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La spirale blanche du questionnement : une plaidoirie pour une rhétorique développementale

The White Spiral of Questioning: A Plea for a Developmental Rhetoric

Abstract: Michel Meyer’s work (spanning almost four decades) has undoubtedly become a mandatory reference for any scholar interested in the field of rhetoric. Since the very beginning, Meyer’s project has been perceived as a fresh take on the philosophical tradition inaugurated by the works of Plato and Aristotle, reaching all the way up to Martin Heidegger. What Michel Meyer wanted to accomplish is a return of philosophy and philosophical rhetoric to a foundational stage, thus avoiding the paradigm of nihilism that had dominated at the beginning of the twentieth century. In this vein, my paper focuses on the role played by questioning within Meyer’s approach. I argue that the process of questioning with everything that it entails (the persons involved and their subsequent relationship, the answers, the problematological difference, the process of negotiating social distance) is meant to ensure an ongoing conversation, developed across more than one level of speech. The figure of spiral seems to be the appropriate one when we want to sum up such a system of thought.

Keywords: questioning, distance, problematology, rhetoric, chleuasmos