Embodiment and Self-Awareness – Evans, Cassam and Husserl[1]

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Abstract

In recent years there has been a general attempt – inspired by P. F. Strawson – to naturalise Kant's notion of the transcendental self. The argument being that self-consciousness should refer to neither a kind of noumenal nor mental self but that the self-conscious subject must conceive of itself as an embodied entity, a person among persons that regards itself as an element of the objective order of the world. While Kant does not make room for the notion of an embodied transcendental self, this is where we need to go as our bodily awareness is central both for self-knowledge and the possibility of cognition and thus a transcendental condition for knowledge claims. In this paper I should like to single out Quassim Cassam's work *Self and World* to see whether such a position is tenable. Cassam's main claim is that we can only become aware of ourselves as subjects if we are at the very same time aware of ourselves as objects located in the spatio-temporal world. We could not be self-conscious and ascribe experiences to ourselves unless we are also aware of ourselves as a physical object among other physical objects in the world. The central claim is that when we self-refer we do not refer to two distinct entities, one possessing only mental, and the other possessing only physical features, rather we refer to a subject that is both mental and physical *at the very same time*. Awareness of ourselves *qua* subject *is just* awareness of ourselves *qua* object. This paper will focus on this claim alone and will ask whether it is tenable. The answer will be negative. Drawing on the work of Edmund Husserl, I shall argue that there is an inherent flaw in Cassam's position which he has inherited from Gareth Evans' depiction of the self. The contention will be that our awareness of ourselves *qua* subject is not compatible with the awareness of ourselves *qua* object.

Introduction

In recent years there has been a general attempt – inspired by P. F. Strawson – to naturalise Kant's notion of the transcendental self. The argument being that self-consciousness should refer to neither a kind of noumenal nor mental self but that the self-conscious subject must conceive of itself as an embodied entity, a person among persons that regards itself as an element of the objective order of the world. While Kant does not make room for the notion of an embodied

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transcendental self, this is where we need to go as our bodily awareness is central both for self-knowledge and the possibility of cognition and thus a transcendental condition for knowledge claims. In this paper I should like to single out Quassim Cassam's work *Self and World* to see whether such a position is tenable. Cassam's main claim is that we can only become aware of ourselves as subjects if we are at the very same time aware of ourselves as objects located in the spatio-temporal world. We could not be self-conscious and ascribe experiences to ourselves unless we are also aware of ourselves as a physical object among other physical objects in the world. The central claim is that when we self-refer we do not refer to two distinct entities, one possessing only mental, and the other possessing only physical features, rather we refer to a subject that is both mental and physical *at the very same time*. Awareness of ourselves *qua* subject *is just* awareness of ourselves *qua* object. This paper will focus on this claim alone and will ask whether it is tenable. The answer will be negative. I shall argue that there is an inherent flaw in Cassam's position which he has inherited from Gareth Evans' depiction of the self. The contention will be that our awareness of ourselves *qua* subject is not compatible with the awareness of ourselves *qua* object.

1. Evans on Embodiment and Self-consciousness

Let me turn first to the work of Gareth Evans. According to Evans, what marks out our self-awareness is that it points neither to a mere mental nor to a purely physical awareness. Rather – to use Cassam's terminology – we are aware of ourselves *qua* subjects and *qua* objects at the very same time. What is distinctive about our bodily self-awareness is that it gives rise to what Sydney Shoemaker has coined 'immunity to error through misidentification relative to the first person pronoun' (from now on IEM). It is in Wittgenstein's *Blue and Brown Book* that the phenomenon of IEM becomes apparent for the first time. Wittgenstein tells us that:

> There are two different cases in the use of the word 'I' (or 'my') which I might call 'The use as object' and 'the use as subject'. Examples of the first kind are these: 'My arm is broken', 'I have grown six inches […] Example of the second kind are: *I* see so and so' '*I* try to lift my arm'.[2]

[2] L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations*' (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), 66.

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I can refer to myself *as an object* by telling my life story or by showing a doctor where I am in pain. However, I can also refer to myself *as a subject*, precisely by not focusing on myself. When I say I have a toothache, the 'I' in question is an 'I' who is thinking about something else, the pain or the fact that I have grown. The difference between the first and the second case is that a certain error is possible in the former but not in the latter. When I say I have grown six inches, I may well be mistaken, the marks on the wall indicate that someone has grown six inches but it is not necessarily '*me*'. To this extent my judgement is *not* immune to error through misidentification. However, when I say 'I am in pain' there is an immunity at play.

> But you aren't in doubt whether it is you or someone else who has the pain!' - The proposition 'I don't know whether I or someone else is in pain' would be a logical product, and one of its factors would be 'I don't know whether I am in pain or not' and that is not a significant proposition

> Imagine several people standing in a ring, and me among them. One of us, sometimes this one, sometimes that, is connected to the poles of an electrical machine without our being able to see this. I observe the faces of the others and try to see which of us has just been electrified. – Then I say 'Now I *know* who it is; for it's myself' In this sense I could also say: 'Now I know who is getting the shocks; it is myself.' This would be a rather queer way of speaking…[3]

In the same way as I cannot doubt that it is 'I' who is thinking, I cannot doubt that it is 'I' who is in pain. I do not need to identify myself as 'x' to know that I am in pain. The 'I' used as a subject refers to the awareness expressed in a subject's ability to speak in the first person way *without self-observation* and with apparent authority about her own mental present state. It is a sort of knowledge in which we have privileged access and where no mediation is required.

While Wittgenstein concludes that in its use 'as subject' the 'I' does not refer at all, since the 'I' does not serve to distinguish me from other people';[4] a claim which we find repeated in Elizabeth Anscombe when she argues that the 'I' is not a referring expression,[5]

[3] L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), 408–9.

[4] Cf. ibid., 67.

[5] G.E.M. Anscombe: 'The First Person' in Cassam, Q. (ed.) *Self-Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 154. Shoemaker has

Evans thinks otherwise: 'despite recent philosophical claims to the contrary, our thoughts about ourselves are about *objects* – elements of reality. We are, and we can make sense of ourselves as, elements of the objective order of things.[6]

Evans believes that he can defend this claim as contrary to Wittgenstein, he argues that IEM is not only true with respect to mental ascriptions but equally holds with respect to bodily ones: There is an internal sense of bodily awareness that is IEM such as proprioceptive (sense of balance, temperature, tactual perception temperature pressure) and kinaesthetic awareness:

With regard to proprioceptive awareness, Evans observes:

> None of the following utterances appears to make sense when the first component expresses knowledge gained in the appropriate way: ''Someone's legs are crossed, but is it my legs that are crossed?'; 'Someone is hot and sticky, but is it I who am hot and sticky'; 'Someone is being pushed, but is it I who am being pushed?' There just does not appear to be a gap between the subject's having information (or appearing to have information) in the appropriate way, that the property of being *F* is instantiated and his having information (or appearing to have information) that *he* is *F*; for him to have, or to appear to have, the information that the property is instantiated just is for it to appear to him that *he* is *F*…[7]

It is a kind of demonstrative reference – the thinker must know which object is in question.

The same holds for our kinaesthetic awareness with regard to position and orientation:

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taken up the distinction and argues that the word 'I' does refer albeit in a different way than it does in its use 'as object'. He does not point to a private language argument, rather suggests that we can know our own present thoughts, attitudes and sensations in a way that is fundamentally different from the way we know of the mental states of other people or indeed ourselves as object of thoughts. The reason one is not presented to oneself 'as an object' in self-awareness is that self-awareness is not perceptual awareness, it is not that sort of awareness in which objects are presented' (Shoemaker (1984):105. I am much in agreement with this view. See L. Alweiss, 'Kant's Not so 'Logical' Subject' in *Harvard Review of Philosophy* Vol. **21** (2014), 87–105.

[6] G. Evans, *Varieties of Reference,* J. McDowell (ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 256.

[7] Ibid., 220–21.

> Included here are such things as: knowing, that one is in one's own bedroom by perceiving and recognizing the room and its contents; knowing that one is moving in a train by seeing the world slide by, knowing that there is a tree in front of one, or to the right or left, by seeing it; and so on. Once again, none of the following utterances appears to make sense when the first component expresses knowledge gained in this way: 'Someone is in my bedroom, but is it I?'; 'Someone is moving, but is it I?' 'Someone is standing in front of a tree, but is it I?'[8]

I am an element of the objective order located at a position in space 'here'. Consciousness of myself as the (embodied) subject of thought is necessarily a consciousness of myself as an object individuated as an existing thing located in time and space.[9]

Evans thereby thinks he can show that self-reference is governed by two key principles that make singular reference and thus self-knowledge possible. The first is what he calls Russell's principle which states that in order to be able to refer to one object one must be able to distinguish that object from all other objects. Like any material object we can locate it in a certain spatio-temporal location. The second is what Evans calls the Generality Principle: We need to be able relate a concept to a network of potential thoughts – namely we need to be able to combine it with other (potential) concepts Evans calls this a 'fundamental constraint'[10] on the nature of 'our conceivings';[11] i.e., the generality constraint. So knowing which object I am referring to is the capacity to identify and keep track of

[8] Ibid., 222.

[9] Once we realize that the subject is embodied Evans believes that he can show that 'I' thoughts are subject to both the generality constraint and Russell's principle as the 'subject's capacity to locate himself in the objective spatial order is exploited' (Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, 256). Evans concedes that there are however cases where misidentification is possible. We could for example imagine that our arm is hooked up with someone else's so when we say our arm is moving it is actually someone else's. However, Evans dismisses these kinds of error. If the subject is registering proprioceptive information from someone else's body without realizing it, and if she as a result does not know that *her* arm is moving, then she 'does not know *anything* on this basis' (ibid., 221). A certain kind of error is in place but one which 'cannot be regarded as a mistake of identification' (ibid., 188). I find it questionable whether it is IEM that makes I thoughts distinctive. However this is a topic for another paper.

[10] G. Evans, *Varieties of Reference,* 100.

[11] Ibid., 104.

myself as a spatio-temporal object which occupies a certain position and orientation in the objective order of the world. I can form a cognitive map of my surroundings, locate myself through proprioception and kinesthesia in relation to objects surrounding me. I see myself as an element of an objective causal order.

Embodiment is not only central to self-reference but Evans, moreover, believes that embodiment is an 'enabling condition' for cognition:

> Any thinker who has an idea of an objective spatial world – an idea of a world of objects and phenomena which can be perceived but which are not dependent on being perceived for their existence – must be able to think of his perception of the world as being simultaneously due to his position in the world, and to the condition of the world at that position. …. The idea that there is an objective world and the idea that the subject is *somewhere* cannot be separated…[12]

Embodiment can explain how objective experience is possible: I am necessarily, an element of the objective order located at a position in space 'here' and it is this location that I feel when I move around. In view this I can draw a distinction between my subjective perspective (this is how things appear to me relative to my particular position in space) and objective one (as things are). In this way Evans resolves Thomas Nagel's (1970) worry about how we can conceive of ourselves both as subjects of experience and as elements of the objective order. The suggestion is that we could not ascribe our perceptions and experiences to ourselves and take them to be our own – unless the awareness of ourselves as subjects of thought was not also an awareness of ourselves as physical objects among other physical objects. There is thus no unbridgeable gap between subjective and objective modes of thought. 'No one can be credited with an 'objective' model of the world if he does not grasp that he is modelling the world *he* is in – that he has a location somewhere in the model, as do the things that he can see'.[13] To put it otherwise, we can only perceive the world from our point of view, and our viewpoint is one located in the objective world.

This proves that embodiment is central to self-awareness and cognition. We should not understand 'I thoughts' in purely mental terms. As Evans notes: 'if there is to be a division between the mental and the physical, it is a division which is spanned by the

[12] Ibid., 222.
[13] G. Evans, *Varieties of Reference,* 212.

Ideas we have of ourselves'.[14] When we are conscious of ourselves as subjects of thought we are also conscious of ourselves as objects of thought, namely, we are conscious of ourselves as embodied beings existing in a spatio-temporal world.

2. Cassam on Embodiment and Self-Consciousness

Evans' position is not without its difficulties and I shall return to them later. First however I would like to discuss how Cassam relates Evans' position to Kant's transcendental self. He suggests that we can learn from Evans that we should not understand the 'I think' merely as a unitary pole, but as an embodied and spatially located bearer of perceptual states. The claim is that when we are aware of ourselves as subjects, we are also necessarily aware of ourselves as embodied beings. '[B]odily self-awareness is awareness of oneself as a physical object'.[15] 'Awareness of oneself as a physical object is therefore to be understood as awareness of oneself, *qua* subject of experiences *as* shaped, located and solid'.[16] 'Self-consciousness is bound up with a sense of oneself *qua* subject of experience as a physical object.[17]

On the one hand, Cassam agrees with the unity argument provided by Kant, namely that we need to be able to ascribe experience to one and the same subject if we are to have objective experience. Cassam calls this the 'objectivity requires unity' argument. On the other hand, he adds a second criterion to this (which Kant would not allow for) namely, 'that the 'I' to which one ascribes one's perceptions must be represented not only as numerically identical through the diversity of experience, but also as a physical object if one's representations are to be thought of as relating to physical objects'[18] and it is this latter un-Kantian claim I should like to explore.

Leaning on Evans, Cassam develops the view that object perception is possible only for an embodied self. His working assumption is that 'for the purposes of the Objectivity Argument physical or material objects are spatio-temporally located, shaped, three-dimensional space-occupiers [and – drawing on Locke – the assumption is that, LA] such objects occupy space in virtue of their solidity or

[14] Ibid., 213.
[15] Q. Cassam, *Self and World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 71.
[16] Ibid., 30.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 36.

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impenetrability'.[19] To account for this, the subject needs to be located in space. The argument is that a disembodied subject does not have a sense of location in the world, it would not have an egocentric understanding of space and could not see objects as oriented around its body. A disembodied subject would be unable to distinguish between below, above, left or right. Moreover, it would fail to identify bodies as solid. Drawing on Brian O'Shaughnessy's work, Cassam argues we need a to have a sense of solidity of one's own body to experience solidity of other bodies by touch.[20] To perceive solidity we need to perceive resistance, i.e., something that is impeding my movements 'obstructing something'[21] and for this we require a solid body.

Further, Cassam insists that it is not sufficient to argue that the 'I think' refers to a geometrical (disembodied) point of view. A point of view available to a disembodied 'I think' located at a single geometrical point, would not allow us to distinguish between actual experiences and virtual ones. Seeing the world would be like watching a film it would not matter what particular spatial location we occupy. When watching a film, it is immaterial whether I am sitting in a cinema or on a sofa in my sitting-room as the scene on the screen is not shaped by my vantage point. In each instance (if I watch the same film) I see the actor looking at Marble Arch. My actual location does not constitute a 'causal constraint'[22] on the perceptual experience. Nothing about my actual location can be gleaned from the Marble Arch we see on the screen. This is because there is no real causal connection. Yet outside the cinema our location matters. It defines our visual field.

Indeed, Cassam believes it is only because we conceive ourselves as an element of the objective order of the world that we are able to make judgements such as 'Marble Arch is twenty metres away from *me*' or 'the glass is to *my left*'. If we were merely occupying a geometrical point all our experience of objects in the world would be like watching a film: we would say that the glass is to the left but we could not say that it is *actually is* to *my* left.[23] We would only have a presentation of spatial locations but not *genuine* spatial locations. Moreover, we would be unable to draw a distinction between illusionary presentations and correctly-related-experience. I can only distinguish between Marble Arch in London and the exact replica of Marble Arch in Dubai if the 'I think' occupies a particular spatial location.

[19] Ibid., 29.
[20] Cf. ibid, 53–4.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., 47.
[23] Cf. ibid., 46, 79.

My location would allow me to judge whether certain experiences are feasible and whether others are not. For example, I cannot walk along Oxford Street and then see the replica of Marble Arch in Dubai. I would have to travel much further than that. I know that these perceptions do not follow each other. There is a sequence of experience which allows me to eliminate illusions and falsified perceptions because they simply do not fit with my geographical and physical self-location. 'Without a proper distinction between what does and what does not constitute a coherent route through the world, there cannot be a proper distinction between perception and illusion'.[24] We can draw such distinctions as long as the subject is regarded as a 'bodily presence'[25] *in the world* rather than occupying merely a geometrical point of view. Our bodily presence is thus central to object perception. 'It is a striking feature of spatial perception that it carries with it a sense of oneself as a physical object amongst physical objects'.[26] Like Evans, Cassam thus believes that being located in space and time is the 'enabling condition' for cognition.[27]

Equally in line with Evans, Cassam argues that 'self-consciousness is intimately bound up with awareness of the subject 'as an object' not as an 'immaterial' substance but as a physical object in the world of physical objects'.[28] This reading suggests that when we know ourselves as subjects of experience, we necessarily also know ourselves as objects of experience.

To illustrate this Cassam draws on Husserl's distinction between the lived body (*Leib*) and the objective body (*Körper*). In many ways that distinction can be mapped onto the distinction between body as subject and body as object. The lived body refers to a kinaesthetic and proprioceptive awareness and the objective body to the physical body understood in terms of its extension, location, solidity and shape. Cassam claims that we view the very same object in different ways – one from within and one from without – without however reducing one to the other. This is what is meant when we say that we are aware of ourselves both as subject *and* as object. As Cassam explains; 'to say that one is aware of oneself as physical object is not just to say that one is aware of what is *in fact* the subject of one's experiences as a physical object [.... self-consciousness requires an awareness, LA] of oneself *qua* subject of experience as shaped, located and

[24] Ibid., 48.
[25] Ibid., 53.
[26] Ibid., 30.
[27] Ibid., 40.
[28] Ibid., 198.

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solid'.[29] Later he tells us 'it would therefore be appropriate to characterize this form of self-awareness as, in Merleau-Ponty's terminology, awareness of oneself as a "subject-object"'.[30] Understood in this way, there is no form of dualism left, no clear separation between the body as subject and the body as object. 'Describing is as 'subject-object' would be to describe is as 'person' in the Strawson's sense',[31] namely a single type of entity where both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and states of corporal characteristics apply. When we are aware of ourselves *qua* subject we are also – and at the very same time – aware of ourselves *qua* object. We are *simultaneously* aware of ourselves as subjects *and* as objects.[32]

Yet it is questionable whether this is correct. Unlike Evans and Cassam, I believe that the conjunction between the lived body and the objective body can never be one of identity. We can still draw a clear separation between the body as subject and the body as object. Indeed, even when we are aware of oursevelves *qua* subject and *qua* object; both never completely coincide. We can glean as much from the writings of Edmund Husserl. According to Husserl, the lived body does not simply complement the objective body, rather it remains distinct: the awareness of myself as a subject remains separate from the awareness of myself as an object. Take the phenomenon of touch as an example: Not only do I experience my body when it is touched but I also sense my lived body as touch-*ing*. When it comes to my own body there always seems a double sensation at play. Two hands that touch each other illustrate this well:

> Touching my left hand, I have touch-appearances, that is to say, I do not just sense, but I perceive and have appearances of a soft, smooth hand, with such a form. The indicational sensations of movement and the representational sensations of touch, which are Objectified as features of the thing, 'left hand,' belong in fact to my right hand. But when I touch the left hand I also find in it, too, a series of touch sensations, which are '*localized*' in it, though these are not constitutive of properties (such as roughness or smoothness of the hand, of this physical thing).[33]

[29] Ibid., 30.
[30] Ibid., 72.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Cf. ibid., 60–71.
[33] E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy; Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), §36, 144–145.

My right hand has tactile sensations through which my left hand is experienced as a physical thing - *i.e.*, as a *res* that has a certain extension, shape and texture. *Instantaneously* my left hand has certain sensations which are not qualities of its body but are in principle different from all material determinations of a *res*. The body hereby is: a '*physical-aesthesiological unity*';[34] a carrier (*Träger*) of sense organs and a body of sensations; I feel my hand moving, I feel the other hand. This is why Merleau-Ponty calls this an 'ambiguous mode of existence.'[35] It is ambiguous since it is neither completely one nor the other. The moment my hand touches another hand, the distinction between touching and being touched becomes blurred. The hand is not only active but in the very instant that it is touch*ing* it is being touched (passive) and experienced as a bodily thing.[36] The touching hand touches and is instantaneously touched by the other hand. We can only refer to a double touching. It is impossible to say which hand touches the other. Each one is both touching and being touched. The division between the activity of touching and the passivity of being touched is blurred. Indeed, I never perceive my own body completely as a thing, nor completely as a lived body but only in its double and 'ambiguous mode of existence'. To this extent the awareness of ourselves as subject remains distinct from the awareness of ourselves as object yet, nonetheless, intimately bound up with it.

Cassam acknowledges this and indeed, seeks to endorse the ambiguity. Nonetheless he insists one must be aware of oneself *qua* subject *as* physical thing, i.e. as shaped, located and solid and *not* as two

[34] Ibid., §40, 155.

[35] Cf. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), 93. Merleau-Ponty therefore calls the lived body 'a third genus of being' (ibid., 350). He concludes: 'I know myself only in ambiguity' (ibid. 345).

[36] In a beautifully written article on Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty illustrates how this ambiguous mode of existence, for example, shaking hands, makes intersubjectivity possible. 'My right hand was present at the advent of my left hand's active sense of touch. It is in no different fashion that the other's body comes to life before me when I shake another man's hand or when I just look at it' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 168, translation slightly altered). With this prior to analogical reasoning, the *other* body arises out of inter-corporeity. The co-presence of the two hands, which are both felt (*sentir*) and feeling (*sentant*), is extended to the other person. There is an *aesthesiological* community which founds intersubjectivity and not reason, analogy or indeed communication.

separate things. That is to say, we are not aware of ourselves as objects as physical things devoid of consciousness. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's terminology (which, in turn, draws on that of Husserl) Cassam says we are aware of ourselves as 'subject-object'.[37] Yet Cassam does not wish to adopt Merleau-Ponty's position because Merleau-Ponty (and for that matter as we have seen above, Husserl) still distinguishes between the awareness of ourselves as subject and awareness of ourselves as object when he refers to the 'phenomenal body and the objective body'. Cassam believes Merleau-Ponty thereby fails to register the full force of the notion subject-object[38] and makes room for a new dualism. We find that Evans raises the same worry. He is concerned that Sartre insists that my body as it is seen by others – namely as '*in the midst of the* world as it is for others' is *not the body for me*. 'My body as it is *for me* does not appear to me in the midst of the world'.[39] However Evans believes: 'what self-consciousness reveals is not mere mind or 'mental phenomena', but mind and body together in the inseparable unity of the embodied self. Thus the supposed contrast between merely bodily processes and merely mental is in fact always in part, a contrast between the body as external object and the same body as internal object …. what this constitutes …. is an ability to identify myself *with an element of the objective order – a body for others, if you like – unreservedly*'.[40] I.e., Sartre's dualism between body-for-itself and the body-for-others is just as unacceptable as the traditional Cartesian subject object dualism that Sartre himself rejects, namely the dualism between the inner theatre of consciousness and the exteriority of the body. For Evans – as for Cassam – it is without doubt that the body known 'from the inside' *is just* the body 'known from the

[37] Q. Cassam, *Self and World*, 95.
[38] Cf. ibid., 72.
[39] Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, 266.
[40] Ibid. Cassam echoes this view when he observes: 'According to some writers in this tradition [i.e. the 'Continental' tradition LA], in being intuitively aware of oneself as a bodily subject one is not thereby intuitively aware of this subject as what Sartre describes as 'a thing among other things' (ibid., 304). As with Schopenhauer's account of self-consciousness, the worry seems to be that there is a conflict between awareness of something *qua* subject and awareness of it as an object among objects, so the body which is presented subject of one's perceptions is a 'phenomenal' rather than an 'objective' body' (Cassam, *Self and World*, 9). Cassam rejects Sartre's view 'about the body that 'either is a thing among other things, or it is that by which things are reveals to me. But it cannot be both at the same time' (ibid., 56).

outside'. Knowledge from the inside allows me to identify myself *unreservedly* within an element of the objective order of the world.

However, it is questionable whether the body as subject is that intimately bound up with the body as object. Evans and Cassam's analyses inadvertently show it is not. For both acknowledge that awareness of ourselves as subjects of thoughts is distinct from demonstratives - and thus the awareness of ourselves as objects – as IEM relative to 'I' thoughts persists over time whereas IEM relative to demonstratives does not.

This much we can learn from Evans: '"I" thoughts are different from demonstratives because a possessor of an "I" thought has a capacity to ascribe past-tense properties to herself on a special basis: namely memory. In the same way as it does not make sense to say "someone is in pain but is it I?" it does not make sense to say "someone was in pain yesterday but was it I?", or "someone was pushed and pulled last night, but was it I?"'.[41] We can keep track of our identity through time and this does not require a particular skill for identification and re-identification as it is immediate. With regard to self-ascriptions, IEM thus does not just hold for the present moment but also *through* time. Yet the same does not hold for demonstratives: IEM relative to demonstratives is restricted to the present tense statements. When I say 'this is red' pointing to the red box in front of me; it does not make sense to say 'I know that something is red but is it this?' (pointing to the red box). However, when it comes to past experience there is no IEM in place. When I say 'this was red yesterday', I need to point to the same object (i.e., the identical red box) to ensure that my judgement is correct. This requires identification and reidentification.[42]

[41] Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, 241.

[42] It is important to note that Evans does not exclude the possibility of misidentification. In a similar way as it is possible to misidentify our body (we only need to think of a subject linked via electrodes to another body or body transfer illusions such as the rubber hand illusion) it is also possible to misidentify ourselves in the past. My brain may be linked up with that of another and I mistake the other brain's memory with mine. Yet according to Evans all these instances do not question the way we normally make judgments. 'This possibility merely shows the possibility of an error it does not show that ordinary judgments of the kind in question are identification-dependent' (Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, 221). Mistakes are possible, however the point is that in ordinary memory judgments we do not say: 1) that man was in front of a burning tree 2) I am that man (ibid., 242). If we were to argue that these instances show that the subject cannot know whether her arm is outstretched on the basis of proprioceptive sensations,

We here arrive at a criterion that is distinctive to our awareness of ourselves self *qua* subject. Only 'I' thoughts where the *'I' is used as subject* are IEM over time as they do not require any tracking of the identity of the referent 'I' over time. Yet if 'I' thoughts are different from demonstratives as the latter changes from 'now' to 'then' and 'here' to 'there',[43] then we need to draw a distinction between the body as subject and the body as object because only the former is immune to error through misidentification over time.

Clearly this raises the question whether the awareness of ourselves as subject always coincides with the awareness of ourselves as object. There seems to be after all a clear separation between the body as subject and the body as object. Cassam acknowledges as much. He realizes that awareness of something as an object is necessarily a form of *perceptual* awareness. While perceptual awareness in general is not immune to error through misidentification, he holds perceptually based demonstrative judgements are.[44] It is this insight which allows him to equate the body as subject with the body as object. Yet he concedes that 'awareness of something as a physical object in this sense is incompatible with awareness of it *qua* subject, given the 'no tracking' requirement on awareness *qua* subject'.[45] In other words, he acknowledges that the body of which one is aware of *qua* subject does not coincide with the body one is also aware of *qua* object as misidentification and failure in temporal tracking is possible with the latter but not the former. This however means that he is subject to what Cassam calls the 'incompatibility objection' which Shoemaker has raised namely,: 'if one's awareness of something is such as to leave open the possibility of misidentification, then this awareness cannot be awareness of it *qua* subject; […] so bodily self-awareness cannot be awareness of oneself *qua* subject *and* awareness of oneself as an object among others in the world'.[46]

Cassam however thinks we can easily side-step this problem by operating with 'two senses in which one might be aware of something as a physical object, a broad and a narrow sense. In the broad sense, to be aware of something as a physical object is simply to be aware of it as a

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then we have to conclude that she cannot know anything on this basis (Cf. ibid., 188; Cassam *Self and World*, 66).

[43] Cf. Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, 237.

[44] Cf. Cassam, *Self and World*, 68.

[45] Ibid., 71.

[46] Ibid., 68.

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persisting and bounded space occupier, as shaped, located, and solid. In the narrow sense, to be aware of something as a physical object is to be aware of it as shaped, located and solid and for one's awareness to involve the exercise of an ability to keep track of that object'.[47] One description is epistemological (narrow) and the other one ontological (broader) and for the objectivity argument we only need to take into account the former.

The 'broad conception' allows him to uphold the claim that the body as subject is compatible with the body as object. Yet, this clearly comes at a cost as it leads him to ignore a crucial aspect which makes 'I' thoughts distinctive from demonstratives, namely, that only I thoughts are IEM not only at a given time, but also through time.[48] Surely this can only leave him with the observation that awareness of ourselves as subject may also be an awareness of ourselves *qua* object however not that the awareness of ourselves *qua* subject is compatible with awareness of ourselves *qua* object as there are aspects that inhere to the former that do not hold for latter. Indeed, I believe it is impossible to uphold the claim that there is no clear separation between the body as subject and the body as object as both Evans and Cassam face a further challenge which we can glean from the work of Edmund Husserl.

I believe Husserl presents another, and even more compelling, version of the incompatibility objection. Husserl, like Evans and Cassam, regards the lived body (or the body as subject) as an enabling condition for the cognition of objects. 'The experience of anything physical (objects understood in term of *res extensa* which are real in time and space) presupposes a sense of our living body'.[49] Cassam rightly cites Husserl to show that the body is central to object perception insofar as the lived body is the zero point of orientation, 'all spatial being necessarily appears in such a way that it appears either nearer or farther, above or below, right or left … The lived body then has … the unique distinction of bearing in itself the *zero point* (*Nullpunkt*) of all these orientations'.[50] The lived body is always

[47] Ibid., 71.

[48] Whether IEM is actually crucial for our awareness of a self is something I leave undiscussed, what matters at this stage is merely that Cassam clearly believes it is cf. Cassam (1997): 61ff.

[49] 'Das Erfahren des Physischen (der Objekte als *res extensa*, als raumzeitlich realer) setzt waltende Leiblichkeit voraus', E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität; Texte aus dem Nachlass. Dritter Teil: 1929–1935* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 433.

[50] Cf. E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, 166; cf. also cited by Cassam *Self and World*, 53.

here, and it is precisely because it is always here that spatial objects can constitute themselves as 'over there'. Spatial objects can only appear for and can only be constituted in relation to an embodied subject.

For Cassam (and Evans) this proves that 'the Body which is the zero point or point of origin of egocentric spatial perception is the same as the Body whose solidity manifests itself in the perception of the solidtiy of other bodies by touch'.[51] However Husserl believes otherwise: It shows that the lived body is *not* compatible with, and in a significant way *separate* from the objective body. His focus is not on IEM but on the fact that we operate with two different senses of place. The body as subject is distinctive as we can never experience ourselves as *solely* occupying *a particular* place in space but we also necessarily experience an *absolute* sense of place which is distinct from the particular places we occupy. No matter how much we move around in the world (occupying different places) – moving from one sense of 'hereness' to another-, we also always have an absolute sense of being 'Here': I cannot be anywhere else but *Here*. I can never be 'over there'. The curious thing is that this absolute sense of Hereness never changes, no matter how much I move around. It is an abiding feature of myself. As Husserl would put it, it is absolute and the particular places we occupy are always relative to this absolute sense.

It is here that Husserl would part company with Evans and Cassam because he believes that we necessarily operate with two notions of 'hereness': First there is my personal centre of orientation which is located in a particular space and time; a location which indeed changes as I move around. In agreement with Evans and Cassam, Husserl observes that as I move around the world, objects are positioned differently around my lived body. Some objects appear closer, others appear further, some come to occlude other objects while again others may disappear altogether from my visual field. At each instance I see only one aspect of the object, I see it from the front, top, side or bottom while other aspects remain hidden. I never perceive all aspects of the object at one and the same time. To this extent kinaesthesia constitutes the structure of visibility. I am aware that when I move my body I will be able to see the object from another perspective which was previously hidden or occluded. Objects to this extent disclose themselves in relation to the particular position I take up in space and this position changes as I move around.

However, an additional notion of Hereness is at play which Evans and Cassam seem to ignore: While I move around my sense of

[51] Cassam, *Self and World,* 53.

Hereness does not change. The point is not only that I am necessarily 'somewhere', but that I necessarily always experience myself as being 'Here' and can never be 'over there'. Although I can randomly change my position relative to objects by moving closer or further away, *I cannot change my position relative to myself*. It is and can only be 'Here' however much I move around. This abiding sense of 'Hereness' does not change even though I constantly change my position in space. My lived body through a system of kinesthetic movements – never moves away *from myself*. It never changes its position, although it does constantly change position in the world. My lived body is always here and sensuously prominent.[52] To this extent my sense of being 'here' is both particular and universal. It is particular insofar as I am aware that I move around in the world and constantly find myself in a different place in the objective order of the world. It is universal as I can never move away from myself. The lived body is *always* the zero point of orientation. My absolute standpoint ('Hereness') discloses that the world is *for* me. Just as the Kant's pure Ego is the '*terminus a quo*',[53] the centre pole of all conscious life, the lived body is the centre pole for experience: 'The structure of the acts which radiate out from the Ego-center, or, the Ego itself, is a form which has an analogon in the centralizing of all sense-phenomena in reference to the lived body'.[54] Indeed, what characterises the lived body (my absolute sense of Hereness) is that it can never be seen from the outside. My particular sense of hereness can, we can locate it in the objective order of the world but not the absolute sense. It is never an object among other physical objects in the world.

In many ways this analysis would play into the hands of Cassam's interpretation. It seems to allow for an easy transition from an '"I think" that accompanies all my representations' to an embodied self that accompanies all my representations.[55] However, were Cassam to pursue this line of thought it would come at a cost, because this absolute standpoint cannot be located in space and time. For the body as subject is always 'Here' and never changes position. It is thus not compatible with a body as object which always finds itself at a

[52] E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), §51,143 / 113.

[53] Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, §25, 105.

[54] Ibid., §25, 105.

[55] It should be noted that Husserl believes that we should never equate the pure Ego with the lived body (cf. Husserl *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, §25, 105). This is however a topic for another paper.

particular place (here) that constantly changes. It can only be seen from *within* and never from the outside. Clearly such a concession would undermine Cassam's main thesis that informs his book: namely that 'the subject of presentation appears to itself as in the midst of the world – it appears to itself as a person in a Strawsonean sense'.[56]

While Cassam does not make room for the distinction between the two senses of hereness, Evans does not seem completely oblivious to it. At least we can glean as much from the way he discusses Elisabeth Anscombe's Sensory Deprivation thought experiment which leads him to differentiate here thoughts from demonstratives. Anscombe asks us to imagine that I am in a state of 'sensory deprivation'. 'Sight is cut off, and I am locally anesthetized everywhere, perhaps floated in a tank of tepid water; I am unable to speak, or to touch any part of my body with any other. Now I tell myself 'I won't let this happen again!' If the object meant by 'I' is this body, this human being, then in those circumstances it won't be present to my senses; and how else can it be 'present to' me?'.[57]

For Anscombe this shows that while my use of 'I' is IEM, my body is not. When I say 'I won't let this happen again', in the tank, I do not have anything for 'this' to latch on to. It may indeed be that I have no body at all. Against this, Evans wants to insist that the subject still has a sense of 'hereness'. If at all the example shows that the '"I" follows the model of "here" rather than that of "this"'.[58] For Evans believes that I would still be aware that I am 'here'. By saying I am here, I am aware which object I am referring to (i.e., *myself*). The suggestion is that to know one's place (here) and know which object is the object of my thought, namely myself, I do not need to be actually receiving information from the object. I.e., I would not need to know where I am in the objective order of the world, to know that I am 'here'. 'A subject does not need to have information actually available to him in any of the relevant ways in order to know that there is just one object to which he is thus *dispositionally* related'.[59] This is because we are *disposed* to thinking about ourselves in that way, i.e. as being here, even if all the relevant information is missing.[60]

[56] Cassam, *Self and World*, 72.

[57] G.E.M. Anscombe, 'The First Person' in Cassam, Q. (ed.) *Self-Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 152.

[58] Evans, *Varieties of Reference,* 216 n21.

[59] Ibid.

[60] I find it hard to understand how we can be disposed to this if we are body blind from birth, i.e. do not have a sense of having a body and lack any

What interests me is that Evans thus acknowledges that 'here' thoughts are different from demonstratives. He realizes that our sense of hereness can persist even if there is no current or past information to rely upon.[61] Evans' main claim is that the subject cannot fail to refer to herself, because she cannot fail to have a sense of place (i.e. hereness) and this is true even if she does not know where she is.[62] This is why 'here' thoughts differ from demonstratives. 'While the latter are information-based thoughts *par excellence*, the former do not seem to depend necessarily either upon the subject's actual possession of information from the place, or upon the actual information-link with the place'.[63] So we do not need to know where we are exactly located, i.e. in front of the bar, outside the library, etc. to be aware that we are 'here'. This suggests that we can have a sense of hereness even if the subject cannot locate herself in the 'framework of a cognitive map'.[64] To put it otherwise, even if the subject cannot see herself from the outside and observe that she is outside the bookshop or in front of Trinity, she still has a sense of being 'here'. Our sense of hereness persists *even if we cannot impose the objective way of thinking upon the egocentric sense of space*. This however suggests that there are instances where my sense of hereness does not coincide with an objective sense of place – and in those moments the self-conscious subject can be presented to itself *qua* subject *without* 'understanding itself as a thing among other things, or as a physical object that it straightforwardly a 'piece' of spatio-temporal reality'.

Indeed, Evans seems to realize as much. Whether or not I successfully refer to myself as being 'here' is not dependent on whether I understand my location correctly. I may be wired up in such a way that when I say 'I am here', I mistakenly think that I am at the bottom of the sea and not on the boat. In this way I can misidentify myself – as being at a different place to where I actually happen to be-.

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proprioceptive and kinaesthetic sense; I can understand the position more if there is a sudden loss of our body sense as we could still recall the sense of hereness we had in the past or it could 'make him wonder, for example, why he is *not* receiving information in the usual ways' (Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, 125).

[61] Indeed the thrust of the discussion focuses on the fact that we have a egocentric notion of space which Evans attributes to our proprioceptive and kineasthetic sense.

[62] Evans, *Varieties of Reference,* 169.

[63] Ibid., 152.

[64] Ibid., 216.

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However, this misidentification does not affect or question my sense of hereness.[65] Unlike with demonstrative thought, here thoughts do not 'depend either upon the subject's actual possession of the information from the place, or upon the actual existence of an information-link with the place. Thus one can think 'I wonder what it is like here' when one is blindfolded, anaesthetized, and has one's ears blocked'.[66] Knowing that I am 'here' is not dependent on receiving any information about that place.[67]

Implicitly Evans thus operates with two different senses of hereness. One is what I called our empirical sense of hereness – it refers to the objective way of thinking about the egocentric sense of space – namely it is the place that can be spatially and temporally located in the objective world – I am in the bar, in front of Trinity and so forth. It functions more or less like a perceptual demonstrative. This sense of hereness is not IEM. The other is the 'general' egocentric sense of space which refers to a notion of hereness without having any information deriving from that place. The subject simply cannot fail to occupy a single place – her egocentric place – which she can never lose or leave aside. As Evans acknowledges 'Places, … being-how shall we say? – so much thicker on the ground than objects'.[68] Like this the important link between I thoughts and Here thoughts can be maintained.[69] 'Here' is the place which 'I' occupy. And this place is IEM as long as we recognise that the place we are referring to is the abiding sense of place or what I have called the universal sense of place which we can never undo. The subject always conceives herself 'to be in a centre of a space (as its point of origin)'.[70] In this egocentric space she necessarily identifies herself as being 'here' even if she fails to identify where exactly that (particular) place is. By drawing this distinction, we avoid the problem that Lucy O'Brien highlights namely, that 'here-thoughts can fail of reference in a way that 'I' thoughts seem not to be able to'[71] as only the particular sense of 'hereness' can fail but not the universal one.

It thus seems that Evans would not be adverse to the distinction that Husserl draws between our universal sense of hereness and our

[65] Ibid., 165f.
[66] Ibid., 152–3.
[67] Ibid., 164–8.
[68] Ibid., 169.
[69] Cf. ibid. 153.
[70] Ibid., 153–4.
[71] L. O'Brien, *Self-Knowing Agents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 42.

particular one. One is linked to the specific information we receive and the other *more fundamental one* refers to our egocentric sense of place which we cannot fail to have even when no, or the wrong, information is available. This abiding sense of 'hereness' is not affected in any way by 'where we happen to find ourselves in the world'. It does not function like a perceptual demonstrative. It cannot be seen from the outside but can only be sensed from *within*. However as O'Brien rightly points out – this is only true if we appeal to a 'use of 'here' that is 'not a more or less demonstrative use'.[72] Clearly this comes at a cost. It suggests that the capacity for first person reference is no longer compatible with the capacity to perceive ourselves as taking up a particular place in the objective order of the world. It refers to the capacity of conceiving ourselves as the point of origin of egocentric space which is the space which the subject necessarily identifies as 'here' and which she can never leave behind. This abiding sense of hereness is absolute – and can *only* be experienced from *within*.[73] Yet once we grant this distinction, Evans faces a conundrum he (just like Cassam) so much wishes to avoid. If the absolute sense of hereness is no longer compatible with the particular place we occupy in the objective world, a chasm opens up between the body as subject and the body as object. For only the body as object functions as a demonstrative and can be located; the absolute sense of place which the body as subject senses as she moves around the world, in turn, cannot be seen from the outside. It cannot be located on the spatio-temporal cognitive map as our sense of 'hereness' remains absolute no matter how much I move around the world. There is thus a necessary chasm that separates the body as subject from the body as object; the duality between the body as subject and body as object cannot be avoided.

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[72] Ibid., 43.

[73] I leave here aside the question whether we can make sense of this sense of 'hereness' if we were no longer embodied. How can reference be fixed in the absence of embodiment? Evans tries to avoid that question by claiming that we still remember what it was like to be embodied; whether that is sufficient to counter Anscombe's challenge is questionable.

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