

Phaedrus and rhetoric assignment

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The foundational and fundamental theories behind communication were erected from Plat's composition of the Phaedra. The main characters, Socrates and Phaedra, whose arguments are both portrayed by Plato, discuss what they believe to be necessary for the responsible practice of rhetoric and writing. Since the beliefs that Socrates shares about rhetoric are not universally known, there are many people in contemporary culture who, according to Socrates' beliefs, practice rhetoric in an inappropriate way.

In today's society, Plat's portrayal of Socrates would disapprove of the inappropriate practices of rhetoric amongst contemporary culture, while John Peters' first chapter from his book *Speaking Into The Air* shows us that writing and other dissemination-oriented media forms of communication may be acceptable despite the views of Socrates. The Phaedra introduced a debate between two philosophers, Socrates and Phaedra. They argue over a speech from a third philosopher, Alyssa, regarding love.

Three speeches were delivered in a dialogue pertaining to the idea that love is supported by the soul, madness, divine inspiration, and the importance of mastering the art one practices. The first part of the Phaedra was filled with debate over the speech of Alyssa and the discussion of love. However, in the second part of Plat's work, "Discussions of Rhetoric and Writing", Eros (love) was not discussed. Instead, they use the speeches from part one as a catalyst to discuss the true nature of communication.

They discuss the knowledge an orator should have to execute a concise argument, the proper way to compose a speech, and writing. Socrates said that, "every speech must be put together like a living creature, with a body

of its own; it must be neither without head nor without legs; ND it must have a middle and extremities that are fitting both to one another and to the whole work” (Plato, ICC). Socrates believed that a speech was subject to organic change and composition. Socrates explains to Phaedra that rhetoric is an art, and more importantly, a means to direct the soul in both public and private discourse.

Rhetoric is the art of effectively persuading an audience or listener through dialogue or written script. It is used to form a concise argument that is persuasive and exempts flashy words that dilute an effective argument. Dialogue that masks the truth and skews away from a persuasive argument is against Socrates’ belief in rhetoric. Socrates references Alkibiades’s speech to elaborate on the contrast of artfulness in rhetoric, he states that an argument with less ambiguity will make one’s speech more impacting.

Socrates explains to Phaedra that rhetoric can be an artless practice if the speaker focuses on opinion rather than truth. Having the belief that one does not need to know the truth, Phaedra believes that one can master the ability to portray specific ideas through broader dialogue. This form of communication is called dialectic. Dialectic is very useful but has the potential to be used improperly. Socrates acknowledges those who practice the improper use of the skill. A speaker who uses dialectic as a way to benefit themselves at the expense of others is what Socrates would call a sophist.

An example of a sophist could be a speaker who would appease encourage the audience to identify with the speaker. Since presenting false information

is an unfair advantage over the audience, it is a discouraged method amongst Socrates and Plato. There are many examples of this that occur in pop culture today. Tyler, the Creator, is a wealthy and successful rap artist from Los Angeles with a growing cult following called "Wolf Gang". His followers are intrigued by his bizarre behavior and aggressive lyrics.

Subjects like drug use, violence, and homophobia are predominant subjects in the "gangster" style rap, which Tyler's lyrics heavily embody. Even though his behavior and lyrics are suggestive of these topics, Tyler is sober, non-violent, and accepting of all sexualities. The purpose behind this is to fabricate an illusion of rebellion to his fans, which subsequently draws him to a populous audience. An example of this can be seen in his song Jamb where he raps "Let's smoke weed, that shit I need, be the shit that's green, a little purple and pink" (Tyler, the Creator).

He seems to condone this behavior when he doesn't do it himself. The New York Times wrote about Tyler and his rap collective Odd Future and asked interesting questions provoking this argument like "Are the group's lyrics reports of literal desires? The goofs of misguided kids? Does the difference matter?" (Carcinoma). Socrates would see this as misleading because he is appealing to an audience and also to the norm of gangster rap to benefit his image as an artist. Phaedra and Socrates continue their conversation to discuss and determine the basis for effective writing.

Socrates explains to Phaedra the myth of Teeth and Thames. Teeth was an Egyptian deity and Thames was the Egyptian king at that time. The myth explains that when Teeth grants the ability of writing to the King, he tells him

to integrate and disseminate the art of writing with the population. Thames rejects this request on the basis that instead of helping his people, writing would only serve as a “remedy for reminding, not remembering” (Plato, AAA). Thames’ thought was that being gifted in writing only results in temporary wisdom.

Plato is trying to communicate that the only way to truly know something is through conversing, asking questions, and exchanging ideas in a dialectic manner. Socrates believes this because writing does not use the fundamentals of expression that are delivered in a speech. Writing is a general practice with a broader audience than in a speech, which allows the audience to criticize, question, or respond. Politically, it is better to hear and explain the argument than to subjectively read. This is because the ability to defend or elaborate itself beyond the words written.

Writing during Plat’s time was a new and versatile form of communication. It granted those who knew how to read the access to a plethora of written information. Evidence in Socrates’ beliefs that writing is a restricting form of communication can be seen in today’s society. Forbes would argue that the social media outbreak of Backbone, Twitter, Reedit, etc. Hinders our ability to efficiently conceptualize our thoughts in a face-to-face situation. For example, a Backbone format is bodied with a main page of mutual friends posting feeds about their life and opinions.

This is a form of restricted writing because this format is accompanied by a social pressure where one is restrained to fully rebuttal or emote due to one’s personal image. The posts on Backbone are crafted from the user’s

portrayal of themselves and endless time to collect a formulated post. The article influence" (Granny). Backbone feeds into this offsetting form of communication through shared dialogue and interface. Forbes also conducted a study amongst Backbone users and found that, " one in five (users) had shunned a former colleague because of an online conversation-gone-bad" (Granny).

Socrates would feel that the instant reciprocation of dialogue would lack the cleverness and initialization of a dialogue shared between people. Although Plato feels that writing is an inefficient form of communication, some may see writing as useful form of one way communication. Writing is the foundation for all recorded knowledge which must bear some resourceful value. Dissemination, or the spreading of information, is dependent on conceptualized dialogue. Writing may restrict the writer from a specific audience, but it grants the text to be read by any person exposed to it.

This preference gives more freedom to the writer where the audience cannot respond. If the writer thoroughly conceptualizes his argument he may be able to sway a broader audience as effectively as a speech. Dialogue is a valued form of communication because it permits a reciprocation of shared ideas. John Durham Peters, author of *Speaking into the Air*, would insist that dissemination through writing is an effective alternative form of communication because the reader does not need to reciprocate, yet the message is still portrayed. Peters alludes to dissemination through his comparison of Jesus and Socrates.

He considers them both philosophers and analyzes their methods of communication. Peters explains how Socrates delivers his ideas through reciprocated dialogue, while Jesus disseminated his ideas through his followers and disciples. Peters' article states that, " parables attributed to ' Jesus' by the synoptic gospels provide a counteraction: invariant and open dissemination, addressed to whom it may concern" (Peters 35). Invariant and open dissemination are responsible for the spread of Christ. The Bible and widespread Christianity in today's society is supporting evidence to Peters' belief in dissemination.

Jesus disseminated his message through those who identified with his message. The Bible was written by those affected by the message of Christ, creating further dissemination for those interested in the message. Peters argues that dialogue is practical but insufficient compared to dissemination. Writing and other dissemination-oriented media may be acceptable after all because it allows the mass sharing of knowledge without reciprocation. If communication were formed by dialogue only, we would be unable to share and record the abundance of information we are constantly disseminating.

The history and foundations of communications would not be the same with Plat's composition of the Phaedra. Socrates' and Phaedra' elaboration of the responsible practice of rhetoric and writing was thoroughly argued by Pewter's emphasis on dissemination. Effective communication was the goal of these rhetoricians. They believed that using these skills in a sensible manner could be very effective and powerful to an individual, and audience, and society. L.) Intro: Explain the basic idea of rhetoric and Plat's Phaedra. Include a brief description of the Phaedra as well as state my thesis. II.

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Thesis: In today's society, Plat's portrayal of Socrates would disagree with the inappropriate practices of rhetoric amongst contemporary culture, while John Peters' chapter " Dialogue and Dissemination" from his book Speaking Into The Air shows us that writing and other dissemination-oriented media forms of communication may be okay despite the views of Socrates. B.) I.)

First paragraph: Describe the premise behind Phaedra and the arguments formed between the three philosophers. II.) Second paragraph: Elaborate on the application of rhetoric and the discussion between Socrates and Phaedra.

III.) Third paragraph: Introduce dialectic, sophists, and give example of an inappropriate form of rhetoric. C.) I.) Fourth paragraph: Introduce Socrates idea of writing and explain his example of the myth of Thames and Teeth.

II.) Fifth paragraph: Explain the restrictions of writing and give textual evidence for an example in today's society. III.) Sixth paragraph: Explain dissemination and how it can be useful through writing. D.) I.)

Seventh paragraph: Explain the ideas behind John Durham Peters' chapter in Speaking into the Air and how they argue the points made by Socrates. E.) I.)

Conclusion: Summarize the points made by Plato, and Peters. Note the relevance of the two pieces and their role in communication. Bibliography

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