

Summer 2010

# Russell Kirk and the Rhetoric of Order

Eric Grabowsky

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RUSSELL KIRK AND THE RHETORIC OF ORDER

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Eric Grabowsky

August 2010

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Eric Grabowsky

2010

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By

Eric Grabowsky

Approved July 9, 2010

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## ABSTRACT

### RUSSELL KIRK AND THE RHETORIC OF ORDER

By

Eric Grabowsky

August 2010

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Janie M. Harden Fritz

The *corpus* of historically-minded “man of letters” and twentieth century leader among conservatives, Russell Amos Kirk, prompts one to reflect upon a realist rhetoric of order for conservative discourse in particular and public argumentation in general. In view of building a realist rhetoric of order within the present spectrum of modern to postmodern thought, this dissertation project contains two related layers of study. At one level, the author both *builds* and *departs* from the realist approach to communicative epistemology known as “rhetorical perspectivism” toward a theoretical framework for the study of rhetoric that is based upon Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas’s legacy of classical realism. At another level, in light of the significance of Russell Kirk for the question of conservatism and postmodernism, from the vantage point of realism, the author considers Kirk’s view on imagination, language, and life as against certain aspects

of Hans Georg Gadamer’s “philosophical hermeneutics.” This comparison, next to a rhetorical theoretical study of The Roots of American Order regarding the essential constancy of human nature *as such* through history, points to some avenues by which Kirk’s imaginative standpoint provides a way of taking the imagination as formative of communicative *perspectives* within *and* across “rhetorical situations.” For conservative discourse and beyond, within this age of epistemological skepticism and moral relativism, Kirk’s *corpus* provides for some ethical prospects for persuasion in terms of both argument and narrative, inclusive of the natural law as a basis for rhetorical ethics. In establishing parameters for a realist rhetoric of order, the author relies upon the work of Richard M. Weaver, who contributed to both movement conservatism and rhetorical theory during the twentieth century. In particular, the author embraces Weaver’s connecting of genuine conservatism to philosophical realism, notwithstanding some necessary correctives toward classical realism regarding reality and ideation. Although this project in large part operates within the realm of rhetorical theory, some implications for the practice, criticism, and pedagogy of rhetoric are highlighted along the way with respect to a realist rhetoric of order.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Ralph E. Grabowsky and Mrs. Donna P. Grabowsky. Their prayers, guidance, and support along the way have provided for my completion of this project.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to acknowledge the perspicacity, professionalism, and patience of my Dissertation Director, Dr. Janie Harden Fritz, whose tremendous effort and ongoing encouragement helped to bring this dissertation to completion. Also, the scholarly insights of our two readers, Dr. Calvin Troup and Dr. Richard Thames, provided significant guideposts for the disciplinary direction of my work herein. For the big picture of my life as an academician, I must thank Dr. Ronald C. Arnett of the Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies for his professional and academic mentorship during my years in coursework and as a graduate assistant. I am deeply thankful to Mrs. Annette Y. Kirk, widow of Russell A. Kirk, for granting to me a Wilbur Fellowship to reside and reflect (from September 2005 to May 2006) at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal in Mecosta, Michigan. Conversations with Mrs. Kirk, who is the President of the Kirk Center, were always insightful at both the scholarly and personal levels. Mr. Charles C. Brown, Archivist of the Kirk Center, was also helpful in terms of conversational insights and scholarly resources. This fellowship opportunity at the Kirk Center supplied a framework of sources, conversations, presentations, and relationships that was of primary import to the development of this project. Of note here too for helpful promptings and insights are the following persons who also resided at the Kirk Center during my time there: Dr. Joseph Devaney, Dr. Matthew A. Kent, and Dr. Joseph Stuart. I must also here thank Dr. W. David Solomon, Director of the Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture, along with his staff and affiliates. Time spent with Dr. Solomon and company has introduced me to books, articles, and ideas that have been



formative to my thinking as a realist scholar of rhetoric. Finally, I also want to acknowledge the following persons (in alphabetical order) who have given to me sources, insights, or encouragement (either directly or incidentally) that in some way or another have influenced my work within this dissertation project: Dr. Kenneth E. Andersen, Mr. Len Barcousky, Dr. Carole Barrett, Mr. Aaron Barth, Professor Jay Basquiat, Dr. Brian Birdnow, Mr. David Boaz, Dr. Thérèse Bonin, Mr. Derrick Braaten, Dr. James M. Brandon, Dr. Duane Bruce, Dr. Jon L. Brudvig, Professor Richard Cain, Dr. Gregory Camp, Mr. Chris Campbell (and his family and his friends), Dr. Boyd D. Cathey, Dr. Thomas A. Cavanaugh, Dr. Mark J. Cherry, Dr. Peter Chojnowski, Dr. Clifford G. Christians, Professor James Patrick Dimock, Dr. H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., Dr. Theresa Enos, Dr. Richard Fiordo, Fr. Benedict Fischer, Dr. Diane Fladeland, Mr. Dan Flaherty, Mr. Robert Gardner, Fr. Scott Gardner, Dr. Eugene Garver; Dr. Pat J. Gehrke, Dr. Gregory Gillette, Professor Charles Gitter, Dr. G. Thomas Goodnight, Mr. Lane Grafton, Mr. Robert W. Grano, Professor Wesley J. Hellman, Professor Joel L. Hefling, Dr. James W. Hikins, Mrs. Amorette Hinderaker, Dr. Joshua P. Hochschild, Dr. Todd T. Holm, Dr. Richard L. Johannesen, Dr. E. Michael Jones, Dr. A. Wesley Jones, Dr. Michael M. Jordan, Mr. Scott D. Kercher, Dr. Nadine I. Kozak, Professor Kristopher Kracht, Dr. Jim A. Kuypers, Dr. Chad Litton, Dr. Jeffrey J. Maciejewski, Dr. W. Wesley McDonald, Dr. Raymie E. McKerrow, Dr. Daniel McInerny, Dr. Ralph McInerny, Professor Jaime P. Meyer, Mr. David Mills, Dr. Robert C. Miner, Mr. Regis Moran, Mr. James Myler, Dr. Kathy Perrin, Dr. Ronald Polansky, Dr. Mark Joseph Porrovecchio, Dr. Lawrence J. Prelli, Mr. John Rau, Dr. Jamieson M. Ridenhour, Mrs. Suzanne M. Rini, Dr. Nita Ritzke, Dr. John Rodden, Mr. Gerald J. Russello, Professor Jeannine Saabye, Mr. Bob

Sale, Professor Casey Slott, Dr. Ted J. Smith, III, Professor Karel Sovak, Dr. Mark M. Springer, Dr. Peter J. Stanlis, Professor Ashley B. Stark, Miss Melani Jean Trujillo, Mr. James Vogel, Mr. Anthony M. Wachs, Dr. Robert D. Weaver, Dr. Scott D. Wells, Dr. Dennis W. White, Mr. Gleaves Whitney, Dr. James Matthew Wilson, Mr. Harry Wisniewski, Mr. Daniel Yates, Miss Jacque L. Young, Dr. Kenneth S. Zagacki, and Dr. Cem Zeytinoglu. I end here with three special notes of acknowledgement. First, to my friend Mr. Jason Winschel, who introduced me to the work of Russell Kirk back in the 1990s before my time in graduate school, while also giving some initial conversational insights regarding Kirk, history, analysis, and argument when I began work on this project. Also, to Dr. Brent Sleasman, whose friendship, conversation, and encouragement since our days in coursework at Duquesne University have positively impacted both this project and my life. Finally, a special thanks to Dr. Leanne M. Bell, who continued to check and encourage the progress of this project along the way.

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## Introduction: Russell Kirk and the Rhetoric of Order

As Richard M. Weaver has demonstrated, the ethical use of rhetoric encompasses the articulation and application of true principles within society through persuasive discourse in various circumstances (The Ethics; “Language is”; “To Write”; Visions 55-72). In both letters and life, Russell Kirk was a scholar and practitioner of a traditional and principled version of conservatism that was dispositional, yet not ideological, and as such was an important pioneer and leader of the conservative movement that developed during the 20th century within the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> For Kirk, as against ideologies, even for conservatism, to be a conservative is to be disposed toward a consideration of custom, reality, and humanity in view of *both* preservation *and* reform within society.<sup>2</sup> His range of work (scholarly, popular, and pedagogical) extended into such areas as history, literature, politics, society, culture, education, and economics (W. Campbell; Horowitz; Kirk, “Cooper”; Kirk, Economics; Kirk, “The Foreboding”; Kirk, The Intelligent; Kirk, The Intemperate; Kirk, John Randolph; Kirk, “Massive Subsidies”; Kirk, Rev. of; Kirk, “Shelton College”; Kirk, “Social Justice”; Kirk, “The Thought”; Kirk and McClellan; Regnery, “Russell Kirk: An Appraisal”; Stanlis, “Prophet of”). Kirk’s most recognizable non-fiction book is probably The Conservative Mind, which was first published in the early 1950s, yet has continued in print in various editions since that time. Kirk also was a fiction writer of note, whose ghost stories provided readers with literary reflections toward the exercise and development of the “moral imagination” (Champ; Newman; Person, Russell Kirk 109-150; Russello, The Postmodern 33-66).

Because he consistently privileged the importance of principles, Kirk communicated on social, economic, and environmental issues in ways that can resound

with contemporary scholarly and political audiences (Bliese, “Richard M. Weaver, Russell Kirk”; W. Campbell; Russello, The Postmodern; Woods). According to Jeffrey O. Nelson, “But Kirk was never a passive thinker, his strength of character and sense of moral obligation elevated the man of letters to its true stature—one who actively ‘points the way to first principles’” (“Introduction” 3). As a pioneer of contemporary movement conservatism, Kirk is identified as a “traditional” conservative whose work has continuing relevance for conservatives who value the importance of moral questions and humane studies for social continuity, political reform, international affairs, and economic endeavors—his discourse is a source of both direction and correction.<sup>3</sup> As indicated within the pertinent literature (Frohnen, “Has Conservatism”; Henrie, “Understanding”; Kirk, Enemies; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; Person, Russell Kirk; Russello, The Postmodern; Stanlis, “Prophet of”; Whitney, “Seven Things”; Whitney, “The Sword”; Woods), for the discourse of this early 21st century (be this discursive condition either modern or postmodern), the work of Russell Kirk, because of his emphasis on the primacy and constancy of principles, continues as a challenge to current progressive trends regarding the theory and practice of society, morality, politics, and education.

As Father A.G. Sertillanges has written, “The order of the mind must correspond to the order of things. In the world of reality, everything rises towards the divine, everything depends on it, because everything springs from it. In the effigy of the real within us, we can note the same dependence, unless we have turned topsy-turvy the true relations of things” (29). Communication regarding order has theoretical and practical importance for a common recognition of reality, an ethical viewpoint toward life, a

genuine revival of culture, and a foundational approach to politics. In a tribute to Russell Kirk, T. Kenneth Cribb stated:

In his early work, Dr. Kirk treated modern exemplars of the conservative tradition from Burke to Eliot, but always with respect to their insights into timeless truths. Later, he more explicitly traced these eternal verities to their ancient historical roots, and to their Source beyond history. All along the way he erected guideposts for those who would follow—all of us here and so many others—that we too might travel the path he had marked toward order in the soul and order in the commonwealth; that we too might discover the Honors of the West. (“Recovering” 7)

Kirk’s communicative efforts within such works as The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot, The Politics of Prudence, Prospects for Conservatives, and The Roots of American Order demonstrate that order was a significant theme within the overall scope of his argumentation. For Kirk, the proper advocacy of order was not to be ideological, as order entails aspects of custom and reality within and across societies, which as he saw it, were important points of emphasis for conservatives.<sup>4</sup>

In summary, Kirk’s view was that adherence to ideologies, which are products of modernity, encompasses *an evasion from* and *a replacement of* religion and philosophy as historically conceived and practiced (Beer, “Science”; Kirk, The Politics 1-29; McDonald, Russell Kirk 14-54; Niemeyer, “Russell Kirk”). Relevant to this point, T. Kenneth Cribb Jr. has recounted the following experience:

As a young man, I once spent time with Dr. Kirk on a walking tour of the Scottish Borders. One day, I asked him for a succinct definition of

conservatism, and he, quite politely, flatly refused. Instead, he offered the insight that conservatism is a disposition of *openness to reality*—that is to say, openness toward the world as God has created it, rather than a blind allegiance to one of those hypothetical worlds in whose name so many were slaughtered in the twentieth century. In an era diabolically attracted to the ideological answers of communism, fascism, and all the other “isms,” Russell Kirk insisted that conservatism is the *negation* of ideology. In a mighty labor of moral imagination, he provided the intellectual tools to defend the common decencies of American life.<sup>5</sup>

Generally speaking, a principled emphasis on individual, familial, and social order is a noteworthy attribute of “traditional conservatism,” for this communicative focus, along with such notions as prudential reform, is prevalent within the work of Russell Kirk (Canavan; Frohnen, “Russell Kirk”; Henrie, “Understanding”; Kirk, The Politics; Nash, The Conservative 50-73; Woods). Richard Weaver, a 20th century rhetorical theorist of note, was a friend of Kirk as well as, by the classification of some, a “traditional conservative.”<sup>6</sup>

With an eye toward commencing a larger theoretical conversation regarding a realist rhetoric of order, this dissertation project opens one door for a rhetorical study of Kirk’s approach to the human imagination in general and his book The Roots of American Order in particular. The human imagination was a central theme for Russell Kirk (Kirk, Enemies; Whitney, “The Swords”), and over his career, he demonstrated a developed interest in social and individual order, particularly as regards his appropriation of Edmund Burke to conservatism (Canavan; Eaves; Kirk, “Burke and the Philosophy”;

Kirk, The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot 12-70; Kirk, The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana 11-61; Kirk, Edmund Burke; Stanlis, “Russell Kirk”).

According to W. Wesley McDonald, The Roots of American Order contains Russell Kirk’s most comprehensive discussion of order (Russell Kirk 116-117). In this book (first published in 1974), Kirk’s message was that the religious, philosophical, political, legal, and literary history of the West, especially during a time of disorder, is the business of every American citizen, for from within an account of Hebraic, Greek, Roman, and European history, Kirk predicated that the moral and political thought of the United States entailed an ordered development, *not a revolution*, from the influence of those cultures, particularly with respect to the principles that substantiate individual and social order.<sup>7</sup>

The theoretical approach taken within this dissertation entails a realist position on reality and humanity, which provides a positional point of view for the author regarding rhetorical, ethical, and political questions. Scholars of multiple disciplines, with varying degrees of distance from particular political standpoints, have articulated and demonstrated the ongoing significance of realism (regardless of type) for scholarly, pedagogical, and social questions (Adler, The Four; Calvet de Magalhães; Grabowsky and Fritz; Hikins, “Realism and”; Lawler, Postmodernism Rightly; R. McInerney, Characters; Pavitt, “The Third”; Ronen; Shively; E. Thompson, “Ways Out”). I stand within the realist tradition of the Thomistic and Aristotelian variety (classical realism), and this guides the theoretical approach to rhetorical, ethical, and political analysis and argumentation in the tasks of scholarly research that define this project.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to many of the realists within my academic discipline who have made important arguments



regarding human communication and objective reality, this project is consistent with Mortimer Adler's contention (consistent with classical realism) that metaphysics is philosophically prior to epistemology—examining what we know precedes the question of how we know.<sup>9</sup> Adler has argued that the proper starting point in the search for truth and wisdom (the goal of philosophy) is our “common experience” of reality, for we exercise our human faculties *within* and *about* reality (The Four 9-71; Intellect; Some Questions; Ten 5-107)—this is relevant to knowledge, opinion, and communication.

As demonstrated by various scholars within the field of communication (regardless of their given political and philosophical biases) (Bliese, “The Conservative Rhetoric”; Bliese, “Richard M. Weaver and the Rhetoric”; Bliese, “Richard Weaver: Rhetoric”; Bliese, “Richard Weaver’s Axiology”; T. Clark, “An Analysis” 400-401; T. Clark, “The Ideological”; S. Crowley; Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part One]”; Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]”; Duffy and Jacobi; Enholm and Gustainis; Floyd and Adams; Follette; Gilles; Johannesen, “A Reconsideration”; Medhurst, “The First”; Medhurst, “The Sword”; Prelli; D. White), the conjunction of Richard Weaver’s rhetorical theorizing and conservative standpoint gives significance to his work for use in the evaluation of argumentation with respect to conservatism. This project rests in general agreement with the following statement given by Weaver in “Conservatism and Libertarianism: The Common Ground”:

[...] A conservative in my view is a man who may be behind the times or up with the times or ahead of the times. It all depends on how you define the times. And this brings us at once to the matter of an essential definition.

*It is my contention that a conservative is a realist, who believes that there is a structure of reality independent of his own will and desire. He believes that there is a creation which was here before him, which exists now not by just his sufferance, and which will be here after he's gone. This structure consists not merely of the great physical world but also of many laws, principles, and regulations which control human behavior. Though this reality is independent of the individual, it is not hostile to him. It is in fact amenable by him in many ways, but it cannot be changed radically and arbitrarily. This is the cardinal point. The conservative holds that man in the world cannot make his will his law without any regard to limits and to the fixed nature of things. (477)*

Richard Weaver, in the Ethics of Rhetoric, argued that definitional argumentation with respect to the nature of things is both *indicative of* and *proper to* conservatism (55-114). He related, in terms of both theory and application, the general importance of philosophical precision for conservative discourse at various points throughout his *corpus*, for a major aspect of Weaver's significance for American conservatism is the status he gave to definitional argumentation, based on the nature of things, in view of the argumentation of conservatives (Bliese, "Richard M. Weaver and"; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part One]"; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]"; Johannesen, "A Reconsideration"; Weaver, "Conservatism and Liberalism"; Weaver, "Conservatism and Libertarianism"; Weaver, "How to Argue"; Weaver, "The Prospects"; Weaver, "Which Ancestors?"). His work, therefore, is relevant for understanding the thought and rhetoric of conservatism.

One of Weaver's major theoretical contributions to the 20th century study of rhetoric is the direction within his work toward the necessity of objective truth to the study and practice of persuasive argumentation.<sup>10</sup> The Platonic approach of Richard Weaver, "High Realist" (as Russell Kirk had designated him), is clearly evident in such works as The Ethics of Rhetoric and Ideas Have Consequences.<sup>11</sup> Marion Montgomery offers a critical assessment of Weaver's own Platonic assumptions regarding our countering the impact of nominalist philosophy, embracing the goodness of created reality, and acquiring a grasp of natural law ("Consequences"). From my own scholarly standpoint as a realist, "Consequences in the Provinces: Ideas Have Consequences Fifty Years After," a presentation turned essay by Montgomery (who identifies with classical realism) contains some of the most substantive philosophical analysis of the work and thought of Richard Weaver that is available across academic disciplines. Montgomery, who has been deeply influenced by Weaver's work, reminds us of the Thomistic view that, in the course of philosophical study, our *primary* goal "is not to learn what others have thought, but to learn how the truth of things stands," for we begin with reality in our common grasp of and academic search for knowledge, which informs our definitions, analogies, and applications—this we have learned from Aristotle and Aquinas.<sup>12</sup>

Definitional argumentation, with a basis in the natures of things, as such, *is at some level* necessary and pertinent to genuine conservatism. I have here said "as such," for an embrace of Platonism is not necessary for this point of view. Weaver's wider positive contribution (reflected in his quoted statement above) concerns the general importance of reality as a primary point of reference for the argumentation of conservatives. Although a conservative political mindset does not automatically follow

from one's acceptance of philosophical realism, realism, generally understood, *is at some level necessary* for the rhetoric of genuine conservatism, and the relevance of metaphysics to the argumentation of conservatism, as affirmed by Richard Weaver and others, warrants further inquiry within the field, *particularly from a realist point of view*.<sup>13</sup> Because of the connection of rhetorical theory and political conservatism within Richard Weaver's work, there is disciplinary precedent by which to examine the argumentation of conservatives along with an inquiry into the assumptions about reality that undergird their arguments. In terms of questions regarding reality, many of the approaches to liberalism that are prominent encompass sets of assumptions that are based upon, in varying degrees, philosophical skepticism (of both the modern and postmodern varieties) regarding knowledge, opinion, and communication (Dunn and Woodard 145-182; Shively).

Establishing and defending the primacy of metaphysics with respect to "common experience" (whether paired with conservative thought or not) is an important yet challenging task, for the philosophical status of reality has implications for questions regarding the aim of inquiry, the foundation of morality, and the scope of teleology (Adler, The Four; Centore, Being; Hayward; R. McInerny, Characters; Shively; E. Thompson, "Ways Out"). Adler has written:

The conflict between philosophy and common sense is almost entirely modern. Under the educational institutions of antiquity and the Middle Ages, the great mass of commonsense individuals in the populations were not instructed by the philosophy that then existed; today, however, with going to college or university routine for so many and with current

philosophical books available to so many, the situation is otherwise. The commonsense minds of many are corrupted and turned against themselves by philosophical doctrines that urge them to renounce their common sense. (Intellect 81)

As realists within the academic field of communication have well highlighted, there are prominent theoretical biases in the discipline against “objectivist” approaches toward human communication (metaphysical or otherwise).<sup>14</sup> The epistemologies of philosophical modernism (which have some assumptions of objectivity) along with the subjectivist and constructivist approaches of postmodernism both encompass skepticism (at differing methodological points) with respect to the intelligibility and existence of reality—both tend to dominate within higher education.<sup>15</sup> According to Ruth Lessl Shively:

Those who do not begin from the assumption of correspondence generally begin from the modern assumption of doubt. That is, they begin by doubting what is not proven or given certainty according to various criteria. Even postmodernists who reject the possibility of absolute proof or certainty generally continue to accept the starting point of doubt. They differ only in that they end in doubt as well. (53)

As Shively has demonstrated, social constructivism pervades the range of pragmatic, participatory, and ideological models of political reform at different theoretical levels with respect to virtues, goods, and practices (3-25). For the classical realist, truth is the correspondence between the intellect and reality, for this is the condition of knowledge, even amid the various social, cultural, and linguistic circumstances of life in which

human beings operate, learn, and communicate (Adler, The Four 21-42; Adler, Intellect 98-101; J. Ryan; Shively 46-58).

Liberalism, in differing versions, has significantly influenced twentieth and twenty-first century academia; hence, it is arguable that conservatism, generally understood, has had a lower status within contemporary institutions of scholarly learning.<sup>16</sup> In the various fields of study (including that of communication), liberal standpoints of various sorts tend to be the measuring points of moral, social, and economic issues, often accompanied by modern or postmodern epistemologies.<sup>17</sup> For the academic field of history, there has been some discussion of the methodological, philosophical, and contextual elements of investigation with respect to the adequate depth at which scholars should appropriate historically the varied thought, argumentation, and influence of conservatives, notwithstanding one's political biases.<sup>18</sup> The various critiques of Richard Weaver's work with respect to his philosophical suppositions or political opinions demonstrate in multiple ways these trends within the realm of communication studies.<sup>19</sup> For the rhetoric of conservatism, the contemporary spectrum of modern to postmodern philosophical standpoints entails challenges and opportunities with respect to the following areas of interest: 1) communicating the truths of foundational principles;<sup>20</sup> 2) confronting the errors within the present intellectual, moral, and social landscape;<sup>21</sup> 3) contending with the continuing implications of the various types of and approaches to conservatism;<sup>22</sup> 4) recognizing topical affinities for persuasive impact within the ongoing academic, cultural, social, and political discourse.<sup>23</sup> These four related tiers combine to constitute the central problem of this dissertation project as it relates to building the case for a realist rhetoric of order.

In spite of gradual intellectual ascendancy since the 1950s and significant political victories since the 1970s, within the midst of what are arguably liberalizing trends within society, issues of morality and culture continue to be significant areas for potential communicative impact by American conservatives (Bottum; Dunn and Woodard 145-179; Henrie, "Understanding"; Nash, The Conservative 329-341). Amply and persuasively challenging the suppositions and policies that are connected to egalitarianism, materialism, individualism, and feminism, for instance, is a controversial enterprise requiring the communication of real foundations (aspects of order) that are constant within, across, and among societies.<sup>24</sup> The influence of both modern and postmodern philosophy, in terms of questions regarding truth and error, presents a difficult yet promising terrain for important philosophical elements of conservative argumentation such as metaphysics, teleology, and essentialism (Hayward; E. Thompson, "Postmodernism"; E. Thompson, "Ways Out"). According to some, the suppositions of modernity present significant limitations for conservatives regarding truth and morality (Craycraft; Hayward; Mills; E. Thompson, "Ways Out"). Postmodern thought supplies additional challenges (Dunn and Woodard 145-182; Russello, The Postmodern; E. Thompson, "Postmodernism"; E. Thompson, "Ways Out"). Steven Hayward has argued that as conservatives contend with postmodernity, questioning the notion of progress must precede any revival of premodern philosophy (12). In Ewa M. Thompson's view, in light of the influential postmodern attack on essentialism, the primary battle for conservatives within the humanities is in the realm of language and epistemology, for she has asserted a defense of essentialism and "logocentrism," particularly with respect to the areas of study heretofore of interest to postmodernists.<sup>25</sup>

The theological, philosophical, and political components within the arena of approaches to conservatism continue to provide, as in the past, both alliances and difficulties (ideational and rhetorical) in terms of conservative argumentation (Berkowitz, Varieties of; Brown; Carey, “The Future”; Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part One]”; Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]”; Dunn and Woodard; Federici, “Russell Kirk”; Francis; Freund; Gottfried, The Conservative; Hamowy; Henrie, “Russell Kirk’s” 55-56; Hoeveler; Lewis; Nash, The Conservative; Noble; Rossiter; Russello, The Postmodern; Smant; H. White; Woods; Zoll, “Philosophical Foundations”). Those within the American conservative movement that developed in the 20th century, while contending with the intellectual and political aspects of modernity and liberalism, sought to establish the parameters of conservatism. Grappling with modern liberalism (generally speaking) was often at the bottom of the agreements and disagreements among the various types of conservatives. It was the strong view of some, for instance, that American conservatism should appropriate some degree of modernity’s liberalism for legitimacy in a modern nation. This controversy regarding modernity and conservatism has entailed differences and convergences of viewpoints on issues of culture, morality, politics, and economics (Berkowitz, Varieties of; Brown; Carey, “The Future”; Dunn and Woodard; Francis; Freund; Gottfried, The Conservative; Guttman, The Conservative; Guttman, “From Brownson”; Hamowy; Hoeveler; Lewis; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 201-219; Nash, The Conservative; Noble; Rossiter; Russello, The Postmodern; Smant; H. White; G. Wolfe; Woods; Zoll, “Philosophical Foundations”), both theoretically and practically.

Scholars such as Marc C. Henrie (“Russell Kirk’s” 55-56) and George H. Nash (“The Conservative”) have highlighted that a point of unity within this arena of



approaches to conservatism was the opposition to communism during the Cold War. As Henrie has explained that the meaning of “the West” was kept ambiguous for the sake of this coalition, he has emphasized the work of Russell Kirk for a view of Western Civilization (in terms of principles) that strongly extends back in time before the Enlightenment.<sup>26</sup> According to Nash, since the Cold War, the presently defining task for conservatives is internal to the United States—what he has identified as “populist relativism.”<sup>27</sup> In view of the work of Russell Kirk, Nash has argued that as conservatives now work in the very public world of policy and administration, they must not lose site of the formative aspects of private order, which impacts the order of the state (“The Conservative” 30). Regarding the current identity and influence of conservatives, it is arguable that the earlier approaches to conservatism such as that of Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver, and others (although still deeply influential in many ways) have been eclipsed by policies and initiatives inspired more by the suppositions of classical liberalism and neo-conservatism.<sup>28</sup> Concerning both rhetorical methodology and conservative discourse, this spectrum of modern to postmodern thought, as mentioned above, will be of import within the chapters to follow.

Some words at this point regarding this dissertation project should magnify both the aspects of my approach and the problems of scholarly interest, particularly in terms of some specific lines of research within the field of communication. First of all, Kirk is not unknown within the broader discipline of communication and rhetorical studies, including his personal and political affiliation with Richard Weaver.<sup>29</sup> Most recently, Jim Kuypers, Megan Hitchner, James Irwin, and Alexander Wilson have argued that traditional conservatism (particularly the work of Russell Kirk), has informed the rhetoric

of “compassionate conservatism.”<sup>30</sup> In the fifties, Malcolm O. Sillars suggested that the writings and ideas of the “new conservatives,” such as Russell Kirk, would provide a corrective balance to the liberal assumptions (which Sillars recognized as a significant component of American political history) that he saw as predominant within the speech discipline.<sup>31</sup>

The goal of this project is not to frame Russell Kirk as a theorist of communication. Scholars of communication and rhetorical studies have enhanced their overall disciplinary conversations through constructive reflection upon communicative practices in light of the theoretical and applied inquiry of others outside of this particular academic field (Arnett and Arneson; Cherwitz, Rhetoric and; Fritz, Arnett, Ritter, and Ferrara). Kirk’s *corpus* can provide such an enhancement. As Gleaves Whitney has indicated, Kirk’s endeavors point toward the place of rhetoric and language with respect to the “Permanent Things” (“Recovering Rhetoric”). Although specifically focusing upon conservatism, Gerald J. Russello has given clear pointers to the significance of Russell Kirk for rhetoric in general (The Postmodern 52, 104-145, 177-213). From authors holding various theoretical and political biases, studies of moral inquiry, social disjuncture, or economic practices are common in the scholarly literature of multiple disciplines, including communication and rhetorical studies (Arnett and Arneson; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton; Bracci and Christians; MacIntyre, After Virtue; Putnam; Sennett)—these were interest areas for Kirk (Russello, The Postmodern; Woods). The work of Russell Kirk in particular establishes the possibility of topical affinities for conservatives, especially within the current milieu; these points of affinity supply communicative occasions for conservatives, particularly with respect to principles

(Bliese, “Richard M. Weaver, Russell Kirk”; Russello, The Postmodern; Woods). For example, John Bliese has demonstrated the ways by which the work of both Weaver and Kirk informs a conservative approach of piety toward and conservation of the natural world, especially in a time of commercial and consumer excesses (“Richard M. Weaver, Russell Kirk”; “Richard Weaver and Piety”). Thomas E. Woods, Jr. has argued that the distinct principles that are of import within the “traditional conservatism” of Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver, and Robert Nisbet provide a communitarian perspective that is more conservative in scope than the typically more liberal models of communitarianism.

Particular disciplinary avenues are relevant with respect to both the approach and topic herein. In terms of the philosophical basis of communication studies, although constructivism, subjectivism, and inter-subjectivism are quite influential for both theoretical and applied study, significant scholarship within the discipline is extant regarding realism.<sup>32</sup> Parameters of inquiry established within this scholarly work have philosophical and practical significance for that which is knowable and communicable with respect to reality. With some theoretical clarifications along the way, I utilize some of these parameters within this project. Out of the earlier research in rhetoric and epistemology that was initiated by Robert Scott (Scott’s work has tended toward the more constructivist side of the equation), a line of study known as “rhetorical perspectivism” has been developed by scholars as a realist approach for that area of inquiry.<sup>33</sup> Richard A. Cherwitz and James W. Hikins, two of the main leaders of the “rhetorical perspectivism” approach, have defined rhetoric as “the art of describing reality through language” (Communication 62), which leads the “rhetorician [...] to investigate both the pragmatic aspects and the philosophical implications of discourse purporting to describe reality”

(64). Hence, the “critic would examine the techniques and strategies employed by speakers or writers in their descriptions of reality” while the “theorist would explore psychological, ethical, epistemological, ontological, and other implications or characterizations of reality” (64). Within this dissertation, I both apply and modify aspects of “rhetorical perspectivism.” Cherwitz and Hikins have also stated:

[...] To rhetorical critics we would issue a challenge. A focus of rhetorical criticism ought increasingly to be on the ability of rhetors to describe reality faithfully through language. We suggest increased attention to what we might term epistemological criticism, criticism that evaluates discourse, not by some set of internal standards, but as occurring within the context of an independent reality apart from discourse. This is not to say that other modes of criticism should be abandoned, or discredit them in any way. The more traditional modes of criticism can assist an epistemological critic in his or her evaluation of human discourse. (171)

From the view of classical realism, this project seeks to take up their challenge in response to scholars of rhetorical epistemology in general (including those of the realist point of view) who have prompted the blending of epistemological questions with both rhetorical theory and rhetorical criticism.<sup>34</sup>

Theoretically, the aim of this project is to build *from* and *onto* the overall disciplinary conversations regarding philosophical realism and communication studies. In the literature, there are a variety of points of view regarding the theoretical basis of rhetoric, such as rhetorical aesthetics, communicative *praxis*, narrative theory, discursive intersubjectivity, and social constructivism—as the “rhetorical perspectivists” have

emphasized, many elements of these viewpoints tend toward postmodernist philosophy.<sup>35</sup> The work within the field, in general, has demonstrated the overlap between rhetorical theory and rhetorical criticism, with this overlap extending into the theoretical and political significance of the speeches and texts examined by rhetorical critics.<sup>36</sup> One example of this overlapping of theory and criticism is the differences of standpoint and approach between those who have continued the ongoing work of rhetorical criticism and those who have advocated a disciplinary shift toward “critical rhetoric.”<sup>37</sup> Scholars within the camp of rhetorical criticism have tended toward a framework encompassing the relevance of stylistic parameters, a focus on particular discourses, and the viability of modern suppositions, while the critical rhetoricians, led by Raymie E. McKerrow, have advocated a framework that entails the implementation of postmodern suppositions, a focus upon multiple discourses, and the criticism of political structures.<sup>38</sup> As demonstrated by the “rhetorical perspectivists,” a realist consideration of the “critical rhetoric” framework provides an additional philosophical layer of inquiry to the dynamic of formalism and fragmentation that is often a part of this disciplinary conversation, yet Kirk’s work as a focus of study points to some of the key items of discussion between these differing approaches as related to the possibilities for a realist rhetoric of order.<sup>39</sup>

The theoretical stance taken within in this project corresponds more to the framework of rhetorical criticism, generally understood. Chapters herein will contain further clarifications on this matter as pertinent to issues of rhetorical criticism and “critical rhetoric.” In light of building a case for a realist rhetoric of order, the project’s methodology encompasses a consideration of the sources, forms, and contexts of persuasive argumentation in general with respect to the aforementioned elements of

Kirk's *corpus* in particular. For theoretical coordinates, various authors are conducive to this project—among them, Aristotle. With respect to the significance of realist philosophy for rhetorical studies, Richard Cherwitz and James Hikins have worked to correct the disciplinary record regarding the category of probable truth in Aristotle's rhetorical theory—Aristotle was a realist.<sup>40</sup> They have articulated a compelling case for a consideration of Aristotelian rhetorical theory that entails the following (Cherwitz and Hikins, "Irreducible Dualisms" 236-237, 239-240; Hikins, "Nietzsche, Eristic" 372-373; Hikins, "Realism and" 21-52, 21n1; Hikins, "Through the" 169): 1) in terms of reality, the factual and circumstantial elements surrounding human communication provide the basis for the connection between occasions of persuasion and degrees of certainty; 2) questions involving contingency and probability are not detached from factual reality. Aristotle's overall *corpus* is conducive to a realist approach to both rhetorical theory and rhetorical criticism.<sup>41</sup>

Martin J. Medhurst has argued that a focus upon "the philosophical grounds of argument with its concomitant commitments to and reliance upon a detailed epistemology, axiology, and metaphysics" would supply a more theoretically precise means of understanding the rhetoric of conservatism ("Resistance, Conservatism" 112). In terms of direction, Medhurst has suggested that scholars (by means of deeper study of conservative perspectives), in regards to accuracy, might better evaluate the use of the term "conservative" by academicians and by speakers (107, 112, 114n19). Medhurst has referred to and (*to some extent*) relied upon the work of Russell Kirk (104-106, 113n9, 113-114n12, 114n16) with his challenges to some in the discipline (primarily regarding conservative resistance rhetoric). In the field of communication, beyond this sort of

movement criticism under discussion by Medhurst, scholars of multiple biases have contended with various philosophical and political points of view with respect to the argumentation of conservatives.<sup>42</sup> Because of Russell Kirk's emphasis on principles, a *substantive* look at his work is a contribution to ongoing efforts toward understanding and classifying conservative communication, for as Kirk was a pioneer and leader of 20th century conservatism, an extensive treatment of his work can be informative to this larger conversation.

Russell Kirk did not consider himself a metaphysician by profession or by disposition, although he did embrace philosophy as a basis for the study of history and the criticism of society. Kirk's metaphysical and epistemological viewpoints, as weighed against religious, moral, legal, political, and social issues, are important aspects of scholarly examination regarding his work (McDonald, Russell Kirk 55-85; Russello, "The Jurisprudence"; Russello, The Postmodern; Zoll, "The Social"). A general look at Russell Kirk's body of work reveals that he was, in a general sense, a realist of some sort, for his approach to reality and humanity provided a basis of a conservative perspective (Federici, "Russell Kirk"; Kirk, Enemies; Kirk, The Politics; McCarthy, "The Pomo Mind"; Quinn; Zoll, "The Social"). At an overall level, I hope that my rhetorical study of Kirk's work from the view of classical realism (beyond the disciplinary implications of my approach as explained above) will provide some additional insights regarding conservatism and communication. At another level, the work of Russell Kirk, *as a focus of examination*, can enhance disciplinary conversations regarding theory, criticism, and pedagogy, for Kirk's overall body of work contains significant and widely-recognized argumentation about reality, education, society, and communication (Kirk, Decadence;

Kirk, Enemies; Kirk, The Politics; Whitney, “Seven Things”). The important discussions in his *corpus* regarding political, social, and educational matters provide a challenge to the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment liberalisms that are presently influential within the field of communication regarding human discourse, democratic governance, pedagogical practice, and free speech.<sup>43</sup> Finally, as Kirk was to some degree both a social and literary critic, his work within these realms provides some direction regarding the modes and aims of criticism generally understood.<sup>44</sup>

In terms of argumentation, John Bliese has suggested that conservatives consider another point of direction from within the work of Richard Weaver—figurative and poetic discourse (“Richard M. Weaver and the Rhetoric” 318-321, 323-324). The proper end and exercise of human imagination, both in theory and in practice, was a significant area of interest within Russell’s Kirk thought and work (Guroian, Rallying 3-79; Kirk, Enemies; Whitney, “The Swords”). Ruth Lessl Shively has argued that the “mythic sensibility” that is manifested among peoples within cultures provides a degree of evidence for the realist point of view as these elements of human communication portray objective truth across history.<sup>45</sup> She has explained, “This mythic sensibility can be seen as essentially the imaginative side of realist philosophy: the manner in which the abstract idea of unconditioned truth in conditioned experience is given concrete significance and imagery in human life” (111-112). Shively has also written, “Conversely, it would seem that philosophies that conceive of the self in strictly historical and particular terms cannot do justice to common moral self-understandings, for in reducing the self to its conditioned aspects, they present a self that, from most perspectives, is unrecognizable and uninspiring” (112). Various realists (classical and otherwise) have demonstrated that



the reality of humanity and of things, in view of both actuality and potentiality, is pertinent to considerations of the imaginative, poetic, and aesthetic elements of discourse with respect to subjectivity and objectivity (I. Chapman; Gilby; Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic”; Hikins, “The Seductive”; Montgomery, “Imagination and”; Ramos; Shively 111-112; E. Thompson, “Ways Out” 199, 204-206)—as Hikins has emphasized, “any artistic performance *requires a context of reality*” (“Nietzsche, Eristic” 364).

Ewa Thompson has suggested that conservative scholars apply premodern philosophical suppositions regarding language and epistemology to the topical concerns of postmodernists who operate within the humanities (“Ways Out”). As has been indicated within the relevant literature, the discourse of Russell Kirk is a contribution to this sort of endeavor, particularly in such areas as education, literature, history, and culture.<sup>46</sup> The work of both Gerald Russello (*The Postmodern*; “Russell Kirk and Territorial”; “Russell Kirk and the”; “Time and”) and Gleaves Whitney (“Recovering Rhetoric”; “Seven Things”; “The Swords”), for instance, reveals that the focus on imagination within Kirk’s *corpus*, in conjunction with his substantive considerations of humanity, truth, history, language, locality, and modernity, is indicative of both *affinities with* and *challenges to* postmodernism. As Russello has highlighted, there are scholars who have worked to frame, as an admixture of confronting modern dilemmas and cultivating premodern assumptions, the possibilities for a conservative approach to postmodernism.<sup>47</sup> As he has identified aspects of Kirk’s work that are similar to postmodern inquiry, Russello has emphasized Kirk’s significance for this possible area of convergence.<sup>48</sup>

However, Russello and other scholars who have considered these possibility of a postmodern conservatism have recognized difficulties with and expressed differences from the more prevalent approaches to postmodernism (Byrne; Henrie, “The Road”; Lawler, “Conservative Postmodernism”; Lawler, Postmodernism Rightly; McWilliams; Russello, The Postmodern 177-213). The question of conservatism and postmodernism is of particular interest to this project, for this entails matters regarding the influence of modernity on one hand, and the communicability of truth on the other. The work of “critical rhetoric,” as well as the suppositions of many communication theorists, is from the vantage point of postmodernism. In terms of the stated problem of this dissertation project, there is a junction of analysis between the possibility of common concerns and the pertinence of philosophical suppositions. Subjectivism, intersubjectivism, or constructivism, as philosophical models of inquiry into human life (which includes the theory and practice of communication), are inadequate with respect to significant elements of moral, social, and economic argumentation, such as the constancy of human nature and the aims of ordered freedom.<sup>49</sup>

Russell Kirk communicated often regarding order and disorder; this is relevant to the problems of interest listed above.<sup>50</sup> Kirk has explained:

Those of us who aspire to conserve our inherited order and justice and freedom, our patrimony of wisdom and beauty and lovingkindness, have a hard row to hoe nowadays—that I confess. Many voices have declared that life is not worth living. A multitude of writers and publicists and members of the class of persons commonly styled “intellectuals” gloomily inform us that we human beings are no better than naked apes, and that

consciousness itself is an illusion. Such persons insist that life has no purpose but sensual gratification; that the brief span of one's physical existence is the be-all and end-all. Such twentieth-century sophists have created in the murky caves of the intellect an Underworld; and they endeavor to convince us all that there exists no sun—that the world of wonder and of hope exists nowhere, and never did exist. Plato knew just such sophists in his day. (The Politics 289-290)

Russell Kirk's argumentation on order was a significant part of the discourse among 20th century American conservatives with respect to the influence of modernity and the parameters of conservatism (Henrie, "Russell Kirk's"; Kirk, Prospects 203-223; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 115-138; Woods). He articulated in a distinct way his opinions concerning the limitations of modern suppositions for conservatives (Kirk, Beyond; Kirk, The Intelligent; Kirk, The Politics; Henrie, "Russell Kirk's"; Russello, The Postmodern). Russell Kirk, in his examination of contentious areas of study such as human progress and linguistic truth, highlighted the important question of order for individuals and communities (Kirk, Eliot; Kirk, Enemies; Kirk, The Politics; Lockerd; Niemeyer, "Knight of"; Whitney, "The Swords").

With "rhetorical perspectivism" as a theoretical springboard, Chapter One of this project pertains to philosophical realism and rhetorical studies. From the view there established, the focus of Chapter Two is Russell Kirk on the human imagination, while Chapter Three contains a theoretical rhetorical analysis of The Roots of American Order as regards the essential constancy of human nature. The concluding section of the project will entail a consideration of some theoretical, practical, and pedagogical implications for

Kirk on order, inclusive of the question of the natural law as a framework for rhetorical ethics. Because of the thematic importance of order and the humane generality of rhetoric, the goal of this project is to be a scholarly contribution to the field of rhetorical studies with implications for various academic disciplines, given the broad scope of Kirk's endeavors. Along the way, for the argumentation of conservatives in the twenty-first century, I hope to highlight some prospects for persuasion.<sup>51</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Please see the following: Boyd; Canavan; East 17-37; Edwards, The Conservative 3, 76, 81, 117, 240-241, 278, 293; Ericson, “Conservatism”; Frohnen, “Has Conservatism”; Frohnen, “Russell Kirk on”; Guroian, “The Conservative”; Hart; Henrie, “Russell Kirk and the”; Henrie, “Understanding” 3-9; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; W. McDonald, “Russell Kirk”; Nash, “The Conservative”; Niemeyer, “Knight of”; Niemeyer, “Russell Kirk”; Panichas, “Russell Kirk”; Person, Russell Kirk; Respinti; Russello, “Russell Kirk and the Critics”; Russello, “Time and”; Whitney, “Seven Things”; C. Wilson. Russell Kirk died in 1994 (Person, Russell Kirk 17-19, 215). Aspects of this dissertation *have influenced* or *have been influenced by* my work for the following conference presentations: “Conservatism in the NCA: The Uncommon Ground”; “Imagination, History, and Reality: Struggling Before and Beyond Language in an Age of Technology.” “For Rhetoric: One Realist Study of ‘Performance’ as a Term”; “Metaphysics and Epistemology for Rhetorical Theory: The Question of Primacy”; “Mortimer Adler and Communication Ethics: Negotiating Difference through Similarity”; “Richard M. Weaver and Russell Kirk: The Question of Definition”; “Richard M. Weaver: The Question of Abraham Lincoln.” This is also the case for my preface to the book The Philosophical Mathematics of Isaac Barrow (1630-1677): Conserving the Ancient Greek Geometry of the Euclidian School by Gregory Gillette as well as my guest lecture, “Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver, and Rhetorical Ethics: The Question of Natural Law,” at Hillsdale College. Finally, aspects of this dissertation *have influenced* or *have been influenced by* the two presentations that were required of me as a

Residential Wilbur Fellow at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal in Mecosta, MI from September 2005 to May 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the following: Beer, “Science”; Frohnen, “Russell Kirk on” 64-67; Kirk, The Politics 1-29; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; Respinti; Niemeyer, “Russell Kirk.” As W. Wesley McDonald has explained, Kirk’s use of the term “ideology” was controversial, for those of different philosophical and disciplinary points of view (including conservatives) have utilized the term in a general way so as to refer to standpoints of some sort (Russell Kirk 34-38, 35-36n33). With Roy C. Macridis’s Contemporary Political Ideologies: Movements and Regimes (Macridis 1; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 35-36n33) in mind, McDonald wrote, “Ideology is any set of beliefs. As the author of one popular undergraduate college textbook put it—whether they know it or not, everyone has an ideology. Insofar as people believe in something, value something, have ideas about things, they possess an ideology” (35). McDonald then argued that to define “ideology” in this way “is so conceptually vague, so broad” where classifying modes of thinking is not possible, while “genuine political philosophy” then could not be distinguished from ideology (35). Implicitly, this also points to “a position of moral relativism,” as “the proponent is assuming that all moral judgments, and hence all prescriptive political statements, are equally based upon subjective judgments, or, to put it another way, all are rationalizations of economic or political interests” (35). Kirk’s approach, according to McDonald, was to embrace “the existence of an objective universal moral order” as against “its ideological adversaries of both the Left and the Right” (35-36). In reference to Kenneth Minogue’s book, The Liberal Mind (W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 36n34; Minogue 15-16), McDonald further argued, “The

problem with the term ‘ideology’ [...] is that it is not only vague but also often used as a tactic to dunk ‘false’ beliefs. Those who ‘conclude that all thinking is ideological...destroy the usefulness of the concept.’ (W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 36n34; Minogue 15-16).

<sup>3</sup> Please see the following: Bliese, “Richard M. Weaver, Russell Kirk”; Cribb, “Why”; Edwards, The Conservative; Edwards, Educating for; Frohnen, “Has Conservatism”; Henrie, “Understanding”; Kirk, The Conservative 8-11, 457-501; Kirk, The Politics; Kirk, Prospects 36-39, 203-223; Kirk, The Roots; Kuypers, Hitchner, Irwin, and Wilson; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; Nash, “The Conservative”; Russello, The Postmodern; Russello, “Russell Kirk and Territorial”; Woods. Although similarities between Kirk’s traditionalism and the views of those known as “paleoconservatives” are observable, such as on foreign policy, it is important to consider points of difference on such matters as the theoretical basis of conservatism the practical direction of cultural reform (Russello, The Postmodern 1-27; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 201-219).

<sup>4</sup> Please see the following: Bradford, “A Proper”; Cribb, “Why”; Frohnen, “Russell Kirk on” 64-67; Henrie, “Opposing”; Henrie, “Understanding”; Kirk, The Conservative 8-11, 457-501; Kirk, Enemies; Kirk, The Politics 1-29; Kirk, Prospects 36-39, 203-223; Kirk, Redeeming; Kirk, The Roots 9; Kirk, The Sword; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 115-138; Person, Russell Kirk 68-72; Respinti. An ongoing conversation on personal and communal order is arguably the most prominent element of Kirk’s *corpus*.

<sup>5</sup> Cribb, “Why” 57. W. Wesley McDonald explained:

A central theme in Kirk’s work was to differentiate conceptually between conservatism and ideology. Conservatism is not an ideology, he strongly

repeated and maintained. In fact, conservatism, by its very nature, constitutes an anti-ideology. In support of this argument, he frequently cited H. Stuart Hughes's famous description of conservatism as "the negation of ideology." [...] (Russell Kirk 34-35)

McDonald pointed the reader (35-36n33) to Kirk's Enemies of the Permanent Things (154) and Confessions of a Bohemian Tory (284) for examples of Kirk's references to Hughes for this description of conservatism.

<sup>6</sup> Please see the following regarding Richard Weaver's ongoing status for rhetorical studies: Beale, "Richard M. Weaver" 626-628; Bliese, "The Conservative Rhetoric" 401-403; Bliese, "Richard Weaver: Rhetoric" 208; S. Crowley; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part One]"; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]"; Duffy and Jacobi 1-18, 93-123, 197-203; Payne, Ratchford, and Wooley; Raho 97-98; T. Smith. There is some variance as to what particular elements of Weaver's work might be *more or less* significant for rhetorical studies, yet regardless, it is clear that his work has ongoing significance for the contemporary study of rhetoric. With respect to Kirk and Weaver's friendship, please see the following: Kirk, Confessions 193-196; Kirk, Foreword; Kirk, The Politics 74-76; Kirk, The Sword 172-175. As the literature regarding Weaver's work indicates, one can *more or less* categorize Weaver as a "traditional conservative" depending upon the coordinates used in terms of philosophy, politics, culture, and custom (Bailey; Bliese, "Richard M. Weaver, Russell Kirk"; De Maio; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part One]"; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]"; Henrie, "Understanding" 3-4; Woods). It should be noted that Richard Weaver expressed, both explicitly and implicitly, certain commonalities with libertarian thought



and classical liberalism on philosophical and political matters (Bailey; Weaver, “Conservatism and Libertarianism”; Weaver, “Relativism and” 132-133). Within the history of 20th century conservatism, Kirk somewhat clearly differentiated his standpoint from those of the libertarian and classical liberal persuasions, although there were common points of agreement on policy (Cribb, “Why” 55-57; Kirk, The Politics 156-171; Nash, The Conservative).

<sup>7</sup> Please see the following: Alderfer; Bradford, “A Proper”; Henrie, “Russell Kirk’s”; Hittinger, “The Unwritten”; Hoffert; Kirk, The Roots 3-10; Lalley; F. McDonald, Foreword; F. McDonald, “Russell Kirk”; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 116-132; Person, Russell Kirk 68-70; Regnery, “Russell Kirk: An Appraisal” 26-27; Respinti 73. In this dissertation project, unless otherwise noted, I am referencing the original 1974 edition of The Roots of American Order. Two notions were influential here in my formulation of this explanation. Firstly, Mortimer Adler has argued that “philosophy is everybody’s business” (The Four vii-xxvii). Secondly, Richard Weaver has stated that “language, which is thus predicative, is for the same cause sermonic” (“Language is” 224).

<sup>8</sup> Please see the following as regards classical realism: Adler, “The Bodyguards”; Adler, The Four; Adler, Intellect; Adler, Ten; Brennan; Centore, Being; Chesterton 45-167; Fackenheim; Gilson, Thomist Realism; Gorman; Grabowsky and Fritz; R. McInerny, Aquinas and; McInerny, Characters; McInerny, Ethica Thomistica; McInerny, Thomism in; Montgomery, “Consequences”; O’Callaghan; Shively; E. Thompson, “Ways Out”; Wellmuth; Wilhelmsen, “Faith and”; Wilhelmsen, “Modern Man’s.” Obviously, with respect to the *application of* and *reliance upon* the work of both Aristotle

and Aquinas, there are variances among these and other authors within this philosophical tradition, such as the immateriality of sense cognition (Adler, “Sense”; Casey), the merits of the great books approach to education (Wilhelmsen, “The Great”), the merits of modern political thought (Adler, Haves Without; Adler, We Hold; Maritain, On The; Maritain, Scholasticism), and the question of world government (Adler, Haves Without; Hochschild, “Globalization”; Hutchins). As representative of the suppositions and approach of classical realism, please see the following from St. Thomas Aquinas: On Being and Essence, Summa Contra Gentiles, Book One: God, Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Two: Creation, and Truth, Volume 1: Questions I-IX. I must also mention as helpful here Dr. Matthew A. Kent’s presentations regarding such topics as classical realism as “common sense” realism, the immateriality of the human soul, and human cognition with respect to ideas during our time as Residential Wilbur Fellows at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal.

<sup>9</sup> Adler, The Four 17-20, 106-123, 247-248. A general reading of the following work within the field of communication indicates the primacy of epistemology in regard to metaphysical and ontological questions: Cherwitz and Darwin, “Beyond Reductionism”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Toward a”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Why The”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Burying the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Irreducible Dualisms”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “John Stuart Mill’s”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Rhetorical Perspectivism”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Toward a”; Croasmun and Cherwitz; Ellis; Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic”; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “The Rhetoric”; Hikins, “The Seductive”; Hikins, “Through the”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy”; Pavitt, “Answering

Questions”; Pavitt, “The Third”; Sharkey and Hikins. Discussion on “rhetorical perspectivism” regarding epistemology and metaphysics will appear in Chapter One. One can find some coverage of Thomas Reid’s “common sense” realism (along with others of this Scottish movement) in the literature of communication and rhetorical studies (Berlin; Kelley), which varies in certain ways from the “common sense” approach of classical realism (R. McNerny, Characters 52-55, 72, 75). In his articulation of Aristotle’s realism regarding rhetorical studies (Hikins, “Realism and” 45n12), James W. Hikins pointed to the scholarship of Fr. William M.A. Grimaldi, S.J. (Grimaldi, Aristotle, Rhetoric I), whose work supported a realist interpretation of the Rhetoric of Aristotle. For examples of Fr. Grimaldi’s work, please see the following: “Aristotle Rhetoric”; “A Note”; “Rhetoric and the Philosophy”; “Rhetoric and Truth”; “*Semeion, Tekmerion.*”

<sup>10</sup> This attenuation of truth is an evident aspect of Weaver’s endeavors within the relevant primary or secondary literature (Beale, “Richard M. Weaver”; T. Clark, “The Ideological”; S. Crowley; Cushman and Hauser; Duffy and Jacobi; Einhorn; Haskell and Hauser; Jacobi, “Using” 280; Johannesen, Strickland, and Eubanks; Sproule, “Using Public Rhetoric”; Weaver, The Ethics; Weaver, “Language is”; Weaver, Visions; Weaver, “To Write”). Although this has often (though not always) been a point of disagreement with his work among scholars, particularly in the field of communication, I am standing by this aspect of his work as a contribution to 20th century rhetorical studies.

<sup>11</sup> Kirk, The Sword 172-175. Please see the following for discussions (from various standpoints) of the impact of Platonism on the work of Richard Weaver: Beale, “Richard M. Weaver”; 631-635; Bostdorff 15-16, 26n8; K. Chase 255-256; Duffy and Jacobi; Follette; Haskell and Hauser; Johannesen, “Conflicting Philosophies”;

Johannesen, “A Reconsideration”; Johannesen, “Richard M. Weaver on”; Johannesen, “Richard Weaver’s View”; Johannesen, “Some Pedagogical” 272-273, 276-278; Johannesen, Strickland, and Eubanks; Kendall; Montgomery, “Consequences.”

<sup>12</sup> Montgomery, “Consequences” 177-178. Montgomery quotes from St. Thomas as follows: “The purpose of the study of philosophy is not to learn what others have thought, but to learn how the truth of things stands” (177). He then explained, “Thomas explores this concern in Question 166 (‘Of Seriousness’) and 167 (‘Of Curiosity’) in the Summa Theologica, II-II. It is, however, a prudential principle underlying all his work, as his careful analysis of ‘what others have thought’ reveals” (Montgomery, “Consequences” 249n15). Please see the following: Centore, Being 173-205; R. McInerney, Aquinas and; R. McInerney, Characters; O’Callaghan; Shively 46-85. As three of the major sources of argumentation discussed across Weaver’s work (The Ethics 55-114; “Language is”; “Responsible”), I here mention definition, analogy, and circumstance. He also discussed arguments from cause and effect (or the argument from consequence).

<sup>13</sup> Discussions of metaphysical and epistemological matters with respect to political, social, and moral questions are considerable ingredients of 20th (and now 21st) century conservative thought and discourse (Beer, “Science”; Byrne; Federici, “Logophobia”; Gottfried, The Conservative; Hochschild, “The Re-Imagined”; Hoeveler; Lawler, “Conservative Postmodernism”; Lawler, Postmodernism Rightly; Lewis; D. Livingston; McMahon; Mitchell, “The False”; Mitchell, “The Homeless”; Ryn; Caitlin Smith). Hoeveler featured Weaver as representative of “a metaphysical conservatism that has resisted the triumph of Nominalism over Realism in Western philosophy,” which

“stands averse to subsequent expressions of empiricism, utilitarianism, and pragmatism that it believes follow from the demise of a transcendent realm of being as a cognitive reality in human understanding [...]” (306). For this, Hoeveler noted (315n1):

The consequences for Weaver were not merely intellectual ones. He derived from the defeat of Realism the decline of authority, the erosion of a structured social hierarchy, and the genesis of an overweening confidence in human reason in its quest to perfect the world—the birth, in short, of the modern revolutionary temperament. See Ronald Lora, Conservative Minds in America (Chicago, 1971), 180-81.

I am not saying that realism *automatically* leads to political conservatism, but I am arguing that realism is a *necessary basis* for a genuine conservatism. For example, Mortimer Adler, who went to great lengths to explain and defend philosophical realism, embraced various viewpoints and policies that are clearly more liberal or modern in scope with respect to political questions, although he did not embrace all aspects of modern political philosophy (Haves Without; Ten 156-177; We Hold). Also, although Shively provides a helpful study and defense of realism, some of her political applications with respect to democracy are, in my estimation, debatable in scope.

<sup>14</sup> Please see the following for analytical discussions (*in support of or in opposition to*) regarding these types of theoretical biases (some of these appear in the literature of “rhetorical perspectivism,” which is discussed further along in this section): Bineham; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Beyond Reductionism”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Toward a”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Why The”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Irreducible Dualisms”;

Croasmun and Cherwitz; Ellis; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “The Seductive”; Hikins, “Through the”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy”; B. McGee; Schiappa, Gross, McKerrow, and Scott; Sharkey and Hikins 51; Waddell. Please see the following that more or less portray these biases (again, some of these are discussed in the literature of “rhetorical perspectivism”): Bineham; Brummett, “On to”; Brummett, “Some Implications”; Cyphert; B. McGee; McGee and Martin; McKerrow, “Space and”; Scott, “On Viewing”; Scott, “On Viewing [...] Ten Years”; Schiappa; Schiappa, Gross, McKerrow, and Scott; Craig Smith; Vatz, “The Myth”; Waddell; Zhao. The authors in the field of communication who have challenged these biases have not necessarily written from the theoretical vantage point of classical realism, yet their various works are significant with respect to the pertinence of reality for human communication.

<sup>15</sup> Please see the following: Centore, Being; Dunn and Woodard 145-182; Shively 3-85; E. Thompson, “Ways Out.” In regard to challenges to constructivism from the view of classical realism (54-58), Shively has noted (58):

Actually, it is difficult to say just how the constructionists would respond to these realist arguments, for they rarely address themselves to the Aristotelian-Thomistic critique. They tend either to focus on more internal debates—for example, between liberals and communitarians, moderns and postmoderns, and so on—or to argue against only long-outworn Enlightenment forms of realism. (152n24)

Apart from Shively’s discussion, one example of something like this might be Steven Ward’s, “The Revenge of the Humanities: Reality, Rhetoric, and the Politics of Postmodernism,” where the classical realist view is not even really considered for the

contest between scientific realism and postmodern relativism in terms of the relationship between the humanities and the sciences. Relevant here too, within Shively's comparison of realism to various philosophical approaches with respect to moral questions (46-82), Shively has also noted (59):

Of course, some empiricists would say that we cannot make moral claims at all, or that there is no relationship between empirical truth and moral conclusions. For example, emotivists generally assume that moral utterances are merely expressions of subjective feeling or interest, and logical positivists tend to assume that moral utterances are simply meaningless or represent confusions of speech. (152n25)

<sup>16</sup> Please see the following: Brinkley, "The Problem"; Brinkley, "Response to"; Kalthoff, "To Tell"; Medhurst, "Resistance, Conservatism"; Nilsen; Ribuffo; Sillars, "The New Conservatism"; Sillars, "A Reply"; Yohn. The biases against conservatism are arguably demonstrable. Yet from the left (Henderson) and from the right (Gottfried, The Conservative 51-77), one can certainly look at some of the dimensions of this matter (regardless of political points of view) in terms of institutional influences, available resources, and the quality of scholarship in conjunction with the continuous debates on ideas and policies that are a part of the life of the modern academy. In the mid-eighties, Martin J. Medhurst well argued that movement studies of resistance rhetoric within the field of communication often reflected a lack of knowledge and precision regarding the philosophical and contextual elements of conservatism ("Resistance, Conservatism"). As I emphasize the pertinence of realism and metaphysics for genuine conservatism, it should be noted that some approaches within 20th century movement conservatism are

explicitly informed by modern philosophical suppositions, such as political or economic libertarianism and Classical or Enlightenment Liberalism (Berkowitz, Varieties of; Nash, The Conservative). Inclusive of the implications of these approaches, the influence of modern thought was significant for Russell Kirk for matters that were internal within and external to movement conservatism (The Politics).

<sup>17</sup> Specifically, in terms of the field of communication, as an example, please see H. Dan O’Hair’s discussions of voice, community, and responsibility within his presidential address from the 2006 National Communication Association national convention. Apart from any epistemological approach specifically, recent disciplinary conversations regarding liberal biases are relevant. See Richard Vatz’s “Voices from the Margins: The Conservative Perspective” from Spectra of February of 2009. Related issues were under discussion on the panel, Whither Ideological Diversity in the NCA, at the 95th annual convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois on November 12th, 2009. See Chapter Three herein regarding Vatz’s work on “rhetorical situation,” political standpoints, and social constructivism.

<sup>18</sup> Please see the following: Brinkley, “The Problem”; Brinkley, “Response to”; Ribuffo; Yohn. In reference to this specific discussion from a 1994 issue of The American Historical Review, William A. Rusher highlighted Brinkley’s argument regarding the pertinence of carving out a place for the initiatives and ideas of conservatism (broadly understood) within American historical scholarship (17). Rusher stated that “this country owes a huge debt of gratitude to Russell Kirk” with respect to Brinkley’s point for scholars of history that ““progressive modernism [...] may not in fact be as firmly entrenched as they thought”” (17). The direction of “imagination” for



scholarly history plays some role within this particular discussion (Brinkley, “The Problem” 429; Yohn). In terms of a richer understanding of conservative thought, Brinkley’s advisement to study the various aspects of conservative history (“The Problem”; “Response to”) parallels that of Medhurst for rhetorical studies of conservative resistance. In this same discussion, Ribuffo argued that conservatism *has received* significant treatment, even amid the complexities and shifts within recent political history, yet he did conclude that “historians of the United States should seriously consider both conservative questions and conservative answers to liberal or radical questions” (449). Perhaps because of Kirk’s historical and philosophical approach to political questions, his work is conducive to Yohn’s call to examine the social and rhetorical factors that have been operative within the categorizations of “liberal” and “conservative,” or “right” and “left” (Ribuffo’s arguments point toward this type of application). Although his cultural and philosophical parameters might be more traditionally Western than that of these scholars, because of an emphasis on principles within a framework of considerable depth, Kirk’s approach fits these types of conversations in view of such matters as (to borrow a phrase from Ribuffo) “the rhetoric of national solidarity” (449n22). Gerald Russello’s writings on Kirk and postmodernism (see Chapters Two and Three herein) certainly put Kirk’s corpus front and center for these sorts of considerations. Also, one can here look to Ted V. McAllister’s review essay, “Of Ideas and Politics: The Rich Promise of History De-Centered.” Basically, he argued there for an empirical approach to conservative history that accounts for economic, political, social factors to replace the typically “idea-driven” histories of those like Kirk and Weaver (both of whom he is clearly appreciative of and influenced by)—a

*de-centering* of ideas away from “larger narratives.” The case is helpful in terms of broadening the purview of conservative historiography, yet in light of what will follow in this project, I would take some caution with the terminology of *de-centering* (of course, arguably, other factors in reality besides “ideas” can be at the center of this or that text or speech—McAllister’s case does not necessarily goes against my realist discussions to follow). For a discussion of conservative history with regard to institutions, please see McAllister’s review essay, “Re-Visioning Conservative History.” There is one additional point to mention here that I will not cover in this project. In light of some of the philosophical, rhetorical, and political positions favored in this project, discussions of conservatism *as marginalized and/or diverse* or *accounting for the marginalized and/or diversity* (Henrie, “Rethinking”; Molnar, “Still Pondering”; Potemra; Russello, The Postmodern) would need to be treated with reflective caution, each in their own ethical and cultural sphere.

<sup>19</sup> Please see the following: Arnett 48-50, 54-55; Bormann; T. Clark, “The Ideological”; S. Crowley; Duffy and Jacobi; Einhorn; S. Foss, “Abandonment” 369-371; B. McGee. Within these sources, challenges to Weaver’s work are either philosophical or political, or both. Brian R. McGee’s critique of Richard Weaver’s emphasis on the ethicality of essential definitions is in part a defense of the prominence of constructivism, inclusive of the concept of definition, within the field of communication and rhetorical studies. In what is likely the most scathing critique of Weaver’s work in the literature, Sharon Crowley has challenged his canonical status for the contemporary study of rhetoric as regards various political, social, rhetorical, and philosophical matters.

<sup>20</sup> Please see the following: Craycraft; Dunn and Woodard; Federici, “Logophobia”; Guroian, Rallying; Hayward; Henrie, “Opposing”; Kirk, The Sword; Kraynak; Lawler, Postmodernism Rightly; D. Livingston; Montgomery, “Consequences”; Montgomery, “Remembering Who”; Russello, The Postmodern; E. Thompson, “Postmodernism”; E. Thompson, “Ways Out.”

<sup>21</sup> Please see the following: Federici, “Logophobia”; Guroian, Rallying; Henrie, “Opposing”; Kirk, The Sword; Kraynak; D. Livingston; Nash, “The Conservative”; Whitney, “Decadence.”

<sup>22</sup> Please see the following: P. Berkowitz, Varieties of; Carey, “The Future”; Chapel; Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part One]”; Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]”; Derbyshire; Dunn and Woodard; Eatwell and O’Sullivan; Francis; Frohnen, “Has Conservatism”; Genovese; Gottfried, The Conservative; Henrie, “Opposing”; Kendall and Carey; Kraynak; Kuypers, Hitchner, Irwin, and Wilson; McCarthy, “What Would”; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; Packer; Rowland and Jones; Russello, “How the”; Russello, The Postmodern; Woods; Zagacki.

<sup>23</sup> Please see the following: Ancil; Carey, “The Future”; Chapel; Derbyshire; Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part One]”; Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]”; Dunn and Woodard; Federici, “Russell Kirk”; Francis; Kraynak; Kuypers, Hitchner, Irwin, and Wilson; D. Livingston; Nash, “The Conservative”; Packer; Russello, The Postmodern; E. Thompson, “Ways Out”; Woods.

<sup>24</sup> Please see the following: Ancil; Bottum; Frohnen, “Has Conservatism”; Kalthoff, “To Tell”; Kraynak; Ritchie; Roshwald. Please see also Modern Age 49.4 of 2007, which is an issue dedicated to Conservative Reflections on Neglected Questions

and Ignored Problems. Medhurst has recommended an article by Martha Solomon (“Stopping ERA”) regarding the STOP ERA movement as an example of a more accurate analysis that accounts for the philosophical positions pertinent to conservatism (“Resistance, Conservatism” 106-107). Although Solomon does not necessarily embrace the particular aspects of conservatism under analysis, the content of her article operatively demonstrates the philosophical importance of “order” and teleology for the argumentation of conservatives.

<sup>25</sup> In her article, “Ways Out of the Postmodern Discourse,” Ewa Thompson utilized and recommended the work of Mortimer Adler, Jacques Maritain, and Alasdair MacIntyre to capture the postmodern conversation from a “logocentric” point of view.

<sup>26</sup> Henrie, “Russell Kirk’s” 56. Overall, in this article, Henrie provided a comparative study on various points between the historical approaches of Russell Kirk and Harry Jaffa with respect to the United States of America. The Roots of American Order plays a role within his discussion.

<sup>27</sup> According to Nash:

This brings us to one of the most formidable barriers to the future success of American conservatism, particularly the variety espoused so eloquently by Russell Kirk. I refer to what James Q. Wilson has described as the growth, especially among baby boomers, of “an ethos that values self-expression over self-control.” But it goes deeper than that: I refer to the spread of what might be called populist relativism. [...]

Now how does one cope with such invincible ignorance, fortified as it is by vulgar relativism and the powerful societal values embraced in

the words “freedom of choice”? I suggest that this is a very real problem, rhetorically and otherwise, for conservatives. People do not like to be told that their behavior is wrong or regressive. And there are increasing numbers of people in our society for whom the doctrine of the “inner check” has neither meaning nor attraction. (“The Conservative” 29)

<sup>28</sup> Please see the following to consider Kirk and/or Weaver in light of contemporary discussions among conservatives: Ancil; Berkowitz, “The Conservative”; Frohnen, “Has Conservatism”; Guroian, Rallying; Russello, The Postmodern. Apart from the efforts of Kirk and Weaver specifically, “The Future of Conservatism” by George W. Carey and “Conservative Critics of Modernity: Can They Turn Back the Clock?” by Robert P. Kraynak are here relevant for the matter of the direction of contemporary conservatism. One must be careful to here differentiate between those aspects of classical liberalism that have taken hold in “mainstream conservatism” (maybe unreflectively) and those of the “old right” who stand against this mainstream on certain points from the vantage point of classical liberalism, libertarianism, etc. Of course, while Kirk’s *corpus* could be weighed against the former or latter, as Clyde Wilson has shown, those libertarians and classical liberals of the “old right” do not hesitate to make known their differences with the points of view that Kirk expressed over the years (“Explaining”).

<sup>29</sup> Please see the following for references to or uses of the work of Russell Kirk from those of the discipline of communication and rhetorical studies: Bliese, “The Conservative Rhetoric” 402, 407, 417n7, 420-421n64; Bliese, “Richard M. Weaver and the Rhetoric” 314n1, 323; Bliese, “Richard Weaver’s Axiology” 285, 285n44; Browne

498; Bryant, “Edmund Burke: The New” 330-332, 331n5, 331n7; Bryant, Rev. of 76; G. Burns; James Campbell 157, 169n1; Chapel 359; T. Clark, “An Analysis” 401, 401n7; T. Clark, “The Ideological” 29n28; S. Crowley 69-70; Hoffman 388, 406-407n93; King 133, 133n25; Kuypers, Hitchner, Irwin, and Wilson; Lee 523; Medhurst, “Resistance, Conservatism” 104-106, 113n9, 113-114n12, 114n16; Nilsen 31-32; Railsback, “The Contemporary” 416, 423n58; Rowland and Jones 80n38; Sillars, “The New”; Sproule, “Using Public Rhetoric” 290, 290n2, 297, 297n33, 308, 308n55; Thomas; Wrage 208, 212. From within the discipline, I have somewhat recently discovered a dissertation entitled “A Rhetoric of Moral Imagination: The Persuasions of Russell Kirk” by Jonathan Leamon Jones, which was completed in 2009 at Texas A&M University. This dissertation by Jones is not consulted for my own dissertational project.

<sup>30</sup> Their article is “Compassionate Conservatism: The Rhetorical Reconstruction of Conservative Rhetoric,” which is from the online American Communication Journal. Similar analysis on *certain* communicative points regarding conservatism in general is available from Dunn and Woodard in their discussion of “Rhetorical Conservatism and Postmodernism” (165-182). Both selections provide helpful considerations regarding principles for persuasion with respect to conservative argumentation in particular and political discourse in general.

<sup>31</sup> Sillars (“The New Conservatism”) prompted an exchange (Nilsen; Sillars, “A Reply”) that is in some ways relevant to the larger theoretical and practical conversation about the *basis* and *role* of conservatism (for both academic and everyday life) in a country that has been influenced by the liberalism of modernity from the beginning in an ongoing way. Another interesting selection is, “The Plight of the Conservative in Public

Discussion,” by James McBurney from the Quarterly Journal of Speech (with no specific reference to Kirk) of 1950, which was originally a presidential address to what was then the Speech Association of America. At times, though, it seems that the sort of conservatism that McBurney was looking to rescue was the sort of standard and economic type that Kirk, Weaver, and others wanted to get beyond in that time.

<sup>32</sup> Please see the following: Cherwitz and Darwin, “Beyond Reductionism”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Toward a”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Why The”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Burying the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Irreducible Dualisms”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “John Stuart Mill’s”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Rhetorical Perspectivism”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Toward a”; Croasmun and Cherwitz; Ellis; Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic”; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “The Rhetoric”; Hikins, “The Seductive”; Hikins, “Through the”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy”; Pavitt, “Answering Questions”; Pavitt, “The Third”; Sharkey and Hikins.

<sup>33</sup> Regarding “perspective realism,” or “relational realism,” please see the following: Cherwitz and Darwin, “Beyond Reductionism”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Toward a”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Burying the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Irreducible Dualisms”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Rhetorical Perspectivism”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Toward a”; Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic”; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “The Rhetoric”; Hikins, “The Seductive”; Hikins, “Through the”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy”; Sharkey and Hikins. For discussions regarding (both supportive and oppositional) rhetorical epistemology as a general course of study (inclusive of the various

philosophical standpoints), please see the following: Bineham; Brummett, “A Eulogy”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Why The”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Burying the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Irreducible Dualisms”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “John Stuart Mill’s”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Rhetorical Perspectivism”: Cherwitz and Hikins, “Toward a”; Croasmun and Cherwitz; Cunningham; Farrell, “From the Parthenon”; Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic”; Hikins, “Through the”; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory” 453-455; Railsback, “Beyond Rhetorical”; Schiappa, Gross, McKerrow, and Scott; Scott, “Epistemic Rhetoric”; Scott, “On Viewing [...] Ten Years”; Sharkey and Hikins; Zhao. Please see the following from Robert L. Scott to get a sense of his philosophical approach to reality, knowledge, and communication: “Epistemic Rhetoric”; “On Viewing”; “On Viewing [...] Ten Years.”

<sup>34</sup> Please see the following: Brummett, “A Eulogy”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Burying the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 64, 171; Cyphert; Farrell, “From the Parthenon”; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, Telephone; Hikins, “Through the” 169; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy” 223-224; Scott, “Epistemic Rhetoric”; Sharkey and Hikins 50-51, 64-65, 66n1.

<sup>35</sup> The postmodern biases of these approaches to rhetorical theory are indicated within the literature of “rhetorical perspectivism” (Cherwitz and Darwin, “Beyond Reductionism”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Toward a”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Why The”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Irreducible Dualisms”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Toward a”; Croasmun and Cherwitz; Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic”; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “The Seductive”; Hikins, “Through the”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy”), yet these biases are



evident upon a reading of the following (many of these sources are discussed or cited by the “rhetorical perspectivists”): Bineham; Brummett, “Some Implications”; Fisher, “Narration as”; Hariman, “Status, Marginality”; B. McGee; McGuire, “Dancing in”; McGuire, “The Ethics”; Poulakos; Scott, “On Viewing”; Scott, “On Viewing [...] Ten Years”; Waddell.

<sup>36</sup> Please see the following: Brummett, “A Eulogy”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Burying the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 64, 171; Cyphert; Farrell, “From the Parthenon”; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, Telephone; Hikins, “Through the” 169; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy” 223-224; J. Murphy, “Critical Rhetoric”: Scott, “Epistemic Rhetoric”; Sharkey and Hikins 50-51, 64-65, 66n1. One might also argue that the literature regarding “rhetorical situation” is indicative of this overlapping. See Chapters Two and Three for my engagement with the literature on “rhetorical situation.”

<sup>37</sup> Although I would depart from *some* of their philosophical assumptions regarding rhetorical discourse, Dale Cyphert’s “Ideology, Knowledge and Text: Pulling at the Knot in Ariadne’s Thread” and John M. Murphy’s “Critical Rhetoric as Political Discourse” provide some helpful insights regarding this theory/criticism overlapping in terms of rhetorical criticism and “critical rhetoric.”

<sup>38</sup> Please see the following: John Angus Campbell, “Between the Fragment”; John Angus Campbell, “Introduction”; Condit, “Rhetorical Criticism”; Cox, “On ‘Interpreting’”; Gaonkar; Leff and Sachs; M. McGee, “Text, Context”; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory”; J. Murphy, “Critical Rhetoric”.

<sup>39</sup> For instance, please see work by Cherwitz and Darwin that pertains to the “critical rhetoric” movement (“Beyond Reductionism”; “Toward a”; “Why The”). As regards this dynamic of formalism and fragmentation, it is to some extent my own consideration, yet it is informed by the philosophical and epistemological points of emphasis within the literature of “rhetorical perspectivism.”

<sup>40</sup> Please see the following: Cherwitz and Hikins, “Irreducible Dualisms” 236-237, 239-240; Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic” 372-373; Hikins, “Realism and” 21-52, 21n1; Hikins, “Through the” 169. One might read Aristotle’s Metaphysics, or following Cherwitz and Hikins, Aristotle’s Physica, Book II, Section 1, 192b as translated by W.D. Ross (“Irreducible Dualisms” 236, 241n19). Again, in an articulation of Aristotle’s realism as pertaining to rhetoric, Hikins points us to the work of Fr. William M.A. Grimaldi, S.J. (Grimaldi, Aristotle, Rhetoric I 23; Hikins, “Realism and” 45n12, 75), whose extensive work supports a realist interpretation of the Rhetoric of Aristotle (“Aristotle Rhetoric”; “A Note”; “Rhetoric and the Philosophy”; “Rhetoric and Truth”; “*Semeion, Tekmerion*”).

<sup>41</sup> A review of Fr. Daniel Fogarty’s explanation of Aristotle’s “philosophy of rhetoric” in his book, Roots for a New Rhetoric, is here helpful (21-27). Although not advocating classical realism as such for today, Eugene Garver’s book, Aristotle’s Rhetoric: An Art of Character, and to some extent, Christopher Lyle Johnstone’s essay, “Aristotle’s Ethical Theory in the Contemporary World: *Logos, Phronesis*, and the Moral Life,” both substantiate my interpretive point here with respect to Aristotle’s *corpus*, particularly regarding rhetoric, practicality, and ethics, which will be pertinent within this

project. One might also look to Garver's "Aristotle's Rhetoric on Unintentionally Hitting the Principles of the Sciences."

<sup>42</sup> With respect to Medhurst, in my estimation, his philosophical and terminological admonitions were certainly insightful for study of conservative resistance in particular and conservative discourse in general at that time. However, in the big picture of the discipline of communication and rhetorical studies, besides this sort of practice and/or discussion of movement criticism, study, and theorizing (Brummett, "The Skeptical"; Medhurst, "Resistance, Conservatism"; Medhurst, "The First"; Medhurst, "The Sword"; Warnick, "Conservative Resistance"; Warnick, "The Rhetoric"), one might also look to the following: Beale, "Richard M. Weaver"; Bliese, "The Conservative"; Bliese, "Richard M. Weaver and the Rhetoric"; Chapel; S. Crowley; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part One]"; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]"; Duffy and Jacobi; Enholm and Gustainis; Johannesen, "A Reconsideration"; Kuypers, Hitchner, Irwin, and Wilson; Rowland and Jones; Weiler; Zagacki.

<sup>43</sup> Please see the following: Kirk, Academic Freedom; Kirk, Decadence; Kirk, Enemies; Kirk, Rights and 153-208; McDonald, Russell Kirk 170-200; Person, Russell Kirk 81-95. In terms of the field of communication and rhetorical studies, one might look to the disciplinary discussions within an issue of The Southern Communication Journal of 1998 (Ball; Goldzwig; Jablonski; McKerrow, "Corporeality"; McKerrow, "Rhetoric and"; Medhurst, "Rhetorical Education"; Medhurst, "The Rhetorical Renaissance"; Turner). Also, as Kirk's approach to Edmund Burke has been a point of reference (pro and con) by those interested in rhetoric (Browne 498; Bryant, "Edmund Burke: A Generation"; Bryant, "Edmund Burke: The New"; Bryant, Rev. of 76), his

significant scholarly contributions in this area deserve ongoing disciplinary attention.

The discourse of Edmund Burke in general is an area of interest within the field of communication and rhetorical studies (Bormann; Browne; Bryant, “Edmund Burke: The New”; John Angus Campbell, “Between the Fragment” 361-365; Condit, “Rhetorical Criticism” 334-339; Leff and Sachs 260-270; Speer).

<sup>44</sup> Please see the following for some insights regarding Kirk as cultural, social, or literary critic: P. Chapman; Person, Russell Kirk 151-200. Relevant to this project, Person wrote the following:

In his essays of social criticism, then, Kirk offered not a point-by-point agenda of how to defeat the problems he perceived in society—widespread indifference or outright contempt for unborn human life, acceptance of pornography in the name of free expression, a lack of accountability by school administrators and faculty, a lack of accountability by the parents of disruptive students in the nation’s schools, the practice of thinking in slogans instead of thinking, the mistaking of the newest ideas for the best ideas, the degeneracy of the Christian faith as practiced within both modern Catholicism and Protestantism, and other issues—but rather a set of principles grounded in tradition by which social problems ought to be viewed and the culture strengthened. (Russell Kirk 178)

<sup>45</sup> Shively 111-112. Shively looked to “the evidence offered by cultural anthropology and, more particularly, by the study of mythology within that field,” which

“offers special insights into the most persistent and common understandings of the self as these hold across cultures [...]” (111, 158n63, 158n64).

<sup>46</sup> Please see the following: McAllister, “The Particular and”; Malvasi; Quinn; Russello, The Postmodern; Russello, “Russell Kirk and Territorial”; Russello, “Russell Kirk and the Critics”; Russello, “Time and”; Whitney, “Recovering Rhetoric”; Whitney, “Seven Things.” As has been indicated, Thompson argued specifically for an approach that tends to be grounded in classical realism. Although that approach *as such* does not predominate these discussions regarding Kirk (excepting discussions on the natural law), on the table there are the possibilities for truth with respect to the trends and suppositions of postmodern thought. In “Ways Out of the Postmodern Discourse,” Thompson made no reference to Kirk’s work.

<sup>47</sup> Please see the following: Byrne; Hayward; Henrie, “The Road” 17-19; Lawler, “Conservative Postmodernism”; Lawler, Postmodernism Rightly; McWilliams; Russello, The Postmodern; Russello, “Russell Kirk and the Critics” 10-11; Ryn. As this segment of the literature contains conversations about various philosophical approaches, such as historicism and realism, I use this term “premodern” very generally here with respect to knowable and applicable truth. For instance, Claes Ryn has argued for “value-centered historicism” as a pertinent philosophical model for conversations about culture, morality, diversity, etc (79-117). Ryn’s work contains departures from certain aspects of modernity such as the Enlightenment, yet his considerations regarding philosophy, history, and truth are arguably reliant upon other elements of modern thought. Ryn does not necessarily foreground conservatism at all points along the way, yet Ryn’s involvement with conservative thought warrants his place in this sort of discussion

(Byrne). Lawler does argue for a “return to realism,” for although not always foregrounding the question of conservatism, Lawler’s work is placed within this larger discussion because of his reputation as a conservative scholar (McWilliams 45; Russello, “Russell Kirk and the Critics” 10).

<sup>48</sup> Please see the following: Russello, The Postmodern; Russello, “Russell Kirk and Territorial”; Russello, “Russell Kirk and the Critics” 9-11; Russello, “Time and” 217-218. Russello has certainly recognized that Russell Kirk, in terms of philosophical suppositions, was not a postmodernist as is generally understood. Thanks to Gerald J. Russello for some help discussion previous to the publication of his book, The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk (Telephone).

<sup>49</sup> My statement here of course indicates my own realist biases throughout this project in terms of philosophy, rhetoric, and society. “Ordered freedom” was a consistent theme within Kirk’s *corpus*. Although I am on record for disagreeing with Dimock’s interpretation of Weaver’s book, The Ethics of Rhetoric (“Rediscovering [...] [Part One]”; “Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]”), he has in my view done a valuable service by pointing to the pertinence of human nature for Weaver’s stances on conservative argumentation (specific discussion of this will follow in Chapter Three).

<sup>50</sup> Please see the following: Aeschliman; Beer, “Science”; Bliese, “Richard M. Weaver, Russell Kirk”; Bradford, “A Proper”; W. Campbell; Cribb, “Why”; Frohnen, “Has Conservatism”; Frohnen, “Russell Kirk”; Guroian, Rallying; Henrie, “Russell Kirk’s”; Hittinger, “The Unwritten”; F. McDonald, Foreword; F. McDonald, “Russell Kirk”; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; W. McDonald, “Russell Kirk and the Prospects”;

Nash, The Conservative; Nash, “The Conservative”; Person, Russell Kirk; Russello, The Postmodern; Whitney, “The Swords”; Woods.

<sup>51</sup> I take the word “prospects” of course from Kirk’s book, Prospects for Conservatives, from the 1950s.

## Chapter One

### Rhetoric, Realism, and Reality

For the field of communication and rhetorical studies, the “rhetorical perspectivists” have provided noteworthy theoretical, critical, and practical parameters with regard to language, thought, and reality. The following statement by James Hikins is indicative of their overall point of view:

[...] Humans are conscious, intention-imbued entities invested with the ability to *know* at least some aspects of the natural world in which they live. They also possess the ability to communicate that knowledge by use of symbol systems. Symbols systems have the capacity to embody both physical and nonphysical dimensions of experience, based on meaning, which is in turn grounded in the ontological properties of relations. Thus human experiences, physical, mental, ethical, and aesthetic, are as much a part of the real world as are the human communicators who populate it. Confident that reality is at least in part knowable, humans weave such knowledge, in the guise of facticity, into their efforts to persuade others, even on contingent issues where the ultimate truth is as yet unattainable. Because rhetoric is in this way anchored in reality, humans are assured at least minimally objective criteria with which to compose discourse, evaluate rhetorical praxis, and generate theory. [...] (“Realism and” 67)

These scholars have highlighted that the stylistic, aesthetic, contextual, linguistic, and practical aspects of discourse (in deliberative, forensic, and epideictic circumstances) are best understood and resolved with respect to reality, for the knowledge and application of



objective truth are viable and worthy goals of both inquiry and communication. Such insights have challenged and enhanced the variety of disciplinary considerations pertaining to intersubjectivity, constructivism, *praxis*, aesthetics, narration, and hermeneutics as theoretical frameworks of rhetoric. Informed by “rhetorical perspectivism” and toward a realist rhetoric of order, this project offers a study of particular aspects of Russell Kirk’s *corpus* regarding order both *with respect to* and *as an account of* reality in terms of argumentation and persuasion in general, for the approach taken herein is (to some degree) compatible with the suggestions of Cherwitz and Hikins toward what they have termed the “epistemological criticism” of speeches and texts.<sup>1</sup> The project utilizes many of the parameters provided by Cherwitz, Hikins, and others, yet builds toward some alternative coordinates of study.

The “rhetorical perspectivists” have affirmed and defended the assumption that reality is, to some degree, both knowable and communicable by human beings—this is a distinctive assumption of realism generally understood. They have made arguments for philosophical realism that are normative for realists (Adler, [The Four](#); Adler, [Intellect](#); Adler, [Ten](#); Centore, [Being](#) 71-74, 173-227; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the” 380-383; Cherwitz and Hikins, [Communication](#); Croasmun and Cherwitz; Gorman 83-142; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Objectivism”; Shively), such as the visible commonalities among cultures and across languages, the objective sense of academic and everyday discourse, and the historical significance of reality before human existence. The scholarly work of this disciplinary movement has shed light upon the relevance of questions pertaining to the epistemological and ontological status of reality with respect to political, moral, and

pedagogical issues (Croasmun and Cherwitz 3-4; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “The Rhetoric”; Sharkey and Hikins). Like other realists (Adler, The Four; Gorman 83-142; Shively), these scholars have expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of argumentation, analysis, and evidence within the various realms of human thought and discourse with respect to knowledge, opinion, and communication (Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Croasmun and Cherwitz; Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic”; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “Through the”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Objectivism”; Sharkey and Hikins).

For matters related to the ongoing work of academia and the everyday life of humanity, although metaphysical suppositions are certainly given significance, the “rhetorical perspectivists” have *generally* favored the primacy of epistemology over metaphysics.<sup>2</sup> This project’s departure on this particular theoretical point does not, *as such*, imply that rhetorical endeavors do not in many ways facilitate our knowledge and opinions about reality—the primacy of epistemology is not necessary for this type of consideration.<sup>3</sup> That which follows provides an overview of the pertinent elements of this approach to realism primarily by means of Cherwitz and Hikins’s book, Communication and Knowledge: An Investigation in Rhetorical Epistemology, as their philosophical suppositions are *generally representative* of the theoretical biases found within the literature of “rhetorical perspectivism.”<sup>4</sup>

Cherwitz and Hikins have articulated an epistemological framework entailing the classification of various levels of opinion and belief weighed against reality, reason, criticism, and argumentation (Communication 18-48). With a review of ample evidence

that is “sufficient” for and “relevant” to a given question of focus, the knowledge of truth (attainable by means of language) is “justified true belief,” which encompasses “persistent justification” (20-35). Although they counter contemporary theories that reality is either *represented to* or *created by* human beings, Cherwitz and Hikins have departed from the views (held in various ways since the time of Aristotle) that distinguish between empirical and non-empirical issues with respect to contingent and scientific truth (22-25). Cautioning against a personal sense of certainty, Cherwitz and Hikins have argued that “justified true belief” *as such* is of “analytical certainty” in terms of truth (35-37). They have stated, “When we speak of knowledge as justified true belief, we refer to a *reflective* (as opposed to a *reflexive*) activity that is dependent on language and that stands in contrast to less sophisticated varieties of cognition and affection” (43). A significant, yet not equivalent, basis of their approach to rhetorical epistemology is “that all knowledge is linguistic” (44-45). In an endeavor to frame the *challenges to* and *benefits of* rhetoric, Cherwitz and Hikins have worked to *build upon* and *depart from* previous definitions of rhetoric (49-61). Of particular interest here is their situating of Aristotle’s rhetorical theory.

Within their body of work, Cherwitz and Hikins have highlighted the important legacy of Aristotle with respect to rhetoric and realism (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 49-70; Hikins, “Realism and” 21-52), which is one of their distinctive contributions to contemporary rhetorical theory. Cherwitz and Hikins have, to some extent, departed from Aristotle’s rhetorical theorizing, for they have argued that as various dialectical (emphasized by them as more academic) areas of study are now contained within the rhetorical discourse of the general public (extending beyond

deliberative, judicial, and epideictic discourse), the approach within the work of Aristotle is *limited* and *limiting* in scope (Communication 50-52). Cherwitz and Hikins have defined rhetoric as the “art of describing reality through language,” where rhetorical studies entail “an effort to understand how humans, in various capacities and in a variety of situations, describe reality through language,” such as with scholarly, literary, and political audiences (61-62). A communicator’s degree of factual accuracy, scope of persuasive intention, and level of effective success do not determine the rhetorical character of a given discourse (spoken or written) *as such*, for persuasive potential is derived from the consistency or coherence between the view of reality of the communicator and the views of the reality among the audience (62-64).

According to Cherwitz and Hikins, as with human communication in general, the various fields of study such as philosophy, history, science, poetry, and fiction (although like rhetoric, distinct disciplinary areas) often contain discourse that is rhetorical (Communication 63-66). Of note, as against such scholars as Weaver and Adler, Cherwitz and Hikins have contended “that dialectic is a kind or form of rhetoric” (as consisting of linguistic “descriptions of reality” that are potentially or operatively persuasive).<sup>5</sup> In their approach, “*dialectical rhetoric*” then entails a presentation of “those descriptions of reality” that are “intentionally faithful to the rhetor’s own conception of reality” (67). This framing of “rhetoric as *description of reality through language*” situates rhetoric as both *distinct from* and *involved with* the various dimensions of human life, both academic and common (66-67).

From the standpoint of Cherwitz and Hikins, meaning is not referential, ideational, behavioral, or operative—meaning is “relational” (that is, of relations)

(Communication 71-91). In referring “with” instead of “to,” language “embodies” relationships among human communicators, audience members, and “extralinguistic phenomena,” as “thought is inherently linguistic” (78-91). Knowing is rhetorical, yet not “all instances of rhetorical discourse are necessarily epistemic,” as particular criteria are needed (resting upon this “relational” basis upon meaning) for “the greatest possible assurance” of the attainment of knowledge (the elevation of opinion to the “goal” of “persistently justified true belief”) (92). There are five “constituents,” or “functions,” of rhetoric with respect to epistemology: “differentiative,” “associative,” “preservative,” “evaluative,” and “perspectival” (92-108). Since these “constituents” will be modified and applied as coordinates throughout the course of this project, they are treated here in an overview fashion.

According to Cherwitz and Hikins, regarding rhetoric as “differentiative,” human beings intrapersonally differentiate relations linguistically with respect to “extralinguistic phenomena” (including one’s own relations to such phenomena) through dialectical and reflexive rhetoric that “constitutes a search for knowledge as justified true belief” (Communication 93-94). They have explained, “The processes can, of course, occur *interpersonally*, but intrapersonal searching for knowledge as persistently justified true belief provides the most perspicuous instances of the basic processes” (94). By means of description, persons associate various differentiations internally to themselves (intrapersonally) or externally to audiences (interpersonally and beyond) (94-96). This “associative constituent” provides an avenue to “persistently justified true belief” through rhetoric, for audience members potentially contribute knowledge to pertinent discussions and possibly supply knowledge for rhetorical argumentation.<sup>6</sup>

They have framed the third “constituent” of rhetoric as “preservative” (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 98-102). So then, “rhetorical discourse also functions epistemically as *preservative*” so as “to insure that epistemic judgments are maintained in the marketplace of ideas where they may be subjected to the scrutiny of arguers,” which can keep “alive ideas whose time has not yet come,” as in the case of heliocentricity if one were to consider scientific discourse (98). Within the literature of “rhetorical perspectivism” (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 98-102; Sharkey and Hikins), the framing of this “preservative constituent” departs at times from Aristotle’s rhetorical theory.

For example, William F. Sharkey and James W. Hikins have argued that Aristotle’s theory of rhetoric “rarely considers that in certain extreme rhetorical situations there may be *no* effective means of persuasion available, this despite the fact that there appears to be an audience, a message, and constraints” (58). In view of deliberative speech, Sharkey and Hikins have written:

The conventional sense is that a speaker debates *now* with an audience capable of being moved to change their mind about *future events*, for example, passing legislation to change policy. Can oratory also be thought of, in the light of the preservative function of rhetoric, as having the potential of changing an audience’s mind in the *future* about a *present controversy*? (58)

With this “preservative constituent,” Cherwitz and Hikins in Communication and Knowledge have departed from Aristotle’s assumptions regarding the persistence of truth and the place of rhetoric toward a consideration of rhetorical discourse as ongoing

rational argumentation in the more modern sense of the matter.<sup>7</sup> By means of preservation and differentiation, rhetorical discourse facilitates the standing of ideas with respect to knowledge and falsity, while at the same time (with the passage of time) sustaining the role of false notions for the expansion and appropriation of knowledge, as in the cases of both science and mythology (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 99-100). In this particular epistemic model, the “preservative constituent” of rhetoric allows for the ongoing refinement of ideas toward possible rejection or justification with respect to the “relations” contained within language.<sup>8</sup>

The “evaluative constituent” of rhetoric, according to Cherwitz and Hikins, is intrapersonal, interpersonal, and communal in scope in terms of persuasion and epistemology (Communication 102-105). It is tied to our “critical evaluation” that is either *implicitly* or *explicitly* contained within the usage of language toward the possible attainment of knowledge and truth (102). To be both genuinely evaluative and epistemic in scope, rhetorical discourse must encompass “bilateralism, correction, and self-risk,” which also, in their view, is indicative of genuine dialectic.<sup>9</sup> Evaluation, then, makes possible “persistently justified true belief” through argumentation by “intersubjective validation” or by intrapersonal rhetoric, which can take one beyond subjectivity into “the more epistemologically productive realm of intersubjectivity,” which could be more likely productive of “*knowledge*, as opposed to belief, true belief, or rational belief.”<sup>10</sup>

According to Cherwitz and Hikins, with the various disagreements among people on significant issues, the “perspectival constituent” of rhetoric, while not eclipsing the possibility of knowledge, is a point of reference in explaining these instances of disagreement (Communication 105-106). With their “relational” view of an independent

reality in mind, Cherwitz and Hikins have argued that as human beings employ the preceding four “constituents” of rhetoric, “*they do so from a particular and unique perspective [...]*” as related to other persons, things, actions, and ideas, which provides for the contexts of particulars in which both professional academicians and everyday people live and communicate.<sup>11</sup> Rhetors might or might not portray elements of reality in the same way, which might account for “arguing on two different levels” or “not achieving stasis,” yet the achievement of “persistently justified true belief” is not impossible (107-108). Cherwitz and Hikins have stated, “Rhetoric describes in language the way the world is *from the perspective of an individual rhetor*” (108). Human beings can gain some knowledge of the world, and this is particularly enhanced by our accepting the perspectives of other human beings, particularly those perspectives that are relevant to given questions under discussion (108). Rhetorical discourse that is genuinely epistemic as a means by which we explore and discover the world will encompass these five “constituents” or “functions” of rhetoric (109-111).

Cherwitz and Hikins, in their discussions of ontology (Communication 115-160), have argued that “relationality” is the basis of reality and consciousness, which then provides for the various contexts of particulars within the real world (124). They have accepted the “relational” approach to realism as explanatory for our epistemological participation within a real world, for with this approach, objects, as points of reference, are the intersections of relations, which is in their view pertinent to rhetorical studies, as these relations are made manifest in communication (124-127). Important for realist theorizing in general, Cherwitz and Hikins have highlighted that we can be confident (among other aspects of consciousness) “that when we are conscious, we are always



conscious *of* something,” such as “sights, sounds, tastes, smells, memories, fantasies, illusions, our own intentions, and so on” (130). Consciousness, in their approach, is naturally constituted as human beings perceive multiple sets of relations (inclusive of the perceiver) within contexts of reality (131-137). The use of language (*meaning is relational*) provides a means of categorization toward the various levels of belief—hence, the epistemological function of communication (135-136).

In their departures from empiricism, positivism, subjectivism, and constructivism, it is important to note that Cherwitz and Hikins (from their standpoint of “relational realism”) have framed as significant for considerations of language, thought, and reality the possibility of truth in both the empirical and abstract realms.<sup>12</sup> They have accepted the view of “relational realism” pertaining to the ontological similarity between the perceiver and the perceived (subject and object); hence, in their view, this approach to realism minimizes the ongoing problems with respect to the question of dualism and knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Also significant, recognizing the challenges entailed, Cherwitz and Hikins have kept on the table the question of *universality* as important to both learning and communication, for from their point of view universals are produced by relations that are identical.<sup>14</sup> From their standpoint, the “relational” account of reality provides for the significance of a wide range of issues for human beings so as to illustrate (from the view of “perspectivism”) the significance of rhetorical endeavors for epistemology toward the possibilities and instances of knowledge and truth, both contingent and certain (Communication 149-157, 159n49, 160n50, 160n51).

According to Sharkey and Hikins, from the view of “rhetorical perspectivism,” as framed within the field of communication, rhetoric is an art with an aim toward

describing, discovering, and predicting reality toward the expansion of human knowledge in a variety of areas, particularly by means of *argumentation*.<sup>15</sup> Rhetorical criticism, with realist rhetorical epistemology, entails the examination of discourse as a vehicle of advocacy by description of reality or realities, which is, of course, is of consequence for ethical, political, and pedagogical questions (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “Through the” 169; Sharkey and Hikins 64-66). Sharkey and Hikins have written that rhetorical portrayals of reality can always vary “with the way the world is,” which in their epistemic view can take one beyond Aristotelian theorizing to consider “that discourse can describe a *future* reality” to “predict how the future might and should be” (65). Using these aforementioned five “constituents” for criticism provides “an understanding of *how* such rhetorical visions can be created” along with “a means for assessing discourse’s success or failure, both in the short term and in times subsequent to discourse” (65). Significant for realism in general, “rhetorical perspectivism” brings to the table for critics a dynamic of “description, evaluation, and prescription” regarding both the relevance of reality and the “rationality of argument,” which “can help ‘keep the conversation going’” in a constructive and additive way (224). As they give have given primacy to epistemology (yet have challenged both empiricism and positivism), the viewpoint of the “rhetorical perspectivists” regarding rhetoric, generally considered, encompasses the fact that human speech is *a part of* and *an expression of* reality in both a descriptive and advocatory sense—the use of language entails predication and persuasion with reference to reality (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “Through the” 169; Sharkey and Hikins 51-53, 64-66). To build a realist rhetoric of order, the *corpus* of “rhetorical

perspectivism” provides a substantive avenue for realist into the larger philosophical framework within the academic field of communication and rhetorical studies.

Richard Weaver (cited by “rhetorical perspectivists” regarding linguistic advocacy) argued that the “predicative” aspects of language provide for the “sermonic” elements of communication, demonstrating this provision, for instance, as a grounding point for our consideration of definitional, analogical, circumstantial, causal, and testimonial argumentation from the view of metaphysics.<sup>16</sup> In his becoming “a principle foil for anti-objectivist critics” (Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic” 370), Weaver’s contribution to rhetorical theory, from my standpoint, was his emphasis on metaphysics, for he mapped out the scope of rhetoric in its subjective aspects with respect to objective truth (The Ethics; “Language is”; Visions 55-72). However, for our quest to remedy the errors that Weaver identified, Marion Montgomery has argued that Weaver’s biases against natural reality (evident within Ideas Have Consequences and The Ethics of Rhetoric) have not, in some respects, supplied an adequate philosophical basis, particularly as we contend with the subjectivisms of both the individualistic and transcendental varieties.<sup>17</sup> According to Montgomery, with the modern appropriation of Platonic Idealism toward a type of subjectivist universalism (or universal subjectivism), the dangers of contemporary philosophy in large part rest on a “shadow wedge” between the transcendental and material realms—problematically, thought precedes reality.<sup>18</sup>

For what he has seen in Weaver’s writings that advocates this separation as derived from the work of Plato (Weaver had clearly proposed a “wedge”) and privileges the “universal” in a way indicative of contemporary philosophy, Montgomery has directed those who would share the concerns expressed Ideas Have Consequences to both

“the *truth of things*” as primary and “the reality of man in nature”<sup>19</sup> With Montgomery’s contentions that these biases of Richard Weaver point away from the important primacy of reality as regards the dangers of contemporary philosophical standpoints, from the view of classical realism, the proper challenges and correctives to either Weaver’s overall work or rhetorical theory are not to be found in the skepticism, subjectivism, or constructivism that rest within the spectrum of modern to postmodern philosophy.<sup>20</sup> Toward a realist rhetoric of order, the primacy of things (reality that is) will guide a targeted study of Kirk’s *corpus*, even with an applied consideration of Weaver’s theories of rhetorical argumentation and commentaries on political conservatism.

Within the work of “rhetorical perspectivism,” there has been a clear recognition of the legacy of classical realism as significant for the status and knowledge of reality in regards to the study and practice of rhetoric (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Hikins, “Realism and”). For example, although not embracing “formal realism,” Hikins has looked to the medieval controversy between the realists and the nominalists for contemporary theorizing on language and meaning, as nominalism is relevant to modern-day theorists who “seem obligated to address at some point the existence and use of common general terms,” particularly as regards “some *viable alternative theory*” to realism—“the question of the ontological status of *universals*,” although philosophically significant, is absent within present day rhetorical studies.<sup>21</sup> According to Hikins, “It should be readily apparent, then, that formal realism has important consequences for the theory of meaning and, by implication, for the language arts” (“Realism and” 27). Of course, Hikins took his discussion toward the “relational” realism of “rhetorical perspectivism.”

This project departs from the “rhetorical perspectivists” on the question of metaphysics and epistemology, yet does not address their “relational” view of ontology, which would entail an extended discussion concerning the question of the metaphysical and ontological distinctions within reality.<sup>22</sup> In giving a strong status to our common sense of reality at the “pedestrian” level, these realists have established a clearer link between academic and everyday life, such as the general and particular factuality of communication, than either the “critical” rhetoricians or existentialists.<sup>23</sup> To be fair, there are times in their work where they seem to come close to, if not outright embracing, some sort of “common sense” realism when discussing the “pedestrian world.”<sup>24</sup> However, for “rhetorical perspectivism,” epistemology is preliminary to metaphysics and, in my view, *to some extent*, common sense, even if not intended, which is indicated straight away in Communication and Knowledge (the book is foundational to the movement), where the independence of reality is assumed and defended, yet as “justified true belief” is the standard of knowledge, realism is rested upon an inquiry of “how we know.”<sup>25</sup> The disciplinary “doubt” that has been the significant concern of the “rhetorical perspectivists” has an historical basis in the intensive focus upon epistemology that has, along with the idealist movement from “thought to things,” guided the modern quest of skepticism (Adler, The Four 28-48, 224-261; Adler, Intellect 79-139; Adler, Ten 5-107, 191-200; Gilson, Methodical; Gilson, Thomist Realism; R. McNerny, Characters; Montgomery, “Consequences”) toward a still-skeptical postmodern response (Centore, Being; Shively). For a targeted study of Kirk’s *corpus* toward a realist rhetoric of order, coordinates will be derived from “rhetorical perspectivism” toward a framework that is based upon classical realism.

As Mortimer Adler has demonstrated, philosophy properly begins with the common human experience of reality, and with respect to this view, he has drawn the following pertinent implications: 1) throughout time and place, human minds are the same and human nature is the same; 2) our minds permit us to know, understand, and opine with respect to the same reality that is independent of the various human minds; 3) the common experience of reality is adequate for intelligible communication among human beings within and across multiple languages and cultures.<sup>26</sup> In regards to the idealism and skepticism of ancient and contemporary times, F.F. Centore has argued:

[...] Knowledge is a *fact* of human experience. It means knowing *what* something is in a definite way. If Cratylus, and the Sophists in general, for all their “humanism,” were right, there would be no possibility of knowing anything. There would be no essences; that is, there would be nothing to know. But everyone knows this is not the case.

Even ordinary people realize that there is a difference between a real physician, who really knows something, and a quack who does not. People might argue, because of different lighting, about the color of a wine bottle and, because of some variation in the condition of their health, about the sweetness of the wine, but the wine, the bottle, the table, the chairs, and so on, are there, and are known to be there.

Moreover, they can be defined and discussed in a public way. Communication and discussion is a *fact* of public life. The world is *not* an amorphous mass of non-things, in which everything ends up being everything else. If this is not true, there’s no possibility for any sort of

conversation, social or otherwise, in order to solve any problems, whether speculative or practical.<sup>27</sup>

Ruth Lessl Shively has emphasized that when constructionists theorize and argue, they fail to consider the presuppositions of truth reflected within their thought and discourse, for as they proficiently employ “rational methods of persuasion”, “they must at least implicitly recognize common, supracontextual [...] standards of argumentation.”<sup>28</sup> Her relevant theoretical point for realism and argument here is that with argumentation, people have expectations of empirical consistency, logical coherence, and evidentiary adequacy, which “reflect the utterly commonsensical fact that, to be persuasive, our ideas must be intelligible and connected to our audience’s ideas and experiences.”<sup>29</sup> From the view of classical realism, truth is defined as the correspondence, or conformity, between the mind and reality, for from this view, generally speaking, the following are possibilities with respect to truth: 1) knowledge with certainty of self-evident truths (this possibility does not require belief); 2) probable truths with the possibility of doubt or revision (opinion more or less corresponding to reality); 3) multiple opinions that lack adequate grounding in various degrees with respect to reality; 4) belief regarding something that is true (this possibility might overlap with something that is demonstrably true as knowledge or rationally true as opinion).<sup>30</sup>

In particular, the primary place of metaphysics (which starts from our common sense of things) with regard to epistemology is a significant attribute of classical realism.<sup>31</sup> According to Adler:

[...] A sound approach to the examination of knowledge should acknowledge the existence of some knowledge to be examined. *Knowing what can be known* is prior to asking *how we know what we know*.

Using the word “epistemology” for the theory of knowledge—especially for inquiries concerning the “origin, certainty, and extent” of our knowledge—I have two things to say about this part of the philosophical enterprise.

First, it should be reflexive; that is, it should examine the knowledge that we do have; it should be a knowing about our knowing.

Second, being reflexive, epistemology should be posterior to metaphysics, the philosophy of nature, ethics, and political theory—these and all other branches of first-order philosophical knowledge; in other words, our knowing what can be known should take precedence over our knowing about our knowing.<sup>32</sup>

Adler has explained elsewhere that the puzzling of philosophers regarding our knowledge of reality as “do not invalidate our claim to know something or alter our assessment of the probability of that knowledge” (Intellect 87-88). Although the commonsensical observation “that reality is not always what it appears to be” might need “philosophical refinement” for the assessment of reality *as such* and *as experienced*, “philosophy goes astray when in modern times its idealist tendency leads it to deny that reality in itself and apart from us exists and is knowable, or to deny that our experience of reality gives rise to knowledge about it” (87-88).



For Etienne Gilson, as “realism starts with knowledge, that is, with an act of the intellect which consists essentially in grasping an object,” it is an approach clearly divergent from contemporary idealism, which “makes knowing the condition of being” while going “from thought to things” (Methodical 128-132). Gilson has written:

The realists of the Middle-Ages opposed the nominalists on a ground noticeably different from that which the problem of knowledge occupies today. The nominalists themselves, Ockham for example, opted for a sensualist empiricism of the crassest kind; by comparison with it the teaching of St. Thomas looks more like idealism than anything else. The fact is, we are concerned with a different problem. The Middle-Ages were long pre-occupied with the nature of the concept, or of the notion which the intellect abstracts from the object; but they never doubted that its content was borrowed from the content of the object, still less that the object really existed.

[...] As used today, the word realism means in the first place the opposite to idealism when it claims that it is possible to pass from the subject to the object. Applied to medieval metaphysics it means a doctrine in which the real existence of the object is taken for granted, either because one denies there is a problem to be solved here, or because one is as yet unaware of such a problem. (25-26)

According to Montgomery, with Weaver’s challenges to the legacy of nominalism and to the “scientism” of modernity, while he overlooked Thomism for Platonism in considering the departures of the nominalists, Weaver also approached the workings of natural world

in a way that is problematic from the view of classical realism (“Consequences”). From this, as indicated by Montgomery’s analysis (which was informed by Gilson’s work), in Weaver’s tending toward the true “ideal” as separate from nature, perhaps *at some levels* he had failed to consider the both the historical and present scope of philosophical contentions with respect to the order of thought and reality.<sup>33</sup>

In emphasizing that “realism takes sense experience to be the medium, not the limit, of intelligible reality,” Shively has made the important clarification between the realist and empiricist approaches, for with the former, knowledge does not end at the level of sense as if “it is a passive aggregation of sense impressions or that it is limited to what can be determined by the senses” (51-52). She has explained, “Rather, realism posits an active intelligence that organizes and gleans the truth from the data of experience, and the truth it gleans there is not limited to what can be empirically observed or demonstrated” (52). Shively has highlighted the significance of the activity of the intellect for providing meaning to that which is sensed by “the powers of conceptualization,” for as this “is an active power that is nourished or actualized by the senses,” knowledge is integrative “of the whole self”—this is here pertinent to the Thomistic account of intellectuality.<sup>34</sup>

As against certain lines of modern philosophy, Adler has emphasized the various implications of the contrasting theoretical standpoints of “mind” as material or immaterial—classical realism holds to the immateriality of the human intellect.<sup>35</sup> St. Thomas has explained:

Moreover, any cognitive faculty exercises its power of knowing in accord with the way the species of the object known is in it, for this is its

principle of knowing. But the intellect knows things in an immaterial fashion, even those things that are by nature material; it abstracts a universal form from its individuating material conditions. Therefore the species of the object known cannot exist in the intellect materially; and so it is not received into a bodily organ, seeing that every bodily organ is material. (Light 74)

According to St. Thomas, human beings are at first “potentially intelligent,” for as “this potency is gradually reduced to act in the course of time,” “the faculty whereby man understands is called the possible intellect. [...]”<sup>36</sup>

As human beings are not God (Who “is pure act”), “sensible things” are pertinent to the “possible intellect,” for it “has forms of the least universality” (Aquinas, Light 76). Aquinas has stated, “[...] forms in corporeal things are particular, and have a material existence. But in the intellect they are universal and immaterial. Our manner of understanding brings this out. That is, we apprehend things universally and immaterially. This way of understanding must conform to the intelligible species whereby we understand” (77). “Certain media” are necessary for the “traversing” of these forms from the realm of materiality to the intellect (77). St. Thomas has written, “These are the sense faculties, which receive the forms of material things without their matter; what lodges in the eye is the species of the stone, but not its matter. However, the forms of things received into the sense faculties are particular, for we know only particular objects with our sense faculties” (77). The senses are a precondition of understanding, for a person who has been blind since birth “can have no knowledge of colors” (77). Aquinas has explained:

This discussion brings out the truth that knowledge of things in our intellect is not caused by any participation or influence of forms that are intelligible in act and that subsist by themselves, as was taught by the Platonists [...] and certain other philosophers who followed them in this doctrine. No, the intellect acquires such knowledge from sensible objects, through the intermediacy of the senses. However, since the forms of objects in the sense faculties are particular, as we just said, [...] they are intelligible not in act, but only in potency. For the intellect understands nothing but universals. But what is in potency is not reduced to act except by some agent. Hence there must be some agent that causes the species existing in the sense faculties to be intelligible in act. The possible intellect cannot perform this service, for it is in potency with respect to intelligible objects rather than active in rendering them intelligible. Therefore we must assume some other intellect which will cause species that are intelligible in potency to become intelligible in act, just as light causes colors that are potentially visible to be actually visible. This faculty we call the agent intellect, which we would not have to postulate if the forms of things were intelligible in act, as the Platonists held.

To understand, therefore, we have need, first, of the possible intellect which receives intelligible species, and secondly, of the agent intellect which renders things intelligible in act. Once the possible intellect has been perfected by the intelligible species, it is called the habitual intellect (*intellectus in habitu*), for then it possesses intelligible

species in such a way that it can use them at will; in other words, it possesses them in a fashion that is midway between pure potency and complete act. But when it has these species in full actuality, it is called the intellect in act. That is, the intellect actually understands a thing when the species of the thing is made the form of the possible intellect. This is why we say that the intellect in act is the object actually understood.<sup>37</sup>

All human beings (sharing the same nature) have their own distinct “potential” and “agent” intellects (both of “the same essence of the soul” for each person), yet “the same thing may be understood by all” (79-97). According to St. Thomas:

[...] By the thing understood I mean that which is the object of the intellect. However, the object of the intellect is not the intelligible species, but the quiddity of the thing. The intellectual sciences are all concerned with the natures of things, not with intelligible species (just as the object of sight is color, not the species of color in the eye). Thus, although there may be many intellects belonging to different men, the thing understood by all may be but one (just as a colored object which many look at is but one).<sup>38</sup>

As Adler has argued, the *genuine* perception of something corresponds to its existence in reality, yet even with discrepancies between appearance and reality (a matter of common sense that has been an element of “philosophical sophistication”), we should “avoid the extreme of regarding all appearances as illusory,” for apart from the cases of human error, “the chair, the dog, or tree that we perceive not only really exists and not only has

the appearance of a chair, dog, or tree, but in fact, that is what those perceived objects really are” (Intellect 116-125).

In view of the work of both Aristotle and Aquinas, Shively has emphasized that within our experiences of sense, we mentally grasp “nonempirical or self-evident truths” such as those pertaining to ethics and logic, for within contexts of experience, yet irrespective of any particular context, we mentally recognize “that which is necessary and supracontextual—meaning unconditional or true in all contexts [...]”<sup>39</sup> Two persons might have differing perceptions and feelings about a given slice of pie, yet they “both see the same necessary truth in it: the piece is always less than the whole” (52). These truths are not “known innately or through a mysterious, nonempirical sense,” but at a basic level, as “*self-evident*,” or “immediately evident in, or necessary to, our thinking and yet are not susceptible to empirical proof” (52). Shively has pointed to our assuming “of the validity of inference,” for “to make sense of our experience or attain knowledge in any way, we must assume that inference works [...] that the *process* is valid, not that any particular inference is valid,” which “is necessary to our thinking” (52-53). However, this assumption “cannot be proven (or, for that matter, disproven), since any proof would have to assume the validity of inference and so would be circular [...]”—it “must be assumed a priori.”<sup>40</sup> She has continued:

In addition to being implied in proofs, some principles must be taken as self-evident because they posit an unconditionality that cannot be observed or demonstrated through our conditional senses. For example, we cannot observe or demonstrate that *every* whole is greater than any one of its parts because we are finite beings who cannot observe every whole

that ever did or will exist [...] we simply take the part-whole relation as self-evident: we see that it *must* be so.

The idea of self-evidence is important to our discussion of realism because the starting point of this approach is the self-evident assumption of correspondence, or the intelligibility of reality, and it is this assumption which separates realism from all other epistemologies. To say that this assumption is self-evident is, as above, to say that it is evident in our experience and yet cannot be empirically demonstrated. For like the assumption of the validity of inference, any proof of the validity of the senses would itself require the assumption of the validity of the senses; any test for the intelligibility of reality has meaning only if there is an intelligible reality (i.e., if the test will tell us some truth). Thus the assumption is either taken as self-evident or it is not taken at all; and if it is not taken, argument ceases [...] <sup>41</sup>

As Shively has emphasized (drawing off of Gilson's work), either "the intelligibility of reality" is "taken as self-evident," and one starts with *being*, or this a matter to be proven empirically or rationally and one starts "with knowledge [or doubt]" where one "will never come in contact with being."<sup>42</sup> These suppositions have implications regarding the question "of objective moral truth," which are connected to a variety of practical issues, for "to reject correspondence" is a rejection of the basis of knowledge that while leading to incoherence, necessitates the use of "distorted forms" within the work of theorizing (53-54).

According to F.F. Centore, while continuing the modern tendency to privilege thought to reality, as a challenge to or extension of the philosophical and general conditions of modernity, postmodern philosophy dwells within the realm of becoming at the expense of considering that which is fixed and objective with respect to being (Being). Generally speaking, the account of reality and intellectuality by classical realists runs counter to contemporary philosophy (modern or postmodern) in a variety of areas regarding logic, language, and life (Adler, The Four; Adler, How to Think; Adler, Ten; Centore, Being; R. McInerny, Characters; Shively). Adler has argued (surrounding his discussion metaphysics, etc. as primary from above) that within a “context of an otherwise sound critical reaction to the dogmatism and pretentiousness” of 17th century philosophy, the focus on epistemology led to what one could term “suicidal epistemologizing” along with what one could term “suicidal psychologizing,” which “is sometimes less picturesquely described as ‘the way of ideas’”—both a “retreat from reality” (Adler, The Four 245-250). He has written, “Epistemology, fashioned by philosophers as a scalpel to cut away the cancer of dogmatism, was turned into a dagger and plunged into philosophy’s vitals” (248). This “psychologizing of common experience deserves to be called suicidal,” cutting “away the very ground on which the philosopher stands” and making “experience subjective, rather than objective” (248). Some scholars within modernity confused the scope and methodology of philosophy with respect to mathematics and science (248-251). Finally, Adler has explained that idealistic “system building,” which was a reaction to “epistemologizing and psychologizing,” had itself led to (reactively) the various existentialist, positivist, analytic, and linguistic approaches to philosophy (251-255).



Drawing from Aquinas, Adler has often emphasized (contrary to Locke’s “philosophical mistake”) that ideas (concepts, memories, percepts, and imaginings) are not “*that which*,” but “*that by which*” human beings apprehend “objects of thought,” for this has implications for questions of objectivity, subjectivity, language, and meaning as against contemporary philosophy—in Ewa Thompson’s view, this is one way “out of the postmodern discourse.”<sup>43</sup> According to Adler (situated in his account that is given above), “It is this error that makes our common experience subjective rather than objective—introspectively observable, which it is not” (The Four 249). As connected to our “common experience” of reality as a starting point, it is here important to mention this significant theoretical aspect of classical realism, for although Cherwitz and Hikins have also contended with the influence of Locke and others from the view of “relationality” (in terms of both meaning and consciousness) (Communication 7-48; 115-160), they and other “rhetorical perspectivists” have, for the most part, conceded “how we know” as primary. For instance, related to this at some level, from the vantage point of classical realism, the “principle of noncontradiction” (pertinent to coherence and extending into logic) is primarily grounded in reality, or being, and is not at first a “law of thought,” as Croasmun and Cherwitz and Cherwitz and Hikins have seemed to suggest.<sup>44</sup> McInerny has written:

[...] The first and foundational judgment of human thinking can be expressed in terms of the fact that the things we know, *in rerum naturae*, are such that they cannot simultaneously exist and not exist. Since our knowledge is of reality—we do not first know our thinking or our expression of it—propositions will reflect this, and contradictories cannot

simultaneously be true because this would involve the assertion that a thing can both be and not be at the same time and in the same respect. That is why we cannot hold contrary opinions. [...] Logic and epistemology recapitulate ontology. [...] <sup>45</sup>

To weigh the movement from reality to thought (classical realism) alongside of a working from “how we know” to “what we know” toward “justified true belief” as knowledge (“rhetorical perspectivism”), if realists are to relegate “what we know” in reality as *secondary*, even if not fully intended, the continuum of modern skepticism to postmodern subjectivism is an impassible challenge, for they will be left (albeit unwillingly) in a theoretical realm where human consciousness either determines or constructs reality.<sup>46</sup>

For some clarifications that pertain to my journey toward a realist rhetoric of order, at this juncture, I should situate my own approach with respect to rhetorical criticism and “critical rhetoric” as related to some of the epistemological items presently under discussion. As James Hikins has argued, the rhetorical critic, in order to ascertain with adequacy the various communicative elements of focus, must, at some level, consider discursive occurrences and aesthetic aspects in terms of reality, knowledge, truth, and facts (“Nietzsche, Eristic”; “Realism and”; “The Seductive”). Raymie E. McKerrow, with a strong leaning toward postmodern philosophy, has framed as central to “critical rhetoric” the exercise and perpetuation of power throughout the various elements of societies, even as these are revealed in the communication of “freedom,” which has prompted some interesting and important points of reflection regarding the relationship between the critic and the community.<sup>47</sup> As realists of various types would affirm,

academic theorists live within and work from the same reality as that of all human beings; hence, *the concerns of scholars* are of potential import for the community and *the concerns of communities* are of potential import for the academy. Questions of authority and freedom are certainly significant areas of critical focus (especially as regards order), yet I would argue, from a realist point of view, that these questions are best considered from the view of the proper exercises and ends of both with respect to reality and reason, which certainly anticipates the targeted study of Russell Kirk to follow in this project.

For McKerrow, the critical rhetorician's role is to interpretively gather elements of symbolic discourse, from within and among the fragmented spheres of human communication, which are aimed at various audiences.<sup>48</sup> As Michael Calvin McGee has ascertained this matter, "critical rhetoric" is helpful in considering a disciplinary shift from a focus on "criticism" to a focus on "rhetoric"—"*rhetoric is what rhetoricians do.*"<sup>49</sup> It seems to me that the wider discussion regarding rhetorical criticism and "critical rhetoric" demonstrates (rhetorically and philosophically) *both* the significance of formal and rational aspects of particular discourses *and* the pertinence of political and social issues across multiple discourses. Without granting absolute status to democratic modernism on one hand and without subsuming human inquiry into discursive fragmentation on the other, the modes of criticism employed by Russell Kirk (social and literary) and Richard Weaver (social, rhetorical, and literary), for instance, indicate the common theoretical importance of content, form, context, conceptualization, and community.<sup>50</sup>

McKerrow has explained that "critical rhetoric" is a "practice" or "orientation," not a "methodology" ("Critical Rhetoric" 450-452). The sense of *praxis* for "critical

rhetoric” is aimed at social transformation, not ethical standardization, for McKerrow argues that power and ideology, as articulated and shaped through discourse, are manifested through rhetorically constructed social relations (452-459). While he has challenged the various epistemic notions of rhetoric (he phrased these as inseparably “neo-Kantian”), he has argued that critical rhetoricians should consider *doxa* with respect to the use of symbols and the maintenance of power.<sup>51</sup> Coupled with this injunction, he has framed rhetorical studies as a nominalist endeavor, for from this viewpoint, the basis and status of both opinions and words are culturally and academically dominant, yet philosophically contingent (455-456). Questions of focus regarding *doxa* and *episteme* with respect to rhetorical studies are significant, yet discussions of knowledge, opinion, and belief in the discussions of rhetorical criticism and “critical rhetoric” within the literature generally occur within the boundaries of modern and postmodern philosophical suppositions regarding these particular matters.<sup>52</sup>

In their own theoretical work, the “rhetorical perspectivists” have put forth some important challenges to the work of “critical rhetoric” that are of philosophical significance to issues of communication and reality.<sup>53</sup> For instance, as Cherwitz and Hikins have explained, McKerrow has utilized argumentation that encompasses scholarly claims regarding factuality and morality, even with his movements away from concrete methodology and rhetorical epistemology (“Climbing the”). Also, according to Cherwitz and Darwin, the work of “critical rhetoric,” by escaping the significant question of the influential relationship between language and objects, has implicitly expressed a positional viewpoint regarding meaning and epistemology (“Beyond Reductionism” 324-327). They have classified McKerrow’s skepticism as pragmatic—the question of truth

impedes the ongoing criticism of power (“Why The” 195). Yet “if power were understood in purely linguistic terms,” one is not able to take on the political aim of “critical rhetoric” toward the unmasking of the abuse of power, for within our “ordinary discourse” we must be able to investigate “the extralinguistic manifestations and symptoms of domination” (Cherwitz and Darwin, “Beyond Reductionism” 325). Epistemological decisions and suppositions underlie any type of ideological criticism (325). To offer adequate critique of the dynamics of language with respect to instances of power, in order to accuse of “domination” with justification, one must understand what power is (in terms of “extralinguistic phenomena”) in order to identify aspects of power in given circumstances (“Beyond Reductionism” 324-327; “Why The” 197-199). This addition of an epistemological layer to criticism would strengthen the potential for “critical rhetoric” toward genuinely recognizing power (“Why The” 198-199).

In light of the significance of epistemological and ontological considerations prompted by Cherwitz and Hikins for rhetorical studies (“Climbing the”; “Burying the” 76), I will take this discussion of the philosophical basis of rhetoric in terms of knowledge in the direction of classical realism. Their insistence upon the pertinence of philosophy guides this project with respect to rhetorical theorizing toward a realist rhetoric of order. It is appropriate here to consider the work of “rhetorical perspectivism” in light of Aristotle and rhetoric. This dissertation project retains the basic components of Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric.<sup>54</sup> As indicated, the “rhetorical perspectivists” both *build* and *depart* from Aristotle’s theory of rhetoric. However, James Hikins has amply demonstrated the significance of reality, truth, and factuality for the various elements of rhetorical argumentation in general and the theoretical mechanics of Aristotle’s Rhetoric

in particular (“Realism and” 21-52). According to Hikins, a basic study of any rhetorical artifact points to the following as axiomatic: “*Although any given example of persuasive discourse may or may not contain a particular persuasive device (figures, tropes, other stylistic devices), every instance of persuasion, without exception, will contain, implicitly or explicitly, some level of facticity; it will exhibit factual claims about the world.*”<sup>55</sup> In terms of the theory and criticism of rhetoric, according to Hikins, the everyday facts of perception are central to rhetorical discourse for matters of probability and claims of factuality, for this allows us to weigh issues of coherence, effectiveness, and ethicality (43-45). Questions of factuality and probability with respect to persuasion have continued to be of interest since the time of Aristotle (45).

Regarding Aristotle’s Rhetoric, Hikins has provided an explanation of the significance of factuality to both *probabilities* and *signs* (the two basic elements of enthymemes) in particular and to rhetorical discourse in general (such as with deliberative, forensic, and epideictic speech).<sup>56</sup> According to Hikins, with facts are at the center of Aristotle’s persuasive theorizing, probabilities should be seen “as the larger issues of a rhetorical discourse, including principal themes or the general thesis of the discourse,” which as “questions are not themselves subject to immediate answer” by the facts or by “simple empiricism”—“one cannot simply ‘look and see’ and find answers to these macroissues” (“Realism and” 47). However, “one can look and see and collect the facts to be weighed in favor of or in opposition to these larger issues of probability” as factuality is “not likely to be problematic beyond the usual tests of veracity one applies to any simple factual judgment” (47). With this, Hikins has argued:

[...] Hence, although any one item of facticity may fail to yield a certain answer to a contingent or probable question, that is, to a macroissue, the aggregate of individual facts may well offer us such certainty. How else are we to account for Aristotle's insistence that rhetoric, properly applied, yields truth and justice?

I have confined the discussion to simple, day-to-day facticity because it is just such a tellurian facticity out of which the majority of rhetorical praxis emerges. Facticity in the vast majority of rhetorical discourse is generally unproblematic. This is not to say, of course, that we cannot *make* a given instance of facticity problematic; it is only to say that the majority of factual claims in persuasion are rightly taken for granted. Once the rhetor has collected supporting materials, they are interwoven in the discourse along with other ingredients of the rhetorical art (stylistic, prosodic, taxonomic, et cetera). When the persuasive message is delivered, the rhetor may take Aristotle's advice and conclude with the closing words of the Rhetoric: "I have done; you all have heard; you have the facts; give your judgment."<sup>57</sup>

From an Aristotelian standpoint, (and this is implied by Hikins), one could frame the "macroissues" of rhetoric as *problems* for which *propositions* are given toward human judgment regarding questions of possibility that generally pertain to aspects of reality that are contingent—this terminology is indicative of the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic.<sup>58</sup>

From the realist point of view (classical or otherwise), our human capabilities in terms of certain knowledge, probable truth, and objective communication do not elude us, even as we engage in adjudicative, deliberative, and ceremonial argumentation—that is, areas involving rhetorical discourse.<sup>59</sup> Hikins has stated:

Of great importance to the understanding of rhetoric, then, is the realization that answers to factual microissues permit us to draw conclusions about larger, probable macroissues. For instance, in criminal trials conducted under contemporary rules of evidence in this country, it is reasonable to assert that the vast majority of those found guilty of crimes are, *in fact*, guilty. In most such cases, factual microissues determine guilt beyond a *reasonable* doubt. Occasional errors in such judgments should not betray the fact that, *with certainty*, we can claim *most* such decisions are veridical. Likewise with other rhetorical persuasions in other domains of inquiry where conclusions are based upon facticity and wherein the facts asserted are subject to rigorous argumentative and evidentiary tests. All this suggests that issues of probability are, as our analysis of Aristotle indicates, merely one point on the continuum of facticity; they are not *qualitatively* distinct from, for example, empirical, apodictic claims.

[...] By most standards of contemporary rhetorical theory and criticism, a fact is something to be certified by an audience. Yet if we are to avoid the dizzying descent from intersubjectivity to subjectivity and, ultimately, to solipsism, we must grant that *some external criteria of*



*facticity must be available against which to test the factual claims of any discourse. [...]*

Facticity is a *necessary* component of rhetoric. Without facts, rhetoric is either nonexistent or devolves into mere style, adornment, and artifice—“mere rhetoric” in the pejorative sense, divorced from any connection with the natural world in which humans exist. This analysis of facticity stands at the heart of a realist theory of rhetoric.<sup>60</sup>

To apply from Adler’s *corpus*, rhetorical argumentation does (in large part) operate in the realm of *doxa*, which is human opinion with respect to and as weighed against reality, while the “factual microissues” of discourse and our “common experience” of reality are significant for the question of probable truths (opinion more or less corresponding to the reality of the past, present, and future) as regards to legal adjudication, ceremonial discourse, and political deliberation (areas of *problems* or “macroissues”).<sup>61</sup> The place of *doxa* for rhetorical studies, in terms of classical realism, is not conducive to a nominalist approach (in contrast to “critical rhetoric”), for even with the various degrees of opinion, human beings communicate about universal “objects of thought” that are actual, potential, or fictive with respect to particularities and commonalities within the reality of the past, present, and future (Adler, The Difference 112-190, 340-347n41; Adler, The Four 28-123; Adler, Some Questions). The role of factuality for rhetoric is pertinent throughout this project.

As persuasion is a significant realm of human thought and communication, the reality of our world in general and of human nature in particular (the “facts of human nature”) are both pertinent to the means and ends of rhetorical discourse (for instance,

regarding *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*) with respect to intellect, desires, credibility, morality, emotions, and passions.<sup>62</sup> According to Fr. Grimaldi, from the view of Aristotle, the art of rhetoric is integrative of the *practical*, *appetitive*, and *speculative* aspects of human nature (“Rhetoric and the Philosophy”). Regarding Aristotle and Plato, he has explained:

The one major difference between the two was that Plato put this art at the exclusive disposition of the speculative intellect as his dialogues reveal to perfection. Aristotle, on the other hand, recognized the whole arena of contingent reality, an area which is neither that of Plato’s World of Ideas nor of his own metaphysics. Herein man is faced not with absolutes but rather with facts, problems, situations, questions, which admit of probable knowledge and probable truth and call for deliberation before assent. It is the area in which the intelligent and prudential course of action which is most conformable to the concrete reality and truth is determined in a given instance by the specific circumstances which appear most valid.

Analyzing the rhetorical art at this level Aristotle in terms of his own philosophy could never divorce intellect from emotions or the appetitive element in man. Plato’s insight, it may be said in passing, was to perceive that this complex of emotions and psychological inclinations in persons can even be put to work in the quest for speculative truth.<sup>63</sup>

Raymie McKerrow, as he has argued for a doxastic focus for rhetorical criticism, has (drawing on the work of Robert Hariman) highlighted “reputation” and “regard” as a part of *doxa* (Hariman, “Status, Marginality”; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory”). From the view of classical realism, McKerrow’s sense of “reputation” and “regard,” in

conjunction with his skepticism and nominalism, is ultimately problematic, in terms of speakers and writers for example (inferred here from both authors' discussions of discourses and institutions), as *at some level* the "facts of human nature" and the reality of human actions are theoretically relevant to the question of one's reputability.

Although he has questioned the applicability of the Aristotelian model for our time, if one takes Eugene Garver's interpretation of *ethos* in the Rhetoric as established by the speaker's deliberation *within* his or her speech (Aristotle's; "The Ethical"; For the Sake; "Truth in"), one could still challenge "critical rhetoric" from the view of classical realism, for as Garver has explained, in Aristotle's *corpus* it is practical action that provides insights into human nature (Aristotle's 237). Based upon Aristotle's Ethics, Adler has written, "The habitual disposition to desire what one ought to desire—to intend the end one ought to seek and to choose aright the means for seeking it—is the very essence of a person's *ethos*, his admirable moral character."<sup>64</sup> If one takes another approach to *ethos* where either the speaker has to directly articulate elements of credibility, or the audience is aware of the speaker's "moral character" as such, human nature is still pertinent.<sup>65</sup> In terms of audiences, Adler has identified "good repute" as a desire that is general to human beings for persuasion by motivation (*pathos*) toward reasonable (*logos*) argumentation (How to Speak 42). Sometimes, according to Adler, persuaders either have to instill or awaken these types of desires, or they "must try to create a desire that is novel—generally inoperative until they have aroused it and made it a driving force" (42-43). Even with Adler's exceptions regarding persuasion and desires granted, that which is general to human beings is still the primary point of reference.

As for the text of the Rhetoric itself, Aristotle's own treatment of the art is an examination of rhetoric as a universal with respect to particularities and commonalities in reality, for rhetoric, as Adler has indicated, it, along with other areas of study, is an "object of thought" amenable for consideration by various persons.<sup>66</sup> Fr. Fogarty has explained that it was Aristotle's realism that initially supplied, generally speaking, a "philosophy of rhetoric" in regard to ("four philosophical elements" applied by Aristotle) "*thought-word-thing relationships*," as connected to "*abstraction*," in view of both "*definition*" and "*argumentation*" as pertinent to rhetorical discourse (21-27). Regarding the theoretical viewpoint expressed within the Rhetoric, as is explicit and implicit in the text, our common sense, personal subjectivity, and communicative objectivity are significant factors, even as we argue in the realm of opinions and beliefs.<sup>67</sup> In the Summa Theologica, as part of a general inquiry regarding our powers of appetite, St. Thomas Aquinas had made reference to Aristotle's Rhetoric as follows: "that hatred can regard a universal, as when *we hate every kind of thief*."<sup>68</sup> In this particular section of the Rhetoric, Aristotle stated, "Now whereas anger arises from offences against oneself, enmity may arise even without that; we may hate people merely because of what we take to be their character. Anger is always concerned with individuals—a Callias or a Socrates—whereas hatred is directed also against classes: we all hate any thief and any informer."<sup>69</sup> From the view of classical realism, *all of human communication* (including dialectical and rhetorical discourse) encompasses, in varying degrees, universal "objects of thought" that are common to human beings.

In a time that seems to be dominated by philosophical skepticism of various types, the work of "rhetorical perspectivism" has been of immense scholarly value in

establishing that human beings can communicate about reality toward knowledge. At this point, so as to establish clear parameters of analysis for this project, I will build from and depart from the efforts of these scholars, particularly in terms of their “constituents” of rhetoric as coordinates of analysis, which will be framed herein as “components.” From the view of classical realism, *all of human knowing is not linguistic* (this will be covered in Chapters Two and Three). Regarding the scholarly question of rhetoric as epistemic, one way of framing the place of rhetorical discourse is as follows: the art of rhetoric is significant for persuasion toward informed decisions, or judgments, which often provides opportunities to improve the opinion, knowledge, and understanding that human beings (both communicators and audiences) bring to communicative contexts.

As we learn in the Rhetoric, contingencies and probabilities are often the focus of rhetorical discourse in attempting to persuade a person or persons toward judgment in given cases pertaining to the past, present, and future, yet like Aristotle, we must consider the art in terms of reality as our primary point of reference. Philosophically, in the general run of daily life (including that of academicians), as probability is considered with regards to certainty, necessity is at some level significant for questions of contingency, even in terms of rhetorical discourse.<sup>70</sup> As St. Thomas has explained, “Contingent things can be considered in two ways; either as contingent, or as containing some element of necessity, since every contingent thing has in it something necessary: for example, that Socrates runs, is in itself contingent; but the relation of running to motion is necessary, for it is necessary that Socrates move if he runs.”<sup>71</sup> As rhetorical endeavors are about persuasion, speakers and writers communicate (explicitly or implicitly) with respect to real aspects of human nature, such as reason, passion, emotion, and desire, for

as both Fr. Grimaldi and Richard Weaver have both demonstrated, rhetoric is directed at the “whole person.”<sup>72</sup>

It is with these philosophical suppositions in mind (particularly regarding human judgment) that we can consider the *evaluative* component of rhetoric. Shanyang Zhao has moved the conversation regarding rhetorical epistemology into the realm of contingent human action with respect to our knowledge of “norms,” which I will return to later in this dissertational project with the discussion of Kirk.<sup>73</sup> According to Fr. Grimaldi:

[...] For example, the moment Aristotle locates rhetoric in the area of contingent reality, human activity, deliberation, and judgment, he places it under the domain of the practical and not the speculative intellect.[...]

This is an essential point, for the difference between the activity of the two intellects is crucial, a difference due to the different object of each intellect. The speculative intellect moves toward Being, the practical intellect towards Being in as far as this Being is to issue in human action.[...] Because of this difference one might say that the role of the appetite is comparatively negligible in the activity of the speculative intellect when compared with its function in the action of the practical intellect. The speculative intellect receives an initial assist from the appetite, but the practical intellect demands the appetitive element as an essential component of its activity. [...] (“Rhetoric and the Philosophy” 373)

To apply Adler's terminology to rhetorical discourse, the *evaluative* component of rhetoric pertains to "prescriptive" rather than "descriptive" judgments, for as Adler has explained, the truth of practicality entails the conformity of our judgment to proper desires with respect to human nature (Desires; The Four 124-141; Ten 108-127). Fr. Grimaldi has stated, "The art or technique of the rhetorician is to perceive and present those things which make decision, and a definite decision, possible, but to stop with the presentation. The audience at this point must come in to accept or reject, to make its particular judgment to execute or refrain from action. Rhetoric, then, is preparatory for action" ("Rhetoric and the Philosophy" 374). Because of Kirk's interest in literary, imaginative, and political discourse, this notion of rhetoric, preparation, and action is relevant to Chapter Three of this project, for in emphasizing the place of human activity in Aristotle's work, Fr. Grimaldi has made reference to the Poetics of Aristotle.<sup>74</sup>

Again, to apply Adler's relevant explanations to the realm of rhetoric, rhetorical communication (like all of human communication) entails the expression of words (*instrumental signs*) that signify *formal signs* (percepts, concepts, memories, and images) that signify the following: 1) objects in the reality of the present (which also have *intentional existence* as common "objects of thought" and communication) that are individually apprehended by means of perception; or 2) common "objects of thought" and communication (which have *intentional existence*) that might or might not exist in the reality of the past, present, or future that are individually apprehended by means of conceptualization, memory, or imagination.<sup>75</sup> According to Aristotle:

[...] The duty of rhetoric is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us, in the hearing of persons who

cannot take in at a glance complicated argument, or follow a long chain of reasoning.[...] The subjects of our deliberation are such as seem to present us with alternative possibilities:[...] about things that could not have been, and cannot now or in the future be, other than they are, nobody who takes them to be of this nature wastes his time in deliberation.<sup>76</sup>

In the bigger picture of rhetoric, as we adjudicate, celebrate, and deliberate, we often do so with reference to reality that was previously actual or to reality that is currently potential (as common objects of thought and communication, both having *intentional existence*), yet never apart from the common objects of thought and communication (hence, having *intentional existence*) that do or might actually exist in the present.<sup>77</sup>

I will consider the *differentiative*, *associative*, and *preservative* components with respect argumentation, reality, and truth. In Aristotle's *corpus*, dialectic and rhetoric are distinct methodologies of argumentation, yet, as follows, are proximate in consideration: 1) dialectical discourse pertains to probable opinions on various questions, ultimately to be weighed against philosophical truth; 2) rhetorical discourse, to some degree informed by dialectic, pertains to potential judgments in particular cases, yet because of existent reality and human nature, is not exempt from the purview of philosophical truth.<sup>78</sup> Fr. Grimaldi has explained that in framing both the enthymeme and the example as ordering elements of credibility, emotions, feelings, and logicity toward belief, Aristotle has brought to the realm of rhetorical discourse "his theory of deductive and inductive reasoning which for him is absolutely essential for all demonstration" ("A Note"). Perhaps, as Fr. Grimaldi has argued, because of its deductive value for persuasive



demonstration as emphasized by Aristotle, the enthymeme “is the container, that which incorporates, or embodies, the pisteis [...]” (192).

In terms of both logic and rhetoric, Edward H. Madden has argued that, in contrast to Aristotle’s framework, the frequent definition of an enthymeme as syllogistic argument with an unstated premise is a “regulative or procedural maxim” irrespective of any particular philosophical standpoint.<sup>79</sup> In considering Aristotle’s rhetorical theory, Madden has explained that as *primarily* an argument from probabilities entailing that which is “generally true” or from signs portraying a “knowledge-of-the-fact,” an enthymeme can be a rhetorical syllogism or not (depending on specificity), yet as such differing from scientific syllogisms (which provide “knowledge-of-the-reasoned-fact”) (369-373). In view of Aristotle’s work, Lloyd Bitzer has classified the enthymeme as a “cooperative” means of argumentation (between speaker and audience) that distinguishes rhetoric from dialectic (“Aristotle’s Enthymeme”). Similarly, Garver has emphasized the enthymeme as the “body of persuasion,” for enthymematic argumentation encapsulates a “shared intention” with an audience with respect to deliberation, which directly impacts the speaker’s *ethos* “in argument.”<sup>80</sup> As indicated by Fr. Fogerty’s overview, in light of Aristotle’s realism, regardless of the interpretative approach one takes to the enthymeme, with the argumentation of rhetorical discourse, reality and reason are still significant.

For the development and communication of arguments, rhetorical activity is *differentiative* and *associative* with respect to the deductive and inductive methodologies that are encompassed along the way. To here apply here the classical realist view (Adler, The Four 28-42; J. Ryan), alongside of “descriptive” correspondence to facts and “prescriptive” conformity to desires, a good rhetorical argument is logically coherent, yet

coherence is a test or sign (not a definition or cause) of truth because of the ontological impossibility of contradiction in reality—for a rhetor *qua* human, “common experience” is significant. In the Posterior Analytics, Aristotle has stated:

All instruction given or received by way of argument proceeds from pre-existent knowledge. This becomes evident upon a survey of all the species of such instruction. The mathematical sciences and all other speculative disciplines are acquired in this way, and so are the two forms of dialectical reasoning, syllogistic and inductive: for each of these latter makes use of old knowledge to impart new, the syllogism assuming an audience that accepts its premises, induction exhibiting the universal as implicit in the clearly known particular. Again, the persuasion exerted by rhetorical arguments is in principle the same, since they use either example, a kind of induction, or enthymeme, a form of syllogism.<sup>81</sup>

St. Thomas has explained that circumstances entail those things that surround and touch human acts.<sup>82</sup> Along the way, he has stated:

The orator gives strength to his argument, in the first place, from the substance of the act; and secondly, from the circumstances of the act. Thus a man becomes indictable, first, through being guilty of murder; secondly, through having done it fraudulently, or from motives of greed or at a holy time or place, and so forth. And so in the passage quoted, it is said pointedly that the orator adds strength to his argument, as though this were something secondary.<sup>83</sup>

St. Thomas has also affirmed that “in so far as circumstances make acts to be worthy of praise or blame, of excuse or indictment,” these are pertinent to politicians and orators, yet differently to both, for “where the orator persuades, the politician judges”—as aspects of reality, circumstances are objective points of reference.<sup>84</sup> A rhetor *associates* and *differentiates* for, within, and about circumstances in building an argument toward “prescriptive” judgments, such as with the enthymeme and example. This is relevant to the question of “rhetorical situation” as treated in Chapters Two and Three.

Rhetoric, properly understood, is *preservative* in regards to truth. As Fr. Grimaldi indicates, in the Rhetoric, Aristotle has explained (from the translation of W. Rhys Roberts), “Rhetoric is useful (1) because things that are true and things that are just have a natural tendency to prevail over their opposites, so that if the decisions of judges are not what they ought to be, the defeat must be due to the speakers themselves, and they must be blamed accordingly.”<sup>85</sup> Fr. Grimaldi has rendered this passage a bit differently as follows: “rhetoric is useful because truth and justice are naturally stronger than their opposites, so that as a result, if judgments are not made as they should be, it follows necessarily that truth and justice are defeated by their opposites [untruth and injustice]. And this merits censure.”<sup>86</sup> With this, he has argued:

What is implicit [...] should be noted: rhetoric prevents us from making wrong judgments and in doing so protects truth and justice. To defend the usefulness of rhetoric on this ground [...] is to attribute to rhetoric an important and significant position. For what Aristotle is saying quite pointedly is that rhetoric is mimesis and is supposed to re-present the real (i.e., truth and justice) in any situation for an auditor. Rhetoric does this in

the only way it can, namely, through language. [...] If truth and justice are defeated, it is because rhetoric has failed in its function as mimesis. The defeat of truth and justice is caused by their inadequate articulation in language. It is the task of rhetoric, and in this task resides its usefulness, to assure an adequate and competent articulation of truth and justice.

When rhetoric fails to present this articulation, bad judgments are made by men, and truth and justice are destroyed by their opposites. As Aristotle remarks, this truly merits censure. Thus it is that in explaining the usefulness of rhetoric here Aristotle is making a remarkably strong pronouncement about the importance of rhetoric, a pronouncement that is usually not even considered as possible for the Rhetoric, and yet one that is not out of keeping with his other comments in this treatise. [...] <sup>87</sup>

In terms of the *preservative* possibilities for rhetorical discourse, from the view of classical realism, I am affirming that which Cherwitz and Hikins have departed from in terms of Aristotle's work in terms of human intellection. The art of rhetoric, properly enacted with respect to reality and virtue, is *preservative*.

Virtue entails habit (Adler, Desires; Aquinas, Commentary; R. McInerny, Ethica Thomistica). So, the preparation of audiences for judgments by means of a virtuous focus establishes *preservative* possibilities regarding truth after given instances of rhetorical discourse. In the Rhetoric, Aristotle has explained that even with exact knowledge, we must go to "notions possessed by everybody" for persuasion "on opposite sides of a question," not so much *just* to take one side or the other, but toward the just use of language in relation to "the underlying facts," yet even as "things that are true and

things that are better are, by their nature, practically always easier to prove and easier to believe in,” the rhetorical art (mirroring in some respects dialectical discourse) entails the discovery of “the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances of each particular case allow.”<sup>88</sup> In terms of coherence and factuality, the rhetorician considers the appropriate and adequate evidence for the case at hand through *association* and *differentiation*, for as regards the proper aim of discourse, this can be (inclusive of style as emphasized by Cherwitz and Hikins) genuinely *preservative* in scope in preparing the audience for practical and ethical *evaluative* judgments.<sup>89</sup>

Rhetorical ethics, in this framework of consideration, encompasses both the purpose of the speaker and the judgment of the audience (the *associative*, *differentiative*, and *evaluative* components). As mentioned above, we can view rhetoric as “prescriptive” in terms of human nature and human desires. At this point, I should mention the virtue of prudence, which is a strong point of discussion within contemporary philosophy and rhetoric (as *phronesis*, or practical wisdom) for the deliberation and action of human beings in the contingencies of life.<sup>90</sup> From the view of classical realism, *contra* the postmodern turn on *phronesis*, the sphere of prudence *is* action and contingency, yet with respect to universality, opinion, knowledge, understanding, goodness, truth, and reality.<sup>91</sup>

According to St. Thomas:

If, however, prudence be taken in a wide sense, as including also speculative knowledge, as stated above [...] then its parts include *dialectics*, *rhetoric* and *physics*, according to the three methods of prudence in the sciences. The first of these is the attaining of science by demonstration, which belongs to *physics* (if physics be understood to

comprise all demonstrative sciences). The second method is to arrive at an opinion though probable premises, and this belongs to *dialectics*. The third method is to employ conjectures in order to induce a certain suspicion, or to persuade somewhat, and this belongs to *rhetoric*. It may be said, however, that these three belong also to prudence properly so called, since it argues sometimes from necessary premises, sometimes from probabilities, and sometimes from conjectures.<sup>92</sup>

Considering McInerney's description of prudence (as a philosophical and not a theological virtue) for our "practical knowing" that "aims to guide singular contingent actions" toward "the proximate judgment" of human action (from Aristotle) and for "the truth of practical judgment involved in a singular action" deriving from "its conformity with rectified appetite" (from Aquinas), classical realism is an integrative view, even as regards the rhetorical realm of adjudication, deliberation, and celebration.<sup>93</sup> The question of virtue in regard to the human aspects of persuasive argumentation is pertinent to the theoretical development of a realist rhetoric of order.

Finally, at multiple levels, rhetoric is *perspectival*, but I do not grant this component in terms of "appearance realism" as put forth by Hikins.<sup>94</sup> As Adler has explained, we opine regarding numerous issues, and the spectrum of our opinions range from "probable" to "mere" opinion, yet even as all human beings could communicate on various matters, we do have differing experiences in terms of nationality and culture (Adler, *Intellect* 126-148; Adler, *Six* 31-71). Sister Gorman has written, "Past experiences stored in the imagination and memory 'color' meanings for individuals" (141). According to both authors, even as the conventional meanings of words as

*instrumental signs* (within languages) vary throughout societies, because of individual differences in experience, knowledge, and intention, users of the same language face challenges to communication with respect to meaning (Adler, “Challenges of”; Gorman 83-142). In view of these challenges, with Sister Gorman’s Thomistic emphasis that “knowledge is in the knower according to the mode of the *knower, not of the known*”, along with Adler’s contention regarding the impossibility of inventing “an ideal language that would be free from ambiguity and multiplicity of meanings,” because of experiential commonalities and educational possibilities, our linguistic limitations do not warrant epistemological skepticism.<sup>95</sup> Against a backdrop of “a common general education for everyone,” Adler has proposed the liberal arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric for improving the communication of meaning.<sup>96</sup> Beginning with Chapter Two, toward a realist rhetoric of order, this project contains an appropriation of the *perspectival* component of rhetorical discourse.

Considered in terms of reality and humanity, although it pertains to contingencies and actions in given contexts, rhetoric is, *to some degree*, “supracontextual.” As indicated above, Cherwitz and Hikins have argued that the consistency of views about reality between speaker and audience provides for the rhetorical character of discourse *as such*, over and above accuracy, intention, and success. With their expressed concerns regarding ethics, they certainly consider consistency, accuracy, and to some extent, intention. In considering the *evaluative, differentiative, associative, preservative, and perspectival* components of rhetoric from the view of Classical Realism, intention (properly understood), correspondence, and coherence provide for the character, success, and ethics of rhetoric. More on this will follow throughout the project. With these

coordinates established, one might now consider how Kirk's focus on imagination can be additive for theoretical considerations of a realist rhetoric of order.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Please see the following as regards my overview of “rhetorical perspectivism” in this paragraph: Cherwitz and Darwin, “Beyond Reductionism”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Toward a”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Why The”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Burying the”; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Irreducible Dualisms”; Croasmun and Cherwitz; Hikins, “Nietzsche, Eristic”; Hikins, “Realism and”; Hikins, “The Rhetoric”; Hikins, “The Seductive”; Hikins, “Through the”; Hikins and Zagacki, “Rhetoric, Philosophy”; Sharkey and Hikins. James W. Hikins suggested that I approach epistemic criticism as considering Kirk’s work as a “sketch of reality” (Telephone). My own framing of approach here toward the rhetorical analysis of speeches and texts is a modification of this advice in view of my own philosophical suppositions as related in this chapter and beyond. Regarding “epistemological criticism,” please see Cherwitz and Hikins’s Communication and Knowledge (171-172). See also Croasmun and Cherwitz regarding epistemology and criticism.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the following: Croasmun and Cherwitz 8-11; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 18-48, 115-160. For example, in their book, Communication and Knowledge: An Investigation in Rhetorical Epistemology, Cherwitz and Hikins theoretically position epistemology prior to ontology, for they have clearly argued that even with the assumption of an independent reality, scholars must first establish criteria for knowledge (18-20). This is not to say that the “rhetorical perspectivists” do not put a helpful emphasis upon common human experience or metaphysics. However, there is a privileging of epistemology that is more or less visible throughout the years.

<sup>3</sup> Based on the realist scholars cited throughout the project, this is one possible extension into the “rhetoric as epistemic” discussion. On one hand, the place of the liberal arts next to realism seems to support this view (Adler, “Challenges of”; Adler, “What Is”; Fogarty; Joseph; Wise), yet on the other, Eugene Garver’s extensive work on Aristotle’s Rhetoric in particular and rhetorical discourse in general provides some challenges for a consideration of the linkage between knowledge, opinion, and rhetoric (even with Aristotle’s realism) as he places the art of rhetoric squarely within the realm of human action, especially deliberation (Aristotle’s; For the Sake).

<sup>4</sup> The literature of realist rhetorical epistemology encompasses a set of similar philosophical suppositions with various applications to the realm of human communication—this book is generally representative of these.

<sup>5</sup> Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 66-67, 70n43-45. They make reference to Adler’s book Dialectic, New York, Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1927 (particularly p.75) and Weaver’s The Ethics of Rhetoric.

<sup>6</sup> Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 94-98. Cherwitz and Hikins have identified the various theoretical approaches (ancient and contemporary) regarding aspects of discourse that are supplied by audiences as pertinent to this “associative” component of rhetoric (such as enthymemes, etc.). That which is provided by both the speaker and audience might lead to “persistently justified true belief” (96-97).

<sup>7</sup> By means of John Stuart Mill’s book, On Liberty, Cherwitz and Hikins have advanced a more rationalist rather than classical realist approach in departing from Aristotle’s view on the question of truth and argumentation (Communication 98-102; “John Stuart Mill’s”). They make reference to the following from the Rhetoric: “truth

and justice are by nature more powerful than their opposites; so that, when decisions are not made as they should be, the speakers with the right on their side have only themselves to thank for the outcome” (Aristotle, Rhetoric, I. 2, 1355a; Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 98, 113n13).

<sup>8</sup> Cherwitz and Hikins have applied the notion of “vivacity” from George Campbell’s The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963, pp. 285-384 (Book III) to this discussion (Communication 100-102, 113n19), particularly regarding an audience’s understanding and assessment of a communicator’s argumentation, which demonstrate the pertinence of both content and style for rhetorical discourse. Richard Weaver, by the way, provided some similar insights (The Ethics 115-185; “Language is”). In Eugene Garver’s view (Aristotle’s), style is least significant for Aristotle and the least tied to Aristotle’s specific political context, which is why, in his estimation, style persisted as a focus of rhetorical theory later in history beyond Aristotle’s time.

<sup>9</sup> Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 102-105, 113n22, 113n24-25. For this particular discussion, they are applying work from Douglas Ehninger (“Argument as Method: Its Nature, Its Limitations, and Its Uses,” Speech Monographs 38 [1970], pp. 102-104) for their notions of bilateralism and self-risk. They have explained, “The conception of ‘dialectic’ herein presented is consistent with Plato’s use of the term. In Republic, Plato conceives of dialectic as the supreme philosophical method; it is the highest of the human arts [...]” (113n28).

<sup>10</sup> Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 105. Regarding “belief, true belief, or rational belief,” please see their discussions from earlier in the book (7-48). Cherwitz

and Hikins have explicitly differentiated their approach from the constructivist, consensus, and phenomenological standpoints regarding intersubjectivity (113n29). Their approach to the question of intersubjectivity differs from these more generally postmodernist framings of the issue, for it is clear that they hold to some standards of justification that are objective within what is considered intersubjective discourse (Communication 105, 113n29, 116-160). Regarding “intrapersonal rhetoric,” Cherwitz and Hikins have been clear in their situating of this as pertinent to rhetorical epistemology (92-94, 104-105, 113-114n30). Please see also “Plato’s Rhetorical Theory: Old Perspectives on the Epistemology of the New Rhetoric” and “The Epistemological Relevance of Intrapersonal Rhetoric,” both by Hikins.

<sup>11</sup> Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 106-107. Their explanation of this “constituent” reflects their adherence to both “relational” and “appearance” realism (which comprises their approach to “perspective realism”), for from this particular realist point of view, we perceive some portion of the relations composing at any given time (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 114n31, 105-108, 115-160; Hikins, “Realism and”). Cherwitz and Hikins have written, “We use the term ‘thing’ to denote the independent objects of reality and not to refer to what have traditionally been described as ‘physical objects’” (Communication 114n32). References to the various realist philosophers from whom the “rhetorical perspectivists” derive their “relational” approach are available across the various published discussions of “rhetorical perspectivism” (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Hikins, “Realism and”).

<sup>12</sup> Communication 137-149. Along the way, Cherwitz and Hikins have noted, “The distinction between ‘physical’ and ‘mental’ or ‘spiritual’ entities is one that has

served little useful purpose and that, in fact, cannot be sustained. Again, the reader is cautioned against taking the term ‘entity,’ which we use frequently, to imply either physical or nonphysical existents” (158n11). As this project develops, one will see the differences on this count between their approach and classical realism. However, of import to their contributions to the disciplinary role of realism, one should emphasize that in this line of scholarship there is generally a defense of both empirical and abstract truth.

<sup>13</sup> Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 137-149; Hikins, “Realism and” 59, 59n16. In light of ontologically distinguishing between subjectivity (“perceivers”) and objectivity (“things perceived”) for rhetorical studies (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 139, 159n44), Cherwitz and Hikins have articulated:

[...] For centuries people have wittingly and unwittingly labored under the conceptual consequences of this implied dualism, and the problem has been exacerbated by the growth of science and ensuing conflicts between science and the arts. In rhetoric, the tendency has been further accentuated by elevating Aristotle’s contingent/apodictic distinction to the status of an axiom. The general result has been to treat use of language as *either* objectively true or as speculative. (139)

According to Cherwitz and Hikins, the only requirement for epistemic interests “is a consideration of the relations obtaining between the item of interest and the context of particulars in which it stands,” which avoids an ontological framework that includes “such phrases as ‘internal to mind’ and ‘external to mind’” (149). They have argued, “An account that is both complete and in accordance with our commonsense beliefs about the world of experience demands only the concepts of: (1) independent relata and

(2) their relations. The account does not require positing either ‘objects,’ in the physicalist sense of the term, or reified ‘social realities’ in the subjectivist sense” (149).

<sup>14</sup> Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 143-149; Hikins, “Realism and” 27-28, 59-64. Cherwitz and Hikins have well demonstrated the pertinent theoretical connection between meaning and universals, generally speaking. Cherwitz and Hikins have relied often upon Aristotle in their case for realism and rhetoric, yet while even mentioning Aristotle’s departures from Plato regarding this, they have tended, at times, to contrast their approach to the Platonic account of universals when contending with pre-modern philosophy. In large part, this has been in response to the general reaction within the discipline to universality as a Platonic view (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication 144; Hikins, “Realism and”). According to Cherwitz and Hikins:

It is important to emphasize that by “universal” we do not mean a transcendent, ethereal, otherworldly, Platonic form, existing as a paradigm in which the objects of the world participate and on which their existence depends. Neither do we take a universal to be a conceptual, mind-dependent phenomenon. For us, universals are the products of identical relations. (Communication 143-144)

<sup>15</sup> Sharkey and Hikins 51. Sharkey and Hikins contrast “rhetorical perspectivism” to the work of Thomas Farrell (“Knowledge, Consensus”) as follows:

Unlike Farrell [...], these authors do not limit their analysis of the extra-human nature of reality to scientific or technical issues. For them, attitudes, beliefs, values—human meaning itself—has an extra-human component. This extra-human component can become the object of

discourse. And it is explored most trenchantly when humans engage in systematic inquiry, most notably *argument*. (51)

<sup>16</sup> Weaver, “Language is”; Weaver, Visions 69-70. In their considerations of rhetoric, the realist scholars of rhetorical epistemology hold to the persuasive scope of the use of language in general (as highlighted by some contemporary theorists), and along the way, they do cite (with agreement) Weaver’s work in this respect in terms of language as “sermonic.”

<sup>17</sup> See the essay, “Consequences in the Provinces: Ideas Have Consequences Fifty Years After” by Montgomery. Weaver was for Montgomery an important influence. Please see a review of Weaver’s The Southern Tradition at Bay by Montgomery from 1969 for some similar points where Weaver was insightful from Montgomery’s viewpoint (“Richard Weaver Against”). This earlier essay does not contain some of these later specific philosophical critiques of Weaver’s idealism.

<sup>18</sup> Montgomery, “Consequences.” The switching of thought and reality in contemporary thought is a major theme across Montgomery’s *corpus* when he is discussing literature, history, politics, and education.

<sup>19</sup> Montgomery, “Consequences.” Montgomery looks to Weaver’s specific words in Ideas Have Consequences along with various implications in and for Ideas Have Consequences and The Ethics of Rhetoric.

<sup>20</sup> Brian R. McGee has offered constructivism as a disciplinary corrective to Weaver’s essentialist emphasis on definitional argumentation. Weaver’s essentialism is rarely embraced in the field of communication and rhetorical studies, even as his rhetorical theory is respected for its importance place in the discipline. Of course, there

are some exceptions, even if they do not accept all of Weaver's essentialism or specific prescriptions. In the academic and popular literature of conservatism, Weaver's essentialism is of prime importance to authors of various disciplines and professions, even if there is some disagreement with his appropriation of definitional argumentation to conservatism, etc.

<sup>21</sup> Hikins, "Realism and" 27-28. Hikins also extends this discussion from the question of universals into the question of meaning.

<sup>22</sup> *In a certain way*, the ontological framework of "relational realism" and the question of epistemological primacy are distinct. The "relational" account of reality of the "rhetorical perspectivists" has been sufficiently provided herein for the purposes of this project.

<sup>23</sup> Although they privilege epistemology, the work of Cherwitz and Hikins substantiate the pertinence of reality for knowledge, opinion, and communication (Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Hikins, "Realism and"). They do speak of the everyday "pedestrian" experience of human beings, including that of academicians, as theoretically significant. Please see Hikins on Hyde's "Existentialism as a Basis for the Theory and Practice of Rhetoric" ("Realism and" 71). Hyde's essay contains a helpful discussion of one existentialist approach to rhetorical studies, which does provide a clear sphere of comparison to other philosophical approaches as related to rhetoric ("Existentialism").

<sup>24</sup> To be fair, there are times in their work where they seem to come close to, if not outright embracing, some sort of "common sense" realism when discussing the



“pedestrian world,” etc. (Cherwitz and Hikins “Irreducible Dualisms”; Hikins, “Realism and”).

<sup>25</sup> Please see the following: Cherwitz and Hikins, Communication; Croasmun and Cherwitz 8-11.

<sup>26</sup> Please see the following: Adler, The Four; Adler, Intellect 79-139; Adler, Ten. Also relevant at this point in the present chapter, Adler has explained:

The reality that is independent of the human mind, without the existence of which knowledge and truth would be impossible, is one and the same reality for all human beings.

Experience is not independent of the human mind. If it were, we would not speak of it as experience. To speak of reality as human is to violate an essential feature of it: its independence of the human mind. But while human experience is mind-dependent as reality is not, it is also, to a considerable extent, the same for all human beings. The reason why there is a common core in human experience, the same for all human beings, is that experience is dependent on reality as well as upon the human mind.

Two factors, not one, enter into the composition of human experience: reality and the human mind. It is a product of their interaction—reality acting on our senses and our minds responding reactively by its perceptual and conceptual activities. The common core of human experience is the product of that interaction. (Intellect 115-116)

Related to this, within his discussion of universals and meanings (“Realism and” 61-64), Hikins has written on the possibilities of communication across cultures, even with

varying terminological distinctions for naming objects within reality for practical or observational reasons (62-63).

<sup>27</sup> Centore, Being 73. For Centore, major points of focus within his philosophical account are *the fundamental skepticism about and an idealist separation from* the reality of the world (Being).

<sup>28</sup> Shively 47. As noted by Shively (47), “By *supracontextual* I mean simply to say that the standards are not specific to particular contexts or that they are evident in all forms of argument, regardless of context” (151n3).

<sup>29</sup> Shively 47, 151n4. Regarding these standards of argumentation, Shively has suggested to readers Ethics and Christianity by Keith Ward, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970, pp. 201-209. Following this, from within her own account of classical realism, she provided a helpful discussion of the balance among context, evidence, argument, and reality (48-49).

<sup>30</sup> Please see the following: Adler, The Four 3-105, 224-261; Adler, Intellect 143-172; Adler, Ten 5-107; Centore, Being 173-205; Gorman; Shively 46-85. Thanks to Dr. Matthew A. Kent (a philosopher) for reviewing (from a Thomistic standpoint) my considerations here via E-mail.

<sup>31</sup> Please see the following: Adler, The Four 77-78, 106-148, 247; Martin; R. McInerney, Characters 3-28; Shively 50-54.

<sup>32</sup> Adler, The Four 247. Pointing his readers back to Chapter Three of The Four Dimensions of Philosophy (17-20, 247, 247n6), Adler has explained:

[...] First-order questions occur in the first two dimensions of philosophy, where we find knowledge about reality, both descriptive and prescriptive.

Second order questions occur in the third and fourth dimensions of philosophy, where we find philosophical analysis and the understanding of ideas and subject matters. Recent linguistic and analytical philosophy is another type of second-order discipline. (247n6)

For some theoretical contrast here regarding realism, epistemology and learning, one might compare Cherwitz and Hikins's emphasis on "language reflection" on experience (Communication 43) next to Shively's emphasis on "empirical experience" toward conceptualization for childhood development (51). Also, in light of Adler's words on metaphysics and epistemology, one might consider the following from Cherwitz and Hikins: "When we speak of knowledge as justified true belief, we refer to a *reflective* (as opposed to a *reflexive*) activity that is dependent on language and that stands in contrast to less sophisticated varieties of cognition and affection" (43)

<sup>33</sup> Montgomery, "Consequences." Montgomery draws at various points from Gilson's Methodical Realism.

<sup>34</sup> Shively 52, 151n11, 152n12.

<sup>35</sup> Although this is a constant theme in Adler's extensive body of work, see in particular The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes.

<sup>36</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, Light 75-76. According to the editor of this particular book (Chapter 83 in this book is entitled, "Necessity of the agent intellect" [77-78]):

To explain the process of knowledge, scholastic philosophy distinguishes between two faculties of the intellectual soul: the *possible intellect* and the *agent intellect*. The agent intellect or active intellect (*intellectus agens*) illuminates the phantasm, abstracting from it the intelligible species,

which are spiritual likenesses of objects, disengaged from all particularizing conditions of matter. See chapter 83 below. According to St. Thomas, “the agent intellect causes the phantasms received from the senses to be actually intelligible through a process of abstraction” (Summa, Ia, q. 84, a. 6). The possible (that is, potential) or passive intellect (*intellectus possibilis*) is actuated and informed by the intelligible species resulting from this abstractive operation, and is thereby enabled to elicit the act of understanding. (76n77)

<sup>37</sup> Light 77-78. The following references are given regarding the Platonists: “[...] Plato, Phaedo (100 D); Timaeus (28 A; 30 C) [...] Aristotle, Metaph., I, 6 (987 b 7); I, 9 (991 b 3)” (77n78). Also, St. Thomas is making reference back to Chapter 82, “Man’s need of sense faculties for understanding” (77, 78n79).

<sup>38</sup> Light 83. St. Thomas is addressing a specific argument here regarding human intellectuality (80-83).

<sup>39</sup> Shively 52, 152n13. Shively referenced St. Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologica, Ia, IIae, 51, I.

<sup>40</sup> Shively 53. She added to this:

Two similarly undemonstrable assumptions are those of *the uniformity of nature* and *causality*. The uniformity of nature must be assumed because any test of it assumes the uniformity of nature (i.e., that tests work because they show us regular occurrences of nature). In like manner, all demonstrations assume causality—that effects have causes that we can observe and learn from. [...] (152n14)

On this count, Shively pointed the reader to C.S. Lewis's Miracles: A Preliminary Study, New York: MacMillan, 1947, pp. 102-106 (151n2, 152n14).

<sup>41</sup> Shively 53. Shively clarified by stating, "Nor can we appeal to probabilistic thinking, saying that observation shows that wholes *tend* to be greater than any one of their parts, for this does not give us the necessity required of the axiom. [...] Moreover the use of probability in itself requires the undemonstrable assumption of a uniform nature (152n15). She here looked also to C.S. Lewis's Miracles: A Preliminary Study, p. 20 (152n15). From Gilson, Shively related, "This conviction of the reliability of our sense is simply the self-evidence of our experience...It is futile to demand a demonstration" (Gilson, Thomist Realism 181; Shively 152n16).

<sup>42</sup> Shively 53, 151n5, 152n17. She referenced here Gilson's Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge, pp. 204, 149.

<sup>43</sup> E. Thompson, "Ways Out." In this dissertation project, for discussions of language, thought, and reality, I rely primarily upon Adler's *corpus* ("The Bodyguards"; The Difference 112-190, 340-347n41; The Four 106-123; How to Think 1-10, 284-293; Intellect 126-133; Some Questions), while also guided too by O'Callaghan's Thomist Realism and the Linguistic Turn and Sister Margaret Gorman's General Semantics and Contemporary Thomism. Thanks also to Dr. Matthew A. Kent (a philosopher) for providing Thomistic insights via E-mail regarding language, thought, and reality.

<sup>44</sup> Please see the following: Adler, The Four 32-34; Centore, Being 173-205; R. McInerny, Characters 43-56; Shively. Please see Communication and Knowledge by Cherwitz and Hikins. Croasmun and Cherwitz specifically identify this as a law of thought that is preliminary to metaphysics. Interestingly, Brummett catches Croasmun

and Cherwitz on the “laws of thought” as regards to Aristotle’s classical metaphysics (“On to” 427, 427n8).

<sup>45</sup> R. McInerny, Characters 49. McInerny is dealing with a specific text from St. Thomas here in light on contemporary trends in philosophy. He has clarified:

Needless to say, this does not prevent the logical and epistemological from having characteristics of their own which reflect our way of thinking about reality rather than the characteristics of the real itself. The seemingly endless discussion of the Problem of Universals is only resolvable when one distinguishes first and second intentions. Predicable universality—to be said of many things—is not a feature of things as they exist, but of things as we know and speak of them. In grasping the nature of human individuals, we form a concept which expresses something found in each of the singulars. The noun expressing the nature is predicable of them all. Is human nature universal? As conceived and named by us? Yes. In itself? No. As found in Socrates and Xanthippe and other individuals? No. Logic rides piggy-back on reality without its elements being in one-to-one correspondence with the units of reality. But it is because of the dependence of our knowledge on the real that non-contradiction enters logic and acquires the antiseptic form  $\sim (p \sim p)$ . (49; 49n5)

<sup>46</sup> I have in mind here notions from Adler’s Intellect: Mind Over Matter, Centore’s Being and Becoming: A Critique of Postmodernism, and Shively’s Compromised Goods: A Realist Critique of Constructionist Politics.

<sup>47</sup> In the literature that is cited in this project, issues of objectivity, subjectivity, meaning, and signification have been relevant to this wider discussion of the scope and aim of rhetorical criticism and “critical rhetoric.” Please see the following regarding “critical rhetoric” and related viewpoints: Charland; Cherwitz and Hikins, “Climbing the”; Cox, “On ‘Interpreting’”; Gaonkar; Hariman, “Critical Rhetoric”; M. McGee, “Text, Context”; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric and”; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric in”; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory”; McKerrow, “Space and.” Of course, among the various views of “critical rhetoric,” scholars might look to varying postmodern theorists to support and/or situate the approach. Yet, to some extent, postmodern suppositions are generally on the table. Although I certainly differ with some of his philosophical suppositions, I do think that McKerrow has provided a service in terms of having us look to the relationship between the critic and the community. I mentioned this in my presentation on the Whither Ideological Diversity panel at 2009 convention of the National Communication Association, where Raymie McKerrow was, along with Jim Kuypers, one of the two respondents to that panel.

<sup>48</sup> See McKerrow’s “Critical Rhetoric: Theory and *Praxis*” (450-451). McKerrow made reference (451, 462) to Michael Calvin McGee’s paper presentation, “Public Address and Culture Studies,” from the annual meeting of the Central States Speech Association of April 1987 in St. Louis.

<sup>49</sup> M. McGee, “Text, Context” 275-279. The aim and scope of rhetoric and rhetorical studies forms a central aspect of a larger discussion in a forum in which this article appeared in an issue of the Western Journal of Speech Communication of 1990 (John Angus Campbell, “Between the”; John Angus Campbell, “Introduction”; Condit,

“Rhetorical Criticism”; Cox, “On ‘Interpreting’”; Gaonkar; Leff and Sachs; M. McGee, “Text, Context”).

<sup>50</sup> Please see the following regarding Kirk and/or Weaver: Beale, “Richard M. Weaver”; Bradford, “Weaver”; P. Chapman; Duffy and Jacobi; Guroian, Rallying 31-79, 189-200; Person, Russell Kirk 151-200; Kirschke; Reardon. These sources vary in their appraisals, but I am making a general statement here that reflects the biases of this project in terms of reality, truth, context, history, tradition, etc.

<sup>51</sup> It is interesting the McKerrow has framed the epistemological focus as a “Platonic, neo-Kantian perception of rhetoric’s ‘true’ role in society” (“Critical Rhetoric: Theory” 453-454), for to some extent this *might* be true in *some* cases. However, I should note that, from the view of classical realism, the various postmodern philosophical influences (including that influencing McKerrow’s work) have also been a result of idealist philosophizing and systematizing.

<sup>52</sup> Please see the following: Cox, “On ‘Interpreting’”; N. Clark; Charland 72-74; Gaonkar; Hariman, “Critical Rhetoric”; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric in”; J. Murphy, “Critical Rhetoric”; Ono and Sloop. For example, Hariman has appreciatively challenged McKerrow’s avoidance of certain principles of modernity with respect to social criticism and political action, for he has argued that *doxa* and *episteme* have a linear relationship rather than an oppositional one (“Critical Rhetoric”). Also, regarding *praxis*, in his suggestions toward a critical focus upon *phronesis* from the view of philosophical hermeneutics, Charland has linked his discussion of McKerrow’s work to the larger question of *doxa* from the view of contemporary hermeneutics with respect to Aristotle’s work (72-74). In regard to McKerrow’s dismissal (challenged by Charland) of this



“virtue tied to ‘an ideal life-style’” (Charland 72, 74n3; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory”) Charland wrote:

[...] Admittedly *phronesis* is in Aristotle a virtue tied to an ideal conception of the good citizen and leader, but the Aristotelian project entails more than the celebration of virtue. It also includes a seminal enquiry into the character of doxastic knowledge and of judgment in the face of contingency [...] For Aristotle, better and worse courses of action do exist even though they cannot be determined through theoretical knowledge. The implication of this is that the absence of transcendental foundations to guide *praxis* does not preclude intelligent judgment. [...]

(72)

In light of the big picture of this project, the classical realist would affirm that at some level, “intelligent judgment” is not possible with “transcendental foundations” at some level with respect to *phronesis*. Charland did cite a relevant article from Warnick regarding Aristotle on knowledge (Charland 72, 74n4; Warnick, “Judgment, Probability”). However, although Warnick has well explained the various technical aspects of Aristotle’s work in terms of their distinct categorical scope and overlapping theoretical proximity, she seems, *at certain points*, to miss the integrative implications of Aristotle’s realism with respect to common sense, human nature, moral virtue, and public discourse (“Judgment, Probability”). With his suggestion of “a hermeneutic moment” for the critical rhetoric framework (73), Charland has of course pointed to the work of Gadamer with respect to *Phronesis* (72-73), whose work will be of particular focus next to that of Russell Kirk within Chapter Two of this project.

<sup>53</sup> Please see the following: Hikins, “Realism and” 61. Preceding his discussion of universals and meaning (“Realism and” 61-64), James Hikins has written:

Rhetorical scholars have eschewed extensive discussion of the theory of universals, except to decry the Platonic variety en passant, and then as much on ideological grounds as on the basis of any considered theory of language (see, for example, McKerrow, 1989, pp. 91, 103-104, 105-106). This is regrettable, for one would assume that a discipline centrally concerned with language would find it requisite to provide its own treatment of the problem of universals. In the absence of such a discussion, the Platonic questions about common general terms in language will persist. (Hikins, “Realism and” 61; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric”)

<sup>54</sup> I am here, in particular, referring to Aristotle’s statements regarding the definition and scope of rhetorical discourse from Book I, Chapters 1 and 2 of the Rhetoric. Although dialectic and rhetoric are mutually relevant, I disagree with Cherwitz and Hikins regarding their conflation of the two.

<sup>55</sup> Hikins, “Realism and” 42. Hikins notes the following:

The claim I am making is that “facts”—often in the form of simple perceptual judgments—that alone have no great importance or that are even describable as “trivial” when viewed in isolation, are utterly indispensable to rhetorical discourse. Questions of pedestrian facticity (basic perceptual claims) will frequently not be, in and of themselves, of central importance to a given instance of rhetorical discourse, that is, they

are not sufficient to alone constitute many significant rhetorical issues. My claim is that they are, however, necessary for the larger issues of a given discourse to make sense and to be evaluated. In aggregate, they comprise the hinges of discourse upon which larger issues of, for example, rhetorical probability turn. (42n11)

<sup>56</sup> Hikins, “Realism and” 45-49. Upon a general reading of the Rhetoric, Hikins’s explanation proves correct and significant with respect to the place of factual reality for persuasive discourse. For instance, he mentions Aristotle’s emphasis on facts preceding a discussion of the topics of rhetorical discourse. According to Hikins, “In expiating this passage, Aristotle provided precise examples of what he had in mind by ‘facts’ for each of his three genres of speeches: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. And for each one it is beyond doubt that he meant by facts the sorts of things that come to be known *by common observation of the pedestrian world*” (46).

<sup>57</sup> Hikins, “Realism and” 47. Hikins has utilized a translation of Aristotle’s Rhetoric by L. Cooper of 1932, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

<sup>58</sup> One could here consult both Aristotle’s Rhetoric and Topics along with the relevant terminological discussions within Aristotle Dictionary by Thomas P. Kiernan. Please see the following by Fr. Grimaldi: “Aristotle Rhetoric”; “A Note”; “Rhetoric and the Philosophy.” With respect to argumentation in books, Adler and Van Doren have emphasized as significant for analytical reading the identification of both the *problems* under discussion and the *propositions* of authors (92-113). The question of judgment and contingency with respect to Aristotle’s Rhetoric is certainly a focus of those holding to more postmodern philosophical perspectives, particularly existentialism. One of main

foci in this line of scholarly work is the place of judgment in rhetoric coupled with their view of contingency and reality (Hyde, “Existentialism”). For instance, according to Michael Hyde, “The business of rhetoric is to ‘deal with what is in the main contingent’ (Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1357a15). By informing us about the nature of our certainly uncertain existence, existentialists hope to call us to responsible action in dealing with this total contingency. The importance of rhetorical theory and practice is affirmed when this call is made and understood” (“Existentialism” 214). Although rhetorical matters do pertain to “‘what is in the main contingent,’” from the realist point of view (inclusive of Aristotle’s work), because of the integrative scope of humanity, reality, virtue, and existence, the question of “contingency” would need clarification in terms of the relationship of contingency to certainty as well as our free will to act within contingent circumstances (when we have chosen this or that action, we *could have* chosen otherwise). The work of both Adler and Maritain are helpful on these matters. Although I would differ with some of Farrell’s arguments regarding Aristotle’s philosophy with respect to Aristotle’s Rhetoric (“Philosophy against”), he has helpfully reminded readers that Aristotle did not have “a radically indeterminate understanding of contingency” (193). For Farrell, one could “grant, as did Aristotle, that unlikely things happen all the time without drawing the spurious conclusion that everything necessarily is or should be treated as radically unlikely,” yet he emphasized as significant “that Aristotle understood that the realms of the probable and the indefinite only take on being and meaning when they are placed in opposition to life’s intractable necessities” (193-194). I guess rhetorically one could consider the “meaning” of contingency for audiences in terms of “opposition to life’s intractable necessities” in a certain way. Philosophically, though,

from a realist view, might it be more accurate to say that these contingencies take on “being” (and probably to some extent meaning) *within the context of* “life’s intractable necessities”?

<sup>59</sup> Please see the following: Adler, How to Speak; Grimaldi, “Rhetoric and the Philosophy”; Grimaldi, “Rhetoric and Truth”; Shively 46-85, 152n14, 152n15; Wise. Warnick has provided a thorough and helpful overview of the various elements of knowledge and practicality in the work of Aristotle, including important clarifications of scope regarding philosophy, dialectic, and rhetoric (“Judgment, Probability”). Therein, however, she has challenged Fr. Grimaldi’s interpretation of the Rhetoric regarding truth and persuasion with respect to Aristotle’s overall *corpus* (299-302). Regarding this along with her overall discussion, even as she recognized Aristotle’s realism, I think that there is more to be said though (in Fr. Grimaldi’s defense) regarding the *integrative* aspects of Aristotle’s realism in relation to rhetorical discourse as portrayed by Fr. Grimaldi.

<sup>60</sup> Hikins, “Realism and” 48-49. I omitted the following by Hikins: “As Young and Launer [...] noted regarding conspiratist rhetoric, ‘as long as credibility is an audience-centered rather than a message-centered concept, critics of rhetoric need an external standard [...]’” In discussing the issue of probable truth, Adler has utilized the courtroom example in his challenges to philosophical skepticism. He is referencing M.J. Young and M.K. Launer’s Flights of Fancy, Flight of Doom: KAL 007 and Soviet-American Rhetoric, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988.

<sup>61</sup> Please see the following: Adler, “Challenges of”; Adler, The Four 4-48, 224-261; Adler, How to Speak; Adler, How to Think 1-50, 204-213, 223-253, 284-293, 329-337; Adler, Intellect 79-89, 175-188; Adler, Six 31-63; Adler, Ten 5-107; Adler, “What

Is”; Adler and Van Doren. Regarding *doxa* and rhetoric, this is my application of Adler’s work and it is, as follows: 1) to some extent implied in his use of the courtroom example regarding opinion, knowledge, perception, and evidence; 2) to some extent indicated within his discussions of the liberal arts as related to his overall approach to politics, education, language, and philosophy. Also, in a review of Adler’s Aristotle for Everybody: Difficult Thought Made Easy, Halford Ross Ryan (in the Quarterly Journal of Speech) wrote, “Adler draws from the Rhetoric on three occasions: to discuss the various goods, the enthymeme, and human opinion. The rhetorical theorist might desire more explication of the Rhetoric, but Adler treats all of Aristotle’s writings in relative proportion to Adler’s own objective” (113). The relevant discussion from the book here on human opinion is Chapter 19, “Beyond a Reasonable Doubt” (Adler, Aristotle 160-167), for which Adler cited the Rhetoric, Book II, Chapter 25 among other works of Aristotle (204). Robert Hopper’s *somewhat* critical review of Adler’s Some Questions About Language would be one entrance point for a larger discussion on Adler’s work along with classical realism from within the field of communication and rhetorical studies.

<sup>62</sup> Please see the following: Adler, Desires; Adler, How to Speak 21-67; Grimaldi, “Aristotle Rhetoric”; Grimaldi, “A Note”; Grimaldi, “Rhetoric and the Philosophy.” Books I and II of the Rhetoric by Aristotle indicate this. Like in Haldane’s discussion of Thomistic ethics for the United States (165), the phrase or notion of the “facts of human nature” is not uncommon among classical realists.

<sup>63</sup> Grimaldi, “Rhetoric and the Philosophy” 372. This might point us to one significant aspects of Richard Weaver’s contribution to 20th century rhetorical theory, as

he was under the influence of Plato in his rhetorical theorizing. For this project, I am not necessarily taking a position on the controversy regarding the similarities or differences between Plato and Aristotle on the art of rhetoric (Garver, Aristotle's 21-22; Nichols).

<sup>64</sup> Adler, Desires. Adler here was making reference to Aristotle's Ethics.

<sup>65</sup> In terms of Aristotle, Garver confronts the question of inferring from a person as speaker to a person as such in terms of morality (Aristotle's). For Garver, the articulation of credibility could be a part of a speech as *ethos* if it is genuinely attached to the speech within an argument. His point of differentiation are those instances where effects are provided by a speaker that do not operate within argument, but are an attempt to boost one's *ethos* outside of an argument.

<sup>66</sup> This is clear upon a reading of any of the three books of Aristotle's Rhetoric. See Adler's The Four Dimensions of Philosophy (145-148) regarding one's study of rhetoric as an "object of thought." An example of this might be the often cited P. Albert Duhamel's "The Function of Rhetoric as Effective Expression."

<sup>67</sup> At one level, my statement here is based upon my biases expressed in this chapter and in the Introduction regarding Aristotle and realism and rhetoric. Of course, there are very visible aspects of the Rhetoric that point in this direction.

<sup>68</sup> Summa Theologica, First Part of the Second Part, Question 29, Article 6

<sup>69</sup> Rhetoric, Book II, Chapter 4, 1382a (269)

<sup>70</sup> This statement is based on an approach to Aristotle's Rhetoric from the standpoint of classical realism of the Aristotelian and Thomistic tradition. The contingency of the sphere of action is affirmed in general, but not apart from considerations of necessity within reality. It should be noted that Aristotle does indicate

that many of the facts of rhetoric are those within the sphere of contingency, but again, this does not mean that necessity is not a consideration in terms of the big picture of reality.

<sup>71</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, First Part, Question 86.

<sup>72</sup> Regarding the art of rhetoric and the “whole person,” please see the following: Grimaldi, “Rhetoric and the Philosophy”; Weaver, “Language is.”

<sup>73</sup> Zhao’s “Rhetoric as Praxis: An Alternative to the Epistemic Approach” gives some helpful angles on the whole rhetoric as epistemic discussion in the discipline, while looking to move to the realm of “social praxis” for considerations of rhetoric. However, a realist might ask when reading Zhao’s article, *to what extent* does rhetoric actually “generate normative knowledge” (256) for issues of morality, politics, etc.?

<sup>74</sup> Grimaldi, “Rhetoric and the Philosophy” 374. Fr. Grimaldi referenced Aristotle’s Poetics, 1449b 35 (374, 365n19).

<sup>75</sup> Please see note 43 above. For specific discussion of “signs” in Aristotle’s Rhetoric, please see Fr. Grimaldi’s “*Semeion, Tekmerion, Eikos* in Aristotle’s Rhetoric.”

<sup>76</sup> Aristotle, Rhetoric, Book I, Chapter 2, 1357a (111). For Garver, this text is evidence for the centrality of deliberation in Aristotle’s rhetorical theory (Notes 110).

<sup>77</sup> This is a direct adaptation and application by me of Adler’s explanation on reality, thought, and language (The Four 75-123) to the realm of rhetorical discourse

<sup>78</sup> Please see Aristotle’s Rhetoric and Topics on this matter of course. Also, one can look to the relevant terminological discussions within Aristotle Dictionary by Thomas P. Kiernan. One might look to Weaver’s The Ethics of Rhetoric and Natanson’s “The Limits of Rhetoric” for a discussion on the *roles of and relationship between*



rhetoric and dialectic, which was written in part with respect to Weaver's The Ethics of Rhetoric. Warnick's "Judgment, Probability, and Aristotle's Rhetoric" is helpful here of course. Please see Garver's "Comments on 'Rhetorical Analysis Within a Pragmatic-Dialectical Framework: The Case of R.J. Reynolds'" for an interesting discussion of Aristotle on rhetoric and dialectic in light of contemporary notions of the same two arts as influenced by modernity.

<sup>79</sup> The title of Madden's article is "The Enthymeme: Crossroads of Logic, Rhetoric, and Metaphysics," which Fr. Grimaldi referenced in his "Rhetoric and the Philosophy of Aristotle" (371; 374n1).

<sup>80</sup> Please see the following from Garver: Aristotle's; "The Political." Eugene Garver has made reference to Fr. Grimaldi's commentaries on Aristotle's Rhetoric (Aristotle's 252-253n9, 256n26, 258n32, 258n34, 284n20). Garver's explanation at certain points differs some from Fr. Grimaldi regarding aspects of rhetorical argumentation (76-103, 139-171).

<sup>81</sup> Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, Part 1, Book 1.

<sup>82</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, First Part of the Second Part, Question 7

<sup>83</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, First Part of the Second Part, Article 1

<sup>84</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, First Part of the Second Part, Article 2

<sup>85</sup> Grimaldi, “A Note” 173; Aristotle, Rhetoric, Book 1, Chapter 1, 1355a (101). This passage is at the center of Fr. Grimaldi’s article, “Rhetoric and Truth: A Note on Aristotle. ‘Rhetoric’ 1355a 21-24.”

<sup>86</sup> Fr. Grimaldi is building his own translation and interpretation here (“A Note” 174-176).

<sup>87</sup> Grimaldi, “A Note” 176-177. To conclude the article, Fr. Grimaldi connects this interpretation to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics (1172a 35-36): “‘Whenever language is out of tune with the perceived facts it is despised, *and it destroys truth besides*’” (“A Note” 177).

<sup>88</sup> Aristotle, Rhetoric, Book I, Part 1, 1355a-1355b (101, 103). Garver has emphasized the discovery aspect here, as persuasive success depends on elements outside of the rhetor’s artistic control, “including the prejudices of the audience and the strength of the case” (Notes 102). Garver deals at length in his work with the difference between rhetoric and sophistic from Aristotle’s view (Aristotle’s; Notes 102), which ultimately for Garver points to rhetoric as an art *that rests in argument* in given political contexts about practical matters.

<sup>89</sup> My words here were prompted by John Lyne’s response to the panel, In The Bosom of Metaphysics: The Spaciousness of Weaver’s Rhetoric, at the National Communication Association convention of 2006 (on which I participated), in which he emphasized that for Aristotle, one looks for the evidence that is adequate to the discussion or case at hand.

<sup>90</sup> Guided by varying philosophical suppositions, discussions of prudence/practical wisdom are somewhat frequent in various academic disciplines

(Arthos, “Where There”; Eubanks, “On Rhetoric”; Farrell, “Philosophy against”; Garver, “Aristotle’s Natural”; Garver, “Eugene Garver’s”; Hariman, “Prudence/Performance”; Hauser; Jacobi, “Professional” 120-125; Kuypers; Warnick, “Judgment, Probability”). As will be seen as the project goes forth, prudence was a virtue that Kirk often discussed (The Politics).

<sup>91</sup> Please see the following: Adler, Desires; Aquinas, Commentary; Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Second Part of the Second Part, Question 47; R. McInerny, Ethica Thomistica; Montgomery, “Virtue and”; O’Neil. According to Fr. Grimaldi, “[...] The enthymeme in the field of probable demonstration which is the demonstration of Rhetoric parallels in a broad sense the role of apodeixis, or the demonstrative syllogism, in the field of Metaphysics, just as the practical syllogism plays a similar role in his Ethics” (“A Note” 192). His comparison here indicates the *integrative* approach of Aristotle’s realism.

<sup>92</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Q.47, A.2, ad 2.

<sup>93</sup> Please see the following: R. McInerny, Characters 84-91; R. McInerny, Ethica Thomistica. McInerny in his work often brings forward implicitly the relationship between knowledge, action, and the liberal arts. He has done this explicitly too (“Introduction: ‘A Bracelet’”). I will expand on this a bit more in the project. At this point, I am applying McInerny’s explanation to the discussion in light of the later development in the project.

<sup>94</sup> Hikins provided a discussion of “appearance” realism in general and as it relates to “rhetorical perspectivism” in “Realism and its Implications for Rhetorical

Theory” (31-33, 52-59, 71). More specific discussion on my use of *perspective* will follow in Chapter Three.

<sup>95</sup> Gorman 83-142. Please see Adler’s article, “Challenges of Philosophies in Communication.” Sister Gorman’s book, General Semantics and Contemporary Thomism, which was utilized by Johannesen in his discussion of Weaver and Hayakawa (“Conflicting Philosophies”), provides an outstanding comparison of Thomism to General Semantics. Along the way, Sister Gorman outlines key elements of the classical realist view on language, thought, reality, etc. She admits of the challenges of ascertaining meaning among peoples within and between cultures, but takes a stand against both epistemological and moral skepticism.

<sup>96</sup> Please see Adler’s “Challenges of Philosophies in Communication.” One has to consider Adler’s views on the liberal arts alongside of his classical realism with respect to thought, language, and reality (Adler, “Challenges of”; Adler, How to Speak; Adler, How to Think 233-253, 284-293, 329-337; Adler, “What Is”; Adler and Van Doren). Adler specifically did tie intention to rhetoric (please note that I end this chapter with intention “properly understood”). More on the matter of intention from the classical realist view, along with discussions of understanding and knowledge, will follow in Chapter Two and in Chapter Three.

## Chapter Two

### Rhetoric, Imagination, and the Question of a Postmodern Conservatism

As a spokesperson for American order, Russell Kirk had and has a notable place among conservatives in the United States. Within such books as The American Cause, America's British Culture, and The Roots of American Order, Kirk endeavored to praise and to defend "the roots of order" in the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> As we will see in this and the next chapter, notions of reality and continuity played a role in Kirk's attempt to inform our American "historical consciousness."<sup>2</sup> Kirk once wrote, "The moral imagination of the man of letters, combining with the political and historical imagination of the talented statist, may yet lead us back from the fleshpots of abnormality to the altar of the permanent things" (Enemies 302). In conjunction with a rhetorical study of The Roots of American Order within Chapter Three regarding human nature, this chapter develops a realist framework toward a consideration of the theoretical merit of Kirk's overall theme of "imagination" *beyond conservative discourse*. These steps can assist in thinking about his *corpus* as it relates to a realist rhetoric of order that is attentive to both the contextual and "supracontextual" aspects of rhetorical discourse.

Prompted by Kirk's influence upon conservatism and his focus on order, Gleaves Whitney has spoken of the forging of "politics, rhetoric, and the Permanent Things into a powerful unity" within American history in terms of truth, goodness, beauty, and love.<sup>3</sup> As will be seen in this and the next chapters, there is a communicative link within Kirk's endeavors between the human imagination and the "Permanent Things." Jeremy Beer has argued that "[...] fresh studies of Kirk's thought will have to transcend the limitations posed when one approaches Kirk on (literally) his own terms," which will require "prior

explication” of the core of Kirk’s endeavors, “not his particular principles and ideas, as important as these are” (“The Idea”). He explained that “Future Kirk scholars must attempt to exhume his meanings and illuminate his rhetorical strategies”<sup>4</sup> Beer has also argued that a fresh look at Kirk will go beyond “the conservative political tradition” while also stepping “outside of Kirk’s own idiom so that one doesn’t get bogged down in the vagaries of terms like ‘permanent things’ and even the ‘moral imagination,’” which “perhaps, is the analytical tool that will allow us to destroy Kirk the icon and recover Kirk the man.”<sup>5</sup>

For the study of American movement conservatism, Mortimer Adler’s work, which is extensively employed in this project, provides a bit of critical distance. As Hyrum Lewis has well highlighted, although Adler was a proponent of metaphysical realism before and after the WWII era as against cultural relativism, he was no fellow-traveler with the American right as it developed on the political front—he was a proponent of a type of Aristotelian framework of democratic and economic reform (consider, for instance, his advocacy of world government).<sup>6</sup> From the vantage point of General Semantics, S.I. Hayakawa recognized a similar cultural and political distinction, yet he grouped Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler, “the Divine Doctors of the Great Books Movement,” with Richard Weaver, Russell Kirk, and others for a critique of the “New Conservatives.”<sup>7</sup> However, Frederick Wilhelmsen, who as a Thomist philosopher was a contributor to the intellectual literature of conservatism, considered the “Great Books” programs such as that of Adler and Hutchins as “Enemies of Wisdom” for the study of philosophy, particularly with reference to Catholic institutions of learning in the United States (“The Great”). For what was arguably similar for Adler and Wilhelmsen

regarding the necessary distinctions between textual meaning and philosophical truth, he lamented that an intense educational focus upon books, for instance, eclipses this important distinction as it relates to the pedagogical and habitual aspects of philosophical activity.<sup>8</sup> Of course, Adler is not the final word on Aristotle or St. Thomas, but he was, as Ralph McInerney has commemorated, a significant voice for both classical realism and liberal education in the United States of America throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (“Memento Mortimer”).

In his book The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk (preceded by a series of articles), Gerald J. Russello has provided a layer of study that is conducive to Beer’s suggestion by placing Kirk’s endeavors within a larger conversation about conservatism and postmodernism (others have touched upon this with Kirk, but his analysis is more extensive).<sup>9</sup> In a time of popularity for conservative discourse, he has emphasized that the often celebrated influence of Kirk, whose “‘aesthetic’ conservatism” (a term applied by Donald Atwell Zoll in 1972) was a key element in Kirk’s assembling (in Zoll’s analysis) “‘presumably disparate currents as religious neo-orthodoxy, literary agrarianism, moral realism, and anti-egalitarianism’” around a “‘prescriptive center’” from the tradition of Edmund Burke, which in Russello’s view, “seems to have little bearing in the postmodern political landscape, and the coalition that the center forged is in tatters.”<sup>10</sup> Pointing to legitimate doubts as to whether the admirers and allies of Kirk from the past and present have sufficiently grasped his work, Russello has observed that “Kirk’s thinking on community, loyalty to region, and imagination find fewer contemporary echoes in conservative thought, even as they appear with increasing frequency in mainstream discourse.”<sup>11</sup> For the basis of conservatism and “a critique of liberalism,” so

as to differentiate a “strand of conservative thought” from the various types of conservatisms, he has focused upon, among other related aspects, the place of imagination in Kirk’s *corpus* (5). Russello’s inquiry: Might Kirk’s “aesthetic, imaginative conservatism” have “anything to say in the contemporary world” (5)?

Russello’s writings are a piece of a larger interdisciplinary literature (including the field of communication) on the dispersion and direction of movement conservatism since the time of Kirk and Weaver until the present day, which includes coverage of such disputations as the dynamics of the “culture wars,” the merits of “democratic capitalism,” and the aims of foreign policy.<sup>12</sup> At bottom, Russello has argued that because of Kirk’s engagement with such areas of study as community, locality, imagination, sentiment, and religiosity, his work has a certain congruity with the postmodern *critique of and departure from* both modernity and modernism, yet in approach is different in some theological, philosophical, and political respects from postmodernist thought—hence, Kirk is a key figure for an emergent postmodern conservatism (The Postmodern; “Russell Kirk and the Critics”). There is consensus within the relevant literature regarding the postmodern significance of Kirk’s strong stand against modern liberalism, even with Kirk’s variance from the more extreme versions of postmodernism.<sup>13</sup> However, Daniel McCarthy, who wrote that “Kirk the symbol had become uncoupled from Kirk the man—a very postmodern turn of events,” has raised some serious points of regarding Russello’s book that have significant philosophical merit.<sup>14</sup>

For McCarthy (a libertarian), Russello’s evidence ultimately shows that Kirk and the postmodernists share at best a convenient alliance against Enlightenment liberalism.<sup>15</sup> In the Epilogue (“Is Life Worth Living?”) of The Sword of Imagination: Memoirs of a



Half-Century of Literary Conflict, published not long before his death, Kirk wrote that “he had become in his convictions both pre-modern and post-modern” in light of his acceptance and affirmation of religiosity and providence alongside of the waning of the influence of modernist ideology upon “the intellectual world from 1860 to 1960,” as again “in biology as in physics, the scientific disciplines had begun to enter upon the realm of mystery.”<sup>16</sup> Russello did not utilize this reference, yet it does supply evidence for his contention that Kirk recognized something postmodern along the way in his career in relation to the demise of modernity (The Postmodern 1-27, 177-213). Was Kirk’s recognition of a “postmodern age” *primarily* about what McCarthy has identified as “the decay of classical liberalism” (“The Pomo”)? Russello has provided some coordinates for weighing this question. However, I think that McCarthy has pointed to what should be at least one major crossroads of consideration for the question of a postmodern conservatism.

Historians oftentimes operate with a “philosophy of history” or a “theory of history” regarding the movement of past events, while they might also “talk philosophically” beyond the purview of their “specialized” historical research (Adler, The Four 3-71; Adler, How to Think 435-445; Adler, “The Philosopher”; Adler, “The Philosopher [...] Continued”; Adler and Van Doren 234-254). Russello introduced Kirk’s approach to history as a shaping of the past “through the stories and events a society deems worthy of repeating,” for “repetition, and the choice of what bears repeating, becomes tradition” (The Postmodern 6). While for the most part rejecting “the Enlightenment vision of the objectivity of fact,” Kirk had exhibited sensitivity to the subjective elements of history where historians participate “in the creation of history, and

the objects of knowledge cannot be separated fully from those who study them” (6).

Although presently a “‘postmodern’” notion that is common, “Kirk used this understanding of history for conservative purposes [...] to dislodge a seemingly ‘objective’ modern history that seemed merely to confirm liberal premises,” for “[t]he past changes, and how it changes and why are in the hands of the culture generally and the historian in particular” (6).

McCarthy has partially confronted Russello’s postmodern explanation of Kirk’s historical approach history, yet besides objecting to the application of scientific thought to a field such as history, he has argued that Russello did not give ample discussion to “power” and “truth” as it relates to the postmodernists and the traditionalists, for “Kirk was a realist: Objectivity may be elusive, he believed, but the truth is out there, whether we can grasp it fully or not.”<sup>17</sup> Certainly, as McCarthy indicates, Kirk was not attracted to ideological theorizing (“The Pomo”), yet Russello’s book does point to a dimension of Kirk’s work that pertains to the abuse of political, economic, and legal power (The Postmodern 104-176). As I see it, McCarthy’s strong point here is Kirk’s realism. One might here recall Cherwitz and Darwin’s additive critique of “critical rhetoric” toward the value of epistemology (“Beyond Reductionism”; “Toward a”): Knowledge of what power *is* should underlie the study what power *does*.

Russello does not necessarily *downplay* realist assumptions regarding Kirk, especially in his discussion on natural law, which is probably the most explicit aspect of the book in terms of realism—Kirk was a realist of some sort and this is assumed in the book.<sup>18</sup> As McCarthy has indicated, even if more depth of theoretical engagement could have been provided, Russello has valuably opened a door for future Kirk scholarship

through a closer study of postmodern thought, like that of Hans-Georg Gadamer, whom Russello discusses along the way in his book (“The Pomo”). Arguably, at least from the vantage point of this project, realism is a philosophical matter that is in need of more emphasis as against postmodernism, even as one considers Kirk’s strong stand against modernity. As Gadamer’s hermeneutics still assumes a historicized view of philosophical questions amid the changing elements of reality and cultures, it seems that realists ultimately have to confront the more moderate postmodernisms of scholars such as Hans Gadamer (Centore, Being 173-227; Centore, “Classical Christian”). How then does Kirk’s realism square with Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics? At the center of Gadamer’s hermeneutical approach is not “power” or “truth,” but “understanding” (Philosophical Hermeneutics 18-43).

Although Russello has clearly placed his arguments within a larger conversation, scholarly study pertaining to what is now termed “postmodernism” has somewhat of a history in the literature of conservatism since about the 1950s (for instance, by such realists as Thomas Molnar, Marion Montgomery, Ewa Thompson, and Frederick Wilhelmsen).<sup>19</sup> As Russello has highlighted, realists such as Peter Augustine Lawler have explicitly embraced a “postmodern conservatism” that looks to bring forward premodern and realist assumptions to engage, in light of the limitations and failures of modernity, what are *typically* the philosophical biases of postmodernism.<sup>20</sup> As stated in the Introduction, this project rests with Richard Weaver’s contention that “a conservative is a realist” (“Conservatism and Libertarianism”). My putting of Weaver’s work alongside of postmodernism is not necessarily an original contribution, yet the rhetorical, philosophical, and political dynamics of his work are of import to this project,

particularly for what Walter H. Beale has phrased as “the alienation of language from reality.”<sup>21</sup> One can stand with Montgomery, however, in holding that Weaver needed to account for *more of reality* in his stand against the modernism of modernity (“Consequences”). Weaver’s contributions to both rhetorical theory and conservative argumentation will be at the forefront at later points in this project, yet this present chapter also carries his contention that “a conservative is a realist” to the conversation.

From the Introduction herein, one might also here go back to Cribb’s reminder of Kirk’s view of conservatism as “a disposition of *openness to reality*” and “the *negation of ideology*” (“Why” 57). In view of the relevant literature on conservatism and postmodernism, these words suggest *either* a hermeneutical and phenomenological quest “to the things themselves” *or* an advisement and exemplification to go from things to thinking.<sup>22</sup> Montgomery, of course, would have us look beyond our present political categories of “liberal” and “conservative” to both a recognition and a stewardship of our intellection of *things* within and across communities (“Consequences”; “Tradition and”; “Wanted: A Better”). As F.F. Centore has well outlined (not directly with respect these political categories), there is a “foundational” difference between postmodernism and realism regarding philosophical assumptions on being and becoming (Being; “Classical Christian”).

To grapple with the question of a postmodern conservatism, one might borrow from Michael Calvin McGee (who has informed and furthered the “critical rhetoric” movement) toward a focus upon “[p]ostmodernity” to keep “attention on the conditions, situations, and circumstances which determine, influence, prompt postmodernism,” which allows a consideration the work of scholars as responsive to “rhetorical situations.”<sup>23</sup>

Although “[r]eality is more at issue” with this sort of attentiveness, a classical realist should depart from the following in McGee’s argument:

[...] The possibility of making meaning by attaching social to reality is a compelling indication that the stuff of Reality is changing. One would not choose the term if it were not already suspected that Modern accounts of Reality have failed. *Social reality*, I mean to say, *is Real by virtue of its Sociality*, not by virtue of its Rationality or its simple empirical Being. Reality is Real *just because* it is social. [...] (“Suffix”)

One classical realist revision might go as follows: The sociality of humanity is real because it is natural to human beings who, sharing a common human nature, are uniquely a part of reality as they think and talk about reality.<sup>24</sup> The dynamics of epistemology, idealism, and constructivism, which form a sort of continuum between modernism and postmodernism, have been covered herein within Chapter One.

Centore, who has used the term “hyper-modern” for the relativism of postmodernism in both the popular and academic realms, has detailed within his account what one might call a postmodern condition (Being). Much of the discussion regarding conservatism and “the postmodern” has centered on the conditions of postmodernity with respect to either the negatives of modernity or the tenets of postmodernism (or both). Lawler, when arguing that modernity is now susceptible to judgment, has used that same term “hypermodern” for the “allegedly postmodern characteristics” of what is *typically* postmodernism (“Conservative Postmodernism”)—in his view, it is ultimately a matter of proper philosophical direction, particularly regarding human nature. Although promoting more of a studious engagement with postmodernism rather than a explicitly conservative

embrace of the term “postmodern,” Ewa Thompson’s analyses suggest something like a postmodern condition (in both the academic and popular realms) *because of the influence of postmodernist philosophy* (“Body, Mind”; “Dialectical”; “Postmodernism”; “Ways Out”). All of these above discussions, from their own angles of entry, magnify the disintegration and fragmentation of the present day, which reminds one, of course, of the social and discursive studies that accompany the “critical rhetoric” scholarship where there is a grappling with postmodern condition along with a favoring of this or that postmodern line of thought (John Angus Campbell, “Between the Fragment”; Condit, “Rhetorical Criticism”; Cox, “On ‘Interpreting’”; Cyphert; Gaonkar; Hariman, “Critical Rhetoric”; M. McGee, “Text, Context”; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric in”; J. Murphy, “Critical Rhetoric”). However, regardless of how one ascertains a postmodern condition, the philosophical matter of “postmodernism” hinges on our *grasp of, relationship to, and place within* the one real world of practice, discourse, and knowledge, which extends philosophically, of course, into rhetorical studies.<sup>31</sup> Notwithstanding differences on linguistics, metaphysics, or epistemology, both classical and contemporary realists hold to the independence of reality *as such* as assumptive for both everyday and theoretical discourse (Adler, The Four; Calvet de Magalhães; Casey; Centore, Being; Ellis; Hikins, “Realism and”; R. McInerny, Characters; Ronen; “Signs in General”; E. Thompson, “Ways Out.”)—it is an inescapable fact, *even in postmodernity and even for postmodernists*.

In The Sword of Imagination: Memoirs of a Half-Century of Literary Conflict, Kirk recounted his response to President Richard Nixon’s concern about the future of America:

“That depends upon public belief, Mr. President,” Kirk suggested.

“Despair feeds upon despair, hope upon hope. If most people believe the prophets of despair, they will seek out private hidie-holes and cease to cooperate for the common good. But if most people say, ‘We are in a bad way, but we still have the resources and the intelligence and the will to work a renewal’—why, they will be roused by the exigency to common action and reform. It is all a matter of belief.”<sup>32</sup>

McGee’s recommendation and Kirk’s words prompt a turn to Lloyd Bitzer’s model of “rhetorical situation” (“Functional”; “The Rhetorical”). Medhurst has emphasized the importance of both context and exigency toward adequately studying the argumentation of conservatism as a movement (“Resistance, Conservatism” 109-111). However, with the sort of depth that Medhurst has encouraged, one might also look to see if a scholar such as Kirk can enhance our theoretical understanding of rhetoric *beyond conservative discourse*. Although Bitzer’s overall work has been informed by pragmatism, his situational model is somewhat conducive to a realist approach to rhetorical studies.<sup>33</sup> Viewed as either pragmatist or realist, his assumption of an objective reality for both situational participants and rhetorical critics is a primary point of contention *or* support, for the question of “situation,” as Barry Brummett has noted, is at bottom an ontological one.<sup>34</sup>

James Hikins has suggested to me an application of the constitutive function of *perspectives* for rhetoric to Bitzer’s model of “rhetorical situation,” specifically with respect to the standard of “fitting response” (Telephone). Drawing from the realist scholars of “rhetorical perspectivism” (including Hikins) in Chapter One, I granted a

*perspectival* component to rhetoric, yet from the view of classical realism. From a *perspective*, a rhetor *associates* and *differentiates* in view of the *evaluative* judgments of audiences within the sphere of “prescriptive” truth, possibly toward the *preservation* of virtue. For the bigger picture of developing a realist rhetoric of order, Kirk’s imaginative standpoint provides one way of taking the human imagination as a formative aspect of *perspectives* within and across “rhetorical situations.” Unlike Weaver, he was not a rhetorical theorist, yet as accentuated by both Russello (The Postmodern) and Whitney (“Recovering Rhetoric”), Kirk was sensitive to the importance of rhetoric and language. This is certainly evident in Kirk’s commentaries and commemorations on the “Ethical Labor” of his friend, Richard Weaver (Confessions 193-196; “Ethical Labor”; Foreword; The Sword 172-175). Specifically, though, how might Kirk as historian theoretically inform rhetorical studies with respect to the human imagination? To this I will return in the next chapter with The Roots of American Order. If Kirk is going to be significant for building a realist rhetoric of order, one must first begin an account of his realism.

The key question at this point, then, pertains to the congruity between Kirk’s historical approach and Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics. Russello has written in his introduction:

Postmodern figures help to throw light on Kirk’s criticism of modernity, despite their great differences with conservative ideas. Kirk himself emphasized the social construction of much of our lives by tradition and custom that rendered the modern “autonomous self” simply no longer credible. Other postmodern thinkers, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer in his



Truth and Method, [...] have voiced understandings of tradition similar in some respects to those of Kirk.<sup>35</sup>

He also emphasized later in the book that Gadamer's notion of our ongoing relationship with tradition for knowledge and understanding was similar to Kirk's traditionalist view.<sup>36</sup> Kirk's appraisals of modernity in terms technology, science, and communication do bear a high degree of resemblance to that of Gadamer (Philosophical Hermeneutics 25-26, 107-112). Does he point to the same solution though? Regarding hermeneutics in relation to "serious historical research" (11-13), Gadamer has written, "It is imagination [*Phantasie*] that is the decisive function of the scholar. Imagination naturally has a hermeneutical function and serves the sense for what is questionable. It serves the ability to expose real, productive questions, something in which, generally speaking, only he who masters all the methods of his science succeeds" (12). In Kirk's parlance, Gadamer would certainly be under the category of a "scholar" rather than an "intellectual," as he was more given to a close study of texts (classical and contemporary) rather than a proclivity to see the "life-world" *primarily* in terms of power and economics, although those terms could possibly be a part of a hermeneutic inquiry within Gadamer's approach, at least in application.<sup>37</sup>

Ewa Thompson has argued that the "centering" of meaning in terms of language and epistemology is most significant for conservatives as regards areas of academic contention pertaining to identity, community, and morality—this is more important, in her view, than disputes about parties and policies ("Ways Out" 196-206). As postmodernism goes beyond denying religious belief ("blunt atheism") to challenge what has been traditionally assumed *as given* on the natural level, this epistemological task of

“centering” seems to be even more pressing than a defense of religion (197-200, 204-206). According to Thompson, “A feature that distinguishes postmodern discourse from modernity and pre-modernity is the insistence on a discourse-without-presence [...]”<sup>38</sup> Recalling her own scholarly experiences of trying “to use the insights of ‘genealogical’ discourse while in fact upholding ‘tradition,’” her own “logocentric concerns” were countered by “ways of constructing identity,” which “does away with any kind of center that identity was assumed to possess in traditional discourse,” for “in postmodern discourse, one can only speak of a process of assembling, without ever reaching the universal.”<sup>39</sup> Yet, if Gadamer’s work puts us back into the realm of appreciating “tradition,” is it “logocentric,” and if so, in what way?

One must also then ask the same question regarding Kirk. As central to his book, Russello has written, “[...] Kirk thought that disorder in the imagination was an inevitable feature of the modern world. People search for individual identity through the images that surround them, and modern images are based either on the false science of materialism or a debased sensuality, which Kirk denominated the ‘diabolic imagination’” (The Postmodern 5). Kirk certainly upheld this basis of “identity” in true and false imagery (Decadence 220-233), but part of Kirk’s quotation that Russello provides, as follows, will be germane: “‘Images are representations of mysteries, necessary because mere words are tools that break in the hand, and it has not pleased God that man should be saved by abstract reason alone.’”<sup>40</sup> For Kirk, according to Russello, conservatism should entail the fashioning of “the appropriate images to convey this sense of mystery to each generation” as “an attempt at reconstruction,” while recognizing “that engagement of the sentiments through an imaginative rendering of history was just as important as an

appeal to reason” (5-6). To consider Russello’s consequent application, how would this type of conservatism as “hermeneutic” hold up for both the defense *and* critique of “existing institutions” to get beyond, as mentioned by Russello, the sort of “situational conservatism” articulated years ago by Samuel Huntington?<sup>41</sup>

One’s evaluating if Kirk and Gadamer were “logocentric” in the *same way* matters for this and other questions. To introduce “key substantive areas of Kirk’s conservative vision,” Russello has written, “A society uses history, law, and politics to construct its identity, and each of these factors has been a consistent focus of conservative thought” (The Postmodern 6). Even as he “was sensitive to the importance of subjectivity in history” while rejecting “the Enlightenment vision of the objectivity of fact,” did Kirk really hold that “[t]he past changes” (6)? If historians participate “in the creation of history,” what of the relationship between “the objects of knowledge” and “those who study them” (6)? In his book, Russello has, *at times*, employed what I will call here for this project the language of construction. Although I am not aware of any point where Kirk utilized the language of construction, it can be discussed from a realist vantage point. According to Ewa Thompson, “Nationality is a continuous process of construction, agreed; but that does not mean that nationhood can be reduced to a construction process” (“Ways Out” 196). Of course, we construct arguments—that is a common expression. Because of the difficulty of ascertaining the reality of the past, even Adler and Van Doren discussed the ways in which historical facts *as stated propositionally* are conventional to the extent that a matter is in dispute or under study (185-187). They have even explained that facts are somewhat “culturally determined,” although factual agreement across cultures is possible (187). To the extent that language

use is involved in the formation and life of communities, one could also speak *in a certain way* of our constructing “social realities,” as both the linguistic and non-linguistic practices that are expressive of human understanding are a part of our life within reality (O’Callaghan 292-294).

However, Gadamer did not *often* utilize a *direct* language of construction in his writings.<sup>42</sup> Craig Waddell has classified Gadamer as a “contemporary constructivist philosopher,” yet because of Gadamer’s openness to “prejudices of authority and tradition” for the possibility of “understanding,” Waddell has concluded that his “dialectical approach [...] draws upon both constructivism and positivism and, thus, avoids both self-exempting fallacy and the extremes of the two positions” (112-114). Within a discussion of conservatism as regards “historical imagination” (The Postmodern 67-74), Russello has observed that Kirk did hold to the “evidence of commonality” among disparate points of view, even as it was understood before the rise of postmodern thought “that each person ‘reads’ texts and circumstances differently” (74). According to Russello, “Yet this insight should not diminish the work of the individual or deny the possibility that other readers may find meaning—even the same meaning—in the same text or circumstance” (74). To be fair to Russello on the language of construction, he is making a case for a type of postmodern conservatism, and one can “read” Kirk’s discourse and life in a particular way to amplify an argument. Scholars have “read” Edmund Burke, for instance, as exemplary for rhetorical discourse (Bormann 304-305; Bryant, “Edmund Burke: A Generation”; Bryant, “Edmund Burke: The New”; Leff and Sachs), as supportive of “value-centered historicism” (Ryn), and as indicative of classical realism (Pappin, The Metaphysics). So, it is fair to take Russello as engaging (in a non-

reductionist way) more moderate versions of postmodernism with his use of the language of construction.

Russello has articulated that Kirk's appropriation of history as transformative "into tradition" leads to the notion "that institutions or social practices worth conserving must be transmitted in new forms if are to survive," yet he explained that Kirk did not base his view on "a mild form of utilitarianism," but "on a perception not of superiority, but of familiarity" (The Postmodern 6-7). Yet, what of Russello's statement that "one cannot escape one's own tradition"?(7) How does one take that in terms of a realist epistemology, or in light of Kirk's sort of realism? Of course, it is difficult to argue with Russello's contention that, "[t]he concept of the autonomous individual at the center of much contemporary liberal political theory is false" (7). In light of certain criticisms of Kirk's defense of existing institutions amidst the inevitability of change, Russello pointed in a helpful direction by stating, "This mischaracterizes Kirk as a reactionary and ignores his strong assertion that conservatism is an attitude or set of attitudes that define one's stance toward reality, not devotion to particular social institutions" (7). Terms such as "*modernity*" and "*postmodernism*" have taken on a degree of complexity, yet Kirk held that a rationalistic approach to solving "fundamental moral problems arising from humanity's fallen nature" along with "a mechanistic view of the human imagination" were characteristic of the former (9). As Russello highlighted, from Kirk's standpoint, lacking imagination, this "liberal order" was failing, while "a new age that had discarded both liberal rationality and the premodern tradition represented in the writings of Burke" was emerging as "the Age of Sentiments," which Kirk likened (in 1980) to a "Post-Modern Age."<sup>43</sup> However, for the larger argument of this chapter, it is again germane to

observe that in Kirk's Modern Age essay, "The Age of Sentiments," in discussing this new era against "the Age of Discussion," he wrote, "Words are tools that break in the hand; and this word 'sentiments' is employed loosely in a variety of ways" (229). I will return to Russello's comparative distinction between these two ages within the concluding section of this project. For now, the matter of *words as tools* is theoretically on the table.

Yet with this "Age of Sentiments," it is recognized "that humanity is moved by the heart first," yet this "must be disciplined [...] by tradition and imagination to serve as a coherent basis for an individual or society," so Kirk's communicative efforts "intersects with postmodern thought in surprising ways, although the distinctions are equally sharp" (Russello, The Postmodern 11-12). In Russello's account of Kirk's approach, people make and re-make tradition through temporal choices, even as tradition pre-exists these persons, yet the notion "that individuals always act within a tradition, even if they change it, is an opinion shared by Kirk and the postmoderns."<sup>44</sup> Human beings "are tradition-making animals and will always seek a stable expression of agree-upon social custom," as then "[a]uthority comes into play to make decisions as to" the acceptance of this or that tradition, yet "given the long time-horizon of tradition, judgments can be made among particular social practices" (25-26). According to Russello, however, Kirk was not a "postmodern" in the sense of being a "trendy" relativist," as he "advocated core truths based in human nature"—"the 'Permanent Things' of human existence (26). Russello has helpfully emphasized that although both postmodernism and conservatism can be seen as relying upon historicism for relevant arguments, Kirk was "historically conscious" while accepting the possibility of truths *within* and *across* history, which

varies from the typically postmodernist evasion from truth or meaning amid symbolic conflict and ideological politics—prudence was the key for Kirk’s politics (26).

However, the philosophical question of “logocentrism,” as established by Ewa Thompson (“Dialectical”; “Ways Out”), will impact how we recreate or make tradition, which is a key point of comparison between Kirk and Gadamer.

Gadamer has inquired as to the centrality of “the problem of language” in relation to “modern science,” as “the question of how our natural view of the world—the experience of the world that we have as we simply live out our lives—is related to the unassailable and anonymous authority that confronts us in the pronouncements of science” (Philosophical Hermeneutics 3). He argued that since the 17th century, philosophical studies have had the “task” of mediating “this new employment of man’s cognitive and constructive capacities with the totality of our experience of life,” which has included an “attempt to bring the topic of language to the center of philosophical concern” (3-4). According to Gadamer, “Language is the fundamental mode of operation of our being-in-the-world and the all-embracing form of the constitution of the world,” so, “we always have in view the pronouncements of the sciences, which are fixed in nonverbal signs (4). He argued, “And our task is to reconnect the objective world of technology, which the sciences place at our disposal and discretion, with those fundamental orders of our being that are neither arbitrary nor manipulable by us, but rather simply demand our respect” (4). Seen from a variety of viewpoints, this dilemma of “modern science” is indicative of the impact of modernity, which is certainly relevant to Kirk’s communicative endeavors. Also, Russello’s discussion of Kirk on “place” in relation to architecture (The Postmodern 47-52) points to a certain congruity with

Gadamer's focus upon aesthetics (Philosophical Hermeneutics 3-17, 95-104). However, Kirk's criticism of the "rootlessness of much of modern life and the associated loss of place as a defining characteristic of existence" was more of a notion of "alienation" *from* "aesthetic judgment" (as opposed to "into") as problematic, for Kirk was more inclined than Gadamer to equate beauty, truth, and goodness at the level of "aesthetic consciousness."<sup>45</sup>

According to Gadamer, the standard of "historical objectivism," even with the legitimate quest for rigorous historical accuracy, provides for "our actual encounter with historical tradition—and it knows only an alienated form of this historical tradition" (Philosophical Hermeneutics 5-6). He wrote, "Indeed, it could very well be that only *insignificant* things in historical scholarship permit us to approximate this ideal of totally extinguishing individuality, while the great productive achievements of scholarship always preserve something of the splendid magic of immediately mirroring the present in the past and the past in the present" (6-7). Gadamer argued that *as it had been approached* (especially with theology), in seeking to avoid "misunderstanding," "the hermeneutical consciousness" made "alien" that "deep common accord" that is present among peoples, even as they misunderstand each other (6-8).

In Gadamer's view, we must get beyond these aesthetic, historical, and hermeneutical "alienations" to ascertain what has "been left out" as well as "what makes us so sensitive to the distinctiveness of these experiences" (Philosophical Hermeneutics 8). Relevant herein, he explained the following:

[...] we must certainly admit that there are innumerable tasks of historical scholarship that have no relation to our own present and to the depths of



its historical consciousness. But it seems to me there can be no doubt that the great horizon of the past, out of which our culture and our present live, influences us in everything we want, hope for, or fear in the future.

History is only present to us in light of our futurity. [...] <sup>46</sup>

According to Gadamer, “It is not so much our judgments as it is our prejudices that constitute our being,” which as a “provocative formulation” restores “to its rightful place a positive concept of prejudice that was driven out of our linguistic usage by the French and the English Enlightenment,” as prejudice does not “inevitably destroy the truth.”<sup>47</sup> He explained, “[...] the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience,” which “are biases of our openness to the world [...] simply conditions whereby we experience something—whereby what we encounter says something to us” (9). Hence, our framework of “prejudices” toward “the old” provide for our disposition toward openness to “the new” (9). Prejudice is linked to authority, which “is in need of hermeneutical rehabilitation,” yet “[t]he nature of the hermeneutical experience is not that something is outside and desires admission,” for “we are possessed by something and precisely by means of it we are opened up for the new, the different, the true” (9). The challenge for “this hermeneutical conditionedness of our being” is “unbiased” modern science and its “pronouncements” (10). Regardless of their philosophical differences, Kirk would have likely agreed with Gadamer’s contention that “we must ask repeatedly if something has not been omitted” within the discourse of modern science (10).

To some extent mirroring Kirk’s concerns (Decadence; Enemies 153-297; “Statistics”), the “methodological abstraction” and “effective propaganda” with

contemporary statistical studies, with its “language of facts,” points to the hermeneutical view that “[n]o assertion is possible that cannot be understood as an answer to a question, and assertions can only be understood in this way,” which also pertains to certain trends in terms of “serious historical research” regarding the details of the past (Philosophical Hermeneutics 10-12). According to Gadamer, “imagination [*Phantasie*]” assists in ascertaining “what is questionable” (the full quotation is provided above) (12). He argued that “[t]he real power of hermeneutical consciousness is our ability to see what is questionable” as it relates to the “whole of our experience,” including together art, history, and science, which then portends the following:

[...] The consciousness that is effected by history has its fulfillment in what is linguistic. We can learn from the sensitive student of language that language, in its life and occurrence, must not be thought of as merely changing, but rather as something that has a teleology operating within it. This means that the words that are formed, the means of expression that appear in a language in order to say certain things, are not accidentally fixed, since they do not once again fall altogether into disuse. Instead, a definite articulation of the world is built up—a process that works as if guided and one that we can always observe in children who are learning to speak.<sup>48</sup>

This process of language acquisition points to, for Gadamer, “the real mode of operation of our whole human experience of the world” (13-15). He argued, “There is always a world already interpreted, already organized in its basic relations, into which experience steps as something new, upsetting what has led our expectations and undergoing

reorganization itself in the upheaval” (15). It is “the support of familiar and common understanding” that “makes possible” an engagement with “the alien,” which provides “the broadening and enrichment of our own experience of the world” (15).

According to Gadamer, “Understanding is language bound,” yet “linguistic relativism” does not follow, for as “we live wholly within a language [...] there is absolutely no captivity within a language—not even with our native language” (“The Universality of” 16). The evidence for this is one’s mastering a foreign language, with which “we do not constantly consult inwardly our own world and its vocabulary,” for as one gets better at it, “the less such a side glance at our native language is perceptible, and only because we never know foreign languages well enough do we always have something of this feeling” (16). He has argued:

But it is nevertheless already speaking, even if perhaps a stammering speaking, for stammering is the obstruction of a desire to speak and is thus opened into the infinite realm of possible expression. Any language in which we live is infinite in this sense, and it is completely mistaken to infer that reason is fragmented because there are various languages. Just the opposite is the case. Precisely through our finitude, the particularity of our being, which is evident even in the variety of languages, the infinite dialogue is opened in the direction of the truth that we are. (16)

Gadamer’s contention that “the relation of our modern industrial world, founded by science” as “mirrored above all on the level of language,” calling for the hermeneutical “special task for the theologian,” certainly parallels Kirk’s *corpus* in key areas on the import of theology, although Kirk might have placed a more equal emphasis on language

and imagery than did Gadamer.<sup>49</sup> Pondering Martin Heidegger on “history” in relation to “our futurity” (like Gadamer did), Wilhelmsen wrote, “Man organizes his past around the direction of the future. This discovery has been among the most profound advances within modern times. [...] In fact, the best way to come to understand a man’s future is to find out what he has forgotten about his own past.”<sup>50</sup> In the introduction to a recent publication of Kirk’s Eliot and His Age: T.S. Eliot’s Moral Imagination in the Twentieth Century (originally published in 1971), Benjamin G. Lockerd, Jr. has highlighted these words of Eliot, which were often referenced by Kirk (the two men were correspondents) (xvii): ““There is no such thing as a Lost Cause because there is no such thing as a Gained Cause. We fight for lost causes because we know that our defeat and dismay may be the preface to our successors’ victory, though that victory itself will be temporary; we fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph.”” Yet if ““mere words are tools that break in the hand,”” what of our “centering” for identity and “the universal” in discourse?

As emphasized in Chapter One, all scholars *as humans* share a “common experience” of reality, even if their inquiries go toward the “special experience” of science or history (Adler, The Four 3-105, 224-226). Philosophy begins with this “common human experience” in the search for wisdom and truth, regardless of the claims of scientists or the contexts of philosophers (Adler, The Four 3-105, 224-261; Adler, Intellect 79-89; Adler, Ten 5-107, 191-200). From the Aristotelian and Thomistic viewpoints, the “expression of understanding” by language is normative for human beings for both ordinary usage and scientific enterprises, as both “take place in a linguistic context” (O’Callaghan 281). Although Gadamer seems to have held that there

is a real world in which we live and communicate (Philosophical Hermeneutics), he was insistent on the envelopment of both being and understanding *within* language as “not only an object in our hands,” but “the reservoir of tradition and the medium in and through which we exist and perceive our world” (18-43, 59-68).

For Gadamer, we live within an interpretive give and take of tradition that “encompasses institutions and life-forms as well as texts,” which is bounded by prejudice and authority, yet a “hermeneutic consciousness” prompts awareness and attentiveness to these boundaries in the “task” of understanding.<sup>51</sup> Gadamer has explained that in this way only does one “learn to gain a new understanding” of what has been “seen through eyes conditioned by prejudice” (Philosophical Hermeneutics 38). According to Gadamer, “But this implies, too, that the prejudgments that lead my preunderstanding are also constantly at stake, right up to the moment of surrender—which surrender could also be called transformation. It is the untiring power of *experience*, that in the process of being instructed, man is ceaselessly forming a new preunderstanding” (38). However, according to O’Callaghan (dealing with the “linguistic turn,” yet not with Gadamer’s), our “spoken language is but one of the embodied reasonable forms of life,” albeit significant, that is expressive our understanding of reality for our communal life as rational and political animals within (and not *autonomously above*) a real world.<sup>52</sup> To utilize O’Callaghan’s example, for the young child Alice, it is not the instructional experience of “cat” as a word, but her experience of a real cat that provides the conceptual basis for her learning about cats, which will certainly intersect into the human realm of language.<sup>53</sup>

According to O’Callaghan, we are political animals, so our “political life, which necessarily involves communication,” is the flowering of our “more basic vital activities or *forms of life* informed by reason,” which connects us to the epistemological and communicative value of standing within traditions (291). In view of children learning language, Gadamer has argued, “In truth we are always already at home in language, just as much as we are in the world” (Philosophical Hermeneutics 63). However, we can *only* be “at home in language” if we are *at home* “in the world.” Notwithstanding Gadamer’s appropriation of an Aristotelian example to illustrate our acquiring language and grasping universals, one could only comprehend that army taking a “stand” with either a real or a pictorial experience of war that *preceded* one’s reading of an essay by Gadamer.<sup>54</sup> We are beings in a world of being, according to O’Callaghan, who actualize our “potential being” through acts that include (but are not limited to) “the manipulation of verbal or written symbols,” all expressive of human understanding, toward “the more perfect form of existence embodied in the expression of understanding in speech which is the fruit of understanding shared with the community.”<sup>55</sup> O’Callaghan has explained, “Thus, the Aristotelian is leaving enough room for Alice, through her experience of all the forms of life, to genuinely develop, transform, and even correct what she has gained from the community in learning language” (292). Human beings write and they speak, which as significant aspects of “social reality” are indicative of how “social communities and their languages shape the acquisition of knowledge” (292-295).

With Maurice Charland’s recommended addition of “a hermeneutic moment” for “critical rhetoric” (73), Gadamer’s suggestion that the variety of human languages does not indicate “that reason is fragmented” is a valuable insight for one’s grappling with the

question of the “fragmentation” even *within* the English speaking history of Britain and America, which stills remains a point of contest regarding both rhetorical criticism and rhetorical pedagogy (John Angus Campbell, “Between the Fragment”; Condit, “Rhetorical Criticism”; Leff and Sachs). However, one is here reminded of Adler’s contention that because of our “common human experience” of reality, peoples of very distinct languages, *even if the help of a translator is needed*, can communicate (Intellect 126-139). This “common human experience” is *precursory to* and *informative of* the educational and political “dialogue” that can be bolstered within and across cultures by such studies as poetry and history, both of which engage the imagination through terms and texts, which are also experienced in reality (Adler, The Common; Adler, How to Think 204-213, 223-243, 284-293, 329-337; Montgomery, Romantic). According to Montgomery, “Indeed, the imagination has sometimes become a substitute Lord and Giver of Life, not only for the poet but for a range of would-be makers of being; the imagination, liberated from its responsible grounding in reality, creates a variety of coloring books to tempt our happy greens” (“Imagination and” 120). Specialization and “technique” in both society and science “shift [...] our vision of man in nature” as “mind is enabled to believe itself the ultimate cause and value of being” (120-122). Did Kirk, as Ted McAllister has suggested, “in some tension with his more reified label ‘mind,’” use “‘imagination’ to bridge the gap” for “the the partial and the whole, the particular and the universal”<sup>56</sup>? Regardless, is there some link in reality between what is in our mind and what we can imagine?

Russello has featured Kirk’s definition of “sentiment” as “‘a moving conviction [...] derived from some other source than pure reason,’” which is linked, of course, to the

human imagination along with a “qualified respect for reason.”<sup>57</sup> Kirk once wrote, “All great systems, ethical or political, attain their ascendancy over the minds of men by virtue of their appeal to the imagination; and when they cease to touch the chords of wonder and mystery and hope, their power is lost, and men look elsewhere for some set of principles by which they may be guided” (“The Dissolution” 32). Russello has rightly observed, “Imagination appears with great frequency in Kirk’s essays, and knowing how used the term is key to understanding his thought” (The Postmodern 53). In helpfully setting “Imagination against Ideology” (drawn from Kirk’s *corpus*), he has referenced Whitney’s “five types of imagination that contributed to Kirk’s program of cultural critique,” which Whitney (prompted by Kirk’s The Sword of Imagination) has articulated as imaginative “swords.”<sup>58</sup> For those persons of “humane letters” “who would embark on a crusade to fight the errors of their time,” Whitney has explained:

They need the *historical* imagination to understand what humankind has been. They need the *political* imagination to know what humankind can do. They need the *moral* imagination to discern what the human person ought to be. They need the *poetic* imagination to perceive how human beings should use their creative energies. And they need the *prophetic* imagination to divine what human beings will be, given the choices they make. (“The Swords” 312)

According to Russello, “For Kirk the imagination was clearly more than a passive experience; it was a central feature of the human outlook, critical to understanding the past, selecting among political compromises, or bringing about any social change [...]” (53). Russello, like other writers, has led with Kirk on “the moral imagination” (this



predominates in Kirk's *corpus* as developed from Irving Babbitt and Edmund Burke) as against "the idyllic imagination," which seeks a clean break with custom and convention, and the "the diabolic imagination," which enters to fill the void of this disillusioned total departure.<sup>59</sup> As "another corrupted form," Vigen Guroian has added "the idolatrous imagination," encompassing "[i]dolatry," which "in biblical terms, is the giving of one's highest loyalties and devotions to objects and things other than God"—this sort of relativism is, in Guroian's account, indicative of the postmodern condition (Rallying x, 50-58).

Like Russello did in his own way regarding a postmodern affinity (The Postmodern), one must work within and beyond Kirk's phraseology on such a matter as imagination. According to Russello, "While figures as diverse as politicians and historians could promote the moral imagination, Kirk found its presence most evident in literature," which "releases us from Eliot's provincialism of time [...]" (58). He also mentioned Bruce Frohnen's application of "'the insights of the seer,' [...]" which provides another approach to the imaginative."<sup>60</sup> As follows, Kirk provided one description of "moral imagination" within a positive discussion of Ray Bradbury's writings (Enemies 116-124):

The moral imagination is the principal possession that man does not share with the beasts. It is man's power to perceive ethical truth, abiding law, in the seeming chaos of many events. Without the moral imagination, man would live merely from day to day, or rather moment to moment, as dogs do. It is the strange faculty—inexplicable if men are assumed to have an

animal nature only—of discerning greatness, justice, and order, beyond the bars of appetite and self-interest. [...] (119)

Kirk's treatment of "moral imagination," which is a contribution to the ongoing question of the relationship between poetry and reality, challenges "the notions of relativism and 'cultural constructionism' that rule much of the academy today" in looking "beyond 'the barriers of private experience and events of the moment'" (Lockerd xx). Guroian has seemed to argue that the imagination as such is *distinctly human* and *particularly religious* (Rallying 49-79). However, St. Thomas has explained that both human beings and other animals (both relying upon sense perception) have imagination, yet it is the rationality of humans that allows for the exercise of their imaginative capacities beyond the "moment to moment" of life—to borrow from Adler, humanity is "different in kind" than other animals.<sup>61</sup>

So, how might one consider "moral imagination" in a way that is explicitly realist in terms of a philosophical account? Drawing upon the work of Jacques Maritain, to discuss the aesthetic aspects of "moral imagination," James P. Mesa has emphasized that "methodological purposes determine the formal distinctions made and the vocabulary used in the analysis of different modes of knowing."<sup>62</sup> From Maritain, he also distinguishes "a moral science midway between moral philosophy and prudence, a *practically practical science*, "not to be confused with prudence but is more closely tied to contingent circumstances than moral philosophy," which is encompassed in "the work of the practitioners of moral science—the moralist or moral counselor, and the psychologist insofar as the work is directed to the development and implementation of moral pedagogy [...]" (237). Inconsistency "in different modes of analysis" is not

necessary “so long as the truth of the various distinctions made and relations identified are grounded in the complex unity of the object analyzed,” yet “the division of imagination into the moral and aesthetic need not be strictly held for purposes of a practically practical science” (237).

Blending “the moral and the aesthetic is common in art, literature, and conversion experiences” (Mesa 237). In view of “the complex and incommunicable nature of concrete moral judgments,” he has directed the reader to the psychological “matter of *seeing*.”<sup>63</sup> From a Thomistic point of view, Mesa has argued that even as “the senses are the foundation of all knowledge,” the “subjective conditions” of one’s personal history gives parameters to his or her “personal possession of a *shared reality* that the human mind did not create,” which is relevant to the practical spheres of life, such as with “morality, where the intellect is operating in the heat and stress of the situation and not in the comfortable cool of a conversation in a friendly pub” (239). Against “the reduction of moral judgment and rational action to propositional thinking,” he has given a Thomistic account where the truth of prudence “is the reality of the person in the existential situation”—“a *properly-discerning-reason-in-action*” (239-240). This necessitates “the proper fusion of reason, appetites, and senses” (240). Mesa has clarified, “The simultaneously *properly-oriented-appetites-here-and-now* provide focus for correct discernment of the situation and impetus for proper action,” which contrasts with “the imprudent person” (drawing from McInerney) seeing ““through the *lens* of his disordered appetites”—for a “prudent person,” “a special, concrete sensory knowledge” is indispensable (240).

Mesa has taken this discussion of sense and practicality into the conversation on “moral imagination” (including Kirk’s contribution) (240-241). “[G]ood moral imagination [...] is subordinate to *recta ratio*,” while “bad moral imagination [...] is not” (241). Mesa has explained, “Idyllic imagination confused fantasy with reality, pleasure with the good, and feelings with knowledge. Moral imagination is grounded in an already established reality and recognizes that there are goals that ought to be realized regardless of feelings” (241). From Maritain, he has highlighted the notion that “preceding conceptual and logical expression,” human reason ““is enveloped, immersed, unconscious, embodied in images and inseparable from sensory experience,...[and] operates like a *pattern* for our inclinations.’[...]” (241). Looking to Aquinas’s discussions of memory for the life of human beings, Mesa has argued:

[...] I would have us consider moral imagination as that undirected, spontaneous portion of memory as it relates to the goods known through inclination and the senses. The moral imagination is not preconscious but *conconscious* [...] intelligence shaping, texturing experience and seeing, but is itself unnoticed. It is a *pattern* which serves as a kind of concrete universal through which possible goods available to choice are recognized and made more or less interesting to the person. It highlights familiar features congruent with the person’s full range of experiences.<sup>64</sup>

Mesa has emphasized William Kilpatrick’s call to “return to a more traditional pedagogy which presents moral values to children through lessons in history and literature” (242).

He explained:

Memory is crowded not only with objects given in direct sense experience but also with those vivid images induced through the arts. Powerful signs and images in drama, storytelling, and literature provide a kind of dramatic rehearsal for the moral life. Such memories operating in imagination either aid or hinder moral life. The proper development of moral imagination enables the child to locate his acts within the context of traditions which have ennobled human dignity. In contrast with teaching which is abstract and propositional, this type of education promotes a *visualization* of the moral life [...] The moral imagination is an essential element in the proper focusing of the moral lens and it is important that its adjustment begin early in life. (242)

Chapter Three will consider some of these elements as regards Kirk's discussion of the "roots" of order for America. Yet regardless of one's view of moral pedagogy (abstract or visual), the theoretical centrality of *experience* is here relevant, especially for a larger consideration of a realist rhetoric of order.

For St. Thomas, according to Mesa, the appetite rests upon the good, yet with the beautiful, the appetite rests at an intellectual level (242-243). However, he has argued that although one might make analytical distinctions between the aesthetic and moral dimensions of life, as "there is but one imagination," for the "concrete living person" there is a remembering of "images from the distinct orders of goodness and beauty," which is where "a practically practical moral science takes interest" (243). So, regardless of the *type* of imagination that one speaks of (moral, historical, poetic, etc.), ultimately,

the *human imagination as such* must be central, which is at first a matter of various types of *experiences*. In Enemies of the Permanent Things, Kirk wrote:

[...] My endeavor is to help to refurbish what Edmund Burke called “the wardrobe of a moral imagination.” When the moral imagination is enriched, a people find themselves capable of great things; when it is impoverished, they cannot act effectively even for their own survival, no matter how immense their material resources. I am suggesting in these pages no panacea, then, but am attempting to point the way to first principles. Most of these principles are very old ones, obscured by neglect. (16)

Also, regardless of how one “reads” Burke or Kirk (philosophically), strictly speaking, one could take “a moral imagination” as *the* “moral imagination,” which is a “pattern” extending into the sphere of moral choices, or as *an* imagination that “is subordinate to *recta ratio*,” which is typically “the moral imagination” within the writings of Kirk and others in the same camp, implicitly or explicitly. The former is the framework (as a noun) while the latter is an adjectival distinction with respect to the good.

With Mesa, one can see a connection between “the context of traditions” and the role of imagination, like with Russello’s developing his “participant” notion of history in regards to Kirk (The Postmodern 67-103). Russello has observed that conservatives have held “a declared fidelity to ‘tradition’ or ‘history,’” which looks to either the *normativity* or *utility* of the historical past.<sup>65</sup> Russello explained (in reference to Whitney) that “[t]he historical imagination attempts to trace the change and continuity that humankind has experienced over time,” which allows an historian “to examine historical circumstances

to separate ephemera from lasting conditions, to find answers to present problems in the past, and to provide a counterweight to two dangers: a narrow provincialism and a preoccupation with novelty, which Kirk thought a dangerous modern temptation” (68). According to Russello, “Kirk did believe in a reality outside of any given text; history is one way to determine the norms of that reality. Nevertheless, he shared certain postmodern historical sensibilities” (70). I will take up this “participant” notion of history within Chapter Three. Here, the matter of “logocentrism” remains.

In this project, skepticism has been one main focus regarding the spectrum of modern to postmodern thought (see Introduction and Chapter One), yet Centore has taken this into the realm of being and becoming (Being 21, 26-27)—“the modern thinker is forced to choose one and reject the other.” “‘Being that can be understood is language’” is very much tied to Gadamer’s linguistic view of human understanding, inclusive of our encountering tradition—he saw language as much more than a “tool.”<sup>66</sup> According to Kirk:

We live by myth. “Myth” is not falsehood; on the contrary, the great and ancient myths are profoundly true. The myth of Prometheus will always be a high poetic representation of an ineluctable truth, and so will the myth of Pandora. A myth may grow out of an actual event almost lost in the remote past, but it comes to transcend the particular circumstances of its origin, assuming a significance universal and abiding.

Nor is myth simply a work of fancy; true myth is only represented, never created, by a poet. Prometheus and Pandora were not invented by the solitary imagination of Hesiod. Real myths are the product of the

moral experience of a people, groping toward divine love and wisdom—  
implanted in a people's consciousness, before the dawn of history, by a  
power and a means we never have been able to describe in terms of  
mundane knowledge. ("The Dissolution" 32)

Kirk's approach to "moral imagination" is closer to Mesa's account of "moral  
imagination" as a "pattern" that is both *guided by* and *guiding of* our experiences in and  
of the world, even with the high import of language as part of that experience. However,  
with either realism or hermeneutics, one is taken to the question of words, thoughts, and  
things, or more specifically, "logocentrism."

Thompson has argued that for "literary and historical studies in American  
universities," "logocentric English" and "dialectical thinking" constitute "a difference  
between two languages," as the former "implicitly preserves the distance between subject  
and object, or between the observer and the observed; which assumes that language in  
some way represents reality; and which posits that one can test the truthfulness of a  
hypothesis but subjecting it to logical scrutiny" ("Dialectical" 10). These two linguistic  
frameworks "cannot be reduced to 'approaches' or 'insights'" (10). According to her,  
"Logocentric thinking implies the existence of an absolute order, in the mind or in reality,  
which gives rise to meaning [...]," which "discovers similarities in differences, and  
builds on similarities, correspondences, and continuity rather than on contrast, negation,  
and discontinuity."<sup>67</sup> Because of an implicit acknowledgement of "the possibility of  
thinking in a logical fashion and because it takes experience into account," it "does not  
always demand that criteria be spelled out in the definition of a concept or idea [...]"<sup>68</sup>  
Thompson explained, "Logocentric thinkers exercise man's fundamental drive to give



names to things and articulate the notion of the human subject. They use language as a tool rather than yielding to the idea of being used by language” (10). More recently, Thompson has argued that conservatism “in our pragmatic country” often entails “quoting the Fathers of the Republic, without reflecting on whether these sentences have acquired new meanings owing to disappearance of their philosophical foundations” (“Ways Out” 196). However, “logocentrism” now needs a “more fundamental” defense as “the *centering* of discourse” cannot be so easily assumed (196-197). Thompson has observed, “The conservative discourse in America is so pragmatic and so given to the Enlightenment assumption that language is a translucent place of glass through which the subject matter is clearly visible that to try to dislodge this assumption has to be the work of many writers over a long period of time” (197). Conversations on epistemology need more regularity “if any progress is to be made” (197).

In the West, according to Thompson (building from Derrida), as “philosophers have been substituting ‘center for center’” for meaning they, along with “ordinary people,” assumed “a center or *presence*” in language, including those persons of an atheistic viewpoint.<sup>69</sup> Thompson has written, “Indeed, it is this mysterious ‘something’ that gives language its range and beauty, and makes it the most astounding tool at the service of human beings. The seemingly unlimited creativity of language points to Life, or Center, at its inception” (“Ways Out” 198). She has also argued, “At a certain level, it does not matter how we name the concepts we accept as fundamental. If we do accept one or more of them, the project of postmodernism fails, for its discourse is one continuous argument against presence in language of a *telos*” (199). Because of the common “assumption that language is self-referential, or that any kind of identity is

‘constructed’ and has no core,” traditional theological, philosophical, and poetic terminology has been eclipsed by “the assumption that the idea of origin or the idea of core lie at the basis of meaning,” although, at times, *poetry* is resistant to “the trimming off of the roots of language, the breaking off of that mysterious connection between literal and anagogic of which Dante spoke” (199). There is, according to Thompson, a breakdown in meaning between conservatives and postmodernists (199). She has argued, “These Pollyannas do not notice that a fierce battle took place in the city of language itself, and that taking leisurely walks among the ruins is inappropriate. What has been successfully assaulted by postmodern thought are the fundamentals of language and not the Constitution or family values” (199). In her estimation, amid this breakdown in meaning, conservatives must engage postmodernism with an eye toward the contributions of “logocentric” scholars—with Thompson, it is here where one can turn to some of Adler’s “bodyguards of truth.”<sup>70</sup>

In view of “the insoluble paradoxes and puzzlements” that have a basis in considering “our subjective ideas—the ideas that each has in his own mind—as not only objects that we directly apprehend, but also as representations of the really existing things that we cannot directly apprehend, but about which, nevertheless, we seek to acquire knowledge” (“The Bodyguards” 128-130), Adler has explained:

Those [...] can be avoided or resolved in terms of the Thomistic insight that ideas are neither objects apprehended nor representations of things unapprehended, and in terms of the Thomistic distinction between our apprehension of objects, which is neither true nor false, and our knowledge of things by judgments which are either true or false.

I would add that the modern dichotomy of things existing outside the mind (often mistakenly referred to as having objective rather than real existence) in contradistinction to ideas existing inside the mind (regarded as having subjective existence) should be replaced by the Thomistic trichotomy of the real existence of things, the intentional existence of objects, and the subjective existence of ideas. (130)

Our ideas of objects are the *formal signs* that signify the “objects of thought” that we as human beings think and talk about in common, for an idea (a *formal sign*) is “that by which” we apprehend an object, not “that which” we apprehend (Adler, “The Bodyguards”; Adler, The Difference 112-190, 340-347n41; Adler, The Four 106-123; Adler, How to Think 1-10, 284-293; Adler, Intellect 126-133; Adler, Some Questions).

In reference to his book Ten Philosophical Mistakes, Ewa Thompson has argued that Adler’s realist account (particularly “that by which”) counters both modern (Enlightenment) and postmodern assumptions regarding the “subjectivity of thought” and the “objectivity of the world” with the practical reality that we think and speak of the same objects, even if we have differing ideas about such objects, which points beyond language *alone* for a consideration of meaning (“Ways Out” 200-201). The philosophical notion of ideas as “that by which” we apprehend objects, at a “fundamental” level, “provides ground for an essentialist and logocentric use of language, and it makes communication possible” (201). With Adler’s assertion that we derive our ideas (“meanings”) “from our mental faculties *and* from the senses,” which provides for our thinking and talking about “objects of thought,” not “meanings” (201), the following, according to Thompson, is theoretically relevant:

[...] *Ergo*, it is not true that we all live in separate worlds filled with ideas constructed by ourselves only (here Descartes begins to beckon); and it is not true that language and discourse are merely an exercise in which meanings are arrived at by referencing other meanings. Language is not a cat chasing its own tail. While our ideas (meanings construed by us on the basis of sense experiences and with the help of our own mental faculties) may differ, the objects of thought to which these ideas refer are the same for all of us. It is against this essentialist approach that postmodern thought is directed, with its denial of *Ur-meaning* being a prime example. (201)

In Intellect: Mind Over Matter, Adler explained that each of our ideas “is a single meaning, which is its reference to the object perceived, imagined, remembered, or understood” (130). The words that we use “get their meaning by being imposed upon the objects referred to by ideas as formal signs” (130). Hence, “words *express* the meanings that ideas are,” while “[t]he radical difference between words and ideas is the difference between *having* a meaning or *many* meanings and *being* a meaning and just *one* meaning,” for “[i]f the world did not contain entities that simply *are* meanings, each one just one meaning, then the world could not contain entities that *have* meaning, meanings they acquire, lose, and change.”<sup>71</sup>

One’s idea of something (as a meaning) cannot be changed or lost “without ceasing to be the meaning that it is” (Adler, Intellect 131). Nor can it be “ambiguous,” as “it would have to be several diverse meanings, which is impossible because that is tantamount to saying that one idea can become two or more ideas” (131). Meanings are

located in our human minds, “which are the meanings that words acquire when they are imposed on the objects referred to by ideas,” so it is not possible “that the different languages human beings use cause them to have fundamentally different minds and intellects” (131). If human communication is the “sharing of meaning” (as one definition of it within the discipline goes), it is with respect to the similarity of *formal signs* (ideas) by which we apprehend objects of thought.<sup>72</sup> From Chapter One herein, one might recall Adler’s likening of “[t]he psychologizing of common experience” to the ““way of ideas,”” which “makes experience subjective, rather than objective” (The Four 248). Both the import of “logocentrism” and ““the way of ideas”” are at the crossroads of conservatism and postmodernism. Marion Montgomery brings one back to the question of tradition as it relates to our common experience of reality.

In view of Richard Weaver’s Ideas Have Consequences (published in 1948), Montgomery has recalled the contending of Weaver and others with “*idea* reduced to *ideology*” toward “a recovery of idea to the perspective of human intellectual limits,” which commenced “the endless sorting of the concept of idea which we inherit as our own task, an obligation to our intellectual inheritances in a stewardship of intellect itself” (“Consequences” 165-167). A resistance had begun against “Modernism” that would include, among the publication of other important works, Kirk’s The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana in 1953 (167-168). While “these attempts to recall intellect to known but forgotten things” were not in such agreement so “as to have allowed the emergence of a common metaphysical position to intellectual awakening,” there was common opposition to “the reductionist intent of those Modernist doctrines triumphantly devoted to intellect as autonomous,” which constituted “a new religion” (168). Through

the 1960s and beyond, alliances developed and decayed among the differing types of conservatives, resembling those who would be connected in the 1940s, “for all of whom Christian orthodoxy was important,” which entailed “a recovered orientation” that goes further than the “immanent horizon of history in an affirmation of the transcendent” (168-169). What emerged was “not a common vision but a common opposition to the dominant spirit of our age” that was at times an “*ad hoc* [...] resistance to Modernism” (169). In view of Eliot, drawing from the Southern Agrarian writer Allen Tate, Montgomery has set modernity’s “provincialism,” which dwells only in the present in disregard of the past against a “regionalism” that links the past to the present.<sup>73</sup>

“The sense of an ending” within an “exasperated circumstance” (by the 1990s) is a result, according to Montgomery, “of our inattention to the necessity of a metaphysical understanding of the givenness of creation, including the limited givenness of man himself” (“Consequences” 171-172). Even with the metaphysical efforts of those such as Weaver, “our actions of resistance, however heroic, too often prove only *ad hoc*,” which “means that we contend on the grounds chosen by the radical antagonists of being itself, whereby (the transcendent denied) attention must be focused upon the immanent, upon a closed world” (172). The present attack on “the old vision of *being* itself” is at bottom a “provincialism” of individual intellects as “autonomous and therefore sovereign” to the ultimate peril of “*whatever is*,” for “creation becomes the unexamined provender to the appetitive sovereignty of the alienated person” as “that object under destruction (or in a Modernist term of camouflage *deconstruction*) is the *body of creation*, which body includes nature and nations, things and persons” (173). Concerned about “our metaphysical weaknesses as traditionalists,” Montgomery turned to Weaver, whose

version of idealism he ultimately sought to correct, yet he would also provide a reminder of Eliot's words regarding gained and lost causes (174).

From Eliot, Montgomery has pointed “to that equipment necessary against those opposing weapons of false ideas established by Modernism—ideas themselves *partially* dependent upon truth, but transformed by ideological partiality into absolute ideology.”<sup>74</sup> Beyond the terms “*liberalism*” and “*conservatism*,” he went to that term appropriate to the larger battle that he had described—“*tradition*,” yet this “is possibly a self-wounding sword if not carefully repaired for each encounter” (“Consequences” 175-176). According to Montgomery, “*traditionalism*” can help us recover a notion of persons in community, yet “the viability of traditional man” rests on each “*person* seeing before and after but also seeing within and above,” which points to the following:

[...] Through orthodoxy, let us say, our concern must become paramount that tradition orient itself to the *truth of things* beyond mere tradition taken as current residue in intellect, carried in the blood of “feeling” but unpurified by thought. For “good habits” are good insofar as they are oriented by the ultimate truth of things, which for Eliot, as it would be presently for Weaver, requires a vision of the immanent in relation to the transcendent.

It is through orthodoxy, then, that community in the world maintains “a consensus between the living and the dead,” and so stands witness to whatever truth may be thus rescued, an inheritance we are to bequeath to those not yet born. [...] <sup>75</sup>

If we are both *formed by* and *transformative of* tradition (as Russello has argued) then we must with Montgomery go beyond “what others have thought” to “how the truth of things stand” for both direction and correction, even amid “the sacrifice now made to political expediency in pursuit of desired power disguised by signs, though those signs may residually carry a lingering tradition older than the moment’s expediency” (177-180). According to Montgomery, “Rather, what is required is a devotion to the truth of things as the measure of the validity of those things we say,” even as we utilize of the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, which in Montgomery’s view, St. Thomas himself would support (179-181). Although “[w]e are born traditionalists [...] original and regional, [...] we may make ourselves provincials in false pursuits of self-declared originality,” yet in resisting “that deconstruction of our natural gifts as created intellectual soul incarnate, we must first of all accept responsibility for those gifts,” as traditionalists have the “abiding responsibility” to “the winnowing of” their “historical and natural inheritance in a continuing rescue of those permanent things of which Eliot spoke” (181).

How did “the truth of things stand” for Russell Kirk? Within a larger discussion on Kirk and religion, Dermot Quinn affirmed that “[t]he permanent things of which Kirk so often spoke—order, harmony, even, for that matter, sorrow and grief—are, first and foremost, *things*” (219). Yet, according to Quinn, Kirk’s epistemology, because of his affirmation of Cardinal Newman’s notion of the “Illative Sense” in The Conservative Mind, Kirk was not just “an expositor of patristic or scholastic thought,” but “now involved in an encounter with ideas that have shaped modernity—even post-modernity—in the last century or so” (222-223). The eventual trends from empiricism and positivism to “Heideggerian phenomenology, which offered a very different account of knowing, the



perceiver now restored to something like centrality, perception itself understood as freighted with cultural, historical, personal significance,” as “[o]bjectivity, newly problematic, began to seem unattainable, even undesirable,” even with the ensuing excesses, “surely has a place in Kirk’s story” (223-224).

With Kirk’s understanding of Newman, “a strikingly modern thinker,” he “was able to offer a newly persuasive account of history that appealed beyond the usual denominational or philosophical categories” (Quinn 224). Quinn has argued that the historical “emphasis on the local, the finite, the culturally unique could now be seen as part of this new phenomenology of man,” for as our knowledge is engaged “in the complexity of the personal and the particular, the inescapable here-and-nowness of our lives, are not to be seen as forms of limitation but as radical apprehension of the variety, indeed the infinitude, of things,” which “was a creative response to created order; a new way of perceiving the intelligibility of the world” (224). Regardless of realism or conservatism, Kirk “was also curiously [...] modern enough to speak a language of signs and symbols, of culture and cult, of intuition and imagination, of reason’s power and reason’s limits,” so “Edmund Burke seems not so very far from Edmund Husserl, Froude closer than might be thought to Freud” (224-225). Yet, this must not eclipse “a deeper realism” in Kirk’s *corpus* (225). Quinn wrote:

[...] what was the reality he claimed to know? [...] Realism has its small satisfactions [...] We should not willingly give up these pleasures. Nor, however, should we become addicted to them. Honest empiricism may keep our feet on the ground but without idealism, without some metaphysical principle, we would deny ourselves the sky above and the

sun beyond. If Kirk held to solid things, he also held, more firmly, to the solidity of their meaning. Their deeper intelligibility had to do with order and freedom, with which conservative schemes—any human scheme, for that matter—may not survive. (225)

However, as Joshua Hochschild as indicated, interpretations of Newman's work do vary, as he has, for instance, ultimately argued for "Newman the Aristotelian, aware of both the power and limits of theoretical reason, neither relativist nor rationalist," whose approach to tradition was "not an *ad hoc* traditionalism."<sup>76</sup> Regardless, Newman's notion of the "Illative Sense" would bear some relationship to Kirk on imagination, yet it would be Eliot's influence that would move Kirk's approach away from the "New Humanism" of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More (Beer, "The Idea"; Guroian, Rallying 31-45), both of whom Kirk always highly regarded for American thought and letters.

Weighing Kirk alongside of Gadamer does necessitate the question of phenomenology. Kirk certainly favored the "personal" dimensions of knowledge (he often recommended the writings of Polanyi), yet even as there are some mixed accounts of Kirk's philosophical influences in the secondary literature with regard to Thomists and Thomism (Beer, "The Idea"; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; Quinn; Zoll, "The Social"), his key realist assumptions should not be eclipsed. Clinton A. Brand has emphasized Kirk's debt to Eliot, particularly regarding the "vitality" of tradition through "translation and assimilation" (357-361). With this, because of Gadamer's arguments "for the solidly historical character of knowledge" along with his rehabilitation of "the concept of 'prejudice' to help reclaim the resources of authority and tradition as means of creative insight and rational participation," Brand has brought Gadamer's philosophical

hermeneutics to Eliot's *corpus*, making reference to Kirk's Eliot and His Age along the way.<sup>77</sup> However, regarding Eliot, in this same book, Kirk provided some intellectual history from Montgomery as follows:

“The science of the mind that Eliot studied proved insufficient [...] Phenomenology is after all a development of subjectivity as if it were self sufficient. What it leads to is a separation of subjective being from any Other. The possibility of any dialogue, that word used so desperately in our time, is doomed. For phenomenology, as that branch of learning had developed by the time of Prufrock, was a heresy to the orthodox family relationship of minds very like the Albigensian in its effective isolation of the individual. So considered, one sees how such a heresy is destructive to the sanity of the artist no less than to other men, for a part of the definition of the artist is that he communicates vision, whether simple simile or complex metaphysical system. The pure application of phenomenology means not only that the poet cannot write for others but that he cannot even write for himself.”[...] <sup>78</sup>

At a later point in the book, Kirk provided some of his own thoughts regarding Eliot's ongoing relevance:

To demand that Dante be didactic after the system of Aquinas would be to efface The Divine Comedy; to demand that Eliot, in little more than a thousand lines of verse, should refute modern rationalism—that would be to deny the function of poetry. So it is through a diversity of questing insights, through abstractions illustrated by concrete representations, that

Eliot renews the moral imagination. The rest must be left to theological studies, and to one's own experiences of reality.

All that such a poem as Four Quartets may accomplish is to relate one remarkable man's vision of time, self, reality, and eternity: to describe one person's experience of transcendence. Because there does exist a community of souls, it is possible for some other human beings to apprehend the poet's symbols of transcendence; and to draw analogies between those symbolic images and their own fleeting glimpses, in the journey of this life, of permanent things not knowable through the ordinary restricted operation of five senses. Phenomenology notwithstanding, it is possible for a conscience to speak to a conscience, and for the interior perceptions of a man of genius to quicken and order another man's moral imagination.<sup>79</sup>

In my estimation, these elements of the book are significant for the general question of Kirk and postmodernism, including a comparison between him and Gadamer. It is arguable that phenomenology (even with its variant forms), at least in some accounts, is a major link among the multiple lines of postmodern thought.<sup>80</sup>

Beyond a “pure application of phenomenology” (to recall Montgomery's words), Gadamer expressed an appreciation for transcendental phenomenology yet demonstrated an assimilation of existential phenomenology—aspects of the latter clearly inform his approach to hermeneutics (Philosophical Hermeneutics). If phenomenology takes us “to the things themselves,” realism works *from* the things themselves—truth is the correspondence between the mind and reality.<sup>81</sup> Yet even as existential

phenomenology is attentive to the plight of our everyday lives “in the world,” Gadamer had argued for an envelopment of our grasp of the “nature of things” (a consequence of correspondence) into the “language of things.”<sup>82</sup> According to Centore, with the unity of “the knower *and* the known,” there is “an *intentional* relationship,” as “[t]he thing as known possesses an intentional being [...],” for “[k]nowledge intends, tends to, or contains, other beings”—“the knower becomes the thing known.”<sup>83</sup> He has explained:

[...] In direct contrast to Aquinas’s realism, which recognizes that the idea of something and the something are indeed one and the same thing (which is the *only* way to avoid Epistemological Idealism), Gadamer claims that only through the medium of language can human beings be related to the world. Finite, historical man meets the world in language.<sup>84</sup>

In light of Adler’s “bodyguards of truth,” an individual human being holds a *subjectively existing* idea that signifies an *intentionally existing* “object of thought” that corresponds to a *really existing* thing.

Staying with Adler, by convention, humans impose *instrumental signs* (of a particular language) onto “objects of thought,” which as commonly known or understood are communicated among peoples, while their ideas (*formal signs*) are prompted by both their “common experience” and “special experience” of reality. To take a classical realist step beyond Donald Ellis’s realist arguments for “coherentism” (made against “contextualism” and “historicism”), people “share” meanings when they have similar ideas (*formal signs*), which as “that by which” they know or understand “objects of thought,” comprise the *meaning* of a spoken or written “message,” both within and across time and place.<sup>85</sup> *Contra* Gadamer (Centore, “Classical Christian”; Gadamer,

Philosophical Hermeneutics 102-103), the *mens auctoris* stands as primary for a study of meaning, or more precisely, what “objects of thought” are or were signified by the meanings (formal signs) as conventionally expressed in words, even with the challenges for a “meeting of the minds” in conversation and the difficulties of “interpretive reading” for books (Adler, How to Speak; “Signs in General”; Adler and Van Doren). In addition, the “laws of thought” are founded in our “common experience” of reality, or more specifically, *being*, which takes us beyond language *as primary* for the logical communication of meaning.<sup>86</sup> The ““deep common accord”” (Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics) between and among human beings for communication is at one important level a composite of experiential commonality that includes, *but is not limited to*, language.

Communicative understanding is a result of two minds *in accord* at the level of ideas, even if those ideas as linguistically expressed are from a different time and a different place. The degree to which minds are not in accord is the degree to which there is misunderstanding. Individually, for “objects of thought” that are under study, one can understand more in relation to what is known through experience and language, yet at a *philosophical* level, one can understand (not know) an “object of thought” such as “equality,” “liberty,” or “justice,” which may be followed by judgment and inference toward the clarification of “conceptual understanding” (Adler, Intellect 156; Adler, We Hold). Gadamer has stated, “It is not so much our judgments as it is our prejudices that constitute our being [...]” (Philosophical Hermeneutics 9). In his study of Thomas Paine’s “rhetorical leadership” from the vantage point of “perceptual framing,” David C. Hoffman has pointed out that Hans Gadamer, Richard Weaver, and Russell Kirk had

continued “the semantic alignment of prejudice with custom and its opposition to individual reason” from the usage of Edmund Burke (Weaver’s contribution, for instance, focused upon clarifying the scope of judgments previously made).<sup>87</sup> However, if Joseph Pappin is correct in arguing for Burke’s classical realism (The Metaphysics), then ultimately, one would have to take “prejudice” as a repository of both individual and communal *experience* (which began at some point with sense perception) that governs the *conceptual* “framing” of politics and rhetoric, even amid the influence and import of language.

A major theme of Kirk’s in Enemies of the Permanent Things is “normative consciousness,” which linked for Kirk to the significance of tradition (Russello, The Postmodern). Kirk wrote, “But I do propose to assist in the rescue of normative consciousness from the clutch of ideology. For it ought to be the moral imagination which creates political doctrines, and not political doctrines which seduce the moral imagination” (Enemies 20). For a “restoration of a proper vocabulary,” he would go on to discuss “norms,” ultimately to define them as standards “against which any alleged value must be measured objectively” (20-21). After an extended discussion on “normative consciousness” (21-27), Kirk would look back to the “common patrimony” of Europe and America (27-34). However, he would also inquire as to “the sources of the enduring norms” along with their authoritative standing for us (34). One answer in particular is germane to Kirk’s “logocentrism.”

Kirk indicated that there are “three doors of normative perception: revelation, custom or common sense, and the insights of the seer” (Enemies 34). He proclaimed his embrace of religious orthodoxy, yet because of the predominance of unbelief, he would

turn to David Hume to write, “The standards of morality are shown to us by the study of the story of mankind, and the arbiters of those standards are men of strong sense and delicate sentiment, whose impressions force themselves upon the wills of their fellow-men.”<sup>88</sup> Among the sources of “norms,” Kirk would “turn first to custom, or what we call common sense” (35). He explained:

The good citizen, Virgil remarks, is a law-abiding traditionalist: that is, a man governing himself by custom, deferring to the habits formed among a people through their painful process of trial and error, their encounters with gods and men over a great many years. Custom is the expression of a people’s collective experience, some of it accumulated before that people had a history. [...]

Custom is closely allied with common sense, “those convictions which we receive from nature, which all men possess in common, and by which they test the truth of knowledge and the morality of actions; the practical sense of the greater part of mankind, especially as unaffected by logical subtleties or imagination, as the old Century Dictionary puts it. Common sense is “consensus,” or general agreement on first principles—a word somewhat tarnished by politicians in recent years. In the vast majority of our normative decisions, we defer to the consensus of mankind—that is, we feel ourselves bound to think and behave as decent men always have thought and behaved. Conformity to custom—call it prejudice, if you will—makes a man’s virtue his habit, as Burke expressed this idea. Without the power of custom to control and instruct us, we



should be involved perpetually in “agonizing reappraisals,” endeavoring to decide every question upon its particular merits and advantages of the moment; we would be unnerved incessantly by doubt and vacillation.

Common sense and custom, then, are the practical expressions of what mankind has learnt in the school of hard knocks. There exists a legitimate presumption in favor of venerable usages; for your or my private experience is brief and confused, but the experience of the race takes into account the consequences suffered or the rewards obtained by multitudes of human beings in circumstances similar to yours and mine. Custom and common sense constitute an immemorial empiricism, with roots so antique and obscure that we can only conjecture the origins of any general habit. One thing we do know: it is dangerous to break with ways that have been intertwined so intricately in human longings and satisfactions. Those who toss the cake of custom into the rubbish-bin may find themselves supperless. And if common sense is discarded—why, it is supplanted not by a universal intellectualism, but by common nonsense.

(35-37)

In view of the influence of contemporary philosophical idealism, one might not be so quick to dismiss the “universal intellectualism” resulting from a discarding of “common sense” (at least in academia) (Adler, Intellect 79-89; Adler, Ten 5-107, 191-200; Gilson, Methodical; Gilson, Thomist Realism; Montgomery, “Consequences”), yet the consequent “common nonsense” would still hold in general.

Regardless, although there is *perhaps* some congruity between Kirk and Gadamer on the “dogmatic acceptance” of authority and tradition through “reflection,” Kirk’s work did not suggest “that [...] reality happens precisely *within* language,” even for “societal reality” (Philosophical Hermeneutics 3-58). Regarding the origins of “folk-wisdom” (37), Kirk continued in Enemies of the Permanent Things:

The answer may be that at the beginnings of anything resembling a true civil social order, individual men possessed of genius—obscure men whose very names have perished—were the discoverers of the truths which we now call custom and common sense. Hume’s men of strong sense and delicate sentiment, or their primitive forerunners, presumably existed when man was becoming true man; and their insights were impressed upon their primitive fellows. [...] originally these may have been the intuitions or the empirical conclusions of gifted individuals, who were emulated by the common man; but as the elapse of centuries has hidden the original authorship of folkways and popular convictions, so mankind has come to assume that the multitude itself always apprehended these truths, much as the ant-hill and the hive seem to be governed by a collective consciousness without the direction of commanding intellects.

Such reflections—perhaps impossible to demonstrate or to disprove—lead us to the third principle door to normative understanding: the astounding perceptions of the seer—“the blind man who sees,” like Homer. A few men mysteriously endowed with a power of vision denied to the overwhelming majority of us have been the Hammurabis of our

moral and political and literary codes. We know their names, although sometimes we know little but their names and some appended scanty legends. [...] We accept such men of genius as authorities because we recognize, however imperfectly, that they see farther than you or I see.

[...] Their authority in part is vindicated by the immense influence which their words have exerted ever since those words were uttered; and in part by the fact that intelligent men in every age, upon reflection, have assented to the truths exerted by these prophets and poets and philosophers. You and I see as in a glass, darkly—the riddle of a mirror; but those few men of vision saw something of the real nature of things.

(37-38)

As we will see with the impending study of The Roots of American Order in Chapter Three, although Kirk's general emphasis on experience in relation to reflection is somewhat congruent with classical realism, such speculation (and it was just that it seems) about this ancient source of "common sense" would be problematic, to some extent, at *the level of philosophy*. However, unlike Gadamer, Kirk embraced the notion of "genius," even as extending into the realm of the literary arts, which does have a notional standing for aesthetics within the history of classical realism.<sup>89</sup>

If the "moral imagination" provides a "pattern" *of and for* experience, including that of literature, Kirk certainly did display an awareness of the high importance of imaginative language for the ongoing life of "norms" for humanity, even as "the man of letters [...] holding up the mirror to nature [...] in his appeal of a conscience to a conscience [...] may row with muffled oars [...] aware only dimly of his normative

function” (Enemies 42). Hence, here, with Kirk, the subjectivity of the *mens auctoris* is not left behind in history. According to Kirk, “The better the artist, one almost may say, the more subtle the preacher. Imaginative persuasion, not blunt exhortation, commonly is the method of the literary champion of norms” (42). In his discussion of Bradbury (Enemies of 116-124), Kirk argued:

In Bradbury’s fables of Mars and of the carnival, fantasy has become what it was in the beginning: the enlightening moral imagination, transcending simple rationality. The everyday world is not the real world, for today’s events are merely a film upon the deep well of the past, and they will be swallowed up by the unknowable future. The real world is the world of the permanent things, which often are discerned more clearly in the fictional dead cities of Mars or the fictional carousel of Cooger and Dark than in our own little private slice of experience. [...]

The trappings of science-fiction may have attracted young people to Bradbury, but he has led them on to something much older and better: mythopoeic literature, normative truth acquired through wonder.

Bradbury’s stories are not an escape from reality; they are windows looking upon enduring reality. [...] (123-124)

As relevant to rhetorical argumentation, Russello has helpfully pointed to our *intuitive* capacities toward a consideration of both the originality of the human imagination for “discernment” and our apprehending of the natural law in community (The Postmodern 62-64, 151-157). There is though, admittedly, a mixture of Platonic and Aristotelian tendencies across Kirk’s *corpus*, yet one might also look to his work in terms of a

Thomistic understanding of “poetic knowledge,” which is an *intuitive* grasp of truth (still through an experience of reality) that goes to “wonder” as the beginning of philosophy and is certainly communicable to some extent in language.<sup>90</sup> Within his treatment of “poetic knowledge,” James S. Taylor wrote, “We have to frequently remind ourselves in our utilitarian age that poetry, and all art, for the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition, was considered a means of real and valuable knowledge, a knowledge of the permanent things” (12). From a realist point of view, one must be careful not to disconnect our literary and imaginative considerations or our use of reason from our *experiences* of reality (Montgomery, The Trouble; Montgomery, Virtue). A realist rhetoric of order ought to account for the *integration* of our human capacities, even amid the varying communicative contexts that we encounter.

Is there a realist way of taking “historical man” meeting the world? For a proper balance between “history” and “nature” in appraising of “the truth of things,” one must be careful of the elevation of history “through Historicism,” the raising “of history to some sort of agency,” and the error of making history “an entity, as if it were at least coequal to *being* itself,” even amid the contingencies of human life (Montgomery, Romantic xii-xiv, 208-212; Montgomery, “Tradition and”). According to Centore, Classical Christian Philosophy (CCP), which entails classical realism, has been downgraded by a variety of philosophical currents (“Classical Christian”), including Gadamer’s “radical historicism” (398-399). CCP encompasses claims of truth, yet required for entry into “the postmodern philosophy club is the denial that one has some exclusive claim on the truth,” yet to genuinely do this “one must actually let loose the flux and admit that the universe is only becoming, or that being, if one still wishes to use

such outmoded language, *is* becoming; that reality *is* process” (400). Yet, without compromising to “process philosophy or theology,” one can recognize that “CCP, as found in those, such as Saint Thomas Aquinas, who accepted the truth of Scripture and Church teachings, does in fact have a deep and sincere appreciation of temporality,” while humankind’s “immersion in becoming, a deep sense of the transitory nature of things, and time-consciousness have always played a central role” within Classical Christian Philosophy (401). As will be seen in the next chapter, Kirk leaned toward this “out-dated and classical form of interpretation” (as described by its detractors in Centore’s account) (398), yet one will be able to ascertain Kirk’s sensitivity to temporality in terms of *both* history and nature, which of course pertains to rhetoric.

However, both Alasdair MacIntyre and Frederick Wilhelmsen have indicated that Thomists have kept at a distance from the relationship of philosophy to history.<sup>91</sup> In a highly appreciative essay on Gadamer, MacIntyre contended that although we have “no standpoint outside history to which we can move, no way in which we can adopt some presuppositionless stance, exempt from the historical situatedness of all thinking,” there is no incompatibility in arguing “that a great deal turns on the nature of our awareness of the contingencies of our historical situatedness and that a certain kind of awareness, while not providing a standpoint outside of history, can transform our relationship to it” (“On Not”). In our learning from older texts of philosophy, we reach “conclusions that presuppose an appeal to standards of rationality and truth that do in some measure transcend the limitations of historically bounded contexts,” for we don’t “escape from our particular historical situation into some extrahistorical realm of timeless judgment,” yet “we come to recognize that our historical situation is itself partly constituted by the

possibility of appealing beyond and even against that situation” (158). MacIntyre rested these contentions on the “standards of argument” that are necessary for genuine study and correction in philosophy across contexts, even finding a recognition of these standards within Gadamer’s own work (158-166).

*Contra* Gadamer, according to MacIntyre, “philosophical progress” is possible if reconceived in a way that entails, assisted by Gadamer’s insights, an interpretively practical focus guided by *phronesis* (“On Not” 166-168). Yet this must allow for, in accord with Aristotle’s *corpus*, “someone who is practically directed through habituation into the virtues and thereby toward the human good but also of someone who” occasionally can, “by reflection upon his own and others’ activity [...] arrive at some degree of theoretical understanding of the virtues, including *phronesis*, and their relation to the human good,” which has individual as well as political implications.”<sup>92</sup> “The question of language,” according to MacIntyre, likely provides for his most profound departure from Gadamer’s work, as follows:

The natural languages, on the view that I am taking, may not in their earlier stages be adequate to, but can become adequate to the tasks of metaphysical inquiry, and both poets and philosophers have played key and complementary parts in making them into what they originally were not. And it is sometimes dangerous to be too respectful toward what is taken to be proper usage. At any given stage in the history of a natural language, the rules of usage that are accorded respect by contemporary users of that language may turn out to be obstacles to further inquiry, metaphysical, scientific or moral, and poets and philosophers may

therefore have to move beyond them—to violate them—in order to express questioning thoughts that it would not previously have been possible to express. The natural languages are not in origin, but later become in part at least works of art, made what they are by, among others, poets and philosophers.<sup>93</sup>

As MacIntyre's writings have been a reference point among those conservatives confronting modernity or discussing postmodernism, I will return to MacIntyre within the concluding section of this dissertational project.

Frederick Wilhelmsen took his own stand against “presuppositionless philosophy,” but strongly turned toward the realm of experience as related to both faith and reason (“Faith and”). Wilhelmsen wrote, “Experience, involving—as it does—man’s sensorial marriage with a world whose being is saturated in time and the restlessness of matter, is a ‘going through’ a kaleidoscope of what originally are isolated impressions for the sake of ‘coming out’ with a patterned whole whose symbolic structure can be penetrated intelligently” (27-28). *Both* everyday people and academic philosophers reason within their experience of reality, while the philosopher speculates on “questions and then tries to answer them,” as this “questioning stance is consubstantial with the wonder from whence philosophy begins” (27-31). With Kirk’s emphasis upon the communicative significance of “myth,” Frederick Wilhelmsen’s “post-modern articulation of Thomistic wisdom” (The Paradoxical 192) *could* be a helpful guide toward a realist rhetoric of order, especially as he considered both the mythical and (to some extent) rhetorical dimensions of cultural life (The Paradoxical 73-211). Some of his



philosophical and cultural considerations will assist in looking at The Roots of American Order in Chapter Three.

Gadamer has contended, “Being that can be understood is language” (Philosophical Hermeneutics). However, regardless of one’s realist standpoint on philosophy and history, one can modify this as follows: With our common *experience* of things, we can express meaning by the use of language toward a commonality of understanding.<sup>94</sup> This is “logocentrism” in the classical sense that Ewa Thompson has indicated (“Ways Out”)—language with a “center” in reality. Even in *genuinely* seeing Hans Gadamer as more moderate among the postmodernists for our important encounters with “myth” as against the “prejudices” of the Enlightenment (Philosophical Hermeneutics 3-17, 44-58), he ultimately takes us and reality as “centered” *within* language.

To return to Russello (The Postmodern 7), Kirk did base his view not only on “familiarity,” but also on *some degree* of “superiority,” at least for the traditions of America and England, which will be evident in the next two sections of this project. According to Pappin, “In effect, both for the realist Aquinas and for Burke the development of a second nature, shaped by habit, custom and tradition, is not only consistent with, but a natural outgrowth from, our first or essential human nature” (The Metaphysics 115). Notwithstanding the way in which one “reads” Edmund Burke, in view of The Roots of American Order, one might add Russell Kirk to this list. It is Kirk the “logocentric” and realist historian that points his readers outside of the “provincialism of time,” which is relevant to the formative role of the human imagination for our *perspectives* within and across “rhetorical situations.” Specifically, for this larger

argument, the question of human nature *as such* can assist in ascertaining a realist rhetoric of order.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kirk wrote, “In this book, we examine the roots of order in the United States of America” (The Roots 5). Praising and defending, in the rhetorical sense of these terms, is will be further elaborated in Chapter Three and in the concluding section of the project.

<sup>2</sup> As Ryan Holston indicates for a discussion on Edmund Burke and historicism, the term “historical consciousness” is varied in its bases and applications (37). Here I am using it in a general sense with an eye to Kirk’s engagement with the term, particularly within his discussions of the historian John Lukacs (“History and”; “Regaining Historical”).

<sup>3</sup> In his presentation entitled, “Recovering Rhetoric: How Ideas, Language and Leadership can Triumph in Most-Modern Politics,” Whitney makes reference to an important essay by Kirk regarding rhetoric, “Rhetoricians and Politicians,” which is a review of the book, The Language of Politics in the Age of Wilkes and Burke by James T. Boulton. Russello works from this article regarding Kirk on rhetoric within a larger discussion of the significance of “the statesman” in Kirk’s work (104-145). Whitney has made some reference to Weaver on rhetoric in this particular presentation.

<sup>4</sup> This is a somewhat favorable review of W. Wesley McDonald’s, Russell Kirk and the Age of Ideology, yet with encouragement to further types of study (Beer, “The Idea”).

<sup>5</sup> Concerning the essay, “Russell Kirk and the Conservative Heart” by Mark Henrie (which I will reference at later points in this project), Beer has argued:

Henrie’s essay shows, I think, that the way to truly see Kirk afresh is not only, like McDonald, to have the courage and good sense to step outside

the conventional historiography by looking at Kirk against a background of something other than the conservative political tradition, but also to step outside of Kirk's own idiom so that one doesn't get bogged down in the vagaries of terms like "permanent things" and even the "moral imagination." That, perhaps, is the analytical tool that will allow us to destroy Kirk the icon and recover Kirk the man. (49)

<sup>6</sup> Lewis 456-457. Lewis has noted that Adler "even expressed disgust for the conservative movement" and cited an interview by Mike Wallace where Adler regarded "that right wing as the most reactionary and subversive force of good government you could have in this country" in relation to unlimited capitalism (456n14). Adler certainly had strong leanings toward political modernity (Haves Without; The Common; We Hold) and even world government (Adler, The Common; Hochschild, "Globalization" 48), although he did not buy the notion of a "state of nature" (Adler, The Common 179-189; Adler, Ten 167-177). For those of the classical realist view, a discussion of "truth" and "error" might take one to Mortimer Adler's "The Bodyguards of Truth," in which he also spoke to the matter of "error" in philosophizing. Therein, as in his larger body of work, he granted legitimacy to some contemporary philosophical questions (the question of liberty and equality in relation to justice, for instance) in light of some principles of classical realism, which in Adler's estimation, have been ignored or misunderstood among modern philosophers (125-128). He concluded with Aristotle's words regarding the mixed ease and difficulty of investigating truth, which is better served as a "collective pursuit," according to Adler, by Aristotle's suggestion of accounting for the achievements and mistakes of preceding generations (133). From Adler's standpoint, this

accounting of the past has been disregarded in modern times, unlike the line of study within the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas, which “is a sustained example of conscientious observance of this recommendation” (133). These items above by Adler, of course, pertain to his frequent notion that “philosophy is everybody’s business” (The Four vii-xxvii, 224-261). Adler’s “bodyguards of truth,” as remedial for the contemporary circumstances of philosophy, are still relevant for if one considers the ongoing plight of realist philosophy, for it would be more than plausible to state that a major shift toward classical realism has not occurred in academia, especially for the field of communication and rhetorical studies, where even contemporary realisms have not a high standing.

<sup>7</sup> Of interest here is “The Great Books Idolatry and Kindred Delusions” in Hayakawa’s Symbol, Status, and Personality (154-170). Hayakawa wrote:

I should add here in fairness that Hutchins and Adler, along with Time, Life, and Fortune, while sharing the metaphysics of the Neo-Scholastics, do *not* share the antidemocratic views of the more rabid types among them. They every-man-a-philosopher program of the Great Books Movement is profoundly democratic in spirit, however mistaken in educational philosophy. [...] (169)

<sup>8</sup> Wilhelmsen, “The Great” 326-331. A distinction between textual meaning and philosophical truth, in my view, is evident in Adler’s work (Adler, The Four; Adler, “The Philosopher”; Adler, “The Philosopher [...] Continued”; Adler and Van Doren), even with his years of advocacy for “great books” programs. In a commemoration of M.E. Bradford (“Melvin E. Bradford”), Wilhelmsen wrote, “Although Bradford read more than

anybody I have known—I made the judgment seriously, after having pondered it carefully—he was no partisan of some ‘Great Books’ theory of education which would abstract a dozen or so texts from the context of history. Both Adler and Hutchins gave off the stench of rationalism for Bradford [...]” (4). For one discussion by Kirk of the Great Books approach and its applications, see Decadence and Renewal in the Higher Learning (334-339). Relevant here, Kirk wrote:

[...] it seems to me that the Great Books method tends to neglect historical continuity somewhat; also that it does not include quite enough imaginative literature. Moreover, despite the claim of Mortimer Adler and Robert Hutchins that their well-known list of Great Books was scientifically and impartially drawn up, still the unconscious prejudices of Adler and Hutchins are revealed by the conspicuous omissions from their list: no Cicero, no Burke, no Newman, but instead a good many writers inferior in power and influence to those. I am not wholly easy with other people’s lists of Great Books. (334-335)

Kirk was not a big fan of Hutchins’s leadership as it related to educational and scholarly matters, including his views on Edmund Burke (Beyond 44, 110-111, 157-161, 178, 317; Decadence). In a review of Great Books: The Foundation of a Liberal Education by Hutchins, Weaver is positive on Hutchins’s work, yet argued that he lacked a connection to the general public and that he had relied too much on dialectic (“Mr. Hutchins”).

<sup>9</sup> Please see the following: Beer, “Science”; Byrne; “Captain Kirk”; Guroian, Rallying; Malvasi; McWilliams; Poulos; Quinn; Russello, The Postmodern; Russello, “Russell Kirk and the Critics”; Russello, “Time and”; Whitney, “Recovering Rhetoric”;

Whitney, “Seven Things.” Like Vigen Guroian in Rallying the Really Human Things: The Moral Imagination in Politics, Literature, and Everyday Life, James E. Person, Jr. in Russell Kirk: A Critical Biography of a Conservative Mind and W. Wesley McDonald in Russell Kirk and the Age of Ideology, Russello provides scholarly conversation that would enhance the sort of deeper analysis that was suggested by Medhurst for the study of conservatism as a movement. All four authors, within their respective lines of study, point to the significance of Kirk’s famous attentiveness to human imagination. For a fairly positive appraisal of Person, McDonald, and Russello’s books, please see “Russell Kirk Redivivus” by Federici. He also reviewed The Essential Russell Kirk: Selected Essays, which was edited by George A. Panichas. With his highly critical comments regarding the overall work of Kirk as a conservative, Alan Wolfe has initiated a larger discussion in view of Panichas’s book (Berkowitz, “Conserving”; “Captain Kirk”; Gottfried, “Wolfe’s”; Potemra; Reno; A. Wolfe). This volume by Panichas is not covered in this dissertation, yet it seems to be another significant contribution, as Panichas apparently provided some commentary with each essay (this is certainly a source for future study). In his dissertation, “A Rhetoric of Moral Imagination: The Persuasions of Russell Kirk,” Jonathan Leamon Jones deals with Kirk and postmodernism, yet I do not examine any of his arguments in this project (this another source for future study of course). The application of Beer’s suggestion here to Russello’s book, as far as I know, is my own connection.

<sup>10</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 1-3; 3n3; Zoll, “The Social” 112, 116-117, 118.

Wesley McDonald has pointed to the significance of this earlier study of Kirk’s thought by Zoll for conversations today regarding Kirk on order, natural law, etc. (Russell Kirk

55-79). According to Russello, the Republican and Democratic Parties “have largely accepted the same beliefs in the benefits of the free market, global trade, and exporting democracy, all subjects about which Kirk had deep suspicions,” while “the contemporary Right has adopted some of the intellectual underpinnings of liberalism, such as a belief in equality, the primacy of individual rights, and the universality of American political and popular culture” (3-4)

<sup>11</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 1-2. Russello relates the following:

As Rossiter noted, even in the 1950s Kirk’s alliance with mainstream political or economic conservatism was probably always best left unexamined: “Kirk, it seems to me, maintains contact with the conservatism of Goldwater and General Motors only because most of his friends refuse to pay him the compliment that most of his critics have paid him richly: the chewing, swallowing and digesting of his books.” [...] (Russello, The Postmodern 4, 4n5; Rossiter, Conservatism in America 221).

These thoughts are relevant to those by Ernest Wraga in “The Little World of Barry Goldwater” from the 1960s (who along the way referenced the McBurney article that I noted earlier [208, 208n3]), where he recognized that Kirk and others, seemingly “untouched by the Industrial Revolution and widespread democratization,” provide an intellectual basis for conservatism in eighteenth century ideas that is “largely unintelligible to a modern mind that is essentially secular and pragmatic,” while “the Great Audience” is commanded by “the politicians and pulpit pitchmen” (208). On such person, in his view, was Barry Goldwater, who as influenced by Russell Kirk and



Edmund Burke faced “the charge that conservatism is an ill-concealed rationalization for acquisitiveness” by insisting “that the ultimate object of individualism and competition is character-building [...] the message of Andrew Carnegie, William Graham Sumner, Russell Conwell, and Horatio Alger—heroes all in the heyday of Social Darwinism” (212, 212n16). Kirk did have interest in and give support to the Goldwater campaign, yet one would certainly have to consider his own involvement, the political circumstances of that time, and his own political principles as distinct along the way (Kirk, Confessions 284-292; Kirk, The Sword 254-260, 285-288, 293-295, 298-303). Of interest for today, Russello also stated, “The editorials in Harper’s or alternative outlets such as the New York Press or the Baffler now are as likely as any conservative publication to contain Kirk-like assessments of political utopianism or consumer culture” (4).

<sup>12</sup> Please see the following: Chapel; Gottfried, The Conservative; Kuypers, Hitchner, Irwin, and Wilson; Lewis; Nash, The Conservative; Rowland and Jones; Russello, “How the”; Weiler; Wrage; Zagacki.

<sup>13</sup> Please see the following: Federici, “Russell Kirk”; Holtsberry; McCarthy, “The Pomo”; Potemra; Purcell; Wegierski. In his favorable review of Russello’s book, Michael P. Federici has explained, “Kirk’s work is an effort to get beyond modernity and to restore an older way of conceiving of life that has its roots in the classical and Judeo-Christian tradition” (255). Because of Kirk’s reliance upon Edmund Burke, Kirk argued “that the past provides the historical experience that is necessary” for understanding the parameters of “human affairs,” while “a universal moral order” is reflected within history and literature that is relevant to “contemporary efforts to know what is prudent in political and social life” (255-256). According to Federici, “In short, historical context

matters because it creates inescapable contingencies that modern thinkers tended to overlook due to their faith in science and the perfectibility of human nature.[...]" (256). In a review of The Essential Russell Kirk ("Ghost Over"), W. Wesley McDonald wrote the following:

Panichas incorrectly believes, however, that postmodernism is just another insidious form of ideology. "There is no doubt in [Kirk's] mind," that those, "who are known as post-modern intellectuals were held fast in 'the clutch of ideology.'" But there are both left- and right-wing postmodernists, as Peter Augustine Lawler and Paul Gottfried have pointed out. Kirk was himself a postmodernist, as Gerald Russello demonstrates in his important forthcoming book The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk. Contrary to Panichas' argument, then, it is possible to be a postmodernist who acknowledges the existence of an ethical ultimate.

Notwithstanding McDonald's high standing for Kirk scholarship, this chapter and Chapter Three offer a few ways to consider this claim, pro and con.

<sup>14</sup> This review by McCarthy is available from the online version of Reason Magazine. It is the most challenging review of Russello's book that I have read to date. It is entitled, "The Pomo Mind: Was the Conservative Intellectual Russell Kirk a Postmodernist?" Although I think that Russello's book is an important contribution, McCarthy echoes some (though not all) of my own reflections. From this point forward, aspects of this project will encompass some cultural and philosophical dimensions of McCarthy's review. Drawing from the book, McCarthy therein mentions Kirk as "an

icon to traditionalist conservatives” since the 1953 publication of The Conservative Mind. There is one other consideration that I will mention here and not pursue further in this project. *At this point*, from my own biases as expressed in this project, it seems to me that Daniel McCarthy’s separate discussion of Kirk as a “high church conservative” in light of Burke’s influence might ultimately be a better direction to go than some notion of a postmodern conservatism, especially as against the “low church” varieties that do tend to dominate the present conservative discourse (“What Would”). For instance, one could consider this framework alongside of John Derbyshire’s discussion of “lowbrow conservatism” as against earlier intellectual movement conservatism in “How Radio Wrecks the Right,” or alongside of George Packer’s, “The Fall of Conservatism,” from The New Yorker.

<sup>15</sup> McCarthy’s libertarianism is evident upon a reading of his review of Russello’s book (“The Pomo”). He has concluded his review as follows:

And as a book showing Kirk to be a more eccentric, unorthodox figure than most conservatives imagine him to be, the book is delightful. But for all the connections Russello finds between Kirk and postmodernism, the strongest impression it leaves is that Kirk and the pomos are at best allies of convenience against liberalism. And that may be the least attractive element in either camp’s thought.

A strong case is available for *at least* this convenient alliance, as Kirk’s strong stance against the principles and trends of modernity (rationalism, standardization, etc.) is highly evident within the relevant primary and secondary sources (Beer, “Science”; D. Bell 127; Federici, “Russell Kirk”; Frohnen, “Has Conservatism”; Henrie, “Opposing”; Henrie,

“Understanding”; Kirk, Confessions; Kirk, The Politics: Potemra; Purcell; Reno), even at times apart from discussions of postmodernism or identifications of Kirk as postmodern.

<sup>16</sup> Kirk, The Sword 474. As the book is more a set of memoirs, for this epilogue, Kirk provided no references for the authors that he had in mind as positively influential. However, considering the names and some of Kirk’s previous work, this is yet another line of possible study, as there has been some interdisciplinary convergence between contemporary scientific thought at the level of physics and postmodern philosophy—Russello has more or less pointed in this direction.

<sup>17</sup> McCarthy’s summary on this matter is categorically handy as it relates to Russello’s chapter on “Participant Knowledge and History,” particularly as regards to the meaning, conceptualization, and construction of history (“The Pomo”). He wrote:

[...] Kirk, like the postmodernists, did see history as unfinished and imaginative, something that could not be understood by piling up facts in chronological order. But this understanding of history is not peculiar to postmodernists or to Russell Kirk, and few contemporary historians would find much to argue with in Russello’s other points. Who doesn’t recognize perfect objectivity as a chimera? And among today’s historians, who really believes history has an overarching “meaning”? (“The Pomo”)

Although Russello does not explicitly mention the “meaning of history” within the quotation I have provided at the beginning of this paragraph, it is a related point in his treatment of Kirk (our *conceptualization* of the past is significant for this chapter and Chapter Three of this project, which is relevant to one’s squaring of realism and history). Russello is preparing the way for his eventual discussion of Kirk in relation to Lukacs,

which I will cover in Chapter Three. He will more or less blend these lines of argument (which are related), including the question of a meaning of history. I will not be saying that Russello evades realism totally, but it seems that it might have been more helpful if the matter of realism was more at the forefront of the book, especially considering the way in which postmodernism is a departure from realism (see Introduction and Chapter One herein).

<sup>18</sup> McCarthy is complimentary to Russello's discussion on natural law ("The Pomo"), which is probably the most explicit aspect of the book in terms of realism. The observation about Russello's discussion regarding natural law with respect to realism is my own. Please see the following for insights into Kirk's sort of realism: Federici, "Russell Kirk"; McCarthy, "The Pomo Mind"; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; Quinn; Zoll, "The Social." In his review, Federici has written:

[...] Where Kirk tends to separate from most postmodernists is that he argued for the existence of a normative reality that was known from historical experience and tradition. If Kirk's imagination is postmodern, it is so because it attempts to reconstitute the older classical and Judeo-Christian tradition in a way that will carry the West beyond modernity to an age of moral realism. Kirk was engaged in an act of recovering order that creatively integrated the past with the specific challenges of order in the contemporary world. The Burkean tension of change and continuity was at the root of his efforts to make the past a living force on the present. ("Russell Kirk" 256)

<sup>19</sup> Please see the following: Hayward; Lawler, “Conservative Postmodernism”; Molnar, “Philosophical Disorder”; Montgomery, The Trouble 75-83; E. Thompson, “Ways Out”; Wilhelmsen, “Israel and”; Wilhelmsen, “Modern Man’s”; Wilhelmsen, “Technology and”; Wilhelmsen, The Paradoxical. Some of these sources might not mention postmodernism explicitly, but contain what is more or less *part of or indicative of* postmodernism. Wilhelmsen was using the term “post-modern man” as far back as the 1950s (“Israel and” 182). He would write in 1980, “[...] Contemporary man ought not to be identified with post-modern man (a term I invented some years ago) because post-modern man was still-born. He became a mummy practically before he climbed out of the womb of history” (“Modern Man’s” 39). Russello’s highlighting of Bernard Iddings Bell’s use of the term “postmodernism” in the 1920s, which in my view, is a significant scholarly contribution by Russello. The book that Russello discussed is Bell’s Postmodernism and Other Essays. Another related book by Bell was Religion for Living: A Book for Postmodernists, which was published later. Interestingly, an issue of Modern Age from 1961 contained an essay by Martin Buber entitled, “The Word That Is Spoken.” Modern Age was founded by Russell Kirk in the 1950s.

<sup>20</sup> Lawler, “Postmodern Conservatism”; Lawler, Postmodernism Rightly; Russello, The Postmodern 10-11, 11n17, 190-191, 191n30; Russello, “Russell Kirk and the Critics” 10, 13n66. With authors either speaking directly of the terminology of postmodernism or treating of ideas that are in some way relevant to postmodern thought, it should be noted that appraisals of postmodernism/postmodernity alongside of realism do vary within the literature of conservatism and/or by conservatives. For instance, please see the following on this matter: Caiazza 31-32; Henrie, “Reason, Unreason”;

Molnar, “Philosophical Disorder”; Quinn; Thompson, “Postmodernism”; Thompson, “Ways Out”; Wilhelmsen, The Paradoxical.

<sup>21</sup> Please see the following: (regardless of whether the terminology of “postmodern,” “postmodernism,” etc. is utilized): Beale, “Richard M. Weaver”; Bradford, “Strategies of” 99; Chaves, “Soul and Reason” 830, 834-835; S. Crowley; Czubaroff 168, 184n2; Duffy and Jacobi; Genovese; Guroian, Rallying; Jacobi, “Professional” 111-112, 116-117, 126n8; López-Garay 27; Montgomery, “Consequences”; W. Sullivan 118; Whalen. Relevant to this project, Beale wrote:

The happiest result, I believe, of a renewed dialectic between the discourses of the First and Second Rhetorical Awakenings would be to raise the question of whether an effective and responsible rhetoric or an effective and responsible cultural criticism can be promulgated from the standpoint of alienation—either the alienation of the individual from the structures of society and history or the alienation of language from reality. A more proximate goal would be a continuation of the investigation already begun here into the question of right relations among theory, practice, and ideology. In such an investigation Richard Weaver should be put forward as a good example of how to be ideologically interested without being an ideologue. (“Richard M. Weaver” 638).

A major dimension of Beale’s article is the similarities and differences between the “First Rhetorical Awakening,” of which Weaver was a part (with persons such as “Kenneth Burke on the left, and Wayne Booth in the liberal center”), and the “Second Rhetorical

Awakening,” which is to some extent related to postmodernism (although he does not really speak with that specific terminology).

<sup>22</sup> This is my own appraisal of the literature here, which in some ways apart from specific political biases, has been influenced by my study of works by F.F. Centore, Jonathan Chaves, Marion Montgomery, and Ewa Thompson. The phenomenological and hermeneutical terminology here is indicative of my view that the phenomenological lines of thought in the 20th century are significant for the development of contemporary postmodern thought. Discussion of this will follow. Weighed against Cherwitz and Darwin’s parameters (“Beyond Reductionism”; “Toward a”; “Why The”), although they have made a case for a strong epistemology in rhetorical studies to counter what is more or less postmodernism, my specific argument here *might* entail what they would see as an unnecessary “either/or” realism at a theoretical level. Regardless, that philosophical and rhetorical territory has been covered in Chapter One.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Calvin McGee’s article, “Suffix it to Say that Reality is at Issue” is available in the first issue of the [American Communication Journal](#), which is published online. Please see Chapter One regarding his connection to the “critical rhetoric” movement. The scholar that he is speaking of as responsive to “rhetorical situations” within “postmodernity” is Jean Baudrillard (“Suffix”).

<sup>24</sup> I am here anticipating discussion from this chapter and from Chapter Three. My own thinking on the question of human nature in relation to conservatism has been furthered by my study of James Dimock’s articles on Weaver and my involvement with him on a panel at the 2007 convention of the National Communication Association that focused on a discussion of his articles. Lawler’s writings have been helpful, and of



course, many of Adler's books and articles have prompted considerations on the importance of the question of human nature as essentially constant, regardless of conservatism. Deal Hudson's introduction to a recent edition of Adler's The Difference of Man and the Difference It Makes is quite insightful on the matter of the important implications of Adler's discussion of the constancy of human nature for the present day political and academic discourse.

<sup>31</sup> The connection of philosophy to rhetorical studies (from various points of view) has decades of history in the contemporary field of communication and rhetorical studies (Cherwitz, Rhetoric; Cherwitz, Rhetoric and Philosophy Bibliography; Natanson; Natanson and Johnstone; W. Thompson; Walter). Elements of what would be considered a part of postmodernism in the field were under discussion and application as far back as the middle of the 20th century (the late 1950s and early 1960s). Of note for this project, Michael Leff, who had participated in discussions of "critical rhetoric" (on the rhetorical criticism side) moved in the past decade or so to a "hermeneutic" approach to rhetorical criticism (Arthos, "Where There" 343-344n147).

<sup>32</sup> Kirk, The Sword 332. James E. Person, Jr. began Chapter One of his book, Russell Kirk: A Critical Biography of a Conservative Mind, with a recounting of this notable story that is inclusive of this quote (1-2). Kirk and Nixon had communicated on more than one occasion, but in this instance, President Nixon requested a meeting with Russell Kirk to seek Kirk's advice (Kirk, The Sword 328-334). In The Sword of Imagination: Memoirs of a Half-Century of Literary Conflict, Kirk wrote in the third person. In "Russell Kirk and the Conservative Heart," Mark C. Henrie has analyzed the

significance of various aspects of style in the work of Russell Kirk, including Kirk's use of the third person within this book.

<sup>33</sup> Chapter Three contains discussion and references regarding Bitzer and realism, yet please see note 34 immediately below.

<sup>34</sup> In light of some disciplinary discussion, Brummett has written:

[...] Bitzer's position stems from an unwillingness to see rhetorical influences in how the "objects" or reality are manifested; he assumes those objects objectively exist, and allows rhetoric to enter the picture insofar as we talk about *what is there*. Scholars will continue to argue at cross purposes on the rhetorical situation until they realize that their positions stem from conflicting ontologies. ("On to" 426n7)

Available scholarly discussions (often though not exclusively or always with respect to Bitzer) explicitly or implicitly portray the significance of philosophical suppositions for the question of "situation" with regard to rhetoric (Baxter and Kennedy; Biesecker; Cherwitz and Darwin, "Beyond Reductionism"; Cherwitz and Darwin, "Toward a Relational"; Cox, "Argument and"; Croasmun and Cherwitz 11-12; Fisher, "A Motive"; Hunsaker and Smith; Gorsevski; Johnstone, "Rhetoric and"; King; A. Miller; C. Miller; Patton, "Causation"; Patton, "Patton on Tompkins"; Patton, "Patton on Vatz"; Scott, "Intentionality in" 56-58; Sharkey and Hikins; Smith and Lybarger; Phillip Tompkins, "Tompkins on Patton and Bitzer," 1980; Phillip Tompkins, "Tompkins on Patton and Bitzer," 1981; Vatz, "The Myth"; Vatz, "Vatz on Patton"; E. White 13-18; Wilkerson; Young; Zhao 259-265).

<sup>35</sup> Russello has cited Gadamer's Truth and Method (The Postmodern 25, 25n56).

<sup>36</sup> Russello has cited Gadamer's Truth and Method (322-324) (The Postmodern 206, 206n71). He also wrote:

As Daniel Ritchie noted in a perceptive review of a Burke biography, the Irish statesman shared this understanding of tradition with Gadamer, as did Kirk. Against the revolutionary view of self as an entity abstracted from tradition, for Gadamer as well as for Burke, one always acts from within a “hermeneutical circle,” defined by community and tradition [...].

Russello's reference (206, 206n72) to Ritchie's “Remembrance of Things Past: Edmund Burke, the Enlightenment, and Postmodernity” (21, 24) is beyond the scope of this study, but it is indicative of the point that will recur regarding the various ways of “reading” Burke's legacy, which varies within and without the conservative movement.

Interestingly, Pappin, in his book The Metaphysics of Edmund Burke, who “reads” Burke as within the classical realist legacy, argues for some connections between Burke's thought and an existential account of Thomism (52-101, 130-131). For this project, I am not addressing the existential questions surrounding contemporary Thomistic studies. However, for a source that is careful on the matter of giving an account of Thomism with respect to questions of existence in general and existentialist currents in particular, please see Fr. Dominic Bourmaud's, One Hundred Years of Modernism: A Genealogy of the Principles of the Second Vatican Council. Finally, Pappin's work in some ways provides for a stronger realist consideration of Burke and Burke's conservatism with respect to the question of postmodernism (“Edmund Burke's”; The Metaphysics), and his work might be a more helpful guidepost with respect to Gadamer, existentialism, postmodern theory,

etc., at least from my own view of realism (again, apart from the specific matter of existential Thomism).

<sup>37</sup> Kirk, “The American Scholar.” Gadamer’s depth and dexterity with classical and contemporary authors is highly evident in his work. In a highly complementary essay (with some philosophical departures), Alasdair MacIntyre has argued for the 20th century significance of Gadamer’s work on philosophy as a contribution to contemporary philosophy and for the interpretation of classical texts (“On Not”). Regarding my statement here, please see Gadamer’s collection of essays entitled, Philosophical Hermeneutics. The Editor’s introduction by the translator and editor, David E. Linge, is insightful regarding Gadamer’s *corpus*.

<sup>38</sup> E. Thompson, “Ways Out” 195. She has here made reference to Jacques Derrida’s essay, “Structure, Sign, and Play” (195, 207n1). Derrida’s work, among that of others (not including Gadamer), will be a main focus for Thompson, yet her aiming back at reality is still significant for my present discussion. I recognize what some would see as distinctions between Derrida and Gadamer’s work, yet the question of “logocentrism” is still of import here.

<sup>39</sup> E. Thompson, “Ways Out” 195-196. Thompson’s discipline is Slavic Studies (195). She is here recounting her study of Russian colonialism in view of postcolonialism. Thompson explained, “This ‘construction of identity’ is one of the significant phrases students learn in the humanities and social science courses in the early twenty-first century [...]” (196).

<sup>40</sup> The following is the entire quotation as provided by Russello from Kirk’s essay, “The Rediscovery of Mystery” (4) (5, 5n7):

The average sensual man and the average sensual woman, though bored with mechanism and materialism and frightened by the loss of self-image, never will get beyond the tricks of Simon Magnus—not unless the prophet and the man of genius open the way for them. The crowd perceives by means of images, false or true. But the discoverers or shapers of images are persons of extraordinary perceptions, not governed by the idols of the tribe or of the marketplace.

Images are representations of mysteries, necessary because mere words are tools that break in the hand, and it has not pleased God that man should be saved by abstract reason alone.[...]

<sup>41</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 5-6. Russello here has in mind Samuel P. Huntington's article, "Conservatism as an Ideology," from 1957, which has continued as a point of discussion regarding conservatism (Henrie, "Opposing"; Henrie, "The Road"). I will briefly revisit this in my concluding section of the project.

<sup>42</sup> This is my own observation of Gadamer's writings. Waddell wrote:

Perhaps the greatest value of promoting the rhetorical or contingent nature of knowledge—particularly of scientific knowledge—is that this position challenges the "masculine," airtight model of argument of logical positivism and replaces it with the "feminine," open ended model of argument of constructivism. That is, an appreciation of the rhetorical nature of knowledge discourages the pursuit of "the ultimate position," which closes off all further inquiry, and encourages a *plurality* of positions and continued discourse. The self-exempting fallacies in some

constructivists' arguments, however, lead these constructivists to believe that constructivism itself is absolute, rather than simply another construction. The dialectical approach taken by Gadamer draws upon both constructivism and positivism and, thus, avoids both self-exempting fallacy and the extremes of the two positions. (114)

This is likely an accurate coupling of Gadamer's work toward a more moderate epistemological approach, yet it would seem that the "masculine" and "feminine" labels (although an application by Waddell) are debatable extensions of Gadamer's work with respect to Gadamer's own application of the hermeneutical framework to the communication and interpretation within the lives of human beings.

<sup>43</sup> Russello provided (9, 9n14) the following from Kirk's "Imagination against Ideology":

We seem to be entering upon the Post-Modern Age...and new thoughts and new sentiments and new modes of statecraft—or *re*-newed thoughts, sentiments, modes—may take on flesh soon. The Post-Modern Age surely will be an epoch of big battalions and Napoleonic figures; possibly it may be also a time of renewed poetic imagination, and of the reflection of poetry in politics. Thus Americans may learn for instance that the sanguine response to the dreary abstraction called Marxism is not a dreary counter-abstraction called Capitalism (embracing Marx's own jargon), but rather a reaffirmed poetic vision of the splendor and misery of the human condition. [...] (1578)

<sup>44</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 25. I have omitted here to follow aspects of his account that are portraying the more extreme versions of postmodernism. My assumption for this part of the project is the Gadamer's approach can be considered a more moderate approach as regards postmodern thought.

<sup>45</sup> Please see in particular Kirk's Confessions of a Bohemian Tory (33-124; 252-258, 270-273). Gadamer wrote:

The consciousness of art—the aesthetic consciousness—is always secondary to the immediate truth-claim that proceeds from the work of art itself. To this extent, when we judge a work of art on the basis of its aesthetic quality, something that is really much more intimately familiar to us is alienated. This alienation into aesthetic judgment always takes place when we have withdrawn ourselves and are no longer open to the immediate claim of that which grasps us. (Philosophical Hermeneutics 5)

Also, according to Gadamer, “A genuine artistic creation stands within a particular community, and such a community is always distinguishable from the cultured society that is informed and terrorized by art criticism” (5). As Gadamer has in other essays discussed linguistic art in a similar way in Philosophical Hermeneutics, one is here reminded of Kirk's appraisals of contemporary literary studies as terrorized by a variety of approaches, often ideological (Enemies 41-152).

<sup>46</sup> Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics 8-9. Regarding “futurity” with respect to historical studies, Gadamer has stated, “Here we have all learned from Heidegger, for he exhibited precisely the primacy of futurity for our possible recollection and retention, and for the whole of our history” (9).

<sup>47</sup> Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics 9. According to Gadamer, “Heidegger worked out this primacy in his doctrine of the productivity of the hermeneutical circle. I have given the following formulation to this insight: It is not so much our judgments as it is our prejudices that constitute our being [...]” (9). Gadamer here (9) pointed the reader back to his Truth and Method (261).

<sup>48</sup> Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics 13.

<sup>49</sup> Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics 16-17. Vigen Guroian has emphasized the role of theology as a basis for the various aspects within Kirk’s corpus (Rallying 31-32).

<sup>50</sup> Wilhelmsen, The Paradoxical. Please see notes 46 and 47 above. Although strongly a Catholic and a Thomist, Wilhelmsen had an engaged working knowledge of continental philosophy, such as existentialism. Based upon this, he speaks, for instance, as to the *care* needed for a genuine study and appreciation of history (The Paradoxical 174-175). Please see also his article, “Technology and Its Consequences.”

<sup>51</sup> Philosophical Hermeneutics 3-43, 59-68, 130-181. I here have in mind in particular Gadamer’s discussions of Habermas and Wittgenstein.

<sup>52</sup> O’Callaghan 275-298. The context of O’Callaghan’s book, Thomist Realism and the Linguistic Turn: Toward a More Perfect Form of Existence, is in large part his addressing of contemporary analytic philosophy, Wittgenstein, interpretations of Wittgenstein, analytic Thomism, etc.

<sup>53</sup> O’Callaghan 285-298. He is addressing the work of John Haldane here regarding concepts and words in light of interpreting the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas.



<sup>54</sup> I am here referring to Gadamer's appropriation of an Aristotelian example of an army taking a stand with respect to acting and speaking as regards "the universal" for his own view of humans in language, the acquisition of language, etc. (Philosophical Hermeneutics 14-15, 63-64).

<sup>55</sup> O'Callaghan 291-292. The following from Centore is here relevant:

To be *what* we are as human persons we must *act*, and the more we act in conformity with our nature the more we become what we are, and as a consequence, the closer we grow to God and to other human persons. We must *become* what we *are*. The fixed and the variable are not mutually exclusive; eternity and time, nature and *esse*, male and female, and so forth, are complementary. (Being 227)

One might also here consult Adler's writing on the nurturing of human potentialities, even as we share a constant human nature across time and place (Ten 156-166).

<sup>56</sup> McAllister notes the following:

Any extensive discussion of Kirk's book, and his ideas, requires some discussion of his use of the word "imagination," which stands in some tension with his more reified label "mind." Among other sources, Kirk drew his understanding of this useful word from Irving Babbitt [...]. Imagination is a human way of understanding just as is reason. Especially important, humans make sense of the whole, which they experience indirectly, in relation to the part, through the faculty of imagination. The whole is invisible to one's reason alone since reason is bound to existing things. With regard to the arguments I'm making in this essay about the

relationship between the partial and the whole, the particular and the universal, one must understand the way Kirk used “imagination” to bridge the gap. (“The Particular” 198n2)

My concern here is not so much on the emphasis upon imagination, but with the downplaying of “mind.” We must rescue some concept of “mind” in Kirk’s work as regards to both imagination and reality. As indicated within this chapter and the next, there is an essential relationship among experience, “mind,” and imagination in bridging the gap of which McAllister speaks.

<sup>57</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 52, 52n53. He cites here Kirk’s Redeeming the Time, p. 131.

<sup>58</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 53-64; Whitney, “The Swords.” According to Whitney, “There was something undeniably quixotic about Kirk’s life-work. He was, after all, a conservative writing in a liberal nation; a premodern tilting at the modern. There was also a self-deprecating quality about his manner” (311). In light of a comparison to Quixote, Whitney wrote, “the knight-errant Russell Kirk imagined his role in existence, set out on a modern-day crusade, and wielded the sword of imagination to defend the permanent things” (311).

<sup>59</sup> Please see the following: Guroian, Rallying.

<sup>60</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 59, 59n74, 222. Russello referenced Bruce Frohnen’s, Virtue and the Promise of Conservatism: The Legacy of Burke and Tocqueville, University of Kansas Press, 1993, p. 172.

<sup>61</sup> Adler, The Difference of Man; St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica.

<sup>62</sup> Mesa 237, 237n1, 237n2. Mesa has here looked to Maritain's, The Degrees of Knowledge, translated by Gerald B. Phelan, from The Collected Works of Jacques Maritain, Notre Dame, IN, U of Notre Dame P, 1995. Also relevant for my chapter here, he also drew from (among other sources) McInerney's Art and Prudence, Notre Dame, IN, U of Notre Dame P, 1988, p. 106 (Mesa 240, 240n11) and William Kilpatrick's Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong, NY, Simon and Schuster, 1992 along with various sources from Maritain and various sections of the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas.

<sup>63</sup> Mesa 237-239, 238n3-6. In particular, for the issue of "seeing," he has in mind here Bernard Nathanson's The Hand of God, Chicago, Regnery, 1996, with respect to abortion.

<sup>64</sup> Mesa 241-242. According to Mesa, "Moral imagination is not explicitly in Aquinas, but it is in effect described by Maritain" (241). Mesa references St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 49, a. 1, resp. and ad 2 (243n22). According to Mesa, "It is reasonable to suggest that there is a connection between Kilpatrick's imagination, Aquinas's memory and Maritain's quasi-biologically operating intelligence" (241-242). Regarding "conconscious," Mesa notes, "I use this expression with a reverential bow to Maritain's use of *connaturality*" (242n19).

<sup>65</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 67-74. Russello's point holds well, as a review of the literature of intellectual conservatism reveals interests in both tradition and history (with divergent theoretical standpoints) as far back as the days of Weaver's Ideas Have Consequences. See also Francis G. Wilson's discussion of conservatism and history in "The Anatomy of Conservatives" (274-276).

<sup>66</sup> Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics 31. Gadamer references this statement back to his Truth and Method. Truth and Method in large part carries Gadamer's contentions and assumptions regarding language, understanding, being, etc.

<sup>67</sup> E. Thompson, "Dialectical" 10, 21n2. She referenced The Concept of Structuralism: A Critical Analysis by Philip Pettit, Berkeley, CA, The University of California Press, 1975, p. 39.

<sup>68</sup> E. Thompson, "Dialectical" 10, 21n3. She referenced The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath, volume 2 of The Open Society and Its Enemies by Karl Popper, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971, pp. 369-396.

<sup>69</sup> E. Thompson, "Ways Out" 197-198. She is here drawing from Derrida's "Structure, Sign, and Play" in The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man, Eds. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, Baltimore, 1970, p. 249 (198, 207n2, 207n5).

<sup>70</sup> Adler, "The Bodyguards"; E. Thompson, "Ways Out." As mentioned in my introduction, Ewa Thompson recommends the work of Adler, Maritain, and MacIntyre. What follows is a very common discussion across Adler's work. Thompson does not make reference to this as one of Adler's "bodyguards of truth."

<sup>71</sup> Adler, Intellect 130-131. I provide the following note from Adler here because Thompson is discussing Derrida—again, I am not necessarily equating all aspects of Gadamer's work with that of Derrida:

Jacques Derrida's doctrine of deconstruction, as applied to the interpretation of the words on a page, is as self-refuting as the skeptical assertion that it is true (or that it is false) that no statement is either true or

false. Because of that fact, I have paid no attention to the doctrine of deconstruction, but I would like to call attention to the fact that the account in this chapter of the relation of language to mind as the realm in which meanings exist goes a long way toward explaining the profound mistake made by the deconstructionists. (131)

<sup>72</sup> Thanks to my former colleague at the University of Mary, Jamie P. Meyer, Associate Professor of Communication, for prompting me to ponder this phrasing as a disciplinary phrasing of communication via our conversations and his teaching. It is a somewhat common definition of communication in the field it seems. Apart from my conversations with Professor Meyer, upon my own reflection, it seems that this definition of communication can certainly be understood from a classical realist point of view, especially in light of Adler's philosophical framing of communication between and among human beings (The Four 106-123; How to Speak; How to Think 1-68, 204-213, 284-293; Intellect 126-139; Some Questions).

<sup>73</sup> Montgomery, "Consequences" 169-171. He wrote here in view of Tate's essay, "The New Provincialism," and Eliot's, After Strange Gods. In this essay, as he approaches Weaver, Montgomery has in mind Eliot's observations regarding the Agrarian writers on society and literature with respect to provincialism versus regionalism. It is a regionalism that Montgomery is arguing for in this selection. Weaver, the Agrarians, and Eliot were all influential on Montgomery.

<sup>74</sup> Montgomery, "Consequences" 174-175. Montgomery also looked to Eliot's East Coker here for these thoughts.

<sup>75</sup> Montgomery, “Consequences” 176-177, 249n13, 249n14. Montgomery is also building here from Eliot’s, After Strange Gods. Relevant here, according to Shively, “I call the realist approach *orthodox* simply because it recognizes a progressive accumulation of objective moral knowledge. Thus it looks to a certain traditional body of knowledge as authoritative” (78). She also stated, “Thus the orthodoxy, or authoritative body of knowledge, is taken to be the best approximation of truth established thus far. It is not certain or final truth, for that is not available to the flawed and finite mind; rather, it represents what the participants in the tradition agree on as the best—most clearly, objectively, and rationally established—conclusions that their methods and minds can justify” (79).

<sup>76</sup> Hochschild, “The Re-Imagined” 333-334, 337-338, 340. Please see also the following regarding Newman: Caiazza; R. McInerny, Characters 90-120, 124-126; Wise, 138-157. Caiazza has given an appraisal that is in some respects similar to Quinn regarding Newman on certain matters of phenomenology. One might here also consider Mesa’s mentioning of Newman in regards to a consideration of subjectivity with respect to reality and our knowledge of reality.

<sup>77</sup> Brand 357-358, 361-365, 365n2-8. Brand focuses primarily on Eliot and not Kirk. Brand wrote this article in an issue of Modern Age dedicated to revisiting some of the personages within Kirk’s Conservative Mind (Henrie, “Conservative Minds”). Hochschild’s article on Newman appears in this same issue (“The Re-Imagined”).

<sup>78</sup> Kirk, Eliot 60, 373n17, 374n21. This is from Montgomery’s T.S. Eliot: An Essay on the American Magnus, 1970, p. 89.

<sup>79</sup> Kirk, Eliot 243.

<sup>80</sup> Although it would eventually develop into distinct schools and areas of application, phenomenology was one major influence upon the development of postmodern thought on the continent and then eventually in the United States of America. Thomists have varied in their considerations in aspects of phenomenological scholarship, but the question of starting points in terms of persons and reality is certainly going to always be on the table.

<sup>81</sup> Please see the following: Montgomery, “The Abandonment” 58-59; Montgomery, Romantic xxxi; Caitlin Smith; Wilhelmsen, “Faith and” 28; Wilhelmsen, “Modern Man’s” 43-44. According to Caitlin Smith (in an article on Husserl), “For Aquinas, I do not as a knower constitute the world, I constitute my knowledge of the world” (32).

<sup>82</sup> Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics 69-81. Waddell has explained (113):

Hence, although prejudice is prerequisite to understanding, our understanding is also shaped “by the things” themselves, for it is our experience of the things themselves that determines which of our prejudices are arbitrary or inappropriate and which are not. [...] Thus, although Gadamer expresses a notion of correspondence between understanding and “the things themselves,” he emphasizes that the effort to achieve correspondence is a constant task; hence, correspondence is never achieved. The motivation behind interpretation, then, is not to establish correspondence—a futile task—but to create meaning. Yet our notions of correspondence serve as constraints on the making of meaning.

Hence, in Gadamer’s speculative hermeneutics, understanding is *dialectical* in nature—it is shaped neither by prejudices alone nor by the things themselves alone but by “the fusion of horizons” of the two. [...]

<sup>83</sup> Centore, Being 219-222. According to Centore, “As mentioned earlier, this uniting of the knower and the known, in philosophical language, is called Epistemological Realism. I personally become the other *as other*; i.e., not physically, for the other is not physically changed or destroyed as would happen, for instance, in the digestion of food” (221).

<sup>84</sup> Centore, Being 225. In his book, Centore references Gadamer’s Truth and Method when discussing Gadamer.

<sup>85</sup> Donald Ellis’s article, “Fixing Communicative Meaning: A Coherentist Theory,” is a helpful selection from the communication discipline from the standpoint of realism. He addresses Gadamer and a series of other thinkers. Ellis is not a classical realist, as he works from an epistemological framework that has a particular focus on coherence in a different way. There are certainly points in his article, though, that are conducive to classical realism.

<sup>86</sup> Please see “Signs in General and Linguistic Symbols: Hermeneutics and the Philosophy of Language” (no author is given), which employs Adler’s work, among that of others, for the sorts of discussions at this point in the present chapter of this project. As Centore has argued, for “the ordinary human being,” who is precursory to the philosopher, it is of “basic common sense” that within “the real world” one cannot eat their cake and have it too, which “is reflected in the logical world” (Being 179). To revisit Ralph McInerny (from Chapter One herein), “Since our knowledge is of reality—



we do not first know our thinking or our expression of it [...] [l]ogic and epistemology recapitulate ontology [...]” (Characters 49).

<sup>87</sup> In terms of some of the connections here, Hoffman’s article, “Paine and Prejudice: Rhetorical Leadership through Perceptual Framing in Common Sense” is an interesting read, especially in terms of rhetorical theory and criticism in conjunction with epistemology. I would differ with him on some philosophical points, but it is another source linking Kirk to Gadamer. The sentence that follows here is written with Hoffman’s article in mind. Regarding Weaver, please see Weaver’s essay, “Life Without Prejudice,” which Hoffman does reference.

<sup>88</sup> Kirk, Enemies 35. I will postpone some additional brief discussion of Kirk on Hume to Chapter Three. Kirk provides no specific reference to Hume here, but he does provide a general flavor of Hume’s thoughts as applicable to Kirk’s discussion.

<sup>89</sup> Please see Philosophical Hermeneutics (95-104) and Truth and Method by Gadamer. Regarding the possibility and role of genius from a Thomistic perspective, please see Gilby.

<sup>90</sup> See in particular Kirk’s discussions of Eric Voegelin in Enemies of the Permanent Things regarding Plato and Aristotle (274-281), although in The Roots of American Order, Kirk exhibits a respect for both of these classical figures. Some of Zoll’s points of discussion within “The Social Thought of Russell Kirk” are relevant here regarding this mixture of influences (114-115, 132). Please see the following regarding “poetic knowledge” from the Thomistic standpoint: Kramer; S. McInerny; Taylor. Thanks to Father Scott Gardner for prompting in conversation this consideration of poetic knowledge.

<sup>91</sup> Please see the following: MacIntyre, “On Not”; Wilhelmsen, The Paradoxical. For additional discussion on the relationship between philosophy and history, please see Three Paths in Philosophy by James Collins, Metaphysics and Historicity by Emil L. Fackenheim, and History of Philosophy and Philosophical Education by Etienne Gilson. See also On the Philosophy of History by Jacques Maritain. Regarding Gadamer, MacIntyre explained:

In my own case one obstacle is that the tradition within which I have worked for almost twenty years is one that Gadamer had rejected dismissively from the outset, finding no merit in what he took to be “the dogmatic overlay superimposed on Aristotle by [...] neo-Thomism.” [...] Although Gadamer has discussed particular theses of Aquinas with his characteristic sympathy and accuracy, he has never entered into dialogue with a distinctively Thomistic Aristotelianism. This is not surprising, and not only because of Gadamer’s own preconceptions.

For modern Thomism only exhibited an awareness of the importance of the historical turn and the hermeneutic turn in philosophy relatively late in its history. And Thomistic Aristotelians have still perhaps not taken adequate measure of the implications of these turns. So part of the importance of Gadamer’s work lies in the help that it can afford in understanding the bearing of hermeneutics on the Aristotelian tradition. It has often been thought by Thomists, for example, that to acknowledge the historically conditioned character of philosophical—or for that matter

of scientific or historical—inquiry is to make a certain kind of relativism inescapable. [...] (“On Not” 157-158)

<sup>92</sup> MacIntyre, “On Not.” He here follows up with Gadamer’s focus on Aristotle, but with respect to the import of Aristotelian suppositions on metaphysics regarding *phronesis*. In my estimation, this would be relevant to discussions of *phronesis* in the communication discipline for rhetorical criticism, communication ethics, etc.

<sup>93</sup> MacIntyre, “On Not” 170-171. The basis for his disagreement with Gadamer on language pertains to Gadamer’s “Heideggerian view” (169-170).

<sup>94</sup> My formulation here was prompted by my reflection upon Wilhelmsen’s “Faith and Reason,” especially his words on judgment, meaning, being, and propositions with respect to *experience* (31), in conjunction with the larger picture of classical realism (including other items from Wilhelmsen) that is put forth within this project.

## Chapter Three

### Human Nature: The Linchpin of Order for Rhetoric

Richard Weaver's contention that "a conservative is a realist" ("Conservatism and Libertarianism" 477-478) is a major assumption of this dissertation project. So as to build a foundation for a realist rhetoric of order, extending the framework for Kirk on "imagination" from the previous chapter, a rhetorical study of The Roots of American Order as regards to human nature can assist in contending with "historical man" meeting the world from the vantage point of classical realism. To some extent, the question of postmodernism and conservatism encompasses the matter of realism as against philosophical skepticism in general along with social constructivism in particular. Within a comparison of Kirk's work to specific ideas of Hans Gadamer, Kirk was identified as a realist and "logocentric" historian. The following was stated as one realist departure from Gadamer's philosophical statement that "being that can be understood is language" (Philosophical Hermeneutics): With our common *experience* of things, we can express meaning by the use of language toward a commonality of understanding. In view of the scholarship on the intersections of rhetoric with history, coupled with the varying stances among realists on philosophy as related to history (such as Adler, MacIntyre, Maritain, and Wilhelmsen), this human *experience* of things with respect to the historical scope of communal and individual life is significant for the line of argumentation within this chapter.<sup>1</sup> Rhetorically and philosophically, realism is at the crossroads of the question of conservatism and postmodernism.

From his standpoint of "rhetorical perspectivism," James Hikins has suggested to me a consideration of the constitutive function of "perspectives" alongside of Lloyd

Bitzer's model of "rhetorical situation," particularly as regards the matter of "fitting response" (Telephone). Recalling Chapter One's modifications of "rhetorical perspectivism" toward classical realism, from a *perspective*, a rhetor *associates* and *differentiates* in view of the *evaluative* judgments of audiences within the sphere of "prescriptive" truth, possibly toward the *preservation* of virtue. To now expand, in light of the "prescriptive" judgments of rhetoric as *evaluative*, one might consider a speaker or writer's "prejudice," "bias," "framing," or "point of view" (academic and everyday terms), yet at the level of rhetorical discourse, this *perspective*, for which our "common experience" of reality is always a factor, can also be informed by one or more of the following: 1) dialectical reasoning; 2) poetic, dramatic, and literary discourse; 3) the spectrum of mere opinion to probable opinion; 4) beliefs on general matters; 5) differing national or cultural experiences; 6) philosophical suppositions; 7) the "special experience" of an academic discipline; 8) religious beliefs.<sup>2</sup> In a certain sense, since "words *express* the meanings that ideas *are*" (Adler, Intellect 130), rhetorical *perspective* entails meaning as it is communicated to an audience (in spoken or written words) by a communicator.<sup>3</sup> Like the "rhetorical perspectivists," one can maintain the import of situational relevance for the rhetorical communication of *perspectives*, while not embracing epistemological skepticism or ethical relativism.<sup>4</sup> To revisit Chapter One's application of Ruth Lessl Shively's realist arguments against social constructivism (46-85), rhetoric is *to some degree* "supracontextual."

Even beyond the question of conservatism and postmodernism, how might Russell Kirk as historian theoretically inform rhetorical studies with respect to the human imagination? To begin a longer line of argumentation for this question, Bitzer's model of

“rhetorical situation,” which is somewhat conducive to realism, was mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>5</sup> Therein, as a departure from Michael Calvin McGee’s epistemological suggestions (“Suffix”), the following was stated: The sociality of humanity is real because it is natural to human beings who, sharing a common human nature, are uniquely a part of reality as they think and talk about reality. Francis M. Crowley, in his editorial introduction to Fr. John Wise’s book, The Nature of the Liberal Arts, wrote, “Man is properly the subject of the trivium, as nature is of the quadrivium,” while in reference to his title, Fr. Wise explained that “the word *nature* connotes a principle of action,” yet “*essence*, while identified with nature, has reference more to the principle of being; hence, one learns not “what the liberal arts should be from the analysis of man, but [...] from the analysis of practice,” which leads to the conclusion “that their elements are based on human nature, and are, therefore, enduring.”<sup>6</sup> Although rhetoric deals with specific spheres of practical judgments, rhetorical discourse is not exempt (as with grammar and logic) from the typical integration of human capacities that generally occur for intellection and communication across contexts. However, as indicated by Cherwitz and Darwin, realists must also account “for the fact that rhetorical utterances are situated, which is to say that reality (e.g., physical objects, experiences, ideas, feelings, and language itself) *constrains* rhetoric,” while also accounting “for the simultaneous potential of symbols to *shape* reality” (“Beyond Reductionism” 316). From the standpoint of “rhetorical perspectivism,” they have placed “*context*” and “*history*” alongside of “*substance*” as “*relational constituents* of meaning” (“Toward a” 21-24). Hence, one can affirm that even as approaches such as McKerrow’s “critical rhetoric” might provide pragmatic and contextual insights on the use of language, it is necessary to

ascertain rhetorical practices with respect to knowledge and reality both *within* and *across* contexts (Cherwitz and Darwin, “Beyond Reductionism”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Toward a”; Cherwitz and Darwin, “Why The”).

F.F. Centore has argued that when forming, embracing, or evaluating a worldview, we must “put first things first,” which means going from things to thinking by not starting with ideas, which we don’t know directly anyway, as ideas “are always the *means by which* we know the world.”<sup>7</sup> According to Kathleen Jamieson, “One’s *Weltanschauung*, intimately tied to one’s epistemology, psychology, axiology and metaphysic, colors rhetorical choice” (“The Rhetorical” 4). She wrote, “Rhetorical visions develop and decay in response to exigencies perceived through the filter of a worldview. *Weltanschauung* assigns value to exigencies, determines their certitude, assesses their relation to man, nature and society and having cast them in perspective, determines whether a rhetorical vision will be created in response to them” (4). Apart from rhetoric specifically, Emil Fackenheim has treated the philosophical question of metaphysics *or* historicity *as primary* in relation to the “situation” of human beings as “situated” for the creation of their own natures, which is of consequence to one’s stance on the constancy and commonality of human nature through history.<sup>8</sup>

In Fackenheim’s account, the ongoing human dynamic of *living within history* while struggling to *strive beyond history* is now felt more in the West “in part because of the breath-taking swiftness of contemporary events,” which is backed by “an ever increasing historical self-consciousness” since the 19th century (1-3). This has provided for “grave spiritual effects,” for in the past people “could simply accept religious beliefs or moral principles, as unquestionably true,” yet with “this historically self-conscious

age, few men can ever forget that what seems unquestionably true to one age or civilization differs from what seems unquestionably true to others” (3). According to Fackenheim, “And from historical self-consciousness there is but one step—albeit a long and fateful one—to a wholesale historical scepticism: to the despairing view that history discloses a variety of conflicting *Weltanschauungen*, with no criterion for choice between them anywhere in sight. But when events move as they do today this step is easily taken” (3). A philosophical notion of “situation” was significant for Michael J. Hyde and Craig R. Smith in their arguing for a theoretical link between Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics and rhetorical studies, which from their phenomenological standpoint is theoretically pertinent to both epistemic rhetoric and Bitzer’s model.<sup>9</sup> This inclusion of “rhetorical situation” by Hyde and Smith would be an earlier instance within a gradually visible postmodern conversation on Bitzer’s work.<sup>10</sup> From the vantage point of classical realism, however, at bottom is not a “[...] showing what the basic mode of human understanding is and how it structures the experience of existential reality [...] itself a disclosure of the human experience of language,” but a more deliberate appraisal of how our understanding is both *structured by* and *structuring of* our experience of reality, which is not *primarily* linguistic, yet certainly involves the use of language at an important level.<sup>11</sup>

The question of Kirk and postmodernism portends Kirk’s *relevance for* and *interest in* rhetorical discourse, inclusive of the workings of “moral imagination,” “historical imagination,” and “political imagination” (Russello, The Postmodern 52, 104-145; Russello, “Russell Kirk and the Critics” 10-11). “Moral imagination” has taken on significance for such areas of study as communication ethics (Paula Tompkins),



administrative leadership (Stephenson), and moral pedagogy (Mesa). Not surprisingly, the role of imagination and imagery has in general been present within the disciplinary literature on the theoretical and practical makeup of the “situations” of rhetoric (Bitzer, “Functional”; Fisher, “A Motive”; Gorsevski; Larson; Patton, “Causation”), with Gorsevski making specific reference to the relevance of “moral imagination” for participants within a “rhetorical situation” (172). In his 1982 look back at the journal Philosophy and Rhetoric, philosopher Eugene Garver suggested that discussants on “rhetorical situations” would provoke greater interest by comparing “the relation of rhetorical situation to rhetorical act with the relation between ethical situation and ethical act, because they would find the same problems: ethical acts must be appropriate to circumstances, but the ethical agent acts from a vision that transcends the objective givens of the situation and doesn’t merely ‘react’” (“Philosophy and” 147-148). He is, of course, making reference to the larger disputation that was initiated by Richard Vatz on Bitzer’s model, which continues to this day, even recently by Vatz himself.<sup>12</sup> Within his own work, Garver has grappled with the relationship between rhetoric and history, like for instance with his extensive studies of Machiavelli’s political theory and American legal discourse.<sup>13</sup> Also, the role of a philosophy of history and a notion of “situations” as historical are both apparent within the “rhetorical situation” literature (Patton, “Causation”; Phillip Tompkins, “Tompkins on Patton and Bitzer,” 1980; Wilkerson). With these precedents in mind, the larger argument linking the previous and present chapters continues here as follows: As a realist and “logocentric” historian, with respect to the constancy of human nature, Russell Kirk provided significant scholarly coordinates as to the formative and informative role of the imagination for *perspectives* across

“rhetorical situations.” After establishing these coordinates, which are indicated in The Roots of American Order, I will return to the disciplinary discussion regarding “situation” with an eye toward bringing this larger argument squarely back to rhetorical theory.

As argued in Chapter Two, Kirk’s approach to “moral imagination” is somewhat akin to Mesa’s account of “moral imagination” as a “pattern” that is both *guided by* and *guiding of* our experiences *in* and *of* the world (241-242), with language taking on a high place for Kirk within that experience. While “good moral imagination” is in accord with right reason, it “is grounded in an already established reality and recognizes that there are goals that ought to be realized regardless of feelings” (241). Kirk wrote in Enemies of the Permanent Things:

“Art is man’s nature,” said Burke, playing upon Aristotle’s remark that art is the imitation of nature. We are not wholly subject to Fate and Fortune: for the art of the man of letters, and the art of the statist, determine in large part whether we become normal human beings, or are perverted into abnormal creatures. In erring Reason’s spite, as Samuel Johnson knew, the will is free. All argument may be against it, but all necessity is for it. Personal and social decadence are not the work of ineluctable forces, but are the consequences of defying normative truth: a failure of right reason, if you will, resulting in abnormality. When we distort the arts of literature and statecraft, we warp our nature before long. (16)

To reiterate from the previous chapter, regardless of the type of imagination that one considers, it is ultimately the *human imagination as such* that must be central, which is

then a matter of the various *experiences* (both literary and everyday) *within* and *for* these specific areas of study. Although The Roots of American Order is not a direct treatise on the human imagination, it is both practically and theoretically relevant to Kirk's overall imaginative approach to such areas as conservatism, order, and history (W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; Person, Russell Kirk; Russello, The Postmodern; Whitney, "The Swords").

Over the years, Russell Kirk has been commemorated with various designations because of his visible focus upon truth and his multiple contributions to conservatism.<sup>14</sup> For instance, within a look back in 1982 at the journal Modern Age (a publication that Kirk founded), M.E. Bradford recognized The Conservative Mind as "Kirk's most influential book."<sup>15</sup> Yet, Bradford argued that The Roots of American Order alone "rivals the original traditionalist manifesto" as significant "to the status of American intellectual conservatism and its serious outreach toward a vast general audience concerned with defending the responsibilities of the Right in a specifically American context" (295). Kirk clearly communicated that conservatism in America, to be successful, needs to go beyond economic theorizing to "stand in some positive relation to the Party of the Right as it has appeared in moments of crisis throughout the history of Western civilization" (295). In recalling "that what was English or European is often what has become American," one holds to "the premise that the best way to defend the free market is to argue for it as a part of a more inclusive proposition, with reference to its human consequences" (295). According to Bradford, "Kirk is our American Cicero, the repository of our common membership of the ancestral things, who knows who we are by knowing from whence we have come. He is the central figure in any account of the conservative revival at which we here rejoice" (295). In his essay, "Russell Kirk: The

American Cicero,” Forrest McDonald stated that Bradford’s “appellation seems entirely fitting” (15). McDonald concluded that “Kirk’s mission [...] has been to enrich the conservative intellectual tradition” through communicating ancestral wisdom, which “moves us closer toward a whole from which internal contradictions and tensions are entirely absent,” yet “[w]e shall never get there, of course, for what Kirk is seeking, ultimately, is the Truth; and it is inherent in the conservative way of viewing things that the Truth is not for man to know”—“[...] he continues to search and to find, and we continue to be enriched.”<sup>16</sup> Is “Truth” for man to know to any extent, and if so, how does this work in terms of history, especially as regards “the permanent things,” which McDonald described in a foreword to a later publication of The Roots of American Order as those “perduring conditions and needs that must be met if human society is to function well”<sup>17</sup>?

In large part because of Gerald Russello’s recent efforts, “postmodern” is a fairly recent designation for Kirk, yet McCarthy wrote, “Still, Kirk doesn’t seem at first blush like a postmodern figure. *Premodern* would be more like it” (“The Pomo”). According to McCarthy, beyond his eighteenth century style, Kirk’s “ideas echoed various dead white Anglo-Saxon males who defended established institutions of church and state,” unlike postmodernists, who “tend to embrace the marginal, the ‘Other,’ and the genuinely or putatively oppressed, while condemning the ‘cultural hegemony’ of men and institutions that Kirk admired.”<sup>18</sup> However, in light of the work of certain scholars (Stephenson; Paula Tompkins), “moral imagination” is pertinent to the philosophical concept of *alterity*, which will have some bearing on the return to rhetorical studies that follows toward the end of this chapter. Pertinent to this and more, amid McCarthy’s

critiques of Russello's book, there is one other philosophical item that he could have explicitly mentioned regarding the question of conservatism and postmodernism.

James Patrick Dimock's call in the journal Modern Age for a revised interpretation of Weaver's book, The Ethics of Rhetoric, prompts one to reconsider the discourse of Abraham Lincoln as both evidentiary for the rhetorical theory of the book and exemplary for the conservative argumentation of the 1950s ("Rediscovering [...] [Part One]"; "Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]"). *Contra* Dimock's unique interpretation of Lincoln as a defining yet "evil" rhetorician in the book (to Weaver then, not a genuine conservative), it is highly arguable that, as the standard reading goes, Weaver's message to the "New Conservatives" of the 1950s regarding definitional parameters for questions of reform and governance was with respect to, not in spite of, our 16th President.<sup>19</sup> However, in putting forth the question of Weaver on Lincoln, Dimock identified a key philosophical issue in Weaver's work—human nature.<sup>20</sup>

In view of Weaver's *corpus*, it is arguable that, by his analysis of Lincoln's discourse, one message to conservatives from Weaver was the philosophical significance of the constancy of human nature in essence for discussions of both individual morality and social distinction.<sup>21</sup> To open a lecture of 1960 entitled, "Conservatism and Liberalism," Weaver argued the following:

I begin with two words: conservatism and liberalism. People who are willing to accept the name "conservative" are not infrequently asked, as if it were an overwhelming question, "What is it that you wish to conserve?" The more I meditate upon this, the more it seems to me that the answer is an obvious one: the conservative wishes to conserve man—the human

being. The implications of that answer, however, are not so obvious, and perhaps that is why the question is so often raised.

When one says that he wishes to conserve man, he signifies, for one thing, that he knows what man is. That is to say, he believes that man has an essential being, a definable nature, and a proper end. The program of conservation must seek to know that being better, to understand the capacities and limits of that nature, and to help man attain that end. I shall repeat this, for I think it is a cardinal point for any intelligible conservative position. The conservative thinks that man has a definable nature, that he is happiest in the true sense when he is following the laws of that nature, and that he has a unique and transcendent destiny.

In second place, the conservative believes that there are forces in this world which are inimical to these and which militate against all of them. There are forces which tend to confuse him about the reality of his being, voices which tell him that he has no nature except what is exhibited historically from day to day, and there are theories which deny the idea of a destiny. These forces and ideas are disintegrative in the sense that they leave man puzzled and at loose ends. The thinking conservative feels that this man needs help, and to the extent that he is engaged in combating the disintegration—in conserving what otherwise might be lost or dispersed—his is an activist program. Here I suggest lies the germ of the movement of the “new conservatism” in this country and elsewhere.<sup>22</sup>

A concept of human nature was significant for Kirk's "traditional" brand of conservatism, especially as against the truncated or ideological versions given by modernity (Henrie, "Understanding"; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 42-138). Kirk's essentialist approach to human nature, which is evident within his larger body of work, might be rhetorically conducive to "an image of traditional society as a natural, desirable order" that is teleological in scope along with "a motif of 'continuity,'" both of which Martha Solomon has critically identified for the STOP ERA and Right to Life movements, respectively.<sup>23</sup> At bottom, with his own focus upon continuity, Russell Kirk aimed for the conservation of "the human being."

The onward march from modernism to postmodernism has entailed, in one form or another, a frequent denial of the essential constancy of human nature (Centore, Being; Shively), which according to Adler (not speaking *directly* of "postmodernism") is a "philosophical mistake" of contemporary times (Ten 156-166). Although it is arguable that a more explicit treatment of this matter might have been given by Russello, certainly along the way he indicated and emphasized Kirk's essentialist approach to human nature *as such* for religion, politics, history, and literature (The Postmodern). Among those who have grappled with the question of a postmodern conservatism, Peter Augustine Lawler, for instance (whom Russello referenced), has given a high degree of focus to the important implications of holding to the fixity and ends of human nature as properly postmodern in view of the visible deficiencies of modernity—it is for him an aspect of a genuinely conservative postmodernism.<sup>24</sup> Russello also flags the import of human nature as such by drawing from Vigen Guroian, who also as a part of the conversation on Kirk

and postmodernism has emphasized the reality and continuity of humanity through history.<sup>25</sup> In contrast to the typical lines of postmodern thought, Guroian has argued:

[...] A Burkean or Kirkian would say that cultural facts and circumstances are not accidents of place and time, but grow out of human nature itself. In other words “art is man’s nature” and morality is an inevitable concomitant of that “nature.” What constitutes human culture and distinguishes it from the beehive or the wolf pack are images and symbolic articulations that interpret reality, including, inevitably, images of religious and transcendent signification. Human culture is itself the product of the very sorts of ultimate questions raised by countless generations of humanity [...].<sup>26</sup>

Continuing from Chapter Two, as reality is the inescapable basis for thought and communication, the question of conservatism and postmodernism must ultimately rest *either* upon a postmodern quest “to the things themselves” *or* a realist endeavor from things to thinking and speaking, including a consideration of both the personal and general aspects of human nature that Kirk’s *corpus* brings forward as the linchpin for a realist rhetoric of order.<sup>27</sup>

The Roots of American Order is an historical account. From an Aristotelian standpoint, rhetoric as an art is distinct from historical study, with the latter being more directly aligned with politics.<sup>28</sup> According to Weaver, for whom history had a significant place for rhetorical theory (Bliese, “Richard Weaver’s Axiology”; Guroian, Rallying 189-200; Irwin), even in Aristotle’s Rhetoric there are elements of rhetorical discourse that are to be derived from history (Visions 63). Weaver wrote that the design of rhetoric is



for the movement of “feelings in the direction of a goal” to be “concerned not with abstract individuals, but with men in being” (63). He clarified, “Moreover, these men in being it has to consider in relation to forces in being. Rhetoric begins with the assumption that man is born into history. If he is to be moved, the arguments addressed to him must have historicity as well as logicity” (63). For instance, regarding Aristotle’s argument from example, Weaver argued that it “bears out our idea that rhetoric must be concerned with real or historical situations, although dialectic can attain its goal in a self-existing realm of discourse,” as examples are “taken from life, and the force of the example comes from the fact that it *is* or *was*” (63). According to Weaver, “It is the thing already possessed in experience and so it is the property of everyone through the sharing of a common past. Through examples, the rhetorician appeals to matters that everybody has in a sense participated in. These are the possible already made the actual, and the audience is expected to be moved by their historicity” (63). Also, as various scholars have shown, an historian is not exempt from using the rhetorical art along the way, whether it be *epideictic rhetoric* regarding virtue or vice within the landscape of the past and present or *judicial rhetoric* on the justice or injustice of some aspect of the past.<sup>29</sup>

From the vantage point of rhetorical criticism, one might designate Kirk as a spokesperson for American order in light of his praise and defense of its “roots” across his *corpus*.<sup>30</sup> In view of those historical approaches (in the 1970s) that took the United States as either invented or revolutionary, Bradford had explained in a review:

[...] The Roots of American Order presupposes, as a piece of rhetoric, no other state of affairs, no less formidable adversaries to confound. I use the

word rhetoric advisedly. Praise of discontinuity, rupture, and drastic innovation is ever the song of the new ideological historians—of helpful, not baneful change: but change *identified as good by being identified as radical*. Kirk, however, writes no Tory apocalypse. He contends that our roots run deep and remain intact, that to know them is to recognize both their antiquity and their present hold upon us. His book is a calculated inquiry into the genesis of our national character which looks behind events and documents to remote antecedents and attempts to encourage a modest estimation of its originality, a thoughtful appreciation of how much and how far it was brought to these shores, and a quiet rejoicing that we remain, in our essential qualities as a people, so well and so anciently grounded in the funded wisdom of the ages. Kirk's amiable but unremitting determination is to require of our generation a grudging admission that America has a religious, a moral, and *therefore* a political genealogy: a patrimony that could be called *unrevolutionary* and not at all modern, whose order-giving strength owes, by accident or omission as much as by design, to continuities so axiomatic that we have rarely, until of late, felt any need to speak of them at all.<sup>31</sup>

So then, one might take The Roots of American Order as an exercise in epideictic rhetoric in terms of the people and principles that were formative and foundational to the American Republic. Within a positive review of the book, Harold F. Alderfer has explained, "Kirk posits no overall theory or pattern of life, but in these times of doubt he offers a wonderful pageant of progress and good works" (181). In view of Kirk's lack of

admiration for either selfishness or envy, Fr. Francis Canavan wrote, “His conservatism was that of a society guided by a sound tradition and maintained by the moral character of good men and women. America had had such a society, whose tradition he elaborated in his book The Roots of American Order, and he devoted his life to conserving and reviving it” (45). Kirk’s later book, America’s British Culture, might be seen at some level as a forensic defense of the justice of that same legacy of Israel, Greece, Rome, and England against the attacks of multiculturalism on the West within the sphere of American education.<sup>32</sup>

From one angle, it is arguable that Kirk’s communicative efforts within The Roots of American Order was part of a larger attempt to inform the potential “renewal” toward “the exigency to common action and reform” that he once spoke of to President Nixon, for this book, at various levels, encompassed and reinforced a potentially persuasive message to the American citizenry that was at times, as Mark C. Henrie has pointed out, visible within his overall *corpus*—“life is worth living.”<sup>33</sup> As one of many carriers of this persuasive message, the book certainly reinforced Kirk’s observable view that history is everybody’s business. Within a written historical book, an author narrates a story of events from a viewpoint, often including a philosophy of history, to configure the “special experience” of research, which can influence the “prescriptive” judgments of readers.<sup>34</sup> While keeping in mind Aristotle’s explanation of poetry as more philosophical than history in terms of universals, Adler and Van Doren have indicated that *to this extent* (influencing “prescriptive” judgments”), the particulars of the past can be universal in scope.<sup>35</sup> Richard Weaver has explained that historical study is “a sobering discipline because it presents the story not only of man’s achievements but also of his failures,” for

it “contains many vivid lessons of what can happen to man if he lets go his grip upon reality and becomes self-indulgent; it is the record of the race, which can be laid alongside the dreams of visionaries, with many profitable lessons” (Education and 191). One might also here consider the rhetorical dimensions of history as related to deliberative rhetoric, possibly informed by an epideictic type of discourse.<sup>36</sup>

Particularly in view of the book, Enemies of the Permanent Things, Russello’s work points to what would be, for the most part, Kirk’s philosophy of history at the time of The Roots of American Order, which will be germane along the way to the present textual examination.<sup>37</sup> Kirk opened the book with a call for a renewed “understanding of the beliefs and the laws which give form to American society,” which “like that of any other people, is held together by what is called an ‘order’” (The Roots 3). He wrote, “The character of that order is the subject of this book. What is ‘order’?” (3). According to Kirk:

Imagine a man traveling through the night, without a guide, thinking continually of the direction he wishes to follow. That is the image of a human being in search of order, says Simone Weil, a woman who suffered much: “Such a traveller’s way is lit by a great hope.” Order is the path we follow, or the pattern by which we live with purpose and meaning. Above even food and shelter, she continues, we must have order. The human condition is insufferable unless we perceive a harmony, an order, in existence. “Order is the first need of all.”[...]

Before a person can live tolerably with himself or with others, he must know order. If we lack order in the soul and order in society, we

dwell “in a land of darkness, as darkness itself,” the Book of Job puts it; “and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where light is as darkness.”<sup>38</sup>

In view of Weil’s book, The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties toward Mankind, Kirk likened this traveler to Weil as regards her searching for “spiritual order” in her own life and her “thinking of social order in the modern world” (3-4). If one were doing a rhetorical criticism of this particular book, Kirk’s philosophy of history would be a major element of his *perspective* as operative at the level of rhetoric. However, to adaptively borrow for this dissertation project from Cherwitz and Darwin, communicative knowledge of what order *does* necessitates both common and theoretical knowledge of what order *is*, particularly as regards human nature.<sup>39</sup>

Grace Goodell implicates what was a major theme in Kirk’s *corpus* for a “conservative realism” that should take seriously the realist assumptions of the various world cultures as a contrast and corrective to ideological planning (6)—the relationship between personal and communal order. Kirk argued that to apprehend “‘order,’” one might look to “‘disorder,’” which is “confused and miserable existence,” for with social disorder, “many of its members will cease to exist at all,” yet “if the members of a society are disordered in spirit, the outward order of the commonwealth cannot endure” (The Roots 5). Even in coupling “the words ‘law and order,’” they are not the same (5). According to Kirk, “Laws arise out of a social order” as “the general rules which make possible the tolerable functioning of an order,” yet “an order is bigger than any laws, and many aspects of any social order are determined by beliefs and customs, rather than being governed by positive laws” (5). The term “‘order’ means a systematic and harmonious

arrangement [...] in one's own character or in the commonwealth," yet it also "signifies the performance of certain duties and the enjoyment of certain rights in a community," like with "the phrase 'the civil social order'" (5). Kirk will "examine the roots of order in the United States of America, which "give life to us all" with the intertwining of "the roots of moral order, of order in the soul; and the roots of the civil social order, of order in the republic" (5). He then continued:

Although to some extent we trace the history of civilization when we describe the origins of our order, this book is not a comprehensive survey of culture—that work having been done by others. Rather, this book emphasizes certain institutions and customs, and certain ideas and beliefs, which continue to nurture order in the person and order in the republic, down to our time. No study could be more relevant to our present discontents. (5)

In this book, Kirk would provide an examination of "the legacy of order received" from the Hebraic, Grecian, Roman, and European (particularly British) cultures as well as from "America's colonial experience" to "discuss both the beliefs and the institutions out of which American order has grown" (5-6).

"Seeking for the roots of order" leads to "Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, and London," as the "order which Americans experience is derived from the experience of those four old cities" (The Roots 6). Disorder in the soul tends toward "abnormality," as we are "unable to control our impulses," yet "[i]f our commonwealth is disordered, we fall into anarchy, every man's hand against another man's."<sup>40</sup> According to Kirk, "This saving order is the product of more than three thousand years of human striving" (6). Kirk

continued, “The ‘inner order’ of the soul and the ‘outer order’ of society being intimately linked, we discuss in this book both aspects of order. Without a high degree of private moral order among the American people, the reign of law could not have prevailed in this country. Without an orderly pattern of politics, American private character would have sunk into a ruinous egoism” (6). The primary “need of the soul” is order, as one must “recognize some principles of order by which to govern ourselves” so as “to love what one ought to love,” yet it also “is the first need of the commonwealth, for “unless we recognize some principle of order by which to do justice,” living peacefully in society is impossible (6). According to Kirk, “The good society is marked by a high degree of order, justice, and freedom. Among these, order has primacy: for justice cannot be enforced until a tolerable civil social order is attained, nor can freedom be anything better than violence until order gives us laws” (6). W. Wesley McDonald has indicated that this idea of a relationship between order in the soul and the commonwealth is indebted to Platonic and Aristotelian political theory, which view the “well-ordered soul” having “its natural impulses under the discipline of the higher will,” not shaped in character by “economic or social forces external to the will of man, as “[t]he roots of social and personal disorder always lie in the defects of the soul; that is, they are found in the characters of persons. [...]”<sup>41</sup> Kirk had recounted the words of a Russian-born friend, who as a Menshevik during the Russian Revolution learned “through terrible events that order necessarily precedes justice and freedom” (6-7). Looking to escape the Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg, he encountered the anarchy of Odessa, which was a lesson for this friend that even a bleak Communist order was better than no order at all (6-7).

Although “order and justice and freedom have developed together” in the United States, “they can decay in parallel fashion” (The Roots 7). Kirk argued, “In every generation, some human beings bitterly defy the moral order and the social order. Although the hatred of order is suicidal, it must be reckoned with: ignore a fact, and that fact will be your master” (7). Adapting a phrase from William Butler Yeats regarding “what had become the torment of much of the modern world,” Kirk observed that “in the past half-century, the center has failed to hold in many nations.”<sup>42</sup> He explained that “once a revolution or war has demolished an established order, a people find it imperative to search for principles of order afresh” for survival (7). With the undoing of “an old order, revolutionaries proceed to decree a new order—often an order harsher than the order which they had overthrown” (7-8). Never has there been a perfect order, and it is a temptation to think that humans have the ability to “create a new order nearer to our hearts’ desire” (7-8).

Kirk would then recount the story of that “freshman” who argued “that we have no need nowadays for the beliefs and institutions of yesteryear” while also claiming to be able to “outline a better moral system and a better political pattern than those we have inherited” (The Roots 8). Kirk recounted:

I asked him if he could build a gasoline engine, say, without reference to anything mechanical now existing. He replied that he could not. I observed that moral and social concerns really are more delicate and complex than a mere mechanical contrivance—and that even should his novel order be superior, apparently, to the old order, still no one would accept it but himself and a few followers. For people take the proofs of



mankind's experience as evidence of some soundness, and they tend to resist any new creation of some living person not conspicuously a better authority than themselves. (8)

Building from the Aristotelian account of the human capacity for reasoning from sense experience and previous understanding, Frederick Wilhelmsen provided some insights, as follows, which are somewhat appropriate for consideration at this point:

[...] But the concept of experience can be broadened to include the whole spatial-temporal world in which man exists. Experience need not be limited to evident judgments made about the here-and-now. The continuum of life is woven out of a pattern of immediate judgments, mediated judgments, evident judgments, self-evident judgments, and judgments made in faith or belief. All of this accumulated knowledge constitutes a history, a culture. Understood broadly, this corporate experience is traditional wisdom, the inheritance of a *populous*. Every people has its presuppositions: let us think only about the Western technical presuppositions that permit us all to move about in an ordinary day's work; they may have been demonstrated rationally by learned gnomes lurking in distant laboratories, but they are given credence by men at large because society imposes its own authority and validates that authority, so to speak, sensibly. The man buying a new car ought to read carefully the manual instructions the manufacturer gives him with his purchase. Prudent faith in the authority might avoid breakdowns and subsequent drain upon the wallet. Hume can teach us something here.

Reason, all reason, operates within the prescriptions and suppositions of some social order because reasoning cannot take its point of departure from itself: the act of a man, reasoning is lodged in him; and—very profoundly—is his *product*: we produce our own conclusions; we do not capture them on the wing as though they were Platonic ideas floating in a void. In life, reason is always operating on faith and faith is always operating on reason, and both of them are stirred out of the broth of experience.<sup>43</sup>

Kirk would of course look to Hume “to persuade the heterodox” in Enemies of the Permanent Things and as against John Locke for The Roots of American Order, and admittedly, one might take Kirk’s appropriation of Hume’s “*Skeptical Realism*” as another angle of contemporary affinity (potentially postmodern), at least in terms of epistemology.<sup>44</sup> Yet, according to Kirk in The Roots of American Order, even as Hume’s critiques of rationalism toward custom and experience had a place in the Enlightenment context, his “ideas had their revolutionary consequences” as gentlemen and scholars (such as Hume) lost influence on morality at large, while with Europe’s losing faith and forgetting revelation, “religion might need the Schoolmen’s bulwark of reason” (365).

This “undergraduate was not singular in his repudiation of the experience of a civilization” as “[o]ur times resemble those of the concluding years of the Roman Republic, the age of Marcus Tullius Cicero,” for “[a]s disorder washed about him, Cicero examined the causes of private and public confusion” (The Roots 8). According to Kirk, “Like Plato before him, Cicero understood that the problem of order is simultaneously personal and social: Roman men and Roman justice had declined together. It is so still.

That is one reason why Plato and Cicero remain relevant to our present condition” (8). Philosophically, this proposed relevance points back to something even more basically human. In part because of *the constancy of human nature*, we can study and weigh the arguments of persons in history (like those within the “great books”) as relevant for today, such as in the case of Aristotle, who did not face all of our current ethical and political dilemmas, yet as a human being, regardless of time and place, he could have (Adler, The Four 43-48, 124-141, 229-237; Adler, How to Think 444-445; Adler, Ten xiii-xx, 156-166, 191-200; Hudson). Wilhelmsen has argued that as humankind exists “within history, man’s playing out of being historically precedes and conditions his understanding of being itself,” for one’s “bringing of meaning to the order of being is itself eminently historical,” made possible because of an active grasp of “the real,” which is preceded by the *experience* of reality (The Paradoxical 49-104). In this type of account, the metaphysician might transcend history for the science of being, yet even philosophy is influenced by the realm of meaning as related to the historical and cultural framework in which it is operative—Wilhelmsen indicated that rhetoric certainly is.<sup>45</sup>

Because of Kirk’s focus upon “exemplars” for learning within his *corpus*, Eugene Garver might classify Kirk’s rhetorical approach as Ciceronian rather than Aristotelian.<sup>46</sup> However, one must not neglect Cicero’s realism when looking at what might said to be the positivist, pragmatist, historicist, and existentialist aspects of his communication of a “public orthodoxy” in and for his time in Roman history (Wilhelmsen and Kendall), regardless of rhetorical theorizing. Linking back to his reference to Cicero above, Kirk explained:

“To freshen the colors of the picture” is the purpose of this book. We are concerned here with the social experiences and the ideas that blended in America to form a pattern of inner and outer order, still enduring. The popular demand for “relevance” in college and university, nowadays, has some justification; and this book is meant to be relevant to the disputes of our present hour. Those who ignore history, says George Santayana, are condemned to repeat it. Those who neglect the roots of order, one may add, are compelled to water those roots desperately—after wandering in the parched wasteland of disorder.

Upon our knowledge of those roots may depend what sort of order America and the world will have by the end of this century. It may be the order of Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World, rich and dehumanized; it may be the garrison-state controlled by ferocious ideology, as in George Orwell’s Nineteen-Eighty-Four; or it may be an order renewed and improved, yet recognizably linked with the order that arose in Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, and London.<sup>47</sup>

In terms of learning by “exemplars,” Kirk indicated in Decadence and Renewal in the Higher Learning that The Roots of American Order was something like his proposed historical “course that would commence with revelation and social order,” which “would be a study of moral philosophy [...] as related to social institutions” that would offer “something for the parched imagination,” as “American society cannot be properly understood, or preserved, or improved, without an apprehending of its sources” (289-290). As the both the primary and secondary literature illustrates, Kirk aimed for The

Roots of American Order to be an historical textbook in a time of recognizable social and educational disorder, yet it actually attained more of a general readership than actual pedagogical use.<sup>48</sup>

Vigen Guroian has classified Kirk along with G.K. Chesterton and Flannery O'Connor as Christian humanists who are relevant for the postmodernism our time (Rallying 3-45). Kirk argued in The Roots of American Order:

The higher kind of order, sheltering freedom and justice, declares the dignity of man. It affirms what G.K. Chesterton called “the democracy of the dead”—that is, it recognizes the judgments of men and women who have preceded us in time, as well as the opinions of people living at this moment. This higher kind of order is founded upon the practical experience of human beings over many centuries, and upon the judgments of men of vision and intellect who have preceded us in time.<sup>49</sup>

One point of strength, according to Guroian, was Chesterton’s interest in returning to dogma, properly understood (not as alarmist or forceful), but as “religious truth affirmed in consensus, established in authority, and declared as norm in public debate,” which is a necessity of human life (14-17). From Chesterton, he has argued that “[a] postmodern world requires a Christian humanism grounded in philosophical realism,” which as extending into religiosity, “a return to dogma” portends “the rally for the really *human* things.”<sup>50</sup> In terms of the importance of dogma for social and educational life, Kirk had a somewhat similar view to what has been described Guroian, also emphasizing at a basic terminological and etymological level that which is dogmatic for *both* science and politics (Decadence 247-257). Kirk was no advocate for a civic religion to replace real

religiosity within the community, as dogmas could be transmitted in balanced way, particularly through the traditional approaches to learning, which are attentive to *both* the good and bad of human nature through history (Russello, The Postmodern 44-45; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 170-200). Although Kirk's work might be somewhat conducive to a "rhetoric of restoration" that entails "a recognition of the importance of tradition and continuity" alongside a defense of terminological propriety, Kirk did not necessarily adhere to the somewhat negative view of human nature that James Campbell seems to indicate in setting up his arguments for "conceptual reconstruction" for contemporary political and communicative life.<sup>51</sup>

Bringing Chesterton to postmodernism is not a novel idea, as it was from Chesterton's notion of "paradox" that Frederick Wilhelmsen built a realist case (with Thomism) regarding the philosophical relationship among metaphysics, existence, and history for "[a] post-modern articulation of Thomistic wisdom."<sup>52</sup> To extend the realist implications from Guroian's book, when bringing Chesterton to the table, even with the focus on imagination and "paradox," one must also look to Chesterton's strong statements on classical realism within his biography of St. Thomas Aquinas (118-157). Therein, Chesterton set the "common sense" realism of Aquinas against a reigning skepticism in his time, which now arguably persists into postmodernism generally. Broadly speaking, although Christian humanism (beyond maybe the sphere established by Guroian) *might* be susceptible to an accusation of a germinating postmodernism (in regard to both religion and reason), it is quite difficult to accuse Chesterton on this count because of his clear arguments for realism.<sup>53</sup> The larger 20th century conversation on Christian humanism and Thomistic realism had included some contest as to the roles of

philosophy and history for such areas as education, politics, and religion, such as with the divergent standpoints of philosopher Jacques Maritain and historian Christopher Dawson.<sup>54</sup> Regardless, it is likely more accurate to straight away designate Kirk as a Christian humanist than a postmodern conservative, although that depends, it seems, on one's handling of the terms "postmodernism" and "postmodernity," such as within the communication literature, where the terminology of "posthumanism" has emerged near the influence of postmodernist philosophy.<sup>55</sup>

As previously mentioned, Kirk saw conservatism as a "negation of ideology" that should be open to reality as it was created and had developed (Cribb, "Why"). "Ideology" has been and continues to be a word of varying utilization across disciplines, including communication and rhetorical studies, yet as W. Wesley McDonald has pointed out, in contrast to its frequent use, for Russell Kirk, the term was not a catch-all term for any framework of beliefs.<sup>56</sup> Kirk wrote in The Roots of American Order:

Against this higher kind of order, there contend in our age various ideologies—fanatic political creeds, often advanced by violence. By definition, "ideology" means servitude to political dogmas, abstract ideas not founded upon historical experience. Ideology is inverted religion, and the ideologue is the sort of person whom the historian Jacob Burckhardt called the "terrible simplifier." Communism, fascism, and anarchism have been the most powerful of these ideologies. The simplistic appeal of ideological slogans continues to menace the more humane social orders of our time.<sup>57</sup>

According to W. Wesley McDonald, as against ideological notions of reform, Kirk's remedy here is Edmund Burke, which from one vantage point across the varying philosophical interpretations of Burke's writings and speeches, brings to the table a deep respect for historical conventions alongside of a continual attentiveness to present circumstances, not excluding the *constancy of human nature as such* across time and place.<sup>58</sup> As James J. Person has emphasized in discussing Kirk the historian, Bradford designated The Roots of American Order a Burkean preliminary to historical studies *per se*.<sup>59</sup> If one were to take on Pappin's classical realist interpretation of Burke, one can here look to "the development of a second nature, shaped by habit, custom and tradition, is not only consistent with, but a natural outgrowth from, our first or essential human nature" with respect to reason, imagination, and reality.<sup>60</sup> Across the "situations" of rhetoric, with respect to human nature, rhetoric can be *preservative* of virtue in communities.

As highlighted in Chapter Two, Russello has helpfully emphasized "imagination against ideology" in Kirk's *corpus*, which portends, alongside of "moral imagination," the import of "historical imagination" (The Postmodern 53-64). According to Kirk:

The American order of our day was not founded upon ideology. It was not manufactured: rather, it *grew*. This American order is not immutable, for it will change in one respect or another as the circumstances of social existence alter. [...] As Edmund Burke said, change is the means of our preservation.

But also we must have permanence in some things, if change is to be improvement. Americans generally retain a respect for their old moral habits and their old political forms, because those habits and forms express



their understanding of order. This attachment to certain enduring principles of order has done much to preserve America from the confused and violent change that plagues most modern nations.

No order is perfect: man himself being imperfect, presumably we never will make our way to Utopia. (If ever we arrived at Utopia, indeed, we might be infinitely bored with the place.) But if the roots of an order are healthy, that order may be reinvigorated and improved. If its roots are withered, “the dead tree gives no shelter.” Permanence and progression are not enemies, for there can be no improvement except upon a sound foundation, and that foundation cannot endure unless it is progressively renewed. The traveller in the wasteland seeks the shelter of the living order. This book is meant to water roots, for the renewing of order and the betterment of justice and freedom. What Patrick Henry, in 1776, called the “lamp of experience” is our hope of order refreshed.<sup>61</sup>

With the oft discussed influence of T.S. Eliot upon Kirk, one might also go to Marion Montgomery’s admonitions regarding the experience of reality for imaginative propriety along with a sound balance between nature and history for weighing the “truth of things” across contexts for “orthodoxy”—one must be attentive to “the given” within reality, inclusive of the *achievements* and *limitations* of human beings.<sup>62</sup> Even with Russello’s employment of the language of construction in a way that is more adaptive than reductionist, one must ultimately get beyond both constructivism and idealism in order to *ascertain* and *negotiate* ideologies with respect to reality (especially the constant reality of human nature), for otherwise, one is out of the realm of moral accountability and under

the arbitrary control of political power—might then would be the standard for what is right.<sup>63</sup>

Within a framing of what Russello calls “participant history” for Kirk’s approach he leads the way to Enemies of the Permanent Things (The Postmodern 67-103). Upon a reading of this particular book, readers would observe that there was a type of philosophical and religious blueprint already in place for the sort of extended historical conversation that would be communicatively lived out in The Roots of American Order (although Kirk had written previously on American history on various occasions in such works as The American Cause). As against the evolutionary, positivist, and cyclical views of history, in Enemies of the Permanent Things Kirk indicated with a discussion of Eric Voegelin his own historical approach, as follows:

These three schools have dominated so thoroughly the discussion of historical problems for the past century that many people seem unaware that a fourth interpretation of history exists. That fourth interpretation, nevertheless, is a venerable theory, long known to the higher civilizations, though most thoroughly developed in Christian civilization. I mean the belief that history is the record of human existence under God, meaningful only so far as it reflects and explains and illustrates the order in the soul and in society which emanates from divine purpose. The aim of history, in the eyes of this school, is not antiquarian, nor yet programmatic: that purpose is to reveal to existing men and societies the true nature of being. Without this history, indeed no society long endures. “The order of

history,” so Voegelin’s first sentence in Israel and Revelation runs, “emerges from the history of order.”

In the view of this last school of historians, history is not law, in the sense of fixed fate, foreknowledge absolute; nor does it have “meaning” in the sense of providing a Grand Design for immanent improvement. A study of history reveals the general principles to which men and societies, in all ages, are subject; but it cannot confer upon the scholar a prophetic afflatus; it cannot describe the wave of the future. [...]

64

Frederick Wilhelmsen, who called this statement by Voegelin on order and history a “paradox” that is “itself consubstantial with human existence in time and history,” would have us reappraise the terms “objective” and “subjective” toward an older set of meanings that would allow for *both* personal involvement and communicable truth (similar in some ways to another discussion by Kirk in Enemies of the Permanent Things), *contrary* to the analytical idealism of modernity.<sup>65</sup>

For his notion of “participant history,” Russello has turned to the work of historian John Lukacs, whom Kirk admired and recommended (The Postmodern 82-87).

In some ways insightful for this project, McCarthy has written

[...] Russello relates the dubious idea that Werner Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle in quantum physics, which Russello says “struck a terminal blow to the idea of scientific objectivity,” tells us something about historical knowledge. What does our inability to observe simultaneously the velocity and position of a subatomic particle have to do

with our ability—or lack thereof—to understand what happened at, say, the Battle of Hastings? Even if there is uncertainty about both kinds of events, we are not talking about the same kind of uncertainty. We may not know whether King Harold was really killed by an arrow to the eye, but if he was, we can say with certainty that both the position and velocity of the arrow could have been observed simultaneously, if anyone had been in a position to do so.

There is indeed common ground here between Kirkian traditionalists and postmodernists. Both camps try to conscript the uncertainty principle, mathematician Kurt Gödel's incompleteness theorems, and Einstein's relativity into attacks on objectivity in other fields. The Kirkians and postmodernists share a fallacy, and ironically it is a species of scientism: They wrongly apply the ideas of advanced physics and mathematics to history. It turns out that when "science" casts doubt on objectivity, the otherwise science-skeptical Kirkians and postmodernists are all for it. ("The Pomo")

Particularly as regards the relationship of historical studies to "moral imagination," Kirk had positively reviewed Lukacs's writings on a few occasions with an emphasis on various key ideas, including the Heisenberg application ("History and"; "Regaining Historical"). He also saw elements of Lukacs's historical approach in terms of the primacy of words over "facts" as an appeal "not to linguistic analysis nor semantics, but to rhetoric in its original signification," which for Lukacs made words more than just tools.<sup>66</sup> In light of Chapter Two herein, what of this contrast with other aspects from

Russell Kirk (words as “tools that break in the hand”)? Well, Kirk often showed a wide appreciation for the work of various scholars, often highlighting key elements of their work as valuable contributions, yet there is no real employment of Lukacs in The Roots of American Order or Enemies of the Permanent Things, although positive discussion is certainly available elsewhere in Kirk’s *corpus*.<sup>67</sup>

From some realist accounts, Heisenberg’s arguments (or at least certain interpretations or applications of it) might not tell the whole story about what we *know* and *do* in reality for the various *levels of reality*.<sup>68</sup> Patrick Allitt has well outlined the views of various thinkers on history, including a discussion of the question of Heisenberg’s work in relation to history, yet in response to one of Allitt’s articles on Lukacs as historian, Jonathan Chaves has written regarding Lukacs, “How delightful to find that there is a major historian who still thinks great men can in fact change the course of history, and that we need not always see hazy ‘forces’ in accordance with the new superstition.”<sup>69</sup> However, for “orthodox Christians,” Chaves reminded readers (mentioning the insights of Gilson and Chesterton) that “good epistemology starts precisely with the solidity of the physical world around us” (“Scientism, Subjectivist Epistemology” 53). Drawing from Fr. Stanley Jaki, he argues that it is ultimately not a question of changing matter as such with investigation, but of the precision of measurement and knowledge with respect to what can be known within the spheres of science and metaphysics.<sup>70</sup> Here and elsewhere, Chaves has affirmed (as against subjectivism and postmodernism) the necessity of defending reason, properly understood, for both science and religion.<sup>71</sup> Russello certainly portrayed Kirk’s devotion to truth for life and in discourse. Also, Lukacs himself was committed to truth, even with this

particular understanding of epistemology (he did not by the way write well of postmodernism as a subjectivist intellectual movement), yet he was certainly a proponent of a constant human nature through history, particularly as regards the common and academic choices of persons (“Putting Man”). It is probably an open question as to what extent Kirk embraced Lukacs’s epistemological approach to history, although he certainly embraced its scholarly value concerning the centrality of human nature in terms of historical continuity (“History and”; “Regaining Historical”).

Michael E. Meagher has written (with a significant focus on The Roots of American Order), “Kirk is generally recognized as a prominent contributor to modern conservative thought from a decidedly religious perspective” (136). Within a comparison between Russell Kirk and Daniel Boorstin as regards religiosity and politics in America, Meagher has emphasized that by assigning “special importance to Moses and his relationship to God,” they “begin their analysis of American political thought and development in an unlikely area,” which is of consequence in confronting moral skepticism, religious minimalism, and Enlightenment liberalism within the United States (137-143). Kirk opens Chapter Two of The Roots of American Order as follows:

The tap-root of American order runs deep into a Levantine desert; it began to grow some thirteen centuries before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Through Moses, prophet and law-giver, the moral principles that move the civilization of Europe and America and much more of the world first obtained clear expression.

To a wandering people of obscure, the Hebrews, or Children of Israel, occurred then a tremendous “leap in being”: that is, by an

extraordinary perception, the Israelites came to understand the human condition as it had not been understood before. Even earlier than the time of Moses, the Israelites had experienced the moral workings of an unseen power, which had spoken to the consciousness of Noah and of Abraham. But through Moses, the Hebrews learned more distinctly that there watched over them an all-powerful intelligence or spirit which gave them their moral nature. In their sacred book called Exodus, later, the Jews who were the Israelites' descendants would set down the revelation which Moses received from Yahweh, or Jehovah, the unseen Lord of all. (11)

Out of “[r]evelation,” which is “the unveiling of truths that men could not have obtained from simple experience in this world” entailing “a communication of knowledge from some source that transcends ordinary human perception,” namely that of the Israelites “have grown modern ethics and modern social institutions and much besides” (12). The Roots of American Order itself, alongside of the scholarship of Guroian and Russello, for instance, support what one might call a customarily strong view of Kirk and religion, that is to say, these works counteract the notion that Kirk took somewhat of a utilitarian approach to religion, which Dermott Quinn in part resolves anyway with an eye to Kirk's view of human nature.<sup>72</sup>

A notion of “myth” was poetically, pedagogically, and rhetorically significant within Kirk's *corpus* (“The Dissolution” 32-42; Enemies 109-115). To reiterate from my introduction, Shively has argued (in view of anthropological studies) “that what has enduring moral meaning for most people is that which bears this mythic sensibility,” bringing “suprahistorical or unconditioned reality to bear on historical or conditioned

reality,” which “can be seen as essential the imaginative side of realist philosophy: the manner in which the abstract idea of unconditioned truth in conditioned experience is given concrete significance and imagery in human life” (111). She explained that “all cultures and peoples see themselves in some such mythic sense: as creatures of, and yet above, history; as material and yet immaterial in their ends and insights” (112). Hence, “The most common and enduring elements of mythology offer evidence for the common and enduring importance of realist self-understandings, that is, for the claim that people generally see themselves as both immanent and transcendent [...] and that these self-understandings are irreplaceable modes of moral thought” (112). According to Wilhelmsen (The Paradoxical 139-211), “myth” plays a role as related to nature and being for the linguistic and cultural life of a community as well as for the dynamic of experience and cognition as it relates to the *formal signs* that signify the objects in reality that we experience and know in common, which then even impact (positively or negatively) the operations of philosophy.

This notion of a “leap in being” is from Voegelin, which Wilhelmsen upheld as a necessary starting point for history *as such* in terms of history as a “form of being.”<sup>73</sup> According to Kirk, “Even the simplest human communities cannot endure without some form of laws, consciously held and enforced. Ants and bees may cooperate by instinct; men must have revelation and reason” (The Roots 13). He would later argue, “All the aspects of any civilization arise out of a people’s religion: its politics, its economics, its arts, its sciences, even its simple crafts are the by-products of religious insights and a religious cult,” yet “until human beings are tied together by some common faith, and share certain moral principles, they prey upon one another” (14). Communities are



formed with “the common worship of the cult,” for the core “of every culture is a body of ethics, of distinctions between good and evil; and in the beginning, at least, those distinctions are founded upon the authority of revealed religion” (14). In Kirk’s view:

[...] Not until a people have come to share religious belief are they able to work together satisfactorily, or even to make sense of the world in which they find themselves. Thus all order—even the ideological order of modern totalist states, professing atheism—could not have come into existence, had it not grown out of general belief in truths that are perceived by the moral imagination.

This religious origin of private and public order has been described afresh in the twentieth century by such historians as Christopher Dawson, Eric Voegelin, and Arnold Toynbee. The first social organization, beyond mere family groups, is the cult that seeks to communicate with supernatural powers. (14)

Culture from the cult is an idea of Dawson’s, and as indicated in Enemies of the Permanent Things, the view of history that Kirk is advocating at this point in his career is also within the legacy of St. Augustine, who within his own theological framework, as Fackenheim has noted, held a view of human nature as essentially constant.<sup>74</sup>

Kirk’s larger point in this discussion of the Ancient Israelites is that, regardless of the extent to which Israel had a direct *political influence* on the American Republic, there was a moral and imaginative influence in large part because of the ongoing questions of human conduct that linger across time and place (The Roots 11-50). As one of Kirk’s imaginative insights for contemporary persons of letters, Whitney has made reference to

the necessity of the “*prophetic* imagination to divine what human beings will be, given the choices they make” (“The Swords” 312). In view of the discussion of the prophet Amos within this part of the text, Whitney explained:

To make this past-future linkage comprehensible is one of the great tasks of the prophetic imagination. That is why modern civilization in particular has need of its voice. The modern mind tends not to look back; it is in a state of perpetual denial; every day in every way things are supposed to get better. The smug disposition of the modern mind prompted Kirk to remind readers of Hegel’s line: “We learn from history that we learn nothing from history.” [...] Countless lessons are there in history books, but are, alas, ignored. The prophet, by contrast, knows the consequences of history.<sup>75</sup>

There is, of course, a close connection between the “historical” and “prophetic” imaginations (319). One has *experience* toward imaginative formation *across* and *above* our everyday experiences through the oral and literary communication of history (Mesa). Like with Kirk’s travels to various places that he would write about (Russello, The Postmodern; Whitney, “The Swords”), of course, formation occurs too through one’s *direct* experiences of the world.

The constancy of human nature and the consequence of human decisions are themes that remain on the table throughout The Roots of American Order. As Greek thought would positively influence the West in general and be revisited politically in more liberal times in particular, the Roman legacy would eventually play a more direct role in the formation of the American Republic, yet the ups and downs of these cultures

in terms of religion, philosophy, and politics were ultimately connected in the book to the relationship between communal and individual order (51-136). Christianity, which to some extent plays a guiding role for Kirk's work in this book, had a supernatural message that addressed order for persons with consequences for order in the community.<sup>76</sup>

Through the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the Renaissance, great thinkers and everyday people according to Kirk had grappled with the problem of order as it relates to the community and to individual, even amid theological and political differences (Kirk is careful, in my estimation, to not conflate the various points of view) (177-300). A dynamic of authority, reason, and imagination would provide a spectrum for the large purview of Western thought as it would eventually impact the American "founding," which in Kirk's stance, differed from the French Revolution—it was not a "revolution" (374-440). This of course is a major element of Kirk's influence from Edmund Burke, as Kirk would himself give favor to the Constitution over the Declaration of Independence, which is part of a larger controversy anyway, for in fact, across disciplines, Kirk certainly was a part of a larger and debatable discussion for conservatism and beyond as to the connection of Europe to America.<sup>77</sup>

Regardless, this theme of the delicate relationship between personal and social order with respect to human nature is an evident component of the book. According to Kirk, "To live within a just order is to live within a pattern that has beauty. The individual finds purpose within an order, and security—whether it is the order of the soul or the order of the community. Without order, indeed the life of man is poor, nasty, brutish, and short. No order is perfect, but any tolerable order may be improved" (The

Roots 474). For Kirk, ideologues and “extremists” are not the preservationists of order (474-475). He concludes the book as follows:

To protest against the existence of order is to protest against well-being, justice, freedom, and prosperity. Happiness is found in imaginative affirmation, not in sullen negation. Gratitude is one form of happiness; and anyone who appreciates the legacy of moral and social order which he has inherited in America will feel gratitude. The pursuit of happiness is not altogether vain. One finds happiness in restoring and improving the order of the soul and the order of the republic—not in acts of devastation that make a desert of spirit and of society.

America’s order rose out of acts of affirmation, from what Thomas Carlyle called “the Everlasting Yea.” Upon the classical and theological virtues, upon the social experience of the Old World and the New, there was built by self-sacrifice and high imagination the intricate structure of personal and public order. Although no single human mind planned this order of ours, the wisdom and the toil of countless men and woman have gone into its making.

Two hundred years after the ferment which produced Declaration and Constitution, America’s order is in ferment still—but in a ferment of renewal, for change is the means of our preservation. This book has sketched the principal features of the order that the United States inherited and developed. Other hands may renew that order’s structure and improve it with prudence and love, in God’s own good time.<sup>78</sup>

From the classical realist point of view, regardless of where one stands on the connection of America's legacy to political modernity, the constancy of human nature allows for the continuous grappling with the relationship between personal and communal order.<sup>79</sup> As a realist and "logocentric" historian, Kirk offered human nature *as such* as a linchpin of order, which is significant for one's consideration of the study and practice of rhetoric.

Kirk was critical of the "Situationalism" of the late 1960s and early 1970s for education and ethics (Decadence 137-149). Of course, it should be evident at this point in the project that Kirk portrayed sensitivity to context, notwithstanding one's view of the question of conservatism and postmodernism. There might be some congruities between Kirk's overall framework and Bitzer's notion of "public knowledge," although it should be mentioned that Kirk, like Weaver, was not an intellectual fan of the philosophical pragmatism that was a basis of some of Bitzer's rhetorical theorizing (Bitzer did warn, however, against the discarding of tradition for progress).<sup>80</sup> Ralph S. Pomeroy had once written that Bitzer formulated "a new general theory of rhetoric, applicable to all oral and written discourse, in contrast to the many special theories now proposed for a Rhetoric of Agitation and Control, of Civil Rights, of Black Power, of Warmongering, and even of Desecration.[...]"<sup>81</sup> In a certain sense, with this, one can say then that Bitzer aimed to avoid ideology too. To establish rhetoric as "situational," Bitzer went beyond the generalities of "meaning-context and utterance" along with the various settings of a possible "persuasive situation" as follows:

Finally, I do not mean that a rhetorical discourse must be embedded in historic context in the sense that a living tree must be rooted in soil. A tree does not obtain its character-as-tree from the soil, but rhetorical

discourse, I shall argue, does obtain its character-as-rhetorical from the situation which generates it. Rhetorical works belong to the class of things which obtain their character from the circumstances of the historic context in which they occur. A rhetorical work is analogous to a moral action rather than to a tree. An act is moral because it is an act performed in a situation of a certain kind; similarly, a work is rhetorical because it is a response to a situation of a certain kind.

In order to clarify rhetoric-as-essentially-related-to-situation, we should acknowledge a viewpoint that is commonplace but fundamental: a work of rhetoric is pragmatic; it comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to produce action or change the world; it performs some task. In short, rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action. The rhetor alters reality by bringing into existence a discourse of such a character that the audience, in thought and action, is so engaged that it becomes mediator of change. In this sense rhetoric is always persuasive.<sup>82</sup>

In Bitzer's theoretical view, rhetorical communication is a more artistic and elaborate version of primitive human speech, for in both cases, factuality and functionality are contained within and provided by "situation," which is basic to his original essay on "situation," yet more explicit in a later selection entitled, "Functional Communication: A

Situational Perspective,” a functionalist standpoint regarding the workings of rhetorical discourse is an evident component of Bitzer’s overall approach.<sup>83</sup>

Generally speaking, for Bitzer, as real elements in the situation “invite” rhetoric (which are also indicative for the critic), the quality of rhetorical communication is derived from the “fit” between a particular discourse and the situational “exigence” for an audience who can effect change (Bitzer, “Functional”; Bitzer, “The Rhetorical”; Patton, “Causation”)—hence, the standard of “fitting response.” Within Bitzer’s work, the factual, linguistic, human, and customary constraints on the decisions and actions of given audiences, which are influential on and utilized by rhetors, are all in some way a part of reality (“Functional”; “The Rhetorical”). Intention, audience, and formality, according to Bitzer, are not *as such* productive or indicative of rhetorical discourse (“The Rhetorical” 9-13). Scholars have challenged Bitzer’s model (even in adapting it) in terms of creativity, causality, and multiplicity with respect to communicators, audiences, and messages, which is somewhat (though not always) linked to his view of situational reality, as both the determinacy of meaning and action are two areas of distinct yet (at times) connected areas of interest—some have argued that he minimized the pertinence of creativity and intellectually of speakers and writers.<sup>84</sup> However, it is *somewhat apparent* at particular points throughout Bitzer’s work that Bitzer allows for the influence of communicative decisions *within* and *for* “rhetorical situations” (Bitzer, “Bitzer on Tompkins (and Patton)”; Bitzer, “Functional”; Bitzer, “Political Rhetoric”; Bitzer, “The Rhetorical”; Bitzer, “Rhetoric and”; Patton, “Causation”; Young).

From the vantage point of rhetorical constructivism, Richard Vatz has countered Bitzer’s model by arguing that rhetors arbitrarily chose particular situational factors

toward “salience” and creatively translate a “salient” situation by interpretation, which as he has argued, provides the basis for the moral responsibility of communicators— “situations are rhetorical” (“The Myth”). As Young has pointed out, even with some of her disagreements with his challenge to Bitzer’s model, Vatz certainly made a contribution to this larger conversation on Bitzer as to the creative situational role of rhetors.<sup>85</sup> Of interest to this project, Vatz has recently looked to the prominence of Bitzer’s model as regards the predominance of liberalism among rhetorical scholars (“The Mythical”). Vatz has argued that because of an emphasis upon communicative responsibility and rhetorical translation, his own approach tends toward a “more disinterested analysis and criticism” that is not as susceptible to academic liberalism, even with his granting that “there is nothing inherently liberal or conservative” in his or Bitzer’s approaches “for liberal or conservative argument.”<sup>86</sup> In terms of epistemology, for realists, Cherwitz and Darwin have probably provided some areas of resolution between the approaches of Bitzer and Vatz, at least at some level.

With an eye to the “situatedness of rhetoric,” Cherwitz and Darwin of course have argued that “rhetorical perspectivism” better accounts for the impact of reality in “constraining” language and the impact of language in “shaping” reality (“Beyond Reductionism”; “Toward a”). While negotiating between intersubjectivism and realism, they have addressed the challenge to the realist view, often portrayed as holding that the meaning and constraining of language is referential and determinate, as follows:

Given that it begins with the affirmation of an independent reality, it is easy to see why the realist theory of meaning has not been received favorably by communication scholars. In fact, many rhetoricians have



charged that, by granting the existence of an autonomous reality, realism gives objects an ontological priority over language. For this reason, realism is incapable of appreciating the contingency and complexity of human problems, as well as the malleability of language. Realism, it is inferred, has no way to explicate the potential of language to shape reality. As with arguments against intersubjectivity, this objection has been proffered as a justification for rejecting *carte blanche* the realist thesis [...].

On our view, however, this critique does not provide ample grounds for dismissing the doctrine of realism. What it may intimate is that, in order to comprehend the constraining function of objects, which is the project of realism, one cannot simply begin with objects and then focus attention on the unidirectional movement of influence *from* objects *to* language. This is because the notion of constraining assumes the presence of a mechanism linking objects to language. Since not all objects elicit or provoke language, and inasmuch as objects do not necessarily prefigure a specific language choice (note that not all realists are determinists), there must be some other factor explaining the decisions about whether and how to communicate.

It could be suggested that what ultimately illuminates the capacity of objects to constrain language is the intervention of specific cognitive faculties. For example, one's *awareness* of objects and events may be what constrains the decision about whether to communicate and what

guides subsequent rhetorical choices about how to communicate.

Similarly, the *perceived importance* and *relevance* of objects and events may be what elicits and influences particular linguistic determinations.

So, to inquire about what connects objects to language (i.e., what allows objects to constrain language) is to ask what occasions cognitions such as awareness and perception.

While extralinguistic objects and events per se certainly are an essential—sometimes exclusive—part of this determination, frequently it is the manner in which these objects are cognitively structured and portrayed in language that makes awareness possible and accounts for the perception that reality is important and relevant. Explaining how perception and understanding of objects occurs, then, must encompass an examination of how language both mediates and is the vehicle for communicating experience. Since cognitions are embodied by *and* communicated in language, the ability of perception to constrain language is at least partially a function of language. Therefore, to comprehend thoroughly, the *constraining* function of objects requires a cognizance of the *shaping* power of language.<sup>87</sup>

As Bitzer's emphasis is "situational" and that of "rhetorical perspectivism" is epistemological, both portend the importance of reality as such, yet Cherwitz and Darwin have provided further epistemological grounds (from a realist vantage point) to further consider the more explicit attempts to resolve the Bitzer and Vatz dispute.<sup>88</sup> Looking back to Chapter One, this question of constraining and "shaping" also harkens back to

Hikins's arguments regarding the "macroissues" of discourse, for the facts of the rhetorical situation can inform and constrain the argumentation pertaining to this or that "macroissue" as treated as a problem of future, past, or present interest within discourse.<sup>89</sup>

Regardless, Cherwitz and Darwin have pointed to the *human element* of situational involvement. Arguably, with his focus on moral responsibility, Vatz is probably not a constructivist writ-large, at least in terms of the possibilities of human nature *as such* as continuous through rhetorical situations (contrary to Biesecker's provisionally constructed audience identities, for instance).<sup>90</sup> Certainly within Bitzer's model, human beings as such are explicitly a "situation," as this is evident within his own *corpus* and recognized in the secondary literature (such as with his own discussions of particular "cognitive faculties").<sup>91</sup> According to Bitzer, "Not the rhetor and not persuasive intent, but the situation is the source and ground of rhetorical activity—and, I should add, of rhetorical criticism" ("The Rhetorical" 6). However, although the various approaches to rhetorical criticism (Bitzer's model, the close reading approach to rhetorical criticism, "critical rhetoric," etc.) are quite significant for analyzing practice amid various real contexts, from a realist point of view, human nature *as real, within reality, and through history* is the ultimate theoretical ground for rhetoric.<sup>92</sup>

Cherwitz and Darwin have emphasized the historical, contextual, and substantive elements of linguistic meaning as related objects, communicators, and audiences.<sup>93</sup> They concluded their discussion of the "situatedness" of rhetoric with "two interrelated qualities of discourse" ("Toward a" 24). Cherwitz and Darwin have explained that "discourse, as itself a body, necessarily is *constrained* by the substance, context, and

history of existing relationships among bodies [...] controlled and influenced by the dynamic interplay within, between, and among objectively instantiated relational constituents” (24). Yet, it “has the capacity to *shape* and create relationships among bodies,” affecting “the dynamic interplay within, between, and among substance, context, and history (the relational constituents of meaning)” (24). They argued, “[...] these two qualities of discourse are not logical opposites. From a relational perspective, they are two sides of the same coin. Hence, by simultaneously recognizing *both* qualities of discourse, a relational theory of meaning does *not* compel the extreme conclusion that meaning (and language) is either deterministic or entirely subjective and arbitrary” (24). Bitzer’s comparison of rhetoric to morality quoted above (seen within the literature as having ethical and practical import), from the view of Classical Realism, points beyond “situation” alone, for moral questions pertain to circumstances along with actions and intentions, at least from the classical realist point of view.<sup>94</sup> By implication, from this vantage point, with Fr. Grimaldi’s discussion of the practical intellect as relevant to the centrality of judgment on contingencies for rhetorical discourse, the intellectual virtues of both art and prudence are germane.<sup>95</sup> In Garver’s view of Aristotle’s *corpus*, the artistic function of rhetoric as observing and discovering “the available means of persuasion” is linked in a parallel way to prudence via deliberation on contingent matters, as one in the realm of argument and the other in the sphere of action—for Aristotle, rhetorical discourse is a “civic art” (Aristotle’s). More strongly than Bitzer’s focus on “adjustment,” Weaver’s notion that “rhetoric is advisory” captures the artistic function of rhetorical discourse as proximate to the domain of prudence, which as Garver’s overall

study of the Rhetoric indicates, pivots as a philosophical matter on one's standpoint of the *polis* as natural or not.<sup>96</sup>

In framing rhetoric as both “praxis” and “situational,” Shanyang Zhao has done well by moving the rhetorical epistemology debate into the purview of human action with respect to contingency and potentiality, yet *contra* Zhao's move into this area, the truth of “normative knowledge” (or “norms”), even amid intensive advocacy, deliberation, and learning, is not *ultimately* a matter of construction and consensus.<sup>97</sup> According to Ralph McInerney, the liberal arts as arts (virtues) are internally productive within the mind, yet these particular arts are only partially perfecting of the human being as connected to one's “total good” by the virtue of prudence (“Introduction: ‘A Bracelet’” 5-6). To apply some basic distinctions from within Adler's work (Desires; Intellect 149-161), one might consider rhetoric as proximate to or in terms of “*praxis*,” which pertains to “*doing*,” for the rhetorician artistically is involved in “*making*” that which is relevant to the prudential sphere of judgment and action. From varying philosophical vantage points, rhetorical scholars have privileged prudence (“practical wisdom”) for discussions of rhetoric, custom, and history (inclusive of Bitzer's notion of “public knowledge”) (Eubanks, “On Rhetoric”; Mackin), as a corrective to “critical rhetoric” (Kuypers), and for discussions of “performance” (Hariman, “Prudence/Performance”). From a realist point of view, rhetoric as advisement and argument accounts for the intellectuality and emotionality of the “whole person” in terms of “prescriptive” judgments in given cases of action, where practical truth is the correspondence between human judgment and proper desires. For now, though, what of the human imagination?

With her collective approach to Bitzer's notion of "situation," Ellen Gorsevski has centralized the experiential reality of emotions among situational participants as relevant to the "*rhetorical climate*" that stems from the exigencies of "situations."<sup>98</sup> She has explained, "Thus while culture may reside in unconscious thought and behavior that occurs in a given value system of a given society group, climate resides palpably and very consciously among members of that group" (137). She also mentioned, "Rhetorical climates exist throughout history" (147). A "rhetorical climate" can open analysis beyond the "text" or "context" of a "lone persuader" to the handling of "multiple texts" with "a more dynamic, embodied sense of context" (164). While concluding her article, Gorsevski mentioned "moral imagination" as rhetorical alongside of emotionality and feelings within a "climate" (172). Kirk's prompting of "common action and reform" in America might have some parallels to Gorsevski's call for a "collective orientation" for situational study, yet as Russello has demonstrated, Kirk tended to accentuate the import of imaginative leadership for the rhetorical discourse of politics, even as he rejected the autonomous individualism of modernity.<sup>99</sup> Gorsevski's situational elements, however, are distinctly human, which corresponds in *a certain way* to Kirk's attentiveness to both the sadness and joy of human life in reality (Quinn). Yet, the "good moral imagination," to a certain degree, goes beyond "feelings" to experience the difficulties in reality (Mesa). The "felt" aspects of culture (and one might maybe add "climate"), which bear some connection to tradition, must ultimately be weighed against "orthodoxy" as encompassing of the "truth of things" (Montgomery, "Consequences").

For the realm of public and nonprofit leadership, Max Stephenson has argued that Kirk's focus upon Eliot's "permanent things" and Burke's "moral imagination" are

significant for encountering “alterity” within the diversity of the present postmodern landscape, particularly as regards dignity and community, *whether* one holds to “permanent moral truths” like Kirk and Eliot *or not*.<sup>100</sup> The link, according to Stephenson, is “that leaders share a responsibility to identify the norms and traditions that join the population and thereafter, to act upon them,” which takes leaders beyond “popular sentiments” toward an attentiveness “to the assumptions and customs of the populace they serve if they are to attain and retain the legitimacy to act” (270-271). Yet for “morally imaginative action,” a commonality of “norms and claims” is necessary, which in his view could rest in “alterity” (271). According to Stephenson, “Alterity, predicated on respect for the other simply because they are also human” *and* “recourse to some variant of the permanent things” *each* can provide “shared norms and principles” for the fair treatment of human beings across the various national and economic boundaries of the world (271). Stephenson has done well in pointing to the human elements *of community* and *for communication* as regards to postmodern conceptions “alterity” (271-274), yet he has not eclipsed Kirk’s own brand of essential humanity as such (261, 263, 265-271, 274). Amid the various postmodernist concerns about race, class, and gender (Hudson xxv-xxvii), our essential *similarity* is precursory to any consideration or negotiation of human difference, for it is *the* basis of a virtuous approach to ethics and politics (Adler, The Difference 259-280; Adler, Ten; Hudson xxi-xxviii). This precursory notion of human nature is discernable with Kirk’s *corpus*, even with his embrace of “variety” and “diversity” within and across nations (Federici, “The Politics”; Frohnen, “Redeeming America’s”; Malvasi; McAllister, “The Particular”; Quinn; Woods).

In Stephenson's view, while "ethical imagination" can distinguish public and non-profit leaders "from for-profit organizational leadership if not wholly in kind, then surely in degree and in relative significance for the organizations affected," it might also help these leaders navigate between circumstantial and discretionary views of leadership actions, while securing "the ongoing legitimacy of their organizations and the civil society of which those entities are a part" (275). The human imagination as informed historically and morally through reality helps one navigate practical and rhetorical "situations."

A realist rhetoric of order should point one toward ethical considerations of the communicative life of human beings. Although not drawing directly from Kirk, Paula S. Tompkins has provided a framework for communication ethics that encompasses "moral imagination." She has explained

Moral sensitivity is a process of recognizing and being cognitively responsive to the interests of Others. It is influenced by the moral imagination. Moral imagination is the ability to recognize and consider ethical issues and topics from various points of view, including viewpoints that differ from those of the actor [...] Moral *insensitivity* can be a failure of moral imagination. Listening, particularly what I call rhetorical listening engages the moral imagination, prompting moral sensitivity. The practice of moral listening stimulates the moral imagination by facilitating recognition of the existence of Others whose interest to thrive would be affected by the actor's decisions and actions.<sup>101</sup>



Tompkins has contributed to a disciplinary consideration of the ways in which “moral imagination” underlies one’s cognizance of the impact of communicative practices upon the standing of persons within social interactions, including those human elements of communication, such as *rationality* and *emotionality*. She has stated, “When rhetorical listening helps actors imagine the possible trajectory or magnitude of the impact of a communication act on Others, it promotes the mindful practice of ethical communication” (63). Tompkins has also argued, “Developing moral imagination, the ability to recognize ethical issues and consider different points of view, is a matter of ethical practice that promotes moral sensitivity” (63-64). Understanding points of view was a part of Kirk’s stance on “moral imagination,” but it was not the whole of it (W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 42-138).

Both Gorsevski and Tompkins looked at specific case studies to ascertain imaginative factors of communication, yet it is arguable that with Kirk one gets a more definitive stance on ethics in terms of specific principles.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, Tompkins’s approach might be more akin to a dialectical approach to ethics (in the classical sense of the term) as regards the implications that would follow on this or that ethical point of view. Of course, with Patton, one must not forget the import of dialectical reasoning as it relates to one’s communicative involvement within a “rhetorical situation.”<sup>103</sup> Regardless, whether one looks to the past or to the present, imagination will play a role in the ethical engagement of “situations”—Kirk’s work is a reminder of this.

For Kirk, contrary to talk about “values,” “norms” had objective consistency across time and place, which could be learned through history, custom, imagination, and

education, even with our subjective engagement with life.<sup>104</sup> These “norms” have a continuity *across* and *within* the situations of life. As a realist and “logocentric” historian, with respect to the constancy of human nature, Russell Kirk provided significant scholarly coordinates as to the formative and informative role of the imagination for *perspectives* across “rhetorical situations.” The Roots of American Order is one book that provides such coordinates. Bitzer was certainly sensitive to the historical elements of life *across* situations, yet Kirk’s work brings another layer of discussion to the question of “situation” that places a stronger emphasis upon human nature *as such* through and within history, whether one is talking about effectiveness or ethicality. Montgomery has provided one definition of rhetoric as a liberal art as follows:

[...] one acquires, through the study of and use of the figurative language of an experience, to be found in those monuments of unaging intellect inherited from our fathers, those necessary disciplines of head and heart by which men govern their relations with one another in the continuing community of humanity, under that community’s commitment through good will to the full light of truth. (Title ##)

Eugene Garver might say that this description is not, *strictly speaking*, in accord with an Aristotelian definition of rhetoric (Aristotle’s), yet it does capture the classical realist point of view, of which Aristotle is a founding influence. Garver, like the “rhetorical perspectivists” in a different sort of way, points more squarely to the issue of argumentation for rhetoric.

One can look to the topics of argument for what Scott Consigny has described as *integrity with* and *receptivity to* the “situation” for rhetors.<sup>105</sup> The topics pertain to

argumentation (particularly the enthymeme), which for rhetoric is a realm of “shared meaning” or, as Garver phrases it, “shared intention” with respect to language, culture, and reality—this applies also to the example as a rhetorical argument.<sup>106</sup> For the study of history in general, topics can play a role for the understanding and communicating of history, while one’s looking at specific topics can give insights into particular “situations” of rhetoric.<sup>107</sup> Within Weaver’s “advisory” approach to rhetoric, the topics are a significant element having both ethical and practical import for the connection among rhetorical communicators and audiences in terms of the reality of “situations” (“Language is”). If Bliese is correct (“Richard Weaver’s Axiology” 287-288), Weaver was moving toward a greater focus upon the role of history for arguments from defined principles toward the end of his life. Regardless, as rhetoric was for Weaver the most “humanistic of the humanities,” it was because real human beings *across time and place* live within “historical” situations (“Language is”; Reflections of). Imaginative discourse played some role as a part of Weaver’s own advisement for the persuasive discourse of conservatives for their “lost cause” in his day (Bliese, “Richard M. Weaver and the Rhetoric” 318-321, 323-324).

Weaver was a “painful rememberer” who appropriated the value of history for the rhetorical and ethical aspects of life (Irwin). Roger Gilles has contrasted Bitzer’s “situational” model and “Weaver’s foundational rhetoric” (128-129) in terms of liberal and conservative argument. In my estimation, Bitzer’s work *might* or *might not* fall in the line of a “focus on rhetoric’s situational, meaning-making, audience-centered characteristics” (128), yet this prompts some reflection upon the basis of argumentation as it relates to conservatism. Of course, one must adjust for Weaver’s idealist “shadow

wedge” toward our “common sense” of “things” (Montgomery, “Consequences”). From the standpoint of realism, one needs to ascertain the available facts of a “situation” (Hikins, “Realism and” 44), yet must also keep in mind that from the view of Aristotelian rhetorical theory, rhetoric is an art of words, not facts (Garver, Aristotle’s 18-103; Garver, “The Political” 188-193). Kirk’s view of history was ultimately attentive to *both* the factuality reality of the past *and* the linguistic account of a legacy. To bring Adler’s work into rhetorical studies (The Common; “Adler On History”; “Adler On Memory and Imagination”; “The Philosopher”; “The Philosopher [...] Continued”), one can say that whether one is a rhetorician or an historian, *as a human being*, they can imagine the events of the past as recounted, yet with a proper philosophy alongside of either historical or rhetorical studies, they can imagine the implications of future political decisions. With Jacques Maritain, one can see the possibilities for moral and political progress in a linear way through time amid the contingent events of history, as the examination of history is both inductive and imaginative.<sup>108</sup> Both the study and practice of rhetoric can be too. With Russello’s discussion of the “age of discussion” and the “age of sentiments” as it relates to the types of argumentation for conservatives and beyond, this project will move to conclude with not just the basis but the *practice* of a realist rhetoric of order in terms of the sources, forms, and ethics of argument.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Please see the following regarding rhetoric and history (from various points of view): Arthos, “Where There”; Bliese, “Richard Weaver’s Axiology”; Brinton, “Cicero’s Use”; Condit, “Rhetorical Criticism”; Duffy and Jacobi 175-196; Garver, “He Does”; Garver, “Machiavelli’s The Prince”; Garver, “Paradigms and”; Garver, “The Political” 179-180; Gehrke; Gottfried, “Historical Consciousness”; Gronbeck; Irwin; King; M. McGee, “The ‘Ideograph’”; McGee and Martin; J. Murphy, “Knowing”; North; Ono and Sloop; Struever; Weaver, Visions 55-72; E. White.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the following regarding bias, prejudice, perspective, etc. in relation to this sort of notion of rhetorical *perspective* (Weaver spoke specifically on “perspective” in a way that *has influenced* and *is somewhat conducive* to my usage herein): Garver, “Point of View”; Hoffman; Weaver, “Concealed Rhetoric”; Weaver, “Life Without”; Weaver, “‘Parson’ Weems”; Weaver, A Rhetoric. My formulation here is based in particular upon reflections upon the work of Adler and Weaver in conjunction with my overall engagement of “rhetorical perspectivism” from the standpoint of classical realism. It is important here to note that I am differentiating between religious beliefs that are theological in scope and a notion of belief for everyday life regarding non-religious matters. Of course, the specific relationship between rhetoric and such areas as dialectic, poetics, etc. is always going to be a sphere of academic study and debate. In light of these words by Wilhelmsen, one has to be careful with an appropriation of the term “perspective”:

The discovery of perspective in early Italian Renaissance painting gradually removed Western man from the older iconic world in which he

had cradled himself in the bosom of God. Perspective necessarily makes each one of us the center of his own world, a world in which left and right, up and down, front and back, small and large, all lead out from the physical eye and bend back as do the spokes of a wheel to its axis.

(“Modern Man’s” 41)

<sup>3</sup> This statement was in part prompted by my participation in and reflection on a realist rhetorical theory panel, The Now Unconventional Test of Convention: Rhetoric and Reality, at the 94th Annual Convention of the National Communication Association in San Diego, CA of November 23, 2008, especially Richard Cain’s presentation, “Can We Know that We Know? An Examination of the Argument for the Recovery of Epistemological Realism in Contemporary Rhetorical Theory.” James Hikins presented on this panel too (“Realism and the ‘Real’ Real World: Viewing Engagement through the Lens of Rhetorical Perspectivism,” which was co-authored with Richard A. Cherwitz, who was not present), while Kenneth Zagacki was the respondent.

<sup>4</sup> To compare Bitzer’s model to “rhetorical perspectivism,” the two approaches encompass different emphases for isolating rhetorical communication (epistemology and “situation”), yet both entail a basis for rhetoric in discursively significant elements of reality. On the standard of “fitting response,” there would be some variance.

<sup>5</sup> Please see the following: Bitzer, “Bitzer on Tompkins”; Bitzer, “Bitzer on Tompkins (and Patton)”; Bitzer, “Functional”; Bitzer, “The Rhetorical”; Croasmun and Cherwitz 11-12. Much of the discussion within the literature regarding Bitzer’s overall work has pertained to his consideration of reality as objective (Bineham 49-52; Brummett, “On to” 426n7; McGee and Martin; Smith and Lybarger 197, 199, 201;

Phillip Tompkins, "Tompkins on Patton and Bitzer," 1980; Phillip Tompkins, "Tompkins on Patton and Bitzer," 1981; Vatz, "The Myth"; Vatz, "Vatz on Patton"; Young), sometimes with reference to realism. In reference to Bitzer's selection entitled "Rhetoric and Public Knowledge," Bineham has categorized Bitzer's epistemology with the "social knowledge" approach of Farrell and others (49-52). Pragmatist philosophy was, to some extent, a theoretical basis for Bitzer's writings on rhetoric (Bitzer, "Functional" 26; Bitzer, "Rhetoric and"; Mackin 285-287, 289; McGee and Martin). For discussions of "situation" as well as other aspects of this project as related to pragmatism (in varying degrees), please see the following: Bineham 49-52; Brinton, "William James"; Mackin; McGee and Martin; Sproule, "The New" 482-484. In my estimation, Bitzer's model of "situation," by upholding what we take "as *given*" for communication (Hikins, "Realism and"), substantiates what Cherwitz and Hikins have identified as the "argument from persuasive discourse" in favor of the independence of reality (Communication 122-123). I must note here a special thanks to Mark Joseph Porrovecchio for his bibliographic suggestions via E-Mail, which were helpful to my study of the relevant literature *by and on* Bitzer.

<sup>6</sup> F. Crowley 1-5; Wise 8. The Nature of the Liberal Arts by Fr. Wise provides an outstanding historical overview that points to the significance of both realism and religion for the liberal arts.

<sup>7</sup> Centore, Being 173-174. For this discussion of worldviews, Centore drew from Gilson's Being and Some Philosophers regarding William James. According to Adler, worldviews "are all products of the intellectual imagination," yet the plurality of which

“should never be confused with the world that we perceive” (Intellect 123-124). In his estimation:

Nor should these worldviews or world-pictures be assessed for their truth or falsity by their correspondence or noncorrespondence with reality and by pragmatic, empirical tests of such correspondence or noncorrespondence. If some are better and others worse, the only measure of that is the degree to which they can be harmonized and made coherent with our commonsense knowledge of reality, which, being based on the common core of ordinary human experience, is the same for all of us.

(124)

<sup>8</sup> Emil Fackenheim’s Metaphysics and Historicity provides a helpful comparative overview of the implications of the variances between classical metaphysics and 20<sup>th</sup> century continental philosophy. A major element of his discussion regards the constancy of human nature across time and place.

<sup>9</sup> Hyde and Smith’s “Hermeneutics and Rhetoric: A Seen but Unobserved Relationship” provides an interesting engagement of rhetorical studies with contemporary continental philosophy, including Gadamer’s discussion of rhetoric from Philosophical Hermeneutics. It is certainly another example of scholarship regarding the relationship of rhetoric and history. Notwithstanding my philosophical disagreements with them, the article prompts and magnifies some of the issues on the table in this project with respect to philosophical presuppositions. See also Craig Smith’s, “The Medieval Subjugation and the Existential Elevation of Rhetoric,” as it provides an existentialist point of contrast to a classical realist interpretation to Aristotle’s Rhetoric in particular and to rhetoric in



general. Finally, for another consideration of Gadamer's work and rhetorical studies, please see "Where There Are No Rules or Systems to Guide Us: Argument from Example in a Hermeneutic Rhetoric" by John Arthos.

<sup>10</sup> Please see the following: Biesecker; Garret and Xiao; Gorsevski; Hyde and Smith; McGee, "Suffix"; McGee and Martin; C. Miller; Patton, "Causation"; Scott, "Intentionality in" 56-58; Smith and Lybarger; Sproule, "The New" 482-483; Vatz, "The Myth"; Young. Although only some of these sources directly deal with postmodernism or postmodernity, others deal with assumptions, themes, etc. that are arguably to some extent postmodernist in scope and/or indicative of a postmodern condition.

<sup>11</sup> Hyde and Smith wrote:

Thus, to observe and disclose the relationship between hermeneutics and rhetoric, one must describe it ontologically. Such an explication necessitates a phenomenological investigation; as Heidegger has shown, "*Only as phenomenology, is ontology possible.*" [...] A phenomenological investigation of the relationship starts by showing what the basic mode of human understanding is and how it structures the experience of existential reality. This disclosure of understanding is itself a disclosure of the human experience of language; it entails showing how understanding is related to the ontological significations of "interpretation" and "meaning."  
(347)

They drew here from Martin Heidegger's Being and Time, Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, 1962, p. 60. With my own reframing toward realism, I have in mind here my discussion of O'Callaghan from Chapter Two.

<sup>12</sup> Garver specifically wrote of Alan Brinton's "Situation in the Theory of Rhetoric" ("Philosophy and" 147-148) (Brinton's article encompassed general analysis and to some extent Vatz's considerations in particular): "Thus Brinton wants to balance views of the rhetorical situation that tie rhetoric to some 'objective' exigence with views that make the rhetor free to set the agenda and the issues rather than merely respond to the given. His balancing, and that whole question which has been explored since the very first issue of P&R, would be more interesting [...]" (147-148). Please see the following: Bitzer, "Bitzer on Vatz"; Bitzer, "The Rhetorical"; Vatz, "The Myth of"; Vatz, "The Mythical"; Vatz, "Vatz on Patton"; Young.

<sup>13</sup> Please see the following: Garver, "The Circumstances"; Garver, "He Does"; Garver, For the Sake; Garver, "Machiavelli's The Prince"; Garver, "Paradigms and"; Garver, Rev. of The Rhetoric of; Garver, "Why Should"; McGowan. Garver's work has certainly been an influence on the direction of this project. Garver is an academic philosopher whose work *has appeared in and has been discussed within* the field of communication and rhetorical studies (Arthos, "Where There" 331, 336, 338, 342n98, 343n123, 343n143); John Angus Campbell, "Rhetorical Theory" 292, 297-298, 304; K. Chase 256, 262n77-78; Farrell, "Philosophy against"; Garver, "Aristotle's Rhetoric as a Work"; Garver, "Can Virtue"; Garver, "Demystifying"; Garver, "The Ethical"; Garver, "Essentially Contested"; Garver, "Eugene Garver's"; Garver, "He Does"; Garver, "Machiavelli's The Prince"; Garver, "Philosophy and"; Garver, "The Political"; Garver, "Rhetoric and"; Garver, "Richard McKeon's"; Hariman, Rev. of; Wilson and Keith).

<sup>14</sup> Please see the following: Boyd; Nelson, “An Augustine”; Nelson, “Introduction”; Niemeyer, “Knight of”; Person, Introduction; Stanlis, “Prophet of”; Wilhelmsen, “Mr. Conservative”; Wilhelmsen, “The Wandering.”

<sup>15</sup> Bradford, “A Generation” 295. In Kirk’s own commemoration of the journal, in 1987, he wrote: “If during the twenty-first century civilization enters upon an imaginative Post-Modern era (rather than a Post-Christian era), Modern Age may be remembered for the seed it sowed in lonely fields. (I am not mixing metaphors: the Modern Age people have endeavored to engage in both combat and cultivation.)” (“Obdurate Adversaries” 203)

<sup>16</sup> F. McDonald, “Russell Kirk” 17-18. I am not pursuing Forrest McDonald’s framing of “Truth” here, but I think that it needs to be understood in a unique way and in context as to what he is trying to say here. In this particular essay, McDonald looks to The Roots of American Order in terms of considering Kirk’s development in thought regarding Adam Smith in terms of the theme of order, etc. Also, please see McDonald’s Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution for a sense of his own approach to American history.

<sup>17</sup> F. McDonald, Foreword xvii. McDonald identified these as follows:

[...] a transcendent moral order based necessarily on religious faith, social continuity, the principle of prescription or things established by immemorial usage, prudential and natural change as opposed to change based on abstract theories, variety and therefore inequality except in the Last Judgment and before a court of law, and the acceptance of the imperfectability of man. (xvii)

From The Conservative Mind to The Roots of American Order to The Politics of Prudence, these specific themes with respect to order were ongoing within Kirk's communicative framework.

<sup>18</sup> In McCarthy's view, regardless of any alliance between Kirk and postmodernism against liberalism, "a more obvious benchmark for Kirk might be the sentimentally conservative side of the 19th-century Romantic movement," as he was "in many ways a chip off the Walter Scott block, not only in his criticisms of progress and industrialism but in his predilection for things Gothic and medieval" ("The Pomo"). For future study, one could ask the question: Might a connection to Romanticism be another line of inquiry for the question of Kirk and postmodernism?

<sup>19</sup> This two-part article was at the center of our debate on a panel, A Debate: Richard M. Weaver's Ideal Orator...Not Lincoln But Milton, at the 93rd Annual Convention of the National Communication Association in Chicago, IL of November 17, 2007. Dimock has argued that this book was a significant part of Weaver's attempt, with the increasing influence of the "New Conservatives" (as they were known at the time, inclusive of Kirk and Weaver), to provide a definition and demonstration of conservatism beyond opposition to modern liberalism and adherence to Edmund Burke. My own position is that Weaver's message regarding definitional parameters for questions of legal reform and national governance was with respect to, not in spite of, our 16th President. I am not going to recount my argument here for the standard reading of the book regarding Lincoln. Basically, Dimock argued that Weaver was not putting forth Lincoln, but ultimately Milton, as the heroic rhetorician in The Ethics of Rhetoric. Regardless, I do believe that this article is a valuable contribution to ongoing scholarship on Richard

Weaver. For examples of the standard reading of The Ethics of Rhetoric regarding Lincoln, please see the following: Beale, “Richard M. Weaver” 630; Bliese, “Richard M. Weaver: Conservative” 382-384; Bormann 298, 301-302; Bryant, Rev. of; Duffy and Jacobi 192; Evans 295-299; Floyd and Adams; Gilles 128-132; Johannesen, “Richard Weaver’s View” 141-142; Kirschke 92-93.

<sup>20</sup> Although it is my view that Dimock partially misreads Weaver on human nature, he has done a valuable scholarly service by highlighting this issue along the way in his overall argumentation. Regarding Weaver on human nature, please see note 21 immediately to follow.

<sup>21</sup> Please see the following: Weaver, “Conservatism and Liberalism”; Weaver, “Language is”; Weaver, “The Prospects”; Weaver, Visions.

<sup>22</sup> Weaver, “Conservatism and Liberalism” 483-484. The editor of this selection, Ted J. Smith III, identified this as follows: “The text of a lecture delivered to a group of seminarians at Holy Name College in Washington, DC, on October 15, 1960 [...]” (483n1).

<sup>23</sup> The constancy of human nature and the theme of continuity were both evident in and across Kirk’s body of work (Federici, “The Politics”; Frohnen, “Redeeming America’s”; Kirk, Eliot 1-7, 357-368; Kirk, Rev. of; Kirk, “Tragedy and”; Malvasi; McAllister, “The Particular”; Quinn; Woods). Please see the following: Solomon, “Redemptive Rhetoric”; Solomon, “The Rhetoric of”; Solomon, “Stopping ERA.” There is no discussion of Kirk in these articles, for this is my application. Solomon’s focus on continuity was helpful in my considerations of this theme within Kirk’s writings. Of course, Solomon has found problematic certain communicative aspects of order and

continuity within the conservative movements that she has studied in these articles. Also, for some relevant discussion on conservatism, continuity, and human nature, please see Zoll's 1974 article, "The Future of American Conservatism: A New Revival?"

<sup>24</sup> Please see the following: Lawler, "Conservative Postmodernism"; Lawler, Postmodernism Rightly; Russello, The Postmodern 10-11, 11n17, 190-191, 191n30; Russello, "Russell Kirk and the Critics" 10.

<sup>25</sup> Please see the following: Guroian, "Moral Imagination"; Guroian, Rallying; Russello, The Postmodern 52, 60, 65-66, 200; Russello, "Russell Kirk and the Critics" 10.

<sup>26</sup> Guroian, Rallying 75. Guroian here is discussing Richard Rorty (75-77).

<sup>27</sup> The following words from Montgomery's The Truth of Things: Liberal Arts and the Recovery of Reality are here relevant:

What we realize, as "conservatives," at the end of our century is not only how lost to Modernists are those grounds on which we find ourselves embattled, but most immediately how lost they are to ourselves. This is to say that we must more thoroughly recover the intellectual authority of our position. We must reassociate the "thought and feeling" to a viable effect. It is also to emphasize how considerable a beginning has been made already by a conservative intelligentsia, a community of mind, diverse among themselves but united in opposition to the illusions of Modernism. It is upon these works that a successful recovery of those permanent things always depends, since permanently fundamental *thing* is man's given nature as rational creature. As for works by that conservative

intelligentsia, we may name some of them as important to what will prove a continuing “battle of the books,” remembering as we do so what they have in common, lest their differences exacerbate factionalism in the face of that common necessity: the opposition to Modernist reductionisms.

Contending with the aspects and implications of a constant human nature is an identifiable element of conservative thought (Harbour), particularly traditional conservatism (Harbour; Henrie, “Understanding”; Woods).

<sup>28</sup> Please see the following: Aristotle, Rhetoric, Book 1, Section 3; Garver, Aristotle’s 76-103, 156-162.

<sup>29</sup> Please see the following: Duffy 90-91, 93n22; Duffy and Jacobi 175-196; Gottfried, “Historical Consciousness”; North.

<sup>30</sup> According to Wilhelmsen, Kirk would be “not only a spokesman but an intelligence and imagination capable of forging into unity a new cause which was both a banner around which men could gather despite their differences and an intellectual strategy capable of guiding its tactics for more than forty years” (“Mr. Conservative” 18). He explained, “The spokes of the wheel were dispersed throughout the nation [...] But Kirk and Kirk alone was the hub into which the spokes were fixed, and the wheel lifted from the ground and fitted into place” (18). In view of The Conservative Mind, Henry Regnery wrote, “Now, forty years later, there is indeed a vigorous conservative movement and Kirk must be recognized as its leading spokesman” (“Russell Kirk: *The Last Word*” 77). The rhetorical application of Kirk as spokesperson for American order is my own here in light of the present mentioning of forensic, deliberative, and ceremonial rhetoric.

<sup>31</sup> Bradford, “A Proper ” 71. Some preceding words by Bradford are here relevant:

It is nowadays the fashion to think of these United States as a wholly “invented” polity, as the pure and miraculous handiwork of those gifted political craftsmen who were our honored forefathers and whose high achievements we celebrated during the Bicentennial year. It is also the conventional wisdom that our original revolution was *the* genuine revolution, the paradigm for all serious and progressive rebellions, early or late, and the fulcrum upon which the modern world has since been obliged to turn. [...] A corollary premise is that such a revolution is destined to continue on and on, perpetually unfinished, perpetually at war with whatever remains of the older world turned upside down when Lord Cornwallis marched out from his works.

What I have been describing is, to be sure, the basis for a variety of impious readings of the American past. [...] When told that the France of Robespierre, the Russia of Lenin, and the China of Mao are close relations to the America of 1776, that our “political religion” is a position defined by reaction against the structures, customs, and feelings which had informed the long record of Western man prior to the inception of our adventure with independence, they offer no objections. And even though the same solid citizens will, in all likelihood, act in their everyday affairs to belie such infamous analogies, the pressure of distortion gathers continuously in the absence of vigorous refutation. The results, in our



contemporary social and political discourse, are something we experience with ever growing dismay.

Thus we face the paradox that what we are taught from authority concerning the American Revolution is the measure of our confusion on that subject. [...] (70-71)

<sup>32</sup> Although it reiterates on some items that can be found in The Roots of American Order, America's British Culture takes a strong stand against multiculturalism within the context of its time (the early to mid-1990s). Russello explained, "Many years later, Kirk drew the lessons of Roots in miniature with America's British Culture, which concentrated exclusively on the British contributions to American society" (The Postmodern 76).

<sup>33</sup> Henrie, "Russell Kirk and the" 22. See Chapter Two herein regarding Kirk's conversation with Nixon to which I am here referring. The consideration of this specific theme in particular, observable across Kirk corpus, alongside of The Roots of American Order is my own. My considerations in this project regarding Russell Kirk in general and The Roots of American Order in particular were to some degree influenced by specific lectures at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal during my time there (this influence of includes the questions, answers, and discussions that followed by Mrs. Annette Y. Kirk, other Wilbur Fellows, and others in attendance) (Birzer; Kalthoff, Lecture; Pafford; Whitney, Lecture, 20 January 2006; Whitney, Lecture, 8 April 2006).

<sup>34</sup> Please see Adler and Van Doren (234-254). A discussion of the academic study of history as "special experience" is available in Adler's The Four Dimensions of Philosophy (8-48). Hikins also suggested to me a consideration of Walter Fisher's

“narrative paradigm” with respect to realism (Telephone). In light of Russello’s focus upon narrative in his treatment of Kirk and postmodernism, the concluding section of this project will contain some discussion on narrative and argument alongside of some of Kirk’s specific contentions about the United States in this book and beyond, including the natural law. For now, it is sufficient to keep in mind Adler’s explanation that historical writing *in terms of an account of history* is for the most part a narrative endeavor.

<sup>35</sup> Please see the following: Adler and Van Doren (239-241); Aristotle, Poetics.

<sup>36</sup> Please see the following: Gottfried and Broyles; Hauser; Oravec 169-171; Sheard; D. Sullivan, “A Closer Look.” *Possibly relevant* here is Garver’s “He Does the Police in Different Voices: James B. White on the Rhetoric of Criminal Law.” Although he does not frame the particular discussion around these Aristotelian categories, pertinent to this sentence is John M. Murphy’s “Knowing the President: The Dialogic Evolution of the Campaign History.” Relevant to my thought here, Person has related that Ray Bradbury stated in 1974, “*In these polarized and emotional times we need more thinkers of excellence on both sides in order to make fair decisions concerning the future. Russell Kirk is just such an excellent thinker. I hope his The Roots of American Order is read by fair-minded people of both left and right everywhere in our country*” (The Unbought 170). Forrest McDonald identified the book as “a cautionary as well as an educational work” (Foreword xix).

<sup>37</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 67-103. The book, Enemies of the Permanent Things was published in 1969. The Roots of American Order was first published in 1974. In the former, various themes that would appear in an extended way in the latter are evident in terms of history, order, politics, etc.

<sup>38</sup> Kirk, The Roots 3. Kirk was drawing from Weil's book, The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties toward Mankind and her book, On Science, Necessity, and the Love of God (10n1).

<sup>39</sup> This is my own adaptation of Cherwitz and Darwin's discussion of knowledge and power ("Beyond Reductionism"; "Toward a") to the present discussion of human nature of this chapter. While still of course harkening scholars back to a realist rhetorical epistemology, Cherwitz and Hikins have encouraged openness to the assistance of various critical methodologies for discursive insights (Communication 161-172). However, they have argued that although criticism can assist in the generation and testing of "*hypotheses* about rhetoric," it is with the philosophical study of rhetoric where scholars contend with the various "definitional, theoretical, and disciplinary issues that define the field" (Cherwitz and Hikins, "Burying the" 75). Not necessarily celebrating an overall disciplinary emphasis upon "the study of praxis," Cherwitz and Hikins have cautioned against "the study of beliefs" (such as with Raymie McKerrow's "critical rhetoric") for examining the consequential symbolic possession of power at the expense of "epistemological analysis" (75-76).

<sup>40</sup> Kirk, The Roots 6. In this section, Kirk wrote the following: "For, as Richard Hooker wrote in the sixteenth century, 'Without order, there is no living in public society, because the want thereof is the mother of confusion'" (6).

<sup>41</sup> W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 118, 118n5. McDonald has in mind here Sir Ernest Barker's The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle, Plato's The Republic, and Kirk's Enemies of the Permanent Things.

<sup>42</sup> Here are the words that Kirk provided from Yeats (with no specific reference given) (The Roots 7): “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;”/”Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,”/”The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere”/”The ceremony of innocence is drowned;”/“The best lack all conviction, while the worst”/“Are full of passionate intensity.”

<sup>43</sup> Wilhelmsen, “Faith and” 29. Preliminary to this, he wrote:

[...] We reason because we want to and because we must, because of volitional and emotional needs [...] An overarching skepticism about the capacity of reason to achieve truth cannot be dispelled rationally. Such skepticism can only be overcome existentially: possibly all absolute skeptics ought to be locked in rooms and told to find the one clue that will free them: this could shake their doubts about reason’s capacity to do what reasoning does: conclude. Given in its own way as is experience is in its way, reason is an absolute. This is the way we are: reasoning animals.

Experience and reasoning as delineated follow the pattern that Aristotle sketched in describing these ontological structures in the Posterior Analytics. [...] (29)

He also explained:

The man who would drive a wedge between Reason and Faith—capitalized—does so on the grounds that the one is not the other. This reasoning is not very good reasoning: man is not woman but this argues no necessary divorce. Reason is not faith but both have a common source permitting them to nourish one another: experience. The posture which

stakes out an opposition between faith and reason and which does so in the name of philosophical reason is no sacred cow: the advocates of the position advance it as philosophically sound, and hence open to rational questioning. Therefore they can have no objection to their position being evaluated by another philosopher who adheres to a different order of things. (29)

<sup>44</sup> Kirk, The Roots 286, 358-368. Kirk wrote in Enemies of The Permanent Things (with no specific references given):

“Orthodoxy is my doxy; heterodoxy is another man’s doxy.” I subscribe to Samuel Johnson’s profession. When the art of worldly wisdom is in question, for all that, the modern opponent of abnormality, if he means to persuade the heterodox, repairs to the arguments of Johnson’s “Tory by accident,” David Hume. In morals and taste, says Hume, we govern ourselves by custom—that is, by the habits of the human race. The standards of morality are shown to us by the study of the story of mankind, and the arbiters of those standards are men of strong sense and delicate sentiment, whose impressions force themselves upon the wills of their fellow-men. (35)

I have in mind here Donald W. Livingston’s recent article, “David Hume and the Conservative Tradition,” which does not speak specifically in terms of conservatism and postmodernism, but does pertain to some contemporary issues of relevance. In terms of a classical realist view of the movement from modern to postmodern thought, please see

also Centore's discussion of Hume in Being and Becoming: A Critique of Postmodernism.

<sup>45</sup> Please see the following: Wilhelmsen, "Faith and"; Wilhelmsen, The Paradoxical. My statement here considers Wilhelmsen's mentioning of Aristotle's Rhetoric and rhetoric in general within the larger discussion of The Paradoxical Structure of Existence (149-150, 191-192).

<sup>46</sup> Please see the following: Garver, "Machiavelli's The Prince"; Garver, "Teaching Writing." On Cicero and examples, see also Brinton's, "Cicero's Use of Historical Examples in Moral Argument," North's "Rhetoric and Historiography," and "Where There Are No Rules or Systems to Guide Us: Argument from Example in a Hermeneutic Rhetoric" by Arthos (331-332). For another discussion regarding Aristotle, Cicero, and others on rhetoric, please see Duhamel's "The Function of Rhetoric as Effective Expression." Kirk wrote:

It does not follow that an introduction to political theory and precept need be abstract. The ethical imagination may be moved, particularly early in life, through the tool of biography—by which I do not mean simple panegyric. Young people need models, exemplars; and often political institutions and historical processes are better discerned through biographical examination of great men than through abstract or chronological analysis. This approach has been much neglected for the past thirty years and more. Andrew Jackson, for instance, is interesting to high-school freshmen; the Bank and the tariffs aren't really. But one can

learn much about the Bank and the tariffs though a lively study of Jackson.  
(Decadence 289)

Kirk recounted the following in his conversation with President Nixon:

Kirk went on to offer the example of the Byzantine Empire, which—  
despite beginnings not altogether healthy—endured for a thousand years,  
experiencing alternately eras of decline and eras of reinvigoration. “No  
human institution lasts forever, Mr. President; but the United States is  
young, as great powers go; and presumably three-quarters of our  
existence, at least, lies before us. Our present troubles may be succeeded  
by an age of greatness.” Such was the substance of Kirk’s reply. (The  
Sword 332)

One might also here recall that Cribb stated, “In his early work, Dr. Kirk treated modern  
exemplars of the conservative tradition from Burke to Eliot, but always with respect to  
their insights into timeless truths” (“Recovering” 7). In a Foreword to the 2003 edition of  
The Roots of American Order, Forrest McDonald concluded as follows, which is here  
relevant, with respect to Kirk’s sense of humor (xix-xx):

[...] Some years ago I wrote an article about Kirk for a special edition of  
National Review commemorating the early superstars of the conservative  
movement. The article was titled “Russell Kirk: The American Cicero.”  
Kirk never said anything to me about it, but I knew he was pleased  
because of his boundless admiration for the ancient Roman Cicero. Not  
long afterward I reviewed a paperback edition of the present volume for  
the Detroit News. I praised the book appropriately, but said in passing

that I had a few quibbles. When time came for yet another paperback edition, Kirk wrote me, thanking me for the review and asking whether I could send him any suggestions. That was not unusual for him, always seeking to improve his work. The tone of his letter was characteristically modest, but he signed it, “Cordially, Marcus Tullius Kirk.” In case you did not know, Marcus Tullius was Cicero’s name.

So pay close attention to the subtleties as you read on. If you do, you will be entertained as well as enlightened. (xx)

Of course, for insights into Cicero’s perspectives on rhetoric, one could look at, for instance, De Oratore; or, On the Character of the Orator.

<sup>47</sup> Kirk, The Roots 8. Kirk wrote previous to this:

That undergraduate was not singular in his repudiation of the experience of a civilization. Our times resemble those of the concluding years of the Roman Republic, the age of Marcus Tullius Cicero. As disorder washed about him, Cicero examined the causes of private and public confusion. “Long before our time,” he wrote in his treatise The Republic, “the customs of our ancestors molded admirable men, and in turn those eminent men upheld the ways and institutions of the forebears. Our age, however, inherited the Republic as if it were some beautiful painting of bygone ages, its colors already fading through great antiquity; and not only has our time neglected to freshen the colors of the picture, but we have failed to preserve its form and outlines.”



<sup>48</sup> Please see the following: Kirk, Decadence 289-290; Kirk, The Sword 308, 374, 450; Lalley 202; F. McDonald, Foreword; Person, Russell Kirk 68.

<sup>49</sup> Kirk, The Roots 9. Kirk gives no specific reference here.

<sup>50</sup> He has argued that “[a] postmodern world requires a Christian humanism grounded in philosophical realism” as “a fraud has been perpetrated” by “skeptics” who “contradict themselves” in opposing “dogma dogmatically and” denying “their own humanity in doing it” and in claiming “to be empirical but” denying “the testimony of lives lived in faith,” yet these “seeds of suspicion they sow can also sprout, however, into fresh seedlings of belief” (16). Guroian wrote, “When will we know that the rally for the really *human* things has begun in earnest? With the return of dogma, of course. And Chesterton is as sure of a return to dogma as he is that birds need air in which to fly and that fish need water in which to swim [...]” (16). Keeping Chapter Two in mind here, Hans Gadamer certainly did not articulate a “value-free” notion of dogma of the sort that both Chesterton and Kirk had critiqued in their respective times, yet on the other hand, he had an expressed concern about “dogmatism” that diverges in some clear ways from Chesterton and Kirk’s public interests in dogma. The following words by Centore are here relevant:

It may be that the world of human experience does provide a solid foundation for a series of well-balanced doctrines on the great speculative and practical issues of human existence and life. It may also be the case that a certain amount of dogmatism is *necessary* to the preservation of the good life in the good society. It would certainly seem to be necessary for social stability. G.K. Chesterton once observed that those caught up in a

state of moral confusion will never change the world for the better because they are too busy always changing their minds. Even Freud was not opposed to dogmatism in principle. What he opposed was the combination of being dogmatic and being wrong simultaneously. Toleration, justice, privacy, and so forth, are undoubtedly good things, but how can we act on them rationally if we do not know precisely what they mean? (Being xii)

<sup>51</sup> I am here referring to “Politics and Conceptual Reconstruction” by James Campbell. Although the framing of the “rhetoric of restoration” could be helpful (regardless of philosophical point of view), I think that he overstates the negative in making reference to the legacy that was portrayed in Kirk’s Conservative Mind (James Campbell 156-157, 169n1). Of course, Kirk did take account of the negative elements of human nature in general and through history.

<sup>52</sup> Wilhelmsen, The Paradoxical. In the Introduction, Wilhelmsen has written:

But if the “structure of being” is non-dialectical then it follows that it must be paradoxical. The author understands paradox not as an alternative standing alongside the dialectic and capable of being balanced against it as are two boxers going into a ring. Paradox, to change the figure, cuts through the dialectic by simply not recognizing its validity within the order of being as being. Now paradox can be defined here, following Chesterton, as unresolved tension as opposed to the dialectic which commences with tensions and then resolves them. In moral terms, paradox is chivalry whereas dialectic is cowardice. In historical terms,

paradox is pure baroque; and this book is really an essay towards an understanding of the act of being as the baroque heart of creation. In theological terms, paradox is the Cross. (10)

<sup>53</sup> My cautious thought here is in regards to questions of epistemology, the use of reason, etc. that might arise out of the Christian humanist tradition. This is a general notion of mine now and an area for future study, particularly as related to the Western rhetorical tradition.

<sup>54</sup> Please see the following: Allitt, Catholic Converts; Allitt, Catholic Intellectuals; Collins; Jaeger; Maritain, On The. This difference between Dawson and Maritain was discussed during and after Brad Birzer's lecture, "Russell Kirk and Education: Word, Story, and Purpose," while it is also indicated by Collins in his book, Three Paths in Philosophy, within a discussion on education.

<sup>55</sup> Please see the following: Gunn; Hyde, Perfection, Postmodern Culture 19-37. Of course, Christopher Lyle Johnstone has well contributed to the ongoing relevance of both human nature and humane studies for rhetorical theory and communication ethics ("Ethics, Wisdom"), yet one might argue (at least from a realist point of view) that his *considerations of and arguments for* the possibility and availability of wisdom and knowledge among human beings (both personally and generally) across the contexts of "rhetorical situations" are, at points, *too* open. See also Edwin Black's "The Mutability of Rhetoric" regarding the implications for rhetoric as regards to the varying views of human nature. With regards to Mary Poovey's, "Cultural Criticism: Past and Present" from College English, which has somewhat of a postmodernist bias, one would have to put Kirk within her categorization of "humanist": "Whereas humanists want to

investigate origins, stability, truth, identity, mimesis, and the rational subject, post-structuralists focus on representation: language as a system of relations, the instability of meaning, the artificiality of truth, the contradictory nature of identity, the generative capacity of language, and the de-centered subject” (620). I am also at some level indebted to the respondents to A Debate: Richard M. Weaver’s Ideal Orator...Not Lincoln But Milton, (particularly G. Thomas Goodnight), for some insights regarding the place of humanism in Weaver’s work which led to further reflections on my part for this project.

<sup>56</sup> W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 14-41. Please see the following from the discipline of communication and rhetorical studies: King; McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric and”; McKerrow, “Marxism and”; McGee and Martin; Weiler.

<sup>57</sup> Kirk, The Roots 9. Kirk provides no specific reference here.

<sup>58</sup> McDonald has contrasted Kirk’s classical view on the soul and commonwealth with the ideological notion “that a just and stable order can be established merely through economic or political reforms,” which exaggerates “the potential for creating and maintaining order through the institutional manipulation” (Russell Kirk 118). Hyrum Lewis has detailed the eventual adaptation of the “premodern tradition of metaphysical realism” (what he has called “metaphysical absolutism”) in varying ways among such American movement conservatives as Weaver and Kirk. According Lewis:

If anything, the prewar conservative political tradition had tended more in the direction of philosophical fallibilism than metaphysical realism. The founder of modern conservatism—Edmund Burke himself—relied on tradition and longstanding institutions precisely because of his distrust of

the ability of human reason to apprehend the kind of eternal truths upon which the French revolutionaries based their political program. Hence, many political conservatives, following in the tradition of Burke, demanded a limitation of state growth *because* of a focus on epistemological uncertainty. (453)

“The founder” is a elusive reference point here, however, for although scholars like Joseph Pappin and Peter Stanlis have argued for Burke’s classical realism, the ways of “reading” Burke would *legitimately vary* within movement conservatism as it developed, as it has within academia generally (even among rhetoricians). Regarding Burke on human nature as essentially constant, please see Pappin’s The Metaphysics of Edmund Burke (111-134).

<sup>59</sup> Person, Russell Kirk 57-80. Bradford wrote

This book is therefore not so much a dissertation on American history as a prolegomenon to the study of discrete components of that record and a context for such restricted inquiries: a Burkean preface to historical research *per se*, and a touchstone for understanding the specious eschatologies and mythologies which structure the narratives of our regnant historians. Since the filter through which the general Western prescription came into our system is a British one, the pivotal sections of Kirk’s inquiry concern, *a fortiori*, the effect of that filter on the decisions which drove British America to pursue a destiny of its own. His great point is that the impetus was itself English, and after the Revolution continued to be English—at least until 1860. (“A Proper” 74)

Bradford was in disagreement with Kirk's positive approach on Lincoln with respect to American order (77-78). See "Dividing the House: The Gnosticism of Lincoln's Political Rhetoric" by Bradford for a sense of his view on Lincoln. Of course, Kirk did have a high appreciation for America's southern culture and history (C. Wilson), including the work of the Southern Agrarian writers of the 20th century (The Sword 176-180).

<sup>60</sup> Pappin, The Metaphysics 114-116. In conjunction with this, please see Pappin's discussion therein of "The Case for Burke's Metaphysics" (52-101). O'Callaghan's discussion on the developmental character of being is here relevant, which I will reference in the concluding section of this project.

<sup>61</sup> Kirk, The Roots 9-10. Kirk noted: "For recent discussions of 'order' discussed only briefly in this introductory chapter, see particularly Hans Barth, The Idea of Order: Contributions to a Philosophy of Politics [...] and Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics [...]" (10n2). No reference is directly provided for the Henry quotation. His own historical comparison here is as follows:

American laws are not like the laws which Lycurgus gave to the Spartans, never to be altered at all. Nor do we Americans emulate another people of old Greece, the Locrians—whose magistrates put a rope around the neck of any citizen who proposed a change in the laws. (If the reformer convinced the people of his wisdom, honors were heaped upon him; but if he did not persuade them that his proposals were desirable, he was hanged by the neck until dead.) (9-10)

<sup>62</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 58-60. For literature and the "moral imagination," Russello emphasized getting beyond the "provincialism" of time with respect to

community, sentiment, etc. However, I think it important to keep in mind Montgomery's discussion here as it relates to getting beyond "provincialism" as regards realism ("Consequences"). Please see also Montgomery's "Virtue and the Risks of Being."

<sup>63</sup> Please see the following: Adler, Ten 108-190; E. Thompson, "Postmodernism." Also relevant to the larger question of ideology with respect to the philosophy (from a classical realist view) is Wm. Oliver Martin's Metaphysics and Ideology. Hikins has explained, "The ideological argument [...] contends that realism is the enemy of tolerance—that one who claims to know will attempt to achieve rhetorical if not political hegemony over the masses" ("Realism and" 65). Yet he has argued that a "convention-based epistemology" such as social constructivism must account for the possibility of communicative consensus toward intolerance. According to Hikins, "If democratic action becomes the sole criterion of ethical decision making, there simply is *no individual moral responsibility*" (66).

<sup>64</sup> Kirk, Enemies 253-281; Russello, The Postmodern 67-103. Kirk had in mind here Voegelin's The New Science of Politics and Order and History. This discussion by Russello was certainly influential on the direction of this dissertation project. Kirk's historical approach could be additive (and maybe corrective) to discussions within the field of communication and rhetorical studies on the philosophy of history (Combs). The Heisenberg question as related to Kirk and realism could be additive (and maybe corrective) in the same academic field regarding knowledge of the past and present (Combs 53-55; Jacobi, "Using" 275, 288n6; Waddell 103-104) and the moral possibilities of rhetorical criticism (Klumpp and Hollihan 90, 95n22) as related to Heisenberg's work. Apart from the Heisenberg discussion, in terms of Kirk's stated approach to history, one

might look at it as an alternative account to that given by Andrew A. King on the maintenance of power in “The Rhetoric of Power Maintenance: Elites at the Precipice.” It is important to note that King builds in part from Bitzer in setting up his larger discussion (128, 128n4), while later citing Kirk’s John Randolph of Roanoke: A Study in American Politics in portraying Randolph’s use of “*The Official Betrayal Alibi*” (133, 133n25) (that is King’s discursive category).

<sup>65</sup> Please see the following: Kirk, Enemies 158-165; Wilhelmsen, “Israel and”; Wilhelmsen, “Modern Man’s” 41; Wilhelmsen, The Paradoxical. Wilhelmsen’s discussion of “participation” as regards to Voegelin (whom he highly regarded), existentialism, etc. warrants further study.

<sup>66</sup> Reviewing Historical Consciousness, Kirk wrote:

Now if the historian, together with the poet, is to supplant the novelist as the guardian and enlivener of the moral imagination, he must learn to write more nobly and more philosophically than he does today. “In the beginning was the Word, not the Fact; history is thought and spoken and written with words; and the historian must be master of his words as much as of his ‘facts,’ whatever those might mean.”

Lukacs is appealing here not to linguistic analysis nor to semantics, but to rhetoric in its original signification. [...] (“History and” 58-59) He then provides a quotation from Lukacs: ““For words are not mere tools, neither are they mere symbols. They are *representative* realities; they remind us of the inevitable connection between imagination and reality... The corruption of speech involves the



corruption of truth, and the corruption of words means the debasement of speech which is the debasement of our most human *and* historic gifts” (59).

<sup>67</sup> This is certainly not the crux or foundation of my argument here, but it is supportive it seems to an extent. It is important to consider Russello’s recognition that Dawson is mentioned not much in The Roots of American order, but that his ideas would go on to take on more import over the years for Kirk (The Postmodern 83-84). I am not persuaded by Russello’s claims of Lukacs on Heisenberg, at least in total, as hinted at early in Kirk’s work, notwithstanding Kirk’s challenges to an overemphasis on factuality for history. Of course, one might pursue this route to some extent with some of Kirk’s discussion on science from over the years. However, again, in my estimation, Kirk might be proximate in some ways to Lukacs, but more would need to be argued here. For a mentioning of Lukacs as influential by Kirk around the time of the initial publication of The Roots of American Order, please see his response to Zoll’s “The Social Thought of Russell Kirk” in the concluding section of this project. Apart from this question specifically, please see “An Exceptional Mind, An Exceptional Friend” by John Lukacs regarding Russell Kirk. Also, apart from the direct question of Kirk and Lukacs, for one critical account of Lukacs, please see “Blunders, Lies, and Other Historicist Habits,” which is a review of Remembered Past: John Lukacs on History, Historians, and Historical Knowledge: A Reader, edited by Mark G. Malvasi and Jeffrey O. Nelson.

<sup>68</sup> Please see the following: Adler, The Four 32n5, 93-105; Adler, Intellect 105-114; Adler, Six 212-219; Adler, Ten 178-190; Chaves, “Scientism, Subjectivist Epistemology”; Hikins, “Realism and” 64-65.

<sup>69</sup> Allitt, Catholic Converts; Allitt, Catholic Intellectuals; Chaves, “Scientism, Subjectivist Epistemology” 53. Allitt has provided interesting accounts that pertains to thinkers including Wilhelmsen, Lukacs, Molnar, and others.

<sup>70</sup> Chaves, “Scientism, Subjectivist Epistemology” 53-54. No specific reference is given for the application of Fr. Jaki’s work.

<sup>71</sup> I have in mind here “Soul and Reason in Literary Criticism: Deconstructing the Deconstructionists” by Chaves. Of interest to this project, Chaves referenced both Gilson (831) and Weaver (803, 834-835) along the way in that particular article. On a separate but related note, please see “Fish’s Copernican Revolution” by Eugene M. Jones.

<sup>72</sup> Please see the following for this larger discussion on Kirk and religion: Bradford, “A Proper”; Guroian, Rallying; Quinn; Zoll, “The Social.” Some additional discussion will be provided on Kirk and religion in the concluding section of this project.

<sup>73</sup> Please see The Paradoxical Structure of Existence (155-211). Wilhelmsen on Voegelin demonstrates Wilhelmsen’s engagement with certain lines of continental thought, even as he would have some departures from the suppositions that guide what he saw as certain positive insights from continental thought.

<sup>74</sup> Please see Enemies of the Permanent Things (262). Fackenheim wrote, “Does belief in divine action in history ipso facto commit the believer to the doctrine of historicity?” Regarding St. Augustine and St. Thomas, he then wrote, “Both thinkers affirm a human nature which, however affected by the fall, on the one hand, by divine salvation on the other, nevertheless *is* a nature” (21-22n14). He continued:

Divine action in history, as understood in the Bible, does not rule out freedom. Thus God’s use of Nebuchadnezzar for His purposes does not

rule out the reality of Nebuchadnezzar's own purposes which are, to be sure, very different from those of God. Further, the divine purpose in this case—the meting out of just punishment—presupposes freedom on the part of those who are to be punished. [...]

<sup>75</sup> Whitney, “The Swords” 318. Whitney has there quoted from Kirk's The Sword of Imagination (Kirk, The Sword 393; Whitney, “The Swords” 320n37). Although prophetic rhetoric is not a significant element of this project, it will in the background a bit in the concluding section of this dissertation project.

<sup>76</sup> In Enemies of the Permanent Things, Kirk did not deal *at length* with revelation, as he wanted to “address [...] doubters, as well as [...] the converted” (34), yet religion *did play* a role in The Roots of American Order. In concluding his critical review of The Roots of American Order, Hoffert has written the following:

In important respects, Kirk offers a confession of faith rather than a rigorous historical or philosophical analysis. If you come to it as a believer, you'll be overwhelmed. But how can you respond as an infidel? Yet, respond you must. The heuristic stimulation of this book is enormous, as is the danger that it may be swallowed whole. Solace may come inadvertently. The seeds of this harvest may succumb to the sterility of their own purity of breed. (642)

In my own observation, regarding both theology and philosophy, it would be an interesting area for future study to compare Kirk's discussions from The Roots of American Order to something like Pope Pius XII's Christmas Message of 1942, “The Internal Order of States and People.”

<sup>77</sup> Please see the following: Alderfer; Berkowitz, Varieties of; Bottum; Brown; Carey, “The Future”; Carey and McClellan; Dunn and Woodard; Federici, “The Politics”; Fitzgerald; Freund; Frohnen, “Redeeming America’s”; Frohnen, “What We”; Gordon; Guttman, The Conservative; Guttman, “From Brownson”; Henrie, “Mr. Henrie”; Henrie, “Rethinking”; Henrie, “Russell Kirk’s”; Henrie, “Understanding”; Hittinger, “The Unwritten”; Hoffert; Kirk, The Roots 347-477; Kurtz; J. Livingston; Malvasi; McAllister, “The Particular”; Molnar, “Still Pondering”; Morison; J. Robinson; Rossiter; Watson; Wheeler. Of course, this larger conversation to some extent underlies the divergences and similarities among the varying types of conservatives. From my viewpoint, notwithstanding Kirk’s important related contributions, it is an academically debatable issue as to the connection between the United States and modernity, the Enlightenment, etc. regarding such issues as religion, governance, conservatism, etc. One would have to face both the distinctness of the American from the French Revolution, for instance, alongside of the visible elements of influence of Enlightenment thought upon the very early days of the United States of America (inclusive on both counts of the varying religious, philosophical and religious points of view of the Founding Fathers).

<sup>78</sup> Kirk, The Roots 475-476. Kirk provided no specific citation here for Carlyle. Within the last section of the concluding chapter of the book (“*In God’s Own Good Time*”) (468-476), Kirk relied in large part (among other sources) upon the book by Julián Marías, America in the Fifties and Sixties, Ed. Aaron Rockland, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 412, 420-421, 441, 444 (468-469, 474-475,

477n18; 477n22) for a notion of avoiding both reactionary and radical reforms in the United States of America.

<sup>79</sup> One might review the divergent political views regarding contemporary America by Adler and Kirk, for instance, yet both have an essentialist approach to human nature *as such*.

<sup>80</sup> Please see the following: Bitzer, “Functional”; Bitzer, “Rhetoric and”; Kirk, Decadence; Weaver, Education and; Weaver, “‘Introduction’ to.” Interestingly, Frank Purcell has looked at Kirk’s conservatism in light of the pragmatism of Charles Sanders Peirce, inclusive of the question of conservatism and postmodernism. In light of some of the issues of this project, that would certainly be an area for future study.

<sup>81</sup> Pomeroy 42, 67-68n2. Pomeroy had a variety of references in mind with regard to these approaches.

<sup>82</sup> Bitzer, “The Rhetorical” 3-4. Mark Joseph Porrovecchio has emphasized that Bitzer’s work regarding “situation” is a contribution toward delineating the concrete parameters of rhetorical discourse with respect to the types of human communication in general (“Rethinking the” 46-47, 49-50).

<sup>83</sup> In this original essay on the question of “situation,” Bitzer has drawn upon the work of Bronislaw Malinowski for an example and one analysis of primitive speech regarding a fishing expedition in the Trobriand Islands (Bitzer, “The Rhetorical” 4-5, 14n1; Bronislaw Malinowski, “The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages,” sections III and IV, appearing as a supplement in Ogden and Richards’ The Meaning of Meaning). Bitzer’s functionalism is apparent as basic in his original essay with his example from Malinowski and his explanation of “situation.” The following summary

description by Biesecker is helpful: “‘Rhetoric,’ here, is the name given to those utterances that serve as instruments for adjusting the environment in accordance to the interests of its inhabitants. [...] In his view rhetorical discourse is an effect structure; its presence is determined by and takes its character from the situation that engenders it [...].” (234)

<sup>84</sup> Please see the following: Brinton, “Situation in”; Hunsaker and Smith; A. Miller; Smith and Lybarger; Phillip Tompkins, “Tompkins on Patton and Bitzer,” 1980; Vatz, “The Myth”; Vatz, “Vatz on Patton”; Wilkerson; Young.

<sup>85</sup> Please see the following: Vatz, “The Myth”; Vatz, “Vatz on Patton.” This is a pertinent theoretical point regarding creativity (Young), yet in terms of the practical, ethical, and linguistic aspects of rhetoric, my point of departure from Vatz’s arguments on this matter is certainly toward classical realism. A genuinely creative rhetor will most certainly account for the words (*instrumental signs*) that are conventionally applied to common objects of thought through the particular language of use within a “rhetorical situation” so as to prompt ideas, or *formal signs*, in the minds of the audience members. For an account of grammar, rhetoric, and logic that is grounded in classical realism, please see Sister Miriam Joseph’s The Trivium: The Liberal Arts of Logic, Grammar, and Rhetoric: Understanding the Nature and Function of Language. Also, one could look to either the rhetorical *topoi* or situational exigence as related to genre criticism (Young). Bradford’s commentary certainly points toward the realm of enthymematic argumentation (“A Proper”). However, with his specific reference to “remote antecedents” (71), one might consider the ongoing inquiry into the genres of rhetorical discourse, which has been to some extent an extension of situational inquiry for rhetorical

studies (Garret and Xiao; Jamieson, “Antecedent Genre”; Jamieson, “Generic Constraints”; Jamieson and Campbell; C. Miller; Phillip Tompkins, “Tompkins on Patton and Bitzer,” 1980 87-88; Young). As Kirk provided an Ancient to American historical account that encompassed matters of language, custom, and principle, The Roots of American Order is a possible scholarly source with respect to the facets of examination that have been under discussion with regard to rhetorical genres, such as the discursive and political aspects of American history (Jamieson, “Antecedent Genre”; Jamieson, “Generic Constraints”). For a discussion of “antecedent genre,” Jamieson has built from Eliot’s notion that “a writer must actively cultivate ‘the historical sense’ which ‘involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence [...]’” with regard to a literary engagement of history (“Antecedent Genre” 406). Her reference here was T.S. Eliot’s “Tradition and The Individual Talent” from The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism, London: Methuen, 1920, p. 49 (406n1-2). It should be noted, of course, that discussions of genre criticism have illustrated the relationship between rhetoric and history.

<sup>86</sup> Vatz, “The Mythical.” A panel that I observed at the 2008 convention of the National Communication Association in San Diego, CA, Social Movements, Rhetorical Situations, and the Enduring Salience of the Bitzer-Vatz Exchange (22 November 2008), which included Vatz and others was helpful in terms of some additional insights about situational theory in general as regards to both rhetorical criticism and rhetorical theory. It was at this panel too where I continued to develop further considerations (by conversation and reflection) regarding Cherwitz and Darwin as providing some epistemological middle ground to consider the contributions of both Bitzer and Vatz.

Please see Croasmun and Cherwitz for an earlier discussion of Bitzer and Vatz from the vantage point of realism, which is also quite helpful in looking at the two approaches.

<sup>87</sup> Cherwitz and Darwin, “Beyond Reductionism” 319-320.

<sup>88</sup> Please see the following for instance: Consigny; Hunsaker and Smith; Phillip Tompkins, “Tompkins on Patton and Bitzer,” 1980. Consigny focused upon the topics of argument, for instance, while Hunsaker and Smith discussed the “*issue* as an analytic unit of conflict.” In my own observation, Cherwitz and Darwin’s realist account here discussed could be a helpful addition to Phillip Tompkin’s earlier “new formulation” that looked to bring together the views of Bitzer and Vatz (“Tompkins on Patton and Bitzer,” 1980 87-88). He summarized as follows: “[...] rhetorical discourse shapes, and is shaped by, rhetorical situations [...] one can also post a theory of rhetorical relativity in which the *same phenomena*, depending upon perspective, can be construed as *both situation and discourse*” (88). Finally, as Croasmun and Cherwitz have argued regarding the work of Bitzer and Vatz, a focus upon the rhetorical construction of situations *as reality* is ethically problematic with respect to such considerations as fallacious arguments and dishonest presentations, for audience members often weigh discursive claims against evidentiary standards pertaining to both rationality and reality. Their discussion highlights the centrality of the judgments of audiences, which is of import to rhetoric as *evaluative*.

<sup>89</sup> Again, Hunsaker and Smith argued for a focus upon the “*issue* as an analytic unit of conflict” with regard to disciplinary discussions on “rhetorical situations.” Although there might be some areas within their discussion that one could contest from a realist point of view, it is important to note that Hunsaker and Smith built from



Aristotle's notions of actuality and potentiality for the context of "issues" (Aristotle, The Metaphysics, Trans. W.D. Ross, The Basic Works of Aristotle, Ed. Richard McKeon, New York: Random House, 1941, 1049b11, 1046a10-18, 1022b33; Hunsaker and Smith 145-146, 146n11, 146n12). Also, with respect to my discussion that follows regarding "moral imagination" for situations, it is important to recognize that Hunsaker and Smith looked at both the "logical" and "motivational" aspects of situations (148-150), although their psychological account differs in some ways both from mine and Kirk's. On a separate but related note, "Inherency as a Multidimensional Construct: A Rhetorical Approach to the Proof of Causation" by Cherwitz and Hikins with respect to Aristotle's four causes and argumentation might warrant further study for some of the philosophical matters related to the question of "rhetorical situation."

<sup>90</sup> Please see the following: Vatz, "The Myth"; Vatz, "Vatz on Patton." It is important to note that Vatz cites Weaver on a few occasions in his original critique of Bitzer (interestingly, he also accuses Bitzer of a type of Platonism) ("The Myth"). Looking at Barbara Biesecker's departures from Bitzer and Vatz from a deconstructionist point of view does seem to signal that maybe Vatz is not a constructivist writ large (at least with respect to human nature *as such*). In passing here I will note that Michael Calvin McGee pointed readers to Biesecker's "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation Through the Thematic of *Differance*" within his aforementioned discussion ("Suffix"). In contending with the factual objectivity of exigency in Bitzer's model with respect to creativity and values ("Situation in" 242), Alan Brinton noted, "Vatz [...] rejects the presupposition that there are objective values. Oddly, he at the same time places great emphasis on the moral responsibility of the rhetor in defining the situation" (248n18).

<sup>91</sup> Please see the following: Biesecker; Bitzer, “Bitzer on Tompkins (and Patton)”; Bitzer, “Functional”; Patton, “Causation”; Porrovecchio. Although Bitzer clearly has clearly held to the reality of human beings *as such* through “situations,” it is important to here note some of the concerns within the relevant literature regarding an adequate audience focus for situational theory and situational criticism (Biesecker; Garret and Xiao; Gorsevski; Smith and Lybarger). Considering an audience focus, to some extent, is not off base from a realist view, as Aristotle looks to the types of audiences in terms of epideictic, deliberative, and forensic discourse in the Rhetoric.

<sup>92</sup> Please see Weaver’s The Ethics of Rhetoric and “Language is Sermonic.” Overall, in Garver’s treatments of Aristotle’s *corpus*, the question looms as to the operative borders of rhetoric with respect to dialectical discourse (also a linguistic art), political science, ethical practices, and philosophical ethics (Aristotle’s)—Aristotle, obviously, inquired into these areas as a theoretician. According to Garver:

The most noble arts are the most revealing about the human ergon and human nature. These are practical arts. Nothing can be further from Aristotle’s idea of practical art than the popular contemporary claim that rhetoric is epistemic and that metaphor is the most revealing thing in rhetoric. Today people try to find a connection between human nature and a poetic art, sometimes even a poetic art of rhetoric, but finding links between creativity, metaphor, insight, and essential humanity. [...]

(Aristotle’s 237)

<sup>93</sup> Cherwitz and Darwin, “Toward a” 19-24. They are, of course, considering this terminology from the view of “rhetorical perspectivism.”

<sup>94</sup> Patton, “Causation”; Pomeroy 54-57; Porrovecchio. Bitzer provides some discussion of “practical wisdom” in view of Aristotle in “Political Rhetoric.” Pomeroy’s discussion of “rhetorical sanction” (55-57) could merit further study in terms of Bitzer’s own work alongside of some of the questions of leadership, audience, etc. that are on the table in this chapter. In terms of the classical realist view of ethics, please see McInerney’s Ethica Thomistica.

<sup>95</sup> I have in mind here Fr. Grimaldi’s discussions that are cited within this project in general and that both Fr. Grimaldi and Weaver both look to Maritain on action and prudence (Grimaldi, “Rhetoric and the Philosophy” 373, 375n16; Weaver, The Ethics 3-50).

<sup>96</sup> Please see the following regarding Weaver and rhetoric as “advisory”: Bliese, “Richard Weaver’s Axiology” 286-288; Fisher, “Advisory”; Johannesen, “Richard M. Weaver on” 128-129; Johannesen, “Richard Weaver’s View” 136-139; Weaver, “Language is.” Somewhat relevant to this are the following: Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part One]”; Dimock, “Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]”; Eubanks, “Axiological Issues”; Eubanks, “Nihilism and”; Eubanks, “On Rhetoric”; Eubanks and Baker. Garver’s Aristotelian scholarship (Aristotle’s; “Eugene Garver’s”; “The Political”; “Truth in”) certainly upholds the *evaluative* component of rhetorical discourse (for “prescriptive” judgments), yet his work provides a formidable challenge to an extension of Aristotle’s rhetorical theorizing to the notion of rhetoric as an art as *preservative* of truth both within and across historical contexts. Garver has centralized Aristotle’s conception of rhetoric as an art of words, which portends for him the question of the proximity or distance (for Aristotle) between the *ethos* of a political speaker as a virtuous

person and the *ethos* of a political speaker as manifested in argument. Garver views the *polis* as more contingent than did Aristotle, which leaves open another question for him as to the direct applicability of the Rhetoric for our present times if there is now a greater circumstantial distance between these two spheres of *ethos* (communal and individual) for deliberation. For Garver, while signaling for us the importance of *ethos* “in argument,” Aristotle’s Rhetoric can be indicative of what we lack in political communities alongside of what we have gained since the time of Aristotle. On another yet related note, for a brief take regarding insight into American audiences resulting from an examination of rhetoric, please see William Raymond Smith’s “American Rhetoric: The Will and the World,” which is a review of Daniel Boorstin’s book, The Image: Or What Happened to the American Dream. Also, please see Maurice Natanson’s “The Limits of Rhetoric” for a discussion on the *roles of and relationship between* rhetoric and dialectic, which was written in part with respect to Weaver’s The Ethics of Rhetoric.

<sup>97</sup> In “Rhetoric as Praxis: An Alternative to the Epistemic Approach,” Zhao is fairly clear in taking a consensus view regarding practical and moral truth for the realm of *praxis*.

<sup>98</sup> Gorsevski drew upon a variety of disciplinary sources to appropriate her use of “climate” for this discussion.

<sup>99</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 104-145. Gorsevski built from Weaver on hope from The Ethics of Rhetoric regarding the transfiguration of situational climate (including Weaver’s eye to “human imagination and effort”), yet departed from his notion of singular rhetorical leadership with her focus beyond “the lone rhetor and toward the rhetoric of a given collectivity” (Gorsevski 144; 178n30; Weaver, The Ethics 20).

Also, with respect to Kirk and leadership, please see W. Wesley McDonald's discussion of Kirk on education (Russell Kirk 170-200).

<sup>100</sup> Stephenson also discusses Charles Taylor's work, particularly the notion of "social imaginaries" from Taylor's Modern Social Imaginaries, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004 (261, 269-271, 274-275, 277). In my own observation, Stephenson's discussion of Kirk next to T.S. Eliot's classical approach points one to *some* potential alliances for serious Kirk enthusiasts with John Angus Campbell's "neo-classical" approach to rhetorical studies, yet Kirk's *corpus* portends a more explicit foundationalism than Campbell would seem to embrace across his own writings ("Between the Fragment"; "Evil as"; "Rhetorical Theory"). Campbell has recommended the work of Eugene Garver ("Rhetorical Theory"). Interestingly, Campbell has published an article in Modern Age, which is entitled, "John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, and the Culture Wars: Resolving a Crisis in Education."

<sup>101</sup> Paula Tompkins derived her definition of "moral imagination" from Jaska, J. A. and M.S. Pritchard, Communication Ethics: Methods of Analysis, 2nd edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1994.

<sup>102</sup> Gorsevski looked at a situation of racial hatred in Billings, Montana from the early 1990s (based upon her own research) while Paula Tompkins looked at Martha Solomon's examination of the medical findings of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study ("The Rhetoric of Dehumanization: An Analysis of Medical Reports of the Tuskegee Syphilis Project," Western Journal of Speech Communication 49 [1985]: 233-247; "The Rhetoric of Dehumanization," Critical Questions: Invention, Creativity, and the Criticism of

Discourse and Media, Eds. W.L. Nothstine, C. Blair, and G.A. Copeland, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994, pp. 301-306).

<sup>103</sup> Please see the following: Garver, Aristotle's Rhetoric; Patton, "Causation" 48; Weaver, "To Write"; Weaver, Visions 55-72. In going beyond "perceptual processes alone" to the dialectical securing of situational factors ("in the classical sense"), Patton referenced the Platonic tradition *via* Weaver's The Ethics of Rhetoric (Patton, "Causation" 48, 48n45; Weaver, The Ethics 3-26). In terms of rhetorical creativity and purpose, Patton would go toward both pragmatist and phenomenological considerations (48-55), yet his highlighting of dialectic "in the classical sense" is here relevant. According to Richard Weaver, "Dialectic is abstract reasoning upon the basis of propositions; rhetoric is the relation of the terms of these to the existential world in which facts are regarded with sympathy and are treated with that kind of historical understanding and appreciation which lie outside the dialectical process" (Visions 56).

<sup>104</sup> See Enemies of the Permanent Things in particular. Within a similar discussion years later in The Politics of Prudence (239-252), Kirk stated, "Etienne Gilson points out that positivists deliberately advance the concept of 'values' because they deny that words, or the concepts represented by words, have real meaning." No citation is given by Kirk, but regardless, the following by Gilson from Methodical Realism is here relevant:

[...] A third way of recognizing the false sciences which idealism generates is by the fact that they feel it necessary to "ground" their objects. That is because they are not sure their objects exist. For the realist, whose thought is concerned with being, the Good, the True and the Beautiful are

in the fullest sense real, since they are simply being itself as desired, known and admired. But as soon as thought substitutes itself for knowledge, these transcendentals begin to float in the air without knowing where to perch themselves. This is why idealism spends its time “grounding” morality, knowledge and art, as though the way men should act were not written in the nature of man, the manner of knowing in the very structure of our intellect, and the arts in the practical activity of the artist himself. The realist never has to ground anything, but he has to discover the foundations of his operations, and it is always in the nature of things that he finds them: *operatio sequitur esse*.

[...] So we must carefully avoid all speculation about “values,” because values are simply and solely transcendentals that have cut adrift from being and are trying to take its place. “The grounding of values” is the idealist’s obsession; for the realist it is meaningless.

For a relevant discussion on the relativity of “values” next to the permanence of virtues with respect to university life, please see Mark A. Kalthoff’s, “To Tell the Truth,” from [The American Spectator](#). Kalthoff covered similar ground and more for education and other topics in his lecture of April 8, 2006 at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal.

<sup>105</sup> Although from differing philosophical vantage points in some ways, Weaver and Consigny both provide some similar and important considerations regarding the role of topics with respect to rhetoricians for situations. One of the prominent discussions by Weaver is his ethical and political ranking of the rhetorical topics (Bliese, “The

Conservative Rhetoric” 402-416; Bliese, “Richard Weaver: Rhetoric” 210; Bliese, “Richard Weaver’s Axiology”; Bormann; Bostdorff 15-16; T. Clark, “An Analysis” 400-401, 401n5; T. Clark, “The Ideological” 27-32; Enholm and Gustainis 49-55; Floyd and Adams; S. Foss, “Abandonment” 369-371; Johannesen, “Richard Weaver’s View” 140-144; Johannesen, “Some Pedagogical” 276-277; Sproule, “An Emerging” 17; Sproule “Using Public Rhetoric” 289-290, 296-308; D. White), with the argument from definition being the most ethical for rhetoric and most appropriate for conservatism within his framework (The Ethics 55-114; “Language is” 208-216). Also considered by Weaver alongside of this ranking was argumentation based in testimony or authority, which depended for him on the quality or standing of the source or authority in use (“Language is” 209-210, 215-216). General accounts of the topics of argument without this ranking are available in Weaver’s textbook, A Rhetoric and Handbook, and the essay, “Looking for an Argument” by Bilsky, Hazlett, Streeter, and Weaver.

<sup>106</sup> Garver, Aristotle’s 139-171. Please refer back to my discussion of the “sharing of meaning” from earlier in this project. Please see also Martin J. Jacobi’s “Using the Enthymeme to Emphasize Ethics in Professional Writing Courses,” in which he discussed the sharing of ethical ground *via* the enthymeme (280-287).

<sup>107</sup> Consigny; Garret and Xiao; Wiethoff 172-174, 172n3. Wiethoff focused upon the value of *specific* topics of a debate for critical insights as opposed to the general topical lines of argument, which in his view don’t necessarily lend themselves for the study of particular controversial discourses, as their general categorizations in the rhetorical tradition were not intended for critical specificity. With his mentioning of Weaver (173, 173n4), though, one might need to reflect upon this further it seems, even



as against Aristotle's Rhetoric, in terms of the relationship between special and general topics. As the topics are related to enthymematic argumentation, Jacobi's "Using the Enthymeme to Emphasize Ethics in Professional Writing Courses" is here relevant also. Struever's article "Topics in History" provides helpful considerations on history and explored *via* the topics, particularly as against tropical explorations based upon style. Although Struever takes *some views* that are conducive to classical realism in terms of a linear notion of history and regarding human nature (see Maritain's On the Philosophy of History), it should be noted that in other locations within her overall scholarly body of scholarly work, she has provided various positive discussions of philosophical hermeneutics. Finally, apart from specific discussions of rhetoric, situation, and history, Garver's "Demystifying Classical Rhetoric" provides a helpful overview of the classical rhetorical legacy on the use of topics, the categorization of issues, and the inartistic proofs of evidence. In some ways, in my own observation, it provides some grounds for simplifying some of the discussions of topics, issues, etc. that occur in the "situation" literature. One might also look to Weaver's operative and generalized use of the term "situation" within some of the selections of The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver (edited by Curtis and Thompson) and within The Ethics of Rhetoric. Finally, with respect to the use of the topics with respect to notions of *freedom* and *order* for society (Consigny; Medhurst, "Resistance, Conservatism"), Kirk's *corpus* could provide communicative items for both critical and theoretical study.

<sup>108</sup> Please see Maritain's On the Philosophy of History. For rhetorical studies, in view of the question of Kirk and postmodernism (regarding temporality, history, human nature, etc.), it might be interesting to consider both Maritain (On the) and Wilhelmssen's

discussions on history (“History, Toynbee”; “Modern Man’s”; The Paradoxical) alongside of Raymie E. McKerrow’s “Space and Time in the Postmodern Polity.” As related to conservative thought and discourse, one might consider Kraynak’s advice on ascertaining the past and look to the future in his “Conservative Critics of Modernity: Can They Turn Back the Clock?” toward not “thinking in terms of historical progress in a rational and linear direction and to think instead in terms of cycles of civilization in which narrow trends play themselves out over finite periods while the full range of human possibilities remains permanently viable” (32-33).

## Conclusion

### Argument and Narrative for a Realist Rhetoric of Order

The problem of this dissertation project encompassed the following four areas of challenge and opportunity for the rhetoric of conservatism within the spectrum of modern to postmodern thought: 1) communicating the truths of foundational principles; 2) confronting the errors within the present intellectual, moral, and social landscape; 3) contending with the continuing implications of the various types of and approaches to conservatism; 4) recognizing topical affinities for persuasive impact within the ongoing academic, culture, social, and political discourse. With respect to this problem, from the vantage point of classical realism and as related to rhetorical studies, the project has taken a look at Russell Kirk's imaginative and historical standpoint toward the development of a realist rhetoric of order. While upholding Weaver's contention that "a conservative is a realist" ("Conservatism and Libertarianism" 477), it is important to ascertain Kirk's relevance *beyond the discourse of conservatism* for the academic discipline of communication and rhetorical studies. For the theory, practice, and ethics of rhetoric, one sphere of implication for this overall conversation is the question of narrative and argument.

For theoretical, practical, and ethical matters, "narrative" has become a prominent point of reference within various academic disciplines (Arnett and Arneson; Condit, "Crafting Virtue"; Coopman; Fisher, "Clarifying"; Fisher, "Narration as"; Fisher, "Narration, Knowledge"; Garver, *For the Sake*; Guroian, *Rallying* 189-200; Leslie; Rodden, "How Do"; Talone 328-331), including discussions of the natural law (Budziszewski 147; Hall, *Narrative*; Hochschild, "Natural Law" 6-7; Rogers). Russello

has put forth the matter of narrative discourse for Kirk's role for the question of conservatism and postmodernism, particularly as against the communicative trends of modernity, inclusive of Kirk on the natural law (The Postmodern; "Time and"). Besides his suggestion on Bitzer's model of "rhetorical situation," James Hikins has also suggested to me an examination of Walter Fisher's "narrative paradigm" in light of realism and communication (Telephone). However, although Fisher's "narrative paradigm" has been central to the field of communication and rhetorical studies, one might go to one of his own major sources along the way—Alasdair MacIntyre.<sup>1</sup> What follows is an attempt to offer some considerations of narrative and argument regarding Kirk's *corpus* toward a realist rhetoric of order.

As it relates to rhetorical discourse, one can look to a general notion of *narration*, which often includes the recounting of real events, but could include the utilization of poetic or fictional narratives *within* or *as* a rhetorical case.<sup>2</sup> In view of contemporary discussions of narrative next to argument, Eugene Garver has likened narrative to Aristotle's reasoning from example, yet he has written, "Narrative can create *ethos*. But we shouldn't oversell it."<sup>3</sup> To revisit my earlier coordinates, the question of narrative and argument is indicative of the dynamic among *association*, *differentiation*, and *perspective* as components of rhetorical discourse. From a realist standpoint, arguably, one must embrace a "real world" paradigm that allows for the *experience* and rationality that are necessary for both fictive and real narratives *as well as* rhetorical and dialectical argumentation.<sup>4</sup> According to Adler:

The ancients wisely distinguished poetic truth from scientific or philosophical truth. The measure of the latter was its correspondence with

the actualities of the real world in which we live. The poetic truth of a story or narration lies rather in its internal coherence and in its conformity with the possible, not the actual. In short, if it is a likely story, believable because it might have happened, it has poetic truth.

Of the many different worldviews or world-versions that the human mind has been able to construct, some have more poetic truth than others, but none should be mistaken for or converted into the really existent world in which we live and that we experience from day to day. Nor should the construction of these fictions of the mind be confused with our efforts to attain knowledge of reality, either through ordinary common experience and the philosophical refinement of it, or through the special experience derived from scientific investigation and the development of scientific theories emerging about it. (Intellect 124-125)

Although there is *some variance* between Adler and MacIntyre's accounts of human cognition with respect to "narrative," seen in the big picture of his *corpus*, MacIntyre has ultimately upheld a "real world" paradigm for discourse.<sup>5</sup> With MacIntyre, whom has been referenced both for conservatism in modernity in particular and for realism against postmodernism in general, one can look to history to see *both* narrative discourse *and* rational argument as significant *across* and *within* the particularities of given societies.<sup>6</sup> Kirk's communicative endeavors are helpful for this sort of reflection, including those within The Roots of American Order.

With respect to Kirk's status within early 20th century movement conservatism, Russello has looked to Kirk's The Conservative Mind as among a series of influential books by key authors (The Postmodern 28-29). He has written:

With the publication of these books, a history of conservative thought that was half-hidden and half-created began to come into focus. Indeed, one of the purposes of The Conservative Mind was to compose a narrative that placed conservative principles at the very core of Western and, with Kirk's later The Roots of American Order, American culture. (29)

Romantic or postmodern, Russello has well captured the “two Kirks”—writer of both fiction and non-fiction—as this relates to an imaginative engagement with the modern and the spiritual, the flavor of which, for instance, is contained in Kirk's 1963 book Confessions of a Bohemian Tory: Episodes and Reflections of a Vagrant Career.<sup>7</sup>

According to Russello, after writing books on a “series of discrete subjects, Kirk once again returned to the grand narrative style with his Roots of American Order” (39-40), which as “his most ambitious work” was “a sweeping narrative of the evolving understanding of the sources of American society, and their connection to the larger Judeo-Christian civilization, which itself has drawn much of its own self-understanding from the Greek and Roman civilizations” (75). Kirk indicated in his later memoirs that The Roots of American Order was a part of his efforts “to point the way toward a more imaginative politics” (The Sword 305-309).

Kirk's approach to sentiment, in Russello's account, is relevant to our appropriations of both narrative and tradition (The Postmodern 52, 87-98, 177-213). Russello wrote:

Sentiment assumes a larger importance in Kirk's work because of his assertion that the coming (post)modern age will be an Age of Sentiments, superseding the old, modern, liberal Age of Discussion. The Age of Sentiments will be more concerned with the power of image on the heart, rather than that of logical discourse on the mind. Kirk thought that rhetoric—the creation of an image through language—was a critical art for conservatism to perfect. And according to Kirk, rhetoric is only effective at creating those images if it pays careful heed to sentiments, of both the speaker and the audience.

Kirk's construction of the role of the sentiments, therefore, is tied together with his qualified respect for reason. [...] Thus, when writing of education, Kirk stressed the importance of arousing students' feelings for or against certain things through the use of stories, only later providing a rational explanation for those feelings.<sup>8</sup>

Echoing to some extent his own discussions elsewhere of the "Age of Sentiments," Kirk wrote in The Roots of American Order:

Our twentieth century, Simone Weil wrote, is a time of disorder very like the disorder of Greece in the fifth century before Christ. In her words, "It is as though we had returned to the age of Protagoras and the Sophists, the age when the art of persuasion—whose modern equivalent is advertising slogans, publicity, propaganda meetings, the press, the cinema, and radio—took the place of thought and controlled the fate of cities and

accomplished coups d'état. So the ninth book of Plato's Republic reads like a description of contemporary events."

This analogy of fifth-century Greece with our age is too true. One may add that our time of troubles also is like the disorder of the Roman republic in the first century before Christ, and like the catastrophic collapse of Roman civilization in the fifth century after Christ. As individuals and as a civilization—like that man without a guide in the darkness, like Simone Weil, like societies that are dust now—we people in the closing decades of the twentieth century grope for order.<sup>9</sup>

According to Russello, "Kirk's historical style was deliberately narrative rather than analytical," generally preferring "anecdote and example to extended argument" (68). However, the communicative work of historians *is in large part* a narrative endeavor as a recounting of the past, which is "written from *some* point of view" (Adler and Van Doren 234-237). At bottom, since Kirk was an historian, narrative *should have* been a major element of Kirk's communicative endeavors.<sup>10</sup>

However, according to MacIntyre, like the great figures of recognizable historical accounts, we all have a "narrative history" in relation to our own personal actions and identities, which unifies one's life for the possibility of a "quest for the good" as guided by the virtues that are entailed by one's role in bearing "a particular social identity" (After Virtue 204-221). In discussing the "given of achievement" in persuasive discourse for "the post-postmodern world," Hikins has explained that rhetorical theorists will need to be attentive to cultivating "ethical dimensions of rhetorical expression, including public moral argument" with a vigilant focus "both against those who would make



argument merely a game of winning without regard for knowledge and the pursuit of truth, and against those who recommend the nebulous vision of discourse as simply an ‘ongoing conversation.’”<sup>11</sup> Regardless of one’s stance on the definition, necessity, or status of postmodernism (conservative or otherwise), the human element of communication continues through time and place, which means that *some degree* of progress in knowledge and practice occurs through history, although *regress is always a possibility*.<sup>12</sup> Although “conversation” was in a way paradigmatic for MacIntyre’s account of “narrative” in After Virtue (210-214), he certainly held therein for the possibilities of either progress or regress in knowledge and practice, like in his appreciative discussion of Gadamer’s “philosophical hermeneutics” (“On Not”). However, whether “the narrative phenomenon of embedding is crucial” for practices encountered within tradition or not, MacIntyre’s *corpus* ultimately takes “public moral argument” into a conversational sphere that is essentialist in scope, particularly as regards human nature, like in his book, Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues.<sup>13</sup>

Although MacIntyre’s important critique of the “Enlightenment Project” *should* resonate with readers of Kirk, on another note, with McCarthy one can ask if Kirk’s traditionalist social view actually entailed an embrace of a “metanarrative,” as that term is sometimes understood around postmodernism.<sup>14</sup> Even with Russello’s use of “narrative” terminology, his description of Kirk’s historical standpoint as encompassing participation, construction, and discovery still tends to put Kirk among those supporting some sort of “metanarrative” approach to theory and practice.<sup>15</sup> Certainly, Kirk lacked enthusiasm and support for an ideological and exceptionalist view of American

“democratic capitalism” for the rest of the world (Kirk, The Politics 172-190; Russello, The Postmodern 1-27, 80-81, 101-102, 104-145), which certainly puts Kirk’s view of the United States in some tension with recent “conservative” foreign policy (F. McDonald, Foreword xviii-xix; Russello, The Postmodern 8-27, 80-81). To revisit Chapter Two of this project, however, for the traditions of America and England, was Kirk’s view of tradition based *primarily* upon “familiarity” (6-7), as Russello indicated, or did it entail *some degree* of “superiority”?

In Enemies of the Permanent Things, Kirk was for the most part making a case against certain liberals of that time who advocated a “transcending” of American tradition (172-196). From within that commentary, the following quotation is a bit more expanded than that given by Russello:

Whether one wishes to preserve a tradition or to transcend it, he needs first to make sure of what that tradition is, and of what it has done to nurture a nation’s life. Nations do not endure without traditions. Some traditions may grow obsolete; all require respectful scrutiny, now and then, in the light of the age, lest they ossify. Traditions do take on new meanings with the growing experience of a people. And simply to appeal to the wisdom of the species, to tradition, will not of itself provide solutions to all problems. The endeavor of the intelligent believer in tradition is so to blend ancient usage with necessary amendment that society is never wholly old and never wholly new. He believes that tradition is a storehouse of wisdom; as Dwight McDonald says, tradition nourishes.

Sudden parting from tradition, however abstractly rational, may sweep away much that is good together with a little that is bad.<sup>16</sup>

There is no question that Kirk was here recommending a type of reckoning with the traditions that are genuinely one's own, or *familiar* to him or her. However, in concluding this particular discussion, Kirk wrote:

The man who respects tradition prefers the devil he knows to the devil he doesn't; and he is not disposed to sweep away a body of beliefs that have served us well in exchange for some new domination to which its prophets cannot even put a name. The American political tradition has given the American people a higher degree of justice and order and freedom—with the possible exception of the British—than any other political tradition has conferred upon any other people.

Like other things, tradition may be judged empirically—though that is not the exclusive standard of judgment. Our political traditions, our social normality, has been fruitful, and the only discernible alternative to it is political abnormality. The prudent social reformer must make his amendments in consonance with this tradition, for the sake of renewing his society's vitality. His only other course is to sweep all the pieces off the board. But then he would not be playing the same game, or reforming the same nation, or, conceivably, dealing with civilized human beings. (196)

Even in encouraging an increased “familiarity” with one's tradition, Kirk was clearly speaking a language of “superiority,” at least at some level. As Russello has helpfully pointed out, however, Kirk *was not* for the exportation of the American framework

(actually comprising various traditions) to save the nations of the global community, which was, as Federici has indicated, to some degree connected to Kirk's conservative reliance upon Edmund Burke.<sup>17</sup>

Kirk's engagement with modernity *via* Edmund Burke portends a "rhetorical approach" that "required employment and development of the moral imagination to conjure the sentiments of loyalty and affection for the ways threatened by ideology" (Russello, The Postmodern 107-118). With respect to Burke's influence on Kirk, Russello explained, "Given this limited understanding of the provenance and elaboration of rights, the role of language—which creates the political structure in which society operates—assumes great importance for Kirk," as it "is the means through which politics is communicated, and that language can change."<sup>18</sup> Hence, "like every exercise of imagination, rhetoric must be tied to ethical ends," yet without them, "language will decay into set phrases or coercive instruments" (118). Also, "rhetoric concerns the nature of the audience and the dispersal of political ideas," yet beyond Russello's specific discussion here, this has been a challenging consideration for conservative argument anyway among the various types of conservatives of the twentieth century.<sup>19</sup> Regardless of the role or "multiplicity of narratives" for either Burke or Kirk's approaches (as argued by Russello), Kirk did point to some connection between narrative and argument, as follows:

Perhaps most calamitous of all, the age of ideology—which commenced during the period Mr. Boulton chooses to analyze—tends to shut men's ears altogether to the art of persuasion, beautiful and just. Fanatic phrases and invincible stereotypes supplant reasoned argument predicated upon a

common cultural patrimony. America and Britain has suffered less from ideological illusion than have most nations, but mischief has been done.

[...] <sup>20</sup>

In light of The Roots of American Order alongside of Enemies of the Permanent Things, one might here key in on the phrase “reasoned argument predicated upon a common cultural patrimony” for some link between argument and narrative.

However, to the extent the one connects “narrative” and tradition, a reading of MacIntyre poses a challenge for those who would embrace Edmund Burke’s ideas for a contemporary conservative framework.<sup>21</sup> In his estimation, “such theorists have followed Burke in contrasting tradition with reason and the stability of tradition with conflict” (After Virtue 221-222). According to MacIntyre:

[...] For all reasoning takes place within the context of some traditional mode of thought, transcending through criticism and invention the limitations of what had hitherto been reasoned in that tradition; this is as true of modern physics as of medieval logic. Moreover when a tradition is in good order it is always partially constituted by an argument about the goods the pursuit of which gives to that tradition its particular point and purpose.

So when an institution—a university, say, or a farm, or a hospital—is the bearer of a tradition of practice or practices, its common life will be partly, but in a certainly important way, constituted by a continuous argument as to what a university is and ought to be or what good farming is or what good medicine is. Traditions, when vital, embody

continuities of conflict. Indeed when a tradition becomes Burkean, it is always dying or dead. (222)

Modernity's "individualism" relegated tradition as an adversarial position "to the Burkeans, who, faithful to Burke's own allegiance," attempted to join "adherence in politics to a conception of tradition which would vindicate the oligarchical revolution of property of 1688 and adherence in economics to the doctrine and institutions of the free market" (222). According to MacIntyre, although theoretically incoherent, "this mismatch" was ideologically useful, yet resulting from this, "modern conservatives are for the most part engaged in conserving only older rather than later versions of liberal individualism," with "core doctrine [...] as liberal and as individualist as that of self-avowed liberals" (222). Although this account and analysis could certainly be contested by those conservatives who have an intellectual allegiance to Burke, it can lead one to what has been an ongoing dispute for *both* liberalism and conservatism (Bormann 298, 305; Bryant, "Edmund Burke: A Generation" 101-114; Bryant, "Edmund Burke: The New"; Canavan; Cobban; Deane; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part One]" 301-302, 305; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]" 13-15, 19; Eaves; Huntington; Kendall and Carey 411-422; Kirk, "Burke and the Philosophy"; Kramnick; D. Livingston; 30, 39-40; McCarthy, "What Would"; Nash, The Conservative; Noble 641-642; Panichas, "The Inspired"; Pappin, "Edmund Burke's"; Pappin, The Metaphysics; Ripley; Speer 310n10; Stanlis, "Russell Kirk")—Edmund Burke's political legacy.

Of course, in his discussion pertaining to rhetorical discourse, Russello pointed to Kirk and Weaver's differences regarding the value of Edmund Burke for 20th century conservatives, which is reflected in Kirk's review of The Ethics of Rhetoric.<sup>22</sup> In that

book, Weaver wrote of definitional argumentation as *indicative of* and *proper to* a genuine conservatism, including a critique of Burke's discourse that entailed a classification of Burke as a liberal because of his arguments from circumstance (The Ethics 55-114). Kirk's departure from Weaver's rhetorical analysis was in part due to their conflicting interpretations of the discourse of Burke and their varying appropriations of the terminology of conservatism.<sup>23</sup> Weaver did express reservations regarding Burke for conservatism in general (The Ethics 55-114; "How to Argue" 509-510; "The Prospects" 473-474), yet as M. Stanton Evans has explained (295-297), although *generally* respectful of Burke, Weaver's concerns pertained to the *primary* status of arguments from precedent for the British Whigs as compared to a Colonial emphasis on principles. However, throughout Kirk's *corpus*, including his generally favorable review of The Ethics of Rhetoric, Kirk did not disregard definitional propriety, as he consistently aimed at truth.<sup>24</sup> For this particular dispute, it could be said that while Weaver *philosophized* to refine the terminology and thought of conservatism, Kirk derived from the *conventional* use of the term "conservative" an argument for a correct consideration of principles (with a "centered" view of language)—both men were "logocentric" in the sense described by Ewa Thompson.<sup>25</sup> Regarding definitional argumentation, it is arguable that the philosophical differences between Weaver and Kirk were, *to some extent*, differences in degree, not differences in kind, yet notwithstanding Kirk's communicative style at any given time, there were often *references to* or *expressions of* essential definitions somewhere present within his discourse.<sup>26</sup>

Apart from this particular difference between Weaver and Kirk, one specific area of study regarding Burke, especially among conservatives, has been in terms of the

natural law (Bryant, “Edmund Burke: A Generation” 111-114; Bryant, “Edmund Burke: The New” 332; Canavan; Eaves 128-129; Kirk, “Burke and Natural”; Nash, The Conservative; Pappin, “Edmund Burke’s”; Pappin, The Metaphysics; Stanlis, “Russell Kirk”). Regardless of one’s position on Burke’s appropriation of realism or tradition (I am yet unresolved on this matter by the way), it would have to be squared with “the development of a second nature, shaped by habit, custom and tradition” that “is not only consistent with, but a natural outgrowth from, our first or essential human nature” to put him within the natural law camp of classical realism, as Pappin has worked to do with Burke (The Metaphysics 115, 139-159), even proximate to a consideration of MacIntyre’s critiques of Burke’s approach (Pappin, “Tradition and” 291-293). Relevant here, O’Callaghan has looked to MacIntyre’s description of an intellectually and morally destitute “‘person outside all traditions’” to accentuate his discussion of our rational, social, and political life as “integral to and constitutive of human nature.”<sup>27</sup> Proximate to this, with respect to humans as political animals, he highlighted “the Aristotelian emphasis upon the *developmental* character of *being*, that is, *potential being* rooted in prior *actual being*.”<sup>28</sup> According to O’Callaghan, “Perfection of being is achieved through the actualization of potential *being* (second nature) rooted in the actual being that one already is (first nature). What one already is makes possible the perfection of what one may become through one’s acts” (292). This notion of a “second nature,” based upon a notion of human nature as essentially constant, is significant for both understanding and communicating the natural law, both individually and communally.

Joshua Hochschild has granted Russell Hittinger’s contention that contemporary challenges to natural law theory need to be addressed “on prior ground,” where



“theological and anthropological questions thus take strategic precedence over moral questions,” yet in view of a philosophical and cultural recovery of the natural law, he has asked, “But what could be the role for *natural law arguments* in this project?”<sup>29</sup> In Hochschild’s account (which draws from MacIntyre), the proximity of secularism to the abuse of technology had led to “a corrupted notion of ‘choice’ and its role in moral agency.”<sup>30</sup> In view of “the principle of subsidiarity” from Catholic social teaching, he has argued, “It seems to me that Hittinger points to a helpful strategy here, which is to articulate the naturalness of associations and activities in terms of their *intrinsic values*.”<sup>31</sup> Natural law argumentation tends to not persuade “Post-Christian” audiences because of those who do “not view certain forms of association as ‘natural’ in not appreciating “their *intrinsic value* but regard them as having at best only *instrumental value*, value that can, in principle, be accomplished by some other instrument” (Hochschild, “Natural Law” 6). Yet, persuasion “that certain activities or practices are inherently valuable” is possible (6)—through both “*narrative and argument*.” According to Hochschild:

The first strategy appeals to imagination and memory, through history, fiction, poetry, even the media of popular culture. For those who may have experienced healthy forms of association and their intrinsic values, it is important to keep the memory of these experiences alive; for those, increasingly, who do not, the artist must work to bring before the imagination an alternative vision of social arrangement with its own intrinsic values. [...]

The other strategy is argument. Now much of the appropriate argument must be, as Hittinger insists, not so much *moral* as *anthropological* and *theological*; and so much of the argument must also take place where anthropology and theology are relevant but would otherwise remain only implicit: in political theory, jurisprudence, law, constitutional interpretation. But I think there is also a place for moral argument in recovering the sense of the intrinsic value of certain activities and practices. Moral argument can play this role precisely because the anthropological and theological questions are implicit within them. But then for natural law arguments to play an effective role in evangelizing culture, we must think of them in their dialectical, rather than their apodictic, function. We must remember that in making an argument we may not intend simply to *use* concepts; we may intend rather to *elicit* concepts. We may offer an argument not just to achieve assent to a conclusion, by appealing to pre-existing concepts; but to illuminate new conceptual possibilities, by displaying new concepts at work in unfamiliar contexts. If natural law arguments alone cannot be expected to secure moral consensus by their intrinsic logic, they can exemplify the kind of reasoning that would be required for moral certainty.<sup>32</sup>

To argue “to a corrupt culture,” one needs an awareness “of what will be, for that culture, ‘first in cognition,’” not in the mode of Cartesian rationalism, “but Aristotelian dialectical pedagogy” (7). Natural law argumentation can be of import now, “not in defending particular moral conclusions, but in exhibiting genuine practical reason at work, and

proposing the possibility of forgotten values,” for “in a post-Christian world our intention for the public use of a natural law argument must be, not to end a debate, but to start a conversation.”<sup>33</sup> Kirk’s *corpus* as it relates to the natural law can be a contribution to the questions of “prior ground” along with the operations of both narrative and argument, which is relevant for ethical considerations of rhetoric.<sup>34</sup>

The Roots of American Order is significant for scholarly study of Kirk’s notions of the operative and epistemological elements within the human relationship to the natural law (Kirk, The Roots; Russello, “The Jurisprudence”; Russello, The Postmodern 146-176; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk and the Age 55-85). In the Seventh Revised Edition of The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot, Kirk writes the following regarding the first of his “six canons of conservative thought”:

Belief in a transcendent order, or body of natural law, which rules society as well as conscience. Political problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems. A narrow rationality, what Coleridge called the Understanding, cannot of itself satisfy human needs. “Every Tory is a Realist,” says Keith Feiling: “he knows that there are great forces in heaven and earth that man’s philosophy cannot plumb or fathom.” [...] True politics is the art of apprehending and applying the Justice which ought to prevail in a community of souls.<sup>35</sup>

Reflective of the development of Kirk’s standpoint regarding the natural law, an earlier edition of the book rendered this idea as follows:

Belief that a divine intent rules society as well as conscience, forging an

eternal chain of right and duty which links great and obscure, living and dead. Political problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems. A narrow rationality, what Coleridge calls the Understanding, cannot of itself satisfy human needs. “Every Tory is a realist,” says Keith Feiling: “he knows that there are great forces in heaven and earth than man’s philosophy cannot plumb or fathom. We do wrong to deny it, when we are told that we do not trust human reason: we do not and we may not. Human reason set up a cross on Calvary, human reason set up the cup of hemlock, human reason was canonised in Notre Dame.” [...] Politics is the art of apprehending and applying the Justice which is above nature.<sup>36</sup>

With reference to Kirk’s moral epistemology as it relates to reason and tuition (inclusive of “moral imagination), W. Wesley McDonald has challenged the placement of Kirk within the Thomistic natural law tradition.<sup>37</sup> Within his treatment of Kirk on the natural law, Russello has addressed this challenge, which is a helpful contribution to a realist consideration of Kirk’s *corpus*.<sup>38</sup>

In Russello’s account, one has to see Kirk’s notion of “moral imagination” beyond Enlightenment rationalism against the backdrop of the classical and medieval natural law tradition in terms of the relationship between moral truth and human reason, particularly as regards to “Cicero’s natural law theory as a system of justice that grows out of human recognition of enduring natural laws, a recognition that enables choice between justified and unjustified claims.”<sup>39</sup> Such “recognition is an operation of reason, informed by a body of normative imaginative literature and tradition, which is conditional,” as “sources can change over time in response to consideration of its claims

to authority. [...]”<sup>40</sup> Relevant to McDonald’s challenge, according to Russello, is the medieval distinction between *ratio* (logical and discursive thinking) and *intellectus* (basic intuitive understanding), both of which are involved in knowing.<sup>41</sup> Russello explained, “Reason, therefore, is only the active mode of knowing; it is interpenetrated by *intellectus*, the passive capacity to receive truth that Kirk calls “intuition.””<sup>42</sup> So, with Russello’s account, Kirk’s view of the dynamic of legitimate governance, community history, and individual application portend the pertinence of “narrative and context” as regards the “construction of the legal environment,” although Russello has highlighted both the communicative possibilities and drawbacks for “narrative” as recognized within the academic field of law.<sup>43</sup>

For his appraisals of literary engagement and community life, Marion Montgomery has upheld this distinction between the *rational* and *intuitive* aspects of knowing.<sup>44</sup> He has written:

[...] But one holds an opinion through a complexity of knowing that includes the exercise of both *rational* and *intuitive* intellect. Intuitive intellect we operate upon; all thinkers do. But we have been taught to feel guilty about the intuitive, unless we may be excused because we call ourselves poets. If in addition we fail to develop the rational support of the intuitive, it is perhaps well that we do feel guilty. [...] (Virtue and 139-140)

Although he has built *from* the constructivist side of the rhetorical epistemology debate *to* a Thomistic account of the natural law as a framework for rhetorical ethics, Jeffrey Maciejewski has demonstrated the pertinence of human teleology, even in postmodernity,

for that sort of argument.<sup>45</sup> One must here consider that Kirk had an ongoing focus upon the proper ends of human life (Enemies; The Politics), which is essential to the theory and practice of the natural law.

From another angle, the natural law is a significant *topos*, or source, for moral argumentation; hence, it supplies a practical foundation for an ethical use of rhetoric.<sup>46</sup> It is arguable that scholars of rhetoric should account for natural law, for in the Rhetoric, Aristotle stated:

[...] Particular law is that which each community lays down and applies to its own members: this is partly written and partly unwritten.[...] Universal law is the law of nature. For there really is, as every one to some extent divines, a natural justice and injustice that is binding on all men, even on those who have no association or covenant with each other.<sup>47</sup>

According to St. Thomas, in view of both Revelation and reason, “It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature’s participation of the eternal law.”<sup>48</sup> Keeping in mind some of the earlier epistemological discussions in this project, one might consider the following from Aquinas: “[...] The precepts of the natural law in man stand in relation to practical matters, as the first principles to matters of demonstration. But there are several first indemonstrable principles. Therefore there are also several precepts of the natural law.”<sup>49</sup> That is to say, “the precepts of the natural law are to the practical reason, what the first principles of demonstrations are to the speculative reason; because both are self-evident principles.”<sup>50</sup> So, for example, “*being*” is apprehended simply (providing for our experience on contradiction and non-contradiction), while “*good*” is firstly apprehended by the practical reason, as we all act

“for an end under the aspect of the good.”<sup>51</sup> This leads to “the first precept of law,” which is the basis for the “other precepts of the natural law”: “*good is to be done and ensued, and evil is to be avoided.*”<sup>52</sup> Of course, a Thomistic account provides for reflection upon both the “prior ground” and persuasive communication of natural law theory and practice, both of which are necessary for rhetorical ethics, while Kirk’s *corpus* can assist in developing a contemporary realist rhetoric of order as it relates to the question of narrative and argument.<sup>53</sup>

As indicated earlier in this project, even amid the difficulties of defining terms such as “conservatism” or “postmodernism,” one can confidently grant Kirk’s strong stance against modernity. Russello’s discussion of Postmodernism and Other Essays, which was published by Kirk’s conservative and Episcopalian friend Bernard Iddings Bell in the 1920s, certainly points to the matter of Kirk and religion, although there are *specific* aspects of Bell’s book that I think are *not conducive* to Kirk’s overall religious point of view.<sup>54</sup> Regardless, Kirk on religion has become a recent scholarly issue. Since the 1950s, many have arguably taken what one might classify as a view on the *place* of religion as somewhat strong for Kirk (even before his conversion to Catholicism), yet some have more recently entertained the view that Kirk treated religion primarily in its utility for conservatism.<sup>55</sup> An important contribution of Russello’s book, The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk, is that it gives ample ascendancy to the role of religion in Kirk’s *corpus*, such as with The Roots of American Order. It is arguable that the narration and argumentation within this particular book by Kirk demonstrates to a reader that religion had a pertinent status for Kirk’s approach *beyond utility* for conservatism. Of course, conservatism was never distant from Kirk’s communicative sphere in general,

yet it is important to consider that there really is no substantive discussion or mentioning of conservatism in The Roots of American Order, although religion plays a prominent role.

So, in view of getting beyond the “*situational* definition” of conservatism that Samuel Huntington discussed years ago, has Russello stressed “narrative” at the expense of argumentation?<sup>56</sup> Maybe. Although the various scholarly discussions on history and tradition that he covered have great standing and merit, Russello *might* have overemphasized the conservative reliance on narrative discourse (as against modernity) at the expense of the importance of rational argumentation in terms of the role of rhetoric.<sup>57</sup> In her advocating a “logocentric” engagement with postmodernism, Ewa Thompson wrote:

[...] Of course it is impossible to write about anything intellectual without injecting one’s own humanity into the argument. [...] However, the illusion of objectivity which the Enlightenment proffered should not lead us to a rejection of the thesis that about laborious arguments and discussions based on syllogistic thinking and conducted in an atmosphere as free from pressure as possible, one can arrive at an approximation of truth. [...] <sup>58</sup>

Obviously, tradition is on the table alongside of “narrative” at this point in the project. The question of “tradition” has been a focus of conservative intellectuals for decades, especially as it relates to moral conduct and human epistemology (Carey, “Traditions At”; M. Clark; Cutsinger; Hindus; O. Jones; Hochschild, “The Re-Imagined”; Molnar, “Tradition and Social”; Molnar, “Tradition and the”; Montgomery, “Tradition and”;



Niemeyer, “In Praise of”; Panichas, “The Case”; Pappin, “Tradition and”; Parry; Tonsor; Walsh; Wilhelmsen, “History, Toynbee”; Zoll, “On Tradition”). However, in light of Russello’s intersection of conservatism and postmodernism (The Postmodern 7, 177-213), one might still want to know *to what extent* one must engage one’s tradition and *to what extent* one can “escape” one’s tradition.

In view of the social planning and Enlightenment rationalism of modernity, epistemological dilemmas regarding rationality, aesthetics, experience, and religiosity *for conservatism* and *among conservatives* have been on the table for decades (Henrie, “Opposing”; Henrie, “Reason, Unreason”; Hochschild, “The Re-Imagined”; Hoeveler; D. Livingston; J. Livingston; Phillips; E. Thompson, “Ways Out”), including in regards to the components and operations of human nature. This project has upheld Weaver’s contention that “a conservative is a realist” (“Conservatism and Libertarianism”), yet toward the classical realism of Aristotle and Aquinas, which ultimately encompasses due considerations of both context and tradition as *a part of* and *in relation to* the real world in which we live (Montgomery, “Consequences”; Shively). People have acted *for* and *against* tradition in the work of reform through history, yet it must be respected along the way, but not at the expense of our *knowledge of* and *life within* reality (Molnar, “Tradition and Social”; Molnar, “Tradition and the”). Weaver himself had concerns about those conservatives, including Kirk, who would be insufficiently “speculative” and “theoretical” when weighing tradition and authority, although Weaver certainly embraced the study of history, even in an imaginative way.<sup>59</sup> In the big picture, however, as Kirk was a realist of some sort, he should be seen as one who saw “narrative” and “tradition” as both *a part of* and *accountable to* the reality that we experience. Russello does not

always take his reader far off of this “logocentric” course, yet in view of realism as related to postmodernism, it is probably still an open question as to Kirk’s role as a postmodern conservative, which leads one to a larger question of course. In general, to what extent should conservatism embrace the terminology of postmodernism? Inquiry should certainly continue on these two questions, especially as related to rhetorical studies.

To borrow a term from the critical rhetoric literature, Mortimer Adler likely provided some sort of “hermeneutic realism” with his dialectical approach as it developed over the decades alongside the “great conversation” of his Great Books approach to learning.<sup>60</sup> Those who study history are accountable to proper philosophizing and philosophical truth when they go beyond the purview of the “special experience” of research (Adler, “The Philosopher”; Adler, “The Philosopher [...] Continued”). For Adler, dialectical neutrality is to *some extent possible* when examining the varying standpoints on this or that question from the past or the present, while he certainly saw the study of history as significant for the education of peoples for their own lives and for the quality of political action.<sup>61</sup> Specific political differences notwithstanding, Kirk’s work as a “logocentric” historian could enrich this sort of “great conversation,” especially as it relates to the liberal arts of grammar, rhetoric, and logic.<sup>62</sup>

Eugene Garver has done well to bring forward the contemporary value of rhetoric *as argument*, particularly *as* and *for* deliberative discourse (Aristotle’s; “The Arts”; “Can Virtue”; For the Sake; “Truth in”), although he has also highlighted the role of epideictic rhetoric along the way. However, he has challenged the deliberative merits of an essentialist view of human nature, although his treatments of rhetoric allow for this sort

of view (religious or philosophical) as encompassed in rhetorical deliberations and celebrations about *both* means and ends.<sup>63</sup> From the vantage point of classical realism, though, debates about human nature as such (inclusive of human ends) would probably fit more into something like Adler’s dialectical framework, as these sorts of debates are not necessarily a matter for rhetorical treatment.<sup>64</sup> An ethical rhetoric entails an openness to “noble ends,” while in a balanced relationship with dialectical discourse (Weaver, The Ethics 3-54; Weaver, “Language is”; Weaver, Visions 55-72)—rhetoric is potentially *preservative* of virtue. In light of Kirk’s essentialist approach to human nature, his *corpus* is theoretically and practically significant for a realist “vision” of public discourse.

*For conservatism and beyond*, studies of Kirk can be informative to discussions of judicial, epideictic, and deliberative rhetoric with respect to narrative and argument, both at the theoretical and practical levels, which from the realist point of view, concerns questions of human nature as such.<sup>65</sup> It seems that conservatives (including those traditionalists like Kirk) must grapple with the question of privileging either epideictic or deliberative rhetoric as they shift in focus between legacy and policy (Broyles; Gottfried and Broyles). Bruce Frohnen has written:

Mr. Kirk’s vision does not lend itself to systematic analysis of discrete, specific policy positions. His primary concern always has been with the order of our souls, not with any one particular policy, save as it affects the permanent things. Yet certain policies are more likely than others to protect what ought to be the immutable aspects of the American character. [...] (“Has Conservatism” 62)

According to Zoll, “models” pointing toward an “ethical mandate” are revealed in Kirk’s work “from moral actions of notable men in which a certain consistency and continuity can be witnessed” (“The Social Thought”). And of course, as it captured Kirk’s ongoing message that “life is worth living,” The Roots of American Order pointed Americans to look to specific people of the past as presently relevant.

To here apply one of Adler’s “bodyguards of truth” as found within one of his own discussions on America (We Hold), one might have *ideals* related to order, yet strictly speaking, one cannot understand directly the *idea* of order, but he or she can understand order as an “object of thought,” which is then objectively discussable among human beings (even amid disagreements) in terms of philosophical principles and as related to past actions. Kirk’s historical examples *and* political arguments can inform discussions of “order” as regards to communication ethics and rhetorical criticism, both theoretically and practically. Of course, Kirk is not the only or final word on “order” through history, for a study of his *corpus* might prompt one to examine with depth the work of such scholars as Christopher Dawson, John Lukacs, and Eric Voegelin, especially in light of the sorts of issues that have been raised within this project.<sup>66</sup>

As mentioned earlier in this project, proponents of “critical rhetoric” have pointed toward the important relationship between the rhetorical critic and the greater community, which is relevant to conservative argumentation in general. According to Gleaves Whitney, conservative critics of culture must present a calm, clear, and coherent opposition to cultural decadence (“Decadence” 23). He has explained:

Here aptitude—a sense of aptness—is needed. For the critic must use logic and evidence appropriate to whatever assertion is being made. There

are a number of different levels at which the decline of the West can be argued: sobering social data, knowledgeable testimony of the psychological and spiritual poverty of post-modernity, suggestive historical analogies, inferences drawn from the fine arts and popular culture, intuitive visions of what the decline of the West involves in its most subtle workings—all provide the means to make a compelling case that decadence is a threat we need to take seriously. (23)

Aristotle has defined rhetoric “as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion [...]” (*Rhetoric*, Book I, Chapter 2). For conservatives to concretely confront errors, then, a diligent appraisal of the accessible resources of argument is necessary. However, Whitney also emphasized that for conservative critics to demonstrate decadence within a difficult setting, they must *initially* communicate, in a persuasive way, principles as points of reference.<sup>67</sup> He has suggested that along the way, conservatives should strive to discover the redeemable aspects of the age while maintaining a focus on the “vision” of the West (24-25). Whitney has argued:

Hence decadence ultimately entails the process of falling away from the vision that orders man’s relation to the divine, to the community, to the self, to nature. In the Western context, it signifies a lessening of the hold on the imagination of all that inspires human beings to be devout in their religion, of service to their fellows, true to their conscience, and conscientious in their stewardship of nature. (24-25)

Whitney’s communicative advisement here encompasses points of evidence and focus that could entail the use of *both* narrative and argument as understood from the realist

point of view. In his appraisal of “Thomistic Ethics in America,” John Haldane has explained:

[...] the restoration of serious moral thinking in American public life and in the culture more widely might be advanced by a systematic effort with regard to two tasks. First, that of identifying and exposing invalid reasoning, inconsistency, confusion, misrepresentation, and false values; and second, that of presenting ethical claims in terms that show their ground in commonly known facts of human nature. Of course it is part of the cultural problem that those facts have themselves become somewhat obscured. I think the effort to bring them back into view and to render them vivid in phenomenological consciousness is best pursued by those possessed of literary and artistic imagination, rather than by academic philosophers. [...] (165)

Kirk’s brand of “moral imagination” was ultimately a “pattern” *guided by* and *guiding for* experience, while his own communicative and imaginative endeavors accounted for these “commonly known facts of human nature” as he aimed to enhance the imagination of his readers toward the good (in both fiction and non-fiction). Yet *beyond conservative discourse*, there is one final area where Kirk’s *corpus* could be a contribution to the field of communication and rhetorical studies as well as for the culture in general with respect to a realist rhetoric of order.

Understood in a realist sense of the term, Kirk’s work could supplement the type of “performance” of natural law arguments that Hochschild recommended above, which is relevant to epideictic, deliberative, and judicial rhetoric.<sup>68</sup> Discussions of prudence

have emerged in the communication literature alongside of discussions of “performance” as it relates to such areas as public discourse (Hariman, “Prudence/Performance”) and “critical rhetoric” (Kuypers). Notions of prudence were consistently operative within Kirk’s *corpus* for individual and communal action (The Politics), while prudence or “practical wisdom” is proximate to considerations of the natural law in the Thomistic tradition (R. McInerney, Ethica Thomistica; M. Murphy; Rhonheimer). For theoretical, critical, and practical matters within a realist rhetoric of order, Russell Kirk’s provides some ethical prospects for persuasion that can be both applied and exemplified toward the *preservation* of virtue, not just for conservatives, but for the public at large.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> MacIntyre is a significant source for Fisher's development and extension of the "narrative paradigm" ("Narration as" 266, 268-269, 273, 275, 279, 282; "Narration, Knowledge" 169). Please see the following with respect to Fisher's "narrative paradigm" within the field of communication and rhetorical studies: Arnett and Arneson; Condit, "Crafting Virtue"; Leslie; Rowland; Warnick, "The Narrative." The direction of this chapter with respect to argument, narrative, and tradition was to some extent influenced by my ongoing personal communication with Dr. Gregory Gillette and Professor Richard Cain.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the following: Hikins, "Realism and" 43-44; Leslie; Rodden, "How Do"; Rowland; Warnick, "The Narrative." Book III of Aristotle's Rhetoric covers *narration* in one sense of the term that I am using here. Discussions of "narrative" are going to exhibit a favoring of the use of the term in the paradigmatic or technical sense (the latter what Rowland referred to as a "mode of discourse"), or both together. It should be obvious in this concluding section of the project that I would lean toward viewing narrative as a "mode" of discourse. In his paradigmatic framing of narrative, Fisher of course acknowledges the communicative tradition of looking at narrative as a "mode" of discourse ("Clarifying"; "Narration as").

<sup>3</sup> Please see the chapter entitled, "Rhetorical Argument and Ethical Authority," in Garver's book, For the Sake of Argument: Practical Reasoning, Character, and The Ethics of Belief. An area where Garver sees this interest in "narrative" is within the law literature. One of his main points here is that inductive reasoning has no superiority over deductive reasoning. In my estimation, an area of future study would be looking at



Garver's work on *ethos* in discourse (Aristotle's; For the Sake; "Truth in") alongside of John Rodden's article, "How Do Stories Convince Us? Notes Towards A Rhetoric of Narrative," such as with the relationship of rhetoric, grammar, and logic to narrative discourse. On a separate note, for an insightful account of Kirk on George Orwell (built from Rodden's interviews of Kirk), please see Rodden's "A Young Scholar's Encounter with Russell Kirk."

<sup>4</sup> The phrase "real world" paradigm as applied to this conversation is, as far as I know, my own, and it is my realist adaptation of Fisher's language ("Clarifying"; "Narration as"). Hikins's discussion ("Realism and" 43-44) on factuality and narrative (and Fisher), including his reference to Rowland (43), helpfully reminds one that stories must be evaluated "in relation to the world" (Rowland 270). I anticipate here my discussion of MacIntyre's realism and essentialism.

<sup>5</sup> I have in mind here Adler's discussion in Intellect: Mind of Over Matter of "About What Exists Independently of the Mind (Including a Note About Reality in Relation to Quantum Mechanics" (90-114) and "What the Mind Draws from Experience" (115-125) next to MacIntyre's discussions in After Virtue. One might also consult Adler's Truth in Religion: The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth with respect to the question of narrative and argument. Of course, Thompson has recommended *both* thinkers (along with Maritain) to conservatives for a "logocentric" engagement with postmodernism. For a generally negative appraisal of the "virtue ethics" movement in general and MacIntyre's work in particular that works primarily from a theological standpoint, please see "Virtues in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas" by Fr. Thomas F. O'Meara.

<sup>6</sup> Please see the following: Brand 361, 365n19; Craycraft 33; W. Frank; Gottfried and Broyles 47; Guroian, Rallying 194, 211-213, 222; Hayward 12; Henrie, “Rethinking” 9, 16n2; Hochschild, “The Re-Imagined”; Neiman; Pappin, “Tradition and”; Ritchie 40-41; Russello, The Postmodern 89, 117, 150, 200; E. Thompson, “Ways Out” 197, 204-205; Walsh. Both MacIntyre (After Virtue 204-225) and Fisher (“Narration as”) point one to consider narrative alongside of history. In terms of arguments having a history (for both conservatives and liberals), please see Garver’s review of The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy by Albert O. Hirschman.

<sup>7</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 33-41. This notion of the “two Kirks,” which Russello drew from Kirk’s own look back on his career, is employed to illustrate the social/historical and literary confrontation that Kirk provided with respect to modernity, which also pertains to Kirk’s dexterity of style. For instance, along the way, Russello has reminded readers of Kirk’s interest in writing fiction, such as the horror story, “There’s A Long, Long Trail A-Winding.” He has written, “Kirk used stories such as this one to give narrative form to his arguments about human nature and society” (32). Russello makes reference to Confessions of a Bohemian Tory, but any reader of Kirk’s writings knows that this book reflects the flavor of the “two Kirks.” McCarthy has written, “Russello’s overview of Kirk’s politics is insightful, and his take on Kirk’s spiritual background is even more revealing” (“The Pomo”). Yet, according to McCarthy, while Kirk’s “playfulness” seems conducive to a postmodern “sense of the playful,” it remains that Kirk “sounds more like an old Romantic than a contemporary postmodernist” (“The Pomo”).

<sup>8</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 52. Russello helpfully pointed out that Kirk was opposed to reductive rationalism as well as sentimental reductionism as emancipated from thought (52). Earlier in the project, I indicated that I thought that realism could have taken more of a center stage in this book. Here is one example. Along the way in his discussion of Kirk, sentiment, and imagination (52-64), it is my view that he could have emphasized more Kirk's pre-modern and realist understanding of "origination" as regards to *experience* and imagination (although he is hinting at it). With his emphasis on "discernment," one would have to ask the questions: discernment *of what* and *by what*? Possibly relevant here are discussions of "poetic truth" from a Thomistic standpoint (Kramer; S. McInerney; Taylor). However, to be fair, Russello did seem to balance out his overall case on this matter at a later point in the book in terms of Kirk's "strong strain of individualism," optimistic viewpoint, and "belief in free will" as regards to postmodern views on the historical and contextual dimensions of art (207).

<sup>9</sup> Kirk, The Roots 4. Kirk drew here from Weil's The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties toward Mankind. Please see "The Age of Sentiments" in Redeeming the Time and Kirk's article, "The Age of Sentiments," which was published in Modern Age in 1983. Russello has highlighted Kirk's recognition of and entrance into the "age of sentiments," privileging to some extent the "image," which has arguably followed the failures of modernity's "age of discussion" (The Postmodern). Such a view has some confirmation in the communication literature, at least on one count. J. Michael Sproule has put the purveying of popular images for "social power" and "the increasing importance of interpersonal attraction and identification" as indicative of a new "managerial rhetoric" ("The New"). Kirk had a very reserved view of television as a

medium of communication, although he thought some positive communicative effects could be had. Interestingly, there was even some planning to make The Roots of American Order into a single episode for television.

<sup>10</sup> Of course, much of Russello's work supports this notion that narrative is a significant part of the historian's communicative endeavors (The Postmodern 68-82, 98-103; "Time and"). As an historian works from a point of view (Adler and Van Doren 234-239), in view of some relevant scholarly discussions (Garver, "Machiavelli's The Prince"; Garver, "Paradigms and"; McAllister, "Of Ideas"; McAllister, "Re-Visioning"; Russello, "Time and"; Struever), one might consider how *both* narrative *and* argument work for the bringing forth of history to either general audiences or academic historians.

<sup>11</sup> This quotation is from, "The Given of Achievement and the Reluctance to Assent: Argument and Inquiry in the Post-Postmodern World," by James Hikins (157-158). He also added to this, "If we pursue a vigorous, invention-centered, marketplace of ideas conception of argument in the post-postmodern world, we may finally attain the vision of Quintilian, Cicero, Bacon, Burke, Ehniger, and others of a genuine rhetoric of social amelioration." For the sake of clarification, I here note that it seems that Hikins is referring to Kenneth Burke, not Edmund Burke. In his proposed "Tenets of Post-Postmodern Theory of Argument" (153-156), Hikins contended that argumentation "*will be increasingly 'scientific'*"; "*will be both epistemic and ontologic*"; "*will be represented centrally in pedagogy.*" There are aspects of the essay with which I differ, yet I think that his contribution here is certainly this notion of the "given of achievement" with respect to a realist view of argumentation. With respect to Hikins's essay here, of course, the issue of "scientific" argumentation would need to be confronted in terms of

Kirk's *corpus* in particular (Beer, "Science") and pre-modern philosophy in general (Federici, "Logophobia"; Wellmuth). Please see also "Rhetoric, Objectivism, and the Doctrine of Tolerance" by Hikins and Zagacki in The Critical Turn: Rhetoric and Philosophy in Postmodern Discourse. Both Russello's book (The Postmodern) and McCarthy's review ("The Pomo") prompt one to consider future inquiry on Kirk in relation to the "rhetoric of science" and the "rhetoric of human inquiry," both of which sometimes intersect with the literature of either "critical rhetoric" or rhetorical epistemology.

<sup>12</sup> Please see the following: Adler, The Common; Adler, How to Think 435-445; Adler, "The Philosopher"; Adler, "The Philosopher [...] Continued"; Adler and Van Doren 234-254; Hikins, "The Given"; Hikins, "Realism and"; Hikins and Zagacki, "Rhetoric, Objectivism"; MacIntyre, "On Not"; Maritain, On the; Wilhelmsen, "History, Toynbee"; Wilhelmsen, The Paradoxical. As indicated by Adler, although historical context is certainly significant (particularly for political philosophy for him), we can and must weigh the philosophical arguments of the past *within, for, and against* the framework of the present, as truth and error can happen *in* and *across* any period of time, although corrections do happen and progress is possible.

<sup>13</sup> MacIntyre, After Virtue 204-225. In using the term "conversational sphere" here, I have in mind discussions of narrative, conversation, and/or discourse that are to some extent postmodern in scope (Cherwitz and Darwin, "Why The"; Hikins and Zagacki, "Rhetoric, Philosophy" 201-212). One must recognize the realist implications of MacIntyre's work (MacIntyre, "On Not"; Shively 3-6; E. Thompson, "Ways Out" 197, 204-205). In particular, as Haldane has emphasized (154-155), significant is MacIntyre's

shift toward a more essentialist view of human nature in Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues. For discussions of MacIntyre on “narrative” in regard to moral discourse, from varying points of view, please see the following (also providing for some connections between narrative and argument): Condit, “Crafting Virtue”; Fisher, “Narration as”; Leslie. Condit focused, in a somewhat critical way, upon the “conversational model” of moral theorizing across academia (“Crafting Virtue”). Guroian writes of MacIntyre’s stance toward modernity, focus upon context, etc., yet departs from MacIntyre on the question of an essential human nature across contexts (Rallying). However, it looks like Guroian is relying more upon the views of MacIntyre as given in After Virtue, which have changed in regards to human nature as such.

<sup>14</sup> I have in mind here references by conservatives to MacIntyre (please see note 6 above). McCarthy has argued that to define “*postmodernism*” is challenging, but if it is “‘incredulity toward metanarratives,’ or skepticism toward grand stories like the Enlightenment account of scientific and moral progress,” then traditionalists might embrace this disposition, “depending on whether Kirk’s belief that ‘society is a spiritual reality, possessing an eternal life’” is its own metanarrative, yet “they find rationalistic system building equally distasteful, fearing that it strips the mystery and feeling from life” (“The Pomo”). McCarthy mentioned Lyotard here for this definition of postmodernism (“The Pomo”). Russello referenced Lyotard’s work in The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk (183, 183n15, 206, 211). At another point in his review, wishing for a more systematic approach from Russello, McCarthy reminded readers that “Kirk put a high premium on narrative integrity” (“The Pomo”).

<sup>15</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 28-103. Russello does portray aspects of Kirk's corpus as that of a "metanarrative" approach, and at times, he does not *totally* buy the "narrative"/"metanarrative" distinction, at least in its usual postmodernist varieties.

<sup>16</sup> Kirk, Enemies 181. Kirk provided no citation information for his Dwight Macdonald reference. Here is the quotation as provided by Russello (The Postmodern 6, 6n8):

Some traditions may grow obsolete; all require respectful scrutiny, now and then, in light of the age, lest they ossify. Traditions take on new meanings with the growing experience of a people. And simply to appeal to the wisdom of the species, to tradition, will not of itself provide solutions to all problems. The endeavor of the intelligent believer in tradition is so to blend ancient usage with necessary amendment that society is never wholly old and wholly new.

<sup>17</sup> Please see the following: Federici, "Russell Kirk"; Russello, The Postmodern 1-27, 80-81, 101-102, 104-145. According to Federici:

[...] Kirk was content living in a diverse world, and he was skeptical that American values and traditions could be transplanted to foreign lands. After all, American values were not themselves one monolithic set of beliefs; they were multiple sets of local and regional customs and traditions that may only be appropriate in certain parts of the U.S., not across national boundaries. This was one instance in which Kirk had profound disagreements with neoconservatives. ("Russell Kirk" 257)

Beyond differences with the neoconservatives, McCarthy looked to Kirk's "animosity toward" the libertarians (even amid some common ground) as a point of interest as "his attitude could be fruitfully compared with the disdain many postmodernists feel for capitalism and classical liberalism" ("The Pomo"). This probably has some comparative merit with respect to certain rhetorical scholars (of rhetorical criticism or "critical rhetoric") having this sort of "disdain," although I think that Kirk's *corpus* would break ranks eventually in terms of politics, philosophy, and theology. Regardless, one might search for some topical similarities concerning modernity's notions of "freedom," which has been front and center within the "critical rhetoric" literature.

<sup>18</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 117-118. Russello proceeds here with an overview that pertains to Kirk's view of rights as more limited (derived by the historical experience of a given society) than a typical universalistic approach.

<sup>19</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 119. Russello here is basically looking at Edmund Burke's focus upon the aristocratic and educated elements of English society as not from an unnecessarily elitist point of view. Regarding the audiences of conservatism, please see the following: Beale, "Richard M. Weaver"; Bliese, "Richard M. Weaver and the Rhetoric"; S. Crowley 69-73; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part One]"; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]"; Johannesen, "A Reconsideration" 3-6, 9-10; McAllister, "Re-Visioning" 45-46; Weaver, "The Prospects" 475.

<sup>20</sup> Kirk, "Rhetoricians" 767. Russello worked in part from Kirk's article, "Rhetoricians and Politicians," which is a book review of The Language of Politics in the Age of Wilkes and Burke by James T. Boulton (114-124). Russello does not utilize this particular quotation from this review by Kirk that I am giving here.



<sup>21</sup> In light of MacIntyre's critique of Burke and admiration of Newman, Hochschild has looked to Cardinal Newman regarding tradition, reality, *phronesis*, etc. in "The Re-Imagined Aristotelianism of John Henry Newman." MacIntyre's critique of Burke to follow herein was one springboard and point of discussion within Pappin's imaginary exchange between Burke and Sartre ("Tradition and" 286-287, 291-293). Within this exchange developed by Pappin, one here then has a possible defense of Edmund Burke against MacIntyre's critique.

<sup>22</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 106, 118-119. Please see Kirk's review of The Ethics of Rhetoric (reviewed alongside of The Quest for Community, a Study in the Ethics of Order and Freedom by Robert A. Nisbet), which is entitled, "Ethical Labor," which later appeared in the book, Beyond the Dreams of Avarice (79-100). Please see the following regarding this matter of difference between Kirk and Weaver regarding Edmund Burke: Beale, "Richard M. Weaver" 629, 634; Bliese, "Richard M. Weaver: Conservative" 382-384; Bliese, "Richard Weaver's Axiology" 285; Bryant, "Edmund Burke: A Generation" 110-111; Bryant, Rev. of; T. Clark "An Analysis" 401; Kendall 79, 79n13-15; Sproule, "Using Public Rhetoric" 290, 290n2, 297-298, 297n33, 308, 308n55.

<sup>23</sup> Stanlis indicated that Weaver shifted to a more positive understanding of Edmund Burke's argumentation after reading a version of a manuscript of Stanlis's Edmund Burke and the Natural Law (Stanlis, "Russell Kirk" 42). Stanlis mentioned Weaver's openness to a more positive appraisal of Burke in the discussion that followed George H. Nash's presentation at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal of October 31st, 2009 (this presentation is available for viewing on the Internet at

<http://kirkcenter.wordpress.com/>). Please see note 25 below regarding my terminological point here.

<sup>24</sup> Although one could look at a variety of works here, one might study closely his later memoirs, The Sword of Imagination. Please see also the tribute essay by Gerhart Niemeyer, “Knight of Truth.”

<sup>25</sup> In “Ethical Labor,” Kirk pointed back to the original signification of the term “conservative” in Europe. Basically, his view was that (in view of Burke) a conservative is grounded on principles as it relates to circumstances. To the point made by Evans, apart from any shift in Weaver’s negative view from The Ethics of Rhetoric (see note 23 above) or elsewhere, Weaver did demonstrate in some instances a respect for Edmund Burke, even with regards to conservatism (Weaver, Ideas 48; Weaver, “The Southern” 211). I have in mind here Ewa Thompson’s “Ways Out of the Postmodern Discourse” and “Dialectical Methodologies in the American Academy.” Evans is not an academician, but a journalist, yet he knew Richard Weaver (286-287). He wrote:

A word that appears over and over again in his writings, and I think is indicative of what made him so powerful, is the word “center.” There must be a center by which all other things are brought to scale and made coherent. If that center is not there, then all you have is random facticity. This is opposed to the moderns who work from the outside in, from the periphery. He talked about that: just taking the facts on the periphery and focusing on them, working from the outside in. Richard Weaver worked from the inside out. And his reasoning on this, it seems to me, is incontestable. Without that center, without that core of absolutes, then

nothing else is possible. There is no right, there is no wrong, everything is flux, everything is random, everything is opinion. There is no intelligibility. (292)

<sup>26</sup> Please see the following regarding Kirk's style or argumentation: Davis; Henrie, "Russell Kirk and the"; McAllister, "Of Ideas" 60-61; Russello, The Postmodern; Wilhelmsen, "The Wandering." One must consider here that Kirk began The Roots of American Order as follows: "Our own society, like that of any other people, is held together by what is called an 'order.' The character of that order is the subject of this book. What is 'order'?" (3). See also Kirk's book, Academic Freedom: An Essay in Definition. Certainly, in light of the overall discussion within this project (including Garver's thoughts on Aristotle and style), questions of style and delivery could be pursued further *including* and *beyond* Kirk and Weaver's endeavors in light of certain relevant discussions across disciplines (Beale, "Richard M. Weaver"; Bliese, "Richard M. Weaver and the Rhetoric" 318-324; Bliese, "Richard Weaver: Rhetoric"; Bradford, "Weaver"; Broyles; Crider; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part One]" 303-309; Dimock, "Rediscovering [...] [Part Two]"; S. Foss, "Rhetoric and"; Geiger; Gottfried and Broyles; Guroian, Rallying 189-200; Hoffman; Jacobi, "Using"; Johannesen, "Attitude"; Johnstone, "Communicating in"; Kirschke; McLuhan; Struever; Vivian, "Style, Rhetoric"; Weaver, The Ethics 115-185; Weaver, "Individuality and Modernity" 84-85; Weaver, "'Parson' Weems" 274-276, 283-298; Winterowd). Finally, I must here mention that my reflections upon the philosophical differences between Weaver and Kirk were influenced by Dr. Michael M. Jordan's question to me after my guest lecture at

Hillsdale College, “Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver, and Rhetorical Ethics: The Question of Natural Law,” of January 27th, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> O’Callaghan 291, 334n39. O’Callaghan referenced MacIntyre’s book, Whose Justice? Which Rationality? Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 1988, p. 367.

<sup>28</sup> O’Callaghan 292.

<sup>29</sup> Hochschild, “Natural Law” 1-2. With “Natural Law Argument in a Post-Christian World (Or, Why Catholic Moralists Need the Agrarians, and *Vice Versa*),” Hochschild is considering Russell Hittinger’s book, The First Grace: Rediscovering the Natural Law in a Post-Christian World, which provides helpful discussion on Thomistic natural law theory and its relation to contemporary questions, particularly *in* and *for* the United States of America. My reading of this article by Hochschild certainly provided direction for the concluding section of the dissertation project. In view of Hittinger’s book, Hochschild emphasized that natural law arguments, even beyond “the strict liberal standards of ‘public reason’ [...] just don’t happen to be rhetorically effective for a ‘post-Christian’ audience” as consensus is lacking on “the anthropological and theological premises to which Hittinger turns our attention” (3). Hochschild explained:

There are those who would argue that the failure to secure universal assent is evidence that there is no such thing as natural law. Of course classical examples of universalistic morals always include accounts of why some people *happen* to fail to know what is *in principle* available to everyone; the grasp of moral truths in principle available to anyone may not be in fact available to those who are poorly educated (e.g. Plato’s Republic) or especially disobedient to God (e.g. Romans 1). Indeed one could even say

that it is a precondition of any good natural law theory that it include the resources for accounting for the conditions of its failure to achieve consensus; and I am inclined to agree with Alasdair MacIntyre who, in explicitly taking up this challenge, has argued that Thomistic natural law theory does account for the precise sort of failure to appreciate natural law exhibited by “the dominant cultures of advanced modernity.” [...] (3)

Hochschild noted here MacIntyre’s “Theories of Natural Law in the Culture of Advanced Modernity,” from Common Truths: New Perspectives in Natural Law, Edward B. McLean, ed., Wilmington, DE: ISI, 2000, pp. 91-115. Drawing from other sources from MacIntyre also, MacIntyre’s work will be a significant point of reference along the way forward in this article by Hochschild.

<sup>30</sup> Hochschild, “Natural Law” 3-5. Helpful alongside of Hochschild’s discussion here might be Wilhelmsen’s “Technology and Its Consequences.”

<sup>31</sup> Hochschild, “Natural Law” 5-6.

<sup>32</sup> Hochschild, “Natural Law” 6-7.

<sup>33</sup> He ends his article here then as follows: “That kind of conversation can head down many paths; and happily, we can see much farther down those paths thanks to the illumination of The First Grace” (7). For a negative appraisal of contemporary times with respect to the natural law, please see Wilhelmsen’s “The Natural Law, Religion, And the Crisis of the Twentieth Century.”

<sup>34</sup> Straight away, one could go to “The Unwritten Constitution and the Conservative’s Dilemma” by Russell Hittinger, or Hittinger’s introduction to Kirk’s, Rights and Duties: Reflections on Our Conservative Constitution, both of which contain

discussions of the natural law in view of the written and unwritten principles of countries.

As regards Kirk's "six canons" of conservatism from the 7th Revised Edition of The Conservative Mind (Hittinger, "The Unwritten" 61-62):

If one hesitates to affirm that these canons still constitute the unwritten principles of our legal and political order, then one can appreciate the conservative's dilemma. In The Roots of American Order, Kirk concluded that: "whatever America's incertitudes today, it is difficult to find American citizens who can sketch any convincing ideal new order as an alternative to the one long rooted here." [...] The conservative agrees that there is no "convincing" alternative. Unfortunately, the flesh and blood of culture has a life of its own, and there is no guarantee that the conservative's understanding of right reason will be en-rooted in the body of unwritten propositions. The conservative finds himself in the rather awkward position of having to defend the traditional order not only in more abstract terms and arguments, but perhaps even in the mode of prophesy. (62)

For discussions *from* or *on* Kirk's *corpus* in relation to the natural law, please see the following: Aeschliman; Henrie, "Russell Kirk's"; Kirk, America's British; Kirk, "Burke and Natural"; Kirk, "The Case"; Kirk, Rights and 126-138; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk; Person, Russell Kirk; Russello, "The Jurisprudence"; Russello, The Postmodern. Some words from Henrie's "Russell Kirk's Unfounded America" are relevant to the considerations of this concluding section, particularly with respect to Hochschild's recommendations. He wrote:

Finally, it must be admitted that Kirk's view of American order may be too optimistic. Kirk argues in effect that America is well-founded because it is not really "founded" so much as "grown"—from the healthy soils of Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome. But what then accounts for the obvious pathologies which have of late "grown up" in our society? [...] (55).

Later, he concluded his article by writing, "Kirk's work is an attempt at the *recovery* of tradition from the diremptions of the eighteenth century. The success of the attempt remains uncertain" (56).

<sup>35</sup> Kirk, The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot, Seventh Revised Edition 8. Kirk's use of the term "realist" here might entail the practical use of the term as realistic rather than a "realist" in a philosophical sense. Kirk noted a reference to Feiling's Toryism, pp. 37-38 (503n3).

<sup>36</sup> Kirk, The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana 7-8. This is a revised edition of his original edition (published in 1953) that was in print in the 1960s. He noted a reference to Feiling's Toryism, pp. 37-38 (449n3). Regarding the development of Kirk's thought on the natural law, please see the following: Hittinger, "The Unwritten"; W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 55-85; Russello, The Postmodern 146-176; Stanlis, "Russell Kirk." The work of Peter Stanlis was a significant influence on Kirk's development in the area of natural law. Stanlis has studied Edmund Burke with respect to the Thomistic tradition of natural law.

<sup>37</sup> W. McDonald, Russell Kirk 55-85. To anticipate what will follow on Kirk and religion, McDonald does not so much see Kirk as a conservative utilitarian on religion as much as he downplays the influence of Catholicism on Kirk (including in regards to the

Thomistic natural law tradition). However, in looking at some of Kirk's religious influences (mostly Catholic), Beer has stated, "[...] that Kirk was no Neo-Scholastic does not mean that his Catholic Christianity was extrinsic to his basic commitments" ("The Idea" 48). Also, I think that *maybe* distinctions between morality from the natural law and morality from Divine Revelation could be brought to McDonald's discussion. Of course, theology and philosophy are related, and the natural law is congruent with Divine Revelation, but I think he overlooks this to some extent as he looks at Catholicism and Kirk.

<sup>38</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 151-154. Russello initially addressed McDonald's challenge in "The Jurisprudence of Russell Kirk." In The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk, Russello primarily focused upon McDonald's discussion regarding Kirk next to the Thomistic natural law tradition from Russell Kirk and the Age of Ideology, while mentioning McDonald's dropping therein of a specific critique of Kirk's intuitive approach for legal and moral issues from McDonald's "Reason, Natural Law, and Moral Imagination in the Thought of Russell Kirk" from Modern Age 27.1 of 1983, pp. 15-24, specifically p. 23 (Russello, The Postmodern 152, 152n24-26, 232). McCarthy wrote in his review of Russello's book:

The chapters on Kirk's political thought and jurisprudence are on firmer ground than the chapter on history. Russello brings his talents as a legal thinker to bear in discussing Kirk's views on natural law, common law, and positive law. He clarifies a contentious issue among Kirkians: whether, and to what extent, Kirk was a natural-law thinker. Russello argues convincingly that for Kirk, the common law—built up over



centuries upon the ad hoc decisions of judges and juries—should be preferred over consciously constructed legislative law or abstract natural law. He feared the revolutionary potential in natural law and disliked its absolute and rational qualities; he wanted it tamed and codified by common law or, failing that, legislation. There is a plausible pomo dimension to Kirk’s thought here. The bottom-up and participatory common law does have qualities congruent with postmodernism—certainly relative to the rationalistic, top-down approach of legal positivism and the universalism of natural law. (“The Pomo”)

<sup>39</sup> For this aspect of this discussion, Russello referenced The Roots of American Order, pp. 111-112, 209, 352, of an edition from 1974 (Russello, The Postmodern 152, 152n27, 216).

<sup>40</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 152-153. Russello points the reader to pp. 285-286 of Enemies of the Permanent Things (The Postmodern 153n28), which is a book that does in a few places provide some good discussion by Kirk regarding the natural law.

<sup>41</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 153. For this aspect of the discussion, Russello noted Josef Pieper’s Leisure: The Basis of Culture, pp. 26-27, New York: Mentor, 1963, and Gregory Wolfe’s “Russell Kirk—The Catholic as Conservative,” pp. 25, 28-29, from Crisis, 11.9 (October 1993) (The Postmodern 153n29, 153n31-32, 226, 235).

<sup>42</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 153.

<sup>43</sup> Russello, The Postmodern 153-157. Noting pp. 111-112 of a 1974 edition of The Roots of American Order (153n33, 216), Russello wrote, “Imagination is a necessary condition to a rational and human application of the law, both customary and salutary

[...]” (153). This particular discussion by Russello is helpful in seeing the pros and cons of narrative alongside of the standards of argumentation, which are quite important in the area of law. This could be read alongside of Garver’s For the Sake of Argument, which is discussed in note 3 above.

<sup>44</sup> Montgomery, The Trouble 63-123; Montgomery, Virtue and 139-143; Montgomery, “Virtue and” 22.

<sup>45</sup> Please see the following from Maciejewski: “Can Natural Law”; “Natural Law as an”; “Natural Law as the Right”; “Natural Law, Natural Rhetoric”; “Reason as.” One major entrance for Maciejewski into the sphere of natural law for communication ethics is rhetorical epistemology, yet he builds from the constructivist side of the conversation (Scott, Brummett, etc.) to the issues at hand. As should be obvious from this project, my own approach would be to enter in from the realist side of the rhetorical epistemology debate. Maciejewski’s overall approach and his applied discussions are quite helpful, my differences notwithstanding. See also “Natural Law and the Right to Know in a Democracy” by Maciejewski and Ozar. Finally, regarding teleological considerations of political frameworks (145-147), J. Budziszewski wrote:

Am I barking up the wrong tree in dragging formal and final causes into the matter? Some followers of Alasdair MacIntyre might protest that the home truths of a constitution lie not in its form or finality, but in its story. I answer that this alternative is false. By all means let us tell its story. As I hope that MacIntyre himself would agree, classical metaphysics doesn’t mean *not* telling stories; it means looking into them more closely. We tell a thing’s story when we tell how it comes to be, how it comes into its own

or fails to come into its own, and how it dies or changes into something else. But to ask such questions *is* to ask about forms and finalities. How can we tell the story well, if we refuse to look into them? (147)

<sup>46</sup> My classification of natural law as a *topos* was initiated and influenced by Robert L. Frank's article, "Reason and Religion in Rerum Novarum" before I even began this dissertation project (during my time in coursework) (Grabowsky, "Thomistic Natural Law"). Frank discusses Pope Leo XIII's use of Thomistic natural law philosophy within the modern age along with some ongoing implications beyond that time in history. Robert L. Frank, through E-mail communication to the author, encouraged further research, provided relevant sources, and suggested scholarly directions with respect to St. Thomas Aquinas, natural law, and rhetorical ethics ("Re: Aquinas" 24 June 2003; "Re: Aquinas" 25 June 2003). I had subsequently discovered that Kathleen Jamieson identifies natural law as a *topos* for various instances of rhetoric ("Natural Law"). Jamieson analyzes the rhetorical use of the natural law in general as a *topos* with respect to various natural law theories. She explained, "The persistence of the *topos*, natural law, may be attributed to its ability to satisfy both rhetorical and psychological needs of men. This paper will argue: 1) that certain recurring rhetorical situations solicit appeal to the *topos* and 2) that the *topos* responds to man's need to believe in a just and ordered universe" ("Natural Law" 235). Jamieson concluded the article as follows:

[...] Across eras and languages this *topos* has functioned as first premise, *assumed* to be true, because it satisfies such human needs as: filling gaps in positive law, allowing appeal from "unjust" positive law, offering an inviting foundation for international law, but perhaps most importantly,

allowing an assertion that there is order behind what appears to be flux.

(241)

Obviously, even with Jamieson's helpful historical sketch, I would take this framework in the direction of a realist approach to rhetorical ethics with respect to the natural law.

Jamieson has written of natural law elsewhere too ("Interpretation of"; "The Rhetorical Manifestations" 8-9). For additional natural law discussions in the communication discipline (from varying philosophical and theoretical points of view) besides those of Maciejewski and Jamieson, please see the following: K. Foss; Hasian; Krois; Masugi; Pedrioli; Rieke 48-53; Rodgers. In my estimation, with respect to the discipline of communication and rhetorical studies, a realist approach to the natural law would provide some helpful alternatives to discussions such as Hyde and McSpirtt's "Coming to Terms with Perfection: The Case of Terri Schiavo."

<sup>47</sup> Aristotle, Rhetoric, Book I, Chapter 13, 1373b (215, 217). I say "arguable" here because there are points of view that would tend to distance this notion (to some extent at least) as found in the Rhetoric from the natural law tradition (Adler, "A Question" 235, 409n100a; Aristotle, Rhetoric, Book I, Chapter 10, 1368b7 [187]; Garver, Notes 186, 214).

<sup>48</sup> For this section, I am utilizing Treatise on Law (Summa Theologica, Questions 90-97), published by Regnery in 1965, which was reprinted from within an earlier Benzinger Brothers edition of the Summa Theologica. Parenthetical page references here and to follow (notes 48-52) are to this particular publication from Regnery. Please see Question 91, Second Article (14-16).

<sup>49</sup> This is taken from the Second Article of Question 94 (58).

<sup>50</sup> This is also taken from the Second Article of Question 94 (58). St. Thomas refers the reader back to the Third Article of Question 91 (17-19).

<sup>51</sup> This is taken from the Second Article of Question 94 (59).

<sup>52</sup> This is taken from the Second Article of Question 94 (59-60).

<sup>53</sup> In approaching the natural law as an “object of thought” for study (Adler, The Four 149-156, 204-206), one would need to have an understanding of natural law theorizing since the times of antiquity, as carried forward by Catholic thought, and as impacted by the Enlightenment (Hittinger, The First; Jamieson, “Natural Law”). Various theoretical and applied discussions on the natural law are available across academic disciplines (Adler, “A Question”; Budziszewski; T. Burns; Cornish; Finnis; Fleischauer, Stanlis, and Greene; Goerner, “On Thomistic”; Goerner, “Response to”; Goerner, “Thomistic Natural”; Goyette, Latkovic, and Myers; Greene and Stanlis; Greene; Guerra; Hall, “Goerner on”; Hall, Narrative; Hibbs; Hittinger, The First Grace; Hochschild, “Natural Law”; Kolakowski; Kunz; D. McInerney; Mills; M. Murphy; Nardin; Porter, “Natural Law”; Porter, “A Tradition”; Rhonheimer; D. Robinson, “Antigone’s”; Rogers; Tozzi; Velasquez and Brady; Weatherby 809-815; Wilhelmssen, “The Natural Law”) that are relevant to considerations of the natural law for rhetorical ethics as related to a realist rhetoric of order. Regarding Kirk and the natural law, please see note 34 above.

<sup>54</sup> I have in mind *certain* aspects of this book (and Bell’s later book, Religion for Living: A Book for Postmodernists) that would conflict with Kirk’s Catholicism. Of course, with regard to the question of conservatism and postmodernism, Russello has pointed out some congruities with Bell’s work that are clearly visible. Although Kirk was highly respectful of his friend Bell, I am aware of no place in his writings or

speeches where he mentioned or recommended this particular book. In my estimation, Kirk's *corpus* could offer a Catholic and essentialist dimension to discussions within the field of communication and rhetorical studies that pertain to religion, the humanities, etc. (Christians, "Christian Scholarship"; Christians, "Cross-Cultural Ethics"; Johannesen, "The Greek"; Johannesen, "Ronald Reagan's"; Johannesen, "Theistic Reference"; Lessl; Wilkins and Christians; Zulick). Russell Kirk was an adult convert to Roman Catholicism, for he entered the Catholic Church in 1964 (Person, Russell Kirk 13).

<sup>55</sup> For instance, this first view has been behind formidable challenges to Kirk and others' work from such scholars as Allen Guttman, who questioned the plausibility of a genuinely conservative tradition in a fundamentally liberal (in terms of the Enlightenment) country like the United States (The Conservative; "From Brownson"). Various sources support a view that religion was highly important for Kirk's conservatism (Bradford, "A Proper"; Ericson, "Christian, Therefore"; Guroian, Rallying; Pafford; Quinn), ultimately overtaking the notion that religion was for Kirk of utility for conservatism (Pafford; Quinn), even as Kirk was "no Hot Gospeller" (Kirk, The Sword 474; Pafford). As W. Wesley McDonald has indicated (Russell Kirk), Zoll seems to have articulated the earliest overt assessment regarding Kirk on religion, morality, etc. With his analysis of Kirk's appropriation of metaphysics and doctrine, Zoll situated Kirk outside the currents of both Catholic philosophy and Catholic conservatism up through the early 1970s, yet he did observe that it was evident "that Kirk's theistic convictions deepened and expanded over the course of his career" ("The Social Thought"). Zoll contended that Kirk's work demonstrated "a lack of philosophical precision" along with

an “unabashed theism” (much like, he emphasized, Edmund Burke) (“The Social Thought”). In a response to this article by Zoll of 1974, Kirk explained the following:

As Mr. Zoll has perceived, I think in images, rather than in abstractions. Ontology I leave to my betters in that field, like him. In part, nevertheless, my choice of method is strategic: for human beings are more moved by images than by formulations: Even today, picture and parable are the most powerful forms of argument, neglected though they are by most writers on society. If I have enjoyed any success in persuading people, it is owing to my renewal of half-forgotten devices of persuasion: in the realm of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. I suppose that “evocative” is the adjective to describe my rhetoric-though I took to that style blindly and naturally, and came to understand my own approach only after the publication of my early books.

Mr. Zoll shrewdly recommends a nearer attention to natural science, as distinguished from unhappy and incompetent scientism in society. He is quite right. My own neglect of such possibilities results from my relative ignorance of the natural sciences, awed though I am by quantum mechanics, say, and by genetics. It seems to me that Arthur Koestler, in The Ghost in the Machine, The Case of the Midwife Toad, The Roots of Coincidence, and other books, gives us a glimpse of the true visions that issue from the gates of horn: that is, high promise lies in the application of scientific methods to the study of phenomena wondrously neglected by the mechanists. The present tendency of such studies is

toward teleology and the ground of spirit; all this, in the long run, may exert upon society in the twentieth- or the twenty-first century so strong an influence as did Newton's theories in the eighteenth century or Darwin's in the nineteenth.

My "historicism" (something of a devil-term), or my repairing to historical sources of understanding of the human condition, is not really produced by a belief that everything grows out of process; rather, I began to relish historical studies, particularly of a philosophical bent, quite early in life-and I write about what I know. I agree with John Lukacs, in his Historical Consciousness, that historical writing may become the chief mode of literary expression in the dawning age-and may work a renewal of our apprehension-of the inner order and the outer order. The future is unknowable, and the present escapes as I sit at this typewriter: so the past, including past revelation and the insights of dead men, is our principal source of wisdom. We work within our limitations, and I never have obtained the prophetic afflatus. ("Comments on" 343-344)

<sup>56</sup> Russello returns to his discussion of Huntington's 1957 article, "Conservatism as an Ideology" from earlier in the book (The Postmodern 179-180). Basically, according to Huntington, "situational" conservatism recurs through history to protect the established order, with some openness to change on secondary matters. Relevant here, he notes in his article, "Hence any theory of natural law as a set of transcendent and universal moral principles is inherently nonconservative. [...] The efforts of contemporary publicists such as Russell Kirk to appear conservative and yet at the same



time to espouse a universal natural law are manifestly inconsistent” (459n6). For a somewhat fair appraisal of conservative positions from around that time, please see Francis G. Wilson’s “The Anatomy of Conservatives,” which was published in 1960.

<sup>57</sup> Regarding history and tradition, I have in mind Fr. Stanley Parry’s “The Restoration of Tradition” and Josef Pieper’s “Tradition: The Concept and Its Claim Upon Us,” both utilized by Russello in The Postmodern Imagination of Russell Kirk. Please see the following: Russello, The Postmodern 177-213; Russello, “Russell Kirk and the Critics”; Russello, “Time and.” In terms of argument and narrative, I have in mind Russello’s discussion of Genovese’s analysis of Bradford, conservative discourse, etc. from the book, The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism (The Postmodern; “Russell Kirk and the Critics”), which would probably require more discussion as to the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic (considering Genovese’s discussion of Weaver and Bradford). Also, Russello *at times* downplays the significance of Kirk’s canons of conservatism from over the years (The Postmodern). In my estimation, Kirk’s canons of conservatism play a role in his contribution to argumentation in general. For another account of these canons in relation to Kirk’s overall discourse (similar in certain respects to that of Russello, but with a bit of a different take on the canons), please see Henrie’s “Russell Kirk and the Conservative Heart,” which is also relevant for looking at Kirk’s work in terms of narrative and argument together. One might look to Montgomery’s “Richard Weaver Against the Establishment: An Essay Review” in considering Weaver’s contribution to the question of rhetoric and dialectic for conservatism. Again, in the bigger picture, I do think that

Russello has made a valuable contribution to the natural law conversation with respect to Kirk as it relates to narrative and argument.

<sup>58</sup> E. Thompson, “Ways Out” 196-197. Please see also Ewa Thompson’s recent article, “Postmodernism and European Memory,” which pertains to the import of ascertainable truth in historical studies in general and for conservatism. In a Modern Age symposium of 2007, “Why I Am a Conservative: A Symposium” (with various contributors), with her own story of embracing conservatism (265-270), Ewa Thompson provides some operative evidence as to the import of both narrative and argument for conservative discourse. She explained, “My notion of being a conservative excludes any permanent attachment to a political party or a public policy. In my view, ‘conservative’ is a philosophical term, and it designates an attitude grounded in philosophical and existential premises” (265). Philosophically, she became a conservative because of conservatism’s tendency toward a “logocentric” view of language, while the “existential reason” for embracing conservatism pertains to her story as a person from Eastern Europe (265-270).

<sup>59</sup> Please see the following: Person, Russell Kirk 188; Weaver, “How to Argue”; Weaver, Ideas 50-51, 148-187; Weaver, “The Prospects”; Weaver, “Up from Liberalism”; “Which Ancestors?” One might also suggest “Richard M. Weaver and the Rhetoric of a Lost Cause” and “The Conservative Rhetoric of Richard M. Weaver: Theory and Practice,” both by Bliese. Regarding Weaver on language, truth, metaphor, etc., please see Whalen’s presentation that is documented below.

<sup>60</sup> Please see, for instance, Adler’s How to Think About The Great Ideas: From the Great Books of Western Civilization, edited by Max Weismann. I am appropriating

the term “hermeneutic realism” as explained by S. Mailloux (“Rhetorical Hermeneutics,” Critical Inquiry 11 [1985], p. 630) as quoted within McKerrow’s “Critical Rhetoric: Theory and *Praxis*” (455). See, for instance, Adler’s “The Human Equation in Dialectic” and “The Great Idea of Dialectic,” along with Aristotle’s Topics. Regarding history, please see Adler’s book, The Common Sense of Politics. Although I don’t confront his article in this project, for one account of Adler’s approach to history with respect to philosophy, historical studies, dialectic, etc., please see Tim Lacy’s “The Lovejovian Roots of Adler’s Philosophy of History: Authority, Democracy, Irony, and Paradox in Britannica’s Great Books of the Western World.” Relevant here also, please see Weaver’s essay, “Mr. Hutchins as Prophet,” regarding dialectic and rhetoric in terms of the Great Books approach. One might weigh the approach to dialectical discourse that I am describing here alongside the various trends on dialectic within the field of communication and rhetorical studies (Mifsud and Johnson). Finally, relevant here might be Boileau’s complimentary review of Adler’s The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto.

<sup>61</sup> Please see note 60 immediately above. It should be noted, however, that Adler would not have one dwelling in dialectic discourse forever, as one would be accountable in his view to philosophical truth, especially in light of his own movement from dialectical discourse to more specific philosophical writings through his own life as a philosopher (The Four vii-xxvii). In terms of Adler’s relevance for moral and political matters, I would also look to his discussion of ethics in “The Bodyguards of Truth” (he also discusses “prescriptive” truth there along the way) in terms of some problems with contemporary moral and political philosophy (130-132).

<sup>62</sup> I have in mind here Adler’s “Challenges of Philosophies in Communication” alongside of “The New Conservatism and the Teacher of Speech” by Malcolm Sillars. On another note, I might differ *a bit* from discussions by Sillars regarding objectivity, values, and argumentation in his “Audiences, Social Values, and the Analysis of Argument.” The liberal arts of rhetoric, grammar, and logic provide a basis for examining “narrative” (Rodden, “How Do”), while the significance of a liberal education as promoted by Adler and others points to the genuine purpose of education with respect to the past and the present (Dougherty). Guroian’s chapter, “The Narrative of Freedom,” contains some discussion that points to Weaver’s relevance for my overall discussion here (Rallying 189-200).

<sup>63</sup> One major tenant of Garver’s work is that deliberative rhetoric is central in Aristotle’s treatise on rhetoric (Aristotle’s; For the Sake). Regarding religious questions in public life please see Garver’s “Why Should Anybody Listen? The Rhetoric of Religious Argument in Democracy” and “The Ten Commandments: Powerful Symbols and Symbols of Power.” To characterize Garver’s overall endeavors, one might say that he is an Aristotelian scholar with a pragmatist dimension for contemporary matters with an eye toward hermeneutical considerations that is influenced by both the former and the latter (“Aristotle’s Genealogy”; “Aristotle’s Natural”; Aristotle’s; “Can Virtue”; “Essentially Contested”; “The Ethical”; For the Sake; “He Does”; Machiavelli’s The Prince; “Paradigms and”; “Philosophy and”; “Point of View”; “The Political”; Rev. of Beyond Moral Judgment; Rev of Burdens of Proof; “Rhetoric and”; “The Rhetoric”; “Truth in”; “Why Pluralism”; “Why Should”). There are some points of both theory and application where I would depart from his discussions, yet I do think that his work is a

significant contribution to the contemporary study of rhetoric across disciplines. Arthos does bring some of Garver's ideas to his own discussion regarding rhetoric and hermeneutics ("Where There" 331, 336, 338, 342n98, 343n123, 343n143), yet it should be noted that while Garver is open to a *certain* type of historicism, there are areas where he departs from the sort of hermeneutics of Gadamer.

<sup>64</sup> My thoughts here regarding the question of human nature with respect to dialectical and rhetorical discourse are informed by my personal communication with Eugene Garver in conjunction with my reflection upon both Adler and Garver's writings.

<sup>65</sup> Please see the following: Beale, "Rhetorical Performative"; Broyles; J. Chase; Duffey and Croft 151-208; Duffy; Duffy and Jacobi 175-196; Garver, "Aristotle on"; Garver, Aristotle's; Garver, "Comments on"; Garver, For the Sake; Garver, "Richard McKeon's"; Garver, "Truth in"; Garver, "Why Should"; Gottfried and Broyles; Hauser; Jacobi, "Using" 288-289n11; Nichols; Oravec; Perelman 19-20, 147; Rosenfield; Sheard; D. Sullivan, "A Closer Look"; D. Sullivan, "The Epideictic"; D. Sullivan, "The Ethos"; Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic"; Zeytinoglu. I am taking no specific position on some of the controversies on the types of rhetoric here for theory, criticism, pedagogy, and practice. However, in view of Russello's book and beyond, studies of Kirk's *corpus* could enhance such discussions. Of note for this project, in light of her interpretation of Aristotle's Rhetoric, Oravec argued for the role of epideictic rhetoric for the *advisement* of audiences toward virtuous action (which is then deliberative in scope) (169-171). Also, for some realist considerations for epideictic rhetoric, please see Daniel N. Robinson's book, Praise and Blame: Moral Realism and Its Applications. Relevant to a major theme of this project, according to George Michos (in encouraging conservative

involvement in the mainstream of politics and academia), “The debate we must pursue with liberals concerns human nature itself; and there is no subject with more immediate practical consequence than this. If we are to have a healthy public philosophy, it must be predicated upon a realistic conception of man, ignoring neither his capacity for noble achievement nor his capacity for evil” (9). Finally, I should note here that Paul Gottfried, in speaking of epideictic rhetoric (Gottfried and Broyles 46-47), wrote the following:

“The invoking of epic heroism has served to nurture and preserve social virtue in traditional communities. Alasdair MacIntyre argues that in the absence of an education based on epic literature and epic models societies cannot teach or practice virtue” (47).

<sup>66</sup> A study of Eric Voegelin’s writings in light of some of the matters of this project regarding realism, history, and postmodernism is prompted by my reading for this project (Federici, “Logophobia”; Montgomery, “Eric Voegelin”; Montgomery, “Tradition and” 267-268, 271n2; Wilhelmsen, The Paradoxical 11-46, 103-104n10, 166-170, 174-175, 204-206). Apart from this specifically and in general, I have in mind here my conversations with Dr. Joseph Devaney when we resided at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal, as he had a focused interest in Voegelin (I must also thank Joseph here for our conversations with respect to his general focus on history). In addition, along the way I encountered some discussions (Brummett, “Perfection”; Fisher, “A Motive”; Fogarty; Garver, “Machiavelli’s The Prince”; Johannesen, “Richard M. Weaver’s Uses”; C. Miller) that might prompt my examination of Kenneth Burke’s work with regard to “situation” and realism. Interestingly, Kenneth Burke published an article in Modern Age entitled, “Art—and the First Rough Draft of Living.” Of course, as a general philosophical and rhetorical matter, future study of Gadamer in light of classical realism

contains many avenues potential interest (Arthos, “The Word”; MacIntyre, “On Not”). Both a realist rhetoric of order and Kirk’s *corpus* in particular would be relevant, in my estimation, to developing what M.E. Bradford has discussed as a “rhetoric of the common good” for conservatism (“Rhetoric and”). With this, one might look at Kirk and Burke with respect to “prescription” (Canavan; Eaves; Kirk, “Burke and the Philosophy”; Kirk, The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot 12-70; Kirk, The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana 11-61; Kirk, Edmund Burke; Stanlis, “Russell Kirk”) as against the notion of “prescriptive truth” that is employed within this project. Certainly the work of both Stanlis and Pappin would be helpful in this endeavor. Finally, Allitt’s writings (Catholic Converts; Catholic Intellectuals) provide for additional consideration on the question of history, reality, knowledge, religion, etc. as it relates to authors mentioned in this project and others.

<sup>67</sup> Whitney, “Decadence” 23-24. For his overview of principles, he draws in part from the insights of Russell Kirk (23,25n6).

<sup>68</sup> When using the term “performance” here, *at one level*, I am using it in a certain ordinary or classical sense as related to communication, like what was employed in Adler’s How to Speak, How to Listen (4, 9). This *might be* conducive (as *might be* Hochschild’s suggestion regarding natural law arguments) to Garver’s sense of “performance” (implied or stated) when he is writing of the enactment of public deliberation, etc. (“Aristotle’s Rhetoric as a Work”; “The Arts”; “Machiavelli’s The Prince”; “Paradigms and”; “Philosophy and”; “The Political”; Rev. of Beyond Moral Judgment; “Richard McKeon’s”; “Teaching Writing”; “The Ten”). One would have to observe though that Garver might approach the instructional value of history and

literature *in some ways* differently than did Kirk. Please see Johnstone's "Communicating in Classical Contexts: The Centrality of Delivery" for a more classical and/or ordinary use of the term "performance." For discussions of "performance," please see also "Jurisprudence as Performance: John Brown's Enactment of Natural Law at Harper's Ferry" by Marouf Hasian Jr. and "Rhetorical Performative Discourse: A New Theory of Epideictic" by Walter H. Beale. Cherwitz and Darwin have provided critiques of the use of the term "performance" as applied with respect to postmodern perspectives, especially as against, as a replacement of, or overshadowing epistemological argumentation ("Why The"). It should be noted here too that in a general sense, narrative is pertinent to matters of rhetorical "performance" also. As it should be expected, I am trying to avoid here a postmodernist use of the terminology in my own application herein. Apart from this matter of "performance," the following commentary by Hayward is here relevant:

The effects of modernity on politics are most evident in the dissolution of practical moral reasoning. To a significant extent, the triumph of the "fact-value" distinction means moral questions are not susceptible to rational deliberation. In place of moral reasoning is historicism. Moral judgments today are based on a notion of the unfolding of history. Alas, too many conservatives accept this historicism of our time as a given, and do not, for instance, have a principled objection to legal positivism, except that they would prefer a different current of history to prevail in jurisprudence. [...] The recovery of moral reasoning based on "the laws of



nature and nature's God" must rank foremost among the tasks for conservative thinkers in the next generation. (13)

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