

TYPING IN TONGUES: ENTERING AN AGE OF SECONDARY PRINT

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## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, my professors, my friends, my bartenders, Britney Spears, Chris Hansen,  
and a younger Hannah who didn't think she would be smart enough to pull this off.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Around 2004, I was jumping on a trampoline with my friend when she mentioned between jumps this new and exciting website. “Have you heard of *Myspace*? It’s really cool!” I had not, so I inquired further. As we continued to jump, she said, “You get to design your own page, choose your best friends, talk to anyone, and add your favorite music and stuff to it. It’s really cool because you can be friends with anybody... you can even be friends with Britney Spears.” I had to stop jumping. The idea of becoming friends with Britney Spears was almost too much for my 10-year-old brain to handle. I absolutely had to know more. “You mean to tell me... that I can be actual friends... with THE Britney Spears? Like, I can talk to and hang out with her?” My friend stopped to think. “No, it’s not like that. She probably won’t answer you if you try to message her, she’s too famous. But it’ll show up on your friends list!” I had stopped listening after the words “you,” “friends,” and “Britney Spears” had been uttered. Perceived closeness with someone I had idolized (keep in mind, this is just after *Toxic* was released) accompanied with a fully customizable page that I could curate was the essence of greatness to a 10-year-old.

Immediately upon returning home I begged my mother to let me make a Myspace profile. I had it all planned out—seafoam green background and bubblegum pink accents. My piece de resistance was for *Toxic* to play upon opening my page. I was moments away from being digital friends with Britney Spears, which would undoubtedly make me famous as well and thus help me achieve the ultimate goal: child stardom. As I sprinted into my mom’s room, I made my case. I thought it was a pretty good one, too. “I can pay the bills when I’m famous after becoming friends with Britney Spears!” My mother turned down the volume on the TV, which happened to be playing an episode of *To Catch a Predator*. Her answer was an absolute and resounding, “Hell no.” Chris Hansen made sure I was never going to have a Myspace page, and I never did.

It was those tools such as Myspace that facilitated a perceived closeness with people near and far, known and unknown, and the expression of self that has consistently held my attention. The internet may be used as a tool for communication, yes, but communication through this tool alters how we perceive our reality, our psychology, what’s appropriate for our rhetorical situation, and the symbol systems through which we understand our surroundings. The theoretical understanding of ourselves through such degrees of hypermediation has since been the thing I think about as I stare at the ceiling at night and my favorite place to examine/explore rhetoric and composition. In fact, why we call the internet a “place” at all is such an exciting question to me that I wrote an entire thesis about it.

I'd like to thank my parents as the liminal boundary that both facilitated and limited my exposure to the internet as both the internet and I grew up. You were also my support system through this whole experience, and without you answering my teary late-night calls, I'm not sure I would've made it through. I would also like to thank Chris Hansen, not only for catching internet predators, but also for making the early years of social media absolutely terrifying to my parents and therefore an exciting and somewhat forbidden place to me. Had the internet been mundane and ubiquitous in my life, I probably wouldn't have thought it was so cool. Lastly, I would like to thank the many professors that have had a hand in challenging my assumptions, helping me become a better writer, and giving me multiple existential identity crises while holding my hand the whole way through. All of you (well, maybe not Chris Hansen) have been some incredible role models for how to treat people with kindness and never stop learning.

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## I. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Al Gore famously called the internet “The information superhighway.” An Austrian promotional campaign for including social media use in IT education administered brochures with titles like “Buckling Up in Cyberspace” and “Media Education in the Passing Lane.” In fact, the price of educational computer games in Germany is set by the transport minister, with all media education falling under the transport ministry’s aegis (Simanowski 51-52). There’s a reason why conversations surrounding digital communication are rife with traffic-related metaphoric language: users communicate through a vehicle, or more specifically, an interface. Our concepts of time and space as a means of both expression and utility are remixed by the tool we’re using as a method of communication, thus restructuring how we perceive ourselves, others, and the world around us. As it is on the road, so it is online: the tool with which we are able to create symbolic meaning affects how we communicate and, conversely, how we use the tool. In this thesis, I first investigate how we create meaning through the use of digitally mediated communication tools. I will begin with providing an overview of Ong’s foundational theories of oral and print cultures, and then identify my key research questions. Next, I will provide the methodology for which I will be doing my analysis, a short review of the literature I intend to use, the theory of secondary print, and three chapters about specific clusters of dynamics that demonstrate the progression from orality to secondary print. I then conclude with how I see secondary print in action and potential avenues for future research.

Returning to the metaphor linking the way we communicate on the highway to the internet, this metaphor is particularly visual in nature. Scholars across disciplines have

long discussed whether or not the interface of words themselves (particularly English's Latin alphabet) are intended to represent visuals or sounds. For example, Derrida in *Signature Event Context* thought of written words as the physical representation of our visual world around us and, more importantly, how we mentally visualize ideas, calling them 'signs.' For Derrida, the sign "comes into being at the same time as imagination and memory, the moment it is necessitated by the absence of the object from present perception" (5), which is then visually represented as a 'mark,' whether that be a painting, writing system, or other 'species' of communication. One scholar in particular, Walter J. Ong, regarded words written and words spoken as distinctly separate in what they are intended to represent. In *Orality and Literacy*, he found this to be problematic, especially when considering humanity's progression from oral culture to written culture. According to Ong, words did not come into being as a sign but rather as a sound, saying, "Thought is nested in speech, not in texts, all of which have their meanings through reference of the visible symbol to the world of sound" (75). As people in an age of print (or typographic culture) where so much of our communication is constructed in visual space, thinking of words as signs is particularly appealing because the term sign suggests a visual reference. Ong argues that our complacency in accepting words as signs is due to typographic cultures' tendency to "reduce all sensation and indeed all human experience to visual analogues" (76). To Ong, "sound is an event in time," which we have a hard time conceptualizing without a visual reference. Ong writes, "Time is seemingly tamed if we treat it spatially on a calendar or the face of a clock... but this also falsifies time. Real time has no divisions at all, but is uninterrupted and continuous... Reduced to space, time seems more under control" (76). Space gives us the ability to conceptualize time, and

therefore visualize sound.

As human cultures moved from dominantly oral communication (a sound in time) into dominantly print communication (a visual in space), it restructured much of the way we perceive the wor(l)d. Oral cultures tended to be community-oriented, believing the spoken word was a part of the human lifeworld. Because there was no way to record what had just been said, thoughts tended to be produced in a collaborative effort, with formulaic patterns and mnemonic devices in order to be easily memorized. When human culture shifted towards become more literate, we no longer had use for memorization, interlocutors, and the like. We became more analytical and thoughtful in our word choices as we read and wrote in solitude. Later, we developed new, powerful tools of communication technology—namely the telephone, radio, and television— in which another move was made: secondary orality. For approximately the past 143 years we've been in an age of speaking from a consciousness restructured by the standards of print. In a basic form this looks like a newscaster reading a teleprompter—what you hear are words that were written, or words as a sound in *time* moving like a visual in *space*, which will be explained later. However, because of the most recent revolution in communication technology, it is possible to argue that secondary orality may no longer fully describe the age we are in.

I propose that due to recent revolutions in communication technology — specifically social media —we may have entered a new stage of literacy. Using Walter Ong's definitions of orality, print, and secondary orality, I hypothesize that digital communication has brought us into an age of secondary print, which I define as words as a visual in *space* moving like a sound in *time*.

### *Research Question*

Due to recent revolutions in communication technology, meaning the ability to send print messages instantaneously to people near and far, is it possible that secondary print may better describe what we see in digitally mediated communication as a step after Ong's theorized secondary orality? Does the new media environment, particularly social media, now create conditions for the written word to simulate oral communication with a consciousness restructured by secondary orality? Using *Orality and Literacy* as a frame, I hypothesize that digital communication has possibly brought us into an age of 'secondary print', or words as a visual in space moving like a sound in time. I build on Ong's theory and argue through an interface and rhetorical analysis of key social media sites and texts why I believe secondary print may be better described by secondary print than as mere extension of secondary orality.

## II. METHODOLOGY

For this thesis, my purpose was to expand on Ong's work in *Orality and Literacy* and update the theories discussed in the book in order to apply them to contemporary communication environments. In doing so, I begin by explaining what Ong said in order to ground the theory of the nine psychodynamics he proposed and tracked through what he called noetic states, meaning orality, print, and secondary orality. Using Ong's work, critiques of Ong's work, and modern digitally mediated communication theory, I then expanded on examples, which I propose as evidence, that I found on several different platforms around the internet; these examples make a notable distinction between secondary orality and what I believe secondary print is. Using these examples, I discuss these differences in order to support my theory of secondary print. In order to analyze these examples, I use rhetorical analysis methods—and later, a repetition analysis—to see if my theory of secondary print better describes our current communication environment than simply an extension of secondary orality.

In order to determine how well secondary print describes the kind of communication happening on computer-mediated communication platforms, I will be conducting a rhetorical analysis. A rhetorical analysis, as Jack Selzer proposes, is a type of analysis or criticism that “can be understood as an effort to understand how people within specific social situations attempt to influence others through language” (281). For my project, I will be using what he calls textual analysis, or “one or another kind of rhetorical terminology as a means of careful analysis of a single symbolic act considered on its own discrete terms” (283). This means that I will be looking at the specific words used in social media posts to analyze them for their rhetorical situation. I will also be

looking to see how these sites emphasize or direct users to navigate the space visually. Using Ong’s theories about orality, print, and secondary orality as the foundation, I will propose the features I believe are unique to secondary print and then provide examples found on public profiles across platforms to demonstrate their use. I will be looking across common social media sites to compare and contrast how different sites organize information. I also do an analysis using a tool called *SongSim* which provides a visual tool to measure repetition in speeches or songs in order to accurately describe the differences in different noetic states of things intended to be heard vs. read.

Although Ong commonly organized psychodynamics similarly to how I organize them in the coming table in his work using subheadings or other forms of emphasis, I categorized and constructed the graph on my own. I did this in order to make sense of the sheer amount of information in a way that I believe is true to what Ong in his book. The psychodynamics outlined in *Orality and Literacy* can be categorized into three groups: 1) affecting our perception of time and space (in blue), 2) affecting our sense of community (in purple), and 3) affecting memory (in red). Using these three categories, I will then discuss the nature of computer-mediated communication to theorize secondary print. Here is a table of Ong’s psychodynamics organized by these color-coded categories:

Table 1. Complete Table of Ong’s Psychodynamics

Psychodynamics of Orality (sound in time)	Psychodynamics of Print (sight in space)	Psychodynamics of Secondary Orality (sound in space)
Additive rather than Subordinative (memory)	Subordinative, linearly structured (memory)	a return of less complex, flatter characters of oral discourse with the climactic linear plot, which respects temporal sequence. (48) (memory)

Aggregative rather than analytic (memory)	Analytic rather than aggregative (memory)	It combines the ease and safety of "preserved" communication (like reading) with visual immediacy and a narrative order. (memory)
Redundant or 'copious' (memory)	Non-repetitive with little need for mnemonic devices (memory)	In terms of formal structures, television's recapitulation of its themes in daily, weekly, and annual cycles, and its repetition of formats, creates some basic trustworthiness and security for the viewer. (memory)
Conservative or traditionalist (community)	Allows for more theoretical thought (community)	Television constructs to a certain degree a world of agreement, permanently creating and reinforcing a consensual field of common, "taken for granted" knowledge. (community)
Close to the human lifeworld (space and time)	Separated from the human lifeworld, considered "dead" (space and time)	From an analytical point of view, audiovisual orality distances sound from real and actual manifestations of presence, from the manifestation of other people's interiority. (Space and time)
Agonistically toned (community)	(community)	We increasingly realize that, as cultures feel the effects of the audiovisual stage of oral communication, they regain their tendency to think in terms of a virtue-vice polarity and start making up heroes and villains again. (community)
Empathetic and participatory (Community)	absent/invented interlocutor, individually minded	Contrary to the private act of reading... the participatory sense

	(community)	transmitted by television can lead to "collective self-presence." (community)
Homeostatic (space and time)	Governed by rules (space and time)	[no distinction noted] (space and time)
Situational rather than abstract (space and time)	Abstract rather than situational (space and time)	Television discourse is less abstract but much more action oriented. (space and time)

These categories will help guide my analysis of both the interface design and the rhetoric of the users' communications by providing a context in which I can study psychodynamics of secondary print. In doing so, I will create a fourth column to show how secondary print uses the elements of the previous psychodynamics and remixes them in its own way. What follows is the description of the analysis I intend to do based on the three categories outlined in the chart.

Alongside my rhetorical analysis, I am looking for visual referents, meaning the way information is organized and how communication is visually structured, to past psychodynamics of oral and print culture. I will look specifically at how information is organized for a user's intake (structural space), as well as the speed involved in both generating and consuming information (time signature), since these are the terms that Ong used to describe the major differences between cultures. This will allow me to see how the interfaces have used specific elements of both print and oral characteristics in their own unique ways.

Rather than conduct an interface analysis from a user design approach, which tends to emphasize production and *what* users do on the site instead of how the site is designed to facilitate user interaction from a theoretical approach, I will instead be

analyzing the interfaces through a somewhat visual rhetoric scope in my rhetorical analysis. Likewise, the methodology used to conduct interface analyses as a methodology in the rhetoric and composition field tends to focus on the connections between users and textual/contextual information within posts themselves. For my purposes, I focus solely on the visual and functions design to look at what is possible as a component to the rhetorical analysis on the posts themselves in order to consider the time and space in which the rhetorical events occur. That is to say: I am looking at the way the site is constructed to see how it limits/facilitates the human/computer and human/computer/human interaction within a more traditional rhetorical analysis that considers the rhetorical events within the structure of the interface. What follows next is an overview of the chapters concerning the theory of secondary print.

### *Perception of Space and Time*

Each interface is designed with distinctly different features, layouts, and functions that facilitate user interactions unique to the platform, which influences how the user may conceptualize themselves, time, and space as purposefully designed by the teams of engineers of the site to encourage and emphasize some things over others. Most literally, I mean the limits a user encounters based on how the site is designed that prompt and/or influence what you can or may be encouraged to do with the function of the site itself. For example, if you were to open these apps right now, they would eagerly demonstrate the following for you: On Facebook, the invitation to create a post (text, photo, or check-in at a location) greets you first followed directly by your friends and followers' stories. On Twitter, you see little more than a header before diving right into the tweets, which

you may have set to show “top tweets” or “most recent tweets.” On Instagram, you see the button to add a post or direct message directly above the friends and followers’ stories. The question becomes all the more interesting when you try to figure out if the information you’re being presented first is supposed to be the most important information, as we would assume would be true for a print document, or if there is perhaps another motive behind this organization, like sheer utility.

These differences, which may seem minor to some, are a selling point for the platform and what may be crucial to attaining the highly sought after attention of the user. And so, in an effort to be unique yet still keep user interaction and volume high, each platform makes critical choices as to how information is organized, how users are able to understand themselves as part of their community within the platform, and the relative feeling of interpersonal interaction. The fact that a like button, a retweet button, and a quote retweet button exists is evidence that Twitter as a social media site encourages such participation in its users. Based on this encouraged interaction through interface design, I will examine sites such as Twitter to see if they display any evidence of Ong’s criteria of orality in print. Namely, I will be looking to examine the role of interfaces in the psychodynamics of oral culture in visual space as print. The results can help situate current psychodynamics within print, secondary orality, or determine if we have moved to secondary print due to the interface’s ability to remix space and time.

### *Perception of Community*

I believe the effects of communicating through digital means are felt by the users. Given how the interface itself organizes the information and facilitates/encourages specific types of interactions through their site, users must conceptualize their

communities in different ways online than they would if they were face-to-face with their communities. Looking at the substance of the conversations happening on these platforms, I will be able to seek out evidence of how users engage with one another. In the oral culture of the past that Ong speaks about in *Orality and Literacy*, he suggests humans were more community-oriented out of necessity. The need for an interlocutor, the need to name things, and the need for communication to be conservative/traditionalist were results of how they understood themselves as part of their community. With the invention of print, we became far more individually minded as a species. Communication was able to be more theoretical and analytically structured, with a now imagined interlocutor and audience. As we entered a stage of Ong's theorized secondary orality, a remix of sorts happened. We may choose to be community oriented if we plan to be, or we may choose not to engage with a community and remain individual. In secondary orality, community dynamics may sound and look like orality: however, our perceptions of ourselves and our group were fundamentally rooted in the linear, analytic thought of print culture. In secondary print, I believe the converse of this to be true. While we may be engaging with a community in a way that looks and feels like print, the group dynamics are more closely mirroring that of oral cultures.

### *Perceptions of Memory*

As Ong described the shifts in cultures, the way we remember things in our communication has shifted with each tool. Whereas enthymemes and repetition were common ways to remember what had been said, those were less important when we gained the ability to record and reference our communication. What has remained the same, however, is the need to be memorable in spaces saturated with information. While

mnemonic devices and repetitive patterns may no longer be necessary as we communicate with a consciousness restructured by print, there may be evidence of a return to memory tools in digital communication, which will be expanded on in chapter VI.

While it is certainly different to how oral cultures used memory devices, evidence that they are still important can be found across platforms. Understanding what is likely to get repeated and producing utterances that are believed to get repeated are arguably an important aspect to a users' ethos. In this section, I will be utilizing the repetition analysis and rhetorically analyzing how we approach memory on digital platforms and the effects that may have on both our perception of time and space as well as our perception of community.

### III. A REVIEW OF ONG AND A PROPOSAL OF SECONDARY PRINT

In order to expand on Walter J. Ong's theories in *Orality and Literacy* (1982), I consider how communication and thinking have extended beyond the book as new communication tools have been created. In order to do so, I first provide a brief overview of Ong's original work and then give some context to the surrounding contemporary conversation and criticism to Ong's work in the field of rhetoric and composition. In the next section, I briefly discuss the contemporary conversation on literacy tools from the perspective of Ong and their facilitation of meaning-making in these contexts. Once the background for *Orality and Literacy* is established, I then provide a discussion about how the interface of the communication tool facilitates the remix of sounds and visuals that Ong theorizes about, focusing mainly on Brandon Hookway's book *Interface* to provide a theoretical foundation. Then, I talk specifically about sound and sound studies as it relates to rhetoric and composition and sound's effects on our psyche. Lastly, I propose my theory of secondary print using the theories discussed in the overview.

#### *Orality and Literacy*

It is hard to imagine that when Ong wrote *Orality and Literacy* in 1982, he foresaw the impact the book would make on how scholars in various fields in communications perceived shifts in literacy. Eleven translations and multiple reissues later, Ong's book continues to be a point of reference as we consider what he theorized all those years ago in our own contexts. In this book, Ong marked the shifts in human communication through three literacy cultures: oral, print, and secondary orality.

Oral cultures' consciousness—their understanding of who they are in relationship to each other and the world around them—is, according to Ong, structured completely by

the dynamic relationship between sound and time. He says, “All sensation takes place in time, but sound has a special relationship to time unlike that of the other fields that register in human sensation. Sound only exists when it is going out of existence. It is not simply perishable but essentially evanescent, and it is sensed as evanescent” (32). By the time someone speaks a word, you do not experience the word all at once, as we visually perceive a word on a page, but as it is vanishing from perception, in time. By the time the beginning of the word leaves your mouth, it is gone. Without technology to replay it, something said would have happened instantaneously and it would be gone forever. This ‘time signature’ (for lack of a better term) of oral communication—present-immediate—is incredibly important to the sensory aspect of verbal interaction and part of what structures the way an oral culture thinks. According to Ong, “language is a mode of action and not simply a countersign of thought... All sound, and especially oral utterances, which comes from inside living organisms, is ‘dynamic,’” (32) essentially moving with time.

Print culture, a shift towards the visual, likewise had distinct effects on our psyche. Writing restructured our consciousness because it reassigned words as sound in present, fleeting time to visuals in quiescent space. Most notably, vision is a dissecting sense (72). Ong is careful not to condemn the visual nature of written culture, noting the powerful changes it gave people to reach across space and time to one another. Because writing changed the sense perception for delivery, it changed the time signature of communication as well. Rather than the present-immediate but disappearing spoken word, written word exists in a past sense, with the potential for it to exist forever, so long as the physical container still exists. This allows us to think far more abstractly and

analytically than before, without concern for memory devices, immediate context, or an interlocutor bound by physical presence.

Lastly, Ong theorized about how new shifts in technology may be facilitating something new: secondary orality. Over the past 143 years, new tools of literacy (namely the telephone, radio, and video) have allowed us to communicate using aspects of both oral and print cultures. These technologies facilitate sound in time; however, unlike primary orality, secondary orality is produced from a consciousness that is antecedent and dependent upon print. As Ong says, “This new orality has striking resemblance to the old in its participatory mystique, its fostering of a communal sense, its concentration on the present moment, and even its use of formulas. But it is essentially a more deliberate and self-conscious orality, based permanently on the use of writing and print, which are essential for the manufacture and operation of the equipment and for its use as well” (136). Secondary orality, then, allows for a sound in time to move and feel like a visual in space rather than being reduced to space. Rooted in the analytic, linear structure of thought, the imagined audience, and sense of closure characteristic of print culture, secondary orality consciously chooses characteristics of primary orality that make for memorable and effective delivery. According to Ong, “Before writing, oral folk were group-minded because no feasible alternative had presented itself. In our age of secondary orality, we are group-minded self-consciously and programmatically” (136). In essence, the medium of sound in time (spoken words) allows visuals in space (written words) to take new forms.

### *Reappraisals and Criticisms of Ong's Theories*

This is not to say, however, that all scholars agree with Ong. As our thoughts on

orality, literacy, and secondary orality have evolved, many have made compelling critiques of his work. One of those criticisms is concerning what scholars have called “The Great Divide,” meaning that oral cultures and literate cultures are in stark difference from one another, something that Robert Connors found particularly repugnant, saying that Ong, “makes the point that there are numerous literacies, and that to believe that reading-writing abilities in contemporary culture *create* cognitive abilities or constitute the only meaningful sort of literacy is narrow and discriminatory” (Connors 380). This has also led to some critiques about Ong and his contemporaries perpetuating a sense of technological determinism, or that our psychology and communication is predetermined by the medium.

Theorists Charles Ess, Akira Kawabata, and Hiroyuki Kurosaki in a special edition of the *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* said this in their introduction on the subject: “however, [Ong’s] approach has come under criticism on several points, beginning with its tendency toward a technological determinism that is no longer seen to hold up in the face of empirical evidence” (953). The Great Divide and technological determinism have led some of Ong’s readers to believe that Ong put types of communication in a sort of hierarchy, placing more value on literate cultures (a fairly western perspective to take) than oral cultures. While these critiques clearly have merit, especially considering the research we have today, I believe that Ong still has provided a framework from which I can create my own hypotheses about our current technological moment. Perhaps my research may be cause for a reevaluation of Ong’s work and a much-needed reappraisal of how we conceptualize literacy, communication media, and the word.

## *The Role of Communication Tools*

Tools of communication and literacy and their effects on our psychology, methods of communicating, and understanding of the world around us have been well documented over time. Looking at this from a dramatist point of view, for example, Kenneth Burke's *Language as Symbolic Action*, it has been long established that “‘reality’ could not exist for us, were it not for our profound and inveterate involvement of symbol systems” (1343). Our perception of reality is pushed to its rhetorical limits through degrees of separation from the corporeal life-world as we find ourselves performing our cultural and personal identities through symbol systems within symbol systems again, ultimately creating a form of fictionalized hyperreality. In *Remediation*, authors Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin state that “the hypermediated or networked self encompasses and multiplies the self of virtual reality. The networked self is made up both of that self that is doing the networking and the various selves that are presented on the network” (233). In the hypermediated self, our personhood is refracted through various interfaces, both limiting and facilitating our agency within the system, which pushes users further and further from our experiential reality. As the reality we experience online (read: the signifier) is distanced from the reality we experience offline (read: the signified), we reach a state of simulacra. I believe it’s possible to argue that as reality continues to simulate itself into an abstraction, we have to reconfigure our perception of sounds and visuals as a way of thinking rather than mere units of information. As Walter Ong describes, when human cultures moved from a dominantly oral communication (a sound in time) into dominantly print communication (a visual in space) the shift restructured much of the way we perceive the wor(l)d and had various effects on how we

use our senses and perception of time to not only communicate with others but also understand our place in the universe.

Different communication tools, as we have seen, remix time and space to create new ways of getting our message across. As stated before, this usually takes shape as visuals and sounds that we use to make sense of the world around us. Sound is instantaneous and, without the use of recording technology, experienced in a present time signature. As Ong states, It's immersing, incorporating, and harmonious, in contrast to vision, which is isolating, dissecting, and analytical. Sound is felt around you, not before you as visuals are. Humans see things one at a time, while humans are "at the center of their auditory world" (72). Sight also happens in a past time signature, and, assuming that the container itself is not lost or damaged, has the potential to last forever. This distinction in how time is felt between the two modes of communication changes how we perceive ourselves and those around us, essentially restructuring our thought and sense of reality. It happens outside of you, while sound is an internal process. Ong says, "Interiority and harmony are characteristics of human consciousness. The consciousness of each human person is totally interiorized, known to the person from the inside and inaccessible to any other person directly from the inside" (72). This affects not only how someone perceives words but also how they see themselves as part of their community and the very universe itself, effectively creating a feeling of connection to those around us and our sense of place. According to Ong, "The centering action of sound (the field of sound is not spread out before me but around me) affects man's sense of the cosmos. A sound dominated verbal economy is consonant with the aggregative (harmonizing) tendencies rather than with the analytic, dissecting tendencies (which would come with

the inscribed, visual word: vision is a dissecting sense)” (73).

With powerful tools of communication technology—namely the telephone, radio, and television—another move had been made: secondary orality. For at least 140 years, we have been in an age of speaking from a consciousness restructured by the standards of print. In a basic form this looks like a newscaster reading a teleprompter—what you hear are words that were written, or words as a sound in time moving like a visual in space. This means that it uses the incorporating, harmonious elements of sound but with an organization and psyche that use the individual, dissecting, analytical characteristics of print. We know that sound is a more interconnected, interpersonal, sensation that more fully represents your interiority as a reflection of your identity as a member of a group. However, because sound wells up out of our subconscious (82), we have less control than we do with print in choosing how we represent ourselves to those around us. In print, we make fully-conscious, fully-formed utterances that represent how we would prefer to be seen, essentially choosing how our exterior, individual selves are presented to others because we’re able to carefully think and curate what we want to say. However, because the written or printed word is ‘dead,’ it lacks the interpersonal appeal that oral communication has to offer. Secondary orality not only has the benefits of sound as an interpersonal sensation but also the benefits of print’s fully-conscious utterances we choose to represent us.

### *Interface as a Site of Communication*

An interface, as defined by Branden Hookway in his book *Interface*, is a complex and somewhat contradictory term. I will be relying heavily on Hookway’s theoretical understanding of the interface in my thesis. Broken down etymologically, the word

interface may mean “between faces” as well as “facing between” (8). When understood as between faces, “The interface thus would be an interior condition, whose activity and influence is constrained within the boundaries given by its defining entities” (8), meaning the interface is a closed system, characterized by the entities using it and thereby delimiting the relations that happen within the system. When understood as facing between, however, the interface “would suggest a boundary or zone of encounter that actively extends into and condition that which it separates” (9), meaning the interface is the site where internal qualities are translated to be understood exteriorly. Each gets at a partial description of the interface’s function in communication systems. The interface, then, is the sum total of the *facing between* and *between faces*; as Hookway says, “In combination, the interface is both an interiority confined by its bounding entities and a means of accessing, confronting, or projecting into an exteriority” (9).

So what can be an interface, then? Using this definition, words written, words spoken, rooms, the road, the cockpit, the keys of a piano, and, yes, the interface we have become most aware of, computers, smartphones, and tablets are all forms of an interface. Typically, when humans interact with an interface in a *between faces* sense, we can learn what’s needed for successful communication. Pressing on your gas pedal tells the engine that the car is supposed to accelerate; likewise, a human clicking on the thumbs-up icon on Facebook tells the program that they would like to react to a post. The mechanical action needed to let the other entity know how it needs to perform is typically regarded as something one can master with practice and necessary information, assuming the interface is working as it was designed to.

When we interact with an interface in a *facing between* sense, though, our

mechanical actions become rhetorical in nature. The interface itself becomes obscured as another entity is involved—typically another human. Now the acceleration on the highway and the liking of a post have the potential to signal to others our motives, for better or for worse. Being that the interface is defined by both understandings of it, our agency is therefore facilitated and restricted by it. The constant give and take between understanding and being understood is dependent upon and limited to the interface we're using. While the technology may not predetermine how we will communicate, there is a link between the tool's interface and the shifts in culture that Ong describes.

Perhaps it is in this tension between faces/facing that our consciousness is restructured, as Walter J. Ong suggests in *Interfaces of the Word*. Subscribing to Ong's definitions of several communication modes, different interfaces rely on our different senses and different time signatures to understand them. Ong calls the interface between humans and their communication technology (whether it be writing, print, or computers) an alienation from their natural world (17). The move from oral culture, called an earlier noetic state, to technologized culture created separation within the psyche. Ong says, "With writing, the earlier noetic state undergoes a kind of cleavage, separating the knower from the external universe and then from himself. This separation...split[s] up the original unity of consciousness and in this sense alienat[es] man from himself and his original world" (18). Thus, literacy—in all its variances through different communication tools—separates the knower from the known.

### *Sound in Composition*

Ong spends quite a bit of time theorizing about sound and its effect on our psyche. It is important to describe how sound plays a role in digitally mediated communication in

order to describe the characteristics that emerge. In the field of rhetoric and composition, we have seen a return in interest in how sound affects our meaning-making. As the field of sound studies has emerged over the last thirty or so years, rhetoric and composition has also regained some focus on the way sound and its perception impact our rhetorical communication. This is not to say that sound is a new concept to rhetoric and composition; we have always recognized that rhetoric may happen through sound waves; however, the particulars of those sound waves and their influence on our perception of self, place, and reality is only beginning to reemerge, at least in the English-speaking, western body of work. Perhaps experiencing so much communication without voice has led us to contemplate how a voice changes our experience in communication.

Steph Ceraso in her book *Sounding Composition: Multimodal Pedagogies for Embodied Listening* has discussed the implications of sound—in both making sound and listening to sound—as a compositional practice between student and professor. Through vignettes that begin the book, she describes sound as a fully embodied experience. Sound may happen simultaneously with other senses and color the way in which we engage with the spaces and reality we occupy, making sound more complex than it may be commonly talked about. Rejecting the idea that our experience with sound is somehow passive or isolated, Ceraso claims, “Engaging with sound entails much more than hearing audible information. Sonic experience is complex, varied, multisensory, and contextual” (3). Rather, it may be more helpful to think about our auditory experiences as a sounding, a verb that more accurately encompasses action and corporeal connection between making sounds and consuming them.

As media and communication studies professor at University of London, Julian

Henriques writes in *Sonic Bodies: Reggae Sound Systems, Performance Techniques, and Ways of Knowing* that sounding “encompasses everything, everyone and all the activities that go into the making of sound” (xxix). Much like Ong, Ceraso and Henriques approach engaging with sound not as a singular object that delivers information, but rather as a way of thinking that involves much more of our bodies and space. Scholars like Ceraso and Henriques have connected rhetoric and composition with sound studies as we begin to understand and investigate sound from a philosophical approach. As a rhetor, knowing the sounds of the community someone may wish to engage with is an important part of genre participation and your rhetorical situation. That includes going beyond language and into the very pace, pitch, rhythm, and tone of the voices and sounds that make us worth listening to.

In the emergent field of sound studies, the human voice has gained attention as material—quite literally vibrations—that affects us psychologically, rhetorically, socially, and beyond. Discussion amongst scholars about the effects of the human voice has led to it being described as a paradox, being at once the intersection of the body and language and yet defying the limitations of both. In his book *A Voice and Nothing More*, Mladen Dolar, a Slovenian philosopher, psychoanalyst, cultural theorist, and film critic, argues that “[i]t is precisely the voice that holds bodies and languages together. It is like their missing link, what they have in common” (60). The commonality is expressed as neither can fully capture all that the voice is. Dolar goes on to write, “[w]hat language and the body have in common [is that] the voice does not belong to either” (73).

Paradox though it may be, it stands that many contributors to the field agree that the voice is intrinsically linked to something human and is an important aspect of

knowing another. As professor Eric Anderson, a contemporary theorist in the field of sound studies, summarizes, “it matters (in every sense) from what particular body a given voice emerges; ultimately, we always hear in the voice not just *anybody* but a particular *somebody*” (Anderson). Someone’s voice, then, is steeped in identity and fundamental to our conceptualization of how we are of the same kind and yet a unique actor in the sonic landscape.

While text-based communication may be lacking the sound waves of a literal voice, these characteristics of how the voice is understood from a rhetoric and composition perspective in the contemporary discussion go hand-in-hand with Ong’s discussion of sound and the psychodynamics it facilitates. How is text able to enact these characteristics in order for us to recognize voice without the actual soundings of the human voice? Anderson and Dolar’s work provides a point of reference to describe these aspects and investigate how we can understand voice in our hypermediated, multi-sensory experience of reality online.

For the purposes of this project, one of the most important features of the human voice is its link to imagination, as has been outlined by scholars in sound studies and rhetorical theory alike. As Anne Mooney said in her contribution to *Kairos*’ special issue on *Navigating the Soundscape, Composing with Audio*, “a voice inevitably prompts the listener’s imagination to construct the speaker, including the speaker’s self”. Imagined authors and audiences have been mentioned long before the emergence of sound studies, most notably by Ong in *Orality and Literacy* (102).

However, when considered as sound waves, the voice has the ability to be both a “possession or attribute of its human source” (Anderson), while simultaneously also

being, as Steven Connor says, an “autonomous voice-bod[y]” (35) wherein a voice without an apparent bodily source takes an imagined shape of its own. In doing so, voice as “sound works to unsettle and exceed arenas of visibility by relating us to the unseen, the non-present or the not-yet-apparent” (LaBelle 2), essentially conjuring a personhood in the mind of the listener.

This element of imagination when viewed in relation to space also causes us to imagine voice as something that “announces and verifies the co-operation of bodies and the environments in which they have their being” (Dolar 6). The voice, whether heard or spoken, has the ability to “form the essential and enduring means by which to nurture spaces between,” forming the basis for “a coming community” that may “invite different groups or individuals to become co-producers of a common world-in-the-making” (LaBelle and Stavros 11).

Ong was careful to mention that in print culture, every audience and every author is imagined (102). Sound’s ability to engage our imagination may be present in its characteristics that can be found without the actual sound being present itself. As sound works to unsettle and exceed arenas of the unseen, digital tools are likewise able to traverse space and time in our immediate surroundings. While a tweet itself may remain silent before us, it may also feel as loud and abrasive as someone yelling in our vicinity. That feeling is not evoked by our corporeal environment, but instead conjured in the mind of the reader. These characteristics of sound, then, may be utilized by different tools, but their effects are an important aspect to how we understand ourselves and our reality, however hypermediated or simulated they may be.

Because of the most recent revolution in communication technology and its

utilization of sound, space, and the interface through which we interact, it's possible to argue that secondary orality may not wholly describe the age we are in. Social media now allows the written word to become simulacra of oral communication with a consciousness restructured by secondary orality. I theorize that it is possible that digital communication has brought us into an age of secondary print, or words as a visual in space moving like a sound in time. Visual word now has the potential to transcend death, its "rigid visual fixity" (81), by allowing us to respond through visual space as we would with sound in time, reuniting the word with the human lifeworld. It has the time signature of both print and oral culture—instantaneous and forever, present and past. It has the analytic, fully-conscious self-awareness of print in a space that visually attempts to simulate interpersonal, interconnected communication previously only possible through verbal, face-to-face communication.

### *Theory of Secondary Print*

The theory of secondary print that I will now begin to propose is a culmination of all that was previously said in the literature review. It takes Ong's theories and the criticisms and applies them to modern theory of computers, sound, and interfaces. It is important to note this as the foundation of my theory of secondary print. Ong provided theories that could be applied to communication in a macro-sense. Narrowing the focus to how elements of sound, interface, and digitally-mediated communication tools are functioning in reference to *Orality and Literacy* has the potential to help us reframe how we think about modern communication technology and expand on our knowledge of how these tools function in our world.

At this point in internet history, the digital communication tools we use have

become ubiquitous almost to the point of invisibility. It feels for many as though the capacity in which we interact with others in a mediated space happens so often and with such ease that the mechanical understanding of what we're allowed to do and the types of interaction encouraged by the site itself is blurred. In essence, this collapses the human in action/object in motion understanding of ourselves—such is the nature of an interface. We only seem to be aware of the interface in a facing-between sense when the interface is new to us or is operating incorrectly; however, that is not to say that this is not by the careful design of companies themselves. Before I speak at length about the literal interfaces of social media sites, I believe it's important to lay some theoretical groundwork about how we understand these spaces from a rhetoric and composition perspective.

As I began in the introduction with parallels between driving and communicating through digital tools, I believe this metaphor can be extended further. By looking at what is actually happening when we're driving, we can see certain similarities between drivers' interactions and digital communication that are symptomatic of a larger concept at hand. In both circumstances, we find individuals with the perceptions of a level of anonymity (they can't *actually* hear me) as well as expertise (what the hell are they doing?!) operating in a world built on a symbol-system more limited than face-to-face communication, which drives interactions to extremes. When you're on the road and all you have to communicate with someone is a blinker, a horn, speed, and perhaps the flash of the lights, suddenly the meaning we make out of each mode of communication either becomes appropriately polite or incredibly rude. Similarly, the difference between "okay!" and "ok." when texting an acquaintance can commonly be the difference

between whether they like you or hate you. Without the ability to read vocal tone and body language, the emotional queues in each message are carrying more weight than they would in other contexts.

But like I said, these are the symptoms. When looking at them from the perspective of an interface, let's say the highway and IMing (included but not limited to: texting, DMing, etc.), what's *causing* the symptoms becomes clearer. In *Interfaces of the Word*, Ong calls the interface between humans and their communication technology (whether it be writing, print, or computers) an alienation from their natural world (17). Ong says, "With writing, the earlier noetic state undergoes a kind of cleavage, separating the knower from the external universe and then from himself. This separation...split[s] up the original unity of consciousness and in this sense alienating man from himself and his original world" (18). This cleavage of knower, the external universe, and ourselves is potentially where the lines of understanding ourselves in this space get the most ambiguous: because the interface, while separating us, gives us the illusion that there is no separation. This is essentially where obfuscation between human/machine and human/machine/human becomes the most prominent. Instead of taking this philosophical understanding of who we are in relation to the whole online and on the highway, we instead tend to think about it as an isolated and solitary act.

Regarding this with Burke's theory in mind, our use of communication technology would take form as a visual symbol system, from which we construct reality in the interface. Burke says, "'Reality' could not exist for us, were it not for our profound and inveterate involvement of symbol systems" (1343), and we cannot, as symbol-using animals, see ourselves outside of this system. In both interfaces of the highway and the

messaging platform, our physical presence—our bodies—are stationary, solitary, silent. And yet, due to the interface we're using, we don't see ourselves that way. The interface collapses "the pragmatic recognition of a distinction between persons and things" because "if an object is closely associated with some person... it can readily become infused with the identity of the person" (1346). The interface, due to the limitations of the visual symbol system, blurs this distinction because inside its reality the thing *is* the person, and therefore every motion of the thing is a symbolic action demonstrating the human's motives it's fused with. Put more simply, we don't actually get mad at the message—the message fulfills its duty by conveying information—it's the person we're talking to. The car that's cut us off is not what's angering us—it's operating exactly as it was designed to—it's the other driver we believe is taking risks and exhibiting behavior we deem to be incorrect.

In a criminal justice textbook entitled *Road Rage*, the author proposes that driving is a symbolically meaningful act associated with speed, excitement, and vitality (Garase 42). Although the author admits that why we associate these feelings with driving is difficult to precisely pinpoint, driving "encompasses feelings of invulnerability as well as [provides] drivers with shelter" (42). Emotions that stem from driving are presented as contingent on a number of variables: age, race, and natural propensity for and lack of self control, yes, but also our reaction to something called General Strain Theory (GST). GST attempts to "facilitate understanding" of precisely what evokes emotions when driving by how individuals respond to "(1) strain as the actual or anticipated failure to achieve positively valued goals, (2) strain as the actual or anticipated removal of positively valued stimuli, and (3) strain as the actual or anticipated presentation of negatively valued

stimuli” (42). From a Burkean perspective, what creates strain caused by goals and stimuli is a question of your motives and the motives of the person you’re interacting with. The machines that facilitate these emotions almost become so obscured from our view that they may not feel like they exist.

Going forward, I will be discussing the different ways interfaces and their users conceptualize themselves and each other, whether it be by the visual design of the interface or the group dynamics displayed by the users. It is important when discussing secondary print to be aware of the nature of both before diving into the critical details that have led me to believe that secondary print may be a better way to describe what’s going on in digital spaces. As introduced earlier, there are three main categories into which Ong’s psychodynamics can be grouped: space and time, community, and memory. As human cultures moved from one noetic state to the next, distinct differences occurred in each category as each psychodynamic mutated in order to fit the needs of the users of the different kinds of interfaces (spoken words, writing, and spoken words derived from writing). As I go through each category in greater detail with analysis of examples, you may notice that many of the psychodynamics also have effects from the other categories (an example: psychodynamic (v): close to the human life world has an effect on memory and community as well). This is true to the nature of human communication as we so rarely do anything that can be neatly categorized and color coded.

#### IV. SPACE AND TIME

As stated previously, oral cultures' consciousness— their understanding of who they are in relationship to each other and the world around them— is, according to Ong, structured completely by the dynamic relationship between sound and time. He says, “All sensation takes place in time, but sound has a special relationship to time unlike that of the other fields that register in human sensation. Sound only exists when it is going out of existence. It is not simply perishable but essentially evanescent, and it is sensed as evanescent” (32). By the time someone speaks a word, you do not experience the word all at once, as we visually perceive a word on a page, but as it is vanishing from perception, in time. By the time the beginning of the word leaves your mouth, it is gone. Without technology to replay it, something said would have happened instantaneously, and it would be gone forever. This ‘time signature’ (for lack of a better term) of oral communication—present-immediate— is incredibly important to the sensory aspect of verbal interaction and part of what structures the way an oral culture thinks. According to Ong, “language is a mode of action and not simply a countersign of thought... All sound, and especially oral utterance, which comes from inside living organisms, is ‘dynamic’,” (32) essentially moving with time.

Perhaps sound is so intrinsically linked with life because our very bodies are one of the first sources of sound that we encounter. As far as we currently know, we are the only beings on earth that have the ability to not only enjoy variations in pace, pitch, rhythm, and tone, but also perceive it as music. The musicality of the human voice has a huge impact on how we feel about our surroundings, ourselves, and each other. Studies, such as those described in the book *On Repeat* by Elizabeth Margulis, have shown that

music has a strong emotional tie and is a common way that we make things memorable. In fact, many stroke or traumatic brain injury patients relearn how to speak and move first by singing and dancing (17). While it's hard to pinpoint exactly when noise becomes music, scientists do know that, for example, a repeated sound leaves the world of white noise and quickly becomes perceived as a rhythmic beat, or what is known as the speech-to-song illusion. Listen to [this video](#) of someone repeating the words “sometimes behaves so strangely” and pay attention: at what point does the repeated phrase leave the realm of speaking and enter a more musical place in your head? It is clear that the dynamics of sound and its characteristics have deep roots in what it means to be human, and, through a long journey of evolution, are one of the quickest ways we are informed of our surroundings.

Space, on the other hand, has its own set of important characteristics that we use to understand our surroundings, ourselves, and each other. In contrast to sound—a moment in time that happens from within us—sight happens outside of our bodies, observing what's before us and making sense of something that we typically believe will remain static in its form. We need our sight to further analyze the space we're in and think more critically about what's been presented before us. Most notably, vision is a dissecting sense (Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 72). We commonly have the ability to take a step back and think about what we're seeing, whether we're gazing at a piece of art on the wall, watching someone prepare food, or reading words on a page. Like I said before, Ong was careful not to condemn the visual nature of written cultures, noting the powerful changes it gave people to further reach across space and time to one another. Because writing changed the sense perception for delivery, it changed the time signature of

communication as well. Rather than present, immediate but disappearing words, written words exist in a past sense, with the potential for it to exist forever, so long as the physical container still exists. This allows us to think far more abstractly and analytically than before, without concern for memory devices, immediate context, or an interlocutor bound by physical presence. Communication in writing leaves the temporal world and is now a spatial material.

Through each interface that we engage with, we use these senses to conceptualize the space and time that the interaction is happening in, “and its operations may be characterized in spatial and temporal terms” (17), as Brandon Hookway describes in *Interface*. This means that no matter what the interface may be, we have to understand it in its own boundaries of time and space. With the many iterations of communication technology, we attempt to make sense of these boundaries as set by the interface itself. Hookway goes on to explain, “Its effects are registered not only in the opening up for access or experience of otherwise unavailable spatialities and temporalities, but also in how space and time are understood and treated within culture” (17). This directly relates to Ong’s claims that our perceptions of time and space are informed by the interface we are using to communicate (at least in part).

Research in the field of linguistics, anthropology, and sociology have long debated how the interface of language itself impacts how we think about non-linguistic concepts. While the Sapir-Whorf Theory that language *determines* how we think has been categorically dismissed, scholars tend to accept that language, in general terms, affects how we conceptualize and problem-solve using spatial and temporal terminology. As stated by authors Edward Munnich and Barbara Landau in “The Effects of Spatial

Language on Spatial Representation: Setting Some Boundaries” in the book *Language in Mind: Advances in the Study of Language and Thought*, for example, English speakers tend to think of time in horizontal metaphors, so we use words like “Monday is before Tuesday,” “after work,” or “I’m behind on grading.” This is in contrast to Mandarin speakers, who tend to think about time in vertical metaphors, “specifically, *shang* ‘up’ refers to events that are earlier in time, while *xia* ‘down’ refers to events later in time; that is, time proceeds in a downward direction. So Mandarin speakers say the equivalents of ‘Nixon is up from Clinton’ or ‘Tuesday is down from Monday’” (Munnich, Landau 149). While it’s difficult to pinpoint exactly how much the language informs how the speaker perceives and interacts with space and time, there is undeniable evidence that the speaker will have an orientation to space and time that’s unique to the language.

This may contribute to the “cleavage” that Ong often refers to. It is impossible for one person to fully know the linguistic and non-linguistic happenings in someone else’s mind. Siphoning thoughts into a sentence alone begins the cleavage, and each interface the sentence must pass through further distances the knower from the known. These partial projections of the self through hypermediated space and time underlie Ong’s psychodynamics. Below, you will find a table in which Ong’s psychodynamics concerning perceptions of time and space are defined for orality and print. The third column, secondary orality, is defined from an article by Günter Thomas called “Secondary Ritualization in Postliterate Culture: Reconsidering and Expanding Walter Ong’s Contribution on ‘Secondary Orality.’” Ong talked about secondary orality as a sort of future projection in rather vague terms, but this article fleshes out the psychodynamics of post-print culture true to Ong’s work, although not as evenly distributed as orality and

print.

Table 2. Psychodynamics that Affect Perceptions of Space and Time

Orality	Print	Secondary Orality
<p>(v) <b>Close to the human lifeworld:</b> “oral cultures must conceptualize and verbalize all their knowledge with more or less close reference to the human lifeworld, assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction with human beings” (<i>Orality and Literacy</i>, 42).</p>	<p><b>Distant from the human lifeworld:</b> “A chirographic or typographic culture can distance and in a way denature even the human, itemizing such things as the names of leaders and political divisions in an abstract, neutral list entirely devoid of a human action context” (42).</p>	<p>“From an analytical point of view, audiovisual orality distances sound from real and actual manifestations of presence, from the manifestation of other people's interiority” (Thomas 394).</p>
<p>(viii) <b>Homeostatic:</b> “Oral societies live very much in a present which keeps itself in equilibrium or homeostasis by sloughing off memories which no longer have present importance... Word meanings come continuously out of the present, though past meanings of course have shaped the present meaning in many and varied ways, no longer recognized.” (46).</p>	<p><b>Variability:</b> “Print cultures have invented dictionaries in which the various meanings of a word as it occurs in datable texts can be recorded in formal definitions. Words thus are known to have layers of meaning, many of them quite irrelevant to ordinary present meanings. Dictionaries advertise semantic discrepancies”(46).</p>	<p>[no psychodynamic equivalent given in article]</p>
<p>(ix) <b>Situational rather than abstract:</b> “Oral cultures tend to use concepts in situational, operational frames of reference that are minimally abstract in the sense that they remain close to the human lifeworld” (49).</p>	<p><b>Abstract rather than situational:</b> a propensity for categorization (51), classification (52), logic (in the formal Greek sense) (52), defining beyond appearance or behavior (54), analyzing themselves and their world (54)</p>	<p>“Television discourse is less abstract but much more action oriented. Like primary orality, it presents many forms of knowledge in a fundamentally narrative way of reasoning, compared with abstract forms of literal analysis. The ongoing flow of television appears to be the unity of different narrative</p>

		formats, visually expressed” (Thomas 394).
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Ong carefully traced the changes in time and space for each revolution of communication culture and commonly used print as a comparison to make sense of orality. As these psychodynamics show, oral cultures' propensity for communication to happen in reference to the human lifeworld and their immediate surroundings was because of the fleeting nature of sound. Sound also is an incorporating, harmonizing sense that is one of the main ways we feel connected to others. Having something easy to reference while also connecting it back to an object, action, or experience that those in the conversation may find relatable is directly in line with Ong's claims on the characteristics of sound. These characteristics of the sense in connection to the quality of the psychodynamics will come up again later.

As print became more and more ubiquitous in communication, we no longer had to connect things with the shared experiences and visible reality of the people communicating. When communication became written, it left the temporal world and instead became a material in the spatial world. Being free from the limits of time allowed print culture to take a step back and think about things, and as Ong suggested, create lists, records, and categories that remained static in time. This caused thought to be more linear and complex in its own way, as well as—I believe Kenneth Burke would argue—hierarchical in nature. Again, this characteristic of space is connected to the quality of the psychodynamics of print. Print gave us a way to capture time and therefore symbolically visualize sound.

Secondary orality is where the time and space are layered upon each other, as Thomas argues. Tools like radio, television, and telephone allow us to traverse time and space while still giving us their own sense of time and space. Meaning, we experience it in our corporeal reality but are simultaneously experiencing the spatial/temporal boundaries within the medium. This is to say: a sound in time is experienced as a material in space. It has the ability to be recalled yet remain static, or as Ong would say, “dead” (33). It has the texture of orality, but the inner mechanics of print. Television, in particular, is a great example of how we experience this. For example, think about how the different interfaces the phrase “here is your local weather” said by a local newscaster must go through as degrees of separation from the corporeal world: 1) the thought is first carried by a language and then written, 2) which is then read off of a teleprompter and then said to a camera, 3) which is then broadcast into your home through a screen, 4) which is then seen and heard by you. The audiovisual sensation typically associated with face-to-face communication is so far removed from the physical space and time your body is occupying that we consume and interact with it as we might with print, as Thomas argued. It is important to note here that while you are having an audiovisual experience by watching tv, you are still consuming something scripted and edited in most cases. The ability to groom a final product into what you want it to be is a hallmark of print culture’s approach to time and space—most things that are included are carefully chosen, and they have been chosen for a specific audience.

One of the most important distinctions Thomas made in his article is that, while you must have writing and reading to produce television, its consumption does not require literacy. As Thomas said, “Audiovisual orality is a type of secondary orality that

can—in terms of reception and understanding—completely bypass literacy” (392). This is in contrast to what I believe the next noetic step is: secondary print. Many still talk about our current digital age as a continuation of secondary orality. I, however, believe there are distinct differences in how we approach each of the psychodynamics Ong and Thomas laid out that make it not quite fit into Ong’s projections.

More and more rapidly, we’re able to go about communicating through print instantaneously and without much forethought about what would go into the message. As in secondary orality, we experience the spatial/temporal boundaries within the medium simultaneously as we experience time and space in our corporeal state. What’s different, however, is that instead of a sound in time being structured like a material in space, a material in space (print) is structured and commonly engaged with as though it were a sound in time (orality). And—returning to Thomas’ assertion about consumption bypassing literacy in secondary orality—while the consumers of a text-based message online must be literate in order to consume it, the production does not necessarily demand reading and writing. It seems as though it may be working in the opposite direction as speech-to-text continues to become more intelligent and more prevalent. While we are still a ways away from speech-to-text fully replacing the written word, we can find evidence of writing that more closely resembles someone speaking unscripted. In doing so, it’s as though the written word is reaching back towards orality to be reconnected with the human life world--not siphoned off from the living, but moving dynamically with our interiority.

I will now outline how I believe secondary print would complete the table above using Ong’s and Thomas’s theorized psychodynamics:

Table 3. Completed Table of Psychodynamics that Affect Perceptions of Space and Time

<b>Orality</b>	<b>Print</b>	<b>Secondary Orality</b>	<b>Secondary Print</b>
(v) <b>Close to the human lifeworld:</b> “oral cultures must conceptualize and verbalize all their knowledge with more or less close reference to the human lifeworld, assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction with human beings” ( <i>Orality and Literacy</i> , 42).	<b>Distant from the human lifeworld:</b> “A chirographic or typographic culture can distance and in a way denature even the human, itemizing such things as the names of leaders and political divisions in an abstract, neutral list entirely devoid of a human action context” (42).	“From an analytical point of view, audiovisual orality distances sound from real and actual manifestations of presence, from the manifestation of other people's interiority” (Thomas 394).	<b>Close to the digital human lifeworld:</b> Secondary print distances the visual word from real and actual manifestations of presence. It is close to the digital human lifeworld and the happenings that go on there; however, it depends on the denaturing, itemizing, contextless structure of print.
(viii) <b>Homeostatic:</b> “Oral societies live very much in a present which keeps itself in equilibrium or homeostasis by sloughing off memories which no longer have present importance... Word meanings come continuously out of the present, though past meanings of course have shaped the present meaning in many and varied ways, no longer recognized.” (46).	<b>Variability:</b> “Print cultures have invented dictionaries in which the various meanings of a word as it occurs in datable texts can be recorded in formal definitions. Words thus are known to have layers of meaning, many of them quite irrelevant to ordinary present meanings. Dictionaries advertise semantic discrepancies”(46).		<b>Categorically Homeostatic:</b> While data, listing, and creating hierarchies is important to the visual presentation of the site, the language used within the site constantly evolves. Words that are no longer relevant to the time are either retired or change meaning depending on the people using them and the context they're in.
(ix) <b>Situational rather than abstract:</b> “Oral cultures tend to use	<b>Abstract rather than situational:</b> a propensity for categorization (51),	“Television discourse is less abstract but much more action	<b>Abstractly situational:</b> While certainly the abstract thinking

<p>concepts in situational, operational frames of reference that are minimally abstract in the sense that they remain close to the human lifeworld” (49).</p>	<p>classification (52), logical (in the formal Greek sense) (52), defining beyond appearance or behavior (54), analytical of themselves and their world (54)</p>	<p>oriented. Like primary orality, it presents many forms of knowledge in a fundamentally narrative way of reasoning, compared with abstract forms of literal analysis. The ongoing flow of television appears to be the unity of different narrative formats, visually expressed” (Thomas 394).</p>	<p>that Ong claimed was characteristic of print is more than possible on many sites across the internet, the word limit of a site like Twitter means that more likely than not, a post will lean towards situational rather than abstract. The situational is now used to convey the abstract.</p>
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*Psychodynamic (v)— Close to the digital human lifeworld*

Secondary print distances the visual word from real and actual manifestations of presence. It is close to the human lifeworld—accepting that the digital world is a part of it—and the happenings that go on there; however, it depends on the denaturing, itemizing, contextless structure of print. We have to accept what’s happening in the site as the “lifeworld” and the events/experiences within it in order to participate. While the events/experiences of the corporeal lifeworld bleed into the one within the interface and vice-versa, posts tend to mirror subject matter not only about the site itself but what is relatable to the group, as figure 1 demonstrates.



Figure 1. “Dark Mode” by João Silva. *Reddit*, Nov. 2016, [www.reddit.com/r/woooosh/comments/lrdf41/last\\_year\\_brazilian\\_comic\\_book\\_artist\\_silva\\_joão/](http://www.reddit.com/r/woooosh/comments/lrdf41/last_year_brazilian_comic_book_artist_silva_joão/).

As we apply quantifiable data to human interaction (think likes, shares, etc.), print’s sense of space is subjected to orality’s sense of time, and so you get an instantaneous and harmonized conversation that takes place in what feels like easily retrievable material space.

*Psychodynamic (vii)— Categorically Homeostatic*

While data, listing, and creating hierarchies is important to the visual presentation of the site, the language used within the site constantly evolves. Words that are no longer relevant to the time are either retired or change meaning depending on the people using them and the context they’re in. Technical terminology and slang are only used when they make sense for the context and are easily understood by the group. We can find an abundance of evidence as to how hierarchies, data, and lists are still heavily in use by looking at the side of Instagram called “theorygram” which commonly produces images such as fig. 2 to categorize people by their political beliefs.

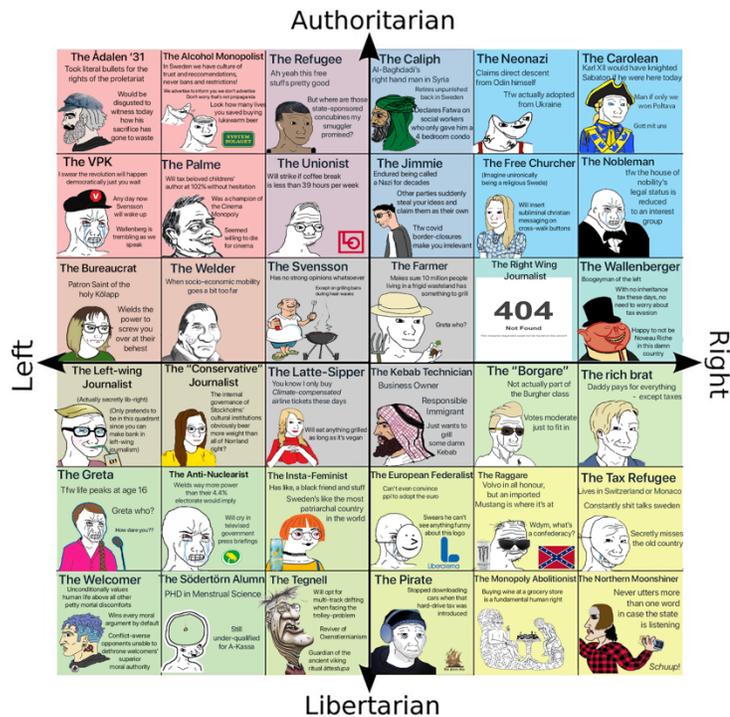


Figure 2. U/AGoonAndAGopher. “Political Compass but It's Swedish.” *Reddit*, 2020, [www.reddit.com/r/PoliticalCompassMemes/comments/gcuxjv/political\\_compass\\_but\\_its\\_swedish/](http://www.reddit.com/r/PoliticalCompassMemes/comments/gcuxjv/political_compass_but_its_swedish/).

If you look closely at the image, you’ll also see terminology that’s specific to the lifeworld of the users as both digital citizens and political activists. While slang has most likely been around as long as language itself, there seems to be a turn away from the belief that there should be formal definitions for words. Words in digital spaces have become more malleable as they’ve contended with not only the mechanical limits of the interface but also in describing life within it as well. Were I to have a conversation with someone not all that long ago about declining “cookies” because I was worried about my data, yes, it would likely have been considered bizarre. However, beyond the terminology that’s been appropriated and reworked for the particular needs of a space and culture as all language is at any given moment, we’re generating—and more importantly, accepting

and utilizing—new words faster than they can be documented by the dictionary makers and linguists that we once relied on to validate our lexicon. The categorizing, hierarchy-making practices exemplified in fig. 2 make sense in the digital space they were conceived in. It utilizes language that's specific to a culture and documents them in a visual format that can be easily edited, added to, and reproduced by

*Psychodynamic (ix)*

While certainly the abstract thinking that Ong claimed was characteristic of print is more than possible on many sites across the internet, the word limit of a site like Twitter, for example, means that more likely than not, a post will lean towards situational rather than abstract. More precisely, I would argue that the situational is now used to convey the abstract. This will also relate to enthymemes and repeatable structures later, but it's worth mentioning now that the abstract vs. situational in orality and print is very commonly both in secondary print. While the meme in fig. 3 is applicable to my argument in many ways, it demonstrates an abstract thought with a situational form through both text and image, which it hyperawarely pokes fun at.



Figure 3. “People Who Need Text vs. Image Meme” by Unknown. *Instagram*, 2020.

Concerning space and time, there are a few general things worth mentioning. Digital communication tools bring the internal and the external together through their use of sound and sight characteristics. Visual word now has the potential to transcend death, its “rigid visual fixity” (81), by allowing us to respond *through* visual space as we would with sound in time, reuniting the word with the human lifeworld. It has the time signature of both print and oral culture—instantaneous and forever, present and past. It has the analytic, fully-conscious self-awareness of print in space that visually attempts to simulate interpersonal, interconnected communication previously only thought possible through verbal, face-to-face communication. This may be why digital communication feels as though there’s no closure as described by a Twitter user in fig. 4.



Figure 4. “Fangmeli Tweet” by (@Pangmeli), Fangmeli. *Twitter*, 2019.

## V. COMMUNITY

According to Ong, community dynamics are directly related to the medium that the members of the community are communicating through. Because communication happened in the vast majority through soundwaves in oral cultures, the harmonizing, living characteristics of sound were echoed in how groups of people thought about themselves and each other, their place in the universe, and their approach to knowledge. As Ong explains, “Because in its physical constitution as sound, the spoken word proceeds from the human interior and manifests human beings to one another as conscious interiors, as persons, the spoken word forms human beings into close-knit groups” (74). Spoken word unites members of the group towards a common goal: understanding each other and creating/passing along knowledge. Knowledge, then, is considered a group effort and is as alive and action-oriented as the people speaking it into existence, a “unifying phenomenon, a striving for harmony” (72).

In linguistics, speech is identified and talked about as a gesture. Linguists talk about speech as a gesture because creating speech is an action, i.e. a series of movements involving multiple organs. Speech cannot be static. As Peter Ladefoged and Keith Johnson note in *A Course in Phonetics*, “We can convey information by gestures of our hands that people can see, but in making speech that people can hear, humans have found a marvelously efficient way to impart information. The gestures of the tongue and lips are made audible so that they can be heard and recognized” (2). Linguists also consider speech to be parasitic on other organs that have evolved as we have. The pulmonic airstream mechanism which delivers oxygen to the rest of our body is also the source of speech, essentially the bellows that push air through our glottis and out of our oral and

nasal tracts. While the glottis keeps food out of our airways, it also constricts and makes vocal folds vibrate. The vocal tract (tongue, teeth, lips, etc.) are the tools we use to consume food and keep foreign objects in or out of our mouths, and yet they are also the articulators that create the speech sounds that we understand as consonants and vowels. Speech cannot be made passively, and it cannot be regarded as thing-like the same way written or printed text is. It is a graceful action that cannot be dismembered from the body.

As previously mentioned, sound resonates from within. As Mladen Dolar said in his book *A Voice and Nothing More*, “[i]t is precisely the voice that holds bodies and languages together. It is like their missing link, what they have in common” (60). The commonality is expressed as neither can fully capture all that the voice is. Dolar goes on to write, “[w]hat language and the body have in common [is that] the voice does not belong to either” (73). Paradoxical though it may be, many contributors to the field agree that the voice is intrinsically linked to something human, and is an important aspect of knowing another. As professor Eric Anderson, a contemporary theorist in the field of sound studies, summarizes, “it matters (in every sense) from what particular body a given voice emerges; ultimately, we always hear in the voice not just *anybody* but a particular *somebody*” (Anderson). Someone’s voice, then, is steeped in identity and fundamental to our conceptualization of how we are of the same kind and yet a unique actor in the sonic landscape. We know people by their voice, and yet we know them beyond their voice—the sound of someone’s body is how we identify them as a member of our corpus. They are fellow humans.

In contrast, words subjected to vision lose their actionable, harmonizing,

incorporating abilities, according to Ong. Once in the visual, material world, individualization and isolation then become the dominant way we perceive ourselves in the universe, no longer regarding the acquisition of knowledge as a community act. While words subjected to material space promoted isolation and uniqueness, it also caused us to imagine more fully. When reading, we have to conceptualize what's written in our own heads rather than having it visually presented to us as the creator mentally visualized. That may pertain to the fictional world a character in a book may occupy, yes, but it also means a certain amount of imagination is involved when thinking of the creator themselves. As Ong has famously said, "The writer's audience is always fiction" (102).

When the actual writing happens in print culture, it is in a different time and space than when it is read, just like this thesis. This characteristic means that, while communication can travel distances and through time in ways not previously attainable in oral cultures, the writer and the reader are separated. Even when sending personal letters, reading and writing happens in the isolated, private space within the mind. Secondary orality uses both sight and sound to communicate, meaning it is communication happening over sound waves but from a consciousness "restructured by print" (136). While remaining objectively distanced much in the same way as reading, the audience and the creator of secondary oral communication are still able to feel the characteristics of the sound it's happening in. Ong attributed this to Marshall McLuhan's "global community" in which the participants of secondary orality consider themselves to be a part of a much bigger community across cultures and time. As Thomas explains, "Contrary to the private act of reading, television especially offers a shared experience

with other viewers and with persons on television. Not only the speed of communication but also the sound heighten ‘presence’ in the deep sense of an ‘existential relationship of person to person’” (390).

As an audience member in secondary orality, you’re still separated from the speaker much in the same way that the reader and the writer are. However, because sound is the medium of communication, you are able to connect with the speaker and thereby make the audience feel a sense of “collective self-presence” (Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 136). Due to secondary orality’s consciousness being antecedent and dependent upon print, much of the same approach to knowledge and individualization remains, as well as the structuring of communication. In secondary orality, we’re group-minded “self-consciously and programmatically,” essentially a member of the community because we have decided we want to be; we have experienced the inward turn of print and have decided to turn outward (Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 136).

Below are the psychodynamics that affect perceptions of community in each noetic state as Ong and Thomas have described:

Table 4. Psychodynamics that Affect Perceptions of Community

Orality	Print	Secondary Orality
(iv) <b>Conservative or traditionalist:</b> “Since in a primary oral culture conceptualized knowledge that is not repeated aloud soon vanishes, oral societies must invest great energy in saying over and over again what has been learned arduously over the ages. This need establishes a highly traditionalist or	<b>Allows for more theoretical thought:</b> “Writing is of course conservative in its own ways. Shortly after it first appeared, it served to freeze legal codes in early Sumeria (Oppenheim 1964, p. 232). But by taking conservative functions on itself, the text frees the mind of conservative tasks,	“Television constructs to a certain degree a world of agreement, permanently creating and reinforcing a consensual field of common, ‘taken for granted’ knowledge” (Thomas 394).

conservative set of mind that with good reason inhibits intellectual experimentation” ( <i>Orality and Literacy</i> , 41).	that is, memory work, and thus enables the mind to turn itself to new speculation (Havelock 1963, pp. 254-305)” (41).	
(vi) <b>Agonistically toned:</b> “By Keeping knowledge embedded in the human lifeworld, orality situates knowledge within the context of struggle (or reciprocal name-calling as well as fulsome expression of praise)... highly polarized, agonistic, oral world of good and evil, virtue and vice, villains and heroes” (44).	<b>Less agonistically toned:</b> “Writing fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another. It separates the knower from the known” (44).	“We increasingly realize that, as cultures feel the effects of the audiovisual stage of oral communication, they regain their tendency to think in terms of a virtue-vice polarity and start making up heroes and villains again” (Thomas 395).
(vii) <b>Empathetic and participatory:</b> “For an oral culture learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known” (45).	<b>Objectively distanced:</b> “Writing separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions for ‘objectivity’, in the sense of personal disengagement or distancing” (46).	“Contrary to the private act of reading... the participatory sense transmitted by television can lead to ‘collective self-presence”” (Thomas 390).

As you may notice from the table, it seems as though the psychodynamics of print are in direct contrast to those of orality. In turn, secondary orality mimics much of the same qualities of orality, but with a structure informed by the psychodynamics of print. Because all knowledge is held within speech in oral cultures, many of these psychodynamics are participatory in nature, essentially prompting group interaction. Psychodynamics (iv), (vi), and (vii) display the incorporating, reciprocal nature of sound instilled in the way community members interact with one another. Conversely, print displays the isolating, analytical qualities of sight in the community dynamics. These psychodynamics show us how we engage with a community when we’re engaging with

writing and reading, which Ong was careful to note as a private, solitary experience.

Even if a group of people were to read exactly the same thing, they would be doing it on their own time and in their own spaces, which refers back to sight causing us to imagine.

Secondary orality, as a result, uses much of the same qualities as orality due to it still being sound; however, the degree of separation from the interface that causes print to be an individual endeavor to consume is still very present in secondary orality.

Thomas aptly described the community dynamics of secondary print in context with its need for immediacy and simultaneity. Television particularly, “makes possible presence without physical presence, a type of community with others without physical co-presence. The community of audiovisual orality does not ‘take place’ but meets at a virtual place without physical location” (391). While the global village as McLuhan described is at work, the highly edited nature of television/video as a means of communication keeps those that consume communication in an audiovisual medium in a position much more similar to a readership than a live audience. In a hyper-textual culture that is antecedent yet dependent upon secondary orality, this aspect of immediacy and simultaneity is one of the major points of convergence between the noetic states.

There is still a presence without physical presence and sense of anti-location as described in secondary orality; however, the ability to respond to the writer in real time makes the readership much more like a live audience (should the reader choose to engage with it).

I will now outline how I believe secondary print would complete the table above using Ong’s and Thomas’s theorized psychodynamics:

Table 5. Completed Table of Psychodynamics that Affect Perceptions of  
Community

Orality	Print	Secondary Orality	Secondary Print
<p>(iv) <b>Conservative or traditionalist:</b> “Since in a primary oral culture conceptualized knowledge that is not repeated aloud soon vanishes, oral societies must invest great energy in saying over and over again what has been learned arduously over the ages. This need establishes a highly traditionalist or conservative set of mind that with good reason inhibits intellectual experimentation” (<i>Orality and Literacy</i>, 41).</p>	<p><b>Allows for more theoretical thought:</b> “Writing is of course conservative in its own ways. Shortly after it first appeared, it served to freeze legal codes in early Sumeria (Oppenheim 1964, p. 232). But by taking conservative functions on itself, the text frees the mind of conservative tasks, that is, memory work, and thus enables the mind to turn itself to new speculation (Havelock 1963, pp. 254-305)” (41).</p>	<p>“Television constructs to a certain degree a world of agreement, permanently creating and reinforcing a consensual field of common, ‘taken for granted’ knowledge” (Thomas 394).</p>	<p><b>Theoretical thought becomes traditionalist:</b> Because secondary print is print acting like someone speaking unscripted, the text may in fact live forever on the internet; however, the rapid rate and sheer amount of text means that it may be easily lost or forgotten in the deep corners of the web. Secondary print allows for users to engage with the ‘taken for granted’ knowledge of secondary orality, but mimics the traditional or conservative aspects of orality in an effort to stay relevant within the community.</p>
<p>(vi) <b>Agonistically toned:</b> “By Keeping knowledge embedded in the human lifeworld, orality situates knowledge within the context of struggle (or reciprocal name-calling as well as</p>	<p><b>Less agonistically toned:</b> “Writing fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another. It separates the knower from the known” (44).</p>	<p>“We increasingly realize that, as cultures feel the effects of the audiovisual stage of oral communication, they regain their tendency to think in terms of a virtue-vice polarity and</p>	<p><b>Agonistically abstract:</b> While it seems as though there isn’t much change between secondary orality and secondary print, the key difference is that print is now acting like orality.</p>

<p>fulsome expression of praise)... highly polarized, agonistic, oral world of good and evil, virtue and vice, villains and heroes” (44).</p>		<p>start making up heroes and villains again” (Thomas, 395).</p>	<p>Secondary print allows written word to reunite knowledge within the arena where human beings struggle with one another. Reciprocal name-calling, fulsome expression of praise, and polarity are being demonstrated in instantaneous print.</p>
<p>(vii) <b>Empathetic and participatory:</b> “For an oral culture learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known” (45).</p>	<p><b>Objectively distanced:</b> “Writing separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions for ‘objectivity’, in the sense of personal disengagement or distancing” (46).</p>	<p>“Contrary to the private act of reading... the participatory sense transmitted by television can lead to ‘collective self-presence”” (390).</p>	<p><b>Empathetic and participatory from a distance:</b> Because of secondary print’s ability to be instantaneous and yet forever, users have the ability to regard what’s written on the internet either objectively with chosen disengagement or empathetically, although the sites themselves push users towards empathetic, communal identification with the known.</p>

*Psychodynamic (iv)—Theoretical Thought Becomes Traditionalist*

This psychodynamic requires a bit more interpretation than the others. Because secondary print is print acting like someone speaking unscripted, the text may in fact live forever on the internet; however, the rapid rate and sheer amount of text means that it

may be easily lost or forgotten in the deep corners of the web. Secondary print allows for users to engage with the ‘taken for granted’ knowledge of secondary orality but mimics the traditional or conservative aspects of orality in an effort to stay relevant within the community. Most certainly, digital communication tools embody print’s psychodynamic (iv). By storing knowledge outside of the human capacity for memory, the mind has never been so free of conservative tasks like memorization. It also may still favor “younger discoverers of something new,” over the wise woman, and yet the traditional and conservative efforts of the community are still an active part of what it means to be an internet user (41). It seems as though the archival system of the site has become the wise woman, and the knowledge it keeps is valued by the users.

I must reiterate here that the choice to engage is one of the hallmarks of both secondary orality and secondary print. While there have been some exceptions that I will discuss later, no one is technically forced to engage with what they read online; you are not “born” into an internet community at present. That being said, we do see the concerted efforts of specific site users to keep knowledge alive and consciously tended to.

While the conservative or traditional of psychodynamic (iv) admittedly mirrors more closely that of print culture, there are certain parallels to how internet users, specifically Twitter users, address keeping knowledge and traditions.

Ong described how traditions change in oral culture, saying “vigorous leaders...invent new shrines and with these new conceptual universes. Yet these new universes and the other changes that show a certain originality come into being in an essentially formulaic and thematic noetic economy” (42). The need for a single person to keep all the knowledge is no longer necessary, but the collective knowledge of internet

users is consistently collected and preserved should the need for it arise. The new universes are not exactly shrines but perhaps new iterations of social media. One of the more widely debated topics on social media recently is Cancellation. If we accept Canceling as a new tradition and the old texts/tweets/posts of someone as the “taken for granted” knowledge, we can see how we may have progressed from secondary orality. Indeed, celebrities seem to quake in fear of being canceled for tweets and other social media posts from long ago that get “remembered” by the community and are then judged by the current traditions. Trevor Noah was Canceled and nearly fired from the Daily Show for tweets such as the one in fig. 5.

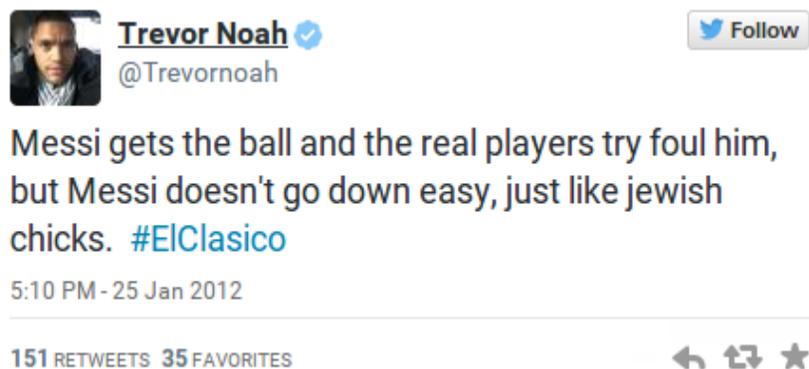


Figure 5. “Tweet” by Trevor Noah. *Twitter*, 2012, [knowyourmeme.com/photos/940776-trevor-noahs-tweet-controversy](https://knowyourmeme.com/photos/940776-trevor-noahs-tweet-controversy).

*Psychodynamic (vi)—Agonistically Abstract*

While it seems as though there isn’t much change between secondary orality and secondary print, the key difference is that print is now acting like orality. Secondary print allows written word to reunite knowledge with the arena where human beings struggle with one another. Reciprocal name-calling, fulsome expression of praise, and polarity are being demonstrated in instantaneous print. I believe this can be attributed to the ability

for the readership to reply in real time, much like a live audience. The naming of things, villains and heroes, good vs. evil, and, of course, the polarization of oral and secondary oral culture seem to have been magnified in digital spaces. Donald Trump’s tweets during the 2020 U.S. election alone are rife with examples of print demonstrating psychodynamic (vi), as in fig. 6.



Figure 6. “Tweet” by Donald Trump. *Twitter*, 2020, twitter.com.

It may be that the simplicity of Boolean logic and exponential functions within algorithms that modern computing is founded on promotes such polarity in its own way. When looking at a social media site’s interface in a *between faces* sense (Hookway 8), the algebraic functions algorithms are built on only allow for its logical extension into our social structure. As described by Jon Kleiberg in *The Mathematics of Algorithm Design*, algorithms are, in essence, the design of processes that represent and manipulate information that “turn out to obey their own inherent laws, and they are performed not only by computers but by people, by organizations, and by systems that arise in nature” (1). Modern algorithms’ main purpose is to find the most efficient computational solution—or the fewest steps—and are typically written as a polynomial function. When searching, tapping a “like” button, or responding to another on a social media site, algorithms are run. The very nature of predetermining the search space and possible connections before figuring out how to get from point A to point B as one must when

interacting with a social media site upholds Jan Van Dijk's argument in his book *The Network Society* that "Fixed forms are the basis. Subsequently they have to be turned into more or less flexible programs. However, formalization, standardization, and all sorts of automatization remain present in a prominent way" (247).

Inke Arns in *Code as Performative Speech Act* suggests that the imperative to execute can make code a performative speech act (Arns, Austin 8). Some, such as Estee Beck in "Computer Algorithms as Persuasive Agents," argue that algorithms are by their nature persuasive, saying, "Persuasive computer algorithms are written-only language objects with encoded agency, transactional invention, and embedded values, beliefs, and logics of the three rhetorical appeals performing functions that provide the grounds for human and non-human change". Considering the arguments made by Beck and Arns, it seems as though humans and computers are working together to create and shape how we perceive the wor(l)d. In essence, we're subjecting human agency and thought to logico-mathematical modes of communication, which can only allow for so much variance as any variance must be coded to exist. Twitter only allowing 280 characters, for example, predestines a tweet to be simplistic, and a return to oral culture's psychodynamics which arose from a need of simplicity due to the fleeting nature of sound seems, well, logical.

*Psychodynamic (vii)—Empathetic and Participatory from a Distance*

Because of secondary print's ability to be instantaneous and yet forever, users have the ability to regard what's written on the internet either objectively with chosen disengagement or empathetically, although the sites themselves push users towards empathetic, communal identification with the known. They are designed to encourage specific interactions and elicit specific types of information sharing amongst the users.

The sites are not comparable to a large, empty room full of people. Rather, they are far more like a casino that has no windows and dim lighting to accompany the free-flowing drinks in order to get you to do what the casino wants. As explained in the methodology chapter, if you were to open Facebook right now it would eagerly demonstrate this for you, for example: in fig. 7, the invitation to create a post (text, photo, going “live”, etc.) greets you first, followed directly by your friends’ and followers’ stories. It even asks you a question, “What’s on your mind?” in order to get you to participate.

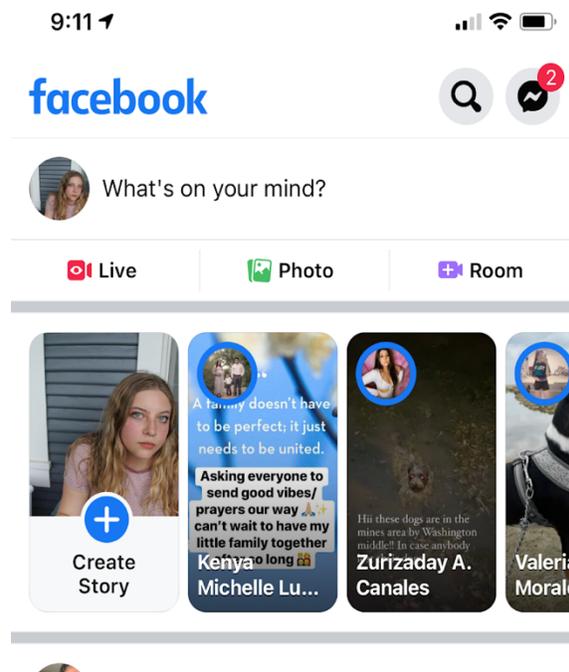


Figure 7. Screenshot of Facebook by Hannah McKeating, 2021.

Looking at your own page and the information you have available to others, you are likely to have your birthday, hometown, and workplace listed directly under your name. This information, along with the things you’ve chosen to share with your Facebook friends in your posts, are all working towards the goal of getting you to feel comfortable—so you will feel connected with the group and, hopefully, participate. While this aspect of Facebook is admittedly creepy, the interface facilitates

psychodynamic (vii) in order to support a feeling of togetherness, as the company is financially incentivized to do. The careful placement of each of these ways to interact with your community on Facebook elicits engagement very purposefully because the more time we spend on Facebook, the more data they can collect on us.

What's most notable about the community dynamics in secondary print is that it uses the quality of print in a structure more similar to secondary orality. Of the four, participation by choice is most prominent in secondary print, although, as demonstrated, users are prompted for specific kinds of participation and information sharing that is dictated by the interface. Never before has someone been able to respond through text as we are now. While we may experience a collective non-presence of the digital communities we engage with, the expectation and solicitation to engage—and engage in a way that's deemed tolerable to the group—is far more reminiscent of orality than it is of print or secondary orality.

## VI. MEMORY

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, you will surely come to notice that these categories are easier to talk about in thematic clusters, but in actuality play roles of cause and effect upon one another. Perhaps it is because I have a consciousness restructured by print that I feel the need to organize what was said in *Orality and Literacy* into categorical graphs in a way that will help me and my readers make sense of the information. I come by that honestly as someone born in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Western society. However, I do believe it somewhat detracts from their much more circular nature. The characteristics of the sensory used to take in information and produce information (i.e. sight and sound) have undulating effects into other areas of our psychology and perception of self, others, and wor(l)d. Much like the lateral soundwaves rippling through air particles that cause the eardrum to vibrate, orality, print, and secondary orality have reverberating consequences not only on how we *think* about time and space, but also how we interact with the groups of people around us, as discussed in chapter 4.2. In this subchapter, I will discuss how Chapter 4 (perceptions of space and time) and how Chapter 5 (perceptions of community) both affect and are affected by how we remember—or perhaps conceptualize remembering.

Because in primary orality all knowledge only lives when it's spoken into existence, or as Ong says, “you know what you can recall” (Ong 33), people in primary cultures had to get creative regarding a difficult problem. How do you share knowledge of the past? Ong offered a fairly simple explanation: “think memorable thoughts” (34). There are a few ways that oral cultures went about this. Mnemonic devices, interlocutors, and heavily rhythmic and repetitive patterns of syntax and organization were essential to

sustained thought spoken into being. For the purposes of this chapter, I will most closely look at rhythm's relationship to memory due to it being the most researched of the three memory devices just described. Essentially, oral cultures used the musicality that human beings are uniquely and adeptly drawn to in order to generate speech in a memorable way so that knowledge could continue to be remembered by others. Classical Greek and Roman rhetoric in the form of orations provides some insight as to how that worked.

Looking back at a piece of rhetorical theory from an oral culture, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* was particularly careful to note the various ways repetition and rhythm can be an effective form of delivery. Certain definitions outlined in *Rhetorica*, such as epanaphora—"one word forms successive beginnings for phrases expressing like and different ideas" (253); antistrophe—"We repeat not the first phrase, as in epanaphora, but the last" (254); and interlacement—"The union of both figures, the combined use of antistrophe and epanaphora" (254) were used to give an orator a perceived elegance, as mentioned in *Rhetorica*, "In the...kinds of figures which I have thus far set forth, the frequent recourse to the same word is not dictated by verbal poverty; rather there inheres in the repetition an elegance which the ear can distinguish more easily than words can explain" (255). This musical quality in repetition, then, was a critical part to an orator's delivery. This was not only for the sake of the audience's memory and their entertainment, but also for the orator to memorize the speech they were going to give. As I described in Chapter 4, it doesn't take much for sounds to turn into music in our minds, as demonstrated by the speech to song illusion in which a repeated phrase begins to sound like a beat.

We now have the scientific technology to understand the connection between

memory and rhythm. In “The Phonological Loop and Memory for Rhythms: An Individual Differences Approach,” Satoru Saito looks at how both audio and visual rhythms (i.e. repetition in time) were processed by the hearer/seer. According to Saito, visual and auditory rhythms are processed in our brains differently using the phonological loop, which is generally accepted as a system for retaining phonemic information that’s made up of the phonological store and articulatory process. Audio vs. visual rhythms access the phonological loop differently. As Saito explains, “Materials presented auditorily have direct access to the phonological store, which can hold speech-based information for about 2 seconds” (313). As with the fleeting nature of sound itself, the phonological store provides direct access to our brains, but only for a brief moment. Saito goes on to say, “On the other hand, visual materials only have access to the store through the articulatory control process, which serves to allow visually presented materials to be phonologically coded by an articulatory mechanism” (313). Essentially, this means that visual materials may be more memorable; however, they have less direct access to the parts of our brains that serve memory functions. The audible rhythm is felt; the visual rhythm is coded and filed away for future use.

Print and writing, as Plato’s Socrates argues, “destroys memory” (79). Without the need to engage all of the elements of the phonological loop as members of oral cultures did, print cultures were able to instead become more analytical in thought, as described in chapter 4. Freed of the cumbersome baggage of mnemonic devices and repetition from oral culture, print cultures were instead able to think more slowly and carefully plan what they intended to say. The burden of memory was no longer solely on the speaker, but rather on the physical material that the information was written down on.

With the advent of print, the role of memory shifted from retaining and conserving all things to remembering where to locate the information and retain what was read, which allowed for the more critical thinking and thereby isolation as described in chapter 4.

In secondary orality, memory regains some of its former position that it had in primary orality because, at the end of the day, secondary orality is still intended to be heard, not read. While secondary orality is still built on the linear structure and has respect to temporal sequence (48), the audio aspect of secondary orality saw the return of flatter characters and formulaic structures which build upon themselves. We now have the ability to go back and listen again to what was just said, and so repetition for memory’s sake is less likely to take place, although rhythmic speech or particularly musical variances in pace, pitch, tone, and rhythm remain have remained important because it is much easier for us to listen to someone that speaks with varied musicality than someone who speaks a-rhythmically in monotone. Most importantly, the burden of memory is on the recording tool, as it was in print. While going back to do the equivalent of “rereading” what you just missed is perhaps more difficult with secondary orality tools like television, memorization is no longer necessary for the conservation and preservation of the groups’ knowledge. Rather, memory instead serves to locate the information and operate the machinery itself.

Below are the psychodynamics that affect perceptions of memory in each noetic state as Ong and Thomas have described:

Table 6. Psychodynamics that Affect Perceptions of Memory

<b>Orality</b>	<b>Print</b>	<b>Secondary Orality</b>
(i) <b>Additive rather than Subordinative:</b> “Oral structures often look to	<b>Subordinative rather than additive:</b> “Written discourse develops more elaborate and fixed grammar than oral	“a return of less complex, flatter characters of oral discourse with the

<p>pragmatics (the convenience of the speaker)” by continuously adding to what was said before—the introductory “and” (<i>Orality and Literacy</i>, 37).</p>	<p>discourse does [narrative, syntactic structure] because to provide meaning it is dependent simply upon linguistic structure, since it lacks the normal full existential contexts which surround oral discourse and help determine meaning in oral discourse somewhat independently of grammar” (38).</p>	<p>climactic linear plot, which respects temporal sequence (Ong 48)”</p>
<p><b>(ii) Aggregative rather than analytic:</b> “reliance on formulas and to implement memory. The elements of orally based thought and expression tend to be not so much simple integers as clusters of integers, such as parallel terms or phrases or clauses, antithetical terms or phrases or clauses, epithets” (38).</p>	<p><b>Analytic rather than aggregative:</b> High literacy rejects loads of epithets and other formulary baggage “as cumbersome and tiresomely redundant because of its aggregative weight” (39).</p>	<p>“New oral electronic media replace oral formulas with slogans, thereby fabricating their own formulaic nature. However, slogans are less enduring and interpretive than oral formulas” (Thomas 390).</p>
<p><b>(iii) Redundant or ‘copious’</b>  “Redundancy, repetition of what was just said, keeps both speaker and hearer surely on track... it is in a profound sense more natural to thought and speech than is sparse linearity... [its] also favored by the physical conditions of oral expression before a large audience” (40).</p>	<p><b>Non-repetitive with little need for mnemonic devices</b>  “Sparsely linear or analytical thought and speech is an artificial creation, structured by the technology of writing... With writing, the mind is forced into a slowed-down pattern that affords it the opportunity to interfere with and reorganize its more normal, redundant processes.</p>	<p>“In terms of formal structures, television's recapitulation of its themes in daily, weekly, and annual cycles, and its repetition of formats, creates some basic trustworthiness and security for the viewer” (393).</p>

We can measure the memory aspects of orality, print, and secondary orality using a visual tool. The website SongSim allows users to input text (usually used for song

lyrics) to create a visual representation of repetition. Here is an example of a song, *Lovefool* by The Cardigans:

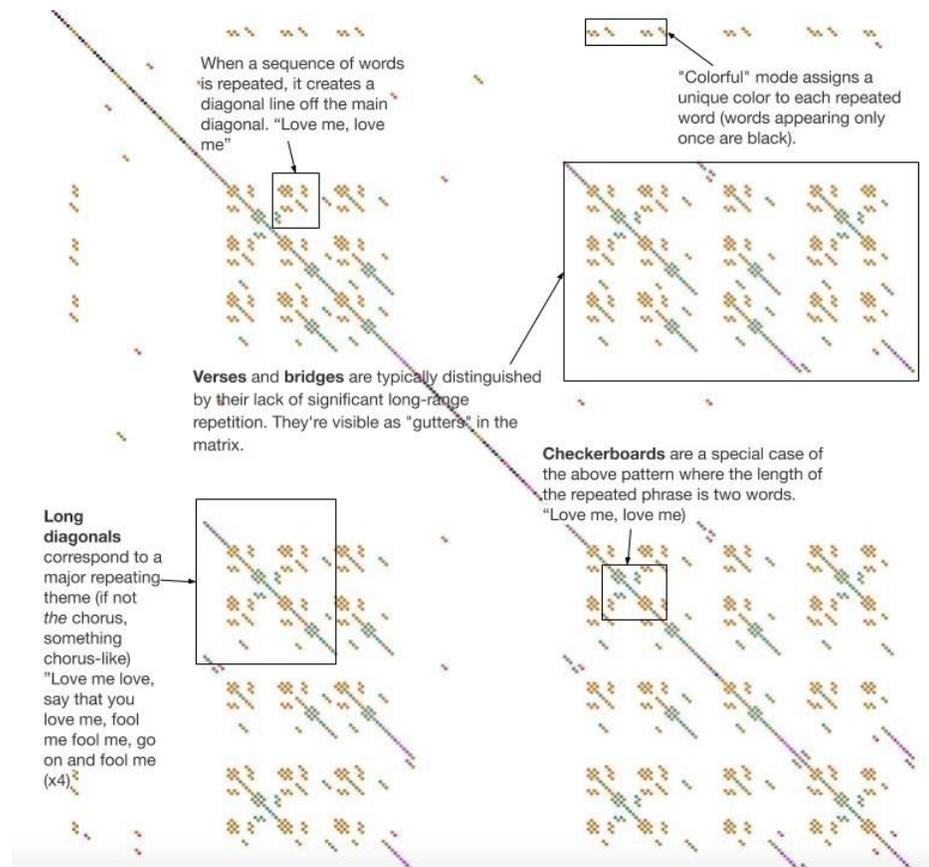


Figure 8. "Lovefool" by The Cardigans. *SongSim*, 2019.

We can see how certain words repeat at specific parts, creating bridges, choruses, and common verses throughout the song. This is an example of something that was fully intended to be repetitious—it's a pop song. It only serves to be heard. Conversely, all writing is going to have some repetition within it due to the nature of language itself, but it purposefully intends not to be repetitive. We repeat words like prepositions, articles, and terms directly related to the topic throughout written and oral speech, which will still show up in SongSim. Here is the last 525 words of a past essay I wrote, for example:

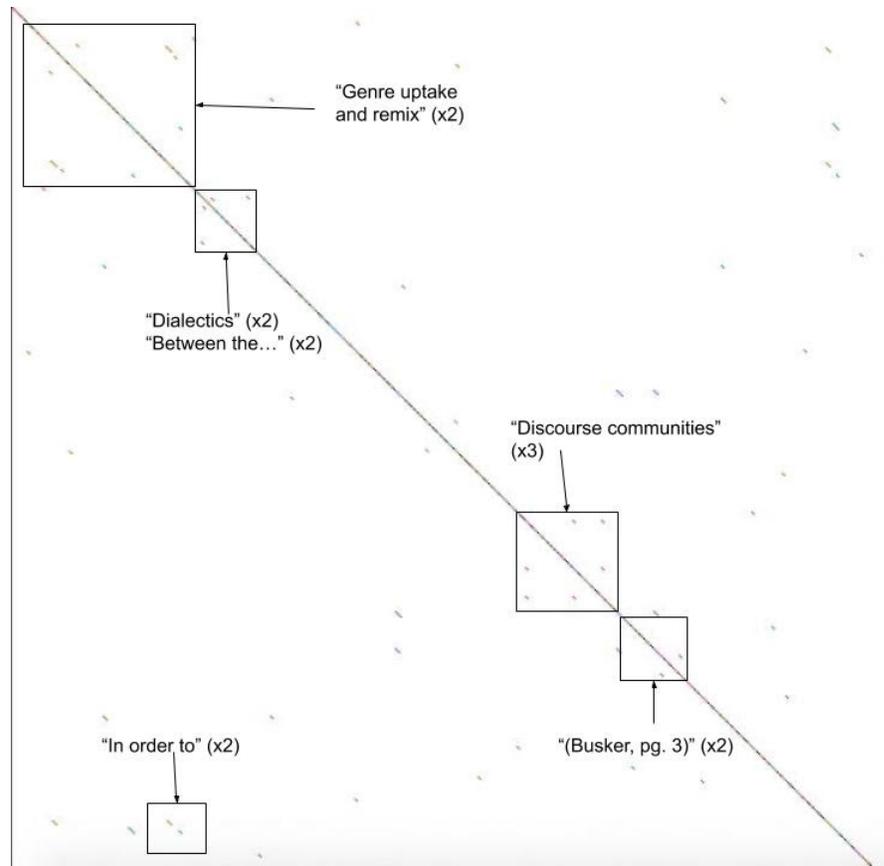


Figure 9. Hannah's Short Text 1 Excerpt. *SongSim*, 2019.

Even in written text that wasn't meant to be repetitious, there's still some evidence of repetition in it. That being said, it's still clear by the overall structure that, for the most part, my intention was not to craft my delivery by the classical standards of oration, but was instead intended to be *read*.

Now let's look at Obama's Keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. Here are the last 525 words of the speech put into SongSim:

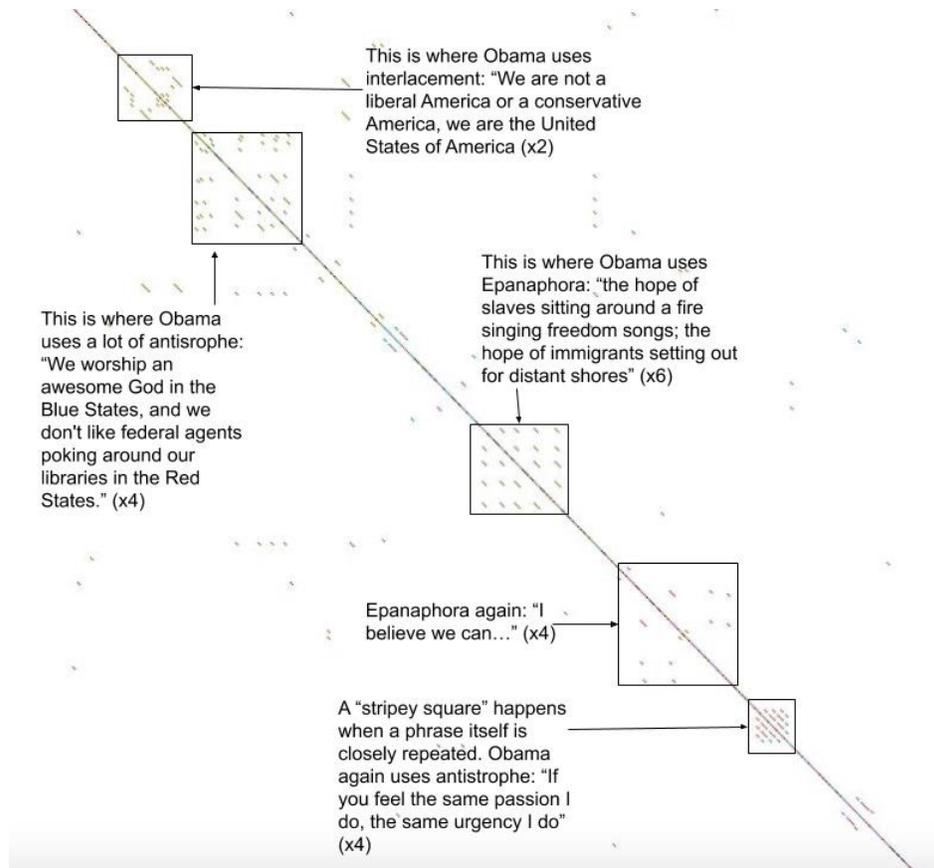


Figure 10. Barack Obama's 2004 DNC Keynote Speech Excerpt. *SongSim*, 2019.

Although it's not 100% songlike, we can still see where and how Obama purposefully used repetitive speech by the structure presented in this graph. By looking at this SongSim rendering of the excerpt, we see that Obama's speechwriter, Jon Favreau, was conscious of the speech's repetition and can even argue that he did so to make Obama's delivery more musical. Although the listeners of this speech more than likely were able to retrieve or replay it, it was still written to be listened to.

Now let's look at the last 525 words of Donald Trump's 2016 RNC speech:

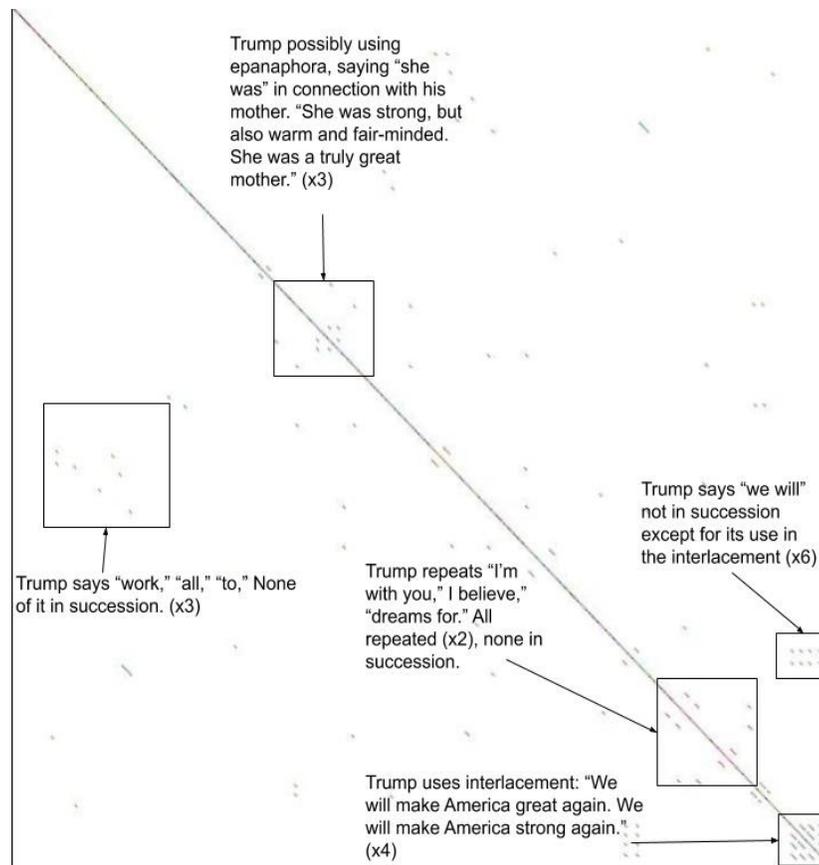


Figure 11. Trump’s 2016 RNC Speech Excerpt. *SongSim*, 2019.

Trump’s use of repetition is different, aside from the single use of interlacement at the end. There is no doubt that he repeats himself; however, the majority of the time he does repeat himself it’s not by the *Rhetorica’s* standards; it’s more evident of a limited vocabulary than it is of classical form. Rather than the carefully balanced and curated use of repetition like epanaphora, interlacement, etc., Trump’s use of repetition is more commonly a reiteration of a word out of succession. Visually, we can see that Trump’s use of repetition is, for the most part, more like the excerpt of my short text than Obama’s speech.

We can find evidence of this in how Obama used technology to communicate during his presidency. Obama strategically and consciously used Youtube during 2007 in

an effort to appeal to this form of representation characteristic of secondary orality's scripted sound. In a Politico.com article titled, "How the Twitter Candidate Trumped the Teleprompter President," journalist Virginia Heffernan writes that

the videos made a theme of the presidential candidate's aloofness. Respectful cameras showed Obama extreme deference, in large part because they were on his payroll. Obama's stirring "Yes We Can" speech in New Hampshire found an audience not as documentary news but in a tightly storyboarded film uploaded by the campaign—complete with sentimental cutaways showing rapt supporters.

(Politico)

Essentially, Obama attempted to craft his image using the visuals-in-space-moving-as-sound-in-time quality of secondary orality; Obama was speaking with sound in time from visual space. More will be said about this later.

Secondary print is no less evident in Trump's presidency as secondary orality was in Obama's. Obama's scripted sound earned him the moniker of "the Teleprompter President," while Trump's arguably intentional self-representation as unscripted sound in visual space earned him the moniker of "the Twitter President." As Virginia Heffernan states in her article, "If Obama found in YouTube a place to executive-produce himself, Trump through Twitter has a stage on which to play himself" (Politico). Trump found ways to use visual space to become a paradox himself: Is a tweet (written word) intended to appear unscripted anything more than script itself? This self-representation is partially attributed to his style of tweets, which seem to be a self-fulfilling prophecy of what print culture thinks words sound like... and they might, in secondary orality. Heffernan says, "Trump makes himself heard in fragments, monosyllables and exclamation points, a

proud male hysteric with the deafening staccato and hair-trigger immune system that Twitter exists to host. He embraces odd abbreviations, erratic capitalization and typos in his invariably reactive rants” (politico). Trump is essentially creating script of something someone in secondary orality would believe *sounded* unscripted.

It appears that Trump’s speeches were written not for the standard of delivery in oration that has dominated throughout the centuries of the past, but instead is symptomatic of Trump speaking to a readership. I believe it’s possible to argue that this identifiable lack of musicality in his speech tells us that this is one way (of many ways) that while Trump may be engaging in the act of speaking, he is not speaking to be heard and remembered by his immediate audience that’s listening, but to be reproduced in a space where visual word is able to able to move and feel like audible word and remembered by a machine. Trump’s speech is secondary print spoken back into reality. I will now outline how I believe secondary print would complete the table above using Ong’s and Thomas’s theorized psychodynamics:

Table 7. Completed Table of Psychodynamics that Affect Perceptions of Memory

<b>Orality</b>	<b>Print</b>	<b>Secondary Orality</b>	<b>Secondary Print</b>
(i) <b>Additive rather than Subordinative:</b> “Oral structures often look to pragmatics (the convenience of the speaker)” by continuously adding to what was said before—the introductory “and” ( <i>Orality and</i>	<b>Subordinative rather than additive:</b> “Written discourse develops more elaborate and fixed grammar than oral discourse does [narrative, syntactic structure] because to provide meaning it is dependent simply upon linguistic structure, since it lacks the normal full	“a return of less complex, flatter characters of oral discourse with the climactic linear plot, which respects temporal sequence (Ong 48)”	<b>Subordinately Additive:</b> Secondary print makes linear thought with respect to temporal sequence additive in substance and visually organized to be subordinative.

<p><i>Literacy, 37).</i></p>	<p>existential contexts which surround oral discourse and help determine meaning in oral discourse somewhat independently of grammar” (38).</p>		
<p><b>(ii) Aggregative rather than Analytic:</b> “reliance on formulas and to implement memory. The elements of orally based thought and expression tend to be not so much simple integers as clusters of integers, such as parallel terms or phrases or clauses, antithetical terms or phrases or clauses, epithets” (38).</p>	<p><b>Analytic rather than Aggregative:</b> High literacy rejects loads of epithets and other formulary baggage “as cumbersome and tiresomely redundant because of its aggregative weight” (39).</p>	<p>“New oral electronic media replace oral formulas with slogans, thereby fabricating their own formulaic nature. However, slogans are less enduring and interpretive than oral formulas” (Thomas 390).</p>	<p><b>Aggregative and Analytic for the sake of Being Remembered:</b> Secondary print has evidence of the use of formulas and mnemonic devices like those in orality; however, they’re used not to help remember entire histories, but rather be memorable in a very loud and densely populated space.</p>
<p><b>(iii) Redundant or ‘copious’:</b> “Redundancy, repetition of what was just said, keeps both speaker and hearer surely on track... it is in a profound sense more natural to thought and speech than is sparse linearity... [its] also favored by the physical conditions of oral expression before a large audience” (40).</p>	<p><b>Non-repetitive with little need for mnemonic devices:</b> “Sparsely linear or analytical thought and speech is an artificial creation, structured by the technology of writing... With writing, the mind is forced into a slowed-down pattern that affords it the opportunity to interfere with and reorganize its more normal, redundant processes.</p>	<p>“In terms of formal structures, television’s recapitulation of its themes in daily, weekly, and annual cycles, and its repetition of formats, creates some basic trustworthiness and security for the viewer” (393).</p>	<p><b>Repeated but not Repetitive:</b> The repetitions found in secondary print do have similarities in the scheduled, organized sense of cycles and formats found in secondary orality; however, evidence of redundancy as was used in oral cultures can be found in the quantitative data associated with posts as well as some sentence</p>

Repetition is just one aspect of musicality, but there are many factors in making something musical. It's possible to argue that the past standards of musicality, which Tarling states as "variety of tone, pace, pitch of voice and rhythm...with a suggestion of singing, rather than singing itself" (45), have also changed in the digital age. Obama gave his speech before the public had Facebook and Twitter, and so delivered speeches that would have delighted the ears of the likes of the anonymous author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. As reporter James Fallows remarks, "Obama's speeches were musical... It was no accident that Will.i.am was able to set one of his speeches to music to some effect" (Fallows). Trump, on the other hand, delivers particularly unmusical speeches. We can find evidence of this not just in his lack of classically composed repetition, but in his variety of tone, pace, pitch, and rhythm, as well. He breaks almost every rule of the classics, and yet, one could argue that he's still an effective speaker.

To further the idea of secondary print affecting our speech, we can look at the case of *DeepDrumpf*. According to Ott,

Brad Hayes programmed a Twitterbot to mimic the then presidential candidate. The bot, which is called *DeepDrumpf*, uses an artificial intelligence algorithm based on Trump's language in hundreds of hours of debate transcripts to generate Trump-like tweets. . . . Trump's debate rhetoric during the Republican primary displayed three prominent traits: it "use[d] simple language," it "defer[red] to trusted friends and colleagues," and it "constantly insult[ed] his opponents (Garfield 2006)." (63)

The bot didn't learn from Trump's tweets--it learned from Trump's speech, an important

distinction.

The idea of the tools used to communicate effecting the way we speak is not a new concept; writers such as Dennis Baron in his article *From Pencils to Pixels: The Stages of Literacy Technologies* remarked on how new forms of literacy first mimic past forms of literacy and, in return, older forms of literacy end up mimicking the new. Baron says,

As costs decrease and the technology becomes better able to mimic more ordinary or familiar communications, a new literacy spreads across a population. Only then does the technology come into its own, no longer imitating the previous forms given to us by the earlier communication technology, but creating new forms and new possibilities for communication. Moreover, in a kind of backward wave, the new technology begins to affect older technologies as well. (16)

Is it any wonder, then, that our speech has been altered by this new(er) form of literacy? We don't technically need to remember a speech ourselves, and we don't technically need to hear it, either, when we're aware it's going to be "reprinted" almost immediately after it was given and readily available to us through social media and online news sources.

*Psychodynamic (i)—Subordinately Additive*

Secondary print makes linear thought with respect to temporal sequence additive in substance and visually organized to be subordinative. In fig. 12, you will notice how Tumblr users collectively work together to increase group knowledge.

verdigrisandgrame nobleplaidypus



**unexplained-events**  
 Researchers have used Easter Island Moai replicas to show how they might have been "walked" to where they are displayed.

**VIDEO**

**smileforthehigh**  
 Finally. People need to realize aliens aren't the answer for everything (when they use it to erase poc civilizations and how smart they were)

**desiremyblack**  
 (via TumblrOr)

**pearlsnapbutton**  
 What's really wild is that the native people literally told the Europeans "they walked" when asked how the statues were moved. The Europeans were like "lol these backwards heathens and their fairy tales guess it's gonna always be a mystery!"

**kwlanaroha**

**safia aidid**  
 @SafiaA

**Richard Burton in 1850s called Somalis superstitious for believing mosquitos carry malaria #CadaanStudies**

**species; and there is a red variety called "Dikai sa," whose venom, according to the people, causes them to vomit. The latter abounds in Galays and the hill ranges of the Berberah country; it is innocuous during the cold season. The mosquito bites bring on, according to the same authority, deadly fevers; the superstitious probably arise from the fact that mosquitoes and fevers become formidable about the same time.**

RETWEETS 333 FAVORITES 183

11:37 PM - 25 Mar 2015

Maori told Europeans that kiore were native rats and no one believed them until DNA tests proved it

And the Iroquois told Europeans that squirrels showed them how to tap maple syrup and no one believed them until they caught it on video

**theopenses**  
 Oral history from various First Nations tribes in the Pacific Northwest contained stories about a massive earthquake/tsunami hitting the coast, but no one listened to them until scientists discovered physical evidence of quakes from the Cascadia fault line.

**thegriffthewolfate**  
 Rookkund Lake AKA "Skeleton Lake" in the Himalayas in India is eerie because it was discovered with hundreds of skeletal remains and for the life of them researchers couldn't figure out what it was that killed them. For decades the "mystery" went unsolved.

Until they finally payed closer attention to local songs and legend that all essentially said "Yah the Goddess Nanda Devi got mad and sent huge heave stones down to kill them". That was consistent with huge contusions found all on their neck and shoulders and the weather patterns of the area, which are prone to huge & inevitably deadly goddamn hailstones.

<https://www.facebook.com/statiscobscura/videos/10154065247212728/>  
 Literally these legends were past down for over a thousand years and it still took researched 50 to "figure out" the "mystery". 🤔

Figure 12. "Tumblr Thread" by Unexplained-events. *Tumblr*, Tumblr.com.

This post was regarding a discovery about the movement of Easter Island Heads, to which other Tumblr users continued the conversation. Each post is in reference to both the original post and what the others have said. Spatially, each comment is subordinated to the one that came before it; however, in substance there's evidence that each member is taking it upon themselves to keep the conversation going in a fairly additive way. No, they may not always use the introductory "and," but in secondary print where one can see what was previously said, the use of the introductory "and" is not necessary to make these conversations additive.

*Psychodynamic (ii)—Aggregative and Analytic for the Sake of Being Remembered*

The use of formulas and mnemonic devices are evident in secondary print in ways that primary print would simply never be able to attain. These formulas are one of the notable characteristics of Twitter jokes and memes. These formulas and mnemonic devices go beyond simply the use of slang or common phrasing—the structure in which people are making a point is repeated across users in the hopes that it will increase their own popularity and therefore make them memorable. Figures 13-17 demonstrate one of these particular structures that became overwhelmingly prevalent in 2019:



Figure 13. "Tweet Format 1" by Antonio Garza. *Twitter*, 2019, twitter.com.



Figure 14. “Tweet Format 2” by @JAAVRGSJ. *Twitter*, 2019, Twitter.com.



Figure 15. “Tweet Format 3” by @fallawaypilots. *Twitter*, 2019, Twitter.com.



Figure 16. “Tweet Format 4” by @greenlight. *Twitter*, 2019, Twitter.com.



Figure 17. “Tweet Format 5” by @VINTERINE. *Twitter*, 2019, Twitter.com.

These Twitter posts demonstrate how users copy and repeat each other's structures for effect. Unlike in primary orality where the structure and memory devices were used in a sense of plot in order for the speaker to remember particular things, the use of structures and memory devices are instead intended to create a memorable post using a structure that needs little explanation. Other formats like memes may also constitute the aggregative qualities of secondary print; however, I wanted to focus on how a particular sentence structure is commonly aggregated on its own.

*Psychodynamic (iii)—Repeated but not Repetitive*

In terms of repetition and redundancy, secondary print has some similarities to primary orality, print, and secondary orality, but as we have seen so far with the memory chapter, secondary print uses the best of both the print and oral world to be repetitive and redundant in a different way. The repetitions found in secondary print do have similarities in the scheduled, organized sense of cycles and formats found in secondary orality; however, evidence of redundancy as was used in oral cultures can be found in the quantitative data associated with posts, as well as some sentence structure. The number of times something is “repeated” in digital spaces has not truly been seen before to this magnitude. As said before, we now have quantitative data associated with the amount of times something gets repeated. Retweets on Twitter are an example, as shown in fig.18.



Figure 18. “Explanation of @degendering’s Tweet” by Hannah McKeating. Screenshot, 2020.

The tweet itself is not redundant or copious in its own right; however, it's repeated by others and can still have a redundant effect as more users retweet it.

Memory plays a very interesting role in secondary print. Our minds are no longer weighed down by the need to remember everything on our own. The technology at our disposal (whether it be a pen and paper, video/ audio recording, or the RAM of a computer) are all able to do the remembering for us, which gives us the space to be analytic and purposeful in composition. That being said, the aspects of memory that made it a communal effort are still present. Memory is still a group endeavor, as each of the examples have shown. We no longer are forced to carry the burden of remembering exact words, figures, and whole histories when speaking or typing; we have tools that do that for us now. However, the spaces in which these tweets occur can sometimes still feel as though we're in a loud room where everyone is talking at once. That, in my opinion, is a sign that the visual material that is a tweet is able to use the characteristics of sound and time, the community dynamics that were prevalent in oral communication, in print. The focus from remembering the words and the stories to instead being memorable in spaces that feel loud is what has changed.

## VII. CONCLUSION

What I have presented to you so far has been a discussion about what I believe secondary print looks like and where I see it taking place. In essence, I've been attempting to theorize its existence in the digital world because bringing Ong's work into contemporary communication environments has educational, political, and economic implications as our communication technology continues to progress. This might be on a micro-level, as in the words we use to describe the things around us, but it has a macro-level impact as well, as in the standards we are measuring communication with and who we decide gets to communicate. With a new noetic state comes a new set of rules, and the monetized, algorithmically coded, instantaneous, and yet forever existing space of internet-based communication platforms are where these rules are being created and constantly readjusted to suit the environment and its users.

In the preface, I called Twitter a place. I am not the only person who conceptualizes social media platforms as a place—it is, after all, a visually designed space where dynamic word becomes visual material. But the terminology surrounding these platforms and the way we think about them are signs, smoke signals, to how we intend to use them, and in turn, how they use us. As I said in Chapter 5, these sites are designed to elicit a particular kind of communication, namely for the user to reveal more about themselves and therefore become easier to advertise to. Considering that this is where many Americans are getting their information, are talking to each other, and where political campaigns are taking place, it is important for us as academics not only to change our standards to better fit the world around us, but to guide others in their use of these tools so everyone can utilize the networks available to us in ways that are

advantageous to all in our communities.

How we teach students to use these literacy tools and understand themselves in these spaces is already becoming an imperative focus. Perhaps we would be better off teaching digital literacy differently than how we teach driver's ed. In both driving and media education at a national level, students are taught how to use both the vehicle and the internet as a mechanical motion, not a human action. As described in *The Death Algorithm and other Digital Dilemmas* by Roberto Simanowski, "When you look at how schools teach students about media, you could easily get the idea that... education on the subject is firmly in the hands of the police... the underlying educational model is that of traffic school. The goal is to teach people types of behavior so as to avoid accidents in the digital realm" (50). In secondary print, print itself is closer than ever to achieving the feeling of interconnectedness with a community, and yet it still is hard to imagine ourselves outside of isolation in these spaces. Similarly, media education is taught as a set of tools for boosting one's own competitive edge; as Simanowski says, "Educational and research policy is subordinated to economic policy which is often criticized as focusing on *Homo economicus* instead of *Zoon politikon*. Whereas the latter understood him- or herself as part of the common body politic, responsible for that community, the former is concerned first and foremost with enhancing his or her portfolio value in all domains of life" (59). In the pedagogical practices responsible for media and driver's education, we're taught how to be objects in motion next to each other, not humans having *interactions* with one another.

I believe this can be attributed to the way we commonly regard computers and digital devices in opposition to the more artistic, emotional aspects of humanity. Perhaps

it is because I have spent too much time with Ong, but I find this notion to be confusing. Just as numbers and math equations can be translated into musical notes to be [played on a piano](#), I believe the logical, mathematical side of the computers and digital tools we use are an extension of human creativity, and therefore a more humanist approach to how we teach the use of these tools is necessary. If we continue to teach students simply to practice defensive driving while online, I believe they will continue to accept their subjugation by the institutions they participate in without questioning what's most beneficial for their community. If we as educators intend to break the factory setting that the government, education system, and economy place them in, then we cannot forget about the way they learn how to interact with machines and, more importantly, each other through these machines. Tech company monopolies are only becoming richer as our students are sold more and more as the product to advertisers. The critical thinking we instill in our students while in our classrooms cannot be limited only to the classroom. As we continuously innovate how we make contact with each other, hopefully we'll begin to realize that cars and the internet are not amoral tools for us to personally use without consequence, but instead tools designed with a specific purpose that have consequences on the bodies around us.

This thesis is a projection about the potential life of something invaluable: a future where the staged, metaphoric, symbolic representation of ourselves that we carefully curate into written thoughts are shared with one another in the communal sense only previously achieved in the highly sought-after interconnectedness of physical interaction. It's the ability for writing not to be siphoned from the human life force, stationary, but instead tap into it, moving with us in our interiority. It is important to me

not to focus on the death of something that new literacies bring but instead the life it breathes into past forms to allow us to communicate far more fully than we have before. It's one of the most incredible aspects of human innovation and indeed technology itself—we're always trying to get closer to each other, to understand each other in the most effective way possible. Merging these time signatures and sensory aspects of communication is the closest we've gotten to communicating with each other as a whole—not limited to space and time but overcoming it and using it advantageously—at the most basic form. There are negative consequences, misgivings, and caveats, of course, but in exploration and innovation of those we can only get closer to authentic synchronicity.

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