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Saulo de Freitas Araujo
Thiago Constâncio Ribeiro Pereira
Thomas Sturm *Editors*

The Force of an Idea

New Essays on Christian Wolff's Psychology

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Preface

This book is the result of a long-term dialogue on the history and philosophy of psychology, which began in 2009 at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. In 2012, the third editor was invited by the first to visit the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (Brazil), teach a master class in the new Graduate Program in History and Philosophy of Psychology, and start conversations with his master's and doctoral students. In 2013, the first editor went to Spain as visiting scholar in the Department of Philosophy at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, where the third editor was teaching and doing research. Then, in 2015, the second editor also went to Barcelona to develop part of his PhD training under the supervision of the third editor.

The common question that has provoked and sustained our conversations and collaborations is the role of eighteenth-century German philosophy and psychology in the development of psychological science. Doubtlessly, Christian Wolff (1679–1754) has a prominent place in this discussion. However, although his work is often referenced, it has not received enough attention and analysis in the history and philosophy of psychology. Wolff's psychology was prominent especially (though not exclusively) in eighteenth-century German philosophy and psychology, as witnessed by the fact that it led to a genuine school of psychology and was critically discussed until well into the nineteenth century, before it became neglected and forgotten.

In 2018, we decided that an up-to-date, comprehensive collection of essays on Wolff's psychology, its contexts, contents, and consequences was both worthwhile and a long overdue enterprise. We wanted to make Wolff's psychology more visible not only for scholars of early modern thought but also for a wider audience in history and philosophy of the human sciences, interested in the development and fundamentals of psychological science. The year 2020, in which most of the work on this volume was carried out, marks also the tercentennial of Wolff's *Deutsche Metaphysik* (The German Metaphysics), the first systematic presentation of his psychology—a good occasion for a reassessment of that psychology.

We have invited prominent international scholars, according to their respective expertise both in Wolff's work and in the topic to be addressed. They are among the

best representatives of Wolff-scholarship. Their contributions focus on the major guiding ideas of Wolff's psychology, both empirical and rational, its structure, its main innovations, its relation to other areas of Wolff's work, as well as its impact on later authors, schools, and research practices. As editors, our aim is to do justice to Wolff and his psychological insights—some of which, albeit often in different disguises, are still alive today, though their founder is no longer credited. This is the force of an idea: it develops a life of its own.

Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, Brazil — Saulo de Freitas Araujo
Volta Redonda, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil — Thiago Constâncio Ribeiro Pereira
Bellaterra (Barcelona), Spain — Thomas Sturm

Citations and Translations

References to Wolff in the literature are not standardized. Although most scholars tend to use Wolff's *Gesammelte Werke*, published by Georg Olms (Germany), there are many exceptions. Moreover, the way to refer to passages of his work is sometimes idiosyncratic, with abbreviations and rules created for a particular purpose. For the nonspecialist reader, this can generate confusion.

In order to make the references and citations homogeneous throughout the book and more accessible to nonspecialists, we have adopted APA (American Psychological Association) style, according to the seventh edition of its *Publication Manual*. However, given the specificity of the majority of Wolff's writings, which are ordered in numbered paragraphs, we have followed the common practice of giving the corresponding paragraph number(s) for both indirect and direct citations. In the latter case, the corresponding page number(s) is also given. The complete references to Wolff's work are always given at the end of each chapter.

As for the translations, we have adopted the general rule of rendering all original passages in English. However, all authors are responsible for their own translations as well as for style.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank, first, all contributors for sharing the central idea of our project and accepting our invitation. This project could not have been carried out without their participation.

Saulo Araujo would like to thank the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development in Brazil (CNPq) for financial support.

Thiago Pereira would like to thank the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development in Brazil (CNPq) for financial support during his PhD (2015–2016), as well as Marcos Pereira, Rogéria Ribeiro, and Fabíola Brandão for their personal support during the preparation of this volume. He also thanks his colleagues from the psychology department at the Fluminense Federal University, especially Gustavo Ferraz and Roberto Preu, for the continuous intellectual stimulation.

We are equally grateful to Bruno Fiuza at Springer for his constant encouragement and support.

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About the Editors

Saulo de Freitas Araujo is professor of history and philosophy of psychology at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora in the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil. He is also director of the Wilhelm Wundt Center for the History and Philosophy of Psychology (NUHFIP) at the same institution. His work focuses on the historical development and philosophical foundations of scientific psychology, especially in the German tradition. Among numerous publications, he is author of *Wundt and the Philosophical Foundations of Psychology: A Reappraisal* (Springer, 2016).

Thiago Constâncio Ribeiro Pereira is professor at the Fluminense Federal University (Psychology Department, Volta Redonda-RJ, Brazil), where he also leads the FHIPSI (The Philosophy and History of Psychology Research Group). His work deals with the history and philosophy of psychology, focusing on Christian Wolff's psychology (on which he developed his PhD thesis entitled "The Unity of Psychology in Christian Wolff's Thought"), eighteenth-century psychology, and the mind–body relationship.

Thomas Sturm is ICREA research professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain). His work centers on three areas: Kant's philosophy, theories of rationality at the intersection of philosophy and psychology, and the relations between philosophy and history of science. His main publications include *Kant und die Wissenschaften vom Menschen* (2009) and *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality* (coauthored with L. Daston, M. Gordin, P. Erickson, J. Klein, and R. Lemov, 2013). He has published numerous articles in journals such as *Erkenntnis, Kant-Studien*, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, and *Synthese*.

About the Contributors

Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero PhD, is a research fellow and lecturer in philosophy (philosophy of language, history of philosophy) at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy). His publications include two books (*Filum cogitandi: Leibniz e la conoscenza simbolica*, Milan 2007; *Conoscenza simbolica: Pensiero e linguaggio in Christian Wolff e nella prima età moderna*, Hildesheim, 2009) and several articles primarily focused on Leibniz, Wolff, their sources, and their influence. His research is devoted to early modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant with a special interest in metaphysics, the theories of knowledge, language, and modalities, mereology, the mind–body problem, rational theology, and the philosophy of biology and medicine.

Sonia Carboncini did her doctorate in Florence with Claudio Cesa and later in Trier with Norbert *Hinske*. She worked at the *Leibniz Archiv* in Hannover and at the *Leibniz Forschungsstelle* in Münster. She participated in the edition of the *Gesammelte Werke* by Christian Wolff. She has published numerous works on Wollf's metaphysics, on the influence of Leibniz upon it, and on the relations between Wolff and the environment of the French Encyclopedists.

Corey W. Dyck is professor of philosophy and faculty scholar for arts and humanities at Western University. He is the author of *Kant and Rational Psychology* (Oxford 2014), coeditor (with Falk Wunderlich) of *Kant and his German Contemporaries* (Cambridge 2018), and is the translator and editor of the collection *Early Modern German Philosophy: 1690–1750* (Oxford 2019). In addition, he has published a number of articles on Kant's philosophy and its history in various academic journals including *Journal of the History of Philosophy, Kant-Studien*, and *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*. He has held visiting positions at Oxford University, Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, and at the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, where he was also recently an Alexander von Humboldt research fellow.

Werner Ludwig Euler is a visiting professor of philosophy in the Latin American Institute of Economy, Society, and Politics (ILAESP) at the Federal University for Latin American Integration in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil. Between 2012 and 2016, he was a visiting professor in the Department of Philosophy at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) in Florianópolis, Brazil. His work focuses on ancient, modern, and contemporary philosophy, covering the fields of theoretical and practical philosophy, the mind–body relationship, philosophy of medicine, logic, and metaphysics (ontology), aesthetics, and philosophy of art. He has participated in many international conferences on philosophy. Among numerous publications, he is author of a voluminous commentary on Kant: *Natur und Freiheit. Kommentar zu den Einleitungen in Kants "Kritik der Urteilskraft"* (Meiner, 2018).

Ursula Goldenbaum is professor at the Department of Philosophy at Emory University. She held academic positions at research institutions in Berlin and Potsdam in the GDR, then in Germany, before joining Emory in 2004. Her subject of research is the history of early modern philosophy. She edited writings and letters of Leibniz (1991), Mendelssohn's translation of Rousseau's Treatise on the Origin of Inequality (2000), and the Wertheim Bible (2011) and published monographs on Spinoza (1993), on the controversy about the principle of least action (2002), and two volumes on the public debates of German enlightenment (2004). She published about 100 articles about seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers, especially on Leibniz and Spinoza. In 2007–2008, she was a member of the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton. She is currently the president of the North American Leibniz Society and serves since 2012 as a board member of the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*.

Jean-François Goubet is professor of philosophy of education at the *Institut National Supérieur du Professorat et de l'Education* of the University of Lille, France. He wrote several articles and book chapters on Wolff's psychology and was the editor of two volumes, *Die Psychologie Christian Wolffs. Systematische und Historische Untersuchungen* (with Oliver-Pierre Rudolph, 2004) and *Psychologie et Métaphysique. Autour de Christian Wolff* (2003). His work has the classical German philosophy for object, with emphasis on psychology, logic, metaphysics, aesthetics, and also education. He signed contributions on Meier, Reinhold, Kant, Fichte, Herbart, and Natorp.

Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter studied philosophy, musicology, and sociology at the Westfälische Wilhelmsuniversität Münster, graduating with a thesis on Kant's concept of a faculty and its precursors in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German thought. He now teaches philosophy at the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow (Russian Federation). He is mainly interested in the history of German philosophy between Melanchthon and Kant.

Dieter Hüning has studied at Philipps-Universität Marburg and at Freie Universität Berlin. He obtained his PhD with a dissertation on "Freiheit und Herrschaft in der

Rechtsphilosophie des Thomas Hobbes" (*Liberty and dominion in Thomas Hobbes' philosophy of law*) in 1996. In 2009, he completed his Habilitation on "Die Begründung des Strafrechts in der neuzeitlichen Naturrechtslehre" (*The Different Foundations of the Right to Punish in Early Modern Natural Law Doctrines*). Since 2010, he has been assistant professor at the Kant-Forschungsstelle at the University of Trier.

Ferdinando Luigi Marcolungo is currently a full professor at the University of Verona. He has conducted research in the field of theoretical philosophy, publishing both books and essays on the issue of knowledge in the works of Giuseppe Zamboni (1875–1950). Also, he has carried out researches in moral philosophy, publishing several essays on the theme. Alongside, he has worked regularly on the thought of Christian Wolff, with essays on: *Wolff e il possibile* (1982) Padova: Antenore; *Christian Wolff tra psicologia empirica e psicologia razionale* (Ed.) (2007) Hildesheim-New York: Olms; *Christian Wolff e l'ermeneutica dell'Illuminismo* (Ed.) (2017) Hildesheim-New York: Olms. In this context, he has devoted many papers to the careful examination of different aspects of Wolff's rationalism and its reception in eighteenth-century Italian philosophy.

Michael Bennett McNulty is assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis-St. Paul. His research focuses on the history of philosophy of science, and he has written extensively on Kant's views on the sciences, especially his conception of chemistry. McNulty's research has appeared in journals such as *Synthese*, *Kant-Studien*, *Kantian Review*, and *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*.

Manuela Mei studied philosophy and history at the University of L'Aquila and received her degree in philosophy in the AY 1998–2002. After a scholarship at the University of Düsseldorf in 2004, in autumn 2005 she was admitted to the PhD course at the University of Florence (2005–2008) and on April 2009 received her PhD about the Christian Wolff's theory of the *pars inferior animae* faculties. During her research activity in Trier, she analyzed the birth of Wolff's concept of *Psychometria*. In 2010, she received a scholarship from the Herzog August Bibliothek of Wolfenbüttel and focused her attention on the source of Wolff's psychological theory of the soul. She took part in national and international conventions about Enlightenment and published scientific articles, essays, and in 2014 the translation of the Georg Friedrich Meier's *Versuch einer allgemeinen Auslegungskunst* of 1757. She has been a history and philosophy high school teacher since 2012.

Andreas Rydberg is a researcher at the Department of History of Science and Ideas at Uppsala University, Sweden. In 2017, Rydberg defended the dissertation *Inner Experience: An Analysis of Scientific Experience in Early Modern Germany*. This work charted scientific experience in the intersection between philosophy, theology, and medicine by looking at a number of cases (Wolff among others) in the Prussian town of Halle, in early and mid-eighteenth-century Germany. Since 2017,

he has been working on various shorter projects with a special focus on identity formation, *cultura animi*, and therapy of the soul. In spring 2019, he began a larger 3-year project on self-knowledge and objectivity in eighteenth-century Germany.

Mario Spezzapria is professor at the Department of Philosophy of the Federal University of Mato Grosso, and post-doc researcher at the University of São Paulo with a CNPq grant. At present, he deals with the history of German philosophy in the eighteenth century, in particular with questions of aesthetics and anthropology as developments of empirical psychology in *popular philosophy* and *Wolffianism*. He published *Credenza e ragione scettica: L'influenza di Hume nel pensiero di J. G. Hamann.* Prefazione di Márcio Suzuki. Torino: Nuova Trauben, 2017.

Márcio Suzuki is professor of aesthetics at the Department of Philosophy of the University of São Paulo (Brazil) and CNPq researcher. He is the author of *O gênio romântico. Crítica e história da filosofia em Friedrich Schlegel* (São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1998) and *A forma e o sentimento do mundo* (São Paulo: 34, 2014). He was visiting professor at the University Blaise Pascal—Clermont-Ferrand (France) in 2008, and at the Federal University of Paraná (Brazil) in 2009–2011.

Falk Wunderlich is Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter at the Department of Philosophy at Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, having previously worked at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, the University of Notre Dame, and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (Berlin). He works on early modern philosophy with a focus on Kant, Hume, and materialism, especially Priestley and German materialism. His main publications are: *Kant und die Bewußtseinstheorien des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 2005); as coeditor: *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 24/5 *Special Issue: Varieties of Early Modern Materialism*, with Patricia Springborg (2016); *Michael Hißmann: Briefwechsel*, with Hans-Peter Nowitzki et al. (Berlin, De Gruyter, 2016); and *Kant and his German Contemporaries*, with Corey W. Dyck (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Chapter 1
Introduction: Reevaluating Christian Wolff's Psychology

Saulo de Freitas Araujo, Thiago Constâncio Ribeiro Pereira, and Thomas Sturm

Christian Wolff (1679–1754) is one of the leading figures in eighteenth-century Western thought, usually counted as the most eminent German thinker between Leibniz and Kant. Wolff's works found a wide audience among European philosophers and scientists from numerous fields and his fame attracted many students from different countries to come to Germany.[1] Wolff became professor in Halle and Marburg, and later a member of the Royal Society in London and the academies of Berlin, Halle, Paris, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, and Bologna. In recognition of his service in modernizing German academic philosophy, he was called *praeceptor Germaniae* (educator of the German nation) and, in 1745, received the title of Imperial Baron (*Reichsfreiherr*) of the Holy Roman Empire.[2]

Wolff was a systematic thinker and accordingly it is important to consider his philosophical views from the perspective of the whole. His work covered not only logic, metaphysics, and ethics, but also such fields as political theory, natural law, and law of peoples, mathematics, mechanics, or economics. At the same time, he

[1] Wolff was especially well received in Catholic countries in which the scholastic tradition was still alive (e.g., Italy). For the influence of the scholastic tradition on Wolff's philosophy, see Leduc (2018).

[2] For more details about Wolff's biography, see Kertscher (2018).

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tried to order and articulate them in a new way as a system.[3] Wolff invented new philosophical and scientific disciplines, although he would not draw such a distinction himself. After Wolff, it became commonplace, at least in the German tradition, to conceive of a philosophical system in terms of a general metaphysics, or ontology, and a special metaphysics—comprising cosmology, psychology, and theology—preceded by logic and followed by ethics, politics, and other practical disciplines.[4]

In the last decades, the publication of Wolff's *Gesammelte Werke* by Jean École and his collaborators has aroused new interest in his ideas, which has led to interesting and important reappraisals in the scholarly literature. For example, it has become clear that Wolff's philosophical program was neither a mere rephrasing of Leibniz's ideas nor just a preparation for Kant's critical philosophy. On the contrary, there is a growing understanding that Wolff was an original thinker, who has to be understood in his own terms. However, notwithstanding the merits of such reevaluations, many aspects of his thought remain open to new investigations and deserve further analysis and discussion.

Reappraising Wolff's philosophy, however, goes beyond a purely historical interest. Wolff's philosophical system also matters because it poses challenges that are still alive today, such as the relationship between philosophy and psychology. In particular, the meaning, scope, and impact of Wolff's psychological program have not received sufficient attention in the literature. Although he did not coin the term *psychologia*,[5] Wolff was the first to give psychology a new status: (1) by establishing it as a proper science or discipline among the special philosophical sciences (next to ontology, theology, cosmology, moral philosophy, economics, etc.), (2) by

[3] The spirit of systematicity is a hallmark of Wolff's work. It was not by accident that he wrote a specific essay to establish the difference between a systematic and an unsystematic intellect. According to him, "*a systematic intellect* is one that connects universal propositions to each other" (Wolff, 1729, §.2, p. 108), thus building a system of universal truths, whereas "*an unsystematic intellect* is one that … considers particular propositions as if they had nothing to do with the others" (§.5, p. 112). In this context, Wolff mentions Euclid's *Elements* and Descartes' *Meditations* as models to be followed, which betray the influence of the mathematical method on his thought. For a detailed discussion of Wolff's concept of system, see Albrecht (2019).

[4] He was so influential in the development of German philosophy in the eighteenth century that Kant, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, referred to him as "the famous Wolff, the greatest among all dogmatic philosophers" (Kant, 1787/1998, B xxxvi). Obviously, this characterization is a double-edged sword: Wolff is famous, indeed the most outstanding of all "dogmatic" philosophers, but he represented precisely those whose thought Kant wishes to destroy, and so Wolff might be the best, but only of those who have produced a "dogmatic" philosophy—clearly not a positive characterization. After Kant, it became increasingly unpopular to follow in Wolff's footsteps, and this surely also impacted the legacy of his psychology.

[5] Talk of "psychology" probably originated in sources that are no longer accessible: Marko Marulič (1450–1524) is said to have used the title *Psichiologia de ratione animae humanae liber I* for a piece of writing in 1520. The term definitely can be found in texts by Joannes Thomas Freigius (1543–1583), and in book titles *psychologia* appears in works by Rudolf Göckel (1547–1628) and Otto Casmann (1562–1607), among others (e.g., Goclenius, 1590; Casmann, 1594). For more details, see Krstič (1964), Lapointe (1972), Brozek (1999), and Klempe (2020).

assigning to it a key role in the foundation of moral or practical philosophy, and (3) by inaugurating a division of psychological knowledge into two main branches—*psychologia empirica* and *psychologia rationalis*—, thereby setting a new agenda for debates that ranged from enthusiastic acceptance to fervent criticism.[6] Finally, one should not forget that the so-called emergence of scientific psychology in the nineteenth century cannot be dissociated from the development of a new psychological culture in the eighteenth century, largely based on Wolff's legacy.

Considering all those aspects, a new volume on Wolff's psychological program may help to consolidate his contributions not only to philosophy, but also to the human sciences in general. The last collection of essays dedicated to Wolff's psychology was published in 2007 (Marcolungo, 2007), and the last monograph appeared in 2011 (Mei, 2011). Since then, only isolated articles and book chapters have been published (e.g., Chance, 2018; Dyck, 2014; Rumore, 2018; Goubet, 2018). The present volume offers, for the first time in English, a comprehensive anthology of essays by an international group of leading scholars on Christian Wolff's psychology and its historical impact.[7] It explores Wolff's psychology comprehensively in its various aspects. Moreover, it closes a linguistic gap in Wolff scholarship: most publications on Wolff and his psychological program have appeared in German, French, Italian, or Spanish, but so far there is not a single book dedicated to Wolff's psychology in English.

Our principal goal is to offer a broad account of Wolff's psychological program and its impacts that may contribute to the disciplinary fields of historiography, philosophy, and psychology, not to mention Wolff scholarship. To do this, we have divided the contributions into two parts. Part I covers the scope and contents of Wolff's psychology, both in its internal structure and in its relation to other parts of his philosophical system, such as logic, ontology, cosmology, theology, aesthetics, and practical philosophy. Part II deals with the reception and impact of Wolff's psychology, starting with his early disciples, then moving on to Kant and others, until reaching the nineteenth century with Hegel and Wundt.

As an antechamber to both parts, Ursula Goldenbaum offers a fresh and illuminating account of the historical context underlying the development of Wolff's psychology. She uses a wide range of primary sources to highlight biographical, religious, political, and institutional aspects that help us understand the formulation and the fate of Wolff's psychological program.

Beginning Part I, Thiago Pereira and Saulo Araujo explore, in Chap. 3, the origins of Wolff's psychology in his German writings. Bringing together historical and philosophical analysis, they present content and context of its first exposition in the

[6] Before Wolff, psychological topics appeared in discussions related to either the tradition of the *scientia de anima* (science of the soul), which largely consisted of commentaries on Aristotle's *De Anima*, or medicine. It was Wolff who unified the whole field of psychological topics into a single science or discipline. For more details, see Araujo (forthcoming), Boenke (2005), and Vidal (2011).

[7] The volume by Rudolph and Goubet (2004) also explores dimensions of Wolff's psychology, but among other things does not consider its reception and impact as comprehensively as we do here.

Deutsche Metaphysik (Wolff, 1720)[8] and its further development and clarification in the *Anmerckungen* (Wolff, 1724) and the *Ausführliche Nachricht* (Wolff, 1726).

Chapters 4 and 5 analyze in closer detail the specific contents of both psychological disciplines—empirical and rational psychology. Ferdinando Marcolungo explores the relationship between reason and experience in empirical psychology, whereas Corey Dyck unveils the meaning of Wolff's rational psychology, offering a critical response to current interpretations of Wolff's rationalism.

Manuela Mei, in Chap. 6, investigates one of the many innovations of Wolff's empirical psychology, namely, his conception of *psychometria*. She shows in which sense Wolff believed in the possibility of a quantitative knowledge of the human mind, and compares his understanding of psychometrics with that of Robert Greene (1678–1730).

Next (Chapter 7), Falk Wunderlich analyzes the mind-body problem in connection with Wolff's psychology. More specifically, he deals with some of its metaphysical aspects, such as Wolff's understanding of Leibniz's monadology and the doctrine of pre-established harmony.

In Chap. 8, Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero examines the connection between Wolff's logical and psychological doctrines. He argues that a psychologistic reading of Wolff is one-sided and obscures the foundational role logic plays with respect to psychology.

Márcio Suzuki and Mario Spezzapria, in Chap. 9, delve into the relationship between aesthetics and empirical psychology. They claim that Wolff's remarks on representation as a composition give the concept of image a new status, which will have important aesthetic consequences.

The relationship between psychology and practical philosophy is explored by Dieter Hüning in Chap. 10. He examines the psychological assumptions underlying Wolff's concept of natural obligation as well as its implications for debates surrounding the concept of natural law and the will.

In the last chapter of Part I, Jean-François Goubet discusses the relationship between psychology and the other metaphysical disciplines: ontology, cosmology, and theology. He illustrates their important connection by analysing Wolff's conception of pleasure.

Part II, then, addresses the legacy of Wolff's psychology. In Chap. 12, Sonia Carboncini shows how Wolff's disciples and followers further developed and disseminated his psychological program within and beyond the German borders.

In Chap. 13, Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter discusses the reception and the debates associated with Wolff's conception of the faculties of the soul. More specifically, he explores the realist interpretation of the faculties by authors such as Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762), Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766), Georg Friedrich Meier (1718–1777), or Johann Georg Sulzer (1710–1779).

[8] Although the title page gives the date of publication as 1720, the book was actually published in December 1719, as Wolff himself recalls later (Wolff, 1726, §.4).

Andreas Rydberg offers, in Chap. 14, a new look into the beginnings of experimental psychology in the eighteenth century. He traces the idea of psychological experiments back to Wolff and, in the aftermath, to three different discourses that developed in that context, namely, the experimental-philosophical, the iatromechanical, and the ethical-metaphysical.

Next, Michael Bennett McNulty (Chap. 15) illustrates the reception of Wolff's psychology by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). In particular, he shows that Kant not only rejected the metaphysical aspects of rational psychology but also criticized the empirical side of Wolff's program.

In Chap. 16, Werner Euler discusses the reception of Wolff's psychology by Hegel. More specifically, he shows that Hegel criticized Wolff's rational psychology for being an abstract metaphysics that is unable to apprehend the essence of its object, namely, spirit. Instead of presenting yet another theory of the mind-body relation, Hegel proposed a wholly new way of approaching the study of spirit.

In the last chapter, Saulo Araujo and Thiago Pereira explore the reception of Wolff in nineteenth-century German psychology. More specifically, they show how Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) adopted and interpreted Wolff's psychology by way of establishing his own conception of a psychological science, though they also point out a number of important respects in which Wundt appears to have misunderstood Wolff.

Together, these chapters show that Wolff's psychological ideas are historically and philosophically more significant and interesting than conventional wisdom admits, but also that they are subject to misinterpretation. In general, Wolff's psychology remains a challenge to historians, philosophers, and psychologists. We hope this volume will contribute to bring Wolff's psychology to a wider audience.

Finally, we wish to note that, despite our comprehensive approach to Wolff's psychology, important facets and aspects have not been addressed here. For instance, the relationship between empirical psychology and practical philosophy involves many other factors. In addition, it would be interesting to show how the idea of rational psychology was carried forth in the eighteenth century by authors such as Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) and Johann Nicolas Tetens (1736–1807). Wolff's reception in the nineteenth century also deserves more attention. After all, it was not only Hegel and Wundt that discussed and commented Wolff's psychology. This is of course just to say that a single volume cannot exhaust the richness, complexity, and legacy of Wolff's contributions to psychology, but we hope that the present volume will serve as a foundation for further research in these and other directions, in the future.

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Chapter 2
Who Was Afraid of Wolff's Psychology? The Historical Context

Ursula Goldenbaum

> Wolff "presented the philosophers' hypotheses about the union between body and soul in greatest clarity, enabling everybody to judge with reason about any soul."[1]

2.1 Introduction

Christian Wolff (1679–1754) has suffered an increasingly bad reputation, shaped by Hegelians. They presented Wolff as an un-original thinker, a mere ruminant of Leibniz (1646–1716), whose only achievement was the methodological education of the German youth.[2] The question arises though how such a boring thinker could cause so many controversies over more than five decades. The first wave of publications began after Wolff's notorious *China Lecture* in 1723,[3] his subsequent banishment from Prussia, and the ban of his philosophy in Prussia and other territories. It produced almost 200 writings pro and con Wolff (Zedler, 1731–1754, vol. 58, columns 546–677, columns 883–1232). A new intense controversy about Wolff began in 1735, on the occasion of a Wolffian translation of the Pentateuch by Johann

[1] This is from the newspaper's review of Wolff's *Psychologia rationalis* (Neue Gelehrte Zeitungen, April 15th, 1734, pp. 269–270, here p. 270). This is my translation, just as all other translations from German sources, if not mentioned otherwise.

[2] Hegel (1770–1831), in an extremely short presentation of Wolff, somehow shaped the final judgment about Wolff up to our canon of the history of philosophy (Hegel, 1986, pp. 136–139). Lewis White Beck simply repeats (Beck, 1969), sometimes literally, what had been said by Hegel. Neither of the two seems to have studied Wolff.

[3] The best edition of Wolff's China lecture has been produced by Michael Albrecht (Wolff, 1726/1985a), containing a rich and instructive commentary about the circumstances and the research level about China at the time. For an English translation see Ching and Oxtoby (1992).

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Lorenz Schmidt (1702–1749)—the so-called *Wertheim Bible*—which stirred up a theological turmoil with more than 100 writings pro and con (Zedler, 1731–1754, vol. 55, column 595–662; Goldenbaum, 2004, pp. 175–508). Moreover, this case against the Wolffian translator was used by Joachim Lange (1670–1744), Wolff's major theological opponent at the University at Halle to extend the ban of Wolff's philosophy to all states of the German Empire, by showing a *necessary* connection between the "horrible" *Wertheim Bible* and Wolff's philosophy and by organizing an Empire-wide campaign against Wolff (Lange, 1735). Winning this battle was crucial for Wolff; it would decide the fate of his philosophy. This second public debate about the *Wertheim Bible* is rarely recognized as a debate about Wolff since Carl Günther Ludovici (1707–1778), the likely author of all three articles concerning Wolff in *Zedler's*. *Universal-Lexicon*,[4] anxiously separated it from the first Wolff controversy in order to undermine Lange's strategy. He did this as well in his history of Wolffian Philosophy where he reports those writings caused by the Wertheim Bible in an Appendix only (Ludovici, 1737/1977, §§.516–521).

In the following, I will (1) discuss and answer the question how theologians got so obsessed with the German philosopher, especially during the first decades of the eighteenth century. It was mostly about Pre-established harmony, so important for Wolff's rational psychology. I will then (2) lay out the restrictive political conditions under which Wolff worked and published, including the procedures of censorship in the German Empire after the Peace of Westphalia. To challenge the theologians as Wolff did, much caution in formulation was needed, great diplomacy, outstanding teaching skills (Hartmann, 1737/1973, pp. 381–383; Ludovici, 1737/1977, §§.343–349, pp. 287–291), and the ability to win supporters and build a network, including influential allies at the courts. But besides all that it also needed much courage and commitment to stand up for his ideas.[5] And (3), I will present the means that Wolff and his partisans had available under these conditions as well as those they developed themselves to stand their ground and to increasingly take hold of the universities—against the power of their adversaries. Here, I will survey the rich landscape of German journals and Learned Newspapers which developed in early eighteenth century[6] as well as of the Wolffian Societies.

[4] He authored the articles "Christian Wolff" (Zedler, 1731–1754, vol. 58, columns 546–677), "Wertheimische Bibel" (Zedler, 1731–1754, vol. 55, columns 595–662), and "Wolfische Philosophie" (Zedler, 1731–1754, vol. 58, columns 883–1232).

[5] This shall be said against Jonathan Israel's superficial subsumption of Wolff as a moderate enlightener (Goldenbaum, 2014).

[6] Martin Welke estimates about 250,000 regular readers of newspapers in Germany at the beginning of the eighteenth century and half a million readers in the middle of the century. In 1808, the 8000 copies of *The Times* were topped by 56,000 copies of the *Hamburgische Correspondent* (Welke, 1981). For Hamburg, see also Böning & Moepps, 1996.

2.2 Pre-established Harmony as the Core of Wolff's Psychology

Wolff's Psychology appeared in two parts in 1732 and 1734, divided into empirical and rational psychology (Wolff, 1738/1968, 1740/1972). He wrote and published them during a rather calm period: he had already settled at his new position in Marburg, after his escape from Prussia, and wrapped up his defenses against the most serious official accounts from German universities that came out in the aftermath of his banishment from Halle (Ludovici, 1737/1976, pp. 155–185). Joachim Lange, also aware of the significance of official University Reviews about Wolff's philosophy, wrote an extended review of nine such Reviews using them as ammunition to raise further concerns about Wolff's philosophy (Lange, 1725/2000). Wolff could not yet anticipate that huge public debate about the *Wertheim Bible* that was soon to come, in 1735. With his *Psychologia empirica* (Empirical psychology) and *Psychologia rationalis* (Rational psychology), however, Wolff turned to the very core of the differences between him and his theological opponents, spelling out the implications of the much-attacked Pre-established Harmony for a new understanding of the soul. In contrast to our time, the term "psychology" included everything related to our soul, i.e., epistemology, theory of emotions, and theory of action.

The major points of theological criticism of Wolff's philosophy, leveled by Pietists and Orthodox theologians alike, were the following: (1) the application of the mathematical method beyond mathematics, (2) the thesis that this world is the best possible, (3) the alleged "mechanism" of this philosophy, and (4) above all, Pre-established Harmony. It was the same criticism Leibniz faced after publishing his *Theodicée* (theodicy) (Lorenz, 1997, pp. 99–150). Why would these highly abstract metaphysical ideas become such a stumbling block for theologians? How could they provoke hundreds of writings against Wolff and his disciples? Why would theologians even mobilize political authorities against him, even the Emperor? What was at stake between Wolffians and anti-Wolffians (not only Pietists), during the first half of the eighteenth century and beyond, was the question of free will. Wolff, still a young university professor, was attacked more boldly than Leibniz, the European celebrity, but Leibniz was criticized for the very same reasons as Wolff.

The mechanical explanation of natural phenomena, the latent determinism of the mathematical method with its necessary a-priori conclusions, and above all, Pre-established Harmony, were seen as so many threats to free will (*liberum arbitrium*). Allegedly, Leibniz-Wolffian Determinism would take away moral responsibility and thus provide an excuse to sinners and/or criminals. The deep gap between Leibniz, Wolff, and the Wolffians on one hand and their opponents on the other, was caused by their radically different stances toward modern science, i.e., mechanics. Whereas Leibniz and Wolff embraced it unconditionally when explaining natural phenomena, their opponents wanted to restrict the mathematical method to mathematics, including perhaps applied mathematics. They denounced mechanical philosophy as "mechanical absolutism" (Löscher, 1735, p. 239) that would lead to

Spinozism. But it was especially the explanation of the soul according to Pre-established Harmony, and of the will as determined by our intellect to act, thereby always striving for the best that caused panicking reactions. We would no longer be seen as free to determine ourselves by *mere will*, if the will were determined by our intellect. The head of the Anti-Wolffian camp, the Pietist theologian Joachim Lange gets to the heart of the theological concerns with pre-established harmony when he cries out against the Wolffian Johann Lorenz Schmidt, the author of the *Wertheim Bible*:

> I only say this […] that the author deduces the stubbornness [of Pharaoh in Exodus 7, 13 and following] from the nexus or the fatal connection of all things, and in this way ascribes it to God according to his pre-established harmony. This nexus is the very soul of the whole system of mechanical philosophy. (Lange, 1735, p. 25)

The causal nexus of everything with everything was seen as a hidden version of Spinozistic determinism and fatalism, just as—50 years later—Friedrich Jacobi (1743–1819) would claim that all rationalism led necessarily to Spinozism, i.e., fatalism (Altmann, 1977, pp. 142–144). Lange as well as Jacobi had to ignore the careful distinction of Leibniz and Wolff between the absolute mathematical necessity of abstract things and the contingency of concrete things that allowed them to make modern science compatible with theological intentions and to overcome Spinoza's absolute determinism.

Already in his *Vernünftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen* (Rational thoughts concerning God, the world, and the human soul) in 1720 (Wolff, 1751/1983a, §§.744–747), and then in his *Psychologia rationalis*, Wolff conceived the soul as *one* single force (*einige Kraft/vis unica*) (Wolff, 1740/1972, §.57). In his empirical psychology, it is distinguished into an upper and lower faculty to know, to perceive, and to reason (*pars superior/pars inferior facultatis cognoscendi*) (Wolff, 1738/1968, §§.54–55). The upper faculty of knowing was the intellect while the lower included representation, memory, and an imaginative sensing force (*Einbildungskraft/facultas imaginandi*) (Wolff, 1738/1968, §.92; 1751/1983a, §.235). The *one* single force of the soul was endued with an appetite toward the best which, if joined by rational ideas, would produce conscious volitions and thus allow for free choices of the will (Wolff, 1740/1972, §§.480–529, pp. 396–450). Most appetites though were led by the lower faculty of cognition—as in animals—and thus remained determined by external objects rather than by the soul itself. Rationally informed choices would lead to more perfection and thus to joy, while choices according to the senses could lead to less perfection and thus to sadness (Wolff, 1738/1968, §§.616–617, §§.621f., pp. 464–465). Not unlike Spinoza (1632–1677) (and Leibniz), Wolff deduces all, or at least all major human affects from this simple foundation. Human freedom, for Wolff, is not the traditional idea of free choice of the will, i.e., choosing by the mere power of our will, out of nowhere. Rather, every choice we make is determined by a *Bewegungsgrund* (motive) to choose the best. If we are determined by a rational judgment of our intellect, our choice will be free. We may well be in error about what is objectively best for us, and thus lack freedom, but we cannot desire anything than what appears best to us.

This is perfectly in agreement with Leibniz, and moreover, with Spinoza who both rejected *liberum arbitrium* as free choice of the will, as a mere act by a power of the will, independent of any cognitive power. Spinoza openly mocked free will as a human illusion while Leibniz and with him Wolff rejected it as "indifferentism". They held on to the *term* "free will," but used it for what they understood as freedom. Thus, Joachim Lange was quite right to smell Spinoza in Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy. But it was not by chance that these philosophers all ended up at freedom as choice led by reason. They tried to develop a concept of freedom that was compatible with modern deterministic science.[7] In contrast, Lange and almost all contemporary theologians and many philosophers, insisted on the separation of the soul into two forces, the intellect and the will, to vindicate absolute responsibility of individuals for their deeds to their free choice of the will.

2.3 The Political Constellation During the Rise of Wolffian Philosophy

As mentioned above, the theological battle against Wolffianism began in 1721 although tensions between theologians and Wolff had come up before.[8] It continued beyond his death but had two peaks, in terms of publications. The first wave of attacks was due to Wolff's China lecture, the second peak, less recognized was reached after the publication of the *Wertheim Bible* in 1735, turning into a public debate well beyond the walls of academia. This careful translation of the Pentateuch into then-modern German was produced in great awareness of the hermeneutical problems that beset such a project. Schmidt commented on his solutions of these problems in more than 1600 footnotes—in the spirit of Wolff's logic (Goldenbaum, 2004, pp. 195–209; Wolff, 1713/1978, ch. 10, §§.1–23; ch. 11, §§.1–8; ch. 12, §§.1–12; 1740/1983b, §§.902–981). He aimed to translate the text according to the understanding of its original audience, i.e., the ancient Jews. As a result, no allusion to the savior remained which alarmed Orthodox and Pietist theologians alike. It is from this time that the old opponents, the orthodox Lutheran Valentin Ernst Löscher (1673–1749) and the Pietist Joachim Lange made peace and united against the Wolffians.[9] Obviously, it was to his greatest dismay that, in spite of Lange's successful intervention against Wolff at the Prussian court in 1723, the philosopher continued to thrive—at the University of Marburg. In 1735 though, Lange hoped

[7] The discussion of free will is getting momentum again, due to new results of neuroscience. There appeared already an *Oxford Handbook of Free Will* (Kane, 2002). The controversial positions are presented less aggressively today but the discussion is quite heated too.

[8] Lange warned students already to attend Wolff's lectures on mathematics. He planned a refutation of Wolff's *German Metaphysics* right after its publication (Hartmann, 1737/1973, pp. 401–402).

[9] Emmanuel Hirsch speaks of an "Empire-wide General Mobilization" (Hirsch, 1951, p. 432). Even the long-lasting battles between orthodox and Pietist theologians came now to a stop (Goldenbaum, 2004, pp. 265–266).

again. Arguing that the *Wertheim Bible* was a *necessary* product of Wolff's philosophy, he aimed to defeat Wolff once and for all.

Although, at first glance, the controversies look like any scholarly controversy, the opponents did not fight equally. Theologians had the church and its administration available and were in close connection with state authorities (Hinrichs, 1971, p. 175). In Prussia and Saxony, theologians of the Lutheran church had their own journals available. These were supported and distributed by the churches, and pastors were supposed to buy them on a regular basis. In addition, theologians could use their pulpits, lecture at universities, and publish in their journals. Thus, theologians had a wide range of options to attack opponents and to spread their judgments through all levels of the Christian church. Above all, they could easily connect with state authorities even before it came to formal censorship (Wotschke, 1932, p. 54; Goldenbaum, 2004, pp. 226–232). Wolff, in contrast, began as a simple professor of philosophy, teaching mathematics at first. Thus, controversies between theologians and Wolff have never been authority-free discourses, i.e., free exchanges of arguments about philosophical differences. Theology had the monopoly in defining what the truth was and Joachim Lange still openly asked philosophy to be the maiden of the mistress theology (Lange, 1703). In these controversies, theologians did not even have to come up with novel arguments but simply nail their colors to the mast to show they belonged to the right side.[10]

There existed, however, certain accepted rules in controversies. Scholars, including theologians, had to follow the *polemical method*, i.e., to present objectively the argument of the opponent before offering one's counter-arguments (Zedler, 1731–1754, vol. 20, columns 13–37). Also, one had to respond to criticism to show one's willingness to listen and one's ability to respond. In theological controversies though, additional rules were in play. Since in the Lutheran church, all participants were considered as (equal) members capable of reading the Holy Scriptures on their own, with theologians as advisers rather than exclusive interpreters, all sides were obliged to talk to and to listen to each other. As long as deviating members were listening and considering the arguments of the community (represented by theological leaders), they remained part of the community. Only a refusal to listen, unwillingness to consider counter-arguments, and improper moral behavior could provide a case for persecution as, e.g., arrogance, vanity, or the intention to undermine religion. Only then, the church could ask the political authorities to take action. This procedure, called the *Elenchus* (Gierl, 1997, pp. 60–212), is the reason why theological attacks more often than not include *moral* blame of the dissidents in addition to arguments. It is a pity that such complaints against Wolff are still uncritically taken seriously by historians today (e.g., Schrader, 1985, pp. 180–181; Bianco, 1989, p. 112; Watkins, 1998, p. 146).

Formal censorship was, since the Westphalian Peace, no longer in the power of the Emperor. Since all three Christian denominations were now tolerated within the

[10] Historians who wonder about such redundancy are unaware of the pressure to express one's agreement with the official position of the church (Watkins, 1998, p. 148).

Empire, it was the rulers of single territories who were in charge. They decided about the "state religion", which could worship freely and publicly, but they had to tolerate their subjects who belonged to other denominations. Such decentralization had great advantages for modern philosophers of that period. It is well-known how Christian Thomasius (1655–1728) escaped persecution initiated by Saxony's theologians at the University of Leipzig by quickly moving to the nearby University of Halle in Prussia (Hinrichs, 1971, p. 353, 369). Likewise, when Wolff had been banned in 1723 by the Prussian king and had to leave the country within 48 h or be hung, he easily found another position at the University at Marburg.[11] Both philosophers could thus continue to lecture and publish within their new states, but above all, they could communicate with their colleagues and students in German language.

Since the rulers of the territories were in charge of formal censorship, they could handle it according to their own ideas. If a university existed, censorship was usually given to its theologians. But in the case of the University of Leipzig, already the city with the largest book market of at least the Protestant area of the Empire, theologians could not manage to censor all books and journals. Thus, censorship was split according to disciplines (Kobuch, 1988, pp. 18–43). Little territories with few publications decided from case to case. It was always the duty of the pastors, on any given level, to admonish the members of their communities to stay in the limits of true faith, to enter in a discourse with prospective dissidents as long as these were willing, and to ask political authorities for bans of publications and persecution of the authors if they found them unwilling.

Of course, toleration happened in different degrees in different states, and was sometimes denied altogether as, e.g., to the protestants in Salzburg. But such violations of the Westphalian Treaty did not go unnoticed. This was due to the new institution of the *Corpus evangelicorum* at the Diet, i.e., the Protestant estates; this institution could and did send protests to the Emperor on behalf of persecuted Protestants and he was supposed to take action according to the Westphalian Peace. Besides, a journal with the title *Reichs-Fama* (Fame of the Empire) regularly published the complaints of subjects who suffered intolerance (Goldenbaum, 2004, pp. 85–86). Of course, the instrument of the *Corpus evangelicorum* was cumbersome and inefficient. That it nonetheless worked can be seen in the case of the *Wertheim Bible* which was widely discussed at the Diet and in related correspondences among Protestant courts. It was likewise negotiated between them and the Emperor's institutions (Goldenbaum, 2004, pp. 289–294, 354–355, 386–400, 410–420, 443–451), always referring to the *Protestant freedom* to interpret the Bible.

These rules and procedures of the Westphalian Peace are rarely noticed in intellectual history, although European contemporaries were well aware of the legally backed religious tolerance within the Empire, much in contrast to their own countries. Among these were Locke (1632–1704), Voltaire (1694–1778), Rousseau

[11] Wolff had received the offer from Marburg before the ban due to the intention of Landgraf Carl I of Hessen to thoroughgoingly improve his University (Kertscher, 2018, pp. 142–147, 146–147). The number of students grew from 60 to 70 before Wolff's arrival up to 174 in 1727. Wolff got another offer from the University Leipzig right at his arrival in Marburg.

(1712–1778), and Penn (1644–1718) (Voltaire, 1764, p. 46; Raumer, 1953, pp. 326–352; Specht, 1989, p. 12). With every territory executing its own censorship, including the Free cities of the Empire (*Freie Reichsstädte*) which were directly answering to the Emperor, with lots of cities (even small cities) with printing shops, and a wide network of publishing houses distributing books and journals throughout the Empire (Goldfriedrich, 1908), the responsibilities were not always obvious. Usually, the authorities tried to get first the printer who could be found more easily (Schrader, 1985, pp. 64–69).

The Prussian theologians tried very hard to achieve a ban of Wolff-related works by showing the authors' unwillingness to listen or pointing out their moral flaws, and, moreover, by announcing their whereabouts. But their complaints at the Prussian court were of little effect if the authors lived outside of Prussia. The success against the Wolffians of the University at Jena remained limited due to the reluctance of the court at Weimar. But the tiny territory of Wertheim answered directly to the Emperor and its dukes supported Schmidt. That is why Joachim Lange, when fighting against the *Wertheim Bible* and Wolff together in the late 1730s, went out of his Protestant way and denounced Schmidt at the Emperor's court in Vienna. Arguing that Schmidt undermined all three denominations he asked for an Empire-wide ban and prosecution of the author (Goldenbaum, 2004, pp. 330, 397–400), and of Wolff's philosophy as the cause. He even agreed, clearly against the Westphalian Treaty, to hold the trial against the Lutheran Schmidt on Catholic territory to make sure the dissident would stay forever in chains in the casemates of the Bamberg castle. Although he finally succeeded with the ban of the *Wertheim Bible*, it took him years. And during these years, Schmidt was permitted to respond to all theological criticism fueling an ever-increasing public debate about his translation, the principles of translating and about the freedom of thinking (Schmidt, 1736a, b, c, d, 1738). Moreover, he formally approached the *Corpus evangelicorum* to defend, against his enemies, his Protestant freedom to translate the Bible according to his best knowledge (Schmidt, 1736e).

After a period of increasing support for Wolff at the courts and thus by state authorities during the late 1720s and early 1730s, when Lange had even been silenced by the Prussian king and needed to find colleagues outside of Prussia to write against Wolff, Lange used the publication of the *Wertheim Bible* in 1735 as a welcome opportunity to eventually secure an Empire-wide ban on Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy.[12] In this extremely dangerous situation for Wolff, he and his partisans made the greatest efforts to avoid a final Empire-wide ban. Therefore, they had to deny such a *necessary* connection between Wolffianism and the *Wertheim Bible* although they were well aware that there was one, in terms of method as well as metaphysics. This is clear from some letters Wolff as well as Mosheim (1693–1755) and Reinbeck (1683–1741) exchanged with Schmidt and with his mentor at the court of Wertheim, Johann Wilhelm Höflein (1689–1739). They expressed their

[12] An outstanding example is Johann Friedrich Bertram (1699–1741), a former student of Lange who published against Wolff on behalf of Lange to show Wolff's connection with the Wertheimer, simply because Lange was forbidden to continue his polemics (Goldenbaum, 2004, pp. 337–344).