Chaim Perelman, in collaboration with L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, defines argumentation as "the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind's adherence to the theses presented for its assent." Like Kenneth Burke, who writes that rhetoric is "the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols." Perelman believes that a rhetor linguistically creates a presence which the audience adheres to. The rhetor creates a presence by first analyzing how the audience thinks and acts and then stylistically re-creating the resulting information. The audience adheres to the presence because it fills the audience's consciousness with its very being. The rhetor then enters into communion with the audience, and, as a result of subsequent argumentative techniques, they act together.

The paradigm of Perelman's new rhetoric resembles a gestalt in that his theory of argumentation describes rhetorical processes as a configuration of psychological phenomena held together by a linguistic system. Moreover, the effect of the configuration is a synergic phenomenon which precedes (and even avoids) logical analysis. In a phenomenological sense, argumentation achieves meaning only when the audience registers in the speaker's consciousness and vice versa. Rather than merely analyze the audience, the rhetor becomes the audience. The two merge, become one, and the union results in action. In this respect, Perelman's new rhetoric transcends audience analysis.

Referring to *The New Rhetoric*, Henry Johnstone writes, "This book may not be surpassed for another hundred years. But when it is, it will be surpassed by another book on techniques, not by a book on audiences—for such a book would not be to the point." Don't think of this as an overstatement. Perelman's fecundity results from his conviction that "the development of all argumentation is the function of the au-

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dience to which the speaker is obliged to adapt himself." The ensemble can be of three kinds: the self as audience, a universal audience, and a particular audience. Self can be an audience in the case of arguing with oneself. ("Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?") In such an instance, a person must divide into two or more interlocutors who engage in argumentation with one another (NR, p. 14). Perelman separates the universal from the particular audience according to the notions of conviction and persuasion put forward by Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason*. Conviction, according to Kant, is a judgment grounded in objectivity and is therefore valid for every rational being. On the other hand, a judgment grounded in the character of the subject is a persuasion. Perelman expands Kant's two notions by associating persuasion with action, and conviction with intelligence. In terms of audience in Perelman’s theory of argumentation, a particular audience is subject to persuasion, whereas the universal audience holds to its convictions (NR, pp. 28-29). In short, objectivity, conviction, and intellect are characteristics of the universal audience; character, persuasion, and action are characteristics of the particular audience.

Perelman, however, disclaims the universal audience even as he defines it. In one place, he defines the universal audience as "the totality of being capable of reason" ("SC," p. 155). In another context, he defines it as the incarnation of traditional reason. In a third context, Perelman writes, "Philosophical discourse considered traditionally as an appeal to reason would be characterized by its adaption to an ideal audience. This audience for Plato, and for the religious mind, would be incarnated by a divinity; I would call it the universal audience." And in a final context, Perelman writes the universal audience "never actually exists." It is rather a mental construct of the rhetor who refers to it. Moreover, the mental construct varies from person to person and from age to age. Consequently, the universal audience is something unreal, a mental construct, a creation of the rhetor who refers to it so that a particular audience will adhere to these put forward by the rhetor. In short, the rhetor creates a construct of a universal audience in order to persuade a particular one. A fiction, as Walter Ong might say, the universal audience transcends the boundary of the particular audience into "the philosophic privilege conferred to reason" (NR, p. 30).

The particular audience is the primary concern of Perelman’s theory of argumentation. A universal audience supplies
the self-evident data employed by the rhetor, but the particular audience determines all the other characteristics of a particular instance of argumentation which enable the rhetor to persuade the audience: it is as if the audience persuades itself. Perelman, upstaging Wayne Booth who says a rhetor has to define the audience, repeatedly asserts the concept that argumentation is a function of the audience being addressed. In one context, he writes that "it is in relation to an audience that all argumentation is developed." In another context, he writes that "all argumentation depends for its premises—as indeed for its entire development—on all that is accepted, that which is acknowledged as true, as normal and probable, as valid" ("SC," p. 156). And in a third context, Perelman writes, "In argumentation, the important thing is not knowing what the speaker regards as true or important, but knowing the view of those he is addressing" (NR, pp. 23-24). An argument which fails to develop according to the nature of its audience employs the *petitio principii*, that is, the rhetorical fallacy in which a discourse uses premises not accepted by the audience (NR, pp. 112-113). Consequently, in this respect, Perelman's new rhetoric is not so new as its name implies. The new rhetoric employs characteristics of Aristotelian rhetoric. The means of convincing an audience—those data obtained from the rhetor's creation of a universal audience—constitute the logical argument. (Several modern studies assert that by enthymeme Aristotle meant an argument using premises drawn from the audience's beliefs. In this way, Aristotelian *logos* too is a matter of audience). The means of persuading an audience—those characteristics of an audience which develop the discourse—form the pathetic argument. Similarly, the rhetor's discovery of convincing and persuading data with which to develop a discourse corresponds to Aristotelian invention. Moreover, the rhetor who adapts to the characteristics of the audience has an admirable ethos: An audience having similar beliefs cannot but help like one of its members who expresses commonly held ideas. In this way, the rhetor becomes a member of the audience.

A rhetor, who attempts to gain the adherence of an audience's mind and who, simultaneously, addresses a multiplicity of audiences, must first reduce the minds into a singular mind. To do so, the rhetor can refer to self-evident truths held by a universal audience. The rhetor can also achieve the reduction by means of a selective appeal to commonly held values and opinions; that is, the rhetor can appeal to the universal as-
pect of the particular audience. Perelman emphasizes the notion that a rhetor who conceptualizes an audience to address simultaneously discovers the means to persuade the audience: "knowledge of an audience cannot be conceived independently of the knowledge of how to influence it" (NR, p. 23). Moreover, he writes that "knowledge of an audience is also knowledge of how to bring about its conditioning as well as of the amount of conditioning achieved at any given moment of the discourse" (NR, p. 23). A rhetor therefore varies an argument according to the nature of the multiplicity of audiences being addressed. The argument is directed first to one audience, then to a second, and finally to a third. In other words, the rhetor varies the argument from occasion to occasion as the audiences vary. The argument, however, must be continually adapted to each audience so that its adherence may be realized. Adherence then becomes a cumulative effect reducing several independent minds into one mind. The adherence to a thesis by one audience increases the chance of adherence by a second audience, and so on. Call it jumping on the bandwagon. Conversely, the rejection of a thesis by one audience may cause another audience to reject the thesis also (NR, pp. 103-104). Call it jumping off the bandwagon.

Perelman insists a rhetor "must not lose sight of the quality of minds" being addressed (NR, p. 7). Similarly, for the rhetor's argument to be effective, the audience must be or become disposed to listen to the rhetor. A disposition on the part of the audience to listen occurs when the rhetor creates a presence. According to Perelman, a rhetor creates presence by selecting certain elements from the audience's opinions, convictions, and commitments and by stylistically amplifying those elements. In this regard, Perelman writes that "one of the preoccupations of the speaker is to make present, by verbal magic alone, what is actually absent but what he considers important to his argument or, by making them present, to enhance the value of some of the elements of which one has actually been made conscious" (NR, p. 117). In other words, the rhetor fills "the whole field of consciousness with this presence so as to isolate it, as it were, from the hearer's overall mentality" (NR, p. 118). Consequently, Perelman's presence becomes a psychological element which controls how the audience perceives, conceives, and remembers the rhetor's objects, ideas, and lines of argument.

Perelman lists numerous stylistic techniques which a rhetor uses to make things present to an audience's mind. Presence increases when the rhetor gives an extended exposition of
the significance of certain elements. Repetition, the accumulation of contradictory accounts, and the detailed account of the successive stages of a phenomenon magnify presence. A rhetor who uses the imperative invites the audience to participate in the action (NR, pp. 144-145). The present tense, the use of the singular instead of the plural, and an unusual use of the demonstrative convey the feeling of presence (NR, pp. 160-162). Other more elaborate figures of speech make the rhetor’s discourse present to the audience’s mind. Figures of speech depending upon repetition—*anaphora*, *conduplicatio*, and *adjectio*—magnify presence in that they suggest distinctions of help divide complex actions into sequential events. *Synonymy* and *metabole* repeatedly paraphrase a single notion and thus suggest progressive direction. The rhetor’s imaginary indirect speech with a single person (*sermocinatio*) or with a group engaged in conversation (*dialogism*) helps maintain presence. *Onomatopoeia* evokes an actual noise (NR, pp. 174-176). It thus becomes evident that, in Perelman’s theory of argumentation, presence displays, by means of verbal techniques, "certain elements on which the speaker wishes to center attention in order that they may occupy the foreground of the hearer’s consciousness" (NR, p. 142).

Presence refers to not only the rhetor’s linguistic projections of important elements into the audience’s sphere of consciousness but also the argumentative schemes which the rhetor uses to persuade an audience. Although they must be fully elaborated on in a subsequent essay because of their extensive-ness, let it be noted here that, according to Perelman, association or dissociation characterizes all schemes. Through association, the rhetor unites separate elements so that an audience may perceive a unity among them. Association schemes are divided into the quasi-logical and the real. Quasi-logical schemes bring together elements so that they appear to follow the process of formal logic, whereas real schemes bring together elements so that they seem to correspond to the nature of the very thing they represent. The real may be further divided into particulars and analogies. Through dissociation, a rhetor separates a whole into individual elements so that the audience’s thought concerning it may be modified. Thus, dissociative schemes aim at the re-formulation of notions held by an audience (NR, pp. 190-192). Perelman insists that, whenever a rhetor projects schemes into presence, the audience reacts to the discourse as if it were an object of thought. That is, the audience "tends to argue on [its] own account about the speech
in order to take [its] own stand, to determine the credibility [it] ought to attach to [the speech]" (NR, p. 189).

Perelman asserts that there exists a common language with rules prescribing how a conversation may be entered into and that an audience is willing to listen to consider a rhetor's point of view (NR, pp. 14-18). Similarly, there also exist reasons as to why an audience may refuse to adhere to a presence created by a rhetor. The audience may not accept the premises the rhetor implies it accepts, the audience may think the expressed premises are one-sided, or the audience may think the way the rhetor puts forward the premises is unacceptable. Conversely, the agreement on and the choice and presentation of premises acceptable to an audience enable the rhetor to create a presence to which the audience adheres (NR, pp. 65-66). A rhetor can utilize a wide assortment of objects of agreement in order to secure or intensify an audience's adherence to a presence. The rhetor can employ fact and truths and validate them by evoking the universal audience. The rhetor can employ the audience's presumptions or values, those concrete or abstract objects which predispose an audience to act one way in stead of another. Similarly, a rhetor may refer to hierarchies which illustrate how the audience prefers one way over an-other. And, in order to support stated values and hierarchies, the rhetor may employ loci of the preferable to justify them ("TPR," pp. 289-290).

Just as the rhetor attempts to shape a discourse according to its audience, the rhetor likes also to receive explicit or implicit tokens of adherence from the audience. However, because the rhetor is the one doing the talking (or writing), the rhetor determines the tokens received from the audience. A rhetor who begins a discourse with a pledge or oath involves the audience (NR, p. 106). The rhetor can employ a closed case which depends upon inertia, that is, upon an "attitude previously adopted [which] will continue into the future, either from a desire for coherency of from force of habit" (NR, p. 106). In other words, inertia suggests that things will remain the same. Similarly, the rhetor, who argues from precedents, suggests discontinuous sameness. In other words, precedents convey a sporadic leap through time, whereas inertia suggests a continuous flow through time. Finally, a rhetor can engage an audience (or opponent) in dialectic. A question-answer interaction enables the rhetor to realize what points of a discourse an audience has adhered to. Also, the interaction enables the rhetor to realize what points of a discourse require additional
support before adherence is secured (NR, pp. 106-110).

When rhetor and audience adhere because of the rhetor’s creation of an audience-oriented presence (which is then augmented with argumentative techniques), the adherence provokes the audience to act in ways desired by the rhetor. That is, a rhetor who obtains an audience’s agreement concerning how a value, being, or ideal may influence the outcome of a specific action also disposes the audience to act. This concept is the traditional assumption of rhetoric: Those who believe in X will act in a certain way. (Obviously, as in religious principles, belief does not always lead to action). In this respect, Perelman writes, "The new rhetoric, like the old, seeks to persuade or convince, to obtain an adherence which may be theoretical to start with, although it may be eventually manifested through a disposition to act, or practical, as provoking with immediate action, the making of a decision, or a commitment to act" ("TPR," p. 282). Thus, Perelman’s new rhetoric is a theory of argumentation which provokes either a mental or physical action on the part of an audience.

Perelman says, when the rhetor and audience contemplate the possibility of acting together, they commune. Like presence and adherence, communion is closely connected to the rhetor’s use of language. A discourse which stylistically parallels a particular audience’s linguistic system better achieves communion with the audience than one which fails to do so. That is, the form in which speaker embodies presence, the form which seeks to secure adherence, can be arranged so that it employs characteristics of the audience’s cultural atmosphere. In other words, every social structure has a unique means of expressing itself, its social communion. An effective instance of argumentation employs a particular social structure’s uniquely expressive linguistic system so that all boundaries between argument and audience vanish (NR, pp. 164-165). Identification occurs. Just as presence can make the past or future present, style can make a rhetor’s argument the very expression of the audience being addressed.

Perelman writes also that "values, as objects of agreement . . . make possible a communion with regard to particular ways of acting . . ." (NR, p. 74). A rhetor, therefore, "tries to establish a sense of communion centered around particular values recognized by the audience, and to this end he uses the whole range of means available to the rhetorician for purposes of amplification and enhancement" (NR, p. 51). Although a uni-
versal audience fails to adhere to certain values because they do not necessarily correspond to the real, a rhetor can still appeal to a particular audience's values so that the audience can make one choice instead of another and also so that the audience's justification of the choice will dispose other audiences to accept and approve it (NR, p. 74). A rhetor can enter into communion with an audience by referring to either its concrete or abstract values. Perelman defines a concrete value as a notion which is "considered as a unique entity" in that it is attached to a tangible object. Because of this connection, seemingly abstract virtues and behaviors—notions such as obligation, fidelity, loyalty, solidarity, and discipline—become concrete because they "can be conceived only in relation to concrete values" (NR, p. 77). For example, the cross, a flag, and a country are material things which represent abstract emotions. Members of a particular group provide the connection that links a concrete object to its abstract value. A rhetor who recognizes such structures of participation among a particular audience and who employs them in a discourse makes them an aspect of communion with the audience (NR, p. 332). For instance, a speaker in the southern United States might refer to the Confederate flag, or a speaker in a Catholic church might refer to a statue of the madonna. Consequently, Perelman defines an abstract value as the intangible foundation of a concrete value, and a rhetor moves back and forth between the abstract and the concrete in order to manifest the values of an audience so that the rhetor and audience can enter into communion. In order to illustrate this notion, Perelman writes, "When a person says that men are equal because they are children of God, he seems to be relying on a concrete value to find an abstract value, that of equality. . . ." (NR, pp. 77-78).

According to Perelman, "it is an illusion to imagine that the conditions for . . . communion occur naturally" (NR, p. 56). Consequently, he lists a wide variety of rhetorical techniques that a rhetor may use to establish communion with an audience. One technique is the question. Perelman says a rhetor, who uses the question, must know the audience will answer affirmatively. (A door-to-door salesperson gets the home-owner saying yes first). Doing so, the audience confers its agreement concerning a particular course of action (NR, p. 159). Other literary devices refer to a particular audience's cultural heritage. A rhetor's allusion to an important historical event creates emotions aroused by memories and pride. A quotation
enhances communion when its purpose is not to give authority to a particular statement. Maxims and proverbs, for example, reflect the culture of which they are a part. The rhetor increases communion also by using figures which engage the audience with the discourse. Apostrophe and the oratorical question aim not at gaining information but at engaging the hearer. Similarly, the rhetor may resort to oratorical communication in which the audience merges with the discourse. The rhetor may employ the enallage of person, a figure by which the rhetor moves, for example, for "I" or "he" to "you." Likewise, the rhetor can move from either "I" or "you" to "we" and consequently identify the audience with the rhetor (NR, pp. 177-178). Referring to these ways to establish communion (or to increase it), Perelman writes that "Every technique promoting the communion of the speaker with his audience will decrease the opposition between them—an opposition which is harmful when the task of the speaker is to persuade" (NR, p. 321).

For Perelman, argumentation requires not "the exactness of specific logical modalities" which correspond to a rhetor's thesis. It rather requires the rhetor's "variations in the way of expressing thought" which obtain the adherence of an audience's mind (NR, p. 163). Because Perelman's new rhetoric aims at a meeting of minds, the part employed by the audience becomes crucially important. Moreover, because the aim of argumentation is to persuade by means of adherence, Perelman says any persuasive discourse must be "based on beliefs accepted by the audience with such conviction that the rest of the discourse can be securely based upon it" ("TPR," p. 286). That is to say, a rhetor must first create a presence to which the audience adheres and, only afterwards, introduce controversial points. A rhetor who neglects the beliefs of an audience and who consequently commits the petitio principii simultaneously begs the question in that the rhetor presupposes "the existence of an adherence that does not exist" ("TPR," p. 286). Perelman does not associate an audience's beliefs with self-evident truths. Indeed, as irrational as it may sound, a particular audience's belief may contradict a self-evident truth. In such a case, a rhetor must refer to the audience's belief rather than to the self-evident truth in order to secure the audience's adherence. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca write, "nothing constrains us to limit our study to a particular degree of adherence characterized by self-evidence, and nothing permits us to consider a priori the degrees of adherence to a thesis proportional to its probability and
to identify self-evidence with truth" (NR, p. 4). In other words, a rhetor refers to what the audience holds to be true, not necessarily to the real. Consequently, an audience adheres to a rhetor when the rhetor expresses the thoughts of the audience (NR, p. 36). Then they commune. Afterwards, they act.

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NOTES


3Perelman divides The New Rhetoric into two books: a treatise on "the discursive means of obtaining the adherence of minds" and a sequel on the linguistic techniques used to persuade and convince (NR, p. 8). The focus of this essay is the rhetorical structure of this adherence of minds.


6Perelman claims a rhetor seeks to persuade an audience to adhere to ideas which lack self-evidence, that is, to theses which elude the formal proof of Cartesian demonstration. In short, Perelman limits the domain of argumentation to "the credible, the plausible, the probable" (NR, p. 1).


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12Consult "Aristotle’s Enthymeme Revisted" by Lloyd Bitzer, *QJS*, 45 (1959), 399-408.

13Because the truth is self-evident, the composite audience will have to accept it as possessing "an absolute and timeless validity, independent of local or historical contengencies" (NR, p. 32). Perelman writes "that audiences are not independent of one another, that particular audiences are capable of validating a concept of the universal audience which characterizes them. On the other hand," Perelman continues, "it is the undefined universal audience that is evoked to pass judgment on what is the concept of the universal audience appropriate to such a concrete audience, to examine, simultaneously, the manner in which it is composed. . . " (NR, p. 35). The universal audience therefore becomes not an entity which is concretely realized but a concept of rhetorical invention which the rhetor uses to discover available self-evident data to which a particular audience will necessarily adhere.

