

**Corey W. Dyck.** *Kant and Rational Psychology*. Oxford University Press 2014. 288 pp. \$74.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780199688296).

Kant's Paralogisms have increasingly drawn attention over the last two decades as scholars recognized their significance for Kant's overall argument in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*CPR*) and, more broadly, the history of philosophy. One need only consider the host of books from notable names that have published on the topic, like Allison's *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (2004), Ameriks' *Kant's Theory of Mind* (2000), Grier's *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion* (2001), and Kitcher's *Kant's Transcendental Psychology* (1990) and *Kant's Thinker* (2011). Traditionally, scholars have regarded Descartes' and Leibniz's classical rationalism as the object of Kant's critique of *Seelenlehre*. Dyck departs significantly from this interpretation, contending that Wolff and Baumgarten are the primary objects of Kant's critique of the soul and that contextualizing the Paralogisms with respect to Kant's immediate predecessors has decisive implications for understanding them.

The book begins by tracing the development of rational psychology as a sub-discipline of metaphysics. The emergence of rational psychology as a discipline coincided with its methodological justification rooted first and foremost in experience. This presents a telling point of departure from its treatment by classical rationalism, 'In contrast to the narrowly rationalistic approach to the soul which would proceed completely independent of experience, the rational psychology pioneered by the theorists of the German tradition relies essentially upon empirical psychology' (9). This difference proves decisive. By having its foundation in experience, rational psychology proves to be 'uniquely a creature of the German Enlightenment,' seeking to 'incorporate what it took to be key insights of empiricistic thinkers like Bacon, Newton, and especially Locke' (10). Metaphysical descriptions of the soul, like its substantiality, are ultimately derived from 'what can be known empirically of the thinking subject' (11). In keeping with this context, Dyck begins with an exposition of Wolff's and Baumgarten's empirically driven rational psychologies in the first and second chapters before exposing each of the Paralogisms in the remaining five chapters of the book, many of which open with further reflections on Kant's immediate predecessors and his pre-critical texts.

For Dyck, this immediate context shapes the aim of Kant's critique of *Seelenlehre* to 'not only expose the erroneous metaphysical claims but also account for the grounds for the rational psychologist's mistaken reliance upon what, for Kant, amounts to an empirical intuition of the soul' (11). This latter point is particularly important, for it is by mistaking 'the unity in the synthesis of thoughts for a *perceived* unity in the subject of these thoughts' (*CPR*, A402) that the rational psychologist justifies applying empirical categories like substance for proving and describing the soul. When rational psychology has its ground in empirical psychology, much depends on what is perceived and what can be inferred from this perception. For Dyck, Kant's critique of the soul in the Paralogisms hinges on the way that he prohibits the representation of thinking ('I think') as a basis for positing the concept of the I or soul, and by doing so, safeguards against false inferences, including the most prevalent 'hypostatized consciousness (*apperceptionis substantiate*).'

Scholars like Kitcher interpret Kant's shift from pre-critical to critical as a move away from affirming rational psychology's reliance upon experience toward a conception of rational psychology as proceeding independent of experience; in this way, the critique of *Seelenlehre* in *CPR* is seen as engaging narrowly the positions of classical rationalism. Alternatively, Dyck argues, 'Where Kant

had previously taken this concept [the ‘I’] to have its origin in reflection upon our inner experience, he now stresses in the *KrV* that this representation is inferred from the merely formal *I think*, and I will argue that it is as a direct consequence of this new foundation of the concept of the soul, rather than simply a change in his conception of rational psychology, that Kant is led to reassess the method and findings of that discipline’ (71). If other interpreters have largely focused on Kant’s repudiation of intellectual intuition to characterize his conception of rational psychology independent of experience, Dyck emphasizes how the distinction between the representation of the ‘I think’ and the ‘I’ or soul is operative for rational psychologists in a way that suggests that the experience of the former conditions the possibility of coming to knowledge and understanding of the latter. For instance, Kant gives a succinct account of this distinction in *CPR* B428—‘The proposition I think or I exist as thinking is an empirical proposition. Such a proposition is grounded on empirical intuition, consequently also on the object thought, as an appearance; and thus it seems [*scheint*] as if, according to our theory, the soul, even in thinking, is completely transformed into appearance [*Erscheinung*]’ (88). Elaborating on this text, Dyck concludes, ‘Given, then, that reason sets out from a representation of the I think that is initially taken in connection to an empirically given manifold of representations, this process has the consequence that the I or soul seems to be given empirically as well...Of course, it is just this accompanying empirical manifold from which reason must abstract in framing the idea of the soul, yet the fact that the I think must originally be considered in connection with the empirical manifold means that the resulting idea of the I or soul would, like any concept generated through the process of abstraction, appear to be empirical’ (88). For Dyck the way Kant frames the error of the rational psychologists in *CPR*—taking the perception of the ‘I think’ in experience as a basis for justifying claims about the ‘I’ or soul—appears strikingly similar to the empirically driven method of the rational psychologies of Kant’s immediate predecessors reflected in Kant’s pre-critical works.

Dyck finds additional support for his interpretation in the fallacy of subreption. Both the conception of this error in the German tradition and the way Kant appeals to it at the conclusion of the Paralogisms indicates for Dyck a continuity between Kant’s pre-critical and critical accounts of rational psychology. In *CPR* A402, Kant names the great temptation of the rational psychologist—‘nothing is more natural and seductive than the illusion of taking the unity in the synthesis of thoughts for a *perceived* unity in the subject of these thoughts. One could call it the subreption of hypostatized consciousness (*apperceptionis substantiate*)’ (85). Wolff and Baumgarten defined subreption as an error of false inference that results when appeals to experience are mistaken for basic (*Grund-Urtheil*) or intuitive judgments (*judicia intuitiva*) when they are actually purely inferred, discursive (*Nach-Urtheil*) judgments. By taking the ‘I think’ as the basis for positing an ‘I,’ the rational psychologist exceeds the limits of experience and mistakenly characterizes the ‘I’ empirically as a ‘substance.’ Thus, “‘the fallacy of subreption in experience’ is that error “where we seem to experience that which we do not experience in the least”” (86). To assert, then, that the soul is a substance, one must transgress the limits of experience and hypostasize or objectify the ‘I’ as something perceived. Kant straightforwardly rejects the possibility of the ‘I’ as an object of perception, ‘But this unity is only the unity of thinking, through which no object is given; and thus the category of substance, which always presupposes a given intuition, cannot be applied to it, and hence this subject cannot be cognized at all’ (B421). For Dyck, Kant’s delimitation of the possibility of experiencing the ‘I’ indicates that he is critiquing the rational psychologies of Wolff and Baumgarten since the classical rationalism of Descartes and Leibniz never held that the ‘I’ is perceived empirically through experience.

By attending to the immediate context of Kant's critique of *Seelenlehre*, Dyck offers an important perspective for understanding the Paralogisms. This context underscores how the development of rational psychology as an empirically-based discipline seeking to keep pace with developments in early modern science informs Kant's critique of *Seelenlehre* and his critique of metaphysics generally. For this context to be appreciated, Dyck insists on a strict demarcation between interpreting Kant's Paralogisms in terms of Descartes' and Leibniz's classical rationalism and interpreting them in their immediate Wolffian and Baumgartian context. Dyck may exaggerate this difference. Even if one admits that many of the positions represented in the Paralogisms are more closely representative of Wolff and Baumgarten (and this is a significant if), there remain compelling reasons to think that Kant thought that he was dispatching the entire rational psychology tradition (from Descartes to his immediate predecessors) with his critique of *Seelenlehre*. At the conclusion of the book, Dyck encourages his readers to see 'whether the interpretation I have offered of the main line of criticism in the Paralogisms actually leaves room for any substantive engagement with the narrowly rationalistic psychology of...Descartes and Leibniz' (226). Dyck follows this by stating, 'Given that neither are taken to fall prey to the illusory appearance of the soul as empirically given, their predications of the concepts of substance, simplicity, identity, and existence of the soul would not seem to be objectionable for the same reasons as Kant found the Wolffian tradition's assertions to be' (227). While it is true that Descartes and Leibniz did not consider the soul as empirically given through perception by experience, it seems apparent that Kant thinks that the metaphysics implicated in the Cartesian description of the soul as a *res cogitans* and *ego autem substantia* mischievously borrows, knowingly or not, on empirical categories like 'thing' and 'substance.' This is confirmed in the fourth paralogism where Kant famously proffers his critique of idealism, 'The transcendental idealist, on the other hand, can be an empirical realist or, as he is called, a dualist, i.e. he can grant the existence of matter without going outside mere self-consciousness and without assuming anything more than the certainty of presentations in me, and hence the *cogito, ergo sum*...The transcendental idealist is, therefore, an empirical realist and concedes to matter as appearance an actuality that does not need to be inferred but is directly perceived.' For Kant, the empirical method obtains in idealism though its conditions are decided singular on the certitude of the '*cogito, ergo sum*' rather than intuition. Though there is a significant difference between the German tradition and classical rationalism, Kant seems to think that his critique of the empirical basis of knowledge of the soul extends to both.

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