

CULTURE, RELIGION, AND THE PRESENCE OF THE WORD:
A STUDY OF THE THOUGHT OF WALTER JACKSON ONG

by

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ABSTRACT

CULTURE, RELIGION, AND THE PRESENCE OF THE WORD: A STUDY OF THE THOUGHT OF WALTER JACKSON ONG

by

RANDOLPH FRANKLIN LUMPP

Walter Jackson Ong, S.J., Professor of English at St. Louis University, is a noted scholar in the humanities who has published over three hundred books, articles, and reviews, ranging over a wide spectrum of topics and disciplines. In the process of his writing, he has developed an account of cultural evolution and a metaphorical procedure which are potentially significant for contemporary theology.

Ong's account of cultural evolution is based on the discovery that cultural patterns are wedded to the media of communications. These media are correlative to the structure and function of the human senses as an operational complex which he calls the sensorium. He presents a typology of cultural evolution divided into three parts: oral-aural or auditory culture, visual-literate culture, and secondary oral-electronic culture. These three have succeeded one another in the evolution of culture viewed globally.

Oral cultures are those in which the human life world is structured around speech and hearing. While they evince a dynamism characteristic of the world of sound, they are severely constrained by the scarcity of knowledge and the limited capacity of memory to process, store, and retrieve information. Knowledge is cast in poetic, thematic and formulaic terms, making explicit and objective verbalization extremely difficult.

Literacy makes it possible to process and store knowledge apart from human persons. It gives rise to the capacity to innovate and progressively frees the individual from the rigid traditionalism of tribal memory. It also encourages treating knowledge as abstracted from persons, as quantifiable and maneuverable by analogy with things in a visual field rather than in speaking persons. Manuscript culture is the first phase of visual-literate culture, progressing from the invention of script to the invention of print. It retained strongly residual ties to orality. However, these were relatively quickly subdued by printing, which quantified and mechanized the approach to knowledge even further, fostering the scientific, economic, and philosophical revolutions which characterized the modern era. While objectivity became enhanced, subjectivity tended to be repressed or detached from the object world. Reality was conceived increasingly in terms of "method" and "system."

Electronic culture, with its renewed emphasis on auditory media, encourages a reorganization of the sensorium in terms of a synthesis of oral and visual-literate sensitivities and values. This is a world of "secondary orality," an increasingly globalized culture which becomes preoccupied with personalist, existential, and non-systematic phenomenological approaches to reality while depending upon and maintaining concern for the "objectivity" of scientific visualism.

Each of these cultural syntheses or complexes has a shaping effect on religion. In oral cultures religion has a highly existential cast, though its incapacity for connecting verbalization with objectivity tends toward a confusion of subject and object and makes it prone to magic and superstition. Visual culture shifts toward a religion of clearly defined doctrines and creeds or denigrates religion in the name of science and reason. Electronic culture seems to encourage a reunification of the objective and existential aspects of religion.

The Judaeo-Christian tradition is a special case because of its special relationship to the word, its foundation in the personal and personalizing Word of God in history which orients it toward the future rather than toward the past or a timeless world of ideas. For Ong it is providential that the Incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus Christ took place in an oral milieu with existential sensibilities at a time when the established presence of literacy made it possible to record its originating historical events.

Nevertheless, Christianity has been affected by the course of cultural change. While theology has made possible an adaptation to the demands of visualist sensitivities, it has also created a divisiveness based on attempts to define and limit the existential and symbolic dimensions of Christian faith. Christianity divided in the Gutenberg age along the lines of vernacular, nationalist, visualist sensitivities which emphasized individual reliance upon Scripture and altered attitudes toward sacraments, tradition, authority and the symbolic dimension embodied in materiality and femininity. Electronic culture may be creating a reunifying or ecumenical sensibility.

Ong's scheme of cultural and religious evolution as described above can be understood in terms of a central metaphor in his thought: the presence of the word. The primacy of the spoken word in human reality allows him to trace cultural and religious patterns in terms of the ways in which the word is present, whether it is conceived as present orally, visually or in combination. The shift from oral to visual culture can be treated as a radical shift from oral-aural to visually based analogues or metaphors for thought, from the event-centered word expressed in the Hebrew dabar to the more visualist logos or idea-centered word.

Ong's personal and intellectual heritage is composed of a hybrid confluence of factors which have enabled him to develop an interdisciplinary scholarly procedure. Foundational affinities in his thought include an interplay between Christian metaphysics, post-Renaissance scholasticism, an existential St. Louis Thomism, Ignatian spirituality, a future-oriented cosmology congenial to that of Teilhard de Chardin, and an interest in the new criticism in literary studies. This interplay forms a base from which Ong expands to include material from an increasingly wide spectrum of disciplines and studies. The result is a distinctive kind of non-methodized, non-systematic, yet disciplined and critical scholarly discourse which can be styled a metaphorical procedure. For theology, this metaphorical procedure, which Ong bases on the "endemic binarism" or "twinning vision" of human consciousness, creates a theological discourse which enables traditional theological insight and expression to be incarnated into an ongoing, open-ended dialogue with human knowledges of the most diverse sort.

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Randolph Franklin Lumpp was born June 30, 1941, in Sidney, Nebraska. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from Seattle University, Seattle, Washington, in 1963. He studied in the Department of Theology at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, during the academic years of 1963 and 1964, receiving the Master of Arts degree in Theology in 1968 with an essay entitled Luther's Liturgical Reforms of 1543 and 1546: Backgrounds and Influences. He spent two years in residency at the University of Ottawa, from 1967 to 1969.

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In addition to these men, the writer is indebted to Dr. Walter Jackson Ong, S.J., for his patient and thoughtful critiques and suggestions during the course of the conception and preparation of this investigation. He wishes to acknowledge the indispensable inspiration and critiques offered by Mr. Timothy Chouinard, of Florissant Valley Community College, St. Louis, Missouri, and Dr. Edward L. Maginnis, S.J., of Regis College, Denver, Colorado. Special thanks is also due to all those relatives and friends who assisted throughout the various stages of this project not only with their patience and encouragement but with the painstaking work of preparing the text.

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Abbreviations of Ong's Works
as Used in Footnotes

<u>ACC</u>	<u>American Catholic Crossroads</u> , New York: Collier Books, 1962.
<u>BW</u>	<u>The Barbarian Within</u> , New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962.
<u>DVCP</u>	<u>Darwin's Vision and Christian Perspectives</u> , New York: The Macmillan Co., 1960.
<u>FAC</u>	<u>Frontiers in American Catholicism</u> , New York: The Macmillan Co., 1957.
<u>HG</u>	<u>In The Human Grain</u> , New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967.
<u>KFM</u>	<u>Knowledge and the Future of Man</u> , New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968.
<u>PW</u>	<u>The Presence of the Word</u> , New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967.
<u>RM</u>	<u>Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue</u> , Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.
<u>RRT</u>	<u>Rhetoric, Romance and Technology</u> , Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971.
<u>RTI</u>	<u>Ramus and Talon Inventory</u> , Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.
"Letter"	Personal letter from Ong to R.F. Lump (4 June 1974).
<u>NB</u>	Any work without an author indicated is by Ong. Reviews of Ong's works are given the entire citation each time in order to avoid confusion. The Book under review is noted by abbreviation in parenthesis at the end of the citation: e.g., Thomas Vernon, <u>Style</u> 4 (Spring 1970): 169-174, (<u>PW</u>).

INTRODUCTION

...I am often called a "scholar's scholar," a most unjournalistic epithet, and am accused, often jokingly, by fellow Jesuits and others, of being precisely not a popularizer but rather recondite, if not actually, even perversely, arcane. Perhaps I should say that I feel that I do have a tendency to swim against currents, to say, if possible, things that go against the general drift of thought. This probably goes back to childhood training. My family did not believe in doing things just because other people did them (although they did not believe either in doing things just because other people did not do them). The training I received in Jesuit schools followed pretty much the same line: act out of your own interior convictions before God, not out of "human respect."¹

The State of the Question

This is a study of the thought of Walter Jackson Ong. It will be especially concerned to examine that thought in terms of the distinctive procedure which Ong employs as a consequence of his intellectual tradition, which is a confluence of several distinctive factors, and the characteristics of his thought viewed as theological discourse.

Despite the fact that Ong is a widely published and widely read scholar, very little work has been done on the potential of his thought for contemporary theology. This may be due in part, or so we shall suggest, to the fact that he transgresses disciplinary boundaries in a somewhat unique fashion. He operates from a base which does not make him especially visible as a theologian. Nevertheless, this very fact lends support to the possibility that he has contributed something distinctive to the understanding of how theology might be done.

¹Unpublished personal letter from Walter J. Ong to Randolph F. Lippert dated 4 June 1974, p. 4. Hereafter this is referred to as "Letter."

We shall suppose in this study that the current state of theology is such that, in addition to the more established types of theological discourse, there is a search for alternative ways in which theology, as a reflective quest for understanding Christian tradition, might be pursued. Particularly relevant is the search for effective ways to explicate and exploit the theological import of the many expanding human knowledges and disciplines in evidence today.

An operative factor here is the attempt to move beyond the confines of single disciplinary specialisms into an integrating and interdisciplinary kind of discourse. If this is to be done in a way which does not compromise depth, discipline, or tradition, it must be embodied in thinkers who possess those qualities in a number of different fields. While there have been such minds in the past, we might anticipate that theological discourse of this sort today might have a peculiar and unfamiliar appearance and that it need not be disqualified as theology on that account. It might in fact proffer insights into both the content and the procedure of theological investigation that would otherwise go unattended.

The intent of this study is to explore the thought of Walter Ong as a kind of paradigm of this sort of interdisciplinary theologizing. In no way will it be stated or implied that this is an exclusivist paradigm. Besides the fact that there are numerous other scholars and thinkers involved in theological experimentation, the very nature of Ong's approach is one which invites others, both in content and in style.

Nevertheless, we shall maintain that there is something especially fundamental and felicitous about the union of elements which come together in Ong. Novel as he is, he speaks from a tradition which has an

especially definite and grounded character even while it calls for development and enrichment in its every detail. Ong seems to negotiate the paradox implied here with a rare balance between tradition and innovation.

Discussion of such matters will have to await further exposition, however. We shall look first at a sketch of Ong's personal and professional history, followed by a more specific statement of the character and structure of the present study.

A Sketch of the Personal and Professional History of Walter Ong

Walter Jackson Ong, Jr., was born November 30, 1912, in Kansas City, Missouri, to a family with a tradition in business and the printing industry.

The family of his father, Walter Jackson Ong, Sr., dates back to the earliest settlement of New England when, in February, 1631, Francis Ong arrived at newly settled Boston on the same boat with Roger Williams. Grandfather Richard Marshall Ong was born in Ohio, and after the Civil War, in which he had brothers serving on both sides, he moved to New Orleans and worked as a businessman until his retirement. Walter Ong senior was born there.

Ong's paternal grandmother, Mary Virginia (Jackson) Ong came from a Tennessee Scotch-Irish background. The daughter of a physician, she was an Episcopalian and reared Walter, Sr., in that religious tradition rather than in his father's Methodism. Walter, Sr., followed in his father's footsteps as a businessman.

The ancestors of Ong's mother, Blanche Eugenia (Mense) Ong, were entirely German Catholic. Her father, Matthias Mense, was born in Germany,

and shortly after migrating to Washington, Missouri, he co-founded, with his brother Ben, an English language newspaper, The Franklin County Observer. A brother of Ong's mother, Eugene Mense, was later, as a young man, a reporter for the Kansas City Star, and still later Ong's only sibling, Richard Mense Ong, entered the printing and publishing business. Ong's maternal grandmother was born in St. Louis where her mother had come as an infant.

The household in which Walter Ong grew up seems to have been characterized by vitality, congeniality and security coupled with a deeply religious spirit. Ong has described his father as having been very much a Southerner in the sense that he preferred a life-style which centered on human relations. Though his family was not wealthy, Ong recalls that it enjoyed very comfortable associations with well-to-do friends and at the same time an "esteem for the poor, both as poor and as persons."²

A genuine spirit of Christian piety prevailed in family life. Though an Episcopalian until his deathbed, when he became a Catholic, Ong's father often attended Mass with his wife and sons. The latter were regular servers, and both parents encouraged them by their own practice of a regular life of prayer.

While Ong's parents were neither of them intellectuals, they were intelligent and encouraged intellectual and artistic pursuits. The Mense family in particular fostered interest in the artistic dimension of life. Yet, in Ong's words, "What our father and mother principally gave us two boys was the unselfish love they had for each other and for us. They would support us in our interests even though they didn't particularly share or even understand them."³

²Ibid., p. 2. ³"Letter," p. 1.

Ong began his formal education in public schools, though he attended Catholic schools from the third grade until he began doctoral studies at Harvard. His high school career at Rockhurst, the Kansas City Jesuit preparatory school, included a rigorous emphasis on writing, especially under the tutelage of Fr. Charles Scott, S.J., during his senior year.

It was during these years at Rockhurst that Ong's interest in journalism first blossomed. He edited the student newspaper at Rockhurst High School and Rockhurst College, where he completed his baccalaureate in 1933. Just out of high school, at the age of sixteen, he wrote a series of articles on his trip to Europe for the 1929 Boy Scout Jamboree, and these were published in the Kansas City Journal-Post.⁴ During the last part of his time at Rockhurst College, and for a short time after graduation, Ong produced a four to six page tabloid newspaper for his own Annunciation Parish in Kansas City. For this paper, which he founded and for which he sometimes received the collaboration of his brother, he served as editor and business manager, writing most of the material and selling the advertising. During college he also produced advertising posters for various events in the Kansas City area, obtaining free admissions for his work.

After graduation from college he took a job with the Southwest News Company, a branch of the American News Company which distributes most of the magazines in the United States. About a year later he went to work for the Quigley Lithographing Company, which operated one of the last old stone lithograph presses in the Midwest. The company was in

⁴See the bibliography to the present study for data concerning these articles.

receivership because of bankruptcy, and Ong soon took a job with another publishing firm where he worked until entering the Jesuits, September 1, 1935.⁵

From 1935 to 1937, Ong attended the Jesuit novitiate of the Missouri Province, St. Stanislaus Seminary, in Florissant, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis. In the juniorate, which was shortened to one year instead of the usual two, his studies continued, among other things, in the humanities, languages, literature and history. Because his bachelor's degree had included a great deal of philosophy, as well as Latin, English and some French and German, his study at the Jesuit Philosophate at St. Louis University, 1938-40, was also shortened by one year. He received a Ph.L. in 1940 and an M.A. in English from St. Louis University in 1941. His M.A. thesis dealt with the sprung rhythm in the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Marshall McLuhan, who taught at St. Louis University from 1937 until 1944, before and after he received his Ph.D. from Cambridge University, was nominal director of Ong's thesis, which was published in 1949 in the book Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins.⁶

From 1941-43, Ong did his regency at Regis College in Denver, Colorado, where he served as an instructor of English and French. In 1943, he began four years of theology at St. Mary's College, St. Mary's Kansas, which served as the displaced St. Louis University School of Divinity, the Missouri Province theologate, from 1931 to 1967.⁷ During this period

⁵"Letter," pp. 2-3.

⁶Walter J. Ong, "Hopkins' Sprung Rhythm and the Life of English Poetry," in the book Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. Norman Weyland, S.J. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1949), pp. 93-173.

⁷Edward L. Maginnis, S.J., has said of the four years of

he was listed as an assistant in the Department of English of St. Louis University for the purpose of teaching reading courses in English for foreign Jesuit students at the theologate. He also took the opportunity of learning Spanish from Mexican Jesuits in the group. On June 16, 1946, he was ordained to the priesthood at St. Mary's.

After the concluding year of theology, Ong taught a course in ethics at Rockhurst College (Summer, 1947), and then began his tertianship at the Jesuit summer house in Beulah, Wisconsin. The building was unheated, and after a chilly October, the tertians moved to the newly remodeled St. Joseph's Hall in Decatur, Illinois. The following summer Ong gave a course in moral theology at Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa, and in the fall began doctoral coursework in English at Harvard, finishing with oral comprehensives, December 8, 1949.

In the Spring of 1950, Ong went to Europe on a Guggenheim Fellowship. These are not given for doctoral work, but since Ong had already done a considerable amount of publishing, he received it as an established young scholar. This Guggenheim grant, and another which he received for 1952-53, account in part for the enormity of his doctoral dissertation which ran some 1700 pages in the manuscript and which was subsequently revised and then published by Harvard University Press in the two volumes, Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue and Ramus and Talon Inventory.⁸

theological training during the time that Ong was there that, "Not even God could change that."

⁸Ong, Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958) and Ramus and Talon Inventory (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958). For Ong's remarks on the size of these two volumes which comprised his dissertation see George Riemer, The New Jesuits (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p. 147.

From early 1950 until late November, 1953, Ong engaged in the laborious effort of tracking the fortunes of the many editions of the works of Peter Ramus and Omer Talon along with influences and controversies which issued from them. The first part of this enterprise was spent in London. In mid-November of 1950 he moved to the Jesuit house of Études in Paris where he lived across the hall from and for the first time read the works of Père Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

In late November 1953, Ong returned to Harvard, submitted his dissertation the following summer, and then returned to St. Louis University as an assistant professor of English. Since 1959, he has been a professor of English at St. Louis and since 1970, professor of Psychiatry in the Humanities at the St. Louis University School of Medicine.

In addition to his assignment at St. Louis University, Ong has had a number of fellowships and visiting professorships. He was a fellow of the Center for Advanced Studies at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut (1961-62), visiting professor in English at the University of California in Santa Barbara (1960), visiting lecturer at the University of Poitiers (1962). During 1963-64, he delivered the Terry Lectures at Yale University, talks which with some revision were published as The Presence of the Word in 1967.⁹ In 1965 he was made a fellow of the Indiana University School of Letters, and during 1966-67, he was Berg Professor of English at New York University. He was McDonald Lecturer at McGill University in Montreal (1967-68), Willett Visiting Professor in Humanities at the University of Chicago (1968-69), and National Visiting Scholar of Phi Beta Kappa (1969-70). During 1973-74, he was in

⁹Ong, The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

residence at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, California, and from April 14 to May 12, 1974, Ong delivered twenty-six lectures, seminars and video-tapes in Zaïre, Cameroons, Sénégal (in French) and in Nigeria (in English) on a tour sponsored by the United States government.

The scope and character of Ong's involvement in learned societies and associations gives some indication of the ambiance of his intellectual life. He is a member of the advisory board of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the board of the National Humanities Faculty, a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a member of the American Association of University Professors, the Renaissance Society of America (advisory council 1957-59), the Modern Language Association (Committee on Trends in Education, 1968-70), the Modern Humanities Research Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Cambridge Bibliographical Society (England), the Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (executive committee, 1962-63), the Milton Society of America (president, 1967), and he is regional associate of the American Council of Learned Societies.

Ong has served as a member of the National Fulbright Selection Committee for France (1957-58, chairman, 1958), and as a member of the White House Task Force on Education (1966-67). He has served on the National Council on Humanities since 1968 and as vice-chairman since 1971.

In addition to being a member of Alpha Sigma Nu and Phi Beta Kappa, Ong was made a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques by the government of France. Besides publishing his own articles and books, he has been active in the editorial processes of Studies in English Literature, Philosophy and Rhetoric, Abstracts of English Studies, The English

Literary Renaissance, and Manuscripta.¹⁰

The Character and Structure of this Study

This is a study of the way one man has articulated and employed a metaphor. The metaphor is "the presence of the word" and the man is Walter Jackson Ong. The metaphor is complex, and the man is prolific and polymorphous in his thought. The present endeavor will seek to display the reciprocity between Ong's thought and his metaphorical style and procedure and some of the implications which arise therefrom.

The unifying force in Ong's more than three hundred published works, or so we shall maintain, is his discovery of the analogous or metaphorical form between the structure of human sensation, on the one hand, and human thought and human culture on the other. This analogy has enabled him to articulate patterns of correlation between the structure of experiencing and knowing, on the one hand, and, on the other, the concrete pattern which the development of human cultural history has taken. Precisely what this means will be the topic of the ensuing chapters.

The term metaphor has been selected as a means of indicating the distinctive character of Ong's thought for several reasons. First, while Ong himself does not seem to think of his thought in precisely these terms, what he says about metaphor indicates that it is a fitting term. Secondly, what others say about his thought suggests that it approaches metaphor more closely than any other term we have been able to identify.

¹⁰Biographical data not obtained from Ong personally was obtained from the following publications: Who's Who in America (Chicago: Marquis' Who's Who, Inc., 1972), 37th ed., p. 2389; Dictionary of American Scholars (New York: R.F. Bowker, 1964), 4th ed. 2, p. 229; Saint Louis University Bulletin 62 (General Catalogue 1966-67), p. 166.

Thirdly, metaphor, understood as a kind of analogy, provides a suitable way of pointing to the convergence in Ong's practice of his existential Thomist tradition, which makes extensive use of analogy, and his involvement in the new criticism in literary studies wherein metaphor is a basic and pervasive concept.

It will not be our intention here to make a detailed inquiry into the vast and complicated study of the nature of metaphor itself. Rather, we shall attempt to rely upon descriptions of metaphor by a few respected experts which are congenial with our purpose of elucidating Ong's procedure in terms of his use of the metaphor of "the presence of the word."

The fitting character of the term metaphor for describing Ong's thought is suggested by the fact that he is an interdisciplinary and suggestive thinker. We shall endeavor to demonstrate that by this interdisciplinary approach he seeks to discover and to articulate correlative or analogous forms among diverse and various disciplines which tend toward a fundamentally comprehensive account of the dynamics of cultural and religious history. For reasons which we shall try to make clear in the course of this study, these correlations are not precisely methodical or systematic. Rather, they are suggestive. That is, they establish points of contact among apparently disparate bodies of knowledge, a complex network or mosaic of insights which invites reflection not only on what is known but also upon the much more vast extent of reality which remains to be known. Since one function of metaphor appears to be the exploitation of this sort of reflection, it seems an appropriate term to designate what Ong does and the way in which he does it.

Since Ong's approach is interdisciplinary, his thought concerns

itself with virtually every significant field of learning, and since he regularly discourses in a way which includes several at once, it is not possible in a study as limited as this to treat them all or even most of them. We shall be concerned, however, with the significance of his approach for theology. Since his theological discourse occurs in the midst of his doing other things as well, we shall attempt to explore the character and usefulness of his thought for theology; and in this exploration, we attempt to formulate our conclusions in a way which, in keeping with Ong's own approach, suggests further development.

This study is organized around an attempt to synthesize the components of Ong's use of the metaphor of the presence of the word and to analyze the traditions which give structure to his approach. It is divided into two parts, Exposition and Assessment, each of which is composed of two chapters.

Chapter one will present a synthesis of Ong's treatment of the presence of the word in human experience insofar as it shapes cultural processes. Chapter two will treat the same metaphor in terms of the religious dimension of cultural process with attention to the analogy between the human word and the divine Word.

Chapter three will examine what appear to be the central formative intellectual traditions within which Ong works and which provide basic elements of his metaphorizing procedure. Chapter four will examine his style and procedure as a process of metaphorizing with special attention to the kind of theological discourse it produces.

If, in fact, we shall succeed here in establishing that Ong is a radically metaphorical thinker, we shall also have shown him to be singularly difficult to capture convincingly in a study such as this.

He eludes being easily classified except by terms such as metaphor which allow for a large measure of suggestivity. Nevertheless, we shall attempt to show that such elusiveness has its value, and that Walter Ong's creative and disciplined use of it constitutes a significant contribution to contemporary thought.

PART I. EXPOSITION

CHAPTER I

ONG'S SCHEME OF CULTURAL EVOLUTION

Man's sensory perceptions are abundant and overwhelming. He cannot attend to them all at once. In great part a given culture teaches him one or another way of productive specialization. It brings him to organize his sensorium by attending to some types of perception while relatively neglecting other ones. The sensorium is a fascinating focus for cultural studies. Given sufficient knowledge of the sensorium exploited within a specific culture, one could probably define the culture as a whole in virtually all its aspects.¹

Introduction

This chapter will provide a synthetic description of Ong's scheme of cultural evolution which lies as a background to his treatment of religion. An assessment of this will be treated in Part II of this study.

Four main themes will comprise this chapter. The first will be a description of what Ong means by "culture" and the procedure by which he approaches it. The second will be a discussion of the presence of the word in history as both a key to cultural evolution and as a central binding thread in Ong's thought. The next three sections will treat in order the basic characteristics of the stages of culture which Ong identifies in terms of sensory stress and communications media. These are the oral-aural (auditory) culture, the visual-literate (chirographic-typographic) culture, and the literate-oral (electronic) culture.

¹PW, p. 6.

Ong's Understanding of Culture

Ong's cultural scheme involves a three part division of human history. While it may seem facile at first, it is rife with complications, overlappings and qualifications.²

"Culture" in Ong's thought is itself a complex concept.³ This is due in part to the fact that for him it cannot be treated entirely as an abstraction. It points to concrete historical phenomena always uniquely specified in time and space.⁴

Nevertheless, his use of the term does exhibit a number of generalizable characteristics.

Culture is an extension of and part and parcel of cosmic evolution and represents its highest stage of development although still inchoately.⁵ It is this specifically as an act and actuation of personalized, incarnate self-consciousness which is the human race in the process of its own self-realization.⁶

²PW, pp. 53-76.

³"World as View and World as Event," American Anthropologist, 61 (August 1969): 635.

⁴"Philosophical Sociology," The Modern Schoolman, 37 (January 1960): p. 139. "World views and philosophies are the coefficients of cultures and languages, not in the sense that we must despair of finding one which is true but in the sense that all concepts and insights and judgments, even when entirely true, involve some specialization; and the precise specialization which is resorted to in any one case is determined, at least in part, by a culture and corresponding set of linguistic practices. The fact that these cultures can reach out to embrace one another saves us, of course, from the charge of facile 'relativism.' The specialized views can be made to interpenetrate -- but not in abstraction. One cannot learn to form concepts without assimilating particular cultures."

⁵"The Church and Cosmic History," ACC, pp. 15-28.

⁶Review of Unfinished Man and the Imagination: Toward an Ontology and Rhetoric of Revelation, by Ray L. Hart (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), Biblica, 51 (1970):253 ff.

Culture is manifested in the progressive appropriation of the cosmos by human, personal consciousness, stored in memory or by other means, that is, in and by knowledge.⁷ It is also manifested in the simultaneous and co-relative imposition of human perfections (or capabilities) on the world through skills (technologies) which simultaneously intensify consciousness and further generate knowledge.⁸

Culture in the largest sense remains incomplete despite its richness and diversity since its consummation is identical with the achievement of total consciousness, self-possession and the world dominion by the human race, that is, conterminous with the consummation of humanity and world which is history.

Consequently, all concrete, individual "cultures" are fragments or partial realizations of the total potential of culture. They are limited both quantitatively and qualitatively.¹⁰

Regarded externally, basic limits or horizons in particular cultures trace more or less directly to media of communications, that is, to the principal means available by which knowledge is obtained, processed

⁷"Knowledge in Time" in Knowledge and the Future of Man: An International Symposium. (New York, Chicago, and San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 3.

⁸Ibid., pp. 8-12. "Knowledge, Time and Man," Current Issues in Higher Education 1963: The Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual National Conference in Higher Education 3-6 March 1963, ed. G. Kerry Smith (Washington, D.C.: Association for Higher Education, a Department of the National Education Association, 1963): 230-232; "Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu," Theological Studies, 7 (March 1946):18; "Breakthrough in Communications," HG, pp. 15-16.

⁹"Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," HG, pp. 80-82. "Christian Values at Mid-Twentieth Century," Theological Digest, 4 (Autumn 1956): 155-57.

¹⁰"New Definitions in the Humanities: The Humanities in a Technological Culture," concluding section (pp. 83-87) of "Report by the Commission on Trends in Education," PMLA, 77 (May 1962): 86.

and stored.¹¹ Hence, cultures can be characterized in terms of the dominant media which they possess.¹² There are oral cultures which rely principally on the medium of spoken communication. There are literate or chirographic (manuscript) and typographic (print) cultures.¹³ There is electronic culture which, because of the global character of electronic communications and transportation technologies, tends toward a single complex yet structurally unified culture involving the human race as a whole.¹⁴

Regarded interiorly, cultures are characterized by the primary analogues or metaphors by which the knowing process is understood and by which knowledge is appropriated, processed, and stored.¹⁵ The media of communications are extensions (or exteriorized perfections) of human sensory capacities which are themselves media individually (the "five" senses) and collectively (the whole human body as an operational sensory-cognitive complex).¹⁶ The presence or absence of given media technologies sets up stresses, biases, specializations, or operational preferences, which create noetic horizons or perimeters by accentuating certain sensory

¹¹"Communications as a Field of Study," mimeographed copy of an unpublished talk given 22 February 1968, at St. Robert Bellarmine House, St. Louis, Missouri: p. 6; PW, p. 17.

¹²PW, p. 20; "Wired for Sound: Teaching, Communications, and Technological Culture," BW, p. 220.

¹³"Comment: Voice, Print, and Culture," The Journal of Typographic Research, 4 (Winter 1970): 77-83.

¹⁴"Breakthrough in Communications," HG, p. 11; "Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," ACC, pp. 74-76; "The Reaches of History," Commonweal, 68 (15 August 1958): 489-490; "On Mass Media and Theology: What a Catholic University Should Do." A transcription of an interview with Dr. Andrew Ruszkowski, Director, Institute of Social Communications, St. Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario, 24 June 1969. (Mimeographed for private circulation), p. 1.

¹⁵"I See What You Say: Sense Analogues for Intellect," Human Inquiries, 10 (1970): 39-41.

¹⁶PW, pp. 1-2, 6.

analogues and suppressing others.¹⁷ Hence, there are oral-aural or auditory cultures which rely on analogues organized around sound, visual cultures which favor knowledge possessed by analogy with sight, and visual/oral or secondary oral culture which involves a certain synthesis of the oral and the visual.¹⁸ This later stage also highlights a certain dialectical tension between the cultural types thus characterized.

Culture, then, is inseparable from history. It is consciousness incarnated in time and space. It is a function of the growth of knowledge. It always involves tradition in that there is continuity in cultural embodiedness from the perspective of cosmic evolution as a whole, from the concrete, historical perspectives of individual cultures, of spatially or temporally distinguishable groups or societies, or in the progression through the oral-visual-electronic sequence just suggested.¹⁹

This very sequence points to the fact that Ong sees a large measure of determinism in history.²⁰ History is moved by human invention,

¹⁷ A good example of the way this works can be seen in the use of the analogy of taste as meaning discriminative judgment. PW, pp. 305; "Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," Worship (Collegeville, Minnesota) 44 (October 1969): 478.

¹⁸ PW, pp. 3-4, Ong relies here on Bowman, Barr and Whorf. James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Thorlief Bowman, Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek, trans. Jules L. Moreau, 2nd. ed. (1954) with the author's revision to January, 1960 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961); Benjamin Lee Whorf, Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings, ed. with an introduction by John B. Carroll (Cambridge: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology; London: Chapman and Hall, 1956).

¹⁹ "Nationalism and Darwin, HG, p. 83.

²⁰ "I See What You Say ": 27.

yet inventions cannot occur until the conditions for them are ripe.²¹ Human freedom must cooperate with cosmic determinism, and thus, in the larger picture, there is little alternative to the way history has worked out.²² Nevertheless, through knowledge, man has a greater possession of the real determinisms and is thus more acutely aware of the real possibilities in which human freedom can be exercised.²³ In this sense, greater knowledge means at least potentially greater freedom.²⁴ How this works depends in large part on the condition of human communication.

The Presence of the Word

In Ong's perspective, being a communicator enters into the very definition of human being.²⁵ Communication as the calling of one interiority to another is the radical characteristic of humans which

²¹"Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time" HG, p. 64: "Knowledge itself is a communal affair and evolves communally. The most an individual can hope to contribute to the process is what we have recently learned to style a "breakthrough" in a front of activity which must be on the whole cooperative rather than purely person. Because it develops communally, the structure of human knowledge must be explained not only in terms of its various logics. It must also be explained sociologically." "Nationalism and Darwin," HG, p. 91: "We need to replace the cyclic model with some sort of open model more responsive to historical fact. To conceive of the realities of national existence we need perhaps something like the models used by geneticists in thinking of biological populations or by taxonomists in describing the patterns of organic evolution. These models will, of course, not apply to the totality either, for a nation is more than a biological unit; it is a culture as well. Yet they promise to supplement old analogies which are still much cruder than these models are."

²²"I See What You Say": 27-28.

²³"Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision," National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin: Report of the Proceedings and Addresses -- Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois 19-22 April 1960, 57 (August 1960): 39-45; "Knowledge in Time": pp. 24-28.

²⁴"The truth shall set you free. It may be somehow liberating to know the depths of our bondage." "I See What You Say ": 42.

²⁵"Breakthrough in Communications," p. 1.

constitutes the human race as a single species.²⁶ There is no thought apart from a communication setting, and, in order to be really grasped either for oneself or for another, thought must be processed through words.²⁷ Culture is inseparable from linguistic economy.²⁸ All human artifacts are utterings or outerings of human potential or the imposition of those potentialities on environment.²⁹ Yet insofar as those outerings are manifestations of human interiority they bear an analogous relationship to the role of the human word which is itself the prime analogate for human thought and communication.³⁰

The Ariadne's thread in the Ongian labyrinth of cultural and religious history, then, is the presence of the word in human life and history.³¹ Ong differentiates cultural types or stages in terms of the various ways in which the word can be and has been present.³²

²⁶PW, p. 15

²⁷"Communication Media and the State of Theology," Cross Currents, (Fall 1969): 463; PW, pp. 138-161.

²⁸"Nationalism and Darwin," p. 97. "Religion, Scholarship, and the Resituation of Man," HG, p. 129; Introduction to Darwin's Vision and Christian Perspectives (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 6-7; "Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," Worship 44 (October 1969): 485.

²⁹"Voice as Summons for Belief: Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self", BW, p. 49.

³⁰"A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," BW, p. 28; "Voice as Summons for Belief, Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self," BW, pp. 51-56. "If the human community is to retain meaningful possession of the knowledge it is accumulating, breakthroughs to synthesis of a new order are absolutely essential. McLuhan heralds one such breakthrough into a new interiority which will have to include studies of communication not merely as an adjunct or sequel to human knowledge but as this knowledge's form and condition." Review of Gutenberg Galaxy, by Marshall McLuhan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962) America 107 (15 September 1962): 747.

³¹PW, pp. 320-231.

³²"Breakthrough in Communications," pp. 2-3.

Ong's approach to the problem of culture as a multifarious process of communication and as a multidimensional manifold of different ways of understanding is rooted in the fact that while understanding is more than sensation, we cannot escape understanding in terms of sensory analogues.³³ Yet Ong registers his concurrence with Lonergan that if understanding is approached exclusively by analogy with ocular vision, not only does understanding disappear but human subjectivity disappears as well. For understanding proceeds by a progressive amplification which is not like seeing at all, and to be a human subject is to be one who looks and not one who is looked at.³⁴

For Ong, the spoken word serves as the closest analogue for understanding and for subjectivity since it registers interiority per se while sight and touch work only with surfaces.³⁵ This distinction can be illustrated by the difference between a man's word and a word as it appears in a dictionary or other written source.³⁶ A man's word is more than a sentence or a statement. While it involves these, it represents an integral orientation of his subjectivity toward another subjectivity. The word in the dictionary is a fragmented meaning, a part made of other parts (letters) which appears quite separated from subjectivity.³⁷ It is silent and

³³Ibid., p. 3; "Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," p. 85; "A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," BW, pp. 26-40.

³⁴"I See What You Say": 22-25, 34.

³⁵"Communications Media and the State of Theology": 464.

³⁶PW, pp. 32-33.

³⁷"Breakthrough in Communications," p. 2; "The Word in Chains," HG, pp. 52-59.

dormant on the written page and as such is closer by analogy to an "idea" than to a word.³⁸ A similar instance is the distinction between "true" as meaning trustworthy, loyal, faithful (redolent of subject-subject interaction) and "true" as accurate, objective, factual, propositional, that is, as separated from subjectivity as far as possible.³⁹

All these meanings are latent within human potentiality since they are precisely devices whereby the human subject has attempted to appropriate himself and his world by working in, with, and through himself as a sensory-cognitive organism.⁴⁰ But we can never step outside that organic actuality in attempting to understand how it operates.

This is a complex problem, but since sensation presents the subject with more than can be effectively thought about or understood at any point, and since cultures inevitably involve a certain amount of specialization in how the data for thought are treated, the sensory analogues which a society prefers, for whatever reasons, will say a great deal about how that society goes about its business.⁴¹ In general, societies which exploit the power of the spoken word in noetic processes tend to evince a dynamic orientation toward subjectivity.⁴² On the other hand, such cultures, existential though they be, lack the ability to verbalize objectively, that

³⁸PW, pp. 34-35: "Basically, the Greek word "idea" means the look of a thing. It comes from the same root as the Latin "video" (I see), which yields the English "vision" and its cognates. The ideas were thus in a covert sense like abstract pictures, even though other things were only pictures or shadows of them."

³⁹Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁰"Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu," Theological Studies, (March 1946): 10-11; PW, pp. 1-3.

⁴¹PW, p. 6.

⁴²PW, pp. 111-122.

is, with the clarity and distinctness proper to vision.⁴³ While visual cultures can link verbalization with observation to produce objectivity, they may overlook subject reality and personhood since the subject is precisely what is not an object.⁴⁴

Formulated in more general terms, Ong holds that while there is a certain primacy of the spoken word for communicating human reality, each and every cultural stage or type has both advantages and disadvantages. A key to these lies in how the word is present, that is, how it is understood and used in different circumstances, and how those understandings and uses relate to the whole of human actuality in cosmos and history.

This will be more concretely appreciated if we examine it in light of the types or stages of history themselves.

Oral Culture

The first of Ong's cultural types or stages is the oral-aural or auditory culture. This is a culture which is organized principally around oral forms of communication, knowledge storage and retrieval. It embodies in its characteristic features both the advantages and the disadvantages of the medium of sound.

The salient features of sound which Ong elicits as formative of cultural characteristics include the inescapable dynamism of sound,⁴⁶ its

⁴³"I See What You Say": 29-30; PW, p. 50; "Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," ACC, p. 85

⁴⁴PW, pp. 22-35; "Rhetoric and the Origins of Consciousness," RRT, pp. 1-3.

⁴⁵"World as View and World as Event," pp. 637-643.

⁴⁶PW, p. 43.

weddedness to the present exercise of power, and, in the human life-world, its association with the personal presence of human to human in voice.⁴⁷ Sound is a special key to interiority since it resonates from interiors, and unlike other sensory approaches to interiority, expresses interior as interior.⁴⁸ This is especially significant in human vocal communication where it discloses that interior presence which is called self-hood or personhood, an actuality which cannot precisely be seen, touched, tasted or smelled, but which in a real sense can be heard.⁴⁹ Hence, oral-aural communication lends itself to the realm of the existential in a special way, and oral cultures exhibit a special affinity for the existential dimensions of human life.⁵⁰

Communality is further accentuated by the fact that oral-aural communication fosters groups in a special way.⁵¹ Oral cultures tend to be group-oriented, tribal rather than individualistic.⁵²

If sound is dynamic it is also evanescent.⁵³ Oral cultures tend toward the tribal because they rely for their survival on constant repetition

⁴⁷PW, pp. 111-183; "Breakthrough in Communications," p. 6.

⁴⁸PW, pp. 117-122.

⁴⁹"A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," BW, pp. 26-40.

⁵⁰PW, pp. 111-117.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 122-128.

⁵²"Contrasts in Catholicism," FAC, pp. 39-40; "Communications Media and the State of Theology": 477.

⁵³"Breakthrough in Communications," p. 7; "The World in Chains," p. 53.

of the tribal store of knowledge.⁵⁴ The precarious wisdom of the tribal stored in the memories of living persons, lives in repetition because only there can it be retained and retrieved.⁵⁵ Forgetfulness is the enemy in oral cultures.⁵⁶

The scarcity of information and the precarious and limited character of its retention mean that oral cultures tend to be conservative, stressing the formulaically and thematically embodied wisdom of the ancestors and dreading innovation, which displaces patterns of recurrence or confuses the collective memory.⁵⁷

The need to remember and to recall what recurs gives a decidedly past-oriented cast to oral cultures.⁵⁸ They favor mythic modes of expression which embody the foundational themes of the culture, a cyclic understanding of time, and a search for the Golden Age or the eternal return.⁵⁹

⁵⁴PW, p. 22: "Once we can get over our chirographic-typographic squint here, we can see that the word in its original habitat of sound, which is still its native habitat, is not a record at all. The word is something that happens, an event in the world of sound through which the mind is enabled to relate actuality to itself."

⁵⁵"Knowledge in Time," pp. 3-5; PW, p. 23.

⁵⁶"Knowledge in Time," p. 4; "Communications Media and the State of Theology": 466-467; "World as View and World as Event": 638-641.

⁵⁷The New Catholic Encyclopedia, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), s.v. "Literature, Written Transmission of," p. 833; "Communications Media and the State of Theology": 467; "World as View and World as Event": 638-639; Review of The Singer of Tales by Albert B. Lord, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), Criticism 4 (Winter 1962): 74-78; PW, p. 24 ff.; "Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style," RRT, pp. 33-34.

⁵⁸"Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision": 38-39.

⁵⁹"Breakthrough in Communications," p. 5. Primitive man was a victim of his past because he did not know it. "Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," pp. 61, 69, 70. See also "Nationalism and Darwin," pp. 85-88; "Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision," HG, p. 108.

Lacking stress on individuality, oral culture tends to confuse the worlds of the subject and the object. Objects tend to be personalized and subjects tend to be treated as objects, or at least the climate does not encourage the fuller measure of subjectivity common in modern existential thought.⁶⁰ All knowledge tends to be caught up in stereotypical virtue-vice polemics to the extent that even purely "natural" occurrences tend to be schematized around the good or ill will of personal or quasi-personal forces, real or imagined.⁶¹ Hence, a certain verbomotor polemic encourages a kind of spontaneous and uninhibited display of violence that is less obvious in more psychically inhibited cultural forms.⁶²

Visual Culture

Abstractly, and in some ways concretely in history, visual culture tends to appear antithetical to the character and values embodied in oral culture.⁶³ Consequently these two cultural forms, when found in mutual proximity, seem to be characteristically locked in mortal conflict.⁶⁴

Ong finds the key to this struggle in a shift from oral-aural to

⁶⁰"Knowledge in Time," p. 16; "Voice as Summons for Belief," BW, pp. 60-61; "Wired for Sound," BW, p. 227.

⁶¹Review of Preface to Plato by Eric A. Havelock, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), Manuscripta 7 (November 1964, p. 180; "World as View and World as Event," 641-642; PW, pp. 83-85.

⁶²"Breakthrough in Communications," pp. 8-10; "Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy": 478; "World as View and World as Event": 642-643; PW, pp. 192-222.

⁶³PW, p. 34.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 231-241.

visual analogues for noetic processes.⁶⁵ This shift, effected especially by phonetic literacy, signals an alteration of a complex and massive sort in both personality structure and social structure.⁶⁶

First of all, vision itself functions quite differently from sound. It can register quiescence in a way that hearing cannot.⁶⁷ It works with light reflected from surfaces rather than with power resonating from interiors, and it fosters attention to exteriors (objects) rather than to interiors (subjects).⁶⁸ It also requires of the perceiver distance and detachment in a way that the other senses do not.⁶⁹ It encourages a sense of sequentiality, of fragmenting actuality and of taking one thing at a time.⁷⁰ Unlike sound, which situates man in the middle of his environment, vision situates him at the side, as a spectator with a detached point of view.⁷¹

Sensory bias does not quite mean the use of this or that sense.

Humans use all their senses all the time. What matters is the self-conscious

⁶⁵"Ramus and the Transit to the Modern Mind," Modern Schoolman 32 (May 1955): 308-309; Review of The Art of Memory by Frances A. Yates, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), Renaissance Quarterly, 20 (Summer 1967): 252-259; "From Allegory to Diagram in the Renaissance Mind: A Study in the Significance of the Allegorical Tableau," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 17 (June 1959): 423-440.

⁶⁶PW, p. 8.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 112.

⁶⁸"The Spiritual Meaning of Technology and Culture," mimeograph copy of talk on 7 March 1966, to the Faculty Seminar on Technology and Culture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, p. 3; There is a gradual shift from polysemy to literal surface meanings. See PW, pp. 46-47.

⁶⁹"Tudor Writings on Rhetoric," Studies in the Renaissance, 15 (1968): 50.

⁷⁰PW, p. 129.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 128-129; Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane (New York, Harper and Row, 1961), pp. 36-47.

or unselfconscious (but effectively operative) emphasis placed on a given sense in noetic processes.⁷² Oral cultures necessarily rely on speech and hearing and cast knowledge in terms of personal presences.⁷³ The invention of writing and pre-eminently the invention of the phonetic alphabet both manifest and reinforce a tendency to conceive of knowledge more and more by analogy with seeing rather than with hearing.⁷⁴

The history of this shift in stress or emphasis, on one level at least, is the history of civilization.⁷⁵ Writing enabled men to record their knowledge, to fix it in space rather than suffering it to flow in time.⁷⁶ One could put something down and come back to it later.⁷⁷ Knowledge itself could be conceived as an object and not simply as an exchange between speaking subjects.⁷⁸ This ability to record and to store information abstracted from living memories deinhhibited the ability to innovate. It also encouraged privacy and individualism in human consciousness since, among other things, reading and writing can and even must be done alone in a way that speaking and hearing cannot be.⁷⁹

Literacy not only augmented the store of available information securely fixed, it accelerated the complexity of human action and inter-

⁷²PW, p. 6.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 84-85, 200-222.

⁷⁴"I See What You Say ": 29.

⁷⁵PW, p. 30.

⁷⁶"The Word in Chains," HG, pp. 53-55; PW, p. 48.

⁷⁷PW, p. 42, "Verba volant, scripta manent."

⁷⁸"Grammar in the Twentieth Century," BW, pp. 168-169.

⁷⁹PW, p. 30; "Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style," RRT, pp. 23-24.

action. Originally devised for commercial purposes, it brought about urbanization and with it law codes, philosophy, art, science and technology.⁸⁰

From one perspective the progress of the shift created by literacy has been exceedingly slow. Yet in a global perspective and in terms of the length of time the human race has been on earth, this history has been not only brief but ever accelerating. The stretch of 5,000 years since alphabetic literacy appeared has witnessed monumental changes in personality structure, social organization, and technological development.⁸¹

Visual culture may be roughly divided into two stages or phases. The first Ong calls manuscript culture, and it is found most developed in the West during the Middle Ages.⁸² Throughout this period, particularly

⁸⁰"Literature, Written Transmission of," p. 834; PW, pp. 35-40, 53. The invention of the phonetic alphabet came by a devious route. Ong stresses the fact that it was a nonce occurrence. Review of Unfinished Man and the Imagination, pp. 254-255: "All explanation of any subject, from physics to metaphysics and sociology, drifts toward the use of exclusively visual models for whatever is explained. It is easier to explain visual models than the nonvisual actuality for which they are surrogates. Thus, words are commonly explained by being made to be 'signs' (they are not; they are sounds, noises, something heard -- a 'sign' is at root something you see). As 'signs', words are said to 'stand' for concepts or things (they do not 'stand'; they voice or sound). Sound, which cannot exist except when it is going out of existence, which is time-bound so that if you stop it for 'inspection', you have no sound but silence, becomes quiescent marks on a surface or a pattern on an oscilloscope so that it can be 'observed'. (You cannot observe sound; you can only hear it)."

⁸¹"Knowledge in Time," p. 5; "Literature, Written Transmission of," p. 834: "World as View and World as Event": 643-644.

⁸²"Knowledge in Time," p. 5; "Communications Media and the State of Theology": 469-70; PW, 25 ff; Ong draws attention to the fact that McLuhan attaches manuscript culture to the oral side rather than the visual. Ong himself prefers to see residual oralism in manuscript culture which is already on its way to visualist quantified processings of reality. Cf. also, PW, pp. 54-55.

through the development of arts scholasticism,⁸³ the emotionally free-wheeling yet increasingly residual world of auditory synthesis⁸⁴ gives way to chirographically controlled patterns of thought.⁸⁵ Building on the initial impulses established in ancient Greece and Rome, techniques were improved for controlling, quantifying and precisising thought.⁸⁶ In contrast to the vernaculars, which remained close to the auditory world, learned Latin⁸⁷ became the foundation for a complex and sophisticated logic which grew out of the study of the conduct of disputations and trying to answer questions like, "How does what he says refute what I say."⁸⁸ Thematic and formulaic oral memory and performance diminished in favor of verbatim recording. The apotheosis of this process comes with the second or typo-

⁸³Review of The Wars of Truth, by Herschel Baker, Social Order 3 (march 1953): 138; Review of The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought, by Peter Munz, The Month, 9 (June 1953): 366-67; "System, Space and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, p. 71; Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 41-48.

⁸⁴"Memory as Art," RRT, pp. 104-112.

⁸⁵The New Catholic Encyclopedia, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), s.v. "Humanism," pp. 219-220.

⁸⁶Review of Preface to Plato by Eric A. Havelock (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), Manuscripta 7 (November 1964): 181. PW, pp. 25 ff.; Ong stresses the rise of science as a consequence of the confluence of Greek rationalism and the Judaeo-Christian understanding of history, creation. This understanding grounds science by assuming that all reality is ultimately intelligible. "Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," ACC, pp. 80-81.

⁸⁷PW, pp. 76-79; "Latin and the Social Fabric," BW, pp. 206-219; "Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," HG, p. 74.

⁸⁸"Communications Media and the State of Theology": 470-475; "Communications As a Field of Study," p. 2; "Tudor Writing on Rhetoric, Poetic, and Literary Theory," RRT, pp. 65-66.

graphic phase of visual, literate culture.⁸⁹ Typography vastly extended and accelerated the objectifying, quantifying and controlling proclivities initiated by writing.⁹⁰ Dialogue "splinters" into monologue and soliloquy.⁹¹

Peter Ramus is a peculiarly rich example of what happened to the Western mind in the sixteenth century.⁹² Ong used Ramus to launch some far-ranging explorations into the causal and effectual dimensions of cultural change. Ramus' importance lies in the role he played in shaping Western

⁸⁹RM, p. 97; "Humanism," pp. 219; Humanist interest in Greek moderated this during the Renaissance, and this is one factor that set humanism off from strict, Latin Scholasticism and its attachment to disputation. Curtius links humanism to writing. Ong approves. "Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style," RRT, p. 24.

⁹⁰"Humanism," p. 219ff; "System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, pp. 74-76.

⁹¹RM, p. 291; Rosenstock-Huussy insists that first-rate experiences are not realized through the eye (PW, xv). He resisted "the decay of the time-sense and of the power of speech." "Philosophical Sociology" Modern Schoolman 37 (January 1960): 138.

⁹²Review of Cultural Foundations of Industrial Civilization, by John U. Nef, America 99 (3 May 1958): 177-178; Ripening of conditions for change in 16th century, "System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, pp. 68-85; "Ramus, Peter," The New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), s.v. "Ramus, Peter," pp. 77-78.

Peter Ramus (Pierre de la Ramée) was born in 1515 near the birthplace of John Calvin. He died in 1572 in the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. After weathering considerable hardship, Ramus managed to complete university studies at Paris as a Master of Arts in 1536. His professional career was punctuated with controversy in no small measure due to his publication of two anti-Aristotelian treatises (1543). His works were banned and he was forbidden to teach philosophy until 1547 when Henry II, with whom he enjoyed favor, took the throne. Henry made him regius professor (1551) and later dean of regius professors (1556).

Ramus' importance seems to lie not so much in the quality of his work but in the fact that his search for a simplified, universal "method" for processing all human knowledge seems to have hit a basic element in the temper of the times. This took the form of logic texts which became the mainstay of primary and secondary education as a kind of primer of the arts of discourse. The heart of this logic was a spatial diagrammatic process which translated knowledge of all sorts into neat dichotomies. One could use it to take knowledge apart into these diagrams or put it together for discourse by assembling the elements into prose. The history of the rise and spread of Ramism and its enemies is as complex as it is fascinating.

thought in places as far reaching as the German humanist colleges,⁹³
 Wesleyan Christianity,⁹⁴ and the New England mind.

The most important concept one might associate with him is
 "method."⁹⁵ The logical sophistication of arts scholasticism⁹⁶ at its peak,
 despite the fact that it laid the foundations for modern science, made it
 too complex for teaching the arts of discourse to schoolboys.⁹⁷ Attempts
 were made, in the centuries prior to Ramus, to effect a simplification
 which would make it pedagogically manageable. Most notable were the logics
 of Peter of Spain⁹⁸ and Rudolph Agricola.⁹⁹ What was gained was more than
 paid for in the philosophical realm, however, by the blurring of important

We cannot reproduce it here but rather refer the reader to Ong's own works
 on the subject. Ong presents a concise summary of the significance of
 Ramism in RM, pp. 306-07.

⁹³"Ramus and the Transit to the Modern Mind": 306; "Humanism,"
 pp. 221, 223-224. Of course this ties in with the wider phenomenon of
 humanism in general.

⁹⁴"Peter Ramus and the Naming of Methodism: Medieval Science
 Through Ramist Homilectic," Journal of the History of Ideas, 12 (April 1953):
 235-248; Review of The Learned Doctor William Ames: Dutch Backgrounds of
 English and American Puritanism by Keith L. Sprunger (Urbana, Chicago,
 London: University of Illinois Press, 1972), Manuscripta 18 (1974), pp. 51-53.

⁹⁵"System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism,"
 pp. 78-79.

⁹⁶Review of Studies in the Italian Renaissance, by B. L. Ullman,
 (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1955), The Classical Journal,
 51 (January 1956): 189; RM, pp. 53-91, 131-148. This arts scholasticism
 has to be differentiated from "Thomism" which is a minority scholasticism
 somewhat on the periphery of the central tradition which, for example,
 produced nominalism.

⁹⁷This persisted even into Erasmus' day. See Review of The
 "Adages" of Erasmus: A Study with Translations, by Margaret Mann Phillips,
 (Cambridge (England): Cambridge University Press, 1964), The Classical
 Bulletin, 41 (December 1964), pp. 31-32; "Oral Residue in Tudor Prose
 Style," RRT, p. 31; RM, pp. 39, 149-167.

⁹⁸RM, pp. 53-83; Quirinus Breen, Manuscripta, 4 (Fall, 1960): 53, (RM).

⁹⁹RM, pp. 92-130; "Humanism," p. 221.

metaphysical and epistemological questions. Ramus extended this movement by attempting to devise a universal, uniform and simple method whereby all knowledge whatsoever could be processed for easy discourse.¹⁰⁰

This is not to say that Ramism constituted the whole of education. It did, however, touch on such a fundamental illusion in the early typographically conditioned mind, that its effects may be fairly taken as typical of early typographic culture.¹⁰¹ In any event, the method and logic of Peter Ramus and his associate, Omer Talon, poured into numerous editions and thousands of copies highlighting the fact that typography made the book, and in some ways knowledge itself, a mass-produced commodity.¹⁰² The extent of uniformising, quantifying, objectivising, visualizing, con-

¹⁰⁰Review of Petrus Ramus, Dialecticae Institutiones; Aristotelicae: Facsimile Neudruck der Ausgaben Paris 1543 mit einer Einleitung von Wilhelm Risse (Stuttgart-Bad Constatt: Freidrich Frommann Verlag -- Gunther Holzboog, 1964), Renaissance News, 18 (Spring 1965), p. 142; "Ramist Classroom Procedure and the Nature of Reality," RRT, pp. 142-164.

¹⁰¹Review of De Veris Principiis et Vera Ratione Philosophandi contra Pseudophilosophos Libros IV, by Mario Nizalio, (Roma: Fratelli Bocca Editori, 1956), Renaissance News, 10 (Autumn 1957): 154-156; "From Allegory to Diagram in the Renaissance Mind: A Study in the Significance of the Allegorical Tableau," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 17 (June 1959): 423-440. This is a superb study of changing sensitivity in view of its subtle complexity; Review of The Anatomy of the World: Relations Between Natural and Moral Law from Donne to Pope, by Michael Macklem, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1958), Manuscripta, 31 (July 1959): 111-113. The shift here is one from the earlier geocentrism to the Copernican and Newtonian view. Ong draws attention to a "tendency to impute to the moral realm a tidiness such as the Newtonian discerned in the operations of the physical universe; thus is the stage set for a philosophy of 'optimism' -- this is the best of all possible universes." This involves a close interaction between cosmology and morals.

¹⁰²Omer Talon (ca. 1510-1562) and Ramus produced over 800 editions of and adaptations of their works, helping to spawn hundreds of Ramist educators and public figures. RM, p. 295.

trolling, communicating, and storing knowledge which the printing press brought with it was unthinkable in the manuscript era which preceded Gutenberg.¹⁰³

The ramifications of all this are far from simply educational and philosophical.¹⁰⁴ The situation precipitated a host of consequences,¹⁰⁵ or at least led to the manifestation, in politics, science, commerce, art and art criticism, philosophy and religion.¹⁰⁶ In short, every aspect of society and culture was affected.¹⁰⁷

Politically, visual culturists felt compelled to undertake the renovation of the world by imposing art on nature. "Preliterate" or oral-aural cultures of the world represented a massive, untutored, artless, superstitious arena into which civilization has to be brought, nourished and matured, even if it meant killing natives for their own good. Ironically, the primitive served to justify the imperialist's vision of himself.¹⁰⁸ Closely allied with this is the rise of modern science which similarly discerned a mandate to purge the world of myth, ritual, magic and superstition, in the name of enlightenment and liberty.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³"Man in a Word," The Intercollegian, 85 (Summer 1967): 35.
 "Grammar in the Twentieth Century," BW, pp. 173-174; PW, p. 50; RM, pp. 307-318.

¹⁰⁴"Ramist-Classroom Procedure and the Nature of Reality," RRT, pp. 142-164.

¹⁰⁵"Ramist Method and the Commercial Mind," RRT, pp. 165-190.

¹⁰⁶"Humanism," pp. 221-224; RM, pp. 5, 287.

¹⁰⁷"Ramus and the Transit to the Modern Mind": 301-311.

¹⁰⁸"Spenser's View and the Tradition of the 'Wild' Irish," Modern Language Quarterly, 3 (December 1942): 562-571; PW, p. 9.

¹⁰⁹"Memory as Art," RRT, p. 111.

In commerce this movement was allied to the conquering and mobilizing of nature in such a way as to wrest from it an accumulation of surplus goods, wealth and power, all of which vindicated the visual, literate, "civilized" approach to reality.¹¹⁰ Likewise, in spite of the intense competition of the marketplace, overt hostilities which harkened back to oral polemic were progressively subdued in favor of an artful irenicism and formality.¹¹¹

In education, the rough-and-tumble contentiousness which characterized the Latin-centered, male puberty rites¹¹² of the medieval university yielded to the humanists, a practical, prepare-for-life, orientation which was wedded to the rise of nationalism, the legitimation of the vernaculars

¹¹⁰Review of Cultural Foundations of Industrial Civilization, John U. Nef (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), America, 99 (3 May 1958): 178. The earliest record of the use of the word "civilization" is from 1757.

¹¹¹"Tudor Writings on Rhetoric," Studies in the Renaissance, 15 (1968): 39-69; Review of Logic and Rhetoric in England, by Wilbur Samuel Howell, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), Renaissance News, 9 (Winter 1956): 206-211; "Ong: Following a Renaissance Prototype," Aardwolf, 2 (December 1969 - January 1970): 3.

¹¹²"Latin and the Social Fabric," BW, pp. 211-216; "Tudor Writings on Rhetoric": 46-51; "Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite," RRT, pp. 113-114; Review of Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry, by Brian Vickers, (New York: St. Martin's Press and London: Macmillan, 1970), College English, (February, 1972), p. 615: "If this is interpreted to mean that rhetoric was the product of male chauvinism, then male chauvinism was essential for the maturing of intellect and culture. Whatever your interpretation, these are the forces you are dealing with when you undertake the history of rhetoric, deep movements within the human psyche in its relationship to cultural evolution "; "Rhetoric and the Origins of Consciousness," RRT, pp. 14-15; "Humanism," pp. 215-224. Of course, humanism itself looked back to oral performance rather than to originality which came with Romanticism.

and the entrance of women¹¹³ into the school and the marketplace. One went to school not as a life's commitment to membership in a medieval guild of scholars but in order to be prepared to take one's place in the overtly genteel preoccupations of bourgeois productivity.¹¹⁴ Individualism prospered in the sense that one had to earn one's place in the orderly scheme of things.¹¹⁵ Just as there is something inevitably elitist about literacy when relatively few have access to the skills it generates, visualist society supplants in-groups, "elites" of tribe and tradition, of blood and heritage, with the more abstract and uniform citizenship of individual effort.¹¹⁶ One had to make something of one's self, that is, to apply art and method to nature's wild givenness.¹¹⁷ The social contract transcended mere natural

¹¹³"Synchronic Present: Modernity in Literary Study," HG, p. 21; Review of Leicester, Patron of Letters, by Eleanor Rosenberg, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), The Historical Bulletin, 34 (May 1966): 240; Review of The New Woman: Her Emergence in English Drama, 1600-1730, by Jean Elizabeth Gage, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1954), The Historical Bulletin, 34 (May 1956): 234-235; "Humanism, pp. 220-221. Despite its classical orientation, humanism had a great impact on the vernaculars; PW, 241-255. Ong notes a possible connection between the atrophy of puberty rites and campus violence in the sixties. Cf. Review of The Theory of the Avant-Garde, by Renato Poggioli, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1968), American Literature, 40 (January 1969): 590.

¹¹⁴"Humanism," p. 224; "Educationists and the Tradition of Learning", BW, pp. 149-63.

¹¹⁵Review of The Theory of the Avant-Garde: 590. The complex problem suggested here by the romantic quieting of the polemic mind produces alienation as the new motive of agonia, an appropriate response for visualist detachment.

¹¹⁶Review of The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture With Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene, by Ernest W. McDonnell, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954), The Historical Bulletin, 34 (November 1955): 38; "Interiority and Modernity in the Spiritual Exercises," An edited transcription of a tape made 13 April 1969, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri; "Breakthrough in Communications," HG, p. 4; PW, p. 54

¹¹⁷"Humanism," p. 221.

savagery.¹¹⁸

In philosophy, the propensity for thinking of human knowing more and more exclusively by analogy with vision immortalized the split between objectivity and subjectivity in ways which stubbornly persist even today.¹¹⁹ The detachment of the observer led either to an exaggerated and isolated subjectivity, as in Descartes and the idealist tradition, or to an empiricism which exiled the subject from the real in the name of objectivity.¹²⁰ Hence, the philosophical stage was set for a kind of schizophrenia, symbolized by the conflict between Hegel and Kierkegaard, a split which fragmented Western civilization in a manifold of ways.¹²¹ In the words of T.S. Eliot, the West experienced a dissociation of sensibility."¹²²

Electronic Culture

If visual culture brought with it a certain fragmenting of human reality through individualism,¹²³ nationalism and analytic habits of mind,

¹¹⁸"Religious-Secular Dialogue in a Pluralist Society," American Catholic Crossroads, (New York: Macmillan, 1959), pp. 90-91; "That American Way," America 100 (November 1958): 238-31. Ong notes that there is a certain ambiguity in the politico-religious order. Such elitism can create jingoist and chauvinist attitudes of unfounded superiority.

¹¹⁹"I See What You Say": 22-24; "Ramus and the Transit to the Modern Mind": 311; "Swift on the Mind: Satire in a Closed Field," RRT, pp. 198-200, 219, 222.

¹²⁰PW, pp. 66-69. Ong demonstrates, for example, John Locke's visualist bias.

¹²¹Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style (Garden City: Doubleday, 1955), p. 39.

¹²²"Ramus and the Transit to the Modern Mind": 302; "Psyche and the Geometers: Associationist Critical Theory," RRT, p. 234.

¹²³Review of Essays on Individuality, ed. Felix Morley, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), America, 99 (July, 1958: 415; Ong suggests that individual and person are not the same, a distinction which puts him in league with Teilhard. See: Christopher Mooney, Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 52.

it also vastly extended man's potential and/or actual control over himself and his environment.¹²⁴ While one face of the industrial, commercial and scientific revolutions which it produced reveals alienation, the other displays a preoccupation with freedom and fulfillment. While on the one hand it appears as an antithesis to oral culture, it can also be seen as laying foundations for a further stage of culture which has allowed for a renewed entrance into the synchronic world of sound fostered and emblemized by the "secondary orality" of electronic communications media.¹²⁵

Ong contends that later stages of evolution do not eliminate earlier stages.¹²⁶ Rather, in complex and subtle ways they subsume and transform them into new and even more complex forms.¹²⁷

An important example of this is the phenomenon of Romanticism.¹²⁸ Initially a creation of visual, literate culture which later has served as a bridge between visual and electronic cultures,¹²⁹ Romanticism

¹²⁴"Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision," HG, p. 106.

¹²⁵"Worship at the End of Age of Literacy": 474n. Here the synthesis implied in the oral-visuality or secondary orality of electronic culture is brought out; "Communications Media and the State of Theology": 477-78; "Wired for Sound: Teaching, Communications, and Technological Culture," BW, p. 255; "The Literate Orality of Popular Culture Today," RRT, pp. 283-303; PW, pp. 9, 87-92; "Crisis and Understanding in the Humanities," RRT, pp. 326-331; "Synchronic Present: Modernity in Literary Study," HG, p. 28.

¹²⁶"Breakthrough in Communications," HG, p. 11; "Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style," RRT, pp. 24-25.

¹²⁷"Media Transformation: The Talked Book," College English, (December 1972): 405-410; PW, p. 9.

¹²⁸"On Mass Media and Theology: What a Catholic University Should Do": 6-7; "Romantic Difference and the Poetics of Technology," RRT, pp. 255-283; PW, pp. 252-55; "Communications as a Field of Study," p. 2.

¹²⁹"J.S. Mill's Pariah Poet," RRT, pp. 237-254. Perhaps Romanticism serves as a bridge because it is 'elitist' at its core.

began as a reaction against the objectivising tendencies of print technology and the scientific and technological patterns which developed from it.¹³⁰ Yet it is based upon the noetic security which flows from the information abundance which frees man from terror and fatalism in the face of his "natural" environment.¹³¹

In the electronic setting, Romanticism supports an intensified concern for the subjective dimensions of reality as surfaces in existential and personalist philosophies.¹³² Ong sees both Romanticism and personalism as

¹³⁰"Classic and Romantic," The Concise Encyclopedia of English and American Poets and Poetry, ed. Stephen Spender and Donald Hall, (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1963), p. 52. This reaction betrays a fundamentally dialectical character, and, as Ong puts it, "the classic-romantic dyad was obviously reflecting in its own way oppositions caught in other pairs of terms recurrent in philosophical analyses: act-potency, form-matter, the one and the many, yang-yin (male-female), Apollo and Dionysos. In any complex state of affairs both elements in dyads such as these will be identifiable, often in a myriad of ways at once, and it is little wonder that Romanticism could serve as a universal solvent of manifold phenomena."

¹³¹Review of The Theory of the Avant-Garde: 588-590.

¹³²"Outsiders Inside Society Today," BW, pp. 260-285; "Communications As a Field of Study," p. 2; "At the Present Front of Knowledge," HG, p. 14; Review of The Inward Morning: A Philosophical Exploration in Journal Form, by Henry G. Bugbee, Jr., with an introduction by Gabriel Marcel, (State College, Pennsylvania: Bald Eagle Press, 1958), The Modern Schoolman, 37 (November 1959): 68-69: "Bugbee's outlook has a great attraction for Marcel, and it is to the credit of the French philosopher that he recognizes the attraction at the very time when, as someone outside American culture, he protests his own limitations for assimilating all that Bugbee's sensibility has to offer. Bugbee's thought and Marcel's meet in that they are both exploratory, both attempts at communication deriving from facing honestly the isolation of the self, and both reverent in a way which makes them fruitful. However, Marcel's reverence tends to lodge in persons, Bugbee's in things; and thus the isolation of the American is--true to the American tradition--more complete. The various themes which weave through the discussion--the self, the meaning of man, God, meditation, prayer, critiques of or extrapolations from what this or that philosopher says--tend to focus on the person-thing mystery more, it seems, than on any one other subject. This is what gives Bugbee's thought its value, for the person-thing mystery is in great part America herself and could offer grounds for America's contribution to the development of philosophy." See also "Personalism and the Wilderness," BW, pp. 233-241.

hallmarks of electronic technological culture which is consequently characterized both by greater objectivization and greater subjectivization, greater exteriority and greater interiority, simultaneously.¹³³ This situation introduces new and perplexingly complicated patterns into the fabric of human culture.¹³⁴

If the qualities of literate culture include individualism and nationalism, electronic culture, in varied and sometimes antithetical ways, encourages group consciousness and global perspectives and values.¹³⁵ If the delimiting and isolating techniques of visual culture extend man's control over both interiority and exteriority, technological culture intensifies synthetic or synchronic and interpenetrating habits of mind and action.¹³⁶ Visual culture drove a wedge between the human person and the world or it

¹³³"Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," ACC, p. 91; Review of Tomorrow is Already Here, by Robert Jungk, trans. Marguerite Waldman, with an introduction by Herbert Agar, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), Thought, 29 (Winter 1954-1955): 597-598; "Knowledge in Time," pp. 18-38; "Man In A Word," p. 36; Review of Technology and Christian Culture by Robert Paul Mohan, (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University Press, 1960), America, 104 (22 October 1960): 129; "New Definitions in the Humanities: The Humanities in a Technological Culture," concluding section (pp. 83-87) of "Report by the Commission on Trends in Education," PMLA, 77 (May 1962): 86; "Ideas of Technology: Commentary," Technology and Culture, 3 (Fall 1962): 459-462; "The Knowledge Explosion in the Humanities," HG, pp. 41-51; "American Culture and Morality," HG, pp. 164-188.

¹³⁴PW, p. 222 ff.; "American Culture and Morality," HG, pp. 176-177.

¹³⁵"The American Catholic Complex," FAC, p. 1; "Breakthrough in Communications," HG, p. 11; "World as View and World as Event": 646.

¹³⁶"The Knowledge Explosion in the Humanities," HG, p. 48: Here as in other contexts Ong asserts that history is deposited in us as personality structure. See also: PW, pp. 178, 316.

threatened to eradicate person and to leave only world.¹³⁷ Electronic culture tends to resituate the human person in its pivotal role.¹³⁸

As with any cultural form, electronic culture has its own characteristic forms of distortion.¹³⁹ These may be more difficult to characterize than those of earlier and simpler periods because of the sheer complexity which pertains. In some ways it perpetuates the objectivist scientism which characterized visual culture's battle with materiality. As such it contributes to what Ong calls the Great Western Fiction of a self-made, self-sufficient, self-contained world.¹⁴⁰ Yet at the same time its very complexity tends to force recognition of the inevitable plight of man, at least in more sensitive parts of society.¹⁴¹ At the same time, Ong seems to suggest that the mass of society is caught in a superficial secularism which practices a kind of superficial informedness which militates against recognition of the depth dimension of human existence.¹⁴²

¹³⁷"Knowledge in Time," KFM, pp. 16-18; "Review of Preface to Plato, by Eric A. Havelock, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), Manuscripta 7 (November 1964): 179-81.

¹³⁸"Religion, Scholarship, and the Resituation of Man," HG, pp. 132-133; "Knowledge in Time," p. 21; "Breakthrough in Communications," HG, pp. 14-16; PW, p. 101.

¹³⁹"Platform of Good Will," A Catholic View, Platform of Good Will Series, (New York: National Conference of Christians and Jews, 1961): 7; Pluralism, for example, can create indifference ; "Crisis and Understanding in the Humanities," RRT, pp. 304-336.

¹⁴⁰"Kafka's Castle in the West," Thought, 22 (September 1947): 439-60.

¹⁴¹Ibid. : 443; "Finitude and Frustration: Considerations on Brod's Kafka," Modern Schoolman, 25 (March 1948): 174-175; Review of Claudel et son art d'écrire, by Henri Guillemin, Renaissance 8 (Summer 1956): 208-209. Claudel is a good example of the roots of twentieth century romantic awareness of the infrarational.

¹⁴²"Reporting Providence," Commonweal 45 (January 1947): 367-369.

Nevertheless, technological culture vastly extends knowledge of the quantity, variety and availability of human cultural tradition past and present.¹⁴³ A more thorough knowledge of actual human success and failure makes the present-day arena of human decision-making more realistic even if virtue and vice do not seem to be cultural variables but remain rather matters of individual decision.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, the global communications network makes possible a kind of cultural pluralism and interplay which accelerates cultural sharing, hybridization of forms of knowledge previously separated, and a general acceleration of noetic productivity.¹⁴⁵

In some ways the stress on presentness¹⁴⁶ and social orientedness in technological culture causes a depreciation of past traditions in favor of superficial faddism.¹⁴⁷ In other ways it has had the opposite effect.¹⁴⁸ In oral cultures, tradition is static and timeless. Visual culture strove to eliminate tradition in the name of the self-made man. Electronic culture, however, vastly extends knowledge of the past and makes the scope and variety

¹⁴³Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 351. Precisely at the time when we gain the greatest precision, the need arises to make our language reinhabit the rich fullness of the symbolic.

¹⁴⁴"Knowledge in Time," KFM, pp. 24-28; "The Spiritual Meaning of Technology and Culture," Faculty Forum 41 (May 1967): 5; "Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision," National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin: Report of the Proceedings and Addresses 57 (August 1960): 39, 46; "Breakthrough in Communications," HG, pp. 12-13.

¹⁴⁵"Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision," 43-45.

¹⁴⁶PW, p. 101; "Synchronic Present: Modernity in Literary Study," HG, pp. 17-40.

¹⁴⁷"World as View and World as Event": 645; "Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision": 39.

¹⁴⁸"Communications as a Field of Study," p. 4.

of traditions more apparent¹⁴⁹ and available.

A tremendous diversity of cultures, disproportion in economic, social and psychological development, parochial, nationalistic and isolationist attitudes, all these remain despite the globalizing thrust of electronic culture; yet the accelerating influx of information and interaction makes isolation from the "others" increasingly difficult to maintain.¹⁵⁰

In academe, the knowledge explosion in the humanities as well as in the sciences has precipitated new insights, questions and perspectives.¹⁵¹ Education has become more characterized by interdisciplinary and inter-relational studies.¹⁵²

Ong sees all these processes as having a bearing on prospects for world peace.¹⁵³ The bloody conflicts which occur today seem to focus on groups inhabiting the margins between oral, visual and electro-technological cultures. Often ancient, tribal hostilities in existing oral cultures clash with the residual insecurities of industrial and neo-industrial societies.¹⁵⁴ Yet here, despite this and the precarious involvements of technological super-

¹⁴⁹"Synchronic Present: Modernity in Literary Study," HG, p. 38. Knowledge of the past breeds the existential present.

¹⁵⁰"New Definitions in Humanities: The Humanities in a Technological Culture," PMLA 77 (May 1962): 85; "Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy": 485; PW, pp. 295-304; "Introduction," HG, p. 9.

¹⁵¹"The Knowledge Explosion in the Humanities," HG, pp. 45,49; "Knowledge in Time," KFM, pp. 12-16.

¹⁵²"Research and American Catholic Education," ACC, p. 91; "Philosophical Sociology": 138-139; "English, 2000 A.D.," St. Louis University Magazine 44 (July-August 1971): 11; "Educationists and the Tradition of Learning," BW, pp. 149-163.

¹⁵³PW, pp. 255-263; "Nationalism and Darwin," HG, p. 94.

¹⁵⁴"On Mass Media and Theology: What a Catholic University Should Do," p. 15.

powers, myths of global harmony have begun to challenge more widely the older patterns of unquestioned violence.¹⁵⁵ Personalist, existentialist, romantic and ecological thought patterns seem to exercise a moderating influence on these hostilities even if total peace remains an illusive ideal.¹⁵⁶

Conclusion

Culture is the complex reality and concept which refers to concrete historical expressions of human patterns of self-manifestation and self-realization in the world, rooted in man's unique being as the meeting ground of matter and spirit. Man produces cultures through technologies and especially and primarily through media of communication. Culture is an expression of man's radical oneness with the world as the spearhead of evolution.

Culture is both an exterior and an interior actuality in that it characterizes not only the observable artifacts and patterns of action of a people and their space and time, but also their interior patterns of thought.

For Ong, the central hermeneutical key to cultural typology is constituted by the analogues or the structures of techno-cognitive syntheses represented by the stress on or preference for a given mode of communication and of knowledge processing and storage. This stress or preference amounts to the elevation of the characteristics of a given sensory process to the position of primary cultural criteria.

Ong distinguishes three general types of culture: oral, visual and secondary oral. Each has its co-relative communications media: oral-aural,

¹⁵⁵"Breakthrough in Communications," HG, p. 16

¹⁵⁶"World as View and World as Event": 645.

literate and electronic.

Oral culture centers on a world characterized by speech and hearing, i.e., by sound. As such it is dynamic, existential, volatile, conservative and tribal. The generation and preservation of knowledge is precarious due to the evanescent character of sound as the medium of reinforcing memory. Knowledge is not perceived as something apart from persons, and it is thematically or poetically formulated. Observation is not wedded to "objective" verbalization.

The term visual or literate culture describes that phase of human history characterized by the shift from spoken to written communication made possible by literacy and especially the phonetic alphabet. The ability to store information, while denaturing communication in various ways, nevertheless made it possible to conceive of knowledge as a commodity, as a quantity which could exist independent of persons. From early manuscript culture to widespread literacy in print, knowledge grows and accumulates with accelerating speed, freeing men from repetition of tribal memory and subservience to nature. Human knowing comes to be understood less and less as dialogue between speaking persons and more by analogy with the detached, fragmenting and objective activity of vision.

The appearance of electronic media of communications and travel has created a wedding between knowledge abundance and the dynamic existentiality of secondary orality. In ways still too complex to describe, the human sensorium is reorganized to foster a synthesizing perception and a globalizing pattern of cultural interaction. While scientific objectivity accelerates renewed emphasis on sound, it creates pressures for dialogue which manifest themselves in personalist and existentialist patterns of thought and behavior.

The thread for the maze in this three-part typology or history of cultural evolution is, for Ong, the way in which the word is present. The word is the closest analogue for human thought since it relates interior to interior, subjectivity to subjectivity, in dialogue. Though literacy at first repressed dialogue by treating the word as an independent object, the electronic environment makes the word newly present in the existential dynamism of sound while retaining the advantages of visualist-literate processings of the human word. This relieves the pressures of oral polemic and hostility which characterized oral cultures as well as the objectivizing depersonalism of visual culture, making possible hopeful prospects for world peace.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION IN ONG'S SCHEME OF CULTURAL EVOLUTION

The God of Judaeo-Christian revelation manifests himself in what men know of the universe, not in what they do not know. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, far from being a religious liability, increase in knowledge over the ages, including knowledge of material and secular actuality, is a boon to religion. Early man's ignorance deformed his religious sensibility and, despite the sense of the sacred to which he had access, predisposed his religion to superstition and deterioration. The expansion of knowledge, with the concomitant breakup of the enclaves hitherto locking man in isolated groups across the earth's surface, sees Christianity more widespread and more truly catholic today than ever before. The Christian dispensation is closely tied to the evolution of the material world, and to its very materiality. For the Christian, matter, changing¹ in time, is a positive good, and the future is colored with hope.

Introduction

If Ong's scheme of cultural evolution is complex, his treatment of religion is no less so. Nevertheless, his interplaying of theological and cultural insights produces some perspectives on the religious dimension of human life in general and on Christianity in particular which are distinctive and suggestive for a theology of culture.²

This chapter will provide a synthetic description of Ong's religious and theological thought with special attention to the way in which it relates to the scheme of cultural evolution suggested in the previous chapter.

The first section will consider the presence of the word in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Section two will treat Ong's understanding

¹"Introduction," HG, p. 11.

²"Christian Values at Mid-Twentieth Century," Theology Digest 4 (Autumn 1956): 155-57; "The Reaches of History," Commonweal 68 (August, 1958): 487-90.

of religion in terms of oral, visual and electronic cultures. Thirdly, Ong's account of the relationship of faith to religious and secular knowledge will be discussed. Fourthly, Ong's treatment of the role of cultural change in the divisions of Christianity will be recounted. The final section will take note of Ong's studies of American Catholicism.

The Presence of the Word in Christianity

The Judaeo-Christian tradition is preeminently a tradition of the word.³ Even given the oralized existentiality of early cultures, Judaism and Christianity stand out as having exploited the economy of the word far more than other religious traditions even if not yet to the fullest.⁴

The economy of the word in the Old Testament is well established. In a sense, God assaults man through his word.⁵ Through it he creates the cosmos, establishes his promise, creates his people, challenges and reforms them. In his word he offers his Law, his wisdom, his judgment, his peace, his loving-kindness. Through his word he leads them onward in history to a gradually deepening sense of his personal being and his will to share that personalized life with them.⁶ Hence, the drama of Israel is at root an historical dialogue and encounter between the human word and the divine

³PW, pp. 179-191. In this book Ong is primarily concerned with Hebrew-Christian religion.

⁴"Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," ACC, pp. 82-83; The New Catholic Encyclopedia, ed, s.v. "Literature, Written Transmission of." p. 838.

⁵PW, p. 12. Ong gets this from Eric Auerbach's, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature (Garden City: Doubleday, 1957).

⁶Bernard Cooke, "The Biblical Theology of Person," Contemporary New Testament Studies, ed. Sister M. Rosalie Ryan, C.S.J., (Collegeville: North Central Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 83 ff.

word which not only breaks men free from cosmic cyclicism and points them to a future, but it creates as well a special kind of interiorized history, Heilsgeschichte, which grips the whole human race as well as each individual human person in the well-springs of their being.⁷ In such a context, one may appreciate why the Hebrew dabar, unlike the Greek logos, means not only "word" but also "event."⁸

The New Testament makes more of the personalizing and historicizing valences of the word than the Old Testament did.⁹ Here the Word of God, his personal self-revelation, is manifested as a divine person who is himself the Father's Word and Son: eo verbum quo filius.¹⁰ Everything which the historical Jesus Christ utters sums up the personalizing direction of God's word in history in terms of his own history of dwelling in the midst of human beings as a man: the Word becomes flesh.¹¹ In him even the inner life of God is expressed as a life of intersubjectivity, of communication, of shared consciousness and personal presence, making the power of the life

⁷"Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," HG, p. 71; "Philosophical Sociology," Modern Schoolman 12 (April 1964): 140; H. Stahmer, Social Order 13 (June 1963): 36-44; PW, pp. 176-179.

⁸PW, p. 12, pp. 111-138; James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Thorlief Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek, trans. Jules L. Moreau, January, 1960, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961).

⁹"Literature, Religion, and Faith," Network 2 (Spring 1974): 14-16.

¹⁰PW, p. 12.

¹¹"Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," ACC, pp. 76-77; "Christian Values": 155-57; "Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," Worship 44 (October 1969): 480; "Communications Media and the State of Theology," Cross Currents 19 (Fall 1969): 464-65.

shared in and through the Word even more mysterious than it had been in the Old Testament.¹²

A fundamental orientation, then, of Ong's theology of culture lies in the special orientation toward the Word which is typical of Christian faith, where sound understood in terms of personal voice serves as a prime analogate for the life of faith.¹³

Religion and Culture

Religious perception is a human reality, and men must think of and respond to the religious dimension of their existence with the same tools they use for thinking about and responding to everything else. As a consequence, the state of the human sensorium and the cultural forms which it effects have an impact on religious patterns and attitudes.

Oral Culture

The scarcity of data, the polemical atmosphere, and human subservience to the infrahuman world, shape the character of religion in oral culture. Moreover, a noetic economy based on sound is dynamic and

¹²"On Mass Media and Theology: What a Catholic University Should Do," a transcription of an interview with Dr. Andrew Ruszkowski, Director, Institute of Social Communications, St. Paul University, (Ottawa, Ontario 24 June 1969). Mimeographed for private circulation, p. 16; Why Talk?: A conversation about Language with Walter Ong, conducted by Wayne Aitree, (San Francisco: Chandler and Sharp, 1973). This basically incarnational approach typifies Ong's work in general, sometimes to the delight and sometimes to the displeasure of critics. See for example, George Drury, Critic 18 (August-September 1959): 62-63; (ACC); Harold Stahmer, Religious Education, 54 (October 1959): 471-472, (ACC).

¹³"Voice as Summons for Belief: Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self," BW, pp. 49-67; "The Challenge of Technical Excellence to the Catholic Intellect." An address to the Advanced Workshop for the improvement of Catholic Schools of Medical Technology, St. Louis, Missouri, 30 January 1961, p. 5.

is charged with an event-centered consciousness which tends to interpret everything in terms of personal or quasi-personal presences. It invites a world replete with mystery and with strongly existential sensitivities.¹⁴

St. Paul asserts that "Faith comes through hearing."¹⁵ For Ambrose, hearing serves as guaranty.¹⁶ Eliade sees cultures with an auditory cast as especially religious.¹⁷ Too, all kinds of knowledge tend to be embodied together in the same thematic and formulaic devices, and there is no separation of the religious from the secular. Myth and ritual are not only modalities of religious communication, but they mediate secular knowledge as well.¹⁸

Visual Culture

As literate, visualist culture appears and slowly develops, a separation and objectivization of religion occurs, just as knowledge as a whole progressively fragments and specializes.¹⁹ Both the perception and the practice of religion are understood less by analogy with person to person

¹⁴PW, pp. 161-169, 323-324.

¹⁵Romans 10:17; PW, p. 14.

¹⁶"American Catholicism and America," Thought 27 (Winter 1952-53): 521-41.

¹⁷Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), passim; For Eliade on the nature of the Judaeo-Christian time-sense, pp. 110-12; PW, p. 15

¹⁸"The Challenge of Technical Excellence": 1.

¹⁹RM. p. 5.

encounter, dialogue, and more and more in abstract terms.²⁰ Laws, doctrines, and creeds progressively supplant mythic and ritual embodiments of religion until they come to be eyed not only with suspicion but as radically inimical to true religion.

The communal, traditional and material dimensions of religion are subdued in favor of the individual, artful and intellectually or ethically spiritual.

In oral culture, religion totally subsumes the secular. In visual culture religion tends to be compartmentalized and put at the service of the secular project. As such its morally serviceable idea or principle content is explicit and defined. A deistic God who governs through the mechanism of natural processes is no longer the God of mystery. He appears rather like a cosmic Leonardo da Vinci who fabricated a Newtonian universe and retreated to his heaven, leaving it to function automatically.²¹ In such a context, faith is not so much personal encounter, belief-in, but it tends to be instead belief-that, an acceptance of certain more or less precisely formulated propositions.²²

²⁰"Religion, Scholarship, and the Resituation of Man," HG, pp. 130-131; C. G. Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," Civilization in Transition, trans. R.F.C. Hull, Bollingen Series 20, 2d ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 256, 262.

²¹"Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," ACC, pp. 86-87; "American Culture and Morality," HG, pp. 174-181; "Ramus and the Transit to the Modern Mind," Modern Schoolman 32 (May 1955): 301-11; "System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, p. 84.

²²"The Jinee in the Well-Wrought Urn," BW, pp. 55-57; Monroe C. Beardsley, Yale Review 52 (December 1962): 298-301, BW. Beardsley asks how you can believe in God if you do not believe that he exists. The question might well be reversed.

Electronic Culture

In electronic culture the situation is less easily characterized.²³ The multiformity and plurality which pertains does not undergird expectations of uniformity and abstract clear-and-distinctness.²⁴

Nevertheless, the dialogue between religion and secularity remains and takes new forms. In oral culture religion is rigid, all embracing, and inclined toward a confusion of object and subject, thing and person, and may thus be prone to magic and superstition.²⁵ Visual culture desacralizes nature and separates man from it, tending under certain conditions to regard religion as something replaceable by scientific positivism.²⁶ Electronic culture ranges across a spectrum which, at the one end, extends rational, technological positivism, and at the other, a romantically rooted resymbolization of nature. As men become more involved with one another through better forms of communication and transportation, the tensions between different forms become more obvious and more perilous, affecting larger and larger numbers of people.²⁷ However, if various religious and cultural

²³Ong does not develop his account of electronic culture on anywhere near the scale of his treatment of visual culture. The reasons for this might be related to the incipient character of electronic culture and its complexity. On the other hand, the sort of account of culture that he gives, including his treatment of visual culture, could only occur from such a perspective as that provided by electronic culture. This does not mean there is no treatment of contemporary culture. Ong notes that we exist in the first age which has studied itself academically. This is possible because it knows enough about past ages to distinguish itself from them. Why Talk?: A Conversation about Language with Walter J. Ong, p. 33.

²⁴PW, pp. 88-89.

²⁵"Breakthrough in Communications," HG, pp. 5-6.

²⁶PW, pp. 161-169.

²⁷"Breakthrough in Communications," HG, pp. 11-13.

narrownesses become especially dangerous, they also begin to appear anachronistic, suggesting a move toward an inevitable convergence of the human race and its many groups into a unified whole.²⁸

This global condition enhances opportunities for dialogue even if tensions are not eliminated.²⁹ Since religion is specifically concerned with dialogue, the shift into the electronic environment radically readjusts the modalities in which religion is expressed.³⁰

The gaps in cultural development which exist between different parts of the human race make the problem acute since the Christian church as a whole is engaged simultaneously with a vast diversity of cultures, circumstances, and time coordinates.³¹

The global electronic environment fosters new pressures for dialogue among all parts of the human race and these precipitate new stresses on the individual.³² An experience of depersonalization results from a breakdown of familiar ways of imagining and interpreting the world. Yet while the personal dimension suffers in some ways, Ong finds that in other ways greater

²⁸"Knowledge in Time," KFM. p. 25.

²⁹PW, pp. 101, 301.

³⁰"Religion, Scholarship, and the Resituation of Man," HG, pp. 127-145; "Mass in Ewondo," America 131 (28 September 1974): 148-51.

³¹PW, p. 11. Ong has not said much about this process in regard to other groups besides Roman Catholicism. Nevertheless it appears that a similar case could be made for other Christian groups and for non-Christian religions though it might be somewhat more difficult to trace. See below, fn. 99.

³²"Knowledge in Time," pp. 27-28; "The Barbarian Within: Outsiders Inside Society Today," BW, pp. 260-285.

personalization also occurs.³³ Most notably existential and personalist philosophies have arisen to challenge technological depersonalization.³⁴

This especially concerns religion because it highlights the two most profound concerns of Christian religion: communality and personhood. For Ong, mass society has forced the issue of personhood into the open. The high degree of organization and control in the object world can highlight the special character of human being. Personalist or existentialist philosophizing, in contrast to earlier non-personal or objectivist, essentialist philosophies of nature, proves itself especially congenial to Christian religious perspectives.³⁵ God himself, for example, can be seen less as an abstraction or as an impersonal force as he was in philosophies from Plato and Aristotle through Newton, Kant and Hegel.³⁶

The auditory synthesis of oral culture seems to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for a mature awareness of personhood. Since there is a tendency to confuse persons and objects, oral cultures fail, despite their existential propensities to actuate a truly personalized appropriation of human being. However, some exception must be allowed for the Judaeo-Christian tradition which, under the impact of God's self-revelation in

³³PW, p. 305.

³⁴"Voice as Summons for Belief: Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self," BW, p. 66.

³⁵"Gospel, Existence, and Print," Modern Language Quarterly 35 (March 1974): 70.

³⁶"The Word in Chains," HG, p. 51; "Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu," Theological Studies 7 (March 1946): 23. Ong's set against idealism lies in his epistemology and metaphysics. Natural reality, grasped in the clear-opaque ambiguity of human judgment, does not behave the way idealists would like.

history, gradually recognizes the ontological status of personhood.³⁷

Visual culture encourages a kind of objectivity which treats objects as objects, but it risks losing the person in the object.³⁸ Electronic culture seems at least able to highlight both person and object.³⁹ Though this often remains seriously deficient, Ong sees the religious-secular dialogue at work here in a positive way.⁴⁰

For Ong, technological developments are mysteriously involved in God's providential plan for the universe.⁴¹ For the human race it is more than a matter of improved means of contact between individuals and groups. Communications, whether by voice, writing, or electronics, are means by which persons can enter into one another as presences, and this is their most characteristic activity.⁴² It both expresses and grounds experience of God's own personal presence in history.⁴³

Ong sees this at work in the "death of God" theology, where a lagging visualist sensibility is unable to handle changes in the sensorium precipitated by electronic culture. He suggests that Nietzsche's madman was perhaps registering the way new organizations in the sensorium, new specializations in perception, can render man insensitive as regards older

³⁷Cooke, "The Biblical Theology of Person," pp. 83 ff.

³⁸"Nationalism and Darwin," HG, p. 96.

³⁹PW, pp. 304-308.

⁴⁰"Religion, Scholarship, and the Resituation of Man," HG, p. 134.

⁴¹"The Knowledge Explosion in the Humanities," HG, p. 51; "Ideas of Technology: Commentary," Technology and Culture, 3 (Fall 1962): 461.

⁴²"Breakthrough in Communications," HG, p. 1.

⁴³PW, pp. 308-313.

religious signs. If God is silent, perhaps men, being so visually geared, are relatively deaf.⁴⁴ The electronic world catches religion in strife as momentous as that which occurred when writing and print reorganized the sensorium.⁴⁵ The readjustment demanded is at least as powerful and even more complex.⁴⁶

Ong sees these as expressly theological concerns since theology attempts to understand the historical dialogue between God and man. Since communication lies at the heart of existential reality, the evolution of the media is religiously and theologically, as well as humanly, crucial.⁴⁷

Christianity and the Religious-Secular Dialogue

The special significance of the Word in Christian religion raises some special problems which are not encountered by other religious traditions.⁴⁸ On the one hand, the history of the Word of God, in its many senses, is identical with salvation history. The history of the human word is not, however, even though the Word of God works in and through the human word and human culture.⁴⁹

Ong suggests that Christianity has to be treated as a somewhat

⁴⁴PW, p. 16.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 17-18.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 88.

⁴⁷"Communications Media and the State of Theology," Cross Currents 19 (Fall 1969): 462-480.

⁴⁸PW, p. 10ff.

⁴⁹Review of Unfinished Man and the Imagination: Toward an Ontology and Rhetoric of Revelation, by Ray L. Hart (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), Biblica 51 (1970): 254; "The Power and Mystery of Words," St. Louis University Magazine 45 (October 1972): 6.

special case among religions.⁵⁰ In some ways it is not a religion, which, in Ong's terms, has to do with the natural man, with his origins and therefore with his past. Christianity, even more than Judaism before it, is characterized by faith commitment to a personal God who points to a freely bestowed future.⁵¹ The Word of God not only assaults the natural man, but it summons him to faith and hope constituted in interpersonal dialogue.⁵² This summons to dialogue transforms religious interest in the myth of origins to exploit a future of promise. Religion, as anchored in the past, to nature, to origins, is brought into the service of faith which is oriented beyond nature (prepersonal origin) to super-nature (personhood) which, by the very nature of interpersonal sharing, is necessarily gratuitous (grace).⁵³

Nevertheless, since grace builds on nature, one can speak of Christian religion, and, as Ong does, of a religious-secular dialogue.⁵⁴ The heart of this dialogue lies in the presence of the word in secular history and in the developments which come from it. Not only does Christian religious faith transform history through processes which ground secular

⁵⁰"Literature, Religion, and Faith": 14-16; Ong's approach is similar to that of Danielou. See Jean Danielou, "Christianity and non-Christian Religions," in T. Patrick Burke, ed., The Word in History, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), pp. 86-101.

⁵¹"Literature, Religion and Faith": 14-16; There is a good deal in common between Ong's approach and that of Pannenberg. See, for example, Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Appearance as the Arrival of the Future," New Theology No. 5. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman, eds., (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 112-129.

⁵²PW, p. 12; "Voices as Summons for Belief," BW, pp. 49-67.

⁵³"Religion, Scholarship, and the Resituation of Man," HG, 129 ff.; The New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Humanism," pp. 215_b-224_b.

⁵⁴"The Religious-Secular Dialogue," Religion in America: Original Essays on Religion in a Free Society, ed. John Cogley, (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), pp. 170-207.

developments, but secular history is the soil in which faith is planted and nourished.⁵⁵ For Ong this is a genuine dialogue and not a dualism, the latter being precluded by the incarnation of the Word of God in human history.⁵⁶

The history of religion itself is closely wedded to changes in sensorium and culture, as already indicated above. Eliade and others have suggested that religion flourishes in archaic circumstances, under what Ong identifies as auditory conditions.⁵⁷ Ong finds himself tempted to treat religion as if it were merely a product of a certain organization of the sensorium: religion, being related to the invisible, would necessarily languish under conditions of visual culture.⁵⁸

There seems to be some truth to this. Greek religion was unable to withstand the impact of literacy in the form of philosophy, and primitive religion generally has no defense against the influx of science. Religion as a quest for origins, despite its profoundly existential qualities, weathers visualist circumstances poorly except as it serves some practical purpose.⁵⁹

⁵⁵"Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision," pp. 124 ff.

⁵⁶"I should like here to consider our technological age, in only a very few of its most generalized aspects, as one of the geological epochs, that is, as something belonging to this particular time in the pattern of events which constitutes the development of the natural world. All this will be not without theological implications, for it is in this natural world, again at a certain epoch and at no other, that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who like His Father and the Holy Spirit is the One God, entered into the evolutionary pattern by becoming one of us, a true Man." "Technology and New Humanist Frontiers," FAC, p. 89.

⁵⁷Ong is concerned to explain in part the historical process of desacralization which Eliade sidesteps. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 13.

⁵⁸PW, pp. 9-10.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 176 ff.

Matters are somewhat more complex in the Judaeo-Christian religious tradition since it has survived the rise of visual culture with vitality. For Ong, this is because Christian faith is oriented to what men know about the world, not to what they do not know.⁶⁰ Hence, the more men know about the universe, the more they know about the God who created it.⁶¹ When it is true to itself, Christianity does not encourage its adherents to flee from the world and from history, but rather requires engaging them as the arena of God's creative and saving action.⁶²

Being radically historical, Christianity maintains a special interest in the culturo-sensorial circumstances of its origins.⁶³ Ong sees as providential the Incarnation's occurrence early in the literate stage of culture when the highly auditory milieu could still nourish the existential, dialogical life of faith through the Word of God, and yet, the presence and expansion of literacy could enable the founding experiences and the historicity of Jesus to be permanently recorded.⁶⁴ But its historicity is

⁶⁰"Preface," HG, p. xi; "The Challenge of Technical Excellence to the Catholic Intellect," An address to the Advanced Workshop for the improvement of Catholic Schools of Medical Technology, (St. Louis, 30 January, 1961), p.4. (Mimeographed).

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 1-8; "The Catholic Church's Interest in Knowledge and Research," Hospital Progress, 38 (June 1957): 50-51; "Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision," National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin: Report of the Proceedings and Addresses -- Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, 19-22 April 1960, 57 (August 1960): 40-41; "The Challenge of Technology," Sign, 37 (February 1958): 21-24; "American Culture and Morality," HG, pp. 178-180.

⁶²"Post Christian or Not?" HG, pp. 147-164; PW, p. 10.

⁶³"Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," Worship, 44 (October 1969): 479-482.

⁶⁴"Research and American Catholic Education," ACC, p. 93; "On Mass Media and Theology: What a Catholic University Should Do," p. 5; PW, p. 10.

also future oriented, and consequently Christianity has negotiated sweeping changes in the human sensorium and cultural setting. Spawned in the pre-dawn orality of Israelite history, it has moved through the influx of literacy and typography into the electronic age.⁶⁵ It has not remained static, but it reshaped itself to meet the demands of shifting cultural circumstances, like a leaven infused into many different types of flour.⁶⁶

The appearance of different types of social and psychological character have brought with them the emergence of different kinds of Christianity.⁶⁷ The interplay of oral-aural and literate sensitivities in the history of Christianity in particular has had profound effects on the shape and embodiment of Christian Faith.⁶⁸

One of Christianity's most powerful instruments of adaptation has been the invention and development of theology, a hybrid form of knowledge which represents an assimilation of the speculative and explanatory modes of literate culture.⁶⁹

Theology itself has a long and varied history as a voice in the ongoing dialogue between faith and reason, between the existential world of person and the scientific world of essence.⁷⁰ At times the dialogue has

⁶⁵"Let Us Pray -- But How? State of the Question," America, 115 (3 December 1966): 745-46. Ong draws attention to the problem of adjusting the language of the times to the enduring gospel and the problem of reforming liturgy. "Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy": 475-76.

⁶⁶"Knowledge in Time," pp. 35-36.

⁶⁷"The Knowledge Explosion in the Humanities," HG, p. 50.

⁶⁸PW, p. 10.

⁶⁹"Knowledge in Time," p. 37; Review of Unfinished Man and the Imagination: 253 ff.

⁷⁰"Research and American Catholic Education," ACC, p. 94.

tended to become one-sided through overtheorizing.⁷¹ At other times the theological voice has been all but excluded from the conversation. Nevertheless, history inevitably brought new theological spokesmen who endeavored to interpret the faith to their age.

The history of theology registers media effects on religious consciousness.⁷² Contemporary biblical scholarship, for example, demonstrates how the Bible itself is largely the product of an oral milieu, a written record of oral and liturgical traditions, a predicament which creates special problems in interpretation for persons with a highly visualist sensorium.⁷³ The New Testament itself points to a fundamental tension between the spirit and the letter.

The oral-visual shift surfaces in the early Church Fathers, especially among those with strongly neo-platonic ties. Medieval manuscript culture had a residually oral and polemic thought structure and affected the way theology was thought and practiced.⁷⁴ Theology maintained its association with Latin-based oralism well in the twentieth century, and thus played its own part in fostering divisiveness as well as unity.⁷⁵

Theology has played a major role in the formation of dogmatic

⁷¹"Wit and Mystery: A Revaluation in Medieval Latin Hymnody," BW, pp. 118-119.

⁷²"Communications Media and the State of Theology": 462.

⁷³"Ibid.: 465 ff.; PW, p. 21.

⁷⁴While there is residual orality in medieval manuscript culture, Ong associates it with the chirographic complex and takes some exception to McLuhan's linking it with oral culture. PW, pp. 54-55.

⁷⁵"Communications Media and the State of Theology": 474.

statements.⁷⁶ Earlier theology with its residually oral and residually polemical disposition encouraged the expression of Christian belief in formulas which could be memorized easily and carried loaded on the tip of the tongue. Today's theology tends toward more discursive, explanatory, and therefore toward more abstract, impersonal and irenic modes of expression.⁷⁷

Christianity has made more of the personalizing capacities of the auditory synthesis than have other religious traditions because of its stress on interpersonal communication with transcendent divine persons and its radical insistence on a distinction between object and person. The prophets in the Old Testament manifest their personalist concern by stressing the disjunction between man's religion, with its tendency toward idolatrous reliance on objects, and man's authentic reliance on God's Word of self-revelation. They see religion at the service of truly interpersonal dialogue, and they attack it when it interferes with that dialogue. In Christianity, God's Word establishes dialogue between men and God not only by speaking the Father, but by replacing the much less articulate human word with himself as the human response to the Father's creative and redemptive call.⁷⁸ Further, the Church, as his temporal body, makes him as Word continuously present in a manifold of ways.⁷⁹ The Church is radically

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 475.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 476-477.

⁷⁸PW, p. 13.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 318-320.

an organism of dialogue between man and God, between men and men, between men and the prepersonalized world.⁸⁰

From a Judaeo-Christian perspective, religious actuality lies in the twofold dialogue which the Christian engages in between the secular world and the world of communion established by participation in the dialogical reality of the people of God. Hence the secular world is not only a world of objects and the Church is not only an institution.⁸¹ Both are interpersonal activities ultimately ordered to the community of divine persons. In Catholic understanding this means that the Church is most herself when formally at work in the dialogical action of the Eucharist.⁸² The religious-secular dialogue lies in putting subject and object in proper perspective. Ong concludes from Judaeo-Christian historicity that nature is rightly desacralized at least to the extent that the full dignity and freedom of human being is recognized.⁸³ Man should not be subservient to the infrahuman, even though

⁸⁰"Research in dream and other analysis has revealed the fact that water, to the subconscious mind, is a symbol of death, or conversely of life, for in the material universe these two are inextricably intertwined, the generation of one thing being inevitably the corruption of another. This symbolism attaching to water is not arbitrary nor accidental. That is to say, it always arises when the human sensibility is brought into contact with the world around it. Such symbolism is evidently at its profoundest depths related to the fact that life, in its earliest forms, whether in phylogenetic evolution or in the history of a single individual, arises in some sort of fluid medium -- a fact which, by its universality, suggests that the close connection of fluid with life (and death) is itself not arbitrary, not the result of a kind of eenie-meenie-minie-mo procedure on the part of Almighty God, but intimately related to the nature of life and to existence itself." "St. Ignatius' Prison-Cage and the Existentialist Situation," BW, p. 249.

⁸¹PW, pp. 316-321.

⁸²"Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," 486-487; "Voice as Summons for Belief," BW, p. 63.

⁸³"Post Christian or Not?" HG, p. 153.; "The Challenge of Technical Excellence to the Catholic Intellect," p. 3; "American Culture and Morality," HG, pp. 174-181.

ironically the danger remains that scientific objectivity can itself depersonalize human being. Subjectivity remains opaque and recalcitrant in the face of attempts to explain it, and it is therefore easily discounted.

In Christian understanding the object world is gathered up in a new synthesis, becoming the medium in and through which subjectivity realizes itself. The Incarnation means, among other things, that materiality grounds existential self-realization. In turn, all creation is ultimately consummated in the fulfilling dialogue between God and man which constitutes human history.⁸⁴

This does not mean that the religious-secular dialogue is without problems. The world of politics, for example, is a serious area of difficulty. Literacy creates elites, both as groups of individuals and as national forces.⁸⁵ Such elitism can prove problematic for preachers of the Gospel when national purpose conflicts with religious values. This underscores the dangers inherent in such quasi-religious-doctrines as the "white man's burden" and American Manifest Destiny.⁸⁶ Provincialism and chauvinism in medieval "Christendom," and, in a reverse way, in those who speak of a "post-Christian" age, suppose that the apotheosis of Christianity

⁸⁴"The Reaches of History," Commonweal 68 (15 August 1958): 487-90; "The Challenge of Technical Excellence to the Catholic Intellect," p. 2.

⁸⁵"The Reaches of History": 487-490. Fogarty finds Ong too hard on the politico-religious aspect of the dialogue. While it is true that Ong does not focus on the political realm primarily, it is not that he discounts it but rather that other areas, e.g. education, present themselves as more vital. Michael Fogarty, Life of the Spirit 14 (January 1960): 330-31, ACC. We tend to agree with McDonnell that Ong does in religious-cultural terms what John Courtney Murray did in the religio-political. Thomas P. McDonnell, Catholic World, 196 (December 1962): 189-190, BW.

⁸⁶"That American Way," America 100 (22 November 1958): 238-41.

lay in Europe in one period or another.⁸⁷ Ong finds such talk pretentious and wrongheaded in overlooking contributions by non-European peoples. Electronic globalism makes such attitudes anachronistic and odious.

The vagaries of religion under different conditions of the sensorium is a critical area for study since it helps point up areas of tension in the religious-secular dialogue.⁸⁸ From the secular side, it can help the secular project to retain its autonomy.⁸⁹ From the religious side, it can not only help the religious imagination to preserve its autonomy, but it can prevent Christians from identifying the Gospel with any particular culture or cultural stage.⁹⁰ Dialogue is not abstract but is an existential tension which works itself out in the lives of individual persons,⁹¹ and in the last analysis, Ong understands human life as inescapably dialectical and dialogic. Differing cultural circumstances do alter the understanding of that dialogue, but it remains even if its quality may vary.⁹²

Cultural Change and Divided Christianity

The divisions within Christian history show how tight is the relationship between the understanding and practicing of the faith and the state

⁸⁷"Post-Christian or Not?" HG, pp. 147-164; "Religious Secular Dialogue in a Pluralist Society," ACC, pp. 30-55.

⁸⁸"Let Us Pray -- But How? State of the Question": 745-746.

⁸⁹William F. Lynch, Christ and Prometheus (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), p. 37 ff. This way of putting the matter comes from Lynch. We suggest that Ong's approach substantially can be characterized this way though he does not say it himself.

⁹⁰"Post Christian or Not?" HG, pp. 147-164; "American Culture and Morality," HG, pp. 164-188.

⁹¹"Reporting Providence," Commonweal 45 (24 January 1947): 367-369.

⁹²"Let Us Pray -- But How? State of the Question": 746. The past must be incorporated into the present even if it entails some repentance in the process.

of the communications media.⁹³ Early theological expressions, for example, were wedded to the oral, rhetorical habits of manuscript culture and as a consequence they shared heavily in the polemical stance which persisted well into the print era and beyond.⁹⁴

The Reformation and Counter Reformation in large part represent the religious aspect of adjustments demanded by the great divide between oral and visual-literate cultures.⁹⁵ In keeping with alterations in human sensitivity, these adjustments surfaced in many ways.⁹⁶ Ong draws attention to attitudes toward the relative roles of Scripture and tradition, sacraments, preaching, authority, and the feminine as typical.⁹⁷

In general, Ong sees Protestantism as the adaptation of Christianity to heightened literate, bourgeois, commercial, individualist, and nationalist-vernacular orientations precipitated by the Gutenberg era.⁹⁸ Catholicism

⁹³"Père Cossart, du Monstier, and Ramus' Protestantism in the Light of a New Manuscript," Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu (Rome), 24, (January-June 1955): 140-164; "American Culture and Morality," pp. 171-174.

⁹⁴"Communications Media and the State of Theology": 474.

⁹⁵The New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), s.v. "Humanism," p. 223; PW, pp. 262-295. Ramus became a Protestant which made him suspect in France. Ramism as a whole seems to have flourished more in Protestant countries such as Germany where the impact of print-fostered visualism was most keenly felt. Ong treats many of the aspects of this in RM.

⁹⁶Ong shows this for example in morality, see "American Culture and Morality," pp. 164-8.

⁹⁷PW, pp. 262-286.

⁹⁸Review of The Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches by Irvin G. Wyllie, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954), Social Order 5 (March 1953): 129; Review of The Merchant of Prato: Francesco di Marco Datini, 1335-1410 by Iris Origo (New York: Knopf, 1957) Manuscripta 2 (July 1958): 108; Datini shows that examples of this certainly appear before the Reformation. "Philosophical Sociology": 141; Ong approvingly quotes Rosenstock-Huessy to the effect that the Reformation did

remained closer to oral sensitivities than Protestantism, though it too made adaptations to the literate-visual thrust.⁹⁹ In contrast to Protestant emphasis on sola scriptura, Catholicism stressed the role of communal tradition, even if there was a tendency to view tradition as though it were a written document.¹⁰⁰ Widespread emphasis on Scripture in the first place, required the presence of mass-produced copies, in the vernacular, conditions not possible before the Gutenberg era.

The reformers showed a deep-seated aversion to the sacramental economies which smacked of undisciplined materiality.¹⁰¹ Also since sacraments are essentially communal and traditional, they tend to be anti-individualist on two counts. For the reformer they were redolent of magic and superstition, distractions from moral discipline, from conquering the world and oneself by keeping materiality and bodiliness at arm's length.¹⁰²

not make the laity into priests but into theologians. The death-of-God theologians may confirm this insofar as they no longer see theology at the service of the Church. See John Charles Cooper, The Roots of the Radical Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 148-149.

⁹⁹"Communications Media and the State of Theology": 475. In his The Religions of Man (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), Huston Smith has suggested parallels between the fragmentation of Christianity in the Reformation and the fragmentation of Hinduism by Buddhism. He suggests that Buddhism is a kind of oriental Protestantism (p. 101), and he compares the Buddha to Martin Luther in his Scriptural and vernacular preoccupations (p. 107). He also sees similarities between Buddha and Benjamin Franklin in their stress on training for life (p. 115). Like Protestantism, Buddhism is suspicious of material being, and it has evidenced a similar tendency to splinter: "Buddha dies, and before the century is out the seeds of schism have been sown and are beginning to germinate," (p. 132). It may be that literate iconoclasm, by discrediting the symbols of integration, necessarily leads to fragmentation.

¹⁰⁰"Communications Media and the State of Theology": 468, 474.

¹⁰¹"The Lady and the Issue," HG, pp. 188-202.

¹⁰²Benjamin Franklin, The Autobiography: In the Form of a Journal of his Son William (Mount Vernon, New York: Peter Pauper Press, no date given), p. 104. See also, David Bakan, The Duality of Human Existence (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), pp. 21 ff., where he gives a detailed

Similar circumstances pertain in regard to authority. The typographic state of mind preferred the relatively fixed and individually manageable medium of the printed word to the seemingly more arbitrary demands of personal authority embodied in churchmen. The latter raised the spectre of aristocratic, oral and tradition-bound prerogatives which were odious to the burgeoning, liberty-minded, bourgeois commercial class. The concrete manifestations of these processes were complex, but, for Ong, central tendencies are unmistakable.

Ong also illustrates the shift in sensitivities behind the Catholic-Protestant split in terms of the symbolization of devotion to the Blessed Virgin.¹⁰³ Here the aversion of visual culture to everything resonating traditional submissiveness to Mother Earth and Mother Church surfaces as part of its discomfort with sacraments,¹⁰⁴ blood-ties and prerogatives, communal social arrangements.¹⁰⁵ In short everything which witnesses to materiality in human existence, of which the feminine is the archetypal symbol, becomes suspect.¹⁰⁶

account of the relationship between Newtonian and Calvinistic world views from a psycho-historical perspective and the individualistic tendencies which are associated with them; also, see William H. Marnell, Man-Made Morals: Four Philosophies that Shaped America (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 137-170. Here, one can find an interesting treatment of the founding fathers of the United States which is quite congenial with the perspectives here described in connection with Franklin and Jefferson.

¹⁰³"The Lady and the Issue," HG, pp. 188-202.

¹⁰⁴See for example, "'I See What You Say': Sense Analogues for Intellect": 41; Review of The Wars of Truth by Herschel Baker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), Social Order 3 (March 1953): 138.

¹⁰⁵"Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu," Theological Studies 7 (March 1946): 12 ff.

¹⁰⁶"The Lady and the Issue," p. 192.

The puritan sensitivity manifests characteristics of what Neumann calls the slaying-of-the-mother stage of psycho-sexual development,¹⁰⁷ and Ong suggests that it thus serves as a useful index for the degree of separation between Catholicism and the various Protestant sects.¹⁰⁸ Ultimately, he finds the anti-Marian posture anti-incarnational, as are discomfort with belief in the real body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, the desacramentalizing of marriage, and a generally negative attitude toward sexuality.¹⁰⁹ The puritan flees from and seeks to repress the feminine. This flight persists today in some aspects of contemporary feminist movements and in attacks on the maternal role of communal church life.¹¹⁰

American Catholicism

The phenomenon of American Catholicism in some ways serves Ong as a kind of laboratory for what happens to religion and Christianity under conditions of massive cultural change.

One thing that makes American Catholicism an especially interesting example of the Christianity-culture dialectic is the fact that it has been

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 195. Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), Bollingen Series 42, pp. 152-169.

¹⁰⁸ "Nationalism and Darwin," HG, p. 92; Martin Marty, Christian Century 84 (8 February 1967): 177, (HG). Marty finds Ong's reasons for supporting the place of Mary to be a bad case for a good cause. For a Methodist treatment of the issue which seems in accord with Ong's assessment, see Geoffrey Wainwright, "Mary in Relation to Methodism," One in Christ, (1975): 121-144.

¹⁰⁹ "The Lady and the Issue," HG, pp. 194 ff.

¹¹⁰ "Agonistic Structures in Academia: Past to Present," Interchange 5 (1974): 1-2.

overwhelmingly populated by tradition-directed migrants¹¹¹ from residually oral circumstances who took up residence in a culture which has been in many ways the apotheosis of visual-literate culture, its sensitivities, values and expectations. Herein lies much of both the conflict and congeniality which has characterized the interplay between Catholicism and Protestantism in the United States. Today this is complicated by the entrance en masse of American culture into the electronic age of other-directedness and secondary orality.

Typically, the American Catholic has been caught in a nostalgia for his past, rooted in a symbolization of medieval or renaissance Catholicism where he imagines his origins, the very brand of Catholicism which signals, for the American Protestant mind, everything odious. At the same time, passage to America effectively meant a rejection of one's European past and an eager intention to participate to the fullest in the promise of the American dream. This ambiguity has produced a peculiar variety of Catholicism, paradoxical to its core, and exhibiting a certain uneasy resolution by way of a split between theory and practice.¹¹²

Constrained by both religious and cultural forces to maintain his attachment to a frozen symbolization of his European past, the American Catholic has ranked among the world's most conservative. Of course, he has often been aided and abetted, for cultural and religious reasons, by his

¹¹¹Review of What Europe Thinks of America by a Panel of Influential Europeans (New York: John Day, 1953), Social Order 4 (April 1954): 182.

¹¹²"Contrasts in Catholicism," FAC, pp. 35-51. O'Dea asserts that Ong "obviously does not understand" Riesman's tradition-directed, inner-directed, other-directed sequence of social character types. He does not elaborate. This reader finds Ong's interpretation of Riesman, whom he has read long before reading Ong, quite congenial. See, Thomas O'Dea, Thought 32 (September 1957): 476-477, (FAC).

Protestant American brethren who for somewhat different reasons have had a need to symbolize both Europe and the American Catholic Church in similarly static ways.¹¹³ Lacking any reflective awareness of factors in American culture which did not fit into the symbolization, American Catholics forged on the practical level kinds of adaptation which produced a peculiarly American and, in many ways, a progressive form of Catholicism.¹¹⁴

This strange conservative-progressive practicality has many manifestations.¹¹⁵ It can be seen occasionally in a strange anti-secular hyper-Americanism. It is certainly evident in American Catholic education, from elementary grades to graduate and professional schools. Yet it is probably nowhere more apparent than in what Ong calls the "apostolate of the business world".¹¹⁶

Outside the United States the Church has tended to carry on its dialogue with the secular order through the medium of the state. In America, where such dealings were proscribed, the Church entered the world through the bourgeois, commercial world which characteristically centers literate-visual culture.¹¹⁷ This has tended to be unconscious and spontaneous, with-

¹¹³"The Renaissance Myth and the American Catholic Mind," FAC, 52-85.

¹¹⁴"Literature and Cultural Initiative," America 73 (18 August 1945): 396-97, and 73 (25 August 1945): 416-17.

¹¹⁵"The Intellectual Frontier," in Louis J. Putz, ed., The Catholic Church, U.S.A., (Chicago: Fides, 1956), pp. 394-415. Ong finds a perceptive critique of American Catholic anti-intellectualism. See also his Review of The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America by Robert D. Cross (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), Thought 33 (Summer 1958), 296-98.

¹¹⁶Review of The Catholic Dimension in Higher Education by Justus George Lawler (Westminster, Maryland, Newman, 1959), Theological Studies 21 (June 1960): 320-321; "An Apostolate of the Business World," FAC, pp. 24-34.

¹¹⁷Review of The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture with

out any theoretical founding in the minds of its practitioners, and free of the ideological focuses which make Catholicism in the United States suspect in the first place. The marketplace tends to subdue ideological tensions in favor of a pragmatic sort of getting-along despite overt or covert differences.

From its commerce with the business world, the American Catholic Church learned much of what now characterizes it as distinctive among Catholic communities. It shows, on a practical and unreflective level, in an optimism, a service orientation, and a Yankee know-how approach to secular affairs and religious life as well.¹¹⁸ Like barbarians generally, American Catholics have striven to do better than their "Greek", non-Catholic neighbors the very things which make them most different in the first place.

As American society enters the electronic age, the American Catholic Church is beset with adjusting to a host of confusing and paradoxical changes.¹¹⁹ In some ways the essentially communal, tradition-oriented Catholic community has found it relatively easier to slip into the socially conscious character fostered by secondary orality than more inner-directed Protestants. In other ways, notably in its lack of an indigenous theological

Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene by Ernest W. McDonnell (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954), The Historical Bulletin 34 (November 1955): 38. Ong notes the scandal of the Church's failure in the Middle Ages to mobilize the psychological potential of the Beguines, a potential which later was exploited in Protestantism.

¹¹⁸"Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision," National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin: Report of the Proceedings and Addresses--Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois 19-22 April 1960, 57 (August 1960): 37.

¹¹⁹"American Catholicism and America," Thought 27 (Winter 1952-53): 521-541.

focus on itself, it has found it difficult to come to terms theoretically with what is happening, while adapting practically.

Nevertheless, Ong sees the response which the American Church has made to new environmental and cultural demands awkward and inconsistent, but promising to remain a fruitful instance of religio-cultural dialogue.

Conclusion

For Ong religion is inseparable from culture, and its shape varies according to the cultural context in which it operates. Ong is primarily concerned with Judaeo-Christian religion which he sees as especially religion of the Word. This means that they are characterized by faith, by an historically rooted inter-personal dialogue oriented to the future as opposed to other religions which are wedded to nature and therefore to origins, the past.

In oral culture, religion suffers from human subservience to the infrahuman world of myth and nature cycle. Visual culture frees religion in some way but also tends to dampen its existentiality by freezing it into doctrinal rigidity and ideological forms. The synthetic character of the electronic environment shows promise for religion by challenging the fiction of isolated human self-sufficiency and by fostering a renewed sense of mystery.

Ong sees it as providential that Christianity appeared on the watershed of oral and literate phases of history. This allowed it to preserve existentiality and to achieve a speculative habit of mind and a permanence in its originating experience of the Word of God become flesh in the historical man Jesus, who is the living dialogue between God and man. Nevertheless, literacy has also generated problematic side effects by fragmenting

Christianity along the same national lines created by the rise of the printed vernaculars which unseated learned Latin as the only literate tongue. Print fostered concern for objectivity, clarity and distinctness, coincided with a suspicion of the material, maternal, symbolic, oral and personalist components of created actuality in favor of idea, principle, method and system in religious consciousness as elsewhere. Electronic secondary orality and globalism is reintroducing dialogue as a force for ecumenical cooperation to coincide with the planetization of man, the convergence of the human race as a unit.

If religion cannot escape culture, it is nevertheless not identical with it. Rather, religion, at least Judaeo-Christian religion; exists in creative tension with culture which should foster authentic personhood and truly humanizing community. Electronic culture, to a vastly greater degree than either primary oral or literate-visual cultures before it, encourages a religious-secular dialogue. Theology, a major instrument of religious adaptation in visual culture, now takes on new forms to facilitate the dialogue with secularity, on the one side, and the three divine persons, on the other. This two-fold dialogue establishes the perimeters which characterize Christian existence as an existence on the frontiers of the struggle for human actualization.

Ong's extensive studies of American Catholicism show it to be a kind of frontier Christianity caught up in a host of inconsistencies and paradoxes. As a vital Christian form in someways, it has tended to lack effective theoretical self-understanding. It thought of itself as an extension of medieval Europe, a symbolization which made it fearsome for non-Catholic Americans. But in its practical way it established a dialogue

with the bourgeois commercial world, an apostolate of the business world, which allowed it to adapt to American culture. Ong sees American Catholicism as a young, robust and yet somewhat immature form which is, as it comes of age in the electronic, global world, uniquely equipped to make major significant contributions to the religious-secular dialogue in the future.

PART II. ASSESSMENT

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUNDS

I hit St. Louis University when St. Louis Thomism rose to its first crest, quite vigorously historical and structurally sensitive in the hands of the good teachers. What I learned studying philosophy at St. Louis University made my work on Ramism possible and has given me a permanent edge over many colleagues around the world. The advantage of the kind of philosophical training we were given was that if you got it, if you studied it, you knew the central intellectual tradition of all Western culture.¹

Introduction

Articulating the backgrounds to Walter Ong's thought is not an easy matter. His encyclopedic approach to the intellectual life, evidenced by the bibliography of his works, makes it fruitless to attempt an identification of everything that has affected his thought.²

In presenting his intellectual heritage, attention will focus on those areas which, on the basis of evidence in his writings, bear most fundamentally on the themes of this study. These include most especially his metaphysical tradition, including his philosophy of history and evolution, his religious tradition in terms of the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, and his association with the literary tradition of the new criticism.

¹George Riemer, The New Jesuits (Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), p. 184.

²PW, pp. 326-344.

Metaphysics

Ong's personal history reveals his abiding interest in communications on many levels. It includes his interest in media, in language, and in education, as a process of communications. All of these converge, however, in his particularly personalistic metaphysics which in turn is rooted in his Christian faith.

In the context of theology, which is my over-arching or pervasive concern, I am not sure that communication is the only center of my thinking. In one way it is, but in another way my concern lodges in statements of a metaphysical nature (in something like the more or less matured classically rooted sense of metaphysics, knowledge of existence itself). In one way, my concern with such statements and my concern with communication are convertible with personalism. Many if not all of these statements of a metaphysical nature which concern me are dialectically paired, in actuality or by implication.³

The fact that Ong finds his personalism and his metaphysics closely related to his own experience of faith and the way that was understood at St. Louis University when he was in studies there, highlights his approval of Claude Tresmontant's Christian Metaphysics for which he wrote a highly laudatory preface.⁴

Tresmontant, a respected interpreter of Teilhard de Chardin, with whom Ong also has sympathies, attempts to show by means of biblical, patristic and conciliar sources that Christianity is not compatible with just any metaphysics.⁵ He contends that there is a definite metaphysics

³"Letter," p. 5; "Communications as a Field of Study," mimeographed copy of revised text of a talk at the Conference of Academic Administrators of the Missouri Province of the Society, 22 February 1969, St. Louis, Missouri.

⁴Claude Tresmontant, Christian Metaphysics, trans. Gerard Slevin, preface by Walter J. Ong, S.J., (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), pp. 7-11; "Personalism and the Wilderness," BW, p. 239.

⁵Tresmontant, Christian Metaphysics, p. 9.

implied in this tradition, that the Church has selected certain metaphysical positions over others.

Ong identifies himself wholeheartedly with Tresmontant on this point, affirming that just as there is a Newtonian or an Einsteinian physics, there is a Christian metaphysics.⁶ This does not imply a closed system, but rather a history of interaction between faith and natural understanding, worked out by Christians, under the influence of grace, even as they drew on non-Christian sources.

Ong sees this as indicative of the special position which the "natural" world has within Christian perspectives.⁷ Catholic faith in particular is not set off against natural understanding but works through it in a way often embarrassing for other religious traditions.⁸ As a consequence, time and evolution prove themselves uniquely congenial with Christianity as does the special dignity of the human person.⁹

Christian tradition has tended to exalt created human nature even to the point of ascribing to it a destiny of divinization.¹⁰ As creation is free, the supernatural destiny offered to men is also free, and it includes human beings as integral organisms and not as disembodied souls.

The only destiny for man, divinization, cannot be imposed.¹¹ It must come as a consequence of one's own created freedom and reason even if these depend on divine creativity and grace.

⁶Ibid., p. 8 (Ong); p. 19 (Tresmontant).

⁷This is not uncommon among humanists as can be seen in Ong's comments about Marsilio Ficino. The New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), s.v., "Humanism," p. 218.

⁸Tresmontant, Christian Metaphysics, p. 10.

⁹Ibid., pp. 119-140. ¹⁰Ibid., p. 106. ¹¹Ibid., p. 108.

Human evil is not fated or compelled by necessity.¹² Insofar as the created world is permeated by sin, divinization does imply a break with the forces of destruction, with the values of the world, the tribe, the nation, the social class.¹³ Still it is a break on behalf of creation and not an abandonment of it.

Christianity's concern for the supernatural cannot be arbitrary and set against natural understanding.¹⁴ It must find in creation preparations, predispositions, anticipations which are knowable and analyzable in their own right.¹⁵ Even if creation is not consubstantial with God, it nonetheless manifests him. Reason and science cannot be opposed in revelation by the same God. Faith is free and reasonable and cannot intrude on created reality.

Christian faith cannot be a leap into the absurd or a kind of fideism.¹⁶ Theology, philosophy, and the other sciences have value in their own right as co-workers with faith, not as its enemies, even if revelation is a gift and reason is misoriented by sin. Such a metaphysic encourages its proponents to a lively interest in the world and all its facets, as Ong has insisted.¹⁷

Ong is obviously not original in espousing this metaphysic. Rather, here as elsewhere, he thinks with a tradition. It is an optimistic metaphysic, and it accounts in part for the confidence and optimism of Ong's work, despite the fact that this optimism, like Teilhard's, often

¹²Ibid., pp. 53-55. ¹³Ibid., p. 11. ¹⁴Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁵Ibid. ¹⁶Ibid., pp. 126-127.

¹⁷"The Catholic Church's Interest in Knowledge and Research," Hospital Progress 38 (June 1957): 50-51, 102, 106; Tresmontant, Christian Metaphysics, pp. 119-140.

occasions vigorous disavowals from those who think out of some other metaphysics.

Such a metaphysic is also a metaphysic of history, and for Ong, knowing past history is the sine qua non for knowing the present as well as for planning the future. Knowing how things really were gives one perspective on the present and makes apparent the real possibilities for future history since whatever the future is it will be an extension of the past and the present.

Christian metaphysics as here characterized is further a metaphysics of person and communication, of interpersonal dialogue. Even the absolute is no distant monad, whether self or non-self, but for the Christian it is a "they," a single absolute of three persons in eternal dialogic self-communication, Father, Son, and Spirit. Further, these persons call human persons into dialogue with themselves. From creation to the call of Abraham and Moses, even in the semimythical communion between God and Adam and Eve, or through the prophets, Hebrew authors find it impossible to conceive of God except through the address of his Word. In the Incarnation that Word enters the community of men to speak with them, sending his Spirit to speak himself and his Father further in human hearts.

Ong and St. Louis Thomism

Ong's metaphysics was implicit in his religious education from the early days, nurtured by his studies in philosophy and theology in the Society of Jesus and later by his association with Teilhard.¹⁸ In

¹⁸"I Remember Père Teilhard," The Jesuit Bulletin 46 (February 1967): 6-7, 17-18.

particular his approach was shaped by his association with St. Louis Thomism in the early forties.¹⁹

Ong's graduate philosophical training had two aspects. The first part was in the Missouri Province Jesuit philosophate. The second was while he was studying for his Master's in English. Around this time, 1938-41, philosophy at St. Louis University began to shift from a post-Restoration Suarezianism to what has been styled St. Louis Thomism.²⁰ This Suarezianism, a mixture of Suarezian philosophical style, a peculiar Kantianism and some nominalism, though none of these programmatically, was perhaps as much an educational style as a content. With some exception allowed for the more textually-oriented courses in natural theology and the texts of St. Thomas taught by Fr. John O'Brien, S.J., this style embodied a kind of "conclusion philosophy," certain theses with proofs, objections, and answers.²¹

Ong was able to find richness here which served him well later, even though he perceived that the older philosophical approach had a somewhat narrow idea of philosophy's horizons.²²

The Jesuit philosophate gave him a grounding in thought with roots deep in the Renaissance. Suarez (1548-1617) was a contemporary of Peter Ramus (1515-1572), and both lived in a milieu shaped in part by

¹⁹"Letter," pp. 5-6.

²⁰Frederick Copleston, S.J., A History of Philosophy (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1953), 3 (pt.2), pp. 173-228; PW, pp. 211-212; Bernard J. Muller-Thym, "Of History as a Calculus Whose Term is Science," Modern Schoolman 19 (March 1942): 41.

²¹The substance of this characterization of the Jesuit philosophy program during this time comes in part from Edward L. Maginnis, S.J., Professor of Religious Studies at Regis College, Denver, Colorado.

²²Riemer, The New Jesuits, pp. 171-172.

earlier nominalism and scholasticism, both preoccupied with the problem of knowledge, language, and the communication of knowledge. Coupled with his classical background, this philosophical base facilitated Ong's later studies on Ramus and other late medieval and renaissance topics.²³

The St. Louis Thomist aspect of his formal philosophy training was a form of existential Thomism shaped to some extent by the thought of Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson.²⁴ It was complemented by a climate of intensive research into the history of rhetoric and dialectic which prevailed in a number of Midwestern universities at that time, St. Louis University among them.²⁵ This concern for rhetoric included a philosophical inquiry into the noetic and sensory aspects of knowledge. As the more existential St. Louis Thomism gradually won out over the older Suarezianism, it brought with it considerable attention to relationships between knowledge and sensory perception.

An especially important figure here was Dr. Bernard J. Muller-Thym. Muller-Thym, who graduated from Rockhurst College three years before Ong, had done his philosophy Master's at St. Louis along with the Jesuit scholastics, moving to the University of Toronto for his doctorate.²⁶

²³Review of The Degrees of Knowledge by Jacques Maritain (New York: Scribners, 1959), Saturday Review 42 (August 1959): 26; Some of Ong's reflections on cultural elements in Maritain and clues to Ong's intuitive approach. Maritain stresses the diversity of knowledges as does Muller-Thym.

²⁴Ong's earlier writings commonly mention Maritain and Gilson either in the text or in footnotes. See, for example, "The Province of Rhetoric and Poetic," Modern Schoolman 19 (January 1942): 26, fn. 11.

²⁵Review of The Interior Landscape: The Literary Criticism of Marshall McLuhan 1943-1962. Selected, compiled, and edited by Eugene McNamara (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1969), Criticism 12 (Summer 1970): 249; "The Province of Rhetoric and Poetic": 26, fn. 11.

²⁶Review of The Interior Landscape: The Literary Criticism of Marshall McLuhan 1943-1962: 244-51.

He wrote a dissertation on Meister Eckhardt, which was promptly published with an introduction by Gilson. An accomplished violinist as well as philosopher, he was deeply interested in the relation between the philosophical aspects of aesthetics and the psychology of sensation, and he had an abiding concern for the historical dimensions of the problem of knowledge.²⁷

Ong found exemplified in Muller-Thym an informed, non-pietistic approach to philosophy along with an historically, experientially, and experimentally grounded speculative approach to metaphysics and noetics.²⁸ These factors made it especially suited for dialogue with new approaches to literary criticism.²⁹

An illustration of St. Louis Thomism's concern for the inter-relatedness of history, metaphysics, and noetics can be found in Muller-Thym's approach to history, which he calls "a calculus whose term is science."³⁰ That is, although history as a discipline may employ scientific methods, the unavoidable indeterminacy of historical process means that it cannot reach term or completion in the way sciences of the object world such as physics can.

Muller-Thym identifies special connections between history and metaphysics. The latter is concerned with the act of existence, and

²⁷Review of The Interior Landscape: 249.

²⁸"Letter," p. 6.

²⁹"The Meaning of the 'New Criticism'," William S. Knickerbocker, ed., Twentieth Century English, (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946), pp. 344-370.

³⁰Muller-Thym, "Of History as a Calculus ": 42; "The Province of Rhetoric and Poetic": 25. Note footnotes.

it can never be reduced to essence. The indeterminacy of the temporal order which makes history possible is an interplay between necessity and contingency and constitutes an openness to history which is a specifically Judaeo-Christian contribution to metaphysical thinking. Within these perspectives human freedom, though limited, is real and no final system of history is possible.³¹

If Ong is theologically and philosophically a Thomist, St. Louis Thomism represents one of the peculiar twists which his own version of it takes. Of course Thomism itself is a diverse phenomenon, ranging across a spectrum from the most rigid and unimaginative essentialism to the profound and creative Thomism of Rahner, Lonergan, Schillebeeckx, each distinctive in its own right. There is, too, the earlier neo-Thomism of Gilson and Maritain and the still earlier Blondel and Marèchal who sowed the seeds that brought Thomism into the twentieth century. There is even a certain irreducible Thomism in the thought of Pere Teilhard despite or perhaps even because of his orientation toward the physical sciences in things philosophical.

These examples are obviously not representative of all the twists which Thomism has taken in the past and the present, but they do bear witness to the adaptability and elasticity with which it can be practiced. As we have indicated, Ong comes to it, when he makes it explicit in his writings, through the Maritain-Gilson branch, or at least through the St. Louis version of that. He never abandons his basic commitment to Thomist hylomorphic epistemology and metaphysics even though he develops along directions of his own, and the use of its characteristic language is less obvious in his later writing than it was earlier. Too, his

³¹Muller-Thym, "Of History as a Calculus ": 76.

familiarity with other exponents of Thomism makes it impossible to draw hard and fast lines here. What is of significance is the fact that St. Louis Thomism helped him to wed concerns about metaphysics, communications, aesthetics, and history with the sensitivities of the new criticism in a uniquely fruitful way.

Ong and Teilhard

There is no programmatic similitude between Ong's thought and Teilhard's, though Ong's references to Teilhard demonstrate the congeniality between them.³² Despite their innovations, these two men share a common heritage and speak for a common tradition in various ways. Both are not only Christian and Catholic but Jesuit as well.

There are nevertheless important differences.³³ If both Ong and Teilhard are fundamentally evolutionary in their focus and interest, Ong is not a natural scientist. Despite his lively familiarity with things scientific, from physics and chemistry to the social and human sciences, he would not write The Phenomenon of Man. The thought of these two men is as different as is that book from The Presence of the Word.³⁴ Teilhard

³²"Religious-Secular Dialogue in a Pluralist Society," ACC, p. 34; "Research and American Catholic Education," ACC, p. 113; "Voice as Summons for Belief: Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self," BW, p. 49; "Personalism and the Wilderness," BW, pp. 239-240; "The Word in Chains," HG, p. 50; "Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," HG, p. 75; "Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision," HG, pp. 99, 113, 126; "Religion, Scholarship and the Resituation of Man," HG, pp. 144-145; PW, pp. 120, 179, 260; "Crisis and Understanding in the Humanities," RRT, pp. 332, 334. These are not all of the references to Teilhard, but they are representative.

³³Guillot makes a point of this: "A friend of both Teilhard de Chardin and McLuhan, he is no follower, but an independent developer of evolutionary and communications theory." Lawrence Guillot, "Man as a Venture in Knowledge," Kansas City Star 21 March 1968, p. 2D, (KFM). See also Fergus Kerr, New Blackfriars 10 (14 March 1968): 497, (PW).

³⁴For Teilhard the socio-cultural is the continuation of evolution as an extension of the law of complexity-consciousness. Perhaps behind

worked through the natural sciences toward cultural evolution, disavowing, in The Phenomenon of Man at least, any claim to being a philosopher or a theologian.³⁵ Ong, on the other hand, is self-consciously historian, philosopher, theologian, as well as literary critic and litterateur.³⁶

If Teilhard found himself at home in the United States, Ong is very much the Francophile, by interest, disposition, and training. Ong's metaphysics and philosophy of history made him, as a young Jesuit scholar in France, particularly receptive to having his horizons further fleshed out by this distinguished senior Jesuit scholar just five months younger than his own father.³⁷

Both Ong and Teilhard witness to a deeply imbued spirituality flowing from the Society of Jesus. Involved in this spirituality, in contrast to certain monastic spiritualities, is a quality of worldliness, of being involved in secular affairs and taking them seriously.³⁸

the apparent diversity between the two books, there is real unity. After the appearance of man, evolution becomes history, and Ong's purpose in charting structuring forces is not alien to Teilhard's but rather extends it. Still the procedure required by such investigations is pari passu more complex.

³⁵ Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man, trans. Bernard Wall, (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 29.

³⁶ See quote at the beginning of Chapter IV.

³⁷ "I Remember Père Teilhard," 6-7, 17-18. Drury believes, at least on account of his reading of ACC, that Ong sold out to Teilhard and implicitly to a "scholarly prejudice" which reduces history to cosmology and remains "incorrigibly anthropocentric." It is difficult to understand Christianity as not anthropocentric if one is to make any sense of the Incarnation. Fr. Drury's critique seems to be based on an unscholarly prejudice. George Drury, Critic, 18 (August-September 1959): 62-63, (ACC). For an opposite assessment see Richard Gilman, Jubilee, 7 (July 1959): 47, (ACC). Stahmer says that on first reading one is tempted to overestimate Teilhard's influence, but Ong is clearly independent in his use of Teilhard. Yet Ong remains methodologically incarnational. Harold Stahmer, Social Order 13 (June 1963): 36-37, (BW).

³⁸ Cooper puts Teilhard in the company of radical theologians for this reason. This aspect of Jesuitness has always been suspect. John

Further, in both Teilhard and Ong, there is something radically paleological and archeological about worldliness.³⁹ Partly, it relates to a vision of history and to a certain metaphysics of continuity: what has happened in the world has an inevitable bearing on what is happening and what can and will happen.⁴⁰

Ong sees present-day philosophy as moving progressively inward, more focused on interiority, as exemplified in the personalist and anthropological philosophies of Marcel, Jaspers, Heidegger, and others. He remarks that Teilhard moved even further than these by making the focus of the entire evolutionary process, cosmic, organic, and historical, the personal, interior consciousness of man.⁴¹

Teilhard's personalism is especially valuable for Ong because it keeps the human person in an historical and cosmic perspective in a way that existentialism often fails to do: man appears only after an imponderably long period of impersonal evolution.⁴² The infrapersonal and the personal, nature and history, remain in the same world process.⁴³

Charles Cooper, The Roots of the Radical Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952), pp. 155-157.

³⁹Review of Saint Ignatius' Idea of Jesuit University: A Study in the History of Catholic Education by George E. Ganss, S.J., (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1954) The Classical Bulletin 31 (April 1955): 70.

⁴⁰"The Knowledge Explosion in the Humanities," HG, p. 44.

⁴¹"Religion, Scholarship, and the Resituation of Man," HG, p. 144; "Knowledge in Time," Knowledge and the Future of Man (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), pp. 21-22; "New Definitions in the Humanities: The Humanities in a Technological Culture," PMLA 77 (May 1962): 86.

⁴²"Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," HG, pp. 76-78; "Personalism and the Wilderness," BW, pp. 239-246.

⁴³Thomas O'Dea, Catholic World, 190 (October 1959): 61, (ACC). O'Dea notes that Ong gives explicit credit to Teilhard. Sr. Richard Marie, O.S.V., Catholic Educational Review, 59 (September 1961): 422-423,

This creates a vision of the past which is open to a real future, and like Teilhard, Ong attempts "to discover and state where the cosmic processes are tending, especially now that they are concentrated in the mind of man."⁴⁴ Here a convergence between ontology, noetics, history, and communications is inevitable. As Teilhard's cosmology demonstrates, the human person is not an intrusion but rather the hermeneutical key to cosmic history par excellence.⁴⁵

Further, the universe is not only a personal and personalizing universe, but it tends to a personal end.⁴⁶ Teilhard's work was in a radical way the search for an issue, a "way out," not only for man but for the whole cosmos which man represents and expresses.⁴⁷ Evolution cannot be a blind alley.⁴⁸ It will terminate in personhood, in super-personalization. Ultimately it converges on Point Omega, on the Cosmic Christ who personally draws the entire edifice of creation into union with himself.⁴⁹ Such perspectives do characterize Teilhard's thought,

(DVCP); "Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," DVCP, p. 148: "Against the backdrop of the infrahuman universe which has given him birth, man remains more impressive than the rest of this universe. For he, as nothing before him, really includes it all. It comes to life and fruition in him."

⁴⁴"The Knowledge Explosion in the Humanities," HG, p. 50; "The Reaches of History," Commonweal, 68 (15 August 1958): 489-90; Ong stresses the convergence of the human race as a unit as evolution progresses.

⁴⁵"Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," HG, pp. 72-76; "Crisis and Understanding in the Humanities," RRT, p. 332.

⁴⁶Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man, pp. 257-272.

⁴⁷Christopher F. Mooney, S.J., Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1968), pp. 21-27.

⁴⁸Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man, p. 231.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 257-272; Romans 8: 18ff.

and in Ong's view, they represent an inescapable consequence of a truly Christian cosmology.⁵⁰

Ong and St. Ignatius

If Ong has a philosophy of history and a metaphysics which spring from his Christian faith, that faith and its consequent theology is distinctively Ignatian. Ignatian spirituality is not precisely a theology in the formal sense, though it implies a very definite theological stance. It is radically psychological in that it deals with a profound grasp of what one might call psychological processes of existential awareness.⁵¹

Ong is fundamentally psychological in his own approach, as his interest in the relationship between sensation and noetics testifies. Formally psychological interests, particularly those of depth psychology, tie into his thought at several points.⁵² In terms of the emergence of personality from the infrarational, these link up with his cosmology, his Teilhardian affinities, and his historical, personalist, metaphysics and theology. On the more conscious side, they connect with his existential concern for the dynamics of human personal interiority and decision making. These, determinism and decision, make up a dialectic which is radical and pervasive in his thought.

The relationship or tension between freedom and determination is also at the heart of Ignatius' psychology of the spiritual life.⁵³ While

⁵⁰Ong insists that Christ must be projected into the real world. "Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," HG, p. 82; "Christians Confront Technology," [Part] III. America, 101 (26 September 1959): 764-765.

⁵¹"St. Ignatius' Prison-Cage and the Existentialist Situation," BW, pp. 242-259; "Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," ACC, p. 83.

⁵²See for example, PW, pp. 249-255.

⁵³"Hopkins' wrestling with the place of poetry in his life was a part or a dimension of his wrestling with God As we know

Ong's theology may be diverse in language and form, often implicit and formulaic rather than explicit and detailed, and while it may express itself in various styles and contexts, it never abandons this base.

In a particular way, this aspect of Ong's theological posture is perhaps more distinctive of his approach than is his obvious affinity with St. Thomas or Teilhard, or any other Christian thinker, though it certainly in no way excludes these. Orthodox Christian thinkers are difficult to weed out in terms of their originality. They tend, like the Fathers of the Church, who speak of "our philosophy," to reflect on things commonly or collectively held or believed.⁵⁴ In Ong's judgment, this applies also to the Spiritual Exercises as a dynamic response of Christian thinking to a definite set of cultural and historical circumstances.⁵⁵

The Spiritual Exercises, the heart of Ignatian spirituality, are a means for freeing up human decision making, and they do so in light of the Ignatian directive ad maiorem Dei gloriam.⁵⁶ This directive serves as the prime criterion in decision making. One attempts to discern which of the alternatives at hand is to God's greater glory by weighing them against one another in a fundamentally dialectical fashion.⁵⁷

particularly from the 'terrible sonnets' (but also from the 'Deutschland'), the wrestling, the 'agonia', lay under the poetry. Without the struggle to do God's will, to become God's will, the poetry would not have been." "Hopkins: Not for Burning," College English, 23 (October 1961): 60.

⁵⁴Tresmontante, Christian Metaphysics, p. 23.

⁵⁵"Interiority and Modernity in the Spiritual Exercises," (unpublished transcription of taped talk given at the Conference on Interiority and Modernity in the Spiritual Exercises, St. Louis University), 13 April 1969: 10.

⁵⁶"A.M.D.G.: Dedication or Directive?" Review for Religious, 11 (15 September 1952): 257-264.

⁵⁷Ong is supremely aware of this as is Fr. Fessard, whose La Dialectique des Exercices Spirituels de Saint Ignace de Loyola is cited by Ong. "Interiority and Modernity in the Spiritual Exercises," p. 3.

The Spiritual Exercises encourage a certain inner-directed style of mind and spirit.⁵⁸ Ong is a largely inner-directed man, for, as he says, one has to be able to tolerate solitude in order to hammer out one's thoughts in writing.⁵⁹ His entrance into the Society of Jesus seems to have been custom-tailored for the Ignatian way of life.⁶⁰ He describes it as a gradual process of discernment which led to a decision he has never regretted.⁶¹ Familiar with the Society from his student days, prepared in part by the independence encouraged in his home life, Ong's decision has all the hallmarks of Ignatius' design: study the matter, study yourself, and do forthrightly and confidently what you perceive to be ad maiorem Dei gloriam.⁶²

The dialectic in Ignatius' design for decision making is accompanied by a certain historical sense. It assumes that decision has to be renewed and reinforced as it is lived out in changing circumstances.⁶³ One has to take into account not only one's present state, but the overall momentum of one's life.⁶⁴

The point here is not precisely to show that Ong was formed by Jesuit spirituality, which is true enough, but to suggest that he found

⁵⁸Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises to Conquer One's Self and Regulate One's Life and to Avoid Coming to a Determination Through Any Inordinate Affection (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1949). 4th ed. rev. trans. from Spanish.

⁵⁹George Riemer, The New Jesuits (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), p. 182.

⁶⁰"Letter," p. 3. ⁶¹Ibid., p. 4.

⁶²"Interiority and Modernity in the Spiritual Exercises," p. 18.

⁶³"Letter," p. 4.

⁶⁴"Interiority and Modernity in the Spiritual Exercises," p. 20ff.

there a home for and culmination of what and who he already was.⁶⁵ His historical sense, his existential personalism, his radical optimism, are expressive of a kind of interiorized self-awareness before God lived out in the world. In this sense, if Ignatius touched on something radical in human potentiality, Ong's researches and writings extend the Ignatian directive.

Ong and the New Criticism

Commerce between the St. Louis University departments of Philosophy and English were lively when Ong was there.⁶⁶ Marshall McLuhan was exploring matters of common interest to St. Louis Thomism from his own background in Renaissance rhetoric.⁶⁷ He had done his dissertation at Cambridge on Thomas Nashe (1567-1601), and he brought his own peculiarly American variation of Cambridge new criticism to bear on the problems of knowledge, history and communications.⁶⁸

The intellectual ferment at St. Louis University at this time helped guide Ong toward his later intellectual pursuits. Over a decade later, this would be credited in the two Ramus volumes which embodied his dissertation in print.⁶⁹ Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue was

⁶⁵"Letter," p. 3. Ong notes humanist influences on the constitutions of the Society of Jesus and the accompanying worldliness which set it off from earlier religious orders: The New Catholic Encyclopedia, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), s.v., "Humanism," p. 222.

⁶⁶"Letter," p. 7.

⁶⁷"Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," Worship (Collegeville, Minn.), 44 (October 1969): 484; "Synchronic Present: Modernity in Literary Study," HG, p. 25.

⁶⁸Review of The Interior Landscape: 244-251.

⁶⁹Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958); Ramus and Talon Inventory, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1958).

dedicated to Bernard Muller-Thym and his wife, Mary, and Ramus and Talon Inventory was dedicated to "Herbert Marshall McLuhan, who started all this," acknowledging that McLuhan had introduced Ong to Harvard Professor Perry Miller's research on the Ramist shaping of the early New England mind.⁷⁰

Interest in the sixteenth century as a pivotal period in human and Western history, concern for communications vis-à-vis noetics, involvement in literary criticism, especially new criticism, are all common factors between Ong and McLuhan.⁷¹

McLuhan initiated Ong into the new criticism, though the latter's metaphysics made him sensitive to its shortcomings.⁷² Ong has remarked that his own particular version of literary criticism is strongly conditioned by a kind of dialogue with the interest in noetics and the philosophy he had pursued at St. Louis University and his own studies during

⁷⁰Harold Stahmer, Social Order 13 (June 1963): 38, (BW). Quirinus Breen, Manuscripta 4 (Fall 1960): 52, (RM). See, for example, Perry Miller, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954 [1939]); Perry Miller, The New England Mind: From Colony to Province, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953); Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1965); Perry Miller, Roger Williams His Contribution to the American Tradition, (New York: Atheneum, 1966 [1953]).

⁷¹Review of The Interior Landscape: 244-251.

⁷²"Letter," p. 7. Ong also credits McLuhan as having influenced his teaching style. Apart from this: "You will note that the two 'influences' which I feel Marshall McLuhan has exercised on me have neither of them anything to do at all directly with his or my work on the communications media, but are more personal. My concern with the media grew rather unexpectedly out of my work on Ramus, though the grounds for my awarenesses here had been prepared by my earlier interest in noetics. My influence on Marshall McLuhan others will have to figure out. He quotes my Ramus work a good deal in The Gutenberg Galaxy. I don't know of anything earlier than my own work on Ramus, by anyone, which makes the sort of points I make there regarding the relationship of noetics to print. From this the rest stems." (p. 10).

theology.⁷³ In 1943, during his Jesuit regency at Regis College, he wrote an article entitled "The Meaning of the 'New Criticism'" which displays the nexus between his philosophy and new criticism.⁷⁴

Ong singles out I. A. Richards from the ranks of the new critics particularly for treating the philosophical business of literary criticism.⁷⁵ Earlier literary criticism was in the Cartesian-Kantian tradition in that it dichotomized idea and matter, considered sensory impact on ideas either heretical or impossible, and treated poetry as little more than a way to dress up or to decorate preconceived sets of ideas.⁷⁶ Until the turn of the present century, and even after, criticism was performed largely on classical literature.⁷⁷ When vernacular literature was treated, it was gauged by Latin presuppositions.⁷⁸ The study of English literature was not even part of academe until late in the nineteenth century, and critical graduate studies came still later.⁷⁹

The study of literature meant, in this milieu, reading biographies of authors, learning genres, classifying types and periods, with little

⁷³Ibid., p. 7; "Literature and Cultural Initiative," America, 73 (August 1945): 416 ff; Note Maritain, Gilson, and Muller-Thym references.

⁷⁴"The Meaning of the 'New Criticism'," Twentieth Century English, (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946): 344-370. Note Gilson, Maritain and Muller-Thym references.

⁷⁵"The Meaning of the 'New Criticism'," p. 345. Note Ong's use of Richards. According to Professor Timothy Chouinard of Florissant Valley Community College, Florissant, Missouri, Ong still uses Richard's Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment, (New York: Harcourt, Brace [1929]).

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 345-348.

⁷⁷"Tudor Writings on Rhetoric, Poetic, and Literary Theory," RRT, pp. 89-101.

⁷⁸"Tudor Writings on Rhetoric," Studies in the Renaissance, 15 (1968): 68; "The Vernacular Matrix of the New Criticism," BW, pp. 177-205.

⁷⁹The New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), s.v., "Humanism," p. 223.

actual critical treatment of texts. Until Richards, Leavis, Pound and Eliot, and others in their company, pressed the issue, it was more a genteel occupation for rainy evenings than a serious key to the depths of human sensibility.⁸⁰ New criticism got a boost from experimental psychology, which pointed up the infrarational dimension of human cognition, and especially in Richards, it drove on toward metaphysics.⁸¹ Richards concerned himself with what he called "total meaning," which included abstraction as one level of meaning, but also feeling, tone, and conscious and unconscious content.⁸² Such things as meter and rhythm, as part of the sensory impact of poetry, are not merely ways of dressing up ideas, but are integral to metaphor which communicates the flesh and blood of human experience.⁸³

The tension between idealism and materialism, especially as two sides of the dialectic between materiality and intelligence, results from attempts to eliminate ambiguity by reducing everything to one pole or the other. In literature, Milton typifies the dominance of idealism by his formal, architectural approach to poetry.⁸⁴ For the new critics,

⁸⁰"Synchronic Present: Modernity in Literary Study," HG, pp. 29-33.

⁸¹"The Meaning of the 'New Criticism'," William S. Knickerbocker, ed., Twentieth Century English, (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946), pp. 344-345.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 359-360.

⁸³"Literature and Cultural Initiative," America, 73 (18 August 1945): 396.

⁸⁴Review of Preface to Plato, by Erich A. Havelock (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), Manuscripta, 7 (November 1964): 181. Ong says Milton would not have written Paradise Lost if he had known what Havelock knows: epic does not belong in visual culture. "Either by nature or doctrine the puritan is one who intends to worship God in the spirit, tempering his affections and putting away the weakness of the flesh. It is not surprising that John Milton should praise the Reformation in England for casting off the sensual idolatries of those

romantics lose themselves in the other extreme by being unable to account for intellect.⁸⁵

Though fundamentally positive about it, Ong saw excesses in the new criticism, too, in its attempt to see poetry as "the completest mode of utterance."⁸⁶ He admits that this may be true for the concretion of human knowledge, but abstract knowledge, more imperfect from the perspective of materiality, has its own contribution to make.

T. S. Eliot merits some attention here, since next to Gerard Manley Hopkins, there is no contemporary poet with whom Ong seems more impressed. Eliot did a doctoral dissertation in philosophy at Harvard.⁸⁷ Though he never finished the degree, he was a member of the first generation of students there to get intensive education in English literature on the graduate level.⁸⁸

Whether Eliot, the literary critic, ever worked out a consistent philosophy of art to accompany his poetic practice, there is little doubt about the fact that he was capable of philosophical reflection on the

who bow down in 'eye-service of the body, as if they could make God earthly and fleshly because they could not make themselves heavenly and spiritual'." Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style, p. 1.

⁸⁵"The Meaning of the 'New Criticism'," p. 367; Ong cites I. A. Richards', "Coleridge on Imagination" (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935), p. 241.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ong stresses the dyadic and dialectic character of Eliot's theory which commonly is expressed in such dyads as thought and feeling, prose and verse, realism and liturgy. Eliot owes much of this dialectic bent to F. H. Bradley, but it is also parallel to Heidegger's stress on the dialectic between mood and thought. See Review of T. S. Eliot: The Dialectical Structure of His Theory of Poetry, by Fei-Pai Lu (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1966), American Literature 38 (January 1967): 573.

⁸⁸"The Vernacular Matrix of the New Criticism," BW, p. 204.

artistic act.⁸⁹ A prime example of this is his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," perhaps the most mentioned work by another author in all of Ong's writings.⁹⁰

What endears Eliot to Ong, among other things, is his insistence on tradition as the matrix of poetic creativity.⁹¹ Eliot maintains that the individual artist must acquire an historical sense of literary tradition to the point that it thoroughly permeates him. This does not mean that he should simply repeat it, nor that he could improve on it. Rather he should strive to surrender himself to the creative artistic experience embodied in tradition until it overrides the idiosyncrasies of his individual personality.⁹² Moreover, as a spokesman for the new critics, Eliot takes to task criticism which treats of artists and neglects the work itself. For him the lives and times of individual artists are quite secondary.⁹³

While Ong's disposition toward textual criticism puts him in league with Eliot, his historical and metaphysical personalism puts him somewhat at odds.⁹⁴ Ong understands literature as part of the mystery of cultural evolution under divine providence, and he is uncomfortable

⁸⁹Review of T. S. Eliot: The Dialectical Structure of His Theory of Poetry: 573-574.

⁹⁰"Synchronic Present: Modernity in Literary Study," HG, p. 17; "A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," BW, p. 26; "The Vernacular Matrix of the New Criticism," BW, p. 204.

⁹¹Ibid., pp. 177-205.

⁹²"Crisis and Understanding in the Humanities," RRT, p. 332.

⁹³"Voice as Summons for Relief: Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self," BW, p. 53.

⁹⁴"Evolution, Myth and Poetic Vision," HG, pp. 99-126. See especially pp. 118-119.

with the impersonal and non-historical or cyclic implications of Eliot's theory.⁹⁵ He insists that real persons and real history count in the overall scheme of things.⁹⁶

On the one hand, Ong agrees that particular individuals, times, places, and even species have their full meaning only in terms of the larger pattern of evolution as a whole. Art which imitates only individual experience misses the point of art altogether. On the other hand, art cannot eliminate persons, since it is a product of and for persons. He finds Eliot's concern understandable in the light of rampant biographism, but he adds that one can so submerge the life of the subject that one ends up objectivizing art. The object of art is never objective in the same sense that the object of science is. It remains irreducibly existential.⁹⁷

The problem of personalism in art and art criticism discloses, in Ong's opinion, certain currents in a wider cultural malaise.⁹⁸ Confusing or transposing objects and persons poses problems which have persisted throughout history. The personalization of objects is, of course, the basis of idolatry, a deception which seeks falsely to eliminate the ambiguity inherent in the difference between person-object and person-person relationships.

This has the character of an ontological structure for Ong since it relates to the ontological conditions for being either a person or an

⁹⁵"Literature, Religion and Faith," Network (March 1974): 15-17.

⁹⁶"Synchronic Present: Modernity in Literary Study," HG, p. 30.

⁹⁷"Ramus and the Transit to the Modern Mind," Modern Schoolman 32 (May 1956): 301. Ong contrasts French personalist criticism with British object centered criticism and its intense focus on the work of art apart from the artist.

⁹⁸"The Jinnee in the Well Wrought Urn," BW, pp. 20-25.

object. Imbalance in understanding leads to psychological and social imbalances as well.⁹⁹ Even though one may make art into a kind of person surrogate, the personalizing drive cannot be eliminated from actuality.¹⁰⁰

In Ong's judgment, Eliot goes a long way in repairing the Cartesian abstractionist breach in literary criticism by insisting on the rootedness of art in the fleshy sense of history.¹⁰¹ Yet to depersonalize history, as Eliot seems to do, even in the name of tradition, makes it less not more.¹⁰² One ends up with unpeopled history or cyclic history, which is no history.

Ong judges that Eliot lacks total commitment to cyclic history, but like many of his contemporaries, he tends to face the past rather than a real future.¹⁰³ Ong sees here a general nostalgia for a non-personal, naturalistic, romantic, pagan past, a "drift toward the old chthonic fertility cycles," and mythologies.¹⁰⁴ Like the Israelites in the desert, men often find the burden of a future too terrifying. An authentically Judaeo-Christian world-sense "dates," as Hopkins says.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹"A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," BW, pp. 34-39.

¹⁰⁰"The Jinnee in the Well Wrought Urn," BW, p. 24. Beardsley presents a perceptive summary, synthesis of these motifs in Ong. Monroe C. Beardsley, Yale Review, 52 (December 1962): 298-301, (BW).

¹⁰¹"The Meaning of the New Criticism," pp. 345-348.

¹⁰²"A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," BW, p. 38.

¹⁰³"Evolution, Myth and Poetic Vision," HG, pp. 100-117.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 100-101, 110-113.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 122-123; "Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision," National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin: Report of the Proceedings and Addresses--Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, 19-22 April 1960, 57 (August 1960): 40.

It rejects as false the security and tranquility promised by an idealizing of the past.¹⁰⁶

An attempt to identify art with the mythic time of primitive cultures is a drive toward repetition, which is endemic to poetic expression. Poetry thrives on rhythm, for example. Nevertheless, Ong insists that Christians ought to feel at home with the post-Darwinian world of cosmic evolution in a way that many a modern poet seems not to be.¹⁰⁷ Poetry can fall prey to the illusion of the cycle by virtue of its preoccupation with the infrarational. Still that remains somewhat an illusion since even the subhuman levels of evolution proceed in a linear and directional fashion.¹⁰⁸ Like it or not, time is irreversible.

Ong is committed both to art and to personalist, historical metaphysics. He contends that if this presents a crisis of faith, on the one hand, it also means that to the extent that modern poetry fails to assimilate an evolutionary worldview, it fails to embody one of the most profound aspects of modern experience.¹⁰⁹

Ong does find poets who are able to deal with history effectively, but the most outstanding in his mind is his own Jesuit confrere, Gerard Manley Hopkins.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Review of Time in Literature by Hans Meyerhoff, Thought 30 (Winter 1955-56): 626-630; Review of The Ulysses Theme; A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero, by W. B. Stanford, The Classical Bulletin 32 (April 1956): 70.

¹⁰⁷ "Introduction," Darwin's Vision and Christian Perspectives, (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 1-8.

¹⁰⁸ Ong qualifies his use of the term "linear" for history. "Evolution, Myth and Poetic Vision," HG, p. 105.

¹⁰⁹ "Evolution, Myth and Poetic Vision," HG, p. 124.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., HG, pp. 119-125; Review of Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed., Humphry House (London: Oxford University Press, 1959). Review of The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hop-

Hopkins is somewhat enigmatic in that he caught up the evolution-centered thrust of Catholic dogma at a time when Catholic and other religionists were in panic over Darwinism.¹¹¹ Ong finds solace in the convergence of faith, metaphysics, history and poetry typical in Hopkins.¹¹² He suggests further that nevertheless Hopkins still appreciates the psychological mechanisms of old cosmic mythology almost as if he had read Eliade.¹¹³

Ong rejects the idea that contemporary anti-historicism is a consequence of the breakdown of the Christian synthesis. He finds the past lacking a genuinely Christian synthesis because it was typically founded on deficient cosmologies. The problem is to discover and to implement a new cosmology which better accounts for and embodies a real sense of history with a future. These must be brought together in what he calls a "synchronic present," one informed about the past, involved in the present and planning the future. This is a sine qua non for a contemporary Christian worldview.

With Eliot, Ong can call for a continuing reappraisal of the past in the light of the present and a profound sense of continuity with tradition.¹¹⁴ But with Teilhard he looks for the prime mover ahead, not behind.¹¹⁵

kins, ed. with an introduction by Christopher Devlin, S.J. (London: Oxford University Press, 1959); Review of The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins by Alan Heuser, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958). These three reviews all appear in Victorian Studies 3 (March 1960): 305-318.

¹¹¹"Evolution, Myth and Poetic Vision," HG, p. 123.

¹¹²"Bird, Horse and Chevalier in Hopkins' 'Windhover'," The Hopkins Quarterly 1 (July 1974): 61.

¹¹³"Evolution, Myth and Poetic Vision," HG, pp. 122-123.

¹¹⁴"Post Christian or Not," HG, p. 164ff.

¹¹⁵"Evolution, Myth and Poetic Vision," HG, p. 99.

Conclusion

The combination of Ong's intellectual heritage and his response to it has not only been the seedbed of some interesting ideas. It has precipitated an unusually contemporary and yet genuinely traditionalist approach to actuality.

The total complexus of elements or strands of thought which have contributed to Ong's understanding is far too varied to recount in detail. Nonetheless, we have attempted to provide the broad outlines and salient features of the elements which are most basic to his intellectual life. Each of them plays a unique role in the overall scheme of Ongian thought, but no one of them really functions independently.

Philosophically Ong belongs to a metaphysical tradition that has grown up through the mainstream of Western civilization. On one side it flows into natural theology, and, on the other, it connects with Aristotelian hylomorphic epistemology and metaphysics. Nevertheless, it embodies these in a tradition which is radically Christian and personalist-historical. It is a metaphysics which has grown out of the axial union of Greek and Hebrew thought and Christian dialogue with a sovereign God who reveals himself by acting in history.

This particular tradition which has its roots not only into the Patristic era but into the distant past of biblical history, was developed in Ong through an existential and historical orientation expressed by Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson as well as by the further specification called St. Louis Thomism. This latter evinced a pivotal interest in the sensory dimensions of cognition, aesthetics, philosophy of history, and the philosophical implications of the history of discourse, particularly rhetoric and textual criticism.

A complementary element in Ong's intellectual preparation came from the new criticism and its focus on poetic expression, metaphor and textual criticism. Many of the noetic issues overlapped as did the aesthetic perspectives which came together in Ong's Master's thesis on Hopkins.

Both philosophical education and encounter with new criticism came in the midst of Ong's training as a Jesuit where stress on individual commitment and decision making gave shape to an intellectual worldliness which characterized the Society of Jesus at least in principle and in the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola.

While Ong was no doubt directed along the way by many of his Jesuit confreres, he undoubtedly found the perspectives and person of Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin especially congenial with his own. Ong's vision of reality was certainly mature before he met or read Teilhard. But the latter reinforced a sense of worldliness and cosmic history wedded to radical Christian personalism. Directly or indirectly, Ong's work variously extends Teilhard's work in ways that Teilhard could not do. Yet Ong's ties to Teilhard as expressed in Ong's own synthesis are strictly Ongian in character.

Unified by his own personality and personal history, these foundations definitely provide a base for one of Ong's most significant contributions: a procedural style which exploits the confluence of many perspectives and disciplinary motifs. We shall have occasion in the chapter which follows to pursue this "metaphorical" style and procedure which seems to embody so well the potentialities of his formative traditions.

CHAPTER IV

ONG'S METAPHORICAL PROCEDURE AND STYLE

I'm interested in language because it's the meeting ground of... process and structure... People in English label me philosophical. The people in philosophy seem to feel I'm philosophical but I think some of them tend to resent me because I don't do it the way some of them do. I'm constantly being misclassified. Or I'm asked to classify myself and I don't know how. Some people think I'm an anthropologist or a sociologist or a philosopher or a theologian. Occasionally, a professor of French. In principle, I'm a professor of English, but in my own way. I don't particularly see why a person has to first classify himself and then do something. I've been told I teach and practice Onglish.¹

Introduction

Since Ong is difficult to classify simply as a theologian and since his works are commonly classifiable in terms of one or more disciplines other than theology, it seems necessary to examine his discourse for possible clues to its theological character. Despite the fact that Ong's peculiar style and approach make him less obviously theological than writers who are commonly called theologians, we maintain that the thrust of his thought and work is nevertheless theological. We shall attempt to show that his value for theology lies especially in the procedure whereby he discourses theologically in the midst of discoursing in a seemingly non-theological fashion.

This chapter begins by looking for patterns in Ong's bibliography. Given the backgrounds discussed in the previous chapter, his thought seems to exemplify a process of continuous growth without substantial departures

¹George Riemer. The New Jesuits (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), p. 184.

from their initial thrust.

Secondly, we examine his style and procedure with special attention to his critics both pro and con. In this context we shall suggest that metaphor is a most suitable category for describing his procedure or approach. It not only embodies a rapprochement between his existential Thomist tradition and the new criticism as he employs it. It allows for a way of imagining the process by which he discovers and unifies analogous patterns in a multiplicity of disciplines and studies in order to create not only a moving viewpoint but also the effect of a dynamically unified account of cultural and religious history. We shall suggest that the metaphor of the presence of the word provides an integrating force which is based not upon some external classification but on the very structure of human knowing and its progressive development.

Thirdly, we shall examine Ong's tripartite scheme as a convenient or fitting metaphor for the process just described in light of the way this metaphor has taken shape in his thought.

Finally, we shall discuss how Ong's procedure is a kind of theological discourse. Specifically we shall consider its value as a response to the deadening effect of systematizing. We shall suggest that Ong's itinerant metaphorical technique, insofar as it more closely reflects the actual structure of human knowing, tends toward the centering of theological discourse on the mystery of personhood. Its operationally traditionalist, interdisciplinary and incarnational character keeps it rooted in the concreteness of history, where personal mystery occurs, and in dialogue with the wide range of persons thinking and communicating in today's world. While we do not wish to argue that this is the only way of doing theology, we suggest that it is an especially fruitful and fitting way.

Patterns and Continuity in Ong's Bibliography

Walter Ong's professional writings cover a span of thirty-six years. From his first published article in 1939 his works spread out into poetry, articles on literature, language, criticism, and education, along with reviews of books on aesthetics and the history of printing.² Within three or four years of his first scholarly publication, themes which form the backbone of his thought throughout the next three and one half decades are clearly in evidence. His writings from the early period display the basis of a remarkable continuity in his thought not only topically but in terms of his approach and perspective, reflecting his indebtedness to his philosophical tradition and his interest in the new criticism.

Two distinctive features appear in his early writing which tend to become less prominent with time. The first is a focus on critiques of the banality, sophistry and intellectual poverty which characterizes popular culture, and the second is his poetry. The first includes attacks on Mickey Mouse (American sentimentality),³ The Reader's Digest (commercial hucksterism),⁴ and the Luce publications (sophistry),⁵ with an obviously

²Review of A History of Esthetics by Katherine Everett Gilbert and Helmut Kuhn (New York: Macmillan, 1939) The Modern Schoolman 17 (March, 1940): 57; Review of The Origin of Printing in Europe by Pierce Butler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940) The Historical Bulletin 19 (March, 1941): 68.

³"Mickey Mouse and Americanism," America 65 (4 October 1941): 719-20. Ong contrasts the Disney creations with the traditional beast fables, noting that the former is characteristic of the superficial secularity of contemporary popular culture.

⁴"Mr. Barnum and the 'Reader's Digest'," America 75 (6 April 1946): 12-13 and 75 (13 April 1946): 32-33; "Reporting Providence," Commonweal 45 (24 January 1947): 367-69.

⁵"Contemporary Readings in Higher Sophistry," America 70 (1 January 1944): 343-45. For Ong, the hidden environment in the Luce publications is an illusory informedness which discourages asking really significant questions.

polemic tone and a tendency to single out aspects of popular culture for attack. These diminish in his more mature works even if he retains a certain critical awareness of such problems.⁶ Of his twelve published poems, eight appear within the first five years of his professional career.⁷

Ong's interest in the sensory-cognitive relationship is evident from the beginning and registers also his indebtedness to his philosophical and critical traditions.⁸ By the mid-forties, this thrust seems clearly integrated with his concern over the history of the development of thought, especially religious thought, and the existential consequences of cultural patterns of progression and regression.⁹ These merge intriguingly during his theological studies, where his publications focus on John Henry Newman¹⁰ and Franz Kafka.¹¹ By 1950, with an article on the myth of myth, the dominant themes of his thought seem well established. What happens from then on is an ever-complexifying concerto of variations and intermodulations among these themes.

⁶ Review of Tomorrow is Already Here by Robert Jungk, Thought 29 (Winter 1954-1955): 597-98. A good example of Ong's more temperate approach.

⁷ For a listing of Ong's Poems, see the Bibliography.

⁸ Review of Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, 1938; ed. Charles A. Hart, The Modern Schoolman 17 (November 1939): 19.

⁹ "American Culture and Morality," HG, pp. 164-188.

¹⁰ Review of A Preface to Newman's Theology by Edmund Darvil Benard (St. Louis: Herder, 1944), Review for Religious, 4 (March 1945): 126-27; Review of John Henry Newman by John Moody (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1945), Review for Religious, 5 (March 1946): 133-34; "Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu," Theological Studies 7 (March 1946): 3-45.

¹¹ "Kafka's Castle in the West," Thought 22 (September 1947): 439-60; "Finitude and Frustration: Considerations on Brod's Kafka," Modern Schoolman 25 (March 1948): 173-82; Review of Franz Kafka: A Biography by Max Brod (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), Thought 23 (June 1948): 316-16; Review of The Diaries of Franz Kafka by Max Brod (New York: Schocken Books, 1949), Thought 24 (September 1949): 540-41.

In 1951, Ong published his first Ramus article.¹² In the Ramus studies, his perennial themes find fertile soil in which to flourish, to sink their roots deeper and more broadly and to branch out into a luxury of applications. Ramus provided a pivot, a kind of intellectual and historical philosopher's stone by which Ong could turn the most mundane topics into rich hermeneutical substance. By this time also, his congeniality with and yet differences from Marshall McLuhan become evident in a reflective and circumspect way.¹³

Ong's most characteristic mode of expression is the article, first in periodicals and then increasingly in a wide range of scholarly journals.¹⁴ His nearly ninety book reviews, a few of which appear in newspapers and magazines but most of which appear in scholarly journals, tend to be mini-articles on his own interests as well as critiques of other's thoughts. His articles and reviews together account for over eight percent of his works. Of his twelve published books, five are collections

¹²Review of Literature and Theology in Colonial New England by Kenneth B. Murdock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), Theological Studies 11 (June 1950): 296-97; "Psyche and the Geometers: Aspects of Associationist Critical Theory," Modern Philology 49 (August 1951): 16-27; H. Stahmer, Social Order 13 (June 1963): 36-44.

¹³"Literature and Cultural Initiative," America 73 (August 1945): 416; "The Mechanical Bride," a review-article on The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man by Marshall McLuhan (New York: Vanguard Press, 1951), Social Order 2 (February 1952): 79-85; Review of Gutenberg Galaxy by Marshall McLuhan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), America 107 (September 1962): 743-47; "Howard Nemerov and His Poetry," Aardwolf 2 (October 1969): 4.

¹⁴This may relate in part to his observation that books always deal with what is past. Current events are better treated in articles. "Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," Worship (Collegeville, Minn.) 44 (October 1969): 475; Thomas J. Stritch, Critic 25 (June-July 1967): 80, (HG).

of his articles, of which the majority were previously published.¹⁵ Of the remaining seven books, two comprise his major Ramus study, two are editions of Ramus' works, and two are collections of articles drawn from a wide selection of authors including his own contributions.¹⁶

The remaining single work is The Presence of the Word, a unique and distinctive book which merits special comment. It stands in his bibliography as a synthesis of various central strands of interest and concern which are ubiquitous in his thought and the actual studies and writings which he had undertaken up to that time. As was suggested earlier, it holds a place in his literary corpus similar to that of The Phenomenon of Man in Teilhard's, though it must be added that it is in no apparent sense the same kind of book. Ong finds communication, particularly as embodied in human speech, at the heart of human and terrestrial evolution, as an ontological constituent of actuality. In The Presence of the Word he attempts to unify basic facets and indications of this from his own work and that of a host of others, though in keeping with his open-

¹⁵Frontiers in American Catholicism, (New York: Macmillan, 1957); American Catholic Crossroads, (New York: Collier Books, 1959); The Barbarian Within, (New York: Macmillan, 1962); In the Human Grain, (New York: Macmillan, 1967); Rhetoric, Romance and Technology, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1971).

¹⁶Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958); Ramus and Talon Inventory, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958); Petrus Ramus (and) Audomarus Telaeus Collectaneae praefationes, epistolae, orationes (a facsimile of the 1599 Marburg edition). Introduction by Walter J. Ong, S.J. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969; Petrus Ramus Scholae in liberales artes (a facsimile of the 1569 Basel edition). ed. with an introduction by Walter J. Ong, S.J. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970; Darwin's Vision and Christian Perspectives, (New York: Macmillan, 1960); Knowledge and the Future of Man, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968).

ended philosophy of history, he refers to it as prolegomenary.¹⁷

As witness to continuity in his thought, the way in which Ong has assembled his collections is revealing. His first two focus on American Catholicism, published in 1956 and 1959, and they include articles published over a period of four years and two years respectively.¹⁸

In The Barbarian Within (1962), however, the articles span a period of fifteen years, in In the Human Grain (1967) sixteen years, and in his most recent, Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology (1971), a period of twenty-one years.¹⁹ There the earlier works display only minor revisions, and it is difficult to tell, either from the viewpoint of style, approach, or topic, that they belong to such widely separated times in his career.²⁰

Still, this is not to say that there is no development in his thought. The range of his studies has progressively widened, the richness of his documentation and insight has been augmented greatly, and he has pressed his inquiries more and more deeply into the dynamics of cultural and religious history. But there seems to be little evidence to support a conclusion that substantive differences have appeared in his thought, that radical departures have occurred in his intellectual career, or that there is any difference in principle between the early and the later Ong.

In summary, a study of the bibliography of Walter Ong exhibits a notable continuity in his thought. A concern for the metaphysical

¹⁷The Presence of The Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

¹⁸See footnote 15.

¹⁹"Psyche and the Geometers: Aspects of Associationist Critical Theory," Modern Philology 49 (August 1951): 16-27.

²⁰The RRT version, apart from some minor re-wording, omits two paragraphs from the original. See p. 22 (RRT, p. 226) and p. 24 (RRT, p. 230).

implications of history, noetics, language and modes of expression, artistic experience and expression, the patterns of cultural development and their human quality, technological development, and the cosmic and religious significance of all these, form a complex set of themes which comprises the central thrust of Ong's work from the beginning of his scholarly career to the present. All of these are sounded with intricate variations in terms of an existential or personalist orientation. Though his thought has deepened and broadened, it does not appear to have significantly deviated from this thrust. With this in mind, a look will be taken at the way in which he has expressed it.

Ong's Style and Procedure

Style has to do with more or less constant patterns of expression. When regarded in terms of an individual, such patterns can be revealing not only about the external form of an artist, but they may also provide insights into an author's personality and approach or procedure.²¹

Gombrich follows Whorf in asserting that expression registers human experience in such a way that language is not only content but also structure.²² Style in expression is therefore inseparable from procedure. A scientific treatise is written the way it is because it reveals not only

²¹Meyer Schapiro, "Style," A Modern Book of Esthetics, ed. Melvin Rader, 3d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 36.

²²E.H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation, Bollingen Series 35, 2d ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 3-30.

a mode of expression but a style of thought.²³ Ong's thought is deeply concerned with relationships between culture and expression, with style as a key to patterns of thought in various cultural and historical circumstances.²⁴

The patterns of expression in Ong's own writings are often a focus of comment for his critics. This may be due in part to the fact that most of the critical material available on him is in the form of reviews of his books. Nevertheless, they can provide some clues as to his way of approaching scholarly communication and research.

On the positive side, Ong is praised for his clarity, provocative-ness, originality, and his nonpolemical, erudite, scholarly, refreshing and

²³This is never total, however. "However, as a matter of fact, most writing is a composite, not only in the sense that arts other than those which govern the operations of the intellect are needed in order that a given concrete piece of writing take form, but also in the sense that a given piece of writing will often partake of the nature of many kinds of writing at once. In most of what may be designated as poetry there is a considerable mixture of special pleading which is nothing more or less than dialectic or rhetoric. Again, what we would ordinarily call a poem may de facto convey scientific as well as poetic truth, although it is not as a poem that it does so. And a politician, who should be practicing rhetoric may introduce a fact for its own sake. Finally, writing ostensibly scientific can and often does become a plea to take this attitude toward the subject, or that. Works of rhetoric, poetic, and science do not exist in the concrete in separate works. We must generally rest satisfied with calling a thing a poem because it is mostly a poem, or a political speech a work of rhetoric because it is nearer to that than it is to anything else." "The Province of Rhetoric and Poetic," Modern Schoolman 19 (January 1942): 27.

²⁴Ong's interest in language relates to his perception of it as the meeting ground between content and structure. George Riemer, The New Jesuits, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), p. 183; Barden acknowledges this element in Ong but complains that he does not treat it adequately. Garret Barden, Philosophical Studies 17 (Summer 1968): 254-55, (PW); Oppenheimer suggests that while Ong may not "extend or transform our knowledge of general semantics, both the work and its author are perfect examples of good semantic practice." Max Oppenheimer, Etc.: A General Review of Semantics, 27 (March 1970): 120, (PW).

persuasive style.²⁵ Such terms are commonly wedded to appreciations of the way in which he handles the complex and wideranging matters in an organic and comprehensively interdisciplinary way.²⁶ Some see him as providing a model of interdisciplinary scholarship, or as establishing a dialogue between his own personalist, evolutionary humanism and the natural and social sciences.²⁷

On the negative side, common complaints about him include judgments that he lacks clarity, tends to wander, is overly general, does not support his premises with detailed and sustained treatment, is repetitious, heavy, and without a sense of urgency or anxiety about the problems facing the

²⁵George J. McMorrow 33 (October 1959): 609-610, (ACC); Bernard Bergonzi, Black Friars, 44 (April 1963): 186-187, (BW); Ong does not take the role of laudator temporis acti. Nevertheless, while he sees problems with technology, he also sees much that is encouraging and hopeful; Gerald Sykes, Saturday Review 45 (11 August 1962): 27-28, (BW); Sister Mary Cecilia, BVM, Critic 19 (March 1961): 48, (DVCP); Paul L. Holmer, Saturday Review 44 (1 April 1961): 14-15, (DVCP); Francis G. Wilson, Catholic Historical Review 43 (July 1957): 204, (FAC); Marion Garnett Hennion, Liturgical Arts 25 (August 1957): 120-121, (FAC); Gustave Weigel, S.J., Theological Studies 18 (June 1957): 296, (FAC); P. Deasy, Commonweal 86 (24 March 1967): 20, (HG); Dennis Hamm, S.J., Modern Schoolman 46 (November 1968): 80, (HG); Bernard Gilligan, Thought 43 (Winter 1968): 623-625, (PW); Max Oppenheimer, Etc.: A General Review of Semantics 27 (March 1970): 118-121, (PW); E.J. Tinsley, Theology 75 (November 1968): 517-518, (PW); Thomas H. Vernon, Style 4 (Spring 1970): 169-175, (PW); Justin Kelly, America 126 (26 February 1972): 213-214, (RRT).

²⁶Michael Montague, Review for Religious 19 (March 1960): 119-20, (ACC); John C. Kelly, Studies 53 (Spring 1964): 102-05, (BW); Richard J. Bernstein, Review of Metaphysics 21 (March 1968): 559, (PW); Richard A. Underwood, Journal of the American Academy of Religion 36 (September 1968): 278, (PW); Donald C. Bryant, Quarterly Journal of Speech 58 (December 1972): 469, (RRT).

²⁷R. Morris, Renascence 13 (Fall 1960): 43-44, (ACC); Harold Stahmer, Social Order 13 (June 1963): 36-44, (BW); R. Morris, Renascence 10 (Winter 1957): 108, (ACC); William Gerber, Library Journal 93 (February 1968): 756, (KFM); James Magner, Sign 39 (October 1959): 77, (ACC); Charles T. Dougherty, St. Louis Post-Dispatch (January 1968): 40, (PW); J.A. Rycenga, Library Journal 92 (December 1967): 4420, (PW).

contemporary world.²⁸ Critics on both sides draw attention to his optimism, sometimes seeing it as unrealistic and sometimes as a vitally Christian response to a world too frequently characterized by pessimism and gloom.²⁹ Kermode finds him haphazard and without style altogether, though others see this tendency toward an itinerant style and approach as a positive element, as an adventurous, roving, probe of unexplored regions.³⁰

According to Gombrich, all communication represents an interplay between observation and expectation. Consequently style is always accompanied by a horizon of expectation, a mental set, which registers conformity or deviation.³¹ Style embodies a dialectic or dialogue between novelty and convention, between originality and tradition. Ong has drawn attention to this in a detailed treatment of writing as a process of

²⁸Thomas O'Dea, Commonweal 70 (September 1959): 493-95 (ACC); Thomas O'Dea, Catholic World 190 (October 1959): 61, (ACC); O'Dea believes that Ong lacks a sense of anxiety about the problem crisis. O'Dea would be in Jacques Ellul's camp. Ong's chief critique of Ellul is that he seems to be completely devoid of humor. "Ideas of Technology: Commentary", Technology and Culture 3 (Fall 1962): 459-62; "Knowledge in Time", KFM, p. 10; James Magner, Sign 39 (October 1959): 77, (ACC); Gerald Sykes, Saturday Review 45 (August 1962): 28 (BW); Jaroslav Pelikan, Saturday Review 50 (February 1967): 56 (HG).

²⁹"Ong: Following a Renaissance Prototype", Aardwolf 2 (December 1969-January 1970): 2; Catholic World 185 (August 1957): 393; D. Lodge Month 223 (June 1967): 373 (HG); Martin Marty, Christian Century 84 (February 1967): 177, (HG); T.J. Stritch, Critic 25 (June-July 1967): 80, (HG); Thomas J.J. Altizer, Theology Today 25 (July 1968): 281, (PW); Harvey Cox, Christian Century 85 (April 1968): 456, (PW); Ronald L. Holloway, Quarterly Journal of Speech 54 (October 1968): 315, (PW).

³⁰J. Moody, Commonweal 66 (August 1957): 442, (FAC); P. Deasy, Commonweal 86 (March 1967): 20, (HG); T.J. Stritch, Critic 25 (June-July 1967): 79, (HG). Stritch would leave the detailed cartography of these new areas to Ph.D. students and other less imaginative types. Fergus Kerr, New Blackfriars 49 (June 1968): 496, (PW).

³¹Gombrich, Art and Illusion, p. 60.

fictionalization whereby an author necessarily creates his audience in his imagination as he writes.³² The reader in turn must be willing to fictionalize himself along the lines that the author has devised. Otherwise he will find the author's rhetoric unpersuasive, unintelligible, or otherwise unacceptable.³³ A writer's effectiveness, then, can be gauged by the success of this two-fold process of fictionalization, and style and purpose will be seen as intimately related.

This is certainly an important issue in Ong's case, and perhaps an understanding of his purpose will shed light on the recognizably difficult character of some of his writing. A lead might be taken here from his comments on McLuhan, to whom critics link him with some frequency.³⁴ Ong cites McLuhan's notion that the biological metaphor for fusing human interests and pursuits, such as exemplified in terms like "organization," and "social organism," might well be replaced with the metaphor of "orchestration," which McLuhan borrows from Whitehead.³⁵ This shift

³²"Media Transformation: The Talked Book," College English (December 1972): 407; "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction," PMLA 90 (January 1975): 9-21.

³³Mackerness finds the reader compelled "to 'break' an unfamiliar code of discourse" but that the results are worth the trouble in this case. E. D. Mackerness, Modern Language Review 65 (April 1970): 356, (PW).

³⁴"Literature and Cultural Initiative," America 74 (August 1945): 416; Monroe C. Beardsley, Yale Review 52 (December 1962): 299, (BW); D. Lodge, Month 223 (June 1967): 373, (HG); Martin Marty, Christian Century 84 (February 1967): 177, (HG); T.J. Stritch, Critic 25 (June-July 1967): 79, (HG); Choice 5 (July-August 1968): 614, (KFM); John Coulson, Downside Review (January 1969): 116-118, (PW); Lawrence Guillot, Kansas City Times (21 March 1968): 2D, (PW); P. Tihon, Nouvelle Revue Theologique 90 (August-September 1968): 773, (PW); Richard A. Underwood, Journal of the American Academy of Religion 36 (September 1968): 279, (PW); Donald C. Bryant, Quarterly Journal of Speech 58 (December 1972): 469, (RRT).

³⁵"The Mechanical Bride", Social Order 2 (February 1952): 79-85; "Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu," Theological Studies 7 (March 1946): 16-18; "Nationalism and Darwin," HG, pp. 85-87; "Secular Knowledge and Revealed Religion," ACC, p. 78.

would allow for inclusion of both continuity and discontinuity in a single analogy, something which might more effectively express discontinuities in modern society as well as continuities. This metaphor submits with difficulty to unilinear, one dimensional description or explanation, but it does allow for holding in mind a diversity of interacting themes at once.

A distinctively problematic quality in Ong's style of writing and in his approach is such an orchestration of themes. Critics note that he moves across a wide range of disciplines at once, and he commonly does this from a base which is itself an orchestration of an evolutionary philosophy of history, a personalist metaphysics, optimistic and catholic theology, and his concern for the sensory-cognitive and artistic dimensions of human communications.³⁶

A basic and ubiquitous metaphor in Ong's presentation is "dialogue."³⁷ One writer suggests that Ong's thought-style can be regarded as discussional or conversational rather than argumentative or methodologically unified.³⁸ This might explain in part some critics' judgment that his thought fails to coalesce.³⁹ Ong displays overt suspicion of "method" and "system," a suspicion grounded not only philosophically but historically,

³⁶George Klubertanz, Modern Schoolman 42 (March 1965): 323, (BW); Harold Stahmer, Social Order 13 (June 1963): 34-36, (BW); Garrett Barden, Philosophical Studies 17 (Summer 1968): 255, (PW); Max Oppenheimer, Etc.: A General Review of Semantics 27 (March 1970): 118-21, (PW).

³⁷R. Morris, Renascence 13 (Fall 1960): 44-45, (ACC); J. Ewing, Social Order 11 (November 1961): 428, (DVCP). Ewing says Ong never quite dialogues, but we find it hard to understand in what sense that is true.

³⁸C. Lee Miller, Modern Schoolman 46 (November 1968): 68, (PW).

³⁹G.A. Cevalasco, Library Journal 92 (February 1967): 581, (HG); William Gerber, Library Journal 93 (February 1968): 756, (KFM). Gerber says this of KFM, too. This seems to be the price one pays for a dialogical approach, that is, one which attempts to converse with many persons and subjects in the same book.

especially in his studies on Ramist method and the consequences of method and system in cultural history.⁴⁰ He understands the scientific mode of knowing as arrested dialogue, as gaining its objectivity from an attempt to translate actuality into the neutral detachment of visual, spatial analogues.⁴¹ While this is appropriate for treating the world of objects, scientific explanation, as such, remains provisional.⁴² For its overall meaning it must be referred back to the human life-world, to human subjectivity, which is most radically characterized by and sustained in interpersonal dialogue.⁴³ In the subject-subject or person-person world of relationships, objectivity yields to mystery.⁴⁴ The uniqueness of the person as interiority cannot be made into a surface, an object, a thing, which it is not.⁴⁵ Persons can be appropriated only obliquely, that is,

⁴⁰"Ramus and the Transit to the Modern Mind," Modern Schoolman 32 (May 1955): 308-311; "System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, pp. 68-87; "Swift on the Mind: Satire in a Closed Field," RRT, pp. 190-212; M.B. Crowe, Studies 50 (Winter 1961): 458, (ACC). Crowe takes note of Ong's unwillingness to compartmentalize knowledge. H. Stahmer, Social Order 13 (June 1963): 40, (BW): "Ong, like almost all of those he has been compared and associated with deplores the tendency in every age to develop a single system or single language which by manipulation and logical extension is supposed capable of coping with the various questions put to it from every dimension of existence."

⁴¹Review of Unfinished Man and the Imagination: Toward an Ontology and Rhetoric of Revelation, by Ray L. Hart (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), Biblica 51 (1970): 254-255; "I See What You Say": Sense Analogues for Intellect," Human Inquiries 10 (1970): 25-26; "Latin and the Social Fabric," BW, p. 229.

⁴²"I See What You Say": 35ff.

⁴³"Voice As Summons for Belief," BW: 57; "Educationists and the Tradition of Learning," BW, pp. 172-173.

⁴⁴"The Power and Mystery of Words," St. Louis University Magazine 45 (October, 1972): 4-6.

⁴⁵PW, pp. 174-175, 228.

not through abstract knowledge and never definitively.⁴⁶ The closest one comes to another person is in ongoing interpersonal dialogue or conversation.⁴⁷

The role of metaphor in Ong's thought can serve as a clue to his orientation. Robert Boyle makes a useful distinction between metaphor and simile in which he sees simile as the typical expressive style of a detached mind observing and comparing beings, of a mind which prefers the order and clarity of concept. Metaphor, on the other hand, is radically existential; it thrusts the mind into the reality and concreteness of being as dark, mysterious and confusing, into vital, existential involvement.⁴⁸

This resonates well with Ong's approach. In an early article he exhibits indebtedness to Maritain's aesthetic theory and its stress on the infrarational and materially concrete dimensions of artistic expression.⁴⁹ He finds in poetic experience a rich stimulation of the intellect with a "riot" of forms.⁵⁰ The human intellect can only arrive at being piecemeal,

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 294-295.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 167; George Klubertanz, Modern Schoolman 37 (November 1959): 70, (RM). Ong's Ramus studies convinced him that vision is richer for treating of things, voice for persons.

⁴⁸Robert Boyle, Metaphor in Hopkins, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 175.

⁴⁹"Imitation and the Object of Art," Modern Schoolman 17 (May 1940): 66, n. 2; "Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu": 19, n. 60, NB: Citation of Maritain, and Muller-Thym; Jacques Maritain, Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry, (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1953), especially pp. 3-30 and 51-74; Review of A History of Esthetics by Katherine Everett Gilbert and Helmut Kuhn (New York: Macmillan, 1939), Modern Schoolman 17 (March 1940): 57. Ong takes the authors to task for overlooking scholasticism (which is studied by more students in American Colleges and Universities than any other philosophy) and Maritain (who remains un-indexed despite his major contribution to the field).

⁵⁰"Imitation and the Object of Art," Modern Schoolman 17 (May 1940): 68.

and art keeps intellection incarnated, nourished and enriched with experiential concreteness.

This philosophical aesthetic found congeniality in Ong's mind with the new criticism's preoccupation with metaphor.⁵¹ Metaphor generates meaning by fusing sensory apprehension and abstraction in a moment of experiential plenitude. As such, criticism can never fully abstract or explain metaphor since it remains contextualized in a virtually inexhaustible array of concrete relations.⁵² Criticism can help the intellect come to terms with metaphorical expression but can never substitute for it, just as philosophy can never fully abstract the act of being.⁵³ Concrete actuality remains dark, rich, fertile and unyielding in any absolute sense to method and system.⁵⁴ Hence, if abstract knowledge is perfect in one

⁵¹"Imitation and the Object of Art": 66; "The Meaning of the 'New Criticism'," Twentieth Century English (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946, pp. 360-363; "He teaches English at St. Louis University, and approaches the New Criticism and modern concepts of metaphor, symbolism, and mythology from the standpoint of a roving Latinist who seems equally conversant with the poetry of St. Thomas Aquinas and the theories of Cleanth Brooks. . . . Because we Americans are now often more familiar with exotic traditions than we are with our once well-known Christian heritage, this kind of Jesuit teaching might be described as not far from the insoluble zen 'koan', intended to force the student into a direct personal encounter with reality." Gerald Sykes, Saturday Review 45 (11 August 1962): 27, (BW).

⁵²"Finitude and Frustration: Considerations on Brod's Kafka," Modern Schoolman 25 (March 1948): 173; "Kafka's Castle in the West," Thought 22 (September 1947): 444 ff.

⁵³"Imitation and the Object of Art," Modern Schoolman 17 (May 1940): 66. To this extent, however, criticism is creative in its own right and cannot, therefore, simply be opposed to the art work. There is a danger that it will be so opposed, however. See Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, trans. E. Buchanan, (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 349.

⁵⁴"Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu", p. 20. The material element in cognition makes for an indefinite reserve of intelligibility. The act of existence, moreover, is never fully abstractable. This applies not only to works of art, but to the civilizations which produce and preserve them. On the first point, see Jacques Maritain, Existence and the Existent, trans. Lewis Galantiere and Gerald B. Phelan, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 72 ff.

way, it is also imperfect.⁵⁵ Poetic knowledge is less clear, but in a sense it is more real.⁵⁶

Scientific knowledge, insofar as it seeks clarity, distinctness and precision in maximal definition, traffics in simile.⁵⁷

Ong resonates with this in his treatment of metaphor in human judgment.⁵⁸ Metaphor shares in the "endemic binarism" of all human

⁵⁵"Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu": pp. 10-11. Newman's "idea" has much in common with metaphor, i.e., as it is a rich source which is slowly articulated. G. Van der Leeuw has suggested some perspectives in his Sacred and Profane Beauty: The Holy Art, trans. David E. Green, with a Preface by Mircea Eliade (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), which are congenial with the point we are making here, particularly for understanding the character and development of culture relative to human art and communication.

⁵⁶"Out of the tendency to reject all established modes of utterance in favor of a kind of perpetual otherness grows the 'metaphysics of the metaphor' (pp. 196 ff.) which marks avant-garde theory and virtually the entire contemporary sensibility. Poggioli points out the strength of concern with metaphor and symbol (it protects against overactive reification) as well as the vacuity this concern generates when the dialectical relationship of symbol and actuality is not acknowledged and symbol supports and is supported by another which is never there." Review of The Theory of the Avant-Garde, by Renato Poggioli, trans. (from the Italian) Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1968), American Literature 40 (January 1969): 589; See "The Myth of Myth," BW, pp. 131-145, for ins and outs of Ong's understanding of myth.

⁵⁷"A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," BW, pp. 30-31.

⁵⁸"Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu": 19; See also, "Finitude and Frustration: Considerations on Brod's Kafka": 180-81: "Human expression is always doomed to a measure of failure and hence of frustration, not because it never hits the truth exactly or because it always hits just to the side of the truth (this would be modernism and skepticism), but rather because it always hints obliquely at more than it says directly. It is always in over its head. It always suggests, points to, things it does not say. Despite what Descartes and his followers have supposed, there is no human statement that is completely clear-cut at all its edges, for nothing can be said by man that does not in some way call for and depend upon further explanation. We can grasp no truth in all its implications, completely. There is no such thing as total statement within the reach of merely human powers."

cognition.⁵⁹ The latter functions only by "twinning" or doubling concepts in predication or judgment.⁶⁰ Just as walking occurs by placing one foot and then the other, the intellect must secure two footholds--a subject and

⁵⁹"Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," Worship 43 (October 1969): 478. "Thought here is deeply related to the bilateral symmetry of the human body. Left is like right. And yet not entirely the same. As Jerome Bruner has pointed out in a recent article in the July 6, 1969, New York Times Magazine, one of the important discoveries of a child is the asymmetry of his bilateral symmetry. He learns to use one hand to hold things steady, generally the left hand, and the other as a moving operative tool. This muscular adjustment corresponds in fantastically close detail to the structure subject-and-predicate, the binary formation governing all expression and focusing all knowledge; the subject is the inert part of utterance and the predicate or verb the more live and moving." "Communications Media and the State of Theology," Cross Currents 19 (Fall 1969): 468. "The balanced form, which implements oral recall, also conveys the idea of correspondence between things that lie so deep in the Hebreo-Christian sense of what existence is. 'What a man sows, that he will also reap.' (Gal. 6:8; cf. 2 Cor. 9:6; Osee 8:7). Events are not isolated. One thing corresponds to another. Existence has pattern. Actuality is the simple back-and-forth movement which both rides through and shapes the thought of the Beatitudes, and which, at another level is doubtless connected with the bilateral symmetry of the human body. Knowledge of this sort could be arrived at in the early age of mankind long before the media had developed to the point where science could arise." PW, p. 30; "Rhetoric and the Origins of Consciousness," RRT, p. 13; "Crisis and Understanding in the Humanities," RRT, p. 321; "The specialization of this symbolism in circles and four-sided figures (obviously related to the bilateral symmetry of the human body, and thus bearing a heavy material charge), and its tendency to avoid triangles (which, by contrast, carry a kind of spiritual charge), is not a law imputed to mandalas by some sort of extrapolation of an overheated Pythagorean imagination, but a simple fact observable in the figures which actually occur." "St. Ignatius' Prison-cage and the Existentialist Situation," BW, p. 254. David Bakan, The Duality of Human Existence, (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1966), pp. 102-153; A Review of Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry by Brian Vickers (New York: St. Martin's Press and London: Macmillan, 1970), College English (February 1972), p. 615; "As in a dream, the imagery and feeling float freely so that the commonplace unselfconsciously engages with motifs of murder and other disaster. The typical Kafkan effect thus reveals itself as connected with a mechanism of dissociation and reassociation which first disengages segments from reality and then reassociates them with one another, all obstructions done away with." Review of The Diaries of Franz Kafka, Thought 24 (September 1949): 540.

⁶⁰Review of Symbol and Metaphor in Human Experience by Martin Foss (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), Modern Schoolman 27 (May 1950): 326; "Metaphor and the Twinned Vision," BW, pp. 41-48.

a predicate -- in the more or less explicit predication of the actual being of something.⁶¹

Hence, all knowledge exhibits a dyadic structure, a dialectical give-and-take, an analogue-laden affirming and negating, of which metaphor is the supremely fertile instance.⁶² Metaphor reminds us that actuality is inexhaustibly complex, that we must make numerous, varied, and continuous passes at it to really know it.⁶³ These several passes each occur in judgments by which a virtually unending number of concepts

⁶¹"Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu": 19. Judgment is a dramatic acting of being and not angelic. Form determines matter; matter leaves indeterminate.

⁶²Metaphor is a way of keeping us engaged with the many "senses" of actuality simultaneously. Like sacraments which discourage living the "letter" (i.e., one dimensionally as in fundamentalism), metaphor militates against ideology.

⁶³"The very thing which science ordinarily sets out to do by departing from concrete, individual, material, real, existents, it has here in the last analysis failed to accomplish in the most urgent sense. Hence the intellect is justified in tacking back again, in seeking through the greater concretion of metaphor to make up for what it has lost through a journey on which reason has taken it without too great success. Of course, metaphor will not be entirely satisfactory either. But at least it is a compensation of a kind. And at this point, the parallel with poetry comes clear. There are great differences, but there is also a parallel. For both poetry and theology, metaphor is a last, and not quite satisfactory resort." "Wit and Mystery: A Revaluation in Medieval Latin Hymnody," *BW*, pp. 118-119. "Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu": 12. The sacramental economy is also found in this multivalent relation to matter; Coulson warns that, "we certainly need to recover a due sense of primary metaphorical and symbolic language, but never at the expense of rationality. Our problem is how to reconcile this renewed awareness of immediacy and simultaneity with those clarifying and generalising procedures upon which our social and technological existence depends for its functioning." Ong would, of course, agree. Coulson reads Ong as "derived" from McLuhan and this may color his assessment. John Coulson, *Downside Review* (January 1969): 118, (PW).

and experienced actualities are twinned.⁶⁴

Ong seems to be stylistically and procedurally consistent with this cognitive theory. He sets himself against what he sees as a chronic tendency of the human mind to want to reduce actuality to a single term, a tendency which he finds immortalized in idealist philosophies from Plato through Descartes to Hegel.⁶⁵ An examination of virtually any of his significant works indicates that the procedure which he has devised to combat this univocating tendency is embodied in a ceaseless and persistent shifting of perspectives, examining cultural and religious artifacts and processes by changing roles from philosopher to theologian, to literary critic, to historian, to social scientist, and so on.⁶⁶ This is in a sense, a metaphorizing technique, one of "twinning"

⁶⁴Why Talk? A Conversation about language with Walter Ong. Conducted by Wayne Aitree, (San Francisco: Chandler and Sharp, 1973), pp. 1-4; "As a summary of what metaphor in general is all about, we may quote the famous comments of T.S. Eliot, which goes to the heart of the matter better than any abstract theorizing. 'When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for his work,' he writes, 'it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with one another, or with the noise of a typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.'" Gerard Reedy, "Metaphor in 'The Phenomenon of Man'," Thought 46 (Summer 1971): 250.

⁶⁵"Metaphor and the Twinned Vision," BW, p. 43.

⁶⁶"Nationalism and Darwin," HG, p. 83; "These volumes (under review), like the other works of Rosenstock-Huessy, are difficult to classify. And this is as it should be, for a dissatisfaction with all classification because of the disability it unavoidably entails is a mark not only of Rosenstock-Huessy's thought but of contemporary philosophy generally. If it is true, as those who are intelligently ill at ease in the presence of classification well know, that we can never avoid it, however industriously we may conceal it, it is also true that man can never again be so smug about classifying things as he rather consistently has been in the past. Philosophy today is spilling out of its old containers, not shrinking but growing, developing a social dimension and cast which is personalist and even poetic and literary." "Philosophical Sociology," Modern Schoolman 37 (January 1960): 141.

analogous forms from the most diverse sources.⁶⁷

Klubertanz has hinted at this by observing Ong's penchant for tackling a secular topic from the perspectives of literary criticism, then shifting to philosophical implications and then to the theological.⁶⁸ Some critics are irritated and frustrated by such tactics, and they complain that he neglects sustained and detailed treatment of matters which he treats suggestively.⁶⁹

Frank Kermode, while judging Ong more judicious and responsible than McLuhan, assails him for throwing out sentences like apple parings dropped carelessly on the page.⁷⁰ He is especially frustrated by what he reads as Ong's attempt to devise a question-proof system or theory which can explain everything or explain anything away.⁷¹ He asks what Ong's theory is for and concludes that it is for a return to the old, sacred

⁶⁷Review of T.S. Eliot: The Dialectical Structure of His Theory of Poetry, by Fei-Pai Lu, American Literature 38 (January 1967): 573-74; This is a point of affinity between Ong and Eliot.

⁶⁸"Wit and Mystery: A Revaluation in Medieval Latin Hymnody," BW, pp. 88-130; George Klubertanz, Modern Schoolman 42 (March 1965): 323.

⁶⁹J. Moody, Commonweal 66 (August 1957): 444, (FAC); John Coulson, Downside Review (January 1969): 117, (PW); W. Clark Royce, Restoration Quarterly 11 (1969): 284, (PW). Ong's suggestiveness irritates those critics who want sustained treatment which terminates at a clearly defined conclusion. "A plea is made for a new humanism but the author gives no very clear outline of what he desiderates." J.J. Dwyer, Clergy Review 42 (August 1957): 500-501, (FAC).

⁷⁰Frank Kermode, New York Review of Books 10 (14 March 1968): 22-26, (PW).

⁷¹Ibid.: 23.

orality of primitive culture.⁷²

There is much one can sympathize with if one adopts Kermode's approach to Ong. Taken singly or as a whole, his works fail as a total theory. The assumption, however, that he is attempting to produce a theory in the sense of a methodical or systematic whole is open to question.⁷³ Both by his own admission and from an examination of his writings, one can reasonably suggest that Ong is really interested in the interface between theories, in the ground upon which theories are built, in the way theories are produced and the factors that influence them, in the human impact of theories, their philosophical and theological import.⁷⁴

⁷²Ibid. Not all reviewers read him this way however: "It is Ong's historical sense which permits him to develop this approach, and it is the same sense that makes him apply the evolutionary theory of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, that great genius whose writings are now being published, to a description of man's advance in history. Technology thus is given a meaningful place; it is not resentfully pictured as a phase of decline of the spirit. If technology is looked at in this way, then it becomes obvious that our time challenges the Church, and foremost within her the intellectual leaders, to draw the consequences from living in that historical period which is our time. What is needed, according to Ong, is to envision a real Christian mystique of technology and science. That is, it needs to develop a real spiritual insight into technology and science which at least attempts to discover and discuss the philosophical and theological meaning of the technological and scientific trend which marks our age." Rudolph E. Morris, Renascence 10 (Winter 1957): 110, (FAC); For an example of Ong's often repeated disclaimer, see PW, p. 320: "Particularly in studying the presence of the word to man, whether the human word or God's Word, we must beware of the elusive quest for a lost Eden. There is no road back into history: we can only relate the past to the present."

⁷³Morris, p. 109; Nevertheless, Cox sees him as attempting a comprehensive treatment of cultural artifacts. Harvey Cox, Christian Century 85 (10 April 1968): 456, (PW), and The Feast of Fools (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 166. But comprehensiveness does not necessarily mean system.

⁷⁴"Ong: Following a Renaissance Prototype," Aardwolf 2 (December 1969, January 1970): 2. (An unsigned interview).

One particularly perplexing issue for Kermode is Ong's interfacing of his own tripart scheme of history with Freud's psychosexual sequences.⁷⁵ Perhaps anticipating that others would find similarities, Ong tries out the comparison, finds it illustrative in some ways, and unworkable in others.⁷⁶ Miller rightly sees a sense of play here.⁷⁷ But more generally it is typical of Ong's technique in that he is wary of the limits of attempts to achieve theoretical closure or completeness.⁷⁸ He prefers to situate himself as much as possible at frontiers, crossroads, wave-fronts, at points of interaction among diverse phenomena.

Miller differentiates Ong from what he styles characteristic Jesuit and Catholic point-by-point exposition which drives to a

⁷⁵PW, pp. 92-110. Ong suggests the possibility of a more detailed exposition by using Erikson's more elaborate eight-stage sequence: PW, pp. 105-106. In "Rhetoric and the Origins Consciousness," RRT, pp. 10-11, he performs a similar treatment on the stages enumerated by Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, Bollingen Series 42, trans. R.F.C. Hull, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).

⁷⁶"Contrasts in Catholicism," FAC, pp. 39-42; David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); O'Dea claims that Ong does not understand Riesman, but it is not clear what he means. Thomas O'Dea, Thought 32 (September 1957), pp. 476-77, (FAC).

⁷⁷Charles T. Dougherty, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 21 (January 1968), p. 48, (PW); Ong is indebted to Johann Huizinga's Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950); Miller notes that "'Onglish' is often written with a learned smile," and Sullivan sees "a great mind at play." Bryant finds even "his hobby horses" interesting. The point of this is that a certain playfulness in Ong keeps him from becoming ideological. It is rooted in the relationist habit of mind that finds itself at home with metaphor. But play also is or can be serious business, and it regularly is in Ong. Life is radically struggle, agonia, even when that struggle is playfully structured. See Ong's preface to Hugo Rahner, Man at Play (New York: Herder and Herder, p. xii. Miller, Modern Schoolman 46 (November 1968): 68, (PW); Mother Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J., Jubilee 10 (October 1962): 46, (BW); Donald Bryant, Quarterly Journal of Speech 58 (December 1972): 470, (RRT). See also Ong's comments on the play element and "diversified learning" as evidenced by Huizinga: "The Knowledge Explosion in the Humanities," HG, pp. 45-46.

⁷⁸Gerald Sykes, Saturday Review 45 (11 August 1962): 27-28, (BW).

conclusion.⁷⁹ He finds him suggesting rather than moving along an easily determined line of argument: one topic suggests another until the reader begins to experience that everything is ultimately related to everything else.⁸⁰ Consequently some critics mistrust his penchant for startling pronouncements while others find him refreshing and renewing of timeworn or jaded topics. Kuhns finds Ong difficult to manipulate into familiar traditions partly because he presumes the presence of varied levels of meaning in cultural phenomena.⁸¹

If Kermode finds in Ong too little order and continuity, Altizer seems to find in him too much continuity of the wrong kind.⁸² While he absolves Ong of what he calls McLuhan's "grosser absurdities," he judges him more reprehensible for presenting his argument as historical and rational analysis.⁸³ Both Ong and Altizer agree with Eliade's assessment of the fundamentally religious character of archaic culture.⁸⁴ Yet they react to it quite differently. Altizer takes Eliade to mean that modern or post-archaic civilized man is ipso facto incapable of openness to the

⁷⁹C. Lee Miller, Modern Schoolman 46 (November 1968): 68, (PW); Gerald Sykes, Saturday Review 45 (August 1962): 29, (BW).

⁸⁰C. Lee Miller, Modern Schoolman 46 (November 1968): 68, (PW); "While Ong ranges over the entire history of man and culture, evoking and exhibiting his claims rather than arguing for them in detail, he opens up for us a fresh and exciting perspective for understanding a wide range of human phenomena." J. Richard Bernstein, Review of Metaphysics 21 (March 1968): 559, (PW). See also Gerard Reedy, "Metaphor in 'The Phenomenon of Man'": 250.

⁸¹William Kuhns, The Dialogist 1 (Fall 1969): 71, (PW, KFM).

⁸²For a brief account of Altizer's understanding of dialectic, see his "The Sacred and the Profane: A Dialectical Understanding of Christianity," in Thomas J.J. Altizer and William Hamilton, Radical Theology and the Death of God (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), pp. 140-155.

⁸³Altizer, Theology Today 25 (July 1968): 281, (PW).

⁸⁴Cooper, The Roots of Radical Theology, pp. 116-117.

primordial Word. For Altizer the story seems to end here, at least as far as traditional forms of religious experience are concerned.⁸⁵ Man must go on without God, perhaps to find him again in the midst of a committed secularity.⁸⁶

Altizer is too complex and elusive to be adequately treated here.⁸⁷ But his reaction to Ong occasions bringing Ong himself into the light. Altizer seems bothered by Ong's addition of a third stage to history, the electronic age, as a synthesis of the oral and visual.⁸⁸ But despite Altizer's fear to the contrary, Ong's understanding of synthesis does not mean the destruction or negation of former stages.⁸⁹ Ong's personalist theism rooted in the presence of the Incarnate Word means for Altizer that civilized, visualist, literate man with all his arts and sciences must be denigrated in favor of a return to the primeval.⁹⁰ For Ong, if renewed

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 149.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 117, 119.

⁸⁷Cooper lists ten possible meanings of "death of God," pp. 31-33. Somehow they would all have to be taken into account.

⁸⁸Ong seems to be very close to Ricoeur in seeing contemporary hermeneutical approaches as a dialectical synthesis which cannot return to primitive naïveté but cannot any longer ignore the access to reality which was available there. Here both Ong and Ricoeur go beyond Eliade in positing a synthetic possibility beyond his dialectical juxtaposition of primitive and modern. "Does that mean that we could go back to primitive naïveté? Not at all. In every way, something has been lost, irremediably lost: immediacy of belief. But if we can no longer live the great symbolisms of the Sacred in accordance with the original belief in them, we can, we modern men, aim at a second naïveté in and through criticism. In short, it is by interpreting that we can hear again. Thus, it is in hermeneutics that the symbol's gift of meaning and the endeavor to understand by deciphering are knotted together." Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 351.

⁸⁹"Media Transformation: The Talked Book": 405.

⁹⁰"Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision," National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin: Report of the Proceedings and Addresses -- Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois 19-22 April 1960 57 (August 1960): 37-50; "The Challenge of Technology", The Sign 37 (February 1958): 21-25.

or secondary orality of the electronic age means hopeful things for religion, this is not because civilization is denigrated.⁹¹ Rather civilization is complemented and enriched by being relieved of its previous onesidedness.⁹² There is no return but a renewal of an enduring human capacity in a fuller way than either oral or visual cultures alone could imagine. Altizer's approach to dialectic in history may prevent him from expecting such a possibility, at least for the foreseeable future.⁹³ Commitment to Christ apparently means for him a Christ exclusively within history and not a Christ as an hierophantic or sacramental point of access

⁹¹"The uneasiness is shown in the growing or recurrent suspicion that such notions as system may, in the last analysis, prove to be philosophical man's nests. This suspicion need not lead to a new irrationalism at all. It should mean a recurrence of certain other approaches to knowledge which marked the Renaissance, the approach through voice and sound, the Hebraic rather than the Greek approach. Here knowledge is contained not in a system, but in discourse, in conversation which has been going on since man appeared on earth. This point of view submerges the visualist, explanatory approach and with it science itself in something more ultimate and more transcendent, in the existentialist situation, with which our most immediate contact is through voices and persons rather than through observation and objects. In this more living and vocal view of reality, which represents a symbolization the polar opposite of that whose evolution has been discussed so briefly and inadequately here, science is only arrested dialogue of man with man, and an echo of the interior dialogue in silence of each soul with God." "System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, pp. 84-85.

⁹²See "Psyche and the Geometers: Aspects of Associationist Critical Theory," RRT, pp. 220; "The Challenge of Technical Excellence to the Catholic Intellect." An address to the Advanced Workshop for the Improvement of Catholic Schools of Medical Technology, St. Louis, Missouri, (30 January 1961), p. 8. Altizer may be piqued by McLuhan's having relativized his radicalism: "The Newtonian God - The God who made a clocklike universe, wound it, and withdrew - died a long time ago. This is what Nietzsche meant and this is the God who is being observed. Anyone who is looking around for a simulated icon of the deity in Newtonian guise might well be disappointed. The phrase 'God is dead' applies aptly, correctly, validly to the Newtonian universe which is dead. The ground rule of that universe, upon which so much of our Western world is built, has dissolved." Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 146.

⁹³Cooper, The Roots of the Radical Theology, pp. 116-117.

to the divine.⁹⁴ Unlike the modernists, Ong does not see all history as identical with salvation history,⁹⁵ but unlike Altizer, who sees no capacity in the Church to come to terms with technological culture, he finds continuity in the Church's ability to adapt to cultural change.⁹⁶ He does not find radical disjunction in history. Rather later stages culminate and intensify earlier ones, and, if the changes are often monumental, they nevertheless remain part of God's mysterious plan.⁹⁷

What in Ong leads Altizer to conclude that there is no genuine theological or conceptual thinking of any kind in Ong's approach?⁹⁸ Reasons for Ong's suspicion of attempts to enclose actuality systematically, conceptually or abstractly have already been suggested.⁹⁹ While this does not mean depreciating reason, it recognizes its actual limitations and its

⁹⁴Ong would be closer to Schillebeeckx and also to Tillich here. See Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P. God the Future of Man (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), pp. 93ff., and Paul Tillich, Theology of Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 41.

⁹⁵PW, p. 181; W. Clark Royce, Restoration Quarterly 11 (1969): 283-284, (PW).

⁹⁶"On Mass Media and Theology: What a Catholic University Should Do," a transcription of an interview with Dr. Andrew Ruskowski, Director, Institute of Social Communications, St. Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario, 24 June 1969. (Mimeographed for private circulation), p. 13; PW, p. 11.

⁹⁷"To make the modern world and world view, much more than 'secularization' has, quite obviously, been going on. Seen in larger historical, and prehistorical, perspectives, the age of technology is part of the great and mysterious evolution of the universe devised by God. It can be considered as an epoch in what we may call the 'hominization' of the world, that is, the taking over of our planet by mankind." "Technology and New Humanist Frontiers," FAC, p. 88.

⁹⁸Thomas J.J. Altizer, Theology Today 25 (July 1968): 283, (PW). Ong might consider this a compliment.

⁹⁹"Wit and Mystery," BW, pp. 118-120; "St. Ignatius' Prison-cage and the Existentialist Situation," BW, p. 255.

dialectical relationship to the infrarational.¹⁰⁰ Consciousness has evolved and continues to evolve, but it is a long way from perfect culmination.¹⁰¹

Ong's particular understanding of dialectic does not include a simple opposition or contradiction. He terms it "asymmetrical opposition," implying complementarity.¹⁰² He is convinced that metaphysics itself ultimately is founded in dialectically paired aphorisms, in paradoxes which the human mind cannot transcend but can only appreciate par

¹⁰⁰"The Myth of Myth: Dialogue with the Unspoken," BW, pp. 131-145; In this sense Ong would be closer to Pannenberg in his critique of Parmenides and the Eleatic understanding of being as opposed to the more dynamic Hebrew world sense. Wolfart Pannenberg, "Appearance as the Arrival of the Future," in Martin Marty and Dean G. Peerman, eds., New Theology No. 5 (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 112-129. He is in accord with Teilhard's vision of the "prime mover" in the future rather than in the past. See Christopher Mooney, Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ (New York: Doubleday, 1968), pp. 39-73; "Philosophically, Ong is closer to Heraclitus than to Parmenides. Theologically he is closer to the Hebraic tradition of preeminent emphasis upon the word as dabar than to the Greek emphasis upon logos. He resurrects the body of sound from its entombment in the letter and re-presents it in all its sensual comings, going, creatings, and destroyings." Richard A. Underwood, Journal of the American Academy of Religion 36 (September 1968): 278; Unlike Kuhns who differentiates what he understands as McLuhan's deterministic view from Ong's "perceptual meaning" approach, Vernon sees Ong as a "medialistic determinist." He also finds it difficult to understand Ong's preference for the spoken word if it encourages a sense of mystery. (NB: PW, p. 323). But this is precisely the point. The word, insofar as it relates to human personal interiority, shares in the very mystery of personal being. As such it always transcends its predicament, resonating not only the human but the divine as well. (PW, p. 324). Cf., William Kuhns, "The Derring-Do of Walter Ong," The Dialogist 1 (Fall 1969): 71, (PW, KFM); Thomas H. Vernon, Style 4 (Spring 1970): 170-172, (PW).

¹⁰¹"Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision," passim.

¹⁰²"Letter," p. 8; All values may imply a dialectical underpinning to be intelligible. For example, in human sexuality we may need committed celibacy in order to make sense of marriage. Along these lines, Luijpen would insist upon an element of negation in every affirmation. William A. Luijpen, Existential Phenomenology, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), pp. 192-196.

approfondissement.¹⁰³ Asymmetry, which precludes simple contradiction, holds things in creative tension, in an alternating interplay which, like metaphor, pricks the intellect into a continuous state of struggle or agonia.¹⁰⁴ Hence, different disciplines and kinds of knowing need to be interfaced, juxtaposed, to compensate for their fragmentation of actuality. Reductionism is onesidedly losing the tension. To sustain tension, Ong uses a kind of metaphorical, dialectical technique which he describes as "relationist rather than reductionist."¹⁰⁵

Ong's Tripartite Division of History as a Convenient Metaphor

This section will examine Ong's tripartite division of history by looking at its role in his thought and its usefulness for understanding

¹⁰³Muller-Thym, "Of History as a Calculus Whose Term is Science," Modern Schoolman 19 (March 1942): 42.

¹⁰⁴"Communications Media and the State of Theology": 472-473; "Agonistic Structures in Academia: Past to Present," Daedalus 103 (Fall 1974): 229-238; A Review of Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry, by Brian Vickers, (New York: St. Martin's Press and London: Macmillan, 1970), College English, (February 1972), p. 615; "World as View and World as Event," American Anthropologist 61 (August 1969): 643-644.

¹⁰⁵"The paraphenomena of the developments here treated are countless, and individual readers can doubtless think of many that have never occurred to the present writer. Since these reflections are intended to be suggestive rather than conclusive, a few paraphenomena might be suggested here." "Agonistic Structures in Academia: Past to Present," Interchange 5 (1974), pp. 10-11. "At present, it seems best not to go into the question of causal relationships between these shifts, to decide whether the way one thought about knowledge brought on the changes in ways of thinking about the world, or whether the converse was true. The sequence could be either way, or better, both ways. The psychological operations involved in the shifts are so subtle and concern so many people over so great a period of time that it is impossible to discover in full detail which new way of symbolization preceded which. The important thing is that the two shifts work in concert, that man's view of the universe and his view of his own mind are in great part correlatives." "System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, p. 69; Gilligan gives a perceptive summary of how this approach functions in Ong's writing. Bernard Gilligan, Thought 43 (Winter 1968): 624, (PW).

history, culturally and religiously.

Erwin Panowsky has observed that

The historian cannot help dividing his material into "periods," nicely defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "distinguishable portions of history." To be distinguishable, each of these portions has to have a certain unity; and if the historian wishes to verify this unity instead of merely presupposing it, he must needs try to discover intrinsic analogies between such overtly disparate phenomena as the arts, literature, philosophy, social and political currents, religious movements...¹⁰⁶

Huizinga has also pointed to the inevitability of analogies and metaphors in human expression and the role which they play in historical knowledge.¹⁰⁷ Historians do not define history. Rather they try to describe it in terms of analogous forms of life and function which appear together, employing categories which his worldview, his intellect and his culture provide. Furthermore, Huizinga finds the keys to analogies in history manifested in conflict.¹⁰⁸

History is a critical focus in the mosaic of things which make up Ong's work as we saw in the foregoing chapter. Here we would like to suggest that Ong, to the extent that he is an interpreter of history, employs analogies which he draws fundamentally from the analogizing, metaphorizing process in human consciousness itself rather than from some external classification.¹⁰⁹ His division of history is based on the

¹⁰⁶Quoted in Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷J. Huizinga, "Historical Conceptualization," The Varieties of History, ed. with introduction by Fritz Stern, (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1956), pp. 289-303; "Nationalism and Darwin," HG, p. 96; See also, Review of The Frozen Sea, by Charles Neider, (New York: Oxford University Press), Thought 92 (March 1949): 163.

¹⁰⁸Huizinga, "Historical Conceptualization," p. 292.

¹⁰⁹"Philosophical Sociology," The Modern Schoolman 37 (January 1960): 140; Stahmer confirms Ong's affinity with Rosenstock-Huessy. Harold Stahmer, Social Order 13 (June 1963): 36, (BW). Rycenga notes

premise that virtually all human expression is underpinned by sensory analogues, and that, for complex reasons, certain sensory analogues are stressed in certain times and places to the relative neglect of others.¹¹⁰

Ong is not primarily a historian, though the history of human knowing is a central interest of his.¹¹¹ He has a historian's love of concreteness and particularity and typically keeps his studies wedded to actual historical investigations.¹¹² As often as not he situates his more philosophical and theological researches within some specific temporal matrix.¹¹³

this by suggesting that Ong "aims to have us readjust our instruments of interpretation." J.A. Rycenga, Library Journal 92 (December 1967): 4420; Everyone uses metaphors, but not everyone is aware of their shaping effect on the imagining of reality. Further, as the new critics knew, metaphor "resociates" sensibility by moving toward integrated utterance.

¹¹⁰Review of Unfinished Man and the Imagination: 254-255; "Psyche and the Geometers: Aspects of Associationist Critical Theory," reprinted with some revisions in Ong's Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp. 232-236. When we forget analogies are analogies, we end up with something akin to what William Lynch calls the totalistic temptation. William F. Lynch, The Integrating Mind: An Exploration into Western Thought (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962), pp. 3-17. Visual analogies seem to encourage that amnesia more than do those rooted in sound.

¹¹¹"Ong: Following a Renaissance Prototype," 2; See also Aubrey Gwynn, Studies 46 (Summer 1957): 252, (FAC).

¹¹²"Whereas the existential phenomenologists treat life world rather statically and in reference to a general concept of intentionality and historicity, Ong follows the more concrete and historical route of reflecting on the actual shapes of man's oral-aural cultures, the impact of typography on modern awareness-structures, and the present move toward a recovery of the living word through rapid communication." James Collins, Cross Currents 18 (Spring 1968): 175, (PW).

¹¹³"Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu": 3-45. Typically Ong is at his best in studies like this where a finely tooled philosophical sense meets a superbly informed historical erudition.

History treated in terms of analogies and metaphors can provide the mind with "a riot of forms" similar to that provided by artistic expression, and Ong's background in criticism finds a congenial interface with historical sources.¹¹⁴

Tripartite divisions of history are not uncommon, a fact which is interesting in itself.¹¹⁵ Ong is familiar with some of these and even has drawn explicit attention to them.¹¹⁶ Yet in a sense his own division is based on an attempt to discover a pattern behind metaphors of historical interpretation. To this extent it serves as a base, as he styles it, as a prolegomenon, for a hermeneutic of cultural and religious history.¹¹⁷

Ong was not the first thinker to raise the question of the relationship between communications media and the varying character of human

¹¹⁴"Imitation and the Object of Art," Modern Schoolman 17 (May 1940): 66-69; "World as View and World as Event," American Anthropologist 61 (August 1969): 635-637; Gerard Reedy, "Metaphor in 'The Phenomenon of Man': 250.

¹¹⁵Tripartite divisions are apparent in the West at least as early as Giambattista Vico (1688-1744) who speaks of stages of fantasy, will, and science. This apparently passed through the Encyclopédistes to Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and his theological, metaphysical, and positive stages. Triads of various sorts are at work in G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831): logic, nature, mind, and thesis, antithesis, synthesis. More recently and somewhat differently Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) wrote of a tripartite scheme in civilizations, namely, creativity, reflection, and decline. Ong is familiar with David Riesman's tradition-directed, inner-directed, other-directed triad which, Ong suggests, may have roots in Freud's oral, anal and genital stages of psychosexual development. Jungian M. Esther Harding speaks of stages also, the naive, the sophisticated, and the conscious. See her book The Way of All Women (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), pp. 5-6. Beyond the West it is interesting to note that sixth century Chinese Buddhists proposed a three part scheme for history, the periods of the law, the counterfeit law, and the decline of law.

¹¹⁶"Knowledge in Time," KFM, p. 11; "Contrasts in Catholicism," FAC, pp. 39-44; "Religion, Scholarship and the Restitution of Man," HG, p. 131; R. Morris, Renaissance 13 (Fall 1960): 44, (ACC).

¹¹⁷"System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, p. 69.

thought.¹¹⁸ His own philosophical tradition had maintained a lively interest in the sensory dimensions of aesthetics as new criticism also did. Perhaps because of this, he was perceptive of the difference between written and oral forms of expression from the beginning.¹¹⁹ A kind of critical threshold was approached with his publication in 1951 of an article on associationism and its passion for mechanistic, geometric, mathematical analogies.¹²⁰ He notes that these analogies are powerful but that their hypertrophic use by the associationists coincides with a kind of "dissociation of sensibility," to use Eliot's well-known phrase.¹²¹

The full breakthrough in Ong's thought to sensory analogues as a key to sensibility and thought patterns comes with his Ramus studies, notable in Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue.¹²² Ong discovered that analogues associated with voice, and hence with dialogue, were progressively abandoned in favor of spatial-visual analogues which encourage interpreting all knowledge in terms of quantified, visualizable maneuvers

¹¹⁸Ong cites Whitehead, PW, pp. 8, 19. See also Carl Jung, et. al., Man and His Symbols (New York: Dell, 1964), p. 6; David Riesman, et. al., The Lonely Crowd (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961, [1950]), pp. 87ff. It is intriguing that Plato saw a connection in the Phaedrus: "The discovery of the alphabet will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories." The Dialogues of Plato, I, trans. B. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1920), p. 278.

¹¹⁹See "Historical Backgrounds of Elizabethan and Jacobean Punctuation Theory," PMLA 59 (June 1944): 349-360, especially 354, 359.

¹²⁰"Psyche and the Geometers": 16-27 (reprinted in RRT, pp. 213-216); see also, Quirinus Breen, Manuscripta 4 (Fall 1960): 52, (RM).

¹²¹"Psyche and the Geometers": 26 (in RRT, p. 234). This dissociation Ong also calls "hypervisualism." NB: "I See What You Say": 25.

¹²²Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).

of one sort or another.¹²³ Hence, "idea," "method," and "system," appeared and abounded.¹²⁴ Connections with the spread of printing became more evident.¹²⁵

Ong further discovered that models and analogues come and go.¹²⁶ They are not the same always and everywhere, and when they change, thought styles change.¹²⁷ How can this be understood?

A spate of Ramus articles from the early to mid-fifties articulated various pieces of the picture. Between 1955 and 1957, the sensory analogy seems fully matured in Ong's mind. He had discovered the oral-visual contrast as a key to Ramus' success and persuasiveness, and saw in it a pattern which assumed a greater and greater role in Western consciousness.¹²⁸ Rhetoric had kept communications close to the interpersonal

¹²³Ibid., pp. 53-91, 107-112.

¹²⁴"System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, pp. 76-84.

¹²⁵Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, pp. 307-314.

¹²⁶"The use of printing need not be regarded as the cause of this shift of the focus of knowledge toward spatial analogies, but rather as a spectacular symptom of the general reorientation going on. This reorientation is far-flung in its implications, being connected on one side with the emergence of the topical logics (logics of commonplaces or "place"-logics, and thus in effect space-logics) of Rudolph Agricola and Peter Ramus and their half-successful bid to replace the predicamental logics (statement-logics); on another side with the interest in plotting the surface of the globe which makes the same Gutenberg era the great age of cartography and exploration; and on still another with what is probably the most fundamental stylistic difference between ancient writing and modern writing -- the immeasurably greater exploitation today of visualist metaphors and of imagery which in one way or another admits of diagrammatic analysis." "System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism," BW, pp. 75-76.

¹²⁷"I See What You Say": 26ff.

¹²⁸Harold Stahmer, Social Order 13 (June 1963): 38, (BW).

world.¹²⁹ Logic and science like mathematics held subjectivity at maximum distance. Knowledge came to be appreciated as "object" rather than as dialogue.¹³⁰

During this period Ong employed a tripartite division of communications which anticipates his later division.¹³¹ Beginning from a concern about the relationship between religious and secular knowledges, Ong describes "three great periods of interaction" between disciplines: rhetoric (oratorical, dialogical); medieval and Renaissance scholasticism (objectivist, quantitative); and Romanticism and evolutionism (personalist, dialectical, biological).¹³² Over the ensuing decade this division developed into his more common analogy of oral, visual and electronic cultures, wedded to communications media on the one hand and sensory analogues for intellect on the other.¹³³

¹²⁹Commenting on the fact that rhetoric was mainly a male pre-occupation, Ong says that, "If this is interpreted to mean that rhetoric was the product of male chauvinism, then male chauvinism was essential for the maturing of intellect and culture. Whatever your interpretation, these are the forces you are dealing with when you undertake the history of rhetoric, deep movements within the human psyche in its relationship to cultural evolution." Review of Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry: 615.

¹³⁰Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue, pp. 92-93, 104-112, 151-156, 244-245, 277-279, 284-292.

¹³¹"Rhetoric and the Origins of Consciousness," RRT, pp. 1-22; "Tudor Writings on Rhetoric," Studies in the Renaissance 15 (1968): 39-69; "On Being Aware: A Letter to a Catholic Student Interested in the Growth of Catholic Literature and Culture," The Newman Annual, 1956-57 (Minneapolis, Minn.: Newman Foundation at the University of Minnesota, 1957), pp. 84-85.

¹³²Ong has continued to use variations on this device in his most recent writings, particularly when concerned with the role of rhetoric in culture. "Rhetoric and the Origins of Consciousness," RRT, 1ff.

¹³³PW, p. 290.

It is instructive to observe the kind of relevance Ong holds for in these analogies.¹³⁴ Concerning the earlier division of stages, Ong remarks that it is "convenient," and adds that he does not intend to imply that no other convenient groupings can be found.¹³⁵ In The Presence of the Word, where the later grouping or division is worked out in detail, augmented by an increasing assimilation of the work of investigators of "pre-literate" culture and his own "phenomenology" of sound, he characterizes the analogy as "useful."¹³⁶

This styling of stages in terms of shifts in or stages of verbalization is described as "convenient" and "informative."¹³⁷ His treatment is complex and subtle, but it remains self-consciously analogous.¹³⁸ He gives

¹³⁴"Events do not put themselves into language at all. Generally speaking, no two persons will report an event in the same words, even when each reporter may agree with the report of every other. . . . The ways in which a given event can be reported truthfully are potentially infinite; on the other hand, of course, each report requires care and responsibility, for there are also a potentially infinite number of ways of reporting the event untruthfully. Under the stimulus of the event, the imagination must make a selection of its resources and present the mind a way of representing the event conceptually, of focusing its chaotic totality in assimilable terms." Review of Unfinished Man and the Imagination: 253ff.

¹³⁵One is reminded here of the Latin conveniens. Metaphors and analogies are never so much exclusively right as they are "fitting".

¹³⁶PW, p. 22; "Rhetoric and the Origins of Consciousness", RRT, p. 1; See also, Richard A. Underwood, Journal of the American Academy of Religion 36 (September 1968): 278, (PW).

¹³⁷PW, p. 17.

¹³⁸"Interpretation of psychological phenomena by analogy with mechanistic operations and geometric diagrams, we can note in conclusion, is not without warrant and has always been a part of the methodology necessary or accessory to psychology. Everything depends on how much is made of the analogies -- whether, either implicitly or explicitly, they are regarded as quite adequate or whether their analogical character is kept constantly in mind." This statement is made in reference to quantitative, mechanistic analogies in associationism, but it can be applied to his own thought as well as a general attitude toward analogues. "Psyche and the Geometers," RRT, p. 233.

no evidence of thinking of it as an absolute or as exclusive.

This is to say that in examining Ong's division of history into media stages, a concern for finding useful metaphors is apparent. But equally apparent is his recognition that such metaphors are useful because they are to some extent already in service and have been in various ways operative throughout history.¹³⁹ His own metaphor or analogy of divisions is based on an account of the dominant metaphors which have actually enjoyed currency.¹⁴⁰ In other words, "oral" cultures treat actuality in ways analogous to orality; "visual" cultures prefer "visual" analogues or metaphors; electronic culture seems to synthesize these even if the ways elude our powers of description. Even if much is known, there is still much more to be known.¹⁴¹

Ong assembles a wealth of detail from significant and varied researchers, as well as from his own studies, to demonstrate that the use of analogies to differentiate historical periods and cultural styles is well founded.¹⁴² He shows persuasively that, as varied as are the senses themselves, as inevitable as sensation is for cognition, and as limited and specialized as each of the senses is, sensory analogues nevertheless provide a useful, informative and convenient key to determinants or horizons within which history has proceeded.¹⁴³ Just as there is structure to

¹³⁹RM, pp. 314-318.

¹⁴⁰"I See What You Say": 22-42; "World as View and World as Event: 44-45.

¹⁴¹PW, p. 88.

¹⁴²Review of St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis by George P. Klubertanz, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960), America 104 (28 January 1961): 574-75.

¹⁴³See above, p. 120, n.54. This is not arbitrary but is rather an extension of the scholastic axiom nil in intellectu quod non prius

the pre-human levels of evolution, there is structure in the development of cultural and religious history.¹⁴⁴ On the basis of his abundant and circumspect documentation of this sensory-communications analogy, and the modest claims he makes for it, it appears to be a workable and realistic device for interpreting history, one firmly grounded in human and scientific actuality.

Ong's Metaphorical Procedure as an
Approach to Theological Discourse

Lonergan quotes Quintillian to the effect that nearly everything we say is metaphor.¹⁴⁵ Even apart from what has been said in the foregoing pages, to the extent that Quintillian is correct, speaking of metaphor in Ong's thought is justifiable. However, we shall endeavor to show that metaphor, as we are using the term here, is radical and central to the thinking which Ong does. Moreover, we shall suggest that it has some particular values for theological thinking about religion and culture.

One senses that Ong's thought represents a kind of breakthrough in the study of religion and culture, one which is at once germinal, inchoate, original, suggestive as well as grounded in a philosophia perennis, imbued with tradition, and brimming with the obvious and the

aliquomodo in sensibus. The link between this and culture is activated post-factum. If sensory bias is a priori to some degree, the shape of a culture itself is a posteriori. Cultures are specialized. PW, p. 6; "Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu": 22; "The Meaning of the 'New Criticism'," p. 357.

¹⁴⁴Ong's approach has obvious affinities with Newman's "idea" of development. See, "Newman's Essay on Development in its Intellectual Milieu": 9-11.

¹⁴⁵"Paene omne quod dicimus metaphora est." Bernard J. Lonergan, Insight: A Study of Human Understanding, 3d. ed., (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970), p. 544.

commonplace.

Gerard Reedy remarks that Teilhard, due to his radical metaphor-icity, eludes the rigorously logical mind.¹⁴⁶ Ong's itinerant metaphor-icity as well escapes the confines of consistently unilinear treatment and especially of methodical or systematic treatment. Ong's own treatment of religion and culture is so metaphorical that thinkers like Kermode, who anticipates a system, and Altizer, who expects conceptual thinking, are uncomfortable with his approach. Attempts to analyze religion and culture or Ong himself fall under Stallknecht's observations about the study of metaphor: "We have finally to admit that in these studies our theory lags behind experience, and our subject overwhelms us with an embarrassment of riches. There are more things here than can be made explicit in our philosophy."¹⁴⁷

Gerard Manley Hopkins saw that the difference between prose and poetry lies in the fact that poetry draws into a structure a diversity of things beyond explicit and one dimensional meanings. Prose, on the other hand, moves toward maximum explicitness and minimization of the implicit suggestiveness of metaphor. Thus, the scientific treatise is easier to translate than the poem, which remains essentially untranslatable. In fact, the poem cannot even be adequately paraphrased in the same language. Criticism can never replace it. Thus, speaking of the particularity of poetry, Boyle observes that,

Prose intends to interpret reality, to carry being into the mind;
a poem intends to take its place in reality, to be a being that

¹⁴⁶Reedy, "Metaphor in 'The Phenomenon of Man'": 258.

¹⁴⁷Newton P. Stallknecht, Review of Metaphor in Hopkins, by Robert Boyle, S.J. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), Yale Review 51 (December 1961): 642.

the mind may contemplate by way of ear, to draw the mind out into real being.¹⁴⁸

It is especially the metaphoricity of poetry that makes this happen.

Except for his few poems, Ong's writing is certainly not poetry in any usual sense, and still less is it written to be read aloud. What possible relationship is there between what Boyle says and Ong's prose analyses of religion and culture?

One thing is certain: poetry is indeed composed for the ear, and as Lord and Havelock have demonstrated, the kind of discourse which characterizes oral cultures is poetry.¹⁴⁹ If, for Ong, the spoken word is the closest analogue for thought, if dialogue is the proper state of language, and if scientific thought is arrested dialogue lacking existential resonance, we have a key to the nature of Ongian discourse.

The fact that critics have accused Teilhard de Chardin of being unscientific, of being a poet and a mystic rather than a scientist, may be in fact rooted in his use of metaphor. As Boyle says,

Science cannot use metaphor, because metaphor reduces the universal to the particular, because metaphor is essentially unclear -- it does not bring reality into the mind in conceptual form, as science desires, but draws the mind into the non-conceptual mysteries of reality. In Ransom's inimitable statement, it does not conclude an act of attention, but initiates one.¹⁵⁰

In "The Myth of Myth: Dialogues with the Unspoken", and "Swift on the Mind: Satire in a Closed Field," Ong takes this further to say that

¹⁴⁸Boyle, Metaphor in Hopkins, p. 191.

¹⁴⁹Albert B. Lord, The Singer of Tales, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 24, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); Eric A. Havelock, Preface to Plato, (New York: The Universal Library, 1967).

¹⁵⁰Boyle, Metaphor in Hopkins, pp. 182-183. Of course, Teilhard and Ong serve to enlarge our notion of what science is.

there is always an irreducible implicitness in every human utterance since actuality inevitably far transcends our ability to articulate it. It is always tempting to try to override this fact by creating a Procrustean system, what Ong calls the "myth of the ideally isolated system."¹⁵¹ One simply pretends that everything exists equivalently under conditions of standard temperature and pressure. But do they ever, except perhaps approximately in the laboratory? In other words, one can amass data and so organize it as to give the impression that one has exhausted the topic under discussion. But one cannot treat all or even most of the implications of the simplest phenomenon because its implications extend ultimately to everything, indeed, to Being itself. The radius of the atom extends to the limits of the universe.¹⁵²

The "dissociation" of Western sensibility can mean here a dissociation of the way we think about thinking. That dissociation strikes deeply and is evident as early as Plato wherein the search for clarity of idea begins to disenfranchise the poet and the symbolizer. Clarity can thus obscure reality. Since Plato's day, the Western sensibility has traversed all sorts of labyrinthian confusions and reversals which have been quite paradoxical in themselves. Ong has attempted to gather some of these up in his metaphorical scheme. It is quite outside our purposes here to repeat what was said earlier. But to situate the problem at hand, we can ask whether Ong contributes anything which might work toward rapprochement between scientific and symbolic discourse and which might

¹⁵¹"The Myth of Myth: Dialogue with the Unspoken," BW, pp. 131-145; "Swift on the Mind: Satire in a Closed Field," RRT, pp. 190-212.

¹⁵²Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man, trans. Bernard Wall, (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 45.

consequently be useful for theological discourse.

If we assume, to begin with, that human discourse is not divided into a dualism between poetry and prose, but that there is rather a constant interplay between the elements of discourse which make up individual and collective styles, it may be possible to approach some conclusions about Ong's contribution.

We shall take for granted that there is a relationship between culture and communication conceived in its broadest sense to include all linguistic forms as well as the other arts. For, as Ricoeur has said, in this sense man is language through and through. But Ricoeur also points out that neither a dualism or a reductionism between the symbolic and the analytical or reflective is workable. They function in tandem, and critical reflection is itself based on a creative hermeneutics of symbol. Ricoeur thus points to the need for a shift from a kind of reductionistic criticism which deals with the symbolic as a mere masking of ideas to a criticism that is, as he terms it, "restorative."¹⁵³

What Ricoeur prescribes appears to be a kind of synthesis that closely parallels Ong's search for a "relationist" procedure of cultural criticism which invites and initiates further thoughts rather than settles on any set of assertions as a final answer. Ong finds that latter kind of criticism precisely what is objectionable in Ramism, in Swift, in Mill, and even in Hegel and in other forms of visualist reductionism. In this perspective, the dialectical tension between oral and visual cultures is an externalization of an antagonism or agonia grounded in the human mind itself, one that seeks to obliterate the symbolic dimension and all that

¹⁵³Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 350.

it embodies. It is comparable to what Frances Yates has called an "interior iconoclasm," and it issues in what William Lynch has styled the "totalistic temptation" (the ideally isolated system) and "Prometheism" (or the "Great Western Fiction" of a closed, self-sufficient world order), tendencies which are critical for the theological imagination.¹⁵⁴

To the extent that theological discourse is a mode of human discourse, what has been said of discourse in general can also be said of theology. Of course, in a Christian understanding theology must contend with additional complicating factors which some other forms of discourse might not so noticeably. In a knowing grounded in history and on the uniqueness of personal being, succumbing to the totalistic or systematizing temptation proves especially self-defeating. For example, whether one takes theology as "God-Talk" or as "transcendental anthropology," it is not apparent that discourse about God and discourse about man can well be separated.¹⁵⁵ This is true not only because man must always talk from man's perspective, but, since the Incarnation, man's word and God's word are radically unified even if they still cannot be treated as simply identical.

One must go further. Theological discourse cannot go on apart from human discourse, but rather, since God's creating and saving action embraces all creation, theological discourse must include in principle dialogue with all other human discourses and disciplines. To the extent that God's action is directed to all times and places, theological

¹⁵⁴William F. Lynch, The Integrating Mind (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962), pp. 3-17, and Christ and Prometheus: A New Image of the Secular (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), pp. 56 ff.

¹⁵⁵John Macquarrie, God-Talk (New York: Harper and Row, 1967). Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, IX, trans. Graham Harrison, (New York: Seabury Press, n.d.) pp. 28-45.

discourse must invite into dialogue all ages and cultures. For theological discourse so conceived, no datum from whatever source can be *per se* irrelevant.

This is a tall order, and even if one grants that theology is incomplete as long as history is incomplete, one suspects that the actual practice of theology has proceeded counter to these purposes. Methods and systems often enough have tended to produce reductionist ideologies rather than relationist dialogues. Hence, while it has been one of the great instruments of adaptation, theology has been as well a great instrument of division. One suspects, too, that it continues to be so.

In Christ and Prometheus, William Lynch not only provides a penetrating account of the implications of theological discourse as an act of the imagination, but he makes a persuasive case for the idea that the central theological problem today is a call for renovating both religious and secular imagination. His presentation itself is a powerfully metaphorical dramatization of the human imagination. The dramatic character of this call for reimagining entails not the construction of new static images but new ways of imaging, and, thus, new ways of doing theology. Elsewhere he richly substantiates the relationship which analogical thinking has to this project of the imagination.¹⁵⁶

The link between Lynch's call and Ong's work is the notion of metaphor as we have been using it, though this needs some qualification. The metaphoricity at work in Ong is something which shares in the kind of thing poets do, but it is also different. Ong's writing is, in its own way, also scientific. The extent to which Ong's procedure brings into one

¹⁵⁶William F. Lynch, Christ and Apollo (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), pp. 136-193.

formality functions of discourse which are normally opposed says something about the dialectical character of his work.

Perhaps the most accurate way of saying this, though perhaps not especially the most informative when read as an abstraction, is that Ong treats the data of a whole range of disciplines and knowings as though they were the stuff of which metaphors are made. The result is that one finds scientific discourse, or so it appears, which enlarges rather than narrows the matter under discussion, which generates wonder and mystery rather than concludes in a satisfying way.

Ong's pieces end, of course, but they rarely if ever actually conclude. One rarely if ever finishes reading him with the sense that one has particularly finished anything or that what it was all about can be very neatly encapsulated, even though one might be left with a great deal to talk about and surely is left seeded with myriad further questions.¹⁵⁷

This feature of Ong's writings alone invites the use of the term "metaphor" to describe it if for no other reason than that it is closer to metaphor than to anything else. The intellectual effect of reading him is analogous to the experience of reading poetry in that it stimulates the imagination and structures discourse so as to invite and sustain further questioning rather than to provide conclusions. For this reason alone those who are superficially informed will not find Ong too satisfying. Those who seem to find him most stimulating do not regard him as having failed to finalize treatment of some topic, but see him rather as providing one side of a conversation. It becomes a dialogue to the extent that one is able to hear other voices, and to make living the many other

¹⁵⁷Perhaps this is part of what Keats meant when he said that knowledge increases unreality.

speakers whom he represents in the course of his presentation.

With these reflections we might approach the questions of whether and how Ong might be construed to be doing theology. The answer to the whether for this writer, is affirmative, though seeing how Ong actually does it may invite some new thoughts about the nature of theological discourse. For present purposes we understand theology broadly, but hopefully in a way which is in touch with traditional definitions, as a reflective, disciplined discourse which seeks to explore, to understand, and to articulate more fully the reciprocal implication of knowing born of faith and knowing born of human discovery. There are hazards in such a formulation, but there are advantages too.

First, describing theology in this way excludes the possibility of anything like pure theological discourse. Something can be treated as theological even while it may appear on other grounds to be mostly some other kind of discourse.

Secondly, theological discourse cannot be rigidly separated from secular discourse without ceasing to be discourse at all. This means that it is constitutionally interdisciplinary or, in other words, that theological discourse exists only in a state of active tension, or interface or dialogue, or asymmetrical opposition, with other kinds of discourse. The terms of the dialogue are the analogous forms which appear in the process of inquiry, and the more complex and profound these become, the denser the actuality they portray for human apprehension, the closer they approach that richly saturated form of utterance which lavishes on the intellect a host of intelligibilities: metaphor.

Since the metaphorical structure of theological discourse so understood means that it is potentially limitless as regards the concrete

judgments which can be devised to carry it on, any pretense to methodical or systematic completeness is exposed for the illusion it is. No matter what or how much one says, the metaphoricity of which we have been speaking demands that one situate all discourse against the background of an inarticulated and indescribable totality. Upon reflection this totality discloses all discourse as necessarily somewhat arbitrary and provisional no matter how true and productive. Metaphoricity in this sense, in other words, encourages a sense of mystery which is endemic to genuine theological thinking. Among Ong's contributions to theological discourse is a concretizing of the realization that in the midst of great learning, one should avoid the impression that mystery has been eliminated. The human mind hungers for actuality, but it possesses it only in the search. Hence, paradoxically, method and system, to the extent that they succeed, can in the same movement create a certain kind of unreality.¹⁵⁸

Whenever one discourses about anything, one also thematizes oneself, one's own conscious existence in the world. So in theological

¹⁵⁸ Review of Symbol and Metaphor in Human Experience, by Martin Foss (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), Modern Schoolman 27 (May 1950): 327. Human discourse seems to be bounded by mystery on either side. It is interesting to note along with that St. Thomas gives metaphor a place in theology because the subject matter is suprarational and in poetry because the subject matter is infrarational. (In. Sent., prolog., q. 1, a. 5 ad 3; cf. ST, I, 1.9.). The ramifications of this for Ongian discourse are even more far reaching. In the words of Professor Timothy Chouinard, Florissant Valley Community College, St. Louis, Missouri: "The writings of Walter Ong as much as any other contemporary, or not-so-contemporary, thinker, perhaps even more so, suggest an assimilative style-of-approach that is at once maximally-and-minimally assimilative, in a kind of self-consciously rationalizing sense, one that is detachable from Ong and his writings for everyone, but Ong himself of course. By 'maximally-and-minimally assimilative' I mean that Ong has an approach to things that is both disclosing, in Heidegger's word, and remystering, in my own. By phrasing things in such a sort of precise approximateness, or with such an analytic awe, Ong has effectively embodied in his stylistic approach the reconciliation of preliterate naivete' and literate sophistication." (Informal remarks).

discourse, one simultaneously discloses and is disclosed by metaphors which one has grasped and by which one has been grasped. Human discourse is always an event in human life, part of one's historicity, and, therefore, whatever one says is bracketed by the concrete horizons of one's life experience and history.¹⁵⁹ These horizons, including the horizon of one's experience of faith, remind one that far more has gone on, is going on, and will go on than one knows.

Fundamentally theological discourse must be seen as abiding in the ontological agonia which makes up human existence. Though Ong himself does not say much explicitly about theology per se, he calls it his overarching concern, and, if one understands the term broadly enough, he practices it in the sense we have just described quite regularly. One has to be content here less with Ong's account of what theology is and more with understanding what he actually does.

To highlight Ong's metaphoricity an observation by Dylan Thomas about his own poetic practice might be helpful:

I make one image -- though "make" is not the word; I let, perhaps, an image be made emotionally in me and then apply to it what intellectual and critical forces I possess - let it breed another, let that image contradict the first, make, of the third image bred out of the other two together, a fourth contradictory image,¹⁶⁰ and let them all, within my imposed formal limits, conflict.

This describes the process of building and contextualizing metaphors, and its agonistic structure is evident. Of course, in Ong's case the formation process is ostensibly intellectual as well as emotional, and the primary components are the major thematic complexes described in the

¹⁵⁹See Luijpen, Existential Phenomenology, pp. 141-148.

¹⁶⁰Quoted in Geoffrey Moore "Dylan Thomas," Kenyon Review 17 (Spring 1955): 275.

previous chapter, the context of Ong's own biographic and religious heritage, and any number of other disciplines and studies which might be pertinent to his purposes.

In treating of Ong's backgrounds or formative factors we did not include a section on theology per se. The reasons are several. First of all, there is no theological summary either by Ong or by someone else which is comparable to Tresmontante's Christian Metaphysics or Ong's preface thereto. Secondly, Ong himself apparently sees his theology as far more indebted to his philosophical background and to his thoughtfully lived faith life than to any theological school. He certainly belongs to no discernible school of theology despite the fact that he knows well the textbook theology of his seminary days and may at times employ its logia. He has certainly assimilated historical and contemporary theological thought, though one often has to seek it between the lines since he rarely explicates it. In the ordinary terms one would use to classify theologians, one is hard-pressed to say much more than that he is an imaginative, contemporary, orthodox, Catholic thinker. Such observations are not especially informative for present purposes.

This might be in fact the wrong approach to what is distinctive of Ong and his contribution to theological discourse. When we described theology above, we did it so as to cope with the fact that when Ong does theology he commonly does so in the midst of doing mostly something else. We shall examine some of the implications of this fact for theological discourse and shall argue that this characteristic is one of Ong's contributions.

Wolfhart Pannenberg has remarked that a theologian is primarily someone who tries to make sense of the tradition.¹⁶¹ When one gets down to applying categories to Ong, one of the easiest to use is "traditionalist." Yet as it functions in his thought, tradition is not a storehouse of defensive or ideological armaments. Tradition is home and family, the milieu of one's own being-handed-down. Ong knows it intimately, loves it, cherishes it, sees its strengths and weaknesses, chides it and praises it. Tradition exudes from what he says or writes, and it comes out as something vast, vital, warm and fertile, even maternal. One senses in Ong, both personally and in his writings, a pervasive reverence for tradition -- human, Jesuit, Christian, Catholic-- a certain delight at being identified with these things that imbues his work with a kind of secure humanity and prevents it, even when seemingly arcane, from ever being arid.¹⁶²

The purpose of these remarks is not simply praise. Rather they set, in the Heideggerian sense, a mood which characterizes and discloses a radical aspect of Ong's approach. Tradition is embodiedness. It provides a standpoint in the world, a past, a present, and the ground of a future. In this sense, "traditionalist" means more than can be understood in political or ideological terms. Hence, the terms liberal or

¹⁶¹The remark was made at an informal discussion sponsored at Regis College by the Departments of Religious Studies and Philosophy, October 26, 1975.

¹⁶²"Ong represents therefore the imminence of a transcendental style, in other words, of a transcendence from within, which upon being so said, is obviously the only real kind. His relationship with his--and all--embodiedness is the implicit issue here: Ong so accepts history as embodiedness and embodiedness as history that the acceptance itself is transforming of the very thing being accepted, such that it is no longer the same for being so accepted, nor he for so accepting it. Paraphrasing and recontextualizing a statement of Carl Jung's, 'the way out is through.' This would then be the specific and ultimate burden of Ong's 'catholicity,' or 'through-the-whole'-ness." (Timothy Chouinard, informal remarks).

conservative, for example, mean very little when applied to Ong. What could it mean to be "liberal" or "conservative" about one's embodiedness?

Ong loves many of the same earthly things Teilhard did. He is, as was Teilhard, tinged with Romanticism. But unlike Teilhard, who waxed poetic and lyrical about his work, Ong for the most part declines to talk about his work or himself. Characteristically, if one were to ask, he would respond by mentioning what someone else had said about him. This may be opacity or mere privacy, but even so, we suspect more.¹⁶³

Part of this more is expressed in a second term: Ong's approach is incarnational, a notion closely related to what was said of tradition. Yet the mere addition of this term complicates matters immensely.

We have already suggested that Ong's ability to tolerate an unusually high degree of implicitness in his expression is a consequence of his metaphoricity. More accurately, we have likened Ong to the poet because, unlike the scientist, who strives somewhat exclusively for maximum explicitness, Ong structures discourse also for maximum implicitness. This is not mere ingenuity. It is rooted in the metaphysical insight that, unlike purely spiritual knowing, human knowing must come into its own through the density of materiality. Ong's response not only legitimates but positively encourages dallying in the midst of contingency, or perhaps, one should say abiding there.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³Ong will speak about himself if pressed though even then with some reluctance. He does what he does. See Riemer, The New Jesuits, pp. 147-186. "My whole intellectual career, from one point of view, has been the establishment of this connection between the romantic process-oriented, nature-loving side of knowledge and the structured side of knowledge, and neither of these seem to me sufficient unto itself. But I guess if I had to choose one, I'd choose nature." (pp. 183-184).

¹⁶⁴One is reminded here of the dwelling of the Word in the flesh as expressed in the prologue of the Gospel of St. John.

The nucleus of Ong's theological metaphoricity is the word, but not the abstract word which can be an idea. It is the incarnate Word, at once metaphor, person, mystery of being. The divine Word uttered into the void and into human history resonates in Ong's thought with all the concrete density and multivalent richness of the entire Judaeo-Christian tradition. Ong chooses not to explain this phenomenon, since for him that would be either futile or illusory. He approaches it rather by an ever shifting, metaphorical indirection.

Earlier we called the presence of the Word the Ariadne's thread in Ong's culturo-religious scheme, and so it is. For Ong it is supremely suggestive, and to apprehend it as he does is to contemplate not only the orchestration of all things but the dialogue of all voices. For Teilhard the phenomenon of man is the key to cosmic evolution, but as phenomenon he is looked at from outside, and even in Christ-Omega there is a curious impersonality in the geometric metaphors which are strained to articulate a personalizing universe.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps the burden of Teilhard's passion derives partly from his starting in the object world and building toward persons. For Ong the personal presence of the Word fosters a sense of actuality which permeates his works, relieves him of the burden of proof and provides him with assurance of the outcome. Ong is a respector of the labyrinth. He finds it fascinating, even dense and replete with mysteries and enigmas. But he is confident about knowing the key to its construction: the personal God who is intelligibility itself, who creates and redeems through his Word. Consequently Ong rarely if ever indulges

¹⁶⁵Reedy, "Metaphor in 'The Phenomenon of Man'": 257. See also Claude Cuenot, *Teilhard de Chardin*, trans. Vincent Colimore (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1965), pp. 251-252.

in apologetics. He talks about what he knows in such a way as to initiate further thinking by encouraging the reader to incorporate his own insights. An understandable procedure if one knows what to look for, "perversely arcane" if one does not. In any event it confounds systematizers.

Ong's operational insistence on the metaphor of the presence of the Word sheds some light on his use of sensory analogies as a key to history. The ubiquity of sensory elements in knowing, of sensory stress in history, simply suggests in another way what has already been said about the radical, endemic metaphoricity in human discourse. Ong's strategy keeps his thought rooted in history. Systems and methods tend to disembodify thought, to devitalize tradition, to create an artificial world. For Ong the only actual world is one characterized by personal presence, and persons cannot be processed systematically or methodically without being lost. Of course, one cannot adequately express persons in metaphor either, but to the extent that metaphor draws the mind toward the mystery of the concrete and existential rather than exclusively toward the clarity of the abstract and universal or conceptual, it is conveniens.¹⁶⁶ Besides it is more consonant with the movement of the Incarnation of the Word, who does not enter world, history, humanity only to exit, but rather continuously transforms and renovates it from within. The Word accomplishes this through the movement of breath or Spirit which blows where it will, all the while unifying, vivifying, divinizing, setting aright. Hence, for Ong, procedure moves to create a stimulating, germinal intellectual effect rather than to create a theory for complete explanation.

¹⁶⁶Boyle, Metaphor in Hopkins, pp. 176-178.

To say that Ong's theological discourse is incarnational is to stress what was said earlier about its occurring in the midst of some other sort of discourse. Again, since Ong does this more than he says it, his mode of discourse itself expresses what is talked about. Yet he does not mix discourses and disciplines. He rather allows them to fuse without losing their identities. This seems to be a major step toward practical implementation of the qualities of autonomy and unconditionality in religious and secular imagination called for by William Lynch.¹⁶⁷

As we have stressed repeatedly, Ong is well aware of the pitfalls of the kind of imagining which deadens by attempting to systematically encapsulate actuality in human concepts. In many ways it has been rationalism in the hands of religionists and antireligionists alike which has hampered both the religious and the secular imaginations.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷Lynch, Christ and Prometheus, pp. 39ff.

¹⁶⁸Speaking in the context of the work of Franz Kafka, Ong says that, "The mirage of a closed philosophical 'system' that M. Gilson and others have so rightly condemned is a relic of this kind of imagining; and subconscious acceptance of the mirage can generate immediate hostility to Kafka, who finds the mirage yielding such negative results. As proposed by some Catholics, the ideal of a closed philosophical system indeed attempts to reify the mirage envisioned by a cruder rationalism. It attempts to work God quite explicitly into the system, but this emended 'system' remains a mirage nevertheless because its knowledge of God can never be more than a function of its knowledge of the world -- what philosophy knows about God is what the world manifests about him and no more. Metaphysics, or for that matter theology, can be only a relatively satisfactory approach to being. Neither can be a 'system' in the sense of a body of truths that is so self-contained and completely satisfying that if one could master the whole 'system' he would simply have nothing further to ask -- a system that does not raise questions it is powerless to answer itself. To project such a system is equivalently to deny God as the final end of man. Only God is such a being as this system would propose to be, a being whose explanation does not lie in some manner outside itself." "Finitude and Frustration: Considerations on Brod's Kafka," Modern Schoolman 25 (March 1948): 178.

When Alfred North Whitehead characterizes European philosophical tradition as a series of footnotes to Plato, he distinguishes Plato's inexhaustible suggestiveness from the systematizing which deadens thought.¹⁶⁹ Like Plato, Whitehead sees the value of systems, but stresses the prior and radical importance of what he calls "assemblage," the kind of suggestive interfacing of materials which provides an escape from specialism.¹⁷⁰ For Whitehead, Plato wanders beyond system into that nether region of mixed clarity and vagueness which is the breeding ground of creative understanding. As he puts it, "The finite focus of clarity fades into an environment of vagueness stretching into the darkness of what is merely beyond."¹⁷¹ It has been the burden of this study to display precisely this kind of observation about the intellectual procedure of Walter Ong. Ong is certainly not an idealist, but he shares with Plato the conviction that human thinking is radically and inescapably dialogical in the sense that it is a process of gradual discernment, an endless searching which occurs only in living persons. For Ong, too, as well as for Plato, the wise man is the one who knows enough to realize that he does not know.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹Alfred North Whitehead Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology (New York: The Free Press, 1957), p. 53.

¹⁷⁰Alfred North Whitehead Modes of Thought (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 2.

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁷²Cf. Plato, "Apology," in The Dialogues of Plato, trans. B. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1920), I, p. 405. NB: Two aphorisms which Ong commonly uses in conversation and discussion illustrate this point. The first is "Few people realize how much you have to know in order to realize how little you know." The second is, "Whenever a thing is true as true can be and certain beyond all doubt it is still incomplete."

We have endeavored to show that Ong can be misread easily if the horizons of expectation within which one approaches his work do not presuppose his metaphorical suggestivity. It is certainly possible to read him without attaining a clear idea of what he is doing. His works might be quite difficult to manage unless one is, as he is, a "scholar's scholar." Unless one approaches him with a flexible habit of mind and a sense of tradition, the experience may prove as frustrating as it does for some of the critics we have cited. The full import of his efforts perhaps is not apparent unless one reads him widely, in his full diversity and scope. He expresses his overall vision often in bits and pieces assembled from a wide array of sources. His multileveled suggestiveness is often most fruitful when one couples what he says with insights of one's own making especially when those insights unearth implications which he himself did not foresee.¹⁷³

All of these remarks can be meaningfully employed to describe the functioning of metaphorical expression, and since there is an analogy between Ong's procedure and metaphor, it is fitting to call his procedure metaphorical.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the thought of Walter Ong in light of metaphoricity. We noted that his thought can be characterized not only as a complex continuity but also as having a style and a procedure which is open in content and expression. It can aptly be called an orchestration or multivoiced dialogue. Like metaphor, it tends toward an existentially rooted sense of mystery and involvement which encourages

¹⁷³Ong once remarked to this writer that one of the most interesting aspects of publishing your works is seeing how readers find things that you never realized you were saying.

approaching all reality as ultimately caught up in the mystery of personhood.

In Ong's thought, the radical incompleteness of human knowing is counterpoised to scientific artificiality by a sense of its limitless debt to the infrarational which appears in every concrete act of knowing. Too, it manifests the "endemic binarism" or piecemeal approach to actuality which is inevitable in human intellection and which metaphor exploits by beckoning the mind toward an embrace of the inexhaustible complexity and expanse of actuality. Concretely, Ong embodies this insight in his procedure by an orchestration of, or dialogue among, disciplines, by a kind of discourse which in a constant and yet orderly way shifts perspectives between different knowledges. As such, he exhibits a non-methodical, non-systematic, playful suggestiveness which creates the effect of enriching the search for meaning by inviting readers to expect it and to see it everywhere.

The implications of Ong's metaphorical procedure for theological discourse are manifold. Though we have by no means discussed them exhaustively, we have highlighted two major aspects which might be understood as his major contributions.

First is his search for a metaphor which grounds a common understanding of the dynamics of cultural and religious history which has issued in his detailed, complex and suggestive articulation of the metaphor of the presence of the word.

The second is his consequent encouragement and practice of a kind of discourse which links theological discourse, on the one hand, to the endemic metaphoricity of human knowing and, on the other hand, to an

oscillating perspectivity which is interdisciplinary, traditional and incarnational.

While thinkers, who are normally classified as theologians typically discourse in a way which is explicitly and overtly theological, Ong's theological discourse, as an element in his metaphoricity, occurs in an implicit fashion. That is, his theological insights are normally embedded in the midst of his inquiries into a wide range of diversified topics.

On the one hand, this means that Ong's theology is not easily abstracted from the bearings which it possesses in the concrete contexts in which it arises. His contribution is not precisely the invention of new theological logia, but rather the situating of traditional logia in new incarnational contexts.

Consequently, while his works regularly presuppose familiarity with theology as well as with other disciplines, his procedure has the great advantage of educing meanings for theology in unsuspected places. His metaphorical kind of theologizing does not eliminate the need for more abstract theologizing. Rather, it serves as a dialectical complement in theology by demonstrating how insight born of faith penetrates and abides within actuality at every point. In short, it brings theological discourse into that intimacy of openended, conversational dialogue which is the mystery of the presence of the word in human history.

CONCLUSION

In chapters two and three of this study we presented a synthetic sketch of the way the metaphor of the presence of the word has been employed by Walter Ong as a key to the structure and development of culture and religion.

The way in which the Word is present in human experience and history serves as a key because, according to Ong, there is an analogous structure between the characteristics of visual and oral-aural sensory processes and stages of culture. This analogy or metaphor enabled him to describe three stages of human culture, the oral, the visual and the electronic, as three different ways in which the word has been present.

Oral cultures are so called because their way of processing their experience is oral-aural in form; that is, through speech and hearing. These sensory functions exploit the qualities of sound, its manifestation of present power and interiority, its socializing and personalizing capacities. But oral cultures also suffer from the disadvantages of sound, most critically its evanescence. Effective means of storing knowledge are unavailable, necessitating constant repetition of traditional lore, buried in formulaic and thematic devices which all but immobilize the development of knowledge. The threshold of personal development is inhibited by the priorities of a cyclic grasp of the human predicament.

Ong stresses the role of literacy in gradually shifting human awareness from the world of sound and dialogue to the quantified and

detached world of vision. The process is complex but unmistakable. First, writing made it possible to remove knowledge from the precarious world of memory and recitation by encoding it into visual space where it enjoyed a certain permanence. It also fostered the illusion that knowledge and truth could exist apart from human minds. By analogy with seeing, visual-literate cultures gradually came to regard thinking as a detached, impersonal, quantified, objective, and removed from the dialogical exchange of human discourse. The implicit, the symbolic, the mythical, the metaphorical are suppressed.

Ong sees two phases of visual culture: the manuscript culture, which remained close to oral performance and disputation and print culture, which accentuated visualist tendencies to the extreme. The abstracting and objectivizing thrust of medieval arts scholasticism was extended into the methodizing project of Peter Ramus and later into the myth of system.

Romanticism also features as an aspect of visual culture. The knowledge abundance gathered by print created a reaction which saw itself returning toward the infrarational world of "nature," though it remains a "nature" thoroughly domesticated.

Romanticism also serves as a bridge between visual-literate cultures and the third stage of Ong's scheme: electronic culture. This third synthetic stage is synthetic to the extent that it unites the visual-literate scientific capacities with a renewed existential, personalist, symbolic sensitivity which Ong identifies as "secondary orality" fostered by electronic media and related technologies.

Throughout this process the focal point has been alteration in the presence of the word; that is, from a situation in which the word is

present only orally, in sound, to a situation in which it is also processed in visual, written form. The power of this processing is so intense that the visualist analogy came to predominate in virtually every form of thought. The secondary orality, in Ong's view, moderates the visualist monopoly without eliminating the scientific control accomplished by visual culture.

We also outlined the fortunes of religion in this process. While Ong is particularly concerned with the Judaeo-Christian tradition just as he is primarily concerned with Western civilization, he understands religion as being in special ways fostered by auditory synthesis; faith comes through hearing. This is because of the power-filled quality of sound which especially suits it to interior-to-interior or personalizing communication. While this dynamism may be present in some ways in every religion, it reaches its fullest expression in Judaic and especially Christian faith. Both these are preeminently religions of the personalizing Word of God, especially Christianity wherein the Word is a person.

This does not mean that Christianity is unaffected by cultural process. On the contrary, for Ong it was providential for Christianity to appear, for the Word to become flesh, at precisely that point in time when literacy was established but still embedded in the personalizing matrix of orality.

Religions less centered on the personalizing word fared less well. Primitive religions, for example, found themselves able to adapt to visualism and the objectivist critique encouraged by literacy. Theology as a formal discipline is one key factor in Christian adaptation.

Nevertheless, there are countereffects as well. The abstracting objectivizing thrust of visual culture encouraged a tendency to seek

clarity and definition in religious belief. Less preoccupied with the mysterious, stress on doctrinal clarity and uniformity encouraged a fragmentation of Christianity along doctrinal, nationalistic and vernacular linguistic lines. Attitudes toward authority, sacraments, Scripture and tradition were radically reshaped to accommodate visualist sensitivities. The word of God came to be understood less in terms of personal presence and more by analogy with the printed word of Scripture and doctrinal creeds.

In Ong's perspective the secondary orality of electronic culture augurs well for future of Christianity by the reawakening of those modes of religious awareness associated with orality. While difficulties abound, Ong sees a continued stress on the intellectual pursuits of theology, but also a renewal of emphasis on an appreciation of mystery, symbol and dialogue, especially as it manifests itself in personalist approaches to faith. In contrast to earlier stress on clarity and distinctness, and yet still disciplined by careful scholarship, new room is made for the suggestiveness and openness of phenomenological and more metaphorical approaches.

Ong seems to embody a concrete instance of what theological metaphoricity entails. Interdisciplinary, suggestive, itinerant, Ong's approach seeks to dialogue with tradition in light of the explosion of knowledge in the humanities and sciences as well. As a consequence, what he presents is a mosaic of themes which are incarnated in a wide variety of seemingly incidental studies, the overall effect of which is to create an inchoative but, nevertheless, implicitly integral account of the meaning of Christianity in the process of cultural history. His efforts deal very little with predictions of the future. Rather, Ong attempts to summon up and to assemble in a dialogical way, a host of themes which interact in countless ways but which communicate a sense of the unitary

and directional character of cultural and religious history.

Since this assemblage is composed of so many elements, and since it suggests more than it says, we have characterized his approach in terms of metaphoricity. Yet we have also attempted to show that the disciplinary materials which he orchestrates are not haphazard or random. He, rather, speaks from within a set of traditions which have had an important and even pivotal role in the actual history of civilization. Much of the uniqueness of his approach lies not only in what he says but in the comprehensive way in which he interplays the procedures and contents of existential Thomism, the new criticism, Ignatian spirituality, and a Teilhard-like cosmic sense with the perspectives and insights he has gleaned from investigations of the most diverse kinds. Hence, we have placed considerable emphasis on the point that it is not only what Ong says but what enables him to say it, his metaphorical procedure, which embodies his most important contributions.

In our judgment, what Ong provides is an outstanding concretion of the way in which theology can be understood as a dialogue of knowing born of faith and knowing born of human inquiry.

Considered strictly as theology, or as any other single discipline, Ong's work can be quite frustrating. The digressions upon which he embarks, the endless flow of data from diverse sources, the tentatively sketched analogies which he draws, the pregnant observations which he utters but does not pursue, all contribute to a sense of itineracy that make a term like metaphoricity the only suitable device to employ as a comprehensive term for his work. Even a term such as dialectical falls short of expressing the complexity of polysemy in his mode of thought and expression.

Yet positively speaking, Ong performs a valuable service by demonstrating that theological understanding can be fruitfully pursued without lapsing into irresponsible brainstorming, on the one hand, or systematic rigidity, on the other. His thought represents a way in which the articulated truths which embody Christian belief can be uttered not just as abstract propositions but as expressions of personal, existential witness. In Ong, theology becomes not abstract, detached, speculation, but a confident articulation of the intellectually apprehended incarnational character of faith. This difficult to define spirit permeates his work.

The fact that Ong's works have developed itinerantly rather than systematically imposes limits on the results. He has, for instance, entered only very peripherally into the dialogue between East and West. There is little in his work which reaches into religious traditions outside Catholicism. He has treated artistic media, other than literature, only in passing. Even though the matters which he treats reach back into human pre-history, they rarely probe the future except in the most general terms. Despite the fact that his phenomenological technique reaches into structures which pertain more or less to any human circumstances, he treats of the visual-literate cultural phenomenon far more extensively than he does the concrete embodiments of oral or electronic cultures. At the same time, his works read as a whole are often disconcertingly repetitious. Still, his detailed and circumspect treatment of a wide range of the expressions of visual culture contribute a sense of the complexity and richness of such study and a sense of what could be done for a host of areas and subjects which he has not treated himself. In the last analysis the overall effect of his interfacing of knowledges, re-

plete as it is with insights of his own, suggests and encourages further investigation in an especially dynamic way.

This appears to be as it should be. Ong's familial background and his intellectual heritage are hybrid at every point. His friendship with Teilhard, McLuhan, Muller-Thym, all of whom are interdisciplinary thinkers in their own right, and his participation in a rich and varied intellectual and spiritual heritage, when coupled with his own talents, make him not only a Renaissance man, but more appropriately a thinker of the global, electronic age who gives a model of what disciplined thought can mean in that age.

CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE
WORKS OF WALTER JACKSON ONG, S.J.

This bibliography represents a complete listing of the works of Walter Ong through 1975. Reprintings are not treated as separate entries but are listed with the original publication. Radio and television appearances, numerous as they are, are generally omitted. In a few instances, where transcriptions are possibly available, such appearances are included. The guiding principle here, both for the selections listed and the data given about each of them, has been the possibility of obtaining copies in libraries. Unpublished materials are, of course, obtainable only from Ong himself, or, in some instances, from the present author.

"Catholic Scouts at the Jamboree," Catholic Register (St. Louis, Mo.), 12 September 1929: 1.

A large number of news articles, editorials, and feature articles in the Rockhurst Sentinel (Kansas City, Mo.), September 1929 through May 1933, signed and unsigned.

Series of twenty-one signed travelogue articles and original photographs reporting on a trip to Europe as a member of the "Heart of America Troop" of Boy Scouts of America visiting the World Jamboree of Boy Scouts at Birkenhead, England, and other places. Kansas City Journal-Post, 10 July to 8 September 1929.

"The Scout Jamboree " The Queen's Work, November 1929.

Virgil's Simillennium [sic]: A Symposium by the Latin Seminar of Rockhurst College, Kansas City, Missouri, 1930-1931 [copyright 1931]. Includes two items of Walter J. Ong, Jr.: "Foreword," p.7, and "The Laocoon Episode in English Hexameter," p. 19.

A Large number of news articles, feature articles, and editorials, with or without by-line or signature, in the Annunciator, a publication issued about every two months, but irregularly, in the interests of Annunciation Parish, Kansas City, Mo., from its beginning in about October 1931, to its discontinuance in about February 1934. Pieces the author of which is not otherwise identified were almost all by Walter J. Ong, Jr., although occasionally his brother, Richard Mense Ong, would write the articles in the paper.

Walter J. Ong, Jr., was publisher, business manager, and editor of the Annunciator. The pastor of Annunciation Parish was Rev. Matthew D. Tierney. The Annunciator was distributed

free to parishioners (at Sunday Mass) and supported itself entirely by advertisements sold by the business manager, to whom it provided supplementary Depression income after publication costs were paid.

"Cosmologist" (a poem), Fleur de Lis (St. Louis University), 38 (May 1939): 17.

"Literature and the Too-Much Praised," Jesuit Educational Quarterly, 2 (September 1939): 93-94.

"Kateri Tekakwitha" (a poem), America, 62 (14 October 1939): 20.
Reprinted in the book: Harold C. Gardiner, S.J., ed., The Second America Book of Verse, 1930-1955. New York: America Press, 1955, pp. 155-56.

Review of Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, 1938. Edited by Charles A. Hart. (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of the Association, the Catholic University of America, 1939, The Modern Schoolman, 17 (November 1939): 19.

"Words at Work," Fleur de Lis (St. Louis University), 39 (December 1939) 5-7.

"Afternoon," Fleur de Lis (St. Louis University), 39 (December 1939) 18.

"Religion Teaching by Scholastics," Woodstock Letters, 69 (February 1940): 69-81.

Review of A History of Esthetics by Katherine Everett Gilbert and Helmut Kuhn (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), The Modern Schoolman, 17 (March 1940): 57.

Review of The Origin of Printing in Europe by Pierce Butler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), The Historical Bulletin, 19 (March 1941): 68.

"Until Tomorrow" (a poem), Commonweal, 21 (1 March 1940): 405.

"Words and the Wise," Fleur de Lis (St. Louis University), 39 (March 1940): 21-24.
Correction:
Fleur de Lis, 39 (May 1940): 26.

"Imitation and the Object of Art," Modern Schoolman, 17 (May 1940): 68-69.

An interesting early article which reflects Ong's St. Louis

Thomism and new critical approaches to artistic experience and cognitive processes. This article, which cites Maritain, Aquinas, and Muller-Thym presents an excellent portrait of Ong's early concerns and style.

"Song for Summer," Fleur de Lis (St. Louis University), 40 (December 1940): 19.

"Twenty-Two Titles Tell a Tale," America, 64 (4 January 1941): 355-56.

"Metaphor and Meaning," Fleur de Lis (St. Louis University), 30 (May 1941): 17-19.

"Mickey Mouse and Americanism," America, 65 (4 October 1941): 719-20.

One of a number of articles written during Ong's years as a Jesuit scholastic which, apart from their perceptiveness into the banality of popular culture, reveal a contentious side of Ong which is not usually apparent in his more mature, more irenic and scholarly writings. Within a decade after these articles, and certainly by the time the Ramus studies began, one finds Ong's characteristic calm detachment well developed.

"The Province of Rhetoric and Poetic," Modern Schoolman, 19 (January 1942): 24-27.

Reprinted in the book: Joseph Schwartz and John A. Rycenga, eds., The Province of Rhetoric. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1965, pp. 48-56.

This book also reprints the chapter "Ramist Rhetoric" from the same author's Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, 1958 [January].

"Disposed in Labels: After Reading a Biography" (a poem), Sewanee Review, 50 (July-September 1942): 302-4.

"In Other Words" (a poem), Sewanee Review, 50 (July-September 1942): 304-305.

"Spenser's View and the Tradition of the 'Wild' Irish," Modern Language Quarterly, 3 (December 1942): 561-571.

An early example of Ong's interest in interfacing literary-artistic questions with socio-cultural and historical investigations. When read in the light of his later thought on cultural development it not only wears well, but it reveals the continuity in his thinking through the years.

"The Meaning of the 'New Criticism'," Modern Schoolman, 20 (May 1943): 192-209.

Reprinted in the book: William S. Knickerbocker, ed., Twentieth Century English. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946, pp. 344-370. (Slightly revised).

An important article showing Ong's appropriation and critique of new criticism from the perspectives of St. Louis Thomism.

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An attack on the superficiality of popular culture as represented in the Luce publications, Time, Life, and Fortune.

"Historical Backgrounds of Elizabethan and Jacobean Punctuation Theory," PMLA (Publications of the Modern Language Association of America), 59 (June 1944): 349-360.

Emile Bergh, S.J. "Safeguarding Worthy Reception in the Practice of Frequent Communion," Translated by Walter J. Ong. Review for Religious, 3 (15 July 1944): 252-267.

This article appeared originally in French under the title "Pour la Sainteté de la Communion frequente," Revue des communautés religieuses, 1939, pp. 119-126 and 141-145.

Review of Essay on Rime by Karl Shapiro (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945). Various newspapers syndicated by the Catholic Review Service, St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, Kansas, 1945.

Review of A Preface to Newman's Theology by Reverend Edmund Darvil Bernard (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1944), Review for Religious, 4 (March 1945): 126-127.

"Newman and the Religious Life," Review for Religious, 4 (15 July 1945): 230-242.

"Literature and Cultural Initiative," America, 73 (18 August 1945): 230-42.

"Literature and Cultural Initiative," America, 73 (18 August 1945): 396-97, and 73 (25 August 1945): 416-17.

Sequel: Charles A. Brady, "G.K.C. Derivative?" [A letter, featuring the Chestertonian, "You are wrong, Father Ong, the young man said'"] America, (29 September 1945): 531.

A critique of the derivative and sentimental mentality of American Catholic attitudes toward art.

"The Comics and the Super State: Glimpses Down the Back Alleys of the mind," Arizona Quarterly, 1 (Autumn 1945): 34-48.

Sequels: Written up in Time Magazine, 46 (22 October 1945): 67-68. Mentioned again in Time, 46 (5 November 1945): 23.

"A Liturgical Movement in the Middle Ages," American Ecclesiastical Review, 114 (February 1946): 104-113.

Review of John Henry Newman by John Moody (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1945), Review for Religious, 5 (March 1946): 133-134.

"Newman's Essay on Development in Its Intellectual Milieu," Theological Studies, 7 (March 1946): 3-45. Abridged reprinting: Joseph W. Houppert, ed. John Henry Newman. "The Christian Critic Series," general editor, Harry J. Cargas. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1968, pp. 25-56.

An important study of the intellectual currents in Newman's thought which demonstrates the congeniality between Newman and Ong.

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An interesting reflection on the way in which clamoring after the latest news creates a kind of superficial perception of the world which insulates men from the profound and enduring questions about the meaning of human life.

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A good example of Ong's penchant for seeing what everyone else is missing. A study of the role of myth in history, human knowing, and the personalist dimension of Catholic Christianity.

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An investigation of the psychological, philosophical and cultural consequences of Mill's intellectual heritage and his attitudes toward poetry.

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Sequel: Henry L. Savage, "Hunting Terms in Middle English." Modern Language Notes, 66 (March 1951): 216.

Savage agrees with the conclusions but protests that he was not among those whose views had caused or reproduced the confusion which "The Green Knight's Harts and Bucks" seeks to clear up.

"Bogey Sticks for Pogo Men," America, 84 (13 January 1951): 434-35.

An interface of the comic strip Pogo with the common man's discomfort with avant garde artistic experimentation.

"Psyche and the Geometers: Aspects of Associationist Critical Theory," Modern Philology, 49 (August 1951): 16-27.

Reprinted with some revisions in Ong's Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971, pp. 213-36.

One of Ong's first studies showing the relationship between culturally and technologically induced habits of mind and the effects of these psychological structurings on philosophy, politics, and literary criticism.

Review of La Renaissance dans la Pensée historique by W.K. Ferguson (Paris: Payot, 1950), Etudes, 270 (September 1951): 272-273.

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A perceptive and sympathetic review of one of McLuhan's early works which points up the religious implications of what McLuhan says. An important essay for understanding Ong, McLuhan, and the similarities and differences in their thought and style.

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Sequels: Anne Romea. "Réponse au R.P. Ong par le Conseil de l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc." Psyché (Paris), 8 (mai 1953): 282-88; "Réponse du P. Ong." Psyché (Paris), 8 (mai 1953): 289.

A vigorous response to non-Catholic complaints about the definition of the dogma of the Assumption by Pius XII. Ong defends the role of the Blessed Virgin in Christian spirituality and attacks efforts to submerge the feminine dimension in human existence and the important psychological and religious role which the feminine symbolizes.

"La famille américaine," [Traduction faite par le R.P. Antoine Luras, s.j., avec l'approbation de l'auteur] Fovers, 32 (mars 1952): 109-112.

"Les Etats-Unis et l'apostolat du monde des affaires," [Traduit par Madeleine Brosset, avec l'approbation de l'auteur], Etudes (Paris), 273 (mai 1952): 231-40.

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"Les retraites en Amérique," [Traduction faite par les Religieuses du Cénacle de Paris, avec la collaboration de l'auteur], Au Cénacle (Paris), no. 5 (novembre 1953): 14-18.

"Ramus et le monde anglo-saxon d'aujourd'hui," [Traduction préparée par Madelaine Brösset avec la collaboration de l'autuer], Révue de littérature comparée, 28 (janvier-mars 1954): 57-66.
Reprinted: "Ramus and the Transit to the Modern Mind." [original English version] Modern Schoolman, 32 (May 1955): 301-11.

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"Ramus: Rhetoric and the Pre-Newtonian Mind." Alan S. Downer, ed. English Institute Essays 1952. New York: Columbia University Press, 1954, pp. 138-70. Great Britain, etc.: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1954.

This study was first read by Professor Philip Wheelwright of Dartmouth College for Father Ong under the title "Ramus: The Clutch Fist of Method," at the English Institute at Columbia University, September 9-12, 1952. See English Institute Essays 1952, p. 232, where this title is given.

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"St. Ignatius' Prison-Cage and the Existentialist Situation," Theo-

logical Studies, 15 (March 1954): 34-51.

Reprinted in The Barbarian Within. New York: Macmillan, 1962, pp. 242-259.

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Reprinted in: The McAuley Lectures, 1954: Christian Humanism in Letters. The McAuley Lecture Series, 2. West Hartford, Conn.: Saint Joseph College, 1961, pp. 44-67; Frontiers in American Catholicism. New York: Macmillan, 1957, pp. 52-85.

"Swift on the Mind: The Myth of Asepsis," Modern Language Quarterly, 15 (September 1954): 208-21.
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"The Intellectual Frontier," The Catholic Church, U.S.A. Edited by Louis J. Putz, C.S.C. Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1956, pp. 394-415.

Review of Logic and Rhetoric in England by Wilbur Samuel Howell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), Renaissance News, 9 (Winter 1956 [*i.e.*, 1956-1957]): 206-211.

"On Being Aware: A letter to a Catholic Student Interested in the Growth of Catholic Literature and Culture," The Newman Annual, 1956-57 (Minneapolis, Minn.: published yearly by the Newman Foundation at the University of Minnesota, 1957): 84-85.

Frontiers in American Catholicism: Essays on Ideology and Culture. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957.. Paper edition, 1961.
A collection of essays on the peculiar character and history of American Catholicism. One of two books by Ong on this topic.

Review of The American Conscience by Roger Burlingame (New York: Knopf, 1957), America, 97 [whole no. 2499] (6 April 1957): 17-19.

"The Catholic Church's Interest in Knowledge and Research," Hospital Progress, 38 (June 1957): 50-51, 102, 106.
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"Secular Knowledge, Revealed Religion, and History," "A Symposium: Contributions of Various Disciplines to Theology and Religion," III, Religious Education, 52 (September-October 1957): 341-349.
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One of Ong's finest and most articulate statements of the

relationship between secular learning and the Church's mission in cosmic history. Illustrates his shared perspectives with John Henry Newman and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

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"Educationists and the Tradition of Learning," The Fourth Ansley Memorial Lecture [the J.W. Ansley Memorial Lecture for 1957 given for the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation in Hamilton, Ontario, 4 October 1957] The Bulletin Published by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 37 (December 1957): 341-44, 375-377.

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An essay on the relationship of reform-mindedness and educational process from medieval times until the present. Typical of Ong's penchant for putting historical perspective on contemporary problems.

"Voice as Summons for Belief: Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self," Thought, 33 (Spring 1958): 43-61.

Reprinted in: Literature and Belief ("English Institute Essays," 1957). Edited with a foreword by M.H. Abrams. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958, pp. 80-105; The Barbarian Within. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962, pp. 49-67.

An intriguing essay on the role of interpersonal communication in human existence from a philosophical and theological viewpoint emphasizing the important contributions of the verbal arts in the life of the self and the operation of faith.

Review of Christian Thought and Action: The Role of Catholicism in Our Time by Dom Aelred Graham (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958), America, 97 (15 March 1958): 701-03.

"A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives." Essays in Criticism, 8 (April 1958): 166-81.

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Poetry. Ed. James L. Calderwood and Harold E. Toliver. New York, London, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968, pp. 119-131;
The Barbarian Within. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962, pp. 26-40.

A germinal essay on the relationship between visual and vocal approaches to knowledge and selfhood particularly stressing artistic and philosophical circumstances which encourage personalism. An excellent example of the dialectical character of Ong's thought.

"Man Between Two Worlds: St. Paul, the Paulists, and American Catholicism," The Catholic World, 187 (May 1958): 86-94.

A slightly revised form of the sermon preached 25 January 1958 at Old Saint Mary's Church, Chicago, at the Centennial Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving for the clergy celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle (Paulist Fathers).

Reprinted as "Father Hecker and the American Situation." American Catholic Crossroads. New York: Collier Books, 1962, pp. 56-73.

A biographically oriented discussion of the intrinsic dialectic in preaching the gospel between Christianity and culture. Special attention is given the way in which the Paulists attempted to come to grips with American culture.

Review of Cultural Foundations of Industrial Civilization by John U. Nef (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), America, 99 (3 May 1958): 296-98.

Review of The Merchant of Prato: Francesco di Marco Datini, 1335-1410 by Iris Origo (New York: Knopf, 1957), Manuscripta, 2 (July 1958): 108-09.

Review of Essays on Individuality, edited by Felix Morley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), America, 99 [whole no. 2564] (12 July 1958): 415.

"Differentiated Programs in Catholic Education," Bulletin, National Catholic Educational Association, 55 (August 1958), Report of the Proceedings and Addresses--Fifty-Fifth Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 8-11 April 1958: 114-120.

A paper delivered before the College and University Department of the NCEA, 8 April 1958.

"The Reaches of History," Commonweal, 68 (15 August 1958): 487-490.

"The Religious-Secular Dialogue," Religion in America: Original Essays on Religion in a Free Society. Ed. John Cogley. New York: Meridian Books, 1958, pp. 170-207.

Reprinted in: American Catholic Crossroads. New York: Collier Books, 1962, pp. 29-55.

A look at the positive aspects of pluralism from a religious viewpoint, along with some of the negative consequences in history which have resulted from provincialist views of Christianity. Ong aligns himself with Teilhard and against Hegel in insisting that Christianity can be exercised only in a dialogue between persons not as something in the realm of pure ideas.

"That American Way," America, 100 (22 November 1958): 238-41.

Sequel: "State of the Question: Looking Long and Hard at the Ugly American." America, 100 (7 February 1959): 546-48.

Condensed reprint: "Our 'American Way'." Catholic Digest, 23 (March 1959): 84-88.

Reprinted, with very slight abridgment: "What Is Wrong with the 'American Attitude'." Freedom and Union, 14 (March 1959): 4-7.

Reprinted, with some revisions, as: "That American Way."

Literary Types and Themes. Ed. Maurice B. McNamee [S.J.], James E. Cronin, and Joseph A. Rogers. New York: Rinehart and Company, 1960, pp. 258-262; Between Two Cities: God and Man in America. Ed. Fathers of the Society of Jesus, Thurston N. Davis, Donald R. Campion, and L.C. McHugh, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962, pp. 171-181.

Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Reprintings (partial): "Ramist Rhetoric" (pp. 270-292, 268-371).

The Province of Rhetoric. Ed. Joseph Schwartz and John A.

Rycenga. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1965, pp. 226-255.

"Printing and Science" (chap. xiii, pp. 207-214, abridged and with footnotes omitted). The Scientific Revolution. Ed. Vern L. Bullough. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970, pp. 76-78.

Ong's doctoral dissertation. It has become somewhat of a classic in Renaissance and Ramus studies. Covers the backgrounds and developments which led to visual culture.

Ramus and Talon Inventory: A Short -Title Inventory of the Published

Works of Peter Ramus (1515-1572) and of Omer Talon (ca. 1510-1562) in Their Original and in Their Various Altered Forms

with Related Material: 1. The Ramist Controversies: A descriptive Catalogue. 2. Agricola Check List: A Short-Title Inventory of Some Printed Editions and Printed Compendia of Rudolph Agricola's Dialectical Invention (De inventione dialectica). Cambridge:

Facsimile reprint with original title page followed by two additional title pages, each the same as the original except that the Harvard University Press imprint, place, and date is replaced as follows: The Folcroft Press, Inc., Folcroft, Pa. On verso:

"First Published 1958/Reprinted 1969" ; Darby Books, Darby, Pa.

On verso: "First Published 1950/Reprinted 1969" .

"Personalism and the Wilderness," Kenyon Review, 31 (Spring 1959): 297-304.

Reprinted in: The Barbarian Within. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962, pp. 233-41.

Further reflections on personalism in American culture as seen in the work of Henry Bugbee, highlighting its connections with romanticism and the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel.

"Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite," Studies in Philology, 56 (April 1959): 103-24.

Reprinted in: Education and Culture: Anthropological Approaches.

Ed. George D. Spindler. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston,

1963, pp. 444-466; Abstracted in Sociological Abstracts, 12

(April 1964): 638; Reprinted in: Rhetoric, Romance and Technology.

Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971, pp. 113-141.

An important article linking the teaching of communications skills, in particular the teaching of Latin to male school-boys, to the process of psychological development.

"The Declining Role of Literacy: Why New Aural-Oral Age of Communications May Be Developing," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Sunday 19 April 1959, p. 5B.

American Catholic Crossroads: Religious-Secular Encounters in the Modern World. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959.

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One of the two most important sources of Ong's thought on the characteristics of American Catholicism, this collection of essays highlights both the peculiarities of the form of Catholicism which has resulted from an interplay with American culture and the contributions which each of these might make in terms of the larger Christian perspectives of cosmic history.

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"The Challenge of Growing Knowledge," National Catholic Welfare Conference syndicated 1959 School Supplement no. 1, released 15 July 1959, and carried in a large number of Catholic periodicals throughout the United States.

Review of The Anatomy of the World: Relations between Natural Moral Law from Donne to Pope by Michael Macklem (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1958), Manuscripta, 31 (July 1959): 111-13.

- Review of The Degrees of Knowledge by Jacques Maritain (New York: Scribners, 1959), Saturday Review, 42 (22 August 1959): 26.
- Review of Yes, M. De Mille by Phil A. Koury (New York: Putnam, 1959), America, 101 (12 September 1959): 696.
- "Christians Confront Technology," Part III, America, 101 (26 September 1959): 764-765. In this Symposium, "Christians Confront Technology," *ibid.*, pp. 761-765, Part I is by W. Norris Clarke, S.J., Part II by Gustave Weigel, S.J., and Part III by Walter J. Ong, S.J.
Sequel: "Footnote on Evolution," a letter from Walter J. Ong, S.J., to the Editor. "Correspondence." America, 102 (3 October 1959): 1. Reprinted in: Between Two Cities: God and Man in America. Ed. Fathers of the Society of Jesus, Thurston N. Davis, Donald R. Campion, L. C. McHugh. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962, pp. 297-302.
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- Review of The Inward Morning: A Philosophical Exploration in Journal Form by Henry G. Bugbee, Jr., with an introduction by Gabriel Marcel (State College, Pa.: Bald Eagle Press, 1958), The Modern Schoolman, 37 (November 1959): 67-69.
- Review of Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise by Kathleen Williams (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1958), Modern Language Quarterly, 20 (December 1959): 383-384.
- "Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," Thought, 34 (Winter 1959-1960): 547-568.
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Reprinted with further slight revisions: In the Human Grain: Further Explorations of Contemporary Culture. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967, pp. 61-82. Reprinted from In the Human Grain in Reading for Understanding. Ed. Maurice B. McNamee, S.J. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968; 3rd ed., pp. 255-274.
An important study for Ong's evolutionist perspectives which follows the history, backgrounds, and impact of the Darwin-Wallace discovery of evolution in terms of its philosophical and theological significance and its constant struggle with cyclicist views of the world.

- "Philosophical Sociology," The Modern Schoolman, 37 (January 1960): Abstracted in Sociological Abstracts, 12 (April 1964): 553-54.
A discussion of the congeniality of Ong's own thought with that of philosophical sociologist Eugene Rosenstock-Huessy which focuses on the cosmic, philosophical and theological significance of the appearance of the sociological mode of human consciousness.
- "Wired for Sound: Teaching, Communications, and Technological Culture," College English 21, (February 1960); 245-51.
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An inquiry into the historical interplay between communications and educational styles and techniques from antiquity through the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, to the present era of electronic media and its renewed emphasis on voice.
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- Review of 1859 in Review by Thomas P. Neill (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1959), Social Order, 10 (April 1960): 185-86.
- "The Faculty Role: In the Liberal Arts," Higher Education in the United

States: Report of the 1959 Midwest Fulbright Conference for Visiting Scholars from abroad, held at Lindenwood College, St. Charles, Mo., 6-9 June 1959; sponsored by Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, in cooperation with the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils, Committee on International Exchange of Persons, with funds provided by the United States Department of State. Saint Louis, Missouri: Washington University, 1960, pp. 31-33. (Mimeographed.)

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Review of Night Music: A Fiction by Sven Stolpe (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Sunday 24 July 1960, p. 4B.

"Latin and the Social Fabric," The Yale Review, 50 (Autumn 1960): 18-31. Sequel: Newsweek, 7 November 1960, p. 109. Reprinted in Japanese [thus the English-language supplementary title page; the Japanese title can be transliterated "Ratengo to shakaikiko" and means "Latin and the Social Structure"], translated for the United States Information Service. Americana: A Monthly Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences (ed. by the United States Information Service in Japan and published by a Japanese firm), 7 (July 1961): 50-64; abstracted in "Latin and the Social Fabric." Sociological Abstracts, 12 (April 1964): 638; reprinted in The Barbarian Within. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962, pp. 206-219.

An essay on the social implications of Latin, especially its male sex-linked character, its weddedness to literacy and academe, its effect on vernacular languages, its rise and fall as the prime bearer of Western civilization.

"Academic Excellence and Cosmic Vision," National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin: Report of the Proceedings and Addresses--Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois 19-22 April 1960, 57 (August 1960): 37-50.

Discusses the significance of the academic profession and scholarly inquiry in the process of planetary evolution with special emphasis on the commitment to knowledge and research which is implicit in a Christian and Catholic world-view.

"Nationalism and Darwin: A Psychological Problem in Our Concept of Social Development," Review of Politics, 22 (October 1960): 466-81.

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Review of Technology and Christian Culture by Robert Paul Mohan (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1960), America, 104 (22 October 1960): 127-129.

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A study of the effect of Ramus method and its corresponding reshaping of educational curricula and procedures and the shifts in ways of understanding reality which these brought about.

Review of The Living and the Dead: A Study of the Symbolic Life of Americans by W. Lloyd Warner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), The Modern Schoolman, 37 (January 1961): 169-170.

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"The Challenge of Technical Excellence to the Catholic Intellect."
An address to the Advanced Workshop for the improvement of Catholic Schools of Medical Technology, St. Louis, Missouri, 30 January 1961. (Mimeographed.)

Review of Symbolism in Religion and Literature, edited with an introduction by Rollo May (New York: George Braziller, 1960), St.

Louis Post-Dispatch, Sunday 26 February 1961, p. 4B

Review of Erasmus and His Times by Louis Bouyer, trans. Francis X. Murphy, C.Ss.R. (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1959), The New Scholasticism, 35 (April 1961): 254-55.

"Ramist Method and the Commercial Mind," Studies in the Renaissance, 8 (1961): 155-72.

Reprinted in: Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971, pp. 165-189.

Discusses the reasons for the popularity of Ramus' techniques in commercial circles.

Review of Image and Meaning: Metaphoric Traditions in Renaissance Poetry by Don Cameron Allen (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), Modern Language Quarterly, 22 (June 1961): 214-15.

"The Vernacular Matrix of the New Criticism," The Critical Matrix. Ed. Paul R. Sullivan, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1961, pp. 3-35.

Contends that the so-called "new criticism" is the natural result of turning academic attention to vernacular literatures. The latter function according to quite different conceptions from those practices by the older Latin literatures and approaches to literature.

Review of Renaissance Concepts of Method by Neal W. Gilbert (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 35 (July-August 1961): 385-386.

"The Library and the Frontiers of Knowledge," The Catholic Library World, 33 (September 1961): 28-33, 61.

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only with an event in the history of European and American history.

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A significant study of the role of scholarship in freeing human perspectives by presenting an ever more accurate account of the human condition and the way in which such effort is demanded by a Christian world-view.

Response in "Symposium on the Role of Art in Life," Four Quarters (La Salle College, Philadelphia), 11 (March 1962): 14.

"Synchronic Present: The Academic Future of Modern Literature in

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Sequel in Korean (title here translated into English) discusses this article of Father Ong's and related or contrasted ideas of Lionel Trilling: Yong-Kwon Kim, "Synchronic Approach to Literary Study and Vernacular: The Opinion of the Reverend Walter J. Ong, S.J.," Sinsege (Seoul, South Korea), 2 (June 1963): 136-40. Reprinted in: In the Human Grain. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967, pp. 17-40.

A study of the changes in attitudes toward literature which accompany the entrance of vernacular literature into the world of academic scrutiny.

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"Modern Literature and American Universities," The Cambridge Review: A Journal of University Life and Thought, (Cambridge, England), 84 (Saturday 3 November 1962): 77-81.

Sister Joan Marie Lechner, O.S.U. Preface to Renaissance Concepts of the Commonplaces: An Historical Investigation of the General and Universal Ideas Used in All Argumentation and Persuasion with Special Emphasis on the Education and Literary Tradition of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, by Walter J. Ong, S.J. New York: Pageant Press, 1962, pp. vii-ix.

"L'écriture en peril?" [Traduit avec la collaboration de l'auteur par le Père René Marle, S.J.] Études (Paris), 316 (février 1963): 205-210.

This article follows rather closely, but not exactly, the tape by Father Ong, "The End of the Age of Literacy."

"American Culture and Morality," Religious Education, 58 (March-April 1963): 114-126.
Reprinted in: In the Human Grain. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967, pp. 164-187.

Stresses the point that even if the field of moral choice is changing significantly, culture itself is not a moral category. Original sin is not a quantitative variable, there is no hard evidence to assume that this age is significantly more moral or less moral, all cultures have their virtues and vices, and time would be better spent identifying and attempting to cure present ills than in bemoaning current decline or praising current superiority, real or projected.

"Our Roman Catholic Heritage," Religion and Contemporary Society. Ed. by Harold Stahmer. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963, pp. 43-84.

"Classic and Romantic," The Concise Encyclopedia of English and American Poets and Poetry. Ed. Stephen Spender and Donald Hall. New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1963, and London: George Rainbird, Ltd., 1963, pp. 78-80, 97; in 2nd ed. revised, London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1970, pp. 51-54.

"Johnson, Samuel," The Concise Encyclopedia of English and American Poets and Poetry. Ed. by Stephen Spender and Donald Hall. New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1963, and London: George Rainbird, Ltd., 1963, pp. 179-180; in 2nd ed. revised, London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1970, pp. 145-146.

Review of The Enduring Monument: A Study of the Idea of Praise in Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice, by O.B. Hardison, Jr. (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), College English, 24 (May 1963): 661.

"Comments on Dr. James L. Foy's Paper," The Bulletin of the Guild of Catholic Psychiatrists, 10 (July 1963): 171-175.

"Knowledge, Time, and Man," Current Issues in Higher Education 1963: The Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual National Conference in Higher Education 3-6 March 1963. Ed. G. Kerry Smith. Washington, D.C.: Association for Higher Education, a Department of the National Education Association, 1963, pp. 230-232.

Review of Jesuit Education: An Essay on the Foundations of Its Idea by John W. Donohue, S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963): Thought: A Review of Culture and Idea, 38 (Summer 1963): 315-18.

"English as English: The New Criticism and the Study of the Vernacular," The Cambridge Review: A Journal of University Life and Thought, 85 (Saturday 18 January 1964): 182-87.

This article is the revised text of a lecture taped for the B.B.C. Third Programme (radio) in London 3 September 1962, and broadcast 20 December 1962, again around 2 June 1963, and perhaps at other times.

"Recent Studies in the English Renaissance," Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, 4 (Winter [1963-]1964): 163-94.

"The Knowledge Explosion and the Science[s] of Man," The American Benedictine Review, 15 (March 1964): 1-13.

"A Ramist Translation of Euripides," Manuscripta, 8 (March 1964) 18-28.

"[Report on] Grant No. 3037--Penrose Fund (1961), \$1,000. The polemic bias in thought and expression through certain areas of western rhetorical culture," The American Philosophical Society held at Philadelphia for Promoting Useful Knowledge: Year Book 1963: 1 January 1963--31 December 1963. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1964, p. 583.

"Review of Humanistic Education and Western Civilization: Essays for Robert H. Hutchins, ed. with an introduction by Arthur A. Cohen (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), The Critic, 22 (April-May 1964): 58-59.

Review of Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word "Stimmung", by Leo Spitzer. Ed. by Anna Granville Hatcher, with a preface by Rene Wellek (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), The Journal of Religion (The University of Chicago), 44 (July 1964): 245-46.

Review of The Papacy: An Illustrated History from St. Peter to Paul VI, ed. Christopher Hollis (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Monday 26 October 1964, p. 2C

"Hostility, Literacy, and Webster III," College English, 26 (November 1964): 106-111.

Reprinted with some abridgement as "The Word in Chains," In the Human Grain. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967, pp. 52-59.

Shows the literate bias toward language operating in critics of Webster's New International Dictionary, Third Edition, which seeks to record not only the language as written but as also and fundamentally related to speech.

Review of Preface to Plato, by Eric A. Havelock (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), Manuscripta, 7 (November 1964): 179-81.

Points up the value of this volume which shows the link between the rise of ancient philosophy and the transition in ancient Greece from Oral to more chirographically controlled habits of communication and thought.

"The Communications Revolution," The Environment of Change: A Conference at Sterling Forest, Tuxedo, New York 14-17 June 1964, ed. with introduction by Bernhard M. Auer, Publisher, Time, The Weekly Newsmagazine (New York: Time, Inc., 1964, pp. 109-26. (Not copy-righted; not for public sale.)

"Technology and Culture": A Report on Remarks by Walter J. Ong, S.J., Philosophy in a Technological Culture: The Proceedings of the Workshop in Philosophy in a Technological Culture conducted under the general auspices of the Director of Workshops, The Catholic University of America 13 June to 24 June 1963, Ed. Rev. George F. McLean, O.M.I. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964, pp. 161-63, with discussion pp. 172-79.

This report, apparently abridged from a tape, is very badly garbled in places. It was never submitted to the author for checking.

Review of The "Adages" of Erasmus: A Study with Translations, by Margaret Mann Phillips (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1964), The Classical Bulletin 41 (December 1964): 31-32.

"Myth or Evolution? Crisis of the Creative Imagination," McCormick Quarterly, 18 (January 1965), "Myth and Modern Man: Proceedings of a Special Colloquium at McCormick Theological Seminary. Chicago: 22 October, 1964," pp. 37-56.

Review of Varieties of Unbelief, by Martin E. Marty (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), The Christian Century, 82 (3 Feb-

ruary 1965): 142-143; published simultaneously in St. Louis Review, 25 (5 February 1965): 14.

Review of Petrus Ramus, Dialecticae Institutiones: Aristotelicae Animadversiones: Facsimile Neudruck der Ausgaben Paris 1543 mit einer Einleitung von Wilhelm Risse (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag--Gunther Holzboog, 1964), Renaissance News, 18 (Spring 1965): 31-33.

Statement for the Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs, Intellectual and Cultural Possibilities Generated by Vatican Council II. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs, April 1965, p. 40, (mimeographed brochure).

Review of Journal of a Soul, by Pope John XXIII, trans. from the Italian by Dorothy White (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1965), Saturday Review, 47 (10 April 1965): 37-38, 61-62.
Sequel: This review is quoted in the Editorial, "The Spirit of Holiness in Men of Power," Life, 58 (16 April 1965): 4.

"Mild Megalomania?": Woodstock Letters, 94 (Summer 1965): 259-267.
Reprinted in: Sister Formation Bulletin: Official Publication of the National Sister Formation Conference, 12 (Summer 1966): 6-9.

"Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style," PMLA, 80 (June 1965): 145-154.

Claude Tresmontant. Preface to Christian Metaphysics, by Walter J. Ong, S.J. Translated by Gerard Slevin. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965, pp. 7-11.
Though Ong has written little of an overtly metaphysical character himself, his endorsement of Tresmontant's work makes book very useful for understanding his own metaphysical stance.

"Faith and Secular Learning," (Delivered as the baccalaureate address at commencement, the University of Texas, Austin, 29 May 1965.) Texas Quarterly, 8 (Winter 1965-1966): 182-188.

"Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision," Comparative Literature Studies, 3 ([January] 1966): 1-20.
Reprinted in: New Theology No. 5. Ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman. New York: The Macmillan Company; Long: Collier-Macmillan, Ltd., 1968, pp. 222-252; Comparative Literature: Matter and Method. Ed. A. Owen Aldridge. Urbana, Chicago, and London: University of Illinois Press, 1969, pp. 308-327; In the Human Grain. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967, pp. 99-126.
A perceptive treatment of the perennial tension between evolutionary and cyclic world-views especially as evidenced in

certain modern poets and fiction writers. Ong sees contemporary cyclicism as a failure to come to grips with the demands of the time, as an attempt to conquer time by fleeing from it.

"Literature, Threat and Conquest," College English, 27 (May 1966): 620-23.

Review of Pierre de la Ramée, Dialectique (1555): edition critique, avec introduction, notes, et commentaires de Michel Dassonville ("Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance," 67, Genève: Librairie Droz, 1964), Renaissance News, 19 (Summer 1966): 142-44.

Review of A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950: vol. 3, The Age of Transition, and vol. 4, The Later Nineteenth Century, by Rene Wellek. (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 1965), Yale Review, 55 (Summer 1966): 585-89.

"Only through Time," an article-review of To Criticize the Critic: Eight Essays on Literature and Education, by T.S. Eliot (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1966), Poetry, 108 (July 1966): 265-68.

Review of Style, Rhetoric and Rhythm: Essays by Morris W. Croll. Ed. J. Max Patrick and Robert O. Evans, with John M. Wallace and R.J. Schoeck (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), Manuscripta, 10 (November 1966): 177-78.

Contribution in "Let Us Pray...But How? State of the Question," America, 115 (3 December 1966): 745-46.

This lengthy letter of Fr. Ong's concerns issues raised by Gareth Edwards, "Modern English in the Mass," America, 115 (22 October 1966): 483-486.

Review of T.S. Eliot: The Dialectical Structure of His Theory of Poetry, by Fei-Pai Lu (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1966), American Literature, 38 (January 1967): 573-74.

"Ramus, Peter," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. 8. Ed. Paul Edwards. New York: The Macmillan Company and the Free Press of Glencoe, 1967, pp. 66-68.

In the Human Grain: Further Explorations of Contemporary Culture. New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Collier-Macmillan, Ltd., 1967.

"The Spiritual Meaning of Technology and Culture," a resume of a talk 7 March 1966 to the Faculty Seminar on Technology and Culture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. Technology and Culture in Perspective, by Harvey Cox, Hudson Hoagland, Walter Ong, and Gyorgy Kepes, and the Members of the Seminar on

Technology and Culture at M.I.T. Ed. Myron B. Bloy, Jr., and Illene Montana. Cambridge, Mass.: The Church Society for College Work, 1967, pp. 29-31, with discussion, pp. 31-34.

Excerpts from Fr. Ong's and other papers in this booklet appear in Faculty Forum (published as a service to the Faculty Christian movement, through cooperation of the Committee on Faculty interests of the Department of Higher Education, National Council of Churches, etc.), no. 41 (May 1967): 3-4; reprinted in abridged form as "Man, in a Word," The Intercollegian (New York, published by the YMCA and YWCA jointly), 85 (Orientation Issue, Summer 1967): 34-37.

"I Remember Père Teilhard," The Jesuit Bulletin, 46 (February 1967): 6-7, 17-18.

A warm personal recollection of Ong's association with Teilhard which gives revealing insight into the essential character of both men.

"Humanism," The New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 7. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967, pp. 215b-224b.

"Literature, Written Transmission of," The New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 8. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967, pp. 833a-838b.

"Ramus, Peter," The New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 12. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967, pp. 77a-78a.

"Report of the Working Committee on English, Literature, and Arts," The Tufts Seminar to Initiate New Experiments in Undergraduate Instruction, 30 August--11 September 1965. Ed. Jack R. Tessman. Medford, Mass.: Tufts University, 1967, pp. 8-13.

Review of Pseudodoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox, by Rosalie L. Colie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), Seventeenth-Century News, 25 (Spring 1967): 3.

"Implications of the Humanities Institute for School Programs" (a summary of the transcription of Father Ong's talk with some subsequent editing), Literature in Humanities Programs: Papers Delivered at the NCTE Humanities Conference, Fall 1966. Ed. Albert H. Marckwardt, Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967, pp. 57-64.

Review of The Art of Memory, by Frances A. Yates (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), Renaissance Quarterly [formerly Renaissance News], 20 (Summer 1967): 253-60.

Ong's review points up the importance of this unique and thoroughgoing treatment of the fortunes of memory in transition from oral to literate culture.

"Modern Media and God's Word," Part 1 of "The Primacy of the Spirit," a

four-program series on "The Catholic Hour," National Broadcasting Company, Sunday 7, 14, 21, 28 May 1967 (Part I broadcast 7 May 1967) Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Hour, National Council of Catholic Men, 1967.

Printed in abridged form, with an added concluding paragraph, as "Sound and Civilization: From Pericles to Electronics," Saint Louis University Magazine, 40 (Winter 1968): 7-9; St. Louis University Magazine adaptation with some further adaptations and additions, without acknowledgment, reprinted by arrangement with the St. Louis University Magazine and Mr. Conrad Kulawas, editor of The University of Chicago Magazine, as "Media and Culture," The University of Chicago Magazine, 61 (March-April 1969): 25-27; St. Louis University Magazine adaptation, with still further additions reprinted as "Comment: Voice, Print, and Culture," The Journal of Typographic Research, 4 (Winter 1970): 77-83.

Hugo Rahner, S.J. Preface to Man at Play, by Walter J. Ong, S.J. Trans. Brian Battershaw and Edward Quinn. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967, pp. ix-xiv.

Reprinted in "Toward a Theology of Merriment," Moreana: Bulletin Thomas More, vols. 15 and 16, Festschrift for E. F. Rogers (16 November 1967): 326-330.

"The Expanding Humanities and the Individual Scholar" (an address delivered at the Plenary Meeting of the MLA Standing Committees in New York 30 March 1967), PMLA, 82 (September 1967): 1-7. Slightly revised reprint: The Hofstra Review (Hofstra University), 2 (Autumn 1967): 27-32; The Cosmos Reader. Ed. Edgar Z. Friedenberg et al. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1970, pp. 1024-1033.

Review of The Cool Millennium, by Gerald Sykes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), Commonweal, 86 (22 September 1967): 589-591.

"'Idea' Titles in John Milton's Milieu," Studies in Honor of DeWitt T. Starnes. Ed. Thomas P. Harrison et al. Austin, Texas: The University of Texas, 1967, pp. 227-239.

The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History, "The Terry Lectures" [for 1963-64]. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967. Reprintings (partial): "Polemic and the Word," Communications Control: Readings in the Motives and Structures of Censorship. Ed. John [M.] Phelan, [S.J.]. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969, pp. 155-169; La presenza della parola. Trad. Rosanna Zelocchi, introduzione all'edizione italiana di Renato Barilli. Bologna: Societa editrice il Mulino, 1970. "Collezione di testi e di studi: Linguistica e critica letteraria."; The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History. New

York: Simon and Schuster, 1970; A Clarion Book 20549.

In contrast to Ong's normally somewhat episodic collections of essays, this volume represents his only real attempt at synthesizing his insights into the relationships between communications, technology and cultural evolution. A unique and germinal piece of creative scholarship that is most important for a grasp of his thought and his method.

"Literature, Religion, and Faith," Newsletter of the Conference on Christianity and Literature, 17 (Fall 1967): 21-24.
Reprinted in Network: A Journal of Religion and Culture, 1 (Spring 1974): 14-16.

A brief but penetrating article dealing with religion as orientation toward human origins, with faith as orientation to the future, and with the role of literacy and literature in shaping religion and the performance of faith.

"The Human and the Humanist," review-article on Yeats's Blessings on von Hugel: Essays on Literature and Religion, by Martin Green (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1967), The Month (London), 225, new series 39 (February 1968): 110-12.

Walter J. Ong, S.J., ed. Knowledge and the Future of Man: An International Symposium. New York, Chicago, and San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968. Father Ong's contributions: (1) Preface, pp. ix-x, (2) [Chapter] 1. [Introduction.] "Knowledge in Time," pp. 3-38.
New edition: Knowledge and the Future of Man: An International Symposium. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968.

"U.S.S.R.," an unpublished account of a brief visit by Walter Ong to Leningrad 30 July to 2 August 1968.

Reflections on contemporary Soviet culture in comparison to life in the United States.

Commentary [given from notes, taped, transcribed, and slightly edited by Fr. Ong] on a paper by Richard J. Schoeck, "The Scholar in the World: A Humanistic View," CCICA Bulletin, no. 12 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs, Fall 1968): 41-53.

Review of The Life of Teilhard de Chardin, by Robert Speaight (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1967), and of Letters to Two Friends, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, with a Prologue by René d'Ouinice and an appendix by Theodosius Dobzhansky. (New York: New American Library, 1968), St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Sunday 25 February 1968, p. 4B.

Comment on the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World"

issued by the Second Vatican Council, Articles 54, 55, 56 in the booklet Men and Nations: Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Part II, Problems of Special Urgency. Ed. Peter Foote, et al. Chicago, Ill.: Catholic Action Federations, 1968, pp. 22-25.

World as View and World as Event: Paper prepared in advance for participants in Symposium no. 41, "World Views: Their Nature and Their Role in Culture," a Burg Wartenstein[Conference Center, near Gloggnitz, Austria] Symposium, 2-11 August 1968, sponsored by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc., New York. New York: Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, 1968. (Privately printed.)
First public printing: American Anthropologist, 61 (August 1969): 634-47; abstracted in Abstracts in Anthropology, 1 (February 1970): 44-45.

One of Ong's most significant articles. Focusing on the difference between understanding the world as something to be observed or viewed as opposed to something which happens, and event, Ong traces the development from oral to visual to electronic culture in terms of its human and cosmic significance.

"Tudor Writings on Rhetoric," Studies in the Renaissance, 15 (1968): 39-69.

Reprinted as "Tudor Writings on Rhetoric, Poetic, and Literary Theory," with new material added, in Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971, pp. 48-103.

"Interiority and Modernity in the Spiritual Exercises," (unpublished transcription of taped talk given at the Conference on Interiority and Modernity in the Spiritual Exercises, St. Louis University), 13 April 1969.

A philosophical and theological account of the implications of the Spiritual Exercises in light of the cultural context of their origins and their enduring value for the development of personhood in the contemporary world.

Review of The Theory of the Avant-Garde, by Renato Poggioli. Trans. [from the Italian] by Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), American Literature, 40 (January 1969): 588-90.

"Communications as a Field of Study (unpublished talk given to Conference of Academic Administrators of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus, St. Louis, Mo.) 22 February 1969, pp. 1-12

"Middle East," (unpublished account of a visit to Egypt and Israel) 10 May to 12 June 1969.

A personalized account of the interface between elements of oral and visual-literate culture encountered in contemporary Egypt and Israel.

"Crisis and Understanding in the Humanities," Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The Future of the Humanities, 93 of The Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (Summer 1969): 617-40.

Reprinted in: Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971, pp. 304-336.

"Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," Worship (Collegeville, Minn.), 44 (October 1969): 474-87.

A revised version of a talk given at a liturgical Conference, "Worship '69," at the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, June 1969. Ong brings his evolutionary cultural perspectives to bear on the current state of and preoccupations of liturgical reform in the United States and Canada.

"On Mass Media and Theology: What a Catholic University Should Do," a transcription of an interview with Dr. Andrew Ruszkowski, Director, Institute of Social Communications, St. Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario 24 June 1969. (Mimeographed for private circulation.)

A wide-ranging discussion of contemporary theological issues in light of technological change. Includes some treatment of the theories of Marshall McLuhan.

"Howard Nemerov and His Poetry," Aardwolf (Saint Louis University, published unofficially by the Honors Program students), 2 (October 1969): 4.

"The Humanities and Social Crisis," with Martin Marty, Richard G. Stern, and moderator John Cawelti, an edited transcription of a dialogue videotaped 14 March 1969 at WTTW-TV (Channel 11), Chicago, and broadcast 17 April 1969 on WTTW-TV and later elsewhere, The University of Chicago Round Table: Dialogues from the Television Series, Spring 1969 Season. Conrad Kulawas, Ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Office of Radio and Television, 1969, pp. 71-82.

"Communications Media and the State of Theology," Cross Currents, 19 ("Theology in the City of Man," Fall 1969): 462-480. Reprinted in Theology in the City of Man, Saint Louis University: A Sesquicentennial Conference. Ed. John W. Padberg, S.J. West Nyack, N.Y.: Cross Currents, 1970, pp. 462-480. (A Cross Currents Paperback.)

An edition of an address at the St. Louis University Sesquicentennial in which Ong highlights the emergence and role of theology as a discipline from oral culture to the current electronic age.

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Petrus Ramus [and] Audomarus Telaeus Collectaneae praefationes, epistolae, orationes [a facsimile of the 1599 Marburg edition]. Introduction by Walter J. Ong, S.J. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969.

Pedro Lain Entralgo. Foreword to The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity, by Walter J. Ong, S.J. Ed. and trans. [from the Spanish] by L.J. Rather and John M. Sharp. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970, pp. ix-xvi.

Petrus Ramus Scholae in liberales artes [a facsimile of the 1569 Basel edition]. Ed. with an introduction by Walter J. Ong, S.J. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970.

Review of Unfinished Man and the Imagination: Toward an Ontology and Rhetoric of Revelation, by Ray L. Hart (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), Biblica, 51 (1970): 253-58.
Reprinted (abridged) as, "Response--Another View on Theological Style: Ray L. Hart's Unfinished Man and the Imagination," Soundings, 43 (Winter 1970): 450-55.

Review of The Interior Landscape: The Literary Criticism of Marshall McLuhan 1943-1962. Selected, compiled and edited by Eugene McNamara (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969), Criticism, 12 (Summer 1970): 244-51

Ong gives an analysis of McLuhan's literary criticism and his particular approach to new criticism by means of a biographical account of McLuhan's days at St. Louis University and his association with Ong, Bernard Muller-Thym, St. Louis Thomism, Wyndam Lewis, and others.

Al Montesi. Preface to Micrograms: Notes to a Generation of Students [poems], by Walter J. Ong, S.J. St. Louis, Mo.: Maryhurst Press, 1970, p. 9.

"'I See What You Say': Sense Analogues for Intellect," Human Inquiries: Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry, 10 (1970): 22-42.

A paper presented at the First International Lonergan Congress held at St. Leo College, St. Leo, Florida, March 1970. An important article. Treats each of the senses in terms of their usefulness for characterizing intellectual processes, exploring the analogues implied in the operation of each of the senses. Takes as a point of departure Lonergan's observation that in the last analysis intellection is more than sensation, and, therefore, no sense analogue is entirely adequate.

Lonergan

Interview with Walter J. Ong, S.J. George Riemer, The New Jesuits.

Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971, pp. 147-186.

A very useful introduction to and overview of Ong's thought along with some instructive insights into his life in the Society of Jesus and the relationship between his own self-perceptions and the development of his theoretical work.

Review of Peter Ramus, The Logike of the Most Excellent Philosopher P. Ramus Martyr. Trans. Roland MacIlmaine (1574), ed. Catherine M. Dunn, Renaissance Quarterly, 24 (Spring 1971): 87-90.

"English, 2000 A.D.," Saint Louis University Magazine, 44 (July-August 1971): 11.

A brief account of the directions which the study of English is currently taking and likely to follow: most notable a greater move toward interdisciplinary work.

Review of Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry, by Brian Vickers (New York: St. Martin's Press and London: Macmillan and Co., 1970), College English (February 1972): 613-616.

"Media Transformation: The Talked Book," College English (December 1972): 405-410.

Why Talk? A Conversation about Language with Walter Ong. Conducted by Wayne Altree. San Francisco: Chandler and Sharp, 1973. (An issue of the National Humanities Faculty Why Series.)

A discussion of the structure and foundations of language from historical, psychological, artistic and philosophical perspectives. An excellent summary of Ong's thought, rich in illustrative detail.

"An unpublished personal letter, largely autobiographical, from Walter J. Ong to Randolph F. Lummpp, dated 4 June 1974." An emendation dated 10 June 1974 is included.

"Bird, Horse and Chevalier in Hopkins' 'Windhover'," The Hopkins Quarterly, 1 (July 1974): 61-76.

"Christianus Uristius and Ramus' New Mathematics," Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, 36 (1974): 603-10.

"The History and the Future of Verbal Media," Human Communications: Theoretical Explorations. Ed. Albert Silverstein. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1974, pp. 165-183.

Not new material but a concise restatement of Ong's fundamental views on the history and development of communications media.

Review of The Learned Doctor William Ames: Dutch Backgrounds

of English and American Puritanism, by Keith L. Sprunger (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1972), Manuscripta, 18 (1974): 51-53.

A discussion of Ramist connections with early American puritanism in society and education, notably in the founding of Harvard College.

"Mass in Ewondo," America, 131 (28 September 1974): 148-51.

An excellent companion to "Worship at the End of the Age of Literacy," and a thoughtful reflection on the significance of liturgical adaptation in an emerging nation. In Cameroun, liturgy is not forced, elitist or rationalistic, but rather an authentic and natural employing of the music, dance and ceremonial customs of God's people.

"Agonistic Structures in Academia: Past to Present," Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 103 (Fall 1974): 229-38.

Traces the role of struggle in the academic world from the Latin based disputation of medieval schooling to the present crises in education. Tying in with other kinds of contemporary agonia, including the battle of the sexes in its present form, this article represents the leading edge of Ong's present intellectual probings.

"The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction," PMLA, 90 (January 1975): 9-21.

Reviews of Walter Ong's Works

Following is a selected listing of reviews of Ong's books. It is a select list in two regards. First, book reviews represent the only significant secondary literature on Ong that this author has been able to find to date. Due to the elusive character of book reviews, the list is certainly incomplete though it is reasonable to suppose that it is representative. Second, some reviews, especially those in obscure newspapers, are too superficial to repay the difficulty of obtaining them. Though some more popular pieces have been included, on the basis of their own merits, those popular pieces which are obviously superficial have been omitted. Every item which, in this author's judgment, is of even marginal scholarly value, however, has been included.

The reviews are listed alphabetically according to author under the heading of the book of Ong to which they pertain. A number of the reviews were unsigned. In these instances, the citation is included within the alphabetical listing according to the periodical or journal in which it appears. This listing is included only as an addendum for the reader who might wish to investigate scholarly reaction to Ong's books.

American Catholic Crossroads. New York: Collier Books, 1962(1956).

Catholic Charities Review, 44 (April 1960): 21.

Christian Century, 76 (26 August 1959): 974.

Crowe, M.B. Studies, 50 (Winter 1961): 458.

Drury, George. Critic, 18 (August-September 1959): 62-63.

Flynn, J. Thought, 35 (Fall 1960): 477.

Fogarty, Michael P. Life of the Spirit, 14 (January 1960): 330-31.

Gilman, Richard. Jubilee, 7 (July 1959): 47.

Heiser, W.C. Library Journal, 84 (15 May 1959): 1608.

Information, 73 (August 1959): 55.

Kirkus, 27 (15 June 1959): 432.

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