



The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present

By Eric A. Havelock

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When oral culture becomes literate, in what way does human consciousness itself change? And how does the new form of communication affect the content and meaning of texts? In this book, one of the most original and penetrating thinkers in Greek studies describes the transformation from orality to literacy in classical times and reflects upon its continued meaning for us today.

“Fresh insights into the orality-literacy shift in human consciousness from one who has long been studying this shift in ancient Greece and has now brought his vast learning and reflections to bear on our own times. This book is for a wide audience and calls for thoroughly rethinking current views on language, thought, and society from classical scholarship through modern philosophy, anthropology, and poststructuralism.”—Walter J. Ong

“All in all, we have in this book the summary statement of one of the great pioneers in the study of oral and literate culture, fascinating in its scope and rewarding in its sophistication. As have his other works, this book will contribute mightily to curing the biases resulting from our own literacy.”—J. Peter Denny, *Canadian Journal of Linguistics*

“An extremely useful summary and extension of the revisionist thinking of Eric Havelock, whom most classicists and comparatists would rank among the premier classical scholars of the last three decades. . . . The book presents important (though controversial) ideas in. . . an available format.”—*Choice*

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- Sales Rank: #802937 in Books
- Published on: 1988-07-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .60" h x 5.40" w x 8.10" l, .75 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 154 pages

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Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present. The intention of this book is to present a unified picture of a crisis that occurred in the history of human communication, when Greek orality transformed itself into Greek literacy.

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