

JAHRBUCH-KONTROVERSEN VIII:
MATTHEW BOYLE, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS,
TRANSPARENCY, AND REFLECTION (FORTSETZUNG)

Pre-reflective Self-Consciousness as the Form
of Reflexivity

Self-Expression and Being a Self

Katharina T. KRAUS (Baltimore, MD)

Abstract: Boyle's account of self-consciousness is inspired by a long-standing theme in Kant and the post-Kantian idealist tradition, according to which "self-consciousness transforms the general character of human knowing" (Boyle 2023, 12). In this paper, I explore similarities and differences between Kant's view (as I understand it) and Boyle's Sartrean view. I will argue, first, that the kind of pre-reflective self-consciousness that Boyle locates in Sartre's conception of non-positional (self-)consciousness can also be retrieved from Kant's account of transcendental self-consciousness. Secondly, I will argue that the Kantian idealist tradition highlights not only the epistemic implications of self-consciousness, which Boyle focuses on, but also their implications for the 'ontological status' of a being with such self-consciousness. The central insight of the Kantian tradition is, then, that self-consciousness transforms not only our *way of knowing* the world (and ourselves), but also our *way of being* in the world as self-conscious minds.

Keywords: Pre-reflective Self-Consciousness, Form of Consciousness, Mode of Presentation, Reflexivity, Expressivism

Kurzdarstellung: Boyles Auffassung von Selbstbewusstsein folgt einem zentralen Motiv Kants und der nachkantischen idealistischen Philosophie, demzufolge die Fähigkeit zum Selbstbewusstsein den allgemeinen Charakter des menschlichen Wissens transformiert (siehe Boyle 2023, 12). In diesem Aufsatz untersuche ich Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschiede zwischen Kants Konzeption (wie ich sie verstehe) und Boyles Sartre'scher Konzeption. Ich werde erstens argumentieren, dass die Art des präreflexiven Selbstbewusstseins, die Boyle in Sartres Konzeption des nicht-positionalen (Selbst-)Bewusstseins verortet, auch aus Kants Konzeption des transzendentalen Selbstbewusstseins abgeleitet werden kann. Zweitens werde ich argumentieren, dass die kantische idealistische Tradition nicht nur die epistemischen Implikationen des Selbstbewusstseins hervorhebt, auf die sich Boyle bezieht, sondern auch dessen Implikationen für den „ontologischen Status“ eines Wesens, das zu einem solchen Selbstbewusstsein befähigt ist. Die zentrale Einsicht der kantischen Tradition ist also, dass unser Selbstbewusstsein nicht nur die Art und Weise, wie wir die Welt (und uns selbst) erkennen, verändert, sondern auch und gerade unsere Seinsart als selbstbewusste Wesen in der Welt.

Schlagwörter: Präreflexives Selbstbewusstsein, Form des Bewusstseins, Präsentationsmodus, Reflexivität, Expressivismus

1. Introduction

Matthew Boyle's account of self-consciousness is inspired by a long-standing theme in Kant and the post-Kantian idealist tradition. Boyle articulates this core idea as follows: "that self-consciousness transforms the general character of human knowing, giving rise to a distinctively rational form of cognition and supplying the basis for a distinctively philosophical understanding of our own minds and of the world with which they engage"¹. Despite his initial fascination with Kant, Boyle, however, admits: "I found myself struggling with certain difficulties that led me to re-think my approach, moving away from a Kantian formulation of these points and toward one inspired by ideas from Sartre"². But which aspects or problems of the Kantian view led him away from Kant? And what does a Sartrean view offer Boyle that a Kantian one does not? In what follows, I explore these two questions. This exploration will not only show that there are deep similarities between the Kantian view (as I understand it) and Boyle's Sartrean view. But it will also result in a defense of the Kantian view vis-à-vis Boyle's view in important respects in which they differ.

In a nutshell, I will suggest, first, that the kind of pre-reflective self-consciousness that Boyle locates in Sartre's conception of non-positional (self-)consciousness can also be retrieved in interesting ways from Kant's account of transcendental self-consciousness. Secondly, I will argue that the Kantian and post-Kantian idealist tradition highlights not only the epistemic implications of self-consciousness and the first-person perspective, which Boyle focuses on, but also their implications for what one might call the '*ontological status*' of a being with such self-consciousness. The central insight that the Kantian idealist tradition has to offer us is then: that our capacity for self-consciousness transforms not only our *way of knowing* the world (and ourselves), but also our *way of being* in the world as self-conscious minds. This emphasis on being in the Kantian tradition might sound surprising to many ears familiar with the history of philosophy, since Kant is more often associated with the so-called epistemic turn in modern philosophy that originates in Descartes. However, I will argue that precisely an analysis of our being as self-conscious minds will mitigate the worries that Boyle finds with Kant's account.

2. Pre-reflective self-consciousness in Kant and an expressivist interpretation of 'I think'

The central concern that drives Boyle away from the Kantian tradition is a worry about over-intellectualization and self-distancing. Boyle finds this worry manifest in authors who themselves take a Kant-inspired view, such as Korsgaard (1996). Korsgaard sees a close connection between our capacity for self-consciousness and our capacity for rationality: "the human mind is self-conscious in the sense that it

¹ Boyle (2023), 112.

² Ibid.

is essentially reflective. [...] For our capacity to turn our attention on to our own mental activities is also a capacity to distance ourselves from them, to call them into question.”³. Boyle characterizes Kantian positions such as Korsgaard’s as upholding the “*Strong Kantian Claim*”:

(SKC) “Rationality requires the capacity to self-ascribe one’s own representational states in the first person.”⁴

As Boyle is of course familiar with the complex debate about this issue in Kant scholarship, he concedes that this may not be the position that the “historical Kant endorsed”⁵.

Now, I wholeheartedly agree with Boyle that SKC, as defined by him, would lead into philosophical difficulties. It would be too strong a demand on rational belief and rational action if we could only rationally arrive at a belief or intention by ascribing to ourselves this very state of belief or intention, or at least being able to do so upon request. This presupposes, as Boyle rightly argues, a theory of mind and capacities of psychological concept-use that may not be a plausible condition for rationality. A child can judge (on rational grounds) that the sun is shining without being capable of expressing the self-referential belief about herself making (or having) that judgment. Similarly, the child can intend to eat ice-cream without ascribing to herself the intention to eat ice-cream. (Without going into the details of the conception of rationality, I will leave open the extent to which a child’s beliefs and intentions could be considered rational and what would be sufficient conditions for their rationality.) The expectation that a competent human adult would *actually* always accompany their belief or intention with a self-ascription of the form “I believe that *p*” or “I intend to do *A*” would most certainly be too high a bar for rationality. But for a competent speaker and thinker, it would be at least somewhat more plausible to assume the *ability* to form such a self-descriptive judgment when prompted. Nonetheless, Boyle is right to emphasize that such self-ascriptive judgments presuppose a number of more specific competencies, such as the use of second-order psychological predicates, which seem too demanding as conditions for rationality in general.

Having granted Boyle his point about SKC, I think SKC is neither grounded in Kant’s text, nor a philosophically plausible view in the spirit of Kant’s theory of self-consciousness, as it is presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*⁶ (even though I agree that it is a typical misinterpretation of Kant in the contemporary literature). Why do I reject SKC as a reading of Kant? Let’s start with some textual evidence that is often cited in this respect:⁷

³ Korsgaard (1996), 92 f., as cited in Boyle (2023), 112 f.

⁴ Boyle (2023), 113.

⁵ Boyle (2023), 113n.

⁶ In the following: CpR.

⁷ see Boyle (2023), 113n.

“The ‘*I think*’ must *be able* to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me.”⁸

In this passage (as in the following ones), the contemporary concepts of “rationality” or “self-description” are not mentioned. Rather, Kant expresses here a general requirement for thinking or for meaningful representations (i.e. such representations that are “at least [not] nothing to me”). Kant demands that every thought (regardless of whether we have reasons to rationally affirm it or not) can be accompanied by the “I think”. *Prima facie*, this even seems to make the situation even worse for Kant *if* one interprets the accompaniment by the “I think” as a kind of self-ascription, that is, as a judgment about oneself having a certain thought or idea. If a theory implies that the ability to have a second-order thought about one’s own thinking is a condition for thinking (of the first order) at all, then this theory would not get off the ground at all, but would end up in an infinite regress: we could not even grasp a single thought without implying the ability to have an infinite series of higher-order thoughts. This critique of an infinite regress has been famously advanced against various versions of so-called higher-order theories of consciousness.⁹

Hence, it seems a non-starter as an interpretation of this central passage in the *CpR*. But how else can we then understand the accompanying “I think”? “I think” is said to express a kind of *self-consciousness*, namely such a kind that “cannot be accompanied by any further representation”¹⁰. It is thus a self-consciousness that defies being itself made into the object (or content) of a higher-order thought or representation. But for any ordinary self-ascription of the form “I think *p*”, I could easily form the higher-order thought “I think *I think p*”, this making the self-ascription itself the object of a higher-order thought. So, what kind of self-consciousness is implied in Kant’s theory, which precisely does not share this property with an ordinary self-ascription of thoughts or beliefs?

The interpretation I favor, and which I have advocated in my own writings, bears similarities to Boyle’s preferred solution to the philosophical problem. Recall that Boyle argues for a pre-reflective consciousness implicit in all rational thought. He derives his notion of such self-consciousness from Sartre’s notion of non-positional self-consciousness. Sartre famously distinguishes between positional consciousness and nonpositional consciousness. Positional consciousness is consciousness of or about something, whereas nonpositional consciousness is not, at least not explicitly, about something. Rather, Sartre asserts:

(S3) “[A]ny positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a nonpositional consciousness of itself”¹¹.

⁸ *CpR*, B131 f.

⁹ See, for example, Henrich (1967), Zahavi (2005), Kraus (2020). In my view, this critique also applies to so-called self-representational theories of consciousness, if they assume that conscious states entail a self-representation as part of the content of the state.

¹⁰ *CpR*, B 132.

¹¹ Sartre (2018 [1943]), 11. Cited in Boyle (2023), 120, and Boyle (2024), 66.

Nonpositional consciousness therefore plays a foundational role in the production or occurrence of an object-directed conscious representation. Boyle argues that it captures “some characteristic mode of presenting aspects of the non-mental world”¹². I will discuss further details of this proposal below.

Now, similar to Boyle, I argue that what Kant offers in the passage cited above is a theory of *pre-reflective* self-consciousness.¹³ It is crucial for my interpretation that the “I think” is precisely not understood as a judgment or a reflection *about* oneself, the thinker. Its function must be understood in abstraction from any content about the thinker. In fact, Kant emphasizes in various places that the “I think” is an empty representation.¹⁴ I have argued that it is void not only of empirical content, but also of logical content: that is, neither does it contain content about this or that particular thinker or particular mental state, nor is it a logical placeholder for whoever is the current thinker of an occurrent thought. Rather, “I think” serves as a *mere expression* of the self-consciousness involved in the formation of any thought, be it about an external object or about myself. Let me explore this expressivist interpretation further: Forming a thought, for Kant, involves that a multitude of elements (e.g. multiple sensations or concepts) is combined into a unified judgment. Let’s consider Boyle’s example:

- (1) This is a gray cat lying on a mat.¹⁵

This judgment requires the combination of a multitude of sensory impressions of the gray cat and its surroundings, an application of adequate concepts to this sensory input, and finally the combination of those concepts into a well-formed judgment. For such combination of multiple elements to be possible, Kant argues, all elements must be held in one and the same consciousness (rather than scattered across different minds). And in order to hold all elements in one and the same consciousness, a particular constitution of such consciousness is required: it must be self-conscious, that is, conscious of its own unity. Only then can all elements be securely anchored in one and the same consciousness, or what Kant calls the “unity of transcendental apperception”¹⁶. One way of understanding this conception emphasizes the activity of synthesis: all elements of a thought have to be synthesized into a unified consciousness, such that there is self-consciousness of synthesized unity, or perhaps better, so that all elements have a relation (of the right kind) to the unity to which they belong.¹⁷ This self-consciousness cannot yet be judgment about an object (not even about myself as thinker), but it is the very presupposition for any thought of an object or meaningful representation.

Hence, I submit that Kant’s *apperceptive self-consciousness* is (akin to) the kind of *pre-reflective self-consciousness* that Sartre and Boyle have in mind. The forma-

¹² Boyle (2023), 122.

¹³ Kraus (2020), chapter 3.

¹⁴ E.g., CpR A345–346/B404, A355.

¹⁵ Boyle (2023), 117.

¹⁶ CpR, B132.

¹⁷ This is a reconstruction of the complex argument in §16 of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories (B-Edition). For a more detailed discussion, see Kraus (2020). For interpretations that emphasize the role of the mental activity of combining, see, e.g., Kitcher (2011) and Longuenesse (2017).

tion of any judgment such as (1) involves such a pre-reflective self-consciousness, and it can be made explicit by accompanying the judgment with “I think”. “I think” is thus the representational means of expressing such self-consciousness. It expresses what all elements synthesized into one consciousness have in common. I can choose to make it explicit with the augmented representation:

(2) *I think* this is a gray cat lying on a mat.

Important for the expressivist interpretation is that (2) does *not* articulate a higher-order self-ascription by which I ascribe the thought to myself, the thinker. Rather, it is only an *expression of the mere fact* that a self-conscious thinker has formed a thought. Or to put it in more Kantian terms, it expresses the act of apperception through which representational material is combined into a unified consciousness.¹⁸

Boyle is of course aware of the fact that a number of Kant scholars have argued that Kant assumes a theory of pre-reflective consciousness. Boyle cites by name Henrich (1967), who argued against what he called a reflection model of self-consciousness (a model that would uphold something like SKC). But this insight can be found in other commentators, too.¹⁹ Moreover, Boyle himself uses the locution of ‘expression’, for example, in the following passage (without however indicating his proximity to an expressivist reading):

“Thus, although (1) does not explicitly assert that the speaker perceive a cat, it refers to a cat in a way that *presupposes* that the speaker perceives the relevant cat. We might therefore say that (1) expresses the fact that the speaker perceives the cat, not as part of its explicit *content*, but rather implicitly in its *mode* of presenting that content.”²⁰

Prima facie, my reading of Kant and Boyle’s Sartrean view of non-positional self-consciousness seem similar. Let us turn to the major differences that concern Boyle’s conception of “mode of presentation”.

3. *Mode of Presentation vs. Form of Consciousness*

A central question for Boyle’s view is, as he himself states: What is nonpositional consciousness? For Sartre? Or, more importantly in this context, what does Boyle take nonpositional consciousness to be? In his book *Transparency and Reflection*, he develops a detailed answer to this question. He introduces nonpositional consciousness in the context of his account of transparency. *Transparency* is the phenomenon that “we are normally in a position to ascribe beliefs to ourselves, not by seeking evidence concerning our own psychological states, but by looking to

¹⁸ For a detailed account of this expressivist interpretation, see Freitag/Kraus (2020) and Kraus (2020). Kant calls the kind of synthesis associated with the “I think” “synthesis of apperception” (CpR B162n) and the resulting self-consciousness “transcendental unity of apperception”, or simply “transcendental apperception” (CpR B132).

¹⁹ Keller (1999), Longuenesse (2017), Kraus (2020), Freitag/Kraus (2020).

²⁰ Boyle (2023), 118.

the realm of non-psychological facts.²¹ To illustrate this phenomenon with Gareth Evans' famous example: "If someone asks me 'Do you think there is going to be a third world war?', I must attend, in answering him, to precisely the same outward phenomena as I would attend to if I were answering the question 'Will there be a third world war?'"²² In other words, our mental states, such as beliefs and intentions, are transparent to us. To understand what beliefs and intentions we have we "look through" our mental states to the evidence in the world that gives us reasons why we *ought* to have a certain belief or intention.

Boyle explains this phenomenon of transparency by appeal to nonpositional consciousness: Nonpositional consciousness is always involved in our reasoning processes through which we form beliefs and intentions; it accompanies these formation processes without becoming itself explicit or "mentally visible" (to stay with the visual metaphor of transparency). But it can be made explicit through reflection and is therefore a presupposition for acquiring explicit awareness (or knowledge) about one's mental states.²³

Boyle's approach to self-consciousness through the problem of transparency suggests to him a particular interpretation of nonpositional consciousness: For Boyle, nonpositional consciousness is the *mode of presentation*, rather than a contentful self-representation (or self-ascription). This term is borrowed from contemporary analytic philosophy of mind and language and draws on the ubiquitous distinction between *mode* and *content*.²⁴ It concerns the mode under which a certain first-order representational content is grasped or presented in thought (or language or speech). A mode of presentation can, for example, be a "demonstrative" mode (in the case of a perception),²⁵ an "interrogative" mode,²⁶ a "mode of belief",²⁷ etc. It can also be first-personal or a third-personal mode of grasping some content. In this sense, Boyle argues:

"On the Sartrean view, nonpositional consciousness of our own representational states is not simply a further awareness superadded to our consciousness of the worldly objects of these states; it is implied in the very mode of presentation of the relevant objects. In this way, nonpositional consciousness (of) our own consciousness is integral to our first-order representational states themselves."²⁸

Now, I agree with Boyle that pre-reflective consciousness, whatever it may be, cannot be a contentful self-representation or "a further awareness superadded to our consciousness"; rather, it must be "integral" to conscious representations of something. But I don't think that Boyle's conception of a mode of presentation, as

²¹ See Boyle (2024), 37.

²² Evans (1982), 225, cited in Boyle (2023), 116.

²³ This is an important aspect of Boyle's view, which he only indicates in Boyle (2023), but devotes an entire part with three chapters to in Boyle (2024).

²⁴ Boyle cites Recanati (2007) as a source of inspiration.

²⁵ Boyle (2024), 72.

²⁶ Boyle (2024), 73.

²⁷ Boyle (2024), 72.

²⁸ Boyle (2024), 74.

derived from a language-theoretic account such as Recanati's (2007), is a plausible way to characterize such self-consciousness. I believe that the Kantian distinction between *form* and *matter* is better suited to capturing the nature of pre-reflective self-consciousness than the contemporary distinction between *mode* and *content*. Indeed, I have argued so by explicitly discussing Recanati's account of mode of representation and will briefly summarize my argument here.²⁹

An important idea of the Kantian *idealist* tradition is, roughly speaking, that the way in which we are conscious of an object transforms the *way this object is for us*. More specifically, the *forms* of our consciousness set conditions on the kind of objects we can think and cognize. These are, for example, the forms of our sensibility, time and space, and the logical forms of judgment. I have argued that the kind of self-consciousness involved in any thought or judgment (and expressed by "I think") is the most generic form of consciousness, namely what I called the *form of reflexivity*. The Kantian point is that every thought must be formed in accordance with the form of reflexivity and therefore contains a content *for me*. In turn, a content cannot be conceived of as independently of what it is for me. Rather, it is an essential aspect of the kinds of content of which we can be conscious that they present themselves to us in this reflexive form. In this sense, Kant's view does not allow us to consider content and mode as two separable aspects of conscious states. Kant's hylomorphism of form and matter entails that mere matter without form cannot be meaningful for us, and mere form without matter has no content (i.e., an object).³⁰

The essential forms that define the kind of conscious state also transform the kind of content such state can have. The forms can therefore not be detached from those contents. For example, the forms of space and time define essential features of the intuited (or perceived) object; the forms of judgment define essential features of the content judged about; and similarly the form of consciousness, i.e., reflexivity, defines an essential feature of contents of which we can be conscious. (Other forms may be optional, such as a specific propositional attitude.) The content of a representation, for Kant, is thus a *matter-form compound*. (There might be representations without form, but such representations also lack content, e.g., sensation. However, sensation, taken up according to the form of intuition, can provide the matter of an intuition.)

Given this difference between Kant's *form-matter* and Boyle's *mode-content* distinction, a deeper philosophical problem in Boyle's account becomes apparent: What exactly Boyle means by the "first-person perspective" or a first-personal mode of presentation becomes questionable. In the contemporary analytic debate, the first-person perspective is typically contrasted with the third-person perspective: an object appears to me in a first-personal mode, but may be different from a third-person perspective (i.e., viewed objectively). For example, the lines of a cube appear to me in my perception (from my distinct visual perspective) as converging, whereas objectively taken, they are parallel. But that's precisely not the distinction

²⁹ See Kraus (forthcoming a).

³⁰ E.g., "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind." (CpR A51/B75).

we want to explain with pre-reflective self-consciousness. Recall that Boyle wants to explain the phenomenon of transparency, that is, why we look through our mental states, without noticing our mode of presentation, and see directly the contents of these states, as they are considered objectively (e.g., we look at the objective reasons why we think a third world war might be happening, rather than at our subjectively colored states, such as our perception or emotional response, although such subjective states may be indicators).

Kant's conception of transcendental self-consciousness does not line up with the contemporary conception of the first-person perspective. Rather, in his complex Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, he shows that the form of reflexivity is a necessary condition for an objectively valid representation (e.g. a representation of the cube in its geometrical properties with parallel sides). For Kant, it is not an option that we can ever represent an object in a non-reflexive way. As finite cognizers, we are fundamentally limited to how things appear to us. The contents that we grasp in conscious representations are always *contents for us*. Thus, the idea that a content cannot be detached from its essential forms, but is fundamentally characterized by these forms, is a central aspect of Kant's transcendental idealism.³¹ The question of whether the content of a representation is adequate, i.e. whether we represent an object truthfully or whether our judgment is true, are follow-up questions. The assessment of adequacy or truth requires further aspects of Kant's transcendental philosophy (such as his theory of reason and its principles of systematicity as "marks of empirical truth"³²).

Contrary to Boyle's intention, then, Kant's account of apperceptive self-consciousness may not be adequate to explain the phenomenon of transparency after all. In fact, Kant's philosophy might suggest the opposite of transparency: a certain kind of *self-opacity* that I cannot avoid, despite my certainty that my representations always represent contents *for me*. Kant's view allows for a sense in which our mental states remain opaque to us, in which we can be mistaken in both their content and their kind (e.g., whether the state is a perception or a hallucination, a rationally formed belief or an irrational expectation, a rationally formed intention or a self-serving desire, etc.).³³ But I can try to find some clarity by reflecting on my own mental states. Such a reflection is necessarily informed by asking myself *normative* questions such as "Should I believe *p*?". In this, I agree with Boyle. But the factual and the normative question in our self-reflection are not identical and can still yield different results: I can find out that I factually hold a belief against better evidence. Becoming conscious of this cognitive dissonance can, however, lead to a normative pressure to change one's beliefs, in a similar way as Boyle anticipates the transformative power of self-knowledge.

There is another important difference between the Kantian view (as I understand it) and Boyle's view. In accounts that conceive of pre-reflective self-consciousness as a mode-of-presentation, as Recanati (2007) and Boyle (2024), it appears that contents can in principle be defined fully independently of their mode, and can

³¹ See Kraus (forthcoming b).

³² CpR A651/B679.

³³ E.g., Merritt (2018).

then also be attached to other modes of presentation, e.g., a first-personal vs. a third-personal one. This implies that we can have a grasp of reality as it is in itself (to use a Kantian locution). On these accounts, reality is typically understood in a naturalistic way, that is, nature is assumed to exist independently of human consciousness. This naturalistic approach opens up a fundamental gap between the way we are conscious of things (i.e., representations in the mind) and the way things are in themselves (i.e., nature). In contrast, it is precisely a fundamental point of the Kantian and post-Kantian idealist tradition (to which Sartre also adheres with qualifications) that objects are conditioned by human consciousness: For Kant, they are not conditioned in their existence, but in the way they are represented, conceding that they are grounded in things in themselves that are in a fundamental sense independent of the human mind. What it means to represent an object objectively (or from a third-person point of view) is still limited by the conditions of the human perspective in general, though not by the perspective of an individual cognizer who happens to be in this and that subjective mode of representation.

This idealist insight also has fundamental implications for how we conceive of ourselves as subjects of consciousness. It is often assumed that Kant offers us only a formalist account of what it means to be a self-conscious subject.³⁴ His critique of rationalist metaphysics seems to rule out any substantial account of the kind of beings we are as self-conscious minds existing in the world. However, a closer analysis suggests that Kant's transcendental philosophy can provide an interesting account of *psychological beings*, the kind of beings as which we represent ourselves in what Kant calls inner experience (or what Boyle means by *self-knowledge*). However, to understand Kant's complex account of psychological beings, we have to consider much more than his theory of apperceptive self-consciousness: for example, his theory of inner sense (i.e., the capacity for becoming aware of one's inner state in a sensory way in time) and his theory of the idea of the soul (which, as I have argued, is necessary for conceiving of ourselves as empirical persons existing in time).³⁵ Like objects of experience in general, psychological beings – as the objects of inner experience – are fundamentally transformed by the way in which we are conscious of them (or, more specifically, the way in which we are conscious of ourselves as empirical self-conscious beings existing in the world). The important implications of Boyle's view for explaining the possibility of self-transformation through self-knowledge and the essential need for beings like us to acquire self-knowledge can thus be retained in a Kantian account of psychological beings.³⁶ Of course, much more needs to be said. Boyle's Sartrean view of pre-reflective self-consciousness offers inspiring ways of grappling with these deep and difficult issues in a new light and can be expected to shed new light on and spark new interest in the Kantian and the existentialist traditions.

³⁴ Much of the literature is devoted to a logical account of the "I", e.g., Rosefeldt (2000).

³⁵ See Kraus (2020). Sartre (2018 [1943]) also spills much ink on explaining how his nonpositional consciousness allows for, or even, implies a sense of endurance.

³⁶ For details, see Kraus (2020), chapter 7.

REFERENCES

- Boyle, M. (2024), *Transparency and Reflection: A Study of Self-Knowledge and the Nature of Mind*, Oxford.
- Boyle, M. (2023), "Self-Consciousness, Transparency, and Reflection", *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 130(2), 110–129.
- Evans, G. (1982), *The Varieties of Reference*, Oxford.
- Henrich, D. (1967), *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht*, Frankfurt a. M.
- Kant, I. (1900), *Gesammelte Schriften* [AA], vols. Ed. the German (formerly Royal Prussian) Academy of Sciences, Berlin.
- 1992 [1781/1787] *Critique of Pure Reason* [KrV], trans. P. Guyer and A. W. Wood, New York.
- Freitag, W. and K. Kraus (2022), "An Expressivist Interpretation of Kant's 'I think'", *Noûs* 56(1), 110–32.
- Kitcher, P. (2011), *Kant's Thinker*, Oxford.
- Kraus, K. (2020), *Kant on Self-Knowledge and Self-Formation: The Nature of Inner Experience*, Cambridge.
- (forthcoming a), "The Perspectival Nature of Consciousness in German Idealism and Analytic Philosophy", in: *The Palgrave Handbook of German Idealism and Analytic Philosophy*, edited by James Conant and Jonas Held, London.
- (forthcoming b), "On the Formality of Kant's Transcendental Philosophy and his Transcendental Idealism", in: *The Palgrave Handbook of Transcendental and Psychological Idealism*, edited by Faustino Fabbianelli and Andrea Staiti, London.
- Longuenesse, B. (2017), *I, Me, Mine*, Oxford.
- Merritt, M. (2018), *Kant on Reflection and Virtue*, Cambridge.
- Recanati, F. (2007), *Perspectival Thought: A Plea for (Moderate) Relativism*, Oxford.
- Rosefeldt, T. (2000), *Das logische Ich*. Berlin.
- Sartre, J. P. (2018) [1943], *Being and Nothingness* [BN], trans. S. Richmond, New York.
- Zahavi, D. (2005), *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First-Person Perspective*, Cambridge, MA.
- William H. Miller III Department of Philosophy
 Johns Hopkins University
 281 Gilman Hall
 3400 N. Charles Street
 Baltimore, MD 21218
 USA
 kkraus2@jh.edu