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### **‘Unpacking 5: 327 using Kant’s lectures’**

In his experiments of dividing and combining the beautiful arts, as well as of comparing the aesthetic value of the beautiful arts with each other, in §§51-53 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant seems to ascribe rhetoric a low rank among the arts (certainly lower than poetry, at worst lower than any other art).

The reason why this is so is that rhetoric deceives. Indeed, Kant says that the art of poetry “plays with the illusion which it produces at will, yet without thereby being deceitful” (5: 326-327), whereas he describes rhetoric as the art “of deceiving by means of beautiful illusion” (5: 327).

Still, both poetry and rhetoric are arts of speech, both announce something, and both provide something that they do not promise. Besides, illusion seems to be a crucial feature of both.

How are we to make sense of Kant’s suggestion that, although both poetry and rhetoric provide something that they do not promise, and although illusion is a crucial feature of both, only rhetoric is deceitful?

Drawing upon the transcripts of Kant’s lectures, I will show that the relevant distinction lies in the use that each of these two arts makes of illusion. Whereas in poetry illusion is used for its own sake (that is, without a purpose other than an entertaining free play of the faculties), in the case of rhetoric it is to use as the means of persuasion. Yet, in order to persuade someone, what the orator crucially does is passing illusions off as logical truths, thereby ruining one’s understanding, and ultimately deceiving one.

Keywords: rhetoric; poetry; illusion; deceit.