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The Excellence Award at the Fonds Ricœur's Summer Workshop 2021 - "Ricœur rhétorique. The Missed Encounter with Chaïm Perelman in *The Rule of Metaphor*"

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Abstract

This paper argues that Ricœur's philosophy operates on the basis of a more expansive conception of rhetoric than it first appears. To show this, I reread *The Rule of Metaphor* through the "new rhetoric" of Chaïm Perelman. First, I survey Ricœur's understanding of rhetoric in the 1950s and 60s. Second, I examine Ricœur's relation to Perelman within the context of the broader "rhetorical turn" of the 1970s. After examining their respective positions, I argue that Ricœur fails to appreciate the full significance of Perelman's conception of *audience*. In doing so, I draw attention to the central role that Ricœur himself ascribes to the audience or reader in the "work of meaning." I conclude by proposing that the rhetorical triad of *logos*/*ethos*/*pathos* may serve as a conceptual matrix with which the rhetorical aspects of Ricœur's philosophy can be interpreted.

Keywords: Audience; Reader; Rhetoric; Ricœur; Perelman.

Résumé

Dans le présent article, nous proposons de montrer que la philosophie de Ricœur repose sur une conception de la rhétorique plus large qu'il n'y paraît à première vue. Pour le démontrer, nous relisons *La Métaphore vive* à travers la « nouvelle rhétorique » de Chaïm Perelman. D'abord, nous abordons la conception que Ricœur avait de la rhétorique dans les années 1950 et 1960. Ensuite, nous examinons la relation entre Ricœur et Perelman dans le contexte plus large du « tournant rhétorique » des années 1970. Après avoir examiné leurs positions respectives, nous soutenons que Ricœur ne parvient pas à apprécier toute la portée de la conception de l'auditoire chez Perelman. Ce faisant, nous attirons l'attention sur le rôle central que Ricœur lui-même attribue à l'auditoire ou au lecteur dans le « travail du sens ». Nous concluons en proposant que la triade rhétorique logos/ethos/pathos puisse servir de cadre conceptuel pour interpréter les aspects rhétoriques de la philosophie de Ricœur.

Mots-clés: Auditoire; Lecteur; Rhétorique; Ricœur; Perelman.

The paper that won the Excellence Award at the 2021 edition of the Fonds Ricœur's Summer Workshop is published below.

Since 2017, the Fonds Ricœur's Summer Workshops, which take place in Paris during the month of June, have been co-organized by the Fonds Ricœur and the Society for Ricœur Studies. Each year the workshop is dedicated to a specific work by Paul Ricœur on which the presentations and discussions are based.

In 2019, the Fondation Goélands[1] launched an Excellence Award which is given annually to the best paper presented at the Summer Workshop. The winner receives 1000 Euros and, within six months of the Summer Workshop, his or her paper is published in the "Varia" section of the journal *Études ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies*.

All *doctoral* or *post-doctoral* researchers selected to present a paper at a particular Summer Workshop and who wish to apply are eligible for this prize. The paper can be presented in either French or English and its length must correspond to the 20-25 minutes allowed for the oral presentation at the Summer Workshop.

The Jury's criteria of evaluation for the Summer Workshops' Excellence Award are as follows:

1. As the Fonds Ricœur's Summer Workshop focuses each year on a specific work by Paul Ricœur, the Jury favours contributions that place this work at the centre of their reflection.

2. The Jury then assesses the scientific quality of the papers in terms of their precision, their argumentative rigour, and their mastery of the secondary literature on the subject.

3. Lastly, the Jury particularly values the originality of the contributions, that is, their specific contribution to Ricœurian research and the novelty of the theses put forward.

In 2021, the 4th edition of the Fonds Ricœur's Summer Workshop was organized by Azadeh Thiriez Arjangi and Timo Helenius and was dedicated to *The Rule of Metaphor*.

The Jury of the Excellence Award was comprised of Eileen Brennan, Azadeh Thiriez Arjangi, Scott Davidson, Jérôme Porée, and was chaired by Jean-Luc Amalric.

The winner of the Excellence Award in 2021 is Blake D. Scott, a doctoral student at KU Leuven's Institute of Philosophy. The title of his paper was: "Ricœur rhétorique. The Missed Encounter with Chaïm Perelman in *The Rule of Metaphor*".

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[1] Housed by the Fondation pour l'enfance, an officially recognized non-profit organization, the Fondation Goélands is dedicated to two causes: the fight against genetic diseases (funding studies and research projects) and support for young high school students and underprivileged students (awarding grants and financing equipment, etc.).

Nous publions ci-dessous le texte du lauréat du Prix d'excellence de l'édition 2021 des Ateliers d'été du Fonds Ricœur.

Depuis 2017, les Ateliers d'été du Fonds Ricœur sont co-organisés durant le mois de juin à Paris par le Fonds Ricœur et la Society for Ricœur Studies. Chaque année, l'atelier est consacré à une œuvre spécifique de Paul Ricœur sur laquelle portent les contributions et les discussions.

En 2019, la fondation Goélands[2] a lancé un prix d'excellence qui récompense chaque année la meilleure communication présentée lors de l'Atelier d'été. La lauréate ou le lauréat se voit remettre une somme de 1 000 euros et, dans les six mois qui suivent l'Atelier d'été, son texte est publié dans la rubrique « Varia » de la revue *Études ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies*.

Sont éligibles à ce prix toutes les chercheuses et tous les chercheurs en *doctorat ou post-doctorat* admis à présenter une communication à l'édition des Ateliers d'été, et qui souhaitent candidater. La communication peut se faire en français comme en anglais et sa longueur doit être conforme à la durée de 20-25 minutes accordée à la présentation orale lors de l'Atelier d'été.

Les critères d'évaluation du jury concernant le prix d'excellence des Ateliers d'été sont les suivants :

1. L'atelier d'été du Fonds Ricœur portant chaque année sur une œuvre spécifique de Paul Ricœur, le jury privilégie les contributions qui placent cette œuvre au centre de leur réflexion.

2. Il apprécie ensuite la qualité scientifique des communications proposées : c'est-à-dire leur précision, leur rigueur argumentative et leur maîtrise éventuelle de la littérature secondaire concernant le sujet abordé.

3. Il valorise enfin tout particulièrement l'originalité des contributions, c'est-à-dire leur apport spécifique à la recherche ricœurienne et la nouveauté des thèses avancées.

En 2021, la quatrième édition des Ateliers d'été du Fonds Ricœur était organisée par Azadeh Thiriez Arjangi et Timo Helenius et elle était consacrée à *La Métaphore vive*.

Le jury du prix d'excellence était composé de Eileen Brennan, Azadeh Thiriez Arjangi, Scott Davidson, Jérôme Porée et présidé par Jean-Luc Amalric.

Le lauréat 2021 est Blake D. Scott, doctorant à l'Institut de philosophie de la KU Leuven. Le titre de sa communication était le suivant : "Ricœur rhétorique. The Missed Encounter with Chaïm Perelman in *The Rule of Metaphor*".

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[2] Abritée par la Fondation pour l'enfance, reconnue d'utilité publique, la fondation Goélands se dédie à deux causes : la lutte contre les maladies génétiques (financement d'études ou de projets de recherche) et l'accompagnement de jeunes lycéens et étudiants défavorisés (octroi de bourses, financement d'équipements, etc.).

Ricœur rhétorique

The Missed Encounter with Chaïm Perelman in *The Rule of Metaphor*

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I. Introduction

Although Paul Ricœur only thematizes rhetoric in a relatively small portion of his writings, a careful examination of his work reveals a considerably more expansive conception. By this I mean two things: Ricœur not only displays a sharp rhetorical sensibility in the careful way that he constructs his arguments for his audience but, more importantly, his work also innovates many of the fundamental concepts and categories long prized by rhetoricians. In both senses Ricœur's proximity to rhetoric greatly exceeds his own appreciation. Indeed, in *Paul Ricœur. Tradition and Innovation in Rhetorical Theory*—the only monograph on the subject—Andreea Deciu Ritivoi makes a similar point. By focusing on four *topoi* characteristic of the rhetorical tradition operative in Ricœur's work—*doxa, phronesis, epideictic,* and *polis*—she seeks to show "how rhetorical theory changes when we look at it through Ricœur's lens."[3] While this line of thought has hardly been exhausted—evidenced by the recent work of Ritivoi, Steven Mailloux, and John Arthos among others[4]—I approach Ricœur's relation to rhetoric in a different way. Inversely, I want to investigate how viewing Ricœur's work through a rhetorical lens changes the way we look at his philosophy. My question is thus not what Ricœur can do for rhetorical theory, but what rhetoric can do for Ricœur's philosophy.

To limit the scope of my discussion, in this paper I propose to reread Ricœur's relation to rhetoric through the "new rhetoric" of Belgian philosopher Chaïm Perelman (1912-1984). My reasons for selecting Perelman are twofold: (1) although little has been done to bring these two contemporaries into dialogue, references to Perelman's works can be found throughout many of Ricœur's writings. Perelman thus serves as an established interlocutor on the question of rhetoric. Yet, Perelman is also important for intrinsic reasons. (2) His work directly addresses our question. For Perelman, the recovery of rhetoric holds important consequences for how we understand and practice philosophy.

I begin by surveying Ricœur's understanding of rhetoric in two texts, one from the 1950s and one from the 1960s. I then turn to the 1970s where rhetoric becomes a more prominent theme in Ricœur's writings, particularly in *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975). Next, I discuss Ricœur's relation to Perelman in the context of the broader "rhetorical turn" taking place in Francophone philosophy

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[3] Andreea Deciu Ritivoi, *Paul Ricœur. Tradition and Innovation in Rhetorical Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 47.

[4] Andreea Deciu Ritivoi, "Ricœur and Rhetorical Theory. Paul Ricœur on Recognition in the Public Sphere," in Scott Davidson (ed.), *Ricœur Across the Disciplines* (New York: Continuum, 2010); Steven Mailloux, *Rhetoric's Pragmatism. Essays in Rhetorical Hermeneutics* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2017); John Arthos, *Hermeneutics After Ricœur* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

at the time. While the most direct way to initiate a dialogue between the two philosophers would be through Ricœur's critique of Perelman in "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics,"[5] (1986) I propose that a second and more interesting route is through *The Rule of Metaphor,* where it is precisely the lack of any reference to Perelman that proves most striking. Two years later, in the "Foreword" to *The Realm of Rhetoric* (1977), Perelman takes issue with Ricœur's neglect of his (and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's) "New Rhetoric Project" and attempts to differentiate it from other so-called "new rhetorics."[6] After examining their respective positions, I argue that Ricœur's otherwise careful reading of Perelman in "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics" fails to appreciate the full significance of Perelman's conception of *audience*. By reading *The Rule of Metaphor* through Perelman, I draw attention to the central role that Ricœur himself ascribes to the audience or reader in the "work of meaning." Finally, I conclude by proposing that the rhetorical triad of *logos/ethos/pathos* may serve as a conceptual matrix with which the rhetorical aspects of Ricœur's philosophy can be interpreted.

II. Rhetoric and Ricœur (1950s-60s)

Although he does not yet use the term, I would locate Ricœur's first substantive engagement with rhetoric in *History and Truth* (1955). In the important essay "Work and the Word" (published in *Esprit* in 1953), Ricœur explores the nexus between saying and doing, speech and action, and the various modalities of the "power of speech [*la puissance de la parole*]."[7] Pre-figuring much of what he will later develop in terms of symbolic mediation, Ricœur criticizes the sterile separation of the realm of work and speech in some of his contemporaries (notably Henri Bartoli).[8] For Ricœur, such philosophies of work (whether of a Marxist, existentialist, or Christian variety) fail to appreciate the power of speech, a power which lies in its ability to progressively annex what is other, a power which "traverses and penetrates everything human including the machine, the tool, and the hand."[9] Rather than any strict separation, Ricœur's analysis shows how the static distinction between base and superstructure, between work and word, is set into dialectical motion. For, like work, speech also "brings about and makes something within the world. Or to be

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[5] See note 53 on the dating of this text.

[6] The main works of the "New Rhetoric Project" were co-authored by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. Although there has been some disagreement about Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's respective contributions, it is generally recognized that Perelman was responsible for its philosophical component. Olbrechts-Tyteca's contribution, on the other hand, owing to her social scientific training, "took the form of systematic and fine-grained description of discourse at work" (Barbara Warnick, "Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's Contribution to *The New Rhetoric*", in Molly Meijer Wertheimer (ed.), *Listening to their Voices. The Rhetorical Activites of Historical Women* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1997), 70). The most extensive study of Olbrechts-Tyteca's role in the project is that of David A. Frank & Michelle Bolduc, "Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's New Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* vol. 96/2 (2010), 141-63. As the discussion that follows focuses primarily on the relationship between Ricœur and Perelman, I will typically refer only to Perelman except in cases where I cite a co-authored work or refer to the project as a whole.

[7] Paul Ricœur, *History and Truth*, trans. Charles A Kelby (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 197 / *Histoire et vérité,* 3rd ed. (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 238.

[8] For the context of Ricœur's intervention, see François Dosse, *Paul Ricœur. Les sens d'une vie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2000), 172-86*.*

[9] Ricœur, *History and Truth*, 199 / *Histoire et vérité,* 240.

more precise, speaking man makes something and makes himself, but otherwise than by working."[10]

Here, Ricœur proves to be among the first philosophers of the 20th century to investigate the pragmatic or performative dimension of language, anticipating many of the insights of Austin's speech-act theory or, more recently, Barbara Cassin's sophistic theory of "performance" (*epideixis*).[11] For his part, Ricœur identifies three ways in which language acts or operates: (1) the influence it has on others, (2) the reflexive action on the speaker herself, and (3) the operation of the sign on meaning itself.[12] What I would like to draw attention to in this triad is not only the fact that these three operations of language correspond to three central themes underlying much of Ricœur's work—otherness, the self, and meaning—but also the way in which these themes coincide with the classical rhetorical triad of *pathos/ethos/logos*—which, as Michel Meyer argues, is what makes of rhetoric a "well-defined and unified discipline."[13]

Although more could be said about the rhetorical themes in "Work and the Word",[14] we now turn to the text where Ricœur first explicitly discusses rhetoric in his published works, *Freud and Philosophy. An Essay on Interpretation* (1965). Ricœur refers to rhetoric here in two contexts.

The first is in Book 1 where Ricœur attempts to delimit the field of application of the concept of symbol in relation to the concept of interpretation. Here, in his discussion of *hermêneia* in Aristotle, Ricœur explains how the way to hermeneutics has been blocked by the "logical aim" which defines signification in terms of univocity.[15] From Aristotelian metaphysics to modern symbolic logic, the "logician leaves the other types of discourse to rhetoric and poetics and retains only declarative discourse."[16] If the condition of genuine signification is to signify one and only one meaning, as Aristotle argues in Book IV of the *Metaphysics*, any kind of polysemic or equivocal

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[10] "La parole de l'homme…opère et fait quelque chose au monde; ou plutôt l'homme parlant fait quelque chose et se fait, mais autrement qu'en travaillent." (Ricœur, *Histoire et vérité*, 241 / *History and Truth*, 198.)

[11] To put the chronology into perspective, John Langshaw Austin's lectures which formed the basis of *How to Do Things with Words* were delivered at Oxford from 1952 until 1954, before being delivered as the William James Lectures at Harvard in 1955, and then published in 1962. See also Barbara Cassin, *Quand dire, c'est vraiment faire. Homère, Gorgias et le peuple arc-en-ciel* (Paris: Fayard, 2018).

[12] Ricœur, *History and Truth*, 203-4 / *Histoire et vérité*, 245-6.

[13] Michel Meyer, *What is Rhetoric?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 5. For a thoughtful examination of Meyer's "problematology" in relation to Ricœur's hermeneutics, see Olivier Abel, *L'éthique interrogative. Herméneutique et problématologie de notre condition langagière* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2000).

[14] For a detailed discussion of this text, see Ernst Wolff, *Lire Ricœur depuis la périphérie. Décolonisation, modernité, herméneutique* (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2021), 144-50.

[15] Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy. An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Dan Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 22-3/*De l'interprétation. Essais sur Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1965), 32-3.

[16] Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 21-2 / *De l'interprétation*, 31.

signification is, from a strictly "logical" point of view, equivalent to saying nothing at all.[17] Yet, as Ricœur points out, even in Aristotle the notion of being cannot be univocally defined; the attempt to delimit signification to univocity cannot fully sever its connection to the polysemy of ordinary language. To secure the field of hermeneutics, therefore, Ricœur must push back against the reduction of logic to "symbolic logic" which tries to make a clean break with "ordinary language and its incurable ambiguity." As Ricœur explains:

> This struggle begins with the expulsion of all that does not give factual information from the properly cognitive sphere of language. The rest of discourse is then classified under the heading of the emotive and exhortative functions of language; that which does not give factual information expresses emotions, feelings or attitudes, or urges to others to behave in some particular way.[18]

By subordinating *epideixis* to *apodeixis*, the performative to the declarative, philosophy was able to exclude precisely the kinds of discursive functions that interested Ricœur in "Work and the Word." Thus, by opening the door for hermeneutics in the vast universe of discourse, Ricœur's argument here also serves, perhaps only negatively, as a philosophical entryway for rhetoric.

The second and more revealing reference can be found in Book 3. The context of this discussion is Ricœur's critique of the "linguistic" interpretation of the unconscious. Here Ricœur pushes back against Jacques Lacan's claim that "the unconscious is structured like a language," arguing instead that it is not on the level of linguistics but on the level of *rhetoric* that the comparison with the unconscious should be made.[19] Citing Émile Benveniste, Ricœur notes here that rhetoric, "with its metaphors, its metonymies, its synecdochies, its euphemisms, its allusions, its antiphrasis, its litotes, is concerned not with phenomena of language but with procedures of subjectivity that are manifested in discourse."[20] In the passage Ricœur cites here, Benveniste explains that he would prefer to compare the properties Freud attributes to dreams with "style" rather than "language."[21] Despite the interesting phrase "procedures of subjectivity manifested in discourse," rhetoric is understood here in the narrow sense of "stylistics." Consequently, as Ricœur's subsequent discussion will reveal, the analogy of metaphor and metonymy to the unconscious processes of displacement and condensation is based on a rhetoric of the *word*, rather than larger units of discourse such as the phrase or the text. As we will see in what follows, it is this narrow conception of rhetoric that Ricœur will carry into *The Rule of Metaphor*.

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[17] Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford Translation: Volume Two*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 1006a, 1588. This point is well captured by the title of Barbara Cassin and Michel Narcy's book *La décision du sens* ("the decision of meaning"), which refers to the way that this gesture—by no means limited to Aristotle—attempts to circumscribe a sphere of meaning, safe from the dangers of sophistic discourse. See Barbara Cassin & Michel Narcy, *La décision du sens. Le livre Gamma de la* Métaphysique *d'Aristote* (Paris: Vrin, 1989).

[18] Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy,* 50, trans. modified / *De l'interprétation*, 61.

[19] Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 400 / *De l'interprétation*, 420.

[20] Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 400 / *De l'interprétation*, 420.

[21] Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 400, note 70 / *De l'interprétation*, 420.

III. Ricœur among the Rhetoricians (1970s)

From the mid to late 1970s, the term "rhetoric" begins to appear with more frequency in Ricœur's writings. His investigations into the symbolic structure of action, the social imaginary, the creative power of metaphor and plots, and other related themes, inevitably brings him into contact with authors and works associated with the "rhetorical turn" taking place within the broader linguistic turn in 20th century thought. It is in these years that the names of I.A. Richards, Gérard Genette, Roland Barthes, Wayne Booth, Chaïm Perelman, Kenneth Burke, Clifford Geertz, Hayden White, and Tzvetan Todorov, among others, begin to appear with greater frequency in Ricœur's writings. Yet, among Ricœur's texts from the 70s it is primarily in *The Rule of Metaphor* that we find a substantive engagement with rhetoric.

Ricœur's discussion of rhetoric in *The Rule of Metaphor* takes place in the context of his attempt to situate the problem of metaphor historically. Does the return to the problem of metaphor commit one to the hopeless project of "resurrecting rhetoric from its ashes?", Ricœur asks.[22] To answer this question, Ricœur begins with Aristotle, who first conceptualized the field of rhetoric in terms of three main components: (1) argumentation, (2) style, and (3) composition. Relying on Gérard Genette's 1970 article "Restrained Rhetoric,"[23] Ricœur explains how rhetoric has progressively reduced itself—or been reduced—to one of its parts, namely, style. In so doing, rhetoric lost its connection to dialectic, which in Aristotle preserved its connection to philosophy. Without this connection, Ricœur explains—still paraphrasing Genette—rhetoric became an "erratic and futile discipline."[24] I emphasize Ricœur's use of Genette here because he is undoubtedly the source of the claim that this "restrained rhetoric," with its "penchant for classifying figures of speech," is all that can be found in "*the latest treatises on rhetoric*."[25] Or, more precisely, as Ricœur says a few pages later, "rhetoric as we know it from the last modern treatises is amputated from its major part, the treatise on argumentation."[26]

Which "modern treatises" are being referred to here? In "Restrained Rhetoric," Genette discusses three works all published in the academic year 1969-70: Groupe µ's *Rhétorique générale* (1970), Michel Deguy's "Pour une théorie de la figure généralisée" (1969), and Jacques Sojcher's "La métaphore généralisée" (1969).[27] The most important of the three for our purposes is

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[22] Paul Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor. The Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny *et al.* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2003), 8 / *La métaphore vive* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 13.

[23] Gérard Genette, "La rhétorique restreinte," *Communications*, vol. 16 (1970) 158-171; Gérard Genette, *Figures of Literary Discourse*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 103-26.

[24] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 9 / *La métaphore vive*, 14.

[25] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 9, emphasis mine / *La métaphore vive*, 13-4.

[26] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 12-13 / *La métaphore vive,* 18.

[27] Gérard Genette, "La rhétorique restreinte," 158; *Figures of Literary Discourse*, 103; Groupe µ, *Rhétorique générale* (Paris: Seuil, 1992 [1970])/*A General Rhetoric*, trans. Paul B. Burrell & Edgar M. Slotkin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981 [1970]); Michel Deguy, "Vers une théorie de la figure généralisée," *Critique*, vol. 25/269 (1969), 841-61 [incorrectly titled "*Pour* une théorie de la figure généralisée" in Genette's article]; Jacques Sojcher, "La métaphore généralisée," *Revue internationale de philosophie*, vol. 23/87 (1969), 58-68.

Groupe μ's *Rhétorique générale* [*A General Rhetoric*],[28] as it is this text that Ricœur takes as his immediate reference point for so-called "new rhetoric." As he explains in the opening lines of Study 5:

> The common aim of the works of the new rhetoric…is to renovate the essentially taxonomic enterprise of classical rhetoric by founding the *species* of classification on the *forms* of the operations that take place at all levels of articulation in language. In this respect the new rhetoric is dependent on a semantics taken to its highest degree of structural radicalism.[29]

Two things are noteworthy in this passage. First, Ricœur identifies the "common aim" of the works associated with new rhetoric as an effort, however radical from a structuralist perspective, to provide a systematic taxonomy of figures. Second, he also anticipates his critique of this structuralist approach in the fifth study. In short, Ricœur argues that new rhetoric, to the extent that it wants to account for metaphor, cheats: the concept of "deviation" [*écart*] upon which new rhetoric relies is parasitic on the semantic level of *discourse* which it simultaneously disavows. Here, Ricœur's preference for Benveniste over Saussure comes to the fore. As he puts it later: "a rhetoric aspiring to generality cannot operate merely in the 'interior' space…between sign and meaning"; it must also consider "the 'exterior' space between sign and referent", as it is only here, at the level of discourse, that the power of figures to disturb not only the lexicon but also the referential function itself can be understood.[30] A truly "general rhetoric" for Ricœur must therefore not remain at the level of semiotics but must also break through to the level of semantics, where, as we know from the third study, the analysis bottoms out not in the most basic lexical entities but in what Benveniste calls the "instance of discourse [*l'instance de discours*]."[31] According to Ricœur, this error stems from "the tyranny of the word in the theory of meaning," the result of which has been the "reduction of metaphor to a mere ornament."[32]

This brings us to Ricœur's divergence from the diagnosis offered by Genette regarding the decline of rhetoric. Where Genette sees the decline as resulting from the progressive reduction of rhetoric's once vast empire to the small enclave of tropes, Ricœur locates it in this "tyranny of the word," "an error that affects the theory of tropes directly."[33] The problem for Ricœur is thus not how to restore the original domain of rhetoric—which, he adds, may even be impossible for cultural reasons. The problem is rather "to understand in a new way the very workings of tropes, and, based on this, eventually to restate in new terms the question of the aim and purpose of rhetoric."[34] Yet, even if Ricœur's explanation for rhetoric's decline is more fundamental than Genette's, his analysis relies upon the same assumption: that there is nothing at all *new* about "new

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[28] Groupe μ, *A General Rhetoric / Rhétorique générale* (Paris: Seuil, 1992 [1970]).

[29] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 157 / *La métaphore vive,* 173.

[30] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 200-1 / *La métaphore vive,* 216-7.

[31] Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1971 [1966]), 217 / *Problèmes de linguistique générale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 251.

[32] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 51 / *La métaphore vive*, 64.

[33] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 51 / *La métaphore vive*, 64.

[34] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 50 / *La métaphore vive*, 64.

rhetoric"; that all new rhetorics share the "common aim" of renovating "the essentially taxonomic enterprise of classical rhetoric."[35]

In what follows, I want to challenge this assumption by bringing Perelman into the discussion, as his philosophical engagement with rhetoric not only problematizes Genette and Ricœur's story, but also provides the necessary conceptual resources to meet Ricœur's challenge—"to restate in new terms the question of the aim and purpose of rhetoric."[36]

IV. The Missed Encounter

In this section I examine the relationship between Perelman and Ricœur from the very place we left our discussion of *The Rule of Metaphor*. In the "Foreword" (untranslated in the English edition) to his 1977 book, *The Realm of Rhetoric* [*L'empire rhétorique*], Perelman complains that certain French writers have neglected his work in their "rediscovery" of rhetoric.[37] Here, Perelman singles out Genette's article, Roland Barthes' "L'ancienne rhétorique"[38]—both published in the same 1970 volume of *Communications*—and Ricœur's *The Rule of Metaphor*. Yet, of the three writers, it seems that it is Ricœur's neglect that most bothers Perelman. I suspect this may be due to the friendly acquaintance between the two philosophers. Although they must have met some years prior,[39] the earliest recorded interaction between Perelman and Ricœur is to my knowledge in 1960, when Perelman was invited to present a paper to the Société française de philosophie.[40] Given their philosophical proximity, it is all the more peculiar that nowhere in *The Rule of Metaphor* but a single footnote does Ricœur cite Perelman.[41]

Citing the same passages of Genette and Ricœur which we have been discussing, Perelman asks how his French colleagues could neglect the "New Rhetoric Project" for which he, and longtime collaborator Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, had been advocating for over two decades:

> Given that great writers such as Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian have devoted remarkable works to rhetoric, the art of persuading, how is it that classical rhetoric has been limited to the study of figures of style? How is it that the best-known works of rhetoric in France in the 18th and 19th centuries were those of Dumarsais…and Fontanier…who saw in rhetoric

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[35] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 157 / *La métaphore vive*, 173.

[36] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 50 / *La métaphore vive*, 64.

[37] For a more detailed account of Perelman's reaction, see Michelle Bolduc, *Translation and the Rediscovery of Rhetoric* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2020), 279-83.

[38] Roland Barthes, "L'ancienne rhétorique," *Communications*, vol. 16 (1970), 172-223/*The Semiotic Challenge*, trans. Richard Howard (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 11-93.

[39] For example, there is a Christmas card in the Perelman Archives at the Université libre de Bruxelles that Ricœur sent to Perelman and his wife, Fela, sometime during the 1950s (https://perelman.ulb.be).

[40] Perelman's presentation and subsequent discussion can be found in *Éthique et droit*, 2nd ed. (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2012), 126-85.

[41] In the third study, Ricœur notes that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's terms "theme" and "phoros" might be good translations of Richards' "tenor" and "vehicle". Ricœur hesitates, however, adding that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca "limit the application of their pair of terms to analogy, that is, the relationship of proportionality." (*The Rule of Metaphor,* 93, note 27 / *La métaphore vive*, 105-6, note 2.)

only ornament and artifice? This perspective has earned classical rhetoric the hatred of the romantics ("war on rhetoric, peace to grammar") and the disdain of our contemporaries, lovers of the simple and the natural. And how can we believe that the rehabilitation of rhetoric, that a *new rhetoric* could be limited to updating the rhetoric of figures, to "renovate the essentially taxonomic enterprise of classical rhetoric"?[42]

The reference in the last line, we will recall, is to Ricœur's characterization of the "common aim" of the works associated with "new rhetoric." Whether his work is being included in this enterprise or neglected entirely,[43] Perelman points out that his and Olbrechts-Tyteca's new rhetoric not only preempts any possible association with taxonomy, but further that it had also laid the foundation for rhetoric's rapprochement with philosophy by restoring its lost connection to *argumentation.*

Perelman's clear frustration stems from the fact that his own work has already made considerable headway in the directions indicated by both Genette and Ricœur. To recall, the problem for Genette was that so-called "general rhetorics" were not general at all; they merely generalize one part of rhetoric—stylistics—and attempt to pass it off for the whole. For Ricœur, the problem was not so much to restore rhetoric's original domain, but rather "to understand in a new way the very workings of tropes, and, based on this, eventually to restate in new terms the question of the aim and purpose of rhetoric."[44] Not only does Perelman's new rhetoric explicitly attempt to redress Genette's concern about "restricted rhetoric," but it also addresses Ricœur's point by subordinating stylistics to what Perelman takes to be rhetoric's properly *argumentative* function:

> When figures are examined out of context, like dried flowers in an herbarium, we lose sight of their dynamic role: they all become figures of style.
> If they are not integrated into a rhetoric conceived as the art of persuading and convincing, they cease to be rhetorical figures and become ornaments, concerned only with the form of discourse: it is therefore not serious to envisage a modern recovery of rhetoric, even a rhetoric of figures, outside of an argumentative context.[45]

Reiterating a point that he and Olbrechts-Tyteca make in *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman notes that any criteria used to distinguish between rhetorical figures and poetic figures of style already

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[42] Chaïm Perelman, *L'empire rhétorique. Rhétorique et argumentation*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 2012 [1977]), 11, trans. mine.

[43] While Ricœur neglects Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, the 1970 issue of *Communications* which forms the basis of Ricœur's discussion does not do so entirely. In Michèle Lacoste's annotated bibliography, she remarks that while Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's work is "original," their concern with argumentation rather than figures leaves it "on the margins of most modern revivals of rhetoric" ("Choix bibliographique," *Communications*, vol. 16 (1970), 235, trans. mine). Perelman also takes issue with this passage, which seemingly misses the whole point of his work.

[44] Ricœur, The *Rule of Metaphor*, 50 / *La métaphore vive*, 64.

[45] Perelman, *L'empire rhétorique*, 14-5, trans. mine.

presupposes rhetoric's more basic argumentative function.[46] It is thus only by bracketing any reference to this argumentative context, Perelman argues, that a purely taxonomic rhetoric can get itself off the ground in the first place.

What is most striking about Perelman's response is how similar it is to Ricœur's argument throughout *The Rule of Metaphor* that theories which neglect the level of discourse (in Benveniste's sense) are incapable of accounting for metaphor's innovative function. To avoid any metaphysical distinction between the proper and the figurative, Ricœur argues that it is "*use in discourse* that specifies the difference between the literal and metaphorical, and not some sort of prestige attributed to the primitive or the original."[47]

Although Perelman's work precedes that of Benveniste, I would argue that his conception of argumentation serves an analogous task. As Benveniste defines it, "[d]iscourse must be understood in its widest sense: every utterance assuming a speaker and an audience, and in the speaker, the intention of influencing the other in some way."[48] Similarly, for Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, argumentation is precisely that form of discursive action whereby speakers seek to induce or increase the assent of a determinate audience in relation to a given thesis, in a manner that is neither coercive nor arbitrary.[49] As Perelman will later put it in *The Realm of Rhetoric*: "The aim of argumentation is not to deduce consequences from given premises; it is rather to elicit or increase the adherence of the members of an audience to theses that are presented for their consent."[50] Triangulated in this way through Benveniste, what therefore unites Perelman and Ricœur on this point is a shared emphasis on the level of discourse, where what is in question is the phenomenon of "somebody saying something to someone about something."[51] Although in pursuit of different ends, it is this point which allows Perelman to reconnect rhetoric with argumentation and what allows Ricœur to preserve the creative power of metaphor at the level of both meaning and reference.

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[46] Perelman, *L'empire rhétorique*, 14, trans. mine. The passage to which Perelman is referring in *The New Rhetoric* is in §41, "Rhetorical Figures and Argumentation." See Chaïm Perelman & Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric. A Treatise on Argumentation,* trans. John Wilkinson & Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969 [1958]), 169/*Traité de l'argumentation. La nouvelle rhétorique*, 6ᵗʰ ed. (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2008 [1958]), 229.

[47] Ricœur, The *Rule of Metaphor*, 343, emphasis mine.

[48] Benveniste, *Problems of General Linguistics*, 208-9, trans. modified / *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, 241-2.

[49] Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 4 / *Traité de l'argumentation*, 5.

[50] Chaïm Perelman, *The Realm of Rhetoric*, trans. William Kluback (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982 [1977]), 9 / *L'empire rhétorique*, 28.

[51] Paul Ricœur, "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics," in *From Metaphysics to Rhetoric*, ed. Michel Meyer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989 [1986]) / "Rhétorique-Poétique-Herméneutique," in *De la métaphysique à la rhétorique. Essais à la mémoire de Chaïm Perelman*, ed. Michel Meyer (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1986), 143; *Lectures 2. La contrée des philosophes* (Paris: Seuil, 1999), 481.

V. To Whom Does One Speak?

If discourse always involves "somebody saying something to someone about something," then Ricœur's question, "*from where* do you speak?", which he is reported to have posed to his students at the beginning of his seminars,[52] implies a corollary question—"*to whom* do you speak?" By following the trajectory of discourse from the one who initiates the action to the one who receives or suffers it, we find ourselves within what Perelman calls the "realm of rhetoric [*l'empire rhétorique*]." In this final section, I want to briefly discuss Perelman's conception of audience, which he takes to be essential to a truly philosophical rhetoric and show how it sheds light on latent rhetorical aspects of Ricœur's philosophy.

Published in 1958, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on A*rgumentation [*Traité de l'argumentation: La nouvelle rhétorique*] is a highly original text that, ironically, has had a difficult time finding its audience. Although it has earned the recognition of rhetoricians and argumentation theorists, it has been less effective in reaching out to philosophers, its target audience—no doubt owing in large part to philosophy's long-standing hostility to rhetoric.[53] Unlike other texts associated with the "rhetorical turn," *The New Rhetoric* forefronts the importance of restoring rhetoric's connection to philosophy by supplanting the Cartesian paradigm of reason in favour of an argumentative one. The key difference is the role of the "audience." As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain:

> Our rapprochement with [rhetoric] aims at emphasizing the fact that *all argumentation develops in relation to an audience* […]. What we preserve of traditional rhetoric is the idea of the *audience*, an idea immediately evoked by the mere thought of discourse. All discourse is addressed to an audience and it is frequently forgotten that this applies to everything written as well. Whereas speeches are more clearly conceived with their audience in mind, the physical absence of readers can lead a writer to believe that he is alone in the world, though his text is always conditioned, whether consciously or unconsciously, by those persons he wishes to address.[54]

By focusing on this constitutive addressivity, they seek to incorporate every discourse which seeks to influence others (including oneself)—that is, every discourse which cannot claim an impersonal validity—into the realm of rhetoric. Before returning to this point let us look briefly at Ricœur's critique of this gesture.

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[52] As Richard Kearney recounts: "When I arrived in Paris in 1977 to study with the philosopher, Paul Ricœur, the first question he asked everyone is his seminar was: *d'où parlez-vous*? Where do you speak from?" (*Anatheism. Returning to God After God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), xi.)

[53] On this point, see Christopher W. Tindale, "Ways of Being Reasonable. Perelman and the Philosophers," *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 43/4 (2010), 337-61.

[54] Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 5, 6-7, trans. modified / *Traité de l'argumentation*, 7, 8.

In both *The Rule of Metaphor* and "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics,"[55] Ricœur's argument against rhetoric's ambition to totalize the field of discourse is twofold: "[R]hetoric can free itself entirely neither from typical situations which isolate its generative seat, nor from the intention which defines its finality?" i.e., persuasion.[56] These two points are related. As Ricœur explains, rhetoric is defined in relation to specific institutional contexts which guarantees a certain consistency in the composition and interests of the addressees proper to each.[57] Ricœur here cites Aristotle who derives three species of rhetoric—deliberative, judicial, and epideictic—from the three kinds of audiences typical of those contexts.[58] As for the second point, Ricœur argues that a speaker's orientation toward an audience limits them to the use of conventional ideas. In other words, since it seeks to transfer adherence from premises already accepted by the audience, rhetoric has limited (if any) creative potential.[59] On both points Ricœur's criticism is the same: while rhetoric's empire may be far reaching, there is one enclave that it can never overrun completely—philosophy. Unlike philosophy, he claims, rhetoric will always be bound to the contexts and ends which define it. Although Ricœur admits that he cannot, strictly speaking, refute Perelman's identification of rhetoric with first philosophy, he nonetheless insists that philosophy, in its most honest forms, transcends the art of persuasion.[60]

While few could fault Ricœur for his honesty, I wonder how fair this is to Perelman's (and Olbrechts-Tyteca's) project. I would argue that Ricœur's image of rhetoric is here more Aristotelian than Perelmanian. In *The New Rhetoric,* the notion of the rhetorical audience is less a function of the situation than it is a *construction* of the speaker:

> [W]e consider it preferable to define an audience, for the purposes of rhetoric, as *the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation.* Every speaker thinks, more or less consciously, of those he is seeking to persuade; these people form the audience to whom his discourse is addressed.[61]

Simply put, this means that speakers always develop a representation of their audience. It is in relation to this construction that arguers must choose what (and what not) to make present through their argumentation. In this way, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca seek to assuage the philosopher's longstanding fear of rhetorical manipulation which, they argue, is not a problem with audiences

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[55] It is worth noting that Ricœur's analysis and critique of rhetoric is strikingly similar in the two texts. Although seemingly written more than a decade apart, Ricœur explains in the opening paragraph of "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics" (not included in the *Lectures 2* version), that the text is based on a lecture given in 1970 at the Institut des hautes études de Belgique in Brussels, which was presided over by Perelman himself.

[56] Ricœur, "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics", 140/*De la métaphysique à la rhétorique*, 147/*Lectures 2*, 485.

[57] Ricœur, "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics", 138/*De la métaphysique à la rhétorique*, 144/*Lectures 2*, 482.

[58] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric. A Theory of Civic Discourse*, 2nd ed., trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1358b, 47.

[59] Ricœur, "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics", 139/*De la métaphysique à la rhétorique*, 145/*Lectures 2*, 483.

[60] Ricœur, "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics", 140-1/*De la métaphysique à la rhétorique*, 147/*Lectures 2*, 485-6.

[61] Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 19, trans. modified / *Traité de l'argumentation*, 25.

per se, but rather the image of audiences as inherently *incompetent*. Where the rhetor performs to the credulous masses, as the story goes, the philosopher communes with reason itself—or at least an honest interlocutor. But Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca ask, "why not allow that argumentation can be addressed to every kind of audience?"[62] By changing the quality of one's audience, do we not also raise the quality of rhetoric? However honest they may or may not be, philosophers also address themselves to determinate audiences. For Perelman, the point is thus not to *reduce* philosophy to "mere" rhetoric, to one discourse among many, but to elevate rhetoric to the purposes of philosophy—a discourse which strives, however imperfectly, to transcend what is persuasive only to particular audiences in pursuit of a more universal audience.

Once rhetoric is freed from this long-standing philosophical prejudice, can we not find a comparable appreciation of audiences in Ricœur's work? Keeping only to *The Rule of Metaphor*, is there not something unmistakably rhetorical to Ricœur's idea that it is the *reader* who contributes most to the "work of meaning [*travail du sens*]?"[63] Indeed, the activity of the audience or reader is so central to Ricœur's argument that he describes it as the *only* perspective capable of overcoming the substitution theory of metaphor and the "rhetoric" of the word upon which it is based:

> One must adopt the point of view of the hearer or reader and treat the novelty of an emerging meaning as his work within the very act of hearing or reading. If we do not take this route, we do not really get rid of the theory of substitution.[64]

Indeed, as we know from *Critique and Conviction*, it was precisely "the role of the reader" or audience that Ricœur felt was underdeveloped in *The Rule of Metaphor* and would be substantially elaborated upon in the three volumes of *Time and Narrative*.[65]

Perhaps Ricœur's ambivalence about rhetoric in *The Rule of Metaphor* is most evident in the peculiar passage in the Introduction where he describes metaphor as *rhetorical* rather than poetic— as "the rhetorical process by which discourse unleashes the power that certain fictions have to redescribe reality."[66] Indeed, if metaphor belongs to both rhetoric and poetics, as he seems to acknowledge, what might be the aim of a Ricœurian rhetoric? Or, beyond the questionable taxonomy Ricœur provides, what might a truly philosophical rhetoric look like, a rhetoric uninhibited by philosophy's long-standing prejudice against it? Although I leave these questions for future work, I would argue that answering them must involve pushing back against Ricœur's

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[62] Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 7 / *Traité de l'argumentation*, 9.

[63] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 111, trans. modified / *La métaphore vive*, 123.

[64] « [I]l faut prendre le point de vue de l'auditeur ou du lecteur, et traiter la nouveauté d'une signification émergente comme l'œuvre instantanée du lecteur. Si nous ne prenons pas ce chemin, nous ne nous débarrassons pas vraiment de la théorie de la substitution." (*The Rule of Metaphor,* 114 / *La métaphore vive*, 127).

[65] Paul Ricœur, *Critique and Conviction. Conversations with François Azouvi and Marc de Launay*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998 [1995]), 83 / *La critique et la conviction. Entretien avec François Azouvi et Marc de Launay* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1995), 129.

[66] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 5, emphasis mine / *La métaphore vive*, 11.

claim that poetics *alone* aims at a "conversion of the imaginary."[67] If we follow Perelman, a rhetorical conception of audience becomes equally integral to what Ricœur understands by poetic discourse. In both cases, it is the addressee or audience of discourse that mediates the metaphorical innovation of both sense and reference. In a word, both agree that there can be no metaphor without an audience.

VI. Conclusion

While the connections we have identified in this paper require further elucidation—both within *The Rule of Metaphor* and beyond—we have nonetheless been able to uncover a new thread of intelligibility in Ricœur's work: the underappreciated rhetorical dimension of his philosophy. By reading *The Rule of Metaphor* through Perelman's new rhetoric, we have succeeded in (1) contextualizing Ricœur's narrow understanding of rhetoric within a particular intellectual context and (2) identifying the more expansive conception operative in his philosophy. Specifically, we drew attention to the central role that Ricœur himself ascribes to the audience or reader in the "work of meaning." Although the door to this line of questioning has only been opened, we propose that future work will benefit from using the rhetorical triad of *logos/ethos/pathos* as a conceptual matrix with which to interpret the rhetorical aspects of Ricœur's philosophy: *logos* (symbolic action), *ethos* (selfhood), *pathos* (otherness).[68]

VII. Acknowledgments

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[67] Ricœur, "Rhetoric-Poetics-Hermeneutics," 143 / *De la métaphysique à la rhétorique*, 150 / *Lectures 2*, 489.

[68] The viability and fruitfulness of this approach will be explored in a chapter of my forthcoming doctoral dissertation.

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