Courtney D. Fugate/John Hymers (eds.), *Baumgarten and Kant on Metaphysics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, xv + 235 pp.

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The editors of the present collection confirm the growing trend in contemporary Kant-scholarship of regarding Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* – which they translated – as the main channel of Kant's confrontation with the *Schulmetaphysik*.¹ Moreover, they avoid a reduction of Baumgarten's thought to a mere foil against which Kant's philosophical path can be elucidated. The volume does so by offering a careful historical reconstruction of Baumgarten's unique position within the complex setting of mid-eighteenth-century German *Schulphilosophie* and *Schultheologie*.

Various contributors reconstruct Baumgarten's moral and theological positions with regard to the debate between Leibnizian-Wolffian rationalists and Pietists. Alluding to Baumgarten's deathbed utterances concerning the primacy of personal faith over both philosophy and the-

1 Baumgarten, *Metaphysics: A Critical Translation with Kant's Elucidations, Selected Notes, and Related Materials*. Trans./ed. by C. D. Fugate/J. Hymers. London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. Recently, Baumgarten's work has also been translated into German, by G. Gawlick and L. Kreimendahl (Bad Cannstatt: Fromman-Holzboog, 2011) and into French, by L. Langlois in collaboration with É.-J. Poliquin (Paris: Vrin, 2019). An Italian translation is forthcoming.

ology (11f.), Brandon Look examines the philosopher's effort to demonstrate the non-contradictory relationship between reason and revelation. Baumgarten's attempts to mediate between the Leibnizian-Wolffian metaphysics and Pietist theology is further explored by Clemens Schwaiger, who contends that Baumgarten "was [...] something of a Janus, being both Pietist and exponent of the Enlightenment" (43). Schwaiger's analysis of how Baumgarten "sought to take the wind out of the sails of the Pietist critique by revising Wolff's theory of freedom" (43) focuses mainly on the concepts of "spontaneity" and "choice."

By contrast, Henry E. Allison reads Baumgarten's treatment of freedom in view of the "Leibnizian freedom project". He claims that Baumgarten, avoiding "the shadow of Spinoza" (9), locates human freedom within a rationalist framework that is far from rejecting Spinoza's necessitarianism. In order to show the roots of Kant's disagreement with Baumgarten on these important issues, Allison offers an interesting analysis of the lecture notes known as *Metaphysik L*, (mid 1770s), noting Kant's special concern with the understanding of "how transcendental freedom could be attributed to a created being" (179). This question presupposes a detailed analysis of the soul's nature as it reveals itself in the empirical and thinking self.

Further developing the account of Baumgarten's empirical and rational psychology of his *Kant and Rational Psychology*,² Corey Dyck's contribution shows how Baumgarten's rational psychology, contained in the *Metaphysica*, "blends both Wolffian and Pietistic influences in its attempt to understand the human soul, its relation to the body, and its condition in the afterlife" (79).

Like Dyck, Gary Hatfield underlines analogies and differences between Wolff and Baumgarten's conceptions of empirical and rational psychology and their relationships. He points out that both authors provide a "philosophical psychology" fundamentally oriented towards "knowledge, morality and mind-body relations" (62), i. e., sharply distinguished from the study of the vital functions of living beings. Arguably, this approach is already present in Descartes' philosophy, but Hatfield claims – and this is one of his main points – that "Descartes and the Cartesians" also "put in place the conceptual framework for a psychophysiological functional psychology" (62).

As was mentioned at the beginning, this volume emphasizes Baumgarten's influence on the maturation of key themes in Kant's critical philosophy. Recently, scholars have started to consider even Kant's contributions to anthropology in this light. The essay by Rudolf A. Makkreel is enlightening in this regard: examining in particular the way Baumgarten influenced Kant's innovative account of clearness and distinctness, he reconstructs the impact of Baumgarten's empirical psychology on Kant's pragmatic anthropology.

The essays that concentrate on metaphysical issues include those written by Angelica Nuzzo, Courtney D. Fugate, Jeffrey Edwards, Paul Guyer and John Hymers. By focusing on a notion that is crucial to Baumgarten's metaphysical system, namely, *determinatio*, Nuzzo challenges "the tacit dominating assumption" that "Kant's critique of dogmatic metaphysics has made any positive reference to Baumgarten's own metaphysics a losing proposition" (23). She convincingly argues that Baumgarten's concept of determination – although sometimes indirectly and in particular through Kant's mediation – significantly influenced T. Abbt's discussion of J.J. Spalding's *Betrachtung über die Bestimmung des Menschen*, S. Maimon's "principle of determinability", and even the Doctrine of Being of Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

2 Corey W. Dyck, *Kant and Rational Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Courtney Fugate revisits another core notion of Baumgarten's metaphysics, namely, the concept of existence, as well as its connection to the concepts of actuality and complete determination. Fugate partially curtails the effectiveness of Kant's dismissal of Baumgarten's ontological argument in the *Only Possible Argument*. He claims that "Kant's real disagreement with Baumgarten [...] seems to turn not on whether existence is or is not a real predicate, but rather on whether being completely and sufficiently determined is anything other than being actual" – a point which Kant does not deal with in his 1763 text (152).

Jeffrey Edwards also problematizes the way Kant moves beyond Baumgarten (and Wolff) by establishing a crucial connection between thoroughgoing determination and existence. More specifically, he draws attention to Kant's treatment of this connection in the *Opus postumum*. Here he identifies a substantial "refinement of the classical critical doctrine" (201) on this topic, arguing that it offers unexpected developments of issues that were left unresolved by both Kant's pre-critical positions and solutions attempted later.

Baumgarten's impact on Kant, though perhaps not particularly noticeable, can be inferred, at least indirectly, from various features of Kant's critical philosophy. Thus, in his account of Kant's *Refutation of Idealism* Paul Guyer maintains that Baumgarten's definition of the idealist as someone who "admits only spirits in this world" (*Metaphysics*, § 402, here 155) serves as the model for the type of idealism Kant aims to refute in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Consequently, "the task of refuting idealism becomes that of proving simply that there are things other than minds" (159). Of course, the epistemological framework of Kant's refutation, which aims to demonstrate the validity of transcendental idealism alone, differs substantially from Baumgarten's ontological and theological framework. Nonetheless, however, the proximity of the two authors with regard to their polemical target is quite surprising.

One of the harshest of Kant's criticisms of Baumgarten's metaphysics concerns the latter's definition of 'nothing' which according to Kant cannot be grounded empirically. However, John Hymers stresses in his essay that Baumgarten's identification of the principle of non-contradiction and the concept of nothing "assiduously avoids the empirical framework ascribed to him by Kant and is thus logically prior to experience despite the many empirical formulations the tradition bequeathed to him" (117). Hymers also questions Kant's attempt to specify the concept of nothing by drawing on the four classes of categories, and, accordingly, the effectiveness of considering the concept of an object in general as superordinate to the concepts of possibility and impossibility.

The contributors to *Baumgarten and Kant on Metaphysics* decisively deepen our understanding of Baumgarten as an autonomous and original thinker within the Wolffian framework, thanks also to their thorough consideration of Baumgarten's particularly terse Latin, which among his contemporaries already aroused some comprehension problems (4 f.). Ideally, this work can be seen as part of a broader project, which – apart from the translations – also includes the publication of a collective volume, edited by C. Fugate, on Kant's lectures on metaphysics.³ As far as metaphysics and anthropology are concerned, Kant's lectures on these subjects not only shed light on his engagement with his predecessors, but also allow us to better understand Baumgarten's unique position in eighteenth-century German philosophy.

3 C. Fugate (ed.), *Kant's Lectures on Metaphysics. A Critical Guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.