

l'occupation des détroits et de Constantinople par la Russie et qui voulaient faire de Constantinople la capitale de la Confédération slave ou de la Confédération orthodoxe orientale sous la direction de la Russie. Cette idée, qui repose certes sur d'autres sources et qui a pris d'autres dimensions que celles qui nous concernent dans la littérature eschatologique néo-grecque, répond à la fois aux visées expansionnistes des Russes et aux espérances du peuple grec selon lesquelles sa libération serait la conséquence de l'intervention de la "nation blonde"⁸.

Comme nous l'avons déjà dit, la présente étude est le fruit d'un long travail de recherche et de consultation d'archives; elles est riche en matériaux inédits et constitue une source de l'héritage spirituel néo-grec. Elle s'inscrit dans le patrimoine d'un peuple qui n'oublie pas le danger venant de l'Est, mais pas davantage les prolongements de ce même danger du côté de l'Ouest papiste, d'un peuple qui vit sur notre planète sans parents.

Il faut rendre hommage à l'attitude de l'auteur face au problème de la thèse-antithèse du patriarche Anthime de Jérusalem et d'Ad. Coraès ainsi que face au mouvement des Collyvades. Il faut également rendre hommage à son objectivité et à son respect à l'égard des mouvements idéologiques à l'époque turque⁹. L'auteur a fait ses études à Thessalonique, mais il enseigne à Strasbourg depuis plus de vingt ans. C'est à son "éloignement" de l'environnement grec, à sa solitude, et à son vécu aussi des problèmes du Néo-hellénisme, que nous devons attribuer ses efforts et son intérêt pour la Nation et pour l'Eglise. Le livre est dédié au Patriarcat Ecuménique, au sein duquel les commentateurs vécurent et agirent. Ici, en Grèce, nous ne connaissons que très peu la littérature eschatologique néo-grecque, alors que nous connaissons assez bien la littérature occidentale contemporaine (catholique, protestante, anglicane) (p. 8).

Après ce que nous venons d'écrire, il est évident que l'ouvrage de M. Argyriou constitue une contribution importante pour les lettres grecques; une contribution encore plus grande serait sa traduction en grec.

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Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World*. London and New York: Methuen, 1982.

In recent decades a revolution has been brewing in the study of language and literature owing to the modern "rediscovery" of primary orality. Originating half a century ago in Milman Parry's monumental studies of Homeric and Southslav *epos* and later elaborated

8. Pour plus de renseignements, voir C. Papoulidis, "Le Patriarche Oecuménique Serapheim II et les Russes", *Balkan Studies* 17 (1976) 59-66; du même, "The Baptism of the Russians in the Iviron codices 1317 et 1319 of the 18th century", *Balkan Studies* 22 (1981) 73-83; K. K. Παπουλίδης, *Το Ρωσικό Αρχαιολογικό Ινστιτούτο Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (1894-1914)*, Thessalonique 1984, pp. 27-29.

9. "Dans le domaine des valeurs aucun courant idéologique n'a le droit de revendiquer pour lui-même le monopole de la vérité" (p. 682).

largely through the efforts of Albert Lord¹, "oral studies" have since the mid-1950's proliferated at a sometimes dizzying rate across a broadening spectrum of language areas and disciplines². Underlying this surge of interest is the growing recognition that the movement from orality to literacy constituted one of the truly momentous changes in the history of human consciousness. Hence arises a situation both exhilarating and frustrating that confronts many whose interests turn in this direction. For the implications of the orality-literacy question extend into many fields and promise to open new perspectives on many old problems. Yet the diversity and extreme specialization of much of the existing scholarship, concentrating on such detailed matters as the colonic structure of the Greek hexameter or the Serbo-Croatian *deseterac* line or formulaic density in Old English narrative poetry or the Old French *chanson de geste*, tends to obscure its broader significance to all but those working in these areas.

In this context Walter J. Ong's latest book is particularly welcome, both as an introduction and as a major statement in its own right. No newcomer to his subject, Ong has over the past two decades published a number of volumes, most notably *The Presence of the Word, Rhetoric, Romance and Technology, Interfaces of the Word, and Fighting for Life*³, that explore various aspects of the word in its evolution through human cultural history. Perhaps more than any other scholar, Ong has opened up to scholarly study the vast, multi-faceted process of transformation in human consciousness engendered by the "technologies" of writing, print, and the electronic age. Remarkably well-informed in a broad range of subjects, Ong has a distinct gift in discovering major patterns interrelating diverse cultures and fields of study, patterns that often strike one as obvious once they have been pointed out but that no one ever quite seems to have noticed before.

While maintaining this broad evolutionary and cultural perspective, *Orality and Literacy* devotes itself more exclusively than do Ong's previous efforts to setting the differences between the mentalities of oral and literate societies into bold relief. Although the book surveys much

1. Parry's life work, much of it translated from the French, has been republished in *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed. Adam Parry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). Lord's classic study is *The Singer of Tales* (1960; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1965). For a complete review of all of Parry's and Lord's contributions to the subject, see the editor's introduction, "The Oral Theory in Context", in *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord*, ed. John Miles Foley (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1981), pp. 27-122.

2. The most complete bibliography available at present is Edward R. Haymes, *A Bibliography Relating to Parry's and Lord's Oral Theory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Publications of the Milman Parry Collection, 1973). For an excellent and more recent bibliographic survey, see Foley's "Oral Literature: Premises and Problems", *Choice*, 18 (1980), 487-96. Foley's comprehensive annotated bibliography of the oral-formulaic theory, which lists some 1800 items, will be forthcoming from Garland Publishers in 1984.

3. The full citations are: *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1967); *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1971); *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1977); and *Fighting for Life: Contest, Sexuality, and Consciousness* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1981).

of the history and conceptual apparatus of scholarship dealing with primary oral material, it does not offer itself as a handbook to the oral-formulaic theory *per se*. Here the definitive study remains Albert Lord's *The Singer of Tales*, which describes at some length the oral improvisational craft of the Homeric *aoidos* or Yugoslav *guslar* with his traditional "word-hoard" of formulas, themes, and story patterns. Ong, by contrast, is more concerned with characteristic mental processes at their most basic and general level than with the specificities of artistic construction in any particular language tradition or genre. How does writing or the lack thereof help to determine the ways in which individuals and societies think and express themselves? The broad aims of such an inquiry do not permit detailed examinations into (for example) the structure of battle sequences in Avdo Medjedović's *The Wedding of Smailagić Meho*. Yet it can help to illumine the program of assumptions at the basis of oral thought to which Avdo and other oral poets like him have given expression.

After an opening section that reviews some of the major contributions to the modern reawakening to the "oral character of language", the first chapter dwells upon the need of literates to overcome the unconscious biases of their own literacy in their dealings with oral cultures. Indeed, a literate person can never "fully recover a sense of what the word is to purely oral people" (p. 12); the longtime failure of the highly literacized scholarly mind to recognize the mere existence of oral patterns of expression differing from its own appears in the absence of any term for verbal art in oral culture aside from the self-contradicting misnomer, "oral literature". Chapter 2 turns to a closer inspection of the effort of Milman Parry and his successors, the crucial work that has brought the recognition of orality into modern awareness.

Chapter 3, "Some Psychodynamics of Orality", is in many respects the pivotal section of the book, since it is here that Ong outlines some of the major characteristics of "orally based thought and expression". Oral cultures depend on formulas in their thinking as well as their expression, Ong explains, since they are easily recalled: and in a society without writing only those thoughts that can be remembered can survive. Encoding ideas in rhythmically memorable and repeatable verbal patterns, formulas serve not merely the interests of easy expression but comprise the very "substance of thought itself" (p. 35). The economy of oral expression differs from written discourse in other respects as well. It tends to be additive rather than subordinative; aggregative rather than analytic; redundant or "copious"; conservative or traditionalist; close to the human lifeworld; agonistically toned; empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced; homeostatic; and situational rather than abstract (pp. 36-68). Since the spoken word is an event and not a sign or object, since sounds unlike sights "register the interior structures of whatever it is that produces them" (p. 72), oral people perceive the world as interactive and interconnecting, a whole centered in the field of human consciousness rather than isolated and analyzed (characteristic visual functions) into its constituent parts.

Writing, however, removes discourse from the human interactive context that originally produced it and confers upon it autonomy, permanence, and immunity to direct interrogation, as Ong explains in Chapter 4, "Writing Restructures Consciousness". Maintaining that writing is as much a technology as print or computers, Ong reviews the history of scripts, from the ancient pictographs and ideographs down to the alphabet, the crucial discovery that objectified sound and so decisively removed language from the existential sphere of events into the domain of visible things. The slow infiltration of literacy into oral and residually oral cultures, the replacement of memory by written records and its consequences in terms of social institutions and cultural practices, makes a fascinating history that Ong highlights

in some of its more striking aspects but that still needs to be written in its entirety. The discovery of print (the subject of Chapter 5) further catalyzed this process, substituting for the hearing-dominance of oral and residually oral societies the sight dominance typical of the modern world and decisively embedding the word in visual space. Lists, indexes, dictionaries, concrete poetry, the notion of verbal exactitude and the identical copy are all symptomatic of this change. Print heightened the sense of textual closure, completion, self-containment and thus paradoxically sponsored the romantic and post-romantic ideas of originality and self-expressive creativity. The chapter closes with a brief discussion of electronics and "secondary orality", a development whose impact is still being assimilated and that may in the end prove to be as significant as the original discovery and internalization of writing.

Chapter 6, "Oral Memory, the Story Line and Characterization" turns briefly to the study of narrative, contrasting the episodic, non-linear style of plot organization in oral narrative expression with the more climactic, premeditated, self-reflexive manner that literacy promotes with its predilection for "round" rather than "flat" characters and its growing fascination with introspection and the interiority of consciousness. In a more speculative vein, the final chapter, "Some Theorems", attends (in a manner more exploratory than definitive) to some of "the ways in which certain present-day schools of literary interpretation and/or philosophy relate to the orality-literacy shift" (p. 156). Ong devotes separate though brief sections to literary history, new criticism and formalism, structuralism, textualism and deconstructionism, speech-act and reader-response theory, the social sciences/philosophy/biblical studies, and other subjects, stressing throughout the perspectives that a recognition of orality-literacy distinctions opens on these fields of study. Replete with striking and suggestive insights, this section of the book performs the long-needed service of connecting orality-literacy scholarship up with the main lines of contemporary critical theory.

As all these remarks will have made evident, *Orality and Literacy* does not provide a theory and program of research tailored to the specificities of any particular language tradition, although it draws heavily on scholarship of this kind. It is rather an exploration into fundamentals, and for precisely this reason it makes itself relevant to anyone working with primary or residually oral materials or otherwise concerned with the dynamics of oral or literate thinking. One can scarcely imagine any aspect of language or literary study that will ultimately be exempted from considerations of this variety. Clearly the time has come for scholars in many fields to realize that literacy lies at the foundation of their intellectual method and that this fact may have predetermined many conclusions that will now need to be rethought. By outlining so plainly many of the differences between the oral and literate mentalities and thus relativizing the mode of thought in which most of us function, Ong and others dealing with this problem have posed a serious challenge. Yet the challenge contains a promise also. For by recognizing this wider range in the spectrum of human possibilities, we can use the resources of our own literacy with an increased sensitivity to its limitations and so approach the world of knowledge with a greater degree of freedom.