

Between Wolffianism and Pietism: Baumgarten's Rational Psychology

Corey W. Dyck

One of the primary targets in the Pietists' campaign against the Wolffian philosophy was Wolff's rational psychology. Taking issue particularly with Wolff's account of the nature of the human soul, the results of his demonstration of the immortality of the soul, and most of all his defense of the system of pre-established harmony, the Pietists contended that these Wolffian doctrines were incompatible with moral practice and with their conception of God and the afterlife. For his part, Wolff preferred to dismiss these criticisms as unsophisticated and uncharitable (as they often were), yet Alexander Baumgarten, who had been a resident and teacher at August Hermann Francke's famous *Waisenhaus*, and who had attended lectures in the Pietist theology faculty at Halle,¹ was understandably less dismissive of these criticisms in the presentation of his own rational psychology in the *Metaphysica* of 1739. As becomes clear in the course of a careful consideration of his own discussion of the soul's nature as a power for representing the world in accordance with the position of the body, his renewed defense of the pre-established harmony, and his discussion of the soul's state after death which emphasizes its moral condition in the afterlife, Baumgarten was familiar and indeed sympathetic with the Pietist criticisms even as he showed that they could be addressed through subtle but meaningful revisions of Wolff's views on the soul.

In what follows, I will consider Baumgarten's views on the soul in the context of the Pietist critique of Wolff's rational psychology. In doing so, my primary aim is to account for the largely unacknowledged differences between Wolff's and Baumgarten's rational psychology, though I also hope to show that, in some cases, the Pietists were rather more perceptive in their reading of Wolff than they are typically given credit for as their criticisms frequently succeed in drawing attention to

¹ For more on Baumgarten's connections to these Pietist institutions see Meier (1763, 10–11), and for Baumgarten's sympathies with Pietism more generally, see Fugate and Hymers (2014, 8–11) and Schwaiger (2011, 27–9).

significant omissions in Wolff's discussion. To this end, the following is divided into three sections. In the first, I consider the initial topic of rational psychology: the nature of the soul. While both Wolff and Baumgarten contend that the nature of the soul consists in the power of representing the universe in accordance with the position of the body, I will claim that Baumgarten reserves a different function for the body and that he likely does so in reaction to Pietist concerns about the central role assigned to sensation in Wolff's account. In the second section, I turn to the question of which system best accounts for the agreement between states of the soul and the body, and I show that in contrast to Wolff, Baumgarten offers an explicit defence of the pre-established harmony in the face of the Pietist charge that it denies the relevance of the body for the soul's states. In the third and final section, I consider Baumgarten's account of the soul's immortality in which he adopts Wolff's proofs for the soul's preservation of its condition of distinct perception and personality. Yet as I show Baumgarten also offers a demonstration of the soul's preservation of its condition of freedom and considers its state of blessedness or damnation as a consequence of its moral perfection, both of which discussions serve as needed supplements to Wolff's account. In the end, then, I will claim that Baumgarten's presentation in the *Metaphysica* results in a distinctive rational psychology which blends both Wolffian and Pietistic influences in its attempt to understand the human soul, its relation to the body, and its condition in the afterlife.

1. The Nature of the Soul

Wolff's discussion of rational psychology in the *Deutsche Metaphysik* was one of the principal targets of Pietist criticisms. Not only do Joachim Lange and Johan Franz Budde devote lengthy sections of their critical remarks on Wolff's metaphysics to his views on the human soul, but Andreas Rüdiger would re-publish the entire fifth chapter of Wolff's text ("On the Essence of the

Soul and Spirits in general”) along with his own extensive running commentary. Of particular concern, of course, was Wolff’s endorsement of Leibniz’s pre-established harmony as the best system for accounting for the observed agreement between states of the soul and states of the body, which system, according to the Pietists, variously amounted to necessitarianism, Spinozism, atheism, and materialism. Yet the Pietists also reserved criticism for other aspects of Wolff’s rational psychology, including his account of the nature, or essence of the human soul.

While the empirical investigation of the soul can establish the actuality of the human soul (cf. Wolff 1751, §191), the question of what the soul’s nature (and essence) consists in cannot be answered through mere observation but only through recourse to inference, and so it is properly a topic of rational psychology. By the essence (*Wesen*) of a thing, Wolff understands “[t]hat in which the ground of everything else that pertains to [that thing] is found” (1751, §33), whereas by its nature is understood “that which makes a thing active or capable of effecting something” (1751, §756; cf. also §628). Wolff claims that a single power, namely, the “power of representing the world in accordance with the position of its body” (1751, §753) constitutes both the nature and essence of the soul, and his argument for this consists of a number of steps. First, Wolff argues that since matter is incapable of conscious representation or thought (given that the differentiation of representations required by consciousness cannot be accounted for in terms of motions—1751, §738), and inasmuch as our experience confirms that the soul is capable of thought (1751, §728), it follows that the soul is not material. Moreover, Wolff claims that the same considerations serve to distinguish the soul from any composite thing altogether, so that it follows that the soul is simple (1751, §742). As a simple thing, the soul must be taken to subsist for itself (rather than in something else), and is therefore a substance (1751, §743; cf. §114), and since every substance is or has a source of its own alterations, or a power (1751, §115), it follows that the soul is or has a power (1751, §744), and because it is simple, Wolff contends that the soul can have only a *single* power (1751, §745). It

only remains to determine what the single power of the soul is that constitutes the source of the various effects that we observe in it, and Wolff argues that all of the soul's alterations can be derived from a power of representing the world in accordance with the position of the body:

I have already remarked above that sensations follow upon alterations that take place in the organs of the senses and represent to us the bodies in the world that impinge upon our senses. These bodies, however, are parts of the world, and therefore the soul represents a part of the world, or as much of the world as the position of the body in the world allows. Consequently, since the effects of the soul stem from its power, the soul has a power of representing according to the position of its body in the world. (1751, §753)

Given, then, that it is this power of the soul that constitutes the ground of all of its representations and that it is by means of this power that the soul is able to actualize everything it is capable of effecting, Wolff concludes that this power is the essence and nature of the soul (1751, §§755–6).

The Pietists objected strenuously to Wolff's identification of the nature of the soul with the power of representing the world, charging that Wolff's account rests on the controversial system of pre-established harmony, and that the claim that all of the soul's alterations proceed from a single power amounts to a necessitarianism or fatalism.² Moreover, the Pietists challenged Wolff's claim that only a single power is required to account for the ground of all of the soul's alterations, claiming that this is the result of Wolff's conflation of a power with a *part* of a substance (which would imply that a substance without parts can only have a single power). Accordingly, Lange contends that the same assumption could be used to show that insofar as the body is taken to only have a single power (i.e., that of motion) that it also does not consist of parts: "Since the body is a composite thing, and the two spiritual faculties of understanding and will cannot be in a composite substance, so multiple corporeal parts are not to be encountered in the body since otherwise each part would require a substance to which it would pertain" (Lange and Wolff 1724, 52; see also Lange 1724, 116). More plausibly, Rüdiger argues that Wolff's assumption is founded on his wrongly taking merely *different*

² See, for instance, Budde 1724 (14–15), and Lange 1724 (110 and 114)

powers for *contrary* powers, so while a substance's possession of contrary powers might be compared to its being subject to impulses to move in different directions at the same time (cf. Wolff 1751, §745), this does not rule out the possibility that a substance can have powers that are merely different (Rüdiger 1727, 27–8), and as the Pietists will proceed to contend, the soul must be taken to have multiple forces in order to account for the heterogeneous effects of the understanding and the will.

The most persistent criticism on the part of the Pietists, however, concerns the prominent role assigned to sensation in Wolff's identification of the soul's nature with the power of representation. According to Wolff, the power of representation serves as the ground of all of the soul's alterations only insofar as the soul's representations can be traced back to sensations. This is because it is by means of sensations that the soul represents (corporeal) things insofar as they impinge upon the organs of sense (Wolff 1751, §749), which is to say it is by means of sensations that the soul represents a part of the world in accordance with the position of the body. Accordingly, in order to be the source of sensations, the soul must have a power for representing the world in accordance with the position of the body (1751, §753), yet it is only because Wolff also contends that it is from *sensations* that all our thoughts arise (1751, §752) that he infers that all of the soul's remaining alterations have their source in this power, and thus that it constitutes the essence and nature of the soul. In a subsequent exposition of his account of the soul's nature, Wolff underscores just this fact:

We have already seen in the exposition of what we observe of the soul that the series of its thoughts at all times takes its start from sensations and accordingly that the faculty of sensation is, as it were, the first which we encounter in the soul and that from which we can provide the reason for what occurs in the remaining faculties (Wolff 1740a, §271).

Wolff's Pietist critics took exception to this emphasis on sensation, claiming that in limiting the soul to the representation of things from the perspective of the body, the soul is limited to perceiving

ideas of corporeal things. Indeed, Lange claims that Wolff simply identifies the power of representation with the faculty of sensation: “[t]o represent the world to oneself is to make material concepts of corporeal things” (1736, 5).³ Yet, this would be, according to the Pietists, to take the soul’s nature to consist in its lowest cognitive function; thus Lange writes that “*Ideisation* is actually only a *facultas secundaria* consisting only in the perception of ideas” (Lange and Wolff 1724, 40). Moreover, given Wolff’s emphasis on sensation in the derivation of all of the faculties, including the higher ones, from a single power, it is no longer clear how, for Wolff, the soul is able to frame representations of thoughts of higher objects, such as “God and spiritual things,” which after all constitute the “principal objects” of the human understanding (Lange and Wolff 1724, 46). As Lange summarizes:

on this definition [of the nature of the soul] the integrity of the understanding is not preserved [s]ince the understanding has the capacity under the influence of the free will to proceed freely with the ideas it has grasped of corporeal things as it were arithmetically by means of addition, subtraction, [etc.], as well as by means of comparison and inference, and even to consider incorporeal, purely intellectual and spiritual things in a variety of ways. (Lange 1724, 112)

Finally, Wolff’s identification of what is ultimately a *cognitive* power as the soul’s nature is also taken to exclude the operation of other, practically-oriented powers: “through [this definition] the will [...] along with the capacity of influencing the body and governing and moving it, fall out entirely” (Lange 1724, 112). In the end, then, the Pietists charge that the prominent role assigned to sensation in Wolff’s account of the nature of the soul is inconsistent with his attribution of higher cognitive and practical faculties to the human soul.⁴

³ See also Budde, 1724 (84–5) and Lange and Wolff 1724 (45).

⁴ Indeed, as Lange points out, Wolff’s account of the nature of the soul is, in this way, consistent with atheism (inasmuch as it follows that we cannot have representations of God and spiritual things) and Spinozism (inasmuch as the body is the object of the idea that constitutes the human mind); see Lange 1724, 113–14 where he appears to refer to Spinoza’s *Ethics* IIp13—“*Objectum ideae humanam mentem constituentis est corpus*”).

Turning to Baumgarten’s discussion of the nature of the soul in the rational psychology of the *Metaphysica*, we find that he, like Wolff, argues that the soul’s nature consists in “the power of representing the universe according to the position of the human body in it” (Baumgarten 2014, §741). Moreover, Baumgarten’s demonstration mirrors that of Wolff. So, the human soul is defined as that “soul in the closest interaction with a human body” (2014, §740), where this involves the soul’s capacity to represent the body and other things by means of the body’s alterations. Given that the soul can act in this way, it follows that it is a power (2014, §210), and inasmuch as the soul represents the body and other things, and given that the body, as a finite changeable thing, is a part of the world, it follows that the human soul is a power for representing the world. Finally, because the position of the human body accounts for why some things are represented clearly and others obscurely (on account of their proximity to the body—Baumgarten 2014, §512), it follows that the soul is a power for representing the universe according to the position of the body.

Despite thus following Wolff fairly closely in his account of the soul’s nature,⁵ Baumgarten evidently also thinks that the Pietists have succeeded in highlighting an inadequacy in Wolff’s treatment, particularly regarding the prominent role accorded to sensation. As an initial concession to the Pietists, who contend that only distinct powers could account for the heterogeneous effects of the soul, Baumgarten allows that understanding and will constitute separate powers in a broad sense (2014, §197) given that both constitute a ground of inherence for certain accidents in the soul (cf. 2014, §216), yet he sides with Wolff in denying that they constitute independently sufficient grounds for their respective alterations:

The human soul knows, desires, and averts. These are partially different actions. Therefore, the human soul has partially different faculties, which are not powers strictly speaking; much rather, these are conceived through the one power of the soul for representing, in the strict sense; [...] nor can they be accurately said to act

⁵ One important difference, however, is Baumgarten’s attribution to the soul of a capacity to move the body (cf. 2014, §§740–1). The basis for this difference will be discussed in the following section.

mutually upon one another, since action is only proper to substance, and even less can they be said to mutually influence one another (2014, §744)

In a rather more significant departure, Baumgarten deviates from Wolff's emphasis on the capacity for sensation by emphasizing a battery of capacities in the *lower* cognitive faculty in his exposition of the soul's power of representation. So, at the outset of his discussion in the rational psychology, Baumgarten writes:

According to the position of its body, the human soul represents to itself (i) a present state of the world, i.e. it senses; (ii) a past state, i.e., it imagines; and (iii) a future state, i.e., it foresees. The sensations of the human soul are representations of all the parts of the world that are simultaneous with it [...]. The imaginations of the human soul are the representations of all the past parts of the world that precede the sensing soul [...]. The foresights of the human soul are representations of the future parts of the world that are to exist after the act of the sensing soul. (2014, §752)

In an apparent acknowledgment of the Pietist criticism that Wolff had laid undue emphasis on sensation, Baumgarten here also makes reference to the faculties of imagination and foresight. While a seemingly minor amendment,⁶ this proves rather consequential considered in terms of his response to the Pietist worry as Baumgarten completely recasts the way in which the “position” of the body serves to limit the power of representation. For Wolff, the body limits the power of representation only insofar as its situation limits our power of representation by providing a *spatial* perspective on the world. For Baumgarten, however, the body limits the power of representation primarily insofar as it makes possible a *temporal* perspective on the world, that is, a perspective on the world as containing past, present, and future states. This is to say that all of the soul's representations are taken to involve the position of body not because they all ultimately stem from alterations of the body, as was the case for Wolff, but rather because it is only with reference to the current state of the body (and the corresponding acts of the sensing soul) that we can take ourselves to have

⁶ It should be noted that while Wolff does mention the imagination in his account, this is only by way of showing how imaginings (and by extension all other representations) “*kommen hierinnen [...] mit den Empfindungen überein*” (1751, §750).

representations of present states of the world (sensations) as well as of its past (imaginings) and future states (foresights). As a result, Baumgarten offers an account of how the body can limit the power of representation without making, as Wolff seems to, all of the soul's alterations ultimately derivative of sensations.

While subtle, this is nonetheless an important, and distinctive, amendment to Wolff's account since, as Baumgarten proceeds to show, the operation of these lower faculties also tokens the presence of the very higher functions of the soul that the Pietists had claimed were absent from Wolff's account. As Clemens Schwaiger has noted (2011, 84), the faculty of foresight (*praevision*) to which Baumgarten here makes reference, along with the faculty of anticipation (*praesagio*), are altogether absent from Wolff's empirical psychology. By the former, Baumgarten understands "my consciousness of my future state, and hence of the future state of the world" (2014, §595), whereas anticipation involves the representation "of a foreseen perception as being the same as something that they will perceive in the future" (2014, §610). So, both foresight and anticipation involve the perception of the connection between future states and the present state of my body, and insofar as this connection is perceived distinctly, or constitutes "intellectual anticipation," Baumgarten identifies it as an element of the faculty of reason (2014, §641). Similarly, these faculties are essential to Baumgarten's account of freedom, inasmuch as freedom is the "faculty of willing or refusing according to one's own preference (2014, §719), but it is only through foresight and anticipation that we can know what our preference in any given situation is (2014, §712). Finally, Baumgarten makes clear that it is also in accordance with these faculties that we can have representations, albeit confused ones, of divine and spiritual things. According to Baumgarten, it is through foresight that I am able to represent the future state of the world, including of my own soul, to myself (2014, §752), and he explicitly identifies prophecy with a "remarkable proficiency for anticipating" (2014, §615). Given all this, Baumgarten concludes that Wolff's account of the nature of the human soul, suitably

amended, is entirely consistent with the attribution of the higher cognitive and appetitive faculties to the soul (2014, §756). Appropriately enough, it is ultimately through repairing the inadequacies of Wolff's account of the *facultas cognoscitiva inferior* that Baumgarten seeks to address the Pietists' concerns, and such a strategy seems to be carefully designed to appeal to Pietist objections to the highly speculative character of Wolff's rational psychology; thus Rüdiger dismisses the power of representation as a "*hypothesis metaphysica*" which could never prove "serviceable or useful" (Rüdiger 1727, 37). In light of this, then, it is not surprising that Baumgarten should choose to revisit the results of *empirical* psychology, rather than engage in further speculation to buttress this account of the nature of the soul.⁷

2. The System of Pre-Established Harmony

As is well known, in the *Deutsche Metaphysik*, Wolff endorses the Leibnizian system of pre-established harmony, though his discussion is distinguished from Leibniz's in a number of respects. For starters, given that the pre-established harmony attempts to account for the ground of the agreement between states of the soul and of the body, Wolff treated it as a topic for psychology (rather than, as Leibniz did, one pertaining to general metaphysics). Indeed, Wolff begins his discussion in the third chapter of the *Deutsche Metaphysik* (concerning what can be known of the soul by means of observation), by considering what experience discloses regarding the relation between the respective states of the soul and the body. Significantly, Wolff there notes that experience discloses 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 of sense by external things

⁷ While it might be thought that Baumgarten's heavy reliance upon the results of his empirical psychology in accounting for the soul's nature violates the strictures of a properly rational psychology, this is not the case as Wolff himself had contended that rational psychology relies upon empirical psychology for the provision of its principles and the confirmation of its results. For more on this, see Dyck 2014, ch. 1 "The Marriage of Reason and Experience."

(1751, §528). Observation alone, however, cannot disclose the ground of this agreement; as Wolff writes, we “perceive nothing further than that two things are simultaneous, namely, an alteration that occurs in the organs of sense, and a thought by means of which the soul is conscious of the external things that cause the alteration” (1751, §529). Given this, it falls to rational psychology to investigate the ground, and to this end, Wolff contrasts three different explanations—the system of natural or physical influence, the system of occasional causes, and the system of pre-established harmony. Concerning the system of physical influence, Wolff contends that such an influence would be contrary to nature inasmuch as it would allow for a motion that does not produce a further motion (in the case of the influence of the body on the soul) and a motion that has no antecedent motion as its cause (in the case of the soul’s influence on the body) (1751, §762). Concerning the occasionalist system, Wolff claims that it relies on what amounts to constant miracles and that it is inconsistent with his demonstration that the soul is a power, or ground of its own alterations (1751, §764). By contrast, the system of pre-established harmony, which does not take the agreement of the states of the soul and the body to be the effect of God’s *immediate* activity but rather holds that God originally imbued both with independent forces, is consistent with the laws of nature and with the demonstration that the soul has a force of its own (1751, §765).

Wolff’s defense of the Leibnizian doctrine of pre-established harmony was, by far, the most controversial aspect of his metaphysics. As is well known, it is through appeal to the supposed threat of the pre-established harmony to military discipline that the Pietists were able to prevail on Frederick Wilhelm I (the “soldier king”) to have Wolff expelled from Prussia.⁸ In addition to worries about the consequences of the pre-established harmony for freedom and responsibility, the Pietists were particularly concerned with the apparent implication that the corporeal world might not exist or, worse, fail to be relevant to the soul’s states. As the Pietists pointed out, Wolff himself makes

⁸ For details regarding the Pietist campaign that led to Wolff’s banishment, see Zeller 1865, 108–39 and Wundt 1945, 230–44.

just such a claim and even goes so far as to compare the pre-established harmony with classical idealism:

Since the body contributes absolutely nothing to the sensations in the soul, everything would proceed just as it does even if no world existed, which even Descartes recognized and, already long before him, the idealists who admitted nothing but souls and spirits and granted to the world no space other than in our thoughts (1751, §777)

Yet, this apparent endorsement of idealism flies in the face of the fact, disclosed in “constant experience,” that the soul “cannot produce a single idea of corporeal things without the assistance of the body and of bodily things” (Lange 1724, 119). In addition, the denial that the body contributes anything to the soul’s external sensations, or indeed that the soul contributes anything to the voluntary movements of the body, has the consequence of severing (or at least drastically altering the terms of) the union between them. This hardly seems to trouble Wolff since, as Lange notes (1724, 125–6), according to Wolff’s own index, the union of soul and body is only discussed in one section (cf. Wolff 1751, §539), and Lange suspects that Wolff is just following Leibniz who had characterized this union as merely metaphysical rather than as constituting a genuine physical union, or a union involving the mutual *influence* of substances upon one another (cf. Leibniz 1985, 103–4). Given, however, that experience discloses the interaction and union between the soul and the body, and since Wolff himself seems to concede that these cannot be accounted for by means of the pre-established harmony, the Pietists conclude in favour of a real influence obtaining between the body and the soul.⁹

Wolff’s response to this deeply-rooted Pietist concern with the pre-established harmony consists, rather surprisingly, in entirely downplaying his commitment to it and denying that any account of the union between the soul and body has any broader significance for his metaphysics.

⁹ See Budde 1724, 16 and Lange 1724, 121: “Because faith, which is supposed according to this system to arise from the essence of the soul itself in accordance with the orderly course of nature, [actually] comes to be through hearing the gospel; therefore the power to believe does not come from the soul but rather penetrates the soul through the preaching of the gospel, and as a result there must be a natural union and community of body and soul.”

So, in his comments on Budde's critique, Wolff denies that the pre-established harmony constitutes a pillar of his thought, and as evidence Wolff notes not only that his introduction of that system takes place after his discussion of the soul's nature (and so that the latter at least does not depend on the former), but also that of the 550 sections devoted to psychology in his *Deutsche Metaphysik*, only 22 are devoted to its defense (Wolff 1724, 96–8). More substantively, Wolff minimizes the significance of 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 for those who continue to have any apprehensions regarding the system of harmony he simply recommends endorsing one of the other two systems (1740a, §289). Indeed, given that each of these three systems fails to find definitive confirmation (or disconfirmation) in experience, Wolff concludes that they amount to mere *hypotheses* (1740a, §99). As Wolff now admits, the observed order of our representations, (1740a, §279), the fact that a sensation occurs simultaneously with the stimulation of the sensory organs (1740a, §§284–5), and the excitation of movements in the body in accordance with the will (1740a, §287), can all be accounted for whether we assume that the ground of this agreement is found in a natural influence, God's immediate activity, or a pre-established harmony. In any case, as Wolff makes clear, the issue of which system is to be preferred is merely a “philosophical question” and so nothing important, such as matters pertaining to morality or politics, turns on providing an answer to it (1740a, §272).

In stark contrast with Wolff's response to the Pietists, Baumgarten offers a strident defense of the pre-established harmony in his own rational psychology in the *Metaphysica*. Baumgarten seems to follow Wolff in making an initial attempt to mitigate the consequences of endorsing the pre-established harmony, as he notes that accepting an account of the ground of the relation between states of the soul and of the body need not imply that it holds between all substances in the world (2014, §762). Nonetheless, in the discussion that follows Baumgarten rejects the system of physical

influence as well as that of occasional causes, and offers what amounts to an unqualified endorsement of the system of pre-established harmony. Against the psychological system of physical influence, Baumgarten follows Wolff's in arguing that it violates the laws of nature in positing an action for which there is no reaction (2014, §764) and, more provocatively, he contests the Pietist assumption that it is only by means of the system of physical influence that human freedom can be preserved. Having shown that physical influence implies that the soul does not act in bringing about its own alterations but that these are brought about through the influence of the body (2014, §765), Baumgarten concludes that the same must hold for the soul's states of willing:

Now according to the psychological system of physical influence, the human soul does not act by its own power in its own harmonic alterations, but really suffers from the body. Therefore, according to the system of physical influence, the soul, while not acting on anything whatsoever in any of its own volitions and nolitions, suffers from the body, which goes against freedom. (2014, §766)

By contrast, Baumgarten defends the pre-established harmony as the only system consistent with the laws of nature, inasmuch as the power to act (and so react) is not denied of the body, and with freedom since the “sensations of the soul, no less than any of its freest thoughts, are sufficiently determined through its own representative power” (2014, §768). Baumgarten accordingly finds no reason to deny the truth of pre-established harmony, and so given that “the system of universal pre-established harmony is a true doctrine” (2014, §463), and that “if universal pre-established harmony is demonstrated, then psychological pre-established harmony is likewise demonstrated” (2014, §762), he concludes that the latter is also true.

With this endorsement of the pre-established harmony, it might seem that Baumgarten has chosen simply to ignore the Pietist objections to Wolff. Yet this would be to overlook the subtle revisions Baumgarten makes to Wolff's account that significantly change the contours of the debate. As Watkins (2005, 75–7) has noted, Baumgarten adapts the Leibnizian distinction between real and ideal dependence to his own purposes in the *Metaphysica*. Real influence, for Baumgarten, takes place

when the suffering of a substance that undergoes a change on the part of another substance is not at the same time an action on the part of the suffering substance, whereas ideal influence takes place when that suffering is, in fact, at the same time an action on the part of that substance (Baumgarten 2014, §212). Given this, Baumgarten proceeds to argue that all of the substances in the world influence one another, inasmuch as they are parts of the same world (cf. 2014, §408), and since this implies that each substance contains the ground for every change that happens in the world, a “universal harmony” obtains among substances in the world (2014, §357 and §400). What this means, then, is that the system of physical influence and pre-established harmony are not to be distinguished in terms of the former accepting and the latter denying the possibility of interaction, but rather that they are distinguished in terms of what *kind* of influence this interaction is taken to involve. So, the system of physical influence will uphold the *real* mutual influence of all substances in the world, whereas the pre-established harmony will defend the “*ideal* mutual influence of all the world’s substances” (2014, §448—my emphasis), but where both are taken to acknowledge the interaction that takes place among the substances in the world.

As it relates to the specific issue of which system best accounts for the ground of the relation between the states of the soul and the body, Baumgarten makes use of these revisions to directly address the Pietist worries about the pre-established harmony. In particular, Baumgarten takes up the Pietist claim that the interaction between the soul and body, as well as their natural union, is disclosed by means of experience, and proceeds to show how the psychological system of pre-established harmony can be rendered consistent with these facts. So, Baumgarten contends near the conclusion of his empirical psychology, in addition to observing the influence of the soul upon the body in the voluntary motions of the body (inasmuch as the ground of the motion of the body can be known from the power of the soul—2014, §734), every instance of external sensation provides an occasion to observe the influence of the body upon the soul:

In external sensations, it is possible to sufficiently know from the power of the body why a certain alteration occurs in the soul. Therefore, the body acts upon the soul, and influences it. Therefore, there is mutual influence, mutual harmony, and interaction between my soul and body (2014, §736)

Given that this mutual influence obtains between the soul and body, Baumgarten claims that they do constitute a union, and because the soul (as opposed to other substances) stands in the closest possible relation to the body, Baumgarten claims that “there is no union as great as this between my soul and any other body” (2014, §739). As Baumgarten makes clear at the outset of his rational psychology, it is the observed interaction between the soul and the body that supplies the starting point for all of the various psychological systems, including the pre-established harmony:

PSYCHOLOGICAL SYSTEMS are doctrines that seem well-suited for explaining the interaction of the soul and the body in the human being. [...] None are possible aside from the psychological systems of pre-established harmony, physical influence, and perhaps occasional causes. (2014, §761)

Rather than conceding, then, as Wolff does, that the pre-established harmony denies the interaction between soul and body, Baumgarten instead claims that it is the undeniable fact of the interaction between the soul and the body the ground of which is to be investigated by *all* of the competing systems. Accordingly, by carving out space within the pre-established harmony for a kind of influence between substances, albeit one distinct from real influence, Baumgarten is able to respond to the Pietist worries about the role of the body in the states of the soul without retreating to the system of physical influence or downgrading the harmony to a mere hypothesis.

3. The Immortality of the Soul and its State after Death

Turning to the final, but arguably most important topic of rational psychology, that of the soul’s immortality and state after death, we find that it is here that Baumgarten offers the most extensive and significant additions to Wolff’s original discussion. Wolff, in contrast to Descartes (cf.

Descartes 1984, 10), takes the immortality of the soul to involve more than its incorruptibility, or mere survival of the death of the body, which in any case follows from the fact that as a simple substance it cannot perish through the dissolution of its parts (1751, §§742, §922). What also matters in the case of the immortality of the human soul is that it preserves its higher capacities in the afterlife, which is to say that it maintains a state of distinct (rather than obscure) perception, and that it retains its personality. With respect to the former, Wolff observes that it could be the case that the soul survives the death of the body but is no longer capable of distinct perceptions, a condition likened to the soul's falling asleep (1751, §925) or *psychopannychia* (1740b, §739). Even with the soul's survival of the death of the body in a state of distinct perceptions, however, the demonstration that the soul preserves its state of personality, or its consciousness that it is the same soul in the afterlife as it was previously when it was united with a body (1751, §924), is still required for the genuine immortality of the soul as any demonstration that fails to show that the soul retains its personality will be inconsistent with Scripture and even undermine the justification for punishment (and reward) in the afterlife (cf. 1740b §740).

Wolff thus proceeds to demonstrate that the soul will retain its condition of distinct perception and personality in the afterlife. Concerning the former, Wolff admits that, given his claim that the soul's nature consists in representing the world in accordance with the position of the body, it would seem that once the sensory organs cease to function the soul must lose this capacity, leaving it with only confused and obscure perceptions. Wolff claims, however, that the soul must be taken to exist previously to its union with the body (cf. 1740b §727), in which condition the soul's sensations have little clarity (1751, §925). Rather than losing its obscure perceptions when the soul is united to the body, many of its perceptions become clear, and Wolff infers from this that "in great changes the soul retains that which it has, and receives still more than it previously had" (1751, §925). Since the death of the body will also amount to a great change, then, it follows that the soul

will retain its clear and distinct perceptions and indeed that some perceptions will become more distinct when the body perishes. With respect to the preservation of the soul's personality, Wolff argues that, given that past perceptions are reproduced in virtue of their similarity to present perceptions (1740b, §117), which Wolff terms the "law of imagination," when a clear perception that is had after the death of the body and which has something in common with those of our embodied life then the past perception will be reproduced and we will recall having had that perception previously (cf. 1738, §173, §175). This implies, then, that even after the body has perished the soul will continue to be conscious that it is the same soul as it had been previously when it was united to the body (1740b, §746). Accordingly, since he has shown that the soul does not perish with the body and that it retains its higher capacities of distinct perception and personality, Wolff concludes that the soul is immortal (1740b, §739, §747).

In his treatment of the soul's state after death in the rational psychology in the *Metaphysica*, Baumgarten accepts Wolff's contention that immortality involves more than mere incorruptibility and also makes use of recognizably Wolffian arguments to demonstrate that the soul is immortal. So, Baumgarten claims that immortality requires the preservation of the capacity for distinct perception, or spirituality (2014, §402), as well as the preservation of its personality (2014, §641), or its capacity to "call to mind distinctly its own state in this life" (2014, §783). Against the *psychopannychists*, who would deny that the soul maintains its spirituality in the afterlife, Baumgarten argues, similarly to Wolff, that the clarity and distinctness of our perceptions should increase rather than decrease after the death of the body. Given that the clear and distinct perceptions that the soul has in this life are realities which, as realities, are productive of future states of the soul,¹⁰ and given that the soul will subsist indefinitely after the death of the body, it is more natural that the perceptions it had in this life will continue to issue in distinct perceptions in the afterlife rather than in something less perfect:

¹⁰ This is Baumgarten's version of Leibniz's claim that the "present is pregnant with the future"; cf. Leibniz 1985, 341.

Before its death, the human soul had clearly or distinctly known something. This reality, which is never completely sterile insofar as it is a reality, has nothing but realities indefinitely as logical consequences and it is indefinitely in a universal nexus with the spirituality, intellect, and reason of the soul, which again are realities, and which as such have nothing but realities as logical consequences, and it is indefinitely in a universal nexus with the spirituality, intellect, and reason of the soul, which again are realities, and which as such have nothing but realities indefinitely as logical consequences (Baumgarten 2014, §782)

Concerning the personality of the soul in the afterlife, Baumgarten begins by pointing out that the soul must be taken to stand in the closest interaction with some body in the afterlife, and accordingly, that this constitutes a union (2014, §785). Baumgarten then makes use of reasoning similar to that deployed by Wolff to argue, against the “friends of the cup of forgetfulness” (2014, §783), that the soul can be shown to preserve its state of personality:

The human soul that endures after the death of this body is in the closest interaction with another one [i.e., body]. In its different states, this new body will sometimes be more congruent with the former body, and sometime less so. Therefore, it will have some state in which it will be the most congruent with the body that, in this life, was in the closest connection with the soul, and hence it will be the same. (2014, §786)

As Baumgarten argues, inasmuch as the state of the new body with which the soul is united in the afterlife will at some point resemble or be congruent with the state of the old one, it follows that the soul will at some point be in the same state that it was previously and, that it will recall that it is the same soul now as it was previously in this life, presumably on account of something like Wolff’s law of imagination.¹¹ Baumgarten thus follows Wolff in demonstrating the soul’s continued capacity for distinct perception of for consciousness of its own identity in the afterlife.

In their critical remarks on the Wolffian discussion, however, the Pietists focus less on the details of this demonstration of the soul’s immortality than on what is conspicuously absent from the characterization of the soul’s state after death, namely, any mention of the soul’s *practical*

¹¹ That this produces a recollection of the soul’s previous state in connection with the body is suggested by Baumgarten’s reference, in his initial account of personality at §641, to his exposition of memory where he characterizes memory as the perception that “a reproduced representation [is] the same one as one I had formerly produced”(2014, §579).

capacities and condition in the afterlife, and in particular any discussion of the soul's capacity for free action or whether it exists in a state of blessedness or damnation. Indeed, the Pietists contend that Wolff's focus on the preservation of the soul's *cognitive* capacities in the afterlife is entirely commensurate with his unusual characterization of God's purpose in guaranteeing the immortality of the soul. According to Wolff, God created the world so that human beings could recognize God's perfection (1751, §1045), and this recognition would, of course, be impossible should the soul not survive the death of the body and retain its higher intellectual functions in the afterlife. Yet, the Pietists contend that were this God's purpose for the soul in preserving it after the death of the body, rather than for instance rewarding those who perform good works out of the love of God, then this would have the effect of countering any incentive to act well in this life. As Hoffmann writes, on Wolff's account the righteous have no reason to hope for any particular reward through God's providence since "God is not supposed to have looked after the blessedness of rational creatures but rather the perfection of the world as His main purpose" (1736, 61), and as a result we have "neither our being, nor our inner or outer goodness to thank for the kindness of God" (1736, 60). Further undermining the necessary connection between virtue and happiness in the afterlife, Wolff's claim that each human soul will come to recognize the perfection of God (and will require improved higher faculties in order to do so) would seem to imply that *every* human soul, worthy or otherwise, will gain some reward in the afterlife.

Baumgarten evidently recognized these significant oversights in Wolff's discussion of the soul's immortality. Indeed, Baumgarten clearly signals his keen interest in the "*moral condition*"¹² of the soul at the very outset of his discussion of the soul's state after death, where he declares that "[t]he human soul preserves its spirituality, *freedom*, and personality after death" (2014, §782—my

¹² This phrase is found in Meier 1746, §70.

emphasis). That the soul should preserve its state of freedom in the afterlife is presented by Baumgarten as a consequence of the preservation of its spirituality:

the real and natural logical consequences of all of these cannot be increased [i.e., extended] indefinitely without distinct perceptions, conclusions, and volitions or nolitions. Hence the human soul, which naturally preserves its nature after death, at least eventually shows an intellectual life in spiritual actions, and the psychopannychists are in error. (Baumgarten 2014, §782)

So, provided that the soul retains its capacity for distinct perception, the soul will also preserve its capacity for rational desire, or volition, understood as the desire for that which is “distinctly represented by the intellectual faculty” (2014, §689). Insofar as a voluntary action is just an action that is determined through rational desire, and that all voluntary actions are free (2014, §721), it follows that the soul will also preserve its capacity for free action (at least in the sense that Wolff and Baumgarten understand it) in the afterlife.

As would be expected, the remainder of Baumgarten’s discussion of immortality is devoted to showing that the soul’s happiness (or unhappiness) in the life to come depends upon the perfection it has attained in this life. Baumgarten claims that the soul’s happiness consists on the one hand in its prosperity, or perfections that depend on physical goods, and on the other in its blessedness, or perfections that depend on moral goods or goods relating to freedom (2014, §787). For the duration of this life, the human soul’s condition of happiness (or unhappiness) continues to improve (or degrade) for as long as it is altered; so “[t]he more good alterations there are than evil ones, the more they posit happiness than unhappiness, whereas the more evil alterations there are than good, the more they posit unhappiness than happiness” (2014, §789). On account of Baumgarten’s demonstration that the soul will continue to be altered in the afterlife (cf. 2014, §785), it follows that the soul will continue to increase (or decline) in perfection, and accordingly that it will continually approach a condition of blessedness (or damnation) in the afterlife:

The human soul that endures after the death of the body continues to alter. Therefore, its happiness or unhappiness is increased in any given moment of its endurance. Therefore, either the human soul that endures after the death of the body will enjoy greater happiness than in this life, and is a BLESSED SOUL, or it will be troubled by greater unhappiness, and is a DAMNED SOUL. (2014, §791).¹³

This is just to say that the soul's blessedness in the afterlife is the consequence of the perfections (including moral perfections) attained by the human soul in this life and, accordingly, that we also have an incentive to act to increase our own perfection in this life.¹⁴

With respect to the topics of the nature of the soul, the system of pre-established harmony, and the soul's immortality and state after death, we have seen that Baumgarten holds the Wolffian line in the face of Pietist criticisms. This would seem to place Baumgarten's rational psychology squarely within the Wolffian tradition yet, as has also become clear, Baumgarten departs from Wolff in a number of subtle but nonetheless important respects. So, while Baumgarten follows Wolff in contending that the nature of the soul consists in the power of representing the world according to the position of the body, he reconceives the role of the body in limiting that power on the basis of a more robust account of the lower cognitive faculty. Baumgarten also defends, as Wolff does not, the unqualified truth of the pre-established harmony and emphasizes its consistency with the observed interaction between soul and body. Lastly, but most importantly, Baumgarten accepts Wolff's proofs for the soul's maintenance of a condition of distinct perception and personality in the afterlife, but goes beyond Wolff in contending that this is quite compatible with the preservation of a condition of freedom, and with the soul's blessedness (or damnation), in the afterlife. In this frequent recourse to observation rather than speculation, and in this emphasis on the close connection between the soul and its body and on the practical aspect of the state of the soul after death, the influence of the

¹³ One can discern the influence of Baumgarten's notion of continual progress in the afterlife upon Mendelssohn's argument for immortality in his *Phaedon*; see the third dialogue (2013, 168–73) and the preface (2013, 63) where Mendelssohn acknowledges Baumgarten's influence on his proofs for immortality.

¹⁴ As Baumgarten will stress, that “the prosperity and blessedness, or happiness of spirits, to the degree possible in the best world, [a]re the ends of creation,” nonetheless conforms with Wolff's account of God's end in creating the world inasmuch as it contributes to “the glory of God [and] for his celebration” (2014, §948).

Pietist tradition upon Baumgarten's thought can clearly be discerned. In the end, then, we can see that Baumgarten's distinctive "*Doppelgesicht als Pietist und Aufklärer*" (Schwaiger 2011, 81) is nowhere clearer than in his rational psychology.

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