A rhetoric of the sacred other from Enheduanna to the present: Composition, rhetoric, and consciousness

Author
Binkley, Roberta Ann

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Willard, Thomas

Abstract
I examine particular characterizations of consciousness in the Western tradition of rhetoric that inform contemporary academic and professional discourse, characterizations built upon clearly gendered dichotomies. I begin by analyzing the metadiscourse of Enheduanna, (ca. 2350 B.C.E.), Marcus Tullius Cicero (d. 43 B.C.E.), and Carl Gustav Jung (d. 1961). Specifically, I examine the commentary concerning their composing processes as reflective of cultural conceptions of cognition. In all three cases they engender their creative process as sacred, other, and feminine. Focusing on Enheduanna, I analyze her works in terms of contemporary feminist theory. The contemporary rhetoric of feminist spirituality, particularly the discourse surrounding the concept of the goddess as an aspect of the feminine divine, I see as a growing phenomenon of popular culture and psychology. One way to investigate the rhetoric of this expanding popular interest is to examine it through the literary work of Enheduanna as the oldest known author. I compare her rhetoric and the modern discourse of the field of Assyriology which surrounds and interprets it. Within particular academic disciplines and their discourses, current perceptions of history effect theory and influence ideology with far reaching consequences. In rhetoric and composition, I analyze the work of three contemporary feminist rhetorical historiographers: Susan Jarratt, C. Jan
Swearingen, and Kathleen Welch. I contend that their influence, as rhetorical Other, on the current perception of rhetorical historiography, influences composition theory. Their individual reinterpretations of classical rhetorical theory and history not only alter perceptions of the foundational past of rhetoric, but they exert an influence on current theories of the understanding and teaching of composition. Turning to popular culture, I then analyze how two modern psychoanalytic interpretations of the Other as feminine divine in contemporary Western society might also function to alter the teaching and understanding of rhetorical theory and composition. I look at two Jungian feminist psychoanalytic theorists (Sylvia Perera, and Marion Woodman) examining their theories in relation to the composing process. I conclude by proposing an expanded rhetoric, one that includes the Other as an aspect of the unconscious, a rhetoric also inclusive of a deepened, recursive, and reflective consciousness. This rhetoric, I postulate, might work itself out as a more comprehensive way to view composition: ethos expanded to a bicameral mind paradigm, pathos as body wisdom, and a logos of the sacred Other. I finish with a proposal titled, “Toward a Rhetoric of the Sacred Other.”