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*Want and the Promise
of Rhetoric*



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INTRODUCTION: KANT AND RHETORIC?

Death often brings on its wings chances to reflect on the meaning of life. Indeed, the death of a close friend or relative not only spurs private reflection but also demands rhetorical activity—speech to comfort the living, to praise the dead, and to send the departed away from this life in the right ritual circumstances. Like any rhetorical situation calling for artful speech, the actions employed and effects created depend on the situation and the characteristics of the specific rhetor. It is such a combination that we see when the philosopher Immanuel Kant felt called on to act as more than a thinker when his friend and student, Johann Friedrich von Funk, died on May 4, 1760. Funk had studied with Kant for only a year in Königsberg, but he had impressed the developing philosopher. His death so enlivened Kant that on June 6, 1760—just more than a month after Funk's passing—Kant penned a letter of condolence to the deceased's mother. In this document Kant meets the demands of the situation and praises Funk's character: he extols the "life and character of the blessedly deceased" (2:43) and uses this opportunity to rhetorically "express the respect that I have entertained for my former pupil" (2:41).¹ Funk is said to have "shown much diligence in study," to have "lived withdrawn and quietly," and to have prepared for "an uplifting end with the fortitude and ardent devotion of a Christian" (2:43). Kant also assuaged the grieving mother with the thought that her son was buried at the Königsberg cathedral.

So far, Kant had met the demands of a rhetor eulogizing the deceased—he comforted the survivors and honored the dead. These moves are very much in

line with what authorities on *epidictic*, or ceremonial, speaking, such as Aristotle or Cicero would advise in such situations. Yet Kant was a philosopher, and he was fixating on ends beyond the situation at hand. In addressing the immediate needs of the grieving mother, Kant also wanted to make a deeply philosophical point—one that concerned how we value life and the myriad activities and pursuits it entails. Life was not about mere worldly success or happiness. This was a message that Kant conveyed in many other texts in many other ways. Here, Kant adapted to the situation in making this point, since simply lecturing on the meaning of life and human virtue would not only fail to satisfy the saddened mother; it might anger her. Kant's message demanded adaptation, so he enconces his reflections on life and its values in the context created by Funk's untimely demise. Indeed, Kant begins his letter to Funk's mother by appealing to the opportunity opened up to him (and perhaps to her) by Funk's death:

If people living amidst the turmoil of their practical affairs and diversions were occasionally to mix in serious moments of instructive contemplation, to which they are called by the daily display of the vanity of our intentions regarding the fate of their fellow citizens: thereby their pleasures would perhaps be less intoxicating, but their position would take up a calm serenity of the soul, by which accidents are no longer unexpected, and even the gentle melancholy, this tender feeling with which a noble heart swells up if it considers in solitary stillness the contemptibleness of that which, with us, commonly ranks as great and important, would contain more true happiness than the violent merriment of the flippanant and the loud laughing of fools. (2:39)

Kant is eloquently claiming that we ought to wish for those moments that compel us to consider who we are, what we value, and how we ought to orient ourselves to the changing winds of fate and fortune. Funk's death, Kant submits, is just that sort of occasion. The deaths brought on by wars often fail to touch those living in "the quiet stillness of civic life" (2:40), but the deaths of those close to us in this life can rattle our everyday slumbers. As Kant puts it to Funk's mother, seeing the death of one shows us the potential end of our own life—we think, "I am a human being, and what befalls human beings can also happen to me. . . . I find myself in the turmoil of business and in the throng of life's duties, and my friend just recently also found himself in the same, I enjoy my life quietly and without worry, but who knows for how

long?" (2:40). Funk's death should remind all those close to him—including Kant and Funk's mother—that the values and ease of everyday life are not as concrete as they may seem.

Kant wants to use the occasion of Funk's death not only to speak about the deceased but also to say something of educative value for those listening. As of June 6, 1760, this audience was Kant and the mother receiving the letter. Later that year, however, Kant had his letter published by J. F. Driest to distribute it among his friends.² In one sense, Kant was using this death for a purposeful end. Yet by linking his thoughts on the meaning of life and the wise disposition one ought to take in response to this specific event, Kant opened up rhetorical room for such a merger: in a real sense, Kant's ruminations were a response to this unfortunate situation and provide the context in which Funk's way of living can be honored. Beyond this, his rhetorical maneuvering in the face of this tragedy illustrated the value Kant always placed on what can be called "educative" endeavors—activities meant to make the most out of human capacities. When we choose to focus on the wrong things, we suffer and corrupt ourselves. When we attend to the right things and act in the right ways, we become what we should be. Thus, it is not a stretch to claim that Kant is educating the mother—or all who read this letter in its later public iteration—as to the worth of reflecting on what life's value is. Such a reading, informed by Kant's activity here as a rhetorical response to this death, is buttressed by Kant's own thoughts. While consoling Funk's mother, he also makes a point to all that have been in similar situations: "The man of skill, of merit, of wealth is not always the one to whom providence has set the farthest end to his life in order to fully enjoy the fruits of all of these" (2:41). Our lives are too often cut short for reasons we cannot seem to fathom.

Kant's activity in this letter, contrary to the dry and metaphysically focused caricatures we typically receive of his demeanor, is eloquent, rhetorically sensitive, and focused on persuading his readers toward a specific end. Yet the end to which he directs his friends, Funk's mother, and anyone else listening to these words is uniquely Kantian in that it forcefully advocates the centerpiece to his later ethics—that human life ought to be guided and measured by virtue and not by external concerns such as happiness, wealth, worldly prestige, and so on. In this letter from 1760, Kant gives Funk's mother (and us) a clear reading of what kind of disposition or orientation toward life we ought to don:

The wise (although how seldom one such is found!) directs attention primarily to his great destiny beyond the grave. He does not lose sight of

obligation, which is imposed by his position which Providence has designed for him. Rational in his plans, but without obstinacy; confident of the fulfillment of his hope, but without impatience; modest in wishes, without dictating; trusting; without insisting; he is eager in the performance of his duties but ready in the midst of all these endeavors to follow the order of the Most High with a Christian resignation if it is pleasing to Him to call him away from the stage where he has been placed, in the middle of all these endeavors. (2:42)

Kant does not explicitly claim that Funk was such a wise person. But by weaving in this philosophical reflection on the meaning of life as brought on by Funk's passing, Kant is rhetorically connecting this educative counsel with the task of honoring Funk in speech.

These themes of a rationally guided life, the correct valuation of our projects in comparison to moral duty, and the connection between religion and life are themes that continued to affect Kant's philosophical work. As is evidenced by his letter to Funk's mother, Kant clearly had some sort of rhetorical sensibility. One could see his letter as an attempt to reorient those saddened by Funk's passage (and prescient enough to attend to Kant's message). Thus, it is not unreasonable to expect some connection between moral cultivation—optimizing how we value ourselves, others, and our various ends—and rhetoric in Kant's thought. Judging from the received accounts of Kant, however, rhetoric, or the art of persuasion through communicative means, was connected to his system only in a negative capacity. Kant turned down the post of professor of poetry at the University of Königsberg in 1764, even though he was eager for academic advancement and funds. Bravely enough, he even wrote back to the university that he would decline this post in the hopes that a professorship in logic and metaphysics would be open soon.³ It seems Kant would rather not be fully employed in university life if his only choice was that of teaching anything to do with the artful use of language. This reading of Kant's general attitude toward rhetoric, poetry, and the other arts of communication has never left him. Scholars have, by and large, not taken up the challenge of examining and reassessing Kant's apparent antipathy to rhetoric. Most fail to see any sympathetic connection between the study of communication and persuasion ("rhetoric," in short) and Immanuel Kant. Perhaps this is because Kant seemed notoriously hostile to rhetoric—in his *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), he refers to "rhetoric" as the art of "deceiving by means of beautiful illusion (as an *ars oratoria*)."⁴ He also criticizes rhetoric as

moving "people, like machines, to a judgment in important matters" (5:327–28). This perceived antipathy toward rhetoric has not encouraged much sympathetic reflection on Kant's relation to the rhetorical tradition. Only a handful of articles deal with Kant and rhetoric, and there are no book-length treatments of this subject. Philosophers writing on Kant's aesthetics follow this lead and do not include any extended, nonpejorative notion of rhetoric in their explanations of Kant.⁴

Rhetorical scholars tend to dismiss Kant as not relevant to contemporary rhetoric or to read him as an oppositional figure. Clifford Vaida captures the reaction of rhetoricians who do briefly look for Kant's treatment of rhetoric: "Kant's explicit comments on rhetoric are few, casual, and derisive. Consequently, he has not been studied closely by rhetoricians."⁵ The ones who have attended to Kant's thoughts on rhetoric—explicit or implicit—have typically followed one of two strategies. The first strategy is to acknowledge that he disliked rhetoric as a whole and then to find a Kantian rhetoric elsewhere. For example, Don Paul Abbott's study asserts that "Kant's disdain for rhetoric is extraordinary" and claims that historians of rhetoric too hastily "hurry on to Enlightenment figures more sympathetic to the art of persuasion." Abbott acknowledges that "Kant's characterization of rhetoric as unethical, illusive, and inferior to poetics" did evoke a response from contemporaries such as the Protestant theologian Franz Therenin, and Abbott focuses his recovery of a Kantian rhetoric on Therenin's work on eloquence. This is an interesting project, as it involves a figure (Therenin) who has unfortunately been left out of rhetorical history. For this reason alone, Abbott's approach has much value. Yet as a recovery of Kantian rhetoric this is less than ideal, since it seems odd for a figure such as Therenin to "present a vigorous and comprehensive response to Kant's critique" and still represent a true vision of a Kantian approach to rhetoric.⁶ It also would seem as if Kant disagrees with the exemplar of "Kantian rhetoric." Perhaps a Kantian rhetoric had to wait for another defender after Kant's own missteps. One can still wonder, is there really no approach to rhetoric in Kant's thought? Is it the case that he simply rejected a unified whole denoted by the term "rhetoric"?

A second strategy taken by those in rhetoric responding to Kant is to pay attention to him as a modern defender of Plato's attack on rhetoric. This is largely the strategy of Brian Vickers's admirable study on rhetoric and its detractors, mostly hailing from philosophy. There he documents "Plato's hostility toward rhetoric, expressed over a thirty-year period," an animus described as "idiosyncratic and extreme" and as starting a "rivalry between

the two disciplines [that] persisted just as long as rhetoric was a living force.”⁷ Vickers does expend significant interpretive effort detailing a sense of rhetoric in Kant, but it seems like a hollow echo of the Platonic disdain that he finds animating the continuing relationship between these two disciplines. Kant is placed squarely on the philosophy side of this dispute: “[like Plato, he made much use of binary categories to privilege one discipline and dismiss another.”⁸ Kant’s response to rhetoric is said to be bad argument—it is described as a “demolition without examining rhetorical theory, and without analyzing a single text.”⁹ Rhetoric, and the orators who practiced it, was a magical force that overtook the free choice of rational beings and led them to evil actions. Ironically, Kant’s own attempt to side with Plato and philosophy in the battle against rhetoric is judged to be manipulative: “Kant’s desire to destroy rhetoric is notably short on argument, or logic. Like Plato, he uses binary categories to place rhetoric in the inferior position, before dismissing it altogether. He is more original in the strategies he invents to confuse and alarm the reader, who is to be stampeded into a judgment against rhetoric by being told that otherwise rhetoric will stampede him to judgment. Thus he will be manipulated like a machine over which some other person has total control.”¹⁰ Kant, unlike the philosophical approach he is supposedly championing, is as manipulative as the rhetoric he seemingly criticizes. Instead, Kant ought to simply see that “rhetoric [does] not attempt to deprive its listeners of free will, reason, and judgment, but to mobilize them on behalf of a specific issue.”¹¹ This is the same sort of reading of Kant on rhetoric in Bryan Garsten’s project, which examines Kant’s Platonic disdain for rhetoric and finds in it a “fundamental mistrust of ordinary opinion and judgment.”¹² Kant’s “quick dismissal of persuasion and rhetoric” is based on seeing it as a “threat to enlightenment and free thought” or as a practice that “dispersed judgment and so posed a threat to that authority [of a sovereign power to settle disputes].”¹³ If Kant would only recognize the necessity of individual judgment and oratorical adaptation to specific audiences, he would see the value in rhetoric and its art of utilizing messages for persuasive purposes in political communities.¹⁴

These dismissals of any form of Kantian rhetoric are important because they try to take Kant’s comments on rhetoric seriously, but they seem to fall short of the sympathy and sensitivity needed to mine the thought of a thinker as complex as Kant. Simply equating rhetoric to adapted and mobilizing discourse leaves out the worry that Kant continues to bring up—are there not bad or harmful ways to adapt appeals to audiences and to mobilize them to an

orator’s purposes? The simplistic Platonic move of taking rhetoric to denote only bad ways of moving people to belief is just as simplistic and nonuseful as taking rhetoric to denote only good or beneficial activities of orators concerning the judgment of audiences. More analytical touch is required to truly get beyond seeing Kant as a mere partisan in the debate between rhetoric and philosophy. In addition, it is not clear that Kant thought *all* human communication oriented toward belief formation in an addressed audience was manipulative and bad. Part of the task of this book is to problematize such simple, universal pronouncements about rhetoric in Kant’s thought. If it can be shown that he has a complex take on the value and use of communicative action, then we must not lump all such action into a term we know as “rhetoric” and judge that Kant hated what it denotes. We must resist the urges to fit Kant’s thought—known only as we synthetically translate, interpret, or read it—into narratives with which we may be familiar, as such a move risks closing off the option of finding a sense of Kantian rhetoric that we may otherwise find. This is unfortunately what occurs when Kant is placed (occasionally due to his own sloppy utterances) on the side of Plato in the battle of rhetoric versus philosophy. This is also what happens when we envision Kant’s operative binary as being one of reason versus rhetoric. This book instead takes the notion of rhetoric to imply human communicative practices orientated toward persuasion, belief formation, and actional change and asks the more complex questions: What senses of such rhetorical action are enjoined by Kant’s complex thought on morality, religion, politics, aesthetics, and education? Taking “rhetoric” not as a simple term but as a complex concept, what uses or forms of rhetorical activity fit into Kant’s mature thought, especially the important topic of morality and the formation of the ideal sort of human community?

Asking questions such as these get us beyond simply determining on which side Kant was in the debate between reason and rhetoric or between rhetoric and philosophy. It allows this project to extend the small body of literature on Kant in communication studies and rhetoric that has seen rhetorical promise in his way of thinking about aesthetics and morality.¹⁵ Here I engage a wide range of his systematic philosophical thought, including his later works in the 1790s—his *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, his *Metaphysics of Morals*, and his lectures on anthropology and education. This endeavor demonstrates that a more productive course exists than addressing Kant and rhetoric by simply moving past him or by fixating on him as an enemy of rhetoric. This new path considers the ends and ideals resident in his moral and aesthetic projects not as exclusive of communicative activities but as integrally

involving the communicative means and goals we can associate with some rhetorical activity. This more nuanced reading of the value and uses of human communication in his moral project constitutes the rhetorical side that many have overlooked in Kant.

There is a clear need to bring Kant into conversation with communication and rhetoric. His thought has had an undoubted influence on theorizing in many disciplines. His account of aesthetic judgment as detached and disinterested has influenced vital strands of twentieth-century aesthetics. It also serves as a foil for the rhetorical theories that have resisted such disinterestedness. Yet Kant sees the experience of art and the aesthetic as intimately connected to moral matters. This book answers the question: can we reclaim rhetoric as part of Kant's project of moral improvement, of molding an individual into a caring and consistent community member? Part of the answer lies in understanding Kant and his contemporaries better. Another part of the answer resides in employing a more sympathetic, pragmatic methodology to actively reconstruct and build a role for rhetoric in Kant's system of moral cultivation. Considering the possibility that not all communicative activity oriented toward specific audiences is forbidden by Kant, we can reconsider ways of reading Kant, interpreting conflicting utterances, and envisioning his moral program in ways that foreground a sense of rhetoric we have overlooked or ignored. In pursuing such a project, we can see a way that rhetoric and human communication can help move us to the sort of ideal community that Kant postulates as the goal of moral improvement.

A central concept in reading rhetoric back into Kant's philosophy is the notion of *rhetorical experience*, or the use of the experience of a message receiver in the persuasion of that receiver. When we communicate with others, we use various utterances and appeals that are experienced by us and our audience over time. This experience might be one that actively requires the use of certain capacities (such as attentive reasoning), or it might be one that thwarts such processes. This book serves as a thorough exposition of rhetorical experience and its connection to morality in Kant's system. This account is grounded in the Kantian project of moral cultivation—how we make ourselves and our communities more virtuous and capable of instantiating autonomy. In Kant's terminology, the question of moral improvement is how we move to more cultivated, sustainable, and systematic states in terms of how we act as rational agents. My project illustrates the barriers to such moral cultivation noted in Kant's moral philosophy from the 1790s (namely, the gulf between the orderly use of external freedom and the consistent and respectful

exercise of inner freedom) and then discusses how Kant sees religious, aesthetic, and educative means of communication (such as religious narrative and disinterested debate) as ways of noncoercively moving agents toward a more perfect moral state. Thus, my project connects Kantian views of morality, aesthetics, religion, and education through the attention to communicative means enshrined in the concept of the rhetorical. Such a way of analyzing rhetoric in Kant moves us beyond the simple opposition of the rhetorical versus the rational and into a more nuanced conception of rhetoric as manipulative or non-manipulative. This is equivalent to what I identify as Kant's *educative rhetoric*, since both draw on the powers of reason to imaginatively shape the experience of an audience in such a way as to preserve and promote their autonomy.

This project is a detailed pursuit that requires a sensitivity to a variety of domains of Kant's architectonic thought. Chapter 1 sets the stage for my constructive engagement with Kantian rhetoric by considering the hostile reaction of many in rhetorical studies to Kant on rhetoric. Twentieth-century work has not fabricated the Kantian distrust of the many communicative practices denoted by the term "rhetoric." It is real. This chapter explores the historical reasons why Kant may have overstated his case in some of his more exaggerated utterances concerning rhetoric. An important cause of Kant's distaste for rhetoric evident in some of his negative pronouncements was his relationship with Christian Garve (1742–98), an important German translator of Cicero, friendly antagonist to Kant, and "popular philosopher." Kant saw such a popular philosophy movement and the rhetorical-artistic means it often employed as exemplifying the manipulation inherent in a rhetorically influenced philosophy.

Chapter 2 engages Kant's specific criticisms of rhetoric. It explores the reasons that Kant has for his opposition to one conception of rhetoric. Also, I problematize the ways we translate and conceptually simplify the notion of rhetoric in Kant's corpus. From examining the multitude of rhetorical terms in Kant's writings and the various valences of their use, it is far from clear that Kant hated any simple, unified thing known as rhetoric. Following an opening in his *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, I submit both rhetoric and poetry to another experiment in definition and argue that Kant objected to both rhetoric and poetry when they were motivated by certain end-driven orientations or dispositions. He also allowed room for various objects to be experienced as beautiful or sublime depending on the orientation of the observer. Thus, I argue that orientation is a vital part to rendering rhetoric and poetry as types of practices that create vivid presentations of morally edifying ideas

and concepts. This account of orientation, creative genius, and aesthetic ideas presages a way to include a reconstructed notion of rhetoric into Kant's philosophical system, largely through notions of disinterest and the orientation of the ones communicating.

To understand Kant on rhetoric, one must understand Kant on autonomy and freedom. Chapter 3 engages in the necessary step of determining the ends or goals to Kant's normative scheme. This is absolutely essential to reclaiming a Kantian sense of rhetoric, since some of his utterances and virtually all the readings of his detractors fixate on rhetoric in its immoral or manipulative employments. This book, on the other hand, wants to delineate a nonmanipulative or educative sense of rhetorical activity that fits into Kant's moral scheme of individual and communal improvement, so attention must be paid to what he thinks human activity ought to accomplish. This chapter explores the ideal of freedom and autonomy in his important moral work the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). This is vital, since nonmanipulative uses of rhetorical means are the uses that preserve and promote individuals' capability to rationally and freely direct their own projects. Kant's notion of systemic harmony of individual agents acting and respecting one another equally also is revealed. This importantly leads to the developments in his political and moral philosophy in the 1790s, especially in his *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797). There freedom is divided into a sense of external freedom of action and internal freedom of end setting. In Kant's early conception of moral behavior, virtue consists of harmony among agents in their external action and in how their guiding maxims valued self and others. In that ideal, fully autonomous state, one does the right action out of the right motives—respect for the moral law and the equal value of others. This chapter argues that Kant's scheme of moral cultivation envisions a system of moral agents that progress from externally free and consistent uses of action (the realm of right) to a group of agents that act in such a way because of their free internal choice (the realm of virtue). Yet how such a transition effectively occurs is far from clear. How do we get from people being nonharmful to others out of concern for selfish interests to a situation of helping others based on truly respecting them as equal? Force (viz., coercive laws) can only make an agent act (externally) in a free and consistent sense; it can never compel an agent to freely choose to create such harmony because of a respect of the other's equal value. This is what can be called the "problem of force" in Kant's scheme. Societies can enforce duties of right (e.g., those commanding one to not externally harm another's life or property), but an individual or society cannot do any-

thing positive to move that group of agents toward the inner perfection demanded by the endpoint of virtuous agents in a "kingdom of ends." If right lies as a necessary, but incomplete, first step toward the system of virtuous agents Kant imagines in his *Groundwork*, how might we morally and politically encourage movement beyond external consistency of action to the sort of internal respect that characterizes the state of virtue? If rhetoric represents some sort of noncoercive force or persuasion, how can it reliably and ethically move individuals to choose their own paths of moral cultivation?

Chapter 4 begins the recovery of rhetoric in Kant that sees communicative means as a way to noncoercively move others toward more cultivated states. This chapter explores Kant's thoughts on education, a domain that also was subject to the same constraints as politics due to Kant's extreme valuation of individual autonomy. As was the case in politics, manipulation was not encouraged in the education or moralization of rational agents. Here, I begin my elucidation of Kant's nonmanipulative educative rhetoric. Its specifications in pedagogical domains are the focus in this chapter, especially the use of examples by a rhetor or teacher to stimulate the educative experience of critical thinking and moral judgment in an auditor. Previous research on Kant has tended to minimize the rhetorical import of example in his thought. He often maligned examples as encouraging jealousy of the exemplar, as creating mere copying in terms of behavior, and as necessitating moral theory to adjudicate good examples from bad examples. I argue that Kant's writings on education and example can elucidate one communicative means of noncoercively creating the sort of morally virtuous agent he postulates in his moral theory. Hypothetical examples, as experienced means of moral judgment, instantiate the sort of moral disposition that external coercion (e.g., laws aimed at creating a state of right) cannot create. This allows one to begin to extract an educative rhetoric from Kant's moral project, one that preserves and enhances human powers conducive to autonomy through human communicative activity. This chapter is largely focused on what can be labeled as his *pedagogical educative rhetoric*.

Chapter 5 extends the experiential, rhetorical means of moral cultivation resident in Kant's educative rhetoric from example and pedagogy to his later thought on religious community. Drawing heavily on his *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793), I argue that Kant advocates the moralizing use of rhetorical force in the forms of lively verbal discussions and ritual communication. He envisions religious community as a "social solution" to a "social problem" (the existence of selfishness in our will, "evil" in Kant's philosophy). Yet scholars have consistently missed the rhetorical implications of

this move. I argue that Kant's religious employment of rhetoric utilizes (1) communication and discussion focused on religious narratives and symbols to present the ideal moral disposition in one's experience, and (2) rituals as formulaic prayer to perform the moral disposition in a communal setting. The former use of religious imagery and narrative is a Kantian endorsement of the classical rhetorical concept of *enargeia*, or vivid presentation through rhetorical means. The latter use of performed, embodied methods of ritual communication serves as a valuable and disinterested technique to actualize the sort of ideal community in an individual's experience. Both means comprise what this chapter identifies as Kant's *religious educative rhetoric*.

Chapter 6 explores Kant's advocated form of nonmanipulative rhetoric in its more secular, argumentative forms. A vital part to an enlightened citizenry for Kant was the practice of disinterestedly advocating and criticizing various claims to belief. This chapter examines the argument that Kant abolished critical judgment and speech from the polis, and rejected it. More positively, it extracts from Kant's various writings on critical thinking, aesthetics, and belief an account of critical rhetorical activity. As this entails the detached advancing and consideration of argumentative claims, it is analyzed in two parts. First, I examine how a critical rhetor would communicate according to this account. The traditional rhetorical topics of how one speaks and how one constructs one's arguments in regard to others in this Kantian account is explicated. Second, one's activity as a listener to the arguments of others—or as a rhetorical critic—is examined. We can extract Kantian guidance for how we ought to think about and analyze the utterances of other arguers while donning the right orientation toward them as autonomous agents. Both of these domains together will be said to comprise Kant's *critical educative rhetoric*.

The conclusion to this work explores the sort of rhetorical advice that stems from this trifold division of educative rhetoric in Kant. This chapter is the most speculative of those contained in this inquiry, but it is undertaken to show that the practice of rhetoric is not inimical to Kant's themes of moral cultivation of self and others. How one constructs arguments, uses appeals to passion, and portrays one's own character are all interesting parts of the human actions denoted by rhetoric. A fully sympathetic Kantian account cannot leave them out simply because Kant chose not to write on them. In this way, the final section to this book places Kant in conversation with rhetorical sources and topics that he did not know of or overtly engage but that nonetheless have something to say about the ideal that he did approvingly cite—Quintilian's invocation of Cato's "vir bonus dicendi peritus," or the good person speaking well.

There will be some still unconvinced by this account, as there are still those unpersuaded by a range of other unique rereadings of Kant's well-trodden philosophy.¹⁶ These will be those readers who fixate on Kant's utterances that malign and simplify rhetoric and that seem to cohere with the standard Platonic reading of rhetoric as the absolute and manipulative opposite to philosophical activity. Some philosophers will never get beyond thinking that rhetoric denotes only manipulative, nonrational uses of utterance, and some rhetorical scholars will never get beyond fixating only on Kant's remarks concerning language use that fit with the standard Platonic antipathy to rhetoric. Yet my account aims to show that with some sympathy and sensitivity to Kant's moral system, one can see a use for communicative means to move people toward the virtuous. This is Kant's educative rhetoric in its three senses. It is dreadfully true that Kant did not write or lecture on the art of speaking or the art of rhetoric, but this should not prevent us from seeing communicative means of moral improvement in his work. And because he sometimes (but not always) simplified rhetoric and maligning it does not entail that we should also follow this tactic in providing a monolithic reading of this complex thinker. This book represents one of the most extensive looks into Kant's thought and its use of rhetorical means, but it by no means represents the end to that endeavor. In a real sense, it merely opens the door for a richer account of the Kant that we have overlooked, the Kant that combines moral progress with certain ways of communicating with others.