Indigenous American societies pose serious problems for traditional theories of orality, literacy, writing, and semiosis in general. Based on our understanding—albeit incomplete—of American media, this presentation attempts to deconstruct the orality-literacy dichotomy that characterizes anthropological thought (whether it be by anthropologists, historians, literary critics, or others). Using indigenous American media such as the Inca and Wari khipu, Moche fine-line painting, and Mesoamerican iconography as a starting and ending point, it proposes a dialogic model of literacy and subsequently a dialogic model of media that constitutes a revision of the traditional anthropological and historical theory relating to the role of writing/media and its relationship to the development of socio-economic and political complexity, as well as its cognitive effects.

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