

Cremonini, también comentando a Galeno, las inclinaciones, el carácter moral, pueden ser cambiadas por medio de prácticas y hábitos (pp. 205-209).

El libro, en definitiva, traza una larga historia de transformaciones y cambios que significan “el comienzo de un nuevo capítulo”, precisamente el que queda por tratar [*Beyond the Tradition: Santorio and Descartes*, pp. 225-267], enmarcado por el modelo experimental de Santorio, inspirado en la “máquina” (pp. 243-248), impulso de la *statistical quantification* (p. 280), y en el apoyo que supone la tradición naturalista al mecanismo animal de Descartes (pp. 260-263), concluye, en la senda diseñada, “honrando la tesis de *Quod animi mores* [...], la voluntad ha sido definitivamente sujeta y limitada al destino del cuerpo” (p. 267). ■

Rosa M. Moreno

Universidad de Granada

ORCID 0000-0003-2043-7018

Saulo de Freitas Araujo, Thiago Constâncio Ribeiro Pereira, and Thomas Sturm, eds. *The Force of an Idea: New Essays on Christian Wolff's Psychology.* (Studies in History and Philosophy of Science 50), 2021. 325 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-74434-2. ISBN 978-3-030-74435-9 (eBook) DOI 10.1007/978-3-030-74435-9.

While surely many recognize the name “Christian Wolff,” probably few can say anything precise about him or his place in the history of psychology. As an encouragement to reach for the valuable book under review, it may therefore be appropriate to begin with Wolff himself.

In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1805-1831), Hegel said that Wolff had “entirely displaced the Aristotelian philosophy of the schools [i.e., Scholasticism], and made philosophy into an ordinary science pertaining to the German nation”. He thus encapsulated the groundbreaking character of Wolff’s oeuvre. Approximately between Leibniz’s death (1716) and the emergence of Kant’s critical philosophy in the 1780s, Christian Wolff (1679-1754) dominated philosophical curricula in German-speaking Protestant and Catholic universities; summaries of his work circulated in several European languages. Wolff wrote on most areas of knowledge, first in German (thus helping create a vernacular philosophical language), then in longer Latin treatises. He emphasized the “marriage of rea-

son and experience” —the only way, he believed, of attaining the demonstrative certainties that should characterize *scientia*, defined (*more scholastico*) as the capacity to draw conclusions deductively from certain and immutable principles.

This view is reflected in Wolff’s dividing each discipline into an “empirical” and a “rational” branch, which he considered interconnected and interdependent. The former proceeds *a posteriori* and deals with things as they exist and take place; the latter, *a priori*, concerns their reasons. In the case of the science of the soul, empirical psychology is based on observation, and even experimentation, while rational psychology operates by deduction from definitions, irrefutable experience, axioms, and proven propositions. Wolff’s objective was pragmatic. In his view, philosophy should lead to virtue, derived from the exercise of reason; rationality, in turn, was to be based on experience and sustain a philosophy that everyone could apply in their lives. At the same time, his system was embodied in rigidly syllogistic treatises overflowing with definitions, redundancies, apparent inferences, and numbered cross-references —something that put off some contemporary and later readers, and is inevitably reflected in some of the scholarship into the author.

Philosophy, the science of God, the human soul, and material bodies, includes in the Wolffian system logic, metaphysics, practical philosophy, physics, the philosophy of the “arts,” and the philosophy of law. Metaphysics (the science of being, the world in general, and spiritual substances) comprises ontology, general cosmology, psychology, and natural theology. The textbooks by Wolffian authors that Kant, though critical, employed in his teaching, followed such a structure, and reproduced, in simplified form, the style of the original treatises. Despite the quoted compliment, Hegel deplored such style as an expression of the “barbarism of pedantry” and the “pedantry of barbarism,” and saw in it one of the causes for the philosopher’s discredit. Already before Hegel, Wolff was not universally appreciated. French *philosophes* heaped derision on the thinker Voltaire depicted as a *bavard germanique*. Nevertheless, it quickly became common for summaries of Wolffian philosophy or abridged translations of the psychology to keep only the empirical part, considered as the most original and useful.

For readers familiar with early modern philosophy, a title like *New Essays*... brings to mind Leibniz’s *Nouveaux essais sur l’entendement humain*, his rebuttal of Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The editors’ Preface does not make the connection. Neither does it explain in what sense the chapters are *essays*. As often discussed in literary theory and history, the essay, since its paradigmatic roots in Montaigne, is characterized by its freedom, its unsystematic character, its openness, and its attention to style. The chapters in the books

under review are not essays in that sense. This is a minor point, but “New Essays” struck this reader as more than a superficial allusion.

Be that as it may, the book is made up of solid, sometimes innovative additions to the considerable body of academic Wolffian exegesis. As for why they are “new,” the editors explain that although Wolff’s 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 (p. v).

This situation motivated “an up-to-date, comprehensive collection of essays on Wolff’s psychology, its contexts, contents, and consequences,” aimed at making “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” (p. v). Even with a good number of chapters that are unlikely to reach the intended “wider audience,” the volume has the potential for advancing its stated goal.

The book’s title refers to the fact that some of Wolff’s “psychological insights [...] 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” (p. vi). Such a claim seems more rhetorical than substantial, and we are not told how Wolff’s insights live on today. That, however, does not detract from the usefulness of a collection that, for the most part, indeed consists of state-of-the-art discussions of a broad variety of issues related to Wolff’s psychology by some of the best international scholars in the field, and mainly within the framework of professional history of philosophy.

The volume consists of two parts: “The Scope and Contents of Wolff’s Psychology” and “Receptions of Wolff’s Psychology” (from the philosopher’s immediate followers through Kant and Hegel to Wundt). Between the Introduction and Part I, there is a chapter on the “historical context” of Wolff’s psychology, competent, but focused on theologians’ reaction to the philosopher, and including little about psychology specifically. Locating Wolff with respect to the earlier *scientia de anima* would have helped the volume’s objectives.

The volume is rich in detail and erudition, and almost without exception fully refers to existing scholarship. It is weaker in historiography and perspective.

The editors' Introduction ("Reevaluating Christian Wolff's Psychology") could have been an occasion to discuss scholarship on Wolff and the history of psychology, to explain why the edited studies are "new," and to clarify how Wolff's system "poses challenges that are alive today" (p. 2). Five pages could not have sufficed, and it is in this connection regrettable that there is no chapter by the third editor. From the Introduction onward, the claim that Wolff has been misunderstood and neglected surfaces recurrently. For example:

both Wolff scholarship and the historiography of psychology have not yet recognized the full originality, consistency, and influence of Wolff's psychological ideas or their significance within the eighteenth-century intellectual context, particularly for the development of psychology as a science. (pp. 31-32).

Philosophy is inherently subject to never-ending commentary and reinterpretation, and no such claims —not entirely fair, without further explanations, to "both Wolff scholarship and the historiography of psychology"— needed to be made for the present volume to be understood as part of that process.

Readers for whom Christian Wolff is new will find in some chapters of *The Force of an Idea* a good guide, in English for the first time, but more or less accessible depending on their background; those who are conversant with him and some of the topics covered will learn more, discover new perspectives, update their references, and confirm that Wolff remains a fertile and important research topic in the history of the human sciences. ■

Fernando Vidal

ICREA (Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies)

ORCID: 0000-0002-2956-8607

■ **Ricardo Campos.** La sombra de la sospecha. Peligrosidad, psiquiatría y derecho en España (siglos XIX y XX). Madrid: La Catarata; 2021. 256 p. ISBN 978-84-1352-197-8. 18,50 €

La obra que nos presenta Ricardo Campos es una historia crítica de la noción de peligrosidad social en la España del periodo entre 1850 y finales del siglo xx (a medida que se fue derogando la Ley sobre Rehabilitación y Peligrosidad Social