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Article abstract

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Doris Kearns Goodwin and Thomas J. Farrell on the History of the 1960s

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Abstract: In the opening and closing sections of the present essay, I succinctly highlight Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin's new 2024 book *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s* (Simon & Schuster). In the wide-ranging and somewhat lengthy middle section of the present essay, I construct my own personal history of the 1960s. I especially highlight the work of my former teacher in the 1960s, the American Jesuit Renaissance specialist and cultural historian and pioneering media ecology theorist Walter J. Ong (1912-2003; Ph.D. in English, Harvard University, 1955) of Saint Louis University.

The loquacious American historian and notorious plagiarist Doris Kearns Goodwin (born in 1943; Ph.D. in government, Harvard University, 1968; married Richard N. Goodwin [1931-2018] in 1975) is the author of the celebrated 2005 book *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin's new 2024 book is titled *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s*. In it, she weaves together a memoir of her own life, a biography of her late husband's life, and a history of the 1960s. Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin spoke with the *New York Times* real estate reporter Joanne Kaufman about her new book. See Kaufman's article "A Historian Makes Peace With Her Own History: It took Doris Kearns Goodwin a while to adjust to leaving the Concord, Mass., she shared with her husband. But Boston has its compensations" (dated April 9, 2024) in the real estate section of the *New York Times*.

Kaufman says, "Ms. Kearns Goodwin's primary sources [for her new 2024 book] were the 300 (and counting) boxes of letters, postcards, documents, diaries, newspaper clippings, photos, and other ephemera that Dick

Goodwin amassed during the middle years of the 20th century, unceremoniously shoved into storage unity, basements, and a barn, and then, more than 50 years later, retrieved cache by cache and shared with his eager wife.”

According to Kaufman, Richard N. Goodwin “in his 20s, was a special assistant to President John F. Kennedy and forged an enduring friendship with Jackie Kennedy and in his 30s, was a speechwriter and advisor for President Lyndon B. Johnson and Robert F. Kennedy.”

“Mr. Goodwin’s plans to chronicle those turbulent times” were cut short by his death in 2018. However, “after his death, Ms. Kearns Goodwin took up the project.”

Now, perhaps some readers are too young to remember the 1960s. But those younger readers should remember that President Joe Biden was born in 1942 and former President Donald Trump was born in 1946. So Biden turned 18 in 1960, and Trump turned 14 in 1960. So Biden was 18 to 27 during the 1960s, and Trump was 14 to 23.

Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin was 17 to 26 in the 1960s. But Richard N. Goodwin was 29 to 38, and he gathered the archive of materials about the 1960s that Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin used in writing her personal history of the 1960s. I was 16 to 25. And I was impressionable – and idealistic.

Even though President Biden and I were born a wee bit too early in the 1940s to be included in the Baby Boom generation that was born after World War II officially ended in 1945, we grew up alongside the Baby Boomers – one of whom was former President Trump.

We should not forget that President Harry S. Truman had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to bring World War II to an end in 1945. As a result, in postwar America, all Americans lived under the totally terrifying threat of possible atomic warfare.

Christopher Nolan wrote and directed the award-winning 2023 film *Oppenheimer* – starring the Irish actor Cillian Murphy as the cigarette-smoking physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, who is often described as the father of the atomic bomb. Nolan based his film script on the aptly titled 2005 book *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin.

According to their 2005 book (p. 575), President Kennedy had planned to confer the Enrico Fermi Prize on J. Robert Oppenheimer in a ceremony in the White House on December 2, 1963 – which President Kennedy was unable to do because he was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963 – most likely by the CIA. Instead, “On December 2, President Lyndon Johnson went ahead with the fermi Award ceremony, as scheduled” (p. 576).

Now, when President Truman dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the Spanish Jesuit Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991; ordained a priest in 1936) was serving in Japan as a missionary. Later, Father Arrupe served as the superior general of the Society of Jesus (known informally as the Jesuit order from 1965 to 1983).

For further reading about Father Arrupe’s life and times, see Pedro Miguel Lamet’s 2020 book *Pedro Arrupe: Witness of the Twentieth Century, Prophet of the Twenty-First*, translated by Joseph V. Owens, S.J. Disclosure: I was in the Jesuits from 1979 to 1987.

Now, after President Truman had bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the French Jesuit paleontologist and spiritual writer Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) published an essay about the atomic bomb in the Jesuit-sponsored journal *Etudes* in 1946. It is reprinted in English translation as Chapter VIII: “Some Reflections on the Spiritual Repercussions of the Atomic Bomb” in the 1964 collection of Teilhard’s writings titled *The Future of Man*, translated by Norman Denny (pp. 140-148).

On the inside front flap of the dust jacket, we read the American Jesuit Walter J. Ong’s assessment of the collection: “This book shows the mature drive of Teilhard’s thought into the future, and gives us one of the most breathtaking and honest visions we have of what the end of the world and of man may be, a vision rooted in St.

Paul but impossible without the physical sciences and psychology of our own times.”

In any event, in Teilhard’s essay “Some Reflections on the Spiritual Repercussions of the Atomic Bomb,” he says, “As the American journal, *The New Yorker*, observed with remarkable penetration on August 18th, 1945: ‘Political plans for the new world, as shaped by statesmen, are not fantastic enough. The only conceivable way to catch up with atomic energy is with political energy directed to a universal structure’” (p. 141).

Now, despite the totally terrifying threat of atomic warfare that all Americans lived under in postwar America, a funny new thing emerged in postwar America, as the University of Virginia’s Grace Elizabeth Hale explains in her 2010 book *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America*. According to Hale, the trend of white middle-class rebellion emerged in postwar America before the 1960s. The American Jesuit Renaissance specialist and cultural historian and pioneering media ecology theorist Walter J. Ong (1912-2003; Ph.D. in English, Harvard University, 1955) discerned and discussed this trend in his title essay “The Barbarian Within: Outsiders Inside Society Today” in his 1962 book *The Barbarian Within: And Other Fugitive Essays and Studies* (pp. 260-285).

Ong’s 1962 title essay is reprinted in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 277-300). Ong borrowed the ancient Greek terminology about the Greek and the barbarian to articulate his two idealized cultural positions: the Greek position versus the barbarian position. For a study of the ancient Greek use of the two terms, see Edith Hall’s 1989 book *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*. In any event, Ong and John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) in the 1960s were part of an older generation – as were my parents.

But if Hale and Ong are correct in suggesting that the trend of rebellion in favor of outsiders had emerged in the

white middle class of Americans in postwar America before the 1960s, then perhaps some of the rebellion in the 1960s in American culture, perhaps even including the election of President Kennedy in 1960, should be seen as manifestations of that cultural trend. However that may be, the 1960s were characterized by certain forms of rebellion.

Even so, in Ong's terminology in his 1962 title essay, the Harvard-educated John F. Kennedy for the most part represented what Ong refers to as the Greek position – not what Ong refers to as the barbarian position.

Nevertheless, President Kennedy did come around to supporting the black civil rights movement spearheaded in the early 1960s by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – representing what Ong refers to in his 1962 title essay as the barbarian position (the outsider position).

Now, we do not know for sure just how impressionable young Joe Biden and young Donald Trump were in the 1960s, nor do we know for sure exactly what impressions they had of the 1960s. But we do know that the Baby Boomers grew up with television sets. Of course, we do not know how many Baby Boomers watched the televised debates between the two leading presidential candidates in 1960, Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts and Vice President Richard M. Nixon.

But we do know that John Kennedy was telegenic -- and photogenic – and that young Jack Kennedy had been a hero in the Navy during World War II. In the 1960s, he and his wife Jacqueline Kennedy were so telegenic and photogenic that they seemed almost like they had been cast by Hollywood to play their parts on the world stage. In any event, the media lionized Jack and Jackie Kennedy, as they were known at the time. In short, they were glamorous – and the aura of glamor associated with them made the early 1960s also seem somehow to be glamorous to me as a teenager at the time.

But at the time, most Republicans such as Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, generally did not find the Kennedy presidency to be attractive. For further reading about President Kennedy and his assassination – most

likely by the CIA – see the following three books:

(1) James W. Douglas, *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters* (2008);

(2) Peter Janney, *Mary's Mosaic: The CIA Conspiracy to Murder John F. Kennedy, Mary Pinchot Meyer, and Their Vision for World Peace* (2012);

(3) Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy: 1917-1963* (2003).

Now, because Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin characterizes her “Personal History of the 1960s” as “An Unfinished Love Story,” I am inclined also to characterize my memories here of the 1960s as an unfinished love story – both for myself personally and for those other Americans who gravitated toward certain kinds of rebellion in the 1960s (in Grace Elizabeth Hale’s terminology, discussed above).

However, in doing this, I am also prompted to characterize the idealized memories of the 1950s of Trump and his most adamant white followers an unfinished love story for them. By saying this, I also mean to suggest that our contemporary culture war may involve two competing unfinished love stories (in Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin’s terminology).

Because I align the idealized unfinished love story of the 1950s of Trump and his most adamant white followers with the print culture that emerged in Western culture after the Gutenberg printing press emerged in Europe in the mid-1450s, I suspect that their idealized unfinished love story of the 1950s also involves their strong resistance to the unsettling currents deep in their psyches to what Ong refers to as our contemporary secondary oral culture.

Ah, but if we consider two competing idealized positions today in our contemporary culture war in the United States today, then we should also note that neither of those two idealized positions corresponds with the two idealized positions that Ong refers to as the Greek position and the barbarian position. But Dr. Doris Kearns

Goodwin's unfinished love story of the 1960s and my own personal unfinished love story of the 1960s involved our responding positively and creatively to the unsettling currents deep in their psyches to what Ong refers to as secondary orality.

MY PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE 1960s

Now, just as the above introductory section was wide-ranging, and at times meandering, so too this section about me and my memories of the 1960s is wide-ranging, and at times meandering. My meandering in the present section enables me to weave together a wide array of material in this wide-ranging review essay. However, the present section, in the final analysis, like the above section, is ultimately aimed at describing cultural factors in the 1960s that may have contributed to the present trend in this election year of favoring cultural factors over economic factors (discussed below).

I was born in 1944 in Ossining, New York, my father's hometown. However, at the time of my birth, my father was in the U.S. Army and stationed in England as part of the troop buildup there for D-Day invasion of Normandy – under the command of the American General Dwight D. Eisenhower. After my father returned from World War II, he and my mother and my younger sister and I moved to Kansas City, Kansas, my mother's hometown. There, I attended Catholic grade school in the 1950s – when Dwight D. Eisenhower was the president of the United States. My parents were Democrats, and I knew that President Eisenhower was a Republican.

In any event, I certainly have memories of my own of the 1960s. I remember Senator John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1960. I also remember his challenge to Americans in his January 1961 inaugural address. I wrote my first op-ed piece for my Catholic high school newspaper about his challenge to us not to ask what our country could do for us, but what we could do for our country. I was inspired by his challenge. It appealed to my youthful idealism. Sadly, I also remember his assassination in Dallas, Texas, in November 1963.

In any event, because President Kennedy was the first Roman Catholic ever elected president of the United States, I tend to think of him and his presidency as part of what Robert C. Christopher refers to as the de-WASPing of America's power elite in his 1989 book titled *Crashing the Gates: The De-WASPing of America's Power Elite* (the acronym WASP stands for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant). Because President Kennedy was elected in 1960, I also tend to think of certain other social and political developments in the 1960s as parts of the trend of de-WASPing of America's power elite. Now, in addition, I remember the Vietnam War and anti-war protests in the 1960s and 1970s.

During my years of undergraduate studies (1962-1966), the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) in the Roman Catholic Church met in Rome and changed certain practices in the Church such as saying the Mass in Latin and abstaining from meat on Fridays – practices that had been in place when I was attending Catholic grade school in the 1950s.

Because President Biden today is often described as a devout Catholic, I imagine that he remembers how the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s changed the practices of saying the Mass in Latin and of abstaining from meat on Fridays. For a relevant discussion of President Biden, see Professor Dr. Massimo Faggioli's 2021 book *Joe Biden and Catholicism in the United States*, translated by Barry Hudock. For further reading about the Second Vatican Council, see the 880-page 2023 *Oxford Handbook of Vatican II*, edited by Catherine E. Clifford and Massimo Faggioli.

Now, more notably in my life, I remember taking my first class in English from the American Jesuit Walter J. Ong, mentioned above, at Saint Louis University, the Jesuit university in the City of St. Louis, in the fall semester of 1964. I was impressed with him as a teacher and as the author of the 1962 book *The Barbarian Within: And*

Other Fugitive Essays and Studies, mentioned above – he had assigned some of his essays in it to us to read.

Over the years, I took five courses from Father Ong. After the 1960s, I devoted a substantial amount of time and energy to writing and talking about Ong's mature work from the early 1950s onward. For further details, see my recent *OEN* article "Thomas J. Farrell on Thomas J. Farrell" (dated November 17, 2023).

In the 1960s, I remember hearing the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., speak on the campus of Saint Louis University on October 12, 1964. I also remember hearing him speak again at the state capitol in Montgomery, Alabama, on March 25, 1965. For further discussion, see my *OEN* article "Jonathan Eig on the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." (dated May 28, 2023).

In addition, I remember certain acronyms that were frequently used in headlines in the 1960s: JFK, MLK, LBJ, and RFK. Yes, I am aware that headline writers had used the acronym FDR. I can understand why headline writers would prefer to use the acronym FDR rather than the longer word Roosevelt. I can also understand why headline writers would favor the acronyms JFK, LBJ, and RFK rather than their respective surnames. However, I find it harder to understand why headline writers would use the acronym MLK rather than his surname.

In any event, in the 1960s, I first heard about the French Jesuit paleontologist and religious writer Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) from Ong. During Teilhard's lifetime, the Vatican had forbidden him from publishing his views about evolution. However, after his death in 1955, Teilhard's works began to be published in French – and English translations of them quickly followed. The Vatican objected to his works about evolution because evolutionary theory did not square up well with the two accounts of creation in the book of Genesis.

In the 1950s, Ong had a room in a Jesuit residence in Paris for three years (November 1950 to November 1953), where Teilhard also had a room. Ong had read Teilhard's writings in manuscript form when he was living in Paris. When Ong was living in Paris, he dispatched his review-article "The Mechanical Bride: Christen the Folklore of Industrial Man" for publication in the now-defunct *Social Order* (Saint Louis University), (February

1952). As the title of Ong's review-article hints, it is about the Canadian Catholic convert Marshall McLuhan's 1951 book *The Mechanical Bride: The Folklore of Industrial Man*. But the word "Christen" in the subtitle of Ong's 1952 review-article is Ong's editorializing, not McLuhan's.

The young Canadian Catholic convert Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980; Ph.D. in English, Cambridge University, 1943) taught English at Saint Louis University from the fall semester of 1937 to the spring semester of 1944. During that time, the young Walter Ong had studied English under McLuhan at SLU. In Ong's 1952 review-article, he calls attention to Teilhard's thought. Under the subheading "Three Spheres of Being" (p. 84), Ong says the following:

"For some time now in France, a favorite way of conceiving the earth engages it in spheres once more [echoing the ancient harmony of the spheres that Ong had discussed earlier]. There was first the earth's surface, a 'cosmosphere,' a surface devoid of life, unified by mere continuity. Then this was slowly infiltrated by a self-perpetuating network of living organisms, with an interlaced dependence on one another, to form a more highly unified surface than before, the 'biosphere.' In a third stage, slowly, man, with human intelligence, has made his way over the surface of the earth into all its parts, and now in our own day [in the postwar 1950s] – with the whole world alerted simultaneously every day to the goings-on in Washington, Paris, London, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, and (with reservations) Moscow – human consciousness has succeeded in enveloping the entire globe in a third sphere of intelligence, the 'noosphere,' as it has been styled by Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. Begun in the noosphere before it was the complete envelop it is today, the work of Redemption continues in this same noosphere through it involving all lower creation, for the 'sphere' interpenetrate and react on one another.

"The concept of orchestration may prove to be not precisely the concept we need for use in modern industrial society [the focus of McLuhan's 1951 book], but enough has perhaps been said to show that horizons are large

when, by the use of some such terms, we regard our industrial civilization, however crudely, in a cosmic and religious context. To do justice to the horizons, we shall have to know much more than we do about the conditions of the immediate world in which we live, we shall have to be better alerted to our own consciousness.”

As heady as Ong’s account of Teilhard’s three spheres sounds, it qualifies Ong as one of the first American Catholics to call attention to Teilhard’s thought. Ong never tired of touting Teilhard’s work. In any event, a revised and re-titled version of Ong’s 1952 review-article was reprinted in the 1967 book *McLuhan Hot & Cool: A Critical Symposium with a Rebuttal by McLuhan*, edited by Gerald Emanuel Stearn (pp. 83-92).

In the 1960s, the Canadian Catholic convert Marshall McLuhan had published two widely read and widely translated books: (1) the scholarly but flawed 1962 book *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (for specific page references to Ong’s publications, see the “Bibliographic Index” [pp. 286-287]); and (2) the more accessible *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Yes, those two books by McLuhan catapulted him to extraordinary fame in the 1960s.

Now, in the 1960s, Teilhard’s most controversial book was *The Phenomenon of Man*, translated into English by Bernard Wall (1959). In the new 500-page 2024 book *The Invention of Prehistory: Empire, Violence, and Our [Modern Western] Obsession with Human Origins*, New York University’s Stefanos Geroulanos (born in 1979; Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, 2008) devotes an entire chapter (pp. 249-264; also see pp. 263, 302, and 349) to discussing the 1959 version of Teilhard’s key book *The Phenomenon of Man*.

In Geroulanos’ Chapter 14: “The Manchurian Catholic and the Future of Humanity,” he says, “In the late 1939, when Poland was overrun by German and Soviet armies, the French Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was in Zhoukoudian, outside Beijing, writing his magnum opus *The Human Phenomenon*” (p. 249). In Geroulanos’ “Notes” (pp. 409-460), he explains that “The French title *Le phenomene humain* lacks the gendering that the [1959] English translation [*The Phenomenon of Man*] enforces, so I use *The Human Phenomenon* in what follows,

except in citing the English translation” (p. 440n.19).

In 1999, Sussex Academic Press published a new edition and translation of Teilhard’s key book as *The Human Phenomenon*, translated by Sarah Appleton-Weber. Now, in Geroulanos’ text in Chapter 14, he continues: “Already under Japanese occupation for two years, Zhoukoudian was famous as the site where the [forged] remains of ‘Peking Man’ (*Sinanthropus pekinensis*) had been progressively unearthed since the early 1920s. Teilhard had worked at the site for almost fifteen years. In letters to friends in France, few of which ever arrived, Teilhard reported on his shock that ‘the West was ablaze,’ horrified as he already was about a ‘Far East flooded by nature and laid waste by an insidious invasion.’ Still, he would not be deterred. His grand theory posited that humans had emerged (even *emanated*) out of the earth’s biosphere, had become ever-more complex, and had transformed the planet by forming a new mental and spiritual layer around it. ‘No, a thousand times no!’ Teilhard roared, ‘however tragic the present conflict [World War II] may be, it contains nothing that should shake the foundations of our faith in the future.’ The future had to be wrested back from a ‘barbaric’ authoritarianism of the strongest. Christianity and ostensibly all the world dreamt of the convergence into one humanity. This humanity would ultimately become one with God, in a mystical union he called Omega. Teilhard stayed in China, finished his book, and after the war, submitted it for approval in Rome” – but Vatican authorities denied him the approval he needed to publish it (pp. 249-250).

According to Geroulanos, “Until it was revealed as a fraud in the early 1950s, Piltdown had held great value” (p. 250). In any event, in Geroulanos’ Chapter 16: “A History of Cave Painting” (pp. 283-308), he weaves in the following discussion of Mircea Eliade (1907-1986):

“Romanian-born scholar (and former fascist sympathizer) Mircea Eliade was perhaps even more important [than the German prehistorian Horst Kirchner], owing to his enormously influential book *Shamanism*. Eliade defined shamanism as a technique of ecstasy, a

movement beyond the self. Surrounded by his community, the shaman leaps into a realm between human and animal, bridging the worlds. After [Eliade] first published [it] in French in 1951, Eliade settled at the University of Chicago and expanded *Shamanism* for its [1964] American edition, now using Kirchner to dilate his own argument all the way back to prehistory. Eliade insisted [1] that the communal force of early religious life must have been especially intense, [2] that it survived in its magical and religious beliefs that followed in later years, and [3] that the shaman's power was the most likely explanation for the intensity. And he thought shamanism had been near-global. He spared Indo-Europeans, but otherwise he claimed [1] it began with prehistory, [2] became dominant in Siberia and central Asia, and [3] was present from the Americas to Australia and southern Africa" (pp. 300-301).

In 2004, Princeton University Press published Eliade's *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, translated from the French by Willard R. Trask, with a new "Foreword to the 2004 Edition" by Wendy Doniger (pp. xi-xv).

In Geroulanos' new 2024 book, he discusses the biblical characters Adam and Eve from one of the two accounts of creation in the book of Genesis (pp. 17-18, 21, 24, 297, 335, 353, 364, 391-392, and 459n.4). Even though the seven-day account of creation in the book of Genesis obviously does not date from the last 250 years, it strikes me that it could be seen as an ancient way of accounting for our prehistory. But Eliade's book that is most relevant to understanding the second account of creation in the book of Genesis is *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, translated from the French by Willard R. Trask (1954; orig. French ed., 1949).

Ong discusses Eliade's work in his essay "Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time" in his 1967 book *In the Human Grain: Further Explorations of Contemporary Culture* (pp. 61-82; but also see pp. 85, 88, 108, 123, 126, 129-130, 141, and 145). For an accessible discussion of the import of Eliade's book *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, see Thomas Cahill's 1998 book *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels* (pp. 40-41, 48, and 55-56).

Overall, Geroulanos' new 2024 book *The Invention of Prehistory* is an enormously wide-ranging survey and critique. But what exactly is the point of such a critique? What do we learn from it? Geroulanos' "Epilogue: A Storm Blowing from Paradise" (pp. 389-401), he says, "The most obvious and greatest cost of the 250-year obsession with human origins research has been borne by the Indigenous peoples whose destruction was rationalized because they were 'primitives' who were 'vanishing' anyway; by Jews, Roma, homosexuals, and others deemed subhuman by Nazism; by all those who were racialized by ideas about prehistoric humanity; and by refugees, still disdained today as a watery mass and a horde" (p. 397).

In Geroulanos' Chapter 11: "The Hordes and the Flood" (pp. 195-210), he says, "Donald Trump's opening salvo for his 2016 presidential campaign bid was a denunciation of Latino immigrants. His notion of 'Americans' suffering from an invasion of immigrants was certainly not a new one in the U.S., where there is a long xenophobic tradition, but it did help normalize the cruelty of wrenching children from their families to put them in cages in camps" (p. 195).

Now, for a book-length critique of Teilhard's thought, see Edward O. Dodson's 1984 book *The Phenomenon of Man Revisited: A Biological Viewpoint on Teilhard de Chardin*.

For a lively review of Geroulanos' new 500-page 2024 book, see Jennifer Szalai's article titled "Savages! Innocents! Sages! What Do We Really Know About Early Humans?: In 'The Invention of Prehistory,' the historian Stefanos Geroulanos argues that many of our theories about our remote ancestors tell us more about us than them" (dated April 10, 2024).

Now, for all practical purposes, pre-history = pre-literate (i.e., before the phonetic alphabet emerged in ancient Greek and in ancient Hebrew culture) = what Ong refers to as primary orality and as primary oral culture (in contradistinction from what he refers to as secondary orality and as secondary oral culture – our contemporary culture in which communications media that accentuate sound).

As to the last 250 years in our modern Western cultural history that Geoulanos' surveys and critiques in his new 2024 book, this period is part of the print culture that emerged in our Western cultural history after the Gutenberg printing press emerged in Europe in the mid-1450s.

Now, I have discussed Ong's account of secondary orality in my essay "Secondary Orality and Consciousness Today" in the 1991 anthology *Media, Consciousness, and Culture: Explorations of Walter Ong's Thought*, edited by Bruce E. Gronbeck, Thomas J. Farrell, and Paul A. Soukup (pp. 194-209).

As to primary orality, Ong never tired of touting the classicist Eric A. Havelock's perceptive 1963 book *Preface to Plato*. In it, Havelock refers to what he refers to as the Homeric mentality – for Ong, of primary orality (before the emergence of phonetic alphabetic literacy in ancient Greek culture – as involving what he characterizes as imagistic thinking. By contrast with the imagistic thinking of the Homeric mentality, the philosophical mentality of Plato is more abstract.

Ong's 1964 review of Havelock's 1963 book is reprinted in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 309-312).

New York University's Neil Postman (1931-2003; Ed.D., Teacher College, Columbia University, 1955) discussed "the image and the word" in his landmark book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (1985) – but without explicitly advertent to Havelock's discussion of imagistic thinking in his 1963 book. Postman says, "That the image and the word have different functions, work at different levels of abstraction, and require different modes of response will not come as a new idea to anyone. What was new in the mid-nineteenth century was the sudden and massive intrusion of the photograph and other iconographs into the symbolic environment. This event is what Daniel Boorstin in his pioneering book, *The Image*, calls 'the graphic revolution.' By this phrase, Boorstin means to call attention to the fierce assault on language made by forms of mechanically reproduced imagery that spread unchecked throughout American culture – photographs, prints,

posters, drawings, advertisements. I choose the word 'assault' deliberately here, to amplify the point implied in Boorstin's 'graphic revolution.' The new imagery, with photography at its forefront, did not merely function as supplement to language, but bid to replace it as our dominant means for construing, understanding, and testing reality. What Boorstin implies about the graphic revolution, I wish to make explicit here: The new focus on the image undermined traditional definitions of information, of news, and, to a large extent, of reality itself" (p. 74). Subsequently, Postman says, "In *The Image*, Boorstin calls the major creation of the graphic revolution the 'pseudo-event,' by which he means an event specifically staged to be reported – like the press conference, say" (p. 76).

In my estimate, Donald J. Trump excels in producing pseudo-events. For a perceptive profile of Trump, see the American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Justin A. Frank's 2018 book *Trump on the Couch: Inside the Mind of the President*.

Now, Postman continues: "I mean to suggest here that a more significant legacy of the telegraph and the photograph may be the *pseudo-context*. A pseudo-context is a structure invented to give fragmented and irrelevant information a seeming use. But the use the pseudo-context provides is not action, or problem-solving, or change. It is the only use left for information with no genuine connection to our lives. And that, of course, is to amuse. The pseudo-context is the last refuge, so to say, of a culture overwhelmed by irrelevance, incoherence, and impotence" (p. 76; his italics).

Thus, what Ong refers to as our contemporary secondary oral culture happens also to include a kind of variation, as it were, on what Havelock refers to as imagistic thinking in the Homeric mind (which Ong understands to mean the primary oral mind). For Ong, television is one example of the communications media that accentuate sound. However, television also has a visual component. By the 1960s, television sets were in most American homes – with their mix of what Postman refers to as the "different functions" of "the image and the word" in

what Ong refers to as secondary orality. However, in what Havelock refers to as the Homeric mentality (of what Ong refers to as primary orality) words themselves function to produce not only sounds but also what Havelock refers to as imagistic thinking. We can assume that what Ong refers to as secondary orality resonates in the collective unconscious with memories of pre-literate primary orality and its kind of imagistic thinking (in Havelock's terminology). In the United States today, with our contemporary secondary oral culture produced by communications media that accentuate sound, all Americans undoubtedly experience resonances of primary orality and its kind of imagistic thinking in their/our collective unconscious.

Now, in 2015, the doctrinally conservative Pope Francis (born in 1936; elected pope in March 2013), the first Jesuit pope, published his widely read eco-encyclical *Laudato si'* (it is available in English and other languages at the Vatican's website). In Chapter 2: "The Gospel of Creation" (numbered paragraphs 62 to 100), Pope Francis says, "The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which [ultimate destiny] has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things" (numbered paragraph 83). In the accompanying endnote 53, Pope Francis says, in part, "Against this horizon we can set the contribution of Fr. [Pierre] Teilhard de Chardin."

Also, in Chapter 2 of Pope Francis' eco-encyclical, he makes certain other remarkable statements. In Paragraph 79, the pope says the following: "In this universe, shaped by open and intercommunicating systems, we can discern countless forms of relationship and participation. This [discernment] leads us to think of the whole as open to God's transcendence, within which it develops. Faith allows us to interpret the meaning and the mysterious beauty of what is unfolding. We are free to apply our intelligence towards things evolving positively, or towards adding new ills, new causes of suffering and real setbacks."

In Paragraph 81, the pope says the following:

Human beings, even if we postulate a process of evolution [as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin does], also possess a uniqueness which cannot be fully explained by the evolution of other

open systems. Each of us has his or her own personal identity and is capable of entering into dialogue with others and with God himself. Our capacity to reason, to develop arguments, to be inventive, to interpret reality and to create art, along with other not yet discovered capacities, are signs of a uniqueness which transcends the spheres of physics and biology. The sheer novelty involved in the emergence of a personal being within a material universe presupposes a direct action of God and a particular call to life and to relationship on the part of a 'Thou' who addresses himself to another 'thou.' The biblical accounts of creation invite us to see each human being as a subject who can never be reduced to the status of an object.

In the categorization system of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis' 2015 eco-encyclical is part of the category known as Catholic Social Teaching. The English lay theologian Anna Rowlands specializes in Catholic Social Teaching. See her 2021 book *Towards a Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times* (T&T Clark; for specific page references to Pope Francis, see the "Index" entry on Francis [p. 309]).

Also in Pope Francis' 2015 eco-encyclical, he inveighs against what he refers to as the technocratic paradigm (paragraphs 101, 109, 111, 122, and 189). What the pope refers to as the technocratic paradigm is essentially what New York University' Neil Postman refers to in his 1992 book *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*.

Disclosure: Before I retired from teaching at the university of Minnesota Duluth at the end of May 2009, I regularly taught a reading-intensive introductory-level liberal arts survey course on Literacy, Technology, and Society. In it, two of the non-fiction books that I required the students to read were Postman's 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, mentioned above, and his 1992 book. For further information about my course, go to my UMD homepage and click on the prompt for "Courses" and look at the drop-down menu for the course

Now, concerning open systems, mentioned by the pope in Paragraph 81, quoted above, see Fritjof Capra and Pier Luigi Luisi's 2014 book *The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision*. Ong uses systems terminology in the title of his 1977 book *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* and especially in his culminating essay "Voice and the Opening of Closed Systems" (pp. 305-341). Ong's 1977 essay "Voice and the Opening of Closed Systems" is reprinted in volume two of Ong's *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1992b, pp. 162-190).

In Ong's "Preface" in his 1977 book *Interfaces of the Word* (pp. 9-13), he states that "from the time of my studies [in the 1950s] of Peter Ramus [1515-1572] and Ramism, my work has grown into its own kind of phenomenological history of culture and consciousness" (p. 10). Ong also states that the thesis that he has worked with is relationist, not reductionist (p. 9). He claims that his earlier works "do **not** maintain that the evolution from primary orality through writing and print to electronic culture, which produces secondary orality, causes or explains everything in human culture and consciousness. Rather, the thesis is relationist: major developments, and very likely even all major developments, in culture and consciousness are related, often in unexpected intimacy, to the evolution of the word from primary orality to its present state. But the relationships are varied and complex, with cause and effect often difficult to distinguish [from one another]" (pp. 9-10; I have added the boldface here).

For my purposes in the present essay, I am not making any claim about a major development in culture and consciousness. That is, I am not concerned here with the label "major." Major development or minor, television sets emerged as common household items by the 1960s. In saying this, I am just paraphrasing what Ong means by secondary orality (i.e., the orality inculcated by communications media that accentuate sound – including television). However, in the relationist spirit of Ong's relationist thesis, I also see television sets as related to certain cultural developments in the 1960s, perhaps including many cultural developments that Dr. Doris Kearns

Goodwin recounts in her new 2024 book about the 1960s.

In any event, both Teilhard's challenging book *The Phenomenon of Man* (1959) and McLuhan's challenging 1962 book *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* represent new grand syntheses – as does Ong's mature work from the early 1950s onward.

Now, in the 1960s, Ong published the following five books:

- (1) *Darwin's Vision and Christian Perspectives* (1960);
- (2) *The Barbarian Within: And Other Fugitive Essays and Studies* (1962), mentioned above;
- (3) *In the Human Grain: Further Explorations of Contemporary Culture* (1967a), mentioned above;
- (4) *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (Yale University Press, 1967b), the expanded version of Ong's 1964 Terry Lectures at Yale University;
- (5) *Knowledge and the Future of Man: An International Symposium* (1968).

In the 1969 book *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy*, the Protestant theologian Harvey Cox discusses Ong in his "Appendix: Some Relevant Theological Currents" (pp. 163-177) in the subsection on Theology of culture (pp. 166-167). Cox says that "With the death of Paul Tillich" . . . "No single figure has appeared to claim his place as the principal theological interpreter of such cultural forms as painting, music, architecture, and dance. . . . Only Walter Ong makes much of an attempt to pull together the whole range of cultural artifacts into a single inclusive theological interpretation" (p. 166). In Cox's "Notes" (pp. 179-197), he lists three books by Ong: (1) *The Barbarian Within* (1962); (2) *In the Human Grain* (1967a); and (3) *The Presence of the Word* (1967b) (Cox, 1969, p. 196) – all three of which I mentioned above.

Now, in a recent wide-ranging article titled "Hijacking St. Patrick's Cathedral: What the funeral of a trans activist

says about our cultural politics” (dated March 27, 2024) in the lay liberal American Catholic magazine *Commonweal*, the lay liberal American Catholic author and commentator Dr. Peter Steinfels (born in 1941; Ph.D. in history, Columbia University, 1964), the author of *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America’s Politics* (1979) and *A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America* (2003), characterizes the 1960s as the “most accessible starting point for the “very large topic” of “cultural factors that create the distorting filter of distrust through which the economic factors are viewed” by many Americans today.

Dr. Steinfels’ article is about the publicity provoked by the funeral service -- without a funeral Mass -- held at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City on February 15, 2024, for the self-proclaimed atheist and transgender activist Cecilia Gentili (1972-2024). In addition to reading the publicity about what he styles as a pseudo-event (a pejorative term coined by Daniel J. Boorstin [1914-2004; SJD, Yale University, 1940] in his 1962 book *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* – ah, the 1960s again!), Dr. Steinfels also watched the hour-long film of the pseudo-event of the funeral service at St. Patrick’s Cathedral for Cecilia Gentili on February 15, 2024.

More to the point, Dr. Steinfels characterizes the 1960s as involving “the profound shaking of taken-for-granted notions about race, sexuality, gender, religion, and the meaning of America.” Yes, that much is true about the 1960s. However, as Dr. Steinfels himself says, it is a “very large topic” to explore just exactly how “cultural factors” that have evolved since the 1960s to today “create the distorting filter through which the economic factors [today] are viewed” by many Americans today. I am not going to undertake such a challenging exploration in the present essay.

As we noted above, in Grace Elizabeth Hale’s 2010 book *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America*, she calls our attention to what Dr. Steinfels refers to as “cultural factors” involving “the profound shaking of taken-for-granted notions about race, sexuality, gender, religion, and the meaning of America” in the 1960s as involving what Hale refers to as rebellion.

In any event, Trump's most adamant white supporters over the last decade have not been motivated by economic factors. This adamant support for him suggests that they probably were not part of the white middle class that fell in love with rebellion in postwar America. In short, Trump's most adamant white supporters were probably not involved in "the profound shaking of taken-for-granted notions [up to and through the 1950s] about race, sexuality, gender, religion, and the meaning of America" in the 1960s that Steinfels refers to – or if they were involved in the 1960s, they have since changed their views (which may be the case with Trump himself).

Trump's most adamant white supporters are cultural warriors engaged in a culture war with their opposing cultural warriors. But could the culture war turn into a civil war?

We Americans have already had one Civil War in the nineteenth century. We could have another civil war in the twenty-first century.

The British filmmaker Alex Garland has written and directed the new R-rated (for war violence and mass death) film *Civil War*, which I have not seen. It is a kind of warning to us Americans about the terrible possibility of another American civil war in the twenty-first century. Manohla Dargis, the chief film critic for the *New York Times*, describes it as "A blunt, gut-twisting work of speculative fiction" in her article "'Civil War' Review: We Have Met the Enemy and It Is Us. Again: In Alex Garland's tough new movie, a group of journalists led by Kirsten Dunst, as a photographer, travels a United States at war with itself" (dated April 11, 2024). The prospect of a second American civil war in the twenty-first century terrifies me. So, I hope that our current cultural war does not evolve into a second civil war.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN ON THE 1960s

Let's look now at Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin's new 2024 book *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s*. The most efficient way for me to provide you with an overview of her new 2024 book *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s* is to preview its parts for you.

"Introduction" (pp. 1-10).

Chapter 1: "Coming of Age" (pp. 11-37).

Chapter 2: "'A Sort of Dead End'" (pp. 38-57).

Chapter 3: "Aboard the 'Caroline'" (pp. 58-82).

Chapter 4: "A Pandora's Box of Cigars" (pp. 83-110).

Chapter 5: "The Supreme Generalist" (pp. 111-136).

Chapter 6: "Kaleidoscope" (pp. 137-167).

Chapter 7: "Thirteen JBJs" (pp. 168-204).

Chapter 8: "'And We Shall Overcome'" (pp. 205-234).

Chapter 9: "The Never-Ending Resignation" (pp. 235-259).

Chapter 10: "Friendship, Loyalty, and Duty" (pp. 260-309).

Chapter 11: "Crosswinds of Fate" (pp. 310-358).

Chapter 12: "Endings and Beginnings" (pp. 359-382).

Chapter 13: "Our Talisman" (pp. 383-399).

"Epilogue" (pp. 401-405).

"Acknowledgments" (pp. 407-410).

"Bibliography" (pp. 411-413).

"Abbreviations Used in Notes" (p. 415).

"Notes" (pp. 417-449).

"Photo Credits" (pp. 451-453).

"Index" (pp. 455-467).

In conclusion, those readers who do not remember the 1960s, but who do want to undertake an exploration of cultural factors versus economic factors today (in Dr. Steinfels' terminology) may find it convenient to start their exploration of those cultural factors today with Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin's new 2024 book about the 1960s.

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