Constituting the Mind:

Kant, Davidson and the Unity of Consciousness

Abstract

Both Kant and Davidson view the existence of mental states, and so the possibility of mental content as dependent on the obtaining of a certain unity among such states. And the unity at issue seems also to be tied, in the case of both thinkers, to a form of self-reflexivity. No appeal to self-reflexivity, however, can be adequate to explain the unity of consciousness that is necessary for the possibility of content — it merely shifts the focus of the question from the unity of consciousness in general to the unity of self-reflexivity in particular. Through a comparison of the views of Kant and Davidson on these matters, the nature of the unity of consciousness is explored, both in relation to the idea of the unity of the self and the unity that would seem to be required for the possibility of content. These forms of unity are seen to be indeed connected, and to be grounded, in Davidson and perhaps also in Kant, in organised, oriented, embodied activity.

Keywords: Kant, Davidson, consciousness, content, holism, self, spatiality

I.

The idea of synthesis, although often regarded with suspicion,[1] is clearly a central notion in Kant's account of the possibility of knowledge in the Critique of Pure Reason. Inasmuch as knowledge is comprised of judgments, and judgments that properly give rise to knowledge are always synthetic, so knowledge is, for Kant, essentially dependent on the connecting up or synthesis of what Kant called Vorstellungen. or 'representations'.[2] As he writes: "If each representation were completely foreign to every other, standing apart in isolation, no such thing as knowledge would ever arise. For knowledge is [essentially] a whole in which representations stand compared and connected".[3] Patricia Kitcher argues that the synthetic unity of representations or, as she calls them, cognitive states, must be understood in terms of the 'contentual connection' between those states.[4] Indeed it would seem that in the absence of such connection states cannot be said to have content at all, at least not in the sense associated with judgment, since in the absence of the appropriate connection between states "something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all; and that is equivalent to saying that the

representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me."[5]

Kitcher suggests that Kant's insistence on the need for a synthesis of states if they are to have content arises out of a Kantian rejection of the idea of 'intrinsic representation,' and she points to the fact that relational views of content were already present in the philosophical and psychological literature of Kant's time. In a more speculative vein, Kitcher considers similarities between the Kantian view of content as relational and modern functionalist accounts that treat content as constituted by the causal relations among cognitive states, and between those states, perceptual stimuli and behavioural output.[6] Kitcher is not alone in suggesting such similarities,[7] yet relational views of content are also to be found outside of functionalism. Indeed, Donald Davidson, whose work seems closely akin to Kant's in explicitly undertaking a similarly 'transcendental' inquiry into the conditions for the possibility of knowledge and belief,[8] is a notable example of someone who adopts a relational account of content, or more specifically of propositional content, although without adopting a functionalist theory of mind. Davidson views mental states as individuated in terms of their connections with other mental states. Since, in at least one sense, the identity of mental states is a matter of the content of those states,[9] so Davidson treats mental content as constituted holistically, through the interconnection between states, or, as Davidson might put it, through the interconnection between beliefs, desires and meanings.[10]

If, as Kant and Davidson both seem to hold, the existence of representations or mental states, and so the possibility of representational or mental content, depends on the obtaining of a certain unity among such states, the question arises as to the precise nature of the unity in question. To say that it is a matter of '<u>contentual</u> connection' sheds very little light on the nature of the connection as such.[11] Not only is it difficult to see how the relevant connection could be anything other than a connection of content, but, since the very possibility of a certain form of content is itself at stake here, to explain the unity of states by reference to the contentual connection among states seems merely to beg the question at issue. In so far as content is established through connection, so content surely cannot be that on the basis of which connection is established.

It seems that in Kant synthetic unity is closely tied to that self-reflexive unity Kant terms the 'transcendental unity of apperception'. And it might seem that something similar is true in Davidson in whose work there is also an emphasis on a connection between the unity of mental states and a form of self-reflexivity — a connection that is, in part, expressed through the idea of a close tie between knowledge and self-knowledge.[12] That the unity of consciousness is to be explained by appeal to the

unity of self-consciousness has been a common way of reading Kant's arguments in the 'Transcendental Deduction'. But, rather than resolving the question of the unity of consciousness, any appeal to self-reflexivity merely shifts the question from the unity of consciousness in general to the unity of self-reflexivity in particular. Indeed, if representational or mental content requires the appropriate connecting up of states, and if content itself is consequently a matter of such connection between states, then, while self-reflexivity may well have a central role in the constitution of content, it cannot provide any independent grounding for such connection — the question of the unity of states that makes for the possibility of content will, in fact, be identical with the question of the unity of self that may be seen to be invoked by the appeal to self-reflexivity.

How then should the unity of consciousness be understood? Or, to put matters in another form, what exactly is the nature of 'contentual connection'? These are questions that have come increasingly to the fore (though not always in quite this form) in many recent discussions that draw on psychological sources as well as on the work, not only of Kant, but of P. F. Strawson and Gareth Evans.[13] I am sympathetic to much that can be found in these discussions, but in this paper I intend to take up an approach to the questions at issue that has been relatively little explored: through a reading of Kant that operates in conjunction with the explicitly holistic conception of content and the mind to be found in Davidson's work. In what follows, I will first provide an outline of the main features of the Kantian and Davidsonian positions regarding the nature of contentual connection; I will then look more closely at the notion of self-reflexivity that is involved in those positions; finally I will sketch out the main features of an account that is consistent with the relevant notion of self-reflexivity and yet also allows an understanding of the real nature and basis of the connection at issue. Indeed, the argument of this final section will be that the 'unity of consciousness' that is necessary for content, and so the possibility of content itself, must be understood, in Davidson and perhaps also in Kant, to be a matter of organised, oriented, embodied <u>activity</u>.

II.

Any animate creature that exhibits behaviour that goes beyond a simple reflex response must be capable of connecting sensory experience in <u>some</u> way. Such creatures are able to react to their environment in ways that require a capacity on their part to discriminate between relevant environmental features. One might attribute content-bearing states to such creatures on this basis, but the content that is at issue in

such cases is not the sort of content that is at issue in judgment — certainly such states do not seem to involve any form of propositional content. Indeed, Davidson has argued that a state has content only to the extent that some definite propositional content can be assigned to it and he suggests that whether definite content can be assigned to a state is indicated by whether the truth-value of such a content-assignment can be altered by the substitution of some co-referring expression for the expression used to refer to the object to which that state is supposedly directed. So, in ascribing to Oedipus certain beliefs concerning his wife Jocasta, the truth of those attributions may change according to how Jocasta is described — at some point it may be true that Oedipus believes that he is married to Jocasta and yet false that he believes he is married to the woman who bore him.[14] That the ascription of beliefs, and of contentful states in general, is tied to the capacity to give fairly precise specification to the objects of belief is itself indicative of the way in which ascriptions of belief are dependent on the identification of the objects of beliefs (about which I shall have more to say below). For the most part, then, the less precise the specification of the objects of belief, the less precise or meaningful is the ascription of content or of contentful states.[15]

Although Kant does not approach matters from the perspective of the ascription of beliefs, still the possibility of content is also, in Kant, dependent on the possibility of relating states or representations to objects. In Kant, however, this is a matter of grasping representations as possessing a certain necessary ordering that derives from an ordering in the concept of the object to which those states refer. The unifying of representations that is necessary for content is thus dependent, not on some combination of states merely as given in intuition,[16] but on the combining of states in the concept of the object; in combining representations in this way, representations are grasped as representations of a single object and so as distinct from it. So to grasp the unity of a particular set of representations — a particular sphericity, and redness, a certain weight and density — is to grasp the concept of a particular object — the ball I hold in my hand. For representations to be unified in a way that makes for content in the sense at issue here, just is for representations to be unified in relation to objects — unity of content, and hence content itself, is to be understood as a matter of objectivity. Such objective unification brings with it, of course, requirements of consistency and universality, and so Kant can say that the unification of representations under object-concepts is also a unification of representations according to rules.[17]

The notion of objectivity plays a central role in Kant's account in the Transcendental Deduction as well as in the remainder of the Analytic. But the crucial move in the Deduction is the

connecting of objective unity with a certain form of subjective unity. Thus Kant argues that for representations to be grasped as unified in some objective fashion it is also necessary that they be unified with respect to a single subject — it must be possible, as he says, "for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations".[18] One might say that the grasping of representations as together constituting a single objective unity is itself a matter of the unification of those representations within a single unity of understanding — grasping the unity of representational states in terms of a specific content is a matter of grasping those states as states cognised by a single subject. To understand is to unify both in terms of an objective content and in relation to a single, unitary understanding. In this respect grasping the content of some set of states is a matter of grasping both an objective and subjective unity — it is a matter of grasping oneself as the 'cogniser' of states and as distinct from the states that in being unified are also cognised. Objectivity and subjectivity are, we could say, correlative notions, and as such are incapable of being understood independently of one another. Both are necessary elements in the structure by which experience is constituted.

Significantly, when we turn to Davidson, we find a similar inter-relating of concepts of both subjectivity and objectivity. This is particularly clear in Davidson's consideration of the connection between thought and language — something already briefly touched upon above in the discussion above . In 'Thought and Talk' Davidson connects the very having of beliefs directly with a grasp of objectivity. He writes:

> Can a creature have a belief if it does not have the concept of belief? It seems to me it cannot, and for this reason. Someone cannot have a belief unless he understands the possibility of being mistaken, and this requires grasping the contrast between truth and error — true belief and false belief. But this contrast ... can emerge only in the context of interpretation, which alone forces us to the idea of an objective public truth.[19]

The arguments that lead Davidson to this conclusion are unlike those of Kant in that they begin, not with the question how representations can be unified so as to constitute knowledge, but how language and thought might be related — a question that leads on to an inquiry into the presuppositions of interpretation and the ascription of content. Rather like Kant, however, Davidson deploys a view of mental content as possible only within an interconnected, unitary system. In Davidsonian terms, this means that beliefs and other attitudes are constituted through their interconnections with other beliefs and attitudes. Consequently Davidson takes the identification of beliefs, the understanding of action and

the interpretation of utterances as always part of a broader, holistically constrained activity that requires the relating together of attitudes, actions and meanings.

Yet what makes possible any such identification, understanding or interpretation is the ability of the interpreter to attribute true beliefs to the speaker. In doing this the interpreter locates the speaker in relation to her environment and so is able, in the most basic cases, to identify beliefs and attitudes through identifying the objects of those beliefs and attitudes. A fundamental premise of the Davidsonian account is that the objects of mental states are not the proximal causes of those states (say, events in a speaker's perceptual or nervous system), but the events and objects in the world to which both speaker and interpreter stand related.[20] Only if this is so, argues Davidson can we account for the possibility of communicative and interpretive interaction. We thus grasp the contents of a speaker's mind through grasping the contents of the world in which both we and the speaker are situated.[21]

Of course the interpretation of a speaker's utterances and other behaviour, and the attribution of particular mental states, is not a matter of simply identifying beliefs, attitudes and meanings all in one fell swoop. Interpretation is a process that proceeds in piecemeal fashion even though it aims at an understanding of a speaker's beliefs and attitudes as a whole. Thus we continually adjust our attributions of attitudes in the light of the speaker's ongoing behaviour and in the light of what we know to be true. Crucial to this process is the concept of belief itself. For while the embeddedness of a speaker in relation to her environment implies that most of what the speaker believes, at least in the most basic cases, must be true, only if we allow the possibility that the speaker may also believe what is false is it possible to adjust our attributions of beliefs and attitudes to optimise the necessary 'fit' between behaviour and environment.[22] It is thus the notion of belief, and the idea of a distinction between something being held true and something being true, that gives us enough slack to allow interpretation to proceed.

Consideration of the case of belief in particular shows that we can only have the notion of belief if we have the notion of an objective world about which our beliefs can be true or false. The same is true, moreover, of other states: they are identified and individuated only against an interpretive background, which is to say that they are identified and individuated only against the background of a system of other such states and against the background of an objectively conceived world. Furthermore, inasmuch as the notion of belief arises within such an interpretive context (this does not mean that belief is a mere interpretive 'construct', but indicates instead that belief is to be understood only within a

holistic system of attitude and behaviour), so it also presupposes a grasp of the notion of subjectivity. And the latter notion does not involve merely a notion of ourselves as subjects who can distinguish their beliefs and attitudes from the objective world to which those attitudes are related, it also involves a grasp of the idea of the subjectivity of others. Inasmuch as our grasp of notions of belief and meaning do indeed arise within a thoroughly interpretive context, so they arise only in relation to our attempts to understand others and to adjust our attributions of belief and our own understanding of what is true in relation to the behaviour of those around us. Indeed we might say that, in Davidson, we come to see how the notions of subjectivity and objectivity are joined by a notion of intersubjectivity. Of course, in so far as the notion of belief depends on the notions of both objectivity and subjectivity, so these latter notions depend, in turn, on a grasp of the distinction between true and false belief, and so themselves require an understanding of the notion of belief. This indicates that no single one of these notions has any special priority here; instead all are part of a unitary set of interconnected concepts.

The role of a certain formal unity of subjectivity in the constitution of mental content, something already met with in the brief discussion of Kant above, is already suggested in Davidson by his emphasis on the idea of content as constituted holistically. Since mental content is a matter of the interconnection between states so a certain overall unity must obtain between states if they are to count as having content. The need for such a unity of subjectivity is explicitly recognised by Davidson in the idea of first person authority. Davidson claims that, in at least one important sense, we cannot generally be mistaken about our own mental states — this claim is the essence of first person authority itself — arguing that "unless there is a presumption that a speaker knows what she means, i.e. is getting her own language right, there would be nothing for an interpreter to interpret."[23] To suppose that a speaker might not know what she or he means or believes would be to suppose that it were possible for the speaker's utterances to have no connection with the speaker's beliefs or other attitudes or with the speaker's behaviour in general. Yet the meaning of an utterance, or the content of some attitude, is constituted just by the connections between attitudes and between attitudes and behaviour. And while attitudes and behaviour may be more or less integrated with one another, and so the connections between them may be better or worse, still the requirement that speakers know what they mean in speaking and what it is they believe when they hold something true is not something that can fail to obtain since such failure would compromise the very status of the belief or utterance in question as attributable to the speaker and as therefore connected with the speaker's other utterances and attitudes.[24]

It is not enough to argue against the presumption of first person authority that beliefs may be consistent independently of whether we know it. For knowledge of our beliefs, or of any of our attitudes, is primarily a matter of having the capacity to inter-relate beliefs and other attitudes and being able to connect those beliefs with behaviour — since beliefs are constituted through those connections. But the inter-relation of beliefs is just what constitutes beliefs or attitudes as such. Here a clear parallel with the Kantian emphasis on the necessary unity of apperception can be drawn: beliefs and other mental states are constituted through their being understood as elements in the cognitive life of particular speakers, that is, through their being unified within particular systems of attitude and behaviour — in each case within a single 'unity of consciousness'. Failure of first-person authority would represent a failure of such unity and would consequently imply a breakdown in the very possibility of belief, of attitude, and, indeed, of action.

The importance of first person authority derives from the fundamentally holistic character of belief and of mental states in general — it is a direct consequence of the holism of the mental. Only if speakers are assumed to know what they mean and believe can we grasp the utterances and beliefs attributed to speakers as constituting the sort of unity that is required for us even to identify speakers as such. This requirement of unity is evident, not just in the emphasis on first person authority, but also, in Davidson, in the idea that the having of beliefs is dependent on having the concept of belief. Recall that it is the notion of belief as a state which 'takes up the slack' between truth and error that is essential to the possibility of interpretation. Only if we can make sense of the possibility that some of what speakers hold true may nevertheless be false can we adjust belief in order to optimise the fit between speakers' behaviour and surroundings — only then can we interpret. And since beliefs and other mental states are themselves constituted through their connection with other such states, and so with the world, the very possibility of belief depends on having the concept of belief as the holding of something true, which holding true may nevertheless be mistaken.[25] The connection between belief and the concept of belief suggests to Davidson a connection between belief and the phenomenon of surprise. Surprise is dependent on the concept of belief in so far as one requires the concept of belief in order that one be able to exhibit surprise. For surprise arises when one discovers that what one holds true is actually false — it involves, therefore, a belief about a belief.

Davidson takes the holistic character of belief to imply that surprise, along with a whole range of mental states and attitudes, require a certain capacity for reflection. But as he emphasises "This is not

to claim that all thinking is self-conscious, or that whenever we think that p we must be aware that p, or believe that we believe that p, or think that we think that p. My claim is rather this: In order to have any propositional attitude at all, it is necessary to have the concept of belief, to have a belief about some belief."[26] The capacity for self-reflection that is required for mental content to be possible is just a capacity for self reflection that derives from, and is indeed an expression of, the holistic character of mental content or, in Kantian terms, of representations. This is true not only in relation to the connection between belief and the concept of belief, but also in relation to the requirement of first person authority. Such authority does not imply that in every act of speaking, we know what we are saying simply because we are self-reflexively aware of the system of attitudes and behaviour within which our speaking is situated — first person authority holds, in fact, even when we speak 'without thinking'. Like the requirement that one possess the concept of belief if one is to possess beliefs, first person authority follows from the need for unity and integration amongst states if those states are to have content — indeed it can be seen as both required for such unity and integration as well as deriving from it.

It is not that we take mental states to be unified because they are attributed to a single speaker, but rather that the unification of states that arises in the interpretation and identification of such states (and which is tied to our ability to arrive at an integrated account of a speaker's behaviour) is identical with coming to understand those states as belonging to a single speaker. Indeed where behaviour fails to exhibit an appropriate level of integration, and so where unity of content also seems to be lacking, we may have no choice but to deny that there is a single speaker — a single subject — to be understood. Davidson's account is thus one in which the idea of subjectivity is, in part, a 'construction' (though we should be careful how we use such this term) out of the behavioural evidence that particular entities within the world present to us, even while the idea of the formal unity of subjectivity is a necessary prerequisite for understanding mental states as states or subjects as subjects. Indeed, even in our own case, we can understand ourselves as subjects only inasmuch as we grasp our behaviour and our thoughts as part of an integral unity of activity, and only inasmuch as we grasp ourselves in relation to the objects and events around us.

III.

The unity of content that is necessary for the possibility of conceptualised experience or thought is seen,

by both Kant and Davidson, to presuppose a certain unity of consciousness, as well as a capacity to distinguish between the internal life of subjectivity and the external world of objectivity. But the considerations adduced by Davidson suggest, in addition, that the unity of consciousness that is involved here is not so much a matter of the attribution of particular mental states to some pre-existing subject of consciousness, as that the unifying of mental states just is the constitution of a single consciousness. And on Davidson's account this also requires the location of that 'unity of consciousness' in relation to an objective world — a world of objects and events within which action is possible. One important conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the unifying of states that makes for knowledge, and for mental content in general, cannot be separated from the unifying of states that gives rise to the idea of the unitary subject. In fact this latter conclusion seems already to be present in Kant:

> Only in so far, therefore, as I can unite a manifold of given representations in one consciousness, is it possible for me to represent to myself the identity of the consciousness in (ie throughout) these representations. In other words, the analytic unity of apperception is possible only under the presupposition of a certain synthetic unity ... only in so far as I can grasp the manifold of the representations in one consciousness, do I call them one and all mine. For otherwise I should have as many-coloured and diverse a self as I should have representations of which I am conscious to myself.[27]

The unity of apperception is thus the necessary product of the act of synthesis, but its possibility is also presupposed by the possibility of synthesis itself. Similarly Davidsonian self-knowledge is a presupposition of the possibility of interpretation (and so a presupposition of the having of beliefs and so forth), even while it can itself be seen a product of interpretation (in the sense that it arises out of the necessary unity and interconnection of beliefs, attitudes and the rest). And just as Davidson does not take the requirement of self-reflexivity that is expressed in the connection between belief and the concept of belief or in the idea of first person authority to imply that all thinking is self-conscious, so Kant is quite explicit that while the unity of apperception is necessary for the possibility of content, it does not require that we be self-consciously aware of all the contentful states that fall within that unity. Thus while he emphasises that "the manifold representations, which are given in an intuition, would not be one and all my representations, if they did not all belong to one self-consciousness" he also notes parenthetically that those 'representations' can be mine "even if I am not conscious of them as such."[28]

From these considerations it follows that, while the forms of self-reflexivity identified by Davidson and Kant are necessary for the possibility of mental content, neither Davidsonian self-

knowledge nor Kantian apperception provide us with any knowledge of, or acquaintance with, a substantive self — for instance, a Cartesian 'ego' — that exists apart from the integrated unity of contentful states. The unity of self implied by self-knowledge or apperception is a purely 'formal' unity constituted through the interconnectedness of states — formal, that is, inasmuch as it is a basic requirement of the possibility of content that does not require for its satisfaction the inclusion within that unity of any particular state or any particular array of states nor any 'self' or ego' that exists as a distinct, 'unifying' element within that unity. Since, as I noted above, the unifying of states is identical with the constitution of a single consciousness, the unifying of those states cannot be dependent on the unifying operation of such a consciousness nor can states be unified by being referred to such a consciousness whose existence is independent of those states.

That the unity involved in the unity of consciousness that is correlated with the unity required for content is indeed not a unity derived from the prior unity of a single substantive ego or self is perhaps clearer in Davidson than in Kant — that no substantive self is involved is sometimes obscured in Kant's presentation by talk that suggests a concept of the self as that which underlies synthetic unity and brings it about.[29] Such talk can, however, be taken as reflecting an ambiguity in the original claim that the unity of apperception — and hence self-consciousness — is the ground for the synthetic unity of representations. It need not contradict the claim that the self of apperception is properly a formal unity constituted in the process of synthesis itself. Moreover the latter claim does indeed seem to fit best with other Kantian claims concerning the nature of the self. Thus Kant insists on clearly differentiating the self that is given in transcendental apperception from any concept of the self that may be given empirically. And in his discussion of the unity of apperception in the Paralogisms he is also careful to distance the idea of the transcendental unity of apperception from any claim about the simplicity or unity of the soul:

> Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of the thoughts = X. It is known only through the thoughts which are its predicates, and of it, apart from them, we cannot have any concept whatsoever, but can only revolve in a perpetual circle, since any judgement upon it has always already made use of its representation. And the reason why this inconvenience is inseparably bound up with it, is that consciousness in itself is not a representation distinguishing a particular object, but a form of representation in general, that is, of representation in so far as it is entitled knowledge ...[30]

The self of transcendental apperception must thus be quite distinct from the empirical self given in

appearance and from any noumenal self that might be thought to underlie such appearances. The unitary self that is given in apperception — or that may be taken to be suggested by Davidsonian notions of self-reflexivity — is neither that which produces the unity that is necessary for experience (although it is presupposed by it) nor can it be the subject of such experience in the sense of that which underlies experience. As a consequence Patricia Kitcher can write that on the Kantian account:

> Selves are not substances, nor are they anything that cognitive states are connected to ... cognitive states belong to the unity of apperception, not by virtue of belonging to something else, but because they stand, or can stand, in relations of synthetic connection with each other.[31]

The idea that the unity of subjectivity to be found in Kant and Davidson is a purely 'formal' unity (in the sense I indicated above), rather than the unity of an independent, 'substantial' subject, is not an idea that is additional to the idea of content as synthetically or holistically constituted. That the unity of subjectivity is a purely formal unity is indeed a direct consequence of the Kantian and Davidsonian conception of content as dependent on combination. If contentful states are constituted through their being connected with other such states, then there can be no significant role to be played in the connecting up of states by any independent subject to whom those states may be attributed. The connection between states must be intrinsic to those states rather than somehow imposed on them from without — this is clear enough from the fact that the connection between states is a matter of the contentual connection of those states. But then the unity of states cannot be the product of the activities of a self separate from and independent of those states, since any unity imposed by such a subject could only be extrinsic to those states. The content of states is itself established through the connecting up of states; if states are connected in virtue of their content, then those connections obtain just because the states have the content they do (because they are the states that they are). If states already have content, then they are already connected, and there is then no need for any additional operation in order to bring about the connections between states; if states lack content, then there are neither contentful states to be connected nor is there any 'self' that could provide the necessary connection between states.

If one cannot elucidate the unity of consciousness or of content by reference to the operations of a self, neither can one achieve such an elucidation by reference to any structure that exists below the level of the self, that is, by the operation of some mental 'module' or mechanism (some 'sub-personal' process to use Dennett's phrase[32]), however realised, that may be viewed as operating below the level of

the person, self or mind. There is no combiner of states, whether it be a 'self' or any 'sub-personal' component of the self, that operates on states to establish contentual connections between them, simply because the connections between states are given with the states themselves — for there to be mental states just is for there to be a system of states between which contentual connections hold. There is, therefore, no self that is the combiner of states nor is one needed. This is a point that is obscured even in the account offered by Kitcher. While she is clear in rejecting the idea that the contentual connection between states is a matter of the combinatorial operation of a self that is independent of the states it combines, Kitcher holds that contentual connection is nevertheless a product of the operation of some sub-personal 'faculty' or process. Thus she writes that "Thinking selves are not merely systems of cognitive states, because some faculty must always be present to synthesize states... Cognitive states belong to the unity of apperception only because some faculty in whatever material or immaterial form in which those cognitive states are currently realized or preserved creates synthetic connections among them."[33]

Obviously there is a causal story to tell (though the causal story may not be the only one) about how a particular system of states arises, and there is a story to tell also about the underlying physical structure in which that system of states may be embodied. But no appeal to the physical causes of states or to the mechanisms underlying those states can enable us to understand the contentual connection between states. And if the unity of states that makes for content is just a matter of the contentual connection between states, then the unity of states can only be understood through understanding the contentual connection between states. The contentual connections between states cannot be established through operations carried out upon states (whether by the self or any other mechanism), for in the absence of such connections there are no states to connect; and for the same reason neither can such connections be established through states being referred to a single unitary self (or any other structure) independent of those states. Understanding the contentual connections between states — understanding the unity of consciousness — is thus a matter of understanding how the states are themselves related in terms of their content, not how those states are causally produced or physically realised. Here, of course, we come close to some of the considerations that motivate both Davidson's anomalous monism as well as his rejection of certain elements of empiricist epistemology: while mental events are identical with physical events, mental events cannot be reduced to physical events; in addition, the physical causes of mental states, as given under a physical description, cannot provide any rational ground for

those states nor shed light on the rational or contentual connection between them.[34]

Yet if the unity of states that makes for the possibility of content is not to be found in the activity of some independent self, nor indeed in the operation of any sub-personal neuro-physiological system, what is the nature of that unity? The unity at issue is a unity of content, so appealing to just the contentual connections between states merely reiterates the unified character of those states rather than explaining the nature of that unity; and since the content of particular cognitive or mental states is a matter of the contentual connections between states, so both content and connection must be explained together. The question of unity is thus not merely a question about how the relations between certain states, but about those relations as inclusive of the states that are related within them. And inasmuch as the unity of states is closely tied to the unity of the subject, so the question at issue here concerns not merely the content-identity of states, but in a certain sense also the identity of the subject to whom those states belong.[35] We may thus ask: in virtue of what are states appropriately related so that they are states that 'belong to', or are partially constitutive of, a single mind? Depending on whether we focus on the question of unity or 'identity', the problem here can take on at least two forms: first, as a question that raises the issue of the real nature of mental unity directly, namely, 'On what is such unity based?'; second, in a form that concerns the ownership or attribution of mental states: 'On what basis are certain states identified as belonging to a particular individual thinker?', or, to put matters in a less epistemological form, 'what determines that certain states belong to one thinker rather than another?'[36]

Although she also has an answer to the first of these questions — an answer in terms of sub-personal processes or 'faculties' discussed above — Patricia Kitcher also seems to respond explicitly to the second, the question of ownership, by arguing that, in Kant, a synthetic unity of states obtains only with respect to those states presented within inner sense. Consequently, mental states that give rise to other mental states through being connected to those states through outer sense — where for instance you convince me of the truth of certain beliefs that you hold, but which I previously did not, and where your beliefs therefore give rise to a new set of beliefs in me — cannot be said to be synthetically connected (or connectable) with those states.[37] Such a response would appear to be supported by some of Kant's own comments. Thus he writes that:

> ... just as the time in which the observer sets me is not the time of my own but of his sensibility, so the identity which is necessarily bound up with my consciousness is not therefore bound up with his, that is, with the consciousness which contains the outer intuition of my subject.[38]

One could similarly imagine a Davidsonian response to this same problem that would consist in pointing out a similar asymmetry in my knowledge of my own mental states as against my knowledge of the states of others: so far as my own thoughts and utterances are concerned I must know what I mean, but there is no such presumption so far as the thoughts and utterances of others are concerned and consequently my thoughts are distinct from yours in so far as my thoughts are just those thoughts about whose content I cannot, in the appropriate sense, be mistaken.

It seems, however, that both these responses may beg the question at issue. Indeed, this is Sydney Shoemaker's suggestion in a discussion of an earlier presentation of Kitcher's views. One might argue, as does Kitcher, that a state is mine if it is presented to me through the form of inner sense, but, replies Shoemaker, "this had better not mean that I get this self-attribution by a deduction having as a premise that I am aware of the state by inner sense — for that would assume that I have the very sort of self-knowledge we are trying to explain."[39] Shoemaker's comments make clear that, for him, the problem is to provide some non-circular criterion of ownership for mental states. The question, as he puts it, is "how do I get to the judgement that I have the state in question — that it belongs to my own 'I that thinks'?",[40] but to say that I get to this judgment by recognising that the state in question is connected with other states through inner rather than outer sense is merely to assume the distinction between myself and others in so far as it assumes the distinction between the inner sense of my own mental life and the inner sense of others. A response along similar lines could also be made to the suggestion that I can identify my own thoughts through identifying those thoughts about whose content I must be presumed to have knowledge. This is once again to presuppose knowledge of the 'I' that is involved here and so to beg the question at issue.

It is interesting to note that much the same criticism as that which Shoemaker brings to bear on Kitcher reappears in other discussions of Kant. Perhaps most notably, it is developed by Paul Guyer as an argument against the very strategy of the 'Transcendental Deduction' itself. Guyer claims that the Deduction must fail because in supposing the necessity of the unity of apperception, particularly as expressed in the claim that "it must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations",[41] Kant has presupposed that the representations in question are already united in one consciousness and so has already presupposed a large part of what is in contention.[42] Guyer elaborates this point explicitly in relation to temporality, arguing that even if we have a set of states that are given a single ordering

within the form of 'inner sense', that is, within time, that does not imply that there is a single subject to whom those states belong. This point is not altogether clear in Guyer, but it can be simply illustrated. Although state S_1 may occur before S_2, and S_2 occur before S_3, and so on, it may nevertheless be the case that state S_1 is my perception of something moving rapidly across my visual field at 9.00.00, while S_2 is your feeling of a sudden pain in your right shoulder at 9.00.01 this morning, and S_3 is our colleague's hearing of a particularly loud noise at 9.00.02. A single temporal ordering does not of itself, then, establish ownership by a single subject.[43]

In part Guyer's criticism here depends on a misconstrual of the nature of the Kantian position. As was already suggested in the brief survey of the Kantian position in Section II, the Kantian emphasis on the unity of apperception is tied to the requirement that, for representations to be properly connected, is for them to be connected such that they constitute a single subject — thus it must be possible for the 'I think' "to accompany all my representations". Of course, given a sequence of representational states, the fact that any one of those states has content does not depend on that state being connected with just those other states that are also included in the sequence. But for any one of those states to have content it must be appropriately connected up with some set of states and the fact of that connection can be expressed in terms of the idea that those states are together attributable to a single subject. States do not have content independently of their being part of a system of states and so do not have content independently of being attributable to a single subject — grasping the content of a state is indeed identical with grasping the connection between states and identical with the unification of states in relation to a single 'subjective' system.

Guyer's objection does not touch this latter point, but what it does do is to show how the idea of the unity of the subject cannot provide any independent ground on which to explain the unity of states that is necessary for content. For states to have content just is for them to be unified as states of a single subject, but in recognising this point we must also recognise that the unity of subjectivity is as much in need of elucidation as is the unity of states that make it up. So although it is important to have established the close connection that must obtain between the unity of states and the unity of subjectivity, still, in establishing this, we have not established the real nature of the unity that is at stake here. Indeed, that something like the circularity noted by Shoemaker reappears in Guyer's criticism of the Kantian position is indicative of the way in which the question of the ownership of states (that on the basis of which my states are distinguished from yours) is indeed tied to the question about the nature

of the unity of states (that which is the basis for such unity). But it also indicates how little we are advanced in answering the question about the nature of the unity of mental states by looking to an answer to the question of ownership. Of course, the fact that unity of states that makes for content is identical with the unity of the subject to whom those states belong, is often obscured by a tendency to assume that the contents of mental states (and so the states themselves) are fixed independently of the attribution of those states to individuals, or, to put the point in a way that does not suggest a confusion of ontological and epistemological matters, independently of the individuals to whom those states belong. Indeed, this tendency, in conjunction with the intimate connection between the unity of states and the unity of the subject, undoubtedly accounts for the difficulty of much of the discussion here.

The very content, and so, in one sense, the identity, of a particular mental state depends on that state being connected — synthesised — with other states. One way of putting this is to say that the contentual identity of a state depends, in part, on that state being attributed to (or being 'owned by') a particular self. The attribution that is involved here is not, however, a matter of attributing states to a self that is independent of those states: both states and self are constituted through the same relations of synthesis, so that to attribute a state just is to treat that state as appropriately connected with certain other states.[44] Consequently there can be no non-circular criterion of ownership for mental states because the very asking of the question concerning the ownership of mental states already presupposes the identity and individuation of those states, and this is already to presuppose the attribution of those very states.

One might say, as Kitcher does in following Kant, that only those states presented through the form of inner sense are 'mine', but this is only because any states so presented must already be unified with respect both to an objective and a subjective order, which orders are themselves established through the unifying of such states. In this respect it seems that the 'mine-ness' of mental states is indeed given with the states themselves. The 'mine-ness' of such states is actually prior to the idea of there being a 'self' to which those states can be attributed in so far as the 'mine-ness' of mental states is just a feature of their being appropriately connected ('synthesised') with other states. But this is merely to reiterate the impossibility of finding an independent, non-circular criterion for the ownership of mental states. To be presented with mental states is already to be presented with a subject of those states. With the recognition of this point, however, the question of the unity of mental states, understood as a problem concerning the ownership of those states, evaporates. There is, in fact, no such problem to

address, at least not as the problem is usually conceived, for there are neither states to own nor potential owners of states independent of the unifying of those states.[45]

Yet if the question of the ownership of mental states only arises because of an inadequate understanding of the nature of mental states and the unity they possess, this does not imply that the problem of unity as such simply disappears along with the problem of the ownership of states. There remains a question concerning the unity of consciousness that is still to be addressed — a question that is often tied up with questions of ownership and identity, but which is only poorly grasped in those terms. The question that does indeed remain at issue, and is not properly dealt with either by the deployment of the notion of inner sense alone or any deployment of the Davidsonian concept of first-person authority, concerns the real nature of and basis for 'contentual connection' or 'synthesis' itself — the real nature and basis for the unity of the mind. This question can easily take on the appearance of a question about the ownership of mental states, since one way, perhaps the easiest and most natural way, to make sense of synthesis or mental unity is to treat is as something brought about by the operations of an independent self. But the question of the ownership of mental states is, as we have seen, not the real issue here. Moreover, the question of the nature of synthesis cannot, in any case, be answered by looking for unity in some act of self-attribution by an independent subject. That the latter solution is indeed an impossible one can be seen as soon as one reflects on the fact that it is precisely the nature of mental unity, of synthesis, that is in question. Unity cannot be explained by looking to a separate self as the source of unity, since the provision of unity by such a self presupposes the self to be already unified, yet it is just such unity, whether of unified (and unifying) self or of unified states, that is at issue.

IV.

The connecting up of representations or of mental states requires, as we have already seen, a grasp of both objective and subjective unity; it thus requires a distinction between subject and object, between self and thing. Only given such a distinction can we understand objects as existing independently of us or of ourselves as existing independently of objects. The grasp of this distinction, in Kant's thought, turns out to depend necessarily on a grasp of spatiality. Thus in the 'Inaugural Dissertation' of 1770 Kant writes that: "I cannot conceive anything as located outside me unless I represent it as in a space different from the space in which I myself am, nor can I conceive things as outside one another unless I

arrange them in different parts of space"[46] and again in the Critique of Pure Reason he comments that "space is the condition… under which alone outer intuition is possible for us".[47] Although there is some ambiguity in these passages, [48] it seems that what is implicit in them is a claim to the effect that only if one has a grasp of space is it possible to understand things as existing co-temporaneously with ourselves and one another and yet also distinct from ourselves and from one another — only if one has a grasp of space, that is, can one have a grasp of objectivity — and this claim seems to lie at the heart, for instance, of the B Edition's 'Refutation of Idealism'.

Certainly a grasp of spatiality would seem to be essential to the possibility of combining different representations into an experience of objects. Objectivity requires the appropriate integration of perceptions. Such integration involves the connecting of states over time — so A^1 presented at time t^1 is connected with A^2 at t^2 — and also of states at a time. The unifying of distinct but simultaneous states is crucial for the idea of objectivity.[49] One reason for this is that a single object will be capable of presenting more than one aspect at any one time. Even a simple object such as a solid metal cylinder — say of the sort that may be used as a pendulum weight for instance — can give rise, at one and the same time, to a multiplicity of perceptual representations: we can feel the cylinder's weight, its smoothness of surface and hardness of edge, at the same time as we can see its shape and colour, and hear the slight sound made by the rubbing of metal against skin. The idea of an object is precisely the idea of such an unified representation of co-existing particulars.

Yet the notion of a simultaneous unity of contentful states is fundamental, not merely to the unifying of states at a time, but also to the possibility of unifying states over time — synchronic unity is necessary for diachronic unity. If the grey cylindrical representation given to us now is to be identified with the cylindrical representation of five minutes ago we need to be able to understand both representations as underlain by the idea of a continually existing object that remains in existence even in the intervening period when a different set of representations are commanding our attention. That means we need to be able to grasp the idea of existence unperceived (something that preoccupies Strawson in Chapter Two of Individuals); it also means we need to be able to grasp the idea of existence 'alongside'. Where we identify two different representations over time as belonging together in the concept of a single object — we identify, say, the grey circle we saw earlier with the grey rectangle we see now as both being aspects of the same grey cylinder — we need to be able to understand both representations as indeed aspects that co-exist in relation to the same object and this is

just as much presupposed by the unifying of simultaneous representations as of those presented serially. Since no set of serially presented particulars is alone sufficient to enable us to grasp the idea of either existence unperceived or existence alongside, so the mere presentation of contentful states in time is insufficient for the unifying of those states in objects and so, in this sense at least, objectivity does indeed require spatiality.[50]

To have a grasp of objectivity, then, we need to be able to organise representations in relation to concepts of objects and to organise objects such that they can be understood as existing alongside one another as well as alongside ourselves. The latter requires the capacity to locate objects within what might be termed an 'objective' space — only within such a space can objects be grasped as co-temporaneous with us and yet as separate from us. Such a space can be itself represented in the form of a 'map' on which the positions of different objects can be plotted. However, the construction of such a map, and the grasp of such an objective space, is only one element in the combining of states that constitutes experience. Indeed, mere possession of a map, no matter how detailed, is of little use unless that map is correlated with aspects of our current environment. This is a point that Kant himself emphasises: "... our geographical knowledge, and even our commonest knowledge of the position of places, would be of no aid to us if we could not, by reference to the sides of our bodies, assign to regions the things so ordered and the whole system of mutually relative positions."[51] A map that has no connection with our present location, on which we cannot locate either ourselves or the objects and landmarks around us, is meaningless. Only when used in conjunction with our own oriented experience of the world does a map operate to provide a guide to the objective ordering of objects and places around us.

The combining of states requires the locating of the objects cognised within a spatial framework, but it also requires locating ourselves within that framework. This is, moreover, not just a matter of grasping our position within objective space as it might be expressed in some abstract fashion (although our ability to do this is certainly a necessary element in our being able to grasp the idea of objectivity as such); we need also to be able to orient ourselves within such a space. In the most basic sense such orientation involves the ability to order space into different regions — north, south, east and west, or, more basically, up, down, left and right, front and back. Such regions are derived from our own bodily organisation in relation to the possibilities for action and the manner of such action — in relation, one might say, to the possibilities for <u>movement</u>.[52] Indeed, it is the oriented location of

ourselves in space that enables us to act in relation to objects and to keep track of our own position in respect of those objects; it enables us to integrate the idea of objective space and our own location in such space with our perceptual/behavioural experience, and so to integrate objective with what may be called 'subjective' (or 'egocentric') space.[53]

Our movement through space, including both movement of our whole body from one location to another, and the more localised movement of our limbs, sense organs and other bodily parts, enables us to obtain a array of different representations of objects and environment. Experience arises precisely out of the unifying or synthesis of such a diverse sensory array. And inasmuch as are able to keep track of such movement through being able to keep track of the relation between our selves and the surrounding environment, so we are also able to grasp those different representations, including even representations of our own body and its parts, as possessing an objective unity. Since the grasp of objectivity, and so the possibility of synthesis, depends on the grasp of a unitary space, and since grasp of such a space is in turn dependent on a capacity to orient oneself within that space and so to organise that space in terms of one's own capacities for activity, so the very possibility of synthesis — that is the combining of representations in relation to concepts of subjectivity and objectivity — can be seen to reside in the capacity for spatialised, embodied agency.[54]

Arthur Melnick claims that in Kant space is conceived as "not something thought, but rather an activity or performance. The fundamental nature of space is that it <u>is</u> an activity ... In this regard space is fundamentally <u>our</u> behavior or something we do, rather than a way that things are themselves related or situated".[55] Only through being able to relate space to ourselves, that is to our own differentiated bodies, can space be grasped in such a way as to allow for the unifying of representations in relation to objects — that is, for the possibility of synthesis — but in grasping space in this way one thereby also grasps certain possibilities for action. The ordering of objects in space, then, is also an ordering of objects in relation to action. This suggests a conception of synthesis — the combining of states — as indeed nothing but activity, but activity understood as the activity of embodied, oriented, located agency. The unity of the self, and the unity that makes for the possibility of content, is thus given in the unity of spatialised, embodied agency. But this is not to say that the question of the unity of content or self is thereby replaced by a question concerning the unity of space, of body or of agency.[56] The emphasis on activity here should indicate the manner in which the unity that is at issue here is a unity generated in and through the inter-relation of the different elements within it.[57] That which does the

unifying that makes for the possibility of selves or of contentful states is, as a consequence, nothing over and above activity itself. So the problem concerning the need for a subject that produces synthesis, and to which contentual states can be attributed, largely disappears — no such unifying subject is required. Activity does not depend on some prior unity, whether of the subject or anything else, but is itself the establishing of unity and so the establishing of content, self and also, one might say, of an 'empirical' world — in this sense, the very spontaneity of Kantian apperception, and so of synthesis, might be understood as residing in its character as pure activity. Of course, from a Kantian perspective, such 'activity' cannot be identified with the activity of any noumenal self; but neither is it simply to be seen as identical with the activity of some empirical subject — and this is so even though the activity of synthesis operates with only respect to things as they appear and with respect to a body and a space that are themselves appearances.

Spatial embodiment is an indispensable element in the possibility of experience. This means not only that the body has to be given a central role in the understanding of mental states, and that the idea of a disembodied subject is thereby rendered incoherent, but that synthesis must itself be understood as a matter of activity understood as spatialised and embodied. This emphasis on spatial embodiment, however, and on embodied activity in the possibility of experience, may be thought to be at odds with many of the details as well as the more general character of Kant's thought, particularly by those who take Kant to be representation of an excessive rationalist or intellectualist tendency in modern philosophy. Indeed it is quite common (at least in some circles) to treat Kant as standing outside of and as opposed to those ways of thinking that emphasise embodiment and agency as exemplified in twentieth century thought in the work of philosophers such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Yet although there are undoubtedly aspects of Kant's thought that are problematic from the point of view of an approach that emphasises embodiment in this way,[58] and while the particular line of argument advanced here goes beyond anything stated by Kant himself, still the idea of synthesis as a matter of embodied, orientated activity is a carrying through of ideas that are indeed to be found in Kant's own thinking.[59]

The idea of 'synthesis' as precisely a matter of spatialised, embodied activity can be seen to be already suggested in some of Davidson's own comments, in particular his emphasis on subjects as themselves constituted in their involvement and interaction with other subjects, and with objects and events, within an objective world, and in the focus on overt behaviour in the process of interpretation.

This idea is most clearly expressed in a metaphor Davidson first employed in 'Rational Animals' and which he has employed frequently since — a metaphor that can be used to illustrate many of the ideas I have discussed above:

> If I were bolted to the earth I would have no way of determining the distance from me of many objects. I would only know they were on some line drawn from me toward them. I might interact successfully with objects, but I could have no way of giving content to the question where they were. Not being bolted down, I am free to triangulate. Our sense of objectivity is the consequence of another sort of triangulation, one that requires two creatures. Each interacts with an object, but what gives each the concept of the way things are objectively is the base line formed between the creatures by language. The fact that they share a concept of truth alone makes sense of the claim that they have beliefs, that they are able to assign objects a place in the public world.[60]

One of the important conclusions Davidson draws from these considerations is that, as he says, 'rationality is a social trait. Only communicators have it.' But Davidson's argument does not concern merely the importance of sociality here; more broadly it indicates the interconnection between notions of sociality or intersubjectivity, objectivity and subjectivity — as well as of synthesis — as a matter of embodied, oriented activity.

The role of sociality, and of language, is something that is, of course, largely missing from the Kantian discussion (at least in the first Critique,[61] though perhaps one could argue that the role of intersubjectivity is a feature of Kant's discussions elsewhere[62]), and it is also, it might be noted, largely absent from many of the more recent discussions of the connection between spatiality and objectivity in the work of such as Strawson, Evans and others. In this paper I have focused on the connection between subjectivity and objectivity, that is, on the role of self-consciousness in our grasp of objects. What Davidson's work indicates is that, in addition to this connection, there is an important link between subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Indeed, just as knowledge of self, of others and of objects form an interconnected system, so too are the notions of subjectivity, intersubjectivity and objectivity similarly intertwined. And while this is not the place to attempt any detailed exploration of the connection between spatiality and linguistic intersubjectivity, it can at least be noted that the notion of synthesis that we have arrived at here will necessarily be a synthesis that takes place, not merely within the space of physical location, but also within the conceptual space of language.[63]

V.

In both Kant and Davidson we find a conception of mental states as necessarily interconnected and in which the possibility of such connection presupposes notions of both objectivity — of an ordering of cognitive content in relation to objects that are external to and separable from us — and of subjectivity — of a unity and integration to all our contentual states as such. The necessary unity of subjectivity is not the unity of a private inner realm (we have no experience of a noumenal self) but concerns the 'a priori' unity of the self that is the ground for the possibility of cognition. In both Davidson and Kant cognition requires a certain purely formal unity, but that unity itself seems to depend upon location and embodiment within a spatial, objective world.

Of course the comparison I have made between Kant and Davidson may be thought to be undercut by the Kantian dichotomy between understanding and sensibility and between concepts and intuitions. For Davidson himself explicitly rejects such contrasts.[64] But it should be noted that the Kantian account involves something rather more complex than the dualism Davidson rejects. This is, indeed, already suggested by the idea that representations cannot even be said to represent independently of the unity of apperception or of the synthesis in which the Categories are themselves involved. Moreover Kant's argument in the Fourth Paralogism against the idea that the distinction between inner and outer sense should be construed as ontologically basic (and so against the view that mind and body can necessarily be understood as distinct), and the argument of the Refutation of Idealism against the idea that subjectivity can be grasped independently of the concept of an objective world, can both be taken to imply a Kantian rejection of any simple subjective-objective dichotomy that is very close to Davidson's own rejection of such an idea.[65] Yet both Kant and Davidson, even while they reject the distinction between subject and object as reflecting a real distinction between different modes of being, also accept that the distinction nevertheless reflects a structural feature of experience.[66] Without the distinction of self from world, or subject from object, there can be no notion of belief, of objectivity, or of knowledge. And equally, only through spatialised, embodied activity can there be the unity that is necessary for the possibility of content, of consciousness, or of the mind.

Notes and references

[1] Suspicion most famously expressed by Strawson in The Bounds of Sense (London: Macmillan, 1966), p.32. Patricia Kitcher's Kant's Transcendental Psychology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) represents a recent and detailed attempt to defend the project of transcendental psychology giving a central role in her account to the idea of synthesis — see especially Kant's Transcendental Psychology, pp.3-29 — while in Kant and the Mind (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) Andrew Brook has attempted to provide a unified view of Kant's thinking on the mind, particularly in relation to contemporary work in cognitive science. Earlier attempts to defend the idea of transcendental psychology that take seriously the idea of transcendental synthesis can be found in, for instance, Onora O'Neill, 'Transcendental Synthesis and Developmental Psychology', Kant-Studien 75 (1984), pp.149-67.

[2] Although 'representation' is Kemp Smith's usual translation of Vorstellungen – a term that covers both concepts [Begriffe] and intuitions [Anschauungen], I will sometimes refer to 'mental states' rather than 'representations'. Patricia Kitcher, as I note here, uses the term 'cognitive state' instead of 'representation' (Kant's Transcendental Psychology, p.66).

[3] Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1933), A97.

[4] See Patricia Kitcher, Kant's Transcendental Psychology, p.117; also 'Kant's Real Self', in Allen W. Wood (ed.), Self and Nature in Kant's Philosophy (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp.116-18 and 'Apperception and Epistemic Responsibility', in J. A. Vover and Mark Kulstad (eds.), Central Themes in Early Modern Philosophy (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1990), pp.276-278.

[5] Critique of Pure Reason, B131-32.

[6] Kant's Transcendental Psychology, pp.111-12. C. Thomas Powell also considers the relation between Kant's position and that of contemporary functionalism, see Kant's Theory of Self-Consciousness (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp.200-6.

[7] See, for instance, Andrew Brook, Kant and the Mind, pp.12-14; Brook provides a brief and useful summary of the literature on this point in n.20 p.262.

[8] See Carol Rovane 'The Metaphysics of Interpretation', in Ernest LePore [ed.], Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986], p.419. Although I diverge from Rovane on some points, I regard her paper as extremely valuable — all the more so because it is one of the very few discussions that takes up Davidson's work explicitly in relation to Kant.

[9] Mental states or events are, on a Davidsonian account, token-identical with physical states or events (see 'Mental Events', in Essays on Actions and Events [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980], pp.207-224). As such, the token-identity of mental states or events must be determined by the same factors that determine the token-identity of the physical states or events on which those mental states or events supervene. This means that in one sense the identity of mental states (their type-identity) is dependent on intentional relations — relations of content — between states, and in another sense (token-identity) on non-intentional relations — relations that determine the identity of those states or events independently of the description under which they are given. My talk of the 'identity' and 'identification' of mental states throughout this paper is in terms of the former rather than the latter sense.

[10] See, for instance, Davidson, 'Thought and Talk', p.168 and 'The Method of Truth in Metaphysics', p.200, in Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984). See also the account in J. E. Malpas, Donald Davidson and the Mirror of Meaning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), esp. pp.53-60. Given what seems to me to be the obvious emphasis in Davidson on the mind as essentially unitary (and for more on this see below) I find Andrew Brook's claim — with explicit reference to Davidson — that the unity of the mind has received scant attention in recent philosophical discussion somewhat puzzling. See Brook, Kant and the Mind (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.40.

[11] Although Kitcher says little about it, it seems that she takes contentual content to be established through the operation of certain subpersonal processes or faculties (see Kant's Transcendental Psychology, esp. pp.122-123). As I shall argue below, however, this cannot provide the appropriate elucidation of contentual connection at all.

[12] This idea appears most clearly in 'Three Varieties of Knowledge', but it is also expressed in Davidson's emphasis on the idea of first-person authority (see 'First Person Authority', Dialectica 38 [1984], pp.101-11 and 'Knowing One's Own Mind', Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association 61 [1987], pp.441-58) and in the idea that belief requires the concept of belief (see 'Thought and Talk', pp.155-170, especially p.170, and 'Rational Animals', in E. LePore (ed), Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985], pp. 473-481).

[13] See, for instance, Susan Hurley, 'Unity and Objectivity', in Christopher Peacocke (ed.), Objectivity, Simulation and the Unity of Consciousness, Proceedings of the British Academy 83 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1994) pp.49-77. See also works by Cassam, Peacocke and others cited below.

[14] See Davidson, 'Rational Animals', p.474 and also Davidson's reply to Suppes in Bruce Vermazen and Merrill B. Hintikka, Essays on Davidson: Actions and Events [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985], p.252

[15] Neither Davidson nor Kant need be viewed as denying any capacity for contentful experience to non-human animals (on this point see especially Davidson's reply to Suppes), but they do advance a view according to which the sort of content that is characteristic of judgment is possible only for creatures who have the capacity to think in terms of object-concepts. In The Common Mind (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp.14 & 57-58. Philip Pettit introduces, within a concept of intentional agency, a distinction between thinking and non-thinking intentional agents that captures something like the distinction that seems implicitly to be at issue for Davidson (to whom Pettit explicitly refers) and for Kant — a distinction between those creatures that have a capacity for contentful states of the sort associated with judgment and those that possess something less than this, while obviously possessing some capacity for experience and agency. In Kant, it could be seen, more specifically, to provide a way of explicating the contrast between 'association' and 'judgment' (see Henry Allison, Kant's Transcendental Idealism [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983], p.275).

[16] As Kant writes: "[t]he manifold of representations can be given in an intuition which is purely sensible, that is, nothing but receptivity; and the form of this intuition can lie a priori in our faculty of representation, without being anything more than the mode in which the subject is affected. But the combination (conjunctio) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and cannot, therefore, be already contained in the pure form of sensible intuition," Critique of Pure Reason, B129-B130.

[17] There is, of course, disagreement about exactly how the notion of objectivity in Kant is to be understood. See especially Henry Allison, Kant's Transcendental Idealism, pp.133-172.

[18] Critique of Pure Reason, B131.

[19] 'Thought and Talk', p. 170.

[20] This is a crucial difference — perhaps the crucial difference — between Davidson and Quine. For more on this difference see Davidson, 'Meaning, Truth and Evidence', in Robert Barrett and Roger Gibson (eds.), Perspectives on Quine (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp.68-79

[21] It might be thought that a rather large question is begged here by talk of the need for reference to a 'world in which both we and the speaker are situated', rather than just to the idea or concept of such a world. One could certainly phrase the point at issue in a more cautious fashion and so avoid any provocation on the matter, but it is worth noting that Davidson's own position does not seem to concern merely the need for the concept of an objective world, but for an objective world as such. For more on the anti-scepticism implicit in the discussion here see my 'Self-knowledge and Scepticism', Erkenntnis 40 (1994), pp.165-184.

[22] The idea of interpretation as a matter of the 'optimisation of fit' between behaviour and environment is not just a matter of fitting attitudes to behaviour and environment, but also of fitting attitudes to one another. In this respect it can be viewed as a matter of optimising the rationality of the speaker's attitudes and behaviour relative to the environment in which the speaker is located, but there will always be more than one way of achieving such optimisation.

[23] 'Knowing One's Own Mind', p.456; see also 'First-Person Authority', pp.110-11.

[24] This does not mean that speakers may not be mistaken in their interpretation of themselves — first person authority obtains only in respect of a speaker's meaning or believing something and not in a speaker's attempts to interpret what she or he believes or means.

[25] The Davidsonian claim that belief requires the concept of belief has engendered a good deal of criticism. It should be noted, however, that this claim is itself an expression of Davidsonian holism and is clearly intended to apply only to beliefs inasmuch as they involve propositional content and not to some broader class of informational or representational states.

[26] 'Rational Animals', p.479.

[27] Critique of Pure Reason, B133-4.

[28] Critique of Pure Reason, B132.

[29] See for instance Critique of Pure Reason, B133, and B139; see also Kitcher's discussion, Kant's Transcendental Psychology, pp.122-3.

[30] Critique of Pure Reason, A346/B404.

[31] Kant's Transcendental Psychology, p.122. Kitcher's arguments for this conclusion can be found on pp.91-123. A view rather similar to Kitcher's on this point is expounded by José Luis Bermúdez in 'The Unity of Apperception in the Critique of Pure Reason', European Journal of Philosophy, 2 (1994), pp.225-237 (Bermúdez makes explicit reference to Kitcher on pp.230-1). Bermúdez terms the view of the Kantian position found in Kitcher's and his own work the "Formal Ownership Reading" distinguishing it from what he calls the "Substantial Ownership Reading" which he finds exemplified in Dieter Henrich's work (see Henrich, Identität und Objektivität: eine Untersuchung zu Kants transcendentaler Deduktion [Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1976] and 'The Identity of the Subject in the Transcendental Deduction', in Eva Schaper and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl [eds.], Reading Kant [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989], pp.250-280). In Kant's Transcendental Idealism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp.287-293, Henry Allison offers two readings of Kant's view on the nature of apperception that parallel the two readings offered by Bermúdez, the first of which takes the subject of apperception to be identical with the 'noumenal' or 'real' self, while the second takes apperception to involve "a consciousness of the activity of thinking, not of a thinker" (ibid., p.290).

[32] See Daniel C. Dennett, Content and Consciousness (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.93-94. Dennett points out that shifting to the sub-personal level involves abandoning the personal level, and so, in the case of pain, for instance, "Abandoning the personal level of explanation is just that: abandoning the pains and not bringing them along to identify with some physical event" (p.94).

[33] Kitcher, Kant's Transcendental Psychology, p.123 — Kitcher's discussion of the modularity problem on pp. 137-138 should also be noted.

[34] For a recent account of the nature of anomalous monism see Davidson, 'Thinking Causes' in John Heil and Alfred Mele (eds.), Mental Causation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp.3-18; the classic statement of the position is in 'Mental Events' — the latter being one of the few papers, incidentally, in which Davidson explicitly makes reference to Kant. On Davidson's rejection of empiricist foundationalism see 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', esp. pp.312-314.

[35] Although, since the emphasis here is much more on the question of identity as tied to unity at a time, rather than over time, the question of identity raised here is not quite the same as (though it is not entirely disconnected from) the traditional question of personal identity. As will be evident from the discussion below, however, inasmuch as I tie both content and the self to the idea of embodied, spatialised agency, so my account might be thought to tend away from 'reductionist' theories of the continuity or identity of the self. In this respect, my denial that synthesis requires a 'substantial self' should not be taken to imply an espousal of reductionism about the self, but rather indicates a rejection of the unity of the self conceived as something over an above the unity of mental states associated with the unity of embodied agency.

[36] This problem is raised by Hurley in terms of the difference between "togetherness or unity of some metal states occupying a given stretch of time … and the separareness of other mental states occupying that same stretch of time," 'Unity and Objectivity', p.50.

[37] See Kitcher, Kant's Transcendental Psychology, p.121.

[38] Critique of Pure Reason, A363.

[39] Sydney Shoemaker, 'Self-Consciousness and Synthesis', in Allen W. Wood, Self and Nature in Kant's Philosophy, p. 153.

[40] Shoemaker, ibid.

[41] Critique of Pure Reason, B131.

[42] See Paul Guyer, Kant and the Claims of Knowledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.139-154.

[43] See Bermúdez, 'The Unity of Apperception in the Critique of Pure Reason', pp.221-223. Bermúdez draws attention to the discussion in Quassim Cassam, 'Kant and Reductionism', Review of Metaphysics 72 (1989), pp.72-106 in which this point is made in a rather more perspicuous fashion than in Guyer. Indeed, the example used here is a variation on Cassam's presentation (see 'Kant and Reductionism', p.81).

[44] This is very close to the solution contemplated by Shoemaker when he writes: "Some, of course, would claim that my thoughts are simply given to me in inner sense as my thoughts, that is, that they somehow come stamped as mine ... I do not deny ... that it is fishy in the extreme to suppose that I might be conscious 'by inner sense' of what is in fact my thought and not know it is mine; but I cannot see that the principle of apperception (as interpreted by Kitcher) helps to explain why it is fishy" ('Self-Consciousness and Synthesis', p. 153). The account elaborated here does, I think, go some way towards explaining the fishiness.

[45] Thus the position I have outlined here should not be confused with the 'no-ownership' view of mental states that Stawson identifies (and against which he argues) in Chapter Three of Individuals (London: Macmillan, 1959), pp.87-116. The ownership of mental states can never be in question because ownership (in so far as there is such a thing) is given with mental states themselves — those states are constituted only in so far as they are synthesised with other states.

[46] 'Dissertation on the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World [1770]', in Kant's Inaugural Dissertation and Early Writings on Space, trans. John Handyside (Chicago: Open Court, 1929), §15A, p.59.

[47] Critique of Pure Reason, A26-B42.

[48] See Onora O'Neill, 'Space and Objects', Journal of Philosophy 73 (1976), p.30.

[49] Andrew Brook also emphasises the important of synchronic unity, though his treatment differs from mine — see Kant and the Mind, pp.141ff.

[50] In a similar vein Gareth Evans comments that 'because serial spatial concepts do not provide us with a way of thinking about simultaneously existing objects, they are not obviously concepts of relations between (independently existing) objects at all', 'Things Without the Mind — A Commentary upon Chapter Two of Strawson's Individuals', Collected Papers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p.288. The argument set out here is a compressed version of a more complex set of considerations developed in more detail in my Place and Experience (in preparation).

[51] 'On the First Ground of the Distinction of Regions in Space', in Kant's Inaugural Dissertation and Early Writings on Space, p.23.

[52] See Gareth Evans, The Varieties of Reference (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp.152-170.

[53] The relation between subjective and objective space is discussed at length in my 'Space and Sociality', International Journal of Philosophical Studies 5 (1997), pp.53-79.

[54] In 'Kant and Reductionism', Quassim Cassam argues, in support of the Kantian claim concerning the necessity of self-apperception, that the unification of representations in objects requires the attribution of those representations to a single subject whose movements through the world can be mapped in objective space. As a map is meaningless until we can relate it to our own surroundings, so only through the location of the subject can representations themselves be located in space and thus be identified as different representations of the same objects (see especially, pp.86-89; see also Sidney Shoemaker, 'Persons and their Pasts', in Identity, Cause and Mind [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984], p.28).

[55] Arthur Melnick, Space, Time and Thought in Kant (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989) p.6. Unlike the account developed here, however, Melnick does not give the same emphasis to activity as embodied. Instead he treats spatiality as tied to a certain directing of attention that, while nevertheless a performance or activity, may be purely mental.

[56] As Susan Hurley might be taken to suggest — see Hurley, 'Kant on Spontaneity and the Myth of the Giving', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 94 (1994), pp.137-164; also Hurley, 'Myth Upon Myth', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 96 (1996) pp.253-260. Hurley's discussion, and also the reply by Grahame Bird ('Kantian Myths', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 96 [1996], pp.245-251), does, however, raise a number of issues that require a more detailed treatment than is possible here.

[57] In discussing 'three varieties' of knowledge — knowledge of ourselves, knowledge of others, knowledge of objects — Davidson argues that they form an interdependent system in which no one element is prior to any other and yet in which every element is dependent on the other two (see 'Three Varieties of Knowledge', in A. Phillips Griffith (ed.), A. J. Ayer: Memorial Essays Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 30 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], pp.153-166. Exactly the same interdependence applies to the various elements within the structure of activity that is synthesis. No one of the elements within the structure of synthesis is prior to any other — not subjectivity, objectivity nor spatiality — yet all are necessary if cognitive states are to be constituted as experience.

[58] Recognition of the need for consciousness to be located and oriented within the world may, for instance, be thought to introduce complications for Kant's commitment to the immortality of the soul, if such immortality is thought to consist in a commitment to some continued existence of consciousness. Two solutions suggest themeselves here: one is that immortality of the soul will require a similar immortality of the body; the other is that since Kant takes the immortality of the soul to be a matter that goes beyond the bounds of what we can know, we can retain the hope of immortality without being able to conceive how that hope may be fulfilled.

[59] See, for instance, Quassim Cassam, 'Kant and Reductionism' and also Sarah Furness, A Reasonable Geography: An Argument for Embodiment (University of Essex: PhD Dissertation, 1986). In commenting on my discussion here Hoke Robinson has pointed out that the idea of embodied consciousness is a much more prominent idea in Allisonian readings of Kant than in the tradition influenced by writers such as Strawson. On this see Robinson's own discussions in 'Incongruent Counterparts and the Refutation of Idealism', Kant-Studien 72 (1981), pp.391-397 and 'Kant on Embodiment' in Phillip D Cummins and Guenter Zoeller (eds.), Minds, Ideas and Objects, North American Kant Society Studies in Philosophy 2 (Atascadero, California: Ridgeview Publishing, 1992), pp.329-340.

[60] 'Rational Animals', p.480.

[61] Davidson has himself commented, in private communication, that whereas he takes sociality to be central to his understanding of thought, it seems that Kant gives little or no recognition to the role of the social here at all. Davidson sees this as perhaps the major point of difference between his account and that of Kant.

[62] See Wilhelm Vossenkuhl, 'Understanding Individuals', in Eva Schaper and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl, Reading Kant (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp.196-214. Voseenkuhl emphasises the role of intersubjectivity in the Critique of Judgement, but intersubjectivity would also seem to have a role in the Prolegomena.

[63] This connection is one that I explore further in my paper 'Space and Sociality'.

[64] Most notably, of course, in 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', in Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation, pp.183-198.

[65] In 'Transcendental Arguments and Conceptual Schemes: A Reconsideration of Korner's Uniqueness Argument' (Kantstudien 81 [1990], pp.244-51) I argued, somewhat naively as I now think, that Kant's employment of a version of the scheme-content distinction set him apart from Davidson. My comments here represent a modification of the earlier position.

[66] The Kantian distinction between phenomena and noumena can be taken as giving support to this view, for that distinction is not one between two different realms of phenomena, so much as a way of setting limits to the realm of human knowledge and experience. See 'The Ground of the Distinction of all Objects in General into Phenomena and Noumena', Critique of Pure Reason, A235/294-A260/B315, esp. A254/B309-A259/B315.

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