

## Kant versus Rand: Much No to Walsh and Miller

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### 1. Introduction

In his article “Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,”<sup>1</sup> George Walsh presents Immanuel Kant’s mature conception of metaphysics and he compares it to Ayn Rand’s. I take significant issue with Walsh’s representation of Kant. The similarity Walsh finds between Kant and Rand is overblown; nothing distinctive of Kant’s philosophy is compatible with Rand’s.<sup>2</sup> In his comment on Walsh’s article,<sup>3</sup> one way Fred Miller tries to shrink the degree of similarity Walsh purports is by taking Kant to hold a coherence view of truth. I argue that that was not Kant’s conception of truth and that Walsh’s picture of the large commonality between Kant and Rand in metaphysics is to be corrected in other ways. Miller defends Rand against Walsh’s criticism of her diagnosis of Kant’s fundamental error in epistemology. I argue that that diagnosis by Rand of Kant’s error is off the mark, as Walsh had maintained. Additionally, I argue that Rand’s metaphysics and epistemology are not defeated by Kant’s

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<sup>1</sup> George V. Walsh, “Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,” *Objectivity* 3, no. 1 (2001), pp. 1–27. Chris Sciabarra generally follows Walsh’s interpretation; see Chris Matthew Sciabarra, *Ayn Rand: The Russian Radical*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), pp. 139–41.

<sup>2</sup> Walsh, “Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,” p. 22. The fourth point of similarity Walsh lists—exclusion of philosophy from traditional cosmological speculative metaphysics—is something distinctive to Kant, but Rand did not stay squarely with that position.

<sup>3</sup> Fred D. Miller, Jr., “Comments on George Walsh, ‘Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,’” *Objectivity* 3, no. 1 (2001), pp. 28–37.

criticisms of German Rationalism and that her Objectivism is contrary to Kant's Idealism.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Kant's Big Questions Are Not Rand's

Walsh begins with a set of questions he says Rand and Kant shared: How do we know? What ought we to do? What is the world? What is human being? They shared an interest in those questions and they thought that answers to them gave philosophy a job, but Kant and Rand did not coincide on how metaphysics can be a rational pursuit. Rand did not share interest in *other* questions so burning with Kant: How is metaphysics possible? How is it similar to and different from geometry? How is geometry possible?<sup>5</sup> Kant's answers to *these* questions are key to his critique of the received metaphysics of his time, especially Christian Wolff's.<sup>6</sup> Kant's answers to *these* questions

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<sup>4</sup> As far as she developed her published theoretical philosophy, however, Ayn Rand did not develop an explicit reply to Kant's key criticism of empiricism, namely, failing to account for the necessity in and method of geometry.

<sup>5</sup> See Daniel Sutherland, *Kant's Mathematical World: Mathematics, Cognition, and Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); Emily Jane Carson, *Mathematics, Metaphysics, and Intuition in Kant* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1996); Emily Carson and Lisa Shabel, eds., *Kant: Studies on Mathematics in the Critical Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> In Kant's time, Johann Christian Eberhard and Moses Mendelssohn were popular-philosopher defenders of Christian Wolff's philosophy. Eberhard was a prominent critic of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* from the standpoint of German rationalist metaphysics. The German Lockeans Johann Georg Heinrich Feder and Christian Garve helped to introduce the English and French Enlightenment into Germany and they were widely read popular-philosophy opponents of Wolff's rationalism. Upon publication of *KrV*, they became empiricist critics of Kant's transcendental idealism as well.

Kant confronted eighteenth-century post-Leibnizian German metaphysics; David Hume's, Rene Descartes's, and George Berkeley's styles of skepticism; and anti-rational Pietism. Post-Leibnizian German metaphysics includes, importantly, Wolff, Alexander Baumgarten, and Christian August Crusius. Crusius was a philosopher of the Pietist stripe, whose arguments were a reservoir for Kant's anti-Enlightenment contemporaries Johann Georg Hamann and Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. Wolff's grounding of all disciplines in reason was incompatible with the Pietist stance that all ideas were to be

are also key to his innovative epistemology to replace German rationalism and empiricism.<sup>7</sup> Kant's answers to *these* questions form a critique some could make of Rand's theoretical philosophy, and thus invite counters from Rand's standpoint.

Walsh places Rand in substantial agreement with Kant by an informal oral remark she made<sup>8</sup>:

Actually, do you know what we can ascribe to the universe as such, apart from scientific discovery? Only those fundamentals that we can grasp about existence. Not in the sense of switching contexts and ascribing particular characteristics to the universe, but we can say: since everything possesses identity, the universe possesses identity. Since everything is finite, the universe is finite. But we can't ascribe space or time or a lot of other things to the universe as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

Rand's remark that the universe, or the sum of all existents, cannot be regarded as a whole entity having characteristics of its parts applicable to the whole, was not Rand's settled view. Three years after those remarks, she put into published writing that her axiom "Existence exists" entails that the universe as a whole cannot come into or go out of existence. For her, this meant that from metaphysics (based in

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measured by their moral or spiritual impact. Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*, from which Kant lectured, steered a middle course between Wolff and the Pietists.

<sup>7</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A755/B783; see Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Deduction: An Analytical-Historical Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 444–46.

<sup>8</sup> George V. Walsh, "Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant," p. 22. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (hereafter, *KrV*), trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1996 [1781, 1787]), A408–67/B435–95. Note that all citations of the various translations of Kant's works are to pages in the original-language *Akademie* volumes rather than to page numbers of the translations.

<sup>9</sup> Ayn Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, expanded 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Harry Binswanger and Leonard Peikoff (New York: Meridian, 1990), p. 273.

perceptual experience) we know that duration is applicable to the universe as a whole and that the duration of the universe is endless.<sup>10</sup>

Walsh is correct in maintaining that “Kant was primarily interested in settling once and for all the question of whether metaphysics is possible as a science.”<sup>11</sup> Walsh’s emphasis on this issue for Kant was guided by Douglas Dryer.<sup>12</sup> Walsh gives a definition of metaphysics used by Dryer,<sup>13</sup> which Walsh insinuates was Kant’s definition of metaphysics: “the science of all that is, in so far as it is.”<sup>14</sup> That definition is compatible with Wolff’s,<sup>15</sup> but incompatible with Kant’s account of proper method for metaphysics.<sup>16</sup> Walsh gives no citation for that definition of metaphysics in Kant’s works and I have been unable to find Kant making such a claim.<sup>17</sup> If Kant were on board

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<sup>10</sup> Ayn Rand, “The Metaphysical versus the Man-Made,” in Ayn Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It* (New York: Signet, 1982), p. 25. I capitalize ‘existence’ when I mean not only existence *per se*, but also existence as a whole, existence in its entirety.

<sup>11</sup> Walsh, “Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,” p. 7. See Kant, *KrV*, Axiii, Axx–xxii, Bxxii–xxiv.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas P. Dryer, *Kant’s Solution for Verification in Metaphysics* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966), preface and chap. 1. See also, Yirmiyahu Yovel, “Kant’s Project Reconsidered: Metaphysics as Science and as Ethical Action,” in *Kant Today*, ed. Hans Lenk and Reiner Wiehl (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006), pp. 85–98; and Karin de Boer, *Kant’s Reform of Metaphysics: The Critique of Pure Reason Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Dryer, *Kant’s Solution for Verification in Metaphysics*, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Walsh, “Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,” p. 8. This would be a definition of general metaphysics, or ontology.

<sup>15</sup> Wolff writes: “Ontology or first philosophy is the science of being in general, or insofar as it is being”; see Christian Wolff, *Philosophia Prima Sive Ontologia (First Philosophy, or Ontology)* (Frankfurt: Regner, 1730), sec. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Kant, *KrV*, Axiii, Bxx–xxi, B7, B395n. See also, Marcus Willaschek, *Kant on the Sources of Metaphysics: The Dialectic of Pure Reason* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 36–45.

<sup>17</sup> In his lectures on metaphysics, Kant told his students that the term

with this definition, then his conception of what metaphysics is, as an attainable discipline, would be not far from Rand's, which is that metaphysics is "the study of existence as such."<sup>18</sup> However, before arriving at his method for metaphysics under his Critical philosophy, Kant writes (following Alexander Baumgarten) that "metaphysics is nothing other than the philosophy of the fundamental principles of our cognition."<sup>19</sup> In the second edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, he states: "Metaphysics is a speculative cognition by reason that . . . rises entirely above being instructed by experience. It is cognition through mere concepts (not, like mathematics, cognition through the application of concepts to intuitions)."<sup>20</sup> Walsh thus inaccurately casts Rand and Kant as more in step on what is metaphysics than is the case.

From Rand's standpoint, Wolffian metaphysics should be indicted, though not as sweepingly as Kant indicts it. One big differ-

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'ontology' means the science of being, or general doctrine of being, and that metaphysics is supposed to determine the predicables of all or most things. But these are only perfunctory, and that definition and aim of ontology is to be deflated by shifting focus to right epistemological character and limitations. Kant's projected metaphysics conforming to his strictures under the Critical philosophy is not like those of Wolff or Baumgarten, but rather, presentation of all pure *a priori* cognition in a systematic manner. Kant, *KrV*, A845/B873. See De Boer, *Kant's Reform of Metaphysics*, pp. 218-59; Robert B. Pippin, *Kant's Theory of Form* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 223-28.

<sup>18</sup> Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Immanuel Kant, "Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality," in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy, 1755-1770*, trans. and ed. David Walford (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2:283.

<sup>20</sup> Kant, *KrV*, Bxiv. This is a redefinition and contraction of the traditional scope of metaphysics. By this time, Kant considered that up until him and his new conception of it, "metaphysics as a science has never existed at all" (*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forth as a Science*, in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*, ed. and trans. Henry Allison and Peter Heath [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 4:369). See also, Immanuel Kant, "What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?" in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, 20: 259-61.

ence between the metaphysics of Wolff and of Rand is that, for Rand, existence is most basic. She holds that concrete actualities are the existents upon which all else, such as essences and possibilities, must be framed.<sup>21</sup> For Wolff, though, “philosophy is the science of all possible things, together with the manner and reason of their possibility.”<sup>22</sup>

Wolff’s criterion of possibility is freedom from contradiction, where such contradictions concern things in the world. This makes logical analysis the method for Wolffian metaphysics. Since Wolff took the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) to be a consequence of the Principle of Non-Contradiction (PNC), PSR is also a tool in Wolffian metaphysics.<sup>23</sup> Primacy of possibility over existence infects not only Wolff’s metaphysics, but also Baumgarten’s metaphysics, whose order of foundational steps in metaphysics is (i) the definition of nothing, which is the impossibility of contradiction, (ii) and then something, that which is not nothing.<sup>24</sup>

By contrast, Christian Crusius holds: “All other sciences contain further determinations of those things that arise in metaphysics. . . . Metaphysics reveals the grounds of possibility or necessity *a*

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<sup>21</sup> Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 173. Leonard Peikoff remarks, “Leaving aside the man-made, *nothing is possible except what is actual*”; see Leonard Peikoff, *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand* (New York: Dutton, 1991), p. 28. The possible, I say, should be in contrast to the actual, so I amend Peikoff’s remark a bit on the side of Objectivism: nothing is possible except what are potentials (co-potentials) of actuals. Potentials, like actuals, are existents. I submit that my amendment is consonant with Rand’s philosophy and with what Peikoff is getting at with that remark.

<sup>22</sup> Christian Wolff, *Rational Thoughts on the Powers of the Human Understanding and Its Proper Use in the Cognition of Truth* (London: L. Hawes, W. Clarke, and R. Collins, 1770), sec. 1. This work is commonly known as the *German Logic*.

<sup>23</sup> PSR, for Wolff, is the principle that nothing is without a sufficient reason (or ground) why it is rather than not (*Ontologia*, sec. 70). PNC is the principle that it cannot happen that the same thing simultaneously is and is not (*Ontologia*, sec. 28).

<sup>24</sup> Alexander Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. Courtney D. Fugate and John Hymers (London: Bloomsbury, 2013 [1730]), secs. 7–8.

*priori*, through which cognition {of other sciences} becomes more distinct and complete.”<sup>25</sup> Kant’s insistence that metaphysical knowledge be *a priori* conforms to Crusius’s view.<sup>26</sup> Crusius takes metaphysics to be “the science of those necessary truths of reason that are something different from the determination of extended magnitudes,”<sup>27</sup> keeping close to mathematics in method, though not in subject matter. To Crusius’s mind, what we should seek most fundamentally in metaphysics is “a universal fundamental science from which all other human cognition that is to be established *a priori* can obtain its grounds and which also contains within itself the grounds for mathematical and practical sciences {ethics}.”<sup>28</sup>

All three of these metaphysical theories—from Wolff, Crusius, and Baumgarten—were current on the intellectual scene at the outset of Kant’s time. The latter two, especially, gave much weight to metaphysics’s role in fortifying human knowledge and morality and little to the topic of metaphysics itself for a definition of metaphysics. Kant criticized Baumgarten’s definition as resting metaphysics on the level of generality in empirical cognition. Kant, instead, distinguishes metaphysics by the absence of empirical sources in metaphysical cognition, by the *a priori* character of cognition in metaphysics, and by *a priori* cognition from concepts.<sup>29</sup> Rand’s conception, aim, and methods of metaphysics are miles apart from Kant’s in his mature philosophy.

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<sup>25</sup> Christian August Crusius, Preface to *Sketch of the Necessary Truths of Reason*, in *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason: Background Source Materials*, ed. and trans. Eric Watkins (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 137. In quotations I use curly braces to indicate a parenthetical insertion from me, square braces if a parenthetical is from the translator.

<sup>26</sup> On the influence of Crusius on Kant, see Eric Watkins, “Breaking with Rationalism: Kant, Crusius, and the Priority of Existence,” in *Leibniz and Kant*, ed. Brandon C. Look (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 57–78.

<sup>27</sup> Crusius, *Sketch of the Necessary Truths of Reason*, p. 137.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A843-44/B871–72.

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is a critique of the methods in and scope of his predecessors' and contemporaries' metaphysics by confining the results of metaphysics to the world we can experience. While their metaphysical views are different from Rand's, hers is a broadly empiricist method that Kant would reject because the necessity in such a metaphysics is not of the *a priori* sort.<sup>30</sup> As Miller observes, Rand spurns such metaphysics.<sup>31</sup>

Kant's project was a critique of both general metaphysics and metaphysics in its customary applications—"special metaphysics"—as Walsh observes.<sup>32</sup> Kant's plan, on its face, was not the abolition of all metaphysics, but a radical reform of metaphysics, beginning with a critique of received metaphysics through a critique of pure reason within which metaphysics is reined in and reconfigured.<sup>33</sup> Pure reason,

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<sup>30</sup> Kant would reject for metaphysics Rand's principle "Existence is identity" as loaded with too much empirical meaning. Rand includes exclusions under identity: leaf/stone, burn/freeze, and all-green/all-red. Kant had taken PNC as the basic logical rule for all universal negative propositions. Departing from Wolff, he had taken the Principle of Identity as the basic logical rule for all universal affirmative propositions. Just as Kant came to reject Wolff's PSR as a purely logical principle, so he would reject Rand's empirically loaded conception of identity as rightly in play in metaphysics or in logic. Then too, Kant would reject Rand's view of causation, her replacement for widest-scope PSR, under the lens of identity, and oppose her principle of causality against his Second and Third Analogies of Experience in *KrV*, his replacement for widest-scope PSR. See Pluhar's note 160 in *KrV* at A201/B246. See Immanuel Kant, "On a Discovery whereby any New Critique of Pure Reason Is to Be Made Superfluous by an Older One," in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, 8:193–98. See also, Eric Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 185–297; Jeffrey Edwards, *Substance, Force, and the Possibility of Knowledge* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Miller, "Comments on George Walsh, 'Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,'" p. 35. I add that Rand disputes we have *any* knowledge *a priori*, any knowledge independent of experience. Truth of Rand's axioms, though based in experience, can be shown to be necessary truths in the sense of being not possibly false.

<sup>32</sup> Walsh, "Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant," p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Kant, *KrV*, Axx–xxi, Bxxii–xxiii, lxiii. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forth as Science*, sec. 40.

Kant holds, is the instrument by which any science, including a science of metaphysics, can have its principles established in a “law-given way,” its “determining concepts” established distinctly, and its proofs made rigorous.<sup>34</sup> Under his plan, Kant was setting out his substitute for Wolff’s rules for making a science, from the science of geometry to the science of physics to the science of metaphysics.<sup>35</sup>

One difference between Kant and Rand in their conception of metaphysics is that Rand was not interested in establishing metaphysics as a science in Kant’s or Wolff’s sense, and she had no use for what Kant called “pure reason” as method for metaphysics. Then, too, *contra* Kant, under Rand’s epistemology, it can be known that God does not exist.<sup>36</sup> Again *contra* Kant, Rand holds that it can be

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<sup>34</sup> Kant, *KrV*, Bxxxvi–xxxvii.

<sup>35</sup> Wolff, *German Logic*, “Preliminary Discourse,” sec. II. See also, Christian Wolff, *Rational Thoughts Concerning God, the World and the Human Soul, and also All Things in General*, commonly called Wolff’s *German Metaphysics*, in *Early German Philosophy (1690-1750)*, ed. and trans. Corey W. Dyck (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 99–134, and in Watkins, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason: Background Source Materials*, pp. 7–53. Kant also disputes Wolff’s analysis of how geometry works, including Wolff’s source of certainty in geometry, found in Wolff, *German Metaphysics*, sec. 9. See also Lisa Shabel, *Mathematics in Kant’s Critical Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> The existence of such a being is known to be impossible because “a consciousness conscious of nothing but itself is a contradiction in terms: before it could identify itself as consciousness, it had to be conscious of something”; see Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (New York: Random House, 1957), p. 1015. The belief of spiritualists that there is such a thing as consciousness without existence is invalid (*ibid.*, p. 1027). The definition of God “that he is beyond man’s power to conceive . . . invalidates man’s consciousness and nullifies his concept of existence” (*ibid.*, p. 1027). The so-called voice of God in you is in truth “nothing more than the corpse of your mind” (*ibid.*, p. 1037). “The alleged short-cut to knowledge, which is faith, is only a short-circuit destroying the mind” (*ibid.*, p. 1018). An approach toward God that says only what the alleged entity is not (which I note is the negative way of Pseudo-Dionysius and Maimonides) “are not acts of defining, but of wiping out” (*ibid.*, p. 1035). That way is contrary to Rand’s metaphysical axiom that existence is identity. See also, Nathaniel Branden, “Since Everything in the Universe Requires a Cause, Must Not the Universe Itself

known that death is exactly as it appears: cessation of the animal and person that is an individual human.<sup>37</sup> Walsh (correctly) points out that Rand, in these cases, took what is determinate and knowable in metaphysics as beyond the confines imposed by Kant on what could be known by us.<sup>38</sup> One of Kant's Antinomies—the eternity of the world past—Rand took to be contained in her axiom “Existence exists.”<sup>39</sup> Kant was trying to rein in metaphysics too far and made claims of profound insolvability about issues which today are perfectly good scientific questions.<sup>40</sup>

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Have a Cause, Which Is God?” *The Objectivist Newsletter* (May 1962), p. 19; Peikoff, *Objectivism*, pp. 17, 21, 27–28, and 31–33.

<sup>37</sup> Rand states: “Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action. If an organism fails in that action, it dies; its chemical elements remain, but its life goes out of existence”; see Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, p. 1013. “That which you call your soul or spirit is your consciousness” (*ibid.*, p. 1017). Consciousness in animals is done by a living animal's brain processing; see Ayn Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics,” in Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness* (New York: Signet, 1964), p. 19. “Consciousness is an attribute of certain living entities”; see Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 56. Cessation of animal life is cessation of its consciousness.

<sup>38</sup> Walsh, “Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,” p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Rand, “The Metaphysical versus the Man-Made,” p. 25. Kant, *KrV*, A426–33/B454–61. An argument can be made in defense of Rand's stand here, which I have done elsewhere; see Stephen Boydston, “Existence, We,” *Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* 21, no. 1 (2021), pp. 65–104, esp. pp. 69–71. On the other hand, Rand's stand here contradicts her view that there can be no completed metaphysical (physical) infinities and her view, noted by Walsh at the end of his article, that existence as a whole cannot be known to have traits other than existence and identity.

<sup>40</sup> For example, it is often thought that contemporary scientific cosmology has established that the past duration of the universe is finite, extending back only so far as the Initial Singularity. That is a misunderstanding. There is reason to suppose that the total mass-energy of the universe has the same value throughout the past as it has today. Our contemporary cosmology does not propose or conclude that that mass-energy came into existence at the time of the Initial Singularity. Furthermore, our physics and cosmology take it that local physical quantities can be summed for a total value to apply to the universe as a whole. Reasons internal to our cosmology determine which of those quantities conserved locally are also conserved in the universe as a

Notwithstanding the ways in which Rand misunderstands Kant's philosophy in her article "For the New Intellectual," she was right to stress that basic concepts such as *time*, *space*, and *existence* have their basis in reality directly perceived and are not ultimately merely forms brought *from* the perceiving and conceiving subject to experience and reality.<sup>41</sup>

Kant supposed at the outset of his Transcendental Idealism that a valid metaphysics needs to be based only on pure reason, and Wolffian metaphysics failed at that. In getting to their desired pinnacles of showing the existence of God or immortality of the soul, such metaphysics enlists the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR), the workhorse of German rationalism. However, PSR is an informative, synthetic principle, in Kant's mature view of PSR, and because it is not purely independent of sensory perception, it is an illicit lever in metaphysics as a science. Knowledge that is at once synthetic and *a priori* must be informative, not merely analytic, yet based purely on reason.<sup>42</sup>

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whole. Our physics and cosmology contain nothing *a priori* and make no use of Kant's pure metaphysics of nature.

<sup>41</sup> Ayn Rand, "For the New Intellectual," in Ayn Rand, *For the New Intellectual* (New York: Signet, 1961), p. 31. See also, Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, pp. 5–6; Peikoff, *Objectivism*, pp. 8 and 13.

<sup>42</sup> Kant, *Prolegomena*, secs. 2–40. We know that some synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible, because, in Kant's view, we possess such knowledge about mathematics and pure physics, and those successes are not reasonably to be doubted. See also, R. Lanier Anderson, *The Poverty of Conceptual Truth* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 270–86.

In the preface to his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant states: "All philosophy insofar as it is based on grounds of experience can be called *empirical*; but insofar as it sets forth its teachings simply from *a priori* principles it can be called *pure* philosophy. When the latter is merely formal it is called *logic*; but if it is limited to determinate objects of the understanding it is called *metaphysics*"; see Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:388, in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See also, Kant, *KrV*, A841/B869. Walsh quotes from that work and therewith represents Kant as building a bridge between our purely mechanical Newtonian world of fact and our realm of moral values, which includes "man's 'preservation, his welfare, of in a word his happiness'"; see Kant, *Groundwork*, 4:395; Kant, *KrV*, A841–

### 3. Misdiagnoses of Kant's Fundamental Errors

Walsh notes Rand's following remark:

The phenomenal world, said Kant [this is not a direct quote from Kant] is not valid. Reality as perceived by man's mind is a distortion. The distorting faculty is man's conceptual faculty: man's basic concepts (such as time, space, existence) are not derived from experience of reality, but from an automatic system of filters in his consciousness (labeled 'categories' and 'forms of perception') which impose their own design on his perception of the external world . . . . [According to Kant,] man's concepts are only a delusion, but a collective delusion which no one has the power to escape.<sup>43</sup>

Rand errs greatly in stating that, for Kant, "reality, as perceived by man's mind is a distortion."<sup>44</sup> Kant not only did *not* state such a view, but contradicts it:

Still less may *appearances* {*Erscheinung*} and *illusion* {*Schein*} be regarded as being the same. For truth and illusion

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42/B869–70. This is one of the ways in which Walsh exaggerates the closeness of Kant and Rand. The context of Kant's quoted claim conflicts with Walsh's representation. Kant was there saying only that *were those* values correct, then nature would have endowed the human constitution with a well-marked instinct for their accomplishment. Nature has not done this, and that sort of purpose is not the correct moral purpose. Reason is given us "as a practical faculty, that is, as one that is to influence the *will*. . . . This will need not . . . be the sole and complete good, but it must be the highest good and the condition for every other, even of all demands for happiness"; see Kant, *Groundwork*, 4:396. In this, Kant stands in contradiction to the Enlightenment and in opposition to Rand's philosophy.

<sup>43</sup> Walsh, "Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant," pp. 1–2, citing Rand, "For the New Intellectual," p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> Similarly, "distortion"; see Peikoff, "The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy," p. 120. See also, Nathaniel Branden, "The Basic Principles of Objectivism," in Nathaniel Branden, *The Vision of Ayn Rand* (Gilbert, AZ: Cobden Press, 2009), p. 21; and Peikoff, *Objectivism*, p. 51.

are not in the object insofar as it is intuited, but are in the judgment made about the object insofar as it is thought. Hence although it is correct to say that the senses do not err, this is so not because they always judge correctly but because they do not judge at all.<sup>45</sup>

Walsh does not point out this quotation in which Kant flatly contradicts Rand's characterization of Kant. Instead, he counters Rand's characterization by recounting Kant's argument that there is a necessity in Euclidean geometry of a sort not attained in empirical generalization, and Kant saw this as possible only if an important part of our experience of space is contributed by any person's mind. This account does not entail that space is an illusion, even were it form from the mind in experience of things.<sup>46</sup>

Walsh then counters Rand's illusion-delusion charge against Kant's view of empirical knowledge. He endorses Dryer's account of Kant<sup>47</sup> in which the usefulness of regularities in sorting reality from illusions within our experience of the empirical world cannot be applied to distinguish things as they are in themselves from things as experienced by us. Rather, says Dryer, Kant's distinction between things as they are in themselves and as they appear to us must be as follows: "Kant argues that it is only by purely intellectual concepts that we can make meaningful to ourselves the alternative to what are objects of the senses."<sup>48</sup> Those concepts are Kant's categories of the

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<sup>45</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A293/B349-50; see also B70. Against the idea that Kant's "appearances" are illusions, see Anja Jauernig, *The World According to Kant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 248–57 and 267.

<sup>46</sup> Walsh, "Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant," p. 20. Walsh is correct in this point against Rand's imputation of illusion to Kant because Kant concludes that spatial relations are forms of outer experience contributed by the mind. In oral discussion, Rand herself thought that perceived spatial relations of length could be what our visual and tactile systems deliver to us in a process-stamped form, yet be objective all the same; see Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 280.

<sup>47</sup> Dryer, *Kant's Solution for Verification in Metaphysics*, p. 517.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

understanding by which we think of objects *per se* apart from how the categories may present themselves to the senses. Fundamental categories of the understanding, in Kant's system, are apart from space and time; hence, they are things thought of the world, but not things known of the world, which would require empirical intuition of space.

Miller maintains that Kant took truth not as correspondence with reality, but as coherence in the mind.<sup>49</sup> A falsity under correspondence can pass for truth under coherence, which would leave Kant's view about *appearance* open to being systematic illusion. I hold, to the contrary, that where there is a truth relation in Kant's system, Kant is presuming the correspondence notion of truth, not the coherence notion. In Kant's view, rational true belief requires objects fitting the thought.<sup>50</sup> The quotation from Kant in the opening paragraph of this section relies on the correspondence notion of truth as much as Rand's does when she likewise upholds the inerrancy of percepts.

For Kant, space's *connectedness* and its *necessity* entail that its form be from the perceiver of objects, but such a formal organization without at least possible application in experience in its *givenness* would be only a plaything of the mind and without objectivity.<sup>51</sup> Meaningful consideration of the existence of empirical matters presently unknown to us requires necessarily, in Kant's form of idealism, recognizing that we can reach new knowledge only through perception according to laws of empirical progression. That does not bar him from holding correspondence of the empirical conjecture, before those steps are taken, and confirmation of the correspondence with the subsequent empirical finding.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, although a law of nature depends in the necessity of its inner connectedness ultimately on the categories given *a priori* from the understanding, particular

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<sup>49</sup> Miller, "Comments on George Walsh, 'Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,'" pp. 31–32; Miller there gives no reason for this contention.

<sup>50</sup> Kant, *KrV*, B146.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, A155–57/B194–96.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, A493–94/B521–22, B168.

empirical laws “are not *derivable completely*” from the *a priori* laws of nature as such.<sup>53</sup>

Kant’s denial of transcendental realism need not lead him to abandon a correspondence theory of truth, but only to curtail the proper range in which truth is operative for us. He needs no theory of truth concerning attainment of knowledge of things as they are in themselves because he thinks we cannot know them beyond knowing that they are real and that they are distinct from and underlie our empirical engagements. It could be said, further, that things in themselves are like noumena in their unknowability by us. Those truths are put forth as possible truths corresponding with facts. Kant’s repeated claims that there can be no such thing as appearances without something (thing-in-itself) which appears, upholds correspondence as his envisioned relation between appearance and its grounding thing-in-itself.<sup>54</sup> Albeit, that would be a correspondence relation we are unable to get hold of with any specificity. Unlike Isaac Newton’s distinction of apparent motions and true motions, where knowledge of the latter is reasoned from the observational data that are the former, Kant’s things-as-they-are-perceived ordinarily or scientifically are not data for revealing things-as-they-are-in-themselves, but for discovering more of what is perceivable. It is not only “things-in-themselves” that might be

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., B165. Kant’s case against the Ontological Argument for the existence of God is also a testament to a correspondence notion of truth; see Immanuel Kant, “The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God,” in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, trans. David Walford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2:72. Kant makes the following argument: The circumstance that we can self-consistently conceive of a being having every possible kind of positive being there is or can conceive of a cause as the highest cause does not show that such a thing exists. If there were such a being, our concept would correspond to it. The argument that conception of such a being guarantees the existence of such a being fails, meaning (for Kant as for us) that the argument does not establish correspondence of its conclusion with reality; see Kant, *KrV*, A592–602/B620–30. See also, Lawrence Pasternack, “Kant,” in *Ontological Arguments*, ed. Graham Oppy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 99–120; and Nicholas Stang, *Kant’s Modal Metaphysics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>54</sup> See Kant, *KrV*, Bxxvi–xxvii, A251–52; Kant, *Prolegomena*, 4:315; and Pippin, *Kant’s Theory of Form*, pp. 201–15.

quarry and a prize in a hunt for truth.<sup>55</sup> In Rand's metaphysics, "things-in-themselves" are nothing at all, and hence nothing to be sought or won.<sup>56</sup>

Kant holds that whatever is contrary to logical principles is false, but to attain any truth, more is required than conformance to logical principles; one must first obtain reliable information.<sup>57</sup> Knowledge requires not only that information, but also judgment concerning it organized under fundamental concepts, which are Kant's categories of the understanding.<sup>58</sup> *Synthesis* and *unity* are leading ideas in his transcendental, formal idealism. They are essential to cognition and truth,<sup>59</sup> "but even if a cognition accorded completely with logical form, i.e., even if it did not contradict itself, it could still contradict its object."<sup>60</sup> Kant was not an early rider in the coherence-view-of-truth coach even though he overly weighted the side of the subject in the foundations of logic with his doctrine that one should not deviate from

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<sup>55</sup> Similarly, on relative worth, see Graham Bird, *The Revolutionary Kant: A Commentary on the Critique of Pure Reason* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2006), p. 175.

<sup>56</sup> Rand, "For the New Intellectual," p. 32; and Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 80.

<sup>57</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A60/B84–85.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, A51/B75, A247/B304. This is why Ralph C. S. Walker, in *The Coherence Theory of Truth: Realism, Anti-Realism, Idealism* (New York: Routledge, 1989), took Kant's theory of truth concerning empirical knowledge to be a coherence theory. That would be contrary Kant's contention that although such conceptual placement is required for perception of an object as object, it does not suffice for truth in our knowledge of empirical objects. Paul Abela argues against taking Kant's view of truth as only correspondence or only coherence in his *Kant's Empirical Realism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 66–73. Frederick F. Schmitt argues that idealism, such as Kant's, can hold to a correspondence notion of truth in his *Truth: A Primer* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), p. 146. Bird, *The Revolutionary Kant*, p. 258, rejects imputing to Kant a coherence notion of truth.

<sup>59</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A97–98, B129–30, B134–35, B137, B151.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, A59/B84; and A150/B190.

the rules of logic “because the understanding is then in conflict with its own universal rules of thought, and hence with itself.”<sup>61</sup> For Kant, conformance to subject-laden logical form does not suffice for truth.

Kant’s is no less a correspondence theory of truth than Rand’s with her requirement that truth be not only assertion of fact, but also correctness of definitions of the concepts in the assertion.<sup>62</sup> Rand has a context-sensitive and integrative correspondence view of truth. Rand’s metaphysical axioms, and her categories—with their perceptual basis and epistemological role in conceptual thought—involve judgment about present perception.<sup>63</sup> Unlike Kant’s categories applied to present perception, Rand’s axioms and axiomatic concepts are not *a priori*; they get their necessity from the world,<sup>64</sup> not just from being irrefutable. Rand’s axiomatic concepts are thus foundations of objectivity.<sup>65</sup> Unlike Kant’s categories, Rand’s axioms, axiomatic concepts, and categories are drawn entirely from experience; they do not make objects of perception possible as objects in thought.<sup>66</sup> For

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., A59/B84.

<sup>62</sup> Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 48.

<sup>63</sup> Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, pp. 1040–41.

<sup>64</sup> Peikoff, “The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy,” pp. 107–9.

<sup>65</sup> See Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 57; Miller, “Comments on George Walsh, ‘Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,’” p. 34.

<sup>66</sup> See Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, pp. 55–57; Kant, *KrV*, B143–46, B165. Reason, in Rand’s sense, is at work in the activity of human perceptual experience, but reason does not set up *a priori* forms without which no adequate, coherent perceptual experience is possible. Randian integrations in sensory perception, concepts, propositions, and inference are in no part Kantian pure synthesis. Also contrary to Kant, percepts in Rand’s epistemology are not entirely blind without concepts. Then, too, Rand’s distinction between content and action in consciousness does not coincide with Kant’s distinction between matter and form in consciousness; see Kant, *KrV*, A20/B34. See Lorne Falkenstein, *Kant’s Intuitionism: A Commentary on the Transcendental Aesthetic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 72–142. For an echo of Aristotle in Kant on the matter-form distinction, see Miller, “Comments on George Walsh, ‘Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,’” p. 33; and Marco Sgarbi, *Kant and Aristotle* (Albany, NY: State

Kant, the unity of diverse world-presentations of which humans are conscious is from the unity of the apprehending, spontaneously acting self. It is one's possibility of self-consciousness accompanying all one's cognitions that makes synthetic *a priori* judgments possible.<sup>67</sup> The unity of Rand's categories—entity, action, attribute, relationship—is from the unity in the world's identity, the world as it is independently of our discernments of it.<sup>68</sup> Rand's axioms and categories can supplant Kant's *a priori* elements in ordinary experience, physics, and metaphysics.<sup>69</sup> That the objective truths Kant elucidates in his three “Analogies of Experience” are objective unities by ineluctable *a priori* structure of mind,<sup>70</sup> in no way makes Kant's account of empirical truth a coherence theory. It is, rather, a correspondence theory impoverished in the number of correspondences in comparison to what is found in Rand.

According to Kant, “*Intuition* is that by which a cognition refers to objects directly . . . . By means of sensibility objects are given to us, and it alone supplies us with *intuitions*.”<sup>71</sup> We thus immediately grasp through perception that outer objects are in space. Kant would have spatiality and externality not given as something independent of our perceptions, though they are real in such perceptions. Instead, he has externality and spatiality emerging from the constitution of our perceptual consciousness. This is the view that Rand and the German

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University of New York Press, 2016), pp. 79–94.

<sup>67</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A117n, B130–35, B140–45, B151–52, B169.

<sup>68</sup> Rand states: “An atom is itself, and so is the universe; neither can contradict its own identity; nor can a part contradict the whole”; see Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, p. 1016. Rand's axiomatic concepts of existence and identity are a selective focus on and mental isolation of metaphysical fundamentals, but metaphysically they are the widest integration; see Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 56, *contra* Kant, *KrV*, A116–17.

<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Miller, “Comments on George Walsh, ‘Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,’” p. 34.

<sup>70</sup> Kant, *KrV*, B22–21.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, A19/B33 and A239/B298.

empiricists of Kant's time needed to challenge by arguing that the sensory deliverances of objects and their spatial relations are how things are and show themselves to be: as external to the conscious, sensitive subject.<sup>72</sup>

#### 4. The Springs of Form

In Section 1, I stated that Kant's answers to three questions invite counters from Rand's standpoint: How is metaphysics possible? How is it like geometry and different from geometry?<sup>73</sup> How is geometry possible?

We perceive by vision subject-independent separations and degrees of separation between objects in space; we perceive with the

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<sup>72</sup> It is natural to think of Rand's epistemology as empiricist in that it takes all knowledge to be based on sensory experience. In that broad sweep, it is in league with Aristotle, Epicurus, Lucretius, Cicero, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill. Then, too, with Peter Abelard and modern empiricists such as Locke, Rand took reality to be only concrete, aside from our abstractions of it. There is not a mind-independent reality of abstract objects, possibilities, or principles that the mind accesses and brings into coordination with the concrete particulars of sensory experience. There is only one objective realm, not two, guiding our understanding of reality, and it is concrete.

<sup>73</sup> Rand took no notice of nor did she explicate the peculiar method of Euclidean geometry. However, her philosophy contains one significant way of distinguishing between the subject matter of metaphysics and geometry. Having taken identity, rather than PNC, as the deepest base of causality in widest generality, Rand could (but apparently did not notice she could) distinguish metaphysics from mathematics by taking identity (and not also PNC) as the distinctive basis of mathematics; and mathematics, which has not essentially to do with action (only with morphisms and other interrelations of formal objects), has not to do with causality. That is, in contrast to Kant's predecessor Wolff, Rand requires no PSR as a distinguishing note between mathematics and metaphysics. She could, instead, take causality as that distinguishing note. Action and causality are not under the subject matter of mathematics as such. Passage of time also is not under that subject matter. Rand could say that not only is there the law of identity applied to action, which is her metaphysical explication of causality, but in a thinner sense of identity, there is the law of identity applied to things existing through time. Application of the law of identity to action and to mere passage in time goes a significant way to distinguish the subject matter of metaphysics, which deals with those applications in most general form, from the subject matter of mathematics, which does not deal with those applications.

senses subject-independent betweenness-relations among objects; and we perceive all of those relations (unlike parallax or afterimages<sup>74</sup>) as subject-independent. Kant is wrong to slight any of those facts of the content of empirical perception. He errs in thinking that we do not have sensory uptakes that can pick up spatial relations; that is, he did not understand that absences can affect senses.<sup>75</sup> I suggest his reason for slighting them is *mainly* that he thought that on that realist basis we could not end with the sort of universality and necessity we attain in geometry.<sup>76</sup>

Rand never took up this line of thought and does not muster it against Kant. It can be mustered, though, and Leonard Peikoff begins to do so in his “The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy.”<sup>77</sup> There, he dissolves from the standpoint of Rand’s theoretical philosophy the key question that runs through Kant’s three burning questions, namely: How is synthetic *a priori* knowledge possible?

Rand argues, instead, that Kant lands in the absurdity that because consciousness, including perception, requires certain means, it is barred by those means of apprehending things as they are apart from perception of them.<sup>78</sup> Miller defends Rand in this analysis of Kant with

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<sup>74</sup> Kant was cognizant of our ability to discern some subject-relativity among some of our perceptions; see Immanuel Kant, *The Jäsche Logic*, in *Immanuel Kant: Lectures on Logic*, ed. and trans. J. Michael Young (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9:33.

<sup>75</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A20/B34.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, A25, A46–49/B64–67. Moreover, I say, getting by direct sensory perception some subject-independent geometric relations, does not entail that to intellectually reach further geometric relations, one must do so by empirical means. We have other right intelligence to employ for expansion of certain geometric facts picked up within elementary empirical observations.

<sup>77</sup> Peikoff, “The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy.”

<sup>78</sup> See Rand, “For the New Intellectual,” p. 32; Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 80. Rand’s first counter to Kant is in *Atlas Shrugged*: “‘Things as they are’ are things as perceived by your mind” (p. 1036). Speaking of “things as they are” instead of “things in themselves” is significant. “Things in themselves” meant for Kant, as for Wolff, things as they are without relations to other things. Rand maintains that part of the identity of any existent is its external relations; see Rand, *Introduction to*

respect to perception<sup>79</sup> by pointing to a passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

Time and Space, taken together, are pure forms of all sensible intuition, and thereby make synthetic propositions possible *a priori*. But precisely thereby (i.e., by being merely conditions of sensibility), these *a priori* sources of cognition determine their own bounds; viz., they determine that they apply to objects merely insofar as these are regarded as appearances, but do not exhibit things in themselves.<sup>80</sup>

Miller takes Kant's claim that sensible intuition sets bounds on their application and for this reason cannot reach things in themselves, as an example of Rand's general criticism of Kant.

I dispute that this is the fundamental reason Kant thinks we are incapable of cognizing things in themselves. Prior to Kant's critical philosophy, metaphysicians in the shadow of Gottfried Leibniz held that we know things as they are in themselves (e.g., monads), which do not stand in spatial relations but give rise to things standing in spatial relations,<sup>81</sup> and we know them conceptually through intellectual

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*Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 39. Any existent stands in real relations to things not itself. From Rand's framework, any talk by Kant of things in themselves is not talk of any things as they are. According to Rand, existence as it is, is available in perceptions and actions as well as in conceptions true to perceptions and actions. We begin with existence; it is not something we are missing and must strive in higher thought to contact for the first time.

<sup>79</sup> Miller, "Comments on George Walsh, 'Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,'" p. 31.

<sup>80</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A39/B56. The bounds that Critical Kant would place on metaphysics need this bound placed on sensory perception.

<sup>81</sup> See Dionysios A. Anapolitanos, *Leibniz: Representation, Continuity and the Spatiotemporal* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), pp. 94–173; Vincenzo De Risi, *Geometry and Monadology: Leibniz's Analysis Situs and Philosophy of Space* (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2007), pp. 300–341; Nicholas F. Stange, "Bodies, Matter, Monads, and Things in Themselves," in Look, *Leibniz and Kant*, pp. 140–76; Wolff, *German Metaphysics*, sec. 81; and Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, secs. 238–43.

intuition. Kant denies that we can access things in themselves on the ground that we have no power of intellectual intuition.<sup>82</sup> He does not deny that if we had intellectual intuition, we could access things as they are in themselves.

Kant denies also that we have intellectual access to objects called “noumena,” such as God and an immortal human soul. Kant denies such access not on account of needing specific means to access noumenal objects, but because he denies that we have an intellectual *a priori* intuitive power for accessing noumena.

Things in themselves are inaccessible through sensory perception not because we have perception by some specific ways and not others, but because Kant, like his forebearers, had already stripped things in themselves of external relations,<sup>83</sup> including spatial form. Kant also followed the traditional notion that God does not know things by thinking or sensing. God knows noumena and knows things as they are in themselves, which traditionally (and for Kant) meant things not in space. Additionally, Kant hews to the traditional notion that in God’s intellectual intuitive knowledge, God creates the object of the knowledge. Intellectual intuition is not among our powers; “rather, our kind of intuition is dependent on the object, and hence is possible only by the object affecting the subject’s capacity to present.”<sup>84</sup>

I thus set aside Rand’s proposal that Kant’s shortfall is that we cannot know things as they are because consciousness has identity. Kant’s fundamental error(s) concerning cognition is not that. He had

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<sup>82</sup> Cf. Peikoff, “The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy,” p. 107. In the account by Kant, we have no intuitive intellect, only discursive intellect; see Kant, *KrV*, B72, A67–68/B92–93; Falkenstein, *Kant’s Intuitionism*, pp. 28–71.

<sup>83</sup> See Kant, *KrV*, A2, B4, B15–16, A21/B35, A23–30/B38–45. Cf. John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Vol. 1 (New York: Dover, 1959 [1690]), II.VIII.23; Gary Hatfield, “Kant and Helmholtz on Primary and Secondary Qualities,” in *Primary and Secondary Qualities: The Historical and Ongoing Debate*, ed. L. Nolan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 304–38; and Wolff, *German Logic*, I.XXIII.

<sup>84</sup> Kant, *KrV*, B71, B139, and B153. Lucy Allais, *Manifest Reality: Kant’s Idealism and His Realism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 154, 157–58, and 167, argues that the singularity and immediacy that Kant takes as essential to sensory intuition guarantees existence of their objects.

good insight into Euclid's method and (rightly) rejected the German rationalists' and empiricists' philosophical explications of geometry.<sup>85</sup> Kant thought that only if our abstract consideration of spatial relations in Euclidean geometry (taken in Kant's day to be in all its structure the geometry of the physical world) were of structures brought to the world by our minds, only then could we explain the effectiveness of the method of geometry—posits, constructions, theorems—and the resulting necessity of its truths.<sup>86</sup> It is because of *that* and because the faulty conception “things as they are in themselves” excludes all external relationships that Kant overly weights the subject in our experience of space.

After the misunderstandings of his idealism in the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*,<sup>87</sup> Kant emphasized the primacy of outer intuitions over inner intuition and emphasized the permanent in external presentation as necessary to inner flux of mind.<sup>88</sup> However, Kant did not retreat from his characterization of space as form supplied from the side of the subject, with form as ideal, without which no outer

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<sup>85</sup> See Michael Friedman, *Kant and the Exact Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 98–104; Sutherland, *Kant's Mathematical World*, pp. 187–218.

<sup>86</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A24, A46–49/B63–66.

<sup>87</sup> The German Lockeans Feder and Garve criticized Kant's idealism, upon its first appearance, in *KrV* of 1781, as if it were the idealism of Berkeley. Kant replied in *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783) that in his *Critique of Pure Reason* he had not argued for skepticism of the objects of experience; he had argued that and how we have some *a priori* cognition of the objects of experience. Kant had done this by arguing that space and time are not empirical representations, but *a priori* forms necessary for any experience of objects. Space and time, for Kant, are ideal, but not because the material world is ideal. By the time of writing the *Prolegomena*, Kant called his type of idealism not simply *transcendental*, but also *formal*, in contrast to Berkeley's dogmatic or material idealism, and he calls his idealism *critical*, in contrast to Descartes's skeptical idealism. See Kant, *Prolegomena*, 4:374–75. Kant, *KrV*, B519n. On skepticism in the intellectual milieu of Kant's time, see Johan van der Zande and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *The Skeptical Tradition around 1800* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998).

<sup>88</sup> Kant, *KrV*, B274–78 and B291–92.

experience is possible and that does not exist without a perceiving subject.<sup>89</sup> Kant supplants the thought that space and matter are ideal with his ideality of external necessary forms of perception that are sourced in the subject and which, nonetheless, contain existing external objects.<sup>90</sup> Kant's primacy of outer over inner is not Rand's primacy of existence over consciousness,<sup>91</sup> although Rand's primacy is consistent with and suggests that of Kant.

Against the main current of Walsh's exposition, Rand's metaphysics is in thorough discord with Kant's. *Contra* Kant, the unity of things in perception with things in thought is on account of the singularity of the things we access and integration in how we access them.<sup>92</sup>

Miller is right that Objectivism needs a theory of form different from that of Aristotle and Kant.<sup>93</sup> Miller suggests that in form as a "relational state arising from the interaction between the object and our perceptual systems," Rand has a promising alternative to Kant's notion of form in perception as coming from only the subject.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., A26–28/B42–44, A42–43/B59–60, A85–89/B118–22, B148, A492/B520.

<sup>90</sup> Jauernig, *The World According to Kant*, pp. 180–86 and 194–237.

<sup>91</sup> Kant, *KrV*, A289/B345.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Susanna Schellenberg, *The Unity of Perception* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Kant, *Foundations*, 4:475–76; and Kenneth R. Westphal, *Kant's Transcendental Proof of Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 107–16. Beyond the counter to Kant on Rand's behalf in Peikoff's "The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy," the following can and should be done: Challenge and replace Kant's tenet that all formality in episodes of perception is necessarily the product of the subject. Specify a realist replacement for Kant's geometry-susceptible account of space encountered in perception, including form such as betweenness relations, as from the world and from our actions in the world. Cf. Sutherland, *Kant's Mathematical World*, pp. 132–60.

<sup>93</sup> See Miller, "Comments on George Walsh, 'Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,'" p. 34; Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 286.

<sup>94</sup> Miller, "Comments on George Walsh, 'Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,'" p. 34.

Miller also proposes that Rand has, with her view of units in her analysis of concepts, a replacement for Kant's notion of the formal in conceptualization.<sup>95</sup> I suggest, rather, that Kant's doctrine of form as from the side of the subject can be replaced by something not tied to the subject side of perception and conception at all: a notion of form as in the world and our actions in the world.<sup>96</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Kant and Rand are completely opposed concerning what counts as rational metaphysics. Walsh errs in representing the two as closer than they are. Kant's method for arriving at metaphysical

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Rand criticizes modern empiricism for taking knowledge of the world to be "by direct perception of immediate facts, with no recourse to concepts"; see Rand, "For the New Intellectual," p. 30. See also, Rand, "Kant versus Sullivan," in Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It*, p. 83. Nonetheless, against Rand's empirical abstraction, Kant still could object that, for example, gathering from sensory experience the concept 'line' ('straight line') together with the concept 'points' will not suffice to yield the certain truth that any two points determine a unique straight line containing them in the Euclidean plane; see Kant, *KrV*, A25/B39–40; Walsh, "Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant," p. 9. The Randian counter should be that geometric truths can be necessary without being *a priori*. There is no need to explain how geometric truths can be *a priori* because they are not. Spatial necessities coming from the world include: "That my hands each have spaces between the fingers one less than the number of fingers" and "If I slice an apple in half and then slice each half into quarters, I'll end up with four pieces of apple made with only three cuts." There are no possible exceptions.

Kant's *a priori* elements in knowledge are what he took as the formal in knowledge. Unlike Kant, Rand sees no need or warrant for such elements in metaphysical knowledge, as Miller, "Comments on George Walsh, 'Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant,'" p. 35, articulates. Kant argues that geometry, like metaphysics, is synthetic and *a priori*. Objectivists—or any realists concerning spatial relationships—might give the formal in Euclid's method of geometry its full due by pointing to specific spatial forms in the world, attaching to concretes in the world that are picked up in perception, rather than how Kant sources all such form as from the structure of the human mind. However, this requires making out the fundamental contrast of the concrete to the formal attaching to concretes, rather than the traditional contrast of the concrete with the abstract.

conclusions is not Rand's. Kant takes the status of metaphysical knowledge to be synthetic and *a priori*. Rand denies that metaphysical knowledge (or any knowledge) is *a priori*.

Walsh is right, though, that Rand's representation of Kant's theoretical philosophy is generally incorrect. The concerns in Kant's theoretical philosophy are not Rand's concerns. Kant's question of how metaphysics is possible, though not a central question of Rand's, is answered in her theoretical philosophy. Rand's inattention to Kant's question of how geometry is possible is a gap in her empirical epistemology.

The differences between Rand's metaphysics and the metaphysics of the German Rationalists of Kant's time make Rand's view impervious to Kant's critique of those Rationalist systems. Miller's defense of Rand's system as against Kant's is based on mistakenly attributing to Kant a coherence theory of truth. Kant, I argue, has a correspondence theory of truth. While Rand and Kant do not differ about that, Rand invokes many more correspondences to empirical reality than does Kant in their accounts of metaphysical knowledge and of conceptual, discursive knowledge in general.