

# Walter J. Ong, Charles Taylor, and the Age of Romanticism

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## Article abstract

In my 20,762-word essay, I present an ambitious account of the life and work of the American Jesuit Renaissance specialist and cultural historian and pioneering media ecology theorist Walter J. Ong (1912-2003; Ph.D. in English, Harvard University, 1955). In addition, I succinctly highlight two books by the Canadian Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor (born in 1931; doctorate in philosophy, Oxford University, 1961): (1) *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity* (2016); and (2) *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment* (2024) – both published by Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. In my discussion of Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, I especially highlight his chapters on Gerard Manley Hopkins and T. S. Eliot. In the text of my lengthy essay (pp. 1-44), I frequently list related works of interest. I hope that you feel the force of my associations. In any event, my alphabetized list of "References" at the end of my essay is rather lengthy (pp. 45-56).

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## Walter J. Ong, Charles Taylor, and the Age of Romanticism

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**Abstract:** In my 20,762-word essay, I present an ambitious account of the life and work of the American Jesuit Renaissance specialist and cultural historian and pioneering media ecology theorist Walter J. Ong (1912-2003; Ph.D. in English, Harvard University, 1955). In addition, I succinctly highlight two books by the Canadian Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor (born in 1931; doctorate in philosophy, Oxford University, 1961): (1) *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity* (2016); and (2) *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment* (2024) – both published by Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. In my discussion of Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, I especially highlight his chapters on Gerard Manley Hopkins and T. S. Eliot. In the text of my lengthy essay (pp. 1-44), I frequently list related works of interest. I hope that you feel the force of my associations. In any event, my alphabetized list of "References" at the end of my essay is rather lengthy (pp. 45-56).

The prolific, and much honored, Canadian Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor (born in 1931, Ph.D., Oxford University, 1961) has a new 2024 600-page book out, *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*. It is a major work.

It is about poetry and the poetic sensibility in the Age of Romanticism in our Western cultural history. But it is a major work in Western philosophy from the time of Plato and Aristotle down to the present.

In the "Acknowledgments" (p. 601), Professor Emeritus Taylor thanks his "wife, Aube Billard. I have been working on this book, with some interruptions, during the three decades that we have been together. Her affinity for this project, and her belief in it, have kept me on this path in spite of everything. This book is dedicated to her."

I take his reference to three decades to include his 1989 600-page book *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. But a quick check of the "Index" in it reveals no entry on Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889). However, a quick check of the "Index" in Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 600-page book reveals an entire chapter on Hopkins (p. 611), with multiple references elsewhere in the text: Chapter 7: "Hopkins, Inscape and After" (pp. 163-184).

Now, the political scientist Eric Voegelin discusses the cosmos and cosmological order in terms of what he refers to as compactness and differentiation in the following three notable books: (1) *Israel and Revelation* (1956); (2) *The World of the Polis* (1957); and (3) *Plato and Aristotle* (1957).

The notable events that Voegelin discusses in antiquity in our Western cultural history

occurred in what Professor Emeritus Taylor refers to in Chapter 15: “History of Ethical Growth” in Part VI: “Relation to History and the Present” in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (pp. 553-587) as the Axial period in world history (esp. pp. 555-559).

Professor Emeritus Taylor borrow the term Axial period in world history from Karl Jaspers’ famous account of what he famously refers to as the Axial period in world history (Taylor, 2024, esp. Chapter 15: “History of Ethical Growth” in Part VI, pp. 555-562).

In Professor Emeritus Taylor’s subsection II titled “The ‘Axial’ turn” of Chapter 15: “History of Ethical Growth” in Part VI of his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (pp. 555-559), he also calls Robert Bellah’s 2011 book *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*.

For further discussion of Bellah’s impressive 2011 book, see my 2021 4,500-word review essay “Robert N. Bellah’s 2011 Book *Religion in Human Evolution*, and Walter J. Ong’s Thought” that is available online through the University of Minnesota’s digital conservancy: <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/225352>

Bellah’s impressive 2011 book is part of the growing field of study known as Big History. A recent contribution to the field of study known as Big History is David Graeber and David Wengrow’s 2021 book *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*.

For further discussion of it, see my OEN article “David Graeber and David Wengrow on Big History” (dated November 17, 2021): <https://www.opednews.com/articles/David-Graeber-and-David-We-by-Thomas-Farrell-History-History-Cultural-History-Preshistory-Prehistoric-History-and-Religion-211117-192.html>

Briefly stated, Ong is famous for taking the long view of history. In addition to referring to Bellah’s impressive 2011 book *Religion in Human Evolution* in Big History in Chapter 15: “History of Ethical Growth in Part VI of his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, Professor Emeritus Taylor also refers to Merlin Donald’s two books in Big History in subsection V of Chapter 16: “Cosmic Connection Today – and Perennially” in Part VI (pp. 596-597 at p. 597n.16): (1) *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition* (1991); and (2) *A Mind So Rare: The Evolution of Human Consciousness* (2001). In neither of Donald’s book does he mention Ong’s work.

However, in Donald’s 1991 book *Origins of the Modern Mind*, he discusses reading and writing extensively (for specific page references, see the entries on reading and writing in the “Index” [pp. 411 and 413, respectively]). In Donald’s 2001 book, he also discusses reading and writing, but not as extensively (for specific page references, see the entries on reading and writing in the “Index” [pp. 369 and 371, respectively]).

Now, back to Voegelin for a minute. I also align, on the one hand, what Voegelin refers to as compactness (also known as compact consciousness) with what Father Ong refers to as primary orality -- discussed below – and, on the other hand, what Voegelin refers to as differentiation (also known as differentiated consciousness) with what Father Ong refers to as

phonetic alphabetic literacy in ancient Greek culture as exemplified in Plato and Aristotle, and in ancient Hebrew culture as exemplified in the Hebrew Bible -- also discussed below.

For further discussion of Voegelin, see my book *Walter Ong's Contributions to Cultural Studies: The Phenomenology of the Word and I-Thou Communication* (2000, pp. 23, 31, 32, 66-67, 104, 105, 119, 123, 127, 157, 164, 193, 196, 200n.4, 204n.5, and 217n.2).

Now, once the book-reading public understands what the much-honored Professor Emeritus Taylor means by Cosmic Connections, which I explain below, I suspect that his new 2024 600-page book *Cosmic Connections* will become his most widely read book.

Book-reading theists in the three monotheistic religious traditions should especially rejoice in his new 2024 600-page book.

Both theists and non-theists who read Pope Francis' widely read 2015 eco-encyclical *Laudato Si'* should now read Professor Emeritus Taylor's major new work.

In Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 15: "History of Ethical Growth" in Part VI: "Relation to History and the Present" in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (pp. 553-587), he discusses Pope Francis' thought in his encyclicals *Laudato Si'* (2015) and *Fratelli Tutti* (2020 (Taylor, 2024, pp. 580-581, 584, and 586).

For further discussion of Pope Francis' 2020 encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (Siblings All), see Cardinal Michael Czerny and Father Christian Barone's 2022 book *Siblings All, Sign of the Times: The Social Teaching of Pope Francis*, translated by Julian Paparella (orig. Italian ed., 2021). In all honesty, I am surprised that Professor Emeritus Taylor had not also advert to Pope Francis' 2020 post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (Beloved Amazon).

For a discussion of it, see my 2020 4,000-word review essay "Pope Francis' 2020 Apostolic Exhortation, and Walter J. Ong's Thought" that is available online through the University of Minnesota's digital conservancy.

Now, also in Chapter 15, Professor Emeritus Taylor mentions Trump in two places (pp. 575 and 577). No, I do not expect Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* to become a *New York Times* bestseller. Nor do I expect Professor Emeritus Taylor to be named *Time's* Person of the Year in 2024, as the singer and songwriter Taylor Swift was named in 2023 – I don't even expect to see the Canadian Catholic philosopher pictured on the cover of *Time* as a result of his new 2024 book.

After all, not even the twentieth-century Canadian Catholic convert and Renaissance specialist and cultural historian and pioneering media ecology theorist Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980; Ph.D. in English, Cambridge University, 1943) – arguably the most widely known academic in the twentieth century – made the cover of *Time*, not even at the height of his notoriety in the 1960s and 1970s.

Digression: I would not want to be subjected to the kind of criticism McLuhan was subjected to – especially from certain academics. However, I admit that McLuhan did play along with the notoriety he was receiving. For example, he did agree to make a cameo appearance as himself in Woody Allen's movie *Annie Hall* (1977), starring Diane Keaton in the title role. Evidently, McLuhan saw himself as playing the role of prophet of the Age of Television. End of

digression.

As an aside, in case you have been wondering just how big Taylor Swift is, the *New York Times* has helped you out by devoting a long piece to just this question -- with a text by Joe Coscarelli and graphics and additional reporting by Courtney Cox and Fred Bierman (dated May 17, 2024):

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/05/17/arts/music/taylor-swift-sales-tours-grammys.html?smid=em-share>

Now, in the present review essay, I am casting both Father Ong and Professor Emeritus Taylor in the role of prophets of the Age of Romanticism – just as journalists once cast Marshall McLuhan in the role of prophet of the Age of Television. From my standpoint, the Age of Television can now be seen as a manifestation of the more comprehensive Age of Romanticism – just as the Age of Secondary Orality and the Age of the Internet and the still emerging Age of Globalization can also now be seen as manifestations of the Age of Romanticism. Throughout the present essay, I will explain my use of the expression about the Age of Romanticism.

However, at the moment, I want to explain something else. The poet, playwright, and literary critic T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) wrote “Tradition and the Individual Talent” about the individual talent of the poet in relation to his or her tradition of poetry. However, in the present essay, I am considering the individual talents of Father Ong and Professor Emeritus Taylor as literary critics and cultural theorists in relation to our Western tradition.

Each of us in Western culture today is an individual, and each of us have certain talents to one degree or another. However we use our individual talents involves our relation to our Western tradition. In the present essay, I use my talent as an Ong scholar to help us get our cultural bearings about our Western tradition.

Eliot’s essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” is reprinted in volume two of *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, edited by Anthony Cuda and Ronald Schuchard (2015, pp. 105-114).

In it, Eliot says, “Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind” (p. 105) – including the critical turn of mind of Father Ong and Professor Emeritus Taylor as literary critics and cultural historians.

Eliot also says the following: “Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it, you must obtain it by great labor. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his [or her] twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man [or a woman] to write not merely with his [or her] generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of timelessness as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his [or her] place in

time, of his [or her] own contemporaneity" (p. 106).

In Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 13: "T. S. Eliot" in Part V: "The Modernist Turn" in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (pp. 485-524), he quotes this lengthy passage from Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (quoted on p. 504). Professor Emeritus Taylor characterizes Eliot's 1919 essay as bespeaking "his doctrine of tradition as an ever-changing simultaneous order" (p. 506).

More generally, Professor Emeritus Taylor commends Eliot as a literary critic: "But Eliot was not only a great poet; he was a philosopher (his Harvard doctoral thesis was on Bradley); and the combination of these two capacities made him a formidable critic" (p. 503).

In any event, in Eliot's 1919 essay, he continues: "No poet, no artist of any art, has his [or her] complete meaning alone. His [or her] significance, his [or her] appreciation is the appreciation of his [or her] relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him [or her] alone; you must set him [or her], for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he [or she] shall conform, that he [or she] shall cohere, is not onesided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all works of art which preceded it" (p. 106).

In the present essay, I am extending Eliot's strictures about all forms of art to include the art of literary criticism and cultural history as exemplified in the work of Father Ong and Professor Emeritus Taylor.

In Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, he also quotes the following passage from Eliot's 1919 essay: "The poet must engage in 'a continual surrender of himself [or herself] as he [or she] is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of the artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality'" (p. 504; I have added the bracketed material).

"The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him [or her] will be the man [or woman] who suffers and the mind which creates.' As he puts it later: 'Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion: it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape these'" (p. 505; I have added the bracketed material here).

Next, Professor Emeritus Taylor says in parentheses: "(This last statement is followed by a quote in Greek from Aristotle's *De Anima* [1.4], which translates: 'The intellect is doubtless more divine and less subject to passion' [than the passions])" (p. 505; Taylor has added the bracketed material here).

Yes, to be sure, the intellect as such is less subject to the passions than the passions are. In volume two of *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, mentioned above, the editors Cuda and Schuchard inform us that Eliot studied Aristotle's logic with J. A. Smith at Oxford University (p. 114n.25).

In Robert Crawford's book *Young Eliot: From St. Louis to The Waste Land* (2015), he devotes Chapter 9 to "The Oxford Year" (pp. 201-231). It sounds like it was an extraordinary year in young Eliot's life.

What Eliot is describing here as escape calls to mind the subtitle W. Terrence Gordon's 1997 book *Marshall: Escape into Understanding: A Biography*. The intellect's understanding is less subject to passion than the passions are, and so the intellect's understanding can be described as an escape, figuratively speaking.

What Eliot is describing here as the orientation of the intellect is what I would style as a contemplative orientation of the intellect.

Now, I mention above *Time* naming Taylor Swift Person of the Year and the distinction of being of the cover of *Time* as forms of public recognition to say that the much-honored Professor Emeritus Charles Taylor has already received so many distinguished forms of recognition that I now find it hard to imagine what further forms of recognition he could receive for his major new 600-page 2024 book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*.

Now, as I write, the American so-called traditionalist Catholic Harrison Butker, the kicker for the Kansas City Chiefs, has been in the media spotlight because of his commencement address at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, on May 11, 2024. I have no idea what Butker did to get himself invited to deliver the commencement address.

But I suppose that being in the media spotlight as he is at this time is a form of public recognition that the Canadian Catholic Professor Emeritus Taylor has not yet received. In all honesty, I have been surprised by the extent of the commentary in the media about Butker's commencement address at the small Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. Prior to it, he was not especially prominent on the national scene, as far as I know – and Benedictine College is small.

On the national scene recently, campus protests about Israel's ongoing war with Hamas forces in Palestine have been commented on widely by the media commentariat – and certain commencements have even been cancelled due to campus protests.

Now, for one discussion of Butker's controversial commencement address, see the American conservative Catholic convert columnist Ross Douthat's column "Harrison Butker's Very American Traditionalism" (dated May 24, 2024) in the *New York Times*:  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/opinion/harrison-butker-catholicism.html>

For another discussion of Butker's controversial commencement address, see the American Catholic Heather Miller Rubens' article "The casual, but dangerous antisemitism in Harrison Butker's commencement speech" (dated May 29, 2024) in the *National Catholic Reporter*:  
<https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/guest-voices/casual-dangerous-antisemitism-harrison-butkers-commencement-speech>

Both American traditionalist Catholics and American conservative Catholics tend to be anti-Francis. For a discussion of anti-Francis tendencies in the Roman Catholic Church today, see the Italian philosopher and papal biographer Massimo Borghesi's 2021 book *Catholic Discordance: Neoconservatism vs. the Field Hospital Church of Pope Francis*, translated from the Italian by Barry Hudock (orig. Italian ed., 2021).

I have profiled the doctrinally conservative Pope Francis (born in 1936; elected pope in March 2013) in my widely read *OEN* article “Pope Francis on Evil and Satan” (dated March 24, 2019): <https://www.opednews.com/articles/Pope-Francis-on-Evil-and-S-by-Thomas-Farrell-Abortion-Catholic-God-Homosexuality-190324-51.html>

Now, I do not see anything in the Canadian Catholic Professor Emeritus Charles Taylor’s new 600-page 2024 book that would be directly applicable or pertinent to the Roman Catholic Church today – except for, as I have indicated, Pope Francis’ widely read 2015 eco-encyclical *Laudato Si’*. In general terms, anti-Francis Catholics tend to be into climate denialism – just as Trump’s most ardent supporters tend to be into climate denialism.

However, I would be remiss here if I did not mention in the present essay about the Age of Romanticism that I cannot tell you about any discernable impact that Romanticism has had on the Roman Catholic Church. Let me take the German Romantics of the 1790s as the start of the Age of Romanticism. In church history since the 1790s, arguably the most significant development has been the development of what is known as Catholic social teaching. But I cannot tell you how the broad tradition of Catholic social teaching might be interpreted as somehow expressing the spirit of Romanticism.

However, I can tell you that Pope Francis’ widely read 2015 eco-encyclical *Laudato Si’* is part of the broad tradition of Catholic social teaching. Yes, it can be interpreted as an expression of our contemporary ongoing Age of Romanticism. (It is available in English and other languages at the Vatican’s website.)

For a discussion of Catholic social teaching, see Anna Rowlands’ book *Towards a Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times* (2021).

Now, the other big development in the Roman Catholic Church in the Age of Romanticism was the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The reception of Vatican II is still an ongoing process in our contemporary ongoing Age of Romanticism.

I interject these remarks here about the Roman Catholic Church to say that I cannot predict how Professor Emeritus Taylor’s Catholic co-religionists will receive his new 2024 book about the Age of Romanticism. Would Catholics today deepen their understanding of Catholic social teaching and their reception of Vatican II by interpreting these events in the Roman Catholic Church as expressing the spirit of the Age of Romanticism?

In all honesty, I have no idea how Roman Catholics today might see Professor Emeritus Taylor’s new 2024 book about the Age of Romanticism as providing an interpretive framework for understanding church history after the time of the German Romantics of the 1790s. More particularly, I have no idea how the outspoken doctrinally conservative Pope Francis might see his new 2024 book about the Age of Romanticism as providing an interpretive framework for understanding his 2015 eco-encyclical. But the doctrinally conservative Pope Francis is a very creative thinker, and Professor Emeritus Taylor’s new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* is an admirably creative and eloquent synthesis.

For discussion of the ongoing reception of Vatican II, see *The Oxford Handbook of Vatican II*, edited by Catherine E. Clifford and Massimo Faggioli (2023).

Now, in addition to being a creative and eloquent synthesis, Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* is an enormously learned book -- and a remarkably well-organized book. He consistently and carefully operationally defines and explains his terms. I enjoy the play of his mind -- even when I do not bring sufficient background knowledge to understand all of the nuances of his thought.

Now, Professor Emeritus Taylor's subsection 3 in Chapter 1 of his new 2024 book has the subtitle "Schiller's Aesthetic Education" (p. 8). In it, Professor Emeritus Taylor quotes Schiller as saying (in English translation), "Man only plays when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being, and he is only fully a human being when he plays."

I have no idea if Schiller would allow me to expand his observations about play to the admirable play of Professor Emeritus Taylor's mind in his new 2024 book.

I hope that Professor Emeritus Taylor's eloquent and playful voice in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* summons the belief of his readers in their Cosmic Connections. Indeed, the voice of literature, figuratively speaking, has summoned Professor Emeritus Taylor's belief in Cosmic Connections. Now, my favorite essay by Father Ong is his "Voice as Summons for Belief: Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self" in the now-defunct Jesuit-sponsored journal *Thought: A Review of Culture and Idea* (Fordham University) (1958). Father Ong reprinted it in his 1962 book *The Barbarian Within: And Other Fugitive Essays and Studies* (pp. 49-67).

It is also reprinted in volume two of Ong's *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1992b, pp. 68-84). In addition, it is reprinted in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 259-275).

In my estimate, theists in the three monotheistic religious traditions should rejoice in Father Ong's perceptive account of generalized faith in his essay "Voice as Summons for Belief: Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self" -- just as they should rejoice in Professor Emeritus Taylor's account of Cosmic Connections in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*.

In any event, I will try, to the best of my ability, to make the present essay as fast-paced, and as lively, as possible. However, I admit that a book about Cosmic Connections is not likely to stir the passions as, for example, the 2024 elections and the wars in Palestine and Ukraine stir them.

Nevertheless, more generally, Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* can help us get our cultural bearings about our Western cultural history as we move into a more global sense of life today -- just as Father Ong's work can.

Now, some concern has been voiced in the United States about President Joe Biden's age as he stands for reelection in 2024. On November 20, 2024, President Biden will turn 82. On December 17, 2024, the ailing, but still prolific, Pope Francis will turn 88. On November 5, 2024, the much-honored Professor Emeritus Charles Taylor will turn 93. We all age at different rates and in different ways.

As fast-paced as I plan to make this wide-ranging -- and wildly associative -- essay, I also plan

to situate Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book about Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment in the larger conceptual framework of the mature work of the American Jesuit Renaissance specialist and cultural historian and pioneering media ecology theorist Father Walter J. Ong (1912-2003; Ph.D. in English, Harvard University, 1955), my former teacher at Saint Louis University, the Jesuit university in the City of St. Louis.

Now, those of us who are accustomed to watching commercial television are accustomed to having our attention interrupted for commercials – which do not have anything to do with one another – but then shortly we return our attention to the television show that we were watching before the interruption. In this way, we have been accustomed by watching commercial television to a way of paying attention that has prepared the way for reading the present wildly associative essay. At least my associations here are related to certain material covered in the present essay.

In general, my way of proceeding to assimilate new material, such as the material in Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, is to review related familiar ("old") material, such as Father Ong's work – and related work mentioned here. This process of reviewing related familiar material proceeds through associations – hence the wildly associative way of proceeding throughout the present essay. Through the associative connections I make here regarding Father Ong's work, and related work, I hope to persuade you that his account of our Western cultural history provides us with insights for understanding Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*.

Now, Father Ong's paternal ancestors left East Anglia in 1631 on the same ship that brought Roger Williams to the Massachusetts Bay Colony – before Harvard College was founded in 1636. Just to be clear, Cambridge University is in East Anglia, and many of the college-educated colonists in the Massachusetts Bay Colony had been educated at Cambridge University.

Ramist logic (in Latin) dominated the curriculum at Cambridge University when young John Milton (1608-1674) was a student there. Later in Milton's life, he composed a textbook in logic (in Latin) based on Ramus' work. Still later in Milton's life, in 1672, after he had become famous as a poet and pamphleteer in English, he published his textbook in logic (in Latin). In 1982, Father Ong and Charles J. Ermatinger published their English translation of Milton's *Logic* in volume eight of Yale's *Complete Prose Works of John Milton: 1666-1682*, edited by Maurice Kelley (pp. 139-407).

Father Ong's lengthy "Introduction" (pp. 144-205) is reprinted, slightly shortened, as "Introduction to Milton's *Logic*" in volume four of Father Ong's *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1999, pp. 111-142).

Now, a word is in order here about the title and subtitle of Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*. The prolific German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) is usually credited with popularizing the expression the disenchantment of the world as one way to characterize what is often thought of as the growing secularization of the world.

For Professor Emeritus Taylor's operational definition and explanation of disenchantment and of enchantment, see his massive 2007 885-page book *A Secular Age* (for specific page references, see the "Index" entries on disenchantment [p. 858] and enchanted world [p. 859]).

In 2013, the self-styled conservative columnist David Brooks (born in 1961) devoted a column to *A Secular Age* – titled “The Secular Society” (dated July 8, 2013):

<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/09/opinion/brooks-the-secular-society.html>

On the back cover of Professor Emeritus Taylor’s new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, we find the following quotation from David Brooks’ 2013 column: “‘A rich, complex book . . . that is both open and also contains at least pockets of spiritual rigor, and that is propelled by religious motivation, a strong and enduring piece of our nature.’” These words are taken from the closing paragraph of Brooks’ 2013 column.

Now, Professor Emeritus Taylor’s use of the expression Cosmic Connections in Poetry seems to suggest a kind (Cosmic) of relationship (Connections) that is not supposed to persist in the Disenchantment of the world. On the contrary, the Disenchantment of the world is supposed to be characterized by the demise of supposed Cosmic Connections.

So, what, exactly, is Professor Emeritus Taylor up to in his new 2024 book? As we will see below, Professor Emeritus Taylor is concerned with what he refers to in his new 2024 book’s title as Cosmic Connections. More particularly, he is concerned with the poetry and poetic sensibility of the German Romantics of the 1790s – whose thought he explored at length in his 2016 book *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Linguistic Capacity*, which I discuss at length below.

In Professor Emeritus Taylor’s Chapter 7 “Hopkins, Inscape and After” in Part III of his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (pp. 163-184), he says that the “thesis in *The Language Animal* [is] that spoken/written language cannot be properly understood if we dissociate it from other human expressive activities, or symbolic forms” (p. 180n.21).

In any event, Father Ong is silent about the German Romantics of the 1790s. However, as we will see below, he does discuss Romanticism in broad terms – terms broad enough to include Professor Emeritus Taylor’s more finely differentiated discussion of the German Romantics of the 1790s in his 2016 book *The Language Animal*.

Now, for a critique of Weber’s and of Professor Emeritus Taylor’s conceptualization of disenchantment, see Jason A. Josephson-Storm’s 2017 book *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (concerning Professor Emeritus Taylor, see p. 4).

Now, Hartmut Rosa (born in 1965; Ph.D., Humboldt University of Berlin, 1997) wrote his doctoral dissertation on the political philosophy of Charles Professor Emeritus Taylor. In Rosa’s 2019 book *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World*, translated from the German by James C. Wagner (orig. German ed., 2016), Rosa lists seven books by Professor Emeritus Taylor in his “References” [p. 526]; for specific page references to Professor Emeritus Taylor, see the “Index” [p. 552]).

In Professor Emeritus Taylor’s new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, he refers to Rosa’s work in several places (pp. 50-51, 90, 129, 254, 294, and 296).

On the back cover of Rosa's 2019 book, we are told the following by Craig Calhoun: "Hartmut Rosa is one of the leading and most distinctive voices in contemporary social theory. In *Resonance* he continues the important analysis of the very nature of modernity laid out in *Social Acceleration* [2013], and offers a new approach to basic human relationships, both to other people and to the world. This is a truly important book."

More recently, Craig Calhoun (born in 1952; doctorate, Oxford University, 1980) co-authored (with Dilip Gaonkar and Charles Taylor) the 2022 book *Degenerations of Democracy* (Harvard University Press).

In Professor Emeritus Charles Taylor's "Acknowledgments" in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (p. 601), he says, I want to express my gratitude to two colleagues in the Centre for Transcultural Studies: Craig Calhoun and Dilip Gaonkar, who helped me overcome my doubts and keep moving. I especially want to thank Craig for his help in organizing the full manuscript and orchestrating the production of the book."

Now, I discuss Rosa's 2019 book *Resonance* in my OEN article "Hartmut Rosa on Resonance" (dated May 2, 2024):

<https://www.opednews.com/articles/Hartmut-Rosa-on-Resonance-Life-Purpose-Lifestyle-Relationships-Self-development-240502-522.html>

### **Professor Emeritus Charles Taylor's 2016 Book on Language**

Now, Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment* is a follow up to his 2016 book *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Linguistic Capacity*.

On the back of the dust jacket of *The Language Animal*, we are told the following by Craig Calhoun, mentioned above: "Professor Emeritus Taylor is one of a handful of the most important thinkers of our era. The line of thinking he develops in *The Language Animal* is basic to his whole work since *The Explanation of Behaviour* [1964]. Many readers will grasp the importance of a constitutive view of language, and for them this will be a landmark book."

The most efficient way for me to provide you with an overview of Professor Emeritus Taylor's 2016 book *The Language Animal* is to tell you its parts:

"Preface" (pp. ix-x).

Part I: "Language as Constitutive" (p. 1).

Chapter 1: "Designative and Constitutive Views" (pp. 3-50).

Chapter 2: "How Language Grows" (pp. 51-82).

Chapter 3: "Beyond Information Encoding" (pp. 83-100).

Part II: "From Descriptive to Constitutive" (p. 101).

Chapter 4: "The Hobbes-Locke-Condillac Theory" (pp. 103-128).

Chapter 5: "The Figurine Dimension of Language" (pp. 129-176).

Chapter 6: "Constitution 1: The Articulation of Meaning" (pp. 177-263).

Chapter 7: "Constitution 2: The Creative Force of Discourse" (pp. 264-288).

Part III: "Further Applications" (p. 289).

Chapter 8: "How Narrative Makes Meaning" (pp. 291-319).

Chapter 9: "The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis" (pp. 320-331).

Chapter 10: "Conclusion: The Range of Human Linguistic Capacity" (pp. 332-345).

"Index" (pp. 347-352).

Now in Professor Emeritus Taylor's "Preface" in *The Language Animal*, he introduces us to two acronyms that he uses regularly throughout the book: (1) HHH and (2) HLC (p. ix; for further specific page references to HHH, see the "Index" [p. 349]; for further specific page references to HLC, see the "Index" [p. 350]).

Professor Emeritus Taylor says, "My inspiration has been the views on language developed in the 1790s in Germany, the time and place where what we think of as German Romanticism flowered. The main theorists I have drawn on are Hamann, Herder, and Humboldt – hence my name for the theory I have taken from them, the 'HHH'" (p. ix).

Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) was a German Lutheran philosopher.  
Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) was a German philosopher, theologian, poet, and literary critic.

Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) was a German philosopher, linguist, government functionary, and founder of the Humboldt University of Berlin. Professor Emeritus Taylor also says, "The contrast case to this outlook is one which developed in the great thinkers of early modernity, rationalist and empiricist, which were also responsible for the modern epistemological theories which grew out of, and sometimes partly against, the work of Descartes. The main early figures in this tradition which I cite here are Hobbes, Locke, and Condillac. Hence the shorthand title 'HLC'" (p. ix).

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) is "considered to be," according to Wikipedia, "one of the founders of modern political philosophy." "Hobbes is best known for his 1651 book *Leviathan*, in which he expounds an influential formulation of social contract theory."

John Locke (1632-1704) "was an English philosopher and physician," according to Wikipedia, who is "widely regarded as one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers and commonly known as the 'father of liberalism.'"

Etienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714-1780) was a French philosopher, epistemologist, and Catholic priest.

Please note Professor Emeritus Taylor's way of referring to what he is saying here in his 2016 book: "The contrast case to this outlook" (p. ix). Simply stated, he is operationally defining and explaining the two contrasting views that he works with in the book. Basically, his way of proceeding in the book is comparison and contrast.

I would say that Father Ong's favorite way of proceeding is to set up and operationally define and explain what Professor Emeritus Taylor here characterizes as two cases (i.e., two positions). For example, in Father Ong's massively researched 1958 book *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*, he basically compares and contrasts the Art of Discourse and the Art of Reason in the verbal arts of logic and rhetoric in our Western cultural history. In it, Father Ong collapses two tendencies in cognitive processing in our Western cultural history in the singular-sounding expression aural-to-visual shift, mentioned above. In effect, this is his shorthand way of referring to the comparison and contrast of aural cognitive processing and visual cognitive processing.

In Father Ong's 1962 book *The Barbarian Within: And Other Fugitive Essays and Studies*, we find him working with the comparison-and-contrast way of proceeding in the title essay "The Barbarian Within: Outsiders Inside Society Today" (pp. 260-285). It is reprinted in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 277-300), mentioned above.

Most famously, and most extensively, Father Ong works with the comparison-and-contrast way of proceeding with his comparison and contrast of orality and literacy – for example, in his most accessible 1982 book *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. If you are not already familiar with Father Ong's work, but want to study his work, I would recommend that you start with his 1982 book and then proceed to the selections in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*.

For further discussion of the ins and outs of Father Ong's thought, see Thomas D. Zlatich's "The Articulate Self in a Particulate World: The Ins and Outs of Ong" in the anthology *Language, Culture, and Identity: The Legacy of Walter J. Ong, S.J.*, edited by Sara van den Berg and Thomas M. Walsh (2011, pp. 7-29).

But one further point that we should note here about Professor Emeritus Taylor's "Conclusion" in his 2016 book *The Language Animal*. Among other things, he says, "The proposed companion study will explore the post-Romantic tradition which distinguishes real, poetic language from routine, instrumental, designative speech, and which sees the former as operating a kind of reconnection. The link between the two, this volume and its successor, is the Romantic theory of language, called here the HHH, which underlies them both. They are two sides of the same outlook on language" (p. 345).

### **Father Walter J. Ong's Work**

Now, in Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 1: "Designative and Constitutive Views" in *The Language Animal* (pp. 3-50), we are told, "The HLC theory was thoroughly monological. What needs to be recognized is the primacy of communication, of the dialogical. The thinkers of the HHH all saw that the primary locus of language was conversation. Language doesn't just develop inside individuals, to be then communicated to others. It evolves always in the interspace of joint attention, or communion" (p. 50; for specific page references to communion, see the "Index" [p. 348]).

Professor Emeritus Taylor's discussion of HLC theory as monological and of HHH theory as dialogical in his 2016 book *The Language Animal* calls to mind the American Jesuit Renaissance specialist and cultural historian and pioneering media ecology theorist Walter J. Ong's use of the terms monological and dialogical in his massively researched 1958 book *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*.

In it, Father Ong discusses what he refers to as the aural-to-visual shift in cognitive processing in our Western cultural history (for specific page refers to the aural-to-visual shift, see that entry in the "Index" [p. 396]). In note 54 on page 338, Ong acknowledges that he has borrowed the terminology about the aural-to-visual shift in cognitive processing in our Western cultural history from the French Protestant philosopher Louis Lavelle's "discerning and profound treatment of the visual-aural opposition" especially in his 1942 book *La parole et l'écriture*.

Father Ong has summed up his noetic concerns about the aural-to-visual shift in cognitive processing in our Western cultural history in his accessible 1982 book *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* – his most widely read and most widely translated book.

In broad terms, Professor Emeritus Taylor is also aware of what Father Ong refers to as his noetic concerns. See Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 2: "Epistemic Issues" in Part I of his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (pp. 48-84) and his Chapter 9: "Epistemic Retreat and the New Centrality of Time" in Part III (pp. 252-264).

In any event, the prolific French Renaissance logician and educational reformer and Protestant martyr Peter Ramus (1515-1572) was an influential writer in his lifetime. In Ong's massively researched 1958 book, he traces the history of the verbal arts of logic and rhetoric from Aristotle down to Ramus and beyond.

The verbal arts of logic and rhetoric in our Western cultural history involved reasoning about probabilities and persuasion. Ah, but doesn't poetry also involve verbal art and persuasion? You bet it does. As a matter of fact, Plato famously objects to poetry.

The classicist Eric A. Havelock argues in his landmark 1963 book *Preface to Plato* that Plato's famous objection to poetry involved poetry's persuasive power.

Father Ong never tired of touting Havelock's 1963 book. Father Ong's perceptive review of Havelock's 1963 book is reprinted in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 309-312).

Now, in Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, he revisits the persuasive power of poetry decried by Plato with special reference to poetry in the Age of Romanticism. In this respect, his new 2024 book is a creative and eloquent synthesis of Western philosophy since Plato.

Now, of the six influential authors discussed by Professor Emeritus Taylor in his 2016 book *The Language Animal*, only Thomas Hobbes and John Locke are mentioned by name in Father Ong's massively researched 1958 book *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Hobbes, pp. 6, 15, and 147-148; Locke, p. 256). But Father Ong mentions Descartes several times (pp. 7, 121, 125, 198, 229, and 307).

Now, in my adult life (I recently turned 80), I have devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to writing about the work of my former teacher at Saint Louis University, the American Jesuit Father Walter J. Ong, mentioned above. See, for example, my *OEN* article "Thomas J. Farrell on Thomas J. Farrell" (dated November 17, 2023):

<https://www.opednews.com/articles/Thomas-J-Farrell-on-Thoma-Professionalism-231117-426.html>

I discuss Father Ong's philosophical thought in his massively researched 1958 book *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* in my somewhat lengthy *OEN* article "Walter J. Ong's Philosophical Thought" (dated September 20, 2020):

<https://www.opednews.com/articles/Walter-J-Ong-s-Philosophi-by-Thomas-Farrell->

More comprehensively, I have surveyed Father Ong's life and eleven of his books and selected articles in my book *Walter Ong's Contributions to Cultural Studies: The Phenomenology of the Word and I-Thou Communication* (2000) – the winner of the Marshall McLuhan Award for Outstanding Book in the Field of Media Ecology, conferred by the Media Ecology Association in June 2001.

The Media Ecology Association also conferred The Edmund S. Carpenter Award for Career Achievement in Editing in the Field of Media Ecology, in 2012, on me and Paul A. Soukup. In addition, the Media Ecology Association conferred The Walter J. Ong Award for Career Achievement in Scholarship, in 2022, on Paul A. Soukup.

Most recently Paul A. Soukup has published the book *A Media Ecology of Theology: Communicating Faith throughout the Christian Tradition* (2022). I discuss it in my OEN article "Paul A. Soukup, S.J., on a Media Ecology of Christian Theology" (dated December 24, 2022):  
[https://www.opednews.com/articles/Paul-A-Soukup-S-J--on-a-Christianity\\_Communication\\_Faith\\_Theology-221224-346.html](https://www.opednews.com/articles/Paul-A-Soukup-S-J--on-a-Christianity_Communication_Faith_Theology-221224-346.html)

Now, in broad terms, Father Ong liked to characterize his mature work from the early 1950s onward as phenomenological and personalist. However, I would add that his thought is also evolutionary – and it includes technology.

Ong discusses evolution in the following three essays that he reprinted in his 1967 collection *In the Human Grain: Further Explorations of Contemporary Culture*:

- (1) "Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time" (pp. 61-82);
- (2) "Nationalism and Darwin" (pp. 83-98);
- (3) "Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision" (pp. 99-126).

Father Ong also refers to evolution in the title of his 1977 book *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture*.

Father Ong discusses technology in his essay "Technology Outside Us and Inside Us" in *Communio: International Catholic Review* (Summer 1978). It is reprinted in volume one of Father Ong's *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1992a, pp. 189-208).

Father Ong also refers to technology in the title of his 1971 book *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* and in the title of his 1982 book *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* – his most widely read and his most widely translated book.

Now, in Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 3: "Beyond Information Encoding" in his 2016 book *The Language Animal* (pp. 83-100), he refers briefly to Marshall McLuhan in passing (p. 86). Professor Emeritus Taylor says the following: "To the extent, however, that this kind of reduction seems implausible, we will be readier to agree that the coming of language brings with it new goals and purposes; that language is not just a tool, offering a more effective means to preexisting goals. Indeed, one could argue that it is not simply a technology either – even taking on board what Marshall McLuhan showed about the way new technologies transform us [Professor Emeritus Taylor provides no specific reference to a work by McLuhan].

Language is rather fundamental to all our technologies.

"And so the second approach to the issue is to examine the nature of language itself, and to see whether or not it can be fully understood without supposing such unprecedented concerns. This is the approach that has been followed in the first chapters, and that I will continue throughout the rest of the book. The considerations of the previous paragraphs about the attractions (to some) of reductive explanation help explain the temptations to adopt a continuity perspective, and to see the interspecies differences as matters of degree, or of differing means to the same ends. The reductive account is meant to undercut, even refute, the phenomenology which tends to underscore the sui generis nature of linguistically informed modes of life."

In any event, Professor Emeritus Taylor's chapter title "Beyond Information Encoding" in his 2016 book *The Language Animal* calls to mind Father Ong's insightful essay "Information and/or Communication: Interactions" in *Communication Research Trends* (1996). It is reprinted in volume four of Father Ong's *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1999, pp. 217-238). It is also reprinted in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 505-525), mentioned above.

Now, in Professor Emeritus Taylor's 1989 book *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (p. 186), he refers, in passing, to Father Ong's massively researched 1958 book *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*. If Father Ong ever referred to any of Professor Emeritus Taylor's books that were published in his lifetime, I am not aware of it. However, Father Ong and Professor Emeritus Taylor shared a religious faith – both were orthodox Roman Catholics.

Just to be clear here, Father Ong never published book-length studies comparable in focus and scope to Professor Emeritus Taylor's 2016 book *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity* -- or to his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*.

That said, I would be remiss here if I did not mention that Father Ong started writing a book that he seems to have envisioned as a kind of grand synthesis of his thought. However, because he was suffering from Parkinson's disease, he had to abandon this ambitious project. But he did publish certain articles that he had originally intended for the abandoned book.

Years after Father Ong's death in 2003, his abandoned manuscript was posthumously published as the uncompleted book *Language as Hermeneutic: A Primer on the Word and Digitization*, edited and with commentaries by Thomas D. Zlatich and Sara van den Berg (2017). If I understand Professor Emeritus Taylor's 2016 book *The Language Animal* aright, he would find the idea that Ong expresses as "Language as Hermeneutic" consonant with his own view of language in his 2016 book.

In any event, why am I even mentioning Father Ong's work? Let me explain. In the subtitle of Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*, he refers to "the Age of Disenchantment." Ah, but according to Professor

Emeritus Taylor's reckoning, when was this "Age of Disenchantment"? And how does his reckoning of "the Age of Disenchantment" relate to any of Father Ong's dates for reckoning certain periods in our Western cultural history?

Now, Harvard's Perry Miller served as the director of Father Ong's massively researched doctoral dissertation on the French Renaissance logician and educational reformer and Protestant martyr Peter Ramus (1515-1572).

Perry Miller himself grappled with Ramus and Ramism to the best of his ability in his massively researched 1939 book *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (for specific page references to Ramus, see the "Index" [p. 528]) – a pioneering work in the field of American Studies.

Ramist logic had dominated the curriculum at Cambridge University and then at the newly founded (in 1636) Harvard College. In the process of celebrating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Harvard College, scholars had rediscovered, so to speak, the largely forgotten influence of Ramus and Ramist logic on the curriculum of the fledgling Harvard College.

However, toward the end of Miller's massively researched 1939 book, he called for someone else to undertake a more thorough study of Ramus and Ramism. After Father Ong had been ordained a priest and had completed his lengthy Jesuit formation, he proceeded to undertake his doctoral studies in English at Harvard and to write his doctoral dissertation under Miller on Ramus.

In 1958, Harvard University Press published Father Ong's massively researched doctoral dissertation, slightly revised, in two volumes: (1) *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*; and (2) *Ramus and Talon Inventory*.

Ong's *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* is a wide-ranging and deeply informed scholarly study by the Renaissance specialist and cultural historian and pioneering media ecology theorist.

*Ramus and Talon Inventory* is a briefly annotated bibliographic listing of more than 750 volumes (most in Latin, the lingua franca of the day) by Ramus and his allies and his critics that Father Ong tracked down in more than 100 libraries in the British Isles and Continental Europe – with the financial assistance of two Guggenheim Fellowships.

For three years (November 1950 to November 1953), Father Ong was based in a Jesuit residence in Paris. The French Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) also had a room at that Jesuit residence. The Vatican had refused to grant Teilhard permission to publish his writings about evolution. During Ong's years in Paris, he read Teilhard's writings about evolution in typescript form. After Teilhard's death in 1955, his writings about evolution were published in French and then translated into other languages, including English. Hold that thought for a moment now, while I return to Father Ong's 1958 book *Ramus and Talon Inventory*.

In any event, Father Ong's *Ramus and Talon Inventory* features the dedication "For/ Herbert Marshall McLuhan/ who started all this" – meaning that young McLuhan had started Father Ong's interest in Ramus, when he called young Ong's attention to Perry Miller's massively researched 1939 book *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (for specific page

references to Ramus, see the “Index” [p. 528]).

The young Canadian Catholic convert Marshall McLuhan taught English at Saint Louis University from the fall semester of 1937 through the spring semester of 1944. As part of young Ong’s Jesuit formation, he studied philosophy and English at Saint Louis University.

From young McLuhan, young Ong also learned about the posthumously published poetry of the Victorian Jesuit poet and classicist Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889). Father Ong wrote his Master’s thesis on Hopkins’ sprung rhythm – with McLuhan serving as its titular director.

Let me now return to Father Ong in Paris to pick up another point about McLuhan and Father Ong. In 1951, McLuhan published his first book, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man* (Vanguard Press). It consists of advertisements and other pictorial artefacts that McLuhan had selected, accompanied by short essays he had written about each one.

From Paris, Father Ong dispatched his review-article about his former teacher at Saint Louis University’s first book, “The Mechanical Bride: Christen the Folklore of Industrial Man” to *Social Order* (Saint Louis University) (1952). Note that the word “Christen” in Father Ong’s title is his own word, not McLuhan’s. Among other things, Father Ong describes the book as “the author’s whirligig of insights” (p. 80). Father Ong does include a subsection titled “Christen Technology?” (p. 82).

In addition, Father Ong includes a subsection titled “Three Spheres of Being” (p. 84). In it, Father Ong discusses Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s account of three spheres: (1) the cosmosphere; (2) the biosphere; and (3) the noosphere. The word noosphere is formed from the Greek, *nous*, *noos*, mind. In this way, Father Ong became one of the first American Catholics to publish anything about Teilhard’s thought.

In any event, Teilhard’s cosmosphere sounds like it could be connected with Professor Emeritus Taylor’s Cosmic Connections in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*.

In 1967, Gerald Emanuel Stearn reprinted, and re-titled, Ong’s 1952 review of McLuhan’s 1951 book in the book *McLuhan Hot & Cool: A Critical Symposium with a Rebuttal by McLuhan* (Dial Press, pp. 82-92).

In any event, Father Ong draws on the Greek etymology of noosphere in his own characterization of his 1981 book *Fighting for Life: Contest, Sexuality [Gender], and Consciousness* as “deal[ing] with ‘noobiology, the biological setting of mental activity’ – as his counter to E. O. Wilson’s 1975 book *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*.

By way of a digression, I also want to note here something else about Father Ong’s 1981 book. In it, he shifts his attention to the psychodynamics of what he refers to in the book’s title as Contest. I say here that she shifts his attention to signal that he had previously referred to the same psychodynamics with the term polemic – in his 1967 seminal book *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (for specific page references, see the “Index” entry on polemic [p. 354]). For Father Ong, this switch in English terms involved the Greek root words, *polemos*, struggle, war (1967) and *agon*, struggle, contest

(1981). In Father Ong's 1981 book, he refers repeatedly to Johan Huizinga's classic *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (1955; pp. 18, 25, 33, 44-45, 133, and 170). Now, Professor Emeritus Taylor also discusses Huizinga's classic in his 2016 book *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity* (pp. 334 and 335), mentioned above -- he even goes so far as to refer to "the play instinct" (p. 336) in connection with his listing of "the sexual instinct [and] the nest-building instinct."

Father Ong supplied the "Preface" to the German Jesuit Hugo Rahner's book *Man at Play*, translated by Brian Battershaw and Edward Quinn. Father Ong's "Preface" is reprinted as "Preface to *Man at Play*" in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 345-348). End of digression.

In any event, at the height of Marshall McLuhan's notoriety in the 1960s, Eugene McNamara did him the service of collecting his literary criticism in the volume titled *The Interior Landscape: The Literary Criticism of Marshall McLuhan 1943-1962* (1969).

Father Ong then published the somewhat lengthy untitled review of the McNamara-edited volume in *Criticism* (Summer 1970). His review is reprinted as "Review of *The Interior Landscape: The Literary Criticism of Marshall McLuhan, 1943-1962*" in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 69-77), mentioned above.

Now, Elena Lamberti of the University of Bologna has explored McLuhan's literary criticism in relation to his media studies in her book *Marshall McLuhan's Mosaic: Probing the Literary Origins of Media Studies* (2012) -- winner of the Marshall McLuhan Award for Outstanding Book in the Field of Media Ecology, conferred by the Media Ecology Association in June 2016.

In any event, after McLuhan died in 1980, Father Ong published "McLuhan as Teachers: The Future is a Thing of the Past" in the *Journal of Communication* (Summer 1981).

It is reprinted in volume one of Ong's *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1992a, pp. 11-18).

In 1987, Oxford University Press published *Letters of Marshall McLuhan*, selected and edited and annotated by Matie Molinaro, Corinne McLuhan, and William Toye.

In one letter to Father Ong (dated May 31, 1953; pp. 236-238), McLuhan says, "Have sent on a dozen off-prints to you. Living up here in Canada, I have got so out of touch with people that I have even lost the desire to communicate. I can't think of a single person [in Canada] to whom I wish to send an off-print" (p. 236).

In a letter to Michael Wolff (dated July 3, 1964; pp. 304-305), McLuhan says, "In so far as literature us the study and training of perception, the electric age [of television] has complicated the literary lot a good deal. However the new extensions of our senses have greatly enhanced the role of language as training for coping with the total environment, language assumes new roles over and beyond the confrontation of the printed page. Yet the literary man is potentially in control of the strategies needed in the new sensory environment. Language alone includes all the senses and interplay at all times. Perhaps the weakness of literacy as such is its tendency to play up the visual aspects of language at the expense of all the other senses. Hopkins would seem to have begun the strategy of playing down the visual

in order to play up the other senses in speech” (p. 304).

For a related essay about Hopkins and the visual, see Father Ong’s “Technological Development and Writer-Subject-Reader Immediacies” in the 1990 anthology *Oral and Written Communication: Historical Approaches*, edited by Richard Leo Enos (pp. 206-215). It is reprinted in volume three of Father Ong’s *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1995, pp. 240-248). It is also reprinted in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 497-504), mentioned above.

Now, two major biographies of McLuhan have been published thus far:

- (1) Philip Marchand’s *Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and the Messenger* (1989);
- (2) W. Terrence Gordon’s *Marshall McLuhan: Escape into Understanding: A Biography* (1997), mentioned above.

In Marchand’s 1989 biography of McLuhan, he says, “Tipped off by McLuhan [about Peter Ramus (1515-1572)], Ong later devoted years of research to Ramus and eventually produced his classic study, much quoted in McLuhan’s *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, entitled *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* [1958]. It was while working on this book that Ong hit on the basic notion underlying *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, namely that Western culture in the Renaissance had shifted from a primarily auditory mode of apprehending reality to a primarily visual mode and that the vehicle for this shift was the invention of printing [in the form of the Gutenberg printing press that emerged in Europe in the mid-1450s]” (p. 59).

Subsequently, Marchand also says, “Amplifying Walter Ong’s thesis [in *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (1958)], McLuhan argued [in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962)] that the invention of printing effected a still more profound transformation in the psyche of Western man, leading to an emphasis on the visualization of science and industry, capitalism, nationalism, and so on” (p. 155).

Now, Gordon also edited, and provided the editorial apparatus for, McLuhan’s 1964 book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man: Critical Edition* (2003).

In addition, Gordon edited, and provided the editorial apparatus for, the posthumous publication of McLuhan’s 1943 Cambridge University doctoral dissertation – published as *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of His Time* (2006). The classical trivium referred to the verbal arts of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Thomas Nashe (1567-1601) was one of Shakespeare’s contemporaries. Nashe is one of the six English Renaissance university-educated writers known collectively as the University Wits.

About a decade after McLuhan completed his 1943 Cambridge University doctoral dissertation about the classical trivium of the verbal arts and Thomas Nashe, Father Ong completed his massively researched Harvard University doctoral dissertation about the history of the verbal arts of logic and rhetoric and Peter Ramus. Father Ong’s research in the history of the formal study of logic in our Western cultural history clearly benefited from the burst of scholarly studies in the history of logic that had been completed after McLuhan had completed his 1943 Cambridge University doctoral dissertation.

Now, in Father Ong's Chapter IV: "The Distant Background: Scholasticism and the Quantification of Thought" in Book Two: "Background" in his massively researched 1958 book *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (pp. 53-91), he discusses the significant advances that late medieval logicians made in the quantification of thought in logic – without being aware of the advances they were making. The late medieval logicians who made those advances in the quantification of thought in logic were so immersed in their own understanding of the Aristotelian tradition of logic that they somehow had not been aware of the advances that they themselves made. Curious, eh?

But, so what? Father Ong spells out the import of the quantification of thought in late medieval logic in Chapter Five: "System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism" in his 1962 book *The Barbarian Within: And Other Fugitive Essays and Studies* (pp. 68-87):

"In this historical perspective, medieval scholastic logic appears as a kind of pre-mathematics, a subtle and unwitting preparation for the large-scale operations in quantitative modes of thinking which will characterize the modern world. In assessing the meaning of [medieval] scholasticism, one must keep in mind an important and astounding fact: in the whole history of the human mind, mathematics and mathematical physics come into their own, in a way which has changed the face of the earth and promises or threatens to change it even more, at only one place and time, that is, in Western Europe immediately after the [medieval] scholastic experience [in short, in print culture]. Elsewhere, no matter how advanced the culture on other scores, and even along mathematical lines, as in the case of the Babylonian, nothing like a real mathematical transformation of thinking takes place – not among the ancient Egyptians or Assyrians or Greeks or Romans, not among the peoples of India nor the Chinese nor the Japanese, not among the Aztecs or Mayas, not in Islam despite the promising beginnings there, any more than among the Tartars or the Avars or the Turks. These people can all now share the common scientific knowledge, but the scientific tradition itself which they share is not a merging of various parallel discoveries made by their various civilizations. **It represents a new state of mind.** However great contributions other civilizations may hereafter make to the tradition, our scientific world traces its origins back always to seventeenth and sixteenth century Europe [in short, to Copernicus and Galileo], to the place where for some three centuries and more the [medieval] arts course taught in universities and para-university schools had pounded into the heads of youth a study program consisting almost exclusively of a highly quantified logic and a companion physics, both taught on a scale and with an enthusiasm never approximated or even dreamt of in ancient academies" (p. 72; boldface emphasis here added by me).

The quantification of thought in late medieval logic no doubt contributed to the subsequent development of modern science and of modern capitalism in our Western cultural history. Of course, modern capitalism has been globalized in our contemporary economic globalization.

Nevertheless, the quantification of thought in late medieval logic stands as a singular development in our Western cultural history, as I explain in my article "The West versus the Rest: Getting Our Cultural Bearings from Walter J. Ong" in *Explorations in Media Ecology* (2008).

For a related discussion, see Ian Morris' book *Why the West Rules – For Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal About the Future* (2010).

Now, young Ong's 1941 Master thesis was published, slightly revised, as "Hopkins' Sprung Rhythm and the Life of English Poetry" in the 1949 book *Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Norman Weyand, S.J. (pp. 93-174).

It is reprinted in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 111-174), mentioned above.

However, for a more up-to-date account of Hopkins' sprung rhythm, see James I. Wimsatt's book *Hopkins's Poetics of Speech Sound: Sprung Rhythm, Lettering, Inscape* (2006).

In Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 7: "Hopkins, Inscape and After" in Part III of his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (pp. 163-184), he refers to Wimsatt's 2006 book (Taylor, 2024, p. 164n.1).

In 1966, Father Ong published "Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision," which is largely about Hopkins, in *Comparative Literature Studies* (January 1966). He reprinted it in his 1967 book *In the Human Grain: Further Explorations of Contemporary Culture* (pp. 99-126). It is also reprinted in volume two of Father Ong's *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1992b, pp. 104-127).

In 1986, years after young Ong wrote his 1941 Master's thesis on Hopkins' sprung rhythm, Father Ong published his book *Hopkins, the Self, and God*, the published version of his 1981 Alexander Lectures at the University of Toronto.

When Lindsay Waters, the retired director of Harvard University Press, told me about Professor Emeritus Taylor's then-forthcoming new book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*, I suspected that it would include a chapter on Hopkins. It does: Chapter 7: "Hopkins, Inscape and After" (pp. 163-184).

In any event, a few years after Harvard University Press published Father Ong's doctoral dissertation in two volumes in 1958, McLuhan published his ambitious 1962 book *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*.

Ong's generous review of McLuhan's 1962 book is reprinted in *An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiries*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2002, pp. 307-308, but also see Ong's later comment about McLuhan's 1962 book, p. 343), mentioned above. In Ong's generous review, he says, among other things, that McLuhan's 1962 book is a synthesis – and now I am saying that Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book is a synthesis.

For Professor Emeritus Taylor's sake, I hope that he is not now subjected to the kind of defensive attacks for his book that McLuhan was subjected to.

Now, in Father Ong's mature work from the early 1950s onward, print culture (also known as typographic culture -- in distinction from chirographic, or manuscript, culture) emerged in our Western cultural history after the Gutenberg printing press emerged in Europe in the mid-1450s.

For Father Ong, before the Gutenberg printing press emerged in Europe in the mid-1450s, our Western cultural history, from ancient times through medieval times, featured what Father Ong refers to as manuscript, or chirographic, culture with phonetic alphabetic literacy.

For Father Ong, before phonetic alphabetic literacy emerged in ancient Hebrew culture and in ancient Greek culture, our Western cultural history was characterized by what Father Ong refers to as primary orality (primary oral culture).

The classicist Eric A. Havelock describes how phonetic alphabetic literacy impacted ancient Greek culture in his landmark 1963 book *Preface to Plato*, mentioned above.

The biblical scholar James L. Kugel describes how phonetic alphabetic literacy impacted ancient Hebrew culture in his 2017 book *The Great Shift: Encountering God in Biblical Times*.

Kugel's title *The Great Shift* calls to mind Father Ong's expression about the aural-to-visual shift in cognitive processing in our Western cultural history in his massively researched 1958 book *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (for specific pages references, see the entry on aural-to-visual shift in the "Index" [p. 396]).

For an Ongian article that can be related to Kugel's 2017 book about the Hebrew Bible, see my article "Walter Father Ong and Harold Bloom Can Help Us Understand the Hebrew Bible" in *Explorations in Media Ecology* (2012).

Now, for Father Ong, after the communications media that accentuate sound, including the telephone, movies, and television, our Western cultural history came to be characterized more and more by what Father Ong refers to as secondary orality – which term he uses to differentiate it from primary orality.

For Father Ong, secondary orality emerged mostly in the twentieth century, reaching greater influence than before with the prevalence of television sets. Thus, we can think of secondary orality as a kind of juggernaut of communications media that emerged most prominently in the latter twentieth century and continues apace in the twenty-first century.

Now, because Trump and his most ardent supporters like to hearken back to the 1950s, perhaps we can align the 1950s with the hyper-visualist orientation of the Western psyche that emerged in our Western cultural history after the Gutenberg printing press emerged in Europe in the mid-1450s. Thus, we can think of the 1950s/1960s as the great divide between print culture and the ascendent secondary oral culture in our Western cultural history.

But the nostalgic view that Trump and his most ardent supporters have of the 1950s is an idealized view, based on their own selective nostalgia.

But what do we mean when we speak of nostalgia? In Jennifer Schuessler's article titled "A Furious, Forgotten Slave Narrative Resurfaces After Nearly 170 Years: John S. Jacobs was a fugitive, an abolitionist – and the brother of the canonical Harriet Jacobs. Now, his own fierce autobiography has re-emerged" (dated May 23, 2024) in the *New York Times*, addresses this question. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/arts/john-jacobs-slavery-discovery.html?smid=em-share>

Schuessler says, "Today, we may think of nostalgia, a term coined in the 1680s by a Swiss

physician, as a pleasantly wistful state. But it originated as a medical diagnosis, which was often applied to despondent prisoners, soldiers and others seen as ‘irrationally’ homesick, including enslaved people.”

Now, when we think of Trump and his most ardent supporters as nostalgic for the 1950s, do we think of them as “pleasantly wistful” for the 1950s? Or do we think of them as despondent, as irrationally homesick – due to their idealized view of the 1950s?

I myself tend to think of Trump and his most ardent supporters as irrationally despondent due to their idealized view of the 1950s.

For an article about the 1960s that I hope is not nostalgic for the 1960s, see my 8,750-word article titled “Doris Kearns Goodwin and Thomas J. Farrell on the History of the 1960s” in the online journal *New Explorations: Studies in Culture and Communication* (Spring 2024):

<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/nexj/issue/view/2831>

(You will have to scroll through the lengthy table of contents to locate my article.)

I also hope that the present review essay is not nostalgic for our Western cultural past. After all, the ultimate purpose of the rather lengthy present essay is to provide its readers with a clear-sighted, albeit complicated, discussion of our Western cultural history, so that the readers will be in a better position to face our current challenges here in the United States and abroad.

Now, Father Ong’s pair of historically distant contrasting terms primary oral culture and secondary oral culture serve as a contrast with his historically closer contrasting pair of terms chirographic, or manuscript, culture, on the one hand, and, on the other, typographic, or print, culture. Combined, Father Ong’s two sets of contrasting terms produce a fourfold schema for describing our Western cultural history: (1) primary oral culture, encompassing pre-literate and prehistoric culture; (2) ancient and medieval Western manuscript culture; (3) modern Western print culture; and (4) our contemporary Western secondary oral culture.

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

However, our contemporary secondary orality is by now best thought of as global, not just Western. The self-styled conservative columnist David Brooks surveys certain global trends of thought in his column titled “We Haven’t Hit Peak Populism Yet” (dated May 23, 2024) in the *New York Times*:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/opinion/populism-trump-elections.html>

When Brooks turns to recommending ways in which we Americans today might counter the populist tendencies of Trump and his most ardent supporters, he refers to measures that work “from the bottom up.”

In any event, we can attribute what Brooks refers to as populism and populist tendencies not only in the United States today, but around the world today to the deep currents in our collective unconscious that are reverberating as a result of what Father Ong refers to as our

contemporary global secondary orality.

I am concerned by the rise of the populist trends in the United States and around the world that Brooks succinctly describes. Even though I interpret those trends here as manifestations of our contemporary global secondary orality, I do not want to leave you with the impression that I interpret only alarming trends as manifestations of our contemporary secondary orality in Western culture.

The Jungian psychoanalyst and psychological theorist Edward C. Whitmont (1912-1998) calls attention to certain promising developments in his 1982 book *Return of the Goddess*. By the Return of the Goddess, he means awareness of the Return of the Goddess archetype in our Western psyche at the level of ego-consciousness.

For a broad discussion of Jung and Jungian psychological theory, see my *OEN* article “Getting Our Bearings from Jung” (dated March 15, 2015):

<https://www.opednews.com/articles/Getting-Our-Bearings-from-by-Thomas-Farrell-Adults-Aquarius-Christianity-Culture-150315-296.html>

Ah, but what about the Romantic Age as both Father Ong and Professor Emeritus Taylor discuss it. Let’s refer here to the German Romantics of the 1790s. Let’s also refer here to the secondary orality of the latter twentieth century and the twenty-first century. For all practical purposes, secondary orality today carries forward today the Romantic Age – and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Ah, but since we have now shifted our discussion from our Western cultural history to take into account our global secondary orality, should we not also take into account that our global cultural view includes today many parts of the world that have still strong residual forms of primary oral cultures? Yes, indeed we should also acknowledge this.

Now, let’s backtrack a bit. Where, exactly, does what Professor Emeritus Taylor refers to as “the Age of Disenchantment” fit into Father Ong’s fourfold schema for discussing our Western cultural history? Basically, what Professor Emeritus Taylor refers to as “the Age of Disenchantment” emerges in what Father Ong refers to as print culture (typographic culture) – but not overnight.

Nevertheless, Father Ong refers to another pair of contrasting terms in his important article “World as View and World as Event” in the *American Anthropologist* (August 1969). It is reprinted in volume three of Father Ong’s *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1995, pp. 69-90).

In “World as View and World as Event,” Father Ong operationally defines and explains the world-as-view sense of life that he associates with phonetic alphabetic literacy in our Western cultural history, on the one hand, and, on the other, the world-as-event sense of life.

For Father Ong, the world-as-view sense of life emerged most decisively in our Western cultural history in ancient Greek philosophy exemplified by Plato and Aristotle – and was carried forward subsequently in Western philosophy down to the present day. But the world-as-view sense of life was also carried forward in our Western cultural history by ancient and medieval Christian theology in manuscript culture and then subsequently also in print culture.

Thus, what Weber and Professor Emeritus Taylor refer to as the disenchantment of the world involves what Father Ong refers to as the world-as-view sense of life. By contrast, what Weber and Professor Emeritus Taylor refer to as the enchantment of the world involves what Father Ong refers to as the world-as-event sense of life.

Father Ong also discusses what he refers to as the word-as-event -- which animate the world-as-event sense of life -- in his 1967 seminal book *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (pp. 110-138), the expanded version of Father Ong's 1964 Terry Lectures at Yale University.

In it, Father Ong discusses commonplaces in our Western cultural history – he discusses both what he refers to as analytic commonplaces and cumulative commonplaces (for specific page references, see the entry on Commonplaces in the “Index” [p. 347]). For Father Ong, the commonplace tradition was the central core of rhetorical culture in Western cultural history up to the Age of Romanticism.

In Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 1: “‘Translation’ and the ‘Subtler Languages’” in Part I of his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (pp. 3-47), he refers to “treasuries of common reference points” (p. 3). For all practical purposes, what Father Ong refers to as the commonplace tradition in our Western cultural history can also be described as “treasuries of common reference points.”

In any event, for a perceptive discussion of the world-as-event sense of life, see the anthropologist David M. Smith's 1997 essay “World as Event: Aspects of Chipewyan Ontology” in the anthology *Of Ong and Media Ecology*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (2012, pp. 117-141).

But also see my discussion of both the world-as-event sense of life and the world-as-view sense of life in my article “Walter Ong and Harold Bloom Can Help Us Understand the Hebrew Bible” in *Explorations in Media Ecology* (2012), mentioned above.

Now, because Father Ong uses the term Presence in the title of his 1967 seminal book, I have collected other books that also feature the term Presence in their titles. Because the subjective felt experience of what Professor Emeritus Taylor refers to as Cosmic Connections in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* may seem like the experience of Presence, I want to list here certain other books that also have the term Presence in their titles (listed here alphabetically by author's surname):

Hans Belting's *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, translated from the German by Edmund Jephcott (1994; orig. German ed., 1990).

Robert A. Orsi's *History and Presence* (2016).

Robert Sokolowski's *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (1994).

George Steiner's *Real Presence* (1989).

Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Presence and Thought: An Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*, translated from the French by Mark Sebanc (1995; orig. French ed., 1988).

Ah, but the subjective felt experience of what Professor Emeritus Taylor refers to as Cosmic connection in his new 2024 book may seem like the experience of union. Consequently, I now want to list here three books that have the term union in their titles (listed here alphabetically by the author's surname):

Bernhard Blankenhorn's *The Mystery of Union with God: Dionysian Mysticism in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas* (2015).

Eloi Leclerc's *The Canticle of Creatures: Symbols of Union: An Analysis of St. Francis of Assisi*, translated from the French by Matthew J. O'Connell (1977; orig. French ed., 1970), discussed below.

Anna Ngaire (A. N.) Williams' *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (1999).

Now, in Father Ong's fourfold schema for discussing our Western cultural history, he also tends to discuss certain tendencies in poetry – the subject matter of Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book – as carrying forward in print culture centuries-old patterns of thought and expression that Father Ong identifies as rhetorical culture. However, centuries after the Gutenberg printing press emerged in Europe in the mid-1450s, Romanticism emerged in our Western cultural history. Thus, we now have classic versus romantic in print culture in our Western cultural history.

See Father Ong's succinct encyclopedia entry on "Classic and Romantic" in *The Concise Encyclopedia of English and American Poets and Poetry*, edited by Stephen Spender and Donald Hall (1963, pp. 78-80). In it, Father Ong notes complaints about the protean qualities of the terms classic and romantic (p. 78). Subsequently, he says, "The term 'classic' is older than 'romantic'" (p. 78). He notes that "the Latin *classicus* (from *classis*, one of the social and political classes of Roman citizens)" was used by Aulus Gellius to differentiate the "high-class writer" (*classicus scriptor*)" (p. 78).

Subsequently, Father Ong says, "The 'romantic' picture is somewhat confused by the fact that this term, too, refers to Latin, since, with its cognates in other languages, it derives from a Latin adjective for 'Roman,' *Romanicus*, from *Romanus*" (p. 78).

Subsequently, Father Ong says, "By the late seventeenth century (France 1669, England 1674, Germany 1698), the term 'romantic poetry' or 'romantic literature' had come into use, as meaning romance-like poetry, referring to the works of Ariosto and Tasso and the medieval romances from which they derived. By the late eighteenth century, the term romantic was active in ways in which 'classic' had never been and was being applied not only to poetry and criticism, but to manners, characters, and culture generally, and by the early nineteenth century its reference to literature was widely extended, particularly at first in Germany, the seedbed of romanticism" (p. 79).

Subsequently, Father Ong observes wryly that "little, if any, literature or art can be qualified as classic to the exclusion of all romanticism or [as] romantic to the exclusion of all classical

elements” (p. 79).

Now, Father Ong writes more broadly about Romanticism in his essay “Romantic Difference and the Poetics of Technology” in his 1971 book *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (pp. 255-283). In it, among other things, Father Ong plugs the late Renato Poggioli’s book *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, translated from the Italian by Gerald Fitzgerald (1968; orig. Italian ed., 1962) (Ong, 1971, pp. 256 and 278; but also see pp. 294, 325, and 394).

Ong says, “The late Renato Poggioli has suggested that for the entire foreseeable future all serious developments in literature and art, and it would seem in lifestyles generally, will oscillate back and forth between one and another form of romantic alienation” (p. 256; Poggioli, 1968, p. 127). Father Ong also says, “All this hints that we have not yet plumbed the depths of otherness which romanticism was and is” (p. 256). Father Ong describes “the romantic hankering for what is different, original, strange, ineffable, inaccessible, unknown” (p. 257).

Renato Poggioli (1907-1963; Ph.D. in letters, University of Florence, 1929; second Ph.D., University of Rome, 1937) died in a hospital in crescent City, California, as a result of injuries sustain in a car crash. At the time of his death, he was a professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature at Harvard University.

According to the Wikipedia entry about him, “Poggioli’s own magnum opus, his *Teoria dell’arte d’avanguardia*, which traced the connection between the twentieth-century *avant garde* and the legacy of nineteenth-century Romanticism, first appeared in [the Italian-language literary periodical co-founded by Poggioli and Luigi Berti] *Inventario* [1946-1963] in four installments between 1949 and 1951.”

According to Poggioli’s reckoning, in his 1968 book, the Age of Romanticism extends to the present in our Western cultural history.

Thank you for bearing with me up to this point. Up to this point, I have presented the most complicated account of Father Ong’s thought that I have written in an essay. As complicated as my account here of Father Ong’s thought is, my account of our Western cultural history here has served the overall larger purpose of establishing a conceptual framework for now considering Professor Emeritus Taylor’s new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*.

For a briefly annotated bibliography of Father Ong’s 400 or so distinct publications (not counting trans or reprinting as distinct publications, see Thomas M. Walsh’s “Walter J. Ong, S.J.: A Bibliography 1929-2006” (2011).

### **Professor Emeritus Charles Taylor’s New 2024 Book on Poetry**

Now, the most efficient way for me to provide you with an overview of Professor Emeritus Taylor’s new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment* is to outline its parts for you. It has the following parts:

“Preface” (pp. ix-xi).  
 Part I (p. 1).  
 Chapter 1: “‘Translation’ and the ‘Subtler Languages’” (pp. 3-47).  
 Chapter 2: “Epistemic Issues” (pp. 48-84).  
 Chapter 3: “An Epochal Change” (pp. 85-91).  
 Part II (p. 93).  
 Chapter 4: “Holderlin, Novalis” (pp. 95-124).  
 Chapter 5: “Nature, History” (pp. 125-139).  
 Chapter 6: “Shelley, Keats (after Wordsworth)” (pp. 140-160).  
 Part III (p. 161).  
 Chapter 7: “Hopkins, Inscape and After” (pp. 163-184).  
 “Explanatory Note: Wider Spaces of Meaning” (pp. 185-190).  
 Chapter 8: “Rilke” (pp. 191-244).  
 “Coda Note: Rilke and Visual Art” (pp. 245-248).  
 “Explanatory Note: Emerson and Transcendentalism” (pp. 249-251).  
 Chapter 9: “Epistemic Retreat and the New Centrality of Time” (pp. 252-264).  
 Part IV (p. 265).  
 Chapter 10: “Baudelaire” (pp. 267-361).  
 Chapter 11: “After Baudelaire” (pp. 362-386).  
 Chapter 12: “Mallarme” (pp. 387-472).  
 “Note on ‘Symbolism’” (pp. 473-481).  
 Part V: “The Modernist Turn” (p. 483).  
 Chapter 13: “T. S. Eliot” (pp. 485-524).  
 “Coda Note: The Buried Life” (pp. 525-529).  
 Chapter 14: “Milosz” (pp. 530-550).  
 Part VI. “Relation to History and the Present” (p. 551).  
 Chapter 15: “History of Ethical Growth” (pp. 553-587).  
 Chapter 16: “Cosmic Connection Today – and Perennially” (pp. 588-598).  
 “Acknowledgments” (p. 601).  
 “Credits” (p. 603).  
 “Index” (pp. 605-620).

The “Index” does not contain the names of authors cited in the footnotes – which appear at the foot of pages.

As you can see, not all of the six numbered Parts have titles; only the last two Parts have titles. In any event, the Part numbers appear as headers on the even-numbered pages. The odd-numbered pages feature the titles of the respective Chapter or Note. I guess the Part number headers are meant to remind us of the significance that Professor Emeritus Taylor attaches to the Part numbers.

In Professor Emeritus Taylor’s “Preface” in his new 2024 book, he tells us that his new book is about “the human need to cosmic connection” (p. ix). He says that his “hypothesis is that the desire for this connection is a human constant, felt by (at least some) people in all ages and phases of human history” (p. ix). However, he allows that “forms this desire takes have been very different in the succeeding phases and stages of this history” (p. ix).

Much of what I have reviewed above has focused on the earlier pre-Romantic “phases and stages of this [our Western cultural] history.” It is in the “Preface” of Professor Emeritus Taylor’s new 2024 book that he briefly indicates what our pre-Romantic Western cultural

history involved regarding what he refers to as Cosmic Connections. Granted, in my rather extensive review of our pre-Romantic Western cultural history, I have not always or extensively indicated how what he refers to as Cosmic Connections were expressed and worked – in short, I have not above thematized his term Cosmic Connections or even suggested an alternative way of referring explicitly to the process that he describes with that term.

However, anthropologist David M. Smith does suggest an alternative way of referring explicitly to the process as Ontology in the title of his essay “World as Event: Aspects of Chipewyan Ontology” (2012; orig. work published 1997), discussed above.

David Abram suggests another alternative way of explicitly referring to the process of Cosmic Connections as a more-than-human world in the title of his 1996 book *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*, discussed below. If we hear in Abram’s main title *The Spell of the Sensuous* an echo of Plato’s famous parable of the Divided Line, then we will be able to see how Abram’s 1996 phenomenological account of primary orality can be connected with the classicist Eric A. Havelock’s 1963 book *Preface to Plato*, discussed above.

Incidentally, in Professor Emeritus Taylor’s Chapter 11 “After Baudelaire” in Part IV of his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* (pp. 362-386), he refers, in passing, to Abram’s 1996 book (Taylor, 2024, p. 366n.3).

Now, the biblical scholar James L. Kugel suggest another way of explicitly referring to the process of Cosmic Connection as Encountering God in the title of his 2017 book *The Great Shift: Encountering God in Biblical Times*, discussed above. But Kugel’s use of the expression Encountering God calls to mind the aim of Jesuits such as Father Gerard Manley Hopkins and Father Ong and Father Jorge Mario Bergoglio (now Pope Francis) when they made 30-day preached retreats in silence (except for daily conferences with the retreat director) following the *Spiritual Exercises* of the Spanish Renaissance mystic St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), the founder of the Jesuit order, as part of their Jesuit formation. (Disclosure: I was in the Jesuits from 1979 to 1987. I made a 30-day directed retreat in the Jesuit Novitiate.)

For an English translation of this minor classic in our Western cultural history, see *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary by George E. Ganss, S.J.* (1992).

In it, the culminating meditation in the Fourth Week is the “Contemplation to Attain Love” (standardized numbers 230-237). It strikes me that it is designed to lead the retreatant to experience what Professor Emeritus Taylor refers to as Cosmic Connections in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*.

Because the first Jesuit pope took the name Pope Francis to honor the medieval mystic St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), the founder of the Franciscan order, I should like to mention here that his famous Canticle is also designed to lead the people singing it and hearing it to experience what Professor Emeritus Taylor refers to as Cosmic Connections.

For a perceptive relevant study of St. Francis of Assisi’s famous Canticle, see the French Franciscan Eloi Leclerc’s aptly titled book *The Canticle of Creatures: Symbols of Union: An*

*Analysis of St. Francis of Assisi*, translated by Matthew J. O'Connell (1977; orig. French ed., 1970), mentioned above.

But let's move on with what else Professor Emeritus Taylor says in his "Preface."

He says, "'Cosmos' is an older word. Today people talk about our alienation from Nature, from the natural world, from the 'wilderness' (Thoreau's 'wildness'), from the environment which we have been treating as a mere instrument, where it should really be a source of spiritual nourishment" (p. ix).

Hmm. Father Ong wrote about the wilderness in his essay "Personalism and the Wilderness" in the *Kenyon Review* (Spring 1959). It is about Henry G. Bugbee's 1958 book *The Inward Morning: A Philosophical Exploration in Journal Form* (reprinted in 1976).

Father Ong reprinted his 1959 essay in his 1962 book *The Barbarian Within: And Other Fugitive Essays and Studies* (pp. 233-241).

It is also reprinted in volume four of Ong's *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1999, pp. 45-54).

Now, Professor Emeritus Taylor also says in his "Preface," "In this earlier mode, cosmic connection [in our Western cultural history] involved the invocation of orders structuring the cosmos which distinguished higher and lower realities, self-realizing orders on the model of Platonic forms; schemes like Lovejoy's Great Chain of Being, or the Kabbalah, which defined the higher reality powering the merely visible/ tangible world we live in" (p. x).

On a related note, I should note here that Father Ong published an untitled review of Leo Spitzer's book *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word 'Stimmung'* (Ong, July 1964).

In addition, Professor Emeritus Taylor says in his "Preface," "Starting in the seventeenth century [in our Western cultural history], belief in these orders had been steadily undermined, under the growing influence of modern science, principally the Galilean-Newtonian natural science [that emerged in the print culture that emerged after the Gutenberg printing press emerged in Europe in the mid-1450s] foregrounding the laws of material reality.

"The Romantic period, beginning in Germany in the 1790s, was the moment in which the drive to cosmic connection started to take another form. This book begins with an attempt to characterize this form, in which works of art take on a crucial role. This book begins with an attempt to characterize this form, in which works of art take on a crucial role. I will be mainly concerned with some poets of this period. Their works bypass the philosophical objections to the belief in cosmic orders but generate in the reader the felt sense of a reality higher and deeper than the everyday world around us" (p. x).

When Professor Emeritus Taylor turns to rounding off his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* in Chapter 16: "Cosmic Connection Today – and Perennially" in Part VI of his book, he says, "I am proposing that the need/ desire for cosmic connection has been a perennial feature of human life" (p. 596). He also says that "this book was conceived as a companion study to my *The Language Animal* [2016]. The point of origin for both is the theory of language which developed in the Romantic period in the 1790s in Germany]" (p. 597).

Now, in Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 1: "'Translations' and the 'Subtler Languages'" in Part I in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, he situates it in relationship to his 2016 book *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity*. Briefly, both books are rooted in his understanding of the German Romantics of the 1790s.

Professor Emeritus Taylor subdivides

Chapter 1 into five numbered subsections, some of which are longer than others. Subsection 2 has a subtitle: "The new Romantic outlook" (pp. 4-8). In it, he delineates what he refers to as "seven interlocking theses" (p. 5), which he numbers. But he also mentions a possible eighth point (p. 7).

Clearly Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book is not just enormously learned, but also remarkably well organized.

In Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 2: "Epistemic Issues" in Part I and in his Chapter 9: "Epistemic Retreat and the New Centrality of Time" in Part III in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, he discusses epistemic issues. What he means by epistemic issues are related to what Father Ong refers to as noetic concerns.

Now, regarding time, Father Ong discusses time in his essay "Evolution and Cyclicism in Our Time," which he reprinted in his 1967 book *In the Human Grain: Further Explorations of Contemporary Culture*, mentioned above. For Father Ong, the linear sense of time is consistent with an evolutionary orientation – but a cyclic sense of time is not.

For his account of linear time versus cyclic time, Father Ong draws on the work of Mircea Eliade (1907-1986).

Eliade's book most related to what Father Ong refers to as cyclicism is his abstruse 1954 book *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, translated from the French by Willard R. Trask (orig. French ed., 1949).

For a book of related interest, see Donald L. Fixico's accessible book *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World: American Indian Studies and Traditional Knowledge* (2003).

For a phenomenological account of what Ong refers to as primary orality, see David Abram's 1996 book *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*.

Abram's use of the expression "a More-Than-Human World" calls to mind what Professor Emeritus Taylor refers to as *Cosmic Connections* in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* – and what Hartmut Rosa refers to as *Resonance* in his 2019 book *Resonance*.

Now, because I have highlighted Father Ong's publications about the Victorian Jesuit priest and poet and classicist and Catholic convert Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) above, I want to turn now to Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 7: "Hopkins, Inscap and After" in Part III of his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*.

Recently, Oxford University Press has been publishing a new edition of *The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, under the general editors Lesley Higgins and Michael F. Suarez, S.J. (2006-2024). Thus far, seven of the eight planned volumes have been published. Only *Volume VIII: The Poems*, edited by Catherine Phillips, remains to be published – presumably in 2025.

For a commentary on Hopkins' poems, see Paul L. Mariani's 1970 book *A Commentary on the Complete Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*.

For another commentary focused on what literary scholars refer to as Hopkins' terrible sonnets (because they are about terrible experiences to have, not because they are terrible poetry), see Daniel A. Harris' 1982 book *Inspirations Unbidden: The "Terrible Sonnets" of Gerard Manley Hopkins*.

For a biography of Hopkins, see Paul L. Mariani's 2008 book *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Life*.

Father Ong's 1985 book *Hopkins, the Self, and God* is, in part, also about Hopkins' life and education, and, in part, a reading of and commentary on his poems (i.e., literary criticism).

In any event, Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 7 on Hopkins in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* is a deeply philosophical chapter. In it, he refers the reader back to earlier philosophical reflections in earlier parts of the book: to Chapter 3, Section II (p. 163); to Chapter 3 (p. 167); and to Chapter 1 (p. 179).

But let's start with the opening of Chapter 7. Because Professor emeritus Taylor highlights Hopkins' distinctive account of what he (Hopkins) refers to as *Inscape* in his chapter title, we may wonder what Hopkins means by *Inscape*.

Professor Emeritus Taylor says, "Gerard Manley Hopkins extends the scope of Romantic poetry, as I've been describing it, by developing a new mode or form of – or perhaps a new route to – (re)connection. This is to capture and present to us the inner force which shapes a given particular being, which Hopkins describes as its 'inscape'" (p. 164).

Hopkins also developed a distinctive rhythm: sprung rhythm.

Professor Emeritus Taylor says, "These two facets [of sprung rhythm] are essential: the first to capture the inscape of the target being, the second to raise it to the heightened language of poetry with the intensity of feeling it releases" (pp. 163-164).

Subsequently, Professor Emeritus Taylor says, "Hopkins has a philosophical account of what an inscape is, and it is very much an underlying story. It is a very old, traditional account, drawn from ancient and medieval philosophy. In medieval terms, Hopkins is a passionate 'realist'; he believes that things are as they are because they are shaped to conform to their Idea or Form. If this Platonic-Aristotelian doctrine is true, then the distinctions we mark in our language are really there in reality – hence 'realism.' The rival view held that the distinctions we mark depend on the names we give them: hence 'nominalism' [also known as 'terminism'; I will return to this term momentarily]; on this latter view, we are ultimately unconstrained by allegedly 'essential' differences."

“But Hopkins went beyond standard medieval realism. Besides the shaping force of the general Form, each particular thing has its own force which maintains it in its ‘thisness’ (*haecceitas*). This was the doctrine of the Oxford scholar and Franciscan priest philosopher and theologian John Duns Scotus [c.1265/1266 to 1308], who inspired Hopkins” (pp. 164-165).

Yes, Hopkins attended Oxford University. Yes, he even wrote a poem about John Duns Scotus at Oxford.

In Ong’s 1986 book *Hopkins, the Self, and God*, he devotes pages 106-112 to discussing John Duns Scotus. Of Hopkins’ admiration for Duns Scotus’ theology, Ong says that “Hopkins’ admiration knew almost no bounds” (p. 106). Because Professor Emeritus Taylor tends to favor the use of the term Connection in his new 2024 book, perhaps we can use it here and say that Hopkins felt a Connection with Duns Scotus.

In Ong’s massively researched 1958 book *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*, he prefers to use the term terminism, rather than nominalism, mentioned above (pp. 58, 135, 146-148, and 203).

Now, among other things that Professor Emeritus Taylor says in Chapter 7 on Hopkins in his new 2024 book, after his remarks about “the epistemological tradition descended from Descartes” (p. 172), “And then there is the primacy of the eye, of the theoretical stance [of Greek *theoria*] since the Greeks which has also fed this hegemony [of linear perspective] of mapping, and this has intensified since the early modern period [of the French Renaissance logician Peter Ramus (1515-1572)], what Heidegger calls ‘the Age of the World Picture.’ The supposed advantage (undoubted advantage for mapping) of this stance is that information becomes ‘disentrained from our turbid selves’ [quoting William Poteat]. Vision can put things at a distance. Seeing a whole landscape can give us a sense of dominance, of holding at a distance, can still or sideline our reactions of resonance” (p. 172).

For a study of related interest, see Andrea Wilson Nightingale’s 2004 book *Spectacle of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in Its Cultural Context*.

Now, in 1922, T. S. Eliot’s famous modernist poem “The Waste Land” was published. Consequently, we celebrated the centennial of its publication in 2022. Therefore, I want to turn now to Professor Emeritus Taylor’s Chapter 13: “T. S. Eliot” in Part V: “The Modernist Turn” in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*.

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965) was famous not only as a modernist poet but also as a playwright, literary critic, and poetry editor.

For Eliot’s poems, see *Poems of T. S. Eliot: The Annotated Text*, two volumes, edited by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (2015).

For Eliot’s plays, see *The Complete Poems and Plays* (1969).

For Eliot’s prose, see *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, eight volumes, edited by Ronald Schuchard and others (2021).

For a study of Eliot's poetry, see Jewel Spears Brooker's 2018 book *T. S. Eliot's Dialectical Imagination*.

For a biography of Eliot, see Robert Crawford's two volumes: (1) *Young Eliot: From St. Louis to The Waste Land* (2015), mentioned above; and (2) *Eliot After The Waste Land* (2022).

Father Ong's comments about Eliot are scattered throughout his books and articles. However, I would call your attention here to Father Ong's late essay "T. S. Eliot and Today's Ecumenism" in *Religion and Literature* (Summer 1989).

It is reprinted in volume two of Ong's *Faith and Contexts*, edited by Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (1992b, pp. 211-226).

In any event, in Professor Emeritus Taylor's Chapter 13 about Eliot in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, he says, "After the flowering of symbolism, and the full-scale epistemic retreat it involves, Eliot finds an original way to create a picture of a believable cosmic order, theologically centered, which is light-years away from the invocations of order of the early Romantics (which remain underappreciated by Eliot)" (p. 485).

Subsequently in Chapter 13 about Eliot, Professor Emeritus Taylor says, "My master trope in this book is (re)connection: this was originally framed as recovering contact with a continuing cosmic order. But that is not at all what is at stake in Eliot's *The Waste Land*: what the poem strives for is contact with the sources of a fuller life. Now this may turn out to require connection to a standing cosmic order – and it does turn out to involve this for Eliot, as will become evident in his later work. But in the first instance, this is not how the issue seems to be defined for this work" (p. 494).

Subsequently, in his discussion of *The Waste Land*, Professor Emeritus Taylor says, "This section ["The Fire Sermon"] is oddly named, because the Buddha in his sermon speaks of desire, especially sexual desire, as 'burning,' and Enlightenment as a way of dousing the fire, but the issue in *The Waste Land* is much more the mechanical, loveless, even passion-free nature of sexual relations" (p. 497).

Subsequently, Professor Emeritus Taylor says, "Where does this leave Eliot? He seems to be perplexed. The past stanza [lines 423-425] seems to be in his own voice" (p. 501).

Subsequently, Professor Emeritus Taylor says, "*The Waste Land* articulated in unparalleled fashion the mood of searching among the younger generation, and all the more effectively in not jumping in with ready-made answers. I would bet that it is the most read and cited poem Eliot wrote" (p. 502).

That's a safe bet.

In any event, Professor Emeritus Taylor's discussion of Eliot in Chapter 13 of his new 2024 600-page book *Cosmic Connections* is, overall, far more insightful and more satisfying than his extensive but somewhat superficial earlier discussion of him in his 1989 600-page book *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (pp. 299, 405, 422, 429, 459-492, 503, and 506), mentioned above. However, in making this sharp criticism of his discussion of Eliot in his 1989 book, I do not want to be misunderstood here as somehow dismissing his scholarship in other respects elsewhere in the book. For example, I am especially impressed with his historical scholarship in Part II: "Inwardness" (pp. 109-207). I especially appreciated his use of honor culture, as expressed in the Homeric epics, as a point of historical departure

(pp. 16, 20, 23, 25, 44, 65, 152-155, 214, and 285).

In Father Ong's first book, *Frontiers in American Catholicism: Essays on Ideology and Culture* (1957), he discusses David Riesman's widely read 1950 book *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* with its tripartite schema of (1) tradition-directed character (also known as outer-directed), (2) inner-directed character, and (3) other-directed character (Ong, 1957, pp. vii and 39-44). Among other things, Father Ong says that a tradition-directed character "would be that formed, for example, in a primitive, nonliterate society, where activities such as hunting or various crafts are learned simply by being grown into. Here the pattern of action, and to some extent objectives themselves, are defined by a way of life accepted as part of existence, interior and exterior. In the more primitive tradition-directed societies, there are not even any handbooks or abstract 'arts' to guide or form activity and character, only various saws or maxims of very general application" (pp. 39-40).

"The Middle Ages can be taken as a representative period when the tradition-directed character in a somewhat more advanced form flourished in the West. . . . There is no literature about individualism in the Middle Ages such as there is today" (p. 40).

"This [tradition-directed] society is by no means restricted to the European Middle Ages, but can be found also, as Riesman indicates, among the Hindus or the Hopi Indians, the Zulus or the Chinese, North African Arabs or the Balinese" (p. 40).

"In Western history, the inner-directed character comes to the fore as a typical product at the time of the Renaissance" (p. 41).

In 1950, when Riesman wrote his widely read book, he was concerned about the emerging consumerism in postwar America, which he interpreted as undermining inner-directedness. For Riesman, the inner-directed character is most admirable and so, for him, the emerging other-directed character is regrettable. But Father Ong demurs from Riesman's negative view of the other-directed character. Indeed, Father Ong's all-male Jesuit religious order subsequently adopted the motto "men for others" to characterize Jesuits.

In any event, in Father Ong's 1986 book *Hopkins the Self, and God*, mentioned above, he includes the "References" (pp. 161-172) a number of studies of the Renaissance and what Riesman refers to as the inner-directed character, even though he (Father Ong) does not refer to them in his text.

In Father Ong's widely read and widely translated 1982 book *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, published in the New Accents Series in literary studies, he devotes a profound and probing subsection to "The inward turn: consciousness and the text" (pp. 178-179). Father Ong takes the expression "The inward turn" from the title of Erich Kahler's book *The Inward Turn of Narrative*, translated from the German by Richard Winston and Clara Winston (1973; orig. German ed., 1970).

Here are a number of other studies on the historical inward turn of consciousness (listed here alphabetically by the author's surname):

Harold Bloom's *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1998).

Phillip Cary's *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (2000).

Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse's *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (1992).

Katharine Eisaman Maus' *Inwardness and the Theater in the English Renaissance* (1995).

Denis Renevy's *Language, Self, and Love: Hermeneutics in the Writings of Richard Rolle [1300-1349] and the Commentaries on the Song of Songs* (2001; In Renevy's "Introduction," he says, "As Taylor's *Sources of the Self* aims to explain the making of the modern identity, this particular medieval tradition is passed over silently" [p. 2]).

Larry Siedentop's *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism* (2014).

I hasten to add here that this is not an exhaustive listing of studies of the inward turn of consciousness.

Now, what Professor Emeritus Taylor refers to as the Age of Disenchantment in our Western cultural history emerges ascendent in the Renaissance and the print culture that emerged in our Western cultural history after the Gutenberg printing press emerged in the mid-1450s in Europe.

**In conclusion**, Lindsay Waters, mentioned above, the retired director of Harvard University Press, who published Professor Emeritus Taylor's books for years, told me in email message dated May 19, 2024, that he had read Professor Emeritus Taylor's book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment* in manuscript form when Professor Emeritus Taylor sent it to him more than a year ago. In Waters' estimate, "it was the jewel of the crown of his writing and life."

However merited Waters' estimate of Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections* is, it is nevertheless only an estimate of its worth in relation to Professor Emeritus Taylor's body of work as such.

But earlier in the present essay, I referred to larger cultural trends such as David Brooks' report about populism in the United States and elsewhere in the world today.

Moreover, I undertook my rather elaborate review of Father Ong's body of work, in part, to establish the broader cultural context for the populist trends in the United States and elsewhere in the world that Brooks describes – and also, in part, to establish Ong's pertinent account of our Western cultural history as a way to approach Professor Emeritus Taylor's account of our Western cultural history in his new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*.

Now, I have followed Professor Emeritus Taylor in dating the Age of Romanticism as starting with the German Romantics of the 1790s. But neither he nor Father Ong suggests that an end the Age of Romanticism.

But what if the Age of Romanticism is just getting started, as it were? Wouldn't this suggest

that forward-looking people in the present might want to study Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 600-page book *Cosmic Connections* to get their bearings on the present in our Western cultural history? Because he sees his new book as a companion to his 2016 book *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity*, forward-looking people might also want to read it.

In Professor Emeritus Taylor's new 2024 book *Cosmic Connections*, he titles Chapter 3 "An Epochal Change." In my estimate, his book has the potential to bring about another epochal change in our Western cultural history.

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