points out how his attempt to revive Aristotelian logic can be seen as, among other things, the persistence of a conception of logic which is broad and includes what we would today call "theory of language and ontology".

I Introduction

1.1 The Question concerning Logic

In his contribution to the *Festschrift* for Eduard Zeller's 70th birthday, Wilhem Windelband writes that

the transformation [*Umwälzung*] which logic is presently undergoing, [... is] at no point so visible as in the system of the forms of judgment. [...] The point of departure for this perhaps long unfinished movement lies in the Achilles' heel of Kant's philosophy: in Kant's logical prejudice.¹

Were only the first part of the sentence read, Windelband could be thought a prophet. A few years later, logic was in fact fundamentally "transformed" through the propositional calculus and predicate logic established by Frege and Russell. However, what must surprise the logicians and philosophers schooled in Frege and Russell is the area in which Windelband sees the revolu-

¹ Windelband (1884), 167: "Die Umwälzung, in der sich die Logik gegenwärtig befindet, (...) an keinem Punkt so sichtbar, wie an dem System der Urtheilsformen [sei]. (...) Der Ausgangspunkt dieser vielleicht für lange noch nicht abgeschlossenen Bewegung liegt an der Achillesferse der Kantischen Philosophie: in Kants logischem Vorurtheil."

tion in logic. Few logicians and philosophers would locate the originality and progress of the Frege-Russell tradition in the system of the forms of judgment or in negative judgment, which Windelband particularly emphasizes. The simple explanation is of course that Windelband speaks of another transformation which he saw as underway then, but which is almost forgotten today.

Windelband refers to authors such as Sigwart and Lotze (among others), authors who attempted, against Kant, to reunite logic with metaphysics and epistemology. What Windelband here calls Kant's "prejudice" is, from the point of view of these philosophers, the assumption that logic is a "formal" science. The supposed transformation is directed against this tradition.²

In this essay the debate will be traced through the example of Joseph Geysers's theory of negative judgment. Joseph Geysers (1869 – 1948) suggests himself for consideration for both historical and systematic reasons. Historically, because he is in a series of authors such as Trendelenberg, Sigwart or Lotze who opposed "Kant's logical prejudice"³ and wanted to argue for a logic intertwined with ontology and epistemology. An interest in Geysers in particular is justified because he argues for this conception of logic in the knowledge of modern rivals such as Frege and Russell and the phenomenological movement, starting from Brentano, to Husserl or Reinach. And as regards systematic reasons, Geysers explicitly appeals to Aristotle and this allows the study, in an exemplary fashion, of how Aristotelian thoughts are taken up in this debate. Accordingly, Geysers's Aristotelianism is not naive and uncritical but is established as a genuine counter-position to Frege and Russell and to phenomenology.⁴

It goes without saying that Geysers's project was ultimately doomed to failure. Today, philosophical logic is primarily based on the Frege-Russell tradition and, for a few, on the phenomenological movement. However, even a failed project may merit consideration. It is capable of showing that the history of philosophy was more polyphonic than one usually thinks. It is also capable of showing that these authors put forward theories that were coherent and well-grounded in themselves. And finally, I think that it can also be seen in Geysers how Aristotelian positions can be modified and further developed in argument.

2 I do not mean to say with this that the positions of the above mentioned philosophers coincide with each other. This is certainly not the case. However they have a similar project and questions, as I want to make clear in the following.

3 Windelband (1884), 167.

4 See Smith (1978) for an essay that outlines the connection between these two movements using the theme of negative states of affairs.

In the following I wish, first of all, to describe Geyser's Aristotelianism (section I.2) and to sketch the generally Aristotelian roots of "objective logic".⁵ This will provide the framework for the detailed study of negative judgment in section II.

I.2 Geyser's Aristotelianism

Joseph Geyser writes, in the foreword to the revision of Geyser (1909a), that:

(T1) I have thus not needed to change my basic conception. I still profess an objective conception of logic determined through Aristotelianism and realism, that means, I consider the general forms and laws of thinking as dependent on the **relationship to the purpose** of reconstructively knowing ideal and real being.⁶

This is a programmatic remark and should be seen as such. Without this general methodological setting Geyser's views must remain incomprehensible. That obviously does not mean that Geyser's understanding of logic or philosophy is only shaped by Aristotle. Certainly there are other influences, but it can nonetheless be maintained that Geyser's theory is essentially shaped by this. And, as was said above, it is this that makes engagement with his theory interesting. For, despite knowledge of modern theories and conceptions of logic, Geyser still prefers the foundation of Aristotelianism.⁷ One concern of this essay is to show that there are good and systematic grounds for taking such a conception seriously and that an examination of this philosopher who was inspired by Aristotle is capable of providing a contribution that transcends purely historical interest. It is a contribution that obviously cannot consist in a rejection of the formal logic based on Frege-Russell – this must in fact be seen as naivety on Geyser's part. But it can show, on the one hand, that a *philosophy* of logic and of judgment cannot only consist in purely formal considerations, but must establish reference to more general ontological or epistemological considerations. And on the other hand, it shows that a source of such considerations can be of Aristotelian inspiration. And this in a double sense: in that for one thing it shows how Aristotelian

5 Geyser (1919), V.

6 Geyser (1919), V: "Meine Grundauffassung habe ich dabei nicht zu ändern gebraucht. Nach wie vor bekenne ich mich zu einer durch Aristotelismus und Realismus bestimmten gegenständlichen Auffassung der Logik; d. h. ich betrachte die allgemeinen Formen und Gesetze des Denkens als abhängig von der Beziehung auf den Zweck, das ideale und reale Sein nachschaffend zu erkennen."

7 On this see especially Geyser (1909b) where he reviews modern approaches in logic.

thoughts can be found transformed in Geysler and for another it shows how Aristotle's logic may in general be taken up in a systematic way.

1.3 Aristotelianism and Logic

Geysler wants to present an “objective logic” which is shaped by Aristotle's conception of logic. However, what is meant here by the word “logic”? As the above citation suggests, logic is, according to Geysler, occupied with the general “forms and laws of thinking”. While it is true that these laws of thinking are general, they are not to be equated with the formality of formal logic. In fact Geysler explicitly turns against formal logic (Russell, Frege) since it is, according to him, the “purest formalism”.⁸

One of Geysler's critical points, although one which is not wholly accurate, is that logical formalism remains empty precisely because it disregards all content of concepts.⁹ For our purposes this critique is informative because with it the second component of Geysler's conception of logic moves into view. Logic is oriented towards the structure of objects. In other words, if the task of logic is to recreate real or ideal being, then, according to Geysler, a purely formal theory focused on mathematics does not suffice. This treats, according to Geysler, concepts only insofar as they have a domain that includes other concepts. But it does not question what the structure of these concepts is or how this structure is prescribed by objects.

From a modern-day perspective, Geysler's critique is hard to understand and unconvincing. He seems to think that logic is primarily based on extensional relations between concepts. Nevertheless these brief remarks are important for the specific elements of the “objective logic”¹⁰ that become apparent in his criticism of formal logic. Ultimately another understanding of what logic really is underlies Geysler's conceptions. Geysler's understanding of the task of logic is shaped by the direction Windelband characterized in the citation above. And so it is no wonder that Geysler also rejects the Kantian determination of logic as the “form of thinking” alone, without taking into account the objects of thought. His logical project aims to show that logic is essentially intertwined with epistemology, linguistic philosophy and metaphysics.¹¹

⁸ Geysler (1909b), 132.

⁹ See Geysler (1909b), 132.

¹⁰ Geysler (1919), 197.

¹¹ Compare Geysler (1917), 46.

(T2) Aristotle's logic seeks nothing less than disregarding objects in its investigations and determinations. It is rather thoroughly [...] oriented by the nature of the objects of knowledge.¹²

(T3) In truth, however, Aristotle's logic comprises its own region of theoretical investigations and thus forms a determinate part of philosophy. It researches the general nature of the concept, judgment and inference, organizes these forms of thinking into their species and determines the basic laws on which the truth of thinking depends.¹³

Here logic is not to be understood as a formal system which has ~~core~~ concepts such as validity or deduction. According to Geysler, logic also comprises more general investigations that one would nowadays more readily reckon as belonging to the domains of philosophy of language and ontology.¹⁴

Since "the general nature of the concept, judgment and inference" can only be determined in connection with their ontological correlates, logic is not sharply distinguished from ontology. So, for example, judgment can only be correctly determined when one takes into account the structure of that about which the judgment is made and so also the content and objects of judgment. This point will be central to the determination of negative judgment in the following. Geysler himself sometimes expresses this interrelation with the concept of derivation:

(T4) The essence of objective logic lies in the scientific determination of the essence, the species and the laws of the forms of thinking through derivation from the determinations and differentiations of the objects of knowledge and their states of affairs.¹⁵

"Derivation" must not, of course, be understood as logical deduction. In this context "derivation" means that objects and states of affairs possess an explan-

12 Geysler (1917), 46: "Die Logik des Aristoteles bemüht sich um nichts weniger als darum, bei ihren Untersuchungen und Bestimmungen von den Gegenständen abzusehen. Sie ist vielmehr durch und durch an der Natur der Erkenntnisgegenstände (...) orientiert."

13 Geysler (1917), 47: "In Wahrheit umfaßt aber die Logik des Aristoteles einen eigenen Umkreis theoretischer Untersuchungen, und bildet darum einen bestimmten Teil der Philosophie. Sie erforscht die allgemeine Natur von Begriff, Urteil und Schluß, teilt diese Formen des Denkens in ihre Arten ein, und bestimmt die Grundsätze, von denen die Wahrheit des Denkens abhängt."

14 Nevertheless the emphasis here lies on the "nowadays". For Geysler's conception of logic was more common in the 19th century. Reconstructing this would be a philosophically worthwhile project and, as mentioned in the introduction, the present essay can be understood as a small step in this direction.

15 Geysler (1919), 197: "Das Wesen der gegenständlichen Logik liegt in der wissenschaftlichen Bestimmung des Wesens, der Arten und der Gesetze und Denkformen durch die Ableitung aus den Bestimmtheiten und Verschiedenheiten der Gegenstände der Erkenntnis und ihrer Sachverhalte."

atory primacy, in that the analysis of logically basic concepts must begin by an analysis of its objects. Geysler clarifies this with the example of the carpenter. Just as a carpenter must respond to the nature of the wood ~~and to the nature of his objects more generally~~ in making furniture, so too must the logician respond to his “material”, the structure of objects.

II On the Theory of Judgment

A theory of judgment is an essential component of logic for Geysler. ~~And his~~ theory of judgment, like his understanding of logic, is shaped by Aristotle. Consequently the theory of judgment too is oriented towards objects, like logic generally. Briefly put, judging for Geysler is “thinking of states of affairs [*Sachverhaltsdenken*]”:

(T5) It is necessary for judgment that the relationship is conceived as an objective one, that means, a relationship that is related to determinate objects in that it exists between them.¹⁶

(T6) Thus judgment, according to its essence, is defined as a thought that refers to a determinate state of affairs of a determinate object.¹⁷

A judgment is a thought (or more accurately thought-content) that expresses a relationship between an object and a state of affairs concerning it. For example, the judgment “the rose is red” expresses a relationship between the rose and being red. It expresses the state of affairs of the rose’s being red, which is a state of affairs concerning the rose. Here an idiosyncrasy in Geysler’s use of “state of affairs” must be noted. As will be explained in greater detail below, he sometimes maintains that a judgment as a whole expresses the state of affairs, the rose’s being red. More technically, he maintains that the state of affairs is *the being red* and it is the state of affair *of* an object, the rose. In this technical usage, in a judgment a state of affairs is attributed to an object. In this sense, one can say that a state of affair expresses how things stand with respect to an object. The judgment is true ~~to the extent that~~ the state of affairs holds, as it is stated. Insofar as the state of affairs is not as it is stated, the judgment is false. We have, with this, named the general characteristics of judgment: A judgment is a

¹⁶ Geysler (1922), 139: “Nötig ist zum Urteil, daß die Beziehung als eine gegenständliche erfaßt sei, d. h. als eine solche, die auf bestimmte Objekte als eine zwischen ihnen bestehende bezogen ist.”

¹⁷ Geysler (1922), 126: “Das Urteil ist somit seinem Wesen nach zu definieren als ein Gedanke, der auf einen bestimmten Gegenstand einen bestimmten Sachverhalt bezieht.”

statement of a state of affairs that is true or false. It should be noted that in this determination of judgment Geysler intends to make an explicit connection to Aristotle.

(T7) The conception of judgment not only corresponds to the objective relation [*dem objektiven Verhältnis*], as I have just shown, but also to that conception that Aristotle had of judgments, when he saw its essence in a mental relationship, i.e. he sought it in a purely theoretical field.¹⁸

II.1 The Characteristics of Judgment

Judging is thus thinking states of affairs. Judgments are thoughts that state that a determinate object ~~is in a determinate state of affairs~~. If this ~~relationship exists in~~ reality, the judgment is true, if it does not, the judgment is false. In the following this will be analysed more precisely. In section II.1.1 judgment is distinguished from acceptance or rejection of some content. In section II.1.2 the concept essential to judgment, namely that of a state of affairs, is explained. Finally in section II.1.3, I explain judgment and its relationship to truth and falsity.

18 Geysler (1922), 138: “Nur so entspricht die Auffassung des Urteils nicht nur dem objektiven Verhältnis, wie ich es soeben zeigte, sondern auch jener Auffassung, die Aristoteles vom Urteile hatte, als er sein Wesen in einer gedanklichen Beziehung sah: d. h. es im rein theoretischen Gebiet suchte.” How plausible is Geysler’s view? If we concentrate on the determination of the truth of judgment we see that Geysler’s interpretation agrees with modern commentators.

(T8) For Aristotle the truth of knowledge consists in the agreement of the state of affairs asserted in judgment with the state of affairs existing in the object of judgment [So besteht für Aristoteles die Wahrheit der Erkenntnis in der Übereinstimmung des im Urteil behaupteten Sachverhalts mit dem am Gegenstande des Urteils bestehenden Sachverhalts]. (Geysler (1917), 54)

(T9) This circumstance brings it about that Aristotle’s theory of truth for assertions counts as a correspondence theory of truth in that it regards an assertion as true when and only when it ‘asserts its object to be as it is’. (Crivelli (2004), 137)

Certainly two citations cannot *prove* that Geysler has a plausible interpretation of Aristotle and one which agrees with contemporary research. Nevertheless it must be said that long stretches of Geysler (1917) need not fear comparison with commentaries that originated many years later. And in my opinion Geysler, as an interpreter of Aristotle in the narrower sense, presents ideas that are still of interest. However our main focus remains on Geysler’s own systematic explanations of judgment.

II.1.1 Judgment is Different from Acceptance and Rejection

A judgment as such is different from the rejection or acceptance of some content. A judgment is the having of a determinate thought-content, not the acceptance or rejection of ~~some content~~. Rather misleadingly, Geysler sometimes calls the content of the ~~thought of~~ judgment “representation [*Vorstellung*]”.¹⁹

(T10) In the question concerning the essence of judgment, two meanings of the expression “I judge that” must be well distinguished. In the one meaning this expression states a purely theoretical mental act, in the other, a practical one. In the first sense “I judge” means as much as “I have a representation that is true or false”. In the second sense, however, the expression means “I have taken up a stance towards a representation that is correct or incorrect”.²⁰

This distinction is important, for it prevents psychologistic misinterpretations and ensures the objectivity of judgment. In the second sense judgment is an actively taken up stance towards a content of thought. The thought “Robert Musil wrote ‘The Man without Qualities’” is true (or false). But the thought does not yet determine the stance that one can take towards this content. Thus Mary holds it to be false, because she is of the opinion that Heimito von Doderer authored ‘The Man without Qualities’. If she holds this thought to be false, she has taken a position towards this thought. It is for this reason that Geysler calls it a practical mental act. “Mary judges that Heimito von Doderer authored ‘The Man without Qualities’” expresses Mary’s stance *towards* the content “Heimito von Doderer authored ‘The Man without Qualities’”. This stance can be seen as the *holding-true* or *holding-false* of a thought-content. This is a psychological stance.

This stance is to be strictly separated from the grasping of the thought-content itself. This corresponds to the first sense of “I judge, that...”. It is not a stance towards a thought-content that is meant here, but the mere having of a thought-content. “Mary judges, that Robert Musil authored ‘The Man without Qualities’” expresses in this sense that Mary has the thought that “Robert Musil authored

¹⁹ Geysler (1922), 135: “Man muß in der Frage nach dem Wesen des Urteil zwei Bedeutungen des Ausdrucks: “Ich urteile, daß” wohl auseinanderhalten. In der einen Bedeutung wird durch diesen Ausdruck ein rein theoretischer, in der anderen ein praktischer Geistesakt ausgedrückt. In dem ersten Sinn bedeutet “Ich urteile” so viel als: “Ich habe eine Vorstellung, die wahr oder falsch ist.” In dem zweiten Sinne aber bedeutet dieser Ausdruck: „Ich habe zu einer Vorstellung eine Stellung eingenommen, die richtig oder unrichtig ist.” Misleadingly, because in contemporary usage “representation” is understood as the subjective mental episode of a person rather than as objective thought-content.

²⁰ Geysler (1922), 135 f.

“The Man without Qualities””. In this case no statement is made as to whether Mary thinks that the thought is true or false. It is merely claimed that Mary thinks this thought. That is why Geysler calls it a ‘theoretical’ mental act. It is a mental act in which an objective content that is true or false and accessible to several people is grasped. In this sense judgment in Geysler is comparable to the grasping of a thought in Frege.

For Geysler, as opposed to Frege’s thoughts, judgments depend for their existence on thinking, as they are the *having* of a representation.²¹ Insofar as no one thinks “Robert Musil authored ‘The Man without qualities’”, this judgment does not exist. However that does not mean that the *content* of the thought is subjective. That which is thought when one judges that Robert Musil authored ‘The Man without Qualities’ is objectively determined. This is because the content of judgment is determined through its reference to a state of affairs. Thus the content is general and two people can think the same thing.

Now that the two meanings of “I judge, that...” have been differentiated, it is necessary to consider more closely the aforementioned relation between judgment and states of affairs.

II.1.2 Judgments and States of Affairs

A judgment states a state of affairs.²² The meaning of this can be clarified by contrasting concepts with judgments:

- (1) The bicycle is red.
- (2) The red bicycle...

(2) is a concept. A concept is a determination of an object. In this case an object is determined as a “red bicycle”.

(T11) Concepts are thought-contents whose intention is to make an indeterminate object a determinate or more determinate object for knowledge. [...] Concepts are thought-contents which determine (establish) something as that which it is.²³

²¹ See Geysler (1913a), 128f.: “Begriffe sind Denkinhalte, deren Intention ist, ein unbestimmtes Objekt zu einem für das Wissen bestimmten bzw. bestimmteren Objekt zu machen. (...) Begriffe sind Denkinhalte, durch die von einem bestimmt wird (festgestellt) wird, was es ist.”

²² In section II.2.2 I will set out just what is to be understood by “statement”.

²³ Geysler (1919), 48.

Concepts are accordingly neither true nor false, but refer to objects [*Objekte*] or things [*Gegenstände*].²⁴ By (2) something is determined as a red bicycle. However there no judgment is made nor is anything stated.

In (1) a state of affairs is expressed in a judgment. It is ~~stated~~ of an already conceptually determined object *that* it is something or something holds of it. In (1) it is said of a bicycle that it is red. The judgment is that the object determined conceptually as a “bicycle” is red. A judgment refers not to an object, as concepts do, but to a state of affairs. In other words: (1) refers to the bicycle’s being red. A state of affairs can thus be provisionally characterized as what is stated in the *that*-clause of a judgment. Insofar as judgments state states of affairs, one can specify the following canonical form of judgements vis-à-vis states of affairs: A person judges of an X, that [state-of-affairs]. The aforementioned state of affairs is embedded in the *that*-clause as an assertoric statement.²⁵

Geysler thereby assumes a determinate structure of states of affairs or judgments, a structure I shall call the *Aristotelian structure*. In a judgment it is said that a state of affairs belongs to a conceptually determinate object. Geysler also calls judgment a statement about relations. He does not mean with this that a relation such as “greater than” is at issue, but that there is a relationship or relation between the subject and the predicate. The special feature of the *Aristotelian structure* can be linguistically marked through a prolepsis. Proposition (1) can accordingly be rendered more precisely as follows:

(3) The bicycle, that it is red.

Geysler himself uses the following phrases: “Extension [being] a state of affairs of matter [...] non- extended [being] a state of affairs of the soul.”²⁶ Explaining this structure and delimiting the judgment from the concept, Geysler writes:

(T12) Hence also the sense of the intention is different in concept and judgment. Concerning the concept, it consists in taking uncertainty away from the object, concerning judgment, it consists in completing already existing knowledge of the object, in that it adds new knowledge to this knowledge of the state of affairs of the object concerned. Unlike judgment, nothing is claimed as such in the concept. [...] Inversely, judgment has the meaning: “I

²⁴ Not all concepts are determinations of objects ~~to the same extent~~, for objects can be determined essentially or accidentally. However this distinction modelled on Aristotle can be ignored here.

²⁵ This canonical form is suggested by (T12).

²⁶ Geysler (1919), 45.

claim the following (positive or negative) determination also belongs to the so-and-so determined something.”²⁷

I have already discussed the difference between concepts and states of affairs above. Here Geysler’s remarks concerning states of affairs must be considered in more detail. States of affairs are always states of affairs *of an object*. ~~The state of affairs of X can be expressed as follows.~~

(4) A determinate X, that it is φ .

A judgment consists of a subject ~~or~~ an object to which a state of affairs is assigned as a predicate.²⁸ The states of affairs of an object are thus the quantity of states of affairs that belong to ~~an object~~ as a subject.

In addition, (4) is an identity criterion for judgments. The judgment “A determinate X, that it is φ ” and “A determinate Y, that it is ψ ” are different if and only if $X \neq Y$ or $\varphi \neq \psi$ (or the copula is different).²⁹

Geysler’s view of judgments raises at least three questions that I want to briefly address. First, what are the constituents of a judgment? Geysler seems to believe that judgments consist of concepts (rather than objects) plus the copula, although it is true – in a certain way – that the object itself is a constituent of the judgment. Being red is attributed to the *object*, which is a bicycle. On the other hand Geysler repeatedly stresses that the object must be already conceptually determined. And this conceptual determination is part of the judgment. “This bicycle” and “Lucy’s birthday present” is a conceptual determination of the same thing. However the judgments “This bicycle, that it is red” and “Lucy’s birthday present, that it is red” are different judgments. Hence one must presumably take the above identity-criterion more precisely: In a judgment the subject X must be already conceptually determined and, in modern terms, be embedded in intensional contexts.

²⁷ Geysler (1919), 49: “Darum ist auch der Sinn der Intention bei Begriff und Urteil ein verschiedener. Beim Begriff besteht er darin, dem Objekt die Unbestimmtheit zu nehmen, beim Urteil darin, das schon von dem Objekt vorhandene Wissen zu vervollständigen, indem zu diesem Wissen das neue Wissen der Sachverhalte des betreffenden Objektes hinzugefügt wird. Im Begriff als solchem wird nichts behauptet wie im Urteil. (...) Umgekehrt hat das Urteil den Sinn: “Von dem soundso bestimmten Etwas behaupte ich, daß ihm auch noch die folgende (positive oder negative) Bestimmtheit eigen sei.”

²⁸ What is the subject and what is the predicate is not arbitrary. Bicycle serves as the subject rather than red. Here Geysler cites Aristotle, *APo* I 22. However for our purposes we can leave the question of natural subjects ~~to one side~~ for the time being.

²⁹ See section II.2.3 on the copula.

Secondly, the question arises as to whether the subject of the judgment must exist. I have not found any explicit discussion of the presupposition of existence in Geyser.

Thirdly, the object-domain of X is conceived very broadly. Judgments too, as we will later see, can be understood as objects [*Gegenstände*] and be subjects of a judgment. It should therefore not be assumed that the object-domain of X comprises only “natural” subjects or those that would be described as substances.³⁰

In summary the *form* of judgment can be characterized as follows:

(5) A judgment is a statement regarding a determinate X , that it is φ .³¹

We have now seen that judgments express states of affairs, or more precisely that a judgment expresses that a state of affairs belongs to an object. In order to arrive at a complete theory of judgment and of negative judgment in particular, the central concept of the statement needs to be clarified along with the concept of the copula. This is the theme of section II.2.2. By way of preparation, however, the relationship of judgment to truth and falsity still needs to be clarified.

II.1.3 Truth and Falsity of Judgments

A characteristic of judgments is the following: every judgment is true or false. The truth or falsity of judgments is due to the fact that they are statements as opposed to questions. That is why one can think that judgments, insofar as they are statements, are essentially determined by truth and falsity and that a definition of judgment is explicated by using the concepts of truth and falsity.

For Geyser, however, this is not the case. The truth and falsity of judgments is a *consecutive* and not a *constitutive* characteristic of judgments.³² Judgments are not defined by the fact that they are true or false. Being true or false is not a *component* of what it is to be a judgment. And to this extent it is not a *constitutive* feature. But it *follows* from the definition of judgment that it is true or

³⁰ However in Geyser formulations to the effect that there are “natural” subjects or a hierarchy of judgments can be found. See section II.2.1.

³¹ The extent to which Geyser’s analysis can be applied to conditional judgments is not clear to me. Obviously it is difficult to bring these into canonical form. Furthermore, Geyser’s remarks in Geyser (1909b), 129 indicate that he did not wholly understand it. For him, the judgment “All circles are curves” is “If P , then Q ”. He does not see that P and Q are *propositional-variables*, as opposed to variables for *terms*.

³² See Geyser (1913b), 121.

false. To speak more precisely, it follows from the definition of judgment as a statement that it is true or false. The intention of the judgment is to state things as they are. A judgment is a thought that seeks to grasp the objectively existing state of affairs as it is. If this is successful, the judgment is true. If not, the judgment is false.³³ Thus if the judgment expresses the state of affairs as it is, then it is true.

With this Geysler presents an identity theory of the truth of judgments. If a judgment states the state of affairs as it is, then it is identical with it. This is especially important because, as we will see, the identity theory of truth motivates Geysler's assumption that negative and positive judgment are on a par with each other. How does Geysler come to this conception of truth?

First of all Geysler explains that truth is a property of the thought-content and truth and falsity arise from a relation between it and the objectively existing state of affairs.

(T13) This consists in the fact that the property of truth or respectively of falsity pertaining to the thought-content results from a relation in which one element [*Glied*] is itself and whose other element relates to it such that it binds it as generally valid.³⁴

We should remember here the relevance of the first of the above meanings [*Sinne*] of "I judge, that...". A judgment is a determinate thought-content. This in turn is generally bound by the other part, that is, the state of affairs. I understand this to mean that the state of affairs is independent of the thought-content and is superordinate to this. The "bond" is to be understood thus: the thought-content is true whenever the stated/ intended state of affairs is indeed as it is stated. In the case of a true judgment the said relation is the relation of identity:

(T14) Such a thought-content always expresses a determinate state of affairs considered by itself, that means, a determinate relation between a determinate (real or ideal) object and ~~the content thought in a determinate concept~~. This state of affairs is, however, at first glance or in itself only one that is thought, one posited within and by thinking. With the objective or actually existing state of affairs that thinking wants to grasp through it [the thought state of affairs], it necessarily shares, in and of itself, only the object of the state of affairs, because each state of affairs in thought is not thought of anything other than the object of the objective state of affairs. Both thus refer to the same identical object. It is, however, the intention of the thought state of affairs to go further towards identity

³³ I will explain in more detail this conception of the judgment-intention in section II.2.2. See in particular (T20).

³⁴ Geysler (1913b), 121: "Es besteht dieses darin, daß die Eigenschaft der Wahrheit bzw. Falschheit des Denkinhaltes aus einer Relation resultiert, deren eines Glied er selbst ist und deren anderes Glied sich zu ihm so verhält, daß es ihn allgemeingültig bindet."

and not to be other than the state of affairs as given in the object itself. If this is so, the judgment is true, if however the state of affairs associated by thought with the object is not identical with ~~that which is given~~, then the judgment is false.³⁵

Independently of whether the judgment is true or false, the judgment must be about the object whose state of affairs are concerned in the judgment. This is a condition that ensures that the judgment is about a determinate state-of-affairs at all. To return to the above example:

(3) The bicycle, that it is red.

A judgment concerning the state of affairs named in (3) is only possible if the subject of judgment is the bicycle named in (3). To put it in another way, the subject of the judgment must refer to the object whose state of affairs is expressed. This is a necessary condition for making a judgment about states of affairs at all. In the form of the judgment introduced here

(5) A judgment is a statement of a determinate X, that it is φ

means that one must, with the variable X, refer to the characterized object, such that a judgment concerning the state of affairs of X, its being φ , is made.

The truth and the falsity of the judgment is based on whether the predicate “that it is φ ” in fact expresses a state of affairs of the object. By way of illustration, we can consider the judgment that (3) the bicycle is red. The judgment is true because in addition to the grasping of the object, the property of red is also said to belong to the object. The stated state of affairs is thus not other than, i. e. is identical with, the objectively existing state of affairs. A judgment

35 Geyser (1913b), 122: “Ein solcher Gedankeninhalt drückt immer für sich betrachtet einen bestimmten Sachverhalt aus, d. h. ein bestimmtes Verhältnis zwischen einem bestimmten (realen oder idealen) Gegenstande und dem in einem bestimmten Begriff gedachten Inhalt. Dieser Sachverhalt ist aber zunächst oder an sich nur ein gedachter, ein im und vom Denken gesetzter. Mit dem objektiven oder dem wirklich bestehenden Sachverhalt, den das Denken durch ihn erfassen will, hat er darum aus sich nur den Gegenstand des Sachverhaltes notwendig gemeinsam, weil jeder gedachte Sachverhalt von keinem andern als dem Gegenstande des objektiven Sachverhaltes gedacht wird. Beide beziehen sich also auf denselben identischen Gegenstand. Jedoch ist es die Intention des gedachten Sachverhaltes, noch weiter in der Identität zu gehen, nämlich kein anderer Sachverhalt zu sein als der am Gegenstand selbst gegebene. Trifft dies zu, so ist das Urteil wahr, ist aber der vom Denken dem Gegenstande beigelegte Sachverhalt mit dem an ihm gegebenen nicht identisch, so ist das Urteil falsch.”

is therefore true if and only if the state of affairs expressed in it is identical to the objectively existing state of affairs.

These aforementioned characteristics of judgment are important mosaic stones for the overall picture of negative judgment that Geysler seeks to create. We recall that in the question concerning negative judgment, it is the first of the senses of “I judge, that...” presented in section II.1.1 that is relevant. The question is whether there is a thought-content that is negative: is there, in addition to the judgment that the bicycle is red, also the judgment, on a par with the first, that the bicycle is not green? This is to be strictly separated from the question of whether one can hold a judgment to be false. The question of whether one can have an accepting or rejecting stance towards a thought-content is not what is at issue, but rather whether there are positive as well as negative thought-contents.

Thought-contents are thus conceived objectively: a content expresses a determinate state of affairs. The sense or intention of a judgment is, one can provisionally say, to express the state of affairs as it is. This is important because it determines the judgment neither as essentially positive nor as a negative.³⁶ This is an important step towards the claim of an equal status [*Gleichordnung*] between negative and positive judgment, as will be explained later in more detail. Furthermore, a consecutive result of this determination is that the thought-content is the bearer of truth and falsity. Neither psychological states as such nor the object or state of affairs itself is the bearer of truth and falsity.³⁷ If the judgment is true, what is stated in the judgment is identical with the objectively existing state of affairs. It follows that the structure of states of affairs are isomorphic with the structure of true judgments. If a negative judgment is true, it seems to be obvious that a negative state of affairs is expressed.

II.2 Negative judgments

Following this initial characterization of judgments and states of affairs, we can pose the opening question anew: is there, in addition to positive judgment, a negative judgment that is on a par with it? The above example (5), as well as the objectual correlative, holds for affirming judgments. We can now say more precisely:

³⁶ I will lay this out in more detail in section II.2.2.

³⁷ See also Geysler's interpretation of Aristotle in Geysler (1917), 54. Geysler does not pose the question concerning the truth of states of affairs. In this he greatly differs from modern interpretations such as Crivelli (2004). This is important for the assessment of negative states of affairs.

(5) A positive/ affirmative judgment is a statement of determinate X, that it is φ .

(5*) A negative [*negatives*]/ negating [*verneinendes*] judgment is a statement of a determinate X, that it is *not* φ .

The question is thus whether (5) and (5*) are on a par [*gleichgeordnet sind*], that is to say, whether they are both elementary forms of judgment that are irreducible to one another. Geysler argues that this is so. And, as he remarks, a successful answer must fulfil two conditions.

1. The judgment “X is not φ ” is different to the judgment “it is false that X is φ ”.³⁸
2. A general characterization of judgment must be given which is neither positive nor negative.³⁹

The first condition ensures that the negative judgment cannot be traced back to a positive judgment. The second condition ensures that the negative judgment on par with positive judgment.

II.2.1 ‘It is false, that X is φ ’ versus ‘X is not φ ’

Since Geysler holds that negative judgment is in parity with positive judgment, he must assume that a negative judgment is different from a judgment in which falsity is predicated. In order to understand Geysler’s answer, the individuation criterion for judgments must be considered again: the state of affairs “A determinate X, that it is φ ” and “A determinate Y, that it is ψ ” are different if and only if $X \neq Y$ or $\varphi \neq \psi$ (or the copula is different). Let us consider the following propositions:⁴⁰

(6) It is false, that X is φ .

(7) X is not φ .

If both judgments say the same thing, then there is no negative judgment in addition to the positive. Are these judgments thus the same? According to Geysler, no. For by the identity-criterion for judgments just cited, (6) and (7) are obviously different. (6) and (7) each have different subjects and predicates. Therefore they

³⁸ See Geysler (1913a), 118.

³⁹ See Geysler (1913a), 120.

⁴⁰ For the sake of simplicity I will not use the canonical notation in (6) and (7).

are different judgments. (6) refers to the state of affairs “ X is φ ’, that it is false”. (7) refers to the state of affairs “ X , that it is not φ ”.

(T15) The two judgments, “ S is not P ” and “It is not true (or: it is false), that S is P ”, are, for this reason, not the same judgment. They both have a different logical subject as well as a different logical predicate. In the first the concept S is the subject, in the second the judgment that “ S is P ” and in latter the concept P forms the predicate, in the former the concept of truth forms the predicate.⁴¹

In this way we may see how Geysler can differentiate both judgments within his theory. A negative judgement is a judgement in which a state of affairs is denied of an object. However, the predication of falsity is a positive judgment. Here falsity is assigned to the judgment of a state of affairs.

This cumbersome formulation already suggests an objection. Geysler’s differentiation between the judgments only makes sense when the *states of affairs* expressed in the judgments are different. Now one might agree with Geysler that, *grammatically* considered, the judgments (6) and (7) are different. But surely an *ontological* distinction should not be made here. It might be thought that the state of affairs expressed in judgments (6) and (7) is the same. Why should one assume that there is both the state of affairs “ X is not φ ” as well as the state of affairs “It is false, that X is φ ”? Such an assumption seems, for reasons of ontological parsimony, problematic. For, if there is in addition to the state of affairs expressed in the judgment “ X is φ ” a distinct state of affairs expressed in the judgment “It is true, that ‘ X is φ ’”, an infinite series of new states of affairs can be constructed for every judgment: X is φ ; it is true that X is φ ; it is true, that it is true, that X is φ and so on. According to the above criterion of individuation these are altogether different states of affairs.

Geysler himself does not discuss these difficulties to the best of my knowledge. However one can perhaps to some degree justify Geysler’s implicit assumption in that he makes a clear distinction between the kinds of judgments that are carried out in (6) and (7). (6) is a meta-judgment. It is a judgment concerning another judgment. The judgment carried out in (6) presupposes (7).

(T16) The actually intended meaning of the judgment “ S is not P ” lies in the exclusion of S from the domain of P or of the characteristic P from the content of S . As in the judgment “ S

41 Geysler (1913b), 120: “Die beiden Urteile: “ S ist nicht P ”, und: “Es ist nicht wahr (oder: es ist falsch), daß S P ist”, sind auch aus dem Grunde nicht dasselbe Urteil, weil sie sowohl ein anderes logisches Subjekt als auch ein anderes logisches Prädikat besitzen. Im ersten ist der Begriff S , im zweiten das Urteil “ S ist P ” Subjekt, und in jenem bildet der Begriff P , in diesem der Begriff der Wahrheit das Prädikat.”

is P”, P is affirmed of S, so too is P immediately negated from S in the judgment “S is not P”. And only the knowledge of this being-separated of P from S gives the logical fundament to new judgment: “It is not true that S is P.”⁴²

The idea relevant to meeting the above objection is that of the “logical fundament”. Judgments of the kind “S is P” are the logical fundament for judgments of the kind “It is true that S is P”. Geysers can assume a hierarchy of judgments and states of affairs through this graduated model of logical precedence or subordination. There are certainly different ways to explicate this hierarchy, but the general idea is simple: although they are different states of affairs – there is thus an ontological and not merely a grammatical difference between (6) and (7) – these states of affairs are not independent of each other. It is rather that one of the state of affairs is the *ontological ground* of another state of affairs.⁴³

In this sense, a state of affairs such as (6) is, to take up a famous phrase, an “ontological free lunch”.⁴⁴ The ontology is indeed richer, but at the same time there is a structure of dependence that orders the world hierarchically. So there is indeed an infinite regress of states of affairs but this regress is not threatening because all higher-level states of affairs are grounded in the state of affairs of the first level. In addition, the hierarchization of states of affairs permits making a corresponding distinction between objects and properties of the first level and objects and properties of the higher levels. So it can be argued that judgments in which truth and falsity are predicated of other judgments express states of affairs of higher levels which must be grounded in lower-level states of affairs.

It can thus be said that Geysers’s conception of the individuation of states of affairs can clarify why a negative judgment of the form (6) “It is false that X is φ ” is a different judgment from the predication of falsity in judgment (7) “X is not φ ”. Moreover Geysers can meet some potential objections to his conception of the individuation of states of affairs through the assumption that basic judgments are the logical fundament for higher-order judgments.⁴⁵

⁴² Geysers (1913b), 120: “Der wirklich gemeinte Sinn des Urteils “S ist nicht P” liegt in der Ausschließung des S vom Umfange des P bzw. des Merkmals P vom Inhalt des S. Wie im Urteil “S ist P” P von S bejaht wird, so wird ebenso unmittelbar im Urteil “S ist nicht P” P von S verneint. Und nur die Erkenntnis dieses Getrenntseins des P von S gibt dem neuen Urteil: “Es ist nicht wahr, daß S P ist”, das logische Fundament.”

⁴³ For a contemporary overview on “grounding” see Correia/Schnieder (2012).

⁴⁴ Armstrong (1997), 12.

⁴⁵ Whatever the case may be, it must be remarked that Geysers’s theory here commits us to the view that the same thoughts or judgments are not expressed in the principle *duplex negatio est affirmatio*. (8) “It is not the case, that the bicycle is not red” is not the same judgment as (1) “The bicycle is red”.

II.2.2 A More General Characterization of Judgment

However, the arguments of the previous section are only a small step towards a satisfactory theory of negative judgment. As said above, it is even more important to bring to light a general characterization of judgment that is not based on the affirmative character of judgment. So as to see the significance of this condition for Geysler's thesis that they are of equal status, it can be provisionally assumed that a judgment is essentially determined through the concept of affirmation or of assigning. Thus one could, for example, argue that in a judgment an object is always *assigned* a property. However it can easily be seen that such a definition makes the determination of negative judgment impossible, for it is difficult to maintain that negative judgment *assigns* a property to the subject.⁴⁶ On the contrary, negative judgment seems to be precisely distinguished in that a property is *denied*. Thus if every judgment is determined through its affirmative character, negative judgment cannot be on a par with it.

Here one could object that it has still not been shown why a general characterization of judgment is required. One could still conceive positive judgment as an assigning and negative judgment as a denial of a property. This conception of positive and negative judgment might be essentially correct but it is unsuitable as a definition because it does not explain why it is a judgment that is spoken of in both cases. It is precisely regarding this point that Geysler criticizes Aristotle's theory:

(T17) Thus in this way Aristotle informs us of his views of the content of those statements that can be true or false, but he does not teach us about the element common to both kinds of judgment which takes concrete shape in both forms of the "connection or separation established by the understanding".⁴⁷

Geysler, like Aristotle, holds that negative and positive judgment are kinds of judgment that are irreducible to one another. He nevertheless requires that, as species of judgment, they be grasped under a common genus:

⁴⁶ On the other hand, it could be thought that negative judgment attributes a negative property to the subject. As against such a view, see "the locus of negation" in section II.2.3.

⁴⁷ Geysler (1913b), 121: "Somit unterrichtet uns Aristoteles hierdurch zwar über seine Ansicht von dem Inhalt jener Aussagen, die entweder wahr oder falsch sind, belehrt uns aber nicht über das beiden Urteilsarten gemeinsame Moment, das in den beiden Formen der "vom Verstande geschaffenen Verbindung oder Trennung" konkrete Gestalt gewinnt." Geysler is referring here, as is evident from the context of the passage, to Aristotle, *de An.* III 6.

(T18) According to our argument, positive and negative judgment are, in logical regard, two species of elementary judgment. They must relate to one another in such a way that the general essence of judgment is collectively attributed as their genus. Consequently the judgment must itself be so determined that neither the affirmation of the predicate to the subject nor the negation of it belongs to its features.⁴⁸

The decisive difficulty ~~here is so determining~~ the common genus that there is no recourse to negation or affirmation. Affirmation and negation are, according to this conception, *differentiae specificaе* that differentiate the genus of judgment. But of course the determination of the genus of judgment cannot itself contain one of these differences.

Judgment generally understood is not a judgment above and beyond positive and negative judgment. As Geyser stresses, the requirement for the determination of the genus of judgment does not, of course, imply that one can make a judgment that is neither positive nor negative. Every judgment is necessarily either negative or positive. The thesis is thus not that there is a general judgment as a third form of judgment in addition to negative and positive judgment. Rather the thesis is that ~~they both share in a general determination that distinguishes them as judgments.~~ Geyser illustrates this with the example of the triangle:

(T19) As the right-, acute- and obtuse-angled triangles are three species of flat triangle, and as accordingly no individual triangle is possible which is only “the triangle” and does not fall under one of the three types of triangle, just so the fact that every concrete judgment is either positive or negative also does not speak against the logical existence of generic judgment in general. A judgment that would only be a judgment and thus not neither positive nor negative can certainly not be carried out. Nevertheless that through which the positive judgment is a judgment can very well be identical with the general element through which the negative judgement is a judgment. Or to put it in another way: positive and negative judgments are the two forms in which the general essence of judgment is concrete and individual.⁴⁹

48 Geyser (1913b), 120: “Gemäß unserer Schlußfolgerung sind bejahendes und verneinendes Urteil in logischem Betracht zwei Arten des elementaren Urteils. Sie müssen sich mithin so zueinander verhalten, daß ihnen das allgemeine Wesen des Urteils als ihre Gattung gemeinsam zukommt. Konsequent muß sich das Urteil in einer Weise bestimmen lassen, daß zu seinen Merkmalen weder die Bejahung des Prädikates vom Subjekt noch die Verneinung gehört.”

49 Geyser (1913b), 120f.: “Wie das recht-, spitz- und stumpfwinkelige Dreieck drei Arten des ebenen Dreiecks sind, und wie dennoch kein individuell bestimmtes Dreieck möglich ist, welches nur “das Dreieck” wäre und nicht unter eine der drei Arten des Dreiecks fiel, so verschlägt es auch nichts gegen die logische Existenz des gattungsmäßigen Urteils überhaupt, daß jedes konkrete Urteil notwendig entweder ein bejahendes oder ein verneinendes ist. Ein Urteil, das nur Urteil und nicht auch entweder Bejahung oder Verneinung wäre, kann sicherlich nicht vollzogen werden. Dennoch kann das, wodurch das bejahende Urteil zum Urteil wird, sehr wohl mit dem

No triangle can exist that is not one of the three species of triangle. Nevertheless there can be a general *determination* of triangle that does not refer to any of the three species of triangle. According to Geysler, the same should apply to judgment.

Judgment generally understood as statement-intention. An essential characteristic of judgment generally understood was already *designated* in the previous section. A judgment expresses a state of affairs of an object. This must now be grasped in more detail, as it is the key to understanding judgment in general.

(T20) The intention of the judgment is to think of the state of affairs that actually exists between the content of the predicate and the object. Consequently, this intention does not contain an affirmation nor negation of predicative conceptual content of the object. Rather the intention of the judgment, according to its meaning and essence, stands above it. Whether it has to be completed as affirmation or as denial depends upon the objective state of affairs.⁵⁰

Geysler argues that a judgment is essentially determined by the intention to think the objective state of affairs. States of affairs are, as presented in section II.1.2, always states of affairs of an object. A state of affairs arises from the relation of an object to a property, the content of a predicate. A property can be attributed to an object or not. That is the basis of positive and negative judgment. We recall:

(5) A positive judgment is a statement of a determinate X , that it is φ .

(5*) A negative judgment is a statement of a determinate X , that it is *not* φ .

Positive and negative judgments are both determined through the general element of seeking to state the state of affairs as it is. This basic determination of judgment is however bound neither to the positive nor to the negative judgment. Rather it *arises*, as Geysler notes, whether the judgment is positive or negative insofar as the intention of the judgment is to express the state of affairs as it is. It is

allgemeinen Moment identisch sein, durch welches das verneinende Urteil zum Urteil wird. Oder anders ausgedrückt: Bejahung und Verneinung sind die beiden Formen, in denen das allgemeine Wesen des Urteils konkret und individuell wird.”

50 Geysler (1913b), 123: “Die Intention des Urteils ist die, zwischen dem Inhalt des Prädikates und dem Gegenstand eben den Sachverhalt zu denken, der tatsächlich zwischen ihnen besteht. Folglich ist in dieser Intention weder enthalten, den prädikativen Begriffsinhalt vom Gegenstande zu bejahen, noch auch, ihn von diesem zu verneinen. Vielmehr steht die Intention des Urteils ihrem Sinn und Wesen nach darüber. Ob sie sich als Bejahung oder als Verneinung zu vollenden hat, hängt von dem objektiven Sachverhalt ab.”

a consequence of this general intention of judgment that it is sometimes positive, as in (5), and sometimes negative, as in (6).

“Intention” must not be misunderstood as a psychological state here.⁵¹ Intention does not refer to a mental state of judging. Intention rather means that the content of a thought ~~refers to~~ a state of affairs. The content of a thought is in an intentional relationship to the state of affairs. And the particular intention of the judgment is to express the state of affairs, that is to say, to establish identity between the content of judgment and the objective state of affairs. ~~In this sense it can be said that in a judgment the content of the judgment should reach the existing state of affairs.~~

So when Mary judges that the bicycle is red, the relevant intention here is not Mary’s intention to make a judgment, although this undoubtedly also exists and explains why a judgment was made at all. The relevant intention is rather the intentional relation which exists between the content of the judgment and the objective state of affairs. The judgment that the bicycle is red ~~refers to~~ the state of affairs of the bicycle’s being red. And the particular intention of the judgment is that this relation is ~~true~~; the expressed state of affairs should be the same as the objectively existing state of affairs.

This way of applying the concept of intention also motivates Geyser’s application of the concept of statement. The characterization of judgment as statement does not imply that to judge is an “external or an internal speaking”.⁵² Geyser thinks of a statement in ~~the legal sense~~:

(T21) Concerning the choice of the term “statement”, I meant the typical usage of this word in judicial proceedings. For the intent to bring the actual facts faithfully to expression is decisive for the “statements” of the witness. And this is precisely the characteristic intention of judgment too.⁵³

Just as the intention of the ~~legal~~ statement ~~consists in getting at~~ the facts, so too the intention of judgement is to ~~express~~ the objective state of affairs. Also when Geyser speaks here of the “intent of the witness”, one should not, as the context makes clear, read this as falling back upon a psychological theory. I think that

⁵¹ This is also a criticism that Geyser aims at Reinach because he thinks that Reinach has misunderstood the intention of the judgment as psychological. See Geyser (1913a).

⁵² Geyser (1913b), 123.

⁵³ Geyser (1913b), 123: “Zu der Wahl der Bezeichnung ‘Aussage’ bestimmt mich vielmehr die charakteristische Benützung dieses Wortes in der Gerichtsverhandlung. Ist ja doch für die ‘Aussage’ des Zeugen die Absicht maßgebend, den wirklichen Tatbestand treu zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Und eben dies ist auch die charakteristische Intention des Urteils.”

one should rather understand Geysler's remark as saying that a witness statement *qua* witness statement aims to report a fact. When one says that a witness has the intent of getting at the objective fact, one does not make a statement about what occurs in the heads of the individual witnesses. It is a determination of what a witness and a witness statement are. Geysler's characterization of judgment in general must be understood against this background:

(T22) A judgment is a statement about objective states of affairs.⁵⁴

The intention of the judgment, namely to express the state of affairs as it is, makes the thought-content into a judgment. The intention of the judgment is to think the states of affairs of the object, that means, its relation to different properties as they exist in reality. This is a general definition of judgment. It applies to both negative as well as to positive judgment and characterizes them as judgments. However, as required, it does not make reference to either the positive or the negative character of the two species of judgment.

II.2.3 Negative Judgment and the Copula

Geysler can provide ~~both a~~ general determination of judgment that comprises positive and negative judgment as well as ~~distinguishing~~ a negative judgment from a positive judgment in which falsity is predicated. However this is not an answer to the question of what is specific to negative judgment and how this is supposed to be possible. The analysis carried out up to this point makes available essential conceptual equipment which we can draw upon, but it is not yet a philosophically satisfying answer. The remainder of this essay will provide this answer. A central ~~position~~ will be ~~occupied here by~~ the analysis of the copula and the predicate which figure in judgment. A judgment is, as just noted, determined by ~~the intention of the statement~~ – the intention to state the objective state of affairs as it is. Central to Geysler's theory of negative judgment is his view that the intention of the statement is concretized in the copula. The general function of the copula is thus to express the relationship that an object in a state of affairs has to a property. A judgment is therefore tripartite: It consists of subject, predicate and the copula. This last expresses the relationship in which the subject and the predicate stand.

⁵⁴ Geysler (1913b), 123: "Ein Urteil ist eine Aussage über objektive Sachverhalte."

(T23) In contrast [i. e. to Sigwart], however, we can now show in an easy way that three parts belong to every judgment. These are 1. the object, 2. the concept used for the statement and 3. the intention, linked to this concept, of thinking the relationship which exists between its content and that object. Of these three parts, the object constitutes the subject of judgment, the stated concept the predicate and the copula is ~~formed by the intention of the statement~~ which ~~qualifies it as~~ a predicate. In negative judgment the copula is by no means negated and abolished. It rather remains in it just as in positive judgment. The affirmation of positive judgment as well as the negation of the negative are a further moment taken up in the copula, namely as the concrete implementation of the intention or as the ~~determination in fact~~ of the intended state of affairs.⁵⁵

The central statement is that in negative judgment the copula is not abolished. In negative judgment the copula is not *negated* but *negation* occurs as an additional moment of the copula. ~~It is the concrete determination of the state of affairs.~~ This must now be explained.

The copula as statement-intention. With the distinction between a *negated* copula and *negation* as concrete implementation of the copula, Geysers addresses the basic problem which clung to theories such as Sigwart's. For Sigwart

(T24) negation always [directs] itself against the attempt at a synthesis and thus presupposes a somehow externally approaching or internally originating demand to connect subject and predicate.⁵⁶

This theory is unsatisfactory because it immediately raises the question of the extent to which we can speak of a judgment at all when the copula is negated. How is this separation different from that of an enumeration? What is the difference between the judgment "The bicycle is not red" and the list "bicycle, red"?

55 Geysers (1913), 125: "Demgegenüber vermögen wir jedoch ungezwungen zu zeigen, daß zu jedem Urteil drei Glieder gehören. Diese sind 1. der Gegenstand, 2. der zur Aussage verwendete Begriff und 3. die an diesen Begriff geknüpfte Intention, das Verhältnis zu denken, welches zwischen seinem Inhalt und jenem Gegenstand besteht. Von diesen drei Gliedern bildet der Gegenstand das Subjekt des Urteils, der genannte Begriff das Prädikat und die ihn zum Prädikat erhebende Aussage-Intention die Kopula. Im verneinenden Urteil wird mithin die Kopula mitnichten verneint und aufgehoben. Sie bleibt vielmehr in ihm genau so bestehen wie im positiven Urteil. Die Bejahung des positiven Urteils sowohl wie die Verneinung des negativen treten zur Kopula als weiteres Moment hinzu, nämlich als konkrete Ausführung der Intention oder als die faktische Bestimmung des intendierten Sachverhaltes."

56 Sigwart (1893), 150: "...[richtet] sich [die Verneinung] immer gegen den Versuch einer Synthesis, und setzt also eine irgendwie von aussen herangekommene oder innerlich entstandene Zuzumuthung, Subject und Prädicat zu verknüpfen, voraus."

Frege famously parodied theories such as Sigwart's in the essay *Verneinung* with the image of cutting a piece of paper.⁵⁷

A satisfactory theory of negative judgment can thus not be based on assuming that in negative judgment, as opposed to positive judgment, subject and predicate are not connected. Geysler, who places negative judgment on the same logical level as positive judgment, stresses for this reason that in negative judgment too subject and predicate are connected. The link between subject and predicate through the copula is present both in positive as well as in negative judgment. They are distinguished, however, through the "concrete implementation of the intention or [...] the factual determination of the intended state of affairs".⁵⁸ Since both the positive and the negative judgment are constituted by the general intention of the statement to say the state of affairs as it is,⁵⁹ and since the state of affairs too can be positive or negative, the relationship of the subject and the predicate of judgment can be determined in two ways by the copula. The copula can thus factually determine the states of affairs in two ways, as Geysler notes.

It follows from this that in a negative judgment too the copula is present. Depending on the quality of the judgment, the copula is present in a "special form", as Geysler says:

(T25) Thus the affirmation or negation is not a new component standing over and above the copula, but they are the copula itself, though each in a special form.⁶⁰

The copula connects in both negative and in positive judgment. It may sound cumbersome to speak of a negative link. However, this can be somewhat mitigated if the theoretical function of the copula is envisioned together with Geysler's views of predication:

(T26) Accordingly, to predicate means to classify the content of a certain concept in the state of affairs of a determinate object.⁶¹

⁵⁷ See Frege (2003), 70.

⁵⁸ Geysler (1913b), 125.

⁵⁹ See also (T28).

⁶⁰ Geysler (1913b), 125: "Deshalb ist die Bejahung oder Verneinung nicht ein neuer Urteilsbestandteil gegenüber der Kopula, sondern sie sind die Kopula selbst, aber je in einer speziellen Form."

⁶¹ Geysler (1913b), 132: "Prädizieren heißt demnach, den Inhalt eines gewissen Begriffes den Sachverhalten eines bestimmten Gegenstandes einordnen."

Every judgment involves predication. The kind of predication is determined by the copula. There are two ways of classification, depending on whether the concept belongs to an object or not. The function of the copula in judgment is thus to bring the object and the concept into the relation which objectively exists. Concepts are applied to objects by the copula. This takes the form of positive or negative predicates.⁶²

(5*) A negative judgment is a statement of a determinate X , that it is *not* φ .

In (5*) the not-being- φ is predicated of X , that is to say, φ is classified in the states of affairs of X . For the existing state of affairs of X is that it is not φ and precisely this relationship is expressed through the copula. The copula classifies the state-of-affairs “that it is *not* φ ” in the states-of-affairs of the object X .

The place of negation. The thought, essential to Geysers theory, that the copula relates concepts to objects in the form of predicates, must be further explained. To this end, it is necessary to determine the place of negation. If the place of negation is correctly determined, it can be seen that the putative paradox of negative connection dissolves and that negative judgment contains a genuine predication.

(T27) That which is to be understood by state of affairs is what is stated in the judgment about the object. That is why the state of affairs is the predicate of judgment while the previously mentioned predicate concept is only a component part of the predicate. In the judgment “The cornflower is blue”, “blue” is not the predicate but rather “being-blue”; in the judgment “A lies on the left of B” it is not “left” but rather “lying on the left of B” that is the predicate.⁶³

According to Geysers, in a judgment the state of affairs itself is the predicate and not merely the concept that is stated about an object. The concept that occurs in a judgment is intended in the predicate concept. In Geysers example, this is “blue”. However, the predicate in the proper sense is the entire state of affairs. This is why negation, strictly speaking, does not concern the copula but the state of affairs. The copula is the intention to state the objectively existing

62 ●●●●

63 Geysers (1913b), 389: “Unter dem Sachverhalt ist dasjenige zu verstehen, was im Urteil vom Gegenstande ausgesagt wird. Daher ist der Sachverhalt das Prädikat des Urteils, während der vorhin erwähnte Prädikatsbegriff nur ein Bestandteil des Prädikates ist. In dem Urteil “die Kornblume ist blau” ist nicht “blau”, sondern das “Blausein” Prädikat; im Urteil “A liegt links von B” ist nicht “links”, sondern das “Links-von-B-gelegen-sein” Prädikat.”

state of affairs of the subject of judgment. And to the extent that it is the state of affairs of X not to be φ , that which is negated is the state of affairs.

(T28) For the intention, namely the statement of the objective state-of-affairs, remains completely in positive validity. What is negated is not the intentional relation (“copula”) between the stated and the objective state of affairs but the state of affairs, or more accurately the co-belonging of the conceptual content, to that which is the object.⁶⁴

This can be made clear with the following examples.

(9) The soul, that it is not mortal.

(10) The soul, that is it immortal.

(11) The soul, that it is non-mortal.

(12) It is not the case: the soul is mortal.

(10) is not a negative judgment, but a positive one. In (10) the property of immortality is predicated of the soul. The corresponding state of affairs is: the soul, that it is immortal. Similarly (11) is not a negative judgment. Here the negation refers to the predicate concept, not to the entire predicate. In (12) negation is a propositional operator. It refers to the proposition “The soul is mortal”. Only (9) is a negative judgment in the proper sense. In (9), mortality’s belonging to the state of affairs of the soul is negated.

(9) The soul, that it is *not* mortal.

Here the negation refers to the *being*-mortal of the soul. It is thus neither said that the state of affairs, namely that the soul is mortal, does not exist nor does it say that the negated predicate “not-mortal” is attributed to the soul. It is said that that *it is not* mortal is a state of affairs of the soul.

The predication of a negative state of affairs thus arises, according to Geysler, because a determinate conceptual content determines a state of affairs together with the copula and is stated as the predicate of an object.

(T29) It is of course obvious that the copula and the predicate belong to each other, in that the copula without a predicate is empty, the predicate without copula is blind. The predi-

⁶⁴ Geysler (1913b), 126: “Denn die Intention: Aussage des objektiven Sachverhaltes, bleibt völlig in positiver Geltung. Was verneint wird, ist nicht die intentionale Beziehung (“Kopula”) des ausgesagten auf den objektiven Sachverhalt, sondern der Sachverhalt, oder genauer die Zugehörigkeit des Begriffsinhaltes zu dem, was der Gegenstand ist.”

cate implements what the copula intends, the copula for its part gives the predicate the judgmental directedness towards the subject, thus precisely making the predicate [in so doing].⁶⁵

Through the intention of the copula, the state of affairs of the object (soul) is expressed as it is: the conceptual content (mortality) is negatively related to the object (the soul). The (complete) predicate thus is the negative state of affairs (“that it is not mortal”) predicated of the soul.

Two questions for Geyser’s theory. At this point (at least) two questions arise for Geyser’s theory of negative judgment. The first is that the assumption of a negating copula may still seem bizarre. How can a negative connection be thought? Is this not a *contradictio in adjecto*? One can also give expression to this idea by saying that that (9)-(12) necessarily have the same truth value. Should it not be assumed that the propositions are equivalent and that (9) is only another way of writing (12)? For another thing, Geyser assumes not only that negative and positive judgments, but also that negative states of affairs and positive states of affairs are on a par ontologically. How can this assumption be justified? The first question can be understood as a criticism of Geyser’s giving negation too great a role. It is important that the relationship between predicate and subject is negated. But the question of how exactly this happens is meaningless. The second question raises doubts about the ontology presupposed by Geyser in his theory of judgment.

Let us turn to the first question. I think that it goes back in part to considerations set out in section II.2.1. Ultimately one can say that there too the propositions

(6) It is false, that X is φ .

(7) X is not φ .

necessarily possess the same truth-value. However, it was already explained above that judgments are not individuated through their truth value but through the state of affairs to which they refer. The same thus holds for propositions (9)-(12). Accordingly it can be argued here too that there are different judgments by means of the individuation-criterion for judgments. However this would hardly satisfy the critics because this answer appears to be equivalent to a *petitio prin-*

⁶⁵ Geyser (1913a), 391: “Denn daß Kopula und Prädikat zueinander gehören, indem die Kopula ohne Prädikat leer, das Prädikat ohne Kopula blind wäre, ist selbstverständlich. Das Prädikat führt aus, was die Kopula intendiert, die Kopula andererseits gibt dem Prädikat die urteilsmäßige Richtung auf das Subjekt, und macht es dadurch eben zum Prädikat.”

cipii. For the question is not so much that of whether one can *designate* a difference between propositions (9)-(12). Certainly that is possible, as was just observed. The question is rather ~~that of~~ whether the distinction between the propositions can be *explained* in a meaningful way. How can the distinction between a negative state of affairs and the negation that refers to the entire proposition be understood?

Perhaps it is helpful to clarify this distinction by means of a concrete example:⁶⁶ Suppose there are the elements a ; b ; c as well as the corresponding sets $\{a\}$, $\{b\}$, $\{c\}$, $\{a; b\}$, $\{b; c\}$, $\{a; c\}$, $\{a; b; c\}$ and so on. The following applies to every element and every set: either the element is contained in the set or not. If an element is contained in a set, this relation is expressed by e . If an element is not contained in a set, this relation is expressed by ϵ . For example:

$$(13) a e\{a; b; c\}$$

$$(14) a \epsilon \{b; c\}$$

In this system the relations e and ϵ are primitive. They cannot be derived from others but indicate the two basal relations between elements and sets. It can also be said that it is not denied that there is a relation between a and $\{b; c\}$ in (14). On the contrary, a and $\{b; c\}$ stand in a relation, namely the relation ϵ . This relation implies that a is not contained in $\{b; c\}$. So understood, the relation ϵ is on a par with the relation e . The reader will have noticed that we have established a set-theoretical model of Geysler's theory of judgment here. a ; b ; c correspond to the objects, the sets $\{a\}, \{b\}, \{c\}$ correspond to the concepts that can be stated through the copula as affirming or negating states of affairs of objects. This was expressed through the relations ϵ and e in our example. It is not the case that we cannot understand the relation ϵ or that the properly basic relation – whatever that should mean – is e . Just as e and ϵ are the two basic relations that exist between elements and sets, so the copula in Geysler expresses the two basic kinds of states of affairs, namely *that X is φ* and *that X is not φ* . If we take one ~~theory~~ as meaningful, we should take the other ~~theory~~ as meaningful too.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ I owe this example to Karl-Georg Niebergall.

⁶⁷ Using this example, Aristotle's conception of predication and the copula, as it is presented in the *Analytica Priora*, can be understood: "I call a ~~terminus~~ that into which a statement can be analysed [*zerlegen*], namely into that which is stated (as predicate) and of which it (as of a subject) is stated, in that one adds 'is' or 'is not'" (Aristotle, *APr.* I 1, 24b16–17). It is also clear here that there are two ways of combining subject and predicate that are of equal status. Aristotle does not apply negation here as propositional operator, but as copula between two terms. Geysler's theory is also close to the Aristotelian view in this respect.

Nor ~~can it be~~ an ~~objected~~ to the theory that in another system proposition (13) can be expressed by

$$(15) \sim(a \in \{b; c\})$$

(15) is neither “more natural” or “more understandable” than (14), nor does it imply that (14) is “in truth” an abbreviation of (15). For, equally plausibly, (15) can be understood as an abbreviation of

$$(16) \sim (a \notin \{a; b; c\})$$

Negative states of affairs. This example, which is to illustrate the equal status [*Gleichordnung*] of positive and negative judgments, is thus capable of justifying the assumption of negative states of affairs. For – and here return to our point of departure – according to Geysers the separation of logical-linguistic theory and ontological theory is artificial. Geysers presents an objective conception of logic. Logical considerations are thus not separated from ontological ones. That is why I assume that from Geysers’s perspective an analysis of negative judgment is at the same time an analysis of negative states of affairs. Geysers does not first draw up a theory of propositions, much less a formal language, and then, in a second step, ask what ontological implications this theory has. Rather the above presented analysis of negative judgment is also an analysis and theory of negative states of affairs. A further clue that this could have corresponded to Geysers’s views is his conception of truth and falsity. Geysers ~~presents the view~~ that a true judgment is identical with the state of affairs that it expresses.⁶⁸ The identity theory of truth means that true judgments cannot be explained at all independently of states of affairs.⁶⁹ Figuratively speaking it can be said that there is no gap between true judgments and the expressed states of affairs. In my opinion, these ~~two~~ reasons speak for Geysers’s defence of negative judgment as necessarily implying a defence of negative states of affairs.

Geysers’s defence is based on two considerations. For one, Geysers indicates that the word “exist” is ambiguous. For it can mean in one sense that a state of affairs objectively exists in an object. In another sense it can mean that a determinate relation to an object exists.⁷⁰ In the ~~second~~ usage a supposed paradox

⁶⁸ See section II.1.3.

⁶⁹ This is of course expressed very simply. For a more detailed description of the identity theory of truth, see Dodd (2000); David (2002).

⁷⁰ See also Geysers (1913a), 388.

arises, as noted above. However when we speak of a negative state of affairs we use “exist” in the *first* sense. One says that it is objectively the case that the state of affairs of the flower, namely that it is not red, exists.

And here, secondly, the particular Aristotelian structure of states of affairs is essential.⁷¹ States of affairs are always states of affairs *of an object*. I have attempted to make this identifiable by means of a prolepsis:

(9) The soul, that it is *not* mortal.

It belongs to the states of affairs of the soul that it is not mortal. By means of this formulation one can recognize that for Geysler the question concerning the existence of negative states of affairs corresponds with the question concerning negative relations.

(T30) The meaning of “negative states of affairs” or, better, the state of affairs expressed in negative judgment, also immediately follows from this. And this is precisely the state of affairs that a certain relation to a determine object does not exist or, briefly, the state of affairs of the non-existence of a relation.⁷²

There is undoubtedly a certain difficulty in saying that there is a state of affairs that is characterized by not existing. For example, one might be tempted to say: “There is the negative state of affairs $\sim p$, that means, the state of affairs that p does not exist.” However by means of the example of set theory from the last paragraph it should be clear that Geysler’s theory does not force us to employ such linguistic extravagancies. Rather (9) is only understood as saying that mortality does not belong to the states of affairs of the soul. The relationship between the soul and mortality is such that the soul is not mortal. Just as the relationship between a and $\{b; c\}$ is such that a is not an element of the set $\{b; c\}$.⁷³

71 See section II.1.2.

72 Geysler (1913a), 386: “Daraus ergibt sich sofort auch der Sinn des “negativen Sachverhaltes”, oder besser des im negativen Urteil ausgesagten Sachverhaltes. Es ist dies eben der Sachverhalt, daß eine gewisse Relation an einem bestimmten Gegenstande nicht besteht, oder kurz der Sachverhalt des Nichtbestehens einer Relation.”

73 Finally it must be mentioned that Geysler thus considers himself on firm Aristotelian terrain:

(T31) For Aristotle these relationships arise from the circumstance that there is also a being-connected or divided in the objects of knowledge or, to speak more generally, that there are states of affairs of being and *nothingness*. Thought enters into an intentional relation to these objective states of affairs. It is directed towards the object in that it has the goal of grasping and reflecting the connections and divisions of the object in the connecting and dividing posited by thought. [Diese Beziehungen ergeben sich für Aristoteles aus dem Umstande, daß es auch im

III Concluding Remarks

This concludes our investigation into Joseph Geysers theory of negative judgment. Departing from his objective logic, a logic that was based on Aristotle, I have shown how Geysers established a theory of negative judgment and negative states of affairs. Geysers can be understood as a paradigmatic representative of one of the 19th and early 20th century philosophies inspired by Aristotelian logic and ontology, but also as an additional voice in the debate that endures to this day as to how to define judgment and states of affairs. It is a voice that may sound strange at first to philosophers influenced by contemporary analytic philosophy. But it is also a voice that it is worthwhile listening to, as has hopefully become clear through the detailed study of negative judgment. Whether Geysers and the Aristotelian tradition in which he stands can be philosophically revived is a question that only time can answer.

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Gebiete der Gegenstände des Erkennens ein Verknüpft- bzw. Getrenntsein, oder allgemeiner gesprochen, Sachverhalte des Seins und Nichtseins gibt. Zu diesem objektivem Sachverhalt tritt nämlich der Gedanke in intentionale Beziehung. Er ist auf den Gegenstand gerichtet, indem er das Ziel hat, durch die von ihm gesetzte Verknüpfung bzw. Trennung die Verknüpfungen bzw. Trennungen des Gegenstandes zu erfassen und wiederzugeben.] (Geysers (1917), 53)

Geysers refers here to Aristotle, *Met.* IV 7, 1011b23–29; IX 10, 1051b3–9; *de An.* III 6, 430a26–b6. A reference to Aristotle is not a legitimation of the assumption of negative states of affairs but an explanation of why Geysers can hold them to be relatively unproblematic. Geysers apparently thinks that the assumption of negative states of affairs already occurs in Aristotle. This assumption is in no way trivial and is disputed, for example, by Crivelli (2004), 49–50. Nevertheless the authority of Aristotle can make negative states of affairs appear less problematic than perhaps they are in fact.

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