

Words are ultimately defined by the nonverbal (the recognized symbolize, given/intention to/signify)

"Prison-house of ~~words~~ language" can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you can only explain words by other words, of course ~~were~~ language is a prison-house. But words are ultimately explained, have their meaning, in a nonverbal context. Words do not begin from words (e.g., the way a child learns language--Piaget) nor end with words. ^{itself} But of course language has a privileged place: it is where existence [^] in a significant way peaks.

Plato was right. Plato's Socrates expressed his dislike of writing, but admitted that in the last analysis orally uttered words could not make it either. Only living oral exchange between living persons, where words are found in a totalized, existential, personal setting really conveys truth.

Note that this is not at all what Derrida makes out "logocentrism" to be. For Derrida, logocentrism means that persons understand words as having their value because they supposedly render ~~present~~ "present" what each word refers to, and he traces this attitude ^{"phallocentrism,"} to an economy of thought which values spoken words over written words. Plato is saying (and I am saying) that ^{simply} spoken words have their value not because they make present the things they refer to, but because they vivify an entire existential situation in which the things or truths they refer to are set in a person-to-person interchange. (See Gadamer, T&M, 331, ?.) The "presence" in play here is basically the presence of one person to another, which is the most basic and deepest sense of presence.

So Habermas + Heidegger.
Relativism? No, relationism. Every dialogue is in history and is related in one way or another to every other dialogue in history. Traces of relationship may be faint, but they are real. (British English echoes the Empire.)

Orality forces return to the holistic world where rhetoric, which moves human beings to decision, is more comprehensive than logic, which studies only structures and which ~~can~~ not come into ~~being~~ being before writing.

How do computers fit in? Very indirectly. They do not engage truth any more than an unread written text does. When their results are put into a total human setting (as in space exploration, between astronauts or between astronauts and ground crew), then their truth appears. And it can be lethal. Star Wars summitry.

But like writing, computerized expression can be interiorized (hackers).