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Introduction to Language and Technology

Language and Technology Narrative

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**A VISION IN LANGUOLOGY**

As far back as I can remember, I have always been fascinated with learning. As any child would be, I would imagine, I have always been curious about the world around me. I've always asked questions and when I didn't find the explanation logical enough, I asked more. Of course this would sometimes annoy my mother, but she would always explain to the best of her ability. Logic was very important to me was because I never asked questions just to ask them. I've always asked questions in order to apply the information received to my own life. The roles that language and technology played in my life, was relative to the way I communicated and expressed my thoughts with family, friends and professional associates and acquaintances. I was determined to gain knowledge through experiences and oral traditions. I learned the difference between being enlightened and experienced, the difference between retention and wisdom. Language and technology are both a major part of my life, and this piece will explain how it came to be just that.

Before I fully learned how to read and write, I found myself being very elated by the thought of creation. I was interested in writing tools, but only truly understood their purpose when I went to school. I remember the day I learned how to write. My neighbor had come down with his two year-old son and showed my mother that his son was able to write his own name. My mother decided then and there that my sister and I would learn too. When I was around three years-old, my mother would make us write our names on paper. I didn't know how to hold the pencil on my own, so my mother would guide my small hands across the paper. I recall getting upset when she wouldn't let me do it on my own. I did not have full control of my motor skills (well, when it came to writing anyway), and would often pull away from her grasp as she tried to teach me how to write. Eventually my mother let me attempt to write my name on my own. When I saw the letters flowing from my pencil and the idea that I was in control of this "art", the feeling was indescribable. I still have this feeling to this day.

I'm not sure if I would say that I grew up in a traditional household, even though the definition of what a "traditional family" is has changed. My mother was a single mother and she raised my sister and I on her own. She was very strict, but honestly, it wasn't overbearing. She wanted to make sure that she lead by example and that we followed suit. I would say that my mother was well-invested in orality. She believed in passing down knowledge and traditions. She was born and raised in The Bahamas grew up on the island of Nassau, which is also the capital of the country. Her mother and father took my mom and her siblings to church every Sunday and instilled the teachings of the Christianity in their children. Family was very important to my grandparents, and they believed that it took a village to raise a child. My mother was taught to speak and show respect to her elders, regardless of whether they were strangers or relatives.

My grandmother was a housewife who raised nine children alongside my grandfather. She cooked, cleaned and took care of her children, which back then, was a common role for women to play at home. My grandfather owned a pool-cleaning business and many of his clients were the rich and famous citizens of The Bahamas. He worked hard at his job and brought home the money for my grandmother and their children. They were comfortable with their roles and passed down their beliefs of a strong family unit to my mother and her siblings. My grandparents, if they were alive today, would credit all of their successes and will to persevere to their belief in God. To this day, my mother is a strong believer in Christianity and tries her best to live in a way that would make God pleased with her life. As the study of orality has proven, it indeed an apparatus of language and technology that is good for the soul.

Education was always something my family emphasized. One thing my mom always recited was, "I can do a lot of things for my children, but I can't make them get an education. You would have to want and do that for yourself". She valued it greatly, and because of this I valued it too. I excelled in several areas of school. All throughout elementary school, I was placed in gifted classes and even in high school where I was placed in advanced classes. I received several awards which included, "Student of the Year" and "Student of the Month". I've also received certificates for excellent progress in several subjects, mainly English and social studies. I have no doubt in my mind that my mother would've been disappointed if I didn't accomplish a lot of the things I have. It's not that I was doing it for her, but I knew that it was something she would appreciate. It was my way of showing her that I listened and understood where she was coming from.

When I was growing up, television was a luxary and definitely not something my mother left to raise her children. For the most part, the television was purely for entertainment, not an essential part a life as it has become for many people. Days we would come home from school, my mom made sure our homework was completed and our chores were done before we even considered turning the television. On the other hand, she allowed us to listen to music whenever we wanted to. I especially enjoyed listening to music when I was doing chores or my homework. It calmed me and made the time spent doing assignments go by quickly. As an adult, music is still something I enjoy to get me through assignments and household chores. It has been implemented into my domestic routines.

As a child, I quickly developed a large vocabulary. I would assume that reading as much as I did is what helped me. I spent hours upon hours reading all types of books and documents. I read manuals, guides, maps, textbooks, novels, biographies, auto-biographies, fiction, non-fiction and even the dictionary. The secret to me developing a vocabulary at a young age was to always keep my dictionary nearby. Whenever I read and came across a word I did not understand, I would immediately stop and find it in the dictionary. I would read the meaning several times and even look up synonyms to get a clearer understanding of the term. I would then reread the passage and replace the unfamiliar word with one of the simpler synonyms. It would all make sense to me and I would then be able to apply the difficult word to my day-to-day life.

When it comes to speech or anything that involves oral communication, I honestly feel that I am less proficient than when it comes to writing. I have always been nervous in front of large audiences and I sometimes found myself stumbling over words and even pronouncing some of them incorrectly. When you are speaking, there are many opportunities to forget significant details, your tone may be off, your confidence may seem low and people may even question your intellect. Writing, unlike speech, gives you the opportunity to utilize your skills to their fullest capacity, and even if there are significant details left out, you are given the opportunity and the time to go back and insert them. You may use words that may have otherwise slipped out of memory and explain relevant information with sufficient details. This helps greatly in that it doesn't make you come across as a person who doesn't know what they're talking about. You can embody confidence and intelligence through writing and connect with your audience on a higher plane.

When I was a pre-teen, my mother introduced my sister and I to our first computer. It was both an exciting and intimidating experience for us. It was exciting because we knew that the computer held a world of possibilities and endless sources of information. It was intimidating because we didn't know where to start and what we would do with said information. At first, my mother told us that the computer would only be for school assignments and all other activities had to be monitored. For the first two years, we did just that, and then when my sister and I entered high school, we became aware of social media.

Social media, by way of the Internet, exposed the good, the bad and the ugly of society. From braggers, to racists, "fronters" (people who put on an act for their audiences) and perverts, to the kind, caring and the helpful. Social media has brought many groups of people together who would have otherwise not been accessible to one another. It made communicating fairly easy and attainable to all types of people across the globe. In a way it has bridged the gap between communities and cultures. Many lives have been impacted negatively and positively due to social media. It uncovers the good people do and the bad, and whether we like it or not, we must admit that it changes our perspective of the world surrounding us. We learn a lot about other people's heritage and this can bring about discussions filled with knowledge and information. The Internet allows us to follow up with current events, breaking news, political, economic, and social issues all while being able to discuss these things with various people from all aspects of life.

For a while I used my social media pages to write creatively and share my pieces with other authors. Sometimes I get a thought and an inkling to write them down. I would just write. My thoughts would flow freely and I would just write. When I complete a writing, I post it on my page and tag some of my writer friends to see if they understood where I was coming from. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. At times I would have to explain what the focus of my writing was. I have revisited pieces that I have written months and even years ago and end up confused by what I read. This just shows to me that writing is indeed an art. It's a picture almost. Just how a camera or an artist captures an image in time, my mind captures thoughts and I write them down at that specific moment. I realize that my thoughts don't always have to make sense to me at all times, but what matters is that they once did.

While I did use social media for creative expression, I have realized that it can create a false sense of intelligence and pride. I thoroughly enjoy browsing news pages and reading the comment sections to see what people have to say about the articles. Online everyone is an expert. They seemingly always know what to say and oftentimes have a great explanation to back up their opinions. As Neil Postman described in his essay *The Judgement of Thamus*, King Thamus strongly believed that the technology of writing would give people a false sense of superiority. Thamus also believed that students who were taught this technology would just use reflection instead of using "internal resources". He felt as though people would just receive a lot of information without instruction, thus making them ignorant. This is exactly what I feel most people on social media rely on. They retain information, recite that same information and get it confused with wisdom.

I would also like to revisit another essay by Neil Postman entitled *From Tools to Technocracy*, in which he talks about technology taking precendence over systematic beliefs and world views. Postman mentioned a book by Frederick W. Taylor called *The Principles of Scientific Management*, where Taylor explains that human labor and thought is efficiency, but also that technical calculations are far more superior to human judgement. Taylor felt this way because humans are imperfect and subject to error. He felt that human judgement can be clouded by a lot of biases, vagueness and unnecessary complexity. Perhaps this is why people use the Internet to paint a facade of who they really are and how they really think. They understand that in a world like ours, technology, for the moment, will alwaysappear to be the greater and more accurate force. The creator and has become the creation and the creation has become the creator.