The second orality may provide the means to resuscitate communication to a richer state, where both oral and literate traditions influence the way we perceive our world.

The digital manipulation and simultaneous dissemination of images to a variety of audiences introduces an unprecedented historical phenomenon. In Internet Invention, Gregory Ulmer describes this as the age of "electracy," while Kathleen Welch calls it the "second orality." For the purposes of this short response, these terms will be used synonymously.

Electracy presents a "cumulative" form of communication, including the previous oral and literate modes. Welch argues that the emergence of digitization allows us to embrace a second orality (or, the combination of oral and literate traditions), stating that "the three communication-consciousness forms are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are cumulative" (Welch, 764). According to Ulmer, "[e]lectracy is an image apparatus, keeping in mind that 'images' are made with words as well as with pictures" (Ulmer, 2). David Bolter believes that "true electronic writing is not limited to verbal text: the writeable elements may be words, images, sounds, or even actions that the computer is directed to perform" (Walker, Reinventing Rhetoric). And "[a]s Walter Ong observed, postliteracy is secondary orality, a hybrid of oral and literate features" (Ulmer, 38).

The secondary orality (and likewise Ulmer's concept of 'electracy') causes us to think more abstractly, just as literacy transformed individuals in the ancient world. According to Welch, as a result of writing, "the Greek world had changed…not only on the outside (communication, or exterior discourse) but on the inside as well (expression to self, or interior discourse). Consciousness itself began to take on [new]…possibilities presented by the written word" (765). Because "the ways people perceive have changed radically" (Welch, 775), we can assume that this new self identity and awareness causes us to think differently. Ulmer writes that "the first communication of an electrate person is reflexive, self-directed" (5). And just as literacy allowed us to think on a more abstract level (due to the permanence of the printed word), "electracy further foregrounds the personal, causing a new abstract meaning to surface. It puts things into a new context" (Hawk, 9/22). The intellectual "soup" that ensues will undoubtedly allow us to transcend current limitations of mental faculty. Furthermore, the new transition may create a variety of texts, just as we saw with the transition from orality to literacy. Tony M. Lentz states that "speaking and writing competed with each other, and their strife led to stunningly original work" (Welch, 763). If indeed these new texts materialize, what will their effect be?

The second orality also presents a more democratic mode of creating and transferring knowledge by empowering student texts. This mode may not merely result in "stunningly original work," but also debases the status quo, in that it helps to abolish class distinction. According to Welch, "the study of secondary orality can bring about a democracy of texts" (775). Ulmer's "EmerAgency" is imagined as an "umbrella organization gathering through the power of digital linking all the inquiries of students around the world and forming them into a 'fifth estate'" (1). Welch believes that "[i]f students…empower themselves through writing and the dialectic of inquiry, then the status quo might be in danger" (769). "With the technology of [the] secondary orality, the spoken word and the written word are empowering each other in ways that previously were not possible" (Welch, 774). If one recognizes that the current generation of students is more well versed in digital media than generations past, it can also be assumed that digital media will "do away completely with 'intellectual property' and liquidate the 'heritage,' that is to say, the class-specific handing-on of nonmaterial capital" (Welch, 768).

The new "pop" of abstractive thinking that is to become of the transition into the second orality gives us the opportunity to produce texts we have never seen before. The new way of perceiving our world (through an accumulation of image, text, and sound) presents us with a new and resonant form of communication.

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