Orality and Literacy - two levels of interface

Orality as exemplified in Tribal, Indigenous Cultures, such as the Mardu Australian Aborigine, the Crow American Indian, or Chukchi of Siberia

Literacy as exemplified in Euro-American Culture

Keep in mind the technological development of literacy itself. Cruciform was developed by the Sumerians around 2800 BCE, which was fundamentally a series of pictographs, used for recording ideas and numbers associated with economic transactions. Semitic languages, such as Arabic, Aramaic, Hebrew and Phoenician, around 1500 BCE, developed consonants, and Greeks around 500 BCE first to add vowels to language. Carbon 14 dating, place the Dead Sea Scrolls (900 documents on papyrus and animal skin, including the entire Hebrew Bible) around 335 BCE - 107 BCE

1. the Physiological Experience as mediated through each mode:

orality - an auditory experience that involuntary unifies the listener in an event as a transitory, evanescent process, conceptualizing that event as reality

literacy - the reader voluntarily engages objects on a page as if permanent representations, conceptualizing an objectified and separated concreteness in reality

2. the ways Meaning/Knowledge are elicited, organized, stored and communicated as mediated through each mode:

orality - pervasively embedded in socially experiential situations (as engaged in stories, ritual, dance, song, regalia, art, architecture, landscape), and contextualized in interpersonal dynamics (terse, minimized use of function words such as prepositions and conjunctions, variation in intonation, personal pronouns are indistinguishable)

literacy - formalized and decontextualized, and non-socially, non-experiential (books, computer)

Orality spawns a participatory, non-dualistic engagement in a reality that is understood as continually unfolding, as “becoming”

Literacy tends to render you as a “subject,” an estranged viewer of a reality fixed as an “object.”

For further discussion see:

