The “Aristotle of Königsberg”?: Kant and the Aristotelian Mind

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In 1794, Michael Wenzel Voigt, a professor of rhetoric in present-day Czechia, published the first German translation of Aristotle’s *De anima*.[[1]](#footnote-1) Even amidst the general hostility to Aristotle’s theoretical philosophy,[[2]](#footnote-2) Aristotle’s work on the soul had seen a particularly poor reception in 18th century Germany. Even Johann Jakob Brucker, in his groundbreaking history of philosophy, prefaces his summary of Aristotle’s views on the soul with the proviso that he regards it as “a foolish task to seek to reduce Aristotle’s psychology to clear and certain notions.”[[3]](#footnote-3) Voigt’s translation was explicitly intended to rescue Aristotle from Brucker’s dismissive treatment,[[4]](#footnote-4) and the bold strategy he adopts towards this end is to assert a direct connection between Aristotle’s doctrines and Kant’s Critical philosophy. Thus, he contends that Aristotle’s books on the soul can be read as an “appendix” or as a “propadeutic” to Kant’s Critical works,[[5]](#footnote-5) and claims more expansively that:

the Aristotelian philosophical works, and among these the books on the soul, are the ground and soil in which that seed lies from which, through the fortunate cultivation of our immortal Kant, the beautiful stem of reason has grown and which now blooms for the well- being and happiness of humanity.[[6]](#footnote-6)

In the ensuing (otherwise capable) translation, Voigt attempts to illuminate the connection between the two thinkers by introducing Kantian adulterations directly into Aristotle’s translated text. Many of these changes occur, unsurprisingly, in book three where, for instance, Voigt replaces the ‘common sense’ with the ‘inner sense’; introduces Kantian terminology (such as “apprehension of intuitions”); interprets Aristotelian imagination through Kant’s doctrine of the threefold synthesis; and even straightforwardly identifies the active intellect with Kantian *reason* understood as “the faculty of principles.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

Voigt’s rather hamfisted methods aside, the conjecture at the core of his project—that a number of key Kantian claims about the mind or soul[[8]](#footnote-8) have a largely overlooked Aristotelian provenance—turns out to be correct, or so I will argue in this chapter.[[9]](#footnote-9) Even so, we will see that this connection is not direct but is instead mediated by the reception of Aristotle in the late 17th and early 18th century.[[10]](#footnote-10) Moreover, it is not limited to the views Aristotle expresses in his texts on the soul but extends beyond his psychological and even metaphysical works to include views expressed in his logical and ethical thought. By way of showing this, the following chapter is divided into three sections. In the first, I consider the Aristotelian doctrine of the *tres operationes mentis*, a doctrine that assumes some prominence in Kant’s presentation of his logic but the real importance of which lies in its connection with Kant’s identification of the understanding as a capacity to judge (*Vermögen zu urteilen*). In the second section, I turn to Kant’s broader metaphysics of the soul, and argue that in spite of well-known Critical limitations he nonetheless finds a place in his theoretical philosophy for the Aristotelian-inspired conception of the soul as an *entelechy* or power. Finally, in the third section, I turn to Kant’s contention that certain powers of the soul, such as the understanding, act *spontaneously*, and I situate Kant’s distinctive contribution within the context of the broader discussion of the mind’s spontaneity, a discussion which has its unexpected locus in Aristotle’s ethics. In the end, I conclude that a case can be made that some core Kantian views on the mind are thoroughly informed by his engagement with, and transformation of, Aristotelian views circulating in 18th century Germany.

1. The Three Operations of the Mind

The first, and arguably most important Aristotelian doctrine of the mind which Kant takes up is the distinction between the *tres operationes mentis*, or three operations of the mind. The distinction itself was introduced by way of grounding the treatment of logic contained in the *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, and the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics* in a division of the basic activities of the human intellect. Notably, Aristotle himself does not introduce this distinction—in his lone consideration of the operations of the mind in this context, his distinction between perception, memory, and understanding in the final chapter of the *Posterior Analytics* (II.19), Aristotle does not indicate that, or account for how, these capacities might serve to ground the structural divisions of his logical works.[[11]](#footnote-11) Rather, it was subsequent Aristotelian commentators who supposed that some such consideration of the various operations of the mind underlies Aristotle’s own treatment, and to this end they identified three distinct acts or operations of the intellect, namely the acts of apprehending concepts (*simplex apprehensio*), judging (*judicium*), and inferring (*ratiocinium*). So, in Aquinas’ preface to his *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* we find:

The parts of logic must therefore correspond to the different acts of reason, of which there are three. The first two belong to reason insofar as it is a kind of intellect. The first of these is the understanding of indivisible or simple things, the act by which we conceive what a thing is. [...] The second act of the intellect is the composition or division of things that are understood, the act in which truth or falsity is found. [...] The third act is proper to reason itself; it is the act by which we proceed from one thing to another, so as to arrive at a knowledge of the unknown from the known.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Unsurprisingly, this division became a staple of Aristotelian presentations of logic, but this same division of the mind’s operations underlies a number of the most prominent early modern logics as well. For instance, the most famous treatment of logic in the early modern period—the so-called *Port-Royal Logic*—employed this division (with one significant augmentation) and assigned to it at least a structural significance. So, as Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole write: logic “consists in the reflections that have been made on the four principal operations of the mind: conceiving, judging, reasoning, and ordering.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

Turning to the early modern German context, the Protestant rejection of Aristotle’s philosophical authority[[14]](#footnote-14) and the rise of Cartesianism meant that the Aristotelian division was often not observed even if *some* account of the operations of the mind was increasingly recognized as an important topic of logic. Christian Wolff, for instance, notes that the “three operations of the understanding, or *tres mentis operationes*, are the ground of ancient Aristotelian logic, as the Schoolmen treated it, [but many] of the moderns have dismissed this way of treating logic.”[[15]](#footnote-15) Likely on Wolff’s mind are a number of influential logics within the broadly Cartesian tradition which revised the list of faculties. These include Johannes Clauberg’s logic, in which he amends the tripartite division so that clear and distinct perception, judgment, and memory are the three underlying operations,[[16]](#footnote-16) and Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus’s *Medicina mentis* which takes Descartes’ own division of the faculties into sense, imagination, and intellect as its starting point.[[17]](#footnote-17) Additionally, Wolff might have had in mind the rather idiosyncratic presentation of his colleague, Christian Thomasius, who departs rather dramatically (and intentionally) from the Aristotelian division in distinguishing four operations of the mind which do not clearly correspond to distinct faculties.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Surprisingly, however, the division among the three operations of the mind does not initially inform the structure of Wolff’s treatment of logic in his first text devoted to the topic, the *Vernünfftige Gedancken von den Kräften des menschlichen Verstandes* (or the *German Logic*).[[19]](#footnote-19) The order of Wolff’s discussion in the first edition of that text, published in 1713, proceeds from a discussion of concepts, to a discussion of propositions (after a treatment of words), followed by an account of experience and invention, which is only then followed by an account of inferences. However, with the second edition of that text Wolff re-arranges the order of his treatment to bring it in line with the traditional Aristotelian division (even if he does not explicitly invoke it). From that point, the account of the three operations of the mind takes on increasing prominence for Wolff, even serving as the first chapter in the theoretical part of logic in Wolff’s later Latin presentation of his logic.[[20]](#footnote-20) In any case, following the Aristotelian tradition, Wolff distinguishes between three operations, namely, *apprehensio simplex*, *judicio*, and *discursus* which are taken to yield concepts, judgments, and inferences. So, concepts (or bare representations of things) are taken to arise through the simple apprehension (or attention) to our sensations and imaginings,[[21]](#footnote-21) propositions are the results of acts of judgment in which we connect or separate our concepts,[[22]](#footnote-22) and inferences rest on acts of discursion or ratiocination through which a judgment is derived not directly from the representation of some thing but from other judgments.[[23]](#footnote-23) In addition to this, Wolff offers a defense of the completeness of the division of the mind’s operation into these three (and only these three) operations. In our cognition we either merely represent a thing and thereby conceive it, or we additionally make some judgment concerning it which is, in turn, either drawing on what is already given in our conception or on some other judgment.[[24]](#footnote-24) Despite these augmentations to the original account, Wolff credits himself with re-introducing the ancient division of the three operations of the mind into logic.[[25]](#footnote-25) In this he evidently proved rather influential as subsequent thinkers within the Wolffian tradition gave the topic central importance in their own treatments of logic. This is evident in the works of Wolff’s immediate students and disciples,[[26]](#footnote-26) but also in the treatments of figures like Martin Knutzen who takes up the consideration of the faculty of cognition and its three operations as the first part of his general logic and even offers his own proof of the completeness of this division.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Significantly, and in spite of objecting strenuously to other elements of Wolff’s logic, Kant himself endorses the tripartite division of the operations of the mind as an important part of general logic. While Kant does not mention the division in his published works, the student notes to his lectures on logic make clear that he was well aware of the traditional division of the operations of the mind. The Wiener logic notes, for example, record the following: “The ancients asked: how many operations of the mind are there? Response: three, *apprehensio simplex*, *judicio*, and *ratiocinium*” (24:904).[[28]](#footnote-28) Kant evidently went further than this, as is recorded in the Busolt notes, where the ancient distinction is explicitly endorsed: “the *operationes mentis* were already correctly divided by the ancients, namely: *apprehensio simplex* that is, a concept judgment, and reason” (V-Lo/Busolt 24:653). Kant also recognizes the Aristotelian provenance for the division of the three operations of the mind, even (according to the notes) wrongly attributing it to Aristotle himself. Rather oddly, in light of the foregoing, he is also recorded at one point as having claimed that Wolff sought to do away with it in his logic: “before one treats of syllogisms, one should first discuss the three operationen of thought. That was Aristotle’s method—very strict. –It was Wolff who broke with it” (V-Lo/Dohna 24:763).[[29]](#footnote-29)

Yet, in Kant’s hands, the division of the three operations of the mind takes on new significance. It is frequently invoked in the context of his exposition of (what he terms) pure general logic. Notably, Kant introduces this division at the outset of his lectures, in the consideration of the parts of logic,[[30]](#footnote-30) or in any case in advance of the treatment of concepts specifically (which was considered relatively late in the textbook by G. F. Meier that Kant used).[[31]](#footnote-31) The division would therefore appear to play its familiar structuring role in Kant’s presentation of logic, that is, it serves as the basis for the ordering of the topics treated in the theoretical part of logic: “With this division, one surveys the whole of logic.”[[32]](#footnote-32) Accordingly, it might be thought, the operation of *simplex apprehensio* grounds the doctrine of concepts, the operation of *judicium* grounds the doctrine of judgments, and the operation of *ratiocinium* grounds the doctrine of inferences (syllogistics), where in each case the operation is uniquely involved in performing the corresponding task. Indeed, this is confirmed in Kant’s account of the divisions of general logic in the KrV:

General logic is constructed on a plan that corresponds quite precisely with the division of the higher faculties of cognition. These are: *understanding*, *the power of judgment*, and *reason*. In its analytic that doctrine accordingly deals with *concepts*, *judgments*, and *inferences*. (A130/B169)

However, this nod towards this division’s traditional structuring role does not exhaust its significance for Kant, and arguably does not even account for its principal contribution to his general logic. Kant’s consistent interest in the division is, rather, to be explained by his conviction that one operation, namely that of *judicium*, is also at work in the other products of the understanding (concepts and inferences) and, for this reason, enjoys a priority over either *apprehensio simplex* and *ratiocinium*. That syllogisms involve an act of judging can be made evident, Kant contends, when we consider that a given syllogism can be framed as a complex judgment in which we express how the connection of two concepts (in the conclusion) is grounded through a third concept;[[33]](#footnote-33) thus, Kant identifies reason, as “the faculty of inferring, i.e., of judging mediately” (A330/B386). Yet, Kant had also long asserted that the kinds of concepts most of interest for logic, namely distinct concepts, were not solely the products of an act of apprehension of some representation but additionally involved an act of judging inasmuch as the articulation of a concept is only possible through a judgment that expresses a rule for the relation of the concept to one (or more) of its clearly-had marks. As Kant first explains this in *False Subtlety*:

A distinct concept demands, namely, that I should clearly recognize something as a characteristic mark of a thing; but this is a judgment. In order to have a distinct concept of body, I clearly represent to myself impenetrability as a characteristic mark of it. (FS 2:58)  
Kant would later make the same point when he contends that concepts are “predicates of judgments” (A69/B94).[[34]](#footnote-34) This is all just to say, as Kant often emphasizes, that “all actions of the understanding go back to judgments” (V-Lo/Bu 24:662), or what is the same thing, that “the *understanding* in general can be represented as a *faculty for judging*” (A69/B94).[[35]](#footnote-35)

For Kant, then, a consideration of the Aristotelian analysis of the operations of the mind serves as a necessary prologue to the treatment of logic precisely because it provides the opportunity for disclosing a deeper psychological truth. As he puts it at one point, it shows that “the faculty of cognizing distinctly and the faculty of syllogistic reasoning are not different fundamental capacities [*Grundfähigkeiten*] [but both] consist in the capacity to judge [*Vermögen zu urtheilen*]” (FS 2:59). This fact has clear implications for the treatment of logic to follow, particularly for his novel transcendental logic. In the context of pure general logic its significance is largely corrective as it is in virtue of failing to consider the three operations of the mind that, for instance, G. F. Meier overlooks the role that the operation of judging plays in the generation of distinct concepts.[[36]](#footnote-36) However, in the context of Kant’s presentation of his *transcendental* logic, this division plays a role of central importance. While this point has not gone unnoticed in the past,[[37]](#footnote-37) the foregoing context allows us to locate the significance of the Aristotelian analysis in providing the needed framework for the discovery of the vital “clue” that makes the disclosure of the pure concepts of the understanding possible. It is, namely, only through consideration of the Aristotelian division of the operations of the mind—and through the consequent derivation of the products of the other operations from *judicium*—that we can determine the understanding in general as a capacity to judge and, through elaborating the functions that are expressed in the act of judgment, systematically derive the categories at the core of a putative transcendental logic.[[38]](#footnote-38) Ironically, then, it is in the context of Kant’s utterly novel disciple of transcendental logic that the traditional Aristotelian division of the *tres operationes mentis* finds its most consequential application.

2. The Soul as an Entelechy or Power

Kant’s discussion of the three operations of the understanding, and especially his tracing of them to a capacity of faculty for judging, fits into an overall metaphysical picture of the mind or soul. This is a conception of the soul as an underlying substance possessed of a set of psychological faculties (*Vermögen*), which constitute the capacities in the soul in virue of which certain actions or operations are possible for it, and endowed with a power or activity (*vis*, *Kraft*) which serves as the ground for the actuality of its states. This was an Aristotelian conception of the soul that had attained to new prominence in Germany at the outset of the 18th century after having fallen into disuse. As it happens, it was Leibniz who had laid the groundwork for its rehabilitation through his attempted emendation of the conception of substance.

As Leibniz recounts, he came to realize that conceiving bodies merely in terms of extension and impenetrability yielded results that were incompatible with the acknowledged laws of motion, and thus was convinced of the necessity of positing something over and above these qualities, namely, a power or force.[[39]](#footnote-39) The significance of power or force, thus understood, is not limited to physics, however. As something in addition to the mechanical properties of bodies, power is properly identified as a metaphysical concept, and is that in which the derivative power or force in bodies is grounded. This metaphysical concept of power in terms of a continual “striving or effort which has its full effect unless impeded by a contrary striving”[[40]](#footnote-40) becomes central for Leibniz’s conception of substance as such, in which context it is identified as the continually-acting source of the various changes that take place in a given substance.[[41]](#footnote-41) Significantly, Leibniz is quite explicit regarding the Aristotelian provenance of his conception of substance in terms of an active power, in addition to making a deliberate application of it to the soul. The former is signalled by the fact that Leibniz characterizes primitive power through adopting Aristotelian terminology, as when he claims that active power “contains a certain act or *entelechy*”[[42]](#footnote-42) and identifies primitive power as “nothing but the first *entelechy*.”[[43]](#footnote-43) This general account of substance as an active power is applied to the soul when Leibniz contends that its internal states “come to it through its own original constitution” which, given that all of the soul’s states amount to perceptions (of varying degrees of clarity and distinctness), Leibniz proceeds to identify as a “representative” in nature.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Leibniz’s emended conception of substance and its application to the soul were taken up by Wolff. So, following Leibniz, Wolff understands a substance primarily in terms of the possession of a power; thus he contends that a substance, or a “thing that persists for itself [*vor sich bestehendes Ding*],” has a source (“*Quelle*”) of alterations within itself that accounts for the changes in its states, where this source is identified as a power (*Kraft*—DM §115), or as a “striving to do something” (DM §118). Likewise, Wolff contends that the soul is a substance, and so endowed with a power, on account of the fact that it is demonstrably immaterial (DM §738) and thus simple, which is to say that it subsists for itself (DM §§742-4). Even so, in his psychological writings, Wolff considerably augments Leibniz’s fairly impoverished treatment of the soul (at least as presented in the texts Wolff had available to him) with a richer account of the soul’s various faculties that includes faculties of (outer) sensation, imagination, memory, and understanding (DM §§220, 235, 249, 277). Yet, Wolff also contends that positing this diversity of faculties is not inconsistent with the claim that the soul is endowed with a single power which, again following Leibniz, Wolff identifies as representative in nature. Instead, Wolff attempts to show that all of the representations that are possible for the soul (corresponding to its faculties) have their ground in the soul’s power, identified as “a power of representing the world in accordance with the position of the body in the world” (§745).[[45]](#footnote-45) As Wolff argues, all of the soul’s representations find their source in this power of representing the world inasmuch as all such alterations have their source in sensations, where sensations are just representations of the world (cf. DM §§749-51; AzDM §271). Moreover, Wolff contends that the soul could not possibly have more than one power given that, as a simple thing (DM §742), it cannot have any parts but being endowed with multiple powers would require the posit of multiple parts of the soul (DM §745).

The (Leibnizian-)Aristotelian characterization of the soul as a *single* power would, however, find an influential challenger in Christian August Crusius. Crusius contends that the posit of a generic power of representation offers little in the way of explanatory utility, though he also recognizes that positing a distinct power for every “positive property” of a thing would be similarly useless.[[46]](#footnote-46) Instead, Crusius contends for multiple, irreducible powers in the soul, which he identifies as *fundamental* *powers* (*Grundkräfte*). By way of distinguishing explanatorily primary fundamental powers from “mere faculties and arbitrarily-abstracted general powers” such as the power of representation, Crusius provides a list of 8 characteristic marks proper to fundamental powers, among the most important of which are: “*A true fundamental power must constantly pertain to a thing*”; “*As long as one cannot intelligibly derive the effect from the supposed fundamental power, then one either does not yet have a fundamental power, or one does not have a completely distinct understanding of it*”; “*A finite fundamental power always has the same proximate effect, and from this the more remote ones must be understood”*; “*The conditions to which the action of a fundamental power are bound must lie in the same subject* [*as that power*]”; and “*A fundamental power must not permit of being causally derived from other powers*”.[[47]](#footnote-47) In light of this, Crusius denies that a power of attraction could be fundamental in bodies (since its conditions lie in other bodies[[48]](#footnote-48)), and he argues that in addition to a distinct fundamental power of willing, there must be multiple fundamental cognitive powers to account for effects as diverse as sensations and consciousness which are as different as “the sun itself and the idea of the sun.”[[49]](#footnote-49) Relating to the Wolffian concern that admitting multiple powers would be inconsistent with the simplicity of the soul (which Crusius nonetheless upholds), Crusius responds that this inconsistency arises only when one conceives of the distinct powers in corporeal terms, that is, as physical parts of the soul, when in fact the attribution of multiple powers to the soul is no more problematic than the attribution of multiple properties to it.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Turning to Kant, though it has been under-emphasized in the literature, his own division of the soul into a set of faculties, each with its own distinctive activities, and identification of the soul’s distinct fundamental powers clearly indicates that he accepts the Aristotelian-Leibnizian picture, even as we will see he is sensitive to Crusius’ concerns. Indeed, this is so in spite of Kant’s criticisms of the very claims that would appear to be needed to support this perspective. Thus, Kant argues that the behind the rational psychologist’s alleged cognition of the soul’s substantiality lies a conflation of our insight that the *I* serves as the “constant logical subject of thinking” with an intuition into the persistence of that subject over time (A350), and similarly that the fact that the “*I* encompasses not the least manifoldness within itself” is inflated by the rational psychologist into a “cognition of the simplicity of the subject itself” (A355).[[51]](#footnote-51) Rather surprisingly, in fact, in an early draft of the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant even frames his opposition to the rational psychologist’s efforts to cognize the soul after its separation from the body explicitly in terms of Aristotle’s definition of the soul: “The soul is, in appearances, one substance with the body; it appears only as the *entelechie* of the body.”[[52]](#footnote-52)

Against the Wolffians, Kant will deny that we can dispose of any *cognition* of the soul as (endowed with) a power, but he will nonetheless contend that the *idea* of the soul as (endowed with) a single power serves an indispensable *regulative* function in our investigation and organization of our cognitions of inner appearances. Kant makes the case for this in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, where he sets out from the challenge that faces any attempt to trace the observed changes in the soul back to powers: “At first glance the various appearances of one and the same substance show such diversity that one must assume almost as many powers as there are effects” (A648/B676). Like Crusius, Kant distinguishes a number of fundamental powers which provide the causal ground of the innumerable other faculties and powers of the soul that might be posited, where what distinguishes these “comparatively fundamental powers” is that they cannot be derived from one another nor from another power of the soul (A94). Even so, Kant thinks that we could not begin to trace the effects of the soul back to even comparatively fundamental powers independently of the posit that the soul has “a single radical, i.e., absolutely fundamental, power” (A649/B677). However, Kant is clear that this posit is made solely “for the benefit of reason,” namely for bringing “systematic unity into cognition: (A649/B677-A650/B678) and thus amounts to a merely subjectively rather than objectively valid claim (cf. A306/B362). As such, the representation of a single, fundamental power is a transcendental presupposition, one that is ultimately rooted in reason’s idea of the soul (and indeed, as substantial and simple) since we “connect all appearances, actions, and receptivity of our mind to the guiding thread of inner experience *as if* the mind were a simple substance” (A672/B700).[[53]](#footnote-53) In the end, then, despite rejecting the possibility of any cognition of the soul’s substantiality and simplicity, Kant can be seen to offer a measure of vindication for the Leibnizian-Aristotelian conception of the soul as a power or entelechy, even if this is only a conception that we are constrained to adopt for the sake of investigating inner appearances.

3. The Spontaneity of the Soul’s Powers

In addition to conceiving of the soul as, fundamentally, a power, German thinkers in the 18th century devoted considerable attention to the nature of the *activity* of the soul’s power (or powers) and faculties. Not only were these distinguished into active and passive, but some actions and powers on the part of the soul were designated as spontaneous, and, in a way that anticipates Kant’s own (apparently original) identification of the actions of the understanding as such. Yet again, at the root of this discussion we find a historical source in Aristotle, though not in his psychological works but instead in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, and specifically in his account of voluntary action:

Since an action is involuntary when it is performed under constraint or through ignorance, a voluntary action would seem to be one in which the initiative [*ἀρχὴ*] lies within the agent who knows the particular circumstances in which the action is performed (1111a21-22)

This account of the voluntariness of an action was taken up by Leibniz in his account of *freedom* presented in the *Theodicée*. In addition to adding the condition that the freedom of an action requires contingency, he also clearly distinguishes the two components identified above by Aristotle, identifying spontaneity with the condition that an action finds its principle in the agent itself:

The spontaneity of our actions can therefore no longer be questioned; and Aristotle has defined it well, saying that an action is *spontaneous* when its source is in him who acts. ‘*Spontaneum est, cujus principium est in agente*.’[[54]](#footnote-54)

Taken in the broader context of Leibniz’s denial of inter-substantial causation and consequent posit of a power in each substance that serves as the ground of its actions, all of the actions of a substance, properly speaking, are spontaneous, a consequence that Leibniz embraces.[[55]](#footnote-55)

In any case, Wolff would take up the Leibnizian definition of freedom (if not all of the underlying Leibnizian metaphysics) for the purposes of his own treatment in the *Deutsche Metaphysik*. Moreover, Wolff was well aware of the Aristotelian provenance of Leibniz’s account (cf. AzDM §163), which likely informs his decision to translate ‘*spontaneitas*’ with the more colloquial German ‘*Willkühr*’ (i.e. power of choice). As Wolff writes in his definition of freedom,

it becomes clear that *freedom* is nothing other than the power of the soul, through its own spontaneity [*Willkühr*], for choosing that one among equally possible things that pleases it most. (DM §519)

Interestingly, A. G. Baumgarten attempts to split the difference between Wolff’s and Leibniz’s account, as he distinguishes *spontaneitas* and *arbitrium*. The latter is directly relevant to freedom and free actions in particular,[[56]](#footnote-56) while the former is now understood generally as an “action that is dependent on a sufficient principle that is internal to the agent” and which, as in Leibniz’s case, is taken to characterize all actions, properly speaking, that pertain to a substance.[[57]](#footnote-57)

This broadly Aristotelian conception of spontaneity would once again undergo a significant refinement at the hands of Crusius. Crusius begins by supplementing the Leibnizian division between (active) power, faculty (or capacity), and the resulting action with the notion of a *first action* or *fundamental activity* (*actio prima*, *Grundthätigkeit*). Crusius contends that the posit of a first action is necessary in order to avoid an infinite regress among the various acts on the part of a substance. A first action, then, is understood as an act that proceeds immediately from an active substance, which is to say that it does not require any other efficient cause for its production.[[58]](#footnote-58) Crusius proceeds to distinguish three different types of first action, namely, (i) those that constantly occur and those that do not constantly occur (i.e., they occur only when appropriate circumstances arise), where these latter are further divided into (ii) those which are *necessitated* when appropriate circumstances obtain and (iii) those that are only rendered *possible* under the appropriate circumstances.[[59]](#footnote-59) Where the first pertains to God’s own activity, and the “active power of the elements,”[[60]](#footnote-60) Crusius takes the latter two to characterize the fundamental activities of the two principal powers of the soul, namely, the understanding and the will. So, in the case of the first actions of the will, the presence of the appropriate circumstances will make a first act of the will possible without further determining it as necessary (and so these are termed *free* first actions)[[61]](#footnote-61); by contrast, the presence of appropriate circumstances necessitates the action of the cognitive power (as in, for instance, the production of a sensation when an external stimulus occurs).[[62]](#footnote-62) As it happens, this distinction in the fundamental activities of understanding and will is taken by Crusius as an indication that they are irreducible to one another and thus distinct fundamental powers.[[63]](#footnote-63)

As should be clear, the first actions of the understanding (and will) are spontaneous in the sense attributed to that term by, for instance, Leibniz where an act is spontaneous which finds its beginning (*principium*) in the agent. Indeed, all first actions are *spontaneous*, since the effect is brought about solely through some internal property of the substance’s essence, which is just what Crusius understands by ‘spontaneity [*Selbstthätigkeit*].’[[64]](#footnote-64) However, there is a slightly different, and stronger sense in which the first acts of the understanding in particular are understood to find their *principium* in the agent, namely, insofar as these acts are determined by the understanding in accordance with a discursive *principle* internal to the “essence of the understanding [*Wesen des Verstandes*]” itself. For Crusius, it is the essence of the understanding that constitutes the “supreme criterion of actual and possible things” inasmuch as just those things will be actual or possible, or be able to exist separately or in combination, which the understanding is capable of thinking, or of thinking separately or together. This basic truth, for Crusius, yields “three supreme principles” that constitute the essence of the understanding:

1) the principle of contradiction: Nothing can be and not be at once. 2) The principle of the inseparable: Those things that do not permit of being thought without one another can also not be without one another, 3) The principle of the incombinable: What does not permit of being thought with and next to one another can also not be with and next to one another.[[65]](#footnote-65)

What it means, then, for an act of the understanding to be a first act, that is, an action that has its ground in the essence of the understanding itself, is that it will be necessitated in accordance with the constraints on what can or cannot be thought referred to in the above principles. So, a first act of the understanding will not contain a combination or separation of concepts that is haphazard or adulterated by what we might *will* to be the case but instead will combine or separate them in accordance with how the understanding is necessitated to think them as combined.[[66]](#footnote-66) Such an act is spontaneous, then, not simply because it finds its *beginning* in the agent but also, and importantly, because that act proceeds in accordance with a *principle* that is internal to the agent, in this case, what we are able to think as possible, or as separated or combined as determined by the essence of the understanding.[[67]](#footnote-67)

Kant was thoroughly acquainted with Crusius’ discussion (as well as other contemporary accounts) of spontaneity. Moreover, even Kant’s most distinctive contribution to the discussion—the identification of a spontaneity proper to the act *I think*—is best understood within this broadly Aristotelian framework. We might consider Kant’s presentation of this account in the B edition Deduction, where he justifies the identification of the *I think* with an activity by considering how beings with a discursive understanding, in contrast to beings with an intuitive intellect, can become conscious of their identity with respect to their representations. As Kant writes in §16 of the B Deduction:

through the I, as a simple representation, nothing manifold is given; it can only be given in the intuition, which is distinct from it, and thought through *combination* in a consciousness. An understanding, in which through self-consciousness all of the manifold would at the same time be given, would *intuit*; ours can only *think* and must seek the intuition in the senses. (B135)

Kant begins here by claiming that we are not conscious of the identity of the subject (represented by the *I*) by means of sensible intuition. This claim might be thought to amount to a contingent claim about our own cognitive limitations, that namely, we are beings for whom nothing persistent is given in inner sense. Yet this is not the case as Kant’s point is that this is a limitation proper to any discursive cognizer, that is, any being for whom a manifold must be given. The ground for this assertion lies in the peculiar nature of the identity of the subject inasmuch as it is that which is represented as *necessarily* identical throughout all of its instantiations: “in all consciousness [it] is one and the same” (B132). It is precisely the necessary unity and singularity of the *I think* that serves to mark it off from any intuitively given representation, which is to say that it can never be given empirically; thus, at A107, Kant writes, “[t]hat which should *necessarily* be represented as numerically identical cannot be thought of as such through empirical data.”[[68]](#footnote-68) Accordingly, Kant proceeds to assert that it is only a being with an intuitive understanding for which the identity of the subject could possibly be given through self-consciousness. In the case of discursive cognizers, then, the consciousness of the identity of the subject is not passively received but must be actively generated, which is to say that we must *think* the identity of the subject. The *I think*, therefore, already is or expresses an act since it indicates that the relation of a given manifold of representation to the identity of the subject (the *I*) can only be effected through our activity in combining the manifold, that is, through *thinking* our identity with respect to that manifold.

Kant proceeds to maintain that in addition to being or expressing an act, the *I think* is also *spontaneous* in the (Crusian) sense that it is generated in accordance with a principle internal to the subject, namely, that the act *I think*, as signifying the active relating of a manifold of representations to the identity of the subject, is itself made necessary by the principle of apperception. This principle is given in Kant’s claim that “[t]he *I think* must *be able* to accompany all my representations” (B131) and is justified, according to Kant, since were it not to hold, “something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would […] be nothing for me” (B132). Kant’s reasoning here, I take it, is that what is (minimally) required for cognition is that a representation is something *for* me, that is, that it represents something *to* me (where the specific conditions for a representation to do this are to be determined through the Deduction). The *me*, however, for whom the representation is to be something is necessarily the same subject for all of my representations,[[69]](#footnote-69) which is to say that the *me* is the accusative of the *I* of apperception.[[70]](#footnote-70) The principle of apperception, therefore, amounts to the claim that, for all of my representations, in order for them to be something for me, it must be possible to be conscious of their relation to their identical subject. As we have seen, however, the way in which discursive cognizers are conscious of the relation of a manifold of representations to the identity of the subject is by means of the act *I think*. That the act *I think* relates to the principle of apperception in this way is suggested by Kant’s (initially peculiar) claim that original apperception “produces [*hervorbringt*] the representation *I think*” (B132.) Insofar, then, as it is an act that proceeds in accordance with, and is even necessitated by, an internal principle (that of apperception), the *I think* is appropriately labelled spontaneous.

Despite its important connections to Crusius’ account of spontaneity, Kant’s claim that the *I think* is “an act of spontaneity” differs in an important (and influential) way from the antecedent tradition. Specifically, Kant’s account of the *I think* issues in a novel shift in focus when it comes to spontaneous activity: where Crusius had taken that action to be spontaneous which proceeds in accordance with a principle internal to the self, for Kant, the action *I think* is spontaneous given that it proceeds in accordance with the self *considered as a principle*, that is, insofar as it is the *identity* of the self (as expressed in the principle of apperception) that makes the activity of the mind with respect to the manifold of representations necessary. Kant’s Critical account of spontaneity, therefore, is characterized by a literal activity from the self, a *Selbst*tätigkeit,[[71]](#footnote-71) and inasmuch as Kant takes himself to have shown that the spontaneous act *I think* functions as a condition for all other activity on the part of the understanding, it follows that it is spontaneity in this sense that distinguishes the activity of the understanding from that of any other faculty. Kant’s account of a *Selbsttätigkeit* on the part of the mind is accordingly quite distinct, yet even here he can be considered to be working within the Crusian, and so the broadly Aristotelian framework, though the “principle of apperception,” which expresses the necessary identity of the self with respect to all its representations, displaces the principle of contradiction (along, presumably, with the principles of the incombinable and inseparable) in constituting the “essence of the understanding.” Kant is in fact quite explicit on this score, as he claims that *this* principle is “the supreme principle of all use of the understanding” (B136) as the relation of representations to their objects, which is to say, the possibility of the understanding itself as a faculty of cognitions, can only be thought by means of this principle.[[72]](#footnote-72)

I take it that the foregoing has shown that core Kantian doctrines—the identification of the understanding as a capacity for judging, the attribution of a (merely) regulative use to the idea of the soul, and even the claim of the spontaneity of the *I think*—are productively informed by what can be broadly identified as Aristotelian views on the mind. Indeed, and perhaps equally significantly, we have seen that in spite of a broader hostility towards Aristotle, Aristotelian doctrines continued to circulate and find eminent defenders within the 18th century German context, making it less surprising that Kant would take them up himself. Even so, Kant was not only aware of the Aristotelian provenance of (at least some of) these views but they were frequently and decisively transformed in his hands, as he either greatly altered the significance of the claims made (as when he assigns a regulative status to the idea of the soul’s fundamental power) or made use of the Aristotelian doctrine for his own ends (as in his discovery of the priority of the operation of judging, or in his doctrine of the spontaneity of the *I think*). Given this, we might hesitate in designating Kant the “Aristotle of Königsberg,” since his reception of Aristotelian doctrines was anything but passive (or “unconscious”[[73]](#footnote-73)); it can, however, hardly be denied that the Stagirite’s doctrines, and their subsequent appropriations, supplied a vital context for the develoment of the Königsberger’s own views on the soul.

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1. *Aristoteles über die Seele. Aus dem Griechischen übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen begleitet* (Frankfurt & Leipzig, 1794). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This might be contrasted with the positive reception of Aristotle’s political philosophy, as well as his work in the context of aesthetics and rhetoric; see Johan van der Zande, “Goodbye to Aristotle: Christian Garve between Late and Neohumanism,” in Udo Roth and Gideon Stiening (eds.), *Christian Garve (1742–1798): Philosoph und Philologe der*

   *Aufklärung* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021); pp. 143–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Brucker, *Historia critica philosophiae*, (2nd ed., Leipzig: Weidemann & Reich, 1767); vol. 1, p. 821. These, and other, criticisms of Aristotle’s psychology in particular are echoed in Formey’s *Kurzgefasste Historie der Philosophie* (Berlin: Pauli, 1763); see, for instance, p. 137: “Des Aristoteles Ideen von der Seele waren gewiß räthselhaft.” Both texts served as sources for Kant’s own account of the history of philosophy (for the latter see AA XXIV:31), and indeed seem to have informed his views on the obscurity of some central Aristotelian terms; see for instance. V-Lo/D-W 24:768, 781; and R 2330, 16:316 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Voigt, *Aristoteles über die Seele*, pp. vi and viii-ix. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Voigt, *Aristoteles über die Seele*, p. iv (though anomalously numbered ‘vi’). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Voigt, *Aristoteles über die Seele*, p.iii-iv. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For these, see Voigt, *Aristoteles über die Seele*, pp. 183, 192 and 214-15. See also Petersen, *Die Philosophie Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburgs. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Aristoteles im 19. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Boysen, 1913); pp. 130-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Note that in what follows I will make use of ‘soul’ and ‘mind’ more or less interchangeably. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Nor was the perception of a connection limited to psychology as Kant’s student Daniel Jenisch made a similar case in his translation of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, in the context of which he refers to Kant as the “Königsbergischer Aristoteles” (from which the title of this chapter is drawn); cf. *Die Ethik des Aristoteles in zehn Büchern* (Danzig, 1791), pp. viii and 193 (and see also Petersen, *Die Philosophie Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburgs*, p. 458). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Kant did own the works of Aristotle (Warda, *Immanuel Kants Bücher* [Berlin: Martin Breslauer, 1922], p. 45 lists a copy of “Aristoteles *Opera*” in Greek and Latin translation as among the books in his private library, which collection appears to have included *De anima*), though we will see in what follows that Kant’s uptake of Aristotelian doctrines in the context of his own views on the soul are crucially informed by their modern German reception. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. On this see Buickerood, “The Natural History of the Understanding: Locke and the Rise of Facultative Logic,” in *History and Philosophy of Logic* 6 (1985), 157-90; pp. 160-1; and Sgarbi, *Kant and Aristotle: Epistemology, Logic, and Method* (Albany, NY, USA: State University of New York Press, 2016); p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics*, trans. Ralph McInerny (South Bend IN: Dumb Ox Books, 2008); Book I, ¶4; p. 1. Aquinas likewise mentions this division at the outset of the commentary on *De interpretatione*, but refers to *De anima* 430a26-28 (in which Aristotle distinguishes between reasoning concerning indivisible things and that concerning things that involve combination) as another source for this division. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Cf. *Logic or the Art of Thinking* [1662]. Trans. and ed. Jill Vance Buroker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)*;* p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Philipp Melanchton is a notable exception here; see Sgarbi, *Kant and Aristotle*, p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. AN §56. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. *Logica vetus et nova* (2nd ed., Amsterdam, 1658); pars prima, cap. II, §16. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See Tschirnhaus, *Medicina mentis et corporis* (2nd ed., Leipzig, 1695); p. 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See Thomasius, *Introductio ad philosophiam aulicam* (Halle: Renger, 1703); p. 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. For ease of reference, I have made use of the following abbreviations for Wolff’s texts: [AN] *Ausführliche Nachricht von seinen eigenen Schrifften, die er in deutscher Sprache heraus gegeben*, (2nd ed., Frankfurt am Main: 1733); [AzDM] *Der vernünfftigen Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt, Anderer Theil, bestehend in ausführlichen Anmerckungen* [1724] (2nd ed., Frankfurt: Andreä und Hort); [DL] *Vernünftige Gedanken von den Kräften des menschlichen Verstandes und Ihrem richtigen Gebrauche in Erkänntnis der Wahrheit* or *Deutsche Logik* (Halle: 1713); [DM] *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt* or *Deutsche Metaphysik* (11th ed., Halle: Renger, 1754); [LL] *Philosophia rationalis, sive Logica*, 3 vols (Frankfurt and Leipzig: Renger, 1728). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See LL §§30ff (pp. 125-42). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See DL c. 1, §§4-5; AN §56, p. 183; and LL §§33-4 (pp. 126-7). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See DL c. 3, §§2-3; LL §§40-2 (pp. 130-2) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See DL c. 4, §§1-4 and LL §§48-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Wolff accordingly distinguishes between “intuitive” and “discursive” judgments where the former are arrived at immediately through the representations of given things (or only attribute to those things that which is contained in our representation) and the latter are arrived at mediately (or attribute something that is not so contained); cf. AN §56 (pp. 182-3) and LL §51 (p. 136). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See AzDM §93 (p. 165) and LL §52; and see also Michael Wolff, *Die Vollständigkeit der Kantischen Urteilstafel* (Frankfurt a. M: Klostermann, 1995), 191 and 191n299. Wolff also indicates that he made a beginning of accounting for the three operations of the intellect in DM §286; see AzDM §93. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See for instance the treatment by L. P. Thümmig in *Institutiones philosophiae Wolffianae*,[1724] p. 4; and Johann Peter Reusch in his *Systema logicum* (Jena, 1734), Tractatio propaedeumatica, p. 1; cf. also §29. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. *Elementa philosophiae rationalis sue logicae* (Königsberg & Leipzig: Hartung, 1747); p. 51; for his attempted proof, see *Elementa* §44 (pp. 60-1), and M. Wolff, *Vollständigkeit*, p. 191n299. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. For similar formualtions, see V-Lo/DW 24:701, R 1705 (16:88) and 1713 (16:90), and the following note. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Sgarbi (in *Kant and Aristotle*, pp. 23-4) contends that because Kant directly refers to Aristotle here his source for the distinction of the three operations of the mind must be the Königsberg Aristotelians rather than Wolff or the Wolffian tradition. However, Kant’s apparent failure to recognize the significance of this distinction in Wolff may instead be a commentary on the lack of any discussion of the three operations in subsequent logics which Kant identified as within the Wolffian tradition, including those of Baumgarten and Meier (cf. JL 9:21: “*Baumgarten*, a man who has much merit here, concentrated the Wolffian logic, and *Meier* then commented again on Baumgarten”). See also n36, below. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See also V-Lo/DW 24:701 and V/Lo-Bauch pp. 30-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. This is the case for the presentations in V-Lo/Pö 24:565, V-Lo/Bu 24:653, V-Lo/Wien 24:904. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. V-Lo/Bauch, p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Cf. FS 2:59, V-Lo/Bauch pp. 31.749-56; V-Lo/DW 24:771, R3710, R3946, R4638 (17:620) [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Cf. also V-Lo/Bu 24:663, V-Metaph/Dohna 28:652 and 703, and 29:37. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See also FS 2:59, V-Metaph/MvS 28:480, R407 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Kant mentions this division by way of supplementing Meier’s presentation at the outset of his discussion of concepts, even faulting Meier the author of his preferred logic textbook for overlooking the distinction when he writes, in his copy of G. F. Meier’s *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*, “*tres operationes mentis*” at the outset of Meier’s treatment of concepts (*R* 2829, 16:533; cf. Meier, *Auszug* §249). See also V-Lo/Pölitz 24:565. Kant does, however, appear to credit Wolff with recognizing both the importance of the operation of judging for producing distinct concepts, and the underlying analysis of the three operations of the mind; cf.V-Lo/Philippi [1772] 24:409, and Dyck, “The Priority of Judging: Kant on Wolff’s General Logic,” in *Estudos Kantianos*, vol. 4.2 (2016), 99-118; pp. 111-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Brandt, for instance, contends that the “*Systemidee*” behind the derivation of the moments of the table of judgments is secured through their correspondance to the three operations of the mind; cf. Brandt, *Die Urteilstafel: Kritik der reinen Vernunft, A67-76; B92-101* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1991), pp. 46, and 62-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. The significance of the determination of the understanding as a capacity to judge for Kant’s aims in the Metaphysical Deduction, and indeed, the Transcendental Analytic as a whole is, of course, a central theme of Longuenesse’s now classic study, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge,* trans. Charles T. Wolfe (Princeton University Press, 1998). However, she does not, to my knowledge, connect this characterization of the understanding to the Aristotelian *tres operationes mentis*. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, ed. and trans. Leroy Loemker (2nd ed, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), p. 440. See also Garber, *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), especially chapter 3, for a detailed treatment of Leibniz’s criticism of the Cartesian conservation principle and conception of body. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, p. 435. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, p. 433: “I say that this power of acting inheres in all substance and that some action always arises from it, so that the corporeal substance itself does not, any more than spiritual substance, ever cease to act.” [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, p. 433. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, p. 436. Among other references, see also Leibniz’s reply to Bayle, in *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, p. 577. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, p. 457 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See the detailed treatment of Wolff’s account of the relation between faculty and power, within the general context of his metaphysics, in Heßbrüggen-Walter, *Die Seele und ihre Vermögen. Kants Metaphysik des Mentalen in der ‘Kritik der reinen Vernunft‘* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2004), pp. 57-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Crusius, *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft-Wahrheiten, wiefern sie den zufälligen entgegen gesetzet werden* (Leipzig:

    Gleditsch, 1745); §29. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. For these references, see *Entwurf*, §§70-6. Crusius’ notion of a *Grundkraft* is also discussed in Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005); pp. 81-5), and Heßbrüggen-Walter, *Die Seele und ihre Vermögen*, pp. 96-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Cf. *Entwurf*, §74. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *Entwurf*, §§446 and 444. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. *Entuwrf,* §73. On this, see Hahmann, “Crusius on the Fundamental Powers of the Soul” in Grunert, Frank, Hahmann,

    Andree and Stiening, Gideon (eds), *Christian August Crusius (1715–1775): Philosophy between Reason and Revelation* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021); pp. 89-113; here pp. 93-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. For details, see Dyck, *Kant and Rational Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014), especially chapters 3 and 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. R 4757 (17:704): “Die Seele ist in den Erscheinungen mit dem Korper eine substantz, sie erscheint nur als entelechie vom Körper.” [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. For details here see Dyck, *Kant and Rational Psychology*, pp. 199-225. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. *Theodicy*, ed. A. Farrer and trans.E.M. Huggard (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952); §301. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. *Theodicy*, §296. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Baumgarten, Alexander Gottlieb, *Metaphysica / Metaphysik*. *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, trans. and ed. Günter Gawlick and Lothar Kreimendahl (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2011); §719. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §704. For more in the way of this historical background, see especially Kawamura, *Spontaneität und Willkür. Der Freiheitsbegrik in Kant's Antimomienlehre und seine historischen Wurzweln*. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *Entwurf* §81, see also *Dissertatio philosophica de usu et limitibus principii rationis determinantis vulgo*

    *sufficientis* (Leipzig, 1743); §XXIII (translated in Dyck, *Early Modern German Philosophy (1690–1750)* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2019; p. 214). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *Entwurf* §§81-2, *Dissertatio philosophica de usu*,§§XXIV-XXV (Dyck, *Early Modern German Philosophy*; pp. 214-15). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Cf. *Entwurf* §§79, 81; *Dissertatio philosophica de usu*,§XXIV (Dyck, *Early Modern German Philosophy*; pp. 214-5). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. *Entwurf* §83 (1), *Dissertatio philosophica de usu* §XXVI (Dyck, *Early Modern German Philosophy*; p. 215) [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Cf. *Entwurf* §§82, 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Cf. *Entwurf* §446. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Cf. *Entwurf*, §79. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. *Entwurf* §15; *Weg zur Gewissheit und Zuverläßigkeit der menschlichen Erkenntnis* (Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1747), §255; cf. also *Dissertatio philosophica de usu* §XXVII (Dyck, *Early Modern German Philosophy*, p. 216). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. *Weg zur Gewissheit*, §259. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. For a fuller discussion of this, see Dyck, “Spontaneity before the Critical Turn: Crusius, the Pre-Critical Kant, and Tetens on the Spontaneity of the Mind” in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 54.4 (2016), pp. 625-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. This, I take it, is what Kant is getting at when he claims that the *I think* “cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility” (B132) though he rather hastily takes this to imply the spontaneity of the *I think* rather than merely its identification as an act. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. See B132: “For the manifold representations that are given in a certain intuition would not all together be *my* representations if they did not all together belong to a self-consciousness.” [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. On this, see Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004), p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Notably, in the B edition of the *KrV*, Kant refers to the *Selbsttätigkeit* of the mind, or its literal activity from the self, , more frequently than he had in the A edition, where he had almost exclusively made use of the Latinate *Spontaneität*. The only instance in the A edition where Kant refers to the *Selbsttätigkeit* of the mind occurs at A418 (B446), and in that case it has to do with “absolute *spontaneity* (freedom).” By contrast, in the revisions in the B edition, Kant makes more frequent use of the term *Selbsttätigkeit* and its variants (cf. B68, B130, B158n, B278) and specifically in reference to the activity of the understanding (see B130, B278). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. See also B139: “for the human understanding it [i.e., the unity of consciousness] is unavoidably the first principle.” [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. The characterization is Wundt’s; cf. Wilhelm Wundt, *Leibniz. Zu seinem zweihundertjährigen Todestag* (Leipzig: Kröner, 1916), p. 95; and Petersen, *Die Philosophie Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburgs*, p. 461. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)