

## Space and Objective Experience

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### I

In his paper 'Things without the mind', Evans examines what he describes as 'the Kantian thesis that space is a necessary condition for objective experience' (1980a: 250). He reads the second chapter of Strawson's *Individuals* (1959) as a defence of a weakened version of this thesis, but maintains that Strawson's main line of argument is unsuccessful. This leads Evans to put forward his own arguments for the Kantian thesis. These arguments assume that this thesis is primarily concerned with the 'connection between the idea of an objective world and the idea of a spatial world' (1980a: 249). More specifically, they assume that what is at issue in the claim that space is necessary for objective experience is whether someone who has the idea of an objective world must 'thereby conceive of a system of spatial relations in which both he and the phenomena he experiences have a place' (ibid.). In this context, the idea of an objective world is the idea of a world that can be perceived and exist unperceived. Accordingly, Evans insists that 'to defend the Kantian thesis, the idea of space must be shown to be implicitly involved in the very idea of existence unperceived' (1980a: 261).

Evans's Kantian thesis is one of a range of Kantian theses about the necessary conditions of objective experience, although it is the only one discussed in 'Things without the mind'. I will refer to necessary conditions of objective experience as *epistemic conditions*, and to the thesis that space is an epistemic condition

as the *Spatiality Thesis* (ST).<sup>1</sup> In general, claims about what is necessary for objective experience raise a number of basic questions. One is whether the various conditions that they identify are genuinely necessary conditions. I will call this the *question of necessity*. Another question concerns the ultimate basis or foundation of what is claimed to be necessary for objective experience. To enquire about the basis or foundation of a condition of objective experience is to ask why that condition obtains, or what makes it the case that it obtains. This might be described as the *question of foundations*. Finally, there is a question about the proper methodology or procedure for discovering or establishing necessary conditions of objective experience. I will refer to this as the *question of method*. These three questions are obviously related, and I will have more to say about the relations between them in due course.

It does not seem to me that Evans is successful in his attempts to establish that in order to have the idea of an objective world one must also have the idea of a spatial world. I also have doubts about his suggestion that the Kantian thesis cannot be defended without showing that the idea of space is implicitly involved in the very idea of existence unperceived. A different and better approach is suggested by Kant in the first *Critique*. According to Kant, it is the *perception* of space rather than the *idea* of space that should be seen as necessary for objective experience. I am sympathetic to this version of the Kantian thesis, and will attempt to bring out the respects in which it fares better than Evans's account of the link between space and objectivity. On the other hand, I reject Kant's idealist explanation of this link. The explanation that I favour, and which I will outline in the concluding section of this chapter, does not depend on Kant's idealism.

### II

According to Evans, objective experience requires the conception of a world whose existence and operations are independent of our

<sup>1</sup> The expression 'epistemic condition' is taken from Allison (1983). For Allison, an epistemic condition is one that is 'necessary for the representation of an object or an objective state of affairs' (1983: 10). Allison also assumes that such conditions 'must reflect the cognitive structure of the mind (its manner of representing) rather than the nature of the object as it is in itself' (1983: 27). I do not accept this assumption.

experience of it. To have objective experience, one must think of one's experience as experience of a world which is, in this sense, 'objective', and so must have the idea of an experience's being of something distinct from it. Assuming that features and processes can be conceived of as being distinct from our experiences of them, one can conceive of one's experience as experience of an objective world without conceiving of it as experience of a world of objective *particulars*. To this extent, the conception of an objective world need not be the conception of a world of *objects*, but it must be the conception of a world which can exist unperceived.

On this reading of 'objective experience', what would it be for 'space' to be among its necessary conditions? One thing that Evans might have in mind is:

(ST<sub>e</sub>) The existence of space is necessary for objective experience.

I am going to take it that for 'space' to 'exist' is for spatial objects or phenomena to exist. A spatial object or phenomenon is something that has spatial properties. Extension, solidity, shape, and location are all examples of spatial properties. So (ST<sub>e</sub>) is the thesis that objective experience requires the existence of objects or phenomena with at least some of these properties.

On a different reading, suggested by several of Evans's formulations, the Spatiality Thesis is the thesis:

(ST<sub>i</sub>) The idea of space is necessary for objective experience.

I will assume that to have what Evans calls the 'idea' of space is to possess some spatial concepts and to be able to use them in spatial thinking or reasoning. Spatial concepts are concepts of spatial properties, and spatial thinking is thinking in which spatial concepts figure essentially. On this reading, the plausibility of the Kantian thesis depends on the plausibility of maintaining that spatial concepts and spatial thinking are needed to make adequate sense of the notion of existence unperceived.

A third reading of the Kantian thesis is suggested by the observation that spatial properties are not just ones that we are able to think about; they are also ones that we are able to perceive. We can perceive extension, solidity, shape, and location, and can perceive things as possessing such properties. If perception of spatial properties is described as the *perception of space*, then the Spatiality Thesis can

then be understood as the thesis:

(ST<sub>p</sub>) The perception of space is necessary for objective experience. Given Evans's conception of objective experience, the question that (ST<sub>p</sub>) raises is whether the perception of space is required for possession of the idea of an objective world.

As I have already indicated, 'Things without the mind' is primarily concerned with (ST<sub>i</sub>). The question with which Evans begins his paper, and which he represents himself as trying to answer, is 'what is the connection between the idea of an objective world and the idea of a spatial world?' (1980a: 249). It is in the context of trying to answer this question that he suggests that, in order to defend the Kantian thesis, the idea of space must be shown to be implicitly involved in that of existence unperceived. He gives several reasons for thinking that these ideas are connected in this way, and I will have more to say about these reasons below. The important point for present purposes is that Evans's arguments for the Kantian thesis appear, at least in the first instance, to be arguments for (ST<sub>i</sub>).

This is not to say that these arguments have no bearing on (ST<sub>e</sub>) and (ST<sub>p</sub>). It is important to bear in mind that Evans argues for (ST<sub>i</sub>) by elaborating 'two different reasons for doubting whether a subject whose experience was wholly auditory could be regarded as having a conception of an independent reality' (1980a: 250-1). The hypothetical subject ('Hero') who figures in Evans's discussion is one whose experience is wholly auditory, at least in part because he 'inhabits a purely auditory universe' (1980a: 274). A purely auditory universe is one that is composed of sounds rather than material substances. Assuming that sounds have no intrinsic spatial characteristics, Hero's purely auditory universe will be what Strawson calls a 'No-Space world' (1959: 63). In part 3 of his paper, Evans argues that Hero would be unable to conceive of his world as an objective world. If, as Evans sometimes implies, the fact that Hero inhabits a No-Space world were at least partly responsible for depriving him of the conception of an independent reality, then it would seem that the existence of space is, just as (ST<sub>e</sub>) claims, necessary for objective experience.

How is the fact that Hero inhabits what is in fact a No-Space world, a 'world without substance' (Evans 1980a: 268), supposed to explain his lack of spatial concepts, and therefore his inability

to make sense of the same thing existing both experienced and unexperienced? A natural thought would be that Hero lacks those spatial concepts needed to make sense of existence unperceived because there would be no such thing as the perception of space in a No-Space world. The idea here is that the appropriate spatial concepts would not be available in the absence of spatial perception. So if objective experience requires spatial concepts, then it also requires the perception of space. On the present reading of 'Things without the mind', this is the force of (ST<sub>p</sub>), although it is not absolutely clear whether Evans himself would endorse this argument for (ST<sub>p</sub>).

It seems, then, that Evans can be seen as arguing for (ST<sub>e</sub>) and (ST<sub>p</sub>), even though (ST<sub>i</sub>) is undoubtedly his primary concern. In the light of this, what is the relationship between the Kantian thesis, as Evans understands it, and the Spatiality Thesis for which Kant argues in the first *Critique*? Unlike Evans, Kant is primarily concerned to argue for (ST<sub>p</sub>) rather than for (ST<sub>i</sub>). In arguing for (ST<sub>p</sub>), Kant assumes that to have 'experience' is to have perceptual knowledge of objects, and that perceptual knowledge of objects involves both thought and perception. In this sense, all experience is objective experience, although Kant's conception of objective experience is narrower than Evans's. On Kant's conception of experience, the sense in which 'space' is an epistemic condition is that the perception of space or spatial properties is necessary for the perception of objects. If, as Kant maintains, we cannot perceive objects without perceiving them as shaped, extended, and located in space, then it follows straightforwardly that these forms of spatial awareness are necessary for perceptual knowledge of objects, and therefore for experience.

Let us now return to my three basic questions. So far, I have said that Kant and Evans are primarily concerned to argue for different versions of (ST), but I have not said what their arguments are. It remains to be seen, therefore, whether they provide satisfactory answers to the question of necessity. In the next two sections (III and IV below), I will examine some of Evans's arguments for (ST<sub>i</sub>) and Kant's arguments for (ST<sub>p</sub>) in more detail. These arguments will be easier to understand if we have a rough idea of what Kant and Evans have to say in response to the question of foundations and the question of method. The rest of this section will therefore be devoted to outlining and comparing their conceptions of the basis of

epistemic conditions and their views about the proper methodology for establishing necessary conditions for objective experience. My own views about these matters will be set out in section V.

As far as the question of foundations is concerned, the demand for an account of what makes space necessary for objective experience should be understood as the demand for an explanation of the fact that space is an epistemic condition in terms of something more basic. Intuitively, to explain a particular epistemic condition in terms of something more basic is to explain it by reference to independently intelligible factors or considerations, ones that can be grasped without a prior grasp of that very condition. One issue, therefore, is whether it is ever appropriate to try to explain epistemic conditions in this way. It might be argued, for example, that there is nothing more basic or fundamental in virtue of which space is an epistemic condition, no independently intelligible fact or facts by reference to which we can hope to explain the connection between space and objective experience. On this view, the appropriate reaction to the question of foundations is to reject it. All explanation comes to an end once space has been identified as an epistemic condition, and it is fruitless to ask *why* space is necessary for objective experience.

This is not Kant's view. His idea is that there is something more basic that makes it the case that space is an epistemic condition: namely, the 'subjective constitution of our mind' (A23/B38).<sup>2</sup> To be more precise, Kant's proposal is that what makes space necessary for perceptual knowledge of objects is the fact:

(FS) Space is a form of human sensibility.

Kant's idea is that (FS) is intelligible independently of (ST<sub>p</sub>), and so can be used to explain in more basic terms why (ST<sub>p</sub>) is correct. On this view, the point at which all explanation comes to an end is the point at which space is identified as a form of human sensibility. As Strawson remarks, Kant regards it as 'an ultimate *fact* about the cognitive equipment of us human beings—as something not capable of further explanation' (1997: 237) that we have just the forms of sensibility that we do have. Other beings might be different, but we are not in a position to judge whether our mode of perceiving objects is 'peculiar to us' (A42/B59). This means that we are also not in a position to judge whether space is only a necessary

<sup>2</sup> All references in this form are to N. Kemp Smith's translation of Kant (1787).

condition under which perceptual knowledge of objects is possible *for us* or a necessary condition for any perceptual knowledge of objects, human or otherwise.

What would it be for space to be a 'form' of human sensibility?

On one interpretation, regarding space as a form of human sensibility is equivalent to regarding the perception of space as necessary for the perception of objects. On this interpretation, Kant would be left with no substantive account of the basis of (ST<sub>p</sub>). Instead, he would be forced to concede that (FS) and (ST<sub>p</sub>) are notational variants, and that (FS) cannot be used to explain in more basic terms why (ST<sub>p</sub>) is correct. Since Kant's aim is precisely to explain in more basic terms why (ST<sub>p</sub>) is correct, he must show that regarding space as a form of human sensibility is not equivalent to regarding the perception of space as necessary for the perception of objects. He must show that there is some other way of understanding (FS), and must explain how (FS) can be intelligible independently of (ST<sub>p</sub>).

In representing space as an epistemic condition that is grounded in the forms of human sensibility, Kant is denying that the nature of the objects themselves can account for the connection between space and perceptual knowledge of objects. He is committed to denying this because he thinks that 'space does not represent any determination that attaches to the objects themselves' (A26/B42). Given the non-spatiality of the objects themselves, only our subjective constitution can account for the dependence of objective experience on space. This is intended as a substantive account of the basis or foundation of a particular epistemic condition. In general, Kant's view is that epistemic conditions have foundations that are entirely subjective. In other words, he thinks that they reflect the nature of our cognitive equipment *rather than* the nature of things or objects as they are in themselves. The conclusion he draws from this is that the proper procedure for establishing or discovering what is necessary for objective experience is to study our cognitive equipment. This is the gist of his answer to the question of method, although he would add that what is needed to establish epistemic conditions is a 'transcendental' rather than an empirical investigation of our cognitive equipment.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Kant thinks that an empirical investigation of our cognitive equipment cannot establish epistemic conditions, because he is convinced that epistemic conditions are, by their nature, ones our knowledge of which must be a priori. There is more on this below.

Kant's conception of epistemic conditions is an idealist conception.<sup>4</sup> To be an idealist about epistemic conditions is to view them as having entirely subjective foundations, and therefore as conditions that might not bind beings whose subjective constitutions are very different from ours. It remains to be seen whether there are any good arguments for idealism, but the lesson of the discussion so far is that idealism has no chance of being viable unless it is able to provide characterizations of our subjective constitution that are not simply equivalent to statements of those very epistemic conditions claimed to be grounded in our subjective constitution. I will have more to say below about the prospects for idealism and about the relationship between (FS) and (ST<sub>p</sub>). The immediate priority is to bring the present phase of my discussion to a conclusion by giving an indication of Evans's approach to my second and third questions, and comparing his conception of the basis of the link between space and objectivity with Kant's conception of the basis of this link. The obvious question to ask in this connection is whether Evans's implicit conception of the basis of epistemic conditions is an idealist conception.

An immediate difficulty is that Evans makes no explicit attempt to explain the fact that objective experience requires the idea of space. At best, it is only by implication that he says anything that bears on this issue. One clue to his thinking is provided by his description of the connection between space and objectivity as a 'conceptual connection' that lies 'deep in our conceptual scheme' (1980a: 249–50). Further clues are provided by the concluding paragraphs of 'Things without the mind'. These paragraphs contain a ringing endorsement of Strawson's methodology in *Individuals*, a work in which Strawson represents himself as doing what he calls 'descriptive metaphysics'. Unlike other forms of metaphysics, descriptive metaphysics 'is content to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world' (1959: 9). Its aim is to bring to light certain very general features of our conceptual structure, and it proceeds by tracing the relations that obtain between the fundamental elements of this structure. This is what Evans is

<sup>4</sup> See Allison (1983) for an extended defence of Kant's idealist conception of epistemic conditions. There are some telling criticisms of Allison's arguments in Guyer 1987: ch. 15.

alluding to when he remarks in his final paragraph that 'the connections between the fundamental concepts of our conceptual scheme are central objects of philosophical investigation' (1980a: 290). The implication is that the connection between space and objectivity is one such connection, and that the methodology of 'Things without the mind' is essentially the same as Strawson's in *Individuals*.

If this is right, then we already have Evans's answer to the question of method. More controversially, these remarks might also be thought to suggest an answer of sorts to the question of foundations. The answer they suggest is that our conceptual scheme, the structure of our thought about the world, is the basis or foundation of the conceptual connection between space and objectivity. To put it another way, the suggestion that is starting to emerge is that what makes it the case that space is necessary for objective experience is the fact:

(CS) The ideas of space and objectivity are connected in our conceptual scheme.

Two ideas are connected in our conceptual scheme just if one of them implicitly involves the other. As long as our conceptual scheme is such that the idea of space is implicitly involved in that of objectivity, we can conclude that the idea of space is conceptually necessary for objective experience.

This reading of Evans points to a kind of structural parallel between his view and Kant's. Just as Kant regards (FS) as the basis of (ST<sub>p</sub>), so Evans can be read as holding that (CS) is the basis of (ST<sub>i</sub>). More generally, just as Kant attributes epistemic conditions to our subjective constitution, so it now seems that Evans attributes them to our conceptual scheme. This is not to say that what Kant calls the 'subjective constitution of our mind' is the same as what Strawson and Evans refer to as 'our conceptual scheme'. For Kant, our subjective constitution consists of a set of interrelated cognitive faculties or capacities, such as sensibility and understanding. In contrast, a conceptual scheme is a set of interrelated concepts, or a set of propositions in which the concepts that constitute the scheme find essential employment.<sup>5</sup> In this sense, there is a difference

<sup>5</sup> This account of the notion of a conceptual scheme is drawn from Strawson (1982).

between regarding our subjective constitution and regarding our conceptual scheme as the basis of a particular epistemic condition. Nevertheless, the point of insisting on a structural parallel between the two approaches is that they both represent the fact that space is necessary for objective experience as a reflection of facts about *us*, facts about our perceptual or conceptual equipment.

Despite this parallel, it would be premature to conclude that Evans has an idealist conception of the basis of (ST<sub>i</sub>). There are two issues here. One is whether he really thinks that (CS) is the basis of (ST<sub>i</sub>). The other is whether, if he does think this, his account would amount to a form of idealism. On the first of these issues, it may well be the case that the suggestion in 'Things without the mind' that the connection between space and objectivity is one that lies deep in our conceptual scheme is *not* intended as a substantive answer to the question of foundations. In order to think of (CS) as the basis of (ST<sub>i</sub>) one would need to suppose that (CS) and (ST<sub>i</sub>) are independently intelligible, but there is no evidence that Evans regards (CS) and (ST<sub>i</sub>) as independently intelligible. His view might be that what it is for the ideas of space and objectivity to be connected in our conceptual scheme, or for one of these ideas implicitly to involve the other, just is for the idea of space to be necessary for objective experience. In that case, (CS) cannot be used to explain in more basic terms why (ST<sub>i</sub>) is correct. And if Evans is not trying to explain in more basic terms why (ST<sub>i</sub>) is correct, then he cannot reasonably be accused of being an idealist. The issue of idealism arises only for those who accept the question of foundations, but perhaps Evans would not regard this as a legitimate question.

Suppose, on the other hand, that we are not moved by these considerations, and insist on reading Evans as trying to explain in more basic terms what makes (ST<sub>i</sub>) true. Given my characterization of idealism, the proposal that (CS) is the basis of (ST<sub>i</sub>) would still only count as a form of idealism if two further conditions were met. First, it would have to be the case that conditions of objective experience that reflect our conceptual scheme are ones that *do not* reflect the nature of reality as it is in itself. Secondly, it would have to be the case that conditions of objective experience that reflect our conceptual scheme might not bind beings whose conceptual schemes are very different from ours. To put it another way, it would have to be the case that the epistemic conditions that apply

to us might not be universal in scope. The best way of showing that Evans is not committed to some form of idealism would therefore be to show that his account of (ST<sub>1</sub>) does not meet one or both of these conditions.

With regard to the first condition, the idea that reality as it is in itself is non-spatial plays no part in Evans's discussion. To this extent, it would be open to him to represent the link between space and objective experience as one that reflects the nature of reality as well as our conceptual scheme. The natural way of doing this would be to insist that 'our thinking is rooted in the nature of the world and in our own natures' (Strawson 1956: 107). The idea would be that we ourselves are spatial objects living in a spatial world, and that this somehow explains the connection in our conceptual scheme between the idea of an objective world and the idea of a spatial world. If this is right, then the proposal that our conceptual scheme is the basis of a particular epistemic condition such as (ST<sub>1</sub>) does not imply that this condition has entirely subjective foundations.

On the question of whether space is an epistemic condition that might fail to be universal in scope, Evans concedes at one point that a spatial scheme is not the only scheme that is capable of making sense of the idea of existence unperceived. He is not troubled by this concession because, as a descriptive metaphysician, he is concerned primarily with our own conceptual scheme. As long as our scheme is one where the idea of space is implicitly involved in the idea of existence unperceived, the obvious way of acknowledging the possibility of alternative schemes without giving up (ST<sub>1</sub>) would be to read this thesis as claiming only that the idea of space is, for us, necessary for objective experience. In this way, the concession that there might be non-spatial ways of making sense of existence unperceived leads smoothly to the conclusion that the spatial epistemic conditions under which objective experience is possible for us might not be universal in scope.

To sum up, I have argued that one way for Evans to counter accusations of idealism would be to deny that his remarks about the link between (CS) and (ST<sub>1</sub>) constitute a response to the question of foundations. Another possibility would be for him to admit that he is addressing the question of foundations in these remarks, but to deny that his response is an idealist response. He could deny this on the basis that there are two conditions that need to be fulfilled

for an account of (ST<sub>1</sub>) to count as an idealist account, and that his account does not fulfil both conditions. It is arguable that it fulfils the second condition, but it does not fulfil the first. Unless it can be shown that epistemic conditions that have their basis in our conceptual scheme are entirely subjective in origin, the structural parallels between Evans's account of (ST<sub>1</sub>) and Kant's account of (ST<sub>p</sub>) do not justify the conclusion that Evans is an idealist.

This discussion leaves many important questions unanswered. For example, it does not indicate whether Evans would be right to reject the question of foundations, if he does reject this question. It suggests various ways in which Evans could counter accusations of idealism, but it does not say which of these ways of proceeding is the most promising. I will argue below that the question of foundations is not one that should be dismissed as illegitimate or misguided. It is possible to explain in more basic terms the connection between space and objective experience, but the best explanation will not be one that represents our conceptual scheme as the basis of this connection. Even if we think of our conceptual scheme as rooted in the nature of the world, it is still misleading to attribute epistemic conditions to our conceptual scheme. It will become clearer why this is misleading once we have a better understanding of the precise sense in which space is necessary for objective experience. This is therefore the point at which we need to turn to the question of necessity. Once we have reflected on the plausibility of regarding space as necessary for objective experience, we should be in a better position to understand why we should neither reject the question of foundations nor respond to it in any of the ways which I have discussed so far.

### III

Why should one suppose that space is a necessary condition for objective experience? Evans's first argument for the Kantian thesis is primarily an argument for (ST<sub>1</sub>). It turns on the claim that 'the idea of existence now perceived, now unperceived, is not an idea that can stand on its own, stand without any surrounding theory' (1980a: 261). What provides the indispensable surrounding for this idea is a rudimentary theory of perception. Such a theory must incorporate an account of the enabling conditions of perception: that is,

an account of the conditions that must be fulfilled for a perceiver to perceive what is there to be perceived. The required theory must also be able to explain why a perceptible phenomenon may not be perceived, and it must do so in a way that is subject to 'significant empirical control' (1980a: 268). If we are entitled to rely on spatial notions, then it is easy to explain why a perceptible phenomenon may not be perceived. For example, one might fail to perceive the  $\phi$ -ing that is there to be perceived simply because one is in the wrong position to perceive it or because there is something in the way. The question, therefore, is whether we can 'find a non-spatial way of making sense of existence unperceived' (1980a: 263).

One proposal that Evans considers is that existence unperceived can be explained by citing deficiencies in the perceiver, such as his not being receptive in the appropriate modality. On this account, 'Hero must see the course of his experience as simultaneously determined by the way the world is and his changing receptivity to it; each is connected to experience, but only as modified by the other' (1980a: 265). This is similar to the way in which, in a spatial theory, one can tell that one's position has changed by the changing course of one's experience, but only when this is taken together with a map of the world, which must itself be constantly updated by adopting views as to when and where one is moving. Unlike the scheme using receptivity, a spatial theory employs a *relativized* notion of receptivity: one is receptive to (located at) this or that position, rather than absolutely receptive or unreceptive. What the spatial scheme and the scheme using receptivity have in common, however, is that they both take the condition that accounts for the presence or absence of perception to be '*a priori* connected with, and, therefore, known to be satisfied only upon the basis of, propositions about the way the world is' (1980a: 266). According to Evans, this feature of the two schemes is not only permissible but necessary for a viable account of existence unperceived.

Why, then, does Evans object to the scheme using receptivity? His objection to it is that its explanation of existence unperceived is not subject to adequate empirical control, and that this is so because it does not employ a relativized notion of receptivity. Hero can suppose that if he were now to become receptive, he would now perceive  $\phi$ -ing, but there is no criterion of his now becoming receptive other than his perceiving  $\phi$ -ing. In contrast, it is not true in a spatial scheme that one's present experience is the only criterion

of one's being at a certain location. Given that one moves continuously through space, one can also fix one's location by reference to propositions about adjacent places. Evans's conclusion is that:

here, surely, are the materials for a possible defence of the Kantian thesis—a line of defence which rests upon the idea that only a spatial theory can satisfy the demand that the factor accounting for the presence or absence of perception of perceptible phenomena should be at once *a priori* connected with the propositions about the world, and yet subject to significant empirical control. (1980a: 268)

Assuming that a spatial theory is one that employs spatial concepts and spatial reasoning, the version of the Kantian thesis supported by these considerations is (ST<sub>i</sub>). To have spatial concepts and to be able to engage in spatial reasoning of the kind required to explain why a perceptible phenomenon may not be perceived just is to have the 'idea' of space.

I will refer to this argument for (ST<sub>i</sub>) as the *Perception Argument*. As I have stated it, this is not an argument for (ST<sub>e</sub>) or (ST<sub>p</sub>). It is one thing to hold that only a spatial theory of perception can explain the possibility of existence unperceived, but it is a further question whether the ability to make sense of existence unperceived in spatial terms requires the existence of space or the perception of space. To turn the Perception Argument into an argument for (ST<sub>e</sub>) or (ST<sub>p</sub>), much more would need to be said about the conditions under which spatial thinking is possible. It would need to be argued, for example, that the spatial concepts that figure in such thinking would be available to one only in a spatial world or in a world perceived to have spatial properties. It is instructive, therefore, that Evans makes no attempt to argue along these lines, and thereby to relate the Perception Argument to (ST<sub>e</sub>) or to (ST<sub>p</sub>). As far as he is concerned, the only Kantian thesis directly at issue in relation to this argument is (ST<sub>i</sub>).

How convincing is the Perception Argument? It is striking that Evans's own endorsement of it is distinctly half-hearted. After describing it as providing the materials for a possible defence of the Kantian thesis, he adds in a surprising and significant footnote that:

a spatial scheme is not the only scheme to employ a relativized receptivity condition, with the possibilities of additional empirical control that that provides; we can make sense, perhaps, of the idea of being  *$\phi$ -receptive*, where receptivity is relativized to a universal. And there are other possibilities. (1980a: 268 n. 19)

On the face of it, this concession is at odds with the claim in the text that only a spatial theory will do when it comes to making sense of the notion of existence unperceived. It now appears that there are other possibilities: that is, non-spatial but still empirically serviceable ways of making sense of existence unperceived. If Evans is right about this, then the Perception Argument fails to establish that the idea of space is necessary for objective experience.

One reaction to Evans's footnote would be to dismiss it as misguided. After all, the alternatives that Evans mentions are not spelled out in any detail, and perhaps detailed scrutiny will reveal each alternative to be unworkable. On the other hand, it is hard to see how one can know in advance that this will be the outcome. What guarantee is there that it will not turn out to be possible, with sufficient ingenuity, to find a viable non-spatial way of making sense of existence unperceived? As the complex discussion of the scheme using receptivity illustrates, it is not as if the thought that there might be non-spatial ways of making sense of existence unperceived leaves us blank. A great deal depends on the precise extent to which the factor accounting for the presence or absence of perception must be subject to empirical control, and this is surely a delicate matter. Viewed in this light, it is not obvious that the concession that Evans makes in his footnote is misguided.

A different reaction to the footnote, which is more in keeping with an idealist conception of epistemic conditions, would be to argue that it poses no threat to (ST<sub>1</sub>) when this thesis is understood in the way that Evans understands it. The fact that a spatial scheme is not the only scheme to employ a relativized receptivity condition does not show that space and objectivity are not connected in *our* thinking, or that *we* have the option of making sense of existence unperceived in non-spatial terms. In other words, it might still be true that the idea of space is, as far as we are concerned, necessary for objective experience even if there are alternatives to the spatial scheme. As long as these alternatives are not alternatives *for us*, there is no reason to abandon something along the lines of (ST<sub>1</sub>). The most that the footnote shows is that this thesis is correct only in a somewhat restricted sense, but this is in keeping with Evans's insistence that the primary aim of 'Things without the mind' is to illuminate 'the role of space in our thinking' (1980a: 268).

The problem with this line of argument is that it does nothing to justify the assertion that we do not have the option of making sense

of existence unperceived in non-spatial terms. If, as Evans concedes, there are alternatives to the spatial scheme, then we need to know why these are not alternatives for us. One thought might be that the alternatives that Evans has in mind are too complicated for us to grasp, or that there is some other reason why we are psychologically incapable of operating with anything other than a spatial scheme. It is not clear, however, why one should suppose that non-spatial ways of making sense of existence unperceived are bound to be any more complicated than spatial ways of doing this. Furthermore, even if it is true that we are psychologically incapable of operating with anything other than a spatial scheme, this is presumably not the sense in which Evans regards the idea of space as necessary for objective experience.

For these reasons, Evans's footnote must be regarded as posing a genuine threat to the Perception Argument for (ST<sub>1</sub>). This makes it important to understand why Evans is apparently unconcerned about this threat. The explanation is that he is really engaged in two different projects but mistakenly runs them together. The first is the Kantian project of identifying necessary conditions for objective experience. The second is the Strawsonian project of describing and understanding our own conceptual structure. Yet understanding our own conceptual structure need not be a matter of showing that we must think about the world in the ways in which we do think about it, or that there are no alternatives to our perspective on the world. This is the sense in which the Kantian and Strawsonian projects are different, though not incompatible. If we employ certain concepts in our objective experience, that is one thing; it is a different matter entirely whether our employment of these concepts is strictly necessary for objective experience. If we want to show that we *must* think about the world in a certain way, then we cannot be content to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world. We must go beyond merely descriptive metaphysics.

These points also have a bearing on Evans's second main argument for the Spatiality Thesis. Since the question to which Evans represents this argument as providing an answer is whether there can be a world without substance, I will call it the *Substance Argument*. The substance that is at issue here is material substance, the kind of substance that is constituted by its possession of primary properties such as position, shape, size, and motion. These are properties of bodies or material substances 'immediately consequential upon the

idea of space-occupation' (1980a: 269). Evans assumes that a purely auditory world would be a world without material substance, and also that one would lack the concept of substance in such a world. One would lack this concept because one would lack concepts of the primary properties of matter. The aim of the Substance Argument is to show that 'without ideas corresponding to our ideas of the primary properties of matter', one would not be able to make sense of 'the same thing existing both experienced and unexperienced' (1980a: 278). This amounts to an argument for the Spatiality Thesis, since primary properties are spatial properties, and ideas corresponding to our ideas of the primary properties of matter are spatial ideas.

Although the Substance Argument is primarily an argument for (ST<sub>i</sub>) and (ST<sub>e</sub>), it can also be seen as providing some support for (ST<sub>p</sub>). It is an argument for (ST<sub>i</sub>) because (ST<sub>i</sub>) is just the claim that spatial ideas are needed to make sense of the notion of existence unperceived. What the Substance Argument adds to this claim is the requirement that the spatial concepts indispensable for objective experience are specifically concepts of primary properties. The sense in which the Substance Argument supports (ST<sub>e</sub>) is that it represents the availability of such concepts as conditional on the existence of material substance. Finally, the case for reading the Substance Argument as providing some support for (ST<sub>p</sub>) is that the mere existence of material substance cannot account for one's possession of concepts of primary properties. In order to have ideas corresponding to our ideas of the primary properties of matter, it is arguable that one must also be able to perceive the primary properties of matter, and so must be capable of spatial perception.

Is the Substance Argument successful in its attempt to show that a thinker who lacks concepts of primary or spatial properties could not make sense of the same thing existing both experienced and unexperienced? Evans writes that 'the notion of objectivity arises as a result of conceiving a situation in which a subject has experience as involving a duality: on the one hand, there is *that of which there is an experience* (part of the world) and, on the other, there is *the experience of it* (an event in the subject's biography)' (1980a: 277). Suppose that we call this the *duality requirement* on objectivity. According to the Substance Argument, one must have concepts of primary properties in order to fulfil this requirement. In a purely auditory universe, in which one would not have such concepts,

the thought that one would have certain auditory experiences if one were to go to a certain position would not be the thought of 'two states of affairs existing simultaneously and related causally' (ibid.). So it would not be the thought of one's experiences as experience of an objective world.

It is beyond dispute that the notion of objectivity involves the kind of duality that Evans describes, but it is a further question whether one must have concepts of primary properties in order to make room for this duality. Evans's idea is that, in order to make room for this duality, one must have the idea that the phenomena that one experiences have persisting or relatively abiding properties. Concepts of primary properties come into the picture because they are concepts of persisting or relatively abiding properties. So, for example, 'we can think of sounds as perceptible phenomena, phenomena that are independent of us, and that can exist unperceived, because we have the resources for thinking of the abiding stuff in whose changes the truth of the proposition that there is a sound can be regarded as consisting' (1980a: 278). Yet this supports the conclusion that one's thinking will satisfy the duality requirement if one possesses concepts of primary properties. It does not support the conclusion that one's thinking will satisfy the duality requirement *only if* one possesses concepts of primary properties. For concepts of primary properties to be strictly necessary for the notion of objectivity, it would need to be the case that one can only think of something as persisting or as relatively abiding by thinking of it as possessing primary properties. One way of undermining the Substance Argument would therefore be to dispute the assumption that only primary or spatial properties can coherently be thought of as persisting.

The thought that persistence and existence in space go together is one that Kant endorses when he writes in the General Note on the System of Principles that 'space alone is determined as permanent' (B291). In response, it might be argued that the most that can be claimed is that there is a connection 'in our conceptual scheme' between the idea of persistence and the idea of existence in space, but that there might be conceptual schemes in which sense is made in some other way of the idea of persistence. Given the general tenor of his discussion, and his own reaction to the Perception Argument, it is hard to see how Evans could object to this move. Indeed, even the extent to which persistence and existence in space

are linked in our conceptual scheme is easily exaggerated. For example, it is arguable that we can conceive of a buzzing or a headache as persisting or relatively abiding without conceiving of it as having primary properties or as being produced by something with primary properties. So when Evans suggests that one must have the concept of space-occupying substance in order to satisfy the duality requirement, he is simply describing one very central and obvious way of satisfying this requirement. He cannot claim to be describing the only possible way of satisfying this requirement, even by the lights of our own conceptual scheme.

There are other aspects of the Substance Argument for (ST<sub>i</sub>) that I have not discussed and which suggest alternative ways of linking the notion of objectivity with concepts of primary properties.<sup>6</sup> For reasons that I do not have the space to go into here, I do not believe that these other aspects of the Substance Argument are any more convincing than the aspect that I have just discussed. But even if I am wrong about this, there is still a question about the role of the Substance Argument in 'Things without the mind'. For Evans elaborates this argument after conceding that a spatial scheme is not the only scheme to employ a relativized receptivity condition, with the possibilities of additional empirical control that this provides. I have already commented on the way that this concession undermines the Perception Argument, but does it also undermine the Substance Argument? One thought might be that it does undermine this argument, because a non-spatial scheme that employs a relativized receptivity condition would not be one that employs concepts of primary properties. So if such a scheme can explain why a perceptible phenomenon may not be perceived, then it follows that a grasp of the idea of existence unperceived does not require a grasp of concepts of primary properties.

In order to deflect this objection to the conclusion of the Substance Argument, one would need to show that one cannot make sense of the notion of existence unperceived simply by citing

<sup>6</sup> For example, I have not discussed the idea that sounds and other secondary qualities are dispositions that require categorical grounds of a special sort. Furthermore, the Perception Argument and the Substance Argument are not the only arguments for the Spatiality Thesis in 'Things without the mind'. There is also the argument in part 4 of this paper to the effect that one must have 'simultaneous' spatial concepts in order to think of unperceived particulars existing simultaneously with perceived particulars. I am unable to discuss this argument here.

failures in receptivity, even if one has a relativized notion of receptivity. One would need to show that this explanation of the possibility of existence unperceived needs to be supplemented by an appeal to the idea that the perceptible phenomena to which one is sometimes receptive possess primary properties. The case for requiring this form of supplementation is that it is only on the basis of the idea that the world one inhabits is a material world that one can conceive of the phenomena to which one is receptive at various different times as persisting through gaps in observation. At this point, however, one would once again be drawing upon elements of the Substance Argument I have already called into question, and so would once again be faced with the objection that persistence and existence in space can be pulled apart.

Where does this leave the Substance Argument for (ST<sub>e</sub>) and (ST<sub>p</sub>)? As far as (ST<sub>e</sub>) is concerned, it is one thing to argue that the availability of concepts of primary properties is conditional on the existence of space, but this is not going to cut much ice if concepts of primary properties are not necessary for objective experience. By the same token, the failure of the Substance Argument for (ST<sub>i</sub>) means that it is not going to be possible to argue for the indispensability of spatial perception on the basis that the perception of space is the source of the idea of space. Apart from anything else, this argument relies on an empiricist conception of concept-acquisition, but Evans is no empiricist when it comes to accounting for ideas of primary properties. He emphasizes that these concepts cannot be woven exclusively out of materials given in experience, and implies that it would be closer to the truth to describe them as innate or natively given.<sup>7</sup> In that case, there is a sense in which, even by Evans's own lights, the perception of space is not the source of the idea of space, although there might still be a sense in which spatial perception is needed to trigger and justify one's innate spatial ideas.

These considerations suggest that the Substance Argument for (ST<sub>e</sub>) and (ST<sub>p</sub>) is as inconclusive as the Substance Argument for (ST<sub>i</sub>). Does this mean that we should reject the Kantian thesis? This would be an overreaction to what I have just been arguing. Aside from the fact that I have not been able to consider all of Evans's arguments for his preferred version of the Kantian thesis, it would

<sup>7</sup> See, in particular, Evans 1980a: 271.

not be right to reject this thesis without considering Kant's own arguments for it. Unlike Evans, Kant argues for (ST<sub>p</sub>) rather than for (ST<sub>i</sub>), and he does not argue for (ST<sub>p</sub>) by first arguing for (ST<sub>i</sub>). Instead, he argues directly for (ST<sub>p</sub>). If Kant's argument is successful, then one can agree that the *perception* of space is necessary for objective experience even if one is not persuaded by Evans that the *idea* of space is necessary for objective experience. The next question that needs to be addressed, therefore, is whether Kant makes a convincing case for (ST<sub>p</sub>).

## IV

Kant's claim is that the perception of space or spatial properties is necessary for objective experience because it is necessary for the perception of objects. In the terminology of the Transcendental Aesthetic, it is a condition 'under which alone objects can be for us objects of the senses' (A29). The 'objects' at issue here are *objective particulars*: that is, particulars that can be perceived yet exist unperceived. The perception of space is necessary for the perception of objective particulars, because one cannot perceive an objective particular without perceiving it as having spatial properties such as shape, extension, and location. This is one sense in which space is one of the 'forms' of objective experience. Kant's idea is that space is necessary for objective experience because we can only perceive objective particulars by perceiving their spatial properties. This leaves it open whether we can think about objective particulars without thinking about their spatial properties.

Unfortunately, there are counter-examples to the proposal that we can only perceive objective particulars by perceiving their spatial properties. For example, sounds can be regarded as objective particulars, but it is false that one can only perceive sounds by perceiving their spatial properties. For a start, it is doubtful whether sounds have any intrinsic spatial properties or characteristics. It does not follow from this that sounds cannot be heard as having spatial properties, but it is independently implausible that one cannot hear a sound without hearing it as having any spatial properties.<sup>8</sup> We do not hear sounds as shaped or extended or as

occupying space. The only spatial property that we sometimes hear sounds as having is location, but it is possible to hear a sound without hearing it as located or as coming from any particular direction.<sup>9</sup>

Unless one is prepared to deny that sounds are objective particulars, one is going to have to concede that Kant is wrong to represent the perception of space as a necessary condition for the perception of objects. The reason why he makes this mistake is that the objects he has in mind throughout his discussion are *material* objects or bodies. He makes this explicit in the following important passage:

[I]f I take away from the representation of a body that which the understanding thinks in regard to it, substance, force, divisibility, etc., and likewise what belongs to sensation, impenetrability, hardness, colour, etc., something still remains over from this empirical intuition, namely, extension and figure. These belong to pure intuition, which, even without any actual object of the senses or of sensation, exists *a priori* in the mind as a mere form of sensibility. (A20–r/B35)

This passage suggests that it might be possible to defend a somewhat more restricted version of (ST<sub>p</sub>) than the version undermined by reflection on the nature of auditory perception. Instead of taking objective experience to involve the perception of objective particulars, Kant could stipulate that objective experience involves the perception of material objects. According to the restricted version of (ST<sub>p</sub>), the perception of space is necessary for objective experience in so far as it is necessary for the *perception of bodies*. I will refer to this version of (ST<sub>p</sub>) as (ST<sub>pb</sub>). The sense in which, according to (ST<sub>pb</sub>), the perception of space is necessary for the perception of bodies or material objects is that we can perceive bodies or material objects only by perceiving their spatial properties.

One of the attractions of restricting (ST<sub>p</sub>) in this way is that sounds are no longer a problem. Sounds are not bodies, so the possibility of hearing a sound without hearing it as having any spatial properties is not a counter-example to (ST<sub>pb</sub>). Unlike sounds, bodies have 'extension and figure'. They also occupy space to the exclusion of other bodies. Locke describes this characteristic of bodies as their 'solidity' or 'impenetrability'. Bodies are

<sup>9</sup> I am indebted at this point to discussion with John Campbell, and to Campbell (1997).

<sup>8</sup> See Nudds (2001) for further discussion of this point.

an important subclass of objective particulars, and it is easy to forget that there are objective particulars that are not bodies. This is Kant's mistake. He claims that the perception of space is necessary for the perception of objective particulars because he assumes that all objective particulars are bodies. Once it is conceded that this is a mistake, it must also be conceded that the perception of space need not be a necessary condition for the perception of those objective particulars that are not bodies.

Although ( $ST_{pb}$ ) is more plausible than the unrestricted version of ( $ST_p$ ), it still faces a number of challenges. Consider the case in which one hears a car alarm sounding in the middle of the night. A car alarm is a material object, but one can hear a car alarm sounding without hearing it as shaped or solid or even as spatially located. Does this not undermine ( $ST_{pb}$ )? The reason that it does not is that the primary or direct object of audition in this case is not the car alarm but the sound it makes.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, cases where it is plausible to insist that what one is perceptually aware of is not just a sound but a body making or producing a sound will not be ones where something is perceived without being perceived as having any spatial properties.<sup>11</sup>

It is controversial whether the direct objects of audition are sounds or bodies, but it is not controversial that bodies are the primary direct objects of sight and touch. Although ( $ST_{pb}$ ) draws attention to the fact that it is not possible to perceive a body by sight or touch without perceiving *any* of its spatial properties, this should not be taken to imply that it is not possible to perceive a body by sight or touch without perceiving *all* of its spatial properties. For example, one might see an object glinting in the far distance without seeing what shape it is or perceiving its solidity. One might *believe* that the object is shaped and solid, but that is a different matter. On the other hand, there is no question of the glinting object being seen without its being seen as located in relation to the perceiver and, perhaps, other objects. One might sometimes misperceive the locations of the things which one sees, but this is not to say that bodies can be seen without being seen as having a spatial location. The same goes for touch. When one perceives a

<sup>10</sup> M. G. F. Martin also makes this point. See Martin 1997: 93.

<sup>11</sup> The cases that I have in mind are ones where one perceives a sound as being produced by something which one can also see. The significance of such cases is illuminatingly discussed in Nudds (2001).

body by touching it, one must be aware of it as located in space. Strictly speaking, therefore, it is the perception of location that is necessary for the perception of bodies.<sup>12</sup>

One reaction to what I have just been arguing would be to protest that it deprives the Spatiality Thesis of any interest. Since bodies are essentially spatial, is it not trivial that the perception of space is required for the perception of bodies? The answer to this question is that it is not trivial. The claim that bodies are essentially spatial is metaphysical or ontological. In contrast, the claim that the perception of space is required for the perception of bodies is epistemological rather than metaphysical. To argue from the premiss that bodies are essentially spatial to the conclusion that the perception of space is necessary for the perception of bodies would be to argue from a metaphysical premiss to an epistemological conclusion. As will become clearer below, it is certainly not beyond dispute whether it is legitimate to argue in this way, any more than it is beyond dispute whether ( $ST_{pb}$ ) is plausible in its own right. The suggestion that ( $ST_{pb}$ ) trivializes the Spatiality Thesis underestimates the amount of work that needs to be done to explain the meaning of ( $ST_{pb}$ ) and to establish its correctness. If it were the case that ( $ST_{pb}$ ) is not just true, but trivially true, it would be much less difficult to defend than it actually is.

Another anxiety about what I have just been arguing might be that it is unacceptable to assume that objective experience involves the perception of bodies or material objects. But in what sense is this unacceptable? One thought might be that it is unacceptable because it fails to address scepticism about the external world. Yet, if the object of the exercise were to respond to scepticism, then it would be no more acceptable to assume that we have experience of objects that can exist unperceived than that these objects are material objects. Scepticism, however, is not the issue when it comes to establishing a connection between space and objective experience. In this context, the object of the exercise is simply to determine the conditions under which perceptual knowledge of material objects is possible and whether the perception of space is one of these conditions. Sceptical doubts about the existence of

<sup>12</sup> Further discussion of this claim would need to take account of conditions, such as optic ataxia, which appear to call into question the existence of such a strong

connection between the perception of bodies and the perception of location.

material objects need to be addressed, if they need to be addressed at all, in a different context.

If, as I have argued, the perception of location is necessary for the perception of bodies, then Evans is wrong to maintain that the Kantian thesis cannot be defended without showing that the idea of space is implicitly involved in the very idea of existence unperceived. For (ST<sub>pb</sub>) is a version of the Kantian thesis, but it does not require one to suppose that the idea of existence unperceived implicitly involves the idea of space. As far (ST<sub>pb</sub>) is concerned, the question is not whether objective experience requires the *idea* of space, but whether it requires a capacity for spatial *perception*. Assuming that one can perceive objects as spatially located even if one does not have any spatial concepts, the approach that I have been recommending does not amount to an argument for the version of the Kantian thesis that interests Evans. It is sufficient, however, that it amounts to an effective argument for the version of the Kantian thesis that interests Kant.

## V

Why is the perception of location necessary for the perception of bodies? Kant's answer to the question of foundations is to represent the fact that space is a form of human sensibility (FS) as the basis of (ST<sub>pb</sub>). This is an attempt to explain an epistemic condition in more basic terms, so we need to ask whether (ST<sub>pb</sub>) and (FS) are independently intelligible. Kant's answer to this question would be to argue that they are independently intelligible, and that the key to recognizing this is to adopt his distinction between the 'matter' and 'form' of 'appearance' or perception. The matter of a perceptual experience is sensation, while its form is the particular way that the matter is given or received in experience. For space to be a form of human sensibility is for the matter of perception to be given or received as spatially ordered, and therefore as spatially located.<sup>13</sup> According to Kant, it is because the matter of perception is given in experience as spatially ordered that the perception of location is so fundamental to the perception of bodies. At the same time,

<sup>13</sup> See Falkenstein (1995) for a detailed discussion and defence of this way of reading what I am calling (FS).

it would be open to him to argue that his story about the form of perception is intelligible independently of (ST<sub>pb</sub>).

This explanation of (FS) implies that it is sensations that are received as spatially ordered, but a different view is suggested by Kant's remark that the matter of appearance is what 'corresponds to sensation' (A20/B34). What corresponds to sensation consists of various sensible features of material objects such as shape and colour. This suggests that the form of appearance is the way in which, when one perceives a material object, its various sensible features are given to us in experience. Space can be described as a form of appearance or of human sensibility to the extent that these features are given to us in experience as spatially located. The fact that the perception of bodies requires the perception of location can then be seen as a consequence of the independently intelligible fact that space is, in this sense, the form of appearance.

The force of this suggestion can be brought out by considering the so-called Binding Problem. John Campbell gives the following account of this problem:

[T]here is much converging evidence that different properties of an object, such as colour, shape, motion, size, or orientation are processed in different processing streams. This means that the visual system has the problem of reassembling individual objects, as it were, from the results of these specialized processing streams.... We do not have perception of an individual object until this Binding Problem has been solved, and various simple sensory properties have been put together as properties of a single object. (Campbell 2002: 30–1)

How, then, does the visual system solve the Binding Problem? Campbell suggests that:

[I]f the visual processing streams contain at least implicit information about the locations of the features being found—just where in the environment a particular colour or shape is, for example—then there is one effective strategy available. Features found at the same location could be put together as features of a single object. (Campbell 2002: 31)

The proposal that location is the key to solving the Binding Problem can be used to make sense of Kant's idea that space is one of the forms of human sensibility. The information provided by different processing streams is what Kant would call the 'matter' of appearance, and the form of appearance or human sensibility is the basis upon which different properties are put together as properties

of a single object. If sameness of spatial location is the basis upon which different properties are put together as properties of a single object, then we can say that space is a form of human sensibility.

This account of (FS) makes sense of (ST<sub>pb</sub>). It explains why, and in what sense, the perception of location is necessary for the perception of material objects, at least as far as visual perception is concerned. We perceive material objects by perceiving their sensible properties, and we have just seen that different sensible properties will not be perceived as belonging to one and the same object unless they are perceived as having a common location. But if the sensible properties of material objects must be perceived as located, then the objects to which these properties are perceived as belonging must also be perceived as located. On this reading, the claim that the perception of location is a necessary condition for the perception of material objects gives expression to two distinct and plausible claims. The first is that the perception of different sensible properties as properties of a single material object is a necessary condition for the perception of material objects. The second is that the perception of location is a necessary condition for the perception of different sensible properties as properties of a single material object.

Since Kant is an idealist about epistemic conditions, he would maintain not only that (FS) makes sense of (ST<sub>pb</sub>), but also that (FS) is the sole basis of (ST<sub>pb</sub>). As I have already remarked, he also takes it to be an ultimate and inexplicable fact about our cognitive equipment that space is a form of human sensibility. His implicit argument for regarding epistemic conditions as having entirely subjective foundations is that epistemic conditions are 'a priori conditions' (A94/B126), and that conditions of knowledge or experience can be known a priori only if they are grounded in our subjective constitution. For the purposes of this argument, a priori conditions are ones that can be established without any empirical investigation. In connection with (ST<sub>pb</sub>), therefore, his claim would be that we can only know without any empirical investigation that the perception of location is necessary for the perception of bodies, because we can know without any empirical investigation that space is a form of human sensibility.

This argument for idealism implies that Kant would not be entitled to defend (ST<sub>pb</sub>) on the basis of what empirical psychologists say about the Binding Problem. After all, it is not as if we can know

without any empirical investigation how our visual systems solve the Binding Problem. It is doubtful, however, whether Kant is right to insist on the *a priority* of epistemic conditions. He does so on the basis that necessity is a mark of *a priority*, but it is a mistake to think that propositions that state necessary conditions for knowledge or experience must be necessary truths.<sup>14</sup> Once we recognize that epistemic conditions need not be a priori, we are free to draw on empirical considerations in support of (ST<sub>pb</sub>). Even if we allow that empirical considerations have a bearing on (ST<sub>pb</sub>), we would still be left with the idealist's core proposal that it is solely in virtue of the ultimate and inexplicable fact that space is a form of human sensibility that the perception of space is necessary for the perception of bodies.

On reflection, however, it is clear that this proposal is indefensible. For a start, it is scarcely inexplicable that the perception of spatial location is the basis upon which the Binding Problem is solved, given the nature of the objects from which most of our perceptual information derives.<sup>15</sup> These objects are material objects, and to be a material object is to exist in space and time. Assuming that our perceptual systems have evolved in a world of spatio-temporal objects, it is hardly surprising that space and time are the forms of our sensibility. If this were not the case, we would not be able to differentiate objects in perception or identify different sensible properties as properties of one and the same object. This explanation of (FS) is not available to Kant because he thinks that space and time are themselves projections of human sensibility, but this view of space and time is one for which there are no good arguments, either in the first *Critique* or elsewhere.

It is one thing to explain (FS) by reference to the nature of the objects from which our perceptual information derives, but can (ST<sub>pb</sub>) be explained in the same way? The thought would be that we cannot hope to understand why the perception of location is a necessary condition for the perception of material objects without taking account of the fact that spatial location is a fundamental and essential feature of material objects.<sup>16</sup> It is fundamental in the sense that it is one of the key factors by reference to which material

<sup>14</sup> I explain why this is a mistake in Cassam (1999).

<sup>15</sup> Martin (1997) makes substantially the same point.

<sup>16</sup> See Martin (1997) for a related line of thought.

objects are individuated. It is essential in the sense that a material object cannot exist without being located somewhere. Some features of material objects, such as shape, are essential without being fundamental, but location is both essential and fundamental. A material object or body cannot exist without a spatial location, and the principle by reference to which material objects are individuated is that two material objects of the same kind cannot be in exactly the same place at the same time. The proposal that I am now considering is that at least part of what makes it the case that the perception of location is necessary for the perception of material objects is the fact that material objects, unlike sounds, are fundamentally and essentially spatially located.

If Kant is an idealist about epistemic conditions, then the position that I have just outlined might be described as amounting to a form of *realism* about epistemic conditions. Realism does not reject the question of foundations, but it denies that epistemic conditions have entirely subjective foundations or that they can be explained solely by reference to our cognitive constitution or conceptual scheme. Its central idea is that epistemic conditions are determined, at least in part, by the nature of the world.<sup>17</sup> It also maintains that epistemic conditions that are rooted in the nature of the world are more likely to be universal in scope, to bind beings whose subjective constitutions are very different from ours, than ones that merely reflect our own subjective constitution.<sup>18</sup> On a realist view, if the nature of material objects makes the perception of location necessary for the perception of material object, then *any* being capable of perceiving material objects must also be capable of perceiving these objects as spatially located.

I have already anticipated the most serious objection to realism. This is the objection that it moves illicitly from a metaphysical premiss to an epistemological conclusion.<sup>19</sup> Spatial location might be a fundamental and essential feature of material objects, but how

<sup>17</sup> Paul Guyer also draws attention to the possibility that 'something which is a necessary condition of knowledge may reflect the structure of *both* the epistemic subject and the object of knowledge, rather than of the former *instead* of the latter' (1987: 340). There are also traces of realism about epistemic conditions in Strawson (1997). I discuss the dispute between realism and idealism in more detail in Cassam (1999).

<sup>18</sup> See Cassam (1998) for more on the thought that realism goes with the idea that epistemic conditions are universal in scope.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Warren (1998) presses an objection along these lines.

is it supposed to follow from this that the *perception* of location is necessary for the *perception* of material objects? An effective response to this question would be to point out that perceptual experiences of material objects must be able to represent material objects as distinct from one another. It is hard to see how our experience could be said to present us with material objects without presenting us with *discrete* material objects; but experiences that are capable of presenting us with discrete material objects cannot be ones that do not in any way reflect the basis upon which material objects are individuated. In Peacocke's terminology, they must be experiences that are 'suitably sensitive' (1993: 171) to what makes discrete material objects discrete from each other.

The principle that experiences which present us with discrete material objects must be suitably sensitive to the basis upon which material objects are individuated suggests one reasonable sense in which our epistemology must be governed by our metaphysics. Against this background, the realist's substantive proposal is that experiences of discrete material objects will be suitably sensitive to what makes these objects distinct from one another only if they represent them, together with their sensible properties, as being at different spatial locations. An inability to perceive discrete material objects as being at different locations would amount to an inability to perceive discrete material objects as discrete, and an inability to perceive discrete material objects as discrete would amount to an inability to perceive material objects.<sup>20</sup> That is why the perception of location is a necessary condition for the perception of material objects or bodies, and therefore a necessary condition for objective experience. The ultimate basis of this epistemic condition is partly metaphysical or ontological, but the realist's claim is that it is a mistake to think that the fact that the perception of location is necessary for the perception of material objects has nothing to do with the fact that spatial location is a fundamental feature of material objects.

Where does this leave the question of method? Once epistemic conditions are regarded as having an ontological or metaphysical

<sup>20</sup> Thought about material objects is subject to a parallel constraint. As Martin points out, 'if one is knowingly to pick out a physical object, then one will be rational only if one takes it that a different object must be in mind where one picks out something at a discrete location, unless one has specific reason to think otherwise' (1997: 90).

foundation, it would be natural to conclude that the project of establishing what is necessary for the perception of bodies is continuous with the project of establishing the essential and fundamental properties of bodies. Although it is not a straightforwardly empirical matter how bodies are individuated, it is not difficult to see that empirical considerations might have a bearing on the principle that no two bodies can be in exactly the same place at the same time. As Leibniz points out, this principle gives expression to the 'reasonable assumption' that 'interpenetration is contrary to nature' (1982: 230), but it is not just a question for armchair philosophy whether this is a reasonable assumption. This suggests that a plausible methodology for establishing such principles, and the epistemic conditions which they ground, will be one that acknowledges a role for both armchair philosophy and empirical science. On a realist view, merely studying our own conceptual apparatus will not tell us how things are in the world, or how we must perceive them as being if we are to perceive them at all.

In my view, something along these lines is the best that can be done for the Kantian thesis. By reading this thesis in the way that the realist reads it, we avoid many of the pitfalls of idealism and are able to provide a comparatively straightforward account of the sense in which space is necessary for objective experience. In a more extended discussion, more would need to be said in defence of the principle that experiences of material objects must be suitably sensitive to the basis upon which these objects are individuated, and in support of the way in which realism exploits this principle in its account of (ST<sub>pb</sub>). It is worth remarking, however, that there is very little in the realist approach that Evans is committed to disputing. If what I have been arguing is correct, then it can only strengthen the case for the Kantian thesis to focus on (ST<sub>pb</sub>) rather than (ST<sub>i</sub>), and to avoid giving the impression that our conceptual scheme is the basis of the connection between space and objective experience. From a realist perspective, we can explain in more basic terms why space is necessary for objective experience, but the correct explanation will be one that appeals to independently intelligible facts about the nature of the objects of objective experience, rather than facts about our conceptual scheme or subjective constitution.

Why, then, does Evans interpret and defend the Kantian thesis in the way that he does, rather than in the way that I have been recommending? The answer to this question is that 'Things without

the mind' is a deeply Strawsonian piece of work, and that Evans is, to some extent, led astray in this paper by his uncritical acceptance of Strawson's framework. If one approaches the Kantian thesis from the perspective of descriptive metaphysics, one is bound to be attracted by the thought that this thesis turns on whether there is a connection in our conceptual scheme between the idea of space and the idea of an objective world. The least that realism establishes is that there is no need to approach the Kantian thesis in this way, and that there is rather more to be said for this thesis than one might suppose on the basis of Evans's ingenious but ultimately inconclusive discussion.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> I thank John Campbell and Ciara Fairley for helpful discussions of the themes of this chapter and for comments on an earlier draft.