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Digital Parrhesia: Towards a New Ethical and Reflexive Framework for Digital Communication
(with Francois Allard – Univ. of Paris – Sorbonne)
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Abstract:

Digital communication longs for a holistic approach to the functions of digital public spheres; such an approach requires an ethical and epistemological reformulation of digital space. To this end, this article interpolates Foucault's articulation of parrhesia into the digital realm. Parrhesia implies that those who have the ability to speak freely have concomitant public duties to speak the truth, to sincerely believe that truth, and to honestly represent themselves when speaking. These duties circumscribe discursive space in which a range of individuals can engage in truth-telling practices, and provide the beginnings of a new critical framework for assessing digital texts and speakers. Digital parrhesia requires analysis of media, context, content, and authors— together, and in relation to each other. This article concludes with a proposal for a techno-semiotic method that fulfills the demands of digital parrhesia and offers points of entry for scholars from across the field of communications.