The Divorce of Reason and Experience: Kant’s Paralogisms of Pure Reason in Context

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IN THE PARALOGISMS OF PURE REASON chapter of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [*KrV*], Kant subjects rational psychology to critical scrutiny. As Kant there understands it, rational psychology is that science that purports to derive metaphysical claims of the soul independently of any experience. Regarding this *rational* doctrine of the soul, he writes:

[I]f the least bit of anything empirical in my thinking, any particular perception of my inner state, were mixed among the grounds of cognition of this science, then it would no longer be a rational but rather an *empirical* doctrine of the soul. We have thus already before us a putative science, which is built on the single proposition *I think* . . . . (*A*342/*B*400)

This putative science purports to yield cognition of the soul’s substantiality, simplicity, identity, and distinction from body, and on this basis proves its incorruptibility, immateriality, spirituality, and, ultimately, immortality (*A*345/*B*403). As Kant tries to show, the bare *I think* does not license any but the most modest versions of such claims. In levelling his criticisms, Kant is not taken to be targeting any philosopher in particular, but the rationalist approach to the soul in general, a fact commensurate with his claim that the *KrV* is a critique not of particular “books and systems”

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but of reason itself (Axii). So, while Kant mentions Descartes a couple of times in the chapter, and singles out Moses Mendelssohn for criticism in the B edition, Kant casts a much wider net, given his intention to curb the excesses of rationalist approaches to the soul more generally, whether they are found in philosophical heavyweights like Descartes and Leibniz, or relatively minor figures like Christian Wolff and Alexander Baumgarten.

In this paper, I will not take issue with this understanding of the critical upshot of Kant’s Paralogisms chapter since I take it to be acceptable in its essentials. In seeking to expose the error and illusion which underlie all attempts to gain cognition of the soul, Kant’s target cannot be any single philosopher or philosophical system. Given this, of course, it in no way follows that a consideration of the historical proponents of rational psychology, especially those who exerted a direct influence upon Kant, promises little in terms of clarifying and refining our apprehension of Kant’s purpose in that chapter. Though minor, figures such as Wolff and Baumgarten provided the immediate context, and even the overarching philosophical framework, for Kant’s engagement with the rest of the metaphysical tradition. With regard to the topic of the soul in particular, in ignoring Wolff and the philosophers influenced by him, we unfairly ignore a philosophical tradition that not only assigned pride of place to psychology within metaphysics, but also prepared the way for and even anticipated many important later approaches to the investigation of the mind. Nor is it the case that our appreciation of the breadth of Kant’s criticism is liable to suffer through a consideration of its depth. Quite the contrary, it seems to me that as long as it is simply assumed that the only rational psychology is a naïvely rationalist psychology—one that proceeds entirely independently of experience—we trivialize Kant’s criticism at the same time we give short shrift to philosophical rationalism by ascribing to it an unnecessarily narrow attitude towards the investigation of the soul.

Accordingly, I will begin by considering Wolff’s foundational account of metaphysical psychology. This aims to show that Wolff’s rational psychology is not

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comfortably characterized as a rationalist psychology, naïvely understood. This is because Wolff consistently stresses the empirical foundations of rational psychology, going so far as to say that he cast them as distinct disciplines only on the basis of extrinsic considerations. That such is the case is something that Wolff scholars have long recognized. Nonetheless, with this result in hand, I will consider how Wolff’s program was received among major German metaphysicians who influenced Kant. We will see that these philosophers accepted Wolff’s general understanding of the dependence of rational upon empirical psychology, despite important differences in execution. Perhaps unsurprisingly, we will find that the same is the case for the publications and lectures of Kant’s pre-Critical period, though supplying the historical context will go some way towards clarifying some of the obscurities of those texts. Turning to the KrV in light of this context, Kant’s account of rational psychology as that science of the soul that proceeds completely independently of experience seems distinctly novel. Far from turning his back on the tradition he had until recently embraced, I will argue that the introductory section of the Paralogisms chapter (A341/B399–A348/B406) constitutes an argument for a distinct conception of rational psychology. By way of conclusion, I will show that rather than putting too fine a point on the argument in the Paralogisms, this reading is entirely consonant with Kant’s general criticism in the chapter, although it does suggest an important change in emphasis from the particular paralogisms to the exposure of an underlying transcendental illusion.

1. Wolff on Empirical and Rational Psychology

Despite his undeniable influence on Kant in psychological and other matters, Christian Wolff and the tradition he founded are largely, and unfairly, overlooked by commentators. Jonathan Bennett seems to speak for many when he writes, “[o]ne gathers that Wolff had a second-rate mind, and it is a matter for regret that he came to be interposed, as a distorting glass or a muffling pillow, between the two great philosophical geniuses of German philosophy.” There was, however, no philosopher so influential in determining the course of metaphysical psychology in eighteenth-century Germany as Wolff. Psychology occupies a central position in his most popular metaphysical text, the Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen (Deutsche Metaphysik), in addition to being the subject matter of two sizeable volumes of his Latin writings. Wolff’s most famous innovation in metaphysical psychology is his distinction between empirical and rational psychology, which latter discipline he claims, rightfully, to have invented.\footnote{See Kant’s Dialectic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 6.}

\footnote{I have used the following editions of the works of Christian Wolff (and the following abbreviations): Vernünftige Gedanken von den Kräften des menschlichen Verstandes und Ihrem richtigen Gebrauche in Erkenntnis der Wahrheit [DL], (reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965); Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen [DM], (reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1983); Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt, und der Seele des Menschen, Anderer Theil, bestehend in ausführlichen Anmerckungen [AzDM], (reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1983); Ausführliche Nachricht von seinen eigenen Schriften, die er in deutscher Sprache heraus gegeben [AN], (reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1973); Philosophia rationalis, sive Logica, 3 vols., vol. 1 containing Discursus praeliminaris de philosophia in genere [DP], (reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1983); Psychologia empirica [PE], (reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968); Psychologia rationalis [PR], (reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1972).}

\footnote{Wolff boasts of the novelty of his rational psychology in the AzDM §261: Da noch niemand dergleichen Arbeit verrichtet, sondern ich dieselbe zuerst unternommen . . . . As Gideon Stiening has shown, \ldots}
Wolff’s first presentation of the relation between empirical and rational psychology occurs in his *Deutsche Metaphysik* of 1719. In the third chapter of that work, “On the Soul and What We Perceive of It,” Wolff takes up the consideration of what we perceive or observe of the soul (*DM §191*). The intention here is not to determine what the soul essentially is, but simply to catalogue “what we perceive of [the soul] in everyday experience” (*DM §191*). The focus on everyday experience is key inasmuch as it limits the investigation to that “which anyone can know who attends to himself” without recourse to experimental investigation (*DM §191*). Thus, Wolff later distinguishes between “common experience” and “experiments” (*Versuche*), where the latter involve attention to that which is the result of effort, and the former involves attention to that which requires no effort on our part to institute (*DM §325*). In addition to this, Wolff charges the empirical psychologist with the task of “seeking distinct concepts of that which we perceive of the soul, and here and there noting some important truths that permit of being proved from them,” which proof rests on the “infallible [untraglicher] experiences” already catalogued (*DM §191*). A prime example of this procedure is provided in the first section of the text. Foremost among common experiences is that “we are conscious of ourselves and of other things” (*DM §1*), which no one in possession of their senses can deny since doing so already assumes that one is conscious of some thing. Wolff goes on to claim that, on the basis of this infallible experience, we can prove that we exist, a reflection he presents in the form of the following syllogism:

Whoever is conscious of himself and of other things, is.
We are conscious of ourselves and other things.
Therefore, we exist. (*DM §6*)

As Wolff explains, the minor of this syllogism is an “undoubted [ungezweifelte] experience” and the major “belongs among those principles that one admits without any proof as soon as one only understands the words” (*DM §7*). As a result, the truth that we exist is “confirmed through infallible experiences” (*DM §191*).

Given this starting point, and its introspective leanings generally, it might be argued that Wolff’s empirical psychology betrays a certain Cartesian sympathy, and indeed it does to an extent. For instance, Wolff initially defines thoughts

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Rudolph Goclenius was responsible for making psychology a separate field of philosophical study in Protestant universities in Germany, though empirical and rational elements were not distinguished within it—see G. Stiening, “Psychologie als Metaphysica specialis,” in *Die Psychologie Christian Wolffs*, 207–26, especially 210–11. Before Goclenius, infinite spirit (God) and finite spirits were considered together in the context of the science of pneumatics; see for instance Georg Meier, *Pneumatica qua scientia spirituum & Dei* (Wittenbergae, 1667).

Wolff does not yet call this discipline empirical psychology, nor does he refer specifically to rational psychology in the *DM*; rather, these terms first occur in L.P. Thümmig, *Institutiones philosophia Wolfianae* (Frankfurt: Renger, 1725; reprint Hildesheim: Olms, 1982), see §16. This is not of course to say that Thümmig necessarily coined the terms—see Falk Wunderlich, *Kant und die Bewusstseintheorien des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 361–115, and below, n19.

See also DL 5, §§1, 13, and AzDM §§99–100.

(Gedancken) as “alterations of the soul of which the soul is aware” (DM §194), an echo of Descartes’s definition at the end of the second Replies.\footnote{The Philosophical Writings of Descartes and Correspondence [CSM], ed. and trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, and A. Kenny, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 1984, and 1991), 2.113.} The similarities are limited, however, as Wolff would extend his investigation beyond the boundaries suggested by Descartes, using his empirical psychology principally to compose an extensive catalogue of the various modalities of thought and of the faculties of the soul that account for the possibility of sensations, images, judgments, appetites, and so on. Descartes, by contrast, was sceptical of such an investigation, redolent as it was of scholastic subtlety.\footnote{CSM 2.55.} Perhaps a more surprising, though widely dismissed influence on Wolff’s empirical psychology is Locke’s Essay.\footnote{An Essay Concerning Human Understanding [Essay], ed. P. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979).} The first sentence of the Deutsche Metaphysik, “We are conscious of ourselves and of other things” (DM §1), invokes the first sentence of Book II of the Essay: “Every Man being conscious to himself, That he thinks, and that which his Mind is employ’d about whilst thinking, being the Ideas, that are there.”\footnote{Essay 1.1.2 (44).} Indeed, the method employed by Wolff’s empirical psychologist—abstaining from questions regarding the soul’s nature and focusing instead on everyday experiences—is just that which Locke had identified as his own “Historical, plain Method” at the outset of the Essay:

> I shall not at present meddle with the Physical Consideration of the Mind; or trouble my self to examine, wherein its Essence consists. . . . These are Speculations, which, however curious and entertaining, I shall decline, as lying out of my Way, in the Design I am now upon. It shall suffice to my present Purpose, to consider the discerning Faculties of a Man, as they are employ’d about the Objects, which they have to do with . . . .

In addition, though hardly surprising for disciplines that claim only to lay bare what is found in common experience, Locke and Wolff achieve a number of similar results. Wolff, like Locke will claim that all thoughts are conscious thoughts (DM §194; cf. Essay II.1.19, 115), and in the course of the empirical psychology Wolff considers a sequence of faculties that is strikingly similar to a list provided by Locke.\footnote{Essay 2.1.1 (104).}

Lewis White Beck: “It is positively painful to see how little Wolff profited from his reading of Descartes, Leibniz, and Locke. Seldom has a man tried harder to be empirical but remained a rationalist malgré lui” (Early German Philosophy [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969], 267). Klaus Fischer casts the dominance of the Wolffian philosophy as an obstacle to the reception of Locke in Germany: see “John Locke in the German Enlightenment: An Interpretation,” Journal of the History of Ideas 36 (1975): 431–46. Recent commentators have been more sympathetic, noting important similarities between Locke’s and Wolff’s accounts of consciousness (see G. Stiening, “Psychologie als Metaphysica specialis”) and empirical method (see Hans-Jürgen Engfer, “Von der Leibnizischen Monadologie zur empirischen Psychologie Wolff’s” [“Leibnizischen Monadologie”], in Nuovi studi sul pensiero di Christian Wolff, ed. S. Carboncin and L. Madonna [Hildesheim: Olms, 1992], 193–213). Recent commentators have been more sympathetic, noting important similarities between Locke’s and Wolff’s accounts of consciousness (see G. Stiening, “Psychologie als Metaphysica specialis”) and empirical method (see Hans-Jürgen Engfer, “Von der Leibnizischen Monadologie zur empirischen Psychologie Wolff’s” [“Leibnizischen Monadologie”], in Nuovi studi sul pensiero di Christian Wolff, ed. S. Carboncin and L. Madonna [Hildesheim: Olms, 1992], 193–213).

So, at Essay 2.19.1, Locke lists under modes of thinking sensation, remembrance, recollection (“If [an idea] be sought after by the mind, and with pain and endeavour found, and brought again in view” [227]), contemplation (“If [an idea] be held there long under attentive Consideration” [227]).
In contrast to empirical psychology, Wolff’s rational psychology is concerned with what is unavailable to casual observation. In rational psychology, the investigation of the soul “is permitted to treat of different things concerning the soul, things to which experience does not so easily lead” (DM §727). Accordingly, it is left to rational psychology to demonstrate, for instance, that there are states of the soul of which it is not conscious (DM §§729; AzDM §§262), that the various, empirically diverse faculties of the soul are derivable from a single force of representing the world (DM §§753–54; AzDM §§265, 269–70), and that the most appropriate system to explain the community of the soul and body is the pre-established harmony (DM §§760–65; AzDM §§272–77), among other topics. And because rational psychology pushes beyond what we can observe of the soul, it will need a tool other than simple observation. As Wolff claims, “insofar as something more than that of which we are conscious is to be met with in ourselves, we will have to bring it out through inferences” (DM §193). Starting from the effects of the soul observed in the course of the empirical investigation, rational psychology will infer to unobserved grounds, thereby disclosing the “nature and essence of the soul” (DM §727) and advancing our cognition beyond the boundaries of experience. So, while empirical psychology might be Cartesian in spirit, Wolff’s rational psychology, especially in its concern for the soul’s unconscious states, wears its Leibnizian influence on its sleeve.

The distinction between empirical and rational psychology is a commonplace in the literature. What commentators have failed to notice is that, according to Wolff, rational psychology relies upon empirical psychology in a number of crucial respects. First, the rational investigation relies on the empirical inasmuch as among its tasks is the clarification and organization of the results of empirical psychology. In his rational psychology, Wolff claims “we will seek distinct concepts among that which we perceive of the soul and note [anmercken] again here and there some important truths that can be proved from these” (DM §191). Further, rational psychology’s concern with deriving truths through inference also relies on what is disclosed in the process of the empirical observation of the soul, since that which everyone can experience regarding themselves can serve “as a principle [Grund]” for deriving something else that not everyone can immediately see for themselves (DM §191). Finally, that which is discovered in the course of our own experience also serves as the “touchstone” (Probier-Stein) for what is discovered through inference in that it serves to confirm or, failing any relevant experience, not to contradict, the conclusions of rational psychology (and not vice versa) (DM §727).

Nowhere is this reliance more evident than in Wolff’s discussion of the empirical foundations for the systems that account for the community (Gemeinschaft) between soul and body. Limiting himself strictly to what can be observed of the respective

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17 Though not a standard rendering today, Wolff frequently understood ‘Grund’ in the sense of principle. So, in the table of German translations of Latin terms provided at the end of the DM, Wolff uses ‘Grund der Widerspruch’ for principium contradictionis (see DM §674).
states of soul and body, Wolff notes that we experience both that the states of the soul harmonize or agree (übereinstimmen) with those of the body, as when a sensation arises in the soul upon the alteration of the organs sense by external things (DM §528), and that the states of the body agree with the states of the soul, as in the case of voluntary movement (DM §535). Wolff cautions us, however, against reading too much into this experience, since we “perceive nothing further than that two things are simultaneous, namely, an alteration that occurs in the organs of the senses, and a thought by means of which the soul is conscious of the external things that cause the alteration” (DM §529). Strictly speaking, our experience only discloses an agreement between these states without revealing anything regarding the ground of this agreement in, for instance, the action (Würckung) of soul and body upon one another. Accordingly, any investigation of this ground can only be taken up in the context of rational psychology. There Wolff compares three different explanations of this observed community: the system of physical influence, the “Cartesian” system (of occasional causes), and the system of pre-established harmony. Wolff himself prefers the system of pre-established harmony to the system of physical influence and to the system of occasional causes. He argues that maintaining a physical influence between soul and body threatens to undermine the laws of motion (DM §762), and he reproduces Leibniz’s criticism of the Cartesian system as relying on constant miracles while adding his own, to the effect that this system is inconsistent with his demonstration that the soul has an efficacious force of its own (DM §764). Nonetheless, Wolff later makes clear that his strategy in discussing each of these views is neither to refute them nor to show them to be inconsistent with experience or the lack there of (since none of them are). Instead, Wolff is only concerned with demonstrating that the system of pre-established harmony is as viable an explanation of the community of soul and body as its two alternatives, though each of the three fails to find definitive confirmation in experience. Wolff even minimizes his commitment to the system of pre-established harmony, claiming that it “is a matter of no importance to me whether one takes this system to be more probable than another,” and while he disputes the alleged inconsistency of this system with established religion and moral practice (cf. DM §§768, 781), for those who remain unconvinced he simply recommends endorsing one of the other two systems (AzDM §289). Without any infallible experience to lend its weight to any one of these systems, Wolff concludes that each of the three remains possible and that even if the system of pre-established harmony is more probable, it is, like the others, ultimately only a “hypothesis.”

Wolff’s later, Latin treatments of psychology do not deviate substantially from the model presented in the German works. If anything, they only better empha-

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19Numerous commentators have noted that Wolff’s later, Latin works betray a clearer sense of the distinction between empirical and rational psychology. See for instance, Max Wundt, *Die deutsche
size the dependence of rational upon empirical psychology. At the outset of the *Psychologia empirica*, empirical psychology is defined as “the science of establishing principles through experience from which the reason is given for what [actually] occurs in the human soul” (*PE* §1). Accordingly, the empirical psychologist becomes practised at attending to the occurrences in his own soul which he can become conscious of (*PE* §2), at reducing the indeterminate and singular issuances of experience to “determinate notions” such as those found in ontology (*PE* §2), and at setting forth the results “by means of accurate definitions” (*PE* §3). Significantly, Wolff continues to hold that empirical psychology provides the principles for the rational science of the soul, as well. Rational psychology is defined as “the science of that which is possible through the human soul” (*PR* §1; my emphasis), which science proceeds using the method of demonstration (*PR* §2). If its demonstrations are to be anything other than hopeless abstractions, rational psychology will need to borrow principles from empirical psychology, among other disciplines (*PR* §3), and it is its use of those generally-available observations of the soul catalogued through the empirical investigation that lends rational psychology whatever claim to certainty it has (*PE* §4). Beginning with what we are aware of as occurring in the soul, rational psychology proceeds by inference to that which is unavailable to experience (*PR* §9), but it is only given this empirical basis that rational psychology is warranted in extending our cognition of the soul beyond the boundaries of experience.

Moreover, while rational psychology uses empirical principles to extend our cognition beyond the bounds of present observation in discussing, for instance, the pre-established harmony or the state of the soul after death, Wolff continues to stress that these conclusions remain subject to the touchstone of experience. He supplies the following useful metaphor for the relation between the two sciences: “Rational psychology obviously expands the space of empirical psychology, while borrowing principles from it: it returns with interest what it has borrowed” (*PE* §5). Indeed, Wolff compares empirical and rational psychology to the empirical and theoretical parts of astronomy. The theoretical discipline formulates theories on the basis of observations, which yield predictions and explanations that in turn serve to direct our observation (*PE* §5). Rather than representing utterly distinct disciplines, then, empirical and rational psychology constitute a single enterprise, which Wolff often refers to as a “marriage of reason and experience” (*PE* §497). In fact, at one point, Wolff admits that the very distinction between

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20 For Wolff’s frequent use of this metaphor, see Luigi Cataldi Madonna, *Christian Wolff und das System des klassischen Rationalismus* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2001), esp. 64.

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20 Schulphilosophie im Zeitalter der Aufklärung (Tübingen: Mohr, 1945), 213, and Heiner Klemme, *Kants Philosophie des Subjekts* (Kants Philosophie) (Hamburg: Meiner, 1996), 17. In the *AN*, Wolff acknowledges his debt to his student, Ludwig Philipp Thümmig, who had provided a much more systematic division of the topics of metaphysics in his *Institutiones philosophiae Wolfianae*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt, 1725–1726; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1982); see especially “Institutiones cosmologicae generalis,” §§2–4, cited by Wolff at *AN* §79. Nonetheless, I will show that this should not be taken to entail that Wolff later came to reject the dependence of rational upon empirical psychology, as Klemme seems to suggest (cf. *Kants Philosophie*, 17). In fact, Thümmig himself endorses an interdependence between empirical and rational psychology; he writes that: *Pars itaque empirica praecedet rationalem, atque adeo illa prior est, haec posterior, & ex principiis rationalis theses empiricae instar conclusionum deducuntur* (*Institutiones philosophiae Wolfianae*, §5).

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empirical and rational psychology is adopted only as a safeguard against potential misunderstanding. The problem as Wolff sees it is that, were empirical and rational psychology to be treated in the context of a single investigation, those who found reason to reject some highly abstract doctrine, such as the controversial system of pre-established harmony, might take this as license to reject wholesale everything disclosed in the context of the empirical investigation. This would be disastrous, however, given that empirical psychology supplies principles for practical philosophy and theology (cf. PE §§7–8). As Wolff confesses in the Discursus praeliminaris, it was ultimately only on account of this strategic consideration that he saw fit to distinguish the two disciplines in the first place:

Because this [rational psychology] is a new undertaking and opposed to the preconceived opinion, and because such new things are initially only consented to reluctantly by most, this was the reason that I separated rational from empirical psychology, so that psychological cognition would not be rejected without distinction. The theory and practice of morality, and even of politics, are founded on psychological principles and are derived from them. . . . Practical philosophy is of a greater significance: that which has a greater significance ought not to be built on such principles as can be disputed . . . . (DP§112)

Of course, that Wolff should intend by ‘rational’ a discipline so reliant upon an empirical investigation is at first counter-intuitive. Indeed, we might accuse Wolff of an inconsistency when he writes that the claims of rational psychology are “derived solely from the concept of the human soul a priori” (DP §112). This inconsistency is only apparent, however, as it is the result of overlooking Wolff’s distinct (at least with regard to subsequent accounts) understanding of a priori cognition. So, while Kant would later take a priori cognition to be distinguished from that cognition known a posteriori in terms of its necessary and strict universal character (cf. B3–4), Wolff takes the distinction to concern the way in which cognition is acquired, that is, whether simply through experience or through inference, where instances of both types of cognition can make claims to universality and necessity.21 Moreover, Wolff does not take these types of cognition to be mutually exclusive: he allows for a “mixed cognition” in which cognition is acquired in part a posteriori and in part a priori, as when we make inferences from principles established through experience (PE §434).22 Corresponding to these distinctions between pure and mixed cognition, Wolff distinguishes sciences that are rational in pure and mixed senses. Disciplines like arithmetic, geometry, and algebra are rational sciences in the pure sense inasmuch as nothing is admitted in the course of reasoning “except that definitions and propositions cognized a priori” (PE §495). Significantly, however, Wolff admits that sciences can be rational, even if only in the mixed sense:

We find enough examples in the sciences that our reason is not always pure, particularly in the cognition of nature [physics] and of ourselves [psychology]. Moreover,

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22 See Engfer: Denn anders als später bei Kant dient bei Wolff der Begriff der Erkenntnis a priori nicht zur Kennzeichnung erfahrungsunabhängiger Erkenntnis aus reinen Vernunft, sondern zur Charakterisierung eines bestimmten Erkenntnisweges (“Leibnizischen Monadologie,” 212).
I take it to be the surest way that we accept in the cognition of nature nothing but what is grounded in infallible experiences [untrüglichen Erfahrungen]. Since those who want to include more into reason than it has a right to come upon things which are the products of fancy, and thereby stray from truth into error. (DM §382)\textsuperscript{15}

Rational psychology, then, is rational in this mixed sense, using inference to expand on what experience has to offer. But despite the mixed status of the resulting cognition, we should note that Wolff does not think it yields much ground to pure cognition in terms of certainty—insofar as its inferences rests on infallible experience, the conclusions of rational psychology will have a high degree of what Wolff calls rigour (Gründlichkeit), if not the highest possible (DM §855).

What becomes clear from the foregoing is that Wolff’s rational psychology is anything but a naïvely rationalist psychology, eschewing observation in favour of what can be known through the application of pure reason alone. Of course, this is not to say that Wolff endorses a kind of empiricism when it comes to psychology. Indeed, this label applies no more to Wolff than it does to Kant, who also proceeds from experience to those grounds of experience that can be known a priori (B1–2).\textsuperscript{24} As we will see, where Wolff and Kant ultimately part ways with regard to psychology is not in terms of whether rational psychology is subject to the limits set by possible experience (since both agree on that), but in terms of whether an experience of the soul is available to serve as a foundation for a rational investigation in the first place.

2. Empirical and Rational Psychology in Baumgarten, Meier, and Crusius

Given Wolff’s popularity, it is not surprising that his understanding of the relation between rational and empirical psychology was widely influential. A comprehensive survey is obviously beyond the scope of this paper; nonetheless, we can show that this is the case for those accounts that proved particularly influential for Kant’s own treatment. As we will see, in each of these cases, rational psychology relies on what is disclosed of the soul in the course of a foregoing empirical investigation to supply it with the principles from which it proceeds. Still, this reliance was not always construed in precisely the same terms as it had been by Wolff.

That this is so is not immediately evident in the chapters dedicated to psychology in Alexander Baumgarten’s Metaphysica.\textsuperscript{25} Initially, it would seem as if he conceives the distinction between empirical and rational psychology much more sharply than does Wolff. For Baumgarten, empirical psychology “draws its claims more nearly from experience,” whereas rational psychology does so “by means of a longer series of inferences from the concept [notione] of the soul.”\textsuperscript{26} Empirical psychology largely preserves its Wolffian focus on observation and short inferences from undoubted experiences, though with one significant exception. Where Wolff had opened his empirical psychology by demonstrating that we exist given that we

\textsuperscript{15}See also PE §497.

\textsuperscript{24}I am grateful to an anonymous referee from the Journal for making this point.

\textsuperscript{25}Metaphysica, 3rd ed. (Halle: Hemmerde, 1757; reprinted in Kant’s gesammelte Schriften, vols. 15, 17).

\textsuperscript{26}Metaphysica §503.
are conscious of ourselves and other things, Baumgarten limits observation to the case of the *I* (ego), or *my* soul, in particular:

> If there is something in a being that can be conscious of other things, that thing is a soul. There exists in me something that can be conscious of other things. Therefore, a soul exists in me (*I*, a soul, exist) . . . .

We will see that Kant follows Baumgarten on this score in his lectures on metaphysics in the 1770s. Nevertheless, if Baumgarten’s empirical psychology is broadly Wolffian in its method and purpose, it would seem that his rational psychology is not, inasmuch as it proceeds merely from an analysis of the “abstract notion of the soul” and so (*contra* Wolff) is understood as a purely rational science. This also appears to be confirmed by the fact that where Wolff takes the rational discipline to, at least in part, inquire into the grounds of the observed effects of the soul (such as the unconscious grounds of conscious perceptions), Baumgarten drops these topics in favour of the properly metaphysical ones, such as the *commercium* of soul and body, and immortality of the soul.¹⁸

In spite of appearances, however, Baumgarten does presume a continuity between empirical and rational psychology along the lines Wolff had, a fact which becomes more evident when we consider the opening sections of the respective discussions. The *I*, its nature, various effects, and relation to the body, are the proper topic of empirical psychology. In the case of my own soul, Baumgarten claims that inasmuch as I observe that my thoughts constitute changes, my soul must be a force (*vis*), or the causal ground of those changes, and insofar as these thoughts are representations, and indeed, representations of the universe according to the position of my body, my soul must be a force of representing the universe in accordance with the position of the body.¹⁹ Turning to the first section of rational psychology, concerning the nature of the soul, Baumgarten begins as expected with a definition of the *anima humana* as simply “the soul which is in the closest connection [*commercio*²⁰] with the human body,” which, taken together, constitute the human being.²¹ Nonetheless, rather than arguing from this concept alone to the nature of the soul as a force representative of the world from the position of the body, Baumgarten relies on what had been observed in the course of the empirical investigation (as well as in the sections on cosmology and ontology), noting that the soul moves its body, desires, and is repulsed, that it is on account of the position of the body that we have clear and distinct representations, and, therefore, that the human soul “is a force of representing the universe through the position of the human body in the universe.”²² It is, however, only on the basis of extending the empirical results concerning *my* soul to the human soul in general that Baumgarten can proceed to demonstrate that the human soul is necessar-

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¹⁷Metaphysica §504.
¹⁸This is Max Wundt’s claim in *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1945), 222–23.
¹⁹Metaphysica §§505–13.
²⁰This translation follows Baumgarten’s identification of ‘*Verbindung*’ as the German rendering of *commercium*. See for instance, Metaphysica §448.
²¹Metaphysica §740.
²²Metaphysica §741.
ily a spirit, an intellect, a person, free, absolutely simple, and incorruptible, not to mention to determine whether its commercium with the body is founded in a pre-established harmony and to determine its condition after death. So, even if Baumgarten’s rational psychology is more properly metaphysical than Wolff’s, it is not for that reason any less dependent on empirical psychology.

That Baumgarten conceives the relation between empirical and rational psychology more or less along Wolffian lines is, admittedly, implied rather than made explicit by the text. Fortunately, Baumgarten’s student, Georg Friedrich Meier, whose four-volume Metaphysik is as expansive as Baumgarten’s is succinct, fills in much of the detail absent from his teacher’s account. At the outset of the third volume of the Metaphysik, the whole of which is dedicated to psychology, Meier defines empirical psychology and its tasks as follows:

Experiential [Erfahrende] or empirical psychology is that science of the soul which is derived in a more proximate way from experience. In this psychology, we collect all of the experiences that we can have of the effects and alterations of our own soul. We distinguish the various alterations of our soul from one another and, by means of our internal sense [innern Gefühls], we form distinct concepts of the same, and at that point we treat of all of that which flows from these immediate experiences of our own soul through a single inference or even a short proof.³⁵

Meier’s definition of empirical psychology follows Baumgarten’s quite closely, and like Baumgarten (and Wolff in his initial proof that “we exist”), Meier does not take ratiocination to be solely the province of rational psychology: even in empirical psychology inferences, albeit short ones, can be employed. This is evident when we consider Meier’s initial treatment of the soul’s effects, where he infers what the nature of one’s own soul must be considered as their ground. We experience that we think, and, insofar as we reason from the existence of the effect to the existence of the cause, this entails that we exist.³⁶ As effects of the soul, Meier notes that thoughts must be accidents or determinations of the soul, and experience tells us that some thoughts do not have their ground in external things but in the soul itself. Thus, the soul is not passive with regard to thoughts, but must constitute the active ground of at least some of them. As such, the soul must be a force of thinking, and thus a thinking substance.³⁷ Given, further, that all thoughts are representations, and indeed representations of the world, this force must be such as to bring about representations. Therefore, we know from our experience that the soul is a representative force.³⁸

³³We might note a contrast with Wolff’s merely hypothetical presentation of the system of pre-established harmony. In his discussion of cosmology, Baumgarten takes himself to have proven the truth of this system, and the falsehood of the alternatives, regarding all substances in the world (Metaphysica §461). Given that this holds universally, Baumgarten reasons that it must also hold concerning the particular relation between the human soul and body (Metaphysica §762). Nonetheless, like Wolff, Baumgarten goes on to consider arguments pro and con for each system applied strictly to psychology, in the end concluding that even supposing the system of pre-established harmony is false, it must be taken to identify the correct ground (i.e., a force) for given alterations of the soul and body (cf. Metaphysica §769).

³⁵Metaphysik §474.
³⁶Metaphysik §§480–81.
³⁷Metaphysik §482.
³⁸Metaphysik §483.
Meier’s empirical psychology does not deviate substantively from that of Baumgarten. Turning to his rational psychology, we find that Meier again follows his teacher carefully, but is much more explicit about the connection between the two disciplines than was Baumgarten in the *Metaphysica*:

Rational psychology is that science of the soul which is derived from the abstract concept of the soul through longer and wider-ranging proofs. *It proves of all human souls that which one has cognized of his own soul in the empirical psychology; it treats of the nature, and essence, of the soul; it treats of such matters as can in no way be decided by experience; it seeks to discover the grounds of the representations of the soul, and the way in which they come to be; and it treats of the remaining finite spirits and souls outside of the human.*

That rational psychology should have recourse to what has been cognized of the soul in empirical psychology is, for Meier, necessary if it is not to provide a merely nominal definition of the soul, but a real one that expresses its nature and essence. So, Meier initially considers the same definition of the human soul as Baumgarten had, namely, that it is “a soul that stands in the most precise community [*Gemeinschaft*] with the human body.” However, Meier claims that this could only count as a nominal definition since it relies upon an account of the “internal structure” of the human body to distinguish the human soul from other souls, and yet it does not belong to psychology to investigate the nature of the human body. The definition of the human being as that animal that is a composite of human soul and body is similarly labelled as merely nominal. Instead, Meier proposes a real definition of the human soul that echoes Baumgarten’s, namely, that it is “a substance, which is a force of representing this world, by means of which it is capable of representing the world in part distinctly, and according to the position of the human body in the world.” Meier claims that this definition constitutes a “universal truth” regarding the human soul, though he admits it cannot be proved with “complete certainty” since it amounts to a mere generalization of the results of empirical psychology concerning one’s own soul to cover the human soul as such. This is not to say that this generalization is without any basis whatsoever—Meier thinks that there is good reason to believe the conclusions of empirical psychology admit of this universal application, and he offers three arguments that show this, even if they have less than “the strength of complete demonstrations.” The first turns on the premise that empirical psychology has given me no reason to think that every thinking being is not constituted as I have observed myself to be:

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39*One important distinction, obvious from the foregoing, is that Meier does not rigorously frame the conclusions of empirical psychology in terms of the first-person singular. For instance, in *Metaphysik §481* he claims that “daily experience teaches us that we think.”

40*Metaphysik §474; latter emphasis added.

41*For Meier a real definition (*Sacheklärung*) “presents the essence of the defined thing,” whereas a nominal definition (*Worterklärung*) does not, but presents only some arbitrarily chosen part of the essence. On this, see his *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre* (*Auszug*) (reprinted in *Kant’s gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 16), §§280–84. Meier also claims that among the criteria of a real definition is that the marks it enumerates are encountered altogether only in the thing defined (*Auszug §§284, 150*).

42*Metaphysik §713; cf. *Metaphysica §740*.

43*Metaphysik §713.

44*Metaphysik §714.

45*Metaphysik §735.
Now, by means of the whole of empirical psychology, I have convinced myself completely that my soul is a substance, which possesses a representative force through which it represents the world to itself, in part distinctly, in part indistinctly, according to the position of its body. Now I see most distinctly that this force, when one considers it merely in this way, does not constitute a characteristic that is properly and only my own . . . consequently, this belongs to that which I have in common with all human souls, and all human souls are accordingly such substances.46

As Meier goes on to say, it is from this concept of the soul that we derive, through wider-ranging inferences, those qualities of the human soul (such as its finite character, or contingent existence) that properly belong in rational psychology. And while Meier concedes that it would be preferable for rational psychology to proceed on firmer foundations, he notes that this recourse is inevitable in any science “in which one strives to explain [erklären] and prove experiences a priori.”47 In any case, what becomes clear in Meier’s treatment is that rational psychology continues to rely on empirical psychology to supply its abstract concept of the human soul with real content.

Perhaps more revealing of the widespread influence of Wolff’s account is the fact that it is even preserved, in adapted form, by Christian August Crusius, one of Wolff’s most philosophically significant critics. Crusius’s discussion is particularly important given that it occurs in the context of a general attack on Wolffian metaphysics, one that results in the rejection of the properly metaphysical status of a number of empirical considerations. In contrast to Wolff, Crusius defines metaphysics in his principal metaphysical text, the *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft-Wahrheiten*, as “the science of those theoretical truths of reason that are necessary, that is, which do not belong to the contingent arrangement [Einrichtung] of this world.”48 Accordingly, ontology is taken to be concerned solely with “the universal essence of things along with such properties as can be cognized *a priori* of them”; natural theology with “theoretical truths about God, as the absolutely necessary substance”; and cosmology with the “necessary essence of a world.”49 In all these cases, Crusius is careful to exclude considerations of the contingent things of the actual world from the purview of metaphysics, going as far as to deny determinations of extended magnitudes and some laws of motion a place in his ontology and cosmology.50 This leads Crusius to differ significantly from Wolff in terms of which investigations are permitted in a properly metaphysical psychology, for which Crusius cantankerously adopts the older term *pneumatology*, or the doctrine of spirits. Consistent with his definition of metaphysics, pneumatology will treat those properties of the spirit that are known to pertain to it necessarily, as opposed to those properties which pertain to it only contingently. The natural, but striking,

46 Metaphysik §735. For the remaining two arguments: see Metaphysik §736 for the argument from cosmological considerations, and §737, which proceeds from what was observed of the community of soul and body and is modelled closely on Baumgarten’s argument in Metaphysica §741.

47 Metaphysik §735.


49 Entwurf §5.

50 Entwurf §§4–5
consequence is that empirical psychology is summarily dismissed from among the proper subjects of metaphysics:

We could not, therefore, follow in the custom of those learned people who draw into metaphysics the complete doctrine of the human soul, in which there occurs much that is contingent, without leaving out of consideration that most useful concept of metaphysics [introduced above]; rather, we will direct our thoughts only towards the necessary essence of a spirit. By metaphysical pneumatology, therefore, I understand the science of the necessary essence of a spirit, of its distinctions and properties, which permit of being understood a priori. 51

There can be little doubt that Crusius’s rejection of empirical psychology’s metaphysical credentials proved important for Kant.54 Yet we should not take this dismissive treatment to imply that for Crusius metaphysical pneumatology can proceed without any reference to experience. Indeed, Crusius takes some reliance upon experience to be necessary inasmuch as he wishes to avoid offering an “arbitrary or inadequate determination of the concept of spirits.”55 Accordingly, Crusius opens his pneumatology with a proof of the reality of the concept of spirit, and to this end he considers “how we are brought to the concept of spirit and what kind of experiences require us to posit alongside matter another type of substances, namely, spirits.”56 To this end, Crusius starts out much as Wolff had, observing that “we perceive thoughts in us,” and he proceeds to claim that we have various faculties corresponding to the different types of thoughts, though he leaves further investigation of these effects of the soul, and their fundamental forces to a separate discipline.57 Nonetheless, Crusius makes clear that this “empirical proposition,” namely that “we are conscious that we think,” is required for what follows.58 In addition, Crusius notes that we are conscious that we will, and indeed, that will and thought are not identical—while the former presupposes the latter, something must be added to thinking for it to constitute an instance of willing, though, again, Crusius does not here pursue the question of the constitution of the human will any further.59 Instead, he goes on to note that we observe that we, and other things, have the capacity to move ourselves,60 and that when we compare the concepts of movement, will, and thought,

anyone who would not deceive himself will perceive [gewahr werden] with complete certainty that movement, thought, and will are not the same, and also that thought and will are not such as allow being conceived as possible from movement as from a sufficient cause.61

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51Entwurf §424.
52See for instance, A848/B876: “Empirical psychology must thus be entirely banned from metaphysics, and is already excluded by the idea of it.”
53Entwurf §425.
54Entwurf §425.
55Entwurf §426.
56Entwurf §426.
58Entwurf §428.
59Entwurf §429.
Given that thought and will could not be explained with reference to, for instance, the movement of matter, Crusius concludes that the concept of spirit as a substance distinct from matter is not arbitrarily formed, but well-founded in experience.

With this concept of spirit in hand, the pneumatologist can proceed to consider which determinations can be abstracted from it without producing a contradiction with “the nature of the world in general, or with other necessary truths,” and in this way determine what properties pertain to the spirit a priori. Of course, Crusius is careful to note that this initial use of experience does not justify the wholesale inclusion of the discipline of empirical psychology in metaphysics. Indeed, he speculates that it was due to their inflation of the importance of these few experiences for the proof of the reality of the concept of spirit that previous metaphysicians took their study to constitute a part of metaphysics:

[In order to be able to determine what pertains to the spirit a priori], we must bring over and presuppose a few experiences from the consideration of the human understanding and will, not on account of their belonging in metaphysics, but rather only to the end that we can prove from them the reality and limits of a concept which properly belongs in metaphysics. Otherwise, the proof cannot be carried out, a fact which might have been perceived by those who would reckon the whole of empirical psychology to metaphysics.

It is clear, in any case, that while Crusius endeavours to found a purely a priori metaphysics, even he does not conceive of a rational psychology completely divorced from experience.

3. KANT’S RATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE 1770S

There can be no doubt that these accounts of the relation between empirical and rational psychology had a significant influence on Kant. Even though Kant’s estimation of the worth of empirical and rational psychology would undergo a number of changes from the pre-critical to critical periods, what did not change was Kant’s understanding of the terms of their relationship. We can begin by briefly considering the background to Kant’s discussion in the 1770s. Kant had already staked out a well-defined position concerning psychology in the 1760s, one that was rather influenced by Crusius’s modest reference to experience in the course of demonstrating the well-foundedness of the concept of soul. This influence is particularly evident in Kant’s most significant publication on psychological themes in that decade, Träume eines Geistersehers, where he asserts that the claims of ratio-

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*Entwurf* §§425.

*Entwurf* §§425.

That psychology cannot proceed merely on the basis of what is known a priori of the soul is of a piece with Crusius’s criticism of Wolff’s attempted installation of the principle of contradiction as the sole and supreme criterion of truth, from which even the principle of sufficient reason is derived. Crusius rejects such derivations, and accordingly holds that that which can be known for certain is not limited to what can be known a priori. On these points, see *Entwurf* §§89, 15, 31, 38, and Weg zur Gewissheit und Zuverlässigkeit der menschlichen Erkenntniss (Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1747; reprinted in *Die philosophische Hauptwerke*, vol. 3, ed. G. Tonelli [Hildesheim: Olms, 1965]), §§47, 260. See also Heimsoeth, *Studien*, 160–79, esp. 161, and Sonja Carboncini, “Christian August Crusius und die Leibniz-Wolfsche Philosophie,” in *Autour de la philosophie Wolffienne*, ed. Jean École (Hildesheim: Olms, 2001), 263–78, esp. 274.
nal psychology are “wholly arbitrary” without some foundation in intuition (AA 02.370). This is not to say that any intuition of the soul is impossible; in fact, Kant attempts his own speculation regarding the systematic constitution of the spirit-world on the basis of “some real, generally accepted observation” (AA 02.333–37; my emphasis), namely, a feeling of being obliged to others, or moral feeling (cf. AA 02.334–35). Kant identifies this as an “immaterial intuition,” which the soul has of itself as a spirit, and distinguishes it from the representations of ourselves in connection with our bodies (AA 02.337). Such an immaterial intuition is neither generally available, since it requires a rare sensitivity, nor easily distinguishable from the ordinary deliverances of the senses (AA 02.340–41). While this intuition legitimates the concept of soul employed in rational psychology, it is also a source of trouble for rational psychology since it bears a deceptive resemblance to run-of-the-mill sensations. As Kant writes, “the spiritual sensation \[geistige Empfindung\] is of necessity so intimately interwoven with the illusion of the imagination, that it cannot be possible to distinguish the element of truth in such an experience from the crude illusions which surround it” (AA 02.340). So, while admitting the possibility of an intuition of the soul, Kant, like Crusius, limits the role of this intuition to legitimizing the concepts employed in rational psychology, rather than providing the starting-place of a full-blown empirical science of the soul. However, unlike Crusius (and Wolff, for that matter), he thinks that the nature of this intuition is such that it persistently threatens to mislead the very rational investigation it was intended to ground.

Kant would retreat from this position in the early 1770s. Though he would continue to stress that empirical psychology as a whole has no place in metaphysics, Kant began to worry less about the corrigibility of an immaterial intuition, turning instead to a possible sensible intuition from which to derive claims about the soul.63 According to the doctrine of sensibility presented in the Inaugural Dissertation, the only available intuition that we might have of the soul is sensible and not intellectual since, as he now asserts, for us there is “no intuition of what belongs to the understanding” (AA 02.396). For this reason, empirical psychology is now required to make do with the cognition that can be gained of the soul through sensible intuition. As Kant writes, “[p]henomena are reviewed and set out, first, in the case of the phenomena of external sense, in physics, and secondly, in the case of the phenomena of inner sense, in empirical psychology” (AA 02.397). This new limitation does not lead Kant to reject much of what had previously been said of the soul in the context of empirical psychology; in fact, he provides an extensive account of what can be learned of the soul through observation. This is especially evident in the Anthropologie-Collins set of lecture notes (dating from 1772–73) where Kant claims that the intuition of the \(I\), considered only in terms

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63Kant’s reading of Leibniz’s Nouveaux Essais sometime after the publication of Dreams is likely among the reasons behind this change of position. Leibniz had argued that many fundamental concepts could only have their source in the soul’s reflection upon its own nature; thus, “reflection enables us to find the idea of substance within ourselves,” and it is after reflection upon itself that the soul discovers “being, substance, one, same, cause, perception, reasoning, and many other notions which the [external] senses cannot provide” (New Essays on Human Understanding, ed. and trans. P. Remnant and J. Bennett [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 105, 111).
of what is available to inner sense, already expresses simplicity, substantiality, rationality, and personality.\textsuperscript{64}

The importance accorded to intuition in Kant's rational psychology is particularly evident in the so-called Pölitz (L) metaphysics notes from the 1770s. As would be expected, empirical psychology is there defined as "the cognition of the objects of inner sense insofar as it is obtained by experience" (AA 28.222). However, following Baumgarten, who framed his empirical psychology in terms of the investigation of the ego, Kant introduces the concept of the \textit{I} as the express concern of empirical psychology. This concept is said to have its source in "the consciousness of inner sense" (AA 28.224), though it nonetheless lends itself to being considered in two ways: "\textit{I as human being}, and \textit{I as intelligence}. \textit{I, as a human being}, am an object of \textit{inner and outer sense}. \textit{I as intelligence} am an object of \textit{inner sense only}" (AA 28.224).\textsuperscript{65}

As Kant makes clear, the concept of the \textit{I} as intelligence is obtained through abstraction of everything given through outer sense (AA 28.224), though empirical psychology will take up both considerations of the \textit{I}. The \textit{I} as intelligence will be the topic for the bulk of the investigation, with the \textit{I} as human being, or in connection with the body, taken up only in the last section.\textsuperscript{66} In addition, Kant allows the empirical psychologist to make limited use of experience gained through external observation of thinking beings on the basis of an analogy:

\begin{quote}
I consider thinking beings merely from concepts, and this is rational psychology; or through experience, which in part happens internally in myself, or externally, where I perceive other natures, and cognize according to the analogy they have with me; and that is empirical psychology, where I consider natures through experience. (AA 28.224)
\end{quote}

The initial consideration of the \textit{I} taken strictly as intelligence yields results similar to those of the \textit{Anthropologie}; the concept of the \textit{I} "expresses" substantiality, simplicity, and immateriality. Though what precisely is intended by 'expression' here is not clarified, it seems reasonable to assume that, as was the case with Baumgarten's empirical psychology, it covers those predicates that can be either immediately observed in my own case or derived more nearly from experience. Thus, Kant claims that my cognition of the substantiality of the \textit{I} is "the only case where we can \textit{immediately intuit} the substance" (AA 26.226; my emphasis), and the soul's immateriality is disclosed through the "analysis" of our consciousness, whereas the soul's simplicity is given a brief proof (AA 28.226).\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{64}See Klemme, \textit{Kants Philosophie}, 78–79 (where he cites \textit{Anthropologie-Collins}, 2–3). See also Klemme's extensive discussion of Kant's turn to an empirical intuition of the soul (\textit{Kants Philosophie}, 118–26). Some have claimed that Kant continues to take our intuition of the soul to be intellectual, rather than sensible; so, for instance, Klaus Düsing, who writes that \textit{noch in Reflexionen der siebziger Jahre vertrat er [Kant] die Auffassung, das reine Ich verfüge über intellektuelle Anschauung} (\textit{Selbstbewusstseinsmodelle} [Munich: Fink, 1997], 106). While some Reflexionen [R] might suggest this (see for instance \textit{R} 4757, AA 17.704), it seems clear that the intuition of the soul under discussion in the empirical psychology of the Pölitz notes could not be intellectual without violating the strictures of a properly empirical psychology.

\textsuperscript{65}See also AA 28.265, where Kant compares the concept of the \textit{I in sensu latiori} with that concept \textit{in sensu strictu}.

\textsuperscript{66}See AA 28.259: "When we consider the soul of a human being, we regard it not merely as intelligence, but rather when it \textit{stands in connection with the body} as soul of a human being."

\textsuperscript{67}Compare \textit{R} 4234 (1769–70), where he claims, "All proof of the simple nature of the soul actually amounts to an immediate intuition of itself through the absolute unity, or the \textit{I}, which is the
Turning to rational psychology, we find that Kant conceives of the relation between it and empirical psychology much as Baumgarten, Meier, and Crusius had. Kant does initially define rational psychology as “the cognition of the object of inner sense insofar as it is borrowed from pure reason” (AA 28.222–23). Moreover, and reminiscent of Crusius, he goes so far as to claim that that “cognition where we abandon the guiding thread of experience is the metaphysical cognition of the soul” (AA 28.263), leading him to reject the metaphysical status of empirical psychology (AA 28.223). However, and again as was the case with Crusius, Kant does not take this to imply that rational psychology does not need to borrow from empirical psychology. Indeed, he claims that the very concept under discussion in rational psychology has its roots in experience. Here Kant follows Baumgarten in taking the object of rational psychology to be the human soul generally, rather than simply my soul, though Kant understands this in light of the distinction between considerations of the I introduced in empirical psychology. It is the concept of the I as intelligence, that concept obtained through the abstraction of “everything outer from the object of inner sense” (AA 28.265), that provides the foundation of the concept of the soul. Thus, the notes read, “[w]hen I speak of the soul, then I speak of the I in the strict sense. We receive the concept of the soul only through the I, thus through the inner intuition of inner sense” (AA 28.265).

In the individual discussions that follow, Kant shows how each predicate applies to the soul. In the case of the concepts of substance and simplicity, it had already been shown in the empirical psychology that they apply to the I. Kant does not see fit to introduce any novel considerations in this discussion, noting at the outset that we can “cognize a priori no more of the soul than the I allows us to cognize” (AA 28.266). The concepts of singularity and spontaneity, however, have no parallel discussion in the empirical psychology section of the notes. Even so, Kant takes

\[\text{singularity of the action of thinking}\] (AA 17.470). One might contrast Julian Wuerth’s discussion of the significance of such passages in his “Kant’s Immediatism, Pre-Critique” (“Kant’s Immediatism”), Journal of the History of Philosophy 44 (2006): 489–532. Wuerth claims that Kant, in focusing on our immediate epistemic access to the soul as a simple substance, proceeds in a manner fundamentally opposed to traditional rational psychology (see “Kant’s Immediatism,” 512), which is presumably taken to be limited to a priori inferences. As we have seen, this is not the case for rational psychology after Wolff. Nor is this inconsistent with the claim cited by Wuerth from the Anthropologie-Collins, namely, that “that which many philosophers present as profound conclusions, are nothing more than immediate intuitions of our self” (“Kant’s Immediatism,” 512; AA 25.10), since, as Wuerth also notes, Kant applies this criticism specifically to Descartes (cf. AA 25.14).
care to marshal the support of experience anyway in their treatment in rational psychology. So, regarding the former concept, Kant notes that “my consciousness is the consciousness of a single substance” (AA 28.267). As concerns the concept of spontaneity, Kant is more sceptical about the speculative warrant for attributing it in an absolute sense to the soul, since this amounts to the question of “whether absolute spontaneity can be attributed to the soul, as a being which [itself] has a cause” (AA 28.268). Despite this obstacle, however, Kant is clear that we have direct insight into a kind of spontaneity of the soul: “I am conscious of no determination in me, and thus I act absolutely freely” (AA 28.269; initial emphasis added). This consciousness of freedom, which has already been treated in empirical psychology, is sufficient for practical purposes even if it falls short of absolute spontaneity. What is in any case clear throughout is that “our transcendental concepts go no further than experience leads us” (AA 28.264).

Moreover, that rational psychology is limited by our experience is especially evident in the second and third sections of the Pölitz rational psychology. The second section concerns the comparison of the soul with bodies in general, animal souls, and other spirits (AA 28.263). Regarding the soul’s comparison with bodies, Kant claims against Wolff that it is not enough that the soul’s simplicity be proved in order to deduce its immateriality (AA 28.272). Indeed, Kant argues that we “cannot prove a priori the immateriality of the soul” but, instead, we have to rely upon what can be cognized of the soul through experience (AA 28.272–73). In comparing the soul with other thinking beings, Kant notes that experience teaches us both that there are beings with merely an outer sense (AA 28.276), and that I am myself (also) a being with inner sense and thus a personality (AA 28.276–77). Yet, for all that, I can only problematically assume that there are other beings with inner sense, or spirits, since neither experience nor reason demonstrates their existence (AA 28.278). The third section, which treats the community of the soul with its body, the soul’s state before birth and after death, is even less conclusive. Regarding the community of soul and body, Kant’s rational psychologist can go no further than noting that thinking and willing are disclosed by inner sense while motion is given through outer sense, though Kant draws a slightly more pessimistic conclusion from this than Wolff had, namely that “all systems of explaining the soul’s interaction with the body are fruitless and in vain” (AA 28.280). Concerning the immortality of the soul, even though Kant will offer four proofs, two are a posteriori (AA 28.291–94), one is a priori, but only satisfactory from the point of view of practice, and the remaining a priori proof is indeed “derived from the

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44Concerning the application of the concept of spontaneity to the soul, Kant is rather more sceptical regarding its speculative foundation, claiming that “the question here is: whether absolute spontaneity can be attributed to the soul, as a being which [itself] has a cause” (AA 28.268). Despite this obstacle, however, Kant is clear that we have an insight into the spontaneity of the soul which is in any case sufficient for practical purposes: “I am conscious of no determination in me, and thus I act absolutely freely” (AA 28.269; my initial emphasis). See also AA 28.267: “Practical or psychological freedom was the independence of the power of choice from the necessitation of stimuli. This is treated in empirical psychology, and this concept of freedom was also sufficient enough for morality.”

45Cf. AA 28.267: “Practical or psychological freedom was the independence of the power of choice from the necessitation of stimuli. This is treated in empirical psychology, and this concept of freedom was also sufficient enough for morality.”
cognition and the nature of the soul,” but is ultimately founded upon experience, that is, the “consciousness of the mere I” (AA 28.287), and in any case only suffices to prove that the soul can survive without the body but not that it necessarily does so (cf. AA 28.284).

Kant is clear throughout that the failure of rational psychology to yield any significant advance in our cognition of the soul is just a function of its limitation to experience. Far from constituting a “central exception” to this rule that all synthetic cognition requires intuition, as some have claimed, rational psychology is constrained to erect its doctrine on the foundation of what is disclosed in empirical psychology through the empirical concept of the I. Where rational psychology exceeds the boundaries of what can be experienced, as when it treats of the soul’s community with the body and its status before birth and after death, there it can only make problematic claims: “we can come up to the boundaries of experience . . . but not beyond the boundaries of experience” (AA 28.265). In thus emphasizing the dependence of rational upon empirical psychology, Kant’s account takes its place in the metaphysical tradition stemming from Wolff, even as it gestures forward to the critical limitation of cognition to the objects of sensible intuition. What distinguishes Kant’s position at this point in the 1770s from that of the critical period is simply where the empirical boundaries are drawn. So, while the claims about the soul’s origin, community with the body, and status after death do not find the requisite support, assertions of the soul’s substantiality, simplicity, spontaneity, and independence from external bodies do. Kant will find reason to reject even these in the Paralogisms of Pure Reason.

4. Pure Rational Psychology

With this context in mind, we can now return to Kant’s account of the topic and method of rational psychology in the *KrV*. As noted in my introductory remarks, it has long been thought that, in excluding all empirical predicates of the soul from rational psychology in favour of those determinations that apply to the soul entirely independently of experience, Kant was not departing from previous metaphysicians. We have seen, however, that this is not the case and that, in fact, the notion of a rational psychology limited to the resources of mere reason would be Kant’s own innovation. Given, however, that Kant continued to endorse the dependence

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70Such is Klemme’s claim in *Kants Philosophie*, 109.

71Again, contrast Wuerth (“Kant’s Immediatism,” esp. 516–17). I agree with Wuerth’s claim that Kant’s “arguments towards his conclusions of the soul’s substantiality and simplicity ultimately rest on only what the testimony of immediate consciousness warrants” (517). I do not, however, take this to imply that, for Kant, rational psychology can only be a redundant exercise, intended to arrive by the more circuitous route of inference at that which immediate experience already discloses (cf. 516). Kant’s rational psychology, as presented in the notes, does cover much of the same ground as did the empirical psychology; nonetheless, it does extend this cognition at least insofar as it applies it to the human soul generally. Moreover, I take it that Kant does not exclude out of hand the possibility that rational psychology extends our cognition of the soul (as Wuerth seems to suggest); rather his point is that this extension is possible only on the basis of available experience.

72See the “Ontology” section of the notes: “All objects of cognition are objects of experience, and what is not an object of experience, what is not given to us through the senses, is not an object for us” (AA 28.187). Without empirical content, a priori concepts of objects become “transcendent and dialectical” (AA 28.187).
of rational upon empirical psychology well into the 1770s, we might wonder what motivates this about-face. It might be thought that, commensurate with his very broad ambitions when it comes to the criticism of metaphysics, Kant has expanded his understanding of rational psychology beyond its original Wolffian parameters to include Descartes and others. This would conveniently absolve us of having to worry about eccentricities of the intervening German tradition in coming to terms with Kant’s criticism of rational psychology, a prospect that has held considerable appeal for some. Though this is certainly a plausible explanation, I will make a case for an essential continuity obtaining between Kant’s Critical and pre-Critical (and thus the traditional) conception of rational psychology. Clearly, Kant continues to hold that rational psychology can proceed no further than the boundaries of experience. Instead, what has changed is that Kant no longer understands the concept of the soul that constitutes the focus of the rational investigation to be empirical in origin. I will also show that the primary argumentative task of the introductory portion of the Paralogisms of Pure Reason (A341/B399–A348/B406) is to introduce and defend this novel conception of rational psychology in light of the familiar, traditional understanding. In the end, we will see that this is quite consistent with the wider-ranging ambitions of Kant’s general criticism of metaphysics.

The opening section of the Paralogisms of Pure Reason quite self-consciously parallels the opening portion of the Pölitz notes on rational psychology. After the initial paragraph, Kant’s Paralogisms begins, much as his lectures on psychology from the 1770s had, with a consideration of the origin of the concept of the soul that provides the focus of the discipline. In the Pölitz notes, Kant had held that the concept of the I was ultimately “a concept of empirical psychology” inasmuch as it was originally acquired through my intuition of myself (AA 28.224). Here, at the outset of the Paralogisms, Kant immediately signals his break with his earlier presentation by replacing the I with the as yet unmentioned “concept” of the I think:

Now we come to a concept that was not catalogued above in the general list of transcendental concepts, and nevertheless must be assigned to it, yet without altering that table in the least and declaring it defective. This is the concept or, if one prefers, the judgment: I think. (A341/B399)

As was the case with the I, the I think is also said to be a concept. Additionally, Kant had claimed at the opening of the empirical psychology of the Pölitz notes that this concept of the I is itself the “foundation” of other concepts, and he indicates that he assigns a similar role to the I think:

But one will easily see that this concept [of the I think] is the vehicle of all concepts whatever, and hence also of transcendental concepts, and is thus always comprehended among them, and hence is likewise transcendental . . . . (A341/B399–A342/B400)

While the I and the I think are both said to serve as sources (or, in the latter case, “vehicle”) of concepts, they do so in rather different ways. The I constituted a source of concepts just in virtue of the fact that it “expressed” them. That is, concepts were disclosed in the process of the empirical consideration, or even the self-cognition, of the I (cf. AA 28.225). The I think, by contrast, functions as the formal source of unity of all concepts as it is by means of the unity of apperception
that the synthesis of marks into the analytic unity of a concept is made possible (cf. A107).\footnote{See also B133–34.} This already suggests an important difference between the I and the I think; while the I think can also be considered a concept, it is better understood as that which “makes all transcendental concepts possible” (A343/B401) and so, strictly speaking, “one cannot even say that it is a concept, but a mere consciousness that accompanies every concept” (A346/B404).

These superficial similarities notwithstanding, Kant emphasizes the crucial differences between the I think and the I.\footnote{While I would not claim that Kant employs a strict technical distinction between the I and the I think throughout the KrV, there are isolated passages where he seems to. See for instance A398: the I think “is only the formal condition, namely the logical unity of every thought, in which I abstract from every object; and yet it is represented as an object that I think, namely I itself, and its unconditioned unity” (latter emphasis mine).} An important difference is already signalled by Kant’s assertion that the I think would be among the transcendental concepts rather than an empirical concept, as was the case with the I. The I think is not discovered empirically through inner sense, but is instead a “transcendental presupposition” (A107) disclosed as a necessary condition of the possibility of experience. In particular, the I think is just that necessary unity to which the manifold of intuition is subject insofar as it constitutes a representation of an object. This is so, Kant claims, despite the fact that the I think seems to be disclosed by an inner perception or experience. He writes,

One should not object [Man darf sich daran nicht stossen\footnote{I have corrected the Guyer-Wood translation (‘One should not be brought up short . . . ’), which wrongly suggests that I do have such an inner experience of the I think, albeit one insufficient to compromise the alleged “pure” character of rational psychology. My version comes close to Kemp Smith’s translation (‘The reader must not object . . . ’). I am grateful to an anonymous referee for the Journal for drawing this to my attention.} that I have an inner experience of this proposition, which expresses the perception of oneself, and hence that the rational doctrine of the soul that is built on it would never be [sri] pure but would be grounded in part on an empirical principle. (A342/B400–A343/B401)\footnote{Kant’s denial that we have any “inner experience” of the I think should not be taken to amount to a denial that the I think is in any way empirical. As he goes on to claim, it can be considered empirical at least in the sense of being a condition of all empirical cognition (I am indebted to an anonymous referee for the Journal for urging this point). I take this position to underlie Kant’s later claim, in the notorious footnote at B422–23, that the I think is an “empirical proposition”: as he writes, “if I have called the proposition ‘I think’ an empirical proposition, I would not say by this that the I in this proposition is an empirical representation” (B423n). Of course, Kant also refers to the I think as an “indeterminate empirical intuition, that is, a perception” (B423n), though as he stresses, this indeterminate perception is not itself an experience but “precedes all experience” (B423n). For sympathetic, but slightly different, resolutions of this problem, see Matthias Kossler, “Der transzendentale Schein in den Paralogismen der reinen Vernunft,” Kant-Studien 90 (1999): 1–22, who argues that transcendental illusion consists in conflating the indeterminate intuition of the I think with a determinate, empirical intuition (see especially 10–11), and Wunderlich, Kant und die Bewusstseinstheorien des 18. Jahrhunderts, 167–69, who argues that designating the I think as an empirical proposition merely reflects its dependence upon empirical representations.} In fact, the I think is not the object of any inner perception or experience at all but is rather a condition for the possibility of such experience, “[I]n inner experience in general . . . cannot be regarded as empirical cognition, but must be regarded as cognition of the empirical in general . . . which is of course transcendental” (A343/B401). The I think, in contrast to the I, only expresses a formal condition
of all experience and does not constitute an abiding intuition of the self. This will have significant repercussions for rational psychology: where it once grounded its synthetic claims on the wealth of empirical content supplied by the I, it must now content itself with the merely formal I think.

Kant had claimed in the Pölitz notes that the concept of the soul is acquired by means of abstraction from the empirical concept of the I (cf. 28.265). Even with the substitution of the I think for the I, Kant claims that the rational psychologist is justified in making use of a concept of the soul, albeit one far removed from that at issue in the Pölitz notes,

> however pure from the empirical (from impressions of sense) it may be, [the I think] still serves to distinguish two kinds of objects through the nature of our power of representation. I, as thinking, am an object of inner sense and am called soul. That which is an object of outer sense is called body . . . . (A342/B400) \(^\text{77}\)

Kant’s complete account of the origin of the concept or, better, idea of the soul is obviously far more complex than he indicates here, involving reason’s search for the unconditioned in the conditions of a thought (A397). Nonetheless, just as the concept of the I as intelligence, obtained by abstracting from outer intuition, served as the basis for the concept of the soul at issue in the Pölitz notes, the I think can also be distinguished from the objects of outer sense and thereby provide the foundation of a concept of the soul. While this claim might seem dangerously metaphysical, it is in fact the same claim that Kant makes later in the Criticism of the Second Paralogism. There he argues that the I think is necessarily conceived as distinct from matter since, unlike matter, it is not an appearance, but a condition of all appearances. He writes, “for it is already self-evident that a thing in itself is of another nature than the determinations that merely constitute its state” (A360; my emphasis). That this judgment is merely analytic (or at least “self-evident”) follows from the fact that it is not based on an alleged cognition of a distinction, but merely on the fact that the I think—the formal condition of all appearance—must necessarily be conceived in distinction from matter—outer appearance. This does yield a concept of soul far less rich than that which rational psychologists previously took for granted, and this is of course just Kant’s point.

That the concept of the soul is derived from the merely formal I think rather than the empirical I leads to an essential reinterpretation of the method and results of rational psychology. Though once supplied with a robust empirical conception of the soul to which the transcendental predicates of objects could be applied, the rational psychologist now has to make do with that concept of the soul founded on the I think. This entails that such a doctrine is likewise constrained by the purity of this concept:

> Accordingly, the expression I, as a thinking being, already signifies the object of a psychology that can [kann] be called the rational doctrine of the soul, if I do not seek

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\(^{77}\)I take Kant to be endorsing this notion of soul, though he clearly suggests that it is distinguished from the traditional, empirical concept of soul at issue in rational psychology. Contrast Michelle Grier who takes Kant to be ascribing the distinction of soul and body founded on the I think to the traditional rational psychologist (Kant’s Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 152).
to know anything about the soul beyond what, independently of all experience . . . can be inferred from this concept I insofar as it occurs in all thinking. (A342/B400)\textsuperscript{78}

This has an immediate and humbling effect on the pretensions of rational psychology. With the \textit{I think} as his sole text, the rational psychologist is no longer justified in applying the concept of objects to the soul since “the least empirical predicate would corrupt the rational purity and independence of the science from all experience” (A343/B401). The \textit{I think} is not given through intuition, so any judgment made regarding it can legitimately employ only a transcendental (i.e., unschematized) concept of the understanding (A348/B406). Yet, because the \textit{I think} is not, properly speaking, an object, but merely the thought of the unity of any object in general, even transcendental concepts do not bear straightforward application to it. Kant captures the difficulty facing his new rational psychologist in the famous “circle argument”:

\begin{quote}

[W]e therefore turn in a constant circle, since we must always already avail ourselves of the representation of it [the \textit{I think}] at all times in order to judge anything about it; we cannot separate ourselves from this inconvenience, because the consciousness in itself is not even a representation distinguishing a particular object, but rather a form of representation in general . . . . (A346/B404)
\end{quote}

The circle argument is not intended as an objection to the concept of the \textit{I think},\textsuperscript{79} but neither is it intended to make the rational consideration of the soul altogether impossible. Instead, the circle argument only illustrates the new predicament of rational psychology in trying to apply transcendental concepts to the very representation that is the original source of their unity. This is, however, a predicament unique to the rational psychologist of the \textit{KrV}. The rational psychologist of the Pölitz notes sought to apply to the soul the very same concepts that the empirical investigation had originally disclosed, yet this did not result in such a circle since the extension of knowledge had an (allegedly) intuitive foundation. With the \textit{I think}, however, there is no longer such a foundation, and so rather than holding out the possibility of synthetically extending our cognition, the rational psychologist is limited to what can only be an uninformative application of transcendental concepts to their formal source.\textsuperscript{80} The rational psychologist is thus limited to asserting that the soul is “substance [only] in concept, [and] simple [only] in concept,” etc. (A400).

In spite of these limitations, Kant notes that a rational psychology founded on the \textit{I think} is better positioned to deliver on one of that discipline’s traditional tasks. The limitation of rational psychology to what is expressed through the \textit{I think} is the condition of any extension of its claims beyond contingent assertions about my own experience. Any rational psychology founded upon the empirical

\textsuperscript{78}See \textit{R} 5453 (1776–78): “All inner experience is a judgment in which the predicate is empirical and the subject is the I . . . independent of this experience, therefore, there remains for rational psychology merely the I” (AA 18.186).

\textsuperscript{79}Compare Düsing, \textit{Selbstbewusstseinsmodelle}, 106.

\textsuperscript{80}On this, see also the Observation after the fourth Paralogism: “This I [i.e., of the \textit{I think}] would have to be an intuition, which, since it would be presupposed in all thinking in general (prior to all experience), would, as an intuition, supply \textit{a priori} synthetic propositions if it were possible to bring about a pure rational cognition of the nature of a thinking being in general. Yet this I is no more an intuition than it is a concept of any object; rather it is the mere form of consciousness . . . .” (A382).
concept of the *I* must, of necessity, be limited to claims about my own nature, rather than licensing certain conclusions about thinking beings in general. This certainly applies to Meier’s understanding of the first task of rational psychology to be that of universalizing the singular conclusions of empirical psychology to apply to the human soul generally. Since I cannot inwardly intuit other thinking beings, I am limited to inferring by analogy that the observations regarding my own inner states apply to other thinking beings. As Meier and the pre-Critical Kant recognized, however, such inferences do not guarantee a universality of the kind needed to securely extend observations made in my own case to thinking beings in general. By contrast, the claims of Kant’s newly-minted rational psychology universally and necessarily apply to everything that thinks, since the *I think* constitutes the condition of all thinking in general and “we must necessarily ascribe to things *a priori* all the properties that constitute the conditions under which alone we think them” (A346–47/B405). To put a sharper point on this criticism, we might take Kant to be saying that, so long as rational psychology relies on an analogy to effect the “transference of this consciousness of mine to other things” (A347/B405), it is doomed to fall short of being a science of the predicates of the human soul in general. This goal can be realized only insofar as the concept of the *I think* constitutes the sole text of the discipline and the foundation of its concept of the soul:

1. If we made use of observations about the play of our thoughts and the natural laws of the thinking self created from them, then an empirical psychology would arise . . . which would perhaps explain the appearances of inner sense, but could never serve to reveal such properties as do not belong to possible experience at all . . . nor could it serve to teach *apodictically* about thinking beings in general something touching on their nature; thus it would be no rational psychology. (A347/B406)

As should be clear, Kant institutes a dramatic transformation of the discipline of rational psychology in the opening section of the Paralogisms. Kant’s new rational psychology, understood as the consideration of the soul independently of all experience, is not the traditional doctrine of his predecessors but is only inaugurated with the *KrV*. Well aware of this innovation, Kant writes that the “rational doctrine of the soul is actually an undertaking of this kind” (A342/B400; my latter emphasis), and continues:

1. [F]or if the least bit of anything empirical in my thinking, any particular perception of my inner state, were mixed among the grounds of cognition of this science, then it would no longer be a rational but rather an empirical doctrine of the soul. We have thus already before us a putative [*angebliche*] science which is built on the single proposition: *I think* . . . (A342/B400)

Kant’s reference to an “empirical doctrine of the soul” here (and at the end of the same paragraph; A343/B401) should not be taken as referring strictly to empirical psychology as it is clearly intended to apply to that Wolffian rational psychology which purported to marry reason and experience. In stark contrast to the mixed rational doctrine of the tradition, the rational psychology founded on the *I think* is a *pure* rational psychology in the sense that it brooks no empirical admixture,
a point underlined by Kant frequently throughout the chapter.\textsuperscript{81} Even so, it must be kept in mind that the pure character of rational psychology is only a function of the \textit{I think}'s lack of empirical content. This indicates that Kant has not simply replaced the traditional mixed doctrine with a wholly new pure doctrine of the soul; rather, that he has only reconsidered the results of traditional psychology in light of its new foundation.\textsuperscript{81}

These considerations require that we refine our understanding of the critical emphasis of Kant’s Paralogisms. Understood within the appropriate historical context we can see that Kant’s charge could not be that the rational psychologist introduces an empirical element into his deliberations and, in so doing, betrays his discipline’s alleged commitment to an investigation conducted independently of experience, since the rational psychologist had always gladly admitted as much. More to the point, Kant’s deepest criticism must be that the rational psychologist errs in believing that there is a foundation in experience for his concept of the soul to begin with. In order to be effective, however, Kant must also explain \textit{how} it is that the rational psychologist, including himself at one point, could have been so egregiously mistaken as to believe that they had intuitive access to the merely formal \textit{I think}. This is a rather different, and indeed much more difficult, task for the Paralogisms than many commentators have previously attributed to it. That this is so requires that the commentator place additional emphasis on the doctrine of transcendental illusion, rather than on the particular paralogisms, as the centerpiece of Kant’s criticism in the chapter. It is in falling prey to the illusion that consists precisely in “taking the unity in the synthesis of thoughts for a perceived unity in the subject of these thoughts” (A\textsuperscript{402}) that the rational psychologist is led to overstep the boundaries of experience. Unfortunately, just this critical strategy is obscured by the tendency of commentators to read the results of Kant’s initial examination of the foundations of rational psychology in the \textit{I think} back into the tradition stemming from Wolff.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{81}See, for example, A\textsuperscript{343}/B\textsuperscript{401} (“that the rational doctrine of the soul that is built on it is never pure,” “corrupt the rational purity and independence of the science”); A\textsuperscript{345}/B\textsuperscript{403} (“the concepts of the pure doctrine of the soul”); A\textsuperscript{348}/B\textsuperscript{406} (“the predications of the pure doctrine of the soul”); A\textsuperscript{348} (“Criticism of the first paralogism of pure psychology”); A\textsuperscript{351} (“This is the Achilles of all the dialectical inferences of the pure doctrine of the soul”); A\textsuperscript{381} (“Observation on the sum of the pure doctrine of the soul”); A\textsuperscript{383} (“a rational doctrine of the soul grounded merely on pure rational principles”); A\textsuperscript{405} (“The assertions of pure psychology”).

\textsuperscript{82}This might be taken as a vindication of Ameriks’s claim that, with regard to the position presented in the Pölitz set of lecture notes, Kant’s critical position “looks much more like a partial than a total reversal.” See \textit{Kant’s Theory of Mind} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), xvi. Obviously, however, I would disagree with his assertion that the previous rational psychologies of Wolff and Baumgarten reflect a “totally rationalist position” (ibid., xvi) insofar as this is taken to imply that they sought to derive claims about the soul completely independently of experience.

\textsuperscript{83}I am grateful to Lorne Falkenstein, Andrew Brook, Brian Chance, and two anonymous referees for the \textit{Journal} for their comments on versions of this paper.