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## We've Changed, but Are We Better?

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In considering the cultural, ideological and technological “advancements” that have ensued since 1959 (“[When the World Tilted -- Again](#),” Edward Kosner’s review of Fred Kaplan’s “1959: The Year Everything Changed,” June 15), I pause to ask if the developments that gave us greater freedom to pursue pleasure and comfort have delivered more happiness and abiding fulfillment in this new millennium.

This is a world in which technology has given us more days, but also more senility and loneliness, not to mention pharmacologically-induced satyrs. It is a world in which born children are “wanted” children and unwanted children are eliminated. It is a world lacking original thinking, unless it is of the “entrepreneurial” (money-making) type. It is a world in which information is at our beck and call, and where noise is everywhere, and silence, especially interior silence, is so anachronistic as to be all but forgotten. It is a world in which the face and, especially, the transcendental spirit of man, have been expunged from art. It is a world (thankfully) in which black Americans aren’t pushed to the margins, but also one in which black families have been decimated.

I was six in 1959 and now I’m 55 years old. If we aren’t careful we will achieve J. R. R. Tolkien’s technological Mordor, in which self-will, efficiency, and the pursuit of pleasure have effaced the self-sacrificing virtues of our “ignorant” past.

**Thomas M. Doran**  
*Plymouth, Mich.*

Mr. Kosner did not mention one other great 1959 event. Pope John XXIII called for Vatican II in January 1959. This was also a game changer.

**Dale Steffes**  
*Houston*

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