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Processus rhétoriques et psychosociaux d'un « débat émotionnel » à l'occasion d'une indignation féministe

Rhetorical and Psychosocial Processes Regarding an Emotional Debate Caused by a Feminist Outrage

Abstract: Following several feminist outrages in media, a reader's letter provokes an exceptional debate in a Swiss daily newspaper: It is one of those "emotional debates" that can seem discouraging, or even unsolvable. This article focuses on the rhetorical and social processes involved in such a debate. After a brief presentation of the main configurations of the antagonistic positions, the analysis reveals the way in which shifts in emphasis (*éclairage*) of the subsequent texts aim at the readers adhering, without seeking to convince them by detailed examinations of arguments from both sides, and a rigorous refutation of the weaker position. Hence, in the course of the interventions, the debate evolves towards some kind of conformism, eliminating extreme positions, to the detriment of a socio-cognitive resolution of the initial issue.

Keywords: argumentation in context, conformism, « hot debate », new rhetoric, natural logic, feminism, sexism