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ABSTRACT

Communication scholars have dichotomized language into orality and literacy, with orality being the language of the "concrete" and literacy being the language of the "abstract." However, the human experience of language is not that simplistic. In daily linguistic patterns, written words and the "literal" are not clearly divorced from spoken words and the "oral." These realms are more fused than commonly thought. In other words, "language games" cannot be divided into clean-cut categories of either the oral or the written. Instead, language, either written or spoken, tends to be more or less rhetorical when it includes elements of euphony, drama or images. Reading practices in antiquity--a time when the written word was embodied in the spoken word--illustrates this contention. The linguistic practices of the sophists included the beauty of sound for pleasure-giving. In ancient Greece, reading without speaking the words seems to have been a rare happening. The balance between vision and sound shifted toward abstraction from the time that Plato said that phonetics and linguistics are not of supreme importance for the philosophic seeker of reality to the time that Aristotle valued sight as the principle source of knowledge. Reading is a practice not of an abstract intellect but of a concrete language. Reading is, in a word, "conversational." The rule of this practice is that the degree of concrete relevance through sound, story and sight determines the degree of rhetoricity. (Contains 28 references.) (RS)

The Return of the Addressed: Rhetoric, Reading and Resonance

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ABSTRACT: The author argues that recent writers in the discipline have dichotomized language into orality and literacy, with orality being the language of the "concrete" and literacy being the language of the "abstract." Finding this schism to be disconcerting, the author demonstrates that the human experience of language is not that simplistic. In daily linguistic patterns, written words and the "literal" are not clearly divorced from our spoken words and the "oral." The author asserts that these realms are more fused than commonly thought. In other words, "language games" cannot be divided into clean-cut categories of either the oral or the written. Instead, what we find is that language, either written or spoken, tends to be more or less rhetorical when it includes elements of euphony, drama or images. To illustrate this contention, the author looks at the reading practices in antiquity, a time when the written word was embodied in the spoken word. From this position the author demonstrates that reading is, indeed, a practice not of an abstract intellect but of a concrete language. Reading is, in a word, "conversational." The rule of this practice is that the degree of concrete relevance through sound, story and sight determines the degree of rhetoricity.

Key words: Orality, literacy, rhetoricity, drama, image and euphony

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In the past several decades, much talk about orality and literacy has appeared in academic circles. Havelock (Preface to Plato and The Muse Learns to Write), Ong (The Presence of the Word, Orality and Literacy), Jamieson (Eloquence in an Electronic Age) and McLuhan (The Gutenberg Galaxy) write of the changes in both culture and consciousness associated with either the oral or literate modality of communication. They write of distinctions between "oral culture" and the "oral state of mind," and "literate culture" and the "literate state of mind." However, the distinction between orality and literacy itself is never directly called into question. The categories have been set and subsequent scholarly discourses pivot on these platforms. I offer an alternative discourse and argue that the categories of orality and literacy are not as definitive as Havelock, Ong, Jamieson and McLuhan would have us believe. While I agree that shifts in the modalities of discourse have occurred from the oral tales of Homer, to the literate texts of Hegel, to the technological trends of Hollywood, human experience does not sustain these demarcations. The sensating body experiences a simultaneity

of sound, vision and tactility, even if a particular discursive modality "favors" speech, print or electronic pixels.

The orality-literacy schism does not acknowledge this simultaneity. In fact, it further compartmentalizes human experience by separating it into "concrete" and "abstract." Havelock writes that early Greek mentality, because it was oral, was not capable of metaphysical or abstract thought (xi) and it was not until alphabetization that the eye supplanted the ear as the "chief organ" (vii). For Havelock, "the concrete and sensual" is coupled with "oral culture" while "the abstract and metaphysical" is coupled with "literate culture."

I argue in this paper that the orality-literacy dichotomy is fallacious and that the notions of either "being concrete" or "being abstract" cannot be anchored in it. Furthermore, I argue that it is the rhetorical capability of language, not its capacity for oral production or literal production, that generates either "the concrete" or "the abstract." More specifically, I explore the notion that language, whether produced orally through the mouth or literally through the mind will tend to be more or less euphonic, more or less dramatistic, or more or less imagistic. In short, the degrees of euphony, drama and image will be in direct proportion to the degree of rhetoricity in any given discourse. With this view it becomes clear that it is not the oral dimension nor the literal dimension of

discourse that manifests it as concrete or abstract; it is the inclusion or exclusion of sound, story and sight.

To illustrate this contention, I will examine the reading of rhetorical prose, primarily ancient Greek oratory. Contra Havelock and those of a similar bent, who propose that "reading" is a mentalistic activity headed towards rational, analytical abstraction, I offer a counter-position about a reading that is concrete, sensual, and even erotic. What activates such an occurrence of reading? As I stated earlier, the rhetorical qualities of the discourse sensually engage the reader with euphony, drama and image. In other words, it addresses, particularly and specifically. As even Havelock observes, one can be stimulated by words to identify oneself with what they say only when they express emotions and passions in active situations (167).

In what follows, I illustrate the rhetorical resonance of reading practices and the cultural conditions that create the need for their formation. As Foucault writes, we should take the discourse itself, its appearance and regularity, and look for the external conditions of its existence that give rise to the chance series of events and fixes its limits (229). To particularize, I will consider the reading of ancient Greek oratory because of the euphony, drama and images in its rhetorical form. Accordingly, I will consider the conditions associated with the production of this rhetorical form. By contrast, I will discuss the manner in which orality was separated from written discourse with Plato

as a catalyst. Lastly, from the standpoint of the phenomenology of sound, I will consider how reading becomes not only a visual enterprise, but one that is oral/aural and erotic.

To begin with, the argument I am putting forth assumes that written language need not be divorced from its sound. The letters, themselves, are actually signs of sounds (Heidegger 97). Moreover, as Heidegger writes, speaking implies the making of articulated sounds, whether we make them in speaking or refrain from making them in silence (114). In other words, these "articulated sounds" are implicit in written letters. As Ong writes, written texts all have to be related somehow, directly or indirectly to the world of sound to yield their meanings. Reading a text is converting it to sound, aloud or in the imagination; writing can never dispense with orality (Orality 8).

Furthermore, as Merleau-Ponty explains, underlying the word is an attitude or a function of speech which condition it (175); spoken or written words carry a "top coating" of meaning which sticks to them and which presents the thought as a style or an affective value. An existential meaning inhabits words and is inseparable from them (182). In this way, when one reads the words of ancient Greek rhetorical discourse, with the euphony, the drama, and the images, we should be able to ascertain both the functions of speech which conditioned them and their affective value.

The prime period and place of political oratory, the 5th century BCE in Athens, witnessed more and more people with less and less political background taking an active part in the operations of government. There was a need for the techniques of political oratory and the Sophists met this need (Kennedy 27-29). This was a time in which "man was the measure of all things." As Havelock explains, the pull between the pleasurable inclination to act in one way and the unpleasant duty to act in another was relatively unknown; there was no warfare between the body and the spirit (158). Hence, in acceptance and promotion of aisthesis and metron anthropos, the community's leadership lay with those who had a superior ear and rhythmic aptitude (Havelock 125). This was employed in the performance or oratory, where pleasure was exploited as the instrument of cultural continuity (Havelock 157). As Ong explains, a sound-dominated verbal economy is consonant with harmonizing tendencies rather than with analytic, dissecting tendencies. It is consonant with conservative holism and situational thinking rather than abstract thinking; the human organization is around the actions of human being rather than impersonal things (74).

Protagoras states in his metron anthropos principle that "as each thing appears to me, so it is for me, and as it appears to you, so it is for you" (Theaetetus 152a). What appears to me is what I experience; likewise I cannot experience what does not appear to me. As Kerferd points out, it is not possible to think anything but what one

experiences, and these experiences are true (22). In other words, what I experience is my perception. My perception, aisthesis, is what I apprehend through my senses, i.e., sight, hearing, smell, sensations of heat and cold, pleasures and pains and even emotions of desire and fear. All these are seated in the sentient part of the soul, inseparably with the body (Cornford 30). Accordingly, what is perceived by the senses is also what "appears" to the senses. Phainomena are literally "things letting themselves appear." This is a cognate with phainesthai, "appear," which corresponds to phantasia. In its more specific sense, phantasia is the product of perception and memory, as distinct from rational appearance, which is not perceptual (Irwin 3), but intellectual. Thus, Protagoras, as a representative of the Sophists, renounces reason, objectivity and the absolute through the principle of metron anthropos. As Zeller concurs, "with the Sophists cam the gradual distrust of human powers of attaining knowledge on the basis of natural phenomena (75). The Sophists came to understand that man is "outside the realm of Ideas and is forsaken by evidentness" (Blumenberg 432). As Poulakos writes, "what matters to the Sophists is not 'pure' fact, but fact as perceived, interpreted and communicated (218).

Thus, we see that as the conditions of democracy created a need for oratory, it simultaneously created a need for a particular kind of oratory. Without the dictatorship of absolute authority, a democracy privileges sense perception

and, consequently, accepts and promotes bodily pleasures. Thus, the oratory prevalent at the time of the Sophists could only be devised as to appeal to sense perception. But as Havelock notes, this began to change by the time the fourth century was under way (158). Not, as Havelock proposes, because literacy came on to the scene, but because the conditions in the culture created the need for a more a discourse that moved away from the body and toward the mind. In the 5th century, reading and writing continued alongside oral discourse. In fact, the reading practices themselves were congenial to the oral/aural experience of being present at an oration. Havelock explains that oral cultures tend to use concepts in situational, operational frames of reference that are minimally abstract in the sense that they remain close to the living human lifeworld (49). So too, when the oral cultures take pen in hand, they still remain close to human sensual praxis. Again, this is due to the congeniality of rhetoric, to democracy and aiethesis. However, the slippage of pleasure in the oral was directly associated with the slippage of democratic politics in the assembly. As rhetorical discourses moved away from the body, philosophical discourses moved into that new place: the intellect, or the mentalistic and rational. Plato, and Aristotle with his systematic rhetoric, were catalysts to this process. But again, the "chemical reaction" that they were catalysts to was the disintegration of democracy, and with it the body;

not the disintegration of orality, devoid of its material circumstances.

Before I address the "disintegration of the body" in rhetorical discourse, I will first point out the particular sensual manners in which the orators and the teachers of orators engaged sensually with both their "auditory" audiences and their "visual" readers.

In regard to the "auditory" in the fifth century, there is evidence of wide interest in phonology and euphony; the linguistic practices of the sophists included the "beauty of sound" for pleasure-giving. For example, they explored many aspects of the sounds of words. Hippias discussed questions of accentuation and spelling; Protagoras and Prodicus addressed the "rightness" in speech; and Gorgias showed how elaborately and effectively a prose-speaker could use effects of rhythm and assonance to influence his audiences (Stanford 8-9). They chose words for the sake of their suitability in rhythm, voice-melody, timbre quality, tempo and volume-variation, as well as for their meaning. The aim of these sophists was not just to find words with the right meaning, but to find the words whose sounds embodied those meanings most effectively; thus, stirring the emotions and giving an audial pleasure (Stanford 78).

In addition, this oral-aural preoccupation is conjoined with the function of the Periclean democracy, with how human beings interacted in practice. The concept of "right speaking," orthoepeia, emphasized the importance of clear

articulation in pronouncing syllables. The word for this, diarthrosis, a metaphor taken from anatomy, refers to the clear demarcation between the limbs and the rest of the body. As a concept, it embodied a principle which, as Stanford explains, is characteristic of all Greek art, literature and thought, i.e., the distinct perception of the separate parts in a complex whole (144). Insofar as these principles of euphony demonstrated balance and harmony, they demonstrated the important of integrating the individual with the whole, i.e, the private citizen with the polis. That euphony is an important feature of a workable democracy is undisputed. This is how rhetorical endeavors, not force, balance and maintain a political community. As Stanford explains, if we want to understand Greek civilization we must not neglect Greek standards of beauty and ugliness in matters of vocal sound, anymore than in the visual arts or in music (49).

In regard to reading in the 5th century, one can see quite immediately that the notion of abstraction, analysis and metaphysical discourse could not possibly be associated entirely with "the written word and the alphabet." In ancient Greece, reading without speaking the words seems to have been a rare happening. The written letters informed the voice, the voice informed the ear, and finally the ear together with the muscular movements of the vocal organs, conveyed the message to the brain. Consequently, the writer, knowing that every syllable he wrote must be spoken and heard by the private reader, was bound to choose his language with

scrupulous attention to euphony. In sum, classical texts were never intended to be read only by the eye; written words were more like memory-aids to remind readers of certain sounds (Stanford 3). As a rule, reading was reading aloud, even for private study. In fact, there is no clear reference at all to silent reading by any Greek until after the fourth century A.D. (Stanford 1-2).

This striking quality of reading was noticed by Nietzsche. He notes that when a man read in antiquity, which was seldom, he read to himself in a loud voice, with all the crescendos, inflections, variations of tone and changes of tempo in which the ancient public world took pleasure. In fact, Nietzsch remarks, the rules of written style were the same as spoken style. These rules depended on the development and requirements of the ear and larynx. Accordingly, when one reads an ancient oration, for example, one is reading a discourse meant to be spoken, to be felt by the orator's mouth and the listener's ears. But when one speaks and reads, one transports the words from an inanimate page to an alive and moving body (179).

This discussion asserts that conditions are not separate from the forms that a discourse will inhabit. As the conditions surrounding the Periclean democracy are distinct from the conditions surrounding Athens after the Pelopponesian War, so too are the modalities of discourse and their variations. These modalities and variations are not because of it being of an "oral nature" or a "literative

nature," but because of certain conditions producing certain needs.

Take, for example, the conditions at the time of Plato. In 404, with the end of the Peloponnesian War and the total defeat of Athens, an assembly ratified a proposal whereby thirty men were appointed to direct the administration. "The Thirty," as they were called, along with their councillors magistrates and "whip-beareres," executed 1,500 men and banished 5,000 (Hammond 443 ff). There persisted a hatred and fear of oligarchy and this prejudice spread to the social and intellectual circles from which they had sprung, the aristocratic, free thinking and outspoken (448). The intellectuals acted not as leaders but critics of Athenian democracy and literature and art drew inspirations not from the state but from the individual, for philosophy was concerned primarily with the soul; the citizens became more self-interested (526). Clearly, withdrawal, which often manifests itself in metaphysical conceptualization, is often initiated by prevailing conditions, not because the discourse is primarily oral or written.

Plato, responding to the conditions of the Pelopponesian War, developed his theory of forms. Contrarily, Havelock writes that Plato's theory of forms was a historical necessity because of the arrival of the new [written] level of discourse; that it enabled the reflective, scientific, technological, theological and analytic levels of thought (267). But even though "orality" corresponds to Plato's

definition of opinion as a state of mind that deals with becoming rather than being, and with the many rather than the one, and with the visible rather than the invisible and the thinkable (Havelock 189), it was not "orality" but the body that provoked Plato's wrath.

Plato's argument for Forms in the Phaedo clearly delineates the distinctions between the body, the soul and sensible particulars. Plato theorized Forms because pleasures, pain and the bodily senses interfere with the intellect and the knowledge of true reality (Grube 90). The soul needs to be freed from the body to attain knowledge. If knowledge is unattainable, it is because the body interferes with its acquisition.

In 78e, Socrates argues that particulars never remain in the same state. This position directly relates to Socrates' consideration of the body as that which changes and of the soul as that which stays the same (79c-80b). For example, in 79c:

> For to investigate something through the senses is to do it through the body. It is dragged by the body to the things that are never the same.

In this case, it is because of the body that particulars are peceived in a certain way. For Plato, the body is multiform, unintelligible and never consistently the same (80b).

Another instance where Plato comments on the disposition of the sensibles themselves is in 75a. In talking about the

Equal, Socrates argues that objects, when placed in relationship to the Forms, are deficient. Ultimately, what Plato is trying to demonstrate is that in assessing a certain degree of deficiency in an object, one must have prior knowledge of a Form in order to make reference to it in this manner. The assessment of prior knowledge is Plato's theory of knowledge through recollection. This theiry directly manifests knowledge as that which is in place and stable through time.

The above represents that Plato, in making references to the states of sensibles themselves, was methodically trying to prove elements of his twofold thesis: (1) the soul stays the same and the body changes; (2) all knowledge is recollection. These two elements combine to strengthen Plato's theory of Forms, and with it the notion that it is because of the body that the soul is deprived from true reality.

As pointed out, the body functions as an interference between the soul and knowledge of the Forms. Plato argues that knowledge is virtually unattainable until death, making the Forms, even though they do not change and could be knowable, unknowable because the body deceives the soul (65c) and confuses it (66a). It is in death that the soul separates from the body and is able to attain knowledge (64a-c). Thus, the point is that the soul needs to be freed from the body. This is because: (1) passions and emotions are attributed to the body and (2) the senses are vague and imprecise.

Therefore, Plato maintains that those who practice philosophy in the right way should keep away from all bodily passions, master them, and not surrender themselves to them (82c). Desire imprisons the philosopher in the body (82e).

Accordingly, Plato writes in 65e-66a that one will come closest to the knowledge of Forms if one approaches it with thought alone and without any sense perception. Furthermore, he writes in 96b, that we do not attain knowledge through that which changes; thus, we do not attain knowledge through the body and its changing senses of sight, hearing and smell. One should consier as true, only that which is examined by other means than the sensible and the visible (83b). In effect, Plato attempts to prove that in order to achieve knowledge, one must withdraw from the senses, from the body and its patterns of deception.

Therefore, as Cornford writes, all knowledge of truths, for Plato, as distinct from immediate acquaintance with sense-data, involves acquaintance with Forms. Forms are outside the realm of perception and Heraclitean flux. Thus, perception, even within its own sphere, is not knowledge at all (106). True knowledge is wholly conceptual and essentially independent of sense; knowledge is only of universals, Ideas [eidos]. The particularity of the "this," the "here" and the "now" is strictly unknowable (Schiller 56-57). The Ideas are the only true reality; sensible things are, for Plato, "debased, unintelligible copies" of the Ideas and are not truly real (Schiller 58). Human perceptions and

human actions must invariably refer to the Ideas, for they are independent and unvarying standards; therefore, knowledge can only be attained if it transcends experience and becomes what is universal and absolute (Guthrie 5,7). As Schiller points out, the "Idea of Good" is Plato's substitute for God; it demands that knowledge shall be unified, ordered teleological, rational and good (54). Plato, as did Parmenides, privileged the powers of human reason over the senses; but where Parmenides rejected the senses entirely, Plato utilized them as a "starting point which the mind must quickly leave behind" (Guthrie 7). Also, the Forms for Plato, was a "one" which controlled a "many." This "one," formed a stablility whereby the flux of perceptions could be measured and apprehended (Schiller 52).

As this discussion indicates, the issues at hand are "the dualistic chasm between the Real and the Phenomenal"; "the dualistic antitheses between thought and sensation, knowledge and opinion" (Schiller 57). In other words, the fundamental distinction to be drawn lies between the calculative or rational and the appetitive capacities, with the spirit of will lying between (Havelock 203-204).

For Plato, when the autonomous subject can no longer recall and feel, he can know; he can be confronted with a thousand abstracted laws, principles, topics, and formulas which become the object of this knowledge (Havelock 221). Platonism insists that one think of isolated mental entities

or abstractions and that one use abstract language in describing or explaining experience (Havelock 257). As one might expect, abstract language for Plato was tied to the withdrawal from bodily experiences and the concrete; however, literacy does not unilaterally engage one in the kind of abstraction that Havelock is positing.

As I discussed earlier, the ancient Greeks when reading, did not abstract themselves from their sensuality. They trandported euphony to the written realm, their bodies were still engaged in the pleasures of the senses. In their reading was a balance between vision and sound. As Ihde writes, in the wider Greek culture, the Appollonian love of light was balanced with the Marsyasian love of sound (Listening 15).

However, this balance is shifted toward abstraction from the time that Plato is saying that phonetics and linguistics are not of supreme importance for the philosophic seeker of reality (Stanford 15) to the time that Aristotle is valuing sight as the principle source of knowledge (Ihde, Listening 7) and making categorical distinctions between classes of things.

These classes of things, for Aristotle, also included the emotions. Aristotle promotes a rationalistic enterprise whereby the passions of the audience can be calculated and determined. He explains passions in terms of cause and effect. For example, in the Rhetoric (1378a), he writes that each of the emotions must be divided under three heads: (1)

the disposition of mind which causes the emotions; (2) the persons toward whom the emotions are directed; and (3) the occasions which cause the emotions. In so doing, Aristotle claims, one could be able to arouse that emotion. In other words, an emotion is something that can be calculated and determined. Not only can its emergence be explained, but its emergence is caused. It is not surprising that Barthes comments on Aristotle's rhetoric of probability and a "grid of passions." "For Aristotle," Barthes writes, "the passions are ready-made pieces of language which the orator must simply be familiar with" ("Old Rhetoric" 75).

Indeed, the Sophists prior to Aristotle were devising linguistic elements that would be appropriate to specific occasions; however, they did not make predetermined categories that would be restrictive of chance and the sponteneity of the moment. Concrete human experience makes allowance for such occurrences. Not all experience is classifiable or predictable. The Sophists knew this to be so.

In sum, when euphonic elements of written discourse were decreased, abstraction, or minimization of bodily experience, was facilitated. This was already under way by the time of Aristotle.

What is it, then, about sound that comes into play in both oral and written discourse? I will now look at sound as a human that is related directly to linguistic concerns. I will then consider how reading becomes not only a visual enterprise, but one that is oral/aural and erotic.

Ong explains that sound is more real or existential than other sense objects, despite the fact that it is also more evanescent. Sound is related to present actuality rather than to past or future; it must emanate from a source here and now discernibly active, with the result that involvement with sound is involvement with the present (Presence 111-112). The experience of sound is also an experience with one's own and another's "interiority." Sound binds interiors to one another as interiors. Even in the physical world, as Ong explains, this is so. Sounds echo and resonate, provided that reciprocating physical interiors are at hand. Thus. the spoken word moves from interior to interior (Ong, Presence 125). The auditory dimension is pervasive in that one does not merely hear with one's ears but with one's whole body. Sound permeates and penetrates one's bodily being (Ong, Orality 45). As Ong explains, when one is face to face with another in speech, the other's speaking fills the space between the two and one becomes auditorily immersed and penetrated as sound "physically" invades one's body (Orality 79).

In sum, sound is embodied expression that is concrete; the expressive activity of one in speech is an intentional, directed and focused activity (Ihde, Sense 171-172). Human speech is always an act, an engagement of the person in things and others where one apprehends oneself in participation and relation (Gusdorf 36 ff). The ancient Greek orators were aware of these qualities of speech and

incorporated the euphonic precision into their discourses, both oral and written. In this way, one can read an oration, even in translation, and hear the resonance of the words, i.e., feel the intensity of address. As Ong writes, there is a continuum between voice, voiced reading and voiceless reading; even voiceless reading can subtly reestablish its secret liaison with the adherence of the spoken word (155).

Even when it came to reading, the Greeks knew how to "engage" the reader as aud-ience. They did not separate words in writing, and thus, the reader had to actively engage himself in the text in oreder to actively "participate" in understanding meaning (Stanford 145). As Iser explains in The Implied Reader, a text must be an arena in which one can participate. The text should be conceived in such a way that it will engage the imagination; it is a pleasure only when it is active and creative. If one were to be given the whole story, if everything were laid out cut and dried, the result would be boredom (275). In sum, great works are constructed so that we experience the doing, not primarily the done (Welsh 45).

Clearly, with the orality-literacy dichotomy cast aside, one can see how ancient rhetorical discourse still yet resonates when read in modernity. This is the case whether it is read in Greek or in translation. The level of euphony and the intensity of address is still yet sensually perceptible by a reader 25 centuries removed. The orations have space within them for the aural audience and the visual

reader to enter. But what carries the sensual, or the erotic, if you will, through ancient Greek orations is the human voice. And whether the reader imagines the occasion of an oration in antiquity or reproduces the ancient voice by reading aloud, he can experience what Barthes calls the "grain of the voice." It is a language lined with flesh where one can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, of the tongue. In other words, the reader experiences the orator's speech as Eros, as the dance of intermittence between desire and pleasure, text and body. As Barthes says, the anonymous body of the actor is thrown into one's ear. "It granulates, it crackles, it caresses, it grates, it cuts, it comes: that is bliss" (Pleasure 66-67).

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