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The Scope of Inner Sense: The Development of Kant's Psychology In The Silent Decade

El alcance del sentido interno. El desarrollo de la psicología de Kant en la década silenciosa

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Abstract

In this paper I argue, contrary to a widely influential account of Kant's development in the "silent decade," that key changes in his empirical and rational psychology throughout the 1770's are traceable to changes in the scope he assigns to inner sense. Kant's explicit inclusion of our access to the I or soul within the scope of inner sense in the early 1770's (after its apparent exclusion in the Dissertation) yields a more robust empirical psychology. Given the Wolffian character of Kant's pre-Critical conception rational psychology, this in turn provides a firmer foundation for the rational cognition of the soul, as exemplified in Kant's treatment in the ML_I notes. Even so, I contend that Kant's eventual rejection of the pretenses of rational psychology to offer cognition of the soul likewise has its basis in his later exclusion of any access to the I from the scope of inner sense, which also reveals a previously unnoticed continuity between his pre-Critical and Critical conceptions of rational psychology.

Keywords

Kant; Empirical Psychology; Rational Psychology; Soul; Inner Sense

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Resumen

En este artículo sostengo, frente a la influyente lectura de la evolución de Kant en la "década del silencio", que pueden rastrearse cambios cruciales en la psicología empírica y racional a lo largo de los años '70, que modifican el ámbito que atribuye al sentido interno. La inclusion explícita de Kant de nuestro acceso al yo o al alma dentro del alcance del sentido interno en los primeros años '70 (tras su aparente exclusion en la *Disertación*) ofrece una psicología empírica más robusta. Dado el carácter wolffiano de la concepción pre-crítica de Kant acerca de la psicología racional, esta proporciona más bien una fundamentación más sólida del conocimiento racional del alma, como ejemplifica el tratamiento que le da Kant en las observaciones de ML_1 . A pesar de ello, defiendo que el rechazo eventual de Kant de las pretensiones de la psicología racional para ofrecer un conocimiento del alma obedece a su más tardía exclusión de todo acceso al yo desde el ámbito del sentido interno, lo que consiguientemente revela una continuidad antes no percibida entre las concepciones pre-crítica y crítica de la psicología racional.

Palabras clave

Kant; psicología empírica; psicología racional; alma; sentido interno

Even if Kant published little in the so-called "silent decade," the 11 years bookended by the Inaugural Dissertation and the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant scholars have not remained silent about the development of Kant's thought in the 1770's towards the Critical philosophy. While much remains disputable in this period, there is something of a scholarly consensus about a few key milestones in Kant's progress towards the *CPR*; thus, around 1772 we see a dawning awareness of the problem addressed by the Transcendental Deduction; appearance around 1775 (in the so-called Duisberg Nachlass); and, sometime after 1778, Kant comes to reject what seems to be the last hold-over of his former dogmatic metaphysics, namely, rational psychology. With respect to this last development, there is

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¹ In what follows, translations from the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* follow *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Critique of Pure Reason*, edited and translated by P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), translations of the pre-Critical works are taken from *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–70*, edited and translated by D. Walford (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), and translations from the lectures on metaphysics follow those provided in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, translated by K. Ameriks and S. Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001). Unless indicated otherwise, all other translations are my own. In addition, I have made use of the following abbreviations: *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* [DS], *Inaugural Dissertation [ID]*, *Critique of Pure Reason [CPR*], Handschriftlicher Nachlass [R], Anthropologie-Collins [AC], Anthropologie-Friedländer [AF], Anthropologie-Parow [APa], Metaphysik L₁ [ML₁].

² On this see for instance Carl, 1989a, where he contends that the letter to Herz of Feb. 12, 1772 contains Kant's first statement of the problem addressed by the transcendental deduction. For a discussion of this see Allison, 2015 (95-104), though Allison ultimately argues that Kant had discovered at least one key part of that problematic relatively soon after the letter, in 1772 or 1773 (see Allison, 2015, 101)

³ For recent discussions of the Duisberg Nachlass, as well as references to previous treatments, see Allison, 2015 (pp. 108-30) as well as Laywine 2006.

also a received view of what led Kant to endorse the prospects of rational psychology well into the silent decade. So, Kant is taken to have held until rather late in the decade that the soul or self is a sort of Cartesian *res cogitans*, or thinking substance, which serves as the ontological ground of the unity among its representations and to which we have a sort of purely intellectual access. Moreover, it is thought that it is as a result of this that Kant remains bullish concerning the prospects of rational psychology, culminating with his striking positive claims regarding the soul in the relevant section of the ML_1 notes. Soon thereafter, however, Kant is taken to grow sceptical of the claim that the soul is an intelligible substance and it is this change that rapidly precipitates the discovery of the Paralogisms.

While there is much that is appealing in this account of the development of Kant's attitudes towards rational psychology in the latter half of the silent decade, it faces a number of challenges. First and foremost, it leaves unexplained Kant's rather egregious oversight in holding out the possibility of a sort of purely intellectual access to the self well after having introduced his doctrine of inner sense (as a sensible form of intuition). Second, it does not account for the rather surprising reversal in the fortunes of rational psychology that takes place with the ML_1 notes; so, it is at the very least not obvious why Kant would now offer a relatively muscular endorsement of the rational doctrine of the soul in light of the withering criticism of that discipline in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*. Lastly, the account of Kant's discovery of the Paralogisms as a sudden transition overlooks the subtle criticisms of rational psychology, and important limits imposed upon it, in the ML_I notes which I take to already and unmistakably gesture ahead towards the Paralogisms. In what follows, then, I will offer an alternative account of the development of Kant's rational (and empirical) psychology which will address these deficiencies and draw attention to important but widely overlooked changes to Kant's account of the soul through the silent decade. I will begin, in the first section, with a consideration of the discussion of the soul in the early 1770's, arguing that an important development in this period consists in the extension of the scope of inner sense to the soul and its acts after their apparent exclusion from it in the Dissertation. In the second section, I will show that it was just this extension that accounts for Kant's revitalized interest in rational psychology in the mid-1770's, though this has been overlooked due to a prevalent misconception of the nature of this discipline. In the third and final section, I will show that even in the ML_1 notes, Kant is careful to circumscribe the limits of what can be known of the soul and, in light of this, that his subsequent discovery of the Paralogisms should be understood not as a radical break but as the last stage of a fairly continuous line of thinking running through his pre-Critical metaphysics.

1. Empirical Psychology in the Early 1770's

The various publications of Kant's pre-Critical period contain a number of discussions of what might be termed empirical psychology, or as Kant refers to it in the

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"Nachricht" of 1765, the "metaphysical science of man based on experience [Erfahrungswissenschaft]" (2:309). So, the Beobachtungen, which approaches the "peculiarities of human nature" from the standpoint of an "observer" (2:207), are naturally considered to be an exercise in empirical psychology, as is the essay on the maladies of the head, and (empirical) psychology also supplies an illustration of the wider applicability of the concept of negative magnitudes in the essay on that topic (2:180). Moreover, Kant's abiding interest in empirical psychology is evident in his lectures and other unpublished texts of this period, including Herder's notes from Kant's lectures on metaphysics (cf. 28:143-4, 850-86, 924-31) and the "Bemerkungen" written in his own copy of the Beobachtungen, and of course, in the many handwritten notes from this period relating to Baumgarten's presentation of empirical psychology in the *Metaphysica*.

Kant's antecedent interest in what can be known empirically of the soul might thus give rise to an expectation that the Inaugural Dissertation of 1770 would also take it up, particularly given its innovative treatment of sensitive cognition and its consideration of inner sense. Indeed this expectation is borne out to a limited extent, as Kant offers a novel definition of empirical psychology in light of his own rehabilitation of the ancient distinction between phenomena and noumena:

«Phenomena are reviewed and set out, *first*, in the case of the phenomena of external sense, in PHYSICS, and secondly, in the case of the phenomena of inner sense, in empirical PSYCHOLOGY». (2:397)

As it relates to the account of sensitive cognition Kant had just outlined, empirical psychology takes as its object the representations delivered by inner sense, such as the perceptions of internal states of the mind. These representations, as sensible, consist of both a matter and a form (2:392) and, as will be familiar, Kant claims that the form of inner sense is time; thus he writes that "all internal changes [internas vicissitudines] necessarily accord with the axioms which can be known about time" (2:401) and that time "embraces absolutely all things" including "accidents which are not included in the relations of space, such as the thoughts of the mind" (2:405). That Kant should specifically identify the phenomena of inner sense as the object of empirical psychology recalls his account of sensitive cognition sketched in Section 2 (§5) of the Dissertation, where he discusses the logical use of the understanding, or its use in subordinating sensitive cognitions to empirical concepts and laws (2:393). As Kant explains, while an appearance is "that which precedes the logical use of the understanding," phenomena are the "objects of experience" where experience is "the reflective cognition which arises when several appearances are compared by the understanding" (2:394). Given that such a use of the understanding is "common to all the sciences" (2:393), which presumably still includes empirical psychology at this point, 4 it would imply that the logical use of the understanding with respect to the soul consists in the subordination of the appearances of the soul, such as the

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⁴ For instance, at 2:398 Kant presents what appears to be the conclusion of Section 2, namely, that "there is a science of sensory things," from which he does not (explicitly) exclude empirical psychology.

thoughts of the mind, to common concepts and the subordination of the observed changes in the soul to higher laws, the result of which yields the phenomena of inner sense that are catalogued in empirical psychology.

While the account of cognition Kant elaborates in Section 2 of the Dissertation would seem to admit of ready application to empirical psychology, a closer look reveals a number of complications. Indeed, Kant himself is not entirely clear on the scope of inner sense as it concerns the soul as he seems to imply that the soul and its acts are not given in sensible intuition. Concerning the soul, Kant unsurprisingly identifies it as an immaterial thing inasmuch as it is "altogether exempt from the universal condition of *externally*, *namely spatially sensible things*" (2:419), which is to say that the soul is taken to be immaterial due to the fact that it is not given as an object of outer sense. Whatever the merits of this argument, the conclusion generates a difficulty as elsewhere in the Dissertation Kant had contended that immaterial things, without qualification, are not bound by the principles of the sensible world (rather than simply not being bound by the form of outer sense):

«Accordingly, whatever the principle of the form of the sensible world may, in the end, be, its embrace is limited to *actual* things, insofar as they are thought capable of *falling under the senses*. Accordingly, *it embraces neither immaterial substances, which are already as such, by definition, excluded from the outer senses*, nor the cause of the world» (*ID* 2:398—last emphasis mine)

Indeed, this is not the only instance in the Dissertation in which the soul is apparently exempted from the conditions of outer *and* inner intuition. In his discussion of the first subreptic axiom in Section 5 ("whatever is, is somewhere and somewhen"), Kant brings up immaterial substances, and the soul in particular, once again, claiming that it is through this erroneous principle that

«there come to be bandied about those idle questions about the places in the corporeal universe of immaterial substances (though *just because they are immaterial, there is no sensitive intuition of them*, nor any representation of them under such a form), about the seat of the soul, and about other questions of the kind». (*ID* 2:414—my emphasis)

These passages might be dismissed as mere carelessness or oversights on Kant's part were it not that Kant seems to help himself to a non-sensible intuition of the acts of the mind, as is evident in the Dissertation's discussion of the origin of the concepts of metaphysics. As Kant contends, these concepts are originally acquired since they are «abstracted from the laws inherent in the mind (by attending to its actions on the occasion of experience)» (2:395) where these actions presumably include the co-ordinating acts on the part of sensibility (cf. 2:393) and the subordinating acts involved in the logical use of the understanding. And while Kant proceeds to claim that these acts are «cognized intuitively» (2:406), it is clear that they cannot be cognized by means of *sensible* intuition, since this

155N: 2386-7655 Doi: 10.5281/zenodo.55117 would render the concepts derived from them *empirical*, and not properly (i.e., purely) metaphysical, in accordance with Kant's previous contention that concepts «are called sensitive on account of their genesis» (2:393). As a result, Kant seems (at least required) to presuppose some form of non-sensible intuition by means of which we have access to the acts of the mind, and through which we acquire the concepts of the understanding which «contain no form of sensitive cognition» and «have been abstracted from no use of the senses» (2:394).

In the Dissertation, then, Kant appears narrowly to limit the phenomena investigated by empirical psychology to our representations of the soul's passively received states and to exclude from its purview (some of) the actions of the mind and indeed any access to the soul as such, considered as an immaterial thing. Indeed, it might be conjectured that Kant's exemption of our intuition of the mind and of the acts from which we acquire the concepts of metaphysics from sensible intuition is a function of Leibniz's influence on the Dissertation.⁵ So, as is familiar, Leibniz offers a qualified endorsement of the Aristotelian dictum in the *Nouveaux Essais*: while the principle "there is nothing in the soul which does not come from the senses" may be allowed to hold generally, "an exception must be made of the soul itself and its states," where reflection on the soul itself is taken to yield the ideas of "being, substance, one, same, cause, [...]."6 Significantly, however, just this exemption was later called into question by various critics of the Dissertation who objected to the seemingly arbitrary character of the limited scope of inner sense. For instance, in his published response to the Dissertation, Markus Herz emphasized against Kant that even our perception of inner activities, such as comparison, are or ought to be subject to the form of inner intuition:

«The proof that leads me to the existence of a soul [...] not only permits me to suppose with a high degree of probability, but also produces a mathematically certain conviction that something simple resides within me whose property it is to think and to will. Each moment I experience that I sense [empfinde] external objects, compare them within one another, and observe their relations to one another». (Herz 1990, 79)

Secondly, and a few years after Herz's reply, Johann Nicolaus Tetens would take issue with Kant's exemption of certain acts of the soul from the scope of inner sense. Thus, in reference specifically to Kant's discussion in the Dissertation, Tetens asserts that "[a]mong internal sensations also belong the feelings of our activities and manners of thinking, from which feelings the concepts of thought and the understanding have their origin," and likewise presuming that Kant is drawing this peculiar exception from Leibniz, he contends that "the restriction that Leibniz imposes on the principle that nothing is in the intellect that is not first in the senses, excepting the intellect, is unnecessary."⁷

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⁵ On this compare Allison 2015 (p. 59).

⁶ Leibniz 1981 (pp. 110-11).

⁷ Tetens 1775, p. 42n.



Perhaps anticipating the sorts of concerns raised by these critics, Kant removed this limitation on the scope of inner sense soon after the Dissertation, as is evident in the student notes to Kant's lectures on Anthropology from 1772/3. It should, of course, be kept in mind that Kant's lectures were based on the empirical psychology chapter of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*, and unsurprisingly Kant defines empirical psychology at the outset of the *Anthropologie-Parow* in much the same way as he had defined it in the Dissertation, namely, as a doctrine of inner appearances:

«Empirical psychology is a species of the doctrine of nature. It treats the appearances of our soul that constitute an object of our inner sense, and no doubt in the same way as the empirical doctrine of nature, or physics, treats appearances» (*APa* 25:243)

Yet, in an immediate departure from the discussion of empirical psychology in the Dissertation, Kant proceeds to draw explicit attention to the I as an object of inner sense, as it is now prominently identified as the "first thought that comes to be in human beings with the use of inner sense" (APa 25:244) and is taken to "express the intuition [Beschauung] of oneself" (AC 25:10). This explicit inclusion of the I within the purview of inner sense occasions a re-orientation of empirical psychology around this concept, as Kant's lectures from the period set out from an extensive consideration of the I in the course of which even the acts on the part of the mind, such as those of the understanding or reason, which were previously taken to be the object of a non-sensible intuition, are now considered to be accessible through inner observation:

«The I is the foundation of the understanding and the capacity for reason, and the entire higher power of cognition, since all these capacities rest on the fact that I observe and intuit [beschaue] myself and that which occurs in me» (AC 25:10)

Indeed, while Kant continues to hold that the concepts of the understanding are acquired through reflection on the acts of the mind, this process is now understood in terms of an "analysis of the I [Analysen des Ichs]" (AC 25:10) which is taken to yield the original representations of (my) simplicity and substantiality given that the "proper I is something substantial, simple, and persisting" (AC 25:13). As should be clear, in stark contrast to the implication in the Dissertation that the soul as such was an object of non-sensible intuition, the lectures on anthropology indicate that the I or soul, and its acts, are now wholly included within the scope of inner sense. As I will contend in the next section, this shift on Kant's part not only succeeds in raising empirical psychology's stock but also, and perhaps unexpectedly, rekindles his interest in the rational doctrine of the soul.

2. Empirical and Rational Psychology in the ML_1 Notes

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⁸ Heiner Klemme also makes note of this change after the Dissertation; see Klemme 1999, pp. 507-10. Moreover, Klemme similarly draws attention to Herz's potential influence on Kant's development from the position of the Dissertation; cf. Klemme 1999, pp. 518-20.

Though at first counter-intuitive, the claim that it was Kant's expansion of the scope of inner sense that led to his renewed interest in rational psychology is much less surprising considered in the context of the then predominant conception of the rational investigation of the soul, which can be traced back to Christian Wolff. As is familiar to many Kant scholars, Wolff first introduced empirical and rational psychology as distinct disciplines within so-called "special metaphysics" (as opposed to "general metaphysics" or ontology). Accordingly, in his first presentation of these disciplines in the *Deutsche* Metaphysik of 1720 (though without naming them as such), Wolff establishes the task of empirical psychology as cataloguing "what we perceive [of the soul] in everyday experience" (Wolff 1740, §191) through the use of careful observation of what transpires in the soul; by contrast, rational psychology is not limited to observation but "is permitted to treat of different things concerning the soul, to which experience does not so easily lead" (Wolff 1740, §727), and for this it makes use of inferences to draw conclusions regarding, for instance, the soul's nature or essence. Yet, in spite of introducing the distinction between the empirical and rational investigations of the soul, Wolff is nonetheless clear that these disciplines are crucially inter-connected. So, the observations regarding the soul's existence, cognitive and appetitive faculties, and relation with the body, catalogued in empirical psychology serve as the fundamental concepts and principles employed in rational psychology (cf. Wolff 1738, §1-4). Moreover, the results of the inferences carried out in the context of rational psychology are in turn subject to confirmation by experience; thus Wolff writes that "one sees that that which was stated of the soul above from experience is the touchstone of that which is taught here [i.e., in the rational discipline] of its nature and essence and the effects that are grounded in them" (Wolff 1740, §727). Along these lines, Wolff compares the complex inter-dependence of empirical and rational psychology to that between the empirical and theoretical parts of astronomy (cf. Wolff 1738, §5). This is all to say, then, that for Wolff rational psychology is properly 'rational' only in a "mixed" sense, that is, in contrast to pure disciplines like algebra and geometry, which admit nothing empirical, rational psychology admits that which "is grounded in infallible experiences [untr\u00fcglichen Erfahrungen]" (Wolff 1740, \u00e8382).\u00e9

Wolff's innovative conception of rational psychology was widely adopted, though a number of his more prominent successors continued to debate the precise terms of the rational discipline's reliance upon experience. So, Alexander Baumgarten makes use of the distinction between empirical and rational psychology in his *Metaphysica*, identifying the former as drawing "its assertions more proximally from experience" whereas the latter does so "by means of a longer series of inferences from the concept of the soul." Even so, Baumgarten introduces a significant (and influential) departure from the Wolffian discussion in that he takes empirical psychology merely to deliver assertions concerning

⁹ See also Wolff 1738, §495: "Ratio pura est, si in ratiocinando non admittimus nisi definitiones ac propositiones a priori cognitas. Pura non est, si in ratiocinando praeterea admittuntur, quae a posteriori congnoscuntur.'

¹⁰ Baumgarten 2011, §503.

the I or my soul (anima mea) in particular, where these observations are generalized in rational psychology to pertain to the human soul as such. For instance, having disclosed through the observation of my thoughts and their limitation by the perspective of the body that "[m]y soul is a power for representing the universe according to the position of the body" (§513), Baumgarten proceeds in the context of rational psychology to demonstrate that this likewise holds of the human soul generally (§741). Baumgarten's conception of rational psychology as generalizing the individual results of the empirical investigation was taken up by his student, G. F. Meier, in his claim that the rational investigation «proves of all human souls that which one has cognized of his own soul in the empirical psychology» (Meier 1765, §474). Nonetheless, Meier also drew attention to the fact that Baumgarten provides little in the way of justification for the generalization from the experience of my own soul in particular. Meier would himself seek to provide such a justification (indeed, he supplies three such attempts), though he confesses that these amount to something less than "complete demonstrations." For instance, Meier argues that the generalization from the fact that my soul constitutes such a representative force to the claim that the human soul in general is likewise such a force is effected by considering that there is no relevant difference between my soul and others in this respect: «this force, when one considers it merely in this way, does not constitute a characteristic that is properly and only my own [...] consequently, this belongs to that which I have in common with all human souls, and all human souls are accordingly such substances». 11 In any case, Meier chalks this particular difficulty up to the unusual nature of rational psychology as a discipline where, in his rather striking phrasing, «one strives to clarify [erklären] and prove experiences a priori». 12

What the foregoing suggests is that, for many of Kant's contemporaries, the prospects for the success of rational psychology in terms of delivering cognition of the human soul in general depended materially on what is disclosed of the I in the context of the empirical investigation. Significantly, Kant too endorsed this Wolffian conception of rational psychology in the ML_I notes to his lectures on metaphysics thought to have been delivered between 1776-8, though that this is so is perhaps not immediately clear. So, Kant is recorded as defining empirical psychology as *«the cognition of the objects of inner sense insofar as it is obtained from experience»* (ML_I 28:222), in stark contrast with rational psychology in which the soul "is cognized not from experience, as in empirical psychology, but *a priori from concepts*" (ML_I 28:262-3). Yet, that Kant upholds the reliance of rational upon empirical psychology is nonetheless evident in the subsequent discussion recorded in the notes. Consistent with his earlier presentation in the lectures on anthropology, Kant identifies the I as a representation immediately disclosed through my

¹¹ Meier 1765, §735. For the remaining two arguments, see Meier, *Metaphysik*, §736 for the argument from cosmological considerations, and §737 which proceeds from what was observed of the community of soul and body.

¹² Meier 1765, §735.

¹³ On the dating of the ML_I notes, see Carl 1989b, pp. 119-20 and the translators' introduction to Kant 2001, pp. xxx-xxxiii.

observation of myself; thus, in the notes we find that «I intuit myself, I am immediately conscious of myself» (ML₁ 28:224). Here, however, Kant offers a more complex account of the acquisition of the concept of the I than that sketched in his previous lectures as he contends that the representation of the I at issue in empirical psychology includes my awareness of the body:

«This I can be taken in a twofold sense: I as human being, and I as intelligence. I, as a human being, am an object of inner and outer sense. I as intelligence am an object of inner sense only» $(ML_1 28:224)$

In spite of its more complex content, Kant nonetheless follows Baumgarten in labelling this representation of the I "merely a concept of empirical psychology" (ML_1 28:224). Turning to the rational investigation, Kant will claim that its foundational concept of the soul as such is derived from this original representation of ourselves. Since rational psychology considers the soul merely as the object of inner sense, Kant contends that we must abstract from this broad representation of the self to yield the concept of the I in sensu stricto: "I take the self in the strict sense insofar as I omit everything that belongs to my self in the broader sense," which is to say that we "abstract everything outer from the object of inner sense" (ML₁ 28:265). As Kant makes clear, the resulting representation of the self (merely as the object of inner sense) is just the concept of the soul at issue in rational psychology: "[w]hen I speak of the soul, then I speak of the I in sensu stricto. We receive the concept of the soul only through the I, thus through the inner intuition of inner sense" (ML₁ 28:265). ¹⁴ Given, however, that the concept of the soul is abstracted from an original empirical representation (of the I), it follows that the resulting representation of the soul is likewise empirical, a conclusion that Kant for his part endorses in the rational psychology section of the notes when he claims that the "concept of the soul in itself is a concept of experience" (ML_1 28:263).

In addition to borrowing its concept of the soul from experience, rational psychology also draws materially on the results of empirical psychology in its treatment of the nature of the soul. This becomes evident, for instance, in comparing the respective treatments of substantiality and simplicity (though I will focus here only on the former). In the section of the notes concerning empirical psychology, Kant accounts for how the substantiality of the I is already disclosed by means of our immediate intuition of ourselves:

«Substance is the first subject of all inhering accidents. But this I is an absolute subject, to which all accidents and predicates can belong, and which cannot at all be a predicate of another thing. Thus the I expresses the substantiale; for that substrate in which all accidents inhere is the substantiale. This is the only case where we can immediately intuit the substance». (ML_1 28:225–6)

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 $^{^{14}}$ See also: "the I in the strict sense expresses not the whole human being, but rather the soul alone" (ML_1 28:265).



As Kant emphasizes, we can cognize our substantiality inasmuch as we immediately intuit that the *I* expresses the "substantiale," that is, the absolute, or "first," or "ultimate [letzte]" subject of predication. ¹⁵ In contrast with external appearances, where we cannot intuit the first subject of predications but can only infer it on the basis of that appearance's observed persistence through changes, in the case of the *I* Kant contends that we directly perceive the subject of thinking. ¹⁶ Moreover, the intuition of the substantiale must be sensible, since otherwise it would not be admissible into an empirical psychology in the first place. ¹⁷ Significantly, Kant's treatment of the soul's substantiality in the rational psychology section explicitly draws upon these results from empirical psychology:

«The I means a subject, so far as it is no predicate of another thing. What is no predicate of another thing is a substance. The I is the general subject of all predicates, or all thinking, of all actions, of all possible judgments that we can pass of ourselves as a thinking being. I can only say: I am, I think, I act. Thus it is not at all feasible that the I would be a predicate of something else [...]». $(ML_1 28:269)$

Of course, this argument is notable in that it is later the explicit target of the first paralogism; yet what is perhaps most conspicuous about it considered in the present context is the frequent reference to the I which, as we have seen, is a concept of *empirical* psychology. In fact, this argument amounts to little more than the application of the previous results concerning the I to the human soul as such. While Kant does not go into detail, this inference might be taken to be licensed inasmuch as it does not turn in any way on the data of outer sense (which are abstracted from for the purposes of rational psychology), and neither does it contain any premises that are particular to my own experience of myself (along the lines of Meier's argument), and accordingly the generalization is taken to be warranted. Kant thus concludes that "the I, or the soul which is expressed through the I [*die Seele*, *die durch das Ich ausgedrückt wird*], is a substance (ML_1 28:269). ¹⁸

What this shows, then, is that the cognition of the soul in the context of the rational psychology of the ML_I notes is possible only on the basis of the cognition of the I available through the empirical investigation. This would suggest, then, that the renewal of Kant's interest in rational psychology since the criticism launched in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* might be accounted for through the extension of the scope of inner sense to include the I and its activities which occurs after the Dissertation. Indeed, in turning to a sensible

¹⁵ See *R* 4412 : "Das erste subiect ist also ein etwas, wodurch die *accidentia* sind" (17:537), *R* 4052 (17:398–9), and *R* 4415: "Die Grenzen sind der erste Grund, die *omnitudo* des verknüpften und das letzte *subiectum*" (17:538).

¹⁶ See R 3921, (17:345–6), R 4495, (17:573), and AC 25:14-15.

¹⁷ Compare, for instance, Kant's parallel discussion of the substantiality of the I in AC (25:10), AF (25:473) and APa (25:244).

¹⁸ Kant's discussion of the soul's simplicity in the empirical and rational psychology sections of the ML_I notes follows much the same pattern; for a discussion, see Dyck, 2014, p.66-7

intuition of the self to serve as the foundation of rational psychology, Kant can be taken to put aside one of the principal concerns underlying his previous criticism of that discipline in Dreams. So, in that text, Kant had identified a certain "immaterial intuition" that we have through which we distinguish ourselves as spirits (DS 2:337). While this intuition is thus important for the rational psychologist (in supplying the ground for the concept of the soul), its distinction from ordinary sensations also arouses Kant's suspicions, and accordingly Kant distinguishes our non-empirical concept of spirit (2:338) and our few, weak impressions of the spirit-world (2:339-40) from our ordinary "bodily sensations" and worries that the former might mislead us given their indistinguishability from mere imaginings: "the spiritual sensation [geistige Empfindung] is of necessity so intimately interwoven with the illusion of the imagination, that it cannot be possible to distinguish the element of truth in such an experience from the crude illusions which surround it" (DS 2:340). After the Dissertation, however, Kant apparently reassesses the risk of relying upon this intuition and annexes our intuitions of the I (if not of the spirit world) to the scope of sensible intuition. ¹⁹ While this does not eliminate the possibility of deception at the hands of illusion, it does in any case provide a more robust basis for the cognitions of rational psychology; thus, where Kant in *Dreams* had viewed rational psychology as hopelessly speculative (likely as a function of the fact that so few of its claims were grounded on an unambiguous sensible intuition of spirit), the prospects of this discipline are revived after the Dissertation precisely on account of its new foundation in the *I*.

3. From the ML_1 Notes towards the Paralogisms

At this point it might be useful to contrast the foregoing results with what I take to be the received account of the development of Kant's psychology in the 1770's. As should be clear, after the Dissertation, Kant's views on rational psychology were not long in tension with the claim that our access to the soul is merely sensible; rather, not only does Kant come to elaborate a fairly rich account of what we can cognize of the soul by means of inner sense, but it is precisely on account of its new foundation in a sensible intuition of the I that the rational investigation of the soul once again attracts Kant's interest. Moreover, the last section has shown that even at the height of his commitment to the prospects of rational psychology (which I take to be the ML_I lecture notes), Kant did not understand the soul as a res cogitans, at least not if this is understood in terms of a merely intelligible thinking substance. Rather, in the ML_I lectures we have seen that Kant draws upon a sensible intuition to establish the soul's substantiality, which is to say, that the soul is taken to be a substance in the same (empirical) sense in which external objects are taken to be substances. The only difference is that in the latter case the final subject of

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¹⁹ It might be speculated that the proliferation and successes of "analytic" models of self-cognition, such as those developed by Buffon, Rousseau, and Bonnet motivated Kant to reconsider our mode of access to the I, and our capacity to distinguish it from the illusory representations of the imagination; for more on these models, see Klemme 1996, pp. 24-32.

predication is "assumed" or inferred on the basis of observed persistence through changes²⁰ rather than directly perceived, which leads Kant to assign a priority to the cognition of the substantiality of the I or soul: "from this I [that] we have borrowed the concept which we have in general of all substances" $(ML_1 28:226)^{21}$ What all this suggests, then, is that, consistent with the Wolffian presentation, the fates of rational and empirical psychology remain intricately inter-connected for Kant in the 1770's, and in this final section I will argue that this same inter-connection can provide an important clue to understanding what might have occasioned Kant's rejection of rational psychology sometime after the ML_1 lectures.

The first point to be noted in this respect is that, while the rational psychology elaborated in the ML_1 lectures represents Kant at his most bullish regarding the discipline (and certainly represents a stark contrast with his Critical rational psychology), it still falls far short of an unqualified endorsement as Kant places specific limitations on what can be cognized of the soul. After having detailed what can be cognized of the soul in the first section of rational psychology (the "transcendental part of rational psychology"—28:263), Kant proceeds to show in the second and third sections that this cognition yields little insight into the nature of the soul's relation to bodies and little certainty concerning its immortality, respectively. Regarding the former, having rejected any a priori proof of the soul's immateriality (ML_1 28:272–3), Kant turns to what can be known of the soul through experience in order to distinguish it from matter, and while Kant allows that immateriality is disclosed "in the concept of the I" (28:273), presumably because the I (in the strict sense) is an object of inner sense (cf. 28:226), he thinks this does not amount to a cognition of the soul's immateriality since it does "not yet prove that our soul should have nothing outer" (28:273). As regards the immortality of the soul, Kant contends that even less can be known about whether the soul will survive the death of the body, and about its state in the afterlife, as the familiar a posteriori proofs of immortality fail to demonstrate the necessity of such survival (which is required for certainty of immortality—ML₁ 28:244-5), and while the a priori proofs do better in this respect they are unable to further assure us of the preservation of the soul's intellectual capacities (especially personality) which, according to Kant, is the "main matter with the soul after death" (28:296). 22 What is in any case significant is the reason why Kant sets these limits to the cognition of the soul in rational psychology, namely, that these investigations go beyond the boundaries of our experience regarding the I. So, whereas like Wolff, Baumgarten, and Meier, Kant emphasizes the dependence of rational psychology on the empirical discipline for its positive claims, Kant also emphasizes, as his predecessors did not, the consequence of this dependence in terms of *limiting* what cognition of the soul is possible when the rational psychologist "abandon[s] the guiding thread of experience" (ML_1 28:263). This is clearly an important anticipation of the central principle of Kant's Critical epistemology, namely

²⁰ Compare *R* 4054 (17:399) and *R* 5297 (18:146).

²¹ As Kant writes, outer appearances are represented as things "which are parallel to my I" (R 4675, 17:648) and are substances "only by analogy" (ML_1 28:209). See also R 5402, 18:173 ²² For a detailed discussion of these arguments, see Dyck 2015.

that all (synthetic) cognition depends upon an available sensible intuition, ²³ or as it is formulated within the context of the rational psychology of the ML_1 notes, "we can come up to the boundaries of experience [...] but not beyond the boundaries of experience" (ML_1 28:264).

There are, therefore, already hints in the treatment preserved in the ML_I notes of the Critical limitations that Kant will impose on rational psychology. Yet, the nature of these limitations also point towards a possible explanation for Kant's later change of heart regarding rational psychology's prospects for delivering cognition of the soul, namely, his rejection of any *sensible* intuition of the I. Indeed, there are indications that Kant's development near the end of the 1770's followed just such a path. Already in the ML_I notes, for instance, where as we have seen Kant unambiguously takes the I as an empirical representation given through inner (and outer) sense, Kant nonetheless sets it apart from our ordinary consciousness of our states. So, in a quote already partially presented above, the notes read:

«We receive the concept of the soul only through the I, thus through the inner intuition of inner sense, [it is] insofar as I am conscious of all my thoughts, that I can accordingly speak of myself as [in] a state [einem Zustande] of inner sense. This object of inner sense, this subject, consciousness in the strict sense is the soul». (ML_1 28:265—former emphases mine)

Kant here seems to assert a difference between two sorts of objects of inner sense, namely, thoughts or the mental states that are the initial object of my introspection, and the subject (myself) the representation of which arises through reflection on the thought (as implicitly belonging *to me*). Indeed, this is borne out by Kant's distinction earlier between the distinct objects of inner sense; thus, the notes read, "I am conscious of two kinds of objects: I. of my subject *and* my state; 2. of things outside me" (ML_1 28:226). As Kant here seems to recognize, in inner sense I only render explicit the consciousness of that subject to which my representations already belong, and this is likely what Kant intends when he claims (in the lectures on anthropology and in the ML_1 empirical psychology) that the I is the "first thought" that occurs to us upon the use of our inner sense, that is, that the I has a certain logical (as opposed to temporal) priority in our self-consciousness.²⁴

Accordingly, already in the ML_I notes, Kant seems to recognize the peculiar character of the I and of our access to it which serves to distinguish it to some extent from our access to the other objects of inner sense (i.e., my mental states). As it happens, a number of other thinkers would draw attention, albeit in rather different ways, to the limits of our empirical access to the I in works published in the latter part of the 1770's. In his *Philosophische Versuche* of 1777 for instance, Johann Nicolaus Tetens contends that our initial feeling of self (Selbstgefühl) does not provide access to the soul as such, considered

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²³ Contrast Klemme who takes rational psychology to be a "central exception" to this principle; cf. Klemme 1996, p. 109.

²⁴ In the notes, inner sense is defined in terms of the "knowledge of that which belongs to me [...] a representation of my representations" (ML_1 28:227)



in distinction from the body; rather, what is disclosed in my initial impression is, claims Tetens, "the incorporated soul, or if one wants to call it such, the ensouled organ," rather than the soul alone. This is due to the fact that the modifications we feel through Selbstgefühl are only residual effects in the brain of the soul's activity, and yet this activity is never itself given to our sensation. The idea of the soul as a subject distinct from the body is instead given by means of a natural judgment that accompanies the feeling of a modification of ourselves according to which that modification is the effect of the soul:

«Since, when we regard our I as the object of our sight, outside of the mere feeling there is also a thought there that, beyond [ausser] the simple act of feeling, also requires an act proper to the power of thought [Denkkraft] which relates those impressions in the brain as an effect to the soul as its cause and thereby recognizes the latter in, and through, the former».²⁷

Similar to Tetens' efforts to draw attention to the paucity of our sensible representation of the self, Johann Bernhard Merian argues that our awareness of the self must be non-reflective. In an essay originally published in 1751 but translated and re-published (by Michael Hißmann) in 1778, Merian rejects inferential reconstructions of the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, claiming that the existence of the soul "is immediately present to itself in the sense in which, without exception, its thoughts are." While this would seem to (in Kant's term) bring our access to the *I* or soul firmly within the scope of inner sense, Merian's position is actually more subtle inasmuch as he stresses that the existence of the *I* or soul is actually *presupposed* by our introspective access to our thoughts. So, Merian disputes the claim that we can know our existence by means of reflection insofar as the cognition of our existence does not amount to the mere recollection of a thought but presupposes an original awareness of myself and my own existence to serve as the object of reflection. ²⁹ In this way, Merian concludes that the basis of the cognition of our existence must be immediate, namely it must be disclosed in an "original apperception" of our own existence.

Kant was undoubtedly familiar with both of these treatments, though precisely when they came to his attention (i.e., before or after the lectures recorded in ML_I) cannot be determined. What is, in any case, clear, is that Kant himself came to reject any sensible access to the self as the ground of the concept of the soul at issue in rational psychology. That such a change in Kant's views must have taken place becomes evident through contrasting Kant's account of the acquisition of the concept of the soul in the ML_I notes with that of the CPR. So, where Kant, as we have seen, held in the ML_I notes that the concept of the soul is "a concept of experience" (ML_I 28:263), one abstracted from an

²⁵ Tetens 1777, XIII.iii.2; II.170-1.

²⁶ See Tetens 1777, XIII.ii; II.152, and XIII.iii.2; II.171.

²⁷ Tetens 1777, V.iii.2; II.172.

²⁸ Merian 1778, p.95.

²⁹ See Merian 1778, pp. 117–18. For more detail here, see Thiel 1996, p.222, and Kitcher 2011, pp. 59–60.

original sensible intuition of the I, Kant identifies the representation of the soul in the first Critique as an "inferred" concept (cf. A310/B367). Kant does not anywhere state explicitly what grounds the changed character of the concept of the soul, but the likeliest explanation is that with the CPR he no longer accepts that there is any sensible basis in the intuition of ourselves from which an empirical concept could be abstracted. Rather, the idea of the soul comes to have its basis in the transcendental unity of apperception, which as the representation of the necessary unity of the thinking subject, cannot be given empirically; as he writes in the CPR, "from the transcendental concept of a subject that contains nothing manifold I infer the absolute unity of this subject itself" (A340/B398—my emphasis), and much the same point is made in R 5553 (a draft of the later Transcendental Dialectic thought to have been written in 1778-9):

«The ground of the idea of the soul is that the understanding must relate all thoughts and inner perceptions to the I and must assume this as the single constant subject so that the most perfect unity of self-cognition might come about» (18:226).

Indeed, earlier in the same note, Kant explicitly rejects as subreptic any putative perception of the self that might serve as the ground for the idea of the soul:

«The paralogism of pure reason is actually a transcendental subreption since our judgment about the object and the unity of consciousness in the same is taken for a perception of the unity of the subject». (18:223)

This would suggest, therefore, that a key (likely the key) development towards Kant's eventual discovery of the Paralogisms is the rejection of any sensible intuition of the self by means of inner sense, and not the rejection of any putative non-sensible access to the res cogitans. Once Kant has reconsidered the availability of the I to sensible intuition, it follows that even the cognition of the soul's substantiality and simplicity must be rejected as lacking any empirical foundation. Otherwise put, the strict limitations that Kant places on rational psychology in the *CPR* are a direct consequence of the pure *I think*, which is "obviously not an experience" (A354), displacing the sensible I as the "sole text of rational psychology" (A343/B401). This casts Kant's criticism of rational psychology in a rather different light as it shows that it is because Kant now recognizes that the concept of the soul is derived from the pure I think, rather than from a representation of the self obtained through experience, that rational psychology no longer has any empirical basis for its cognitions of the soul. Given this, however, Kant's Paralogisms start to look less like a radical break from his discussion of rational psychology in the ML_1 notes, and more like the result of a continual development of Kant's previous views. So, just as before, Kant continues to hold in the CPR that "[w]e will thus cognize a priori no more of the soul than the I allows us to cognize" (ML_1 28:266), yet, where he had previously presumed the availability of observations of the abiding self to ground cognition of the soul, Kant now

shows that it is precisely because we *lack* the relevant intuition of the *I* that the pretensions on the part of the rational psychologist to offer any such cognition must be strictly curbed.

In the end, then, we can see that Kant's development in the 1770's, at least with respect to his psychology, is more continuous than many would suspect; rather than a sudden revolution late in the decade, the Paralogisms would seem to be the result of a gradual advance in Kant's views on the soul, and on the scope of inner sense, throughout the decade. Indeed, and perhaps surprisingly, Kant's views would seem to come full circle. Having denied that the self and its acts are objects of sensible intuition in the Dissertation, Kant expands the scope of inner sense in his lectures on anthropology. This has the result of greatly enriching the resources of not only empirical psychology but also of the rational psychology which he, following Wolff, regarded as reliant upon experience. Yet, Kant evidently comes to think better of this after the ML_1 notes as he rejects any sensible access to the subject of thought once it takes its properly Critical status as a "a form of representation in general" (A346/B404), the consequence of which, as spelled out in the Paralogisms, is the frustration of rational psychology's pretensions to offer any cognition of the soul.

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