

**Comments on Corey Horn's
"Literacy's Influence on Our Souls"**
By Nick Navarro

Thinking about what contextual elements in history spark change in the way we perceive the world is a useful endeavor, revealing much about our current cognition and possible future selves. *Literacy's Influence on Our Souls* presents such an exploration to examine the influence the rise of literacy had on the transformation of our soul. The paper presents historical evidence from oralist manifests and argues that Plato played a pivotal role in shifting our conception of our soul, giving rise to a new subjective objective distinction. According to the paper, Plato engendered this shift by redefining the term *Psyche* to mean "to think and produce thoughts". By way of this shift, the subjective-objective distinction replaces destiny, with autonomy. I find the resulting conclusion to be compelling and partially evidential from the reasoning provided. Furthermore, I would suggest that there are a few assumptions that are taken for granite, creating a foggy sense of what this transformation actually entailed. The importance placed upon the subjective-objective distinction could arise from Heideggerian realization of one's own terminacy —the realization of one's own death. Whether or not this is important to the rise of literacy, by giving time to two specific assumptions, I believe a stronger case may be made for the author's view.

There are two assumptions that I believe may have been made too quickly, deserving further exploration. Foremost, the assumption that prior to literacy, "thought [was] uniform" expressible only through the means of speech. Individuals today are capable of expressing themselves in a variety of different ways by means of artistic and cultural mediums. If we are considering ancient times pre-textual, Greeks had a very complex religious system along with countless pieces of art that people find priceless today. In agreement with Havelock, thought is prior to language; individuals perhaps had conception of a soul (or subjective- objective distinction), yet the medium wasn't available to express it. I believe we can find common ground with this statement. However, I find it important to note why our souls transformed in the manner that they did. To do this, I would suggest examining the philosophy of the pre-Socratics further to illuminate how they viewed the soul.

While it is understandable that the body of this paper is concerned with how Plato transformed the soul, to do so, I would spend more time explaining how the pre-Socratic's viewed the world. Much of what the paper is concerned with in relation to Homer, is reasonable. The lack of control over one's life during this time period is important and evidential. The Iliad reinforces ones bond to destiny thoroughly as exemplified by Achilles. It may be important here to emphasize that there was no subjective-objective

distinction in this time, humans were integral to destiny, to nature, and to the gods. To reinforce this point, explaining what some of the pre-Socratic thought could be beneficial to the paper as a whole. All of the pre-Socratic's attempted to answer what the root of reality is in terms of different elements and formulas. Whether you had Heraclites suggesting we're all fire, or Pythagoras' view on mathematics, pre-Socratic's emphasized that humans were not separate from nature, and that in general we are all made of the same kind of stuff. But again I feel we may find common ground in asserting that Plato changed all of this.

The paper concerns itself with the lexical changes Plato brought about, however I find it important to emphasize Plato's conception of the forms. Plato's vision of an ideal world separate from the shadows we see in our everyday lives, engages the term *Psyche* and arguably creates the subjective-objective transformation in our souls. This is why mathematics is such a complex and abstract subject; the subjective objective distinction is evident in what reality is, and what we observe. This transformation of the soul as the paper asserts, is pivotal in the way society today is constructed. Overall, the paper is constructed well, yet it should take time to explore the foundational factors that influence the transformation of the soul.

In my concluding remarks, I will make a few small suggestions to increase the strength of the paper as a whole. Often there is mention of a change in lexical usage of words from when they were spoken orally to when they were written. It could prove beneficial to include definitions of oralist vocabulary as the paper does with textualists modification. In doing so, the shift from these two conceptions of thought will become clearer, emphasizing the effect writing had on thought. Additionally further explanation of why Plato's academy is relevant could justify its use in the paper and perhaps offer further commentary on the way current educational systems interact with thought. Finally, outlining the points of the paper in the introduction could give the reader greater focus when reading through the various forms of evidence for literacy changing the way we view our souls.