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Notes

1 Herman states, 'It is simply implausible to suppose that a moral theory could persuasively do its work without a grounding concept of value.' *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 209.
2 Alexander Englert suggested this way of putting the point.

G. L. Ercolini, *Kant's Philosophy of Communication*
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(1) Rhetoric [*Die Beredsamkeit*], insofar as by that is understood the art of persuasion … cannot be commended either for the courtroom or the pulpit. … [T]he art of the orator [*Rednerkunst*] (*ars oratoria*), as the art of using the weakness of people for one's own purposes (however well intentioned or even really good they may be) is not worthy of any **respect** at all [*gar keiner **Achtung** würdig*]. (Kant, *KU,* 5: 327, 328n.)

(2) [T]here is much in his [Kant's] work that relies on an important role for speech, rhetoric, communication, and public discourse. … Kant emerges as an important … Enlightenment philosopher of communication – not a detractor of rhetoric in favor of philosophy, as he has been characterized. (Ercolini, *Kant's Philosophy of Communication*, pp. 6, 199)

Question: How can one get from (1) to (2), and is the move legitimate? *Answer*: Yes, it can be done, but it involves some fancy footwork. First, one needs to shift (or rather, enlarge) the focus from rhetoric to communication. The latter includes part of the former, but not the part that Kant attacks. The part of rhetoric that Kant rejects is primarily oratory, by which he means the art of persuasion – 'deceiving by means of beautiful illusion (as in *ars oratoria*), and not merely skill in speaking [*Wohlredenheit*] (eloquence and style)' (*KU*, 5: 327). As Ercolini notes: 'It was oratory, and not rhetoric, that Kant dismissed as deserving of no respect' (p. 156). 'Persuasion' understood in this (Kantian) manner involves both a deceptive purpose (trying to convince an audience of something that may be false) and a violation of the listeners' autonomy – it attempts to 'rob them of their freedom' (*KU*, 5: 327) and move them 'like machines' (*KU*, 5: 328n.) who lack the capacity to make free judgements based on reason.

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The part of rhetoric that overlaps with communication (and which Kant defends) includes taste – 'the *communication* of our feeling of pleasure or displeasure to others' (*Anth*, 7: 244); tone, which, 'although of course it speaks through mere sensation without concepts' (*KU*, 5: 328), involves the ability to move an audience affectively 'in the proper way for the message to make its way in' (p. 190); style (here Kant favours a natural, simple manner of expression whereby one achieves one's end 'through an economy of means – that is, straightaway' (*Anth*, 7: 210), i.e. 'an artfulness that effaces itself', pp. 175–6); eloquence, by which Kant means 'a lively presentation with examples', accordance with 'the rules of euphony in speech' and 'propriety in expression' (*KU*, 5: 327); and popularity, by which Kant means not 'polished superficiality', which frequently 'cloaks the paltriness of a limited mind' (*Anth,* 7: 139), but rather 'true popularity', which 'demands much practical knowledge of the world and human beings [*viele praktische Welt- und Menschenkenntniß*], acquaintance with the concepts, taste and inclinations of human beings, to which constant regard must be given in presentation and even in the choice of expressions that are fitting and adequate to popularity' (*Log*, 9: 47). True popularity, he adds, 'is in fact a great and rare perfection, which shows much insight into science' (*Log*, 9: 48), and in order to learn it 'one must read the ancients, e.g., Cicero's philosophical writings, the poets *Horace*, *Virgil*, etc., and among the moderns *Hume*, *Shaftesbury*, et al.' (*Log*, 9: 47).

It should be noted that some of these Kantian conceptions of rhetoric and communication are a bit idiosyncratic and not universally endorsed, which is one reason why I said earlier that some fancy footwork is required to make the case that Kant is in fact a defender of rhetoric. Ercolini covers this point in a somewhat unusual way in remarking that her 'project starts from the observation that Kant removes from rhetoric with one hand what he shuttles back in with the other, though under different auspices' (p. 6). One could also simplify matters here by saying merely that Kant distinguishes bad rhetoric from good rhetoric, defending only the latter (cf. p. 56).

But second – and this next strategy is more straightforward – in order to successfully make the case that Kant 'has something significant to say about rhetoric' (p. 4) and possesses 'a deeply rhetorical sensibility' (p. 196), one needs to de-emphasize 'the monuments of philosophy, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Practical Reason* … *Critique of the Power of Judgment* … and *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*' and pursue instead a project that 'prioritizes 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*' (p. 8). In turning from the more familiar critical Kant to the other Kant – a more empirically attuned, quasi-popular philosopher who is concerned with communicating his ideas to a wider audience – the move from Kant the rhetoric rejecter

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to Kant the writer with an impressive rhetorical sensibility becomes much more feasible.

Kant's Philosophy of Communication consists of five chapters, plus an Introduction, Conclusion, Notes, Bibliography and Index. In the Introduction ('Enlightenment and the Philosophy of Communication'), Ercolini presents the main themes of her book and concludes with an overview of each of the subsequent chapters. In chapter 1 ('Immanuel Kant and the Question of Rhetoric'), she examines some of the complexities of Kant's 'seeming dismissal of rhetoric' (p. 18), beginning with his taxonomy and hierarchy of the beautiful arts, moving on to his distinction between persuasion (*Überredung*) and conviction (*Überzeugung*) as well as a closer look at the infamous rhetoric-is-unworthy-of-respect footnote in the third *Critique* (*KU*, 5: 327–8n.), and concluding with a brief account of rhetoric's place in Enlightenment Germany and Prussia. In chapter 2 ('On Popularity: Kant's Rhetorical Attunement'), the author examines Kant's distinction between true and false popularity in greater detail, placing it in the context of his extensive interlocution with 'the Ciceronian popular philosophers, in particular Christian Garve' (p. 59) and the related initial reception of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In chapter 3 ('Ethics from the Other Side: Kant's Embodied Anthropological Ethics'), Ercolini examines 'the ways in which communication, sociability, conversation, and a perhaps unexpected accord between the body and the mind emerge from Kant's writings on the anthropological realm' (pp. 19–20). The final section of this chapter ('Excursus *On the Philosophers' Medicine of the Body* (1786)') offers a brief look at an underexplored public oration that Kant presented in Latin during his tenure as Rector at the University of Königsberg. Chapter 4 ('Aesthetics, Communication, and the Discordant Accord of the Faculties') revisits the well-trodden territory of taste in the third *Critique*, bringing it 'to bear upon Kant's treatment of rhetoric and related themes' (p. 20), while chapter 5 ('Style and Tonality in Kant's Philosophy of Communication') examines Kant's unexpectedly extensive remarks on style and tone, arguing that they 'emerge as central considerations' (p. 167) for his Enlightenment philosophy of communication. Finally, in her Conclusion ('Kant's Enlightenment Legacy: Critique, Popularity, Publicity'), she enlists the aid of Foucault, Habermas and Arendt in focusing on *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?* – 'the most profound articulation of Kant's philosophy of communication' (p. 199).

A few minor criticisms, regarding both style and content: some of the page references to Kant's writings are incorrect, and the author does not employ a consistent citation method in referring to them. In some cases, both the Academy Edition volume and page numbers are given, in others only the page number (without any indication of which volume the page number is in), and the citations from Kant's *What is Enlightenment?* include neither the Academy volume nor page number. Also, German nouns are occasionally not capitalized.

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On a more substantive note: in claiming that her study 'tethers the *Groundwork* to the ground of the *Anthropology*' (p. 106), Ercolini departs radically from Kant. Moral anthropology 'cannot be dispensed with, but it must not precede a metaphysics of morals or be mixed with it' (*MS*, 6: 217). And her assertion that 'Kant calls this counterpart to the proper metaphysics of morals a "pragmatic anthropology"' (p. 93) involves a confusion between pragmatic and moral (or practical – see *GMS*, 4: 388) anthropology. The latter is at best a subset of the former. Also, employing the overused term 'embodied' as a tag for Kant's anthropological ethics seems to me to be a mistake, if for no other reason than that Kant is not talking about disembodied moral agents (if any there be – can one act without a body?) in his metaphysics of morals. The proper distinction is not between disembodied and embodied agents, but rather between that part of ethical theory which is concerned with universal and necessary principles that 'hold for all rational beings regardless of differences' (*GMS*, 4: 442) and the part which is concerned 'with the subjective conditions in human nature that hinder people or help them in *carrying out* [*Ausführung*] the laws of a metaphysics of morals' (*MS*, 6: 217). Finally, Ercolini's claim that the third *Critique* 'reveals and exposes … the rhetorical basis of Kantian thought' (p. 217) is over the top and lacking in sufficient support. A compelling case can be made for establishing the importance of rhetoric in Kant's philosophy without resorting to the extreme hypothesis that his philosophy is based on rhetoric. This is swinging for the fences.

But on the whole I thought this was a well-written book on an important and underexplored topic. Those of us who are fans of the other Kant – the impure rather than the pure Kant – will want to add *Kant's Philosophy of Communication* to our bookshelves.

Robert B. Louden
University of Southern Maine
email: Louden@Maine.edu

Robert Greenberg, *The Bounds of Freedom: Kant's Causal Theory of Action*
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This book aims to give a sympathetic account of Kant's notion of noumenal freedom of will 'in terms of analytic philosophy' (p. xiv). I should confess

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