

# Personal Identity and Resurrection

How Do We Survive Our Death?

*To the memory of my father, whose abrupt death in February 2007  
particularly aroused my interest in personal identity and life after death.*

Edited by  
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## Chapter 7

# Personhood, Bodily Self-Ascription, and Resurrection: A Kantian Approach

Johannes Haag

### Introduction

In what follows I will be concerned with the concept of person or, to be more exact, with what I take to be one of the most important aspects of this many-layered concept. As Peter Strawson in his *Individuals* famously pointed out, persons are, among other things, subjects which ascribe to themselves mental *and* physical predicates: we are not only feeling pain, we often conceive of ourselves at the same time as having, for instance, an injury, which is what causes our pain. And we not only perceive a tree in front of us, but conceive of ourselves as standing in front of this tree.

The question I will pursue in what follows is this: is it merely a matter of coincidence that we ascribe to ourselves mental and physical predicates? That is, is it a purely contingent fact about our constitution as human beings which enables us to find our way around a largely hostile world? Or is there a reason for this that is accessible to a priori philosophical reflection?

In the third chapter of *Individuals*, Strawson both asks this question and relates it to another one which is in his view closely connected to it<sup>1</sup>. These questions are:

- (1) Why are one's states of consciousness ascribed to anything at all?
- (2) Why are one's states of consciousness ascribed to the very same thing as certain corporeal characteristics, a certain physical situation, and so on?

I will call (1) the question of the subject, and (2) the question of psycho-physical predication.

As already indicated, the problem of psycho-physical predication will take centre stage in what follows. However, as will become apparent, the problems are inseparable. Strawson was absolutely right when he wrote: "It is not to be supposed that the answers to these questions will be independent of one another."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Peter F. Strawson, *Individuals. An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (Oxford: Routledge Strawson, 1959), p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.



We must therefore concern ourselves at least briefly with the question of the subject before we can hope to find a suitable solution for the problem of psycho-physical predication.

The thesis I will defend in this paper is this:

(T) We can only be conscious of ourselves if we conceive of ourselves as part of an objectively existing physical and corporeal world.

The same thesis in a semantically ascended version would be:

(T<sub>s</sub>) We can only ascribe mental predicates to ourselves if we can also ascribe to ourselves physical or bodily predicates.

If this thesis proves defensible, it could serve as an answer to Strawson's question of psycho-physical predication: we have to ascribe bodily predicates to ourselves because otherwise we would not be able to ascribe states of consciousness to ourselves. We would not be conscious of ourselves unless we were conscious of our body as well.

A further question related to this thesis, which deserves special attention against the background provided by the essays in this collection, is that of bodily resurrection: if a version of T should prove not too far from the truth, this in itself would seem, at least at first glance, to offer comfort for defenders of the doctrine that resurrection—if there is any such thing—has to be *bodily resurrection* after all. For otherwise, it could be argued, how could we ascribe to ourselves physical or corporeal—and hence mental predicates? We will see, however, that things are more complicated.

The two philosophers taking centre stage in what follows will be Immanuel Kant and Gareth Evans.<sup>3</sup> Just a few words on the structure of the following considerations: I will start by (1) giving an analysis of the methodological status of Strawson's two questions. I will then (2) try to make transparent the connection between those two questions. This will rather naturally lead to (3) an answer to the question of the subject—an answer that will be needed later to solve the problem of psycho-physical predication. An answer to the second question was given by Gareth Evans. Although I do not believe that his solution succeeds, I will (4) take a quick glance at it in the fourth part of my paper. My reason for doing that is that I think we can learn from Evans which class of bodily predicates is the important

<sup>3</sup> Strawson himself proposes an answer to this question in *Individuals*, ch. 3.4. I do not think that his argument, which relies heavily on the necessity of ascribing mental predicate to other persons, is successful. The reason is that I do not believe the central premise to be correct, that one has to share the class of predicates by which one identifies persons different from oneself (i.e., bodily predicates) with the persons to whom one ascribes the predicates that one indeed shares with them (i.e., mental predicates). If one rejects this premise, my own account is compatible with the necessary ascribability demanded by Strawson.

one for a successful solution. I will then turn to (5) my own answer in which I try to utilize certain central features of Kant's critical and post-critical work. In closing I will (6) touch upon the question of the relation between T and the doctrine of bodily resurrection.

### Methodological Issues

Before turning to the defence of T I will begin with some remarks on the methodological status of the subject under discussion. The reader might have noticed that I have given a particular modal interpretation to Strawson's questions: I did not interpret them as questions about why it is *in fact* the case that we ascribe physical as well as mental predicates or why it is *in fact* the case that we ascribe our mental states to a subject at all. What I took Strawson to be concerned with is the question why that *has to be the case*. (Strawson's own phrasing is neutral to this distinction.)

This interpretation is not trivial and I would therefore like to go into some detail concerning its motivation. Let us make the difference in question transparent in the context of the question of psycho-physical predication. One answer to the question, "Why is it the case that we do in fact ascribe to ourselves as conscious subjects bodily as well as mental predicates?" could be for instance the following: "We do so because as corporeal beings we have to survive in a world that is full of extended things."

These questions concerning the factual state of things often admit of interesting philosophical answers as well, answers that certainly can shed light on the issues in question. Those answers, however, will be restricted to the—albeit highly abstract—description of the facts in question or rather the description of their factual causes. But this kind of description is not what Strawson is aiming at in asking his two questions, the rhetoric of "descriptive metaphysics" notwithstanding.<sup>4</sup> To make clear what I take Strawson's aim to be, it will prove useful to rephrase his questions:

- (1\*) Why must one's states of consciousness be ascribed to anything at all?
- (2\*) Why must one's states of consciousness be ascribed to the very same thing as certain corporeal characteristics, a certain physical situation, and so on?

This way of putting our two questions indicates a lack of alternatives that is characteristic of the philosophical level of abstraction at which these questions, in my view, are properly located. A satisfying answer to questions of that kind has to explain, why something has to be the case—and cannot be otherwise. The

<sup>4</sup> See Strawson, *Individuals*, Introduction.



proper methodological framework for questions of this kind must therefore be the framework of Transcendental Philosophy.

Let me explain: I must first specify what I mean by claiming that there are no alternatives to the answer. It certainly cannot mean that the answer is somehow logically necessary. That this is not the case is shown by the fact that we can ordinarily think of alternative answers without committing ourselves to any inconsistencies. However, those merely logical alternatives are no alternatives for us, that is, they aren't alternatives to which we can give a determinate content.

This determination of content must always be a determination of thought with respect to its object: as soon as the possibility of this kind of determination is missing, the theory in question only gives us a purely formal analysis of thought. But this is not the kind of answer we expect where we are concerned with the properties of our self-reference about which Strawson is asking. For these questions are concerned with an essential aspect of the overarching question: How is the intentional reference to a world of which we conceive ourselves to be a part possible, that is, the intentional reference to a certain reality *and* ourselves as a part of this very reality?<sup>5</sup> The analysis of this reference necessarily has to be neglected by a purely formal analysis of the sort envisaged.

Which alternatives can be thought about with a determinate content is dependent on the constraints and the scope of our intentional reference to the world. This in turn implies that, although it is not and cannot be the ultimate purpose of this kind of theorizing to describe what those actual constraints and scope are, we cannot neglect to clarify what we actually believe those limits and possibilities to be.

However, unlike the analysis of our actual employment of concepts, analysis of the enabling conditions implies the impossibility of alternatives to those conditions *under presuppositions specified by our description*. The starting point of the thinking about intentional reference therefore has to be the reflexive reference to our own intentionality: There simply is no alternative starting point for the investigation of the enabling conditions of intentional reference. In this sense our actual presuppositions with respect to this reference are a necessary element of the analysis of its enabling conditions.

This perspective can be broadened systematically to provide a generally valid analysis of intentionality by gradually abstracting from the results of this reflexive investigation of our intentionality as well as from the traits that are specific to our particular way of intentionally referring. In this way the scope of description is systematically broadened so as to become more and more general. Every single step of abstraction in this process will inevitably be connected with a loss of determinate content—a loss which in the limiting case will make the result so general as to make it coextensive with the merely logical possible. In that way we would have transgressed the limits of possible abstraction in the analysis of

<sup>5</sup> See Wilfrid Sellars, "Some Remarks on Kant's Theory of Experience", *Journal of Philosophy*, 64 (1967): pp. 633–47, p. 635.

intentionality: the purely formal analysis would be empty in that it affords no determinate content anymore.

Strawson's questions on this view therefore are concerned with necessities that *result* from the analysis of concepts we have to use, if we can use concepts at all—that is, if we can intentionally refer to anything at all. Accordingly, answering these questions should be conceived of as providing an analysis of the enabling conditions of our means of ascription in the transcendental-philosophic sense: it is concerned with the most general conditions of the intentional relation to a world of which we conceive ourselves to be a part. The results of such a transcendental analysis are only justified if—under the preconditions thus specified—they lack an alternative that can be thought of with a determinate content.<sup>6</sup>

The following re-phrasing of our (semantically ascended) thesis should make clear at which level of philosophical abstraction this thesis is properly located:

(T<sub>s</sub>\*) That we can ascribe physical or bodily predicates to ourselves is an enabling condition of ascribing mental predicates to ourselves.

### How the Two Questions Connect

What is the reason for holding that the self-ascription of bodily predicates is an enabling condition of the self-ascription of mental states?

*Prima facie* this connection is not at all obvious. For a very long time it seemed clear to many philosophers that we are immediately aware only of our own mental states and therefore are only unproblematically justified in self-ascribing mental predicates—the phenomenology of self-ascription notwithstanding.

Let us glance briefly at this conception and the philosophical development it initiated. For by recalling this development the connection between the problem of psycho-physical predication and the question of the subject will become apparent in an interesting way. At the very end of this development we will find an answer to the question of the subject that will serve as a foundation for my own answer to the question of psycho-physical predication.

The starting point of this development, however, will be Cartesian philosophy. For it is of essential importance for the success of Descartes's aim in his *Meditations in First Philosophy* that the subject of the *Cogito* ascribes to itself only mental predicates. This subject essentially is *only a res cogitans*, a thinking subject, and nothing else. That we in fact ascribe bodily predicates to ourselves as well and, as Descartes's argument goes on to show, that we do so with a certain sort of justification, does not change this fundamental fact.

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed assessment of the methodology sketched here see Johannes Haag, *Erfahrung und Gegenstand. Das Verhältnis von Sinnlichkeit und Verstand* (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 2007), ch.1.



This aspect of the Cartesian image greatly influenced the early modern discussion about conscious states and their subjects: subjects of experience have been treated as being *essentially* subjects of mental predication and as only *accidentally* subjects of bodily predication.

Yet even in Descartes's writings this move generates skeptical problems concerning the existence of an external world that is supposed to exist objectively, that is, independently of an agent's perceiving it: the existence of one's own body, on this view, is as much a matter of inference as is the existence of an external world in general. But how can this inference be justified? Descartes's own solution in the *Sixth Meditation* is closely tied to his ontology of substances and is hardly convincing, as the reaction even of his contemporaries shows.<sup>7</sup>

Later on this skeptical move would be applied to our knowledge of the subject of thinking as well, famously so by David Hume: just as we have to infer from the content of our mental states the existence of something existing objectively outside our thoughts, we have to infer, from the occurrence of mental states, the existence of something that has those mental states—a subject modified by those mental states.<sup>8</sup> (Note that this move was justified in Descartes. But with the rejection of a positive conception of substance it appears unwarranted.)

The situation, so the argument goes, is symmetrical and the required inference equally problematic in both cases: Just as we can doubt the existence of an external world, we therefore can, or so the skeptic argues, cast doubt upon the existence of a subject of those mental states.

It may already be apparent that what is discussed here is exactly the first of Strawson's questions, the question of the subject. The skeptic, however, does not try to give an answer to this question; he is instead arguing against its presupposition: if we can (with good reason) cast doubt upon the existence of a subject of mental states, we apparently do not have to ascribe those mental states to a subject in the first place. But this was exactly what the question of the subject presupposes.

With the Cartesian denial of a necessary connection between mental and bodily self-ascription, there a development began which ultimately led to an ostensible disintegration of the subject of this ascription.

### The Question of the Subject

This, as we know, was not the end of the story. It did not prove that easy to eliminate the concept of a thinking subject—not even for Hume.<sup>9</sup> And shortly afterwards

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Thomas Hobbes's critique in the *Objections & Replies* to the "Meditations", in *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (12 vols, Paris: J. Vrin, 1897–1913), vol. 7, p. 194f.

<sup>8</sup> See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), I, iv, 6.

<sup>9</sup> See Hume, *Treatise*, Appendix.

Immanuel Kant argued that the self-ascription of mental states is an enabling condition of having conscious mental states: he tried to show that self-consciousness and consciousness of objects are mutually dependent. Let me give you a very short outline of this central argument of the Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>10</sup>

For Kant the paradigmatic conscious mental states are conscious representations of some object broadly conceived. The phenomenon he is concerned with in first instance therefore is the conscious reference to objects that exist independently of our representing them. How, Kant asks, can we justifiably claim that our representations do in fact refer to independently existing objects?<sup>11</sup>

We can do so because we can show that the presupposition of a generally successful reference to independently existing objects is an enabling condition of conscious thinking in general: we would not even have conscious representations, Kant argues, if we would not presuppose the principal success of the reference of our representations—their objectivity, as he puts it.

Objectivity on his account implies lawful necessity. Yet this necessity cannot be found in our representations themselves. In this respect Kant was a perfect Humean: a mere regularity of representations can only give us associations which are subjectively necessary; in this sort of merely subjective succession we search in vain for objectively necessary connections.<sup>12</sup>

But Kant decisively sets himself apart from Hume in claiming that it is not up to us to accept a skeptical solution and satisfy ourselves with a merely subjectively necessary association of representations. We cannot, on his view, choose to refrain from thinking a lawful, objective necessity in the objects of our thoughts. Otherwise, so he argues, our representations would not be representations of objects anymore, because representations of objects imply lawfulness: we conceive of objects as that which, by being the objects of their reference, gives our representations their objectivity! If this were not the case, there would only be a "blind play of representations"<sup>13</sup> instead of consciousness of objects—a play that would be "less than a dream"<sup>14</sup>—and therefore would be "nothing to us".<sup>15</sup>

Since we cannot find this necessary, lawful and therefore objective connection in our representations themselves, we have to infer that we ourselves are responsible for the objectivity of our representations, that is, that we put it into them by referring our representations to an object.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* [CpR]. An elaborate defense of the following sketchy remarks may be found in Haag, ch. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Kant originally asked this question in the letter to Marcus Herz from February 1772. See Kant, *Briefe*, AA. 10:130. It later on became one of the central topics discussed in the CpR.

<sup>12</sup> CpR, A 112/3.

<sup>13</sup> CpR, A 112.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> CpR, A 120.

<sup>16</sup> CpR, A 124.125.



In doing this, we always apply to those representations the same most general structuring principles. These structuring principles are nothing other than the Kantian categories of the understanding.<sup>17</sup> This application of the categories in the structuring of a sensually given manifold, the empirically Given, thus guarantees the objectivity that makes our representations of objects in the first place.

The categories, in turn, are applied by a thinking, that is, representing, subject—a subject that consciously refers to objects by means of this application. It is therefore the subject itself which, by means of this structuring of the empirically Given, makes the reference to objects lawful and thereby gives it its objectivity.

On the other hand, this structuring of representations is possible only if our representations can be treated as representations of one and the same consciousness. We can unite the unconnected mental states into representations of objects by means of the categories only if we can conceive of them as mental states of a unitary subject, that is, if we are able to ascribe them to one and the same subject.<sup>18</sup>

In that way the conscious subject as a point of reference for the self-ascription of representations furnishes the empirically Given with the unity necessary for the consciousness of objects: the conscious reference to a unitary subject that is possible in every moment of our conscious life is as it were the constant element in the steady flow of the empirically Given. And that is the sense in which consciousness of objects is not possible without self-consciousness.

On the other hand—and this is very important—we can become conscious of ourselves only in this spontaneous activity of structuring: in bringing the empirically Given to a unity that we can consciously experience, we simultaneously experience ourselves as subjects of those conscious experiences of unity.<sup>19</sup> We experience ourselves as that which applies the same structuring principles over and over again in connecting its representations. Without consciousness of objects, therefore, there could not be self-consciousness.

If it is possible to fill in the details of this outline of an argument—a very difficult, though not hopeless, task—then consciousness of objects and self-consciousness are mutually dependent.

But at the same time this would provide us with an answer to the question of the subject of our mental states: we must ascribe states of consciousness to a subject because we would not be conscious of objects if we could not!

However, the self-consciousness of Kant's transcendental deduction, one might be tempted to say, is not at all the consciousness of a subject to which we could possibly ascribe bodily predicates. This transcendental apperception, as Kant calls it, is a very formal and by definition empty consciousness: it is nothing more than the consciousness that we apply over and over again to the very same structuring principles—in Kant's words, the consciousness of the identity of a function.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> CpR, B 143.

<sup>18</sup> CpR, A 123.124 and similar: B 137.

<sup>19</sup> CpR, A 108 and similar: B 135/6.

<sup>20</sup> CpR, A 108.

This consciousness is the self-consciousness of a merely transcendental subject, a rather formal concept, far removed from the empirical self-consciousness we are after in the question of psycho-physical predication.

Even a quick glance at my thesis T will confirm some of those considerations and make it clear that my defense of this thesis may not stop at this formal concept of subject. T necessitates much more robust concepts of self and consciousness.

But at the same time those considerations tend to make us overlook that this argument itself already provides a key to a successful defense of T—and thereby to a convincing answer to the question of psycho-physical predication: I hope to show in due course, and with some more help from Kantian principles, that, if we indeed must ascribe our mental states to a subject, we must necessarily ascribe bodily predicates to the very same subject.

### Evans on Bodily Self-Ascription

Before I can continue with the Kantian thread, however, I have to explain why I think it is needed in the first place. After all, one might object, solutions of that kind are laden with transcendental-philosophic ballast. Is this really necessary? My answer is: Yes, because it provides us with a systematically embedded and comprehensive answer to Strawson's questions that is not given by contemporary treatments of this topic. Let me illustrate this with the example of Gareth Evans's proposed answer to them.

What makes Evans especially interesting in this context is that I take him to subscribe to my thesis T. Evans's analysis furthermore makes clear what a successful answer to the question of psycho-physical predication must be like. Finally, Evans's answer is helpful for understanding why a successful argument for T is best provided by going back to Kant.

In the relevant passage of his book *Varieties of Reference* Evans analyzes the ways in which we can gain knowledge about our corporeal properties.<sup>21</sup> This is crucial to his own agenda, since it is part of his project to make clear how even thoughts about ourselves are subject to a generality constraint<sup>22</sup> that is supposed to guarantee that we can apply different thoughts to one and the same object, in this case to ourselves. Knowledge about our corporeal properties, on his account, is one form of immediate identification and can thus ensure that the generality constraint is fulfilled in the case of self-ascription.

Embedded in this investigation we find, as it were *en passant*, Evans's own attempt to answer Strawson's questions. On the one hand we have, on his view, the "general capacity to perceive our own bodies."<sup>23</sup> In this way we can, for

<sup>21</sup> Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 220–4.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100–5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.



instance, perceive that we are hot or cold, that our legs are crossed, that we are leaning against a tree, and so on. This knowledge, in other words, encompasses our proprioceptive abilities and our sensitivity to touch.

The interesting and, I believe, exceptionally important point that Evans makes is the following: This kind of knowledge is not, on Evans's view, the kind that is relevant for answering Strawson's question of psycho-physical predication. What comes into play in the context of such an answer is another way to gain knowledge about our corporeal properties: "I have in mind the way in which we are able to know our position, orientation, and relation to other objects in the world upon the basis of our perceptions of the world."<sup>24</sup>

This ability, Evans explains, consists in the ability to perform a certain kind of material inference. As an example one can think of the following inference:

I see a tree to my right.

Therefore I stand to the left of that tree.

Or alternatively:

I see a tree to my right.

I am currently at place X.

Therefore there is a tree at X.

Characteristic of these—and of all of Evans's other examples of inferences—is the interaction of an ascription of conscious perception on the one hand—in the examples of the perception of a tree—and the positioning or orienting of the perceiving subject in space—I am standing to the left of the tree, am currently at place X, and so forth.

The importance of this ability for our thought about ourselves, Evans points out, can hardly be overrated: we would not have a conscious representation of an "objective spatial world" unless we were able to relate our conscious perception of the world to a state of the world *and* to our position in the world at the very same time. "The idea that there is an objective world and the idea that the subject is *somewhere* cannot be separated, and where he is is given by what he can perceive."<sup>25</sup>

This conceptual dependence gives the self-ascription of a positioning or orientation an importance that surpasses every other ability of the self-ascription of corporeal properties.

Unfortunately it remains unclear why those observations, true and important as they may be, should provide us with an answer to Strawson's two questions. Evans claims, however, that this is precisely what they do, when in this very context he

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 222.

asks the rhetorical question: "Do we really have to go any further than this in order to answer Strawson's questions?"<sup>26</sup>

So, does Evans really provide us with an answer to Strawson's questions? What Evans claims is that we have to position ourselves in an objective world to have a representation of an objective world at all. This claim in itself, assuming it can be supported, is an interesting and important point.

Yet even if it can be argued for—which Evans does not do—it should be clear that this would not entail an answer to the two questions: Strawson wants to know how bodily self-ascription, as it is expressed for instance in our positioning in space, is an enabling condition of the self-ascription of mental states. It will hardly do to answer this question by showing that this sort of bodily self-ascription is an enabling condition of representing an external world, even if this argument should prove to be an essential *part* of a successful answer—as it will. This claim would still have to be connected in a systematic way to the ability of the self-ascription of *mental states*—and Evans does not indicate how this is supposed to be done.

To Evans's merely rhetorical question whether more is to be done by way of answering Strawson's questions we therefore should react with an emphatic "Yes"; more than this must indeed be done.

### A Kantian Answer to the Question of Psycho-Physical Predication

I will now turn to an exposition of how a successful argument, on my view, for this sort of thesis should look. I will do this by highlighting a very interesting development in Kant's thought, the systematic relevance of which often goes unnoticed.

I have already sketched Kant's answer to the question of the subject: why do we ascribe our mental states to a subject at all? His answer, on my reconstruction, was this: without a subject as something that gives unity to our thought there would be neither consciousness of external objects nor consciousness of a subject.

That Kant tried to answer the question of the subject is, I think it is safe to say, more or less unanimously accepted, even if it is widely debated whether his attempt succeeded.

What I would like to show now is that in the further development of his critical philosophy Kant gave an interesting and challenging argument for the necessity of psycho-physical predication—an argument which is at the same time intimately related to his answer to the first of Strawson's questions. In that way, I suggest, we can substantiate Strawson's claim that the two questions are by no means independent of each other.

I will proceed in two steps: First I will concern myself with the general necessity of ascribing corporeal and spatial properties to anything at all; second,

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 223.



I will provide an argument in Kantian spirit for the necessity of applying this sort of predicate to ourselves.

*The Necessity of Spatial Predication: No Consciousness of Objects without Determination of Space*

In the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* from 1781, the corporeal predication which Evans (rightly) considers so important does not play a significant role. The question of positioning ourselves in space is not a transcendental-philosophically relevant question for Kant at that time. The reason is probably that Kant, at this stage in his philosophical development, is still very much confined to the Cartesian constraints of the dominance of the self-ascription of *mental* states. These states, however, are ordered only *in time*, not *in space*.

Although time and space for Kant are forms of intuition, that is, basic characteristics of intuitive representation, time, in the first edition of the *Critique*, is given a somewhat more fundamental function. Kant's reason is the following: all conscious representations, that is, the representations of something different from us and the representation of our own mental states, are subjected to the structuring through time as a form of intuition. But only the representations of something different from us are in addition subjected in this way to space.

The spatial form of intuition thus becomes relevant only if the temporally structured states of consciousness are referred to something *different* from us. For something different from us must, so Kant argues, be thought of as something *external* to us. And what we must think of as external to us must be positioned in space.<sup>27</sup>

And yet this spatial determination or positioning cannot be carried out without the temporal determination of the things external to us as *successively* or *simultaneously* in space. What is external to us, for that reason, is in space and time: determination of space is not possible without determination of time.

In 1781 Kant still believes that the other direction does not hold: our stream of consciousness appears to him purely temporally determined, a steady succession of representations. What is internal to us is only in time. Determination of time therefore seemed possible without determination of space.

That this dominance of mental states and of temporality could not be the last word on these matters became clear to Kant when, shortly after the publication of the first *Critique*, he was confronted with the allegation that his philosophy would come to the same thing as Berkeley's idealism.<sup>28</sup> Kant rightly felt himself misunderstood, as a result of which he attended to a deficit in his own theory: It

<sup>27</sup> This reconstruction of the Kantian argument is originally due to D.P. Dryer, *Kant's Solution for Verification in Metaphysics* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1966), pp. 173f.

<sup>28</sup> As for instance in the review by Christian Garve 1782 in the *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* (shortened by the editor).

became clear to him that determination of time is not possible without determination of space as well—and therefore that there can be no reference to our own mental states without reference to objects in space apart from us.<sup>29</sup>

Without determination of space we would only have our representations as temporally structured states of consciousness: "They arise successively, in continuous flux, one after the other."<sup>30</sup> Could this temporal structure provide us with the temporal determination needed, as mentioned above, for determining something in space?

To this end we would already have to be capable of representing something persistent in time. For this continuity in time is an essential characteristic of an object that is supposed to exist independently of our perceiving it as being external to ourselves. What is continuous is defined by Kant as "that which is simultaneous with succession" (mit dem Nacheinander zugleich).<sup>31</sup> Being simultaneous is not a determination of space, but of time: "Two things are 'simultaneous', as Kant explains in the third analogy, when the perception of the one (A) can both follow and be followed by the perception of the other (B), that is, when apprehension (and not only thought) can proceed both from A to B as well as from B back to A."<sup>32</sup>

So far, the reasoning seems exactly in line with the above claim that the determination of time is necessary for the determination of space: we have good reason, again, to think that no determination of space is possible without a corresponding determination of time. At this stage in the argument, however, it is clear that this kind of determination of time is not possible in a purely temporal consciousness: in temporal consciousness everything is successive and therefore every new perception is later than its predecessor and thus *not* simultaneous. In a purely temporal consciousness one only can proceed either from A to B or from B to A.

Although that which is internal to us therefore is only in time, the purely internal determination of time is not possible: for given that something is purely temporally structured, it is not possible to conceive of it as simultaneous. But external determination, as we already have seen, has to be determination of space. Therefore determination of time, contrary to Kant's original assumption, is not possible without determination of space.

It thus becomes obvious that I can acquire the representation of something different from me in space only if the representation of space can be presupposed together with the representation of time, that is, only if both representations are, to speak with Kant, *a priori* intuitions. In other words, the distinction between

<sup>29</sup> The following consideration owes much to a similar argument in Eckart Förster's forthcoming *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., ch. 3.

<sup>31</sup> *CpR*, B 67.

<sup>32</sup> Förster, *Twenty-Five Years*.



representation and external object cannot be drawn on the basis of temporally structured representations alone.

But what does it mean to presuppose space as an *a priori* form of intuition? Among other things it means that we cannot directly perceive space but only objects in space. In determining objects as spatial objects, we determine something continuous in space. We must therefore refer to corporeal objects in space if we must refer to objects at all.

*The Necessity of Bodily Self-Ascription: No Determination of Space without Positioning of Ourselves in Space as Corporeal Beings*

If Kant restricted his own analysis to the dependence of mental predicates on determination of space, this would present a difficulty for my own project: we would lack a way to argue from the necessity of spatial predication as predication of bodies in space, which we just have shown to be a part of his theory, to the necessity of ascribing corporeal predicates to ourselves as subjects of experience.

In this context it is helpful to notice an element in the Kantian system which is systematically important and which is implicit in his published writings yet which is recognizable only in a few places: the fact that Kant conceives of space as an *a priori* form of intuition which structures our representations of objects different from us has the important consequence that we always perceive external objects from a certain perspective. We perceive objects to our right or our left, in front of us or behind us, see their front or their back, from a wide or narrow angle, and so on.

If these objects were only front or back—if they had the objective properties of being on our left or our right—then the world would not be objective or exist independently in the required sense. It would instead be essentially related to the perspective of the perceiving subject—and therefore subjective!

But this is not possible, as Kant's answer to the question of the subject has already shown. The perspectival nature of our perceptual representation stands in sharp contrast to the essential non-perspectival nature of the objects so perceived, that is, objects which we must conceive as existing independently.

To bridge this contrast we must reflect on what it means to regard an object from a certain perspective. It means relating oneself as oneself to this object by positioning both oneself and the perceived object in one and the same framework of reference.<sup>33</sup> In relating our own position in space to the position of the perceived object we conceive the perception of perspective as a result of a relation between objects that are part of the same spatial world.

The mediation between subjective perception and objectively existing objects of this perception, therefore, is only possible if we as perceiving subjects position ourselves in the spatial framework of the objective world.

<sup>33</sup> Similar considerations may be found in Wilfrid Sellars, "Kant's Transcendental Idealism", *Collections of Philosophy*, 6 (1976): pp. 165–81, §§ 44ff.

It has probably become clear that this taking into account of the perspectival nature of our perception is essentially connected with what we already have encountered in Gareth Evans's talk about positioning and orientation in space: without positioning à la Evans, there would be no differentiating between subjective perspective and objective being.

From this observation we can therefore return to Evans's discussion of Strawson's questions. But I hope that we now understand better what Evans did not provide, namely, an explanation for why we must transcend the temporal, purely internal determination of our states of consciousness at all and must orient and thereby position ourselves in space.

**In Conclusion: Eternal Life and Bodily Self-Ascription**

Let me begin this closing section with a short recollection of my Kantian considerations:

- (1) For the self-ascription of mental states we need the *reference to objectively existing objects*. (That was the result of Kant's answer to the question of the subject.)
- (2) This reference is not possible as a purely temporal reference. *Spatial reference* is needed as well.
- (3) What we need for spatial reference, however, is a reference to *objects in space*.
- (4) This reference to objectively existing objects in space is possible only if the perceiving subject is able to *differentiate* between its *own perspective* on the objects and the *objects* existing independently from its perspective.
- (5) To this end it is necessary for the subject to *position itself bodily in space* as one object among others.

Without positioning there is no differentiation between subjective perspective and objective being; without this differentiation there is no reference to independently existing objects; and without that reference we cannot ascribe mental states to ourselves. The self-ascription of bodily predicates as predicates of our position in space seems indeed to be an enabling condition of the self-ascription of mental states.

And yet this thesis might still seem rather weak: the bodily self-ascription in question, one might argue, is still not the ascription of a material body interacting with other material bodies in space. And indeed, if we stick to the critical Kant in the manner outlined, we are left with the result that all that is needed is the ascription of a position in space to a thinking subject. The consideration up to this point must remain silent about what predicates, beyond those mostly relational



predicates constituting the perspective, are characteristic of the subject in question, at least as far as transcendental-philosophy is concerned.

For a genuinely Kantian, if not properly critical, attempt to argue that it is transcendental-philosophically necessary to conceive of ourselves as material bodies, one could appeal to the development of Kant's thought in his last and unfinished work, the *Opus postumum*. In this bold attempt to account for gaps in the critical philosophy, Kant comes nearer than ever to a full-blown defence of the self-ascription of material bodily predicates.

This task, however, is not only systematically but also exegetically complicated, and will thus have to be left for another occasion.<sup>34</sup> Instead I will close by linking the weaker result of the above considerations to the topic of this collection: the question of (bodily) resurrection. When all we need for being conscious subjects is a perspective, it at least seems that subjects could account for this perspective in a spatial environment without themselves having a material body.

Kant himself indicates as much in discussing whether a religion within the boundaries of mere reason leaves room for the concept of bodily resurrection. He says that what he calls the "psychological materialism"—the idea of the resurrection of a *material* body—is not only unnecessary for the belief in an eternal life but is even detrimental to the proper understanding of these matters.<sup>35</sup>

We seem to be left with the idea of a thinned-out, somehow spatial yet not material subject which could perhaps survive its own death. But Kant does not leave it at that and his further remarks seem to pose a serious problem for the above defence of a thinking subject necessarily relating itself to independently existing spatial objects. For not only is psychological materialism untenable in transcendental philosophy backing; the same goes for what Kant calls cosmological materialism, the doctrine that the thinking subject has to be part of a spatial world at all.<sup>36</sup> How is this possible, given the above argument?

The explanation for this is both simple and consistent with Kant's critical doctrine: space and time, as we have seen, are only the forms of intuition that are specific to human cognition, a cognition characterized by the mutual dependence of mind and body in the way outlined above. As survivors of our own death we would not—or at least not necessarily—be tied to those very same forms of intuitions. We would survive, so to speak, as transcendental subjects.<sup>37</sup> True, we would still be

<sup>34</sup> For a very helpful outline of this line of thought see Eckart Förster, *Kant's Final Synthesis. An Essay on Kant's Opus Postumum* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 24–8.

<sup>35</sup> Kant, *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, 6, 128 fn.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> This probably distinguishes a Kantian model of resurrection from the Cartesian model as outlined in Eric Olson's essay in this collection (Chapter 3). The criterion of imminent causation, however, would be fulfilled—though the schematization of the category of cause would be different from its current spatio-temporal one. This would therefore be a further alternative to the ones discussed by Olson (Chapter 3).

finite rational beings (as opposed to the infinite rational being that is god), but this only means that we are in need of some intuition—sensible intuition in general<sup>38</sup>—that need not be specified by the very same forms as our current intuition. But we cannot say what this intuition would be like, since we are tied to our spatial and temporal framework of reference. We certainly cannot determinately imagine such an alternative, non-spatial system of reference, but Kant took himself, as early as the first *Critique*, to have proven that we must postulate the possibility of such alternative systems of intuitive reference.<sup>39</sup> What we can know right now is that there has to be an alternative system of reference. For, as the above discussion has shown, without a system of reference that allows for the difference of perspectival and non-perspectival properties of objects conceived of as existing independently of us, we could not ascribe mental predicates to ourselves.

In conclusion, we can say that in a Kantian framework we need *some* form of intuition that allows for a conception of an objective reality of which we can conceive ourselves to be a part.<sup>40</sup> This conception presupposes a difference between perspectival and non-perspectival properties of the objects constituting this objective reality. And an enabling condition of making that difference is the (not necessarily spatial!) "location" of those objects in a system of reference of which we conceive ourselves likewise to be a part—a location which, given the system of reference we as human beings are endowed with, can only be location *in space*.

Resurrection, therefore, against the Kantian background advocated in this discussion, can be neither the resurrection of a material body nor that of a body thinned out from all but its purely spatial properties: Eternal life in no way presupposes bodily resurrection, even if we could not conceive of ourselves as thinking subjects without ascribing to ourselves spatial predicates in this world.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> E.g. *CpR*, B, p. 148.150.

<sup>39</sup> E.g. *CpR*, A 42. A further interesting example is B 155.

<sup>40</sup> This may sound rather like the final version of "bodily" (yet non-material and non-extended!) resurrection proposed by Nikolaus Wandinger in his contribution to this volume. There is, however, at least one significant difference: the underlying conception of cosmos is deeply realistic, whereas Kant's conception is, at least in this respect, idealistic.

<sup>41</sup> I would like to thank Georg Gasser, Stefanie Grüne, Hud Hudson, Matthias Stefan, and Markus Wild for helpful comments on previous versions of this paper. My special thanks go to Eckart Förster for inspiring discussions of these and related topics in Kantian philosophy.