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CARISM
Centre d'analyse et de recherche
interdisciplinaires sur les médias

SÉMINAIRE

COMING OUT-ANNOUNCEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS RHETORICAL APPEALS FOR RECOGNITION

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Séminaire principal du Carism où sont discutés des travaux nouveaux ou récents portant sur les médias avec des membres du laboratoire ou des chercheuses et chercheurs extérieurs.

Intervenant : John Magnus Dahl, professeur invité à l'IFP, *tenure track* à l'Université de Copenhague

Présentation : This talk examines how LGBTQ+ individuals' coming out-announcements on social media function as rhetorical appeals for recognition and how they reveal contemporary rhetorical-cultural conditions. Drawing on Axel Honneth's theory of recognition, coming out-announcements are analyzed as rhetorical acts aimed at achieving acceptance and affirmation. In addition, theories of rhetorical agency are applied to understand how these declarations are shaped and received within the affordances and cultures of social media. Finally, the announcements are explored as social actions that respond to and expose rhetorical-cultural conditions.

Through a text and reception analysis of a strategically selected sample of coming out declarations published by Scandinavian LGBTQ+ individuals on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, the study examines how recognition is sought in a media landscape characterized by individual self-presentations, the affordances of social media, and a polarizing public discourse—the so-called ""culture war."" The findings suggest that coming out declarations not only represent personal self-expression but also

serve as participation in a broader cultural genre that both reflects and challenges norms of gender, sexuality, and social belonging. However, this creates a tension: the cultural and socio-technological emphasis on individual storytelling and visibility imposes certain constraints on what kinds of recognition claims can succeed rhetorically and, consequently, on which identities can be recognized at all. It is suggested that queer identities hold a particularly privileged position in this regard compared to other marginalized identities.
The talk argues that coming out-announcements as a genre expose the contemporary conditions for recognition, including the tension between individual self-realization and collective solidarity, and how rhetorical genres on social media create new forms of both inclusion and exclusion. By integrating Honneth's theory of recognition with theories on rhetorical agency, the study offers a theoretical innovation within both rhetoric and social theory by approaching digital communication as a struggle for social visibility and valuation in a culture marked by fragmented communities, individualism, powerful technological platforms, and ongoing cultural conflicts."

Les séances sont ouvertes à tous et toutes sous réserve d'inscription préalable.