

Rhetoric in Society – Virtual Gathering 2021

Thursday, May 27, 2021

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Welcome and Keynote Speech

Karen A. Foss (Regents' Professor Emeritus, University of New Mexico)
Sonja K. Foss (Professor Emeritus, University of Colorado Denver, US)

Constricted and Constructed Potentiality: An Inquiry into Paradigms of Strategic Change

In their presentation, Sonja and Karen Foss will identify and explicate two paradigms for generating change. In the conventional paradigm of constricted potentiality, change agents focus on tangible material conditions and use persuasion, directed externally, to change those conditions and improve their own internal states. In the alternative paradigm of constructed potentiality, individuals focus on symbolic resources and use interpretation to change their own internal states, which then influence material conditions. They conclude with responses to questions and concerns often raised about the paradigm of constructed potentiality.

3:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Coffee break

4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Panel I: “The Rhetoric of the Coronavirus” and the Strategic Construction of Legitimacy. First Addresses of Western Leaders to the Nation

To implement the exceptional measures decided upon to fight the pandemic, the leaders of all the countries struck by Covid-19 needed to be heard and obeyed by the citizens. How are such legitimacy and authority discursively constructed in the first addresses of the heads of government to the nation? To what extent does the political culture of each country determine the strategy of the address? The panel asks if there is a general “rhetoric of the Coronavirus”, and whether there are differences within this rhetoric due to cultural, circumstantial and individual factors. At the same time, it aims at exploring the way public health and political goals are intertwined in these speeches, and how they strategically serve political purposes and interests in the specific context of each of these democratic countries.

Jürgen Siess (Caen University, France) / **Ruth Amossy** (Tel-Aviv University, Israel)

Democracy, Legitimacy and Authority in Times of Pandemic. The March 18th discourse of Angela Merkel on Covid-19

Irit Kornblit (Tel-Aviv University, Israel)

The discursive construction of authority in times of crisis: Belgian Prime Minister Sophie Wilmès' construction of a collective ethos of unity in her March 2020 speeches on Covid-19 measures and lockdown

Keren Sadoun-Kerber (Tel-Aviv University, Israel)

Discursive Authority and Legitimacy during Covid19: the case of Emmanuel Macron

Ruth Amossy (Tel-Aviv University, Israel)

Towards a “Rhetoric of the Coronavirus”: General and Particular Strategies of Legitimacy and Authority Construction

5:30 – 6:00 p.m. *Coffee break*

6:00 – 8:00 p.m. **General Assembly of the Rhetoric Society of Europe**

Friday, May 28, 2021

2:00 – 3:30 p.m. **Panel 2: Pandemics and Rhetoric. Perspectives on Strategic Rhetoric from the Athenian Plague 430 BC to COVID-19 2020 AD.**

The current pandemic offers ample examples of a strategic use of rhetoric, not least from the authorities in charge of handling the situation. This situation calls not only for vigorous study of the present from a number of perspectives, but also for historical studies that offer up comparative perspectives. In this panel, we address the strategies and tactics of authorities and citizens, respectively, in various examples of pandemic rhetoric: Rhetorical ideals in the narratives of the Athenian Plague 430 BC in Thucydides' *History*, representations of the Spanish Flu in the communication of the Swedish media and authorities, the political and epideictic management of grief and comfort during COVID-19, the rhetorical battleground of competing crises (climate, corona, and Black Lives Matter) and their claims for moral, political, and scientific high ground, and, finally, the politicisation and social meaning of mask wearing during COVID-19.

Otto Fischer / Ann Öhrberg (Uppsala University, Sweden)

Authority Communications in a Time of Pandemic. The Example of the Spanish Flu.

Jon Viklund (Uppsala University, Sweden)

Sorrow and comfort. Political rites and strategies in the face of COVID-19 fatalities

Louise Schou-Therkildsen (Uppsala University, Sweden)

A Hierarchy of Crises: Climate, Corona, and Black Lives Matter

Mats Rosengren (Uppsala University, Sweden)

A rhetoric of masks? Social imaginary strategies and tactics during the pandemic 2020

Janne Lindqvist (Uppsala University, Sweden)

Pandemic and rhetoric in Thucydides

3:30 – 4:00 p.m. *Coffee break*

4:00 – 5:30 p.m. **Panel 3: Rhetoric as Strategic Thinking**

As a 'preview' for the conference topic in 2023, the panelists discuss the concepts of strategy that are used in the study of rhetoric and related fields. They deal with questions such as: What is a rhetorical strategy? What are the benefits and limits of pursuing a "strategical" approach? Why is the concept of strategy underrepresented in current rhetorical theory? (Is it?)

Alexander Fischer (University of Basel, Switzerland)

From Manipulative Tactics to Manipulative Strategies

Michael Hoppmann (Northeastern University, Boston, USA)

Strategic Listening: Reasonable Rhetorical Reconstructions

Manfred Kraus (University of Tübingen, Germany)

Strategies, Tactics, Manoeuvres: Martial Imagery in Rhetoric

Sine Just / Marcus Lantz (Roskilde University / Copenhagen Business School, Denmark)

Strategy-as-Rhetoric: The Rhetorical Constitution of Strategic Discourse

Rudi Palmieri / Andrea Rocci (University of Liverpool, UK / Università della Svizzera italiana, Lugano, Switzerland)

Rhetorical strategy for sustainable trust: argumentative effectiveness, contextual exigencies and participant incentives

5:30 – 6:00 p.m.

Coffee break and Farewell