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**KANT'S ENLIGHTENMENT LEGACY:
RHETORIC THROUGH ETHICS, AESTHETICS, AND STYLE**

A Dissertation in

Communication Arts and Sciences

by

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between Enlightenment and rhetoric is complicated, involving the simultaneous movements towards style's eradication and exaggerated effusion. Immanuel Kant, thinker of the Enlightenment *par excellence*, is widely considered no enthusiast of rhetoric. In *Critique of Judgment* Kant claims that oratory deserves no respect whatsoever. However, he immediately retracts that dramatic pronouncement in a footnote that distinguishes bad rhetoric (manipulative oratory that evacuates the listener's ability to use his or her own judgment) from good rhetoric (defined as the combination of eloquence and well-spokenness), where sufficient influence on the mind can be effected without the machinery of persuasion. Without such a distinction, a curious enigma emerges: how can a thinker reject rhetoric while defining enlightenment as the public exercise of reason, at every point?

Examining Kant's complicated and conflicted attitudes towards rhetoric requires looking beyond the curt dismissal in the third *Critique* and to his extensive commentary on not only rhetoric but several related themes that cut across his popular and critical philosophy more broadly. This project does just that in examining Kant's comments, across a broad swath of his works, on a constellation of topics related to rhetoric such as eloquence, the persuasion/conviction distinction, rhetoric's relation to poetry and philosophy, and his sustained interest in the notion of popularity in philosophy. Furthermore, rhetoric plays a role in Kantian ethics, particularly the emphasis in his anthropological ethics on conversation and sociable exchange to better the mind through the body. In Kantian aesthetics, the crucial role of reflective judgment and the orientation of "critique"—especially the important turn it takes in the *Critique of Judgment*—was in no small part actually influenced by British rhetorical and aesthetic theory. Kant also wrote extensively on style, fashioning his own stylistic orientation that emphasizes

balancing both the logical and aesthetic, producing a natural style that effaces itself, and that is suitable to the writer, audience, and occasion (rather than merely following fashion). In examining Kant's "What is Enlightenment" in the context of these themes, an important if not central role for rhetoric in enlightenment, and Kantian philosophy more broadly, emerges.

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Introduction: Persistence of Enlightenment

The legacy of the Enlightenment has become contested territory. While on the one hand revitalized Enlightenment notions have been invoked in discussing deliberative democracy and civic participation, on the other we find critiques of Enlightenment notions of progress, universalism, rationalism, and the Enlightenment subject, largely advanced under the murky amalgam of “postmodernism.” However, within the past half century, the Enlightenment has also been rigorously re-visited and re-examined outside the framework of rejection/acceptance by thinkers who have complexified the Enlightenment’s relation to the present, figures such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Hannah Arendt, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, and Jean Luc Nancy, to name a few. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) invariably plays a central role—not only by means of his well-known essay “An Answer to the Question, What is Enlightenment?” but for his treatments of reason, ethics, aesthetics, and politics under the larger entelechy of cultivating the always as-yet humanity. As Hanns Reill and Peter Baker observe, “in Kant, many of the intellectual strands of the Enlightenment converge.”¹ Animated by this notion of convergence, or, perhaps, constellation, this project draws together discussions of rhetoric, ethics, aesthetics, and style in Kant to work towards Kant’s discussion of enlightenment. While perhaps initially perceived as a philosophical question, approaching the question “what is enlightenment” from the perspective of rhetoric and, more specifically, from Kant’s own writing on rhetoric, oratory, persuasion, eloquence, and style will help recognize some under-examined valences to the question, which operates at the nexus of philosophy and articulation.

With Kant’s essay on enlightenment, we have a case of the apparently straightforward, simple, and self-evident that belies vexacious complexity. While the current popular circulation

of the Enlightenment often rests on a static caricature, it is important to remember that Kant's influential essay was an answer to a question of debate that, from its very asking, was always already under contestation. Kant was but one of the many figures responding to this question and his essay appeared in conversation with and alongside others in the popular publication *Berlinische Monatsschrift*. Kant's definition of enlightenment in the opening paragraph is one of those lines that can be unpacked *ad infinitum*, like the opening gambit of Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*. Kant begins, immediately, with the answer to the question:

Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction of another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapere Aude!* 'Have the courage to use your own reason!'—that is the motto of enlightenment.²

In this opening move, Kant identifies this tutelage (also sometimes translated as immaturity or minority) and associates it with a lack of courage, thus announcing some of the problems of authority and freedom that pervade the essay. The Kantian conception of freedom is a complex synthesis of both positive and negative senses. Kant writes, "For this enlightenment, however, nothing is required but freedom, and indeed the most harmless among all the things to which this term can be properly applied. It is the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point."³ Kant equates enlightenment with the public use of reason, underwritten with an underlying persistence, vigilance, and even insistence in demanding its use *at every point*. This freedom, which Kant sees as being encroached upon from several directions (and upon this point, among others, Arendt's thought is particularly indebted), is explicitly connected to both writing and speech. The public use of reason is exercised for the reading public, but in an expanded sense that includes the listening public, for his examples and explanations throughout invoke both the roles of writer and speaker, reader and auditor.

In making his famous yet perplexing distinction between public and private use of reason, Kant continues,

The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men. The private use of reason, on the other hand, may often be very narrowly restricted without particularly hindering the progress of enlightenment. By the public use of one's reason I understand the use to which a person makes of it as a scholar before the reading public. Private use I call that which one may make of it in a particular civil post or office which is entrusted to him.⁴

In this notion of speaking *as scholar*, Kant's conception of the public versus private uses of reason follows the form of chiasmus, a double inversion of what can be considered a standard conception of those roles (whereas oftentimes the private is considered the realm of freedom and the public considered the realm of obedience). For Kant, one must obey in the realm of private, and it must be clear that here the invocation of "private" denotes a civil position. The examples to which he explicitly refers include the soldier, the member of the clergy, the tax-paying citizen etc. In contrast, the public use of reason is under the Kantian auspice of freedom, backed by the virtue of courage. In Kant's analysis, the role of the scholar takes on an interesting position. The scholar is neither an occupation, nor node of social identity, nor official position of expert, as it is so often presently conceived, but rather the scholar serves as a role one inhabits: an *ethos*, an *attitude*, an *orientation* of oneself toward others in a certain way. The difficulties with this distinction become immediately clear. While although anyone can speak as a scholar, few actually emerge and that raises questions of precisely how scholars, speaking in this public capacity, emerge. The emphasis on the position of *as scholar* in Kant, however, does open up some interesting avenues for refiguring our present predominant professionalization of the scholar as well as re-thinking the relationship between Kant and rhetoric through the figure who vigorously and vigilantly participates in public life.

It may be surprising that the same Kant who wrote about the public exercise of reason in such terms is largely read as having rejected rhetoric as deserving of little respect. Such problems and tensions are not unusual in Kant's writings, for as Gödel's theorems demonstrate for mathematics, any system that strives for completeness cannot be consistent. While many current snap-shots of the Enlightenment writ-large seem to take their basis from Kant in particular, Kant is far more complex and complicated than those reductions. The cracks and the fissures in the most complex of his "philosophical" writing often give rise to contradictions, tensions, paradoxes, and even moments of conflict in multiple. Even in those popular works—those essays written for popular audiences appearing in publications like *Berlinische Monatsschrift*—his self-evident, direct, and clear manner belies a perplexing, even maddening, complexity. For all of Kant's appeals to consistency, Kant scholars can indeed make a career from starting with a set of contradictions or tensions in Kant to explore such complexities. Nancy's treatment of Kant's critical work traces this out in an unusual way by identifying that Kant is exploring philosophy to its very limits—the limits of knowledge, the limits of ethics, the limits of humanity.⁵ In doing so Kant is writing at the very *limit*, a sort of *limit-writing* hardly easy on the reader but a writing that does something very different from the common complaint that although Kant explicitly dismisses the art of rhetoric, his readers wished he had held it in higher esteem. The difficulty of Kant's critical works performs something more than mere inartfulness, for it demonstrates thinking at its exhaustion. Kant's treatment of enlightenment itself also performs a particular rhetoric as it draws together rhetoric, aesthetics, and ethics towards the irrevocably and simultaneously political and communicative positions entailed within "enlightenment." Thus, Kant not only has something significant to say about rhetoric and

enlightenment, but his own rhetorical approaches demonstrate opportunities for examining rhetoric's enlightenment legacy.

The relationship between enlightenment and rhetoric often produces a curious and apparently inconsistent account. On the one hand, Enlightenment rhetoric signifies a decisive move towards the plain, clear, direct-access suitable to the emerging modes of scientific inquiry while, on the other hand, Enlightenment rhetoric becomes divorced from invention, relegated to matters of style and delivery in a secondary rhetoric, associated with the arts of literary criticism and poetry. While stylistic debates are by no means new in the Enlightenment, the rise of scientific method, on the one hand, and the growing litteraturization of rhetoric, on the other, both raise the stakes of stylistic considerations as well as present a striking contrast, rendering a single coherent story about Enlightenment rhetoric difficult. Most of the Enlightenment's role in the history of rhetoric emphasizes the British tradition, where Wilbur Samuel Howell's account *Eighteenth Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (1971) remains standard. This tradition surely influences different instantiations of enlightenment in other contexts and locales, but the role of the rhetorical tradition in the German Enlightenment, and particularly in Kant, not only eludes narrative capture but further complicates many of our current debates about rhetorical theory.

The standard take is that when Kant directly mentioned rhetoric, on the brief occasion that he did, he dismissed it as pernicious, deserving of no respect, faulty in its overriding of individual autonomy, and deceitful in its use of others as a means to the strategic and predetermined end inherent to persuasion.⁶ However, in many ways, Kant's legacy still looms large both in Western intellectual history in general and in the fields of rhetoric and communication specifically, albeit spectrally. As Douglas Burnham notes, while few

contemporary thinkers “are strict Kantians, his influence is everywhere.”⁷ John Dewey proclaims in *German Philosophy and Politics* (1915),

it is not that every philosopher is Kantian, or that the professed Kantians stick literally to his text. Far from it. But Kant must be reckoned with. No position unlike his should be taken up until Kant has been reverently disposed of, and the new position evaluated in his terms. To scoff at him is fair sacrilege. In a genuine sense, he marks the end of the older age. He *is* the transition to distinctively modern thought.⁸

Though the legacy in Western intellectual history has been acknowledged and examined *ad infinitum* in both positive and negative valences, the legacy as it relates to the history of rhetoric has received scant attention. It does require some digging to get past Kant’s curt dismissal, but there is much in his work that relies on an important role for speech, rhetoric, communication, and public discourse.

This project starts from the observation that what Kant removes from rhetoric with one hand, he shuttles back in with the other, though under different auspices. While Kant may have a restricted sense of rhetoric, equated with persuasion and oratory, broader contemporary notions of rhetoric that include the role of communication, reasoned public discourse, deliberation, critique, and other elements actually rely upon several assumptions shared with Kant.⁹ The public use of reason, one of the distinguishing aspects of enlightenment for Kant, is quite influential and certainly makes its appearance in contemporary theorists often cited in the discipline (Habermas and Arendt are two compelling instances). Further examination of both the public use of reason and Kant’s relation to rhetoric more generally connects together several important aspects of Kant’s thinking including ethics, aesthetics, politics, and enlightenment. By looking to the connection between rhetoric and each of these themes, this project examines Kant’s complicated relation to rhetoric. Accordingly, this project begins with an initial

exploration of Kant and rhetoric, and then explicitly connects rhetoric in Kant to his writings on ethics, aesthetics, and style and then gathers together these themes in a discussion of Kant, rhetoric, and enlightenment. The implications of this project reach further than just adding a figure into the history of rhetoric. Examining the ways in which Kant still remains quite influential, even if relatively unacknowledged or naturalized, for speech, communication, and rhetoric offers insight into ongoing conversations in rhetorical studies. Such contribution is oriented not towards setting the past record straight, but more in the spirit, to borrow from Foucault, of a history of the present. In many disciplines, the question of our relationship with enlightenment is of great significance. Approaching this question from the discipline of rhetoric and through the figure of Kant can add to this conversation about enlightenment's legacy by illustrating the important role rhetoric, often not featured in those conversations, plays in enlightenment.

Rhetoric on Kant

Kant only occasionally appears in histories of rhetoric, partly as historical context for enlightenment rhetoric, oftentimes with rhetoric's decline, or as part of a general amalgam of the Enlightenment Project against which "postmodern" perspectives are advanced. In the major disciplinary narratives of rhetoric's history, Kant plays a small role, if any. In Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg's *The Rhetorical Tradition* (1990), Kant does not even make an appearance in the contextual introduction to "Enlightenment Rhetoric," though his treatments of aesthetics had a profound influence, even in his own lifetime. Thomas Conley in *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (1990) mentions Kant in the context of German rhetoric in the nineteenth century, the increasing alignment of rhetoric with aesthetics, and its subsequent critique from the philosophical perspective.¹⁰ James Herrick (1997) identifies Kant, along with Voltaire and

David Hume, as one of the luminaries of modernity to which postmodernism responds. George A. Kennedy in *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition* (1999) has basically only this to say of Kant: “In Germany, rhetoric became the victim of romantic aestheticism and the idealization of poetry . . . Kant then describes oratory as exploiting the weakness of the hearer and dismisses the art of rhetoric as worthy of no respect.”¹¹ James Golden, Goodwin Berquist, and William Coleman’s *The Rhetoric of Western Thought* (2003) identifies Kant as a significant source and influence in the work of both Kenneth Burke and Chaïm Perelman, and later as a counterpoint against which contemporary theory posits itself. These texts represent some of the most commonly referenced standard histories of rhetoric and, at most, Kant serves basically as a footnote.

The commentary on Kant in the field of rhetoric is richer than these histories indicate, although with some assembly required. Robert Hariman, while also recognizing some of the ambivalence in Kant’s account, explains that Kant’s critique of rhetoric aligns with the general philosophical rejection: “although Kant recognizes distinctions between better and worse forms of rhetoric and does not ban its practice altogether from arts or civil society, his basic appraisal is thoroughly negative: rhetoric uses illusion not to liberate the understanding but to preclude judgment and deprive us of our freedom.”¹² This allusion to something beyond Kant’s apparent dismissal of rhetoric has been investigated in a few ways by rhetoric scholars. Burke notably engaged with Kant in “A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language and Postscripts on the Negative” from *Language as Symbolic Action* (1966). The section entitled “Dramatistic Introduction to Kant” illustrates how, in Burke’s hands, *The Critique of Practical Reason* is the work of Kant’s most suited to dramatistic analysis. Accordingly, Burke examines the function of the negative and positive in Kantian ethics.¹³ He demonstrates, among other things, how “in his

heavy way, Kant is working out a scheme that corresponds to the step from the negative attitude in the *lex talionis* [law of retribution] to the positive attitude in the Golden Rule.”¹⁴ Kant appears throughout Burke’s works, namely in the context of epistemological and moral inquiry.

Within the past decade or so, a few article-length studies that discuss Kant and rhetoric have emerged. Samuel McCormick in “The Artistry of Obedience” (2005) looks at some lesser-known texts by Kant and demonstrates how “in a way his formal writings could not, the reappearance of this correspondence in *The Conflict of the Faculties* enacted a menu of persuasive resources for smuggling subversive uses of reason into restricted codes of behavior.”¹⁵ McCormick focuses on Kant’s letter to Friedrich Wilhelm II to examine the politics of philosophy through the particular case of how Kant, after receiving censure for his writing on religious matters, uses strategies of artful navigation that complicate his condemnation of rhetoric. Don Paul Abbott examines Kant’s critique of rhetoric, its various contradictions, and the way in which Franz Theremin, writing only a decade after Kant’s death, attempted to reconcile Kantian idealism with a basically classical understanding of rhetoric. According to Abbott, Theremin’s reworking of rhetoric in accordance with Kant’s philosophy “is neither a dialectic of illusion nor the antithesis of poetry, but a moral force that guides human action, or more simply put, a virtue.”¹⁶ These studies complicate Kant’s position concerning rhetoric and indicate a need for more sustained analysis of how Kant’s work might contribute to the history of rhetoric and rhetorical theory.

Kant also recently has become the explicit topic of inquiry in the interdisciplinary field of communication ethics. Richard Johannesen in *Ethics in Human Communication* (1996) identifies the influence and momentum of Kant’s categorical imperative (namely, unconditionality of moral principles, act only upon the maxim that can be willed as universal

law, and never treat others as solely means to an end). Scott Stroud, in focusing on Kant's ethical writings, such as *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), and *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793), demonstrates how Kant relies significantly on a notion of rhetoric that does not infringe on others' autonomy, which is necessary for Kant's ethical community in the Kingdom of Ends formulation. In this, Stroud recognizes "a form of communal activity centering on a rhetorical force from within each agent that can facilitate progress towards the ideal community of virtuous agents."¹⁷ Pat Gehrke observes, given the overwhelming influence and force of Kantian thinking on Western ethics, that Kant has received less attention than one may expect: an occlusion that can be attributed to the way in which autonomy is overemphasized in interpretations of his thought. Accordingly, he finds that rereading Kant's treatment of experience alongside his moral writings can demonstrate how, contrary to the conventional reading, "Kant's own work undermines the primacy of autonomy and better supports a communication ethic grounded in a duty to community."¹⁸ Such studies open up avenues for sustained examination of how Kant's ethical writings might further underscore and intersect with rhetoric and communication ethics.

Though Kant has started to garner more attention from rhetoricians in the last few decades, one might find surprising the fact that more has been written on Kant and rhetoric in fields related to but institutionally distinct from rhetoric. We can piece together a more nuanced understanding of Kant's relationship to rhetoric by weaving into our discussion relevant scholarship from other disciplines. In the discipline of philosophy, Samuel Ijsseling places Kant's treatment of rhetoric in the broader context of philosophy's rejection of rhetoric from Plato onward and connects Kant's rejection of rhetoric with his injunction to think for oneself and not rely on tradition and authority to dictate actions. Ernesto Grassi departs from this

assumption and instead starts from the problem of rhetoric's subordination to philosophy.

Working from Kant, Grassi shows how rhetoric is not merely a technical doctrine but instead has an "essentially philosophical structure and function" and likewise philosophy has to rest upon rhetoric after all.¹⁹ Robert Dostal's "Kant and Rhetoric" (1980) investigates Kant's treatment of rhetoric from the field of philosophy, arguing that Kant's dismissal of rhetoric is inconsistent with and contradictory to his rather sanguine attitude toward history, since both history and rhetoric share some fundamental presuppositions. Johan van der Zande's "In the Image of Cicero: German Philosophy Between Wolff and Kant" (1995) examines the "popular philosophers" before Kant but After Wolff, the Ciceronian thinkers from within the German Enlightenment who ranged from classics scholars to scholars of languages, history, and eloquence. Van der Zande explains, "compared to the magic mountain [of Kantian critical philosophy], other parts of the German Enlightenment, if noticed at all, seem to them a mere flatland. And their Kantian adversaries successfully stigmatized the name of popular philosophy which the dwellers of the flatland themselves had used for an ambitious humanistic program."²⁰ These popular philosophers are overshadowed completely by the Kantian critical philosophy that followed, an influential portrayal that basically overwrote this strain of Neo-Humanism in eighteenth-century Germany. Despite that historical development, van der Zande compellingly argues that the popular philosophers represented a philosophical program in their own right that was indeed more than the "waste of paper" to which Kant's early followers reduced it.

From the field of political science, Bryan Garsten's *Saving Persuasion* (2006) contains a chapter entitled "The Sovereignty of Scholars: Kant" that serves as one of the more substantial treatments of the topic. Garsten incisively complicates several aspects of Kant's relation to rhetoric by characterizing Kant's antipathy towards rhetoric as a rejection of a specific form of

Ciceronian humanism and rhetoric. Garsten argues that Kant was not targeting his objection towards rhetorical education per se, but instead was focusing on what he called the “popular philosophers” of his day.²¹ Kant critiqued rhetoric and the rhetorical approach of his philosophical contemporaries due to their reliance upon on probability, prudence, practical judgment, and making accessible or popular serious philosophical matters.

Even while increasing attention has been paid to Kant’s relation to rhetoric, both within and outside the fields of rhetoric, Kant is still largely an implicit figure in the field. In contemporary conversations about deliberative democracy, within rhetoric and across the disciplines of political science and philosophy, Kant’s legacy is acknowledged briefly and usually within the context of his influence on Habermas and John Rawls, two indubitably central figures in that discussion. While it would be difficult to call Habermas and Rawls Neo-Kantians in a strict sense (recuperating Kant, returning back to Kant, etc.), they both, albeit in different ways, markedly rely upon and re-activate elements of Kant in their own thinking. Rhetoric, sometimes treated antipathetically in the general discussions of deliberative democracy, has recently played an increasing role in the conversation.²² Darren Hicks, in investigating the three tenets of deliberative democracy (inclusion, equality, and reason) discusses how the concept of public reason that lies “at the core of any account of deliberative democracy” mostly relies on Rawls’s *Political Liberalism* (1993) which, in turn, relies heavily on Kant’s conception of public reason.²³ Gerard A. Hauser and Chantal Benoit-Barne, starting from the observation that “deliberative democracy is now in vogue,” advance the position that that further attention to the role rhetoric plays in public use of reason and deliberation would enhance the conversations on deliberative democracy.²⁴ John O’Neill in “The Rhetoric of Deliberation” (2002) identifies the anti-rhetorical leanings of current deliberative democracy discussions and argues that further

attention to rhetoric and a specifically Aristotelian account of deliberation can actually enhance the conversation in productive ways. His conclusion is that “reason, maturity, and rhetoric are all compatible.”²⁵ Kantian influences haunt discussions of deliberative democracy, and Kant’s antipathy towards what he terms rhetoric is marked; I see these two elements as connected. Leaving this connection under-theorized unfortunately allows deliberative democracy to inherit the Kantian derogation of rhetoric.

Kant plays an additional indirect role in the study of rhetoric, his influence largely second-hand, via contemporary continental theory in which Kant serves an important role. Numerous figures that comprise the terrain of contemporary rhetorical theory are also some of the most extensive and penetrating readers of Kant, including Arendt, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Foucault, and Habermas (as are the figures from which they in turn work: Friedrich Nietzsche, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Martin Heidegger).²⁶ Several Kantian elements are drawn out—working from within Kant—moving in several different directions from Kant. Throughout her work, most notably in *The Human Condition* (1958) and her *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (1982), Arendt has reworked and deployed Kant in service of her conception of the political and towards a vigilant commitment to guard against the increasing closure of its realm. Her notions of judgment, enlarged mentality, and her unusual definition of the political realm are all reworkings of Kantian notions. Foucault works from Kant in his own essay entitled “What is Enlightenment?” (1984) in order to show how Kant’s unusual insistence on thinking about the present, coupled with the question of enlightenment, form the basis of how enlightenment is an ethos, an orientation, that is deeply concerned with the present.²⁷ Habermas substantially works and re-works Kant throughout his oeuvre in the way ethics and communication are always of primary concern. In an interview, he declares “there is, if you will,

just a bit of Kant in me.”²⁸ Several commentators find more than a bit—for example, the significant other alluded to in Tracy Strong and Frank Sposito’s “Habermas’s Significant Other” (1995) is none other than Kant. Derrida engages directly with Kant in *Truth in Painting* (1987), in *Mochlos: or Conflict of the Faculties* (1992), as well as in *On a Newly Arisen Apocalyptic Tone in Philosophy* (1993). As he stated in an interview, “we are already with Kant, as you see, but also far from Kant in politics and writing.”²⁹ Of course, it goes beyond the obvious to highlight how immensely influential Kant was and still is for Western intellectual history: he is, both in positive and negative ways, considered the Western thinker, *par excellence*. The most significant point here, for the present discussion, is that these figures all—in working through, with, and against Kant—emphasize dimensions in Kant that draw attention to the role of rhetoric, style, composition, exchange between others, and the intersection between philosophy and communication. In short, these contemporary theorists, each remarkably indebted to Kant, emphasize the important and even central role of Kant’s influence on many notions that are presently considered important for rhetorical studies, oftentimes working from the precise moments where Kant attempted to distance himself from these themes.

These currents—emerging interest in Kant’s attitudes toward rhetoric, the importance of Kant to deliberative democracy conversations, and the significance of Kant for many key contemporary rhetorical theorists—all provide impetus for reexamining Kant’s curious absence within the historical overviews of rhetoric. Other figures who decry rhetoric serve important roles in rhetoric’s standard histories; one could say that *rhetorike* itself is coined in order to name something to be maligned. Kant’s significant influence and work on aesthetics would be sufficient warrant alone, however the case becomes even more compelling when turning to Kant’s own writings about rhetoric, oratory, persuasion, and popularity (among other topics).

Following Kant's treatment of these elements demonstrates not only how much more conflicted Kant was about rhetoric—that, in fact, rhetoric and the constellation of associated concepts occupies far more of Kant's attention and scrutiny than might be expected—but that rhetoric actually serves far more important roles within his critical thought.

Rhetoric in Kant

In the Third *Critique* Kant writes that the “arts of speech are rhetoric and poetry. Rhetoric is the art of conducting a business of the understanding as free play of the imagination; poetry that of carrying out a free play of the imagination as a business of the understanding.”³⁰ Kant's main objections to what he terms rhetoric are two-fold. First, rhetoric is subservient when compared with poetry in his treatment of the “beautiful arts,” because, among other things, rhetoric promises much and delivers less, whereas poetry effects the inverse. Second, rhetoric is aligned with deception and trickery since it takes advantage of the listener by circumventing the faculty of the understanding and the processes of judgment and, hence, his or her autonomy. Kant's objection, in several ways, proceeds from the categorical imperative insofar as rhetoric, in his depiction, uses people solely as a means rather than respects them as ends in themselves. In bending the will of others to the persuader's own end, rhetoric encroaches upon the freedom of the listener by short-circuiting the process of proper examination of the maxim upon which one is acting. For Kant, right cannot be determined by consequence. Action must both conform to and emanate from duty and thus rhetoric that moves people to comply with an orator's pre-figured conclusion replaces the listener's ability to act from a sense of duty.

Yet, in what directly follows that objection, it becomes clear that Kant is indeed criticizing a certain and specific form of rhetoric based upon the orientation of the rhetor to the

audience. Kant indicates that rhetoric consists of both eloquence and well-spokenness but specifically isolates the “art of the orator, as the art of using the weakness of people for one’s own purposes” in identifying precisely what he deems as “not worthy of any respect at all.”³¹ Kant’s rejection of rhetoric targets the specifically deceitful kind, replacing reason and the critical faculty of understanding with that of pre-determined intent and conclusion. Kant’s treatment thus follows an itinerary somewhat akin to the Platonic rejection of rhetoric, at least in the way it equates rhetoric with its pejorative possibility, an association that still resonates to this day in journalistic uses of the term.

Even while it appears that Kant believes rhetoric merits no respect whatsoever, its operation in Kant is far more complicated. There is, however, room for eloquence in Kant, albeit the scope of eloquence is broader than the particular form of rhetoric on which he is focusing. The explicit target of his attack concerns manipulative oratory that vacates the listener’s ability to use his or her own judgment and instead inculcates conclusions, but eloquence clearly has functions in Kant beyond that particular restricted sense. In fact, eloquence can operate independently or outside of the manipulative oratory he uses as synecdoche for rhetoric. Eloquence’s role actually becomes rather important in Kant’s Third Critique despite the short explicit attention it receives:

Further, the merely distinct concept of these sorts of human affairs, combined with a lively presentation in examples, and without offense against the rules of euphony in speech or of propriety in expression, for ideas of reason (which together constitute eloquence) already has in itself sufficient influence on human minds, without it being necessary also to bring to bear the machinery of persuasion, which, since it can also be used for glossing over or concealing vice and error, can never entirely eradicate the deep-seated suspicion of artful trickery.³²

In this one passage, much can be observed. Kant operationally defines his views concerning eloquence and its subsequent criteria. The problem with the “machinery” of persuasion concerns the way in which the potential (how it “can” be used) for abuse overwrites its capacities, and casts general suspicion as a result. Questions of influence, however, are not sufficient reason to reject rhetoric; the objection has more to do with the way in which such influence is garnered. If rhetoric extends beyond persuasion and strategic communication, to use Habermas’s figuration, then Kant’s attack targets only a specific form or type of rhetoric and represents a far less controversial position than the ostensible wholesale rejection of rhetoric.

Furthermore, the considerations of lively presentation of examples, euphony of speech, propriety of expression, and so forth form a more complicated set of practical and ethical considerations for the rhetor than the diminution of rhetoric to merely stylistic considerations. In this particular sense, and analogous to how Kant’s political theory is often articulated, rhetoric is always shot through with the ethical at every turn. Although relegating it to a footnote, Kant invokes what he assigns as Cicero’s definition of rhetoric in order to transform it in accordance with Kantian ethical theory: “he who has at his command, along with clear insight into the facts, language in all its richness and purity, and who, along with a fruitful imagination capable of presenting his ideas feels a lively sympathy for the true good, is the *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, the speaker without art but full of vigor, as Cicero would have him, though he did not himself always remain true to this ideal.”³³ It is important to note, in passing, that Kant’s reference is not rigorous here, as that definition of rhetoric (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*) alludes to Quintilian’s reference to Cato the Elder more than Cicero. Nonetheless, the criteria by which he combines ethics and rhetoric, albeit seeing it in different terms, shows that the rejection is neither wholesale nor entirely accountable through the divide between the ancients and the moderns.

So, in some sense, rhetoric is conceived by Kant in association with beautiful speaking, and hence reflects the stylistic reduction of rhetoric, but that alone is not sufficient to account for his rejection of rhetoric on ethical terms. In some ways, this can align with recurring motifs of Enlightenment rhetoric: suspicion of the bewitching function of rhetoric, rejection of Ciceronian style, exaltation of clarity and distinctness, and so forth. And yet, rhetoric makes its way back in, “without art,” of course, by means of the connection of communication and ethics, vivacity, exemplarity, vigor, the sympathy for the good, the communicability of judgment, common sense, the distinctions between private and public reason, and the centrality of the public use of reason to enlightenment. What is at stake here not only includes rhetoric, but also an orientation towards enlightenment and the present.

The “Other” Kant

This project also begins from the central premise that approaching Kant from an oblique angle provides a richer, more robust, more complex and livelier understanding of his thought. Immanuel Kant’s legacy speaks about the author of the critical philosophy, and of he whose adherence to a standard of morality could, in the categorical imperative, meet the moral equivalent of strict scrutiny. As a figure capturing the literary imagination of so many authors in his wake in a way perhaps not many other philosophers have, we also inherit a certain portrait of Kant the man. The popular and enduring caricature of Kant portrays the thinker as mechanical, clockwork, neurotically obsessive, severe, gray, humorless, ascetic, and of an utmost resolute nature. In the thoroughly entertaining account provided by Simon Critchley, he begins the entry on Kant in declaring “The life of the philosopher is that of the neurotically obsessive. This is

particularly true of Kant.”³⁴ According to Manfred Kuehn’s engrossing biography of Kant, upon Kant’s death in 1804,

his corpse was so completely dried out that it ‘looked like a skeleton one might exhibit.’ Curiously enough this is precisely what happened. Kant’s corpse became a public sight during the next two weeks. People stood in line to see the corpse until it was buried sixteen days later. The ground was so frozen that it was impossible to dig a grave – as if the earth refused to take what remained of the great man. But then, there was no need to hurry, given the state of the body, as well as the great interest of the citizens of Königsberg in their dead celebrity.³⁵

In a sense, the caricature of the Kant of the Critical Philosophy and moral arbiter of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) presents us with a philosophical legacy akin to the desiccated corpse of Kant, the Kant of hypostatized static maxim. This project, at heart, is animated by contemporary work at both the biographical and philosophical levels that finds an “other” Kant, presenting a lively and interesting character that serves as a counternarrative to the caricature. Kant, for example, was such a good billiards player when he was younger that he was able to pay for additional courses with the proceeds, until the point where he had a hard time finding someone who would play him and his friends. Kant also was a card player. The game, *Ombre*, was a 3-handed Spanish trick-taking game (similar to bridge) with one person as the *Ombre* (“the man”) and the other two trying to prevent the *Ombre* from making contract. Kant, unsurprisingly, liked to be the *Ombre*. He was a sociable character, loved company and conversation, in addition to being a popular lecturer (over 40 years Kant taught nearly 300 courses). Furthermore, despite the aloof and detached caricature, Kant was rather politically adept—in short, he knew how to play his cards well.

Inspired by these recent works, including Kuehn’s *Kant: A Biography* (2001) and Robert Louden’s *Kant’s Impure Ethics* (2000), this project reanimates the desiccated corpse that constitutes Kant in the pantheon of intellectual history by examining Kant’s conflicted and

complex attitudes toward rhetoric beyond the seeming categorical and static dismissal.

Accordingly, this project often takes less recourse in the monuments of philosophy known as the three *Critiques* and *GMM* (although those works will have an important place here, as well) and looks more towards the documents of the other Kant, including letters and many of the B-sides of Kant's discography like *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View* and *Lectures on Logic*. In these works not only does the other Kant emerge, but also in them Kant spends a good amount of time talking about rhetoric, eloquence, popularity, and style. This convergence of streams is not mere coincidence, for the other Kant of the anthropological realm is also the Kant who so highly prizes sociable exchange. Yet, even the Kant of the critical philosophy and moral treatises thoroughly and explicitly attended to rhetorical concerns (audience, style, tone), writing his own redacted version of the *Critique of Pure Reason* for a broad popular (not-philosophically trained) reading audience.

Chapter Overviews

The first chapter, "Whither Rhetoric: Kant's Conflicted Attitudes Toward Rhetoric," examines the various ways in which Kant's seeming dismissal of rhetoric, when examined under a microscope, emerges as far more complex and robust than merely deserving of no respect. While Kant does question the merit of the type of rhetoric that from antiquity forward has been considered relatively suspect, a form of persuasion that completely decapitates the auditor's judgment, Kant still considers an important role for eloquence, true popularity, and style. While rhetoric in Eighteenth-century Germany became separated out and dispersed among the lower faculties of philosophy (logic, Latin, Greek, classics, poetry, etc.), contrary to Kennedy's account rhetoric actually had a lively presence in the German Enlightenment. The popular philosophers, with whom Kant was in several ways aligned under the aegis of *Aufklärung*, served as the public

embodiment of many classical—primarily Ciceronian—principles of rhetoric oriented towards not a private cabal of those technically inclined towards philosophy in the strictest sense, but to a broader reading public. Along these lines, Kant’s own positions toward popularity also aligned, although only in temporary and contentious ways, with the so-called popular philosophers he seems to disparage in *GMM*. Looking at the context of rhetoric in the Prussian university and Kant’s relationship with figures in the German Enlightenment who were aligned with rhetoric at the time helps to demonstrate how rhetoric flourished far livelier in this milieu than Kennedy’s funerary pronouncement leads one to believe.

The second chapter, “Ethics from the Other Side: Kant’s Embodied Anthropological Ethics,” examines the ways in which communication, sociability, conversation, and a perhaps unexpected (at least, from Kant) accord between the body and mind emerge from Kant’s writings on the anthropological realm. Contrary to the hypostatized stagnant morality of the categorical imperative, detached maxims that are so universal in their nature as to seem implausible in application to the realm of lived experience, Kant also discussed this realm of lived experience with persistence across many of his works, but most notably in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. While *APPoV* is not usually considered one of the main works of the Kantian canon—the critical philosophy far overshadows—his course on anthropology was considered one of his finest and one of his favorites. *APPoV* was only published after he could teach no more and was the result of his sustained work for over two decades, before, during, and after the monuments of critical philosophy. Kant’s treatment of the maxims of anthropological ethics, social exchange, conversation, and the connection between the body and mind, demonstrate quite a different orientation than the Kant of the categorical imperative, for instead emerges a more Stoic sense of the care of the self alongside an other-oriented perspective on sociability.

In the third chapter, “Aesthetics, Rhetoric, and the Discordant Accord of the Faculties,” an examination of Kantian aesthetics is brought to bear upon Kant’s treatment of rhetoric and related themes. Kant’s own aesthetics is significantly indebted to the British rhetorical tradition, notably Henry Home, Lord Kames, the source of the methodological orientation of *critique* that ends up serving a crucial role in Kantian philosophy. The way in which Kant’s endeavor shifts in the third *Critique* (*Critique of Judgment*, 1790) represents a departure within critical philosophy from the approach in the first two critiques (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781, and *Critique of Practical Reason*, 1788). Kant insists upon accounting for judgments of taste even though they are purely about feelings of pleasure and displeasure, removed from the service of cognition. The strange nature of reflective judgment, the faculties of the mind, and the manner in which the faculties enter a relationship of free play connect up Kant’s treatment of rhetoric within the context of not only aesthetics, but also his larger critical project. In several ways, examining the third *Critique* can help identify some of Kant’s suspicions concerning rhetoric that, at the same time, reveal its power.

The fourth chapter, “Kant’s Commentary on Style, Popularity Redux, and the *Prolegomena*,” begins with Kant’s own intriguing commentary on style—the balance between logical and aesthetic perfection, general principles of style, on the natural versus affected styles, the distinction between fashion and style, and his marked preference for the “English” over the “French” style. Working from Kant’s recommendations about style, the examination shifts to a particular case where Kant put into practice the operation of popularity. After the rather disappointing reception of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and after realizing that the popular philosophers were not going to take up and popularize critical philosophy in his service, Kant felt compelled to provide his own popular treatment of the basic question of *CPuR* in *Prolegomena*

to *Any Future Metaphysics* (1783). Looking to Kant's own enactment of the task of popularizing his thought provides much insight into the question of popularity, about which he was in interlocution with the popular (Ciceronian) philosophers.

The conclusion, "On Rhetoric and Enlightenment," draws together the previous discussion of style and popularity together with the themes from the first three chapters through Kant's conception of enlightenment. In several ways, publishing and submitting one's works to the public realm sits at the core of Kant's own definition of Enlightenment—to exercise the public use of reason at every point. Style and popularity both connect to the central concern of "What is Enlightenment" in the various ways that freedoms to speak as a scholar (in a public role, where vigilant interrogation is not only possible and desirable but obligated) are diminished and thus require the courage to use one's own reason rather than relying on an apparatus to outsource one's own thinking to others. Kant wrote several articles for a popular audience (before, during, and after the composition of the three *Critiques*), and his very definition of Enlightenment concerns the public role one assumes as a scholar in submitting one's own reason to others in writing. Instead of deserving little respect, rhetoric and its constellation of related concepts including style, popularity, tone, and sociable exchange all play a significant, even central, role in Kant's configuration of enlightenment.

Notes

¹ Baker and Reill, *What's Left of Enlightenment*, p. 5.

² Kant, "What is Enlightenment," p. 7.

³ Kant, "What is Enlightenment," p. 10.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ In the context of Kant's writings, the critical works denote the three *Critiques*: *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1786) and *Critique of Judgment* (1790).

⁶ Some of the key passages in *The Critique of Judgment* that mention rhetoric in particular include the connection with beautiful art (5:305, 5:325-6), arts of speech as divided into rhetoric and poetry (5:321), the exaltation of poetry over rhetoric (5: 326-5: 328), and the distinction between conviction and persuasion (5: 461-463). The role of communication and communicability in judgment is taken up in several places, as well (5: 231, 5: 295, 5: 355), as is the role of common sense (5:238-239, 5: 293-296).

⁷ Burnham, *An Introduction*, preface.

⁸ Dewey, *German Philosophy*, p. 19.

⁹ Habermas, in "Discourse Ethics: Notes on Philosophical Justification," actually relies upon what becomes for him an important distinction in his own work, the exact same distinction Kant makes between convincing and persuading in the Third *Critique*. Kant argues that "the first thing that is required of any proof, whether (as in the case of a proof by observation of the object or by experiment) it proceeds by the immediate empirical presentation of that which is to be proved or is conducted by reason *a priori* from principles, is not that it persuade but convince, or at least have an effect on conviction" (5: 461). In this passage Kant distinguishes persuade, *uberreden*, from convince, *uberzeugen*. Habermas makes crucial the same distinction when

elucidating the notion of “performative contradiction” where he contrasts the following statement ““using good reasons, I finally convinced H that p,”” using the term *uberzeugen* or to convince by means of argumentation and “good reasons” and as a result of discourse, from the statement ““using lies, I finally talked H into believing that p,”” where *uberrede* is to persuade or to talk into in the pejorative sense.

¹⁰ Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition*, p. 242.

¹¹ Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 274-5.

¹² Hariman, “Status, Marginality, and Rhetorical Theory,” p. 38.

¹³ Burke, “Dramatistic View on the Origins of Language,” pp. 436-453.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 443.

¹⁵ McCormick, “The Artistry of Obedience,” p. 322.

¹⁶ Abbott, “Kant, Theremin, and the Morality of Rhetoric,” p. 288.

¹⁷ Stroud, “Rhetoric and Moral Progress,” 350.

¹⁸ Gehrke, “Turning Kant Against the Priority of Autonomy,” p. 2.

¹⁹ Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, p. 19.

²⁰ Van der Zande, “In the Image,” p. 420.

²¹ Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*, pp. 93-8.

²² See, for example, the special issue on deliberative democracy in *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* appearing in 2002 with contributions from scholars in the field of rhetoric including Rosa A. Eberly, Gerard Hauser, and Darren Hicks, among others.

²³ Hicks, “The Promise(s) of Deliberative Democracy,” p. 241.

²⁴ Hauser and Benoit-Barne, “Reflections on Rhetoric.”

²⁵ O’Neill, “The Rhetoric of Deliberation,” p. 268.

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze addresses Kant head on in *Kant's Critical Philosophy* (1963) and also throughout *Difference and Repetition* (1968). Jacques Derrida wrestles with Kant as the main topic of both *The Newly Arisen Apocalyptic Tone in Philosophy* (1992) and in *Mochlos: Or, A Conflict of the Faculties* (1992), as well as throughout *The Truth in Painting* (1978). Jurgen Habermas refers to Kant throughout his works, which are extensive, but Kant serves as a central figure in select essays in each the following collected volumes: *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics* (1993), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (1983), *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985), and *Postmetaphysical Thinking* (1992). Michel Foucault addresses Kant most directly and extensively in the collected volume entitled *The Politics of Truth* (1984), which includes his essay "What is Enlightenment" and the lecture "What is Critique"—both on Kant. Foucault also wrote his dissertation on Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, which appears as the introduction to the French translation of the work and Kant serves as an important figure in his "The Art of Telling the Truth" (1988). Jean-Luc Nancy's dizzying rereading of Kant occupies the entirety of *The Discourse of the Syncope: Logodaedalus* (1976). Friedrich Nietzsche confronts Kant throughout his work, but directly and notably in *The Anti-Christ* (1895). G.W.F. Hegel addresses Kantian ethics most extensively in *The Philosophy of Right* (1822). Martin Heidegger works through Kant in his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929). This list is more illustrative than complete.

²⁷ Foucault, *Politics of Truth*.

²⁸ Habermas, "Interview with Jurgen Habermas," p. 98.

²⁹ Derrida, "Canons and Metonymies," p. 198.

³⁰ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 198 (5: 321).

³¹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 204 (5: 327).

³² Kant, *Judgment*, p. 204-205 (5: 327).

³³ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 205fn (327-8).

³⁴ Critchley, *The Book of Dead Philosophers*, p. 160.

³⁵ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 2.

Chapter One: “Whither Rhetoric: Kant’s Conflicted Attitudes Toward Rhetoric”

Determining Immanuel Kant’s relation to rhetoric is an enterprise fraught with complexities. While his rejection of rhetoric, often truncated to “rhetoric deserves no respect whatsoever,” seems a plausible enough reason why historians of rhetoric do not take him up as an important figure, his own treatment of the subject is far more nuanced and conflicted. With some effort, Kant’s discussions of rhetoric stand poised to contribute not only to our understanding of Enlightenment rhetoric (and the ways in which British rhetorical figures influenced the German Enlightenment), but also to contemporary conversations where rhetoric still battles its malignment. Telling the story of Kant and rhetoric requires gathering together fragments of scholarship scattered throughout the humanities and social sciences, as evinced in the discussion of “Kant on Rhetoric” from the introduction. This chapter begins with Kant’s own references to rhetoric, oratory, and persuasion in *Critique of Judgment (CJ)*, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View (APPoV)*, *Critique of Pure Reason (CPuR)*, *Lectures on Logic (LL)* and other works; and then attempts to contextualize Kant’s treatment of rhetoric with a brief sketch of what rhetoric may have looked like in eighteenth-century Germany and Prussia.¹

Kant on Rhetoric

While Kant’s treatment of rhetoric has received scant attention compared to other figures of the Enlightenment, the history of Western philosophy is replete with discussion of Kant’s ethical, aesthetic, and political writings. Kant is *a* central if not *the* central thinker of the Enlightenment and, furthermore, of enlightenment.² In working through Kantian ethics, aesthetics, and politics, however, rhetoric is never far afield. Even though Kant’s taxonomy

places rhetoric in unquestionable subordination to poetry and other arts, he was indeed no stranger to rhetoric, in several senses.

Kant himself was a lecturer on a wide variety of subjects (including anthropology, pedagogy, logic and metaphysics, and physical geography) which, although included in the faculty of philosophy at the time, extend far beyond the purview of our contemporary discipline of philosophy.³ By all accounts, until very advanced age made the daily schedule of lecturing quite difficult, Kant was described as an entertaining, lively, dedicated, and popular teacher. Not only did Kant devote himself seriously and attentively to preparing and teaching, but according to Michael Young, “the portrait is often lively, for Kant lectured in a free, spontaneous way.”⁴ While Kant is often identified as one of the few professional philosophers (i.e. made a living, well-known, actually read in his lifetime, etc.), this was only well after he received his professorial position in 1770. Early in his career he worked as a *Privatdozenten*, roughly equivalent to adjunct instructorships in present terms, and was not salaried but instead his livelihood depended on the number of attendees for his lectures. Kant prepared announcements advertising his lectures to increase enrollment, and struggled until he finally attained a level of sustainability in this position.⁵ One story from a contemporary of Kant recalls how at one point early in his career Kant wore the same coat until it was falling apart, and he refused when offered a new one. After being a lecturer for quite some time, Kant was first offered a position in poetry, which he turned down, awaiting the position in logic and metaphysics to open. He attained that position by dispatching a letter the day after a professor of mathematics had passed away, presenting his case and appealing that another professor be moved from logic and metaphysics to the line in mathematics so Kant could have the position he desired.⁶

After Kant published *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason* (1792), the present king of Prussia, Frederick William II, reprimanded Kant for overstepping the boundaries of philosophy and addressing theological matters. Samuel McCormick's analysis of Kant's response to the king's reprimand shows how Kant artfully navigated the situation in order to avoid "unpleasant measures" including the loss of his position, livelihood, and so on. Despite the common portrait as an insular and detached thinker apart from this world, Kant actually had to negotiate in the Wrangle, as Kenneth Burke would say, for he was required to respond to political exigencies that demanded he present a case, particularly in situations where the stakes were potentially quite severe. He even served in the rotating head administration position of university Rector multiple times, until he could no longer bear the additional responsibilities.

After attaining his professorial position, and upon being awoken from his dogmatic slumber, as he called it, by reading David Hume, Kant spent the greater part of the 1770s (also known as his "silent decade," publishing little) working on the *Critique of Pure Reason* and developing what would later be known as his critical philosophy. As Kant strived for an ever-receding greater unity, the constant interrelations, distinctions, and references between the variety of subjects that he wrote about and taught underscored how interrelated all matters became under the systematization of critical philosophy, rendering it quite different from Aristotelian dialecticism's division upon further division. Kant's discussions of rhetoric, eloquence, style, oratory, persuasion, and language appear in many if not most of his works, ranging from brief comments to substantial passages. While the sections on beautiful arts in *CJ* often draw the most attention, additional and illuminating layers of the portrait are further developed by also looking at *APPoV*, *CPuR*, *GMM*, *LL*, and other works beyond the influential treatise on aesthetics. He often speaks about practices and concepts under the purview of

rhetoric in other contexts as well, not associating them with the restrictive (and conflicted sense) of the term “rhetoric.” As the editor of Kant’s *Lectures on Logic*, Young notes, “Kant spent a great deal of time in logic lectures talking about matters which, on his own account, do not belong to logic proper.”⁷ In *The Heschel Logic*, Kant identifies that “there are two kinds of inferences that actually do not belong to logic proper but really have no other place, namely *per inductionem* and *per analogiam*” (he also mentions *enthymema* in this context).⁸ These elements of informal logic, associated with rhetoric explicitly by Aristotle and forward, are just a few of the concepts that we recognize as part of a classical understanding of rhetoric, but in Kant’s treatment seem to have less of a clearly identifiable place.

In pulling together some of the aforementioned investigations of Kant and the question of rhetoric, several explanations for Kant’s dismissal of rhetoric emerge. Kant’s diminution of rhetoric is sometimes read in alignment with the reduction of rhetoric to mere style (Dostal); or in the vein of Plato’s rejection of rhetoric on the grounds of its unworthiness and untrustworthiness (Ijsseling); or according to the presupposition that the emotions are dangerous and disruptive to rationality (Grassi); or in the tradition of thinkers who deploy “rhetoric against rhetoric,” a certain rhetorical orientation that eschews its own rhetoricality in exalting the epistemological status beyond mere opinion and persuasion (Garsten); or as an attack against the Ciceronian popular philosophers, Kant’s contemporaries who revived humanism and applied it for a popular (i.e. general not academic) audience (van der Zande). While each one of these explanations has substantial merit in understanding Kant, any one of these alone is immediately insufficient in the face of the others. Each part of the story provides a dimension that, taken together, helps situate Kant’s dismissal of rhetoric in broader contexts. However, even taking these assignments in aggregate form, there is still much in Kant’s work that exceeds these

accounts. Kant is more conflicted about rhetoric than the standard reduction portrays, and what “rhetoric” precisely means not only breaks down in Kant’s own treatment, but also in the larger scope of his particular time and context, which was characterized by shifting roles, purposes, and responsibilities for education.

At this point, turning to Kant’s comments about rhetoric best reveals the complexity, confliction, and relative uniqueness of his attitude toward rhetoric. This account of rhetoric will be divided along the following five dimensions: taxonomy and hierarchy of the beautiful arts, the distinction between conviction and persuasion, the famous footnote on rhetoric in *CJ*, the relation between philosophy and rhetoric, and attitudes toward popularity and popular philosophy. This discussion concludes with a more extensive examination of Kant’s interlocution with the Ciceronian popular philosophers who championed antiquity, prized rhetoric, and sought to bring philosophy to a general audience in opposition to the growing professionalization and inchoate insularity that they observed.

Rhetoric and Poetry, the Arts of Speech

In part, what distinguishes Kant’s critical work—the three *Critiques*—is the method by which Kant approaches the task. Douglas Burnham notes that critique, in the Kantian sense, is “an analysis which attempts to determine the legitimate range of application of *some type of mental power*.”⁹ More than enumerating, critique is about delimiting—assessing limits and boundaries. After discussing the faculties of the mind, their interrelation with one another, and an interesting distinction between the practical and the theoretical, Kant moves on to discuss his taxonomy of the arts. While Kant’s most direct attack on rhetoric occurs in these sections on the

beautiful arts in *CJ*, bringing to bear his elaboration and extension in other works will to help demonstrate Kant's conflicted, complicated, and complex orientation toward rhetoric.

In *CJ* Kant advances that the beautiful is within the realm of critique, and not under the purview of science, although many sciences can indeed inform and provide the basis necessary to set the foundation for beautiful arts. Kant notes that although expressions such as the "beautiful sciences" are oftentimes used, they do not make sense as such. In the following passage, Kant situates rhetoric and poetry as beautiful arts, products of such arts, and furthermore the foundations necessary for making beautiful arts in general possible:

What has given rise to the customary expression beautiful sciences is without doubt nothing but the fact that it has been quite rightly noticed that for beautiful art in its full perfection much science is required, such as, e.g., acquaintance with ancient languages, wide reading of those authors considered to be classical, history, acquaintance with antiquities, etc., and for that reason these historical sciences, because they constitute the necessary preparation and foundation for beautiful art, and also in part because acquaintance with the products of beautiful art (rhetoric and poetry) is even included within them, have because of a verbal confusion themselves been called beautiful sciences.¹⁰

While Kant does not consider a science of the beautiful possible, study of sciences can indeed inform the beautiful arts. The study of history, including ancient authors' rhetoric and poetry, is a science, and its study is important if not essential for the preparation and practice of the beautiful arts.

Kant furthermore delineates the agreeable arts from the beautiful arts. The agreeable arts are distinguished by their purpose in that they are designed for mere entertainment (including lively conversation, enjoyable stories, jokes and laughter, even table setting and configuration to encourage "joyous noise," games, etc.) and, accordingly, the type of exchanges for which "nobody will be held responsible for what he says, because it is only intended for momentary entertainment, not as some enduring material for later reflection or discussion."¹¹ Whereas a

beautiful art serves a higher purpose and function, for it “is a kind of representation that is purposive even in itself and, though without an end, nevertheless promotes the cultivation of the mental powers for sociable communication.”¹² Having distinguished the beautiful arts from the agreeable arts, Kant then identifies that there are three main species of beautiful arts: “the art of speech, pictorial art, and the art of the play of sensations.”¹³ Of the arts of speech, there are two: rhetoric and poetry. So, in short, rhetoric and poetry are the speech arts, one category of the beautiful arts which are distinguished and superior to the mere agreeable arts, for they also serve purposes beyond light entertainment.

Having set out the initial divisions that Kant makes in *CJ*, a brief overview of the faculties of the mind might help situate how Kant quickly moves to distinguish rhetoric from poetry from within the speech arts. For Kant, there are three primary faculties or powers of the mind: understanding, reason, and judgment—each having higher and lower functions and each can serve as the legislative faculty depending on what is under consideration. Understanding concerns the cognition of nature, reason the realm of desire and freedom, and judgment concerns aesthetics both in art and nature. Sensibility is a fourth faculty; it can never operate in a legislative capacity but instead both serves and restricts the understanding. Kant then discusses the cognitive faculties (he is famous, particularly in the case of “faculty,” for using the same term in discrete and differing senses), which basically align with the faculties of the mind, but serve as the source of the different coordinating types of presentations or representations. Furthermore, imagination emerges as yet another (and increasingly important) faculty in his works, namely as a conduit that mediates between sensibility and understanding (or, perhaps, bridges them) and synthesizes sense perceptions into objects or concepts. Leaving the finer relations and operations

of the faculties for later development in chapter three, this brief sketch provides some provisional context for the basis Kant draws upon in distinguishing poetry from rhetoric.

In *APPoV*, Kant draws the speech arts together in a pragmatic and anthropological vein “because they are aimed at a frame of mind whereby the mind is directly aroused to activity, and thus they have their place in a *pragmatic* anthropology, where one tries to know the human being according to what can be made of him.”¹⁴ In looking through the dizzying array of subjects broached in *APPoV*, innumerable things seem relevant to a pragmatic anthropology, especially when defined as dealing with the capacities of what the human can do. Yet, the association between poetry and rhetoric, as gathered together by means of their capacity to directly arouse activity, imbues them both with an interesting and significant power which will bear upon the exaltation of poetry and the debasement of rhetoric within the arts of speech.

At this point, and in the context of the faculties, Kant explains, “rhetoric is the art of conducting a business of the understanding as a free play of the imagination; poetry that of carrying out a free play of the imagination as a business of the understanding.”¹⁵ Kant is quite interested in the notion of purpose, as the whole second—and largely overshadowed—part of *CJ* (“Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment”) attests. So it appears that Kant’s chief distinction between the two speech arts rests upon an inversion of what they set out as their purpose and what they actually deliver. Rhetoric portrays as its purpose, or purports to serve, the important business of the understanding. Poetry, on the other hand, claims its business to be mere entertainment, involving images resulting from the free play of imagination. These two purported aims of each art form the basis for Kant’s prioritization: poetry is mere play of the imagination, but in that humble purpose, it allows for much contemplation on serious matters afterwards. Rhetoric, on the other hand, likes to purport its business as intervening in serious

matters, whereas in Kant's estimation it uses forms that are suited for mere entertainment by means of the free play of the imagination.

This interrelation, in accordance with the relevant faculties, is perhaps put together a bit more comprehensively in the following remark from *APPoV*:

But *poetic art* as contrasted with *rhetoric* differs from it only by the way the understanding and sensibility are mutually subordinated: poetic art is a *play* of sensibility *ordered* through understanding; rhetoric is a *business* of understanding *animated* through sensibility. However, both the orator as well as the poet (in the broad sense) are *inventors* and bring forth out of themselves new forms (combinations of the sensible) in their power of imagination.¹⁶

Several interesting elements emerge in this anthropological take on poetry and rhetoric. The last line definitely points to a conception of rhetoric that goes beyond the common view of Kant's rejection in terms of the eighteenth-century reduction of rhetoric to "mere style." Invention (even if not necessarily invoked here in the classical rhetorical sense) is associated with both arts of speech. Practitioners of rhetoric and poetry are here brought together as inventors, dealing with forms of the sensible in the power of the imagination. Reconciling this with the distinction between the two, perhaps poetry affects a more proper or suitable form of invention given what it ostensibly sets out to do, while rhetoric less so (at least in the Kantian formula). Accordingly, there is something problematic with light use of ornate style for entertainment when brought to bear on important matters.

The arts' purposes explicitly connect with the interaction of the faculties and provide more detail as to precisely what bothers Kant about rhetoric's ostensible purpose, not in any given situation, but writ large. Poetry's declared "purpose," i.e. how poetry, at least in Kant's view, characterizes itself, is more accurate and forthright—it does not take itself too seriously. On the other hand, rhetoric orients itself towards matters of the understanding while dabbling in sensible images as its form. At certain points Kant's difficulty with rhetoric seems to stem from

an intersection of style, overall tone, and even propriety for specific purposes. Part of this rejection arises from the debasement of important matters in the orator's style, for an immersion in the free play of the imagination remains suitable for entertainment, but not for matters of significance. In *CJ*, Kant continues, "The orator thus announces a manner of business and carries it out as if it were merely a play with ideas in order to entertain the audience. The poet announces merely an entertaining play with ideas, and yet as much results for the understanding as if he had merely had the intention of carrying on its business."¹⁷ Something in the manner in which rhetoric dabbles with the free play of the imagination prompts Kant to find it most unsuitable and unfit for the matters in which it intervenes.

Kant's difficulty with rhetoric, however, goes beyond these matters of purpose contra poetry. Poetry contributes to the understanding in an almost unwitting way, and that appears to be an important distinction against which Kant seemingly judges rhetoric. Poetry, in other words, has an epistemologically humble orientation that Kant sees rhetoric overstepping. This evaluation connects to his ethical objection to the possibility for deceit and trickery in rhetoric, namely in oratory and, specifically, in persuasion (contra the implied and explicit honesty and forthrightness of poetry). Continuing in *CJ*, Kant now turns to the orator in particular as the figure for rhetoric:

The orator thus certainly provides something which he does not promise, namely an entertaining play of the imagination; but he also takes something away from what he does promise, namely the purposive occupation of the understanding. The poet, by contrast, promises little and announces a mere play with ideas, but accomplishes something that is worthy of business, namely providing nourishment to the understanding in play, and giving like to its concepts through the imagination: hence the former basically provides less than he promises, the latter more.¹⁸

So the relation develops further into a figure of poetry providing much in its promise of little, and rhetoric providing little in its promise of much. Poetry gives, through its modest claims, and

rhetoric detracts by its aggrandizement. So while the characterization of the speech arts together involve moving the mind to action as well as processes of invention, poetry states its ostensible goal in alignment with what it delivers, and, thus allows the hearer to take a more generous contribution to the understanding. Rhetoric is somehow disingenuous about its own status, using the images of the sensibility and imagination (where the manifold of sense data is synthesized into images through the imagination, images that can exceed the realm of the sensible) in serious and important matters, an impropriety that affords rhetoric a status and power beyond mere style.

Kant clearly distinguishes skillful speaking from rhetoric in the restrictive sense that he condemns, although oftentimes oratory stands in for the pejorative. At this point in *CJ*, Kant specifically associates rhetoric with persuasion (not a radical move but nonetheless a contestable association in the history of rhetoric) in order to separate out the art of skillful speaking from being taken in. Kant delineates,

Rhetoric, insofar as by that is understood the art of persuasion, i.e., of deceiving by means of beautiful illusion (as an *ars oratoria*), and not merely skill in speaking (eloquence and style), is a dialectic, which borrows from the art of poetry only as much as is necessary to win minds over to the advantage of the speaker before they can judge and to rob them of their freedom; thus it cannot be recommended either for the courtroom or the pulpit.¹⁹

In part, Kant is bringing to bear his implied comparison and distinction from poetry as one form of deception based on purpose, and adding to it another based upon ethical considerations explicitly grounded in a concern regarding goodwill (and its violation) towards an audience. In a strange aligned misalignment with classical rhetoric, Kant does associate rhetoric with dialectic, but only to charge rhetoric with evacuating the capacity of the listener to make his or her own judgment on the matter. Persuasion serves as the main target, for it involves overwriting the auditor's capacity for free thought and circumventing the processes of judgment, replacing such with a predetermined conclusion via seduction by means of images borrowed from poetry.

Furthermore, Kant enigmatically weaves the function of musicality into what rhetoric borrows from poetry: “why does poetry win the prize over rhetoric, when both have exactly the same ends? – Because poetry is at the same time music (singable) and tone; a sound that is pleasant in itself, which mere speech is not. Even rhetoric borrows from poetry a sound that approximates tone: *accent*, without which the oration lacks the necessary intervening moments of rest and animation.”²⁰ While both are entertainment (although rhetoric speaks lightly about serious matters, in Kantian terms), musicality and tone suited to poetry are borrowed by rhetoric, in approximate and diluted form, in order to dispose the audience. Once so disposed, persuasion can make work of an individual to take advantage. However, persuasion in this most forceful and degenerate of senses is distinguished from both skill in speaking and eloquence.

What Kant defines as eloquence, briefly, might help support the present discussion. Skill in speaking is composed of two components: eloquence and style. While Kant’s complicated attitudes regarding style will be examined further in the fourth chapter, eloquence and style for Kant in some ways align with the plain style associated with Enlightenment rhetoric. Kant was significantly influenced by British philosophy, particularly the empiricism of John Locke and Hume. Unsurprisingly, perspicuity becomes an important notion for particular situations of serious business. Kant, in *CJ*, draws together his critique of persuasion, a brief commentary on style, and an account for how laudable influence on one another with skilled speaking can be affected, producing a Kantian account of what could be considered a positive role for rhetoric:

Further, the merely distinct concept of these sorts of human affairs, combined with a lively presentation in examples, and without offense against the rules of euphony in speech or of propriety in expression, for ideas of reason (which together constitute eloquence), already has in itself sufficient influence on human minds, without it being necessary also to bring to bear the machinery of persuasion, which, since it can also be used for glossing over or concealing vice and error, can never entirely eradicate the deep-seated suspicion of artful trickery. In poetry, everything proceeds honestly and uprightly. It declares that it will

conduct a merely entertaining play with the imagination, and indeed concerning form, in concord with the laws of the understanding, and does not demand that the understanding be deceived and embroiled through sensible presentation.²¹

Here, Kant elaborates the several elements constituting eloquence: “distinct concept,” “lively presentation in examples,” accordance to “the rules of euphony in speech,” and “propriety in expression.” These elements, although not necessarily exhaustive of Kant’s considerations on the matter, are suitable for what Kant finds truly eloquent: the combination of ideas and reason. All of these elements do have influence on auditors, but not the derogatory type of influence that strips the auditor of having any hand in judgment. Kant identifies the “machinery of persuasion” and the associated notion that persuasion, in this sense, has a certain set of precepts, mechanisms, and rules that dictate the ways in which the audience can be overtaken with conclusion. Unlike poetry, which, once again, does what it claims to but provides more, Kant cannot shake the unsettling possibility that rhetoric can be used for ulterior and nefarious purposes. Echoing, momentarily, Plato’s critique of rhetoric, the possibility of its misuse seems to provide a mysterious force to rhetoric that cannot ever be patently exorcised.²²

Beyond the two instances mentioned previously—the courtroom and the pulpit—Kant identifies in *CJ* more occasions in which persuasion, as he explicitly defines it, is inappropriate: “For when it is a matter of civil laws concerning the rights of individual persons, or of the lasting instruction and determination of minds to correct knowledge and conscientious observation of their duty.”²³ Basically, this would cover most of the occasions of speaking in classical rhetoric (forensic, deliberative, some epideictic, and furthermore apodeictic) save for those epideictic occasions that reflect mere entertainment. The problem stems from basically two simultaneous grounds: “it is beneath the dignity of such an important business to allow even a trace of exuberance of wit and imagination to be glimpsed, let alone the art of persuasion and taking

someone in for the advantage of someone else.”²⁴ So, while on the one hand flooding the understanding with images from the free play of the imagination is not suitable for any “serious business,” having a predetermined conclusion that orients your entire purpose to inculcate the conclusion, hence taking advantage of your audience, is steps further more objectionable. At this point, one of Kant’s signature ethical moves is brought to bear on the matter of persuasion when he explains that “for even if it can sometimes be applied to purposes that are in themselves legitimate and praiseworthy, it is nevertheless still objectionable that the maxims and dispositions be subjectively corrupted in this way, even if the deed is objectively lawful: for it is not enough to do what is right, but it is also to be performed solely on the ground that it is right.”²⁵ Kant rejects the notion that “the machinery of persuasion,”—the dictation of conclusion and incapacitation of the audience’s judgment—would ever be justified, even if the speaker had the truth or was right. This quintessential Kantian ethical injunction: to do the right thing for the right reasons, summarizes his deontological ethic that rejects both using another merely as a means and using unsavory means in the service of a higher good.

Persuasion [Überredung] versus Conviction [Überzeugung]

This ethical objection to persuasion forms the basis of and mutually informs an important distinction Kant sets out in *CPuR*: persuasion from conviction. Persuasion, as distinct from skilled speaking and eloquence, is a system of precepts, rules, and tricks designed to put the audience at disadvantage so the orator can take such advantage and infuse some predetermined end. Taking a slightly different tack from the distinctions above, Kant also defines conviction (objective, grounded, communicable) in contrast to persuasion (subjective, private, incommunicable).²⁶ The primary distinction Kant describes in *CPuR* is, “if it is valid for

everyone merely as long as he has reason, then its ground is objectively sufficient, and in that case taking something to be true is called conviction [*überzeugung*]. If it has ground only in the particular constitution of the subject, then it is called persuasion [*überredung*].”²⁷ For Kant, persuasion, aside from the ethical objection raised earlier, serves as an illusion and thus the objection here is an epistemological one. For Kant, persuasion poses problems on the epistemological level because it confuses the private and subjective with the realm of the objective for, as he explains in *CPuR*, “persuasion is a mere semblance, since the ground of the judgment which lies solely in the subject, is held to be objective.”²⁸ Kant’s distinction between persuasion [*überredung*] and conviction [*überzeugung*] seems at first to imply that distinguishing one from the other would be an important, if not crucial task. Part of the overall suspicion of the potentiality of rhetoric, however, is located in the precisely non-locatable and fairly indistinguishable distinction between the two.

Kant is interested in clearly being able to determine the one from the other, and towards that particular end he identifies that,

the touchstone of whether taking something to be true is conviction or mere persuasion is therefore, externally, the possibility of communicating it and finding it to be valid for the reason of every human being to take it to be true; for in that case there is at least a presumption that the ground of all judgments, regardless of the difference among subjects, rests on the common ground, namely the object, with which they therefore all agree and through which the truth of the judgment is proved.²⁹

The “possibility of communicating” the judgment aligns with the ethical injunction to act on the maxim that you can will into a universal law. However, these are not empirical tests or adjudications, they are conditionalities: the famous *as if* of Kantianism (act *as if* your maxim can be willed as a universal law, exercise judgment *as if* it can accord with universal communicability, etc). Here this would look more like a call to distinguish conviction by

considering the possibility of its universal validity, as if everyone with reason would also find it to be the case. The conviction does not need to be something that, in fact, by some determination, all people with reason hold to be true (and thus may be empirically disconfirmed by extant examples of those with reason who do not concur). Instead, crucially, these are basically thought experiments, internal processes of deliberation, perhaps tests for what is considered one or the other.

However, at the same time that this distinction between conviction and persuasion is essential for Kant, it is not easy to adjudicate with confidence and veracity. Kant provides some leads for the litmus test such as how mere persuasion oftentimes involves several different proofs for a particular ethical duty. In *Metaphysics of Morals* when he identifies that “for any one duty only *one* ground of obligation can be found; and if someone produces two or more proofs for a duty, this is a sure sign either that he has not yet found a valid proof or that he has mistaken two or more duties for one.”³⁰ Providing multiple possible reasons for a certain action is deplorable according to Kant, for not only does he not consider probable or possible proofs to have additive merit, an accretion of arguments or proofs, but instead just the opposite. Kant identifies that presenting a number of proofs “is a highly unphilosophical expedient” in that the “resort to a number of proofs for one and the same proposition” serves only as a mere consolation for oneself that “the multitude of reasons makes up for the inadequacy for any one of them taken by itself,” and, furthermore, this strategy “indicates trickery and insincerity.”³¹ Thus we arrive back at the grounds for the ethical objection to rhetoric, the potentiality for misuse that underwrites rhetoric.

At this point in *MM*, Kant wastes no time in associating this objection to the method of accreting probable support with rhetoric. Kant begins by identifying “when different insufficient reasons are *juxtaposed*, one does not compensate for the deficiency of the others for certainty or

even for probability. Proofs must *proceed* by ground and consequent in *a single series* to sufficient ground; only in this way can they be demonstrative. – Yet the former method is the usual device of rhetoric”³² Here we find yet another angle on Kant’s derogation of rhetoric regarding the constitutive types of proof. Kant charges rhetoric, likely including the Ciceronian popular philosophers of his day who advance the defense of rhetoric, with trying to adequate for lack of conviction by sheer quantity of probabilities. In several senses, this speaks to the epistemological divide that rhetoric often faces in its intercourse with other fields for which probabilism, contingency, and situationality are inferior to inquiry beholden to some form of objectivity, whether oriented towards approximation of a regulative principle or not.

However, even for the great systematizer Kant, distinguishing the good from the bad is not as simple as it seems. In the *Blomberg Logic* Kant grounds his suspicions about persuasion in the fact that “experience teaches us that the strength of our persuasion of a thing can be and is just as great as our conviction of its opposite is afterwards.”³³ There is something ephemeral and even bewitching about the power of persuasion, that once out from under its spell, the possibility for conviction reemerges. One can be persuaded with what later turns out to be at odds with one’s conviction, but furthermore, even distinguishing conviction from persuasion is a fraught enterprise. In trying to establish a practical distinction between them, Kant starts with mathematics as one of the sciences that “open the most certain path, i.e., which actually convince us of certain truths,” but when applied to other subjects and situations, the clarity with which this distinction can be made seems to recede.³⁴ First, the distinction between conviction and persuasion depends on a certain level of self-awareness of, unsurprisingly, additional distinctions. In *Blomberg Logic*, Kant actually distinguishes probability from persuasion—the latter he equates with the illusion of conviction. A probable truth is when “there really is

sufficient ground, but yet this ground of truth is greater than the grounds of the opposite [; it] outweighs them.”³⁵ So probability at least concerns some ground, and recognizes the evidence or grounds in opposition at the same time. On the other hand, persuasion is distinguished by means of “the illusion of cognition.” Kant continues, “here one accepts any degree of truth in order to be able to approve a cognition, without investigating whether the grounds of the opposite have a greater degree of truth or not. . . . Persuasion is really a kind of delusion; for one always considers only the one side, without in the least reflecting on the opposite side, which is most detrimental, however.”³⁶ An idiosyncratic conception of persuasion indeed, in stark contrast to the usual charge levied against the Sophists: the ability to examine and argue both (or many) sides of an issue about which definitude is not possible. For Kant, probability examines the grounds on the other side, while persuasion—because it is the illusion of conviction—does not.

Although a crucial distinction in Kant’s estimation, “the distinction between persuasion and conviction is, however, rather difficult, and hence is very seldom determined rightly. This is because one has perhaps never experienced a true conviction, but only the illusion of it.”³⁷ The difficulty and almost impossibility of this very distinction becomes immediately evident when the basis is ostensibly an illusion (or delusion) in the first place. Accordingly, one can easily see how the various suspicions regarding persuasion specifically, and rhetoric generally, might in part have something indeed to do with the simultaneous necessity for delineating conviction from persuasion and the very difficulty of being able to do so. Kant identifies as a critical role for the philosopher the ability “to separate what belongs merely to persuasion from that which leads to conviction (two types of approval that differ not merely in degree but in kind), in order to exhibit the state of mind in this proof in complete clarity and to subject it to the most stringent

and open-minded examination.”³⁸ While difficult and disorienting, the task requires a certain form of vigilance and a constant exercise of the mind towards this duty.

Reconsidering Rhetoric: The Footnote in CJ

In a well-known footnote in *CJ*, Kant appears to reconsider his seemingly hasty dismissal of rhetoric in the text proper—well known insofar as it serves as the basis for readings of Kant’s take on rhetoric. Setting out the previous distinctions between poetry and rhetoric, the multifaceted rejections of what he calls persuasion, and the distinction between conviction and persuasion provides more context for a richer reading of the performative confliction that Kant’s footnote in *CJ* enacts. The footnote, although extensive and lengthy, is best presented in the context of the previous discussions, and in its entirety:

I must confess that a beautiful poem has always given me a pure enjoyment, whereas reading the best speech of a Roman popular speaker or a contemporary speaker in parliament or in the pulpit has always been mixed with the disagreeable feeling of disapproval of a deceitful art, which understands how to move people, like machines, to a judgment in important matters which must lose all weight for them in calm reflection. Eloquence and well-spokenness (together, rhetoric) belong to beautiful art; but the art of the orator (*ars oratoria*), as the art of using the weakness of people for one’s own purposes (however well intentioned or even really good these may be) is not worthy of any respect at all. Further, both in Athens and Rome it reached its highest level only at a time when the state was rushing toward its ruin and a truly patriotic way of thinking had been extinguished. He who has at his command, along with clear insights into the facts, language in all its rightness and purity, and who, along with a fruitful imagination capable of presenting his ideas, feels a lively sympathy for the good, is the *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, the speaker without art but full of vigor as Cicero would have him, through he did not himself always remain true to his ideal.³⁹

Here several of Kant’s more conflicted attitudes toward rhetoric emerge clearly, *en masse*. At the same time, several idiosyncrasies in Kant’s understanding of what he terms rhetoric also emerge. In the previous distinction between rhetoric and poetry speaking well was comprised of

both eloquence and style, with eloquence further enumerated as involving clarity of concepts, lively examples, euphony, and propriety, whereas rhetoric was equated with oratory and, worse, the machinery of persuasion. However, here rhetoric seems separated out from pejoration and rendered back in alignment with the skill in speaking that Kant finds of sufficient influence on minds without encroaching further. Ijsseling synthesizes this side of the equation artfully in describing how “Kant distinguishes between pure *eloquence* and the *art of persuasion (ars oratoria)*. The former is solely directed towards entertaining an audience and is quite harmless but has little meaning in itself, while the latter is completely different since it is not a free play, but bound to ingenious and technical rules.”⁴⁰ The two constitutive elements of rhetoric in this footnote, eloquence and well-spokenness, open the way into the more positive and suitable forms that have already been shown to have a more substantial role in understanding Kant’s attitudes toward rhetoric.

Much slippage between, even to a point of impropriety, seeming strict divisions of taxonomy is evident. Where skill defined as eloquence and style was opposed to rhetoric and persuasion previously in the discussion, now rhetoric includes both skill and eloquence in the context of a beautiful art and is distinguished from the art of the orator with bag of tricks on hand. Kant’s treatment of rhetoric, albeit confounding and requiring much patience, ends up opening some possibilities for distinguishing, in short, good from bad rhetoric. This moves pretty far from a rejection of rhetoric wholesale, as is oft attributed to Kant, but instead provides a more nuanced and even tentatively a more amenable attitude towards rhetoric than afforded other figures who are often included in any discussion of Enlightenment rhetoric (namely, Locke and Hume).

Not to wedge in Kant's biography too much here, but Kant's own disciplining in the classics might also have some bearing on his differential enjoyment between poetry and a Roman speech. At the conclusion of the equivalent of an early high-school, Kant was largely considered to be headed for a career in the classics. Kant studied Cicero in detail, just about for the entire period he was enrolled at the *Collegium Fredericianum*, including orations. One wonders if memorization and *imitatio* of the orations, towards the pedagogical aim of speaking like a Roman would, might not be entirely irrelevant. At the same time, Kant did seem to have a great love for Horace and was known to cite passages from memory of his favorite writers well into advanced age. Cicero is quite an important figure for Kant's own thinking, especially for *GMM*. Here, however, Kant's reference to Cicero (although actually attributable properly to Cato the Elder, via allusion from Quintilian) regarding vigor without art basically speaks to some of the distinctions between good and bad rhetoric traced above. Against precept and rule (the artifices and tricks of the oratory that make light of serious matters) here is distinguished an art that properly effaces itself, even faintly echoing *sprezzatura*. Suspicions still loom in the background, for there is an unsettling penumbra cast upon rhetoric, the possibility of being taken in that Kant cannot seem to shake. Even Cicero, who so strongly exhorted the necessary combination of wisdom and eloquence, Kant judges as not always meeting his own standard.⁴¹ Kant states, in *CJ*, that "if the beautiful arts are not combined, whether closely or at a distance, with moral ideas, which alone carry with them a self-sufficient satisfaction. . . . they then only serve for diversion" and have no further purpose of the kind that Kant attributes to the beautiful arts in ranking them over the mere agreeable or pleasant arts.⁴² Rhetoric, in its similitude with poetry, can do more than merely entertain (contra Ijsseling) without overwhelming the

audience's judgment with the tricks of persuasion. It is from within this space of possibility, opened up from within Kant's own treatment, that the present project proceeds.

The footnote also draws attention to some of the idiosyncrasies of Kant's conception of rhetoric and rhetorical history. Immediately, one versed in George Kennedy's work on the history of philosophy will wonder how Kant associates an increase in rhetoric with the decline of governmental stability in antiquity. The primary rhetoric to which Kant seemingly refers actually wanes but does not disappear, instead slipping into secondary, more literary and personal written forms in a process of *letteraturizzazione*. Ijsseling notes "Kant claims that the heyday of the art of persuasion was at a time when the ancient world was disintegrating, but this is historically incorrect. Such a remark is by no means characteristic of Kant, since his condemnation of rhetoric is opposed to a tradition still alive in his day and in which rhetoric was held in high esteem."⁴³ Kant himself even seems to be of two minds on this very point, for in the *Blomberg Logic* he had earlier advanced the story of rhetoric's relation to political stability in an account aligning with the mythic golden-age of antiquity:

In oratory, poetry, statuary, in painting, in all the fine arts and sciences, then, the ancients have surpassed us. But couldn't modern times also produce better products than the ancients produced? This is a wholly different question. Oratory, e.g., was so much cultivated among the ancients because everyone was allowed to appear before a people that was free, and he actually did appear frequently and speak. Hence, then, everyone who was disposed to make a public exposition before such a public convocation necessarily had to apply all his industry and effort to achieve his end of attaining the approval of his listeners.⁴⁴

While the popular philosophers and New Humanists were the defenders and champions of rhetoric in eighteenth-century Germany, rhetoric was quickly starting to look like something else due to shifting political configurations that affected oratory.

Another unusual dimension to Kant's portrayal of rhetoric is the delinking of rhetoric with propitiousness and its subsequent assignation to poetry. In an interesting passage in *APPoV*

that begins with a discussion of oracles, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, astrologers, and the like, Kant ends up, however, talking about the difference between rhetoric and poetry with reference to antiquity and, likewise, creates an interesting association between the propitious moment and the madness of oracular and poetic inspiration. Kant examines how

the poets also came to consider themselves as inspired (or possessed), and as fortune-tellers (*vates*), and how they could boast of having inspirations in the poetical impulses (*furor poeticus*), can only be explained but the fact that the poet, unlike the prose-orator who composes his commissioned work with leisure, must rather snatch the propitious moment of the mood of his inner sense as it comes over him, in which lively and powerful images and feeling pour into him, while he behaves merely passively, so to speak. For as an old observation goes, genius is mixed with a certain dose of madness.⁴⁵

Kant inverts the conventional association between rhetoric, *kairos*, and seizing the propitious moment in order to respond in a way that speaks from, of, and to the moment. Here, the prose orator writes in leisure while the poet is the artist who seizes and is seized by the moment. In some ways, perhaps, Kant is himself struggling with the slippage between primary and secondary rhetoric: at certain points talking about the functions of oratory and public speech, at other times talking about composition with a sense of leisure. Part of the conflicted account might indeed be in response to further slippage between primary and secondary rhetorical forms in his own context. The poet and the orator, after largely being distinguished from one another by Kant in *CJ*, are once again drawn together under the auspices of the art of speech when their relations are discussed in the context of a third term, philosophy.

The Speech Arts and Philosophy

While the institutional context for rhetoric in eighteenth-century Germany will comprise the final section of this chapter, we should note at this point the broad scope of philosophy at this time and the more focused manner in which Kant tried to direct it toward the systematic unity of

the critical works. Institutionally, philosophy was less like the particular field in our present universities (either more analytic or continental in focus) and more like what we would consider akin to the liberal arts (but not exclusively). In Kant's time philosophy was the lower faculty, which served as the basis or general preparation for continuation on to one of the professionally oriented, higher faculties of theology, law, and medicine. As such, the faculty of philosophy included history, Latin, rhetoric, mathematics, poetry, logic and metaphysics, mathematics, anthropology, geography, Greek, Hebrew, and other areas. Kant, of course, not only helped determine an influential direction for philosophy writ large through his critical philosophy, but also, in a related point, had a hand in overshadowing the other popular philosophies that had constituted a significant force within the early German Enlightenment. Kant sought to redefine philosophy from a content area or list of names to an orientation—in his courses he often made reference to the importance of learning how to philosophize but in a very specific way, and in contradistinction to other ways.⁴⁶

Kant separated the speech arts, taken together, from philosophy. This distinction proceeds in a few ways that might at first unsettle expectation, given the range of conventional dramaturgy between philosophy and rhetoric, but also aligns in some ways. Kant describes in the *Blomberg Logic* how “in all oratory and poetry one seeks to put forth marks that are coordinate with one another, of which one is immediately aware in the thing to be described, in order to make the concept of the thing lively. By this means one reaches aesthetic perfection in a cognition.”⁴⁷ Another way of phrasing this would be that rhetoric and poetry need to provide overlapping or even redundant details or attributes, at least redundant in the sheer logical sense—expressing the same thing in different ways, with different casts, and so on—in order to make the presentation accord with both aesthetic perfection and the criterion of liveliness of presentation.

This method is set apart from what Kant sees as the role of the philosopher, “who represents a thing with a deep distinctness, emphasizes only one mark of the thing and omits the remaining ones, but seeks out marks, and the grounds for the marks he thinks of in the thing.”⁴⁸ While it is easy to become disoriented in Kant’s explanation of marks, coordinate and subordinate, and how they distinguish and relate to one another, it is clear, and most significant for the present purposes, that the philosopher is concerned with deep distinctness and an underlying criteria of parsimony of focus, important considerations, and the corresponding “marks.”

The distinction between the two is best described by Kant when he states, “the poet and the orator cognize much in few things. The philosopher, on the other hand, considers many objects and cognizes little in many objects. His cognitions are thus universal, they do not concern merely individual *objecta*, but rather whole genera of them. He represents only a few marks, to be sure, but with a deep distinctness.”⁴⁹ More attention will be afforded to the underlying relation between the “beautiful” arts and those areas of “deep distinctness” in the Kantian aesthetics later, but here Kant offers a key distinction in the way he is trying to articulate a vision of philosophy that sets it apart from his contemporaries’ more generally accessible, eclectic, Ciceronian, and less “systematic” sense. Kantian critical philosophy strips matters down to the relevant elements, to provide deep distinctness and, in a related fashion, knows and says a little about many things. In contrast, rhetoric and poetry, taken together, say much about few things. To hurriedly chalk this up to the standard subordination of rhetoric to philosophy from the Platonic tradition would be missing the idiosyncratic basis for Kant’s treatment. In some ways this is partly an inversion of that standard treatment. A commonly considered upshot of *Gorgias*, that rhetoric has no subject of its own, connects to the pejorative devaluation of the sophistical ability to be able to speak about a wide range of topics without knowledge. Kant is

saying something different, and while perhaps this provides another instance of a strange Kantian interpretation of the history of rhetoric, the drawing together of speech and poetry as arts that say a lot about a few things is indeed intriguing.

This should not be, however, mistakenly associated with the index of breadth/depth. Kant is assigning philosophy with the more penetrating and distinct understanding of what is under consideration, at least as far as logical perfection is concerned, and the way in which rhetoric and poetry cognize and say a lot about a few things is more about quantity, repetition, and excess required for aesthetic perfection than about providing more depth to the topic. One of the marks of the philosopher is a sort of conceptual and logical parsimony, and that precision is characterized by fewer marks, while rhetoric and poetry are more characteristically excessive. Kant, once again in *Blomberg Logic*, observes that “in oratory and poetry, one is not miserly with expressions, but frequently rather far too wasteful. One frequently says a thing more than once, but nevertheless only with other expressions and in other images. Precision is thus merely a rule of economy and cleverness, but not at all of taste and of aesthetics.”⁵⁰ And while Kant insists on identifying poetry and rhetoric both as speech arts, he does not seem to connect the rendering of the same idea in several senses, the need for repetition and reinforcement, as relevant to an art which is distinguished by speech. Kant does indeed talk about writing and speaking, examined more fully in the context of enlightenment, but here these seemingly important elements—if considering any role for memory at all—are characteristics of aesthetic perfection, but not of logical perfection or understanding.

For Kant, balancing aesthetic perfection and logical perfection is a tough task particularly since precision, to which Kant assigns genius and talent and is difficult if not impossible to achieve by means of “mere art,” involves “where one is precise and economical in his

expressions, so that someone else thereby attains a certain degree of clarity of concept. . . . Each and every aphorism is of this kind, all proverbs have a certain kind of precision or adequacy. By means of these one says something complete and wise with few expressions.”⁵¹ Perhaps this is the genius of pith: economy of expression, parsimony, and perspicuity combined. However, the arts of speech and the philosopher are even more compatible than this depiction thusfar has indicated. Aesthetic and logical perfection are oftentimes at odds with one another, but more by execution than by necessity. Kant clarifies in *Blomberg Logic* that,

through sensibility perfection of reason is not lost at all; rather, it only attains greater liveliness. From this we see completely distinctly, then, that sensibility does not conflict at all with rational perfection, but rather it furthers this latter in certain cases [;] indeed, it often brings about for it a greater correctness, in that we frequently omit, and have to omit, *in abstracto* marks which actually belong to the nature of the thing, but which can be restored when one considers things *in concreto*. Orators and poets can frequently be very helpful to the philosopher, therefore.⁵²

The arts of speech and philosophy can be seen in more symbiotic and compatible terms than the mythology of philosophy versus rhetoric often presumes, even if through a perhaps perceived diminution of the supplemental role of poetry and rhetoric in the equation. Orators and poets, in dwelling in the realm of the sensible, can help the philosopher by drawing attention to certain elements that the philosopher may have overlooked, which might be essential for logical perfection. This is crucial for understanding the complex relation between Kant and the popular philosophers of his day. On the one hand systematic philosophy indeed is in response to and in interlocution with the more eclectic philosophy of the world, oriented toward a popular rather than a rarefied and specialized cabal of the anointed. On the other hand, Kant’s relation to the popular philosophers of his day was more complicated than mere rejection, for he held some of those included under its purview in the highest esteem. Instead, it involved personal and,

invariably, political relations that easily can be overlooked in the grand scheme of a drama between the Kantians and the Ciceronians.

On Popularity

Before moving on to the relation between Kant and the popular philosophers directly, looking at some of what Kant says about “popularity” may serve useful, for one might be inclined to think Kant merely dismissed popularity if one solely looked at the ways in which Kant diverged from the popular philosophers. His treatments in varying works, however, show that his view of the role of making-popular can be read less pointedly. He did set out very particular parameters for its proper role, likewise identifying common confusions about popularity, as well as criticizing particular instantiations of popularity.

In the second section of *GMM*, “Transition from Popular Moral Philosophy to Metaphysics of Morals,” Kant makes some important distinctions regarding popularity and the popular philosophers with whom he was in conversation, starting with an explanation of how he views the configuration of popularity in its proper form: “this descending to popular concepts is certainly very commendable, provided the ascent to the principles of pure reason has first taken place and has been carried through to complete satisfaction. That would mean that the doctrine of morals is first *grounded* on metaphysics and afterwards, when it has been firmly established, is provided with *access* by means of popularity.”⁵³ There is an unmistakably normative framework in the terminology of “ascent” to principles of pure reason and “descent” to popular intelligibility. The primacy of reason, established clearly in advance, is prior to popularity, a secondary consideration outwards to render-accessible to a general audience. Popularity, or making-intelligible to a broad audience, does not make sense for Kant as an initial consideration

when “correctness” of principles must still be determined, but serves a subsequent yet still important operation. Popularity cannot be of first consideration because proceeding in that way would “never lay claim to the very rare merit of a true *philosophic popularity*, since there is no art in being commonly understandable if one thereby renounces any well-grounded insight.”⁵⁴ These “so called philosophers in name only” according to Kant in *Blomberg Logic*, “are only concerned about their external glitter.”⁵⁵ At this point, Kant’s evaluation of popular philosophy, particularly the moral philosophy with which it substantially occupied itself, further extends into a polemical criticism of those who prioritize popularity first and above all. Such a disposition, he writes,

produces a disgusting hodge-podge of patchwork observations and half-rationalized principles, in which shallow pates revel because it is something useful for everyday chitchat, but the insightful, feeling confused and dissatisfied without being able to help themselves, avert their eyes—although philosophers, who see quite well through the deception, get little hearing then they call [moralists] away for a time from this alleged popularity, so that they may be rightly popular only after having acquired determinate insight.⁵⁶

Kant does not seem interested in sparing feelings, however he appears neither to reject the popular philosophers writ large, nor popularity wholesale, but targets those who do not exhibit a certain type of rigor in thinking alongside and in conjunction with popularization. Furthermore, Kant’s objection concerns the type of topic under consideration, as well as his perception of a lack of methodological and intellectual rigor. The fashionable, what is all the rage, may be suitable to an agreeable art, perhaps, but idle chitchat suited to the dinner table cannot replace deep contemplation of moral considerations.

Kant makes clear in *APPoV* the distinction between popularity and what is fashionable or sociable in a given context, “speaking in a sociable *tone* and in general of appearing fashionable is falsely named *popularity* – particularly when it concerns science. It should rather be called

polished superficiality, because it frequently cloaks the paltriness of a limited mind.”⁵⁷ All in all, the objection to popularity is on grounds of substance, depth, and propriety to the subject under examination. Kant concludes the above observation with an anecdote, “as the Quaker by Addison said to the chattering officer sitting next to him in the carriage, ‘Your drum is a symbol of yourself: it resounds because it is empty.’”⁵⁸ Idle chit chat, the fashionable, what is sociable—these are not things Kant rejects on face, for in contrast to the aloof, clockwork, arm-chair thinker and detached caricature, he was well-known in Königsberg as a charming dinner guest, a social figure with a dry wit and humor, and one well versed in the social graces of the time. He went through a period of elegance in his own comportment, after achieving some success as a *Magister*, and before the turn to the critical works that so changed many itineraries. However, Kant finds this lightness inappropriate for certain contexts and situations, including matters of science.

Kant also had certain aversions to what was considered fashionable for the time. Imitation of French courtly style was one thing for which Kant had serious disdain—he preferred the English in just about every way. Kant did not mince words about the ways in which the *belles lettres* influenced the growing vernacular poetry and writing in Germany. In the *Vienna Logic* he states, “most of what is produced by those who fashion taste in Germany is extremely disgusting, if one reads [by comparison] the products of foreign peoples who have not studied the *belles lettres*.”⁵⁹ In contrast, he continues, “true aesthetic perfection is found in Spectator, Sulzer, Wieland, in whom one notes that they have their heads full of ideas and that they add all the contrivances in order to persuade the mind, in order to accommodate themselves to the comfort of taste.”⁶⁰ Kant is, like with rhetoric, not rejecting popularity *en masse* but instead distinguishing true popularity from false popularity—the former attending to making worldly

and accessible important and substantial insight derived from what one has already ruminated, and the latter merely speaking in following the fashion of the time, concerning oneself predominantly with sounding learned for the purposes of brief and informal chatter. In some sense, the role of popularity is clearly secondary, and, in part, stylistic, at least as set out here. However, popularity has a far more important and substantial role for Kant than mere style, as it were, in both function and form. Popularity, although discussed in terms of clothing and stylistic tweaking, is really another entire form of articulation from what Kant identifies as scholastic. Popularity then emerges less as gently adding a few things to incline the mind and more as providing an alternative form of encounter to scholastic, logical perfection.

In a more comprehensive remark from the *Jäsche Logic*, Kant integrates the distinctions, functions, roles, and exemplars of popularity. He explains that “to learn true popularity, however, one must read the ancients, e.g., Cicero’s philosophical writings, the poets *Horace*, *Virgil*, etc. and among the moderns *Hume*, *Shaftesbury*, et al.”⁶¹ Kant here identifies, from both the ancients and the moderns, writers who exemplify true popularity, all of whom he held in high regard in references throughout his works. He further clarifies that, in part, what constitutes this true form of popularity is that they were all well acquainted with “the refined world, without which one cannot be popular. For true popularity demands a good deal of practical acquaintance with the world and with men, acquaintance with men’s concepts, taste, and inclinations, to which constant regard must be given in presentation and even in the choice of expressions that are fitting and adequate to popularity.”⁶² As examined further shortly, these were indeed the major aims of those who called themselves popular philosophers, as well—a concern with the world, accessibility, and rendering publicly accessible the philosophy of the time.

True popularity, according to Kant, goes beyond merely communicating the upshot to a different audience. Instead, true popularity provides further insight into an examination. Popularization can serve a function akin to the way in which the orator and poet can assist the philosopher in understanding more thoroughly, even emphasizing things the philosopher misses. Popularity, in the Kantian scheme, must attend to the “public’s power of comprehension” and to use “customary expressions” while at the same time maintaining a kind of fidelity to the depth and “scholastic perfection” of the topic at hand.⁶³ Popularization involves a certain approach “in which the clothing of thoughts is merely so arranged that the framework, the *scholastically correct* and *technical* in that perfection, may not be seen (just as one draws lines with a pencil, writes on them, and subsequently erases them).”⁶⁴ In many ways this is the balancing act at the crux of technical composition and communication, to maintain some rigor regarding what is being conveyed, aimed toward a more general audience, while still evoking the finer distinctions of the science. As much as Kant appears wont to describe popularization as mere clothing, dressing up the idea differently as simply as changing outfits on a paper doll, several aspects in Kant also point to the confiction, complexity, and even recalcitrance of language, style, and effect, as well as to the ways in which popularization in some sense must presume something beyond restating and dressing up thought in more suitable clothes. Popularity can assist in drawing attention to those things that might otherwise be missed, for Kant also states that this balance is “a great and rare perfection, which shows much insight into the science. It has this merit, too, in addition to many others, that it can provide a proof of complete insight into a thing.”⁶⁵ These complexities increase manifold when Kant struggles with the response to and subsequent popularization of his own work.

Kant and the Popular Philosophers

Kant's relationship to the popular philosophers was far more complicated than just a pitched battle between worldly philosophy of the educated public and speculative philosophy of the elite cadre, although it certainly is these things, as well. Van der Zande has published learned work on Kant in relation to the popular philosophers, including "In the Image of Cicero," (1995), and "The Microscope of Experience" (1998). As we have seen earlier, the Ciceronian popular philosophers of the eighteenth century were vastly overshadowed and relegated to relative obscurity by the subsequent maelstrom of Kantian critical philosophy. While the previous examination of popularity in Kant indicates that particular instantiations of popular philosophy were the target of his attack, sorting out exactly to which (or which lot) of the popular philosophers some of those passages refer can be rather difficult. The term "popular philosophers" generally refers to Moses Mendelssohn, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Georg Sulzer, Christoph Martin Wieland, Johann Nicholas Tetens, Johann Georg Heinrich Feder, and Christian Garve, among others. Various fragments of evidence can be marshaled to discern Kant's attitudes towards these different figures, but the difficulty of speaking about the lot quickly becomes apparent, not only when sifting through the various references in Kant's works, but also in assessing the biographical information about particular relationships.

Van der Zande describes that "as an independent movement, popular philosophy may be understood as a combination of practical philosophy and literary skills with the goal of morally educating a literate public to be useful citizens of the absolute state."⁶⁶ They could be considered translators of philosophy into popular and accessible form. They also made accessible many works in French, English, Greek, and other languages through translation into German and Latin. Furthermore, "popular philosophers would identify philosophy with practical philosophy

together with the study of history, aesthetics, pedagogy, and language, and thereby it demonstrates that still other philosophical traditions were active in the Enlightenment than are usually recognized.”⁶⁷ The popular philosophers were inclined towards humanism, took rhetoric seriously and foundationally, and opposed the rising professionalization of philosophy that led to what they feared would become a new form of scholasticism, an ivory tower detachment from the world and from concerns of life, with its own specialized jargon. Johann Jakob Engel’s journal, *The Philosopher for the World*, in which Garve, Mendelssohn, and even Kant himself published, is often deemed “exemplary” of popular philosophy. Van der Zande explains that “this journal (*world* denoting the older word for public sphere) announced its purpose to present useful philosophical matter, made attractive and easily comprehensible for most readers, and promised that very often the philosopher’s ideas would be implemented by the poet.”⁶⁸ Popular philosophy, albeit hard to imagine in the wake of the enormous legacy of Kantianism in western intellectual history, was indeed quite popular—a vital alternative strain of German Enlightenment in response to and in conversation with what comes to stand in for German Enlightenment as such.

Garve’s *Some Observations on the Art of Thinking* is, furthermore, considered an important articulation of popular philosophy against systematic critical philosophy in his emphasis on “the intimate connection between the thinker’s intellectual abilities and purposes, his chosen topic, and the proper method and manner of presentation that links these two.”⁶⁹ Garve was well known for bringing important works of antiquity to the contemporary context, including his co-translation of an edition of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* into Latin, and an edition of the works of Cicero. Van der Zande describes how Garve distinguishes between the systematic philosopher as the traveler who takes the more direct route towards the destination and the

popular philosopher as the stroller “who has time to observe whatever attracts his attention. Such a person has no particular goal in mind but is fascinated by whatever surrounds him wherever he happens to be.”⁷⁰ Accordingly, the “true scholar” was less an isolated and pedantic specialist and more akin to the admired figure Socrates, one who served as a “linchpin that held society together” by emphasizing “experience, common sense, and morality.”⁷¹ This orientation places rhetoric in a central role for philosophy, not as a specialized discipline of increasingly inaccessible teachings, but as an overall orientation towards thinking in a social sense, emphasizing eclecticism, multiple perspectives, deliberation, and a crucial obligation and connection to a broader social context. In several ways, popular philosophy was rhetoric’s ally in the German Enlightenment, an incorporation of Ciceronian humanism that was not merely a reactionary conservation of Renaissance humanism, but an application in response to various social impetuses and changes.

While Kant and the Kantians in his wake took up critical philosophy, which became of remarkable influence, and this had a substantial hand in the relegation to relative obscurity of these popular philosophers, other forces conspired to help this process along. A series of reforms enacted in Germany, and upon which Prussian reforms were modeled under the tenure of Frederick II (“The Great”), made school attendance mandatory and produced an influx of students. Thus, the need arose for a professionally trained class of teachers to teach the growing student population. The higher faculties of the university, which awarded doctorates, were considered the professional disciplines and were distinguished from the lower faculties on this point: philosophy was supposed to be merely preparatory for the later professional programs. However, once philosophy became a professional discipline of its own, on the grounds that it became the pedagogical training center for the profession of teaching, this distinction became

difficult. As philosophy emerged as a field of study that one could declare in its own right, it began to professionalize in a certain way. At first this might seem to better align with the vision articulated by the popular philosophers interested in humanist pedagogy and socially oriented thinking, but an important observation by van der Zande explains how the inverse actually serves as a better explanation:

But when the popular philosophers saw in Kantianism only a backtrack to the bad habits of scholasticism, they failed to notice that they were in fact overtaken by a *new* academic idea which can be described as a reversed relationship between ‘world’ and ‘university.’ Popular philosophy had turned the face of philosophy towards the world. Professionalization, however, did not just mean a turning around again. The proponents of a reformed university in the early nineteenth century were as much opposed as the popular philosophers to scholasticism. Professionalization meant rather a dialectical process in which world and university were both preserved in the reform university’s blending of the education of students in humanity and scholarship.⁷²

The way in which the popular philosophers wanted to turn solely towards popularity, towards the audience of the world in the social sense of the term, eschewed some notions that a new professionalism required remain intact. The Kantian critical philosophy that overtook scholarship became an important force for professionalization, whereas the popular philosopher’s turning outward to the popular world and eschewing the specialized audience of insular scholarship would have been at odds with such a move to professionalization.

As if the story were not yet complicated enough, the personal relations between Kant and a few of the popular philosophers add another layer of intrigue. The popular philosophers were contemporaries, scholars publishing alongside Kant’s popular works, and colleagues (albeit in a distributed discourse community, of sorts, across the major German universities). Kant and Mendelssohn were familiar with each other’s work, and even though they differed from one another in notable respects, Kant held Mendelssohn in quite high regard. In an uncharacteristic break with the decorum with which he was known, Kant actually disrupted a dinner party and

left abruptly with ill will when another guest tried to claim Mendelssohn, who had died only recently, was overrated.⁷³ Mendelssohn is typically considered the exemplary figure of popular philosophy and is likely the most well-known.

A brief excursus, on some interesting drama concerning the *CPuR* adds further intrigue to the complicated relationship between Kant and the popular philosophers. A well known anecdote related from one of Kant's students, Christian Jacob Kraus, tells of a garden party where Kraus mentioned that there was a manuscript on Kant's desk that would make philosophers break out into a cold sweat and Feder merely laughed, dismissing anything from such a "dilettante."⁷⁴ The manuscript, published in the following year, was the *CPuR*, and seemingly provided Kant the last laugh—although not in any way that he expected. Upon its publication, Kant eagerly awaited the response and, in particular, he wanted to know what Mendelssohn, Garve, and Tetens thought of it. He had hoped that they would all positively review the work, their opinions and positions as popular philosophers garnering much attention, but it soon became clear they were not going to play that role. Kant had heard that Mendelssohn put it down, only a part way into it, never to get back to it, and this distressed Kant significantly.⁷⁵ The first official review of the *CPuR*, published in 1782 in the *Gottingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, basically characterized the work as following Berkeley and Hume and, as Kuehn notes "for better or worse, this review set the tone and agenda for the next decade or so. It became usual to view Kant as a skeptic in the Humean fashion and to oppose him with appeals to language and common sense."⁷⁶ Although today Kant is largely not considered a skeptic, but rather a respondent to skepticism, this review nonetheless influenced the way in which Kant was viewed and taken up at the time, thus orienting not only the perception of critical philosophy, but also shaping the ways in which it was opposed.

Kant, of course, was less than pleased with how the review portrayed his work. As Kuehn describes, “Kant felt himself ignored by those on whom he counted and treated like an imbecile by those whom he did not respect.”⁷⁷ The way in which *CPuR* was read and taken up was not as Kant had planned—he had initially considered the first critique to be sufficient as the final thoughts on the matter. After this disappointing reception, Kant actually tabled his planned ethical works in order to present a briefer and popularized treatment, resulting in *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* (1783), in which he subsequently challenged the anonymous reviewer to reveal himself and serves as, in part, a polemical defense against the charges.⁷⁸ Garve, in a letter to Kant on July 13, 1783, subsequently revealed himself as the writer of the review, but claimed “I cannot in any way recognize that review, in the form in which it was published,” and claimed the editor—Feder—had substantially altered his original review and thus it did not resemble the one he had prepared.⁷⁹ However, the original review was later published and Kant realized that in its original form it was hardly any more favorable (Feder is known to have added the parts about Berkelean idealism). These matters, seemingly personal intrigue, in context provide bearing on the polemical and *ad hominem* nature of some of Kant’s characterizations of the popular philosophers. At the same time, Kant did indeed set aside plans for the ethical writings (in which, notably in the *GMM*, Kant takes aim at Garve’s reading of Cicero) to write a popular and accessible treatment (and also defense) of *CPuR* in the *Prolegomena*, interested as he was in becoming, to a certain degree, popular.

Although far from how he planned and expected, Kant nonetheless eventually became known as the preeminent German thinker within his own lifetime, and, furthermore, a fashionable célèbre—all the rage. In some sense, the historical struggle between Ciceronian popular philosophy, in which rhetoric stands as the primary figure, and the Kantian critical

philosophy only partly concerned the individuals themselves, transforming into a larger drama. Rhetoric, throughout this chapter, has exhibited an amazing fungibility in Kant, sliding between some of the following: counterpoint companion to poetry, eloquence and skill, the machinery of persuasion, lively presentation and perspicuity as means of sufficient influence, precepts and a type of authority that impinges upon autonomy, mere dressing, heuristic to philosophy, and popularity in terms of access and comprehensibility for the world. Kant's treatment of rhetoric indicates a confliction, a vague unease that is hard to put a finger on. Rhetoric is all over the place, and nowhere at the same time. Furthermore, rhetoric is rather an itinerant figure in Kant, a moving target, of sorts, shifting from one locale and context to another. Rhetoric has a quantum quality in Kant, non-locatable, incapturable. At this point, turning to a more contextual understanding of what happened to rhetoric on a more general scale in the German Enlightenment may provide further grounds for understanding why rhetoric is so at once varied and dispersed in Kant. In several ways, significant shifts in education revoked the terms of rhetoric's mortgage, causing it to have to squat here and there within the faculty of philosophy, no longer in the prestigious neighborhood of the *trivium*.

Rhetoric in Eighteenth-Century Germany and Prussia

Rhetoric in eighteenth-century Germany and Prussia simultaneously reflected several new developments and vestiges from tradition. On the one hand, education experienced significant revision, and on the other, apparatuses of scholasticism lingered, albeit quickly losing their hold. Several occurrences changed the nature of education on a grand scale, one being the aforementioned increase in demand and subsequent creation of a professional class of teachers, a move in which teaching relocated from the informal duty of church figures or those awaiting a

position opening in their field to a profession all its own. The universities, following the model of the university at Halle, experienced several shifts that took place most notably toward the end of the eighteenth century: modern philosophy and science emerged and became dominant in the previously multidisciplinary faculty of philosophy, freedom within scholarship and teaching became emphasized, lectures were increasingly replaced with the *Seminar*, instruction and writing moved toward the vernacular (subsequently phasing out the institutional *lingua franca*, Latin), and classics shifted from imitation towards cultivation of taste.⁸⁰ These developments had significant consequences for the complicated itinerary of rhetoric in Kant's time, for rhetoric both remained affiliated with the previous scholastic models (especially in *imitatio* and *declamation*) but, at the same time, partially relocated in the move towards cultivating taste and an accompanying elegant German style, as well as appeared as counterpart to (and often incorporated within) the science of history.

In the German and Prussian university the lower of faculty, considered the preparatory faculty for the higher disciplines, initially only offered the *Magister* degree, the credentials for lecturing. Philosophy became a professional faculty of its own, in training of professional teachers, and hence began offering the *Doktor* degree. Philosophy, in Kant's time, was less the specialized field of inquiry today and more akin to the liberal arts in general, its scope encompassing somewhat analogously the *trivium* of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric and the *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. At Königsberg in particular, the faculty of philosophy included lines in each of the following areas: Hebrew, Physics, Greek, Rhetoric, Dialectic, History, Ethics, Mathematics, Poetry, and Latin.⁸¹ In this milieu, rhetoric was actually incorporated under the purview of philosophy, alongside languages, math and science, logic, and history. Furthermore, emerging areas of inquiry that captured the imagination

of the time, including anthropology and physical geography, were incorporated into the structure. Philosophy at this time was in transition—moving from the more general tableaux of the liberal arts as a general foundation for the higher faculties to a more focused attention on both logic/metaphysics and science.

There are several different strands of rhetoric at the time and while there were instructors of rhetoric and courses offered, rhetoric was also simultaneously fragmented and distributed among these subtopics of philosophy. At one end, rhetoric can be associated with several extant vestiges of the waning scholastic tradition, the *imitatio* of the Latin ancients, exercises in *disputatio* and *declamatio*, oriented towards the goal of cultivating a fluency so as to speak like a Roman, as a mark of scholarly distinction. As Bruford notes,

until nearly the beginning of the eighteenth century there were more Latin books published in Germany every year than German ones, and Latin was still commonly used for the university lectures even in the second half of the century. Every educated man had to understand Latin to acquaint himself with contemporary thought, and it was chiefly as a living language that Latin was taught, with the emphasis on ‘Eloquence,’ the power to use Latin in speech and writing, not on the study of classical literature for its aesthetic and intellectual value.⁸²

In his own schooling, Kant studied several hours of Latin per term, greatly familiar with not only the philosophical and ethical writings of Cicero, but also the orations.⁸³ Towards the first half of the eighteenth century, particularly during Kant’s schooling, these more prevalent practices eventually phased out, albeit with some disjunctive vestiges remaining for some time afterwards (where *examinatorium*, *repetitorium*, and *disputatorium* were still held). With a decreasing emphasis on Latin (replaced by both an increased attention towards developing the vernacular, and a shift towards studying the Greeks), these remaining apparatuses of scholasticism were largely epideictic in function. As Steve Naragon notes, “as printed matter became more readily available, the importance of the Latin disputations lessened, so that by Kant’s day they had lost

their original function of publically presenting and discussing ideas, and became more a point of ceremony.”⁸⁴ By the time Kant was teaching at the university, he noticed that the students became less and less functionally fluent in Latin, to the point of eventual practical inability to take in lectures in Latin.⁸⁵ Kant was writing and establishing his career basically at the cusp of this wider transition from Latin to the vernacular.

The shift from Latin to German had wide-reaching ramifications on rhetoric, pedagogy, scholarship, arts, etc. Much of what we would consider rhetoric was included under the purview of language instruction, whether earlier with the emphasis on Latin, or under the umbrella of the transition towards German and the primary scholarly language. Thomas Conley describes how “we see in the years between 1750 and 1850 an enormous outpouring of handbooks of declamation and elocution. One bibliography lists over 200 such books” in German, with uses ranging from the “the psychological effects of sound and timbre” to practice in delivery “appropriate to governmental discourse,” just as two examples.⁸⁶ This shift from cultivation of a learned scholarly Latin to an elegant German style reoriented declamations towards cultivation of eloquent German writing and speaking. Speaking of the *Pedagogium* at Halle, which served as an incredibly influential model throughout Germany and Prussia, Friedrich Paulsen describes how in what we could consider early high school “the object of instruction in German was ‘to make the pupils proficient in writing an elegant German *stylum*,’ accordingly, a brief instruction was given in the art of oratory, which was afterwards practiced, with exercises in invention and disposition, and also declamation ‘in order that all that appertaineth to action and pronunciation be duly set forth and observed.’”⁸⁷ Concurrent to the rise of German literary societies, Paulsen notes, “numerous poets and teachers of German, from the days of Opitz to those of Gottsched, tried to stimulate the production of a classical German poetry by textbooks and paradigmatic

examples, giving a full range of metres and styles, of subjects and other accessories, after the model of the French and Latin poets.”⁸⁸ Not only was this shift characterized by the change in emphasis from speaking to literary appreciation, but furthermore, as John Sandys explains,

the aim was not to imitate the style, but to assimilate the substance, to form the mind and to cultivate the taste, and to lead up to the production of a modern literature that was not to be a mere echo of a bygone age, but was to have a voice of its own whether in philosophy, or in learning, or in art and poetry. The age of Winckelmann, Lessing, and Goethe was approaching, and Gesner was its prophet and precursor.⁸⁹

The ancients were used to inspire, towards the task of cultivating the German literary and philosophical arts, providing a voice of their own. Obviously eschewing the fashionable French inclinations in favor of the deep and contemplative English thinkers he found inspirational in the crafting of critical philosophy and its characteristic philosophical style, Kant was “the first great thinker who thought and wrote entirely in German.”⁹⁰ In part, rhetoric was incorporated into German instruction while at the same time, in ancient form, appeared through oratory and writings in Latin instruction, shifting emphasis from imitation to cultivation of taste.

This shift can be seen in part in the context of an emerging Neo Humanism’s revaluation of the classics. Neo Humanism still upheld the classical figures as models but instead turned towards ancient Greece more than Rome, as Paulsen described, “the glorious days of Athenian art and literature, Athenian philosophy and eloquence.”⁹¹ Bruford explains the old way of instruction was “to teach their pupils Latin as they supposed a Roman used it, to produce the best possible imitations of surviving Latin models,” whereas the newer paradigm, characterized by the influential Professor of Eloquence [*Beredsamkeit*] “J. M. Gesner of Göttingen and his pupils was to train the taste, judgment and intellect of their pupils by a study of classical masterpieces.”⁹² Gesner, as a result of significant administrative influence at Göttingen, was influential in the valuation of classical studies and rhetoric for the time and his views were

“disseminated far and wide.”⁹³ The way in which Neo Humanism emphasized writing and cultivation of taste, secondary rhetoric, seemed, at least in part, to further the process of *letteraturizzazione* in Germany, which Kennedy associates with Kant’s time and context.

While Kant’s attitudes towards the popular philosophers (many of whom provided translations and editions of Cicero, Aristotle, and other important works explicitly central to humanistic orientation in which rhetoric had a position of prominence) was partially dismissive, depending upon the particular figure in question, Kant was not antipathetic towards the ancients. While the caricature of Kant would assume him clearly on the side of the moderns against the ancients in that battle, Kant’s own attitude is somewhere in the middle, or represented by the both/and, for he thought they both had their merits in different contexts.

Kant himself received an education heavily oriented towards the classics, yet under the purview of the ruling interest and overall orientation towards theology (the disciplining authority of theology became something for which Kant developed an enduring antipathy). His education at the *Collegium Fredericianum* was largely motivated towards preparing students for a career in theology, a career in which Kant had little apparent interest.⁹⁴ Kuehn details the basic emphasis of Kant’s early education at the *Collegium*, particularly the primary influence on Latin:

There were six classes, lasting up to eighteen hours per week in the lower grades, up to six in the higher. Most of these hours were taken up by drills in vocabulary, conjugation, declination, and the rules of grammar. By their third year, students were expected to read Cornelius Nepos; the fourth year consisted of a repetition of all of Nepos, some Cicero, and some poetry. In the fifth class they read Caesar and more Cicero, and in the sixth year Cicero (*De officiis*, among other selections), Muretus, Curtius, and Pliny. Great emphasis was placed on speaking and writing in Latin. Indeed in the two highest classes students were instructed to talk to each other and their teachers only in Latin.⁹⁵

Kant’s education was largely oriented towards the old-school scholastic paradigm of the classics, having attended the *Collegium* from 1732-1740. He also studied Hebrew and Greek, but as

Kuehn explains, “only after they had read the *entire* Greek New Testament were the students introduced to the classical Greek writers.”⁹⁶ The *Collegium* did use the Neo Humanist Gesner’s *Chrestomathia* (1731), a reader in classical writers including “Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Theophrastus, Plutarch, Lucian, and Herodian.”⁹⁷ This early education in the classics endured, according to Kuehn, for “Kant continued to think highly of the ancients, reading them throughout his life. Seneca and perhaps surprisingly Lucretius and Horace remained his favorites, but he knew other classical writers as well.”⁹⁸ While the record of which higher faculty Kant provisionally declared upon his admission to the University of Königsberg was not kept, it had been expected upon his departure from the *Collegium* by those who knew him that Kant would indeed pursue a career in the classics, based on his great love for Latin authors.

At Königsberg specifically, the information about rhetoric as it was taught during Kant’s schooling is difficult to assess. According to Kuehn, Kant likely attended lectures in rhetoric at the university.⁹⁹ Naragon provides a reference for the faculty and course offering information from the extant university records, indicating that two full professors taught rhetoric at Königsberg in the time Kant was there as a student: Coelestin Kowalewski [sometimes Kowalevski] and Coelestin Christian Flottwell.¹⁰⁰ Kowalewski was “popular with the students, served four times as rector” and Naragon notes, “Kant honored his death with a few lines of verse.”¹⁰¹ In 1743 a new specially formulated line in German Rhetoric was created at Königsberg, held by Flottwell—a line, however, that closed upon his death in 1759.¹⁰² While saying with confidence what this particular course entailed is rather difficult, the information about the shifting emphasis from Latin to an elegant German style of writing and speech is likely a good estimation, or, at least, direction.

At Königsberg, rhetoric also had an intricate and complex relation with history. According to the founding statutes, rhetoric and history were initially combined, then rhetoric joined practical philosophy, then was taught alongside by a professor of Medicine, and then combined with history once again.¹⁰³ While Flottwell's position was specially designated in German Rhetoric, Kowalewski's line was in History. Naragon notes,

Arnoldt also gives list of fifteen full professors of rhetoric (*Beredsamkeit*) [Eloquence], beginning with the founding of the university. . . . This position also included instruction in Latin. The full professor was to alternate between lecturing on universal history (summer) BC and AD, while the associate professor was to teach geography. In the winter, the full professor was to teach Rhetoric, and here to division of the material during the week was even more prescribed.¹⁰⁴

While Kant's speaking at Kowalewski's service indicates a familiarity, whether this was from his time as a student attending his rhetoric lectures, or as a colleague while Kant was as a lecturer, or from the first year of Kant's professorship, is not determinable from Naragon's account.

Kant admired both some of the ancients and some of the moderns. Kant most highly regarded English authors, recalling his exaltation of Hume, Shaftesbury, and *Spectator*, as all modern paragons of true popularity in a favorable sense. Hume famously awoke Kant from his dogmatic slumber, and Kant's works (particularly *CJ* and *APPoV*) are replete with references praising the English thinkers' capacity for deep reflection while oftentimes denouncing the French style that was emulated in his time. Of particular note was Kant's familiarity and reference throughout a range of his works of figures including Locke, Hume, Francis Bacon, Joseph Addison, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Butler, and Samuel Johnson, among others. He also simply adored Alexander Pope. The most significant influence in this regard, and perhaps the most notable in the context of rhetoric, is the influence upon Kant from a figure important in the history of rhetoric, Henry Home, Lord Kames. In the Preface (A) of *CPuR*, upon the first mention of critique of pure reason, in the footnote Paul Guyer and Alan Wood indicate the

following: “the term ‘critique’ or ‘criticism’ (*Kritik*) was apparently first derived by Kant from Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1762), *Elements of Criticism* (1762), in which he referred to judgments in matters of beauty or taste.”¹⁰⁵ One small footnote in the *CPuR*, one giant contribution from the field of rhetoric to one of the central components of Kantian philosophy: *critique*. While Kant’s treatment of critique will be examined later, of most use here is the simple fact that *Elements of Criticism* served as the source for Kant’s notion of critique.

In *Jäsche Logic*, Kant discusses Home directly on the topic of critique and its relation to taste. These lectures are dated with Kant’s late career (originally published in 1800), and so this reference is definitely from the time of *CJ* forward, where the concern with aesthetics returns in the context of the faculty of judgment, revisiting the topic from an earlier treatment in *On the Beautiful and the Sublime*. Kant states,

Some, especially orators and poets, have tried to engage in reasoning concerning taste, but they have never been able to hand down a decisive judgment concerning it. The philosopher *Baumgarten* in Frankfurt has a plan for aesthetic as a science. But *Home*, more correctly, called aesthetics *critique*, since it yields no rules *a priori* that determine judgment sufficiently, as logic does, but instead derived its rules *a posteriori*, and since it only makes more universal, through comparison, the empirical laws according to which we cognize the more perfect (beautiful) and the more imperfect.¹⁰⁶

Kant did not view matters of taste as science, as did Baumgarten—considered the father of modern aesthetics—but instead as matters of taste thus concerning the faculty of judgment. Home, Lord Kames, was the thinker who properly identified the realm of taste under the jurisdiction of judgment and thus appropriately determined through critique. Home is the source for what Kant develops into the centerpiece of critical philosophy—critique, which emerges from Kant as the method of delimiting the capacities of the faculty or power, here judgment, in short: what the faculties of the mind can do.

Kant's knowledge of and devotion to some of the classical authors complicates the picture of Kant as decidedly in the moderns encampment. For as we have seen, Kant identifies select ancient and modern writers alike who demonstrate true popularity in the sense Kant favored. While Kant admired Cicero, he does distinguish, in part, between the writings and the orations. In the famous footnote from *CJ* discussed earlier, the qualification to Cicero's oratory is that he sometimes did not meet his own ideal, elsewhere identifying the "contorted" and "perversity" within his oratory. Cicero becomes an important figure in *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, wherein Kant is responding to Garve's reading of Cicero. In now turning to Kant's ethical works, namely *GMM*, *MM*, *LL*, and *CPrR*, in addition to his works concerning pedagogy and anthropology, the next chapter will examine the ways in which Kant's complex and conflicted attitudes toward rhetoric—more so than just simplistic rejection—actually play a role in these themes centering upon the ethical.

¹ While *LL* is noted as the abbreviation for the volume *Lectures on Logic*, most references in this project will identify the specific title of the lecture. *LL* is comprised of five lectures: *Blomberg Logic*, *Vienna Logic*, *Heschel Logic*, *Dohna-Wundlacken Logic*, and *Jäsche Logic*.

² While there are different takes on this distinction, an issue that will be grappled with in more detail in the conclusion, Enlightenment often refers to the historical period in which its characteristic thought forms its context, whereas enlightenment is used in the broader sense, as in “animated by the spirit of” with a sense of inquiry and vigilant critique. I am trying to keep enlightenment open, opening it towards the possibilities of the present into the future, and thus I use enlightenment to indicate this broader sense rather than the closure entailed in the proper name.

³ While the four faculties and their relation to one another constituting the German and Prussian university structure will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter, at this point it is important to note that basically all of the professorship lines mentioned here (logic and metaphysics, poetry, mathematics, rhetoric) were under the purview of “Philosophy.”

⁴ Young, “Introduction,” *Lectures on Logic*, p. xix.

⁵ Kant, “Kant’s Announcement,” *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*, pp. 299-300 (2: 313). In this announcement for his course of lectures in the winter of 1765-6, advertising his courses in metaphysics, logic, ethics, and physical geography together, Kant ends with an allusion to Isocrates and the struggle with propriety and suitability of the occasion accordingly: “In a sociable century, such as our own, am I not to be permitted to regard the stock which a multiplicity of entertaining, instructive and easily understood knowledge offers for the maintenance of social intercourse as one of the benefits which it is not demeaning for science to

have before its eyes. At least it cannot be pleasant for a man of learning frequently to find himself in the embarrassing situation in which *Isocrates*, the orator, found himself: urged on one occasion when he was in company to say something, he was obliged to reply: *What I know is not suitable to the occasion; and that which is suitable to the occasion I do not know.*”

⁶ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 173. Since the position that opened up was in mathematics upon the death of Langhansen, and Kant was waiting for an opening in logic and metaphysics, Kant’s letter suggested that someone else should be moved into the line in mathematics to make switch available. Kant first suggested Christiani, a relative of Langhansen, to be moved into mathematics but if that was not available, then Buck should be assigned mathematics. “Pointing out that Buck had obtained the position ‘only at the occasion of the Russian *government*,’ and that he himself had ‘all the recommendations of the academy,’ [Kant] thought that such a switch would be harmful neither to justice nor to public utility. . . . On March 31, just fifteen days after submitting his request, Kant was declared *Professore Ordinario der Logic und Metaphysic*. Kant had finally obtained the position he had wanted at least since 1755. Buck was less happy. Neither Kant nor the Prussian authorities appear to have consulted him” (189). Königsberg was occupied by Russia from 1758-1762 and several members of the university community were able to ingratiate themselves to the new order, to which Kant refers in his letter. A tangled web, indeed: Buck was known as Professor Knutzen’s favorite student, and Knutzen was considered by some accounts Kant’s favorite professor at Königsberg.

⁷ Young, “Translator’s Introduction,” p. xix.

⁸ Kant, *Heschel Logic*, p. 307 (854-5).

⁹ Burnham, *An Introduction*, p. 8.

¹⁰ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 184 (5: 304-5).

¹¹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 184-5 (5: 305-6).

¹² Kant, *Judgment*, p. 185 (5:306).

¹³ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 198 (5: 321).

¹⁴ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 349 (7: 246).

¹⁵ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 198 (5: 321).

¹⁶ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 349-50 (7: 246-7).

¹⁷ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 198-9 (3: 21).

¹⁸ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 199 (3: 21).

¹⁹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 204 (5: 327).

²⁰ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 350-1 (7: 247).

²¹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 205 (5: 327).

²² Kant's take on the ancients in his *Lectures on Logic* is fairly interesting, and, perhaps, in some ways surprising. Moreso than Plato, Kant identified with Socrates, "who devoted himself to practical philosophy, which he proved especially by his conduct." In his brief overview of the main figures in the history of philosophy, something with which he often began his logic lectures at Königsberg, he summarizes Plato as "very rhetorical, and obscure, and in such way that he often did not understand himself." Aristotle "developed a blind trust in himself, and he harmed *philosophia* more than he helped it." All references here are from the *Blomberg Logic* p. 23 (§5, 36).

²³ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 204 (5: 327).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Kant elaborates on the specific sense in which he is making this distinction between the subjective and objective grounds in the second part of *CJ* on Teleological Judgment, “the first thing that is required of any proof, whether (as in the case of a proof by observation of the object or by experiment) it proceeds by the immediate empirical presentation of that which is to be proved or is conducted by reason *a priori* from principles, is that it not persuade but convince [überreden, überzeugen], or at least have an effect on conviction; i.e., what is required is that the basis of the proof, or the inference, not be merely a subjective (aesthetic) determining ground for assent (mere appearance), but rather objectively valid and logical ground for cognition; otherwise the understanding is bewitched but not brought to conviction” p. 325 (5: 461).

²⁷ Kant, *Pure Reason*, p. 684-5 (A820/B848).

²⁸ Kant, *Pure Reason*, p. 685 (A820/B848).

²⁹ Kant, *Pure Reason*, p. 685 (A820/B848-A821/B849).

³⁰ Kant, *Metaphysics*, p. 531-2 (6:403-6:404).

³¹ Ibid.

³² Kant, *Metaphysics*, p. 532 (6:404).

³³ Kant, *Blomberg*, p. 115 (§155, 146).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kant, *Blomberg*, p. 113 (§155, 143-4).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Kant, *Blomberg*, p. 173 (§181, 218).

³⁸ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 326 (5: 462).

³⁹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 205fn (5: 327-8).

⁴⁰ Ijsseling, *Rhetoric and Philosophy*, p. 84-5.

⁴¹ Kant also discussed in *Blomberg Logic* his objection to what he saw as the unquestioned exaltation of the ancients, and here Cicero in particular, concerning matters of style: “If one meets with contorted modes of speech in Cicero, Horatius, etc. and others of that sort, who have been accepted as *autores classici*, beyond improvement, then one will not say that Cicero, etc. should not have spoken thus, that he could have avoided an error if he had expressed it somewhat differently. Instead one approves of it; and we are allowed to speak thus too, because Cicero, etc., has done so perversely. Just so do all the ancient poets, in all their mistakes, have the *licentia poetica*. Here we see which prejudices arise from the prestige that antiquity has with us” p. 144 (§170, 182).

⁴² Kant, *Judgment*, p. 203 (5: 326).

⁴³ Ijsseling, *Rhetoric and Philosophy*, p. 86.

⁴⁴ Kant, *Blomberg*, p. 147 (§170, 186).

⁴⁵ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 296 (7: 188).

⁴⁶ Kant clarifies this distinction in the *Vienna Logic* in clear terms: “Philosophy cannot be learned, because every philosopher erects his own building on the ruins of another, and if a system were actually given to me that was so clear that it contained only irrefutable propositions, I would still not be a philosopher if I memorized all its propositions. I would not learn to philosophize then, but would only possess a historical cognition, without knowing the sources from which it was drawn. One can also say here just what one says in jurisprudence: The *legis peritus* [pettifogging lawyers] in the highest laws of reason are the sophists and the dialecticians, who provide themselves with a certain illusion of wisdom, and with this seek to accomplish certain ends by force” p. 260 (800).

⁴⁷ Kant, *Blomberg*, p. 99 (§135, 126).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Kant, *Blomberg*, p. 111 (§154, 141).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Kant, *Blomberg*, p. 101 (§138, 129).

⁵³ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 63-4 (4:409).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Kant, *Blomberg*, p. 52 (§45, 69).

⁵⁶ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 63-4 (4:409).

⁵⁷ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 250 (7:139).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Kant, *Vienna*, p. 270 (811). In *Jäsche Logic*, Kant further clarifies his objection on account of *belles lettres* in stating, “the *belletrist*, or *bel esprit*, is a humanist according to contemporary models in living languages. He is not learned, then, for only *dead languages* are now learned languages, but is rather a mere *dilettante* in cognitions of taste in accordance with *fashion*, with no need for the ancients. We could call him one who *apes* the humanist” p. 554 (46).

⁶⁰ Kant, *Vienna*, p. 270 (811).

⁶¹ Kant, *Jäsche*, p. 556 (47-8).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Van der Zande, “In the Image,” p. 421.

⁶⁷ Van der Zande, “In the Image,” p. 421-2.

⁶⁸ Van der Zande, “In the Image,” p. 425-6.

⁶⁹ Van der Zande, “In the Image,” p. 426.

⁷⁰ Van der Zande, “In the Image,” p. 426-7.

⁷¹ Van der Zande, “In the Image,” p. 431.

⁷² Van Der Zande, “In the Image,” p. 441-2.

⁷³ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 319.

⁷⁴ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 211.

⁷⁵ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 251.

⁷⁶ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 252.

⁷⁷ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 254.

⁷⁸ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 255.

⁷⁹ Garve to Kant, July 13, 1783, *Correspondence*, p. 191.

⁸⁰ Paulsen, *German Education*, pp. 122-3.

⁸¹ This, of course, changes slightly over time. Dialectic becomes, especially by the time that Kant receives his professorship, logic and metaphysics, while rhetoric falls, depending on the particular configuration, under the purview of history at times, sometimes with Latin, and so forth. This source is an incredible online resource by one of the translators involved in the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. This online resource (www.manchester.edu.kant) provides extensive scholarly contextual information on many aspects of Kant’s teaching, details about German universities including Königsberg, student and professor life, etc., and renders such information available to the English reader, largely derived from German-language source materials not otherwise available in English (at least in such a

comprehensive manner). Naragon, *Professors: Introduction*,

<http://www.manchester.edu.kant/Professors/ProfsIntro.htm>

⁸² Bruford, *Germany*, p. 239.

⁸³ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 279. For more elaboration, Kuehn explains, “Kant knew Cicero well, of course. During his last two years of high school at the *Collegium Fredericianum*, he had read most of his *Epistolae ad Familiars*, many of his speeches, and also *De Officiis*. He had always appreciated Cicero’s style, arguing that ‘true popularity’ in philosophy could only be achieved by reading and imitating Cicero. Even if he had not come close to it in the first *Critique*, Kant still hoped to accomplish it in his moral writings” (278).

⁸⁴ Naragon, *On Becoming a Professor*,

<http://www.manchester.edu/kant/Professors/profsIntro.htm>

⁸⁵ “Students needed to know enough Latin to be able to understand the lectures and participate in disputations. . . . although by Kant’s day very few students enjoyed this competency, and most lecturing was done in German.” Naragon, *Student Life*,
www.manchester.edu/kant/Students/studentlife/htm.

⁸⁶ Conley, *Rhetoric in the European*, p. 244.

⁸⁷ Paulsen, *German Education*, p. 127.

⁸⁸ Paulsen, *German Education*, p. 106-7.

⁸⁹ Sandys, *History*, p. 7

⁹⁰ Paulsen, *German Education*, p. 117.

⁹¹ Paulsen, *German Education*, p. 162.

⁹² Bruford, *Germany*, p. 244.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 47-8.

⁹⁵ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 48.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Kuehn, *Kant*, 81.

¹⁰⁰ Naragon, *Biographies: Königsberg Professors*,

<http://www.manchester.edu.kant/Bio/BioKon.htm>

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Naragon, *Philosophy: Philosophy Faculty*,

<http://www.manchester.edu/kant/Professors/profsListPhilFacKon.htm>

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Guyer and Wood, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 715n6.

¹⁰⁶ Kant, *Jäsche*, p. 530 (15).

Chapter Two: “Ethics from the Other Side: Kant’s Embodied Anthropological Ethics”

While most accounts of the history of rhetoric do not assign Kant an important role, his indirect influence on major thinkers in the tradition is fairly notable. The mid-twentieth-century works of I. A. Richards, Chaïm Perelman, and Kenneth Burke were substantially influenced by Kant in one way or another. While Richards largely focuses upon Kantian aesthetics, the topic of the next chapter, Perelman and Burke put Kant to work in the service of rhetoric (two distinct incarnations, of course) and its intersection with ethics. In addition to direct invocation, several key themes in Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca’s *New Rhetoric* (1958) are unmistakably Kantian: the distinction between persuasion and conviction, the universal audience as a mental concept, the relation between the particular and the universal, and the eschewal of empirical methods as a basis for moral principles, among others.¹

Burke, although *sui generis*, highlights important readings of Kant at two key points in the development of his orientation of social criticism. In *Grammar of Motives*, Burke shows how Kant works through the problems in the First *Critique*, namely “where the point arrived at transcended the point of departure,” towards the focus of the Second *Critique*.² Burke linguistically transforms the problems and contradictions in Kant towards the effort of moving from an account of motion to an ethics of freedom and action (the domain of dramatism). In *Language as Symbolic Action* (1966), Burke’s “Dramatistic Introduction to Kant” similarly focuses on the ground of action, this time by looking at the way in which Kant works through a negative to a positive conception of moral action, grounded in duty and respect for the moral law.³ Robert Wess identifies this reading “as Burke’s point of departure for his reorientation of

dramatism.”⁴ While Burke departs from Kant in several ways, his readings of Kant serve as important points in the development of his own critical orientation.

In contemporary rhetorical theory, Jürgen Habermas puts to work several elements of Kantian ethics without recourse to the transcendentalism afoot in Kant. Additionally, recent studies in communication ethics also have been reconciling Kant’s ethics with rhetoric. Scott Stroud addresses the role of rhetoric in Kant’s moral philosophy, asking “how one is to encourage the using of the idea of duty as incentive by other agents.”⁵ Pat Gehrke, while similarly examining the relationship between Kantian ethics and rhetoric, takes a different tack by bringing the First Critique, particularly the analogies of experience, into conversation with Kant’s moral philosophy, namely *GMM* and *MM*, in order to construct an *a priori* duty to community.⁶

The Kant of indirect influence in all these studies of rhetoric is the Kant of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Metaphysics of Morals*. This strict and morally rigorist Kant is interested in determining the *a priori* principle of moral action divested from any particularities, experience, or other intervening factors like instrumental reason, prudence, or other maxims that form an incursion into the purity of the metaphysical realm of morality. The difficulty of reconciling this Kant with rhetoric emerges through these imminently productive and provocative readings of Kant, which cut right to the very quick of the freedom/determinism problem. While this Kant, the Kant of the categorical imperative, remains the main character in the story of Kantian ethics writ large, this actually represents only one side of the coin. From within the *GMM*, Kant himself points to another ethics, an ethics explicitly anchored in the realm of the contingent, the situational, and the momentary. Kant calls this counterpart to the proper metaphysics of morals a “pragmatic anthropology,” but he also very clearly aligns it with an

ethics of the anthropological realm—the realm of actual lived experience, where humans are always in relation to one another in a social enterprise (as much of a folly as that can be). In several ways, Kant, from within his own oeuvre, already applied ethics to the realm of lived experience. He just did so outside of what are considered his ethical works proper.

The present chapter begins by looking at ethics proper within Kant, namely in the *GMM*, and from there works outwards to the other ethics in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. In looking at, through, and between these two works as counterparts of Kantian ethics, various linkages between Kant and rhetoric emerge. Rather than solely trying to align the stagnant metaphysics of *GMM* with rhetoric (while recognizing the already-impure at work within it), this chapter also looks at the numerous ways that Kant's anthropology actually provides intriguing and surprising observations that offer a more robust basis for investigating Kantian ethics in accordance with a rhetorical perspective. Kant's emphasis in *APPoV* on social exchange and conversation are particularly striking when examined on their own, but accrue even further significance when put into context of his remarks in *On the Philosophers' Medicine for the Body* (1786). In this (his address to the university at the close of his first term as Rector), Kant makes explicit the critical role that conversation, sociable exchange, and laughter play for the bodily motions and, accordingly, he articulates an anthropological ethic of the care of the self.

Ethics Proper: Kant's *Groundwork of a Metaphysics of Morals* (1785)

Much has been made of and from Kant's ethics, and among his ethical works *GMM* receives the most attention.⁷ Not only does this short text set forth its argument succinctly, directly, and with an unmistakable resoluteness, but *GMM* also provides the categorical imperative in its three formulations, which have come to be known as the hallmark of Kantian

ethical theory.⁸ The categorical imperative, in all its splendor, properly reads: “*act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.*”⁹ Its categorical stature requires an absence of interest (i.e. any specific goal, inclination, affect, or other outside force), which would base one’s morals on conditionality, rather than the unconditional self-governing and legislating will.¹⁰ So much has been said about this formulation that leaving it in original form, without litany of commentary and citation, borders on the absurd. However, for the present purpose of examining the intersection of rhetoric and ethics, other associated themes that are ancillary to the imperative provide a more productive angle of intervention. Kant’s distinction of this supreme principle of morality from appeals to hypothetical imperatives, prudence, experience, and examples (from a particular perspective) show the limits of morality proper. Morality from a metaphysical perspective is limited both in scope and utility, for morality proper only concerns determination of whether an action emanates solely from duty, but it cannot provide much guidance in its application to actual experience. Furthermore, Kant’s distinctions are not merely about imagined alternatives to his position, but they instead situate the *Groundwork* in a specific and contingent context: namely interlocution with Ciceronian popular philosophy in general and Christian Garve in particular.

In *GMM* imperatives are divided between the hypothetical and the categorical. Hypothetical imperatives “represent the practical necessity of a possible action as a means to achieving something else that one wills (or that is at least possible for one to will),” whereas the categorical imperative “would be that which represented an action as objectively necessary of itself, without reference to another end.”¹¹ Kant clarifies the difference by putting this in the reverse, “now, if the action would be good merely as a means *to something else* the imperative is *hypothetical*; if the action is represented as *in itself good*, hence as necessary in a will in itself

conforming to reason, as its principle, *then* it is *categorical*.”¹² Accordingly, a hypothetical imperative imbricates itself in particular goals, systems of advantage, instrumentality, and the like rather than serving as an end in itself, as with the categorical. Another way of putting this: the hypothetical deals with conditional and contingent action concerned with and oriented towards particular results.

Hypothetical imperatives are similarly related to the concept of prudence, defined in the narrowest sense by Kant in *GMM* as “skill in the choice of means to one’s own greatest well being,” and, furthermore, “the choice of means to one’s own happiness.”¹³ While many moral systems focus on happiness or other goals as key determinants, Kant argues that such specific results-driven (and also condition-limiting) principles are insufficient bases for the supreme principle of morality, which the *GMM* is seeking to discover. However, Kant also makes clear that prudence cannot command, as the imperative does, but can only merely suggest or recommend, for

imperatives of prudence cannot, to speak precisely, command at all, that is, present actions objectively as practically necessary; that they are taken as counsels (*consilia*) rather than as command (*praecepta*) of reason. . . for happiness is not an ideal of reason but of imagination, resting on merely empirical grounds, which it is futile to expect should determine an action by which the totality of a series of results in fact infinite would be attained.¹⁴

Both kinds of imperative operate at the nexus of freedom (the only proper domain for the realm of the practical, “What should I do?”) and necessity. The reason why prudence can only recommend or counsel is that its concept remains indeterminate, dependent upon elements that “are without exception empirical,” and, finally, that “it is impossible for the most insightful and at the same time most powerful but still finite being to frame for himself a determinate concept of what he really wills here.”¹⁵ In other words, be careful what you wish for, as something like money, which one could posit as the basis of what one wants to will as happiness, can entail a

whole host of other complications like “anxiety, envy, and intrigue.” There appears an indeterminacy of the future, an incapability of knowing clearly what one’s desires actually are. According to Kant, in order to render something like happiness into a determinant principle, “omniscience would be required.”¹⁶ Prudence’s determinations, which can only serve as recommendations, are always hypothetical, contingent, and empirical—not categorical.

Though this means that the empirical cannot provide the basis for duty, it is a realm that nonetheless contains its own operations and limits. Rather than an epistemological hierarchy that debases the empirical realm in service of exalting the realm of the ideas, making the former a mere and imperfect copy of the latter, the main objection to prudence is that its inescapable empiricity excludes it from what can be properly considered the necessary basis for the supreme principle of morality.¹⁷ A taxonomical argument, not a normative one. Hume, the one who famously woke Kant from his dogmatic slumber, teaches us that we cannot empirically observe the necessity of the result of one billiard ball hitting another, only the constant conjunction of what is improperly cited as causality (necessity). Likewise, as a starting point, duty cannot be derived from the empirical realm due to be similar insufficient bases for deducing necessity from the empirical. Kant states in the opening of section II, “Transition from Popular Moral Philosophy to Metaphysics of Morals,” that “if we attend to experience of people’s conduct we meet frequent and, as we ourselves admit, just complaints that no certain example can be cited of the disposition to act from pure duty; that, though much may be done *in conformity with what duty* commands, still it is always doubtful whether it is really done *from duty* and therefore has moral worth.”¹⁸ The imperative is an operation of necessity, and while actions can be observed to be in accordance with duty, the action’s actual emanation from duty cannot be registered empirically. This serves as the basis from which the empirical is rejected not writ large but only

insofar as it is not the proper realm in which to ground duty as the supreme principle of morality. Ethics proper, determining moral principle, must be divested from experience because the empirical can only operate upon contingency and influence, and thus can only ever provide hypothetical imperatives. Kant insists upon this point.

Kant's admonition against examples appears curious on face, for Kant's writing is replete with examples of various sorts. He cannot help but provide them, regardless of whether the work is popular or of the utmost technical nature. From the shopkeeper, to the person who chooses not to use his talents, to the style of the French, to someone who breaches propriety at a dinner party, Kant relied upon examples extensively. Examples also serve an essential function in teaching and Kant was, despite his legacy in the history of Western thought, first and foremost a teacher. In *GMM*, examples are problematic, for an example would violate the general divestment of the empirical from the moral as in the previously discussed opening of section II: "no certain example can be cited of the disposition to act from pure duty." The function of example here seems, characteristic of Kant, very specific and restricted. The examples to which he is referring in *GMM* and against which he is cautioning are not illustrative examples like the ones cited above, the kind to which Kant himself was inclined. Instead, Kant's main argument against examples in *GMM* focuses on the use of models or paragons: to make an example of someone, or render some act as an exemplar of moral uprightness and, accordingly, base the principle of morality upon such example. Example in this sense, the exemplar of moral uprightness in whose example we should follow, involves imitation (which is a form of heteronomy, reliance on external authority, or acting from directives outside of one's will) rather than basing one's own action upon duty (autonomy, acting from directives of one's own will). The confusion about the different senses of "example" arises from Kant's own terminology. He uses the term *Beispiele* in

his attack upon popular moral philosophy, which typically means instance, or example in the illustrative sense.¹⁹

Kant insists upon the impropriety of the exemplar as the basis for moral action, since “no one could give worse advice to morality than by wanting to derive it from examples. For, every example of it represented to me must itself first be appraised in accordance with the principles of morality, as to whether it is also worthy to serve as an original example, that is, as a model.”²⁰

The problem has more to do with improper duplication, of imitation and the logic of the self-same replication between the model and then the principle for which the model serves as model, for “imitation has no place at all in matters of morality, and examples only serve for encouragement, that is, they put beyond doubt the practicability of what the law commands and make intuitive what the practical rule expressed more generally, but they can never justify setting aside their true original, which lies in reason, and guiding oneself by examples.”²¹ Examples of this particular sort only confuse the directives of morality by obfuscating the source of action in reason. Although not neat and clear, this does circle back to the question of the categorical (actions must be done only for the sake of duty, not for any contingent purpose) and the fact that examples of this particular sort, when used as grounding for morality, are always under the suspicion of actually operating as hypothetical imperatives instead by possibly surreptitiously shuttling in other teleologies (of influence, of advantage, of inclination, of prudence).

For as timeless and categorical as the *GMM* presents itself, it is (as always, surely, but also especially) a particularly situated text and even involves personal intrigue. This monument of the supreme *a priori* principle of morality hardly bears an overt mark of its genesis as an invective against a very particular figure, Garve, and a form of retribution against the then-exposed author of the influential Göttingen review of the *CPuR*. Garve, under commission of

Frederick II, provided a translation of and commentary upon Cicero's *De Officiis* in the volumes of *Abhandlung über die Menschlichen Pflichten, in drey Büchern; aus dem Lateinischen des Marcus Tullius Cicero* (1783). According to Kuehn, Kant was originally interested in writing a textbook on morals but changed his mind upon the publication of Garve's edition and commentary: "Hamann reported early in 1784 that Kant was working on a 'counter critique' of Garve. . . an attack not on Garve's review but on Garve's *Cicero*—and it was an attack that would constitute a kind of revenge."²² Kant soon thereafter changed his mind once again, focusing instead on a preliminary treatise on morals. However, upon close examination vestiges and traces of this origin remain in *GMM*, though he saved his explicit argument "Against Garve" for the first section of his later essay "On the Common Saying: That May be Correct in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice" (1793).

Johann van der Zande's discussion of Garve's *Cicero* offers a summary of the work to which Kant was, at least initially, in response. As van der Zande explains, Garve

had no desire. . . to translate classical authors for scholars who, being thoroughly familiar with the original text, savored nothing as much as comparison and criticism. His goal with this translation was not historical accuracy, not, as he said, to 'render a picture of Cicero's spirit' but 'to teach useful truths.' His audience was therefore the educated but not specialized reader who could appreciate these truths. To a friend Garve wrote that he wanted his Cicero translation to be popular and agreeable.²³

Garve's work on Cicero "was a huge publishing success," outshining his other works, and resulting in several subsequent editions.²⁴ Garve's work "made productive use of Cicero" by providing updated examples and connecting the work with things to which his audience could relate. He thought this was most appropriate to Cicero, the volumes becoming "a model of popular philosophy, both in the sense of being widely read and of stimulating the modern citizens' interest in the virtuous life."²⁵ Garve's treatment of Cicero effects this turn by making

ethics inseparable from the empirical realm. The general Ciceronian humanism of the popular philosophers, their emphasis on contingency and prudence, on the lived world, and on making philosophical matters accessible to the educated (in contrast with the increasingly specialized technical philosophical or philological classicist approaches) all provide some context. Garve, through his Cicero, really emphasized that “useful citizens were those who committed themselves to sociability and to political engagement. Moral actions were not only to be judged according to their motivation (as Kant asserted) but also on their effects on society at large.”²⁶ Garve, in van der Zande’s formulation, looks at society through the “microscope of experience” and hence many of his examples update Cicero and make connections to modern society.

Some key aspects of Garve’s Cicero are most relevant to the present discussion. Bringing Cicero to eighteenth-century Germany, Garve’s work fosters “deep affinity of the Enlightenment to Cicero” in its emphasis on *eudaemonism*, *humanitas*, and the four cardinal virtues from antiquity (wisdom, justice, fortitude, and moderation).²⁷ Garve also favored examples as an important part of his approach and “depended for his manner of philosophizing on models on which he could comment and of which he could weigh the pros and cons, while prudently advancing his own views, again like Cicero, as approximations of truth or as personal convictions rather than as dogmatic certainties.”²⁸ Duties for Cicero and for Garve relate to the honorable and, accordingly, “are thus essentially related to one’s social standing. Duties make little sense outside of society. They are not internal or subjective principles, but public demands on us.”²⁹ While this represents a classical view, Garve’s orientation puts into sharper focus and concretizes those seemingly ethereal targets of *GMM*.

Even though Kant was thoroughly versed in Cicero from his Latin studies at the *Collegium*, the only personal copy of *De Officiis* Kant owned was Garve’s edition, which he

carefully considered (both the translation and commentary) while writing *GMM*.³⁰ Kant clearly addresses the popular philosophers in *GMM* in the transition between popular philosophy and a metaphysics of morals (recalling the particularly striking imagery of shallow pates reveling in a hodge-podge of half-thought ideas for the purpose of chit-chat), his main charge concerning the lack of rigorous method in determining what is proper to morality. Kant's problem is not with popularity *per se*, for he distinguishes between true popularity—animated by rigorous investigation aforehand—and the false popularity against which he takes up arms here. The precise tenor of his move against popular philosophy in the *GMM* becomes even clearer after examining Kant's arguments against hypothetical imperatives, prudence, experience, and examples as insufficient grounds *when determining the a priori principle of morality*, for they are always empirically based. Kant does not necessarily reject the Ciceronian principles of *honestas*, *fides*, *societas*, *decorum*, and the like. There remains, however, a suspicion that grounding morality upon the empirical can lead to unintended consequences, and thus they can always only function as bases for hypothetical imperatives and not for the categorical.

Kant identifies a certain methodological impropriety (animated by the critical enterprise) in the hybridized, composite, contingent foundations gathered together in the popular philosophers, against which the metaphysics of morals serves as the “proper” investigation of ethics. Of particular concern for Kant is the “hodge-podge” or “patchwork” of different virtues and frameworks in popular moral philosophy—necessitated by their diversity, modality, and contingency—which stem from being solely concerned with the lived world. In looking to “morality of popular tastes,” Kant finds disconcerting their “special determination of human nature (but occasionally the idea of a rational nature as such along with it), now perfection, now happiness, here moral feeling, there fear of God, a bit of this and also a bit of that in a marvelous

mixture” with a complete disregard for the determination of the *a priori* principle.³¹ Kant objects to a much narrower target than Ciceronian values, or popularity, or prudence, or examples as he sought the appropriate basis for determining *pure* practical reason, divested from all other considerations.

The practical, for Kant, concerns the realm of action, the faculty of desire, and the autonomy of will in distinction to the heteronomy of any directives other than a self-legislating principle from duty. Theodor Adorno in *Problems of Moral Philosophy* takes what he sees as the key tension in *GMM*—freedom and necessity—as simultaneously the very core of action, and yet cannot be resolved by elegant reasoned resolution (a popular tendency in Kantian scholarship). Adorno states,

in Kant, moral problems always circle round the question of the relations between the natural, empirical individual human being and the intelligible human being, who is determined simply and solely by his own reason of which freedom is an essential characteristic. If that is so, then the relationship of the universal to the particular is a central feature of that relationship. Ethical conduct or moral or immoral conduct is always a social phenomenon – in other words, it makes absolutely no sense to talk about ethical and moral conduct separately from relations of human beings to each other, and an individual who exists purely for himself is an empty abstraction.³²

As a social phenomenon, ethics always involves the notion of being with and comporting oneself towards others. The morality of *GMM* seemingly points to an absolute interiority, in the form of the supreme principle of duty absolutely and incessantly (at least ostensibly) exorcised from anything at all external to itself—complete autonomy, self-giving law, fearful of handing duty over, so to speak, to heteronomy. However, morality is not a mental exercise, as practical reason, determined by the will, in the domain of freedom is the realm of *action*.

Adorno’s reading of Kant emphasizes how the insistence upon the pure principle of morality is underscored by the performance of its very impossibility. Adorno identifies this

“peculiar Janus-face of Kantian philosophy” and how this, rather than some neat resolution, forms a rupture “at the very source of his practical philosophy.”³³ Herein lies the rub, the very necessity and impossibility that Adorno finds in Kantian metaphysical morality, but also within critical philosophy in general: on “one hand how he is driven by his own analysis to the realization that giving any such absolute status to the primal thing – whether it be the category of causality or that of freedom that necessarily precedes it – leads inexorably to contradictions that prove to be insoluble. On the other hand, he nevertheless refuses to relinquish the idea of something absolute and primary.”³⁴ For Adorno, these are not matters merely for consideration and contemplation. He stresses throughout his reading that action can never be divested of thinking and theory, and that to think these matters is essential to moral philosophy: to slow down, rather than succumb to the contemporary impatience with thinking in favor of some sort of so-called action for the sake of doing anything at all, which he finds pernicious. Kantian philosophy brings to the forefront the crucial problem of action, “the difficulty that our practical philosophy cannot really be separated from experience in any absolute way because it is related to our actual actions, which are inevitably concerned with the material of experience.”³⁵

Adorno’s reading indicates that returning to the *GMM* one brief, final time can serve beneficial. For if the empirical realm interpenetrates, necessarily, unavoidably, the realm of thought, then the possibility remains that the empirical undergirds even the most pure of moral principles. At the very points where Kant calls for the purification of the supreme principle of morality as necessitating divestment from the realm of the empirical / hypothetical / anthropological, he cannot help but use examples from that very realm. As soon as Kant articulates duty as concerning the absolute worth of good will, divested from any identifiable and intervening purpose, he shortly thereafter presents an example of a shopkeeper to demonstrate

the difference between acting in conformity with duty but for other purposes, and acting from duty.³⁶ As soon as Kant presents the categorical imperative, and then its rearticulation as the universal imperative of duty, he provides his famous four examples: someone sick of life contemplating suicide, someone who needs to borrow money but cannot repay, a man of natural talents who chooses not to cultivate them, and a contented person who questions whether others' suffering matters.³⁷ Kant is not illustrating his argument with examples that are provided to serve as the basis or proof of the *a priori* principle or as models from which the principle can be shown, so this does not necessarily conflict with Kant's argument against the use of examples as a form of proof in popular philosophy. As examples, they work to make the argument understandable and accessible—in a word, comprehensible—to the popular audience. However, looking at the illustrative example in *GMM* shows something else, namely that in his recourse to examples from the anthropological realm, especially examples replete with pathos, Kant performs the very impossibility of the pure divestment on which he insists, even at the very point of such insistence.

While the categorical imperative and Kantian duty-based morality seem to pervade conceptions of Kantian ethics writ large, this orientation serves as only *one* part of morality. The categorical imperative is, for Kant, the supreme principle of morality, and as impressive and final as that may sound, this is only half the story of ethics in Kant. In *GMM*, Kant starts with the ancient tripartite structure of science—physics, ethics, and logic—and further delineates two forms of ethics, one concerning its examination regarding the understanding (morals), the other regarding the realm of the sensible (practical anthropology). Conjuring the distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal, ethics is isomorphically divided: “In this way there arises the idea of a twofold metaphysics, a *metaphysics of nature*, and a *metaphysics of morals*. Physics

will therefore have its empirical part but will also have a rational part; so too will ethics, though here the empirical part might be given the special name *practical anthropology*, while the rational part might properly be called *morals*.”³⁸ The vigilant excising of the anthropological from the moral is more about the limits of proper ethics than about the pejoration of the realm of experience. Kant does not exhibit the nihilism that negates the present in favor of an unattainable utopian ideal. The *GMM* clearly investigates the rational, autonomous will, whereas practical anthropology, according to the *GMM*, provides a companion ethics, an ethics of the empirical. Since that can, as Kant could not have made any clearer, only serve hypothetical imperatives (as no categorical imperative can emanate from empirical grounds), this ethics of the anthropology is—from the standpoint of the methodological considerations of the most influential ethical text of Kant’s—an improper ethics. This other ethics can be found in works like *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, which have tended to fall to the wayside within the Kantian legacy, far overtaken by the critical and metaphysical works. Yet, Kant clearly directed us to consider these as important sources of this other half of ethics, the ethics of lived social experience.

Ethics Improper: Embodied Ethics of *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798)

In the shadow of monolithic critical philosophy and metaphysical ethical philosophy, one has to remind oneself that Kant considered the human as part intellectual, part social, and part moral. The second element—sociality—takes a definitive backseat to the other two in our inheritance of Kant’s legacy. Evident not only from the division of ethics into empirical and rational halves, but also demonstrated in every section of *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, the empirical realm of the social, the world of lived experience, represents more the

other side of the coin of Kantian ethics and less an imperfect or flawed illusory realm of the senses as the caricature of idealism might posit. Anthropology was, after all, Kant's most popular course and one, by several accounts, where Kant was most engaged, entertaining, and lively as a teacher. He taught the course every winter semester from 1772 until he could teach no more, ca. 1796.

Considered the standard translation of Kant's works in English, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* added *Anthropology, History, and Education* to their series in 2007. While *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* has been available in German since Kant published it in 1798 (2000 copies were printed, the largest first run of all of his works), and has been available in English translation since 1974, this new volume is certain to inspire further interest in an iconoclastic take on Kant. Robert B. Louden explains,

the Kant of *Anthropology, History, and Education* is often a less familiar Kant, a Kant who does not always say what we expect or want him to say, a Kant who at times does not sit comfortably with the more familiar Kant. But if the questions of metaphysics, moral philosophy, and religion do indeed all refer back to the more fundamental question 'What is the Human Being' . . . this is the Kant we also need to read.³⁹

While in the general scheme of things, these works may be considered the B-sides of Kant's discography, anthropology endured as one of the most consistent foci of Kant's attention. The "impropriety" of this half of the ethics is named such only insofar as these elements of the lived, empirical experience are the very things that Kant so desperately wanted to excise from the proper determination of the categorical imperative. They are not proper bases for determining the *a priori* principle of morality. But that does not mean he wanted to excise these elements from philosophy, or from extended consideration. Kuehn notes, "Kant was perhaps too successful in purifying his moral concepts. He made it difficult even for dedicated scholars of his work to make out which, as a matter of fact, were the anthropological concepts that he so

carefully purified to give rise to the purely moral ones. If only for this reason, the *Anthropology* is a most important work.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, Loudén’s book-length study *Kant’s Impure Ethics* (2000) argues that “the aim of impure ethics is not to think ethically without principles, but rather to find ways (ways based on objective empirical research into human nature) to make these principles efficacious in human life.”⁴¹ This assumption forms one of the foundations for this investigation with the slight difference that rather than stretching *APPoV* upwards toward the *GMM*, the present study tethers the *GMM* to the ground of *APPoV*.

Contrary to the caricature of an awkward and detached rigidity one might ascribe to the author of *GMM*, Kant himself was known about town as cutting quite the social figure, reputed for his wit, his dry humor, his conversationality, his love of social engagements, and especially his anticipation of the evening dinner.⁴² This diverges widely from the caricature of the clockwork Kant, by which you could set your watch during his evening walk, who philosophized from an armchair, detached from the world of actual life. This other Kant, this improper ethics, this realm of lived experience as irrevocably social, is where rhetoric plays a robust role. In other words, there is another ethics in Kant, which could also be characterized as an other-ethics. The ethics of conviction, in Adorno’s formulation, is the proper and critical Kant. The empirical realm—the realm of prudence, of contingency, of incentive, of advantage, of inclination, of passion, of affect, of indeterminacy—is the realm of the social, where sufficient influence can be effected towards various purposes, without infringing upon another’s autonomy or incapacitating his or her power of judgment. It is the realm where the “internal” exceeds containment, where the body and the empirical constantly intercede the purity of metaphysics and instead irrevocably orient thinking towards the present. It is also the space where the proper is in constant transgression, as looking through just a sampling of the list of topics covered in *APPoV* confirms

(maladies of the mind, intoxication, bewitchment, delusion, persuasion, idiomatic expressions, etc.). Hence, when Kant turns to *APPoV*, he unmistakably turns to the rhetorical.

Perhaps it is only appropriate to frame a discussion of one of Kant's lesser-known texts with a work from Foucault hardly referenced and not meant to be published.⁴³ Foucault's *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology* (2008) on the whole examines the geological depth of *APPoV*, for the work is based on lectures spanning almost a quarter of a century, inclusive of his so-called critical period. Foucault is subsequently interested in the relation between these two seemingly independent works. While *APPoV* makes no overt references to even the existence of the critical works, Foucault finds the First *Critique* "is buried inside the text of the anthropology serving as its framework, and it should be envisaged in this way: a structural fact, not as the manifestation of a preconceived intentional plan."⁴⁴ The main questions of the three *Critiques* (What can I know? What should I do? What can I hope for?) are all gathered together in the question of *APPoV*: What is the human? Foucault argues, "to critical thought, which represents the investigation into that which is conditional in the *founding* activity, *Anthropology* responds by offering an inventory of what is *un-founded* in the *conditioned*."⁴⁵ Kant's *APPoV*, when positioned next to the First *Critique*, portrays a particularly illustrative case of the slippage between transcendental principles and empirical principles. Foucault articulates this slippage in the context of bringing *APPoV* and the First *Critique* to bear upon one another (for such slippage constantly threatens to, instead of unseating the *a priori* of the critique, render the human of *APPoV* into the transcendental).

Accepting Kant's invitation within the *GMM* to consider anthropological ethics as its counterpart, I find it productive to bring *APPoV* into proximity with the *Groundwork*. This particular interface, rather than threatening to render the human of *APPoV* into an *a priori*,

instead emphasizes (in conjunction with Adorno's reading, and through the performance of the constant interposition of the empirical into the *GMM*) the ways in which the anthropological is always already interpolated into the metaphysical. This conjunction between *APPoV* and the *GMM* as counterpart ethics effects a sort of reversal of the relationship that Foucault finds between the *Critique of Pure Reason* and *APPoV*: the empirical instead interrupts the transcendental, rather than the human becoming swept up into a transcendentalism of its own. Inscribed within the *GMM*, with marks that match up cleanly with *APPoV*, is the trace of the empirical at the very points of its attempted excisement. We now turn to this incursion of *APPoV*, the ethics of the improper. The particular aspects of *APPoV* discussed here, after a brief introduction about how Kant frames the anthropological enterprise, involve virtue, sociability, and conversation as motifs of this ethics of the empirical. These themes within *APPoV* emphasize an embodied ethics which, importantly, centers upon the human as intractably in relation with others, the critical means of relation involving communication, interaction, engagement, exchange, and comportment.

From within *APPoV*, this enterprise connects precisely back to the point in the *GMM* that prompted the investigation of this other half of ethics: the division between the moral as metaphysics and the moral as empirical. Kant, in *APPoV*, explains that "the two kinds of good, the *physical* and the *moral*, cannot be *mixed* together, for then they would neutralize themselves and not work at all toward the end of true happiness."⁴⁶ Initially the two realms,

inclination to good living and *virtue* conflict with each other, and the limitation of the principle of the former through the latter constitute, in their collision, the entire end of the well-behaved human being, a being who is partly sensible but partly moral and intellectual. But since it is difficult to prevent mixing in practice, the end of happiness needs to be broken down by counteracting agents (*reagentia*) in order to know which elements in what proportion can provide, when they are combined, the enjoyment of a *moral happiness*.⁴⁷

The realm of the lived world is the realm of good living, something Kant initially tries to keep separate from morals in *GMM*, but here he only sustains the effort for a matter of sentences before doubling back with the recognition that practice always already violates the proper taxonomy that distinguishes the three dimensions of the human. The relation between the physical and moral, and the relation between the various hypothetical virtues of the experiential pursuit of happiness, are depicted in terms of reagents—transformations at the border between alchemy and science. Even though ethics operates according to imperatives, the hypothetical imperatives within the realm of lived experience are here cast as experiments. Their results depend on several contingencies, in different combinations and permutations alike. If empirical ethics involves the different combinations of reagents of virtue, one must be careful about the process every step of the way since even the smallest misstep can threaten an experiment of ethics in the lived world with a sense of danger, indeterminacy, and unpredictability.

If ethics in the empirical realm is an experiment, then what even conditional aim is it oriented towards? The answer would have to be found at the intersection between the anthropological question of “what is the human,” and the ethical question of “what should I do.” This intersection aligns with the introductory comments about the two possible forms of anthropology. Kant argues that a systematic study of the human being can advance along two possible fronts: an anthropology from a physiological point of view or an anthropology from a pragmatic point of view. In clarifying these two routes, Kant explains that “physiological knowledge concerns the investigation of what *nature* makes of the human being; pragmatic, the investigation of what *he* as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself.”⁴⁸ Instead of the self as merely an imperfect manifestation of the ideal, the pragmatic

anthropology offers the possibility of thinking about what one does, can, and should make of herself.

Consequently, the experiment of the human enterprise is to make something of oneself, to experiment with reagents towards the hypothetical imperatives of moral happiness. This appears, even allowing for the amplification and stretching in this reading of Kant, as quite a different enterprise altogether than the morality of *GMM* and the *Second Critique*. Kant explains, “such an anthropology, considered as *knowledge of the world*, which must come after *schooling*, is actually not yet called pragmatic when it contains an extensive knowledge of *things* in the world, for example animals, plants and minerals from various lands and climates, but only when it contains knowledge of the human being as a *citizen of the world*.”⁴⁹ Accordingly, the gambit of empirical morality involves an individual invariably oriented towards a social context, an exteriority, rather than the radical interiority of the categorical imperative (setting aside, temporarily, the insistent and ineluctable interpenetration of the phenomenal into the noumenal). Membership as a moral agent shifts from the community of the kingdom of ends to a citizen of the world. While the citizen of the world and accompanying cosmopolitan perspective will return in a slightly different way in the conclusion, for our present ethics of the lived world, the citizen of the world is a social being oriented towards the self only insofar as in the space of another. Kant states, “The opposite of egoism can only be *pluralism*, that is, the way of thinking in which one is not concerned with oneself as the whole world, but rather regards and conducts oneself as a mere citizen of the world. – This much belongs to anthropology.”⁵⁰ Being a citizen of the world involves a self-cultivation, an education, a formation of character that is inescapably social and ethical at the same time.

Before heading with too much resolution down this road, however, Kant's *APPoV* also resists flattening the three realms (moral, social, intellectual) onto a horizontal plane. A hierarchy presents itself at certain points, where the realm of human virtue clearly sits below, as inferior, to the metaphysical realm of morality. Even if morality proper is impossible, its force is too great for Kant to relinquish. Kant declares "all human virtue in circulation is small change – it is a child who takes it for real gold. But it is still better to have small change in circulation than no funds at all, and eventually they can be converted into genuine gold, though at considerable loss."⁵¹ Thus, Kant clearly values the morality of *GMM* more than the ethics of the anthropology, but does not dismiss the anthropological realm as without value or importance for ethics. Indeed, even more interestingly, Kant follows with a critique of Swift: "it is committing high treason against humanity to pass them off as *mere tokens* that have no worth. Even the illusion of good in others must have worth for us, for out of this play with pretences which acquires respect without perhaps earning it, something quite serious can finally develop."⁵² Not only is Kant's defense of human virtue against Swift remarkable, even in its inferiority, but of further interest is this move's underlying assumption that comportment can actually effect a moral transformation (even at a terrible exchange rate). Even if one acts in conformity with duty only for hypothetical or contingent reasons, such an anthropological ethic can clearly, Kant says, dispose one towards proper moral thought and action. A bi-directionality emerges, where the metaphysical moral realm is not necessarily prior to the realm of lived experience and action, but, even in rarity or exception, certain ways of comporting oneself can indeed have an effect in reverse.

Rather than excising the realm of the social from the intellectual and the moral, *APPoV* invites a consideration of the human at the intersection of all three, as manifest in the empirical

realm. As such, engagement in thought and word is not the solitary action of an individual, but happens in the context of others, as a citizen of the world. As previously discussed from *GMM*, any maxim not derived from duty itself is hypothetical, operating in the contingent realm of prudence and purpose. As Kant evocatively describes, “by means of the great difference of minds, in the way they look at exactly the same objects and at each other, and by means of the friction between them as well as their separation, nature produces a remarkable drama of infinite variety on the stage of observers and thinkers.”⁵³ This exchange of thought in play of thinkers and observers is not an unregulated, unruly cacophony. Maxims, albeit differently, do operate here. Kant lays out three principles for thinkers that can lead one to wisdom and will serve as “unalterable commands.”

1. To think for oneself.
2. To think oneself (in communication with human beings) into the place of every *other person*.
3. Always think *consistently* with *oneself*.⁵⁴

Stated in this manner, these maxims underwrite Kant’s treatment of enlightenment in immediately recognizable ways (freedom from tutelage, courage to use one’s own reason, etc.). With the present ethical concerns in mind, however, these principles, by taking the form of imperative, exceed this form in interesting ways. While the categorical imperative dictates that once an action is commanded by duty, the course is irrevocably inscribed, these three commands of thinking require constant and vigilant persistence at every moment. To think for oneself, or to think into the place of every other person, are not maxims that can be determined and then set aside for the course of action inscribed, but must be persistently attended to at all points without end. While these unalterable commands of the social entail a certain course of action, they do not produce the injunction of the categorical imperative that must be followed, for they *are* actions already, and actions that have no end (no strategic purpose towards which they strive,

and/or terminus). In some sense, they command thinking and communication as the experiment of self-cultivation.

Kant's own explanation further clarifies these traits. He identifies the first command as negative, “(nullius addictus iurare in verba Magistri), the principle of *freedom from constraint*.”⁵⁵ The pragmatic anthropology does not carry with it the insistence upon purity that the *Groundwork* does. For in *GMM*, any scintilla of the empirical would taint the categorical and render it hypothetical, and so only one possible imperative can meet a most restrictive criterion of pure practical reason. Here the injunction, however, to think for oneself, while framed as a negative principle, does not display the same insistence on purity (i.e. absolutely and intractably without even an iota of influence, inclination, disposition, etc.) but is more in alignment with the lived world, basically requiring that one not hand oneself over completely to passion, or to another source of authority, as the allusion to Horace from *The Epistles* indicates—no one is forced to follow the words of the master. The *Sapere Aude!* of “What is Enlightenment” (also Horace) indicates that to think for oneself is not purely negative but just as largely (as hypothetical, not categorical) recommends a certain direction.

As for the second maxim, Kant clarifies this as a positive principle, “the principles of *liberals* who adapt to the principles of others”⁵⁶ The second maxim exhorts one to think from the standpoint of every other, from the position of a citizen of the world. This notion will be revisited more extensively in the discussion of aesthetics (through the universal communicability of judgment in *CJ*) but for the purpose of anthropological ethics, this enlarged mentality operates at the nexus between thought and communication, for to think from the standpoint of every other is to think in communication with others. Communication is a social act, not merely a solipsistic

hypothetical test of the validity of one's own argument, but always towards and in concert with actual others.

As for the third, Kant calls this “the principle of the *consistent (consequent)* (logical) way of thinking.”⁵⁷ Consistency is an interesting maxim, especially since in the anthropological realm we oftentimes may not fully understand on what grounds we are acting, but, basically, this is the principle of non-contradiction. As such, these maxims of anthropological ethics differ from metaphysics of morals in that the empirical is always already a part of the consideration and, likewise, there is no need for (or, really, any sense in) a doctrine of purity in the domain of experience. Unlike *GMM*, which excises the empirical from the metaphysical, the anthropological realm is unapologetically empirical. Furthermore, Kant does not want to excise ethics from the anthropological realm (an inverse of the move in *GMM*), but instead admits the already taxonomical impropriety of lived experience. Kant concludes this articulation of the maxims of anthropological ethics with the observation that “anthropology can furnish examples of each of these principles, but it can furnish even more examples of their opposite.”⁵⁸ The realm of anthropology is the realm of the contingent.

These maxims, involving the relation between thought and exchange of ideas with others, are not merely hortatory. Kant identifies that “there is also a *mental pleasure*, which consists in the communication of thoughts. But if it is forced on us and still as mental nutrition is not beneficial to us, the mind finds it repulsive (as in, e.g., the constant repetition of would-be flashes of wit or honor, whose sameness can be unwholesome to us).”⁵⁹ Communication, in the sense invoked here by Kant, is a pleasure of the mind but one also necessarily oriented in a social situation, towards and in concert with others. While Kant's concept of communication is rather expansive in scope, a substantial emphasis on conversation emerges in *APPoV*. Unlike the

resolute rigor of morality, communication involves a certain ease, a certain flexibility, a naturalness, perhaps. To exhibit unyielding maxims of rigidity in social interaction seems forced, out of place, and awkward. Instead, conversation emerges as an important figure for Kant's discussion of communication in *APPoV*, and once again recalls *sprezzatura*—the art that effaces its own artifice. This, however, does not mean that conversation follows no formal structure—quite the opposite. Just as musical improvisation requires the utmost understanding of the conventional scales, a lively and sociable exchange, in Kant's view, involves much understanding and consideration of the movements and contours of conversation itself. Kant even offers in *APPoV* a subtle structure for the organization of conversation, and brings conversation together alongside legal and pedagogical situations through the impromptu presentation:

The teacher from the pulpit or in the academic lecture hall, the prosecutor or defence attorney who has to demonstrate mental composure in free speaking (impromptu), also if need be in conversation, must pay attention to *three* things. First, he must look at what he is saying *now*, in order to present it clearly; *second*, he must look back to what he *has said*; and then third, he must look ahead to what he just now *intends* to say. If he fails to pay attention to any of these three items, that is to say, arrange them in this order, then he lands himself and his listeners or readers in distraction, and an otherwise good mind cannot reject these rules without being called *confused*.⁶⁰

Conversation has to remain open and of the moment, but it does not entail formlessness. The three elements of proper impromptu, in responding to the situation, the contingent, the moment, require mindfulness and self-attentiveness. The temporal structure is not about organizing the actual speech, per se, (as in the standard past, present, future structure for three points in impromptu contexts) but about orienting oneself with vigilant attentiveness to the temporality of the first present, then past, then future of what is being said all at the same time. This discussion of the speaker's task in impromptu speaking (which includes conversation) emphasizes a critical

awareness, a vigilant attentiveness when speaking. Speaking in the moment is not just the neutral or natural articulation of what one knows (one-to-one correspondence) but is instead a Janus-faced endeavor involving three dimensions of time simultaneously, and a balance between those different moments involved in the presence of speaking.

Perhaps surprisingly, one of the most striking motifs of sociability and the ethics of communication from Kant's *APPoV* centers upon communal dining in the section entitled "On the Highest Moral-Physical Good." Kant here articulates a fairly detailed account of social conversation, specified in accordance with very particular configural limits, offering an analysis of the stages of conversation, and the maxims by which tasteful exchange can be effected. Kant states, "good living that still seems to harmonize best with true humanity is *a good meal in good company* (and if possible, also alternating company). Chesterfield says that the company must not number fewer than the *graces* or more than the *muses*."⁶¹ Ten is the perfect number (9 guests, plus the host) for it strikes the perfect balance between having enough people for the lively exchange of ideas but not too many, at the same time. Kant provides the following reasoning: "that number is just enough to keep the conversation from slackening or the guests from dividing into separate small groups with those sitting next to them. The latter situation is not at all a conversation of taste, which must always bring culture with it, where each always talks with all (not merely with his neighbor)."⁶² The ideal space of conversation, providing the highest physical-moral good, is an extended conversation at the dinner table, carefully designed to foster long discussions where each participant addresses the whole party, not merely those in immediate proximity. For this reason, Kant finds large banquets tasteless.⁶³

Such design for the dinner party coincides with a particular model of the flow of conversation, involving three stages: narration, arguing, and jesting.⁶⁴ In the first stage of

narration, topics of news are introduced and people share what they have heard from various sources. In discussing these current developments, a site of disagreement often emerges providing the occasion for lively argument, the second stage. Kant states, this debate “stirs up the appetite for food and drink and also makes the appetite wholesome in proportion to the liveliness of this dispute and the participation in it.”⁶⁵ Eventually the work of simultaneously arguing and eating will see the diners grow weary, at which point the conversation moves to the third stage and “sinks naturally to the mere play of wit.”⁶⁶ Ending the evening in jest ensures that everyone leaves in high spirit, not left caught in the rancor of disagreement and discord. In this brief description of the itinerary of the dinner conversation (an account seemingly trivial and mundane) lies what can be considered a model for sociable exchange that puts into practice the second maxim of anthropological ethics: to think in the place of, to think in communication with, others.

Foucault in *Introduction to Kant’s Anthropology* states, “from the point of view of anthropology, the grouping which has paradigmatic value is not the family, nor the state, but the *Tischgesellschaft* [society of the table]. For when it faithfully behaves its own rules, the *Tischgesellschaft* looks like the particular image of universality.”⁶⁷ Kant’s discussion of table-society is unquestionably striking in its potential exemplarity, despite his rejection of such models, especially when announced by the section heading as the “Highest Moral-Physical Good.” This treatment certainly invites the consideration that being a citizen of the world is like being at a really good dinner party, in good company, nourishing simultaneously the different dimensions of the human. These rules to which Foucault alludes conceptually speak beyond the context of a dinner party. Kant identifies the following “rules for a tasteful feast:”

- (a) To choose topics for conversation that interest everyone and always provide someone with the opportunity to add something appropriate, (b) not to allow

deadly silences to set in, but only momentary pauses in the conversation, (c) not to change the topic unnecessarily or jump from one subject to another . . . A topic that is entertaining must almost be exhausted before proceeding to another one . . . (d) not to let *dogmatism* arise or persist, either in oneself or in one's companions in the group . . . (e) in a serious conflict that nevertheless cannot be avoided, carefully to maintain discipline over oneself and one's emotions so that mutual respect and benevolence always shine forth.⁶⁸

These maxims of the table go beyond the tasteful feast, since they together provide the guidelines for sociable exchange and, more generally, ethical and productive conversation. Some of these maxims, although not categorical, can at first appear to align with the imperative of *GMM*, such as the respect for autonomy and self discipline. However, these maxims most clearly articulate an anthropological ethics of engagement, for they are, at heart, ways of responding to the particular situation and context. One needs to be attentive to the situation and movement of the conversation at all points, and responding appropriately and at the appropriate moment can keep the exchange in play to the benefit of all participants.

The refrain from *APPoV* is, however, that things do tend toward entropy in the lived world. The responsibilities of the conversation involve not only responding to the appropriate cues, but also, and especially, responding to the inappropriate. In *APPoV*, Kant states, “if something derogatory were said about my best friend at a so-called public party (for actually even the largest dinner party is always only a private party, and only the state party as such is public in its idea) – I would, I must say, defend him and, if necessary, take on his cause with severity and bitterness of expression.”⁶⁹ The earlier mentioned story of Kant storming out of the dinner party, over the imperious remarks made about the then-recently deceased Mendelssohn, can serve as just one example. He immediately qualifies his claim about severity and bitterness of such a defense, however, by declaring “but I would not let myself be used as the instrument for spreading this evil report and carrying it to the man it concerns. – It is not merely a social

taste that must guide this conversation; there are also principles that should serve as the limiting conditions on the freedom with which human beings openly exchange their thoughts in social intercourse.”⁷⁰ The conversations at the table can have implications beyond the table and questions of taste. How to orient oneself towards others arises from what should and should not be done in conversation at the table. While the *GMM* represents an ethics of conviction, the empirical ethics of *APPoV*, even though comprised of various maxims and guidelines, also emerges as an ethics of response and responsibility.

As a participant in the conversation of the table, in order to foster the exchange of ideas, a series of guidelines recommend an itinerary and form of sociable exchange, but also of responding in the moment. Sometimes the moment involves a lapse in judgment, a slip of the tongue, gossip about someone not present, or some such indiscretion. Of these moments, Kant explains,

it goes without saying that in all dinner parties, even one at an inn, whatever is said publicly by an indiscrete table companion to the detriment of someone absent may not be used *outside* this party and may not be gossiped about. For even without making a special agreement about it, any such symposium has a certain holiness and a duty of secrecy about it with respect to what could later cause inconvenience, outside the group, to its members; for without this trust, the healthiest enjoyment of moral culture within a social gathering and the enjoyment of this social gathering itself would be denied.⁷¹

The sociality that the table inscribes depends on this covenant for its existence. Whether for the reason of defending someone not at the table or protecting someone who is present at the table, the covenant of the table extends to the very basis of sociality, for without such an unspoken agreement, the enterprise of sociable exchange would not be possible.

The dining party of ten is a curious figure for sociability and sociality writ large. Social, surely, but the configuration seems to indicate a curious liminal space betwixt and between private and public, with its own operations. Kant does articulate an unusual distinction between

public and private in “What is Enlightenment,” but insofar as the dinner party is considered, the classification is technically private (for only a state function would be public). Guests are invited to a private home or meet at an inn, and yet (ideally) one addresses the entire table in exchange. As such, it becomes an unusual motif for *citizen of the world* especially in contrast with the public realm in “Enlightenment,” where to speak as scholar is to speak freely without the constraints upon freedom that relations of the private realm of obedience inscribe. At the same time, in featuring the everyday social gathering of the communal dinner—in sharp contrast to the occasional banquet or official event—this anthropological account features the body, pleasure, social exchange in conversation, and the ethical injunction of the covenant. The society of the table is a context, contingent and situational, that recommends its own implications beyond the table but at the same time resists a divested universality.

This emphasis on the table is unusual, not in general or for being unique—for it aligns with a structure of manners and etiquette that was not uncommon for the time—but for *Kant* in particular (though not because Kant was an unsociable character, quite the opposite). Kant was not just speaking about the table *in abstracto*, this was the sociality to which he looked forward daily in his own life *in concreto*. Kuehn writes, “Kant was a very gregarious and social being – not so much the solitary, isolated, and somewhat comical figure that many have come to see in him.”⁷² His discussion of conversational dining bears the mark of his own life, invariably. Kant, as a writer, is notorious for writing himself out of his own writings (he thought highly of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, but thought he spoke too much of himself), yet in speaking of the table, Kant brings himself into the conversation, so to speak. He writes, “When I manage a dinner party composed of nothing but men of taste . . . this little dinner party must have the purpose not only of physical satisfaction – which each guest can have by himself alone – but also social

enjoyment, for which physical enjoyment must seem to be only the vehicle”⁷³ Kant was well known for his dry wit, his elegant conversation, and his perfection in seizing the moment. What makes this emphasis on the table unusual, however, is that a dinner party is such a synergistic and idiosyncratic event: no two are alike, even with the exact same company. Each takes a slightly different tone, depending on the confluence of a host of differing factors, and while in general a successful dinner party leaves the guests feeling uplifted, the contours, conversations, topics, and itineraries—all different reagents of the evening—leave residual associations, attitudes, and impressions that resist universalization.

In Kant’s *APPoV*, a dynamic between discipline and enjoyment emerges out of the framing connection of the human as part intellectual, part social, and part moral. The flow of conversation, of the propitious moment, is regulated in Kant’s account by a series of fairly rigorous rules and procedures. These very maxims of the table, if that can be allowed, put into play a number of considerations at the levels of the intellect, the sociable, and the moral simultaneously. The conversations should be of taste, should be enjoyable, and should leave the guests feeling something had been accomplished on the level of culture. At the same time, the conversations are regulated by certain rhythms, specific movements, and itineraries. Even further, the freedom of conversation is limited by ethical considerations about who is not there, what should not be said, and the unspoken covenant that what goes on at the party, stays at the party. Contrasting the proper ethics of the *GMM* with the improper ethics of the anthropology, we have found an unavoidable role for lived experience and communication as significant ethical considerations for Kant, with the table standing as model for sociability and responsibility.

Excursus *On the Philosophers' Medicine for the Body* (1786)

The Kant of *APPoV* seems hardly recognizable as the same Kant that drew criticism from later thinkers like Nietzsche. Surely, the Kant of *GMM* seems to be actively evacuating the present, this world, the realm of lived experience, in service of an ever-ethereal ideal of *a priori* morality. However, the other Kant—the Kant of *APPoV*—seems to recognize how virtue is a function of real life and can only be applied in practice, in relation to actual others in experience. This other Kant seems neither nihilist nor ascetic, both serving as forms of abnegation of the present. Furthermore, a little-cited and rather strange work entitled *On the Philosophers' Medicine for the Body*, shows yet another dimension of this other Kant: a deep concern for the body emanating from a philosophical perspective, a careful attention to the ways in which the body and mind are indeed interrelated (contra Descartes), and an emergent ethic of the care of the self that forms a concerned and invested rejection precisely of self-denial and ascetic ideals that he lays to blame for Mendelssohn's death.⁷⁴

In some ways, this attention to the body pervades *APPoV*, the account of the society of the table serving just as one prominent example. At the conclusion of that section “On the Highest Physical-Moral Good” involving the commentary on the society of the table, Kant states that although as small as the “laws of refined humanity” may seem, they are nonetheless serious. He continues, “the *cynic's purism* and the *anchorite's mortification of the flesh*, without social good living, are distorted forms of virtue which do not make virtue inviting; rather, being forsaken by the graces, they can make no claim to humanity.”⁷⁵ Kant's anthropological account takes relish in the lived experience of social interaction, and serves as rejoinder to an ascetic rejection of the body and of the lived realm. The anthropology is, however, rife with the various ways in which the human, relations with one another and with oneself, tend to break down. *Idea*

for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim posits in its fourth proposition an antagonistic conception of human relations, which he calls their *unsociable sociability*, a human nature neither unitary nor solitary but instead divided with regard to the social context in which they are given.⁷⁶

That same figuration can relate to the correspondence between the body and the mind, much in alignment with the general tone of *APPoV*, as well. Kant's *On the Philosophers' Medicine for the Body* begins by contrasting the responsibility between the doctor and the philosopher. Kant claims "the doctors' business is to help the ailing mind by caring for the body," while the philosophers' is "to assist the afflicted body by a mental regimen," which may appear a chiasmic inversion of the aims of contemporary medicine and philosophy with respect to ultimate target (medicine to the mind, philosophy to the body). He continues,

In the first place everyone knows how much the mind's energy contributes to promoting or impeding all vital motions, especially in its affects: the Hippocratic *impetum faciens* [animating force] belongs to this force of the mind. In fact, the phenomena we are considering here go on continuously and are absolutely essential to life: they are not extraordinary conditions that disturb nature, so to speak.⁷⁷

For Kant, from this address, the body and mind are inextricably interlinked and can affect one another. Kant makes a distinction here between two types of pathos: the passions and the affects. This distinction remains not entirely clear depending on where in his work it appears, but in short while both passions and affects can disrupt reason, passions involve a longer-term signing oneself over to inclination that represent a kind of self-enslavement, which Kant finds evil, while affects are involuntary states that temporarily interrupt reason. While Kant does not find any positive or useful role for the passions, here the affects can be helpful. In the context of this distinction, Kant lauds apathy "insofar and it consists in freedom from those mental propensities that are properly called passions, which gnaw and consume the heart, so to speak, bind the vital

force with shackles” and he distinguishes the passions from “those inward motions of the mind called affects” in order to separate the latter out for distinction (namely they can, unlike passions, provide some good).⁷⁸

Kant further explains that the “discipline of the body must, therefore, be considered properly the philosopher’s, not because he knows the body’s machinery, but because he knows about the body from experience.”⁷⁹ A doctor can act as a philosopher if attending to these dimensions, however, for the most part, one should keep to one, the other to the other. While Kant apparently advances these observations in a general sense, the mark of the situated and contextual particularity of this emphasis on the body emerges upon mention of the death of Mendelssohn and the contemporary debate about the cause. Kant explains, “Eulogizers of the great man Mendelssohn put the blame for his death in one way or another on the learned men who got him involved in a dispute with them.”⁸⁰ Mendelssohn was engaged with a debate with Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi over Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s alleged confession to not believing in a God. Kant, clearly dismissing this allegation that Jacobi’s dispute had a hand in Mendelssohn’s death just that same year, proclaims: “in my judgment, however, no one should be accused of such an atrocious crime. What was at fault was, rather, the very way of life that much lamented man adopted.”⁸¹ Kant instead shifts the focus from the popular claim that the dispute was at fault, for indeed Mendelssohn’s health was precarious, to the way in which Mendelssohn treated his own body.

Kant explains that Mendelssohn was prescribed to adhere to “strict temperance” because of the various afflictions from which he suffered. In Kant’s view, however, Mendelssohn took temperance too far, as much as that is sensible, for temperance as one of the four cardinal virtues concerns self-control, moderation, and restraint. Kant explains that in trying to focus on his

studies “he went beyond temperance to such abstemiousness that he kept himself always hungry, so as to avoid the slight and usually transitory discomforts of the stomach that follow a proper meal” and this ascetic self-denial of basic bodily needs “so weakened the forces of his body that the sort of every-day injury that would hardly affect someone properly nourished shattered and killed that much-lamented man, exhausted by excessive temperance.”⁸² Excessive temperance may be contradictory, for abstemiousness and ascetic self-denial no longer moderate but exceed towards the direction of the aforementioned mortification of the flesh, an annulment of humanity and, thus, of morality in forsaking the body. Obviously Kant was not advocating coddling or pampering oneself, for that would exceed temperance. Kant remains clear in his emphatic insistence that “an overly severe disciplining of the body, prescribed as it were by a harsh and coarse master, as distinguished from the temperance prescribed by a companion friendly to the mind, gradually exhausts its very powers.”⁸³ The interconnection between the body and mind is immediately striking, in addition to the serious and careful consideration that Kant affords this interconnection in conjunction with the philosopher’s aim.

Kant’s alternative explanation for the untimely demise of Mendelssohn involves the abandonment of temperance, and the negation of the body in service of a purity of the mind. Furthermore, Kant’s defense not only removes Jacobi from blame, but Kant also, in effect, defends disagreement, debate, and exchange, as well. It was not the (even acrimonious) dispute about Lessing that was to blame, but the lack of self-care: Mendelssohn did not nourish himself. And thus we arrive, subsequently, back at the dining table, in the company of others. Nourishment not only involves the physical, but also the social and intellectual (and, in the development of conversation in good taste towards the cultivation of culture: the moral). In *APPoV*, the importance of the table, of sociality, and of conversation emerge in fairly striking

terms. Here, once again, in the context of the philosophers' medicine for the body, these elements emerge in no less a striking fashion. Kant announces, "It is healthful for the body when, at dinner, the mind is not only free from cares but disposed to merriment and turned away from concentrating on any one subject. What best serves the body is conversation, amiable discussion, especially mirth breaking into hearty laughter. Here the mind exerts most strongly its force in moving the body."⁸⁴ Kant, as in *APPoV*, cautions against eating alone, for one whose business involves the mind tends to brood over thoughts too much and this can negatively affect the nourishment of the body. The bodily motions are most positively affected in a social setting that involves enjoyment and laughter, where the mind is at ease, and the person, in all dimensions, is nourished.

Circling back to the present context of what Kant ascribes as Mendelssohn's ascetic inclinations, the sociable table does not involve the inverse, a complete handing oneself over to the social for, as *APPoV* demonstrates, intemperate exaltation of the social can result in a mania of its own. In its proper balance, however, the sociable dinner involves a convergence of several factors that strengthen the body:

It is not only when the mind is free from care and serene that it aids the vital functions of the body; but also when it is stirred up, at dinner, by the sport and jest of conversation – when, to enliven the gathering, the guests enter into a contest, and the enthusiasm and exertion of the conversationalists rise to the limits of an affect. . . . In such a situation, the remarkable force of the impulses of the human mind manifests itself in increasing the strength of the body, as long as it remains within the limits of a mind that is in control of itself.⁸⁵

In a sense, Kant's address clarifies why he finds much import in the social, in conversation, and in social dining or, as we have been calling it, the society of the table. This is not Kant's ruminations on everyday and eminently un-philosophical topics, for the ultimate concern for the philosopher is not a life of the mind, as one might expect from the Kant of *GMM*, but, perhaps

surprisingly, the care of the body. Kant declares, “the philosopher should therefore consider whether it is possible for him to write the laws of dining socially for those whose way of life commits them to concern for the mind rather than the body in whatever they undertake.”⁸⁶ This rector address was given twelve years before Kant published *APPoV*, in which he outlined in brief form to what he alludes here but we know that his lectures on anthropology had been developed all the while from his acquisition of the professorship up until he could teach no more, so concurrence of topics with *APPoV* certainly remains unsurprising. The importance for Kant of the society of the table, and of the effect of conversation not only in the cultivation of culture but also in assisting with what he terms the bodily motions, casts the liveliness of the social dining experience as a way of caring for the self. Kant certainly provided some maxims for dining, the contours of the conversation, the overall tone of the evening and, in accordance with the framing of this address, precise ways in which philosopher attends to and assists the body by providing a mental regimen.

Kant curiously ends this address on the following note:

The vicissitude of human affairs overturns whatever the daring race of Iapetus undertakes and spins it about in a restless whirlwind, allowing nothing human beings accomplish to stand on a firm basis. So it is that neither in empire nor in peoples, nor in customs and the arts, whether the liberal or useful arts, is there any fixed place or character. Rather everything revolves in an eternal vortex and is driven around in a circle (so that it will not settle down into an inert heap).⁸⁷

In some ways, this is hardly a recognizable Kant. This seems the inverse or anti-realm of the static fixity of autonomy and duty in *GMM*. In other ways, this aligns with the emergence of the other Kant of *APPoV*, which, as we are following here, offers not a contradictory but a counterpart ethics to the proper ethics of duty, autonomy, and will pure and divested from any possible influence of the empirical. The anthropological realm of the body, of lived experience,

of the social unsociability of humanity, can only be the realm of situated action, of contingent bases, and of uncertainty of either the results of actions or the true motives from which we act (even to ourselves). The chaotic human realm—where fixity and foundations remain elusive, which requires morality in practice and in application, as imperfect as that may manifest—remains in motion. This motion, however, appears not in a pejorative case, for the eternal vortex and circular motion is opposed to an inert heap. We are in motion, our bodies operate in accordance with motion, and these elements must be properly and vigilantly attended. Rejecting the body or forsaking the social intercourse to which we are oriented serves neither metaphysical ethics nor anthropological ethics.

While the notion of taste has emerged throughout this discussion of ethics in the lived world, it has been passed over without much explicit comment up to this point. This apparent glossing-over has neither emerged from an assumption that taste is self-evident in Kant, nor from an assumption that the particularities of taste are insignificant to the examination of the role (in concrete and spectral manifestations) of rhetoric in Kant. Far from both of those possible assumptions, taste, and the role of aesthetic judgment, play an important role in the relation between rhetoric and the empirical ethics of the anthropological. So important, as a matter of fact, that these connections will form the basic enterprise of the next chapter. The first chapter connected rhetoric, poetry, and, preliminarily, Kant's own commentary on style, with taste, albeit cursorily, substantially focusing on his treatment in *Critique of Judgment*. This Third *Critique* was never originally planned as part of the critical project, for the First *Critique* was assumed by Kant, at least before its reception, to be the final word on critical philosophy as it stood. The structure between the three *Critiques* is rather recursive as a result. This recursive move of the

critical works, of having to go back to re-articulate critical philosophy through both the Second and Third *Critiques*, which serve as reconsiderations and as revisitations, happens concurrently with the development of the anthropology lectures. Looking towards Kant's aesthetic works, after having examined the embodied ethics of the anthropology, will help contextualize in several ways the role of the faculties, taste, style, and aesthetic judgment.

Notes:

¹ A good study on the connection between the Perelman and Kant can be found in John W. Ray's "Perelman's Universal Audience," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* vol. 64, 1978.

² Burke, *Grammar of Motives*.

³ Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*. Burke shows how, despite appearing to be positive (Burke here seemingly fusing both numerical and normative) the "idea" and the "categorical imperative" in Kant are both resoundingly negative conceptions (not under restraint, not subjected, not dependent, etc.). Then, however, Kant works through the concept of the moral law, shifting the emphasis to positive descriptors, which, nonetheless, still marvel in the negative (438-44).

⁴ Wess, *Kenneth Burke*, p. 232. He continues, "this new dramatism retains this epistemological imprint even as his later texts gravitate away from more rigorous Kantian formulations to be found in this one."

⁵ Stroud, "Rhetoric and Moral Progress," p. 328.

⁶ Gehrke, "Turning Kant."

⁷ The terminology of ethics and morals in Kant (both in his writings, and as they are rendered through translation) are used interchangeably without distinction or delineation. Of course, given the predominant focus on the *GMM*, *MM*, and the *CPrR*, and Kant's treatment of morality within, the potential bases for distinctions might indeed drop away here. While these terms are oftentimes evoked in specific distinguished senses (morality according with social mores, where ethics centers upon ethos or comportment) for the purpose of this discussion, the two are used rather interchangeably. Adorno in *Problems of Moral Philosophy* advances a perhaps surprising

preference for morality over ethics, but himself uses both terms throughout his discussion of Kant for the simple reason that he finds the repetition irritating, which, given their fungibility in Kant, is as good of a reason as any.

⁸ Some debate persists as to how many formulations of the Categorical Imperative exist in Kant's *Groundwork*, but a standard take posits three: universal law, means-ends, and kingdom of ends.

⁹ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 73 (4: 421). Emphasis in original.

¹⁰ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 82 (4: 432).

¹¹ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 67 (4: 414).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 69 (4: 416).

¹⁴ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 71 (4: 18-19).

¹⁵ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 70 (4: 418).

¹⁶ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 71 (4: 18-19).

¹⁷ This notion of limits brings the *Groundwork* under the purview of the critical enterprise.

While *GMM* is technically the basis for *MM*, it can also be seen as the basis for the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Adorno in *Problems of Moral Philosophy* makes such a case and exhorts his students (for this is a series of lectures on Kant) to read them as compatible with one another (p. 6). The critical enterprise, if one can put this so generally, is—contrary to the unbounded and free-wheeling Enlightenment caricature of autonomous human will—all about delimitation, the determination and ascription of boundaries and limits of knowledge. Critique is an assessment from *within* the purview of what is being studied (First *Critique*, the faculty of understanding, the Second *Critique*, the faculty of desire, the Third *Critique*, the faculty of judgment) and of what can be properly assigned to that domain. The response to the First Critique will be re-examined

in further detail in the following chapter, but a predominant charge against Kant at the time was that critical philosophy was a dangerous form of skepticism, while today it is largely considered an (oftentimes naïve) attempt to bulwark against such.

¹⁸ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 61 (4: 406).

¹⁹ Jens Timmerman in *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A Commentary* (2007) provides an explanation that helps to clarify this terminological confusion in *GMM*: “In accordance with a distinction proposed in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant could have used the word *Exempel* (exemplar), rather than *Beispiele* (instance) to avoid confusing the readers. The former expression refers to the way in which we ‘take something [or someone] as an example,’ which is the meaning required in the present context. The latter is that which is brought forward to ‘clarify an expression’” (53-54).

²⁰ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 63 (4: 408).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 278.

²³ Van der Zande, *Microscope*, p. 77.

²⁴ Van der Zande, *Microscope*, p. 79.

²⁵ Van der Zande, *Microscope*, p. 93.

²⁶ Van der Zande, *Microscope*, p. 93.

²⁷ Van der Zande, *Microscope*, p. 79.

²⁸ Van der Zande, *Microscope*, p. 81.

²⁹ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 280.

³⁰ Van der Zande, *Microscope*, p. 81.

³¹ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 64 (4: 410).

³² Adorno, *Problems*, p. 19.

³³ Adorno, *Problems*, p. 47.

³⁴ Adorno, *Problems*, p. 47.

³⁵ Adorno, *Problems*, p. 69.

³⁶ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 53 (4: 397).

³⁷ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 73-75 (4: 421-23).

³⁸ Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 44 (4: 389).

³⁹ Louden, "Introduction," *Anthropology*, p. 17.

⁴⁰ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 407.

⁴¹ Louden, *Kant's Impure Ethics*, p. 170.

⁴² Basically, this is Manfred Kuehn's general approach in his most excellent biography of Kant. Kuehn systematically shows how the caricature we have come to receive of Kant the man is part incorrect, part derived from the Romantic caricature, part due to excerpts largely from his final decade, and the like. For example, Kuehn explains that rigorous and unyielding punctuality was not really of Kant's nature, and was instead the character of one of his friends Joseph Green, an English merchant who lived by maxims and was so punctual that one time Kant set out to meet him but was a matter of a minute or so late only to see Green speeding by in a carriage, passing the approaching Kant without stopping (155). Kant's evening punctuality was a result of his visits to Green, stemming not from his own maxim, but in accordance with another's.

⁴³ Foucault submitted a secondary, complementary thesis in 1964 which consisted of his translation of *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* along with his critical commentary in the form of a monograph. The commentary looked at the genesis and structure of the *Anthropology*, in a nod towards his supervisor, Jean Hyppolite, but it became very clear that

Foucault was departing from Hegel and full-force into Nietzsche (the commentary ends with Nietzsche, as does Adorno's *Problems in Moral Philosophy*). It was suggested that the commentary should be removed and turned into a separate monograph while the translation should be published with a short note. Kate Briggs and Robert Nigro explain, "It was only in 1963. . . that he had glimpsed the outline of a history of the transition from the age of representation to the age of anthropology. To have published his theses, which announced this transition but was still ignorant of the method, would have been counterproductive." (11). The rest is, as they say, history, but the importance of Foucault's reading of Kant to his own work cannot be underestimated for it brought him, to a large degree, to a central problem that lead to *The Order of Things*, and, of course, beyond. Foucault's *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology* was both published and translated for the first time in 2008.

⁴⁴ Foucault, *Introduction*, p. 74.

⁴⁵ Foucault, *Introduction*, p. 70.

⁴⁶ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 377 (7: 277).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Note: The terminology of *pragmatic* does not exactly match up with the cut lines in *GMM* that lead us to *APPoV*. In *GMM* Kant separates moral investigation into the two routes of metaphysical and *practical*. However, given that the realm of the empirical cannot be practical in the very technical sense of *GMM* and *Critique of Practical Reason* (for practical within the critical project is the realm of action, only insofar as acting from duty, a notion divested of anything empirical), the *practical* anthropology mentioned in *GMM* and the *pragmatic* anthropology of *APPoV* seem to overlay one another. My reasoning for this connection, despite seeming terminological difference, is that since anthropology is necessarily within the empirical

realm, it cannot be practical in the critical sense. Anthropology, according to *APPoV*, is properly subdivided into pragmatic and physiological, empirical study of the human from what the human makes of itself, the direction the present discussion will shortly take, and the study of what nature makes of the human. From this, although with caution, I think it supportable to see the *APPoV* as the companion ethics alluded to in *GMM* despite the seeming inconsistency in terminology. Terminological equivocation, and seeming indiscriminant substitution of different terms without technical distinction that may indeed appear elsewhere in Kant, is a long running frustration acknowledged throughout Kant scholarship.

⁴⁹ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 232-3 (7: 120).

⁵⁰ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 241 (7: 130).

⁵¹ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 264 (7: 152-3).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 332-3 (7: 228).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 333 (7: 228-9).

⁵⁹ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 268 (7:157-8).

⁶⁰ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 314 (7: 208).

⁶¹ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 378 (7: 278).

⁶² Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 379 (7: 278-79).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 380 (7: 280).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Foucault, *Introduction*, p. 101.

⁶⁸ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 381 (7: 281).

⁶⁹ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 379 (7: 279).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 273.

⁷³ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 378-9 (7: 278).

⁷⁴ This work was actually a public oration delivered in Latin at the close of his first term as Rector of the University of Königsberg.

⁷⁵ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 382 (7:282).

⁷⁶ Kant, *Idea for a Universal History*, p. 111 (8:21).

⁷⁷ Kant, *On the Philosophers*’, p. 184 (15: 939-40). Pathos in Kant is divided into two different operations: passions and affects. While both of these interrupt the faculty of desire, defined by the principle of freedom and thus anything that interferes with freedom is suspect, Kant in particular separates out the passions for his harshest criticism. Passion is a long-term, calculated orientation towards a specific goal and thus, for Kant, represents a form of self-enslavement. Affect, on the other hand, is a sudden, involuntary interruption of the faculty of desire that can, in some cases, serve in a positive role.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Kant, *On the Philosophers*’, p. 185 (15: 941-42).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 189 (15: 950).

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 187 (15: 945-46).

⁸⁵ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 189 (15: 949)

⁸⁶ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 189 (15: 950).

⁸⁷ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 190 (15: 951).

Chapter Three: Aesthetics, Rhetoric, and the Discordant Accord of the Faculties

To speak of matters of taste often evokes a sense of subjectivist and unapologetically individualist judgment that requires neither support from nor concord with others. We accept as perfectly reasonable disagreement about whether, for example, a certain film was any good, and we chalk up differences to the seeming infinite resignation that “there is no accounting for taste.” Saying someone else has good taste usually indicates an alignment, a concordance, a recognized convergence with our own private judgment. Taste has, in some ways, lost its sense of taste, at least insofar as it no longer necessitates the social. Yet, this observation is neither an account of degradation nor lamentation; the point here merely accentuates the ways in which taste today operates quite differently (with a righteous sense of individualism) from a prevalent European eighteenth-century notion of taste. The relativization of taste, so to speak, certainly exposes the constellation of suspiciously non-universal characteristics that constituted “a person of taste” in the eighteenth century. The point here is not to reestablish a more accurate or authentic notion of taste, but instead to indicate taste’s tropic nature over time. Between the eighteenth century, often subtitled the Century of Taste, and the contemporary usage, there is a slippage between two differing orientations toward taste: the subjective yet universally communicable nature of aesthetic judgments from a perspective of disinterestedness and, on the other hand, the basically private subjectivization of taste.

However, characterizing this distinction so starkly risks oversimplifying the range of positions already available across various eighteenth-century contexts, as well as contemporary ones. Nevertheless, in speaking at such a level of generality the overall difference in cast between eighteenth-century taste and contemporary taste emerge as quite different in emphasis:

the social dimension for the former, and the individualist dimension for the latter. Kant's treatment of aesthetics, while widely influential, could hardly be identified as merely speaking to the predominant conception of taste of his time. Accordingly, it both aligns with and diverges from the general eighteenth-century understanding of taste, but on the whole he viewed matters of taste as universal subjective judgments: given by the subject, but at the same time necessitating in their very form a presupposition of universality in speaking from the position of everyone.

While the previous chapter examined some ways in which Kant's ethical and moral writings provide more intersections with rhetoric than the seeming dismissal belies (which itself is more complex and conflicted than it appears), the connections between morality and aesthetics have thus far largely remained implied. Standards of taste, sociable exchange, and communication (themes which remain central to his aesthetics) emerged as recurrent motifs from within the moral frameworks of both the metaphysical and anthropological approaches to morality. Likewise, Kant's aesthetics deeply concern themselves with moral dimensions yet perhaps not in the expected ways. In fact, the movement from morality to aesthetics reflects Kant's own process in working from the second to the third *Critiques*. As Andrew Bowie notes, "the very fact that there is a third Critique is not least a result of the insufficiency of the first two Critiques with regard to the characterization of the relationship between human freedom and the rest of nature."¹ Kant's own transition towards completing the critical project from the second to third *Critique*—from the examination of the principle of morality and the faculty of desire towards the examination of the aesthetic and teleological dimensions of the faculty of judgment—echoes the very movement within *CJ* itself. Kant is quite clear that aesthetic judgment is based on feeling (of pleasure and displeasure) while morality, as seen in the

examination of *GMM*, explicitly *cannot* be based on feeling or any other empirical interest.

Hence, the connection between morality and aesthetics cannot be based upon a similarity of *grounds*, but instead only upon the similarity of their *experiences*. As Paul Guyer notes,

it is primarily though the experience of freedom which is captured by Kant's conceptions of the disinterestedness and purposelessness of aesthetic response that aesthetic experience is capable of taking on the deep moral import that Kant assigns to it. The coils of Kant's conception of the moral value of the aesthetic, in other words, are tightly wound around the armature furnished by his epistemological analysis and psychological explanations beginning with his discussion of pure judgments of taste.²

The experience of disinterestedness in aesthetic judgment instructs one in acquiring the disposition of disinterestedness that is also required by a Kantian morality divested from empirical interests and purposes. As Henry Allison explains, the connection between beauty and virtue involves "providing a pleasing propaedeutic to, or preparation for, the serious business of morality that is not already of itself moral."³ In other words, the relation between aesthetic judgment and pure moral judgments involves an analogical relation and even a didactic or heuristic function.

Importing the distinction (and simultaneous interrelation) from the previous chapter, aesthetic judgment also clearly connects to the improper ethics of the realm of lived experience and its emphasis on sociability. Kant's *Lectures on Logic* further reflects a similar relation between the empirical ethics of sociability and taste. For Kant, a judgment of taste is universal (never a private matter of individual inclination) but also subjective (given by the subject and not the object). The apparent conundrum of the subjective-yet-universal, in some ways, sits at the center of the enigma of the *Critique of Judgment* (and, even further, of critical philosophy in general with its obsession with interrogating how synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible). Kant states, "sociability gives life a certain taste that it otherwise lacks, and this taste itself is

social. When what pleases me sensibly must also please others straightforwardly, then this means: I have taste.”⁴ The maxims of anthropological ethics and the maxims of aesthetics match up pretty neatly. In the previous chapter, the maxims of anthropological ethics enumerated in *APPoV* emerged as threefold: *to think for oneself, to think oneself (in communication with human beings) into the place of every other person, and to always think consistently with oneself*. In *CJ*, Kant repeats these very three maxims verbatim with the preface that “the following maxims of the common human understanding do not belong here, to be sure, as parts of the critique of taste, but can nevertheless serve to elucidate its fundamental principles.”⁵ In *CJ* Kant then provides extensive commentary on these three maxims, clarifying “the first is the maxim of the unprejudiced way of thinking, the second of the broad-minded way, the third of the consistent way.”⁶ In some ways, in our study of rhetoric’s relation to anthropological ethics, conversation, and the sociable exchange at the table from the previous chapter, we have been discussing taste all the while.

The *Critique of Judgment*, the examination of the faculty of judgment in its two primary forms (aesthetic judgment and teleological judgment), serves as one substantial site where Kant’s discussion of rhetoric takes place. The discussion of the relationship between rhetoric and poetry appears in the part on aesthetic judgment, in the sections discussing the beautiful arts.

Accordingly, we will be revisiting the various confusions inherent in Kant’s treatment of rhetoric within the context of his approach to aesthetics, to resituate that treatment in accordance with the unusual operation and complicated task that comprises *CJ*. This chapter begins by briefly examining Kant’s notion of taste contextually, before turning to the *CJ* to examine the following elements of his critical treatment of aesthetics: the four moments of aesthetic judgment (disinterestedness, subjective universality, purposiveness without end, and without determinate

concept), the faculties of the mind, the peculiarities of reflective judgment, and the free play of the faculties in judgment. Deleuze's reading in *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, by examining and recasting the discordant accord of the faculties in *CJ*, assists in concluding by drawing Kant's treatment of aesthetics into conversation with Kant's suspicions about the potential powers of rhetoric. An inversion takes place from within the hierarchy in *CJ* between the beautiful arts: poetry's declared primacy over rhetoric as the speech arts largely rests upon the assumption that poetry does not unleash the potentially powerful and unsettling (to the faculty of understanding) faculty of the imagination upon matters of serious business, because poetry, according to Kant's argument, merely dabbles in matters of play. On the other hand, rhetoric emerges as dangerous for doing the inverse. Perhaps this partially accounts for the suspicion and anxiety manifest in the litany of diverse and divergent objections that Kant persistently articulates across different works about rhetoric, oratory, and persuasion, while assigning, at the same time, not just a role but an important one for eloquence, popularity, style, and expression.

Kant and Taste

The science of aesthetics proper emerges with the coining of *aesthetics* by the Wolff-Leibniz-inspired Alexander Baumgarten, most notably with *Aesthetica* (1750-1758). Kant was influenced by Baumgarten (even using his texts as the basis for some of his courses), albeit diverging in several important ways, notably on whether aesthetics can be a science and whether feelings have a cognitive function.⁷ Baumgarten drew poetry and rhetoric together only to separate them out as being perfected and unperfected sense presentations, respectively. John Poulakos explains, in "From the Depths of Rhetoric" (2007), that out of eighteenth-century Germany emerged a more complex dynamic than merely the battle between rhetoric and philosophy, or philosophical style versus poetics, or poetry versus rhetoric, in so far as all these

were explicitly at work and converged—from different directions and influences—in Kantian aesthetics. Poulakos explains, “with poetry in the forefront, the quarrel of philosophy and rhetoric assumed the form of two new sites of contestation: the first between philosophy and poetics, which Baumgarten sought to resolve by working out a compromise, and the second between rhetoric and poetry, which Kant adjudicated by declaring poetry superior to rhetoric as well as all other fine arts.”⁸ Poulakos’s analysis posits that the rhetorical tradition formed an unacknowledged—even unwitting—influence on the development of eighteenth-century aesthetics in Germany with the rationalist Baumgarten and then, subsequently, through Kant.

In short, in order to enumerate the relation between rhetoric, poetics, and philosophy, this emerging aesthetic tradition, according to Poulakos’s account, had to reinvent the wheel, starting from scratch upon points that rhetoric had already long-sorted (namely, justification of the aesthetic). Poulakos explains,

What this kind of discourse lacked in both cases [Baumgarten and Kant], and what the rhetorical tradition did afford, was a discursive instrumentality that could, via a set of appropriate arguments, introduce and justify the category of the aesthetic in the first place, distinguish it from its cognitive and practical counterparts, and account for all aesthetic experience, not simply associated with poetry. Because, then, the task of legitimating the philosophy-poetics union and elevating poetry above all other fine arts were rhetorical tasks, and because rhetoric, too had considered the questions of perception and beauty, the inauguration and subsequent development of aesthetics dictated considerable, even if unwitting or reluctant, reliance on the resources of the rhetorical tradition.⁹

Poulakos provides a rich account of one line of connection between eighteenth-century aesthetics and rhetoric, yet there are far more (and even more direct) linkages that further strengthen this affinity. Several of these connections emerged in the first chapter, including Kant’s direct knowledge of Cicero and Aristotle, his attendance at rhetoric lectures, his admiration of the British empiricists, his intellectual milieu connecting him with rhetoric under the aegis of

Aufklärung, the various articles and translations by the popular philosophers on rhetorical figures, in addition to the ways in which rhetorical sensitivity and considerations of both audience and style so occupied Kant throughout his career. Even further, in Kant's own writings, while oratory may deserve no respect whatsoever (even though this comment is qualified immediately in the footnote) evidently rhetoric and especially popularity, tone, style, and eloquence do. These themes directly connect with understandings and conceptions of rhetoric in circulation and active in his time, without requiring an anachronistic imposition by a contemporary understanding or definition. While rhetoric was fragmented and distributed within the lower faculty of philosophy in the Prussian university, it existed indeed—in contrast to Kennedy's succinct depiction—in lively and popular form in eighteenth-century Germany. Critical philosophy overtook popular philosophy, linked with certain political and institutional developments, and Romanticism developed along its own itinerary, yet rhetoric played a much larger role in Kant's thought than most scholars acknowledge. The stylistic forging of critical and philosophical writing effaces its own connections to rhetoric, something which the conclusion will revisit, however upon examination of works alongside *CJ* these traces emerge more distinctly.

While Kant's aesthetics serves as the sustained focus of this chapter, explicitly clarifying Kant's own position regarding taste might serve as a good starting point for the *CJ*. In *APPoV* Kant states, “to be well-mannered, respectable, well-behaved, polished (with the coarseness planed down) is still only the negative condition of taste.”¹⁰ After the negative conditions, i.e. refinement of coarseness, are satisfied as minimal prerequisites, Kant identifies the positive conditions: “taste (as a formal sense, so to speak) concerns the communication of our feeling of pleasure or displeasure to others, and includes a susceptibility, which this very communication

affects pleurably to feel a satisfaction (*complacentia*) about it in common with others (sociably).”¹¹ The emphasis on taste as necessarily communicative and communicable echoes Kant’s repeated insistence that taste is neither individual nor private but social and public. Kant states, “at the ground of everything that has to do with taste lies a sociability. . . he who only chooses that which pleases himself and no other has no taste at all. Thus taste cannot possibly be isolated [,] idiosyncratic. The judgment concerning taste is thus never a private judgment.”¹² In several ways, this echoes the overall tenor of Kant’s observations about ethics at the pragmatic and anthropological (i.e., not transcendental) level. Taste and aesthetic judgment necessitate communicability, the ability to be shared. Kant explicitly insists on this connection between taste, sociability, and communication:

In the human soul there exists a *principium* that would very much deserve to be studied, namely, that our mind is communicative, so that man gladly communicates as well as accepts communication. Therefore do men communicate with one another gladly, and seldom does man sense proper pleasure when he cannot communicate, and communicate his thoughts and inclinations, to someone. Our knowledge is nothing if others do not know what we know.¹³

Whereas taste involves this principle of communicability as a necessary constituent, (immediately preceding this Kant declares a person in isolation has no taste), the scope of communicability also spans larger than judgments of taste. While this *principium* most definitely has been studied from a variety of angles, this might seem a surprising declaration from the Kant of the critical philosophy. On the other hand, this seems less surprising when considering the “other” Kant of the embodied, empirical, anthropological realm of ethics, where communicability likewise serves as the basis for sociality. While taste is subjective—given by the subject and not inherent in the object—taste cannot denote solipsism or relativism in Kant, for the form of aesthetic judgment entails a universal assessment. The nature of aesthetic

judgment and its four moments in *CJ* will be examined in further detail later in this chapter, but for the present the social, communicable, and universal subjective nature of taste for Kant constitutes some key elements sufficient for examining rhetoric's influence.

One additional angle concerning Kant and the rhetorical tradition that remains under-examined generally and only skimmed in this project heretofore, concerns how British figures like Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, Edmund Burke, Henry Home, Lord Kames, and Hugh Blair (among others) influenced Kantian aesthetics. Theodore Gracyk summarizes the six most predominant avenues of influence from British aesthetics to Kantian aesthetics: “(1) the sublime, (2) disinterestedness, (3) the question of whether there is a standard of taste, (4) the role of imagination, (5) common sense, and (6) the relation of taste to genius.”¹⁴ The *Critique of Judgment*, it should be noted, was not Kant's first explicit foray into aesthetics. In 1764 Kant published *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime*, which, as the title intimates, wears its British influence on its sleeve. Several developments in Kant's later *CJ* depart from this earlier work, however *CJ*'s influence from figures in the British rhetorical tradition stands out. Specifically discussing *CJ*, Gracyk notes, “At many places in the text it is likely that Kant has all four authors [Burke, Hume, Kames, and Alexander Gerard] in mind.”¹⁵ While Kant's recourse and sustained attention to the notion of taste reflect the eighteenth-century conceptions of taste, they equally, if not more so, also represent a point of departure. As Gracyk puts it, “Kant's aesthetics is neither isolated from its predecessors nor a slavish imitation of British aesthetics.”¹⁶ Kant often seemed to borrow conventional notions to transform them into something different and technically specific (a recurring motif and source of frustration for readers of Kant), as in the case of common sense or *sensus communis*. Furthermore, while Kant's debt to British eighteenth-century figures in

rhetorical theory (particularly via aesthetics and ethics) has been acknowledged, tracing this influence is akin to navigating a narrow precipice due to the fact that Kant's allusions are not always explicit and because he simultaneously deploys and re-defines what he borrows.

The standard account of eighteenth-century aesthetics posits that from Shaftesbury (1671-1713), and Hutcheson's (1694-1746) extension and response to Shaftesbury, emerged the notion of disinterestedness (independence of aesthetic experience) that Kant later formalized into the first critical moment of aesthetic judgment. However, as Guyer demonstrates, the story is much more complicated. Hutcheson's empiricist leanings, diverging from Shaftesbury's Neo-Platonism, allowed him to radically separate the aesthetic from the practical, and "almost no author between Hutcheson and Kant was willing to follow Hutcheson in this radical separation."¹⁷ Kant did not merely take up Hutchesonian disinterestedness as-is, but instead saw this as the problem or antinomy upon which he felt necessary to work. As Guyer notes, "far from merely accepting an already dominant theory of disinterestedness, he [Kant] wanted to resolve a historical controversy representing a real theoretical antinomy created by his predecessors."¹⁸ This antinomy that Kant inherits from Shaftesbury and Hutcheson involves "that aesthetic experience can only be understood as a delicate balance between the disinterestedness which constitutes its own freedom and the broader sense of freedom which underlies our most fundamental forms of attachment in the world, the freedom of reason on which the bounds of morality are based."¹⁹ Guyer's emphasis on the similarities between moral and aesthetic judgment, based not on the grounding but on the experience, is important to keep in mind when considering the tricky way in which Kant connected aesthetics and morality. In Allison's account, "in spite of being anticipated to some extent by theorists, such as Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, the view that the judgment or experience of beauty was disinterested, at least in

the broad sense in which Kant understood this, was far from the prevailing opinion of aestheticians of the time in either Great Britain or Germany.”²⁰ So while this Hutchesonian moment in Kant was derived from the context of eighteenth-century aesthetics in Britain, it simultaneously represented a fairly radical break from prevailing theories of taste.

The connection between Kant and Edmund Burke immediately presents itself in the title *Observations*. According to Gracyk, however, the affinity between the two does not extend much further. He argues that the connection between Burke and Kant, on the basis of Kant’s treatment of the sublime in *CJ*, is overstated: “except for the brief mention of the ‘terrifying sublime’ the examples of sublimity found in the *Observations* reflect the influence of Joseph Addison and not Burke. Kant never agrees with Burke that the sublime always involves terror.”²¹ Instead, Kant actually denotes two forms of the sublime (mathematical and dynamic), and this distinction explains why sublimity does not always evoke terror, for such concerns only one function. Kant directly references Burke’s aesthetics in *CJ*, in concluding the *Analytic of the Sublime*, and identifies him as “the foremost author” of the psychological approach to aesthetics.²² In doing so, Kant associates Burke with the alternative paradigm that serves as foil to his own “transcendental exposition” of aesthetics. Accordingly, Kant notes, “as psychological remarks, these [Burke’s] analyses of the phenomena of our mind are extremely fine, and provide rich materials for the favorite researches of empirical anthropology.”²³ Kant then distinguishes his transcendental orientation from Burke’s position, which can never account for the universal and can only account for an individual private sense. It appears that, at least in Kant’s account, an individualist and “egoist” private aesthetics (necessarily so, since it is based on the empirical and non-transcendental bases) was indeed operant in the eighteenth century, after all. While the title *Observations* intimates Burke as a main influence, Kant explicitly distanced himself from

Burke. Furthermore, there were several other figures of more substantial influence (even if they were directly cited less).

Burke provoked consideration of the sublime, and Shaftesbury and Hutcheson contributed the orientation of disinterestedness, but it was Kames who provided the methodological orientation that became so very important not only for Kantian aesthetics, but for critical philosophy more generally. According to Gracyk, “while Kant borrows substantially from the British, his debt to Shaftesbury, Burke, and Hume is exaggerated in standard readings. At the same time, his debt to Kames and Gerard has been relatively neglected.”²⁴ Even Kant’s borrowing of common sense, in some way, can be connected to Kames. According to Gracyk, “Kames had already advocated that taste is regulated by an ideal norm. He argues that a foundation in nature provides a ‘common sense’ as a ‘model or standard for each individual,’ a standard to which we ought to conform.”²⁵ But for Kames, this common sense is properly relegated to the few whose taste remains uncorrupted, while for Kant—although adopting common sense from this tradition—common sense evokes a much more Stoic conception of *sensus communis* in identifying the capacities that are common to all. The sense that is shared by all, in a phenomenological and not moral or psychological register, is distinct from what is known as the common sense school or commonsense philosophy.

According to John Zammito, Kames’s influence did not extend solely to Kant: “equally important for Kant in the early 1760s was the *Elements of Criticism*, by Henry Home, Lord Kames. . . The early essays of Herder, which date from the mid 1760s, consider Kames equal in stature to Baumgarten in the question of aesthetics.”²⁶ Kant’s acknowledgment in the first *Critique* of Kames as the source of the proper orientation towards aesthetics was briefly mentioned in chapter one, but in the *Jäsche Logic*, Kant directly cites his own orientation and

method of critique as coming from Kames and situates this within the general context of rhetoric and poetics:

Some, especially orators and poets, have tried to engage in reasoning concerning taste, but they have never been able to hand down a decisive judgment concerning it. The philosopher *Baumgarten* in Frankfurt had a plan for an aesthetic as a science. But *Home*, more correctly, called aesthetics *critique*, since it yields no rules *a priori* that determine judgment sufficiently, as logic does, but instead derives its rules *a posteriori*, and since it only makes more universal, through comparison, the empirical laws according to which we cognize the more perfect (beautiful) and the more imperfect.²⁷

So while Baumgarten coined *aesthetica* and inaugurated aesthetics accordingly as a science, Kant's own soon-to-be even more influential aesthetic theory acknowledged Kames's association between aesthetics and critique as the superior orientation. Given the centrality of the disposition and orientation required by critique for Kant, the importance of this attribution to the rhetorical tradition is of interest to more than the scholar and historian of rhetoric. The difference in orientation offered by critique that Kant derived from Kames, furthermore, played a decisive role in the development of *CJ* and the route by which the third *Critique* found its own authorization, after it was already well under way, in the discovery of *reflective judgment*. Before further examining how crucial reflective judgment's discovery was for the *CJ*, a more general examination of the context and operation of this enigmatic third *Critique* appears warranted.

Critique of Judgment (1790)

Kant never planned the critical philosophy as the monumental trilogy with which we are familiar. From both his letters and comments in select works, he originally estimated the first *Critique* as a complete and sufficient articulation of the new-found critical philosophy. However, upon its unanticipated and disappointing reception, Kant not only reconsidered the

style and presentation of the first *Critique* (1781), but furthermore postponed his *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) to write a popular version of the *CPuR* known as *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783), and additionally produced a second edition of *CPuR* (1787). He acknowledged the incompleteness of his critical system, thereby prompting the second *Critique* (*CPrR* of 1788), and then, in perhaps the most sudden and unexpected turn, focused on taste and aesthetic judgment in the third *Critique* (1790). Originally conceived as the *Critique of Taste*, Kant began work on the *Critique of Judgment* by considering the nature of the beautiful and the sublime and of the fine arts. However, upon his discovery of the unique function of reflective judgment, the critical operation shifted. In confronting the aesthetic terrain—feelings of pleasure and displeasure—in which judgments are non-cognitive in nature, Kant reversed his original assessment of the impossibility of *a priori* principles of taste as articulated in *CPuR*, but he also had to tinker with the operation and method of critical philosophy (and the related criteria for “critique”). Eighteenth-century British rhetoric and aesthetics, as previously noted, played a significant role in this transformation of critique and aesthetics in *CJ*.

In the first *Critique*, Kant explained his early position in a footnote about the possibility of a critique of taste, based upon what he considered at that time to be the only necessary work of critical philosophy:

The Germans are the only ones who now employ the word ‘aesthetics’ to designate that which others call the critique of taste. The ground for this is a failed hope, held by the excellent analyst Baumgarten, of bringing the critical estimation of the beautiful under principles of reason. But this effort is futile. For the putative rules or criteria are merely empirical as far as their sources are concerned, and can never serve as *a priori* rules according to which our judgment of taste must be directed, rather the latter constitutes the genuine touchstone of the correctness of the former.²⁸

In *CJ*, appearing less than a decade after this declaration, Kant had a change of heart and reconsidered aesthetic judgment (alongside teleological judgment) as suitable for critical examination. The critique of *taste* turned into the critique of *judgment* and then only proceeded upon the proper grounds for critique—the determination of *a priori* principles—after Kant (well into the project, even) discovered a new form of judgment: reflective judgment, or judgment without reference to any particular concept but merely the capacity for reflection that gives itself its own principle. Determinant/determining judgment, the type of judgment predominantly in the first *Critique*, operates by subsuming the particular under the general. Reflective judgment, on the other hand, emerges in the third *Critique* as generating the general from the specific. The way in which the *a priori* principle emerges in *CJ* is of an entirely different kind than the previous *Critiques*. What makes the third *Critique* even possible is the common sense that underlies reflective judgment (which includes aesthetic—the beautiful and the sublime—and teleological judgment), the common capacity that makes such judgment, like aesthetic judgment, at once both subjective (given by the subject) and universal (a capacity common to all), but also universally valid insofar as the mere form of aesthetic judgment presumes validity not just individually but for all with such a capacity.

The third *Critique* remains enigmatic for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, the treatment of the beautiful and the sublime in the first part of the work became quite influential on aesthetic theory, grounding an aesthetic formalism excised from the second part's emphasis on teleological judgment, the purposiveness of nature, and the unifying and synthesizing function of judgment, which mediates between reason and understanding towards the systematicity which Kant always sought. On the other hand, the third *Critique* seems to put that very critical enterprise in jeopardy. As Bowie notes, “despite the strictures of the first *Critique*, Kant himself

acknowledges the vital importance of this aspect of philosophy [aesthetics], even at the cost of putting some of his most fundamental ideas into question.”²⁹ Furthermore, the third *Critique* has also served as a site for a re-reading of Kant along a more Nietzschean line (c.f. Deleuze), among other investigations of an “other” Kant (c.f. Jean-Francois Lyotard). Guyer summarizes,

In the last decade or two, however, Kant’s third *Critique* has suddenly been transformed from a *tabula rasa* into a palimpsest of philosophical and critical theories. Instead of being the archetypal work of modernism, the *Critique of Judgment* has suddenly become the archetypal work of postmodernism, revealing the contradictions inherent in every idea of knowledge, rationality, culture, and art which it has become so fashionable to discover.³⁰

While Guyer’s approach follows a different direction, his observation indeed points to the way in which the third *Critique* (in the preface of which Kant declares “thus with this I bring my entire critical enterprise to an end”) not only necessitates an underlying unity and systemacity that draws everything together but also shows the very impossibility of that unity at the same time.

As previously mentioned, taste and aesthetic judgment certainly do not become the focus of the third *Critique ex nihilo*. Kant had written *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1764) before his critical period while he was a *privatdozenten*, and Kant went through a time (coinciding with the Russian occupation of Königsberg) where he was known as the Elegant Magister. According to the standard account, however, after becoming acquainted with the work of Hume, who awoke Kant from his dogmatic slumber, Kant experienced a *palingenesis* leading to the silent decade of the 1770s out of which emerged the Kant of critical and moral philosophy. While it may be tempting to see this conversion as dramatic and encompassing, as a shift from more popular and elegant style to the severity and challenging style of critical philosophy, things do not neatly align with this trajectory. The *Anthropology*, with its persistent themes of social exchange and sociability, was the product of efforts over the course of twenty-plus years

inclusive of and beyond the critical period (1781-1792, during which the three *Critiques* appear). For as disreputable as oratory and rhetoric appear at first glance in Kant, in other ways, these topics (and many of the related themes associated here) persistently occupied much of his sustained attention throughout various works. As investigated in the first chapter, Kant performs a conflicted relation to rhetoric (in his differing accounts of oral expression, oratory, eloquence, and persuasion, as just a few angles discussed). On the one hand, Kant denounces oratory and persuasion as exploiting the hearers and incapacitating them from forming their own judgments (via an over-reliance upon the function of the imagination in matters of serious business), but on the other, Kant identifies eloquence as the union of skill and knowledge, best underscored by perspicuity and parsimony. This confliction becomes even more pronounced and complex in Kant's treatment of and his own struggle with the role of popularity in philosophy. Some clarification about this confliction can be found from within the context of the *CJ* itself.

While Kant makes many moves in *CJ* to provide a critique of the mediating operation of judgment, the most enduring and influential part of Kant's third *Critique* remains his treatment of aesthetic judgment, particularly the analytic of the beautiful and the sublime. The sublime has held an important and persistent interest in the history of rhetoric, from the influence of *Peri Hypsous* (attributed as Longinus), through Burke and other eighteenth-century British figures, and forward into many contemporary theoretical investigations. While much interesting work on Kant's treatment of the sublime has emerged, this is largely in response to—and even in spite of—Kant's rather cursory and strangely disjunctive treatment. In several ways, the *Analytic of the Sublime* does not seem to fit within the third *Critique*. According to Allison, it “seems to have been a last-minute decision, and Kant clearly viewed it as parergonal to the central systematic concerns of the work.”³¹ The four moments of aesthetic judgment, in short, are (1)

disinterestedness, (2) subjective universality, (3) purposiveness without purpose, and (4) necessitated by an indeterminate concept. While the sublime peeks through at points in the account of these four moments, they are technically contained within the *Analytic of the Beautiful* and to a large extent presume aesthetic judgments of the beautiful, in particular. While these moments have been largely excised from their context in *CJ* towards what develops as aesthetic formalism, and taken beyond Kant's later wishes with Romanticism, they are likely the most influential aspect of Kant's aesthetic legacy.³²

The **first moment of aesthetic judgment**, disinterestedness, instructs us on the proper orientation of the moral: to evaluate without interceding empirical interest. Kant defines the beautiful from this first moment of aesthetic judgment by declaring that “taste is the faculty for judging an object or a kind of representation through a satisfaction or dissatisfaction without any interest.”³³ In this moment, Kant distinguishes the agreeable from the beautiful and from the good by recognizing them as three different attitudes toward feelings of pleasure and displeasure. Kant explains, “agreeable is that which everyone calls what gratifies him, beautiful what merely pleases him, good, what is esteemed, approved, i.e., that on which he sets an objective value.”³⁴ Recalling the distinctions set out in chapter two between the moral positions of categorical and hypothetical imperatives—whereas categorical was free from any empirical interest and hypothetical was always oriented towards such interest—may serve useful. For similarly in Kant's aesthetics, only aesthetic judgment of the beautiful is free from interest, since agreeable is merely empirical and instant gratification, and the good is hypothetically oriented towards a particular end contingently designated as good. Aesthetic judgments of the beautiful are disinterested in that they are made without an interest in their object and without adherence to or determination by concept.

The **second moment of aesthetic judgment** involves the subjective universal; taste is both given by the subject (as opposed to provided by the object) and, unlike a private or empirical claim, it interpellates a public context insofar as its very form presumes a claim to universality. Kant defines the second moment by declaring “that is beautiful which pleases universally without concept.”³⁵ At first this sounds like the just-discussed first moment, and while it is directly connected to the first, this second moment is where the orientation of the *subjective universal* emerges most explicitly as a condition for aesthetic judgment. Kant declares, “there must be attached to the judgment of taste, with the consciousness of an abstraction in it from all interest, a claim to validity for everyone without the universality that pertains to objects, i.e., it must be combined with a claim to subjective universality.”³⁶ Subjective in this sense means given by the subject, as opposed to inherent in the object of aesthetic contemplation. While this moment directly results from freedom from interest and concept, the form of aesthetic judgment, while subjective, inscribes a validity for everyone in its pronouncement. This does not mean that everyone will, in fact, actually agree with the judgment but, rather, that the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful operates *as if* it were valid for everyone, through the sense that is common to all. This validity is not a logical validity (which would be oriented towards a concept, and would be cognitive) but merely the reflective function of feelings of pleasure and displeasure.

The **third moment of aesthetic judgment** defines the beautiful accordingly: “beauty is the form of the purposiveness of an object, insofar as it is perceived in it without representation of an end.”³⁷ Related to the operation of judgment without concept, the purposiveness without a determined purpose seems paradoxical because of the unusual way in which the *a priori* principle of the faculty of judgment—the purposiveness of nature—serves to undergird the

seemingly contingent with systematicity and unity. In this moment Kant explains another dimension related to disinterestedness, where the pleasure or displeasure in the beautiful necessarily must be independent of what he calls charm, or the *parerga* (the ancillary or ornamental supplements to the art, like the border to a painting, or a drape on a statue), namely the decoration that can distract from beauty by an overstimulation of pathos. Accordingly, the object of art cannot be a perfection (which would be an end, and would require a concept towards which the perfection, so to speak, was oriented), since the beautiful and the good are distinctly different on this point. So, the object of aesthetic judgment must be without purpose, but at the same time, undergirded by the purposiveness of nature, which unifies and gathers into an underlying accord or lawfulness the seemingly random and contingent. This third moment of aesthetic judgment emphasizes that because there are no objective criteria for assessment of the beautiful (they are subjective and yet universally communicable), a standard of exemplarity emerges in their stead. This is directly contrary to the moral philosophy of *GMM*, where examples and exemplarity cannot and must not serve as the model for moral action. In the third moment, purposiveness without a purpose, the exemplar does indeed provide a heuristic function by which aesthetic judgment can be refined and modeled, but not imitated.

Kant further defines the beautiful according to the **fourth moment of aesthetic judgment** as that “which is cognized without concept as the object of a necessary satisfaction.”³⁸ Now, for Kant, while the agreeable has the possibility of producing satisfaction in one, the beautiful necessarily does so and the articulation of an aesthetic judgment speaks as if everyone’s assent was already presumed. Exemplarity—modeling and refining judgment based on the exemplary or paragon, one who embodies exquisite aesthetic judgment and taste—presumes not the objective conditions for judgment, but “the necessity of the assent of all to a judgment that is

regarded as an example of a universal rule that one cannot produce.”³⁹ The ground of that necessity cannot be a concept, but instead is a capacity common to all, what Kant calls common sense or *sensus communis*. Kant writes, “one solicits assent from everyone else because one has a ground for it that is common to all.”⁴⁰ This further connects back to the universal communicability of aesthetic judgment, since such a necessity, if not grounded objectively, must be grounded in a capacity shared by all, by which the communication is universally enabled. Kant explains, “such a principle, however, could only be regarded as a common sense, which is essentially different from the common understanding that is sometimes also called common sense (*sensus communis*), since the latter judges not by feeling but always by concepts, although commonly only in the form of obscurely represented concepts.”⁴¹ He borrows this term from its English deployment but uses it in a way much more resonant with its Stoic associations. Kant distinguished his use from the uses that posit common sense as a form of evidence or proof towards knowledge, even of the probabilistic variety. He also distinguishes common sense from what he identifies as *sensus vulgaris*, or reduction to the base. Common sense, borrowed but simultaneously distinguished from several of the associations with which it had come to be known, is basically the sheer facticity (divested from the specific moral imputations *sensus communis* had picked up along the way) of a universal power or capacity for judgment, evinced by aesthetic judgment’s necessary ability to be universally communicated, articulated as if everyone’s assent had already been presumed in the judgment.

Kant further specifies,

By ‘*sensus communis*,’ however, must be understood the idea of a communal sense, i.e., a faculty for judging that in its reflection takes account (*a priori*) of everyone else’s way of representing in thought, in order as it were to hold its judgment up to human reason as a whole and thereby avoid the illusion which,

from subjective private conditions that could easily be held to be objective, would have a detrimental influence on that judgment.⁴²

This, of course, connects back to Kant's ethics—both metaphysical and anthropological—in its presupposition to aesthetically judge as if having already taken into consideration everyone else's way of judging using the common faculty, specifically bracketing out all the individuated and interested private elements that convolute judgments of the sort. This counterfactual yet normative framework, to import the Habermasian terminology methodologically derived from Kantian critique, does not indeed survey others' actual judgments to test one's own judgment in an empirical way. Kant clarifies, "Now this happens by one holding his judgment up not so much to the actual as to the merely possible judgments of others and putting himself into the position of everyone else, merely by abstracting from the limitations that contingently attach to our own judging."⁴³ In this way, the earlier discussion of how disinterestedness is propaedeutic to the moral by exemplifying the orientation of divestment from individual empirical interests becomes even more applicable and of even further significance for Kant's critical project.

One can easily see the ways in which Kant's treatment of aesthetic judgment in its four moments connects to aesthetic theory's development, most notably along the lines of art serving no particular end or specific purpose, and the independence of the object of art, among others. Yet, when viewed within the context of the faculties of the mind, and seeing the place of judgment as one of the three primary faculties or powers of the mind, the emphasis subtly shifts. Add to the faculties of the mind what Kant identifies as the *a priori* principle of judgment (the purposiveness of nature that underscores *CJ*), then his aesthetic theory starts to take a different function and emphasis than his legacy in aesthetics belies. Kant refers to the faculties of the mind and their interrelation most directly in the introductions of *CJ*, but this framing serves as an important context for revisiting Kant's treatment of rhetoric. Kant explicitly connects the

common sense emerging from the fourth moment of aesthetic judgment with the faculties of the mind and, in particular, what Kant identifies as their interrelation of “free play.” Kant states, “thus only under the presupposition that there is a common sense (by which, however, we do not mean any external sense but rather the effect of the free play of our cognitive powers), only under the presupposition of such a common sense, I say, can the judgment of taste be made.”⁴⁴ The sense common to all, connected with the communicability and hence subjective universality of aesthetic judgments, serves another heuristic purpose besides, of course, enabling the possibility of judgments of taste entirely. This common sense also connects to how judgment, in its reflection, affords something like recognition of the ways in which our shared faculties interrelate with one another. This is what Kant refers to as the free play of the faculties that characterize judgment, an important conceptualization to which we will return. First, however, we should consider the faculties of the mind and what exactly Kant means by their constitution and operation more generally, before then moving to the discordant accord of free play between them in judgment.

The Faculties of the Mind in *CJ*

As previously noted, several turns that constitute the third *Critique* seem surprising given the orientation of the first two *Critiques*. However, Kant’s critical philosophy even from the first *Critique* was already based on these divisions of the faculties of the mind, which prescribe the central divisions in philosophy. The focus on the faculty of the understanding in the first *Critique* and the faculty of reason in the second *Critique* do not lead one to expect what takes place in the third *Critique*. Kant’s sudden turn from the second to the third *Critique* is announced in a letter to Carl Leonhard Reinhold, the author of *Letters on Kantian Philosophy*

(1786-7), which served to popularize the critical philosophy. Kant, in outlining the primary approach of *CJ*, wrote to Reinhold,

I am now at work on the critique of taste, and I have discovered a new sort of a priori principles, different from those heretofore observed. For there are three faculties of the mind: the faculty of cognition, the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire. In *Critique of Pure (theoretical) Reason* I found a priori principles for the first of these, and in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, a priori principles for the third. I tried to find them for the second as well, and though I thought it impossible to find such principles, the analysis of the previously mentioned faculties of the human mind allowed me to discover a systematicity, giving me ample material at which to marvel and if possible explore, material sufficient to last me for the rest of my life.⁴⁵

Here Kant explicitly maps out each of the *Critiques* as corresponding to each of the faculties of the mind, discovering a difference in kind in the *a priori* principles of aesthetic (reflective) judgment, and furthermore he orients this enterprise towards the systematicity of the operation of the faculties and, accordingly, the different operations of knowledge, action, and judgment. For Kant, the faculties of the mind play a particular role (a role decidedly different, as emphasized by Kant, from a psychological function) and that role involves the powers and capacities of different modes of cognition itself, particularly in the interrelation between those powers. While the faculties of the mind play a central role in the critical project, the way in which they interrelate with one another in reflective judgment (where the faculties enter a relation of free play, without a ruling or legislative faculty) sets the final critical enterprise apart from the previous two *Critiques*. Kant's account of "faculty" is particularly confusing, for he refers to several things as faculties at different places, and uses the term faculty even within the third *Critique* explicitly in two different senses.⁴⁶ However, the ways in which the three faculties of the mind interact with one another is not only important as the basis of aesthetic judgment, but also, as advanced towards the end of this chapter, I believe do indeed relate to the particular suspicions, anxieties, and dangers associated with rhetoric in favoring poetry.

The faculties of the mind and their relation to one another become important for the framing of *CJ*, in both the first and second introductions.⁴⁷ While *CJ* is not where Kant first introduces the faculties of the mind, the importance of their function and interrelation between one another emerges in this work, particularly in the First Introduction, in a way that resolves what Kant sees as the incompleteness of the first two *Critiques*. Kant announces that “we can trace all faculties of the human mind without exception to these three: the faculty of cognition, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire.”⁴⁸ While an overemphasis on the first *Critique* in Kant’s oeuvre might give the impression of the predominance of cognition, across the three *Critiques* it becomes apparent that each examines the operations, capacities, and functions of one of the three main faculties: understanding, reason, and judgment. Kant finds an overemphasis in the history of philosophy on only one of the faculties—the reduction of all things to cognition—and his criticism against rationalism, accordingly, can be seen in this context. Kant continues, “to be sure, philosophers who otherwise deserve nothing but praise for the thoroughness of their way of thinking have sought to explain this distinction as merely illusory and to reduce all faculties to the mere faculty of cognition.”⁴⁹ This overemphasis comes at the cost of understanding the faculty of human freedom and action, reason, and the faculty that concerns the non-cognitive and its relation to nature, in judgment. Critique, as having been derived from Kames, is a methodological orientation by which Kant rethinks the key divisions of philosophy. So much has been said about the Kantian orientation of critique but, as Douglas Burnham succinctly articulates, it primarily denotes “an analysis which attempts to determine the legitimate range of application of *some type of mental power*.”⁵⁰ Another way of putting it: determination of what the powers of the mind can do.

Kant makes this connection between each of the *Critiques* and their corresponding faculties explicitly but retrospectively in the First Introduction of *CJ*: “the critique of pure theoretical reason, which was dedicated to the sources of all cognition *a priori* . . . yielded the laws of nature, the critique of practical reason the law of freedom, and so the *a priori* principle for the whole of philosophy already seem to have been completely treated.”⁵¹ At first, this might seem rather strange for an introduction setting up the eligibility of taste and aesthetic judgment for critique, in reversing the original assessment in *CPuR*. Kant’s primary division within the critical philosophy does not rely upon the same topical taxonomy that had defined philosophy so influentially and pervasively in the past (e.g. metaphysics, ethics, etc.), but instead, in this account, concerns the powers and capacities of the faculties. The way in which Kant emphasizes the importance of the faculties can seem to align with predominant eighteenth-century notions as well. However, in Kant’s discussion of Burke he explicitly distinguished his treatment of aesthetics (which similarly applies to the broader understanding of faculties, not just the one of judgment) from the emerging faculty psychology with which it appears to resonate.⁵²

Kant’s claim of the seeming completion of critical philosophy can be further explained in the context of Kant’s division of philosophy writ large into its two sufficient components: theoretical and practical. While this may at first contradict what was just discussed regarding the primary axes along which critical philosophy becomes divided according to the faculties, upon further examination these divisions align more or less precisely. There are three faculties, and two directly corresponding parts of philosophy: the first *Critique*, concerning theoretical reason, attends to the faculty of the understanding, and the second *Critique*, concerning practical reason, attends to the faculty of reason. So what about the third faculty? Judgment, according to Kant,

serves an unusual type of mediating role between the other two faculties and, correspondingly, between the two parts of philosophy. He writes,

but now if the understanding yields *a priori* laws of nature, reason on the contrary, laws of freedom, then by analogy one would still expect that the power of judgment, which mediates the connection between the two faculties, would, just like those, add its own special principles *a priori* and perhaps ground a special part of philosophy, even though philosophy as a system can only have two parts.⁵³

This serves as one of the ways in which the third *Critique* was not only intended to complete the critical philosophy (addressing one of the main problems emerging from the first *Critique*, the seemingly mutual exclusivity and unbridgeable separation between the noumenal and phenomenal realms), but also to ensure systematicity to the critical enterprise by not only accounting for the two parts of philosophy, but also bridging the theoretical and the practical, providing a mediating faculty that operates betwixt and between understanding and reason.

Judgment, accordingly, does not operate like the other two faculties. The purview of aesthetic judgment concerns feelings of pleasure and displeasure and, according to the previous clarification distinguishing Kant from other eighteenth-century aestheticians, feelings cannot serve as the grounds for cognitive operations. Kant finds error with those who treat feelings as the basis for cognition; for Kant the operation is of a different order and philosophy has been mistaken in reducing everything to cognition. The faculty of judgment in a non-cognitive role differs from both reason and understanding in that it does not take concepts as its basis. Judgment does not have concepts of its own (those are provided by the understanding). Judgment operates only in relation to the other faculties.

However, to serve as the object of critique, there must be some way to determine the *a priori* principle(s) of this faculty, as performed in the first and second *Critiques*. Kant further

explains, “the connection of which with the other two faculties in a system nevertheless requires that this feeling of pleasure, like the other two faculties, not rest on merely empirical grounds, but also on *a priori* principles, there is thus required for the idea of philosophy as a system. . . a critique of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure insofar as it is not empirically grounded.”⁵⁴

The main problem at the outset of the third *Critique* concerns how feelings in most other treatments are tied to the empirical and experiential, but a critique of the faculty of judgment, as the mediating faculty between understanding and reason, requires determination of *a priori* principles not grounded in the empirical (for that is the very definition of *a priori*—independent of experience).

Kant solves this problem, which lies at the heart of the systematicity and completeness towards which his critical philosophy impels him, by distinguishing determining judgment, what he had previously discussed simply as judgment (*Urtheil*) in the first *Critique*, from reflective judgment, the unique form of judgment with which the third *Critique* occupies itself. In *CJ*, Kant differentiates between these two forms: “the power of judgment can be regarded either as a mere faculty for reflecting on a given representation, in accordance with a certain principle, for the sake of a concept that is thereby made possible, or as a faculty for determining an underlying concept through a given empirical representation.”⁵⁵ The first type of judgment, *determining* judgment is a logical judgment in service of cognition determined by a particular concept. *Reflective* judgment emerges as a special form of judgment that serves as the faculty of both aesthetic and teleological judgment in the third *Critique*. Reflective judgment differs from determining judgment by not remaining under the service of cognition, by not operating via subsumption of the particular under the general, and by not being restricted in its purview by a determined concept. Basically those are three different angles of the same condition of reflective

judgment—taking place without reference to a concept, mere reflection as such. On this account, reflective judgment exists in a different order altogether than determining judgment and the faculties of understanding and reason, which all operate in the context of a concept.

Kant explains, “every determining judgment is logical because its predicate is a given concept.”⁵⁶ In contrast, “there is only one so-called sensation that can never become a concept of an object, and this is the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. This is merely subjective, whereas all other sensation can be used for cognition.”⁵⁷ Accordingly, aesthetic judgment is the only form of non-cognitive judgment, insofar as it always concerns the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. Kant continues, reflective judgment “which has no concept ready for the given intuition holds the imagination (merely in the apprehension of the object) together with the understanding (in the presentation of a concept in general) and perceives a relation of the two faculties of cognition . . . (namely the agreement of those two faculties with each other).”⁵⁸ Reflective judgment (of which both aesthetic and teleological judgments are subsets), in its mere reflection without recourse to concept, sets the faculties in relation to one another. Aesthetic judgment (and I will specify, of the beautiful), places the understanding and imagination (which is one part of the non-legislative faculty of sensibility, the producer of intuitions) into a harmonious and complementary relation with one another.⁵⁹ This interrelation between the faculties—here, between imagination and understanding—will become important in the following section, looking to what Kant describes as the free play of the faculties in judgment.

According to Zammito, the *CJ* involved three primary phases in its composition: first, the change of mind (reflected in the earlier mentioned letter to Reinhold) regarding the possibility of a transcendental grounding of aesthetics; second, the discovery of the principle and operation of reflective judgment; and third, the ethical turn and the interconnection between the

seemingly separate realms of the natural and human action.⁶⁰ Kant discovers the principle of reflective judgment, justifying judgment's eligibility as critique-worthy, only well into the project—at least not until after the part on the beautiful and the sublime and the discussion of fine arts (including Kant's treatment of rhetoric and poetry as beautiful arts). Reflective judgment, as part of the second phase of *CJ*, not only represents the inductive move within judgment (rather than determining, a largely deductive operation) but also emerges inductively itself, only after the analytic of the beautiful. In a way, the emergence of reflective judgment performs its own principle, since the general—the *a priori* principle that underlies judgment (the purposiveness of nature, given by mere reflection)—only emerges inductively after the critique of taste had already been underway, rather than from an operation of subsumption, deductively determined from the start.

The brief story here about *CJ* has rather built suspense about the *a priori* principle of judgment, required by the very method of critique but not yet really examined. The principle of the *purposiveness of nature* that underwrites judgment serves as the crux of the operation of *CJ* but perhaps just a bit more back-story will clarify how this works. The discovery of reflective judgment helps to resolve Kant's initial dilemma about whether a critique of taste would be possible. Reflective judgment, mere reflection without concept, and in particular aesthetic judgments, which are non-cognitive and concern feelings of pleasure and displeasure, are universally communicable. The very universal communicability of aesthetic judgments emphasize their subjective nature and yet universal applicability. The judgment is subjective, yet its articulation speaks "as if" it were objective, "as if" it were applicable and valid for everyone. This common sense—the sense common to all—of judgment presupposes a principle that draws together, unifies, and gathers the manifold.

Kant explains, “if there is to be a concept or a rule which arises originally from the power of judgment, it would have to be a concept of things in nature insofar as nature conforms to our power of judgment. . . in other words, it would have to be the concept of a purposiveness of nature in behalf of our faculty of cognizing it.”⁶¹ The purposiveness of nature would be the only possible underlying principle that, not beholden to concept, explains how something like aesthetic judgments, entirely and irrevocably subjective in nature, are at the same time not only universally communicable but also universal in the assent presumed in their form of declaration. This principle that undergirds judgment accounts for the subjective yet universal, the accord among the seeming discord, and the unity underlying the seeming manifold. Kant further explains, “hence I understand by an absolute purposiveness of natural forms such an external shape as well as inner structure that are so constituted that their possibility must be grounded in an idea of them in our power of judgment. For purposiveness is a lawfulness of the contingent as such.”⁶² Through a presumed lawfulness of the contingent—once again, the realm of the anthropological and the empirical—Kant provides not only the *a priori* principle suited to the merely reflective nature of judgment, but also provides an accord and lawfulness that underscores and guides those very contingent operations. Zammito clarifies, reflective judgment is “the most synthetic concept Kant ever achieved concerning the process of human mental activity, especially in its creative—i.e., inductive or synthetic—mode. Reflective judgment was the mental procedure of induction, of finding some concept which unified particulars according to an empirical principle of order or design.”⁶³ In several ways, a comparison can be made to an ancient sense of *logos* (the Presocratic and Stoic veins, especially) gathering the manifold under a guiding—but not determining—subtle pattern or order, underscoring the apparent random and chaotic realm of the empirical.

The Free Play of the Faculties in *CJ*

An underlying harmony, taking the form of the purposiveness of nature, provides a concordance to the manifold of sensations and the contingency of the empirical, anthropological, realm. This accord underwrites the harmonious relationship between the faculties of the mind when they are brought into relation with one another through reflective judgment. In addition, the process of reflective judgment brings this interplay between the faculties to our attention. While both the First Introduction and standard published Introduction emphasize the importance of the faculties of the mind in relation to each other, an unusual and enigmatic notion of the free play of the faculties in judgment emerges most directly in the short section entitled “Investigation of the Question: Whether in the Judgment of Taste the Feeling of Pleasure Precedes the Judging or the Latter Precedes the Former.” Now that we have seen how the faculties serve as a basis for critical philosophy, moving on towards this free play of the faculties in judgment will be useful for connecting back to Kant’s explicit treatment of rhetoric.

The main passage in “Investigation of the Question” that describes the free play of the faculties in judgment is as follows,

The powers of cognition that are set into play by this representation are hereby in a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition. Thus the state of mind in this representation must be that of a feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general. Now there belongs to a representation by which an object is given, in order for there to be cognition of it in general, imagination for the composition of the manifold of intuition and understanding for the unity of the concept that unifies the representations. This state of a free play of the faculties of cognition with a representation through which an object is given must be able to be universally communicated, because cognition, as a determination of the object with which given representations (in whatever subject it may be) should agree, is the only kind of representation that is valid for everyone.⁶⁴

The faculties of the mind, as previously defined, include both the source of particular types of representations of the mind as well as the powers and capacities of cognition in general. The faculty of judgment, as the source of feelings of pleasure and displeasure, does not operate like the other two faculties in so far as it is neither determined by concept nor oriented towards cognition. Judgment, however, is still a legislative faculty (unlike sensibility, which includes sense intuition and imagination together). The free play of the faculties precisely concerns the different way in which judgment actually legislates in its domain, different from both the understanding and reason. When the faculty of judgment serves its legislative role (in contexts of both aesthetic and teleological judgment), the faculties enter a free play with one another. This connects both to pleasure and to the purposiveness of nature (which are themselves connected, naturally) in that one reflecting on the exercise of judgment in its legislative role takes pleasure in the interaction of the faculties themselves, and furthermore in the harmony or accord that emerges when reason and understanding, along with the imagination (as part of sensibility) work in conjunction with one another. The recognition of this accord, this harmonious lawfulness exhibited by the ways in which the powers of the mind work in conjunction with one another is, in a word, pleasurable.

As the discussion of *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* from the previous chapter emphasized, what works in perfection in the metaphysical examinations like *GMM* tends toward entropy when applied to the actual lived realm of experience and empirical considerations. While the *GMM* emphasizes the pure categorical principle of action divested from any interest, the anthropological realm is always already within a matrix of interests and advantages, strategies and machinations, passions and affects, and so forth. While the critical examination of judgment differs from the approach in the first two *Critiques*, it still is concerned

with the operations of the faculty in both its aesthetic and teleological applications, divested from charm or ornament and other parergonal or supplemental aspects. Judgment is the pure reflection not oriented towards a particular concept, end, etc. but instead pure reflection qua reflection, in which the very interplay of the faculties emerges for reflection. In contrast, in the realm of anthropology, of actual social interactions, invariably interfused with interest, things appear rather dystopian. The harmonious relation between the faculties in judgment aligns with and directly corresponds to the purposiveness of nature. That does not mean this is what happens all the time, or even most of the time, however.

In aesthetic judgment of the beautiful there is an accord between the imagination (the source of intuitions not based on sensory impressions) and the understanding.⁶⁵ The sublime, however, as the other type of aesthetic judgment, concerns an accord between the imagination and reason, which subsequently reinforces the power of reason since reason can accommodate what overpowers and overwhelms the imagination. However, that does not mean these faculties always relate to each other with such accordance and lawfulness. The imagination has the power to overwhelm the understanding, to throw it off balance or to unseat it. This power was something that already emerged in the first chapter, motivating some of Kant's reservations about rhetoric. Kant's distaste for Roman oratory, although he loved Latin and the classics, might have had something to do with the incessant memorization and *declamatio* after *declamatio* (lots of Cicero) in a pre-university schooling system based on rather draconian and scholastic models (which later influenced Kant to support experimental Enlightenment forms of education). It was oratory, and not rhetoric, that Kant dismissed as deserving of no respect (which he quickly emended in the long footnote, giving his second thought on the matter). His account of rhetoric, on the other hand, while still raising many questions and concerns, was not a

complete dismissal, nor was it in complete subjugation to poetry. The present question of the faculties, however, played a substantial role in Kant's concerns about rhetoric and its powers over people. Both rhetoric and poetry, as speech arts, use the intuitions of the senses and the imagination but poetry evokes those images in the name of play, whereas rhetoric evokes those images in the name of what Kant distinguishes as serious business. Upon this primary concern, Kant asserts poetry as the finest among arts. It is at the nexus of these intersecting points that the present discussion of the faculties, especially their relation in judgment as one of free play, connects back to the concerns of rhetoric. Rhetoric, in activating images of the imagination towards the efforts of serious business and not just mere play, unleashes a potentially unsettling and discordant force—one that can overwhelm the understanding, and hence might account for Kant's rather curious criteria in prioritizing poetry (business vs. play), and his attendant anxieties about the power of rhetoric. A more robust account of Kant's curious treatment of rhetoric can emerge by combining some of Kant's observations from *APPoV* with Deleuze's commentary on the free play of the faculties from *CJ*—at least in terms of circling back to re-contextualize what seemed to disturb Kant most about what he termed rhetoric.

Deleuze, in his very succinct and ostensibly straightforward reading of Kant in *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, does much work in few pages to draw out and synthesize some overlooked parts of Kant's philosophy across the three *Critiques*. Rather than trying to complete the critical philosophy, or trying to resolve various problems in Kant's philosophy (both of which much of the secondary work tries to do), Deleuze's reading draws from some seemingly parergonal themes across the critical works. One of these themes, which Kant only discusses in passing but Deleuze shows to be crucial to critical philosophy, is the aforementioned free play of the faculties in judgment. Deleuze frames his discussion of Kant with the brief introductory "On

Four Poetic Formulas which might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy.” The first two formulae concern the *CPuR*: From Hamlet “the time is out of joint,” which characterizes the reversal Kant effects between the movement-time relationship, and the Rimbaudian formula “I is another,” where the subject is divided from itself. The third formula, concerning the *CPrR*, “good is what the law says,” effects a reversal from the standard relationship positing good as prior to the law. The fourth formula, “a disorder of all the senses,” is another borrowing from Rimbaud that shows a “deeply Romantic” moment in Kant, and concerns both the *CJ* generally and the free play of the faculties specifically. Deleuze’s deployment of this formula is of great use in the discussion of reflective judgment, the free play of the faculties, and Kant’s suspicions of the powers of imagination particular to rhetoric.

Deleuze explains, “in the other two Critiques, the various subjective faculties had entered into relationships with each other, but those relationships were rigorously regulated in so far as there was always a dominant or determining faculty which imposed its rules on others.”⁶⁶ The understanding, as legislative faculty, clearly runs the show in *CPuR*, and reason functions similarly in *CPrR*. The way Deleuze frames the task of *CJ*, in diverging from the path taken in the prior two *Critiques*, is thus: “if the faculties can, in this way, enter into relationships which are variable, but regulated by one or other of them, it must follow that all together they are capable of relationships which are free and *unregulated*, where each goes to its own limit and nevertheless shows the possibility of some sort of harmony with the others.”⁶⁷ The very modularity and contingency of the function of each of the faculties, switching functions depending on the type of mental operation at hand, makes possible the difference in kind called for in the vexatious task initially posed in approaching the critique of taste.

This is the free play of the faculties: the unregulated, or at least undetermined and unscripted, possible ways in which understanding, reason, and judgment along with further faculties such as sensation and imagination can relate to one another. The free play of the faculties does not suggest complete independence and unhinged lawlessness, of course, but it does suggest, particularly heightened through Deleuze's reading, that what underwrites the interrelation between the faculties is not the determined rule and absolutist legislative command of the first two Critiques, but instead a play between them. Think of it as isomorphic to the unsociable sociability that characterizes human relations (as discussed in the previous chapter), except here as a way of seeing how the faculties relate to one another. Deleuze explains this as the discordant accord in the free play of the faculties, through the formula borrowed from Rimbaud (a disorder of all the senses). Instead of discord necessitating degeneration of a pre-established order (from order to disorder), the faculties of the mind, with the help of imagination's role, demonstrate how accord emerges out of the very discord that precedes it (disorder to order). Deleuze identifies this reversal as central to *CJ*.

Imagination is key to this operation, even though technically it cannot be a legislative faculty but instead (as part of sensibility) can only serve a recommending or supporting role. Yet, this affords imagination a certain independence, following Hegel (a freedom in *not* ruling). Deleuze explains,

it is true that in the *Critique of Judgment* the imagination does not take on a legislative function on its own account. But it frees itself, so that all the faculties together enter into a free accord. Thus the first two Critiques set out a relationship between the faculties which is determined by one of them; the last Critique uncovers a deeper free and indeterminate accord of the faculties as the condition of possibility of every determinate relationship.⁶⁸

Accordingly, the determined relationships of the faculties of understanding and reason are only made possible by their anterior free play and indeterminate accord. Despite the inheritance in

Western thought, it is the third *Critique* which ends up being the pivotal work of the critical philosophy, as Kant indeed saw it. Deleuze even sees this as a “spontaneous” accord emerging from the discord: “It is a tempest in the depths of a chasm opened up in the subject. The faculties confront one another, each stretched to its own limit, and find their accord in a fundamental discord: a discordant accord is the great discovery of the *Critique of Judgment*. . . an unregulated exercise of all the faculties, which was to define future philosophy.”⁶⁹ This future of philosophy was not, however, the Kantian legacy but the unauthorized and illegitimate inheritance of Romanticism.

Deleuze’s reading of *CJ* and of the free play of the faculties particularly emphasizes not only *CJ*’s importance in critical philosophy overall, but also how the free indeterminate accord of the faculties (their ability to spontaneously align in a fundamental state of discord) and imagination’s somewhat independent status as a non-legislative faculty connect with the Kantian suspicions about rhetoric. The tendency, or at least the possibility, of discord between the faculties inscribes the nature of their relationships. Imagination, in presenting intuitions for things that are not actually there, serves as the catalyst for this very free play of the faculties, the ability for accord, spontaneous and situational as it might be. Sensibility and imagination, recalling the opening chapter, are the sources of the images of both rhetoric and poetry, as the speech arts. The imagination, furthermore, has the power to get away from itself, to run away (from the understanding), and sense representations can, in a way, flood the understanding in their unamalgamated and unprocessed empirical manifold.

A particular passage in *APPoV* about rhetoric and poetry when viewed in the context of reflective judgment, the purposiveness of nature, and the free play of the faculties, brings rhetoric back into relationship with Kant’s aesthetic theory. Here Kant neither hierarchizes

poetry over rhetoric, nor criticizes rhetoric; in fact, he treats them both equitably as arts of speech:

Certainly, sense representations come before those of the understanding and present themselves *en masse*. But the fruits are all the more plentiful when the understanding comes in with its order and intellectual form and brings into consciousness, e.g., *concise* expressions for the concept, *emphatic* expressions for the feeling, and *interesting* ideas for determining the will. – When the *riches* that the mind produces in rhetoric and poetry are placed before the understanding all at once (*en masse*), the understanding is often embarrassed on account of its rational employment. It often falls into confusion, when it ought to make clear and set forth all the acts of reflection that it actually employs, although obscurely. But sensibility is not at fault here, rather it is much more to its credit that it has presented abundant material to the understanding, whereas the abstract concepts of understanding are often only glittering poverty.⁷⁰

Here, rhetoric and poetry taken together connect to the faculty of sensibility within the context of the other faculties in an evocative way that lends further insight into the first chapter's initial treatment of the relationship between poetry and rhetoric as discursive arts.

Rhetoric and poetry, dwelling in images of sensibility from both the senses (intuitions from external sources) and the imagination (intuitions from internal sources), present images *en masse* that overwhelm the understanding. The faculty of the understanding, in its application of concepts, amalgamates and processes the intuitions into the concise, the emphatic, and the interesting but inherent in this operation is the possibility of being flooded in a way that the understanding cannot process, leaving it in confusion. This connects, albeit in a different way, with the discussion of how affect can interrupt the faculty of reason, albeit temporarily, from the previous chapter. Kant, as in the case of affect, does not see this excess of rhetoric and poetry as an automatic negative, even though the processes of the understanding are displaced by the senses (or, in Deleuze's poetic formula, a disorder of the senses).

Both imagination and sense intuition have the capacity to unseat the understanding in the manifold of sense images, even if only temporarily. It is, however, dangerous in so far as the understanding can be dislodged or even circumvented. This connects with the affects more directly, in that the unseating or overwhelming of the understanding associates with a lack of control. Kant in *APPoV* details many maladies of the head and body that involve various ways in which the imagination or affects or passions (depending) take control so that we are merely an observer of what is happening to us. In one particular passage he speaks about how an epileptic having a seizure can evoke spasms in the onlooker, how a soldier falling to a violent fit triggered the same in three fellow soldiers, how those who have weakened constitutions should not visit asylums, ending with the following example to complete the series of contagious affects: “One also finds that when someone explains something emotional to vivacious people, especially something that may have caused anger to them, their attention is so aroused that they make faces and are involuntarily moved to a play of expression corresponding to this affect.”⁷¹ This loss of control, particularly of composure and comportment, connects the suspicious elements of affect with rhetoric directly.

But this is true for poetry as it is for rhetoric, for out of the first chapter emerged the far more numerous similarities between the arts of speech. What accounts for the difference in suspicion between the two, whereas poetry suddenly becomes the highest of the beautiful arts and rhetoric becomes associated with distasteful Roman oratory, deserving of little respect? Kant has plenty to say about poetic styles that displease him as much as Roman oratory (he seemed particularly disinclined towards Ovid, as one example), and the connection between imagination and affect overrunning the understanding concern both poetry and rhetoric. And yet poetry always wins the prize over rhetoric at least in Kant’s treatment of the beautiful arts. I

submit that this difference hinges upon returning to the distinction between the serious business in which rhetoric purports to traffic and the play by which poetry associates itself.

Perhaps the extra sense of danger that Kant finds in rhetoric is that the free play of the faculties, without a legislative faculty, and the powers of the imagination not reigned in by the understanding, allow for the potential unseating of understanding in the context of “serious business.” On the other hand, poetry merely presents itself as play, according to Kant, so any temporary vertigo from the free play of the faculties or the power of the imagination exceeding the limits of the understanding is rendered harmless since it occurs in the context of play rather than serious business. In some sense, the capacity that is bestowed upon rhetoric, even in its peroration, infuses rhetoric with a more powerful function than poetry and, in relation, poetry is domesticated and even subordinated. While the highest of the beautiful arts, exalted to the point from which Romanticism takes up its cue (literally over the dead body of Kant, for he protested such going beyond his philosophy with his last breath), poetry has been divested of taking serious business as its aim (a claim to which contemporary poetry, if permitted to speak so generally, certainly forms rejoinder) and therefore any excesses of the imagination serve no threat. Kant’s treatment of poetry as the highest of the beautiful arts, in one way rests on its domestication and diminution. It should be clarified, however, that play (in the general sense in which he uses it) served an important role for Kant, perhaps most strikingly in his support of Johann Bernhard Basedow’s experimental pedagogy that rejected scholastic traditions.⁷² However, play does serve only a supplementary and supporting role, and thus the danger involved in overwhelming the understanding is contained safely within the confines of play, rather than under the auspices of serious business. Accordingly, there is a way in which to view Kant’s prioritization of poetry over rhetoric as the simultaneous move of declawing poetry.

Kant's treatment of aesthetics, initially the critique of taste, evolved into the concluding piece of the critical philosophy puzzle. As the capstone of the *Critiques*, it found an underlying order and guiding principle in the purposiveness of nature, bridging the seemingly insurmountable distance between the noumenal and the phenomenal. The purposiveness of nature ostensibly provides the mediating principle, and the faculty of judgment mediates between the reason and the understanding, which solved some problems that were left from the insufficiency of the first two *Critiques*, but also introduced more problems of its own (the unauthorized yet direct genetic legacy on the aesthetic side, as one example). Critical philosophy, in several ways, serves as the perfect evocation of Gödel's theorem—a complete system and a consistent system are mutually exclusive. Of the many curious turns in *CJ*, the focus on the importance of aesthetic judgment and the beautiful arts (while sections on the sublime and on teleological judgment seem to fit less easily within the structure of *CJ*) is where the relative evaluation of rhetoric and poetry take place.

Kant's various suspicions about rhetoric, even though rhetoric and poetry as discursive arts align on most axes, essentially concern the auditor's potential lack of control over her or his response. Kant identified that one could never be sure that the rhetor was not trying to short circuit the faculties of reason and the understanding, and given rhetoric's alignment with the imagination and its powers, this concern is augmented by Kant's concerns about the emotions playing too central of a role in moving people. These anxieties about uncertainty, however, underwrite many aspects of Kantian philosophy. While rhetoric and poetry both traffic in images of the senses and imagination, rhetoric does so under the purview of serious business, which should be legislated by either the understanding or reason (depending on the serious

business at hand, whether it concerns cognition or action). Hence the powers of the imagination and senses can potentially flood the understanding or interrupt the capacity for reason to guide proper action in matters where a determinant faculty should be guiding the processes. Kant's mild apprehension about affect and emotion also align with this explanation, by means of the same potential dangers. In some ways, Kant's unease about rhetoric are not new—the emotions overtaking reason, the capacity of the auditor to be carried away against his or her better judgment, the immediacy and influential capacities of rhetoric's presence in being moved “on the spot” (in contrast to deliberate reflection that takes its time), and so forth.

And yet, the way in which Kant articulates these concerns about the powers of rhetoric both form a strange inversion within his ostensible exaltation of poetry, and infuse rhetoric with a capacity and a power that certainly deserves attention and respect. What sets Kant's account apart from the standard rhetoric/philosophy divide is that Kant is not rejecting the task of style (in contrast to a pure unmediated access to concepts), but is instead preferring some stylistic elements and approaches over others. For as much as Kant's treatment of rhetoric is characterized as a dismissal, in looking at his treatment of the beautiful arts within the context of *CJ* (the faculties, reflective judgment, and the free play in particular), much consideration is paid to the suspicious forms of rhetoric as well as the more suitable forms in *CJ* and other works. In the history of rhetoric, when Kant is mentioned, the focus largely concerns what Kant finds suspicious but this is only telling one part of the story. For as many comments as he makes about distasteful Roman oratory that relies too heavily upon upon imagination, Kant makes ten-fold more observations and recommendations for what is suitable for eloquence, style, popularity, tone, and beyond. In the conclusion, this examination will be drawn to a close by looking at Kant's explicit comments on style, returning to the question of popularity through the

case of Kant's own popular treatment of *CPuR* in the *Prolegomena*, and connecting the discussion explicitly to Kant's treatment of enlightenment. Kant's definition of enlightenment, as the exercise of the public use of reason at every point, embodies the positive dimensions of rhetoric in Kant's account by drawing together the positive recommendations on style, on enacting true popularity, and on participation and submission of one's ideas into the public arena.

Notes

¹ Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, p. 45.

² Guyer, *Kant and the Experience*, p. 4.

³ Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, p. 264.

⁴ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 32 (§ 18 et 19, 45).

⁵ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 174 (5: 294).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Kant, departing from Baumgarten, does not consider aesthetic judgment (concerning domain of feelings of pleasure and displeasure) to have a cognitive dimension. For Kant, and this becomes important in the unusual negotiation that happens in *CJ*, feelings cannot serve as the *a priori* grounds, since feelings of pleasure and displeasure are inherently and irrevocably empirical.

⁸ Poulakos, "From the Depths," p. 337-8.

⁹ Poulakos, "From the Depths," p. 338.

¹⁰ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 247 (7: 244).

¹¹ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 347 (7: 243-4).

¹² Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 32 (§ 18 et 19, 45).

¹³ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 32 (§ 18 et 19, 45).

¹⁴ Gracyk, "Kant's Shifting Debt," p. 210.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Gracyk, "Kant's Shifting Debt," p. 215.

¹⁷ Guyer, *Kant and the Experience*, p. 49.

¹⁸ Guyer, *Kant and the Experience*, p. 50.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, p. 85.

²¹ Gracyk, "Kant's Shifting Debt," p. 207.

²² Kant, *Judgment*, p. 158 (5: 277).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Gracyk, "Kant's Shifting Debt," p. 204.

²⁵ Gracyk, "Kant's Shifting Debt," p. 213.

²⁶ Zammito, *The Genesis*, p. 30.

²⁷ Kant, *Jäsche Logic*, p. 530 (S 15).

²⁸ Kant, *Pure Reason*, p. 156 (A21/B35-36).

²⁹ Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, p. 25.

³⁰ Guyer, *Kant and the Experience*, p. 1.

³¹ Allison, *Kant's Theory*, p. 303.

³² Perhaps the most dramatic example of Kant's refusal to accept any effort to go beyond critical philosophy is one of Kant's final publications, his open letter denouncing Fichte. While his treatments of aesthetics serve as the primary means by which this going-beyond emanates, many note that *CJ* itself was already a response to the incipient *Sturm und Drang* of Herder, who was once Kant's student before falling under the spell of Hamann and, in a way, defecting from critical philosophy to Romanticism.

³³ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 96 (5: 211).

³⁴ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 95 (5: 209-10).

³⁵ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 104 (5: 219).

³⁶ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 97 (5: 212).

³⁷ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 120 (5: 236).

³⁸ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 124 (5: 240).

³⁹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 121 (5: 237).

⁴⁰ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 121-2 (5: 237).

⁴¹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 122 (5: 238).

⁴² Kant, *Judgment*, p. 173-4 (5: 293).

⁴³ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 174 (5: 293).

⁴⁴ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 122 (5: 238).

⁴⁵ Kant to Carl Leonhard Reinhold, December 18 and 31, 1787, *Correspondence*, p. 272 (10:514).

⁴⁶ Faculties in *CJ* primarily refers to the three legislative faculties of the mind: the understanding, reason, and judgment. By legislative role, Kant means that these three (depending on the situation) can each play a primary and governing role in how a certain operation of the mind can take place (with the other faculties serving a support or ancillary role to the ruling faculty in a particular operation). However many other things are also identified as faculties: sensibility, for instance, is a faculty but can never be legislative (since Kant critiques empiricism's claim that sense data can serve as the basis for knowledge), and the imagination is one part of sensibility. From the end of the First Introduction emerges the two different senses of faculties alluded to here: the powers and capacities of the mind and the cognitive faculties that serve as particular sources of presentations/representations. Plenty of other acuties or acumen are identified as faculties (as in *Lectures on Logic* or *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*), but for the purposes of the present discussion, faculties refer to these three legislative powers or capacities of the mind and, of equal importance, the ways in which these faculties relate to one another.

⁴⁷ The *Critique of Judgment*'s original introduction (known as the First Introduction) is almost twice as long as the introduction appearing in the 1790 edition. The two introductions basically frame the project in a similar way (starting with a discussion of the faculties, then moving to the question of *a priori* principle of judgment, and then distinguishing determining from reflective judgment). However, the first introduction elaborates on reflective judgment more thoroughly, and the published introduction emphasizes the purposiveness of nature more (and, in general, is much shorter per the editor's request). For this difference in detail, and since the present project has already availed itself of lectures, correspondence, and other sources, the First Introduction is most useful for elaborating some exigent concerns.

⁴⁸ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 11 (20: 205-6).

⁴⁹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 11 (20: 205-6).

⁵⁰ Burnham, *An Introduction to Kant's*, p. 8.

⁵¹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 8 (20: 202).

⁵² Burnham, *An Introduction to Kant's*, p. 9. In the eighteenth century, an increasing attention to the faculties of the mind was paid towards the effort, if such a broad stroke can be forgiven, of studying the mind scientifically starting from different types of phenomena and the corresponding faculties of the mind. Kant differs from both a mechanical conception of the universe and faculty psychology. Burnham explains, in further detail that "he was certainly happy to admit without argument that many mental phenomena *might* be explained in this physical way. But prior to and independent of this psychical and mechanical element, there was something in the mind which had its own laws, which was thus independent of such physical causation. If that was the case, then an analysis of the functioning of the brain could only be

superficial. In this way, Kant was one of the first philosophers in history to have sharply distinguished between what we now call ‘psychology’ and the proper domain of ‘philosophy.’”

⁵³ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 8 (20: 202).

⁵⁴ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 12 (20: 207).

⁵⁵ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 15 (20: 210).

⁵⁶ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 26 (10: 223-4).

⁵⁷ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 26 (20: 224).

⁵⁸ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 26 (10: 223-4).

⁵⁹ I have qualified this statement by restricting the complementary relation between the imagination and the understanding to aesthetic judgments of the beautiful in particular. The reason for this concerns Kant’s rather enigmatic treatment of the sublime, considered by many to have been a later afterthought and not really well incorporated into *CJ*. Kant’s treatment of the sublime sets itself apart from the beautiful along many axes (and doesn’t seem to fit with some of the general statements of aesthetic judgment set out in the introductions, etc.), but most important for this discussion is how the sublime places *reason* and imagination into relation with one another, rather than understanding and imagination. Aesthetic judgment, as a more general category, technically includes both the beautiful and the sublime, but the quote in the main text here seems to be largely conflating aesthetic judgment in general with judgments of the beautiful. The enigmatic and incompatible graft of the sublime is a substantial topic of secondary literature on its own, but will not be treated more than cursorily in this project.

⁶⁰ Zammito, *The Genesis*, p. 7.

⁶¹ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 8 (20: 202).

⁶² Kant, *Judgment*, p. 20 (20: 217).

⁶³ Zammito, *The Genesis*, p. 169.

⁶⁴ Kant, *Judgment*, p. 102-3 (5: 217).

⁶⁵ Kant further defines the faculty of the imagination in *APPoV*: “*facultas imaginandi*, as a faculty of intuition without the presence of the object, is either *productive* that is, a faculty of the original presentation of the object (*exhibitio originaria*), which thus precedes experience; or *reproductive*, a faculty of the derivative presentation of the object (*exhibitio derivativa*), which brings back to the mind an empirical intuition that it had previously” (p. 278, 7: 167).

⁶⁶ Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, p. xi.

⁶⁷ Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, p. xi-xii.

⁶⁸ Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, p. 68.

⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, p. xii-xiii.

⁷⁰ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 257 (7: 145).

⁷¹ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 289 (7: 179).

⁷² This support of the importance, in a secondary and supporting role, of play in educational contexts can be found most directly in *Lectures on Pedagogy* (1803).

Chapter Four: Kant's Commentary on Style, Popularity Redux, and the *Prolegomena*

While questions concerning the canon of style have emerged in several ways throughout this study, up to this point they have been neither direct nor explicit. Kant wrote quite persistently about matters of style throughout many of his works, not just in *CJ*. He frequently associates rhetoric and poetry with a certain excess, a certain effluence, a certain effusiveness. Both rhetoric and poetry involve piling coordinate mark upon coordinate mark in describing one thing (providing richness of detail, perhaps) rather than honing in upon one or two incisive and penetrating details about what one is describing. Rhetoric and poetry, in other words, are stylistically promiscuous, while the style that balances the logical and the aesthetic is parsimonious and perspicacious. While these relative comparisons stretch style to its borders with invention and other canons, style has already (albeit implicitly) played a role in the discussion of Kant's treatment of rhetoric and poetry, and, perhaps most significantly, in his notions of popularity. This chapter has two primary foci: Kant's explicit commentary on style and a revisiting of the first chapter's discussion of popularity through the particular case of the *Prolegomena*. Kant's treatment of both style and popularity exemplified in the *Prolegomena* round out the discussion of Kant's conflicted attitudes toward rhetoric, providing the final few pieces necessary to set the scene for the conclusion's return to the opening question of the paradoxical relation between rhetoric and enlightenment.

Accordingly, the first section of this chapter examines Kant's own comments on style, beginning with his treatment of aesthetic versus logical perfection, then moves to his general observations concerning style, his distinctions between affected and natural styles, the distinction between style and fashion, and, finally, his comparison and exaltation of the English style over

the French. In the second part, this chapter revisits some of the complexities involved in Kant's treatment of popularity from the first chapter (at some times minor adjustment, but other times involving reinvention, and the distinction between true and false popularity). The reception of *CPuR* and Kant's subsequent decision to provide his own "popular" version in the *Prolegomena* offer a case by which to examine this struggle. Finally, this chapter concludes by drawing Kant's treatment of style and popularity together to briefly examine the public use of reason in "What is Enlightenment" and to recast the opening paradox of this project: how can Kant both reject rhetoric and define the critical project of enlightenment (an orientation which entails ethical, aesthetic, and political dimensions simultaneously) as the obligation to speak as a scholar on exigent concerns.

Kant on Style

For as much as Kant ostensibly rejected rhetoric, at least according to the short version of the story, he certainly spent considerable time across several of his works on the canon of style. In several ways, his comments on style reinforce and extend upon themes introduced in *CJ* itself rather than provide a contradictory or more complicated understanding of style than what is already therein. However, the *Lectures on Logic* (especially the most extensive of those, the *Blomberg Logic*) and *APPoV* (perhaps surprisingly) treat style more extensively and even introduce some interesting and rather singular observations (although not necessarily inconsistent or incompatible). This section, in largely focusing on Kant's treatment of style, looks first at the interrelation between aesthetic and logical perfection, then moves on to his general commentary on style, his exhortation towards a self-effacing artfulness over affectation, his distinction between fashion and style, and an examination of his preference for what he identifies as the English style over the French.

Aesthetic and Logical Perfection

For Kant, to refresh the point from earlier, cognition includes within its operation expression. Each of the faculties of the mind is in charge, so to speak, of a particular mental operation and hence its associated expression. Accordingly, expression and its purposes differ whether the matter is under the purview of the understanding or reason, or, on the other hand, if it is under the purview of aesthetic judgment, the realm of feeling of pleasure and displeasure. In *Blomberg Logic*, Kant delineates aesthetic from logical perfection in cognition in that the former is subjective, concerning feelings of pleasure and displeasure given by the subject, while the latter concerns objective conditions. Each expression has two different dimensions: aesthetic and logical. Aesthetic perfection concerns “effect on our feeling and our taste” while logical perfection pertains to agreement “with the constitution of the thing.”¹ This particular logic lecture is dated ca. 1770s, the decade during which Kant was writing the first *Critique*, so while it might be difficult to presume that the inchoate critical vocabulary that later manifested in the *Critiques* was already available to Kant, the seeds of such distinctions and functions can be seen in these early logic lectures. While logical cognition and the aesthetic realm of feeling are clearly delineated, they are not yet done through the particular vocabulary and conceptual apparatus developed from within the critical philosophy itself. Nonetheless, these distinctions between the logical dimensions and the aesthetic dimensions clearly echo what was set out in the previous chapter about what Kant would later write in the third *Critique*.

The aesthetic and logical dimensions, spoken in terms of perfections, apparently lie upon a continuum whereas one can head more in one direction and away from the other. As Kant states, “one has to sacrifice some logical perfection if one wants to attain an aesthetic perfection, and one has to give up some aesthetic perfection if one wants to attain a logical perfection.

Something can never be really distinct without being somewhat hard, nor even really lively without being somewhat indistinct, *et vice versa*.”² So aesthetic perfection attends to liveliness of expression while logical perfection pertains to the distinctness of expression. This directly relates to the earlier discussion of the images of rhetoric and poetry piling up coordinating marks (adding attribute upon attribute for the same thing described), in comparison to the clarity and distinctness involved in a form of philosophical articulation concerned only with focusing in on one or two attributes. Kant elaborates that “poets and orators especially make use of such aesthetic concepts [;] e.g., when they want to describe summer or spring, they do not show its causes, but instead they picture only the various changes that take place at these times of year in the fields, among the animals, in the forests, in the air, in the country, and in the city.”³ Thus on one side we have logical expression, favoring distinctness and an incisive specificity—e.g., narrowing spring to the level of cause—and, on the other, the expression of poetry and oratory associated with a myriad of specific, additive, and concrete images and details.

In this way, liveliness, to some degree, upon first glance trades off with distinctness when Kant contrasts the two accordingly: “logical perfections are ones that are perceived only when one regards the thing distinctly. Aesthetic perfections, however, are ones that are sensed by means of confused concepts.”⁴ As pejorative as this characterization sounds (associating logical perfection with distinctness, and aesthetic perfection with confusion), actually the distinction here is less normative than we might assume. Poetic expression would actually be harmed by the deployment of logical criteria in its expression since (recalling that the aesthetic is non-cognitive) “the beauty of all good poetic representations, e.g., of paradise lost, [has] an aesthetic perfection. It is sensed only in confused concepts, and it loses its value just as soon as the concept is made distinct.”⁵ The confusion of concepts refers more to the aesthetic concerns of

feeling (for the confusion would only pertain as far as understanding is concerned), and the variety of sense images (and thus not parsimonious distinctness). As we have examined, the imagination has the power to overflow the understanding with images, but this is not necessarily a bad thing. These images bring to our attention things that would otherwise perhaps go unnoticed. As briefly discussed in the first chapter, poetry and rhetoric can teach philosophy much by means of this operation.

Expressing something with both aesthetic (lively) and logical (distinct) perfection at the same time remains a difficult and even elusive operation, for such would involve locating the perfect fulcrum, adopting a slight metaphoric shift away from mutual exclusivity and towards balance. As Kant states “no one has yet been able accurately to combine, to determine, and to discover the correct measure of aesthetic perfection with logical perfection. That involves much delicacy.”⁶ These notions were first introduced through the discussion of popularity, where popularity requires being able to effect this perfect alchemical transformation of expression, a perfection Kant associates with genius in *CJ*. This balance between aesthetic and logical perfection is not only a difficult task, but a crucial one. It involves navigating between what Kant identifies as “two hazards:” too far in the one direction, “if we seek to cognize something aesthetically perfectly, then we soon lack the correct grounds, that which is solid in cognition, as we end up in shallowness;” and too far in the other direction, “if we cognize something through logical perfection, then we very easily lack aesthetic liveliness, etc., and we fall into dryness.” Kant concludes, “indeed, it is actually quite hard to hit the right mean between the two dangerous wrong tracks.”⁷ Perhaps surprisingly, erring too far in the direction of logical perfection poses as much of a danger as the inverse. This synthesis, this harmony recalls the systematicity of *CJ* where the faculties of the mind all work, ideally, in conjunction with one another. Dryness is

liveliness's antithesis, and for an expression to be both suitable and popular (communicable), balance must be achieved. Kant writes: "if a learned cognition is at the same time beautiful, then it is most useful, especially in *praxis*."⁸ He decries the "scholastics" as those "dry philosophers who bind themselves to a very constrained method," who brought about in philosophy "an irreplaceable loss! . . . because their cognition, and consequently also their exposition of morals, etc. were merely learned and not at the same time beautiful, but rather were completely dry."⁹ Praxis, concerning the anthropological realm of sociable exchange, must take (true) popularity and communicability as its basis, which can only be brought about through the artful sufficiency of both aesthetic and logical perfection without the diminishment of either one to the favor of the other.

Kant more clearly identifies aesthetic perfection's connection to sensibility and to affect (in particular the affect of surprise) and connects it back to the function of the understanding.

Kant writes,

Surprise always has something pleasant for sensibility, but also something displeasing for the understanding. Therefore do we listen gladly to the most wonderful stories. An aesthetic perfection is a perfection according to the laws of sensibility. We make something sensible when we make the object awaken and excite a sensation, and when I make something capable of intuition. The greater art of taste consists in now making sensible what I first expounded dryly, in clothing it in objects of the sensibility, but in such a way that the understanding loses nothing thereby. A perfection gets its worth from being communicable.¹⁰

This quotation is immediately followed by Kant's pronouncement that taste is always sociable, and that someone who focuses solely on his or her private judgment has no taste at all. Taste here directly relates to the notion of true popularity, in so far as one starts with the logically articulated expression and then refigures it according to sensibility. While "clothing" the thought apparently reduces the aesthetic dimension (and popularity) to a diminutive form of mere style,

the opposite emerges when considering style as the delicate balance between aesthetic and logical perfection (avoiding the hazards of both extremes), as well as in the context of the association between the aesthetic and communicability on a general level. The very worth of the perfection lies in its communicability, provided only by aesthetic perfection in conjunction with logical. Aesthetic concerns do not diminish the strength of the expression, for as Kant notes, “*liveliness and strength of cognition are not opposite, but rather both are combined with one another*” and the aesthetic is largely responsible for rendering the expression lively and hence communicable and intelligible.¹¹

General Observations on Style

While the language of “perfections of cognition” appears alien and strange to contemporary scholars of rhetoric, much of what Kant discusses under the purview of this balance involves what he himself calls style. Since cognition presumes, as part of its very operation, expression and since the value of any perfection is only directly connected to its communicability with others, Kant himself is concerned with style in considering this important, even crucial balance between aesthetic and logical perfection. Kant defines his approach to style at the most general level accordingly:

Style actually means a carver’s tool. Here it means the character in which one expresses one’s thoughts. Everyone has his own particular style, just as everyone writes his own particular hand. Style is to be considered (1.) insofar as it is adequate to its *object* (2.) To the person (subject) and the person’s social position. (3.) To those for whom one writes. For everyone a particular style is suitable, and everyone cannot bring his thoughts into someone else’s form.¹²

The three domains involved in the task of style include consideration of subject, the writer, and the audience and an attendant consideration of suitability for all three. This approach to style, that each has his or her own style, perhaps is also surprising coming from Kant, whose

impenetrable philosophical style has largely left philosophy struggling in its wake. Perhaps animated by *aufklärung* itself, Kant clearly rejects reliance upon methods of scholastic imitation and inculcation (not only for ethical considerations, but for aesthetic ones, as well), and in this spirit Kant here is exhorting writers to have the courage to use one's own style. Kant, clearly, cannot be described as a stylistic pluralist, however, and has several sharp criticisms towards different styles. The elements that Kant identifies as central to stylistic consideration, despite the differences between writers and their use of their own style, emerge not only as relatively under-examined notions of Kantian thought in general, but have particular resonance for scholars of rhetoric.

Along those lines, what arises most strikingly from this Kantian definition of style relates to the criteria of adequation and suitability. The style must be adequate to a host of contextual and situational considerations (subject, rhetor's own style and station, and audience). Propriety also serves as a related stylistic principle for Kant. He notes, "appropriateness of writing style consists in the fact that it is such that the style is not too great for the thing but instead is fitting. . . . Congruence consists in the fact that the style is suited to the thing. This can only be learned by experience."¹³ Rather than by genius, to which Kant takes recourse for many a talent, writing style is learned through experience, through practice. A fitting style, both suitable to and appropriate for that which is under examination, as well as suited to the individual style of the rhetor and audience, serves as a central tenet of Kant's observations on style.

Style concerns the aesthetic (not logical dimensions) of expression, although these two domains share a far more complicated relationship than mutual exclusion. The ways in which expressions catch our attention and influence us concern the same ways in which they are communicable, via the aesthetic dimension. Kant ties these notions together by claiming that

“the best expressions, those that strike us the most, lose their force when one analyzes them and cognizes them more distinctly by means of the understanding. Often our understanding rejects something, e.g., various kinds of clothes, that accords with our taste and stirs our feeling.”¹⁴

Kant gives an example: the placement of a door in the house. In connecting the centrality of aesthetic concerns for expression and communicability, he states “it is more conformable to the understanding that the door not be located in the middle of the house and thereby make the rooms small [;] but our feeling requires necessarily that the door, e.g., not be located at the corner of the house.”¹⁵ If the understanding (or, reason) were the primary charioteer of the faculties, so to speak, its recommendation would subordinate the recommendation of the faculty of judgment. However, in Kant’s example, the primacy of the logical consideration would recommend the door to the house be placed in the corner not where it is conventionally placed. Accordingly, expressions that have their door in the corner, adhering solely to the dictates of the understanding, would not get our attention and would not please us as those expressions with their door in the middle of the room, so to speak.

Aesthetic perfection, following from the provided examples, concern more than the mere style to which they are often reduced under the jurisdiction of reason. The placement of the door in a house is not an incidental or inconsequential matter, a supplemental merely dressing something up while keeping the contents relatively the same. It is, consequentially, an alternative invention, arrangement, and style at the same time. Style contains far more within its purview in Kant’s treatment. One such dimension is that of liveliness. The notion of liveliness serves as the aesthetic counterpart to logical distinctness. Kant further elaborates on this connection in the *Vienna Logic*:

Liveliness of cognition belongs, accordingly, to aesthetic cognition and to sensibility. Here one must attend to exactly how liveliness can be brought in where there is obscurity. A certain degree of liveliness can be used everywhere without detriment to obscurity E. g., a fitting expression. Yes, that is good, for without any liveliness no attention would be excited. – In a sermon distinctness and correct explication must be first, and then liveliness must also be given to the exposition, in order to excite attention and to move the soul.¹⁶

With obscurity, another term is added to our constellation, where aesthetic—lively—presentation is often in tension with logical—distinct—presentation, although the task involves the perfect balance of each to the disadvantage of neither. In comparison to the understanding, aesthetic concepts appear confused, for they involve a multiplicity of impressions and attributes rather than an incisive and parsimonious core. Here, however, obscurity serves as another boundary for the aesthetic, and connects to the need for balance with the logical, because too much liveliness can either threaten to fall into or, on the other hand, can help illuminate that which is obscure, depending on how that liveliness is deployed. Finally, almost reflecting a Baconian orientation towards rhetoric (application of reason to the imagination for the better moving of the will), the images of rhetoric, here embodied in a sermon, attract, excite, and move whereas just consideration of the logical elements would likely result in a dry sermon unable to serve those three important functions.

Liveliness must, however, be combined with perspicaciousness. Perspicaciousness serves as a recurring motif in not only Kant's comments on style, but in his philosophy more generally. This connects directly to Kant's use of common sense, for that which is perspicuous is that which is communicable and intelligible to all who have the functioning faculties in common. Kant clarifies, "a cognition is brought *in perspicuum*, however, only when it is so lucid and clear that the humblest understanding has insight into it[;] on the other hand, a cognition is *imperspicua* . . . when it is too great for the whole horizon of the whole human race,

when it can be called *incomprehensible*. *Perspicuousness*, on the other hand, means nothing but *comprehensibility*.¹⁷ As best as can be figured, this complex notion of perspicuity involves both aesthetic and logical perfection, having the dimensions of both clarity, but not at the expense of liveliness, and liveliness, but not at the expense of logical perfection. Although difficult to sort with certainty, I submit that perspicaciousness can be seen as analogous and complementary—if not identical to—the perfect balance of logical and aesthetic perfection entailed in comprehensibility and intelligibility, and, hence, true popularity.

Kant recognizes a wide range of writing styles, some he finds suitable, and some he criticizes. His range of references include both ancient and contemporary, particularly preferring what he identifies as the “English” style and decrying the French (with a few exceptions), along with other writers who use overly elaborate styles that err on the side of aesthetic perfection exclusively. Kant observes,

In writing style, what prevails is sometimes a great pomp of inflated words. Sometimes timid contortions of wit prevail, sometimes again a completely shallow writing style prevails, which people like to call *natural* because it is easy, costs little or no effort, and can be produced without art. Sometimes, again, people love in all things a writing style such as one had been accustomed to use in letters, sometimes, again, people love a heavy, dark, puzzling, enigmatic writing style, which they prefer to a light, complete, distinct style, which is supposed to reveal a certain profundity and the author’s deep-thinking learnedness because one must ponder over it a long time and one has, as it were, a puzzle to solve before one comes to figure out what the author meant by this, and to be able to discover the author’s real sense and meaning, and to find out what the author thought.¹⁸

Kant here steps outside of analyzing the fitness of styles to the subject under examination and looks more to the quality and skill involved in the artful use of style. While it might first appear logical that Kant would favor what has come to be known as the plain style, by now there should be little surprise in seeing Kant taking a slightly unexpected direction. As much as he dislikes

the inflated pomp of some styles, and the trying-too-hard contortions of artificially constructed wit, he also decries what is often called the natural style when inartful exposition masquerades as aesthetically artful. From the *CJ*, however, the art which reflects nature is the art that is most concordant with the power of aesthetic judgment, which is underwritten by the principle of the purposiveness of nature. Kant's rejection of those popular styles that appear natural, but are really just unlearned, may seem inconsistent on the surface, but when Kant discusses art that reflects nature he is referring to something rather specific. An art that makes a fuss over itself, that calls attention to its own artistry, is what Kant seems to find unpleasant in many cases. A style that reflects nature would be a style that effaces its own artistry, a seamless and inconspicuous style.

Affected Style vs. Natural Style

This forms a recurring thematic underwriting Kant's attitudes concerning style, and relates to the next three areas of examination: affected versus natural style, the distinction between style and fashion, and the comparison between French and English styles. In several ways, all three of these angles, at least in part, relate to the strained appearance of artistry and affectation more broadly. Kant contrasts this to a more natural style, by which he means an artfulness that effaces itself. In the same regard, this is not an artless art, for the gambit of *sprezzatura* involves much art in its own appearance of effortlessness. Kant does support what he terms simplicity, which combines self-effacement along with perspicaciousness and efficiency at the same time. Some comments from the *Blomberg Logic* further support this exhortation to a certain form of naturalness and simplicity. Kant proclaims, "too much beauty is also harmful and actually arouses suspicion, beautiful simplicity occurs frequently in nature. The greatest art consists, however, in hiding the art that has been applied somewhere, so that it is

not at all noticeable, but instead seems to be mere nature.”¹⁹ Kant opposes the natural, which contrary to how it might first sound is the result of much art and effort in its own effacement, from the unnatural, where the artistry remains visible and obvious in its effort. Kant explains, “An unnatural art is called *affectation*. . . to appear artful is called affected. Thus it is affected when one does not give his art, but rather hints at an artful investigation. The affected is commonly combined with pedantry. It becomes particularly conspicuous when one applies a single method to everything, whether it is suitable or not.”²⁰ So for Kant, natural style involves not only attending to the specificities and contours of that under investigation, a situational and contextualized approach to style, but further requires the lines of that sketch to be erased.

Kant’s commentary on style favors what he distinguishes as simplicity from what is commonly referred to as the plain style. In several ways, this distinction reveals Kant’s two-mindedness about plain style—on one hand it exhibits a naiveté about the conventions of sociable exchange, on the other hand, it also demonstrates the unfortunate necessity of sociable exchange’s very predication upon pretense. Kant explains, “the plain manner of expressing oneself, as a result of innocence and simple-mindedness (ignorance in the art of pretence), as evidenced in an adolescent girl who is approached or a peasant unfamiliar with urban manners, arouses a cheerful laugh among those who are already practiced and wise in this art.”²¹ This laughter does not emanate from contemptuousness, according to Kant, “for in their hearts they still honor purity and sincerity; but rather a good-humored, affectionate smiling at inexperience in *the art of pretense*, which is evil, even though it is grounded in our already corrupt human nature.”²² By the plain style Kant indicates an unlearned or unartful style rather than an artful exposition that might comprise another understanding of the plain style more aligned with

perspicuity, which Kant supports. This latter understanding aligns with Kant's observations about simplicity, which involves much art both in articulation and effacement of its own artistry.

Once again something acquired by experience, this exhibition of simplicity differs from being merely unstudied or instinctive. Kant distinguishes, "quite different from this [simple mindedness] is *simplicity* (as opposed to *artificiality*), of which it is said: 'Perfect art becomes nature again,' and which one only achieves late in life."²³ Kant further specifies this type of simplicity as "a faculty of achieving exactly the same end through an economy of means – that is, straightaway. He who possesses this gift (the wise man) is, by virtue of his simplicity, not at all simple-minded."²⁴ So perspicaciousness and parsimony reflect the underlying principle of nature, which furthermore does not call attention to itself in its artistry and style. As such, perfect art becomes nature again and as such, reflects and draws together some of the most important elements of Kant's treatment of style. Perfect art does not crudely imitate nature, for that would not only apply one method to everything but also would fail to attend to the contours and the specificities of what is under examination. Imitation has its important place, in providing a beginning point for learning the basic rules. At a certain point, however, one must exceed those rules and the imitation thereof, to avoid the pedantry and strained artistry of applying the same method of style to all situations and considerations. Otherwise, this persistent imitation follows what Kant distinguishes as fashion, and not style.

Fashion vs. Style

Kant's discussion of fashion, and its distinction from style, rests on several recognizable Kantian themes. First, naturally, the courage to use one's own reason—or, in this case, one's own aesthetic judgment—is at odds with merely imitating or following what others are wearing,

or doing, or saying, etc. Add to this Kant's observations about style, including the emphasis he places on a style that accords with nature and appears at ease and not affected, and one arrives at the conclusion that style is distinct from both following the fads and, not unrelated, the appearance of trying too hard. Finally, Kant's observations about prejudices (where thinking does not take place, but authority is handed over to another unreflectively) connect directly to his denouncement of the fashionable, but still aligns with positive observations about style in general. Fashion, on one hand, is following the tastes of others unreflectively, following what is all the rage and, as will be examined more thoroughly in the next section, is associated with what Kant despised as imitation of the French courtly style.

Kant writes, "*fashion* is actually nothing but a prejudice of taste, in accordance with which, through a prejudice, one takes something to be beautiful or ugly. Fashion is the source of aesthetic prejudices. Fashion makes one represent to himself that some inner beauty or other resides in this or that kind of clothing or of dress[;] thus one thinks and also judges according to the rules of taste."²⁵ While at first this may agree with Kant's definition and approach to enlightenment, avoiding prejudices of thinking in favor of a vigilant criticality, it also seems discordant with the earlier Kant who was known for being so very fashionable. This distinction is found in how style and, furthermore, taste differ from mere following and imitation in fashion. Kant explains that "taste is quite ruined by imitation, a fertile source of all prejudices, since one borrows everything, thinks nothing of a beauty that one might be able to invent and come up with oneself, as [compared to] what others have already thought up and have previously cognized, and what is considered beauty by these people."²⁶ Accordingly, style involves a certain form of invention, while imitation and following fashion dictated by others serves as a

type of prejudice, aesthetic prejudice, where one does not think or, more accurately, exercise one's own taste.

Kant, of course, is not against appearing fashionable in dress but his objection more concerns the totalizing way in which people are swept up by fashion—not only in dress, but in manner of speaking and writing, and, in general, thinking. Kant writes,

To clothe oneself fashionably (but according to one's social position, nonetheless) is laudable and good, for it is more acceptable and better to be a fool in fashion than out of it. But to judge, to infer, to think, to write as it were, in accordance with the fashion, is always silly and a proof of no reflection at all. Ceremonies, modes of dressing, compliments may be brought under fashion, but not the understanding.²⁷

In a similar way that Kant considered it of utmost importance to nourish the self with food and conversation in his anthropological ethics, rather than deprive or abstain, Kant does not reject appearing tasteful and elegant in favor of an abstemious and plain manner of dress. He instead is more concerned with the source of such decisions and manners of expression, as well as with how much significance one ascribes to being fashionable. Connecting also back to Kant's anthropological ethics, fashionability can be taken to the extreme of becoming a passion, a way one attaches and subordinates perpetually to an external.

This distinction between fashion and style concerns more the source than the effect, the attitude and approach more than the external display itself. This is about having the courage to follow oneself, not others, which concerns the purview of the second *Critique*, and particularly concern for self-directed action (autonomy) instead of action dictated by external directives (heteronomy). Kant makes this connection to reason explicit:

All fashion in general is harmful rather than useful, for it is opposed to the rules of pure reason as well as to the rules of taste. And he who is or wants to be fashionable in his judgments of taste, or even of reason, certainly has no reason. He thereby shows his very

poor talents and his complete lack of all taste. Nevertheless, it is more acceptable to be fashionable in taste than to be fashionable in thinking, judging, and in *sentiments*; to be fashionable in clothing is acceptable and often good. But to be fashionable in *sentiments*, is *actual, logical prejudice*. Prejudice of taste reigns not only in clothing but also even in style.²⁸

In Kant's treatment of taste, he clearly distinguished that taste's connection to morality is not a direct one, where dress would serve as some direct correlative to the character. While the previous chapter clearly articulated how taste is a function neither of cognition nor reason, the tendency to hand one's taste (concerning feelings of pleasure and displeasure) over to others in imitation illustrates a certain failing of the faculty of reason, even though that faculty is not the proper adjudicator of taste.

As style involves a certain invention and independence that fashion does not, Kant observes that style in dress is analogous to each writer having his or her own style that cannot just be imitation of others. Kant declares, "if everyone wanted to clothe himself according to his own pleasure and taste, we would finally have the most splendid kinds of clothing[;] now, however, proper taste in clothing is really lacking, and just for the reason that in this matter fashion reigns, which everyone follows incessantly and constantly."²⁹ In some ways, as a reworking of his oft-cited aphorism, if it comes to it, it is far better to be a free-thinker out of fashion. Furthermore, as we have seen in several references connecting language and popularity to modes of dress and clothing, Kant's distinction between fashion and style can be helpful in re-examining the connection between rhetoric and attire, with a slightly different return. Kant does not reject fashionable clothing on principle nor does he, on the other hand, consider self presentation unimportant. However, the problem comes from fashion, which is following what is fashionable for only that sake, instead of having your own style, so to speak. As with attire, so too should writing reflect not only the individual style of the author, but should also be fitting for

that which is under examination. Therefore following fashion errs by following and universally applying what is all the rage to all aspects, and then capriciously changing according to which way the wind blows. This simultaneous application of one method (fashion) to everything (speaking, writing, dress, thought) but then capricious substitution of this method when the fashion changes—this is at the heart of Kant’s distinction. Kant’s commentary on writing style follows this same contour, for as we briefly examined in the first chapter Kant criticized those German writers who tried to imitate the style of the French, considering such disjunction grotesque. Kant specifically declares, “much, e.g., that now is actually accounted as lastingly beautiful in our writing style is nonetheless nothing but the fashion of our time. Very many learned men and beautiful minds are actually often more harmful than useful to the learned world. A Young, a Klopstock, a Gleim, etc., have, e.g., really spoiled a multitude of weak minds.”³⁰ Kant frames this evaluation in terms of erring solely in favor of the aesthetic, without the balance of logical perfections, which furthermore connects to following fashion rather than exhibiting style. Kant speaks about this tendency in broader terms, identifying the exaltation of the aesthetic at the expense of the logical with the French style generally, and the balance between the aesthetic and the logical with the English.

On the Relative Merits of the “English” Style vs. the “French” Style

Kant’s antipathy toward fashionable thinking mainly concerns, although not exclusively, how the French courtly style and its overemphasis on aesthetic perfection were imitated by German writers, resulting in stylistic monstrosities and ruining of minds. Kant consistently contrasts the English style in emphasizing logical perfection over aesthetic perfection, and the inverse for the French style. It goes without saying that Kant preferred English over French and while Kant militated against the imitation of French style, following the examples of the English

was quite honorable. So imitation is not per se the crux of this operation, although it serves a role, for the French excess towards the aesthetic perfection is the main target of Kant's prioritization.³¹ In other words, the type of imitation to which Kant objected most vehemently concerned imitation of specific and certain styles into the German language, namely the French.

This account, however, may downplay the danger that Kant saw in these fashionable imitations and followings: not just on account of imitation insofar as that involves the revocation of one's own autonomy in handing oneself over to heteronomy, but the accompanying danger involved in the overstimulation of the emotions and affect. Kant specifically identifies the excess of style involved in this connection as *gallantry*: the double subversion of autonomy by handing oneself over to another's directive, and in doing so furthermore handing oneself completely over to emotions at the cost of reason. Kant clarifies, connecting his distaste for certain stylistic excess with certain dangers, in identifying gallantry with the French more generally:

In general, one does not find among them the least delicacy about indulging others. – No people has more gallantry in writing style than France. . . The Germans fail miserably, and they show something embarrassing in their character when they try to equal the French in their gallantry. This gallantry is dangerous because it is so stimulating and seductive that, because the entire public shouts its approval, we value this more highly than the reproach of learned men.³²

Kant considered such not only an erring too far in the direction of aesthetic perfection—lacking the balance of logical perfection in its conjunction, unsuited to the German language itself, sounding monstrous—but also dangerous in its gallantry, identified with the seduced or even bewitched crowd, moved so thoroughly though affect as to be beyond basic control.

On the other hand, Kant praised generically the style of the English. Unlike the French, the English, in his estimation, effected the perfect balance between logical and aesthetic

perfection, eschewing gallantry, and embodying principles such as perspicaciousness, eloquence, and both efficacy and efficiency of expression. Perhaps more than authors of antiquity, Kant refers to British authors throughout his works. He was especially fond of Alexander Pope. He was familiar with and quoted/referenced Swift, Sterne, Richardson, Fielding, Johnson, Butler, in addition to the several figures mentioned in the previous chapter including Burke, Addison, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and, of course, Kames. While attributing the correct methodological orientation of critique to Kames's treatment, Kant furthermore directly cited Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric* (1783), particularly in reference to style:

Why does one usually understand by 'poet' a writer who composes in *verse*, that is, in a discourse that is scanned (spoken rhythmically, like music). Because in announcing a work on beautiful art he enters with a solemnity that must satisfy the finest *taste* (in respect to form); otherwise the work would not be beautiful. – However, since this solemnity is mostly required for the beautiful representation of the sublime, a similarly affected solemnity without verse is called (by Hugh Blair) 'prose run mad.'³³

While Kant's connection to the British rhetorical tradition was briefly investigated in the discussion of Kant's aesthetic theory and its debt to rhetoric, this passage demonstrates one of the more direct connections between Kant and rhetorical theory's developments in the eighteenth century.

In addition to the stylistic comparisons already made thus far, Kant preferred the English for he argued that they produced more original ideas, and fell back upon less imitation, than the French and others. Kant claims in *Blomberg Logic*,

it has been noted that the English nation has more numerous and greater originals than the French and other nations. This actually derives, however, from the freer and less constrained government. For there almost every one is his own master, at least of his own genius. In most cases he naturally thinks, judges, and acts without being moved by examples, or at least without directing himself according to them, following them, imitating them. Everyone thinks, then, and judges the same thing according to his taste, and therefore there are so few copies there.³⁴

Once again, a curious account of history as far as the relation between originality and political configurations are concerned, but Kant's take on the relative evaluation of the styles says much about the basis of Kant's prioritization of the English over the French.³⁵

One of the most interesting aspects of Kant's assessments and relative evaluations of the French and English "styles" is the fact that Kant did not speak or read English. Kuehn notes that Kant was extremely well versed in Latin, had substantial understanding of Greek and Hebrew, but Kant also took a few optional French courses, so "we may therefore assume that Kant was able to read French and comprehend it when it was spoken."³⁶ This is quite interesting given Kant's later observations about the French style generally, especially since he had to pay for the additional courses. English, on the other hand, Kant did not have the opportunity to study at all. Even though he so greatly took the English style as his model, it is generally accepted that basically Kant had no working knowledge of English. As Gracyk puts it, Kant "read no English and depended on German or French translations or secondary accounts for knowledge of relevant texts."³⁷ Expanding upon Gracyk's claim, the evidence seems to indicate that Kant's comments on English style, his references to various literary and philosophical passages, his exaltation of the English over the French, all emanate from Kant's exposure through translations, popular essays, book reviews, and knowledge from personal acquaintances. The best example of the latter was one of Kant's closest friends Joseph Greene, an English merchant who lived in Königsberg. Greene was the earlier mentioned figure who was so very punctual that Kant's own punctuality was in response and out of respect for Green, as his clockwork evening walk was often to visit him. According to Kuehn "the two came very close and Green's effect on Kant cannot be overestimated."³⁸ Kuehn further characterizes this important relationship:

They completely trusted each other, and they shared most of their thoughts and feeling with each other. Yet the friendship did not, at least as we are to believe Kant himself, rely on ‘mere feeling’ but on ‘principles.’ It was a ‘moral’ friendship, not merely an ‘aesthetic’ one. Kant’s view of maxims, as necessary for building character, was, at least in part, indebted to Green’s way of life. It was not an accident that in the lectures on anthropology in which Kant himself spoke of maxims, he often claimed that the English had the most solid understanding. He himself relied on the judgment of his English friend.³⁹

Kuehn even carries the influence as far as to claim that Kant’s *CPuR* “is not so much the work of a solitary and isolated thinker as the product of a collaborative effort,” at least in its phrasing and idioms largely derived from merchants.⁴⁰ Considering the monument of the first *Critique* as a collaborative and deliberative effort and less of the solitary output after his transformation is certainly provocative and intriguing. As it turns out, Kant’s silent decade was actually characterized by much more talk, collaboration, and conversation than the caricature might lead us to believe.

While it is difficult to assess just what and how much Kant may have gleaned about the English from Greene—both in his own manner and by what he conveyed—the influence according to Kuehn was substantial. However, another significant source of Kant’s knowledge about the English thought and style surely was offered by the German popular philosophers with whom Kant was in complex relation. These popular philosophers not only produced translations, but also reviewed books, wrote review essays, and generally brought works of other Enlightenments to Germany. So, despite his attacks on the popular philosophers as shallow pates glibly espousing capriciously cobbled-together incompatible arguments for the purpose of synthesizing a light version of moral philosophy with public appeal, Kant indeed relied heavily upon those very popular philosophers for translating and transmitting the very thought that was so influential to his own thinking. Furthermore, his own critical philosophy, which quickly tried to distinguish itself from some of their approaches, at the same time strove to exemplify true

popularity. Adding personal intrigue into the mix, particularly with Kant's relation to Garve, the attack on popularity appears more about having the last word after the complicated series of events that transpired after the publication of the first *Critique*. Kant's sustained interest in what he distinguished as true popularity motivated him to render the *CPuR* into a popular form (upon realizing that no one else was going to take up critical philosophy and popularize it for him), resulting in the *Prolegomena*. This work can be viewed as Kant's own process through and operation of the task of making popular.

On Popularity, Redux: *CPuR*'s Reception and the *Prolegomena*

In the years after *CPuR* was first published, reviewed after a period of silence to Kant's disappointment, Kant discovered that Garve indeed wrote the first review of the first *Critique*, known as the "Göttingen review." At this point, Kant's previous admiration and praise of Garve turned into an attack on the "popular philosophers." Kant still published in popular publications and participated in this public use of reason alongside the popular philosophers (even taking a stand in the Pantheism Controversy, briefly discussed in chapter two). While Kant famously swore off polemics after the *Prolegomena*, in which he publically called for the "Göttingen reviewer" (Garve) to reveal himself, Kant still committed himself to the general German Enlightenment ideal of popular publication and making philosophical matters accessible to a broad reading audience.

Popularity, as it turns out, is a substantially greater task than merely providing aesthetic perfection (although it includes that), and more than using generally-accessible language, lively presentation, and examples (although it includes those, too). In short, making popular, at least in Kant's endeavor to transform the *CPuR* into a popular form (the *Prolegomena*) involves not only a re-envisioning and re-invention of the argument and content at hand, but also re-casting the

style of composition, explicitly attending to the various ways in which emphasis, attention, and memory can be cultivated, and a re-structuring and reorganizing to clarify the key questions and distinctions. In the first chapter, popularity emerged as a conflicted terrain at some points involving seemingly minor alterations after the serious investigation has taken place, but at other points involves a much stronger role for classical conceptions of rhetoric at work than the ostensible reduction to mere style. The case of the *Prolegomena* performs this more robust role for rhetoric in the re-imagining of the first *Critique* on many levels, including invention, style, arrangement, and memory.

The initial response and reception of *CPuR* was not the one for which Kant had hoped. As a matter of fact, while Kant became quite popular (and then, of course, the gift and the curse of living to experience the full parabola), it was not in the way or for the things that he expected (not the answers, but the questions). Frederick Beiser characterizes the initial reception: “The *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* was born into an indifferent world. The first seven months after its publication it seemed to suffer the same fate as Hume’s *Treatise*: ‘to fall still born from the press.’ Although the *Kritik* appeared in May 1781, there were no reviews of it for the rest of that year.”⁴¹ Kant had seemingly expected his colleagues (as he named in numerous correspondence: Mendelssohn, Tetens, and Garve) to take up the cause of critical philosophy and make it popular as they had done with so many authors, not only importing philosophy from other countries like England and France, but also making technical works popular and accessible to a more general educated reading public.⁴²

In a 1772 letter to Marcus Herz, usually considered the letter that makes first mention of what will emerge almost a decade later as *CPuR*, Kant seemed suspicious from the start that something like *CPuR* could become a popular work. Kant wrote, “I begin to feel anxious about

my project (which I regard as my most important work, the greater part of which I have ready before me) – then I am frequently comforted by the thought that my work would be just as useless to the public if it is published as it would be if it remains forever unknown.”⁴³ He continues, already upon its inception providing apologetics for what is to become the massive stylistic and terminological tax levied on the reader of the first *Critique*, “for it takes a writer of greater distinction and eloquence than mine to move his readers to exert themselves to reflect on his writing.”⁴⁴ Due to his own expressed anxiety about his writing abilities, combined with a concern that the critical philosophy would not be suited to popularity in the first place, Kant appears to have partially resigned himself to a small, technical audience.

Fast-forward to the year in which *CPuR* appears at the Easter Leipzig book fair, 1781. Kant wrote to Johann Biester, founder and editor of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, his oft-recited litany of apologetics for the *CPuR*’s style and presentation: Kant’s advancing age, the publication exigencies, the short drafting period, and the inability for the necessary revisions towards comprehensibility and accessibility. Kant explains to Biester,

though this book has occupied my thinking for a number of years, I have put it down on paper in its present form in only a short time. That is also why certain stylistic infelicities and signs of haste as well as certain obscurities still remain, not to mention the typographical errors which I could not avoid, since because of the propinquity of the book fair it was impossible to mark them. . . I could not delay the publication of the book any longer to sharpen the presentation and render it more easily intelligible.⁴⁵

The first *Critique*, after being the product of rumination for almost a decade, was, in Kant’s account, a race against time.

He repeated a similar reasoning to Mendelssohn, in a retrospective account after the *Prolegomena* had already been published, with the preface “though I regret this, and regret that

the *Critique* repels you, I am not offended by this.”⁴⁶ Kant continued, “for although the book is the product of nearly twelve years of reflection, I completed it hastily, in perhaps four of five months, with the greatest attentiveness to its content but less care about its style and ease of comprehension.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, Kant offered the following justification and even defense of the *Critique*’s style to perhaps one of the most well-regarded stylists of the time: “Even now I think my decision was correct, for otherwise, if I had delayed further in order to make the book more popular, it would probably have remained unfinished. As it is, the weaknesses can be remedied little by little, once the work is there in rough form.”⁴⁸ Kant supplicated himself before Mendelssohn, who, as Avital Ronell puts it “really had it over him in terms of sheer power of expression.”⁴⁹ Kant continued his defense to Mendelssohn, “Few men are so fortunate as to be able to think for themselves and at the same time be able to put themselves into someone else’s position and adjust their style exactly to his requirements. There is only one Mendelssohn.”⁵⁰ Now, of course such a flattering pronouncement was made in the letter to Mendelssohn himself, but by all accounts, Kant’s esteem for Mendelssohn could hardly be overstated. Mendelssohn was, in his estimation, one of the true geniuses who could effect that perfect balance of logical and aesthetic perfection—in other words, true popularity. Kant, for the sake of expediency, offers his excuses to the inimitable Mendelssohn for having to err on the dry side of logical perfection instead of having the time to make the first *Critique* popular and elegant while still being true to the depth of investigation.

The very audience whom Kant expected most well-suited to understanding what he was up to in *CPuR* either did not bother with the enterprise or did not understand and take it up in the way Kant had expected. As Kant referred to in his letter, he knew that Mendelssohn set aside the *Critique* never to return to it, and Tetens had retired from philosophy a few years before. The

third name upon whom Kant bestowed his hopes for popularizing the critical philosophy was Garve, who did not remain silent and later revealed himself (after being called out in the *Prolegomena*) as the author of the infamous review in *Göttingischen Anzeigen* (i.e. the *Göttingen* review, or the Garve-Feder review). In some ways the Göttingen review's unflattering and unsympathetic portrayal of *CPuR*, as Beiser notes, got Kant "a little of the publicity he was looking for—though certainly not in the manner he had wished." Complicating the problem of popularity and comprehensibility even further, even the technical audience upon whom Kant was relying did not "get it," so to speak. In the broader context, Beiser notes that the more Lockean-inclined *popularphilosophen*, who had assumed an accord between Kant's earlier works and their own under the general aegis of enlightenment, "were not exactly amused by the appearance of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*...the wolf in sheep's clothing had finally appeared—and with all teeth bared."⁵¹ The critical philosophy, in several ways, announced a decided departure from popular philosophy both attitudinally and stylistically.

The Göttingen Review

The review serves as the first official response to the *CPuR* and while it basically inaugurated the attack upon critical philosophy from both the empiricist and later rationalist opponents, this initial reception involves a fairly complicated set of circumstances. Garve wrote the review for the editor, Feder, in whose hands it was heavily redacted and who published it anonymously in *Zugabe zuden Göttingischen Anzeigen con gelehrten Sachen* (*Göttingen Review*) on January 19, 1782. The review's main charge, aside from the impenetrable style by which the readers "are strained beyond the point of exhaustion," is that Kant's *CPuR* is unoriginal in that it says not much more than Berkeley. It also focuses on the first *Critique*'s eschewal of a middle

path between dogmatism and skepticism by merely reducing everything to appearances and, accordingly, erring heavily on the side of skepticism.

After Garve's original version of the review was published in *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* in 1783, the comparisons between the two could be investigated. While Garve's original review, in Brigitte Sassen's translation appearing in *Kant's Early Critics*, spans eighteen and a half pages, the version in the *Göttingen Review* runs five and a half pages. Not only was the content drastically reduced, not an unreasonable move, but the charges that Kant's first *Critique* was nothing more than a re-hash of Berkeleyan idealism were added, and the framing and overall tone amended from Garve's more reverential and deferential tone to the simultaneously impatient, polemical, and dismissive tone of the published review. As Frederick Beiser notes, "Where Feder's edition damns Kant, Garve's original praises him. Whereas Feder's review is polemic, Garve's is a sober summary, cautiously suggesting its criticisms rather than baldly asserting them. But much more significant, Feder suppresses some of Garve's more interesting critical remarks."⁵² While the redacted version was indeed derived from Garve's review, this issue of tone becomes important for a few reasons: first, in that the *Göttingen Review*'s tone sets the tone, so to speak, of the ensuing empiricist (and then rationalist) attack on critical philosophy from the start, and second, that the tone of the review is what ends up provoking Kant into his polemical drawing out of the "Göttingen reviewer" in the appendix of the *Prolegomena*. The *GMM*, as discussed in the preceding chapter, started out as a polemic against Garve's reading of Cicero in response to the revelation he was the Göttingen reviewer. However, in the final version this polemical initial inspiration is largely effaced save for a few references. As Kuehn states, while the *Prolegomena* "ended up as a sustained polemic against the Göttingen review, it did not start out that way."⁵³ The genesis and development of the

Prolegomena takes an inverse form to that of the *GMM*: whereas the *Prolegomena* only ended up as a polemic after the appendix directly calls out the Göttingen reviewer, the *GMM* originally starts as an attack on Garve's Cicero but the traces of that antagonistic inception are effaced as it closes in on publication.

A brief look at the two reviews illustrate this broader point about tone, in synecdoche.

The *Göttingen Review* begins with the following opening framing:

This work, which always exercises the understanding of its readers – even if does not always instruct it – which often strains their attention to the point of exhaustion, which aids them from time to time with well-chosen examples or rewards them with unexpected and generally useful references, is a system of higher or, as the author calls it, Transcendental Idealism.⁵⁴

The review then reduces the key argument of *CPuR* into a summary before charging the work with both skepticism and idealism, ending with “and when, to assume the most extreme position with the idealist, everything of which we can know and saw is merely representation and law of thought. . . why then this fight against the commonly accepted language, why then, and from where this idealist differentiation?”⁵⁵

On the other hand, Garve's original review opens with the following *exordium*:

The philosophical writings Mr. Kant has so far presented to the public have shown him to be one of the deepest and most thorough thinkers and a man whose fine and fruitful imagination often offers apt and well-chosen images for the most abstract concepts, thus making them comprehensible and often engaging also for the less perspicacious reader. But although the depth of his philosophical genius has not been revealed in any of his works to the degree to which it has been in this one, it is in most of its parts much less agreeably and popularly presented. This is the case, we think, not because his style has changed, but because most of the material he treats here is intrinsically too far removed from what is evident to sense and intuition to be made perspicacious even with the greatest effort on his part.⁵⁶

Garve then turns to the difficult and new terminology offered in the *Critique*, provides several pages of summary of what he found to be the main points of the work, before moving to his questions and challenges to the critical philosophy. All in all, despite the controversy about the review, the substantive content in both versions is basically similar. However, the additions and deletions had a significant effect on the overall tenor of the review, and regard for both the author and the work come across quite differently between the two versions. Sassen basically evaluates Garve's original review as "quite an impressive piece of work . . . he did his best to give a fair and thorough account of it, and . . . the objections he raised, for the most part, became standard objections raised by the early empiricist critics of Kant."⁵⁷ The original review exhibits a tone more akin to someone working through something extremely difficult, struggling at the very limits of comprehensibility and complexity with due deference to a form of writing and task beyond the reviewer's capacity. While the felicities and ingratiation in the original review seem relatively conventional, their being stripped out in the edited Feder-Garve review alters the tone, relative position of the commentator, and attitude towards the author. While impossible to gauge Kant's counterfactual response if the first review he had read would have been the original, given the way things happened Kant was not impressed once the original version of the review was published afterwards, feeling like he was being treated as an "imbecile." While *GMM* was the revenge against Garve's Cicero, through the figure of the popular philosopher, it hardly bears but the trace of the initial polemic, the direct target of which becomes obscured over time resulting in the crypto-polemic against the popular philosophers.

Kant wrote the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783) before he had read the original review and, of course, before he learned that Garve was the Göttingen reviewer (for Kant calls out Garve in the appendix and Garve only identifies himself as a result). This popular

work set forth to emphasize the main principles of *CPuR* (1781) that seemed to have been overlooked in its early reception, which was characterized by equal parts silence and polemic/rejection from the *Göttingen Review*. Kant set forth to write the popular version himself as it seemed that the popular philosophers, with whom Kant was in accord on broader concerns of enlightenment, would not be popularizing the critical philosophy as he planned. So many lines of contrast (in structure, in style, in tone, etc.) can be enumerated between these two monumental works, yet just for illustration of present purposes, I will briefly brush a few broad strokes of the divergences that emerge between *CPuR* and the *Prolegomena*, which can be viewed as Kant's own enactment of the task of popularity, of making-popular.

While the *Critique* spans 850+ pages, the *Prolegomena* weighs in around 160. While the *Critique* involves a dense and daunting terminological buy-in, the *Prolegomena* avoids much of the taxonomies and corresponding terminological distinctions that render the critical philosophy in its original form a highly technical series of specifications and corresponding operations. The *Critique* relies upon a dizzying structure and substructure, particularly dependent on technical distinctions (the main structure divided between the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements and the Transcendental Doctrine of Method, the second levels of structure combining different orders including parts, divisions, and books, in addition to the sections known as the Analogies of Experience, and Antinomies of Reason, and the Paralogisms of Pure Reason). The *Prolegomena*'s structure, however, is clearly arranged according to the four basic questions of the transcendental problem: "How is Pure Mathematics Possible?" "How is the Science of Nature Possible?" "How is Metaphysics in General Possible?" and, finally, "How is Metaphysics Possible as a Science?" In the Appendix, "On what can be Done to Make Metaphysics Actual as a Science," Kant not only replies to the charge of idealism from the Göttingen review but

explicitly challenges the reviewer to reveal himself, clearly both frustrated by not being understood and insulted by the haughty tone of the review.⁵⁸

The style of the *Critique* is taxing, impenetrable, and reader-unfriendly with sentences scores of lines long in paragraphs spanning pages, while the style of the *Prolegomena* is crisp, concise, and, overall, perspicacious. Kant recognizes these differences, surely, and sets out in the introduction, accordingly, that the *Prolegomena* can have only been written (and intelligible to the reader) after the first *Critique*: “but although a mere sketch, preceding the Critique of Pure Reason, would be unintelligible, unreliable, and useless, it is all the more useful as a sequel. For so we are able to grasp the whole, to examine in detail the chief points of importance in the science, and to improve in many respects our exposition, as compared with the first execution of the work.”⁵⁹ Along these briefest of sketches between the two works, Kant’s own enactment of popularity demonstrates the range involved within making something technical accessible, comprehensible—popular in Kant’s sense of true popularity. Here, as the result of the laborious task of creating a popular treatment, the monument of Western intellectual history known as the first *Critique* actually serves as propaedeutic to the *Prolegomena*, not the other way around. The popular treatment can only happen in the wake of the conceptual struggle of the first *Critique*, with an exigence provided by that Gottingen reviewer who did not understand what Kant was up to in the *Critique*. Set aside by Mendelssohn, receiving only silence from the retired Tetens, and dismissed in the Göttingen review, Kant effected a reevaluation of popularity in practice, not only entailing a difference of word choice, manner of expression, and organization, but a complete re-casting of critical philosophy. Readers had largely not taken up what Kant took as the central consideration of the first *Critique*—the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge—and so the reorganization of the *Prolegomena* highlights this central question in an explicit and

unmistakable way. This popular enactment of the *CPuR* is underwritten, however, with a certain frustration about being both not understood and misunderstood.

Response after the Prolegomena

After the *Prolegomena* was published, Garve revealed himself as the “Göttingen reviewer” in a letter to Kant dated July 13, 1783. Garve wrote, “you demand that the reviewer of your book in the Göttingen journal identify himself. I cannot in any way recognize that review, in the form that it was published, as my own. I would be distressed if it were wholly the product of my pen.”⁶⁰ He continues, slightly adjusting the claim: “I do bear some responsibility for it. And since I am concerned that a man whom I have long respected should at least regard me as an honest person, even if he also takes me to be a shallow metaphysician, I therefore step out of incognito, as you demanded in one place in your *Prolegomena*.”⁶¹ Garve notes, distancing himself from the published form to which Kant responded so sharply “I received the issue that supposedly contained what was called my review. Your own resentment and displeasure could not have exceeded mine at the sight of it. Certain phrases of my manuscript were in fact retained; but they constituted less than a tenth of my words and less than a third of the published review.”⁶² This claim is, of course, contested by those who examine the two versions in more detail. The published Göttingen review ends up being something like two-thirds Garve’s (with the remaining third Feder’s) extracted from his original review, which was about three times longer.

Garve then writes in the letter of his primary frustration with *CPuR* in the task of the review, its difficult and inaccessible style. Garve explained that in order to write the review, he had to make a 10-12 page précis of the main arguments and movements in the first *Critique*, and it is from this he prepared his version of the review. Garve wrote to Kant explaining that he did

not want to exempt himself from some of Kant's charges in the *Prolegomena*, particularly regarding how the reviewer resented the difficulties of style and comprehension. Garve wrote, "I confess now and then I did. For I believed that it must be possible to render more easily comprehensible (to readers not wholly unaccustomed to reflection) the truths that are supposed to bring about important reforms in philosophy."⁶³ In a way, it seems that Garve was indeed trying to provide not only a review of the *CPuR* but also, at the same time, trying to render it comprehensible and popular in his own engagement. Garve addressed the heart of the matter concerning the first *Critique*'s style directly to Kant:

My opinion, perhaps mistaken, is still this: that your whole system, if it is really to become useful, must be expressed in a popular manner, and if it contains truth then it can be expressed. And I believe that the new language which reigns throughout the book, no matter how much sagacity is shown in the coherence with which its terms are connected, nevertheless often creates a deceptive appearance, making the projected reform of science itself or the divergence from the ideas of others seem greater than it really is.⁶⁴

Garve insisted on the importance of accessibility and popularity in philosophy, while identifying how the first *Critique* in its saturation with newly invented terminology and accompanying distinctions exaggerates the departure from Kant's predecessors. Garve indicated that philosophy needs to be understandable, accessible, and related to what is already familiar, while the newly emerged Kantian philosophy was moving in the opposite direction. Garve saw no function or purpose in the stylistically difficult and abstruse terminological apparatus at the basis of the distinctions and taxonomies within critical philosophy and Garve rearticulated this objection directly to Kant.

Kant's reply of August 7, 1783 exhibits a sense of relief, basically assuring Garve that he knew such a review in its published form could not have been written by someone who otherwise exemplifies "an enlightened philosophical spirit" and a "refined taste, the product of a wide

reading and worldly experience.”⁶⁵ Kant continues, “now I experience the still greater pleasure of finding in your letter clear evidence of your fastidiousness and conscientious honesty and of your humane manner of thinking, which bestows genuine value upon those intellectual gifts,” in contrast to the editor, Feder, “who, entirely without cause has filled his review (which I can call ‘his’ since it mutilates your essay) with the breath of pure animosity.”⁶⁶ At this point, Kant believed that Feder had totally “mutilated” Garve’s original review, and demonstrated relief at Garve’s assurances. He responded, furthermore, to the substantive charge regarding style and popularity that Garve repeated in his correspondence. In this particular exchange, Kant proposed the following defense of his style in the first *Critique*:

You choose to mention, as a just criticism, the lack of popular appeal in my work, a criticism that can in fact be made of every philosophical writing, if it is not to conceal what is probably nonsense under a haze of apparent cleverness. But such popularity cannot be attempted in getting people to go along with me for a stretch, in concepts that accord with those of the schools together with barbarisms of expression, I should like to undertake a popular yet thorough exposition myself (though others will be better at this), for which, let us be called dunces [*doctores umbratici*], if only we can make progress with the insight, with whose development the sophisticated public will of course not sympathize, at least not until the work emerges from its dark workshop and, seen with all its polish, need not be ashamed of being judged.⁶⁷

At this point Kant articulates a defense of what he terms philosophical writing, which he distinguishes from appearance of (perhaps fashionable) cleverness. The popular *Prolegomena* could only have been done after the first *Critique*, but true popularity of the thought can only be effected in an almost retrospective effort to synthesize the new ways of thinking into something that can connect with popular understanding, expression, and idiom.

However, Kant's attack on popularity is not on popularity at all, but ostensibly on a particular form of popularity against which he contrasts true popularity. His attacks on the popular philosophers do not target all popular philosophers categorically, but instead refer to very specific individuals under the aegis of the general. Kant's antipathetic treatment of the particular philosophers (e.g. Garve) exhibits less disrespect and dismissal than a form of retribution. Mendelssohn and Lessing, while popular philosophers in the more general sense of having contributed vastly to German knowledge about foreign Enlightenment figures, are esteemed in Kant's account and thus are not included under the purview of his attack. Garve, the author of the first review of *CPuR*, and Feder, the editor of *Göttingische Anzeigung* who heavily edited Garve's original review and with whom Kant had an ongoing relation of antipathy, are (in my estimation) the primary targets of Kant's attack on the "popular philosophers," and not as figures standing in for rhetoric as Garsten indicates. Neither having taken up Kant's critical philosophy and rendered it in popular form, and having contrarily initiated the public discussion of *CPuR* with the overall negative tone of the Göttingen Review, Kant's general assault upon popularity (and his tactically mobile criterion of "true" popularity in contrast to "false") form more of a personal rejoinder than an attack on popularity or upon rhetoric with which it was largely aligned.

That does not, however, mean that these popular philosophers (even in Kant's estimation) were deserving of little respect. Garve's commentary and translation of Cicero is the one from which Kant largely worked, and the popular essays and book reviews of the popular philosophers (along with Greene) were likely the sources from which Kant got much of his understanding of British Enlightenment thinkers. As Gracyk notes, "a key consideration in determining Kant's knowledge of the British is the view that he read no English and depended on German or French

translations or secondary accounts for knowledge of relevant texts.”⁶⁸ Feder wrote a review essay on Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, and Garve not only provided the edition and commentary on Cicero to which Kant refers and responds in *GMM*, but also was responsible for bringing to the attention of the German intelligentsia essays and reviews of works of the British Enlightenment. Kant’s likely source for his understanding of Burke is Moses Mendelssohn, particularly his 1758 essay summarizing Burke in detail.⁶⁹ It seems rather unlikely that Kant had no respect for these figures of the popular philosophers, since he heavily relied on their efforts of popularization. According to Beiser, “along with Mendelssohn, Garve was then generally regarded as the leading figure of the *Aufklärung*. More than anyone else, he was responsible for introducing British thought, especially British political economy, to the mainstream of the *Aufklärung*. Garve was translator of several British classics, among them Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, Burke’s *Observations on the Sublime and the Beautiful*, and Ferguson’s *Principles of Moral Philosophy*. Even Kant had the highest respect for Garve, whom he classed with Baumgarten and Mendelssohn as ‘one of the great analysts of his age.’”⁷⁰ Kant felt like an “imbecile” after reading Garve’s original review, and although Kant responds in the form of attacks against the popular philosophers, such rejoinder could hardly come from the seeming disrespect evoked in the images of “shallow pates” and the like. In short, this dispute which emerged under the guise of “popular philosophers,” while often aligned with rhetoric and its ostensible lack of methodological rigor, was indeed personal, and targeted neither popularity nor rhetoric after all. That does not mean, however, that rhetoric and popular philosophy escaped collateral damage as van der Zande’s account illustrates. The transition from critical philosophy as new to critical philosophy as philosophy writ large (rendering popular philosophy into relative oblivion) was a slow one, involving the support of the pro-critical *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* under the

editorship of Christian Göttfried Schutz (Professor of Eloquence at Jena), among other complex institutional developments.

The sensitivity and attention to the rhetorical task involved in writing his own popular treatment of the *CPuR* further complicate the assumption that Kant's attack on rhetoric takes place in the name of popularity. Kant, disappointed with the fact that the popular philosophers were not going to take up critical philosophy and popularize it in the way he had expected, took up the task of popularity on his own in fashioning the *Prolegomena*. Kant considered not only the audience and occasion, but his reorientation of the *Prolegomena* also shows careful attention to invention, arrangement, and style explicitly. He is apologetic about the style in the first *Critique*, clearly dissatisfied with the little time he had to edit it and to render its style more felicitous. He performs a fairly extensive consideration of the important rhetorical task of popularity (so important he postponed his own work on morality) with the aim of rendering it memorable, cultivating a certain legacy that perhaps would not have otherwise been forged.

Kant displays conflicted attitudes toward popularity. On the one hand he defends the style of the *CPuR* as necessary to articulate something that had not yet been done in philosophy, and, on the other hand, he offers the numerous apologetics and embarrassed excuses for its composition and style. Kant wanted to be popular, and Kant wanted to be understood. Eventually the former undeniably transpired (perhaps never for the latter), albeit not in the way Kant had hoped. Ronell eloquently frames this strange turning point and even paradoxical task towards philosophical style that Kant helped inaugurate: "Kant, despite it all, became popular, a cult figure. His work, tremendously difficult, uncompromising, awkward, dry, rhetorically cramped, made it to the top of everyone's list – and despite what he said, Kant had installed a program for this eventuality in his own work: he programmed the very popularity he claimed to

renounce.”⁷¹ Kant’s own confliction about the style of the first *Critique* in some ways echoes the confliction he performs about rhetoric throughout his commentary. At one point, he effusively admits his own shortcomings while at the same time admitting an important, if not central role, for style that is suitable, accessible, and comprehensible. From one angle, the first *Critique* was not what it should have been, there was no time. On the other hand, critical philosophy points to something that, as Nancy states, is at the limits of comprehension and, namely, at the limits of articulablity and expression. Difficult style, according to Ronell’s position, is programmed as an almost anti-popular popular style, for abstruseness becomes predominant as philosophical style as such. The performative confliction in Kant’s account of both style and rhetoric shows not an inconsistency, or a contradiction, but instead a many-mindedness about the complicated task of, in short, popularity.

This difficult navigation between style and popularity—forging a philosophical style while, at the same time, trying to reach a broad and popular audience—points to a tension that lies within enlightenment more generally. The relationship between style and philosophy, under the larger purview of enlightenment, highlights some important considerations in examining Kant’s conflicted attitudes toward rhetoric. On the one hand, what draws Kant together with the popular philosophers involves a certain public-oriented function for philosophy, and particularly, for philosophical writing, that characterized one of the core themes in Kant’s treatment of Enlightenment: the public use of reason in speaking as scholar. On the other hand, Kant wanted to distinguish his own critical philosophy methodologically from popular philosophy, particularly by insisting on using only the appropriate forms of evidence and principles suited to the particular philosophical question at hand. Not only that, concerning methodology, Kant

seems to be enacting precisely what he said about style, namely that each should develop his own style and that the style should be suitable to what is under examination.

This chapter examined Kant's commentary on style, and re-visited the question of popularity in briefly looking at his own popular version of the first *Critique* in his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. Rather than the assumption that Kant would err in the direction of logical perfection at the expense of aesthetic perfection (as the first *Critique* ended up doing, to his own admission), Kant instead prescribed the perfect balance in-between, and advised that erring on either side would suffer as much of a loss to understanding as the other. Furthermore, style needs to be suited to the subject, to the writer, and to the audience. Rather than following the fashion of the time (whether in dress, manner of speaking, or writing), style most appropriately is almost idiosyncratic rather than mimetic. Perspicaciousness, defined as comprehensibility, serves as the ruling principle underscoring the observations on style. The most admirable style effaces its own artistry, looks effortless but can never be so. Kant admired the "style" of the English, and generally contrasted that with the French. Kant's own *Prolegomena* provides an enactment of the process of popularity, a notion about which Kant wrote recurrently. In the *Prolegomena* Kant finally has the time (inspired by the Göttingen review of the first *Critique*) to set forth the main principles of the *CPuR* that seemed to get lost in its byzantine structure and infelicitous style. Kant's *Prolegomena* sets out the four key questions of critical philosophy, provides emphasis for those considerations that, in his own estimation, must be accounted for in any future foray into metaphysics, and generally provides a popular, comprehensible, and accessible version that could have only been fully forged and articulated after the first *Critique*'s working-thought. These elements of the popular, gathered into both

perspicuity and popularity, underscore Kant's famous account of enlightenment in some interesting and perhaps implicit ways. In conclusion, we now turn to Kant's essay on enlightenment and how these confusions and tensions within his account of rhetoric, style, popularity, and eloquence converge in this most famous of his popular essays.

Notes

¹ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 31 (§18 et 19, 44).

² Ibid.

³ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 201 (§250, 252).

⁴ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 36 (§22, 51).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 31 (§18 et 19, 45).

⁷ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 100 (§135, 128).

⁸ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 49 (§40, 66).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 32 (§18 et 19, 45).

¹¹ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 98 (§135, 126).

¹² Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 240 (§452-454 et 457, 295).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 34-5 (§18 et 19, 48).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Kant, *Vienna Logic*, p. 296 (§842).

¹⁷ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 93 (§125, 120).

¹⁸ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 136 (§170, 172-3).

¹⁹ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 84 (§116, 109).

²⁰ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 237 (§429, 292).

²¹ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 244 (7: 133).

²² Ibid.

²³ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 316 (7: 210).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 135-6 (§170, 172).

²⁶ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 136 (§170, 173).

²⁷ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 131 (§169, 166-7).

²⁸ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 136 (§170, 172).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 152 (§170, 192).

³¹ Kant's exaltation of what he terms "English," arguably included a broader scope as in "British," given the range of figures he references under its purview (including both Scottish and Irish). Of course, this is no less problematic than the subsumptive imperial notion of a "British" culture, but just offered for clarification.

³² Kant, *Vienna Logic*, p. 279 (822). In this section, gallantry is also associated with the feminine, as it can serve as a way to accommodate the learning of science to "the fair sex." Kant says, in the same passage cited here, "in social intercourse they must set the tone of conduct, of course, but to water down whole sciences on their account, until the sciences are congruent with their capacity, causes shallowness, and scholastic perfection loses its worth in the process." While gallantry here is identified as a form of catering to the capacities of women, the end of the passage identifies the danger of gallantry in rousing the crowd over the voice of learned men. Once again, Kant seems unclear or at least conflicted about what he finds disquieting about gallantry, in the same way—and not unrelated to—his treatment of rhetoric.

³³ Kant, *Anthropology*, p. 351 (7: 248).

³⁴ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 137 (§170, 173).

³⁵ Kant, *Blomberg Logic*, p. 137 (§170, 173-4). Kant continues, in the same passage, clarifying this claim somewhat: “On the other hand, though, countries, states, in which a monarchical form of government is introduced and prevails are not in a position to produce any such *originalia*, or at least not nearly as many, for here people are commonly guided very much by examples, which often becomes norms in thinking, in action, and in judging[;] and in fact customarily the magnates of the empire, those who are great in the empire and at court, are in most cases the *originalia*, the models, according to which men usually seek to shape themselves.”

³⁶ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 50.

³⁷ Gracyk, “Kant’s Shifting Debt,” p. 204.

³⁸ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 156.

³⁹ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 156.

⁴⁰ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 241.

⁴¹ Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, p. 172.

⁴² Kant made mention of his reliance upon these three thinkers to popularize the critical philosophy, most notably in a letter to Garve. However, of interest is the way in which those expected to understand and popularize the first *Critique* does change slightly depending upon to whom Kant is writing. In a letter to Christian Garve (after the appearance of the *Prolegomena*, the correspondence to which we shall return later), Kant wrote, “*Garve, Mendelssohn*, and *Tetens* are the only men I know through whose cooperation this subject could have been brought to a successful conclusion before too long, even though centuries before this one have not seen it done. But these men are leery of cultivating a wasteland that, with all the care that has been lavished on it, has always remained unrewarding.” At this point Kant has just been assured by Garve, identifying himself as the author of the review, that the published version so completely

mangled his original as to now be unrecognizable. Nearly two years earlier, Kant wrote to his friend and former student Marcus Herz, who subsequently taught Kant's work (but was interested in the Kant *Inaugural Dissertation* more so than critical philosophy) with a slightly different list: "I am very uncomfortable at Herr Mendelssohn's putting my book aside; but I hope that it will not be forever. He is the most important of all the people who could explain this theory to the world; it was on him, on Herr Tetens, and on you, my dearest man, that I counted most." Clearly Mendelssohn and Tetens were the two Kant most respected in this regard. Kant to Garve, August 7, 1783, *Correspondence*, p. 199 (10: 342); and Kant to Marcus Herz After May 11, 1781, *Correspondence*, p. 181 (10: 270).

⁴³ Kant to Marcus Herz, Feb 21, 1772, *Correspondence*, p. 135 (10: 132-3).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Kant to Johann Erich Biester, June 8, 1781, *Correspondence*, p. 183 (10: 272-3).

⁴⁶ Kant to Moses Mendelssohn August 16, 1783, *Correspondence*, p. 202 (10: 345).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ronell, *Stupidity*, 282.

⁵⁰ Kant to Moses Mendelssohn August 16, 1783, *Correspondence*, p. 202 (10: 345).

⁵¹ Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, p. 169.

⁵² Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, p. 176.

⁵³ Kuehn, *Kant*, p. 255.

⁵⁴ "The Gottingen Review," *Kant's Early Critics*, p. 53.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Garve, "The Garve Review," *Kant's Early Critics*, p. 59.

⁵⁷ Sassen, *Kant's Early Critics*, p. 11.

⁵⁸ Kant, just to give one example, snaps back: "My reviewer speaks like a man who is conscious of important and superior insight which he keeps hidden; for I am aware of nothing recent with respect to metaphysics that could justify his tone." Kant, *Prolegomena*, p. 154.

⁵⁹ Kant, *Prolegomena*, p. 11.

⁶⁰ Garve to Kant July 13, 1783, *Correspondence*, p. 191 (10: 328-9).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Garve to Kant July 13, 1783, *Correspondence*, p. 192-3 (10: 330).

⁶³ Garve to Kant July 13, 1783, *Correspondence*, p. 193 (10: 331-2).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Kant to Garve August 7, 1783, *Correspondence*, p. 196 (10: 337).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Kant to Garve August 7, 1783, *Correspondence*, p. 198 (10:339-40).

⁶⁸ Gracyk, "Kant's Shifting Debt," p. 204.

⁶⁹ Gracyk, "Kant's Shifting Debt," p. 207.

⁷⁰ Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, p. 175. This comment about Garve was in a letter to Marcus Herz, a student of Kant's, about five years before the publication of *CPuR* and then resulting drama about the review, appearing the following year.

⁷¹ Ronell, *Stupidity*, p. 285.

Conclusion: On Rhetoric and Enlightenment

In the introduction, the apparent paradox between Kant's treatment of rhetoric and his definition of enlightenment animated the re-examination of Kant and the question of rhetoric. How can one malign rhetoric and, at the same time, advance that enlightenment demands the public exercise of reason, at every point? The introduction briefly outlined some of the responses at the intersection of rhetoric and philosophy (including the conviction/persuasion distinction), which each offer a part of the picture but ultimately reduce Kant's treatment of rhetoric to one particular dimension at the expense of a more lively picture. For example, while the standard separation between dialectics and rhetoric seems a tempting direction, as well as the divestment of invention from rhetoric, these narratives do not account for the complexity of Kant's treatment of rhetoric and its constellation of related terms such as eloquence, oratory, persuasion, and popularity. For Kant, neither is language a neutral tool nor is thought easily divorced from its expression. While his rejection of persuasion (in its extreme form, manipulation that completely evacuates the listener's own capacity for judgment) at several points seems to align with a pervasive philosophical suspicion of pathos dating from antiquity, Kant's treatment of the affects and passions exceeds such a reduction, for they are not merely dismissed or to be eradicated in favor of a purely logical discourse. As a matter of fact, erring toward logical perfection at the expense of the aesthetic is just as erroneous as complete indulgence in the aesthetic.

The themes investigated in this project have shown the various and persistent ways in which Kant substantially considered these issues, rather than just dismissing them as unworthy of examination. This conclusion will tie together these conflicted and complicated attitudes toward

rhetoric by briefly looking at Kant's treatment of enlightenment, informed by the intricate distinctions and observations Kant makes about related themes. At this point, having thoroughly examined Kant's complicated attitudes toward rhetoric, we can now revisit the question of enlightenment without just reading over the "public use of reason" and "speaking as scholar" with imported assumptions that either underscore such concepts with a certain version of ancient rhetoric or presume that Kant was thoroughly modern in his eschewal of the unnecessary detour of rhetoric and persuasion when sheer demonstration would suffice. Kant thought that both the ancients and the moderns exhibited prejudice that prevented them from seeing the virtues of the other side. After a review of Kant's conflicted attitudes toward rhetoric from the preceding four chapters, this conclusion revisits in a new light the opening discussion of enlightenment.

Review of Kant's Treatment of Rhetoric

The first chapter provided an overview of the conflicted nature of Kant's direct comments regarding rhetoric, oratory, persuasion, eloquence, and popularity. While Kant seemingly rejects rhetoric upon ethical, aesthetic, and political grounds, his shifting and undeveloped arguments about rhetoric articulate a confliction about rhetoric's power, about its potential uses, and about its possible misuses. And yet, despite his pronouncement that oratory is worthy of no respect whatsoever, he immediately qualifies this claim in the footnote. I would also add that he keeps revisiting the issue beyond that note and throughout a fairly wide range of his works both before and after the third *Critique*. While Kant is concerned about the ways in which manipulation (pure pathos, unhinged from any function of judgment, reason, or understanding) evacuates the listener's capacity to have any role, he also is persistently interested in the Enlightenment ideal of making advances in philosophy popular and accessible to a broader

audience, and explicitly attends to the various difficulties, negotiations, and considerations involved in such a task. While his attack on the popular philosophers is usually taken as an attack more generally on popularity, investigating the context shows that the target is much more specific, particularly the Göttingen reviewer, Christian Garve. This conflicted attitude towards rhetoric seems even further complicated by how rhetoric (although serving as a professorship line and course title) in several ways becomes fragmented and distributed across many different areas within the lower faculty of philosophy in eighteenth-century Germany and Prussia.

The second chapter began with the question of ethics, especially with the immense inheritance of Kantian ethics from *GMM*. While the static and motionless realm of morality from a metaphysical orientation (the categorical imperative, deontological ethics) has certainly infiltrated and even naturalized into contemporary American ethics qua ethics, the whole “other” realm of ethics already inscribed within the Kantian system emerges as of equal if not greater importance. Not only was the *GMM* a response to a particular reading of Cicero (Garve’s translation and commentary), but furthermore it points to another entire arena of ethics in naming practical anthropology as the counterpart to a metaphysics of morals. The anthropological realm of lived experience, imperfect as it may be, is the place where judgment and application and actual ethical practice take place. Kant’s account of ethics within the anthropological realm presents another picture of Kant: the lively, sociable, engaged, animated, bodily, and vital Kant that serves as counterpoint to the caricature we have come to receive both of the man and his work, as the desiccated corpse, so to speak. As such, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* provides the companion ethics to the *GMM*. In *APPoV*, Kant accounts for the cosmopolitan citizen of the world, ruled by the maxims to think for oneself, to think in communication with every other person, and to think consistently with oneself. Conversation

plays an important intellectual, social, and bodily role and the society of the table serves as the highest moral-physical good. Kant's account diverges from Cartesian dualism, and instead places of utmost importance care of the body as a way to nurture the mind.

In the third chapter, the heretofore largely implicit question of Kantian aesthetics was brought to the forefront. Some of Kant's commentary on rhetoric appears in *CJ*, and so examining the ways in which the aesthetic theory fits within critical philosophy helps to provide some further context. Kant borrowed much from British aesthetic and rhetorical theory, with the critical orientation most importantly provided by Kames and other influences, including Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Burke, and Blair. The four moments of aesthetic judgment from *CJ* (disinterestedness, subjective universality, purposiveness without a purpose, and indeterminacy of concept) particularly relate to the unique nature of reflective judgment. Judgment, as a result, operates differently from the other faculties even though operations of the mind involve the faculties in different relations and functions to one another. While they often work in accord with one another, this accord is only made available by an anterior discordancy, enabling them to enter into a relationship of free play with one another without a governing faculty. As Deleuze borrows from Rimbaud: a disorder of all the senses. Given this differential structure of aesthetic judgment, in addition to the unsettling function that the imagination may pose to both reason and understanding, we arrive at a possible explanation for the discomfort and distrust of rhetoric that Kant himself seems unable to clearly identify or specify. Rhetoric, unlike poetry, places the understanding and reason at potential risk of overthrow but within a dangerous context of serious business rather than the mere play of poetry.

In the fourth chapter, Kant's observations on style were examined with particular emphasis on the *Lectures on Logic*. While Kant may have been cautious of untempered pathos

inciting the crowd against their better judgment, he surely took the considerations of style, context, audience, and occasion seriously in examining the task of both writing and speaking. Style and popularity are two themes in which Kant's conflicted attitudes toward rhetoric are most extensively developed and articulated. Kant advises balance between logical perfection and aesthetic perfection, and erring on either side to the disadvantage of the other is just as problematic and discouraged. Style should be appropriate to the subject, to the rhetor's station and personal style, and to the particular audience. Liveliness and perspicaciousness are the ruling principles of style, according to Kant, and both are required for drawing attention and emphasis where necessary, as well as for comprehensibility. Style should be in accordance with nature, an elaborate art that effaces its own artistry and appears effortless. Although it does not have timeless dictates, style should never change with the whims of fashion. Style is deeply rooted in a sense of propriety to several elements of context, underwritten with the sense of autonomy that serves as a refrain throughout Kant's works. The manner in which autonomy connects to style does not place the rhetor at the primary node of interaction, however, since appropriate response must attend to the elements of the situation and context. While Kant favored the lively perspicuity of English style over the French style (which follows fashion slavishly and errs too far in the direction of aesthetic perfection), his access to the English authors who so influenced him was highly mediated, in no small part, through the efforts of the popular philosophers who served as target in *GMM*. However when Kant turned to popularize his own *CPuR* into the *Prolegomena*, popularity emerged as an even more complicated task than merely fine tuning style, instead involving several different levels at once in bringing the technical insights to a general reading public.

From the preceding chapters, we can see that Kant quite extensively wrote about not only style, but invention, arrangement, delivery, and memory. Part borrowing from both ancient and contemporary sources, part his own perhaps even idiosyncratic observations, Kant far from dismissed rhetoric. While he clearly exhibited a distaste for Roman oratory, which was drilled into him towards the end of training him to speak like a Roman, the very specific subset of what he rejects focuses upon the type of surreptitious and manipulative persuasion that disables the listener from exercising judgment. Such a rejection is already in accord with the majority of the history of rhetoric, and hardly makes Kant hostile to rhetoric more generally—just to bad rhetoric. This conflicted attitude is represented at the point he makes the comment about oratory deserving no respect in *CJ*, for he immediately begins a series of reconsiderations and qualifications to what even he seems to recognize as dramatic hyperbole. Taken by itself, this reference in *CJ* could lead one to see that Kant is simply hostile to rhetoric. However, putting it into the context of what is afoot in *CJ* more broadly, in addition to the various other works examined in this project (especially *APPoV* and *LoL*), shows not only a much more complex picture but also a more robust and vital role for rhetoric beyond Roman oratory. The intricate and extensive task of what Kant distinguishes as true popularity (which involves making ideas that he finds rigorous into a comprehensible form) connects to the citizen of the world as the general, educated, sociable, and actively engaged public. Kant's notion of enlightenment serves as a fitting concluding point, for enlightenment brings together rhetoric, ethical considerations, aesthetics, style, and popularity under the broader aegis of public engagement.

What is Enlightenment?

For Kant, enlightenment requires the public use of reason, which further requires various freedoms of expression, which require making public in speech and writing positions on important topics, which is enabled by the orientation of “speaking as a scholar,” which allows one to intervene and examine issues that would be inappropriate to question if speaking from a private position. There are two main elements of enlightenment for Kant that directly relate to the present investigation: speaking as scholar (orienting oneself publically in speech and writing) and the attendant ever-vigilant critical perspective of rejecting reliance upon various social apparatuses of authority. So much has been said on Kant’s treatment of enlightenment, perhaps it appears almost comical to conclude with just a few remarks on such an influential and important essay. However, looking at this essay through the lens of rhetoric (i.e. in accordance with the discussions from the previous chapters), this briefest of examinations draws together the complex functions of rhetoric in Kant. “What is Enlightenment?” not only appeals for the functions and orientations mentioned here, but also performs and enacts those very elements itself. The essay demonstrates the very practice of Kant’s speaking as scholar, as a public and popular work.

The famous question “what is enlightenment?” actually was initially posed in Johann Friedrich Zöllner’s 1783 article about civil unions, appearing ostensibly as a rhetorical question in a footnote. From that cue, a lively debate ensued in the *BM* and beyond, with various definitions, positions, and orientations provided in response. Kant’s essay appears as just one in the context of several other essays, including offerings by Moses Mendelssohn (“On the Question: What is Enlightenment”), Karl Leonhard Reinhold (“Thoughts on Enlightenment”)

and Christoph Martin Wieland (“A Couple of Gold Nuggets, from the . . . Wastepaper, or Six Answers to Six Questions”), all appearing in 1784. While Kant’s essay has endured as both the question and the answer within western intellectual history, it certainly appeared as only one response within the context of a lively and contested debate about the question of the then-present.

At this point, we will revisit some of the motifs of Kant’s enlightenment essay initially outlined in the introduction. For the present purposes, a few brief remarks on Kant’s emphasis on autonomy (and against its relinquishment with handing over judgment heteronomously to external authority), the distinction between public and private, and exercising the public use of reason in speaking as scholar assist in drawing Kant’s treatment of rhetoric to a close. Kant’s famous definition, where he immediately answers the question he poses in the title in the first sentence of his essay, bears repeating:

Enlightenment is man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man’s inability to make use of his understanding without the direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without having direction from another. *Sapere aude!* ‘Have the courage to use your own reason!’ – that is the motto of enlightenment.¹

This ties in, immediately, recognizably, with the discussion of Kantian ethics, aesthetics, and style of the second, third, and fourth chapters. Kantian morality emphasizes autonomy (the self-giving law) rather than reliance on moral exemplars, hypothetical imperatives, and other calculi from the empirical realm. Kantian aesthetics emphasizes the use of one’s own reflective judgment attending to feelings of pleasure and displeasure, which can be attuned by the example of others but ultimately requires the courage to exercise one’s own judgment, so to speak. As for style, Kant’s distinction between fashion and style rests on an analogue to this recurring motif of

autonomy versus heteronomy, where merely following the fashions and trends of others hands over judgment, reflecting neither taste nor style but a failing of reason.

Having the courage to use one's own reason is distinguished from relinquishing judgment to others, whether they be specialists, consultants, or what Kant generally calls guardians. We infantilize ourselves by an apparatus of outsourcing decisions and judgments. "If I have a book which understands for me, a pastor who has a conscience for me, a physician who decides my diet, and so forth, I need not trouble myself. I need not think, if I can only pay—others will readily undertake the irksome work for me."² Thinking for oneself, accordingly, is both laborious and dangerous—hence the overwhelming tendency, in Kant's estimation, to accede to utter heteronomy.

Not only is enlightenment freedom *from* this self-incurred tutelage, but enlightenment is also freedom *to* exercise the public use of reason: "for this enlightenment, however, nothing is required but freedom, and indeed the most harmless among all the things to which the term can properly be applied. It is the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point."³ In addition to reasons of comfort and cowardice, Kant finds that the public use of reason is seriously hampered by various restrictions on freedom. The undertones of the essay, and ways in which it speaks to a host of political events and figures (briefly outlined in the first chapter) is far beyond the scope of the present discussion, but should not be entirely elided. In conjunction with the increasing political restrictions to which Kant was responding, restrictions upon the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point also were reinforced at the social level. Kant observes, "but I hear on all sides, 'Do not argue!' The officer says, 'Do not argue but drill!' The tax collector: 'Do not argue but pay!' Only one prince in the world says, 'Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, but obey.' Everywhere there is restriction on

freedom.”⁴ At this point, Kant advances his idiosyncratic distinction between public and private, where the types of commands above are only pertinent to private contexts (relations of intractable obedience, e.g. in a civil position), and not to the public use of reason (as scholar).

While our predominant understanding of private/public designate private as the realm of freedom and public as the realm of obedience (in accordance with certain conceptions of civic duty, etc.), Kant’s distinction on face resonates as relatively unusual, if not counter-intuitive. In Kant, this public/private distinction experiences a chiasmic inversion. However, the distinction becomes less strange once the very specific domain of what “private” entails is clarified. Kant explains,

private use I call that which one may make of it in a particular civil post or office which is entrusted to him. Many affairs which are conducted in the interest of the community require a certain mechanism through which some members of the community must passively conduct themselves with an artificial unanimity, so that the government may direct them to public ends, or at least prevent them from destroying those ends. Here argument is certainly not allowed—one must obey.⁵

While as many, if not more, questions arise from this designation of private as a civil position of obedience (including Kant’s complicated rejection of civil disobedience but apparently contradictory fervent support of the French Revolution), what is most important in this brief overview is that the distinction between private and public hinges upon different roles the same individual can occupy, and not static divisions of societal domains or divisions along professional (or other) lines.

This becomes clear when Kant contrasts what he defines as the public use of reason. In contexts of civil positions, where Kant supplies the examples of the soldier, the clergy member, and one in a designated civil office, authority and obedience reign, importantly and necessarily. In contrast, Kant states, “by the public use of one’s reason I understand the use which a person

makes of it as a scholar before the reading public.”⁶ In occupying the position of a scholar before the reading public, the same individual who was in a relationship of obedience in a civil position now has the freedom (and even the obligation, in the name of enlightenment) to investigate the issue fully and publicly. Kant explains this positionality accordingly, “thus it would be ruinous for an officer in service to debate about the suitability or utility of a command given to him by a superior; he must obey. But the right to make remarks on errors in the military service and to lay them before the public for judgment cannot equitably be refused him as a scholar.”⁷ This role, in speaking as scholar, not only connects Kantian ethics, aesthetics, and style but also articulates a particular ethos, orientation, and disposition toward the public. In short, to speak as scholar is to inhabit an inexorably public and political role. Politics here, accordingly, is not a certain taxonomy of topic or content, but a way of engaging as a scholar publically with others in word and deed.

Enlightenment and Rhetoric

While Kant may have maligned certain strands of Roman oratory that he memorized and recited *ad nauseum*, Kant invariably ends up articulating a model of enlightenment that rests upon individuals occupying a publically-oriented role in speaking as scholars on pressing and timely matters, whatever they may be. While Kant gave many public lectures, since they were arguably under the purview of his state appointed position they perhaps would not be included as the public use of reason. This appears quite paradoxical, since he was in the technical position of a scholar and professor, but to speak as a scholar in the context of the enlightenment essay does not, once again, refer to the occupational position we associate with scholarship. To speak as a scholar is to assume the role of public commentator, perhaps public intellectual in more contemporary parlance, with the freedom to investigate and inquire without strict adherence to

the dictates of authority and obedience that civil positions require. This type of address largely takes place in writing, although the relation between writing and speech in publication is an intriguing matter to which we will return shortly. Kant states, “but so far as a part of the mechanism regards himself at the same time as a member of the whole community or of a society of world citizens, and thus in a role of a scholar who addresses the public (in the proper sense of the word) through his writings, he certainly can argue without hurting the affairs for which he is in part responsible as a passive member.”⁸ The idea here involves that one should be able to speak as scholar in a public role without conflict with one’s private role. Kant later became embroiled in the several controversies that tested the very limit of this assumption, including the previously mentioned controversy concerning the publication of *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason* (1792), which included the essay “Concerning the Battle of the Good against the Evil Principle for Dominion over the Human Being,” already prohibited earlier that same year from being published in the *BM*. Accordingly, It was through his popular publications—essays written for the general public from the protection of the lower faculty of philosophy, which Kant argued should ensure a type of freedom to explore philosophical matters via exemption from the censors—that Kant embodied the role of scholar, in demonstrating his public use of reason. And yet, Kant also quite clearly understood that one must have *courage* in speaking as a scholar, in exercising the public use of reason, for in a context of ever-increasing restrictions upon various political freedoms, such an endeavor is invariably a dangerous one.

Kant wrote several popular essays throughout his career, spanning into the 1790s. His continuous contributions to the *Berlinische Monatsschrift (BM)* include “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose” (1784), “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment” (1784), On the Wrongfulness of Unauthorized Publication of Books” (1785),

“Determination of the Concept of a Human Race” (1785), “What is Orientation in Thinking?” (1786), “On Radical Evil in Human Nature” (1792), “On the Common Saying: ‘That May be Correct in Theory, but it is of No Use in Practice’” (1793), and “On a New Superior Tone in Philosophy” (1796). Kant further published reviews and other occasional pieces in outlets like the critical-philosophy friendly *ALZ* and the local *Königsbergische Gelehrte und Politische Zeitungen*. The *BM* was closely tied to the *Mitwochgesellschaft*, according to James Schmidt “a secret society of ‘Friends of the Enlightenment’” located in Berlin.⁹ Schmidt notes that secret societies of this sort thrived in eighteenth-century Prussia, particularly filling the vacuum of a decreasing hold of religion and, furthermore, “in a political system that offered few opportunities for the exercise of political agency outside of the bureaucratic structure for the monarchical state, many of these societies furnished an arena in which political opinions could be debated and programs for reform articulated.”¹⁰ Kant’s publication in *BM* and lively and extensive correspondence with some members (notably Mendelssohn, Johann Erich Biester, and Frederick Nicolai) drew him into an extended enlightenment discourse community of sorts. Through popular publications of this type, Kant persistently made available his work, not just for a technically specific audience, but for a broader reading public.

Given the recurring theme throughout this study of the Kantian “as if,” one might wonder whether the writings on enlightenment, the public use of reason, and speaking as scholar similarly involve this modality. The “as if” concerns both the moral thought experiment of testing the validity of the principle of action emanating from reason in the categorical imperative (as if willed as universal law), and the “as if” in the subjective universality of taste, where judgments of taste take place in their form as if the articulation speaks for all. However, Kant’s treatment of enlightenment concerns not just writing or speaking “as if” one were speaking to a

broader public, to use it as a mental schema that guides tone, style, etc. Quite the contrary, Kant's emphasis upon the making-public, on publicality, publicity, and publication alike, concerns the actual conversation and exchange of ideas with others in both face to face and mediated contexts. Kant made it quite explicit in *CJ* that the subjective universality of judgment did not require one to actually compare one's aesthetic judgments with others to empirically test the validity of the universality (an *a priori* principle is at work in the purposiveness of nature, and thus cannot be based upon empirical or anthropological support entailed in an intersubjective negotiation of taste).

However, writing is a different matter. The public use of reason is not a counterfactual schema that orients one's writing to give the air of popularity. The public use of reason demands the actual publication and exchange of ideas. The popular essay published in *BM* from 1785 entitled "On the Wrongfulness of Unauthorized Publication of Books" was written at the suggestion of the editor (Biester), who prompted Kant in a letter to use "our mouth in order to deliver your speech to the public by means of us," taking as its focus the freedom of the press in the context of the changing political landscape.¹¹ In this essay Kant makes a direct argument against publishers who publish without having secured permission from the author. Kant's arguments are interesting, operating at the nexus of publication, enlightenment, speaking, and writing. The minor premise of Kant's argument is "that a *publisher carries on another's affair by publishing*."¹² Furthermore, "in a book, the author *speaks* to his reader; and the one who has printed the book *speaks*, by his copy, not for himself but simply and solely in the author's name. He presents the author as speaking publicly and only mediates delivery of his speech to the public."¹³ In Kant's argument, the author speaks to the audience through the medium of the publisher, with writing emerging from Kant's account as a mediated form of public address.

Kant throughout articulates the function of writing as a form of speech, and publication as public address, but most evocatively when he explains the role of the publisher, who serves as conduit through which such address is transmitted:

To let someone speak publicly, to bring his speech as such to the public – that is, to let him speak in his own name and, as it were, to say to the public: ‘Through me a writer will by means of letters [buchstäblich] have you informed of this or that, instruct you, and so forth. I am not responsible for anything, not even for the freedom which the author assumes to speak publicly through me: I am only the medium by which it reaches you’ – that is undoubtedly an affair that someone can execute only in another’s name and never in his own name (as publisher).¹⁴

Accordingly, his argument advances that publishers should act only in alignment with the author’s authorization since publication is a form of public speaking in the name of the author that takes place through the proxy of the publisher. Popular publication, in particular, becomes an important if not central element of Kant’s conception of enlightenment, for it serves as one of the primary means by which public speaking gets reconfigured in the German enlightenment. Although secondary rhetoric serves as a useful way to explain what happens to rhetoric in the German enlightenment, this subtle shift in Kant’s description figuring writing as a type of public speech by proxy takes a slightly different route—somewhere undecidably between what we presently distinguish as writing and speech.

In fact, Kant reckons publishing as a mute speech. As we have seen in the first and third chapters most explicitly, the speech arts include both poetry and rhetoric. Just as the speech arts involve a broader category that includes both spoken and written forms, speech includes both audible and mute forms, both of which can be variously mediated. The primary motif for published writing centralizes upon the author’s speech, but through the medium of the publisher. Kant writes, the publisher “indeed provides in his own name *the mute instrument for delivering the author’s speech to the public*; but to *bring his speech to the public* by printing it, and so to

show himself as the one *through whom the author speaks* to the public, is something he can do only in the name of another.”¹⁵ The footnote to that passage, however, clarifies this curious account of publication and writing:

a book is an instrument for delivering a *speech* to the public, not merely a thought, as is, for example, a picture, a symbolic representation of some idea or event. This is what is essential here: that what is thereby delivered is not a *thing* but an *opera*, namely *speech*, and indeed by letters. By calling it a mute instrument I distinguish it from one that delivers speech by sounds, such as a megaphone or even the *mouth of another*.¹⁶

Kant figures writing as a form of speech, a curious type of operatic public address. Publication involves the enterprise of a ventriloquist, the author. Publication here is also figured as speech that takes a different role from sheer symbolic representation. Publication, in its animated speaking for the author, operates differently from representation, and more as a form of delivery or an act of oratory.

Through the complex detour of Kant’s conflicted attitudes toward rhetoric, we arrive at an understanding of enlightenment that makes central the role of speech and public address by proxy. Enlightenment, as the public use of reason, involves the role of speaking as scholar through the medium of popular publications. Speech thus emerges as the central figure for enlightenment, even as a strange address through the medium of a publisher who speaks in the name of the author. Publication, unlike the private context of an increasingly technical and specialized profession of philosophy, submits ideas to the public realm not only for exchange (i.e. “to enlighten”) but for actual engagement through response, rejoinder, debate, and refigurement. Speech becomes the primary figure, not only in the public exercise of reason, but alongside the various elements of the anthropological ethics associated with the “other” Kant: the

central importance of conversation and sociable exchange, not only to display taste but for the very vitality of the body to which such exchange at the society of the table provides.

Rhetoric, through the convoluted itinerary traced here, not only deserves respect but becomes of matchless importance. Kant substitutes for the figure of oratory (for him involving lifeless memorization of countless Roman texts) a lively public address of publication, through the medium of the publisher. The centrality of speech as the figure for writing in part works against the ascription that the German Enlightenment embodies one of the high water marks of secondary rhetoric. In several ways, Kant's treatment of enlightenment and attitudes toward publication as a form of speech indicate a partial rejoinder to both ornamentation and interiority. After sorting through the original terminological quagmire, it is my hope that this study has shown how working through Kant demonstrates not only how rhetoric was indeed alive and popular at a time usually designated as one of its nadirs in the history of rhetoric, but also how it played a critical role not only in the agonistic forging of critical philosophy (contra the foil of the popular philosophers), but also through both Cicero and the British rhetorical theorists who served as key influences. Furthermore, this investigation has documented the various ways in which a certain theory of rhetoric emerged—through oratory and public address, although strangely refigured—as the central and defining motif of enlightenment. From the emphasis on eloquence and popularity, through the classification of poetry and rhetoric as speech arts, through the central anthropological role of sociable exchange and the attendant deep interconnection between body and mind, through the critical role of reflective judgment, through the emphasis on perspicuity and liveliness, and to the figuring of the public use of reason as speech, numerous themes surface in Kant's work that undercut and accelerate past the seeming

dismissal of rhetoric. Rhetoric, accordingly, emerges as of central importance in Kant's work, inextricably woven into the fabric of both enlightenment and philosophy.

Notes:

¹ Kant, “What is Enlightenment,” p. 7.

² Kant, “What is Enlightenment,” p. 7-8.

³ Kant, “What is Enlightenment,” p. 10.

⁴ Kant, “What is Enlightenment,” p. 11.

⁵ Kant, “What is Enlightenment,” p. 10-11.

⁶ Kant, “What is Enlightenment,” p. 10.

⁷ Kant, “What is Enlightenment,” p. 11.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Schmidt, “Introduction,” *What is Enlightenment*, p. 3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Biester to Kant, June 5 1785, qtd. in *Practical Philosophy*, p. 29.

¹² Kant, *On the Wrongfulness*, p. 30 (8: 80).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Kant, *On the Wrongfulness*, p. 30 (8: 81).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

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