The Ellul Forum - Issues #1-25

For the Critique of Technological Civilization

The Ellul Forum

For the Critique of Technological Civilization

Jacques Ellul & Latin America

"*Technique, in all the lands it has penetrated, has exploded the local, national cultures. Two cultures, of which technique is one, cannot coexist. . . . We shall continue to have the appearance of different civilizations . . . But their essence will be identical.*"

-Jacques Ellul
The Technological Society (1954; ET1964), p. 130

1988-Present

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The
Ellul Studies
Bulletin

A Forum for Scholarship on Theology and Technology
Department of Religious Studies,
University of South Florida, Tampa, Fl 33620

Contents

The deadline for submissions for the next issue is October 15,1988. See instructions on the last inside page for details.

Welcome

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Ellul Studies Bulletin.* Thanks to the organizational work of Dan Clendenin, Ellul scholars from around the country (and even beyond its borders) met for the first time at the American Academy of Religion convention in Boston last December. At that meeting I indicated that I would be willing to edit a newsletter which could serve as a communications link among us. This letter fulfills that commitment.

Jacques Ellul's "contribution to contemporary theology is monumental... a comprehensive *tour de force."* This conclusion from my book, *The Thought of Jacques Ellul* (Mellen Press, 1981), has been criticized as perhaps too strong a claim. However I remain unrepentant As *the Epilogue* (177ff) in which this statement appeared made

clear, his work is monumental not because he is right in every respect but because of its unique focus and comprehensiveness. The depth and breadth of his work "culminates in a thorough sociological analysis of the technological society and its religiosity in such a way as to directly lay bare the ethical and theological issues surrounding human freedom and the future in our technological civilization."

Ellul has helped theologians to see that technology is not just one more thing to think about but rather has replaced "nature" as the new all-encompassing context in which theology is done. "Perhaps the most important contribution of Jacques Ellul to the future agenda of theology is not the *answers* he offers to the questions he raises (although his *answers* are not insignificant, he would not think of them assoZuftons) but the questions themselves." Through his sociological analysis of the sacralization of technology placed in dialectical confrontation with the Biblical witness to the Holy, Ellul has taught us how to raise the question of technology in such a way as to be appropriated for theological reflection and ethical consideration." He has taught us how to think critically, creatively and constructively about technology in a way no one else has managed to do. Barth may be his equal, indeed his mentor, in theology. Lewis Mumford may approach his status as a sociological and historical critic of technology, but no one has brought these two disciplines (theology and sociology) together in such a way as to define the theological and ethical agenda as Ellul has. "Thus even where Ellul may be thought in error by some, I believe he will be seen as having advanced our understanding of the issues, for his bold formulations provoke further investigation, further dialogue, further insight. He is a man who has done his homework to our benefit." One may not agree with Ellul but there is no way to responsibly do theology in our technological civilization without taking his work into account. There is no way around him, only through him. That is what makes his work monumental.

It is appropriate therefore that this publication bear Ellul's name. It is my hope that *The Ellul Studies Bulletin* will live up to Ellul's dialectical and dialogical standards. Nothing would be more embarrassing and disappointing to Ellul than to have this *Bulletin* be the vehicle for *true disciples, Ellul groupies,* or a *cult of Jacques Ellul.* The whole thrust of Ellul's theological ethics has been to force Christians to think for themselves and *invent* their own responses. Although the *Bulletin* will review and discuss Ellul's work, it should not be our purpose to turn Ellul's scholarship into a body of *sacred* literature to be endlessly dissected. The appropriate tribute of the *Bulletin* to Ellul's work will be to carry forward its spirit, its agenda for the critical analysis of our technological civilization. Ellul invites us to think new thoughts and enact new deeds. The *Bulletin* should be a vehicle for carrying out that challenge, hence the tag line of the *Bulletin, "A Forum for Scholarship on Theology and Technology"*

I debated about what to call this publication. At first I thought perhaps *The Ellul Studies Newsletter.* But I wanted it to be something more than a newsletter and yet something less than a journal. I hope the *Bulletin* will create such a niche for itself. It should be a vehicle for the exchange of information on conferences, publications, etc. But I also hope that it will be a forum for the exchange of ideas. I would like to

invite you to submit short position papers (up to ten double spaced pages) for open discussion. Responses would be invited and printed in the next issue. Sometimes when weare working on ideas but are not quite ready to put them in final form it would be helpfill to be able to send up a *trial balloon* and see how it flies. *The Forum,* I hope, will serve that purpose.

The Ellul Studies Bulletin will be published twice a year in late Spring and again in late Ball (about a month before the AAR meeting). This first issue is free and I encourage you to duplicate it and send it to interested friends or send me their addresses and I will put them on the mailing list. If you decide you wish to receive the *Bulletin* you will need to fill out the subscription form on the last page of this issue and mail it in with your check. Within the United States subscriptions are $4.00 per year. Outside the U.S. subscriptions are $6.00. These rates will have to be reviewed after our first year of operation but I want to keep the cost as low as possible.

Finally, this is an experimental publication. If it is to work everyone who subscribes needs to participate by sending position papers for the *Forum,* annotated bibliographic information on books or articles you have published, reviews of relevant books you have read, announcements of conferences and calls for papers on relevant topics, etc. *The Bulletin* should function as a communications network. If you don't send me submissions it is an indication that there is no need for the network. So let the experiment begin.

Darrell J. Fasching, Editor

Nota Bene

The deadline for submissions for the next issue is October 15, 1988. See instructions on the last inside page for details.

Call for Manuscripts

Peter Lang Publishing (New York/Bem) is searching for bold and creative manuscripts for their new monograph series on *Religion, Ethics and Social Policy* edited by Darrell Fasching. Scholars from the Humanities and Social Sciences are invited to submit book-length manuscripts which deal with the shaping of social policy in a religiously and culturally pluralistic world. We are especially interested in creative approaches to the problems of ethical and cultural relativism in a world divided by ideological conflicts. Manuscripts which utilize the work of Jacques Ellul would be most welcome as well as manuscripts taking other approaches. A two page brief on the series is available. For more information, or to submit a manuscript, contact the series editor, Darrell J. Fasching, Cooper Hall 317, University of South Florida, Thmpa, Florida 33620. Phone (813) 974-2221 or residence (813) 963-2968.

Fasching is also Associate Editor for *U.S.E Monographs in Religion and Public Policy* which accepts manuscripts on religion and public policy which are too long for journals but too short for a book. If you care to submit a manuscript in that category

you may also send that to the above address. Be sure to indicate the monograph series to which you wish to submit your manuscript.

Paper Exchange

One service the Bulletin might be able to perform is providing a bulletin board for the exchange of papers delivered at academic conferences. If you have papers you have delivered on Ellul or on the general topic of theology and technology and are willing to make them available, send the title with a brief annotation and your name and address, and indicate whether there is a fee per copy. These will be listed on the bulletin board and anyone interested can write you for a copy.

Volunteers Needed

If you would be interested in assisting in the production of the *Ellul Studies Bulletin* please contact Darrell Fasching, CPR 317, University of Soutrh Florida, Tampa, Fl 33620. Undoubtedly we will need a book review editor, a bibliographic editor, etc. It is essential that you have access to a computer to prepare copy.

2nd Ellul Consultation Scheduled for November AAR
by Dan Clendenin
ThcAmerican Academy of Religion will sponsor the second Consultation on Jacques Ellul at its annual meeting in Chicago this November.

Last year's meeting attracted over 40 participants. Three papers were presented.

Marva J. Dawn, *The Importance of the Concept of the "Powers" in Jacques Ellul's Work*

Darrell J. Fasching, *The Dialectic of Apocalypse and Utopia in the Theological Ethics of Jacques Ellul*

David Lovekin, *Jacques Ellul and his Dialectical Understanding*

The respondents for the first session were: David W. Gill, Joyce Main Hanks and Charles Mabee.

This year we will have three papers and a single respondent for our 2 1/2 hour session:

Clifford G. Christians: *Ellul's Sociology*

Joyce M. Hanks, *The Kingdom in Ellul's Thought*

David W. Gill *The Dialectical Relationship Between Ellul's Theology and Sociology*

Gary Lee, Respondent

For those interested, the pertinent information for the second consultation is as follows:

AAR Annual Meeting
November 19-22,1988
Chicago Hilton and "towers

Chicago

For further information, you can contact the chairperson of the consultation:

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Farmington Hills, MI 48018

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Book Reviews

Theological Method in Jacques Ellul

by Daniel B. Clendenin (Lan-hanm, MD: University Press of America, 1987). pp. xvii + 145

Reviewed by Marva Dawn, Vancouver, Washington

(Marva is a Ph.D candidate in Christian Ethics at the University of Notre Dame and a founder of *Christians Equipped for Ministry* in Vancouver.)

Dan Clendenin's well-researched and balanced study develops the thesis that "Ellul's theological method revolves around one key theme or kernel idea, the dialectical interplay between freedom and necessity,.. a gold thread ... which serves as a sort of hermeneutical key to his thinking" (xi). This revised doctoral dissertation contributes immensely to the possibility that more scholars and lay readers can properly understand Jacques Ellul and let his thinking stimulate, rather than alienate, their own. Since most of us reading this publication believe that Ellul's prophetic voice needs to be heard in our world, we can all be grateful that Dan Clendenin has provided such a useful tool for listening to him appropriately.

Clendenin's own method is illustrated best by three concentric circles, the largest of which describes four methodological interpretations of Ellul: as theological positivist, existentialist, prophet, and dialectician. His second chapter analyzes the more narrow circle of Ellul's dialectical method, which "operates as a description of reality [the phenomenological], an epistemological orientation to understand this reality, and as a Biblical-theological framework by which to read the Bible and craft a peculiarly Christian style of life [existential]" (xvi). Then, chapters three and four explicate Ellul's central dialectic between freedom and necessity, the innermost circle and the "controlling idea in all of Ellul's work" (59).

The final chapter analyzes four weaknesses and three strengths of Ellul's method. Clendenin's "internal" criticisms are the best part of the book, for he aptly demonstrates that Ellul's works contain definite non-dialectical tendencies which are inconsistent with his avowed method (129). First of all, Ellul's unclear or caustic use of language often invites antagonism rather than dialogue. Secondly, his theme that freedom is not just a virtue of the Christian life, but rather its *sine qua non,* is undeniably reductionistic. Ellul is right to emphasize this aspect because of the social circumstances of contemporary Christianity, but his overstatement denies the dialectical interplay of other factors in discipleship. Most helpful of Clendenin's critiques is his analysis of

the inconsistency of Ellul's universalism in its selective reading of Biblical texts, its negation of human free will, and its negation of the individual (pp 135-141).

I disagree, however, with Qendenin's third alleged weakness in Ellul's; method - viz., his conception of "power as the enemy of God." Utilizing die Biblical notion of *exousiai,* Ellul has maintained a dialectical tension in his understanding of power, though his latest work, *The Subversion of Christianity,* contradicts some of his earlier statements about the nature of "the Powers." Furthermore, Clendenin himself must be criticized for his own overstatement that "Ellul never comes close to incorporating the use of power into his dialectic" [134, emphasis mine), and he himself is inconsistent when he asks Ellul to give "clear guidelines" for "nonpower use," since a few pages later he cites as a first strength in Ellul's method his deliberate refusal to provide solutions in order to obligate readers to think beyond him (133 and 142). His claim that Ellul "gives us no help here with his rather unrealistic picture" (133) overlooks the prophetic nature of Ellul's language, designed to raise awareness of the subtlety of the demonic aspects of power.

Clendenin also cites as strengths that Ellul effectively combines theology from above (revelation) and below (practical concern for the world) and that his theology truly offers hope and freedom to the person on the street. That, of course, is a main reason why all of us care so much about his work.

Freeom and Universal Salvation: Ellul and Origen

In some ways no two theologians in the history of Christianity could be farther apart than Jacques Ellul and Origen, the Neo-Platonic theologian from the 3rd century. If one were to classify them using H. Richard Niebuhr's five types of Christ and culture relationships, Origen would probably fall under the *Christ of Culture* type and Ellul would stand probably be found somewhere between *Christ Against Culture* and *Christ and Culture in Paradox.* In many ways Tfertul-lian rather than Origen would seem to be the theologian who might have the most in common with Ellul. And yet on two themes very much at the heart of Ellul's thought, *freedom* and *universal salvation,* it is in fact Origen who is his kindred spirit. Although its hard to believe, Origen is even more radical on these two themes. On universal salvation it seems that he held that all creatures would eventually be saved, even the devil, and on freedom he thought that because God gave us the capacity to be free, even after universal salvation is achieved, the fall could happen again, should some creature choose to rebel against God. Ellul would not go quite that far on either count but he certainly goes further than most theologians in the Christian tradition have. In the *Forum* column for this issue a case is made for the ethical importance of universal salvation. But to refresh our minds on Ellul's stand the following excerpt from Dan Clendenin's recent interview with Ellul is quoted from *Media Development* (2/1988, p. 29).

Interview

Clendenin: You have been a strong advocate of universal salvation, which you seem to support by at least five ideas: distinction between judgment-condemnation; between salvationfreedom; priority and triumph of God's love (Jonah's hard lesson); your robust/high Christology; scriptural references to perdition - 'God's pedagogy* - only of heuristic value.

Ellul: Exactly. This is a part of Karl Barth. Barth liked very much to make a joke. One day he explained the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian in this way: everyone has received a sealed letter from God, but a Christian is the one who has opened it and read it. That's the way it is in reality. Every person is loved by God, but Christians are the only ones who know it

Clendenin: And experience the joy, hope and freedom.

Ellul: Yes, and that changes completely one's perspective on mission. Because toward pagan people, for example, we do not say to them, 'Be converted or, you will be damned', but rather, 'I'm telling you that you are loved by God.'

Clendenin: That was Jonah's hard lesson, that God loved even the Ninevites! No one is excluded.

Ellul: Yes.

Clendenin: You said with Karl Barth that a person must be crazy to teach universalism, but impious not to believe it.

Ellul: Yes, I like very much this phrase of Barth's. For me, obviously, there are biblical texts which seem to go against the idea of universalism, but I really don't understand them very well. That's why I say very often that for me universal salvation is in the realm of faith, but I cannot present it as a dogma.

Clendenin: Would it be fair to call your belief in universal salvation a pious hope but not an absolute conviction?

Ellul: No, it's an absolute conviction.

Clendenin: Universal salvation sounds very un-Kierkegaardian!

Ellul: Yes, this is exactly the place where I part company from Kierkegaard.

Clendenin: But what about his question: does this do away with Christianity by making everyone a Christian?

Ellul: No, it does not make everyone Christian.

Clendenin: They are not hidden Christians?

Ellul: No, that's right, to teach people that they are loved by God is to start them on the path of being converted to Jesus Christ. But it's not at all what Kierkegaard justly criticized as a 'Christian' society.

Clendenin: Yes, this latter theme you pick up in *The Subversion of Christianity*. What about divine coercion in universal salvation, especially given your very strong emphasis on the absolute importance of human decisions/choices.

Ellul: This is really a story of love between God and man. I don't believe that the human being is completely independent before God.

Clendenin: And here we've begun to ask the metaphysical question which we can never answer.

Ellul: When the Word of God addresses a person it liberates him or her, but this free person has heard a word from God. Often I ask my students and the people to whom I'm preaching, 'Do you understand that what you're hearing right now is a word from God?' Thus there is human responsibility, and one can never say that God does not speak. Yes, He does speak now.

Bibliography

Each issue the *Bulletin* will print bibliographical references to articles and books either on Ellul or using Ellul's work as well as other publications of interest in the area of theology and technology. If you have written such books or articles, please submit the bibliographic information preferably with a sentence or two of annotation. You may also submit articles written by others which you believe your colleagues should know about A few articles by Dan Clendenin and Darrell Fhsching are listed below to start things off.

Clendenin, Daniel.

Theological Method in Jacques Ellul. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987.

"Will the Real Ellul Please Stand Up? A Bibliographic Survey," *The Dinity Journal* 6.2 (Autumn 1985): 176-183.

"The View from Bordeaux: An Interview with Jacques Ellul," *Media Development* 2/1988.

Fasching, Darrell J.

The Thought of Jacques Ellul. New York and Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1981.

A comprehensive analysis of Ellul's sociology and theological ethics. (225pp.)

Technology as Utopian Technique of the Human," *Soundings,* Vol. LXII, #2, Summer 1980.

Utilizes Ellul's work in a broader thesis about the utopian and anti-utopian elements in modern technology.

"Jacques Ellul as a Theologian of Culture", *Cross Currents, xxxv #1,* Spring 1985.

Interprets Ellul's work in the light of Tillich's idea of theology of culture with a focus on Ellul's books The New Demons and Apocalypse.

"Theology and Public Policy: Reflections on Method in the Work of Juan Luis Segundo, Jacques Ellul and Robert Doran," *Method,* Vol. 5, #1, March, 1987.

An *critical comparative analysis of the role theologicaljsociological method in the critique of ideology as an element in the shaping of public policy.*

"The Dialectic of Apocalypse and Utopia in the Theological Ethics of Jacques Ellul" in *Research in Philosophy and Technology* Greenwich: JAI Press, 1988.

An attempt to show that Ellul's dialectic leads to a more positive evaluation of utopianism than he explicitly allows. The complexity of Ellul's dialectic is unraveled using H. Richard Niebuhr's typology of "Christ and Culture."

"Mass Media, Ethical Paradox and Democratic Freedom: Jacques Ellul's Ethic of the Word," in *Research in Philosophy and Technology.* Greenwich: JAI Press, 1989

An attempt to suggest an ethic for Journalists based on Ellul's analysis of media and propaganda which relates Ellul's work to the work of Eric Voegelin and the ethics of Martin Luther as well as the Anabaptist tradition.

"The Liberating Paradox of the Word," in *Media Development* 2/1988.

Relates Ellul's work on media and propaganda and especially his The Humiliation of the Word to the implicit concern the professional fields of communication (especially journalism) have with theology and the explicit concern theology has with communications.

Forum

The Ethical Importance of Universal Salvation

by

Darrell J. Fasching, University of South Florida

The purpose of the *Forum* is to provoke discussion, to further that goal, let me state the thesis of this position paper bluntly. In Dan Qendenin's book, *Theological Method in Jacques Ellul,* (University Press of America, 1987), he offers as one of his most devastating critiques of Ellul the following: "The most glaring inconsistency in Ellul's theological dialectic is bis nearly unqualified affirmation of die universal salvation of all peoples beyond history." (Clendenin, 135) According to Clendenin this dissolves the dialectical tension that Ellul otherwise maintains throughout his theology, the tension between *No* and Yes, between the Judgment and Promise of God. Moreover he argues that by insisting on universal salvation Ellul in fact commits the sin of collectivization (treating humanity as a mass) which he otherwise condemns in his dialectical critique of the technological society. My thesis is quite simple - Dan Clendenin is wrong. (1) Ellul's affirmation of universal salvation has not broken the consistency of his Biblical and Barthian dialectic nor has it succumbed to collectivization. On the contrary (2) the notion of universal salvation is a necessary pre-condition for the ethic of freedom Ellul develops precisely to protest the collectivization of human behavior in a technological society Finally (3) Clendenin's failure to understand this linkage between ethical freedom and universal salvation is complemented by his failure to understand the relationship of both to *power.* This leads to another questionable criticism central to his final critique of Ellul, namely that Ellul allows no positive place for the use of power within a Christian ethic.

(1) First, let's be clear, Ellul is not professing some general philosophical dialectic. He explicitly states that he is affirming the Biblical dialectic of judgment and promise. This biblical dialectic is eschatological. That is, the Biblical literature itself, whether the prophets of the Old Testament or the Gospels of the New Testament, limits this dialectic to history. Clendenin wants Ellul to be "consistent" and carry this dialectic "beyond history." But that is precisely what would be inconsistent. Clendenin suggests that one strategy that Ellul could take in response to his criticism would be to "be explicit about what he implicitly affirms, that his concept of dialectic is limited to history, and that there is no reason for this dialectic to continue after this life. I have found only one place where he hints at such *(The Humiliation of the Word,* 269)."

Clendenin acts as if this were a matter for speculation on which he is inviting Ellul to take a stand and is puzzled that he cannot find explicit references by Ellul to the issue. I submit that this is not hard to understand. Since Ellul explicitly subscribes to the Biblical dialectic which is limited to history I doubt that he ever thought that the matter needed further comment. Ellul remains consistently faithful to the Biblical dialectic.

(2) Second, Ellul's insistence on universal salvation (a) is not an instance of the collectivization which he otherwise criticizes in a technological society but rather (b) is a precondition for an ethic of freedom which is able to combat such collectivization.

Let me address point (2a) first. For Ellul collectivization is a sin which has to do with the limits of human consciousness. Human beings, he argues, (in *False Presence of the Kingdom* for instance) are not capable of loving the whole human race. Individuals can only love individuals, the neighbor who crosses one's path and is in need. Mass media seduce us into trying to love everyone. The media evoke compassion in us for those in distress half way around the world who we can only know abstractly and collectively. In the process we become diverted from caring for the neighbor we can personally know and help. Intent on changing the world, we become swept up in mass movements and bureaucratic structures which rob us of our individuality while at the same time we end up neglecting our neighbor. Such collectivization is a function of our being limited finite beings. As such we can neither know nor relate to all individuals personally and individually. Universal salvation on the other hand has nothing to do with this human limitation. Universal salvation is about God's capacity, not our human capacity. Unlike ourselves, God's knowing and caring are not limited. Only God could conceivably know, love and save the whole human race and do so without collectivization. Only God could love the whole human race by loving each individual as an individual. Therefore Clendenin is quite wrong to say that universal salvation is inconsistent with Ellul's dialectical critique of collectivization.

Now let me turn to point (2b). In fact, the case is quite the contrary of the one Clendenin suggests. Universal salvation actually plays a central role in making possible Ellul's ethic of freedom and its protest against collectivization by undermining the theological rational which has historically promoted Christianity as a collectivizing religion, one which produces an ethic of conformity to the world. Th make my case I wish to appeal to arguments advanced not by Ellul himself, although I believe they are presupposed in his work, but by two of his theological contemporaries, John Howard Yoder and Juan Luis Segundo. These are an unlikely pair of names to link together. Yoder champions the Anabaptist tradition while Segundo is an advocate of liberation theology. But on one issue both agree, namely that as soon as Christianity came to view its message as something everyone must accept in order to be saved, Christianity began to be "watered down" and abandoned its "ethic of discipleship" for a Constantinian ethic of "Christian civilization." [see chapter 8 in Segundo's *The Liberation of Theology*, (Orbis Books, 1976) and chapter 7 in Yoder's *The Priestly* Kingdom, (University of Notre Dame Press, 1984)].

Both argue that the sociological pressure of preaching a Christianity for everyone leads to the compromising of the Gospel ethicand ends up legitimating a "Christian civilization" whose final outcome is the Inquisition. Both argue that the core of this betrayal of the Gospel lies in assuming everyone has to be Christian in order to be saved. At this point Segundo makes the same move that Ellul does. That is, he appeals to Barth's teaching on universal salvation. Only in this way, he argues, can the drive toward collectivization be broken in Christianity and its function as a minority Teaven" within society be recovered. Yoder is more suggestive and less explicit bu t he too insists that we have to get rid of the notion that everyone needs to be Christian, and implies that the separateness of Christians has as its goal the "whole world's salvation" (12). Both of these theologian's share Ellul's conviction that Christians are and should be a minority in the world and that the desire to be otherwise leads to the "betrayal of Christianity". All three are intent upon recovering an important element of prophetic faith, namely, the insistence that *election* isa call to *vocation* (i.e., being a light to the nations) and not to a status of special privilege. To put it in New Testament terms, conversion as a response to the call or election to faith is not a privileged guarantee of salvation but rather a call to be a leaven for the transformation of the world into a new creation. When Jesus tells his disciples that they are to be the "salt of the earth" the metaphor is quite deliberate. Who in his right mind would sit down to a meal of salt On the other hand a little salt brings out the true flavor, the best flavor of any plate of food.

Those who admire Ellul's prophetic ethical critique of our technological civilization but who would choose to deny his position on universal salvation need to ask themselves whether these two can really be separated. As Yoder and Segundo argue, the weight of Christian history suggests otherwise. For Ellul faith is a call to vocation. It is what some are called to do for God's world in history. Salvation on the other hand is what God has done for the whole human race in Christ The good news of the latter frees Christians to assume the task of the former. Ruth is not a work that earns one a ticket to "heaven". But faith does make a difference, precisely where it should - in history as the freedom to struggle against the demonic forces of necessity, of collectivization and dehumanization. Rith inserts the freedom of God into history to the benefit of the rest of the world.

Clendenin's presuppositions become clear when he accuses Ellul of making everyone into a Christian as a consequence of universal salvation (at the very least he seems to think Ellul must believe them to be "hidden Christians"). Clendenin cannot imagine that anyone can be saved unless he or she is a Christian. This never occurs to Ellul. In Clendenin's interview Ellul explicitly denies this interpretation. Ellul is not playing games with Clendenin. It is simply that he can conceive of non-Christians being saved. For Ellul "being saved" and "being Christian" are overlapping categories, for Clendenin they are one and the same category.

(3) Let me tum to my final point, Clendenin's critique of Ellul's treatment of "power." That he should criticize Ellul for holding a view of universal salvation and also for not

advocating a "positive" use of power is rather telling. At least from the point of view of John Howard Yoder's theology. For Yoder thinks that it is significant that as soon as Christianity decided everybody had to be Christian it gave up the way of non-violence for the way of power and coercion. Where Christians of the first centuries refused to serve in the military, Constantinian Christians made serving the state into a Christian duty. Where Christian's of the first centuries practiced the Judaic ethic of welcoming the stranger, Constantinian Christianity made being a stranger, one of another faith, illegal. By force of law, and arms if necessary, being a citizen required being a Christian. Yoder and Ellul understand that if you give power an inch it will take a mile - it will take over the whole world. To give power an inch is to compromise the Gospel as embodied in the Sermon on the Mount.

It is interesting that Segundo recognizes this but argues that not even Jesus could live in the world without compromising this message and so suggests that the Gospel must be compromised and the use of force must be baptized by the Gospel. Ellul does not make that mistake. He too recognizes that no one can live in the world without the use of power but he refuses to baptize it. Power may be necessary but necessity belongs to the realm of sin. To use the Gospel to condone power is to do the devils work. Even the power of a benevolent state rests on power as coercion which will never be used only for just purposes. For Ellul, Christians can hold positions of power but they must never succumb to the illusion that their use of power is blessed by the Gospel - rather they must learn to live with the dialectical tension and paradox of being both saints and sinners at the same time. Clendenin's critique of Ellul on power is wide of the mark. For Ellul power is used positively when the Christian, like the yachtsman, welcomes the conflicting forces of power or necessity that impinge upon him or her and uses them against each other even as the yachtsman tacks against the wind. The only thing to be feared is the calm, for then he or she can do nothing. For Ellul, there is no freedom without power and necessity but as soon as we bless necessity we tum it into a demonic fatality and the positive becomes negative.

The question of the use of power is the most troubling question that Christian ethidsts face. I continue to wrestle with this issue myself. There is room for positions on the "positive use of power" in the ethical dialogue and I hope we will hear more from Dan Clendenin on this matter. But such positions need to take seriously the challenge of Ellul and Yoder (and we could add Stanley Hauerwas to this camp) who insist that Christians have got to stop thinking of themselves as having to "be in charge." The motivation to baptize power does not come from within the Gospel but from the outside, namely, from desire of Christians to run the world. This desire is closely tied to the presupposition that the whole world ought to be Christian, indeed must be Christian, in order to be saved. That is a dangerous pattern of reasoning and motivation and one which Ellul undercuts, severing the traditional link of Constantinian Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) between election and salvation. Since all are saved through Christ's death and resurrection that task is already accomplished. What remains unfinished is the struggle with the demonic dehumanization and collectivization which

occurs in history. It is to that struggle that the elect are called. Ellul's insistence on universal salvation serves to rechannel the energy of Christians in the direction which is most needed in our time, the ethical direction. Rr from capitulating to collectivization in any way, it is rather a most potent force against it.

Clendenin has two other aspects to his argument with Ellul that I have not focused on. One is the charge that universal salvation violates human freedom. But universal salvation does not violate free will. It is not about human freedom at all but about divine freedom. It insists that no matter what humans may do God remains free to accept them in his reconciling love - that his love, like the rain, falls on the just and the unjust alike. Rather than reject those who reject him, he chooses to take the consequences of that rejection upon himself in an act of suffering reconciliation. As Paul puts it, prior to any act of repentance, "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him by the death of his Son...".(Romans 5:8&10)

Clendenin puts his objection another way by arguing that the problem with Ellul's position is that human "actions no longer have ultimate soteriological value." He is quite right and that is as it should be. The act that has "ultimate soteriological value" is the sacrifice of Christ, an act of grace. On this too Ellul is surely right Human acts are restricted to the plane of penultimate value, the plane of history where they can make a difference.

Finally Clendenin argues that universal salvation cannot be scrip-turally maintained. In this position paper I have not tried to show that universal salvation is true or consistent with scripture. I have simply tried to argue that to remove it from Ellul's position effectively undermines the potency of the prophetic ethic he is so much admired for. In fact, however, I am largely persuaded by Ellul's arguments in this area as well.

Clendenin seems to imply that the Biblical dialectic of "judgment and promise" should finally result in a division of the world into the *saved* and the *damned.* Such a conclusion however assimilates the "Good News" to the historical and dialectical categories of the *sacred* and *profane.* It is the power of the demonic (the *diabolos* or divider) over that dialectic which creates dualistic division, strife and chaos. But Ellul correctly perceives that that dialectical dualism is relativized by the Biblical (eschatological/apocalyptic) dialectic between the Sacred and the Holy, in which the Holy unites what the sacred once divided. Hence the love of God transcends the categories of the sacred and profane (the saved and the damned) and falls upon the *just* and the *unjust* alike.

Clendenin also accuses Ellul of a "selective reading of the Biblical texts" but this surely begs the question, since the opposing view selectively reads the Biblical text as well, ignoring precisely those elements Ellul would emphasize. But more to the point every theological position selectively reads the text. After all, (as Krister Stendahl and others have shown) "Justification by faith" is not the dominant theme in Paul's thought and yet Luther made it the criterion by which all other scriptural statements were to be judged and forged it into the pillar of Protestant faith. Until I read Ellul's brilliant

exegesis of the Book of Revelation I remained skeptical that universal salvation could be scripturally maintained. I came away with my mind decisively changed. It seems to me that Ellul does with the Book of Revelation what Luther did with "justification by faith." Clendenin may disagree with Ellul's reading of the Biblical texts but I doubt that he can show that his own alternative reading is any less selective. In the end I am inclined to accept the Pauline advice to Timothy, "We have put our trust in the living God and he is the Saviour of the whole human race but particularly of all believers.This is what you are to enforce in your teaching." (1 Timothy 4:10)

A Visit with Jacques Ellul

Pessac, France, June 27,1987
by Marva Dawn

Jacques Ellul and his wife are very gracious people! They welcomed me kindly and even served raspberries from their garden. Through the excellent translating of Philip Adams, we held a far-ranging conversation for almost two hours. Prof. Ellul asked questions about my work, too - especially about some articles on teaching ethics to children. This stands out in my memory because Ellul serves as an excellent model of a profound scholar who is also able to relate well to other people. Concerning the common split in theologians between the head and the heart he said, "it is contrary to the Gospel."

We talked about many practical issues that day - the situation in South Africa, the ecology movement, U.S. intervention in Nicaragua, caring for the poor and the handicapped, euthanasia. As would be expected, Ellul stressed the importance of avoiding propaganda and political games, of thinking about each problem as a whole (thinking globally), and of seeing what we can modify practically in our own communities. He urged the U.S. to fight communism with economic justice rather than armies and to help the poor not only materially but also with fellowship, spiritual security and support in their anguish.

Regarding his efforts to reform the Church, Ellul criticized a "whole generation of liberal pastors" who "don't believe in anything so they have nothing to say." He said that most of the renewal in France is taking place beside the churches (except for the charismatics), rather than in them. Now he belongs to a small transdenomination-al group trying to listen to laypeople, but this "scares the authorities." Ellul feels his most important insight for the Church has been his emphasis on hope. Secondly, against the particular French problem of 200,000 people (including many intellectuals) becoming Muslim, he stresses, "our God is a Tfinity." This led to a discussion of universalism; had

I already read Dan Clendenin's book (see review) I could have been more able to press him further about the inconsistencies of his views.

The other major doctrinal topic was his concept of "the powers," the subject of my dissertation. When I questioned certain inconsistencies in his writings, he stressed that the powers must be understood dialectically - that they can't be personalized, and yet that there is a Power beyond what can be explained, that every human rupture is a *diabolos,* the Separator.

Most helpful for me were Ellul's comments about practical issues in writing and teaching, such as creating the necessary balance of preparing for one's Bible studies while yet dealing with all the people who want to speak with us when we are leading retreats. He stressed the importance of the Holy Spirit in helping us to find the time to do both. When I thanked him for taking the time to talk with me in spite of all he has to do, he answered, "I'm almost done with what I want to write." Even as *The Presence of the Kingdom* was the introduction to his corpus, his recently complete commentary on Ecclesiastes is its conclusion. He said that he continues to write, but without a tight program. His *Ethics of Holiness* is written, but he doubts whether it will ever be published because it is too long - which led to a discussion of presenting our work in publishable ways. He said that he had created his own market, but that it had taken a long time. When I responded that I'm too impatient, he replied, "you must always be impatient."

I wanted to know Ellul as a person, encountering typical obstacles in the struggle to live out his faith and ministry. He revealed himself as I expected - a wonderful model of a gracious man incarnating the Gospel in practical ways, a brilliant man choosing carefully the values of the kingdom of God.

Media Development Devotes Issue to Ellul

Media Development: Journal of the World Association for Christian Communication has just devoted most of its 2/1988 (vol XXXV) issue to *Perspectives on Jacques Ellul.* Many of you who are receiving this first issue *of Die Ellul Studies Bulletin* have also received a copy since I supplied Michael Haber, the editor, with a copy of our mailing list However a number of you who have been added to the list since then will not have received it. You may want towrite fora copy. The address is *Media Development,* 357 Kennington Lane, London SEII 5QY England (Tblephone 01-582 9139).

The collection of articles is impressive. The table of contents is listed below for your information.

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Forthcoming Ellul Publications

by Gary Lee, Editor, Eerdmans Publishing Co.

It is difficult to keep up with the work of a prolific author like Ellul - he seems towrite more quickly than most of us can read! This difficulty is compounded when the work has to be translated. But it is worth the effort (and the wait, for those who do not read French).

I will begin by just mentioning Eerdmans two most recent translations of Ellul titles: In 1985 we published *The Humiliation of the Word* (285 pages, $14.95), a translation by Joyce Hanks of *La Parole humili^e.* In 1986 we published *The Subversion of Christianity* (224 pages, $9.95), translated by Geoffrey Bromiley from *La Subversion du christianisme.*

In July of 1988 we will publish *Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology* (200 pages, $12.95), translated by Joyce Hanks from *L'ld^ologie mandste Chrttienne.* From both a biblical-theological and a socio-political perspective Ellul examines the attempts to relate Christianity to Marxism (e.g., liberation theology, Marxist Christianity). He describes the challenges that Marxist Christianity presents to traditional Christianity (the former practices some goals that the latter talks about but too often fails to do), and he discusses the roots and development of Marxist Christianity. He then reviews in detail some key Marxist-Christian books, exposing the weaknesses of so-called Marxist Christianity (which is neither Marxist nor Christian!). He argues that the biblical perspective takes exception to all political power; hence he concludes that Christian anarchism is the realistic revolutionary option. The preface by Joyce Hanks provides an excellent introduction to the book, for she shows how it relates to his previous work.

Early in 1989 we will publish Geoffrey Bromiley's translation of *Ce que je crois* (the French edition, published in 1987, is 290 pages; the English edition will probably be less than 200 pages), tentatively titled *What I Believe.* In this book Ellul outlines his beliefs about life, the world, history, and Christianity. In the first part of the book he discusses,

among other things, the meaningfulness of life, the dialectic, evil, and love. In the second part he surveys history from Paleolithic times to the present. In the third part he discusses his religious beliefs, including his views on providence, universalism, and recapitulation. The book is thus a convenient summary of Ellul's beliefs and will serve as an excellent introduction to his thought, for he states succinctly and provocatively his views on many crucial topics.

Later in 1989 we will publish Joyce Hanks' translation of *La raison d'etre: Meditation sur I'Ecclesiaste* (French edition, 1987, 318 pages) (English title uncertain). Here Ellul offers another of his stimulating biblical studies, on a book that has been central to his thinking for fifty years. He begins by discussing his approach to Ecclesiastes and his general view of the book. He then takes up various themes of Ecclesiastes (power, money, work, the good). Next he discusses the role of wisdom in Ec-clesiates and its relation to philosophy. Finally, he examines the references to God in Ecclesiastes, especially in chapter 12. Throughout, Ellul interacts with biblical-theological scholarship, though this is not a verse-by-verse commentary but more a thematic meditation.

We are considering the translation of *Un chrdtien pour Israel',* I have written to Ellul requesting a slight update, and he has agreed to write a postscript concerning the recent turmoil in Israel. In this book Ellul gives a biblical-theological analysis of Israel, then a historical, sociopolitical analysis, in which he examines the propaganda about Israel and considers the complexities of this difficult situation.

I have also just received from the French publisher *Hachette* a copy of *Le bluff technologique,* Ellul's latest book, so that we can consider it for translation. This, his third volume on technique *(The Technological Society* and *The Technological System* being the first two), builds on the previous ones and is similarly massive (489 pages in the French edition). Though we are primarily a religious publisher and this, like the other volumes, is a sociological rather than a theological study, we are pursuing the translation rights.

In addition, we are considering a proposal by Marva Dawn for a translation of six key early articles by Ellul, which, along with Marva's comments, would serve as an introduction to Ellul's thought.

Several years ago Ellul told me that he had written a manuscript on *Technique et Theologie,* but that he could not find a French publisher for it, since he already had so many books in the works. I urged him to send it to me, even though it was handwritten, but he declined. I have asked him again, also for any other material he has, in whatever form. In his recent letter he stated that he has written both this work and bis *Ethique de la Saintete* (which is 1000 pages) but that both need to be updated and revised. In addition, he is currently working on or has plans for three other books, including one on the suffering of Christ, which we will surely pursue.

But Ellul's writing career may be nearing its end. Who will pick up his mantle? Who will cany on in the tradition of Kierkegaard, Barth, Ellul, Stringfellow, etc.? Who will be our next prophet to provoke us to think deeply about our faith and our life?

Addendum

by Dan Clendenin

(Editors Note: Some time ago I asked Dan Clendenin to give me an update on Ellul's publication plans based on his interview with Ellul last April. Then just before press time I got in touch with Gary Lee to update me on what Eerdmans was planning to publish. Since there was a good deal of duplication between these reports and Gary's was more recent, I am appending here, only those comments from Dan which add something to Gary's report.)

Technology and Theology is done but needs to be "greatly revised and rewritten." When I asked Ellul just how close he was to final completion he remarked, "Right now I don't have any desire to write... I'm not writing anymore right now. Maybe later, but not now. Above all, I feel free."

...As for *The Ethics of Love* and the second half of his prolegomena to ethics, he said he has notes, but they need to be written... Finally, I asked him about his two-volume autobiography which is already written. Would it be published? "No, I gave it to my wife. She will do what she wishes with it. If she wants to publish it, she will, if not, she will keep it."

As for other items (not based on my interview). Publisher Donald Simpson of Helmers and Howard (PO Box 7407, Colorado Spring, CO 80933) has been corresponding with Ellul and by now should have finalized a contract to bring back into print *Presence of the Kingdom...* Also a secondary work on Ellul by David Lovekin is due out soon, published by Lehigh University Press.

Ellul and Propaganda Review

A new journal, *Propaganda Review* has crossed the editor's desk. Some of you are probably familiar with it. Its editorial page indicates that the goal is to move "away from narrow definitions of propaganda toward a concept of a socially pervasive 'propaganda environment'." It is a view on the subject which is certainly shared with Ellul and appears to owe a certain debt to his thought It may depart from Ellul somewhat in advocating the use of counter-propaganda to undermine the propaganda environment Issue number *2* contains an article on Ellul, entitled *Jacques Ellul: Quirky Trailblazer of Propaganda Theory* by Claude Steiner and Charles Rappleye. The short article, which contains some fine photo's of Ellul, praises him for his pioneering efforts in studying propaganda but seems to treat him as an "oddball" (i.e., "quirky") in his appeal to Christian faith as a response to the propaganda environment. The article does not adequately illuminate how this faith response relates to the propaganda environment and thus makes the response seem somewhat arbitrary and quixotic.

The difficulty in fighting propaganda however is well illustrated in an excerpt from an interview with Ellul conducted by Claude Steiner, in which Ellul states:

Sometime ago I was teaching a course on propaganda techniques. I wasn't studying the principles of propaganda as I do in my book; I was trying to teach my students about propaganda techniques in various countries so they could recognize them. At that time, I discovered that a French officer had been arrested in the Algerian and imprisoned because he was in possession of secret documents which belonged to the Fifth Office, the office for propaganda during the Algerian AAhr. I tried to contact this prisoner and to get hold of his secret documents because I hoped I could use them in my study. When I finally managed to obtain them, I found that they were notes from my course. The Fifth Office had taken my classwork to conduct their propaganda in Algeria. I decided never towrite anything on propaganda techniques again" (Issue #2, P-33).

If you are interested in subscribing to *Propaganda Review,* the price is $20.00 for four issues. Make checks payable to *Propaganda Review* and mail to Media Alliance, Building D, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123.

The Ellul Studies Bulletin
Department of Religious Studies
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida 33620

Issue #2 Nov 1988 — Ellul's Universalist Eschatology

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In This Issue

From the Editor

by Darrell J. Fasching

Welcome to the second issue of the *Ellul Studies Forum.* For those of you who read issue #1, the first thing you may notice is a name change. The first issue was entitled *The Ellul Studies Bulletin.* Even after I chose the name "Bulletin" I was not entirely comfortable with it but it took me a while to figure out why. "Bulletin" reminds me of *the latest breaking headline* and the effects of *propaganda.* "Forum," on the other hand, suggests dialogue and discussion which focuses on the power of the word. The model of a "Forum" therefore is more in keeping with the spirit of Ellul's work and shall henceforth be displayed on the masthead of this publication.

In this issue you will find an excellent review of Willem Vanderburg*s *The Growth of Minds and Cultures* by Katherine Temple. Vandenburg is strongly influenced by Ellul and his work deserves our attention. You will probably find the *Forum* position paper by Michael Bauman to be a rather harsh critique of Ellul's *Jesus and Marx.*

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But since the purpose of the *Forum* is to stimulate debate and discussion, this should motivate some interesting responses for the next issue. There are also two responses to my essay "The Ethical Importance of Universal Salvation" which appeared in the *Forum* of our first issue. Both Ken Morris and Marva Dawn have some thoughts on my statement.

I am grateful to Dan Clendenin for assuming the responsibilities of *Book Review Editor.* If you are willing to review books or have a specific book you would like to review, contact Dan at William Tyndale College, 35700 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI 48018.1 am also grateful to Carl Mitcham and Jim Grote who have agreed to be *Bibliographic Editors.* If you have materials for the ongoing bibliography, send them to Carl Mitcham, Philosophy & Technology Studies Center, Polytechnic University, 333 Jay Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

The Ellul Studies Forum is meant to foster a communications network among scholars who are interested in the work of Jacques Ellul and in the general area of theology and technology. I want to encourage all readers to send contributions and make suggestions and I hope I will see many of you at the Ellul consultation in Chicago.

Finally, I should mention that I sent Ellul the first issue without advance warning. He responded that he was "happy and surprised at the creation of the *Ellul Studies Bulletin*" and he promises to respond to my request for a short essay to be published in a future issue.

2nd Ellul Consultation Scheduled for November AAR

by Dan Clendenin

The second consultation on the significance of Jacques Ellul's thought for the study of religion will be held at the annual meeting of the *American Academy of Religion* in Chicago. The AAR meets from November 18th to the 22nd, 1988 at the Chicago Hilton and Towers. The session on Ellul will be held Monday, Nov. 21st, from 1 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. in conference room 4K on the 4th floor.

This year we will have three papers and a single respondent for our 21/2 hour session. The papers are as follows:

Clifford G. Christians: *Ellul's Sociology*

Joyce M. Hanks, *The Kingdom in Ellul's Thought*

David W. Gill *The Dialectical Relationship Between Ellul's*

Theology and Sociology

Gary Lee, Respondent

There will be a late night opportunity for all Ellul scholars to get acquainted over a beer (or whatever you prefer). If you are interested please join us. We will meet at

the AAR registration desk at 10 p.m. on Sunday evening and promptly adjourn to the nearest "watering hole" for "serious" discussion.

For further information on the Ellul consultation, contact the chairperson:

Daniel B. Clendenin

William Tyndale College

35700 West 12 Mile Rd.

Farmington Hills, MI 48018

313-553-7200/9516

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First Inter-American Congress on Philosophy and Technology

by Carl Mitcham

The first Inter-American Congress on Philosophy and Technology was held in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Oct. 5-8th, 1988. The Congress was organized by the Center for the Philosophy and History of Science and Technology of the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez, with some assistance from the Philosophy and Technology Studies Center of Brooklyn Polytechnic University.

The congress was attended by approximately 25 scholars from throughout Latin America, 20 from north America and 5 from Europe. It was conducted mostly in Spanish, with some papers being presented in English. Proceedingswill be published in both languages.

The themes that emerged from the conference included the issue of the relationship between religion and technology. A number of what might be called conservative Catholics from various countries (including the US) defended traditional views of the Christianity-technology relationship, i.e., that a recovery of a sense of the sacred or of God is necessary to place technology in proper balance.

Other themes focused on technology and culture, STS (science-technoiogy-society) education, the science-technology relationship, and ethics and technology.

Conference on Democracy and Technology

The Fifth Biennial International Conference of the Society for Philosophy and Technology will be held at the University of Bordeaux in France from June 29th to July 1st 1989. The theme of the conference is "Technology and Democracy." Health permitting, Jacques Ellul is expected to participate. For more information on the conference

contact Stanley Carpenter, Social Sciences, Georgia Tech, Atlanta GA 30332 or Langdon Winner, Dept, of Science & Tech. Studies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Inst., Troy, NY 12180-3590.

Paper Exchange

(Readers are invited to make available relevant papers they have read (or will, read)at conferences. Please provide title, address and cost)

Darrell Fasching will deliver a paper on "Mass Media, Ethical Paradox and Democratic Freedom: Jacques Ellul's Ethic of the Word" at the international conference on "Democracy and Technology" to be held at the University of Bordeaux next summer. Anyone desiring a copy should write to Fasching at the Deptartment of Religious Studies, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL33620 and enclose one dollar to cover the cost of postage and duplication.

Thanks for the Help

A special note of thanks is due to David Gill and Dan Clendenin who shared with me the expense of producing the 1st issue of *The Ellul Studies Forum* which was distributed free of charge in order to generate interest in this enterprise.-*The Editor*

Apologies

Those of you who have sent in checks subscribing to the *Ellul Studies Bulletin* may have noticed that your checks have not yet cleared. I apologize for the delay but I have encountered some bureaucratic tangles which delayed establishing an account to which these checks could be deposited. It appears that I have finally resolved all the problems and you should be getting your canceled checks soon.

Book Reviews

The Growth of Minds and Cultures

by Willem Vanderburg, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.
Reviewed by Katharine Temple
[The following review is excerpted from the winter issue of Cross *Currents* 1985-1986. We are grateful to Katharine Temple and to Cross *Currents* for permission to reprint. - *The Editor*]

A cursory glance at the table of contents might leave the impression that here we have one more introductory textbook in sociology or anthropology. But this would be a mistake. Early on (p.9), Vanderburg tells us this is the first volume in a projected trilogy -*Technique and Culture,* a title which sharpens the focus. I have to admit it is daunting to pick up a 300-plus page book, only to find out there are two more yet to come. Since, however the task is enormous, I also have to conclude that the effort is worth it. In this case, it is important to pay closer attention than usual to the Preface and Introduction, which serve to clarify the end-point.

> I have the profound sense that our present concepts allow us to see the mystery of human life only through a dark glass... But the very process of asking new questions and not absolutizing reality as we know it is vital not only to keep scientific debates in their proper context, but also to guarantee a genuine intellectual life for us and the generations to come— If these reflections can contribute to giving new energy to a dialogue within the multi-versity and among intellectuals around science, technology and technique and their influence on human life, my audacity in attempting a synthesis on such a vast scope will have been worthwhile (pp. 302-303).

At no point is Vanderburg preaching to the converted. He is speaking to people who have to be lured into the discussion in the first place - natural scientists and engineers who, by and large, consider the social sciences beneath them, and those in other disciplines who are thoroughly intimidated by "the hard sciences." As he has to start from square one on both fronts, it is a difficult mix, especially when he wants to promote dialogue, and critical dialogue at that. Then, even apart from his pedagogical pursuits, his own research breaks out of the accepted positivist molds. His conceptual framework is grounded in the dialectical thought of Jacques Ellul (who has written

an incisive foreword that puts the methodology into perspective). Vanderburg has commented elsewhere about the influence.

> In rethinking Marx... Ellul centered on technique, a much broader phenomenon than technology in the engineering sense. Indeed without recognition of this, much of what Ellul says may appear to be overstatement or exaggeration. It was this which struck me most when I first encountered it in *The Technological Society,* and called forth in me a desire to work through this concept from an engineer's point of view *(Cross Currents,* Spring 1985).

Ellul is indeed one of the most brilliant interpreters of our century, but he is an inspiration others have found difficult to swallow, and so he is out of favor in the official groves of academe. Vanderburg has undertaken to introduce a recalcitrant crowd with uneven sophistication to controversial arguments based on highly sophisticated concepts. Perhaps this is as good a definition of formal teaching as any.

Having said that, let me also stress that *The Growth of Minds and Cultures* is not a re-hash of Ellul's insights brought into the classroom. Both are sociologists who view the world very much alike and the Ellul imprint is clear. Nevertheless, they are sociologists who work differently. Just as Ellul is an analyst (in the etymological sense "to loosen," "to unpack," "to dissect") starting from the whole, so Vanderburg remains an engineer, examining the parts to see what makes the system tick and then working toward putting those parts together into a synthesis. One example. This book starts with the irreducible social unit, the individual, and follows how he or she is "enfolded" into the pre-existent web of culture. Ellul, by contrast, tends to start with a definition of *technique* itself. The two approaches are complementary, not interchangeable. The very lack of acceptance Ellul's work has encountered may indicate that the more nuts-and-bolts description is very much in order.

Every once in a while, it also occurred to me that there is not a single topic in the book that won't be old hat to someone and long since rejected by someone else. I cannot say, however, that I wasn't warned.

> I have assumed that most of my readers, like myself, will have an expertise in some areas covered in these essays and not in others... In all of this, I am keenly aware of the fact that both the frontier-type of highly specialized knowledge and the intellectual-reflective kind of knowledge have their own lacunae (p. xxv).

The whole point of a synthesis is not to come up with brand-new separate parts; it is to look at what we think is obvious with new lenses, to show new configurations and relationships. Of course, there is sometimes bound to be a *deja-vue* quality, as well as disagreement, partly because of the range of separate parts and partly because

Vanderburg presents his case without being easily side-tracked. We are sadly unused to this way of thinking. The question is whether this sociological synthesis promotes clarity. I would say that it does. With both scientific coolness and passion, he succeeds in a synthesis that lays the foundation for his next work on technique.

Because he has made such a considerable sociological contribution, I feel churlish in asking questions perhaps better put to the discipline itself. My hesitations come at both ends of its spectrum. First, I think certain biological inquiries deserve greater weight; in particular, genetics and the implications of maleness and femaleness. Second, at the other end stands philosophy. Although the book is deliberately non-philosophical, many of the key concepts carry over from that tradition: mind, will, being, freedom, even culture itself. Such reservations probably would not come to mind if it were not for the overwhelming denial of biology and philosophy in technical civilization at large. Such may be the nature of the beast; nevertheless, from a book that carefully delineates terms, one is tempted to ask for more.

What heartens me the most about this book is the way it re-asserts common sense as a criterion, even as the discarded disciplines once did. Now, "common sense" is an elusive term both philosophically and in common parlance. The only consensus about it is that common sense is never very common. Yet, it is the best expression I know to describe the strength of Vanderburg's argument. By it, I mean a practical wisdom and judgment that rely on perceptions and experience as the touchstones to shake us out of our tendencies to fantasize, objectify, trivialize and distort. People do not initially perceive themselves either genetically or statistically or philosophically and, strange or shaky as it may sound as a theoretical principle, Vanderburg is actually on solid ground when he builds on common perceptions. There will still be disagreements, but the stage is set for discourse based on actual experience, even on the widest conceptual plane.

Vanderburg has concerned himself with technological advances and what they might mean for our life. *The Growth of Minds and Cultures* leads us to see how hard it is to dissociate ourselves form a "star wars" mentality, in which our culture is deeply and almost inextricably embedded. Nevertheless, Vanderburg shows that we can think about this civilization in other than logistical terms or science fiction.

Forum

Jesus and Marx: *From Gospel to Ideology: A Critique

by Michael Bauman

(Michael Bauman is Director of Christian Studies and Associate Professor of Theology of Culture at Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, MI.)

The following was submitted as a book review of *Jesus and Marx: From the Gospel to Ideology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), pp. xvi + 187. However, I thought it provocative enough to merit featuring as the *Forum* statement for this issue. Readers are invited to respond for the next issue. *The Editor.*

The first task of an academic author is to understand his subject. The second is to make himself understood. Though it may be offensive to say so in a forum like this, I do not believe that in *Jesus and Marx* Jacques Ellul has succeeded well on either count. Because it often takes longer to correct an error than to make it, and because this book contains a surprisingly large number of errors of fact and errors of interpretation, I must content myself, within the small scope afforded a book review, to mention but a few of the most flagrant or most easily noted shortcomings.

First, I deny that Christians ought to feel any pangs of guilt "because of what the searching gaze of socialism revealed about them, their church, or even Christianity itself (p.5). Socialism, for one thing, says nothing about anything. Only socialists do. What they say, I am convinced, is philosophically sloppy and historically incorrect The guilt revealed by "socialism" should be guilt felt by socialists. I can not countenance Ellul's irresponsible assertions that Marxist criticisms are "obviously based on justice" or that "in every respect our society is unjust for both individuals and groups" (p. 6, emphasis added). Nor will I countenance Ellul's unproven (and unprovable) assumption that justice means equality. One must not say, with Ellul and the Communists that our "unjust society results from twenty centuries of Christianity" or that "neither churches nor Christians are doing anything to improve the situation (p.6). All I will admit is that books and ideas like Ellul's will not work and that his last statement is a refutation of his own book, written as it is by a Christian and clearly intended as an aid.

What is one to make of the scandalous assertion that "no matter what kind of poverty the poor suffer, the Communists are on their side, and the Communists alone are with them" (p. 6)? I can only say "God help those with whom the Communists stand." Obvious examples like Mother Teresa aside, one need only look at the years

since WWII to see that Communism is the major perpetrator of poverty and not its solution. The Japanese, for instance, were on the losing side of the war effort and suffered nuclear destruction twice. They occupy a land not great in size or in natural resources. Nevertheless, their economy and their standard of living far outstrip that of the Soviet Union, which was on the winning side of the war, which was given all of Eastern Europe as a gift, and which has more people , more land and more natural resources than Japan. A similar comparison could be made between North and South Korea, East and West German, and mainland China and Hong Kong. Capitalism, not socialism, has unlocked the secrets of wealth and sustained growth. Capitalism, not socialism, has been the better friend of the poor. Socialists, not capitalists, ought to feel the pangs of guilt revealed by Socialism. Poverty circles around socialist ideas and socialist ideologues wherever they come to power. Shocking as it is to some, by the 1980's the average Black's per capita annual income under apartheid in South Africa was higher than that of the average white under Communism in the Soviet Union. In short, while capitalism and the Church are not perfect, neither are they what Ellul describes. Nor is Socialism.

Despite Ellul's groundless claim that communist tactics are consistent with communist goals, it is obvious that communists preach liberation and practice enslavement. As long as the same band of happy thugs continues to occupy the Kremlin and to sustain the Gulag, we must not say, as Ellul does that "they accomplish what Christianity preaches but fails to practice" (p. 6). Such ideas are scandalous and reprehensible. Have we forgotten Solzhenitsytn so soon?

That is why Ellul must not say, as he does say with regard to Fernando Belo's communism, that he respects the choice of others to be Communists and does not question it (p. 86). Nor should one say, with Ellul, that Belo's leftist revolutionism is a "perfectly respectable" choice. It is not But, Ellul's muddled sense of Christianity and of Communism permits him to make these and other such abhorrent assertions, such as that Belo's view of the "radical opposition between God and Money, God and the State" and "God and Caesar" are not only true, but "truly evangelical" (p. 89). In other words, because of his partial acceptance of Communist claims, one can tax Ellul with the same charge with which he taxes Belo: he "appears not to suspect [that] Marx's thought is a whole - a precise, integrated unit, based on a thorough method. Once one has adopted it, one cannot mix it with other methods and concepts." (p. 94).

Second, Ellul's understanding of history is less than reliable. For example, he tells us that "often an ideology springs up to parry an ideology-free practice" and that "capitalism is a practice with no explicitly formulated ideology; socialist ideology arises to oppose it. Afterward, capitalism will produce a 'defense'" (p. 1). Not only is it a highly debatable(if not downright mistaken) notion that there is any such thing as an "ideology-free practice" or that capitalism, when it emerged, was one, it is patently false to claim that its ideology developed in response to Socialism. Karl Marx and *Das Kapital,* after all, come after Adam Smith and *The Wealth of Nations,* not before.

Such errors seem to arise from Ellul's peculiar view of ideology, a view wherein he tries to separate the inseparable. Contrary to Ellul, one cannot readily distinguish theology from ideology because the former category is a subset of the latter. To distinguish theology from ideology is no 'more useful than to distinguish Irishmen from humanity. One might well distinguish good theology from bad ideology, or good theology from bad, but one need not do what Ellul tries to do. His attempt is based upon a definition of "ideology" so fully idiosyncratic that if one looked only at his definition, one could not guess the word it was intended to define. Flying in the face of every dictionary known to me in any language, Ellul defines ideology as" the popularized sentimental degeneration of a political doctrine or worldview; it involves a mixture of passions and rather incoherent intellectual elements, always related to present realities: (p.l). A large number of Ellul's conclusions are based upon this monstrous and unjustifiable definition. When the foundation is tilted, how can the superstructure stand straight?

Forum, M. Bauman continued.

Ellul argues that while Christianity is not an ideology, it can degenerate into one as when, for example, it becomes "a means for distinguishing those who are right from those who are wrong [the saved and the damned" (p.2)]. But, Christianity did not become a means for making such determinations; that is something it was from the very beginning. Ellul, one begins to think, does not understand the nature of the very religion he is attempting to promote and to protect. "Christianity," he says," is the destruction of all religions" and of airbeliefs" (p.2). Because Christianity is, on any common sense view, undeniably a religion and entails beliefs, one cannot but wonder after reading such statements (1) if Christianity is not an enemy to itself, or (2) if Ellul uses language with grotesque imprecision and license. For many, the second option recommends itself most convincingly. So also does the conclusion that imprecise language is inescapably tied to muddled thinking.

This book's muddle is extensive. Ellul's skewed vision of history and of economic principles and reality are sometimes shocking, as when he tells us that Caesar is the creator of money (p. 168). For over 200 years, since Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, economists have known that money *antedates* government and that it arises from human action, not human design. Government recognizes the medium of human exchange and adapts itself to it. Government does not create money. But such ideas are (so far as this book is concerned) unknown to Ellul He nowhere shows a knowledge or understanding of classical or of Austrian economics. If his index is to be trusted, Hayek, Von Mises, Schumpeter, Ricardo, Hume, Smith, Say, Bastiate, Gilder and Sowell form no part of Ellul's knowledge of economics. I dare say that without knowing them, one could not understand Marx Perhaps that is why Ellul believes that Marx was "admirably well acquainted" with the problems of his day, that Marx's misdirected and ineffective theories can be labeled "solutions," and that his anti-theism was not an essential part of his ideology (pp. 4,153).

And what is one to make of the grossly exaggerated assertions that "both the Old and New Testaments take exception to all political power" and that "the state's prosperity always implies the death of innocents" (pp. 171,172, emphases added)?

In short, I believe Ellul misunderstands history, economics, Communism and even Christianity itself. In this book, Ellul does not adjudicate the Christian tradition, Christian wisdom, or Christian revelation in a capable or well-informed way.

Forum Response

The Importance of Eschatology for Ellul's Ethics and Soteriology: A Response to Darrell Fasching

By Ken Morris

Dan Clendenin has strongly criticized Jacques Ellul for his affirmation of universal salvation. Darrell Fasching's position paper on "The Ethical Importance of Universal Salvation" took Dan Clendenin to task over his failure to recognize universal salvation as an integral part of Ellul's ethic of freedom, yet it must be pointed out that Ellul himself has said that one need not accept bis universalism along with the main body of bis approach to ethics.[1] Even though Fasching has made a helpful critique of Clendenin's analysis, he has failed to uncover the root of both Ellul's optimistic soteriology and his ethics. In order to understand, and indeed, not be distracted by Ellul's affirmation of universal salvation, we must grasp the centrality of Biblical eschatology to Ellul's thought We must understand what Ellul means by "the presence of the Kingdom," an apt title for his seminal work.

Fasching sees universal salvation as "a necessary precondition for the ethic of freedom Ellul develops precisely to protest the collectivization of human behavior in a technology society." He uses the theologies of John Howard Yoder and Juan Luis Segundo to argue that universalism, by undermining the theological rationale and ethical motivation which have historically promoted Christianity as a collectivizing religion, serves to free up the church from its worries about converting the world and "rechannel(s) the energy of Christians in the direction which is most needed in our time, the ethical direction." Fasching draws on the assertion shared by Yoder and Segundo that the Gospel was betrayed when the church came to view its message as something everyone had to accept in order to be saved. The immediate result of this assumption was that the boundaries of salvation got drawn (and redrawn) in such a way that the greatest possible number of people could be included. Christianity abandoned its "ethic of discipleship" for an ethic of "Christian civilization." This shift failed to preserve the central biblical perspective of election as a call to vocation, and, instead promoted election as a special privilege. But the greatest significance of this move was that the emphasis in theology was shifted off of discipleship and onto salvation. Central to this

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[1] David W.Gill, cd., unpublished interview with Ellul, Bordeaux, France (July 1982).

shift was the definition of the boundaries of salvation *according to,* and *for the sake of,* human understanding.

While it is true that the contemporary church, especially the conservative wing, has a preoccupation with personal, future salvation, and while it is also true that an affirmation of universal salvation effectively undermines this emphasis on soteriology, it does not necessarily follow that Ellul's universalism and his ethics of freedom are inseparable. Both Ellul's ethics of freedom and his soteriology are rooted in his eschatology. One must understand this if one is not to be distracted by his universalism.

Ellul claims that Romans 8, which he feels is a fundamentally universaiistic proclamation, has indirectly inspired all the research and writing he has done over the last fifty years.[2] A specific reading of Romans 8 was the final stage in what Ellul elusively refers to as "a very brutal and very sudden conversion to faith in Jesus Christ."[3] He identifies three essential and interdependent themes in Romans 8: the salvation of the world, the suffering of the present time, and freedom. These three themes became the basis of all of his life's study and proclamation.

According to Ellul's exegesis of Romans 8, every individual is in solidarity with the whole of creation: "The creation's suffering, (Paul) tells us, arises out of human sin - out of my sin." Therefore, if one person can be saved out of their sin, then the whole creation is concerned. "I can't be liberated or emancipated by myself... All creation - humans, animals, things - all are promised salvation, reconciliation, new birth, new creation."

The second theme in Romans 8 is the suffering of the present time. These sufferings are the inevitable subjection to "the law of sin and death" (8:2) which Ellul understands as bondage, obligation, fatality and biological, cultural, social, economic and political conditioning. The work of God in Jesus Christ ruptures these inescapable necessities by introducing hope. Hope, central to Ellul's theology, is defined as the immediate expression of the eschatological and freedom is the ethical expression of hope.[4]

Freedom from necessity and fate is only possible in "the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ." Not only have we all been set free, all creation will be set free. There is a Now of that liberation as well as a Not Yet. Salvation is "a liberation that puts me on the path of freedom." In Ellul's personal discipleship under Christ both Christian hope, which is expressed in his ethics of freedom, and universal salvation are rooted in the Eschaton. "I go through all the miseries of the world carried by this hope, writes Ellul, "because I know that both those who know of it and those who don't are walking together to meet their Lord and Savior."[5]

Given the historically soteriologicai focus of Christian theology, it is understandable that Fasching would argue for a direct connection between Ellul's theology and ethics.

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[2] Ellul, "How I Discovered Hope," *The Other Side* (March 1980), p. 31.

[3] Ellul, *Perspectives on Our Age* (New York: Seabury, 1971), p. 14. [4] Ellul, *Hope in Time of Abandonment (New York: Seabury,* 1971), p. 239.

[4] Ibid., p. 31.

[5] Gill, Unpublished interview with Ellul (July 1982)

Both Clendenin and Fasching grasp the significance of Ellul's eschatological approach to theology and ethics, the same eschatological approach which gave rise to his universalism, but neither has stepped back far enough from the context of their thinking to recognize the effect that this traditional preoccupation with soteriology has had on their own theologies. For that matter, neither has Ellul

Clendenin betrays his preoccupation with soterioiogy by choosing this area to mount "one of his most devastating critiques of Ellul" Fasching is correct in questioning the consistency of Clendenin's stance that adopts the ethics of freedom that are generated by Ellul's eschatology yet rejects the soteriology that issues from the same. Even so, Fasching falls short of ridding himself of a soteriologicai tendency by affirming, after Ellul that in the apocalyptic/eschatological resolution of the historical dialectic between sacred and profane *all* persons are saved. The emphasis is still on salvation, in Fasching's case it is simply all inclusive.

One of Clendenin's critiques of Ellul's universalism is that it fails to extend his dialectic beyond history. Fasching is correct in his assertion that this criticism is groundless since Ellul clearly maintains that the Biblical dialectic is eschatological and thus limited to history. But regardless of whether or not this tension, which centers on the soteriological question, is resolved at the Eschaton, an affirmation of universal salvation in the midst of history allows the dialectical tension to collapse. On the whole, however, Ellul grapples with this soteriological tension in a consistent manner, and even when he allows it to collapse at the times he affirms universal salvation he reveals that he is not entirely comfortable in so doing, adding," I often teach in sermons and public Bible studies, but I never teach universalism. I do believe it, I attest to what I believe, I witness to it, but I don't teach it."[6] To affirm universalism as true, yet to refuse to teach it, is more than simply a reluctance to be identified as a universalist. This hints at the dialectical tension of a soterioiogy rooted in eschatology. Geoffrey Bromiley picks up on this soteriological tension when he observes that Ellul's position strives to avoid "either an automatic salvation on the one side or a salvation dependent on giving oneself in faith to Christ on the other."[7] A main theme in *The Meaning of the City* is that God's characteristic love takes into account human free will, all human intentions, even if they are, in fact, revolts against God, and transforms them as material for the New Creation. Ellul recognizes that what he is contending is prone to misuse. The temptation inherent in this theological position of eschatological appropriation of everything and everyone is to give ourselves over to our selfish desires while counting on God's pardon. But he argues that any such misuse is based on the rupture between reality and truth initiated with the Fall. Ellul draws his analysis from the Biblical revelation and therefore he claims it is fundamentally an appeal to those who have already madea decision of faith: "Either we believe that the Bible expresses

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[6] Jacques Ellul: Interpretive Essays, eds. Christians and Van Hook (Urbana: Univ, of Illinois Press, 1981), p. 40

[7] Ellul, The Meaning of the City, p. 179.

the revelation of God centered in Jesus Christ... or else we do not believe it. We must not confuse the two positions: asserting that since God pardons in the end we have nothing to worry about and thus can obey our every whim is taking the attitude of one who does not believe in revelation."[8]

The person who claims to both universal salvation and moral license is one who does not understand that truth does not equal reality under the Fall. He thinks he can assert the truth that all will be adopted by God in his love while at the same time be rejecting the Lordship of Christ. It does not occur to him that he is attempting to restrict this word of revelation to pure objectivity. He is separating the word of universal salvation from its necessary context of obedient discipleship and, in so doing, uses it to oppose that discipleship. He wants to separate his life for what he thinks is an objective truth, but the biblical revelation is that "all human speech is intrinsically connected to a person —. (when) someone has tried to separate it from the person who speaks it, it has lost is relationship with truth and has become a lie."[9] Only for the person who lives in the eschatological kingdom, that is, under Christ's Lordship, can this revelation be a reality. Only at the Es-chaton are reality and truth reunited.[10] Thus, the present possibility of a situation arises in which two people can assert the truth of universal eschatological salvation but only the one who is in the eschatological kingdom, as demonstrated by his or her submission to the ethics of that kingdom, is speaking of reality in truth. For the other, salvation is not a reality.

In effect, what Ellul accomplishes with his eschatological dialectic is to remove the possibility of answering the soteriological question once and for all: yet he does just that. Ellul has stated that, "the soteriological dimension is diminished with respect to the dimension of the kingdom."[11] With the advent of the Kingdom (though hidden and not yet fulfilled) in the coming of Jesus, the soteriological dimension is completely removed. Therefore, in affirming universal salvation Ellul is taking an unjustifiable liberty with the eschatological dialectic, a liberty that causes more trouble and confusion than it is worth. Especially since the soteriological tension is, in and of itself, sufficient to move our theological focus off of salvation and back onto discipleship and the kingdom of God. Ellul's perspective on salvation and his ethics of freedom share a common root in his eschatology, but they are only indirectly connected.

Vemard Eller (University of La Verne) is a scholar familiar with Ellul who has effectively grasped the importance of retaining a soteriological tension. Eller wants to walk a narrow path in his soterioiogy, one that most contemporary theologians, with their central focus on salvation, would find difficult to accept. On the one hand, he feels that it is wrong to assert that there will inevitably be some people who will not

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[8] Ellul, The Humiliation of the Word (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 33.

[9] Ibid.,p. 237-269.

[10] Ellul, In Season, Out of Season (Harper & Row, 1982), p. 76.

[11] As quoted in Gregor G. BoUch, Karl Barth and Evangelicalism (Downers Grove: IVP, 1980), p. 75.

be saved. On the other hand, contra Ellul, he believes that it is just as wrong to assert that all human beings will ultimately be saved.

Since one cannot be sure of either particularism or universalism, the most one can propose is a "universalistic possibility." This effectively moves our focus off of salvation and onto the ethic of discipleship grounded in our response to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Ellers universalistic possibility (see his *Revelation: The Most Revealing Book of the Bible}* is a third soteriological position, and one which moves beyond the particularism/universalism impasse by preserving the tension of the eschatological dialectic. It only becomes an option, however, after we have been able to identify our misleading emphasis on personal, future salvation as unbiblical and heeded Ellul's call for "re-escbatologization" of Christian theology.

Presently we find ourselves trapped in a circle of incriminations. Contemporary scholars and theologians who begin to rediscover the eschatological root of biblical discipleship and begin to tentatively work out their understanding of the soterioiogical tension, usually, by attempting to balance particularism with a broader sense of God's graceful action, are invariably branded with the scarlet "U" of universalism. A good example is Ellul's predecessor, Karl Barth. In an "evangelical" response to Barth's theology entitled *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth* (1956), G.C. Berkouwer identified the key element of Barth's theology as the tension between universal election and human decision. Instead of seeing this as a dialectic, however Berkouwer pointed to it as a crossroads and wondered which way Barth would turn: "Probably no one will wish to venture a prophecy as to the direction in which Barth will further develop his thought It is possible, however, to state in a nutshell his central thesis. This is that the triumph of election means, centrally and determinatively, the *a priori* divine decision of the election of ail in the election of Christ."[12]

Barth responded to Berkower by attempting to move the emphasis away from the question of salvation and toward a freedom and pursuit of a knowledge of Christ: Tm a bit startled at the title, *The Triumph... Of* course I used the word and still do. But it makes the whole thing seem so finished, which it isn't for me. *The Freedom...* would have been better. And then instead of— *Grace* I would have preferred *...Jesus Christ.'^*

AU this is particularly significant for the contemporary church as it grapples with the issues of evangelism and social action. As long as our focus remains on personal, future salvation, we can never be entirety comfortable with a renewed emphasis on an ethic of discipleship. But if soterioiogy can be grasped in terms of a tension rooted in Biblical eschatology, then we can move beyond the either/or approach (either particularism or universalism) in which the majority of contemporary, orthodox, Christian theology has sunk its roots.

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[12] Ibid., p. 76.

A Second Forum Response to Fasching

In response Darrell Fasching's article on "The Ethical Importance of Universal Salvation" in the premier issue of *The Ellul Studies Bulletin:* It seems to me that throughout his critique of Clendenin's objections to Ellul's notion of universal salvation Fasching confuses two very important and necessarily distinct issues. Underlying all three points of Fasching's argument is a confusion of evangelistic coercion/Constantinian power and the particularity of the gospel.

John Yoder is right to criticize the Constantinian coercion that demanded conversion (a better choice than losing one's life!) and thereby watered down the ethics of Christian discipleship. But that coercion is not identical to the belief that salvation was made possible for the human race particularly through the gift of Jesus Christ, in whom all human beings are invited to have faith.

Rather than the notion of universal salvation, the idea that Jesus alone is "the way, the truth, and the life" is the necessary pre-condition for an ethic of freedom. Without him a person struggles under the un-freedom of trying to mate ones own way, of following all the right steps to find the truth, and of expending great effort to create and justify one's life.

The gift of salvation in Christ is offered freely. God does not coerce us to accept it Moreover, God's grace sets us free re respond to that salvation with lives that carry on what Fasching calls "the struggle with the demonic dehumanization and collectivization which occurs in history." Consequently, the Christian ought not to use power to coerce others into accepting the good news of God's gift in Jesus. Fasching rightly criticizes Constantinian link with power, but throws the bay out with the bath water when he also rejects the uniqueness of Christ's victory over the powers.

Ellul, Yoder and Hauerwas all are right to condemn the unbiblical notions that Christians are in charge, but this ought not to be confused with the idea the Christians have a great gift to offer the rest of the world - the grace of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Fasching falsely links" the desire to run the world" with the belief that Christ alone is the means to salvation. Unfortunately, throughout history, since Constantine, Christians have used power instead of appeal in their evangelism, but that was not the case in the early church. All its members were both pacifists and also advocates of Peter's confession that "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among [humankind] by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).

Fasching's Reply

I very much appreciate the thoughtful responses to my essay by Ken Morris and Marva Dawn. I must say that in many ways I find Ken Morris' essay persuasive. I agree with him that it would be desirable (given the typical narcissistic emphasis

on personal future salvation) to remove the issue of "salvation" from the theological vocabulary altogether, replacing it with a focus on eschatology. I find it distracting, and almost embarrassing, to have to spend so much time discussing it when our focus is on the response of theology to a technological civilization. And yet, just because there is such a prevalent misuse of this theme which does distract from the ethical-eschatological dimension, such a discussion is unavoidable. Given this past history I wonder if it is really possible to attempt to sidestep the issue as Mr. Morris seeks to do. I am afraid that Vemard Eller's position, at least as interpreted by Mr. Morris, may not really undercut the motivation to turn the whole world into a collectivist Christian civilization. Agnosticism about salvation, Max Weber argued, actually led Calvinists to be more compulsive in spreading Protestant Christian civilization. If it is true of Ellul's position, as Mr Morris says, that "an affirmation of universal salvation effectively undermines this emphasis on soteriology" it may be (given our past history) the only way to undercut a collectivist ethic and recover an ethic of discipleship. I recognize that Mr. Morris is right to warn that affirming universal salvation in the midst of history may collapse the dialectical tension necessary for an ethic of discipleship. Paul faced the same problem in preaching that in Christ all things a permitted. Some took this as an invitation to license. That is why it is probably good that the scriptures are ambiguous on this matter. No one can reasonably claim certain knowledge on this issue and take things for granted. It is better to have some doubts even as we live by hope.

I am less persuaded by Marva Dawn's position. I do not see how the statement - "the gift of salvation in Christ is offered freely. God does not coerce us to accept it" - can be true if the consequence of refusal is hell and damnation. It is only offered freely if one accepts Ellul's premises concerning universal salvation. Dawn opposes "universal salvation" to the notion that "Jesus alone is the way" but for Ellul this is a false opposition since he affirms both. Dawn concludes her argument with Acts 4:12 (i.e., there is salvation in no other name), apparently to oppose it to my conclusion with 1 Timothy 4:10 (i.e., God is savior of the whole human race, especially all believers). It is interesting, however, that on her premises one is forced to choose between these two scriptures but on Ellul's premises one can consistently affirm the truth of both.

Bibliographic Notes on Theology and Technology

by Cari Mitcham and Jim Grote.

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De Franch, Ramon Sugranyes, Chanoine A. Doneyne, Jospeh Kaelin, and O. Costa de Beauregard. *Foi et technique.* Paris: Librairie Pion, 1960. Pp. 181. Proceedings from the XUIe Assemble Pldnifere de Pax Romana, Mouvement International des Intellectueis Catholi-ques, in Louvain, July 1959. The authors contribute an "Introduction" and articles on "Technique et religion," "La biologie dans le champ de tension de la pensde contemporaine," and "Probldmesde foi d'unscien-tifique," respectively. These are followed by a lengthy "Accueii de la foi dans un monde scientifique et technique" by an international commission. [Both of these first two citations are to important items inadvertently missing from the "Select Bibliography of Theology and Technology" in *Theology and Technology* (1984), to which these notes are a supplement]

Granberg-Michaelson, Wesley. *A Worldly Spirituality: The Call to Take Care of the Earth.* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984, Pp. xiv, 210. The author "identifies himself as an evangelical and distinguishes himself as such from Catholics and liberal Protestants, but he writes in no sectarian spirit. His concern is to arouse believers of all persuasions - evangelicals, fundamentalists, and all the rest - from construing their faith in exclusively personal terms... and to make them aware of its application to the world as God's creation. He seeks to articulate a biblically-based theology and does not hesitate to call in the assistance of modem biblical scholarship from all quarters." - from the favorable review by George S. Hendry, *Theology Today* 42, no. 2 (July 1985), pp. 264-266. Granberg-Michaelson was for eight years chief legislative assistant to Senator Mark Hatfield, has been a member of the Sojourners community, and now directs the New Creation Institute and teaches journalism at the University of Montana.

Jaki, Stanley L. "The Three Faces of Technology: Idol, Nemesis, Marvel," *Intercolleguite Review* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1988), pp. 37-46. The Enlightenment looked upon technology as idol; its critic Edmund Burke viewed technology as nemesis. "Burke's ultimate perspective on the shift from chivalry to calculators, human or electronic, was a religious perspective" (p. 39). Trying to eschew these extremes are those such as Dennis Gabor who turn to technology as a marvel for manipulating even society. What is really called for is responsibility. A breezy piece with many apt historical references.

Locher, Gottfried W. "Can Technology Exist without Belief?" *Theology Digest* 21, no. 3 (Autumn 1973), pp. 221-223. Abstract from "Galuben und Wissen," *Reformatio 22* (1973), pp. 82-92. Christians must assert themselves to influence science and technology for the better. [Another miss in the 1984 bibliography.]

Lecso, Phillip A. "Euthanasia: A Buddhist Perspective," *Journal of Religion and Health* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1986), pp. 51-57. Buddhism prohibits active euthanasia and advocates hospice care. By an M.D.

Marty, Martin E. "The Impact of Technology on American Religion," chapter 11 in Joel Colton and Stuart Bruchey, eds., *Technology, the Economy, and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 278-287. Although in Europe technological change has been at odds with religion, such has not been the case in the United States. In the US prior to industrialization only about 10-20% of the population was religiously affiliated. But "the coming of technological industrialization was accompanied by an

almost consistent rise in churchmembersbip(toover60percent)fromthe 1870s into the 1960s. Somehow, Americans blended technological mastery with religious search and identification" (p. 279). There are, however, problems and ironies in the technology of worship, the symbolization of spiritual experience, the application of ethics, and the instrumental use of technology.

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Novak, Philip. "The Buddha and the Computer Meditation in an Age of Information," *Journal of Religion and Health* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1986), pp. 188-192. Meditation can help deal with the cognitive as well as the emotional stress of information overload.

"Perspectives on Jacques ElluL" Theme issue of *Media Development* (Journal of the World Association for Christian Communication) 35, no. 2 (1988), pp. 1-31. Contents: Jacques Ellul's "Some Thoughts on the REsponsibility of New Communication Media," Clifford G. Christians' "Is Ellul Prophetic?" Darrell J. Fasching's "The Liberating Paradox of the Word," Roelf Haan's "Understanding Progress: Cultural Poverty in a Technological Society," John M. Phelan's "Jacques Ellul: A Formidable Witness for Honesty," Joyce Main Hanks' "Feminism in the Writings of Jacques Ellul," Katharine Temple's "Jacques Ellul: A Consistent Distinction," Willem H. Vanderburg's "Idolatry in a Technical Society: Gaining the World but Losing the Soul," Daniel B. Clendenin's "An Interview with Jacques Ellul," and James McDonnell's "Annotated Bibliography."

Sherrard, Philip. *The Eclipse of Man and Nature: An Enquiry into the Origins and Consequences of Modem Science.* West Stockbridge, MA: Lindisfarne Press, 1987. Pp. 124. Useful restatement of the problems created by the desanctification of nature in modem science. As much about technology as much as science, though it fails to say so.

Thomas, Mark J. *Ethics and Technoculture.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987. Pp. vii, 305. Technology is neither inherently good nor inherently evil, but ambiguous. From Paul Tillich's theology of culture, which recognizes and tries to deal with such ambiguity, and Tillich's occasional reflections on the ambiguity within technology, Thomas attempts to develop a more comprehensive theology of technological culture. Chapters I and II are introductory, providing first an overview and then some basic perspectives. Tillich's view (summarized in chapter HI) is then systematically contrasted with the more affirmative views of technology found in Talcott Parsons and Herbert Marcuse and the negative view of technology found in Martin Heidegger in relation to technologicaLtimeancLspace (chapter IV) and technological causality and substance (chapter V). The affirmation of technology is coordinate with an autonomous view of the human, the negation of technology with a heteronomous view. The concluding chapter VI sketches a theonomous view of technology. "Human technology is ambiguous (creative and destructive), because human being is estranged from its own ground and source. Autonomous social ethics (Parsons, Marcuse) cannot

create an unambiguously good technological society because it cannot overcome the existential situation. Heteronomous social ethics (Heidegger) cannot create the common good because it cannot reimpose the primal relation to origins. And insofar as all of these ethical interpretations are expressed in terms of a self-sufficient finitude, none can grasp either the depth of human estrangement, nor the ultimate source of transcendence required for its fulfillment Only when human artifice and innovation are seen as derivative and existentially distorted can the ambiguity of the technological era be grasped:

We cannot close our eyes any longer to the fact that every gain produced - for example, by scientific and technical progress - implies a loss; and that every good achieved in history is accompanied by a shadow, an evil which uses the good and distorts it.

Any social ethic which fails to grasp this central reality is doomed to swing with the movements of history between an unwarranted optimism and an equally unwarranted despair over the human condition" (pp. 225-226). A truly theonomous view of technology will affirm its creativity and value production as such but also contain "an element of 'technical self-limitation'" (p. 232). This limitation will be guided by organization under a democratic socialism. Originally a doctoral dissertation directed by Langdon Gilkey.

"To Be Christian is to be Ecologist." Theme issue of *Epiphany* 6, no. 1 (Fall 1985), pp. 1-83. Guest editor, Peter Reinhart. Contents: Vincent Rossi's "The Earth is the Lord's: Excerpts from The Eleventh Commandment: Toward an Ethic of Ecology*," Stephen Muratore's "Where Are the Christians?: A Call to the Church," Rossi's "Theocentrism: The Cornerstone of Christian Ecology," "Earth Stewardship '84: A Special Seminar Section" - with contributions by Fred Krueger on "The Eleventh Commandment and the Environmental Crisis, Muratore on "Stewardship is Enough: Ecology as Inner Priesthood," Reinhart on "The Ten Talents of Stewardship and the Angelic Dimension" and "Eternal Festival: Folk Culture, Celebrations and Earth Stewardship," and Michael Crowley on "The Virtues: Commitment, Spiritual Practice and Transformation" - Michael Eichner's story "The Master Craftsman, an interview with Krueger of the Eleventh Commandment Fellowship, Muratore's "Holy Weakness, Strength of God: From Despair to Christian Ecology," and a good annotated survey of books on the environmental movement.

Readers are invited to contribute to this ongoing bibliography. Please send books or articles to be noted, or notes themselves, to
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Peter Lang Publishing (New York/Bem) is searching for bold and creative manuscripts for their new monograph series on *Religion, Ethics and Social Policy* edited by Darrell Fas-ching. Scholars from the Humanities and Social Sciences are invited to submit book-length manuscripts which deal with the shaping of social policy in a religiously and culturally pluralistic world. We are especially interested in creative approaches to the problems of ethical and cultural relativism in a world divided by ideological conflicts. Manuscripts which utilize the work of Jacques Ellul would be most welcome, as well as manuscripts taking other approaches. A two page brief on the series is available. For more information, or to submit a manuscript, contact the series editor, Darrell J. Fasching, Cooper Hall 317, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33620. Phone (813) 974-2221 or residence (813) 963-2968.

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Issue #3 Jun 1989 — Eller and Ellul on Christian Anarchy

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A Forum for Scholarship on Theology in a Technological Civilisation
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In This Issue

From the Editor

by Darrell J. Fasching

Welcome to issue number three of the *Ellul Studies Forum.* This issue completes our first subscription year and I hope that you think this effort worthy enough to renew your subscriptions for issues four and five. Please note that there is a subscription renewal form enclosed. Also note a slight increase in subscription price, from four dollars per year to six (eight on foreign subscriptions). I started out with the lowest possible subscription price I thought (hoped) we could manage on. However, after a year of experience its clear that this modest increase will be needed to keep us in the black.

You should find this issue especially interesting. Our Forum essay *"Be Reconciled"* is by Jacques Ellul himself. He graciously sent us this article as he promised when we began the *Ellul Studies Forum.* You will also find Ellul's rather stinging reply to Michael Bauman's review of his book *Jesus and Marx* (Issue #2, Nov. 88) in this

issue's Forum Response column. Ellul outlines in detail why Michael Bauman's review is seriously misrepresentative. Nevertheless, I feel compelled to say a few words about this review myself. First, I must offer a word of apology to our readers and especially to Jacques Ellul for publishing this rather irresponsible review. I must confess that at the time, my pressing schedule had not yet permitted me the time to read *Jesus and Marx.* Mr. Bauman was asked to write a review of this book by our book review editor and I received it shortly before publication time. I recognized it to be a rather harsh and uncharitable review. Still, I decided to run it because I felt it was important to establish that critical reviews are welcome and an important part of scholarship, no matter how well established the author under review.

What I was not in a position to judge at the time was that the review was seriously misleading. Having since read *Jesus and Marx* it is now clear to me that Mr. Bauman seriously misrepresented the subject matter of the book. He professes to be a "theologian of culture." He might have learned something from the master of that discipline, Paul Tillich. Tillich said that what struck him most about scholarship in this country when he came here from Germany was that one's opponents always attempted to refute the strongest possible interpretation of your work whereas his European colleagues were in the habit of choosing the weakest possible interpretation and often ended up destroying a "straw man." I am afraid that is what Mr. Bauman did in the last issue - if not worse. While claiming that the first obligation of an author is "to understand his subject" he proceeds to interpret the positions Ellul is criticizing as positions Ellul himself holds. This is an inexcusable error, if it is an error. One has to wonder if it is not deliberate misrepresentation. From Mr. Bauman's review one gets the impression that Ellul is championing communism and socialism and condemning capitalism. One could scarcely conclude from Mr. Bauman's article that Ellul's book is a stinging critique of socialism and communism which argues that Christian faith can never be compatible with either. And yet that is exactly Ellul's thesis. One would never guess, from Mr. Bauman's review, that such sentences as the following could be found in *Jeus and Marx:* If you care for the poor, Ellul argues, "You will have to break quickly with Communism, since its practice has produced many more radically poor people than capitalism ever did. Communism has never defended the truly poor: only those who were useful to the revolution" (p. 131). It makes one wonder if he bothered to read anything beyond the first chapter.

What is equally disturbing about Mr. Bauman's review is the arrogant tone with which he puts forth his own views as unquestionably true, leaving the impression that anyone who disagrees with him is simply out of touch with reality. Mr. Bauman seems painfully unaware of his own vulnerability. If he did not bear the title Associate Professor, I would have assumed him to be a "green" Ph.D., fresh out of graduate school In the future, I promise to exercise tighter editorial control, not to exclude disagreement and/or criticism of the work of Jacques Ellul (I myself engage in these tasks) but to exclude irresponsible scholarship, not worthy of the name.

In the book review section you will find a new review of *Jesus and Marxdone* by Dan Clendenin, our book review editor, which I think will give you a better understanding of the book's contents. You will also find an essay review by Katharine Temple of Ellul's/frurrc/iie *et Chris-tianisme* and Vemard Eller's *Christian Anarchy.*

Indeed, a major section of this issue is devoted to the theme of Christianity and Anarchy. We are pleased to have three essays on this topic. One is derived from the last chapter of *Jesus and Mane.* The other two were graciously sent to me by Vemard Eller. One is by Eller on his interpretation of "Christian Anarchy" and the second is by a mysterious Hu Elz on "Eller's Crowning Achievement" - namely his influence on Ellul's development of the theme of anarchy. Who is Hu Elz? I am afraid I don't know. No identification was given with the essay. But a skillful literaty-critical analysis might suggest that he must be a "close disciple" who has absorbed much of Eller's casual style.

Finally, we have a Bibliographic essay from Carl Mitcham on movements and newsletters in England relating Christianity and technology, which should be of considerable interest And we have a review of upcoming Ellul publications by Gary Lee of Eerdmans Publishing Company.

The next issue (November) will be devoted to the theme of Judaism and Christianity in a Technological Civilization. I am off to Bordeaux and the Society for the Philosophy of Technology's conference on "Democracy and Technology" at the end of this month. While I am there I plan to interview Ellul about his book *Un chrttien pour Israel.* Ellul's view of the cooperative vocation of Jews and Christians in a technological civilization is a fascinating aspect of his work which has received little attention. If anyone has a contribution they would like to make on this or any other topic please feel free to send me your manuscripts.

Forum

Be Reconciled

by Jacques Ellul
Translated by Joyce Hanks

God's reconciliation with humanity is secured through Jesus Christ. But this should lead to reconciliation on our part with God, and to reconciliation among us. In what follows, I would like to suggest just an outline of the second point It seems to me to entail two aspects: religious and theological quarrels and divisions, on the one hand, and position-taking in the World, on the other.

As I have thought about it over the last several years, the tragedy of the separation of our various Churches springs from the fact that the reasons for their separation no longer matter very much. Two hundred or a thousand years ago, these reasons often justified separation. In the case of the theological battle over *filioque,* for instance, do theologians and clergy today really attach great importance to this formulation of the faith?

Or consider certain facets of that great schism, the Reformation: transubstantiation, for instance. A French Catholic theologian said to me a few months ago that "no one" on the Catholic side believes any more that the wine is materially transformed into blood, and the bread into flesh (I think he meant theologians, since the situation certainly differs among simple believers!). He said "we believe in Jesus' real presence (but in the sense of his words: 'I am in your midst'). The bread and wine are Symbols of that presence." This inevitably reminded me of Calvin's phrase: "we believe in Jesus' real (meaning 'true'!) presence in the Lord's Supper, but not in his material presence. The dispute sprang from a certain philosophy of substances, no longer accepted in our day. On the contrary, we can come together rather easily on the basis of an existentialist philosophy.

The huge debate concerning salvation by faith or by works was similar. The terrible thing in this case was that both sides agreed salvation came by grace, in any case. But one group believed a person's initial act was believing in that grace, whereas the other group believed one first put grace into practice through works. Astonishingly, advocates of salvation by faith accomplished the most works in the nineteenth century (works of the Church and of charity). To think the Church was tom asunder, and thousands of Christians died, killing each other, because of such terrible misunderstandings (to which we could of course add others, such as the Virgin and the Saints).

At times breaches have occurred quite differently: a small group of Christians would realize the official Church was forgetting an important aspect of Revelation. For example, it is quite true that in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Protestantism, the Holy Spirit and eschatology were neglected. So these groups of Christians would decide to try to "return the Holy Spirit to his proper place," or "rediscover the importance of eschatology in theology and the spiritual life of the Christian." Their error consisted of making this truth the only important truth: a truth that constituted, by itself, a subject *Stands aut cadentis Ecclesiae.* They considered everything else secondary.

The official Churches committed a much more serious error: they failed to recognize what was right in such movements. Since the groups comprised only a minority, they were obliged to separate from the Church, becoming the Pentecostal Movement, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, etc. The "much more serious" error involved failing to apply a rule I find extraordinary: *Major aut Saniorpars.* It existed in the Church from the tenth to the thirteenth century, only to disappear in the fourteenth. When a decision was to be made in a Church Council, for example, a vote took place, but the majority was not always right! The ideal was to arrive at unanimity. Failing that, the group had to consider whether the minority represented a *saniorpars:* a wiser point of view. This process provoked delays, but resulted in a more just solution. People doubted that truth could be decided by a majority of votes! In reality, the Church should have examined whether these minorities were calling it back to essential truths. Instead, after their exclusion, such groups hardened their position, and ended up in the absurdities and extremism we know so well.

But can all this still be valid today? The Presbyterian Church, for example (the Calvinist church, or the Reformed Church of France), has now recognized again the importance of eschatology and the centrality of the Holy Spirit. Each time someone proposes a reconciliation of these churches, however, or wants to examine what divides us, stern refusals follow. Whose? The authorities'-all of them. What I have to say will meet with very poor acceptance, but the thing separating Churches is no longer theological, religious, or doctrinal questions. It is institutions, organizations, and authorities. The heads of these Churches do not want to lose their power. They see no way to unite their separate and different institutions. People prefer having the body of Christ tom to pieces rather than challenging our authorities, powers, and institutions.[1] Considering that the Churches yield to such feeble motivations, it is not surprising they lose their influence in this world!

The second aspect of reconciliation among us involves taking political positions, often within a single Church.[2] After 1940 we rediscovered in Protestantism (at least

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[1] At this point 1 return to the theme of a series of articles 1 wrote in 1952: "On the Cultural and Social Factors Influencing Church Division," *Ecumenical Review,* vol. 4 (April 1952), pp. 269-275, reprinted as "The Cultural and Social Factors Influencing Church Division," in C. H. Dodd, G. R. Cragg, and Jacques Ellul, *Social and Cultural Factors in Church Divisions* (New York: World Council of Churches, 1952), pp. 19-25.

[2] The point I take up here particularly concerns French Protestantism, but I am convinced a similar

in France) that the Church could not isolate itself from problems in society. For instance, we found ourselves confronted with communism in 1944. What attitude should we adopt? Many French pastors and theologians who had been completely indifferent, before the war, suddenly found themselves with communist friends in the Resistance. As a result of such friendships, they assented to communist doctrine. Moreover, this process highlights an important characteristic of French Protestantism: relationships based on friendship or charity often lead our Protestant intellectuals to join an organization, in order to show they sympathize with the doctrine or philosophy of people to whom they want to be closely related. We find this again in the case of Islam.

Naturally, the "great" French theologians of that era (such as Pierre Maury, Marc Boegner, and Jean Bose) did not allow themselves to be influenced at all by this trend, but a great number followed the (moderate) example of Karl Barth, who said, rather simplistically: "Since the Soviet Union saved us from Hitlerism, we must reconsider our negative attitude." Thus Barth drew close to communism (he was, of course, ignorant of both Marxist doctrine and the reality of the Soviet regime).[3]

Beginning at that point, we have a split in the Reformed Church of France. On the one hand we find those who considered the only calling to be evangelism: making the Gospel known and enabling people to share in salvation in Jesus Christ. On the other, those who considered a Christian could now witness to his faith only through political action, which ought to establish a just society. In such a society, the poor would be given first place. This faction denied the Gospel could be received without social action, resulting in "the good news announced to the poor." The poor with no money, the proletariat, and only they were worthy of bearing the good news. Remarkably, this group managed to prevail, through utterly insidious means. Today, we can no longer deciare that we want to make the Gospel known by means of the Word.

Next we saw political positions taken at the time of the war in Algeria. The same intellectuals and theologians who had sided with the poor now acted on behalf of the Algerian Freedom Fighters, against France. The motive was the same: since the Arabs were poor and oppressed, one had to be on their side, against the rich French oppressors. This tendency continued as the group sided with the Palestinians (because they were the Poor, whereas the Israelis represented the United States, and thus the rich!). The trend continues today with respect to the immigrant workers (all Arabs), and the Palestinians. This Christian political movement has, of course, adopted Liberation Theology. But, more than that, it quickly subscribed to Marxist thought, and now favors Islam, emphasizing the "monotheism" of the two religions!

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problem exists in many countries. Furthermore, in this article 1 especially attack Christians who have taken a Leftist position. I have made (and could make here) the same criticism of Christians of the "Right." See my *False Presence of the .Kingdom,* tr. C. Edward Hopkin (New York: Seabury, 1972) and *Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology* tr. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

[3] Barth had been heavily influenced by his friend Fritz Lieb, who wrote a book in 1945 in which he "proved" that the Soviet Union had completely changed, that it had become completely free, and that there was no oppression there!

Of course, this trend that dominates the Protestant intelligentsia judges very harshly the Christians who confine themselves to the Gospel. These are considered reactionary, and unfaithful to God's will, since they do not put themselves on the side of the Poor. The adopting of political positions has gone beyond earlier theological differences.

My greatest reproach of all these Christians who adopt a political stance is essentially that they are ignorant. That is what grieves me most: between 1940 and 1956, they knew nothing about Marxism. They did not try to find out what was really happening in the Soviet Union. I maintain that when a Christian takes a political stance he should reflect on everything: the means used and the future risks, as well as the doctrine that inspires the movement If you are for the Palestinians, you must study the PLO's charter and evaluate the Israelis' chances for survival if the Palestinians should win. If you favor Islam, you must begin by studying the Koran thoroughly.

I believe that these Christians are acting in good faith, and that they are sensitive to poverty, but they are utterly lacking in perception, dear thinking, and competence. An honest Christian with these deficiencies says nothing. Above all, he does not take himself (like those I am attacking here!) for the equivalent of the Old Testament prophets! The prophets not only listened faithfully to the Word of God, but also were well acquainted with political conditions in their time!

The experience of the last forty years should have given our false prophets a warning about their errors. But, since they take themselves for prophets, they see none of the damage done by the regimes they have supported. They continue to drag well-meaning Christians into other errors, and widen the splits they have produced in the Reformed Church of France!

Update on Ellul Publications

by Gary Lee

Eerdmans Publishing Co.

About a year ago, in the first issue of *The Ellul Studies Forum, I* reported on our forthcoming translations of several Ellul titles. Here is a brief progress report.

We have just published *What I Believe* (223 pages, doth, $19.95), Geoffrey Bromiley's translation of *Ce que je crois.* Here Ellul treats several key general concepts (chapters indude "Life Has Meaning," "The Word," "Lifelong Love") as well as some crucial theological ideas ("The Seventh Day," "Universal Salvation," "Recapitulation") and an overview of history. Thus this work serves as a good introduction to Ellul's thought

Joyce Hanks has recently submitted her translation of *La raison d'etre: Meditation sur VEccUsiaste* (English title uncertain). This is another of Ellul's provocative and insightful biblical expositions; here he finally treats the biblical book that one might associate most closely with him. Publication is scheduled for 1990.

We will indeed publish the translation of *Le bluff technologique,* Ellul's third massive volume on the role of technique in our world. As the title indicates, Ellul examines the technological bluff, that is, the illusions by which technique has fascinated and seduced us. Geoffrey Bromiley expects to finish the translation before the end of this year, and we should publish it either late in 1990 or early in 1991.

We are still in the process of finalizing the contract for *Un chretien pour Israel,* which is another demonstration of Ellul's ability to blend theological, sociological, and historical analysis. Ellul has recently submitted a postscript to take into account the events in Israel that have transpired since he wrote the book(1986). We hope to publish it in 1991.

Ellul'sAnarc/ue *et Christianisme* is our most recent acquisition. Here Ellul looks at the relation between anarchy and Christianity from sociological and historical perspectives, and then examines a number of Biblical texts that provide the basis for the anarchic option. This book is similar to, though briefer than, Vemard Eller's *Christian Anarchy* [Eerdmans, 1987], to which Ellul refers. Look for publication in 1991 or 1992.

Finally, one other book, though not written by Ellul, reflects his influence at a number of points: Marva Dawn *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly.* Marva combines solid Biblical exposition, insight from Jewish traditions, and practical reflections to guide the reader into a fuller appreciation of the meaning of the Sabbath. Available in July (232 pages, $10.95).

The Presence of the Kingdom - Back in Print

Helmersand Howard Publishers, (P.O. Box 7407, Colorado Springs, CO 80933) has just brought Jacques Ellul's *The Presence of the Kingdom* back into print. This edition has a new Preface by Ellul explaining what prompted him to write this book and an introduction by Dan Clendenin. Written early in his career, *The Presence of the Kingdom* is a remarkable *blueprint,* foreshadowing the massive scholarship that was to follow in over forty books. Virtually all the important themes of Ellul's work are contained here in a "nutshell". If you do not have this classic on your book shelf, now is the time to order it. The price is $10.95, with professional discounts (20%) and examination copy discounts (50%) available. Call 719-520-1559 for more information.

Forum Response

A Reponse to Michael Bauman's Review of *Jesus and Marx*

by Jacques Eilul
Translated by Michel Machado

My work has been so often criticized without being understood that I believed nothing could shock me. However, I must confess that Mr. Bauman's article [Issue #2, Nov. 88] first provoked irritation, then stupefaction, and finally I thought it to be a joke! Indeed, I found it (and I use Mr. Bauman's terms), "monstruous", "grotesque." I never read such accumulated stupidity and lack of comprehension. It is evident that Mr. Bauman knows nothing of my work. He does not know that I was for forty years professor of history of institutions and economics and that I am aware of the works of Hayek, Schumpeter and others. Mr. Bauman knows nothing of Marx's theory and of the prominent Marxist theoreticians. Setting aside his ignorance, I am equally disturbed that an obtuse theology professor can so violently judge a book that he has clearly misunterstood and I doubt even seriously, read.

Mr. Bauman's atrocious misconceptions include the following:

1. He accused me of saying that Christians ought to have a feeling of culpability because of what socialism revealed. But, I never said that! I said, in fact, "Many have had a bad consience"... I report a fact, nowhere have I said that Christians must have a bad conscience.

2. I never wrote that justice was equality. I have often written to the contrary. Mr. Bauman should begin to apply to himself the rule that he set in the first line of the article - "The first task of an academic author is to understand his subject."

3. He accuses me of saying that Communists are on the side of the poor. Here again, he missed it. I don't justify the Communists, I do not say that they help the poor. I say that wherever the poor revolt, Communists are there. If Mr. Bauman had known the Leninist *prods,* if he had read Lenin's work, he would have known that that is their tactic. Clearly, I do not entertain the simplistic idea that Communists help the poor; they use them in order to come to power. Only for appearance and public opinion sake do Communists care for the poor.

4. His inability to understand is further revealed when he believes that I could have said that our unjust society is the result of twenty centuries of Christianity. I wrote clearly that this is the accusation hurled at Christianity by Communists and that if many ceased to be Christians it is because this argument was accepted.

5. Concerning my statement that the Communist tactics exactly correspond to Communism's objective, Mr. Bauman, again understood nothing since he doesn't know the clever tactics and grand strategy of Lenin. In a stupid fashion, he transforms it: "the Communist discourse is contrary to what Communists practice." But discourse is not the same thing as tactics!

6. Mr. Bauman attacks me because I said that Belo's choice is respectable. For myself, *a priori,* I respect the choices of all, but I didn't say that I accepted them. *If Mr.* Bauman knew something about the matter, he would have known that I wrote one of my books in order to prove that Belo's position is wrong, not in conformity to the Gospel. Moreover Belo clearly is ignorant of Marxist doctrine.

7. Mr. Bauman makes numerous misinterpretations like this one: He attacks me violently because I wrote that "Caesar is the creator of money". From his learned ignorance, he said that money existed before the State (I wrote twenty pages on the origins of money in my six volumes! *History of the Institutions).* But I never wrote what Mr. Bauman thinks to have read! I wrote that Caesar makes [i.e. coins] money *(fait les prices de monnaie).* Mr. Bauman ignores the difference between create [i.e., originate) and make [Le., coin]. Besides, very early, as soon as metal ingots were used as money they were indeed marked and usually it was the political power who did it.

8. I could go on enumerating the stupidities and confusions of this article, but I will insist only upon two very important questions. First, it is "evident" for Mr. Bauman that Christianity is a religion. I was thinking that since Kierkegaard and Karl Barth, the distinction and even the opposition between religion (which is a fabrication of man in order to satisfy his religious need) and the Revelation of the God of Abraham and Jesus (which doesn't not correspond to the religious desire of man), was clear and well accepted (at least by 90% of European theologians). Evidently, our theology professor knows nothing of Kierkegaard or Barth! From a sociological standpoint, he assimilates Revelation to religion!

My second point concerns my definition of ideology. The "excellent" Mr. Bauman finds it scandalous and unjustifiable. This entails three remarks. First, he seems to ignore that there exist at least fifty definitions of the ideology. Every author has is own and the one of Adorno is not Belo's or Aron's, or Lukak's, etc.. I proposed a definition after having said that there were many others. My definition corresponds to the one accepted by most French political scholars. I

counsel Mr. Bauman to read, for example, the different articles of the *Encyclopaedia Universalis* concerning ideologies, where he will learn that the matter is not so simplistic as he thinks. What is apparent from his article is his inability to distinguish among Theory, Doctrine and Ideology! For example, he argues that I am mistaken in saying that often an ideology arose to defend a previous *praxis* devoid of ideology. (He doesn't know, for instance, that Capitalism was constituted since the XVI century, without the help of any ideology). I am supposed to be mistaken in saying that the liberal ideology appeared to defend Capitalism against the Socialist ideology. What an error he is uttering! Of course, Smith's *The Wealth of the Nations* was published long before Marx's *Das Kapita* - Bauman's response is absurd because, here, we speak about doctrine. Liberal doctrine appeared before Socialist theory. Socialist ideology, however, appeared since 1815 in order to attack Capitalist structure. This was before any Liberal ideology existed.

9. He accused me of not having cited, in this debate Hayek, Schumpeter, Herme, Say, Bastiat, etc... But I don't understand why I should mention these in a debate about Marxism and Christianity in which they are not relevant. I have not quoted the prominent Marxist classics, either. I wanted to focus on current debate and I quoted only current authors, (with the exception of Proudhon and Bakunin).

10. Finally I maintain:

    a) that although it raised the level of life of populations and produced much more from an economic standpoint, liberal capitalism created a much poorer proletariat than before;

    b) that our affluent nations create an increasing poverty in the third world;

    c) that nineteenth century Christianity played the role of an ideology of justification for the wrongs of Capitalism;

    d) But that Marxism will not resolve any of these problems and that Christians must not ally themselves with the Communists.

This was evident in my book. In short, Mr. Bauman understood nothing I had to say. I pity his theology students if he misunderstands the Biblical text in the same fashion. His misunderstanding reflects a theology of the last century, the preconceived ideas of the Constan-tinian heresy, and a desiccated social conservatism.

Anarchism and Christianity

The Paradox of Anarchism and Christianity

by Jacques Ellul

We express our thanks to Gary Lee and Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. for permission to reprint a brief selection from Jacques Elluls, Jesus *and Maix,* (Eerdmans, 1988), The following are excerpts from the concluding chapter.

Perhaps it seems odd to attempt a reconciliation of anarchism and Christianity, since the idea that they are utterly irreconcilable enemies is so well established. Doesn't anarchism repeatedly cry "no God and no Master"? ..,, Looking at the question from the opposite angle, we see that Christianity clearly not only respects authority, but presupposes that authorities exist Everyone believes Christianity to be a doctrine of order... From both sides, then, the reconciliation of anarchism and Christianity seems excluded... Without a doubt the official Church, transformed into a power, taught the opposite of biblical teaching... Essentially... both the Old and New Testaments take exception to all political power. No power can claim to be legitimate in itself. Political power and organization are necessities in society but only necessities. They attempt repeatedly to take God's place, since magistrates and kings invariably consider themselves the incarnation of authority. We must continually challenge, deny and object to this power. It becomes acceptable only when it remains on a humble level, when it is weak, serves the good _. and genuinely transforms itself into a servant...

Usually, however, this principle is stated the other way: the state is legitimate except when it becomes tyrannical, unjust, violent, etc. In reality, since the state is illegitimate, it should be destroyed, except when it acts as servant of all..., effectively protecting the good...

The only Christian political position consistent with revelation is the negation of power: the radical, total refusal of its existence, a fundamental questioning of it, no matter what form it may take. I repeat this statement not so Christians will turn toward some sort of spiritualism, political ignorance, or apolitical position - certainly not! On the contrary, as Christians we must participate in the political world and the world of action, but in order to deny them, to oppose them by our conscious, well-founded refusal Only this refusal can challenge and occasionally impede the unlimited growth of power. Thus Christians can take their place only beside anarchists; they can never join the Marxists, for whom the state is unacceptable only to the extent that it is bourgeois.

Do Christians contribute anything specific or special to anarchism? ... Anarchists live in an illusion, believing that it is possible actually to abolish power and all its sources... Today we can no longer believe in one of the absolute tenets of anarchist faith: the inevitability of progress... We must not become discouraged, then, if our anarchist declaration fails to lead to an anarchist society... [However] when we shake the edifice, we produce a crack, a gap in the structure, in which a human being can briefly find his freedom, which is always threatened... I can hear the disillusioned anarchist: "Is that all we are doing?" Yes: *all* that; through our refusal, we keep the trap from closing all the way, for today. We can still breathe out in the open. The Christian must enable the anarchist to make the transition from a contemptuous "Is that all?" to an "All that," filled with hope...

I believe this two-edge Christian contribution of realism and hope to be essential for anarchism. Anarchism's need for Christianity shows the possibility of a practical harmony, which could accompany the dear agreement of the two on the theoretical level This possibility contrasts with the fundamental contradiction of Christianity and Marxism, and the extraordinary uselessness of cooperation between them. I must clarify, however, that in this essay I am not trying to find a new concor-dism. I do not mean to imply that anarchist thought expresses the Christian political orientation, nor that Christians should adopt an anarchist orientation. In other words, we must not fall into the same error with anarchism that has been made with respeqt to Marxism!

I have tried to show, contrary to what is usually believed, (1) that no radical contradiction exists between anarchism and the concrete consequences of Christian faith in the sociopolitical area, whereas there is a contradiction between Marxism and the implications of the faith; (2) that anarchism does not imply as Marxism does, the elimination of Christian specificity; (3) finally, that within the context of modem society and our concrete historical situation, the determining and decisive problem is that of the universal power of the state™. Communism has shown itself incapable of responding to this challenge. On the contrary, each time it comes to power, it merely reinforces the state. Refusing a synthesis of Christianity and Marxism does not amount to "preaching submission"... On the contrary it means entering a *different* revolutionary way, another way of questioning that is infinitely more radical and profound.

Eller's Crowning Achievement

by Hu Elz
Within the past year or so... the Federation of French Anarchists commissioned Ellul to write for them a book, *Anarchie et Chris-tianisme* ..„ The book was purposed particularly for partisans of political anarchy, who would not have much knowledge as to how Christianity relates - although it could be just as useful for Christians who have almost no knowledge as to how anarchy might relate to their faith. Ellul is probably

the only person ever, who has been equipped to do as full justice to one side of the equation as the other. He is a top authority either way.

In the book Ellul opens by recounting his personal history regarding the two traditions. His faith as a Christian believer has always been his primal commitment; yet, in his political interests, anarchy has long had a fascination for him... The difficulty is that he has never found a way of getting the two together - natural enemies as the two seem to be.

Traditionally, Christianity and anarchism have shown deep animosity toward each other, with what surely is good reason. Anarchy starts from the premise that all of society's effort to structure itself and regiment the citizenry to an established order - all this works to the detriment rather than the enhancement of true humanity. The anarchical goal, then, is to break up these "orders," that, in the ensuing "disorder," individuals might find the freedom to live as truly human humans.

In response, Christianity has not been particularly keen on the idea, seeing anarchy's "disorder" as nothing but a threat to "the ordering of God" and "the godly ordering of the world" to which it is committed. The antagonism has been as much as absolute. Most anarchists have been atheists. After all, the idea ofa 'Lord* (The Great Orderer in the Sky) is quite antithetical to what they have in mind. Further, they have seen (correctly enough) that the institutional church has always been on the side of tighter and tighter ordering rather than looser and looser. Ellul set himself some problem in trying to make those two speak with a common voice.

Ellul's book testifies as to how long he has been worrying the matter. As the years went by, he found more and more evidence of an anarchical strain within Scripture, but he still didn't see how this could contribute to getting the two traditions together. The breakthrough came then, he says [p. 7], in reading Vemard Eller's book, *Christian Anarchy* (Eerdmans, 1987).

Vemard, of course, is happy to have been of help - though the situation is very much a weird one. The truth is that anything and everything Vemard may know of Christian Anarchy he learned in the first place from none other than Jacques Ellul. The first chapter of Vemard's book (in which he defines the concept and establishes its categories) is based directly upon the thought of Ellul - and particularly upon one of his earlier essays regarding Christianity and anarchism. All Vemard was doing was quoting Ellul back to himself.

Actually, this is a phenomenon that probably happens time and again. When I hear my own thoughts read back to me by another person (in this situation in which I am *hearing* rather *thanspeaking,'*) I can often hear things I was not fully aware of having spoken. But if Ver-nard never did anything except echo Ellul's crucial words back to himself, that is more than enough to constitute a crowning achievement.

Probably there was a bit more involved. Vemard came at the problem from a new angle. Rather than trying simply to combine apparent incompatibles, he came up with a new category - a third category that combined at least something of the earlier two and yet was not identical with anything of either of them. In the new two-word term

"Christian Anarchy" neither of the words means quite what it meant when standing alone. Each word modifies the other in the process of being paired.

"Anarchy"... assumed that, once set free, people would freely discover for themselves the minimal, instinctive ordering that would truly serve their humanity. But... "Human regimentation" never manages to limit itself - always gets out of hand and goes demonic.

So "Christian Anarchy"... [uses] that disorder's freeing us to give ourselves wholly over to the Ordering of God... This new regime would not be heavy-handedly impositionai (as all human regimes have to be). God's regime of love and light, is one that never uses force but uses patience and mercy in winning people into that one Order that is right for them.

So Christians need have no fear of anarchy - if it's Christian Anarchy. And anarchists need have no fear of Christianity - if it's Anarchical Christianity. Ellul can combine his two interests - if it is done by going to a new, third category rather than by trying to meld two old incompatibles.

Vemard's crowning achievement proceeds from that point. Ellul, in his book (pp. 12-13), confesses that, in tracing the strain of Christian Anarchy through church history, he had thought simply of renegade individuals such as Tertullian, Francis of Assisi, and a few others. But here again, Vemard's book taught him something he undoubtedly knew for himself - if he had been thinking.

It's hard to say how accurate an understanding of the 16th century Anabaptists... Ellul has had up to this point; these people still do not get a very good press on the Continent But Ellul is explicit in saying that Vemard is right, that the Anabpatists were not *a-political Christian secessionists"... they were true Christian anarchists.

It's hard to know, too, how much Ellul has heard of the Blum-hardts, the 19th-century German fatber-and-son pastoral team that was so influential with the young Karl Barth. But here again Ellul is explicit in seconding Vemard's motion that the Blumhardts "formulated a strictly anarchistic Christianity."

There is no difficulty at all in determining that Ellul has been up on Kierkegaard since goodness knows when... But apparently Ellul bad never thought of SK in connection with anarchy. However, a nudge from Vemard's book was enough to get Kierkegaard in.

Finally, it is no secret that Ellul, for a long time, has been strongly influenced by the work of Karl Barth. However, there were aspects of Barth's thought that had Ellul convinced that Barth could not be a Christian Anarchist. Yet, regarding Vemard's long chapter on Barth, Ellul now testifies that that demonstration has convinced him: Barth will be of that number when the anarchistic saints come marching in.

Christian Anarchy

by Vernard Eller
University of La Verne, La Verne, California

Recently, while I was teaching a graduate seminar on the subject, a student came up with the terminology that enables me to express the gist of Christian Anarchy in fairly short order. She made a distinction between God's "Plan A" and God's "Plan B." Crucial, then, to any understanding of Christian Anarchy is, first, the seeing of the distinction and then the maintaining of it through every step of ethical reflection.

Tbe ... point is made with ... relevancy in the story of Israel's demand for a monarchal government (1 Samuel 8ft)... The overarching question is: "Are the governing authorities... *of God?*" The answer which, from the biblical standpoint, simply will not do - this is the answer we most often get: namely, "The good moral regimes which we find attractive are *of God* but bad, immoral regimes are *of the devil.*

Rather, to our question, the first and decisive answer must be: "Well, the evidence is clear that none of them is recognized, or plays any part, in God's "Plan A." When Israel chose to go for a human ruler, God made it clear that this was nothing other than a rejection of his "Plan A" and indeed of his very self. His "Plan A" prescribes that he retain all (all) the reins of human government (and, indeed, cosmic government) in his own hands - that he perform the necessary governing of creation on his own, with surrogate orderers being entirely superfluous. "Plan A" intends that the government of all things rest with the one true and competent governor. That God be everything to everyone, as 1 Cor. 15:28 so aptly puts it.

Thus, rightly, the last thing any human government can claim for itself is that it is *of God"* ~ when, obviously, what it actually represents is the rejection of God. This is an absolute judgment that recognizes absolutely no distinction between one claimant and another - whether it be good, bad, or indifferent No, to the extent it claims the authority to govern, to that extent it represents a rejection of God's own governance and a defiance of bis "Plan A" (which does not call for any power-sharing on his part).

It is... only under "Plan B" that governing authorities come into the picture as being willed *of God.* In effect, God says that, if we have rejected bis perfect governing authority of "Plan A," it is downright essential that we have governing authorities of some sort. We will just plain have to make do and put up with the imperfect and sinful authorities of human devising. However, no one ought to think that these belong to God's "Plan A"; they are only tbe poor, poor substitute demanded by "Plan B."

Accordingly, in our biblical account, God helps Israel choose Saul as the most promising "Plan B" king for them... Yet, under "Plan B," while trying to use human governing authorities for as much good as he can get out of them, God also is the one who takes the initiative in unseating Saul and trying David in his place. The entire history of Israel's monarchy is that of governing authorities who aren't good for much but who, I guess, do fulfill God's Plan-B intention of keeping things from going completely to smash.

Now Christians, along with their ethics, are going to have the most ethically difficult time imaginable - living, as they do, suspended between "Plan A" and "Plan B." For themselves... Christians are totally committed to "Plan A." They try to make God so completely Lord of their lives that, for them, no other lords or authorities even exit.

It takes all of their time to praise, love, and obey their Jesus. And when human-sinful governing authorities try to intrude themselves into the Christian's value-structure, they can be seen and treated as nothing other than competitors with and thus enemies of God.

Yet Christian ethics can't be left at this single focus on "Plan A." God himself demands that we go dialectical by reminding us that he, also, is the author of "Plan B"; it too is part of his will for humanity. It is true that those governing authorities are enemies of God; yet, just as truly, they represent the government God's wayward children simply must have if they are to survive long enough for him to get them back into salvation. These do, in a strange sense, represent the government of God.

So, if Christians love this wayward world as God loves it, they will have to be willing to involve themselves even in the makeshift ungodlinesses of "Plan B."

In Christ, Christians have been given the freedom to participate helpfully in "Plan B." However, we have blown that opportunity completely when we join "Plan B," treat the governing authorities as though they were now agents of God's saving work, play it as though "Plan A" has been superseded by "Plan B."

What we call "Christian Anarchy," then, is simply this very tricky business of retaining our Plan-A opinion of the governing authorities as rebellious enemies of God - retaining this opinion (as God himself does) even while using these same authorities (as God himself does) for the Plan-B survival of the race.

Translators Needed

Occasionally the *Forum* will be publishing articles submitted in foreign languages. We need volunteers who are capable and willing to provide translations. Usually the articles will be four or five double spaced typed pages. The maximum size is ten double spaced pages. If you are willing to contribute your services in this way it will help to keep the cost of subscriptions down and will be greatly appreciated by your colleagues. We are especially grateful to Joyce Hanks, of Scranton University, and Michel Machado, of the University of South Florida, for their translations of Ellul's essays for this issue. If you can help us out please contact the Editor.

Advisory Board Appointed

As the *Ellul Studies Forum* enters its second year of publication, we are pleased to announce the formation of an Editorial Advisory Board. The editor shall depend on them for advice as to themes and topics for the *Forum* and for occasional editorial comment. The members of the advisory board are as follows:

Dan Clendenin, *William Tyndale College*
Cliff Christians, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*
David Gill, *New College Berkeley*
Joyce Hanks, *University of Scranton*
Carl Mitcham, *Polytechnic University*
Gabriel Vahanian, *University of Strasbourg*

Book Reviews

Jacques Ellul, Anarchic et Christianisme

Atelier de Creation Libertaire, Lyon, France, 1988,123 pp. Vernard Eller, Christian Anarchy, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mi. USA, 1987, 267 pp.

Reviewed by Katharine Temple

Anarchism, that underrated and submerged critique of modem society, has been a longstanding, if not always overt theme in the writings of Jacques Ellul. It goes back at least as far as his time with Emmanuel Mounier and *Esprit* in the 1930s, and his most explicit formulation came in *Autopsy of Revolution,* a classic of anarchist thought Put succinctly, that school (which is a critique of both Capitalism and Marxism from within Socialism) points to the increasing power of the state as the focal point for social analysis.

Theologically, M. Ellul's anarchism points to the same power of the state as a false god or a locus for the incarnation of the principalities and powers - a motif in *Apocalypse.* How he brings together his two types of writing has long been a question, and he has always insisted that they stand in a dialectical rather than a systematic relationship. On the subject of anarchism, he has shown what he means, biographically, in *In Season, Out of Season* and, analytically, in the last chapter of *Jesus and Mane* and now *inAnarchie et Christianisme.*

Although nothing substantially new appears in this slim volume (apart from reflections on 1 Peter), various strands from previous works are pulled together and that alone makes it worthwhile. Here and there some irritants surface, such as some comments about liberation theology or Islam without the more complete arguments he has given elsewhere, or certain statements about the prevalence of socialism that is not self-evident in English-speaking countries. These, however, are relatively few and far between (albeit on-going) points. Overall, it is a treat to encounter his grasp of the anarchist tradition, his fluency with the Bible and Church history, and his emphasis on Christian realism.

InAnarchie et Christianisme, M. Ellul commends Vemard Eller's book, and also I had read some articles on his own [Eller's] and M. Ellul's theological roots, which are as little known and as much shunted aside as anarchism is in social thought. As a result, I was looking forward to *Christian Anarchy,* especially as Mr. Eller writes from this country where, to put it mildly, anarchism has never really "taken." In any case, maybe I looked forward too much and expected too much.

Let me say, first of all, that I was not disappointed in the story of his theological sources - -the radical Reformation, Kierkegaard, the Blumhardts, Karl Barth, Jacques Ellul - -although his explanations seem marred by the tone that hints broadly that really nobody else has had such thoughts as his. How could he not mention William Stringfellow whodid so much to make Karl Barth and Jacques Ellul known here, or Dorothy Day who introduced anarchism through the pages of *The Catholic Worker!* Nor do I disagree about the need for hard questions to be put to the Christian left or peace movements, although, again, other voices have also spoken. Why, for instance, no account of Stanley Hauerwas or John Howard Yoder? And, finally, the matter of whether he is a-political or not (a charge he seems to relish) seems, by and large, beside the point

My disappointments lie elsewhere. Unfortunately, throughout the book, Mr. Eller falls into generalizations and simplifications that start to sound like a parody of some of the complaints made about M. Ellul.

This imprecision is most marked in the title theme of anarchism, which does have a coherent meaning, content and history, no matter how unsystematic these may be. Mr. Eller makes a point of saying (p. 4) that he knows nothing about anarchist writers, nor does he know much about Marxist analysis apart from impressions (p. 60) either. And so the stage isset to waver between "re-inventing the wheel" or a Humpty-Dumpty sense that "a word means exactly what I say it does, neither more nor less." In either mode, the result is not conducive to realism about what is going on, to which we are called to respond. Furthermore, his historical references are, at best, uneven.* The history of biblical exegesis and theological understanding is long and complex; it does no service to dismiss whole traditions, century after century, with a patronizing wave of the band. Indeed, we need iconoclasts to expose errors and shibboleths, but such a vocation requires more, not less insight and detailed knowledge than has prevailed.

Beyond these points, my major disappointment lies in his picture of responses being made by Christians today. My criticism may sound harsh, particularly as "the movement" can often drive me to distraction almost as much as it seems to annoy Mr. Eller. Still, I think we must avoid the temptation to judge anything anybody is doing with broad, unnuanced strokes and at its worst The critique is necessary, but how is it to be made? We must remember that caricature is not constructive, fraternal criticism, while sarcasm means "a tearing away at the flesh." In the interests of clarity and charity, we are not allowed to indulge in such approaches.

Take but one example, tax resistance is one of his main targets. In these sections, I found myself wondering "Whom is he talking about?" There are not all that many tax resisters around, but some do exist and they have seriousness and an awareness about the bonds among taxes, war and materialism — a recognition and thoughtfulness that come close to M. Ellul's discussion but that could not be guessed at from Mr. Eller. He does not bother to address the diverse philosophical biases and approaches among those who do so choose. Some are anarchist, most are not; some are believers, many are not; almost all focus on war taxes. None of these distinctions enters the book,

and he completely ignores the form of tax resistance most consistent with anarchism, voluntary poverty (in keeping with Peter Maurin's - the co-founder of The Catholic Worker - dictum: "The less you have of Caesar's, the less you have to tender unto him"). Such failures from an author who wishes to shed light on the topic only further the division and shallowness, only give scandal rather than edify.

In the end, it comes down to the requirement of realism. The lacks in social analysis and dialectics (the very thinking that lies at the heart of M. Ellul's account of anarchism) combine to undo the contributions Vemard Eller could have made in *Christian Anarchy*.

☒*Examples of this unevenness come in his search for Biblical interpretations. On the one hand, his discussion of Philemon, for example, is enlightening, while his treatment of the Temple and synagogue in Jewish tradition, as another example, should have been edited out as an affront*

Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology, by Jacques Ellul

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988, 187 pp., 12.95.
by Daniel B. Clendenin
William Tyndale College, Farmington Hills, Ml
At age eighteen Ellul borrowed a copy of Marx's *Das Kapital* from the library and, upon reading it, experienced a conversion to a global interpretation of the world. About the same time he also underwent what he describes as a "brutal conversion" to Jesus Christ Unable to eliminate either totalitarian truth, and unable to merge them into a synthesis, for the past sixty years Ellul has sought to hold them in "radical contradiction" (p. 63), by which he means a critical and mutual dialectical tension such as characterizes all of his thought In *Jesus and Marx* he offers a withering critique of the fashionable tendency which merges the two and declares that the only authentic Christian *praxis* is that which commits itself to Marxism. Understanding Ellul, though, demands an effort to enter into his dialectical mode of thinking which holds the two in critical tension. Readers must beware of making two errors.

First, despite this scathing critique, Ellul does not throw out the baby with the bath water. Marxist thought has challenged Christianity in a number of positive ways (pp.5-10). It focuses attention on the need for social justice (which is not to say it brings justice!). It recognizes the role of the poor in the historical process and enters their world (even if not for good). Marxists attain a "coherence between thought and action, theory and *praxis,*" which shames the church's disparity between word and deed. By focusing on the material factors of history, Marxists challenge the evangelical tendency toward a disembodied spiritualization of Christianity which is little more than a privatized experience. Finally, the zeal and militant spirit of Marxists challenge

the church to become what we should be. Indeed, they take seriously the last of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach'*, the goal is not to interpret the world but to change it.

But readers must avoid the opposite mistake of reading Ellul as soft on Marxist Christians. His critique is at two levels. First, there is Marx himself. Marx could never answer existential questions of life, love and death; his view of people as merely economic beings *(homo economicus)* is reductionistic; and his belief in the inevitable progress of history is naive. Thus, Marx is not scientific but passionate (and that is why Ellul likes him). Most of *Jesus and Marx,* though, occurs at a second level and is directed to those Christians who claim to follow Marx. According to Ellul, their words and deeds show they are neither Marxist nor Christian. In chapters 2-6 Ellul levels an excoriating attack on such people, with special attention paid to Fernando Belo's *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (Orbis, 1981) and G. Casalis's *Correct Ideas Don't Fall from the Skies: Elements for an Inductive Theology* (Orbis, 1984). We can summarize five salient points made by Ellul.

First, Marxist Christians display an alarming degree of conformity to sociological trends. Thinking to be "progressive" in their positions, they are really just the opposite: eager-beaver Johnny-come-latelies who "conform culturally and intellectually to the rest of society" (p. 21). This guts Christianity of all content. Thus we witness an incredible sociological phenomenon: Christians who have every reason to oppose Communists and almost no reason to join them continue, like moths to a flame, to find it an irresistible attraction (p. 34).

Second, liberation theologians must ask the question: liberation for whose benefit? The so-called wars of liberation from capitalism and imperialism have resulted in worse dictators, more outrageous oppression and shameless brutality, more prisons, greater economic disparity, than any ever perpetuated by the West (p. 58). Given the fact that Communism "has never incarnated itself in anything but dictatorships," a Christian "would have to be crazy" to join them (p. 137). Third, where is the *praxis* of most of these theologians? Except for a small minority, most of these liberationists are bourgeois professors whose only *praxis* "consists of giving lectures, writing articles, traveling to congresses or colloquia, attending demonstrations, signing petitions and manifestos, and organizing seminars" (p. 128).

Fourth, when Marxist Christians accuse others of a blind reading of the Biblical text and claim to offer the first truly objective and "scientific" exegesis, they reveal their own pre-understandings. They fail to apply the myth of hermeneutical objectivity to themselves. In fact, this theology which claims to be inductive and based on the priority *of praxis* is in reality just another deductive theology with its own uncritically accepted assumptions. Finally, Ellul takes to task "service theology" which contends that meeting human need alone on the horizontal level is all that counts. Considering Matthew 9:2-13 as a case study, he shows how just the opposite is true: the vertical relationship of confession and worship must come first

Jesus and Marx is ultimately rooted in a broader Ellul theme: that the Gospel revelation is fundamentally iconoclastic and inimicable to all power, and especially

political power (which is the worst kind). Thus, the book ends with a chapter on anarchy, "the only acceptable stance in the modem world" (p. 156n). By anarchy Ellul does not mean social chaos. "All my position means is that the present center of conflict is the state, so that we must adopt a radical position with respect to this unfeeling monster" (ibid.).

Bibliographic Notes on Theology and Technology

Bibliographic Report on Some Recent British Discussions Regarding Christianity and Technology

by Carl Mitcham

In early November 1988 I bad occasion to visit in Chalfont-St-Giles, England, with Peter Davies and bis family and to be introduced to a number of discussions among Christian engineers regarding the problems of technology. Davies, after working for seven years as an engineer with Jaguar Ltd., took a leave to earn an M.Sc. in Industrial Robotics and Manufacturing Automation, with the intention of returning to industry. But in the process he became concerned about the use of technology in society and now, as a Ph.D. candidate in management at Brunel University is writing a dissertation on the philosophy of technology.

Science and Faith Newsletter

When asked whether there was any group of persons like himself, technical professionals concerned about the relation between engineering and ethics, Davies first introduced me to the *Research Scientists Christian Fellowship,* the aim of which is "to influence the whole climate of thought about science and Christian faith so that it becomes generally known that there is no conflict but that rather the two can work in harmony" (from a descriptive pamphlet). Interestingly enough, however, a significant number of the contributions to the RSCF newsletter, *Science and Faith* (published once or twice a year), in effect point up thexxistence of real conflicts.

For instance, in Newsletter No. 5 (1985), reporting on the 1985 American Scientific Affiliation/RSCF conference at Oxford, Donald MacKay notes how different speakers identified challenges to Christians in the new sciences of the person (biomedicine, psychopathology, etc.), artificial intelligence, tensions between serving and manipulating, and the need for numerous conceptual clarifications (pp. 10 ff).

In Newsletter No. 6 (June 1986) D. Gareth Jones conducts "An Odyssey through the New Reproductive Technologies" *(in vitro* fertilization, artificial insemination, and surrogate motherhood) and again finds numerous conflicts with Christian ethical principles (pp. 24-49).

Newsletter No. 7 (December 1986) contains a critique of the animal rights movement by David Williams (pp. 11-31) arguing that although animals dcuiot have rights human beings (particularly Christians) have duties and responsibilities toward animals. There is also a report on an RSCF conference on "The Ethics of Animal Use" (pp. 3-10).

By contrast, Newsletter No. 8 (August 1987) is devoted primarily to Donald MacKay's enthusiastic outline of "Christian Priorities in Science" (pp. 10-26). For MacKay, science grows out of Christian belief in an ordered creation and love for humanity, and when true to itself in both theory and practice is essentially Christian. MacKay even criticizes "such a champion of biblical Christianity as C.S. Lewis, who justified bis anti-technological bias by identifying human dominion over nature with hubris," for being too much influenced by Greco-medieval and Stoic ideals of "conforming the soul to reality" (p. 16), and defends as Christian the technological goal of "fashioning the future" (pp. 18 ff).

Newsletter No. 9 (May 1988) announces that RSCF is changing its name to *Christians in Science* and that the *Science and Faith* Newsletter will be joined with *Faith and Thought* (of The Victoria Institute) to form a new and more ambitious journal called *Science and Christian Belief.*

Engineers Group Newsletter

A second newsletter, more immediately devoted to technology, is that of what is called the *Engineers Group.* Here the consideration of tensions with Christian thought and practice are much more pronounced.

For example, the Winter 1984 contents includes: John Davis' "Engineering for God or Mammon?" (pp. 2-6), Kathy Carter's "God and the Computer" (pp. 7-8), John Phillips' "Computers in Practice" (pp. 9-14), and a letter from Tom Hutt on "Engineering and the Task of Developing the Christian Mind" (pp. 17-19). As the editor notes in a forward, "each comes to a similar conclusion" that "we must... avoid setting up Hi-Tech as our idol" (p. 1). But each article also in effect points out that this is exactly what technology tends to do.

The Summer 1985 *Engineers Group* Newsletter contains an article by TMan Jiggins (until recently principal lecturer in Applied Nuclear Physics at the Polytechnic of the South Bank, London) pointing out the ways in which technology destroys community. "Power corrupts," he writes, "and computer power has a peculiar corruptibility" (p. 7). "We live in a progressively artificial world and to an increasing degree our expectations are being moulded by technological values" (p. 9). By contrast, Martin Wood defends the connection of "Computers and Christianity." In the same issue Nigel Rooms comments on Davis' article from Winter 1984 and Richard Franceys writes on problems of "Engineering for Development" while Michael Ducken-field calls for the formation of a Christian working party to apply a Christian ethics to technology.

The Winter 1985-1986 Newsletter contains Paul Marshall's "Is Technology Out of Control?" (pp. 6-12, arguing that although it can be perverted by sin, technology

is necessary for the exercise of Christian stewardship), Gary Colwell's "Technology and False Hope: A Christian Look at the False Assumptions Behind Technology's Optimism" (pp. 13-22), an address to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in 1984. Indicative of the close association of the Engineers Group and the RSCF, this issue includes Gordon Clarke's "The Machine Starts," a counterpoint to E.M. Forster's "The Machine Stops," which also appears in *Science and Faith* (December 1986).

The major piece in the Autumn 1986 issue is David W. Aycock's "Christian Objections to High Technology: Analyzing the Resistances" (pp. 30-54). According to Aycock of the University Counseling Center at Taylor University in Indiana, USA Christians must work to overcome psychological factors that are sources of negativity and keep them from contributing more effectively to the rational assessment of technology in the light of scriptural principles.

The *Engineers Group* Newsletter for Autumn 1987 contains a statement of the "Aims and Objects of the Engineers Group" as part of the *Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship* (UCCF). These are:

"To develop a creative Christian perspective upon engineering and technology

"To help one another maintain a consistently Christian stance throughout our work as engineers

"To foster a constructive Christian influence in engineering

..., [and]

"To provide support and encouragement for missionary engineers and students..(p. 4).

This issue also reprints MacKay's "Christian Priorities in Science" from *Science and Faith* (1987) and includes Mark Williams' "Education for Balanced Attitudes towards Computer Technology" (pp. 35-41).

In the Summer 1988 Newsletter Michael J. Duckenfield asks "Is Maximum Efficiency Always Best?" (pp. 7-10) while John T. Houghton, FRS, Director General of the Meteorological Office, reviews Christian attitudes toward technological progress. According to Houghton, the Christian should lobby government to direct technical change toward worthwhile ends, make sure all facts are considered when making decisions, send "technical missionaries" to developing countries, make better use of new communications technologies to spread the Gospel, make better use of leisure, and "in emphasizing the importance of spiritual as opposed to material values,... demonstrate a positive approach to technological progress and material advances, rather than a withdrawal from their possibilities" (p. 19).

Tensions

On balance both these publications - both of which regularly contain letters and short reviews - exhibit a persistent tension between seeing science and technology as realms of Christian fulfillment and sources of Christian struggle. All but a few of the most positive articles identify problems; and most of those that stress problems also

admit to some truly Christian achievements and promises. Jacques Ellul, for instance, is probably equally praised (as insightful and prophetic) and blamed (as pessimistic and lacking in faith or real understanding of science and technology) for his criticisms of technology.

What is most evident in these publications isa consistent attempt by practicing Christians who are also scientists and engineers to relate their faith and their work. Standing back a bit from the particular difficulties discussed, one cannot help but sense that the persistence of difficulties in itself may be a sign of the times.

Readers are invited to contribute to this ongoing bibliographic column. Please send books or articles to be noted, or notes themselves, to:
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The Deadline for the Next Issue is October 1, 1989. A major theme for the next issue will be Judaism & Christianity in a Technological Civilization.

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Issue #4 Nov 1989 — Judaism and Christianity after Auschwitz and Hiroshima

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A Forum For Scholarship on Theology in a Technological Civilisation

In This Issue

From the Editor

by Darrell J. Fasching

Welcome to issue # 4 of the *Forum.* Let me open by reminding everyone that *The Ellul Studies Forum* subscribers and other interested scholars will be meeting at the AAR Conference in California on November 18th. See the anouncement on page nine for details.

Although putting the *Forum* together is always a labor of love for me, I confess that this particular issue has been something of a distraction since I am currently on sabbatical, writing a book. The working title of the manuscript is *Apocalypse or Utopia? Ethics After Auschwitz and Hiroshima.* I have been able to put this issue together without breaking my train of thought, so to speak, by focusing the *Forum* on the same theme. In effect, I am using the *Forum* as a sounding board for this topic, which is not inappropriate to its intended purpose.

Therefore, in this issue you will find two *Forum* essays focusing on the need for Christian theology to rethink the relation between Christianity and Judaism in a technological civilization. The first is my essay, *After Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Judaism and Christianity in a Technological Civilization,* which explores the impact of Auschwitz and Hiroshima on Jewish and Christian theology and ethics. In the second

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essay, Katharine Tomple attempts to undo some of the stereotypes about Judaism and the law in Christian theology .This essay is reprinted from *The Catholic Worker* where it appeared in a less polemical form as part of a larger essay written for the feast of Epiphany.

We also have reviews of three of Ellul's books, two of which have not yet appeared in English translation. These are *Un Chretien pour Israel* reviewed by myself and *Le bluff technologique* reviewed by Gabriel Vahanian. The third book is *What I Believe* reviewed by Daniel Lewis.

In the *Forum Response* section we have an essay by Vemard Eller responding to Katharine Tomple's critical review of his work. Also in this section you will find a response from Michael Bauman to Jacques Ellul's response to Bauman's critique of Ellul's book *Jesus and Marx.* Among other things, Bauman takes exception to Ellul's definition of "ideology." Bauman clears this issue up more by example than by counter-definition, for Mr. Bauman tells us that he is a "politically conservative, free-market Christian" who holds that "Christian values are capitalist values." That, I venture to say, is a mistake Ellul does not make with regard to either Capitalism or Marxism. Whatever definition of ideology one chooses, it should be axiomatic that Christian faith ought to be in the world but not of it. Mr. Bauman appears to be quite comfortable citing George Gilder to answer the question - "What does it profit a man to gain the world and lose his soul?" The answer, I gather, is quite a bit, and most of it is probably in tax shelters. No doubt Mr. Bauman's preoccupation with showing that justice does not entail equality, follows from this - for if it does Capitalism is definitely in trouble when it comes to the distribution of wealth.

Moving on, thanks to Carl Mitcham and Jim Grote we again have a bibliography of new materials relevant to our interest in theology ina technological civilization.

Finally, I visited Jacques Ellul in Bordeaux in July. I bad thought that I might publish my interview with him in this issue but it didn't turn out that way for two reasons. First, we only had an hour for the formal interview and I found myself using much of it to explore issues that were of more personal rather than public interest Second, even though some of the interview would be of general interest, I have been working against the clock to finish my book and simply have not had the time to transcribe and edit the interview.

There was however, for me, one especially surprising development in my encounter with ElluL Practically the first thing Ellul said to me when we were first introduced was that he thought Gabriel Albanian was the most important theologian writing in France today. Since I did my dissertation on Ellul under Wianian, I was naturally most pleased to hear this. Nevertheless, I thought perhaps he was just being polite. But then at the conclusion of the major address which Ellul gave to the Society for the Philosophy of Technology conference on Democracy and Technology, after a somewhat pessimistic (as usual) assessment of prospects for the future he concluded by saying that the only hope for the future lay in the direction of "Utopianism" in the sense that [n]my good friend Gabriel Vihanian uses that term." Given that Ellul has consistently

spoken disparagingly of "utopianism," this came as a considerable surprise. Since my own book on Ellul was an attempt to reconcile Ellul's apocalypticism with Xbhanian's utopianism as reflected in his book *God and Utopia: The Church in a Technological Civilization,* I found this especially gratifying. When I asked him about this "change" after the speech, he said that for a long time he resisted Vhhanian's utopian approach, but gradually he became convinced by it.

All of this is by way of introducing the focus for the next issue. A new book by Wianian has just been published in France, *Dieu anonyme, oulapeur des mots [GodAnonymous, or words not meant to be feared]* (Descl6e de Brouwer, Paris, 1989). Vfehanian has agreed to furnish an essay based on this book for the June issue of the *Forum.* He has sent me the following paragraph summarizing the book's theme:

> In the biblical tradition, faith consists in changing the world rather than changing worlds. From the Garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem its outlook is thoroughly utopian and therefore in order for the world to become the theater of God's glory it must be hallowed. But "hallowing"... must not be confused with any tendency to "sacralize" past achievements through which God is located here or there. Being neither this or that, God is word. God is language, even that language of which the human is an instrument. True, this verbal character of the human reality is best underlined by technology, but only because the human is the instrument of technology and not the other way around. The human is accordingly the condition of God, so human that God needs no other name than any name through which the human in Christ, the human itself, comes into its own. Not that the human is now the measure of all things. In the biblical tradition, not even God is the measure of all things. For there is no other measure of all things but the Christ in whom God, being a God who speaks ... being a God who is all in all, is God anonymous.

Book Reviews

Un Chretien pour Israel, by Jacques Ellul

Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 1986,243 pp.

Reviewed by Darrell J. Fasching

This book reveals a side of Jacques Ellul that may come as a surprise to some. Most of us are familiar with Ellul the sociologist of technical civilization, Ellul the exegete of scripture, Ellul the theologian and ethicist of freedom. But in *Un Chretien pour Israel we* now discover Ellul the champion of Judaism and defender of the state of Israel against all anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

Although Ellul typically argues that only Christians can introduce freedom into a technical civilization, he clearly makes one exception to this rule. The one other community of hope and freedom is Judaism. Thus one might have guessed that Judaism has a special place in his theological thinking. For those who have read his earlier books *Hope in Time of Abandonment* and *Prayer and Modem Man* this will not come as a complete surprise (see the forum essay for this month). And careful attention to his Biblical commentary, *Apocalypse: The Book, of Revelation* might also have prepared one for this book. But even so I was still quite surprised and most delighted with the depth of his commitment.

The book begins with a personal preface and then proceeds to a discussion of the place of the Jewish people in Christian faith, scriptures, and theology - dealing forthrightly with the history of Christian anti-Judaism. This prepares the way for addressing anti-Jewish trends in our time and the link between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. An analysis of anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist propaganda in contemporary news media coverage follows. The book then concludes with a historical and political analysis of the Middle East situation with special attention to the PLO - Israeli conflict, the emergence of an anti-Semitic bias in UN declarations, and finally a vigorous defense of Israeli political policies in relation to the Palestinians.

In the Preface, Ellul reveals some of the biographical details of how he has come to the position he holds in this book. He goes to lengths to show that his position is based not in any personal factors, such as personal friendships or family influences. Rather, his commitment to Judaism grows out his scriptural and theological understanding that being a Christian requires a relation to the Jewish people. Thus we find that he was largely indifferent toward Israel until 1948 when he read an essay by M. Visscher exegeting chapters 9-11 of Paul's letter to the Romans. "In my own spiritual life,"

he says "chapters 8 and 12 had played an important role, but I had never seen the importance of the teachings of Paul on the Jewish people (13)." This essay was decisive in his development of a commitment to the Jewish people. Thus he insists that he does not defend Israel out of a bad conscience for Christian persecutions of Jews, nor because of the Holocaust (even though he insists Christians must, of course, come to grips with these) nor out of any admiration for Israel's prowess in rebuilding the land of Israel. His defense of Israel comes rather as "a direct expression of the faith which I have in Jesus Christ and as a result of a series of political reflections (16)."

Ellul acknowledges that the New Testament has been the cause of anti-Judaism in Christian history, especially in placing blame for the death of Jesus on the Jews and for promoting a teaching of supersession - that gentile Christians replace the Jews as God's chosen people. But he argues that such a use of the New Testament scriptures is contrary to the theological meaning of the Gospel, which insists that the cause of Christ's death was "our sins." Moreover the negative teachings of contempt in Christianity are based on pulling passages out of context and applying them to the whole of Judaism, and as a result creating a false theology of the rejection of the Jews. But there is only one place in the whole of the New Tostament in which the relationship of Jews to Christians is explicitly addressed as a theological issue, and that is in Paul's letter to the Romans. Everything else in the New Testament thus must be brought into reconciliation with it. Paul provides the norm and standard of theological truth in this area. And Paul's teaching is emphatic: the Jews are not rejected by God. Christians do not replace the Jews as God's elect, but rather are a wild olive branch grafted on to the holy root of Israel. In Ellul's view, Jews and Christians are the two covenant peoples who stand in a dialectical historical relationship to each other as God's faithful witnesses in history. The "Mystery" revealed in Paul is that "through Israel the election and salvation of the whole of humanity will finally be attained" (29) and thus "Israel must always be at the center of Christian theology"(33). Israel testifies to the faithfulness of God and the Church to the universality of the love of God. The problem, as Ellul sees it, was that this theology of Paul's was buried under a tradition of anti-Judaism in the Church fathers, beginning with Origen, so that Paul was selectively read and re-interpreted to conform to the myth of supersession.

As Ellul moves on to the contemporary implications of anti-Judaism, he develops the theme that contemporary anti-Zionism is fundamentally disguised anti-Judaism. Nor does he accept the specious argument that the Arabs can't be anti-Semitic since they are themselves Semites, arguing that Hitler's anti-Semitism (a racial prejudice) was in reality only disguised anti-Judaism (a religious prejudice), noting that Hitler had cordial relations with Palestinian Arabs, which seemed to cause him no problems at all.

One of Ellul's most provocative arguments is that the Palestinian people, as a political and "ethnic" reality, is the creation of propaganda. They had no special "Palestinian" ethnic identity prior to the formation of the state of Israel (157). They were simply Arabs living in the territory. "The Palestinians have never constituted a nation nor an

organized people. They have never been a state" (108). It is only in the last twenty years that "the Palestinian people" have been created through political conflict and propaganda.

In the contemporary situation the media tend to portray the Palestinians as a persecuted minority who have a right to use violence while Israel is portrayed as the oppressive majority whose every act which uses force is condemned, ignoring the fact that the Palestinians are part of an Arab majority which both surrounds Israel from without and threatens her from within at the same time. Israel is accused of exploiting the bad conscience of the West, but nothing is said about the pro-Palestinian exploitation of the bad conscience of the West for its "colonialist crimes."

The most vicious propaganda tactic is to tum the Holocaust back upon the Jews by accusing them being the new Nazis and the Palestinians the new "Jews" or "persecuted people." The analogy is so inexact as to be blasphemous. There are no smoke stacks in Israel, there is no mass genocide. The identity cards and internment camps are no more than many other nations enact to protect their own security. The treatment of Palestinians is no different than the treatment Jews are accorded in many other countries (e.g., USSR, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt,etc.) and yet the media find only the Palestinian situation an outrage. Moreover, few countries are as vulnerable to sudden attack as Israel and fewer still could be annihilated by such an attack.(Ellul calculates that the countiy could be divided by a decisive military attack in less than half an hour.) If other nations lose a war they have the luxury of regrouping their resources and going on. If Israel succumbs to attack there will be no second chance.

The outcome of this propaganda and the political situation it creates, Ellul argues, is to create a new pre-pogrom climate which will be used to "justify" a new attempt at a "final solution."

Ellul goes on to discuss the Palestinian charter, which like Hitler's Afein Khmgf promises the annihilation of the Jewish people and of the growing influence of anti Judaism in UN declarations and policy. On the Palestinian charter, he observes that it has never been revoked. He totally distrusts contemporary Palestinian claims to have revoked this commitment to the destruction of Israel, noting that until they change the charter by the same formal process in which it was first created such claims are nothing but lies and propaganda.

Ellul finally concludes the book with a discussion of Israel as a nation which is not "an exemplary" State, acknowledging that real abuses of power occur. But he nevertheless insists that Israel is a "unique state" showing greater conscience, morality and respect for its promises than have the nations which stand as its accusers. Ellul finishes on a discouraging note, saying that he can see no solution to the situation in the Middle East even as he warns that world peace for the future hangs in the balance there. Yet what is impossible for human beings may yet be possible for God. The task of Christians is to hope and pray and act as Christians "for Israel."

This book is rich in detail far beyond anything I can communicate in this review. Theologically I can find no fault with it at all. Historically, I do not have sufficient

command of the depth and breadth of the facts of 20th century Middle Eastern history and politics so as to be able to disagree with it. At the very least it ought to be on the mandatory reading list of every Christian as a healthy antidote to the anti-Judaic and anti-Zionist propaganda we are deluged with and taken in by, all too often. (For this reason, I was very disappointed to learn that *Eerdmans* has decided not to publish an English translation. However, they have passed it on to *Helmers and Howard,* where Donald Simpson confirms that they are considering it for publication, so there is still hope.) Theologically, Ellul is surely right to insist that it is the special responsibility of Christians to be making the case "for Israel."

Daniel J. Lewis's Review of *'What I Believe'*

'What I Believe' by Jacques Ellul

Translated by G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989; London: Marshal Morgan and Scott, 1989), 223 pp., $19.95, cloth.

Reviewed by Daniel J. Lewis, *William Tyndale College*

Most books with the title "What I Believe" might be discounted out of hand. In this case, however, the fact that the book was written by Jacques Ellul makes the title intriguing rather than banal. The highest interest, of course, will be those who have already been exposed to Ellul's writings.

There is a careful distinction which the reader must observe between faith and belief, a distinction which Ellul makes in the "introduction" and which must not be passed over. Belief, at least in the way Ellul uses it, is the affirmation of what he thinks about things, not so much on a doctrinal level but in terms of a world view. The book is not creedal, and it is not a theology, though as is usual in Ellul's works, theology influences his treatment of the subject matter. Neither is it a philosophical prolegomena, though despite Ellul's aversion to it, philosophy also impinges on the subject matter. Rather, the work is more on the order of an assessment and a conclusion about the way in which human life and society exists, how people make decisions, how the human race explores its potential - and most important - what are the far reaching implications of all this.

Ellul addresses his world view in three major sections. The first is a collage of various beliefs about reality, including the meaning of life, the relationship between chance, necessity, and accident, the nature of communicable truth, the importance of dialectic, the human desire for harmony as a lost ideal in need of restoration, the problem of evil, and the human need for life-long love which arises out of freedom. As is characteristic of his other works, there is a strong ethical bent throughout He himself says, "I have devoted my whole life to making people more aware, more free, more capable of judging themselves, of getting out of the crowd, of choosing, and at the same time of avoiding wickedness and imbecility. My books have never had any other goal" (p. 64).

Special comment is in order with regard to his discussion of the dialectical method. In fact, for anyone not familiar with Ellul's works (and possibly even for those who are), it would be appropriate to read the chapter on dialectic immediately following the introduction. Ellul frequently resorts to explaining his beliefs by the negation of what he does not believe. His method is not unlike that of the sage in the Upanishads who, when pressed for a definition of God, says, "neti, neti," i.e., "not this, not that."

The second major section explores a philosophy of history. Since Ellul's speciality is sociology and history, this portion is particularly insightful. Ellul explains human history under the rubric of three stages or environments, the environment of nature, which be calls the original or prehistoric environment, the environment of the social group, labeled the historical period, and the environment of technology, the post-historic era into which human society is now plunging. Each new environment appears, not by eliminating the previous one, but by superimposition, thus modifying and reducing it to a substratum.

The final major section addresses theism and what Ellul perceives to be metaphysical reality. While it is not so easy to pigeonhole Ellul into a definite theological category, it can at least be said that he certainly is neither a deist, gnostic, process theologian, apologist, nor fatalist. He is more similar, at least in dialectical method, to Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and the Niebuhr brothers. In this final section, he addresses the spiritual potential inherent in a freedom of history, and he does so through the theological lens of God's rest on the seventh day. This rest, which has already been inaugurated, still awaits its consummation in which all the tensions of history and human life will be resolved by a foil reconciliation with God. Reconciliation with God is unilateral, and the divine rest, which will be consummated in a total way at the conclusion of history, becomes the foundation of Ellul's universalism. In his closing comments, he suggests that human freedom to cooperate with God will result in the divine recognition and acceptance of human work, and as he says in his closing line,"... to the utmost of my power it has been the meaning and motivation of all that I do."

It is difficult to be critical of a world view, except to express agreement or disagreement. A world view is not some matter of fact or research, but a perspective and a value judgment on life and reality. At the same time, it may be said from the viewpoint of this reviewer that the most stimulating and perceptive area of the book is Ellul's forcefol and convincing analysis of the technological environment, not as an entity to which a minor adjustment can be made, but as a total framework which assimilates all else in human society.

Forum

After Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Judaism and Christianity in a Technological Civilization

by Darrell J. Fasching

Judaism, Christianity and technological civilization - what possible link ties these three together, other than sheer contemporaneity? The answer, at least my answer, begins by tracing the path to Auschwitz and beyond.

From Anti-Judaism to Anti-Semitism and Auschwitz

That the Holocaust or Shoah (i.e., time of desolation) could occur in our "modem" world is a judgment on ail the institutions and resources of Western civilization, but it is an especially devastating judgment on the one ethical community, above all, which should have come to the defense of the Jews, namely, the Christian church. The cause of that failure has deep roots in Christian history and theology.

In the year 380 C.E., under Theodosius, the first Christian emperor of the Roman empire (Constantine was not baptized until his death bed), Christianity was declared the only legal religion of the empire. From this time forward no aliens or strangers were allowed within Christendom. Human dignity was granted to those who were die *same* and denied to those who were *different. At* this time all pagan traditions were suppressed and forbidden and Judaism came under severe legal restrictions. Within that same decade an ominous event occurred which was to set the pattern for the next two millennia of Jewish-Christian relations. In 388 C.E. the Bishop of Callinicum in Mesopotamia led a mob in the burning of a Jewish synagogue. Theodosius, in an attempt to administer justice, ordered the bishop to rebuild the synagogue. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, the great church father and teacher of Augustine, forbid Theodosius to enforce his decree and withheld the sacraments until he acquiesced to his demands. This event set the pattern for the treatment of Jews in Western civilization from the 4th century onward. The state became an instrument of the Church for the suppression of Judaism in particular and "heretics" in general. Behind this event already lay *more* than three hundred years of theological anti-Judaism in the writings of the church fathers, in which the Jews were accused of "killing Jesus," the Messiah and Son of God, and thus committing a "crime" against the human race. For this "crime,"

it was said, they were condemned by God to wander the earth, homeless, until the end of time as a "negative witness" to the truth of Christianity.

It is hardly coincidental that as these teachings took hold, the legal status of Judaism crumbled and the vulnerability of Jews to prejudice and violence increased. Synagogue burnings, Jewish children forcibly taken away from their parents and baptized, expulsions of Jews from country after country, and especially from the time of the Crusades, repeated mob violence or *pogroms* with extensive loss of life. When Hitler told two German bishops that he was only finishingwhat the church had started, he knew whereof he spoke. No wonder Hitler could say in *Mein Kampf,* "I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord."

Historically, Christians have engaged in a process of spiritual genocide. We have said to the Jew: "You have no right to exist as God's chosen because God has rejected you and chosen us instead. We are the true Israel." The step from such spiritual genocide to physical genocide - from "you have no right to exist as Jews" to "you have no right to exist" - is a step prepared by Christian religious anti-Judaism and carried out under Nazi "secular" anti-Semitism. Both the sacred and the secular in Western civilization, both Christendom and the Enlightenment, prepared the path to Auschwitz. As long as being a Jew was perceived by the Gentile as a religious claim, the "final solution" to the "Jewish problem" (i.e., the simple fact of their existence) could officially be envisioned as conversion, although the popular response was all too often pogrom and expulsion. But once the secularization process unleashed by the Enlightenment redefined being a Jew in terms of race, conversion was no longer a possible solution. Religious anti-Judaism became secular anti-Semitism. Now "the final solution" to the presence of an alien and undesired race came to mean genocide: a solution the Nazis attempted to enact.

Two Models of Faith and Ethics

Different models of faith have different moral consequences. That is the hypothesis I wish to explore in the aftermath of the Shoah. How is it possible that, in spite of more than 2000 years of oppression and persecution, Jews remained faithful to their tradition? And why is it that Christians, who in the beginning were also persecuted, became a persecuting religion and abandoned the central Gospel injunction of loving one's neighbor, even one's enemy, as oneself? Starkly put, I think the answer is to be found in a fundamentally different understanding of faith and ethics in each tradition. Judaism is grounded in an understanding of faith as a dialectic of *trust and questioning,* even to the point of calling God into question, whereas in Christianity the element of *questioning* was largely lost and the dialectic of faith collapsed into an ethic of trust as total and *unquestioning obedience.*

Both traditions allow that trust and obedience play a central role in the life of faith and both appeal to Abraham as a model of this trusting faith. But in Judaism Abraham

is remembered not only as the one who exemplifies the obedience of the Akeda (the binding of Isaac to be sacrificed, Genesis 22) but also as the one who, in the argument over Sodom and Gommorah, questions and challenges God, asking: "Shall not the judge of all, himself, be just?" (18:25)." For Biblical, Thlmudic and Hasidic Judaism, faith is wrestling with God - an ongoing dialogue and debate with God which serves as a training ground for moral autonomy, rooted in a strong sense of human dignity as a reflection of being created in the image of a God who is without image. The reduction of faith, in the Christian case, to unquestioning trust and obedience, by contrast, has taught quite another moral lesson: namely, the subjugation of moral autonomy to finite moral authorities, religious and/or secular-political, who pretend to speak for (or as) God, even when the obedience demanded runs counter to the Gospel message of love of neighbor and one's enemy. The result has been the persistent and repeated tendency of Christians, Protestant and Catholic alike, to accommodate their faith and moral vision to dehumanizing ideologies of the *status quo,* and so become a *negative witness* to the very transcendence they proclaim.

There is in Judaism an understanding of *covenant* as a personal and communal relationship which is essentially a two way street. It is a dialogue between God and his people grounded in a set of mutual expectations. The formula "I will be your God and you will be my people" is understood as a moral contract of love and commitment obligating both parties. Jews are obligated to live by the commandments but God also has obligations: to be with his people, to guide them and protect them. Although the term *chutzpa* has rather lighthearted connotations in American Jewish culture, the Israeli scholar, Mordechai Rotenberg, argues that it has a weightier meaning in the Talmudic tradition and is the most appropriate term for this contractual relationship "according to which God as a dynamic 'personality* allows man to influence him— [Indeed, *chutzpa* is] a symbol for man's capacity to affect God and change his decrees and consequently man's future by his actions and justified complaints (Rotenberg,14)."

If the faith of Jews was a faith grounded in answers, the Holocaust or Shoah (i.e., the time of desolation) might well have meant the end of Judaism. But the faith of Jews, it seems, is not grounded in answers to metaphysical questions but in a personal covenant relationship of *chutzpa-* of ongoing dialogue and debate which is a continuous *wrestling with God.* More than any other factor, it seems to me, it is this which is providing the foundation for post-Shoah Jewish theology. Let me briefly suggest evidence for this from three leading Jewish authors who are struggling to find a path for Jews after Auschwitz: Emil lackenheim, Elie Wiesel and Irving Greenberg.

Emil Fackenbeim has raised the fundamental question: Where was God at Auschwitz? Like virtually all other Jewish authors on this subject, he rejects the pious traditions of the past which accounted for misfortune by suggesting that it is punishment for sins, for the Jews who died in the death camps were overwhelmingly Jews from the most pious and observant communities in Europe. God cannot be let off that easily. But then where was God? And how can one continue to be Jewish in

the face of God's seeming abandonment of his people in the death camps? In response to these questions, Fackenheim says:

> There is a kind of faith which will accept all things and renounce every protest. There is also a kind of protest which has despaired of faith. In Judaism there has always been protest which stays within the sphere of faith. Abraham remonstrates with God. So do Jeremiah and Job. So does, in modem times, the Hasidic Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdiczev. He once interrupted the sacred Yom Kippur service in order to protest that, whereas kings of flesh and blood protected their peoples, Israel was unprotected by her King in heaven. Yet having made his protest he recited the Kaddish, which begins with these words: "Extolled and hallowed be the name of God throughout the world..-" Can Jewish protest today remain within the sphere of faith (Hackenheim, 76)?

Elie Wiesel, a most eloquent survivor of Auschwitz, knows the meaning of this conflict More than any other author, Wiesel deserves to be seen as the bearer of the tradition of *chutzpa* in our post-Shoah world. Wiesel tells us: "I remember my Master... telling me, 'Only the Jew knows that he may oppose God as long as he does so in defense of His creation." Th be a Jew "means to serve God by espousing man's cause, to plead for man while recognizing his need of God." Or again, "Judaism teaches man to overcome despair. What is Jewish history if not an endless quarrel with God? (Wiesel, 6)." Standing like Job in the dialectical and dialogical tradition of *chutzpa,* Wiesel chooses to put God on trial and call him to account This is a persistent theme throughout his writings culminating in his play, *The Trial of God.* The play, ostensibly about an incident in the 17th century, is actually based on an experience he had in the death camps, where he witnessed three rabbis who "decided one winter evening to indict God for allowing his children to be massacred." And when the trial was over and God was found guilty, the rabbis realized it was time for prayers and so they bowed their heads to pray (Brown, 154). The dialectical and dialogical faith of trust and *chutzpa* is not the Active invention of post-Shoah theologians. It is a lived faith, a tradition of faith reaffirmed in the very bowels of the death camps.

Irving Greenberg, our third theologian, explores the ethical as well as theological implications of this tradition. Greenberg takes issue with Richard Rubenstein's belief that God died at Auschwitz. He quotes Rubenstein's declaration that "Jewish history has written the final chapter in the terrible story of the God of History... the world will forever remain a place of pain... and ultimate defeat (Greenberg, 26)." Greenberg's response to this is direct: "After the Shoah, there should be no final solutions, not even theological ones (13)." What Greenberg finds unsatisfactory in Rubenstein's response to Shoah is his "definitiveness." Rubenstein has broken with the paradoxical dialectic of Jewish existence - the dialectic of trust and *chutzpa.* Rubenstein has abandoned the Thlmudic-Hasidic path of *questioning* and settled for a definitive answer. He does not

wrestle with the unnamed God of Jacob. For Greenberg it is not belief in God which has to be abandoned but rather unquestioning trust and obedience. The ethical implication of the Holocaust is that one should be skeptical of all movements, religious or secular, whether of the left or the right. "Nothing dare evoke our absolute, unquestioning loyalty not even our God, for this leads to possibilities of SS loyalties (38)."

After Auschwitz, Greenberg argues, authentic faith defies the traditional categories of sacred and secular. It is action not words which tells us who has experienced the reality of God. Thus Greenberg argues that during the 1967 war against Israel, it was Sartre who spoke out against a potential genocide and Pope Paul VI who was silent Thus we must say that it is Sartre, not the Pope, who has shown himself to be a man of faith, one who has experienced the reality of God and God's image in every human being. Or again, he argues that in Israel today, it is the secular Israelis who represent authentic faith and not the Orthodox Jews. For it is the secular Israelis who insist on the admission of all Jews to Israel and not orthodox Jews, who even after the Shoah, would turn their backs on some Jews who do not meet their "religious" standards. Here the final paradox of the tradition of *chutzpa* reveals itself. The tradition that calls God into question is the tradition that calls human beings into question as well - in the name of the image of God in all creatures. It is the paradox of appealing to God against God on behalf of God's creation.

The Sacred, the Secular and the Demonic: Genocide as Deicide

What went wrong with Christianity during the Shoah? Why did the majority of Christians, and especially clergy, either actively or passively support Hitler and his "final solution to the Jewish problem"? Indeed, not even the famous Barmen declaration of the Confessing Church raised the issue of the treatment of the Jews. The leading figure in its formulation, Karl Barth, later wrote: "I have long felt guilty that I did not make this problem central... There is no excuse that I did not fight properly for this cause...(Lit-teil, 46)."

"The most ironic statistic of the Third Reich... was that more Catholic priests and Protestant ministers died in the German army than were put into concentration camps: from an actuarial point of view it was safer to oppose Hitler than to support him (Allen, 122)." The greatest shame of the Church was "the tendency for all church-going Catholics and Protestants to be more anti-Semitic than were those who no longer attended services regularly (Gordon, 260)."

What went wrong? Undoubtedly a full answer to that question would be very complex, but I would suggest that a fundamental flaw in the dominant model of faith and ethics found within Christianity plays an essential role. It might be thought that the Church failed because it substituted the State for Christ as her Lord. But it is more complicated than that. Virtually from its beginning, Christian faith came to be defined

as requiring (in varying degrees) obedience to the state as an aspect of obedience to Christ Therein, I believe, lies the heart of the problem.

Now feitii as a fierce and unquestioning loyalty to the will of God revealed in Christ could be an ethically powerful force for good in the world, were the "will of God" understood solely in terms of "love of neighbor," and even "one's enemies, as oneself. " But when the message of the Gospel is taken to include the theme of supersession, the myth that gentile Christians replace Jews as God's chosen, and vrfien it is thought to include the requirement of obedience to the state, the implications become ominous.

The key scripture which seems to have promoted this ethic of obedience occurs in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 13: "Let everyone obey the authorities that are over him, for there is no authority except from God..." It is this statement that Luther appeals to in formulating his extreme position in urging the German princes to suppress the peasant revolts of his time. Only God can establish rulers and only God can remove rulers. It is not permissible for human beings to revolt, even against a vicious and unjust ruler. It is this pattern of faith as unquestioning obedience which prepared Christians for obedience even to Hitler.

Throughout history Jews refused to assimilate and be conformed to the world around them. The refusal of the Jew to assimilate led pagan and Christian alike to a violent rage against the Jew, because the "otherness" of the Jew was a witness to that which transcends all religions and cultures, remaining Wholly Other. God cannot be made the exclusive possession of any culture or religion - not even in the name of Christ. The existence of the Jew has reminded others that God's ways are not the same as their ways. In the world of the Shoah, the existence of the Jew was a burdening reminder of "faithfulness" which the-Christian conscience, of those who preached the value of "not being conformed to the world" while practicing conformity to the world of Nazi values, was only too happy to have out of sight and out of mind.

In the Nazi period this rage against the Jewish witness to transcendence escalated to a point of no return. The religious rage masked itself in the myth of race which made assimilation as a "final solution" an impossible option. Hence the Nazis turned to genocide. But make no mistake about it, the rage against the Jew (whether pagan, Christian or Nazi) is a scarcely disguised rage against the transcendence of God, the God who cannot be used to legitimate pagan, Christian or Nazi hegemony, the God who cannot be owned or used for political and ideological purposes, the God who is the limit of all conformity to this world. The attempted genocide of the Jews is a thinly disguised attempt at the deidde of God, in which the perpetrators have all too typically projected their own motives onto the victims as a justification for their own genocidal actions.

Ellul's Contribution to Post-Shoah Christian Ethics

Jacques Ellul's theology speaks with unusual relevance to our situation after Auschwitz. Ellul's theology stands in sharp contrast to traditional Christian theology

with its myth of supersession and ethic of obedience - a theology which shaped the path leading to Auschwitz. Rather than seeing the church as replacing the synagogue, he sees both as standing in a dialectical relation of mutually enabling witness through which they share the vocation to be communities of freedom in a world of determinisms. Ellul is often accused of focusing on the individual to the exclusion of the church. But in a rare discussion of ecciesiology in *Hope in Tune of Abandonment* he holds up the synagogue as the model of apocalyptic hope and urges the church to take the synagogue as the model for a diaspora presence, a "hidden presence" (the incognito), in a technological civilization. "Israel," he says, "is a people centered entirely on hope, living by that alone... As the one hoping people of the world, it is Israel which provides us with the model for this age... an example of the incognito. In this age of abandonment... I think that Christians should take that as a model (Ellul, 290-291)." Indeed, "if history is looked at closely and without the usual Christian prejudice, it turns out to have been forged at least as much by the Jewish incognito as by Christian activism...(Ellul, 297)." "There is only one political endeavor on which world history now depends; that is the union of the Church and Israel... These two communities _. must join forces so that, in effect, this Word of God might finally be written ... in counterpoint to the technological history of these times...(Ellul, 305)." Ellul is speaking, he says, not of an institutional merger but of a conversion of the Church to hope so as to support Israel "in its long march through the same night and toward the same kingdom (Ellul, 304)."

And in *Prayer and Modem Man,* written about the same time, Ellul furthers spells out the meaning of Jewish hope as a model for Christians. In an age of God's silence and abandonment, he argues, apocalyptic hope gives one the audacity (i.e., *chutzpa)* to assault God, and wrestle with him. Prayer is just this combat with God "which is a demand that God not keep silence..., a striving with God, of whom one makes demands, whom one importunes, whom one attacks constantly, whose silence and absence one would penetrate at all costs. It is a combat to oblige God to respond, to reveal himself anew (156)." Such prayer is a "commitment on behalf of man" which "is decisively bound to the commitment with God (164)." Such prayer is "the ultimate act of hope" from which "all further radicalism, of behavior, of style of life and of action" comes (167,176).

Ellul's importance for post-Shoah Christian theology is linked to the feet that he is one of those rare Christian theologians who has allowed the Jewish experience of faith to speak to him and teach him. Ellul's theology echoes the wisdom of Judaism summarized so eloquently by Elie Wiesel: "Only the Jew knows that he may oppose God as long as he does so in defense of His creation." to be a Jew "means to serve God by espousing man's cause, to plead for man while recognizing his need of God (Wiesel, 6)."

Ellul's God is not a "Christian" God but the God of Israel, which is to say, the God of the whole human race. His God is the anarchist God of which Irving Greenberg speaks as the God who invites the contestation of all authority, sacred and secular,

including his own, in defense of his creation. The difference between God (The Holy) and the idol (whether sacred or secular), is that idols will tolerate no dissent. There is a link between Ellul's ethic of audacity (apocalyptic hope) and anarchism, and his universal compassion manifest in his belief in universal salvation. His God is the God of the whole human race, of all those who are different and not just of those who are the same, the God who reveals his transcendence through the *otherness* of the stranger and the alien.

From Auschwitz to Hiroshima: The Demonic Autonomy of Technique

The path to Auschwitz and its consequences represent a severe challenge to the religious traditions of the West. To Christians, because of the complicity of Christianity in that anti-Judaic path renders its theological and ethical categories morally suspect, to Jews, because their victim status presses faith in the God of history and feith in human beings to the breaking point. But the path to Auschwitz, and from Auschwitz to Hiroshima, represents a challenge, equally severe, to the scientific and technical secular culture of the Enlightenment. We do not seem to have fared any better under a secular ethic than we did under a religious one. Indeed we have fared worse; genocide it seems is a unique product of the modern "secular" world and its "technically competent barbarians." As Franklin Littell has put it:

> The same kind of "educated" technicians built Auschwitz and the antipersonnel weapons used in Vietnam... The technically competent barbarian is available to the highest bidder, be he communist or fascist or feudal despot or republican. The common mistake is to suppose this is solely a result of his avarice or unbridled ambition; it is aided and abetted by a system of education that has trained him to think in ways that eliminate questions of ultimate responsibility. Having eliminated God as an hypothesis, he exercises godlike powers with pride rather than with fear and trembling. Unaware of himself as a person, finite and imperfect, he becomes, year by year, less a mechanic and more a machine - a machine which is still able to perform some complex services that are yet beyond the capacity of even the most advanced computers... The world of *techne* largely ignores the past in its devotion to present tasks... And the problems themselves are defined by an intellectual discourse that rules out the mysterious and transcendent... The definitions often lack aesthetic and spiritual quality and... the solutions are often morally outrageous - all of this was programmed in from the start... as a child of the Enlightenment (Littell, 13-15).

Auschwitz is the symbol of a demonic period in modem Western civilization in which the religious, political and technological developments converged to create a

society whose primary purpose was the most efficient organization of an entire society for the purpose of exterminating all persons who were regarded as aliens and strangers to that society - especially the Jews.

Although they stand side by side as apocalyptic events unique to the modem period, Auschwitz and Hiroshima cannot be equated as historical events. Hiroshima parallels Auschwitz only in its consequences, not in its human intentionality Auschwitz expresses the linkage of the technological mythos to the intentionally demonic ethnocentric tribalism of the Nazis. Hiroshima represents the halting of a similar linkage of technology and demonic tribalism among the Japanese by a country, the United States, which for all its weaknesses was built on a tradition of welcoming all the tribes of the earth. Hiroshima stands as a warning, reminding us that if the Nazis or Japanese had had the bomb, demonic tribalism and genocide would have won the day and that victory would have meant the total destruction of the earth and all its tribes.

There is more to the link between Auschwitz and Hiroshima than sheer contemporaneity. This has become dear to me as I have studied the Post-Holocaust Jewish theologians. Again and again, in the same breath with "Auschwitz" the name "Hiroshima" keeps coming up. The link between Auschwitz and Hiroshima turns out to be an inner link demanded by the analysis of those who were, directly or indirectly, the victims of the Shoah. It is as if those who know something of the "desolation" of Auschwitz recognize that in some sense they have a kinship with those who know the "desolation" of Hiroshima. But also, more than once I have encountered an awareness of a logical as well as psychological link between the two - a link identified as the progressive unfolding of a technological civilization which no longer holds anything sacred, not even human life - nothing that is except the technical imperative: If it can be done it must be done. The death camps were technically feasible and they came to pass. The atom bomb was technically feasible and it came to pass. A final, total apocalyptic nuclear annihilation of the earth is technically feasible...

By comparison with the bomb, technical power at Auschwitz was still relatively inefficient and limited in scope and so capable of being demonically directed at targeted populations, such as Jews and Gypsies. But with the coming of the bomb, technical power burst the bounds of all limitations and has become completely autonomous, it has outstripped human intentionality. If there is a next time after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it will not matter who the good guys and who the bad guys are. The threat of apocalypse which erupted at Auschwitz is no longer limited to the West Hiroshima symbolizes the globalization of the demonic.

The movement from Auschwitz to Hiroshima is psychological, logical and finally mythological. For Auschwitz and Hiroshima have assumed the mythological status of sacred events which orient human consciousness. They have become trans-historical and trans-cultural events which are shaping a public consciousness of our common humanity. The horrifying irony of this is that they are not manifestations of the divine but of the demonic and the common awareness they are creating is one structured by dread.

On July 16th 1945 at 5:30 a.m. the first atomic bomb exploded at a New Mexican desert site named Trinity. It lit up the sky "infinitely brighter than the sun" and one reporter thought of the Biblical phrase -"Let there be light." It was a "religious" response to the awesomeness of a new kind of power. But this experience of the "sacred" was no life giving experience. It was J. Robert Oppenheimer, the scientist who orchestrated the "Manhattan Project," who captured its meaning most accurately. He remembered the line from the Bhqgavad Gita, spoken by Krishna/Vishnu: "Now I Am Become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds." The technological utopianism of the secular city, aptly symbolized by "The Manhattan Project" revealed itself at Trinity to be headed toward an apocafyp-tic and suicidal destiny. The sacred power of the technological reality was unleashed in a "cloud of smoke and a pillar of fire" and the division of history into a new *before and after,* which began at Auschwitz, found its completion in the movement from Trinity to Hiroshima. On August 6th 1945 at 8:16 a.m., the bomb exploded over Hiroshima and the *millennium of utopia,* the millennium which gave rise to science, technology and the "myth of progress," came to a premature apocalyptic end.

It is as if in a moment of inverse enlightenment or revelation, the religious symbols of East and West clashed and exploded within the psyche of J. Robert Oppenheimer and he grasped the demonic inversion of the sacred. The symbolism of the Buddha's Enlightenment, the Biblical Exodus and the Resurrection have undergone a demonic inversion. "Trinity" no longer names the God of life but the place where planetary death was bom. Now when a commanding voice is heard from a burning fire it speaks not the language of being -1 Am Who Am - but the language of not-being -1 Am Become Death. Likewise, when the hibakusha (literally "explosion affected person") or survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki speak of themselves as *mugamuchu,* meaning "without self, without center," they speak not of the humanizing experience of liberation *(no-self)* which comes with Buddhist enlightenment but the experience of total "desolation" which comes with total immersion in the kingdom of death of which the survivors of Auschwitz, during the Shoah (i.e., time of desolation), were the first to speak.

The task of theology in our time, as Arthur Cohen suggested in his book *The Tremendum,* is to excavate the abyss of the demonic and build a bridge of transcendence over it. That bridge, I am convinced, must be built on an ethic of audacity on behalf of the alien and the stranger. We need a common ethic to unite us as a global human community, one which can carry us beyond our common dread. Perhaps excavating the abyss will motivate us to build a bridge, one built by *passing* over-the abyss and into other religions and cultures in order to *come back* with new insight into ourselves and bur own culture.

Beyond Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Welcoming the Stranger

In such a context the dialogue between Christians and Jews in response to Auschwitz leads to the inclusion of Buddhists, as inevitably as Auschwitz leads to Hiroshima. For

Buddhism is not only native to Hiroshima but also the other great tradition bound by an ethic of welcoming the stranger - i.e. the "outcaste." I am convinced that the movement from Auschwitz to Hiroshima provides a prophetic warning of what the future holds if we fail to create a cross-cultural public order which can find unity-in-diversity. The apocalyptic threat of our time is that we shall be swallowed up in the abyss of the demonic. Our utopian hope lies in *passing over* and *coming back*—in creating that new world where strangers are welcome and where bonds of cross-cultural understanding could alter our relation to the technical order and at the same time make total destruction of "the other" unthinkable. I believe such a world is possible, based on a new social ethic which can be structured cooperatively by Jews, Christians, Buddhists and other ("secular") a-theists - one which can have a transformative impact on the rest of the world.

After Auschwitz and Hiroshima, I am convinced, we need a new style of theology and ethics. We need a "decentered" or "alienated theology." Alienated theology, is theology done "as if one were a stranger to one's own tradition. It is my conviction that alienated theology is the appropriate mode for theology in an emerging world civilization - a civilization tottering in the balance between apocalypse and utopia. There are two ways to enter world history, according to the contemporary author, John Dunne, - you can be dragged in by way of world war or you can walk in by way of mutual understanding. By the first path global civilization emerges as a totalitarian project of dominance which risks a total atomic apocalypse. By the second path we prevent the first, creating global civilization through an expansion of our understanding of what it means to be human which occurs, as Dunne suggests, when we*pass over* to another's religion and culture and *come back* with new insight into our own (Dunne, ix-xiii).

Gandhi is an example - passing over to the *Sermon on the Mount* and coming back to the Hindu *Gita* to gain new insight into it as a scripture of non-violence. Gandhi never considered becoming a Christian but his Hinduism was radically altered by bis encounter with Christianity. One could say the same (inverting the directions) for Martin Luther King Jr., who was deeply influenced by Gandhi's understanding of non-violent resistance in the *Gita.* When we pass over (whether through travel, friendship or disciplined imagination) we become "strangers in a strange land" as well as strangers to ourselves - seeing ourselves through the eyes of another. Assuming the perspective of a stranger is an occasion for insight and the sharing of insight. Such cross-cultural interactions build bridges of understanding and action between persons and cultures which make cooperation possible and conquest unnecessary. "Passing over" short circuits apocalyptic confrontation and inaugurates utopian new beginnings - new beginnings for the "post-modern" world of the coming 3rd millennium. Gandhi and King are symbols of a possible style for a post-modern alienated theology.

To be an *alien is* to be a stranger. To be *alienated* is to be a stranger to oneself. We live in a world of ideological conflict in which far too many individuals (whether theists or a-theists) practice a "centered theology" in which they are too sure who they are and what they must do. Such a world has far too many answers and not

nearly enough questions and self-questioning. A world divided by its answers is headed for an inevitable apocalyptic destiny. But when we are willing to become strangers to ourselves (or when we unwillingly become so), new possibilities open up where before everything was closed and hopeless. My own conviction is that the *kairos* of our time is one which calls forth the badly neglected ethic of "welcoming the stranger" which underlies the biblical tradition and analogously "welcoming the outcaste" which underlies the Buddhist tradition. It is this care for the stranger and the outcaste which provides the critical norm or test of authentic transcendence as self-transcendence.

Centered theologies, whether sacred or secular, theist or a-theist, are ethnocentric theologies which can only tolerate the alien or *other,* if at all, as a potential candidate for conversion to *sameness.* Centered theologies are exercises in narcissism which inevitably lead down apocalyptic paths like those that led to Auschwitz and Hiroshima. Why? Because such theologies, whether civil or religious, sacred or secular, cannot permit there to be *others* in the world whose way of being might, by sheer contrast, cause self-doubt and self-questioning.

Alienated theology, however, understands doubt and selfquestioning as the essence of transcendence and therefore understands that only a faith which requires one to welcome the alien or stranger is truly a utopian faith open to transcendence. According to the Genesis story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1 -9), human beings sought to grasp transcendence through the ideology of a single language and a common technological project - building a tower to heaven. But God upset their efforts by confusing their tongues, so that they could not understand each other. They became strangers to one another and so could not complete their task. The popular interpretation of this story is that the confusion of tongues was a curse and a punishment for the human sin of pride. But I am convinced that is a serious misunderstanding of its meaning. I would suggest, rather, that human beings misunderstood where transcendence lay and God simply redirected them to the true experience of transcendence which can only occur when there are strangers to be welcomed into our lives.

To put it in terms closest to home for myself, as a Christian who seeks to comes to grips with Auschwitz in the light the history of Christian anti-Judaism, I cannot be a Christian except as I am prepared to welcome Jews into my life, understanding that the very attempt to convert them would be to destroy the authenticity of my own faith by robbing me of the chance to welcome the stranger (the one who is different from me and a permanent witness to the Wholly Other in my life) who is given to me as an invitation to transcendence. For the literal meaning of "transcendence" is "to go beyond" - to go beyond my ego-centered, ethno-centered, religio-centered world to embrace that utopian world glimpsed at Pentecost, where each spoke in his or her own language and yet each is understood by all (Acts *2:*1-13). The tragedy of human existence revealed by Auschwitz and Hiroshima, is that we continue to misread our situation. Given the opportunity for transcendence, the opportunity to be carried beyond ourselves into a new global human community, we continue to insist on a "technological solution," a MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) solution which at best leads to a global stalemate

between cultures and at worst to an attempt at global conquest. In either case we place ourselves under the dark and threatening cloud of an atomic apocalypse which such a path must inevitably bring.

To speak personally as one living in an *age of alienation,* I used to think that the experience of alienation was a problem in need of resolution. I have come to see it rather as a promising opportunity, for when we have become strangers to ourselves we experience a new vulnerability and a new openness to the other - other persons, other ideas, other cultures and ways of life. To the degree that the secularization which accompanies technological civilization alienates us from our "sacred" traditions, it presents us with utopian possibilities. It also presents us with apocalyptic dangers. The greatest danger created by alienation seems to be that we shall get lost in a sea of relativism, of assuming one way is as good as another. That is just as destructive as those centered theologies which assume there is only one way. It is my conviction, however, that there is a path in between these extremes of reiativism and absolutism and that is the way of *passing over and coming back.* This path reveals that some ways are better than others. Those ways are marked by an openness to doubt and self-questioning and a genuine compassion for *the other* which leads to an ethic of audacity *(chutzpa)* on behalf of the alien and the stranger. These are authentic signs of encounter with the Holy.

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On Christians, Jews, and the Law

By Katharine Temple

This article has been extracted from a longer essay written for the feast of Epiphany in the January-February 1988 issue of *The Catholic Worker.*

More and more, I am distressed to encounter Christian teachers who, wittingly or unwittingly, seek to distance us from Judaism. For example I read articles in journals meant for people attracted to "peace and justice" concerns, claiming that Jesus did away with Mosaic Law in favor of something superior, namely, love; that He founded a new religion on a moral rather than an institutional basis; that, in cleansing the Temple, He wanted to abolish completely the purity laws; that He rescued us from patriarchal (and other) oppression in Jewish law; or that civil disobedience is rooted in Jesus' contempt for the same divine revelation, the Law of Moses. Apart from conjuring up the long, dark shadows of Christian anti-Semitism, this quick dismissal of the Law acts to deny the truth of Christianity as being grafted on to the rich root of the olive tree of Israel (Romans 11). As a people so grafted, Hebrew Scriptures are truly for Christians a thoroughgoing revelation *of* grace. (Saying so is not new, for the Church has always promulgated this as doctrine, although not always with clarity and conviction.) And at the heart of the Hebrew Bible - for Moses and all the other prophets and sages, and for the whole Jewish tradition, including Jesus of Nazareth - lies the Law.

Part of the difficulty, leaving aside anti-Semitism, seems to lie in the very word "law" as the translation for the Hebrew word *Torah.* For Christians, "law" brings with it images of dry legalism, devoid of mercy and compassion or freedom. In the matter of Biblical Law, however, these are misguided prejudices. Jews know the Torah given to Moses at Sinai to be God's gift to draw the people's lives into the fullness of His. Pinchas Lapide, an orthodox Jewish theologian who devotes much time to teaching Christians about the Bible, has written: "For Jews, the Torah is a gift of grace which flows from the love of God. Accordingly, to believe or not to believe is the free choice of every individual. Certainly faithfulness to the Torah rests solely and completely on

emunah - absolute, unquestioning trust in God which summons us to work as coworkers with God in the task of improving the world" (from *Paul, Rabbi and Apostle).* A single citation may well not convince Christians who are used to thinking of the Law as harsh and picayune and not needed for us. Nevertheless, the more one learns about Torah (or *halacha,* the way to walk, another Hebrew word for the Law) from those who embrace it, the less desire there is to scorn it.

Christian scholars could gain so much from the whole history of Jewish learning about Torah, but unfortunately, in many circles, its importance continues to be diminished. We are taught to read the Exodus story without following it through to Sinai, or to revere the prophets without heeding their call to return to the Law, or to study the New Testament in isolation from the Old "testament. It is little wonder that we find it hard to associate Jesus with His People, either historically or theologically.

When we do come to the New "testament, many people suggest that Jesus kept the Law when convenient, but broke it to "do his own thing" whenever it did not suit His higher purposes. I remember a paper given at a Jewish-Christian colloquium, discussing examples of the times Jesus supposedly broke the Law, and why. The intriguing part, for me, came when those examples were challenged - by the Jewish participants - not because of differences between Judaism and Christianity, but because of the lack of comprehension shown about the content of the Law. They claimed that none of the episodes under scrutiny undermined a view of Jesus as an observant Jew. Why should Christians find this conclusion surprising or unsettling? After all, St. Luke tells us that as a young man Jesus sat listening to the teachers and asking them questions, and amazed everyone with His understanding and answers (2:46-47). That is, He knew and lived by "Ibrah. From his detailed studies, Clemens Thoma, a noted Christian scholar, concludes: "Jesus, the so-called sovereign transgressor of the Law, does not exist!... He certainly did not practice a narrow-minded interpretation of it, but He also opposed all excesses. He wanted the Law to be understood in its most profound meaning and in its original context" (from/f *Christian Theology of Judaism).* Or, if we prefer to speak of the Christ of faith, why would the Word of God at Creation and at Sinai break His own commandments?

St. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, is the one who tells us how we are to be joined with the root of Israel, and yet he is notoriously perplexing ... and has been presented as the great rejecter of the Law. In fact, many Christians, who otherwise have little use for him, rejoice in the thought that St. Paul announced the abolition of the Law. How could it be, though , that this Pharisee and student of the famous Gamaliel slighted the Law the way we do? Do we know what Jewish sources understood about the Messianic Times and what would happen to Mosaic Law then? Or how he read his Hebrew Bible and the rabbinic commentators? Once more, Pinchas Lapide can help shed some light.

"When Paul says that neither Jew nor Gentile can achieve salvation by fulfilling the commandments or performing the deeds of Torah, he is kicking doors that are already open to all Biblically knowledgeable Jews. It was self-evident to all masters of the Thl-mud [the authoritative Jewish interpretation] that salvation or participation

in the coming world, as it is called in Hebrew, could be attained only through God's gracious love."

"If, in addition, we note that this same Paul includes *nomothesia,* 'the giving of the Law,' among the gracious gifts of God that belong to Israel even after Easter, that the word telos can mean 'goal.' 'conclusion,' 'completion,' 'fulfillment,' or even the 'final part' of a thing, not just 'end'; that the apostle twice indicates that Jesus lived in accordance with the Law throughout his earthly life (Rom. 15:8 and Gal. 4:4); that Paul prescribes a new *halacha* for his young congregations, containing dozens of statutes, regulations, prohibitions and requirements, some of which seem to be even stricter than the unascetic ordinances of orthodox rabbis - then it is no longer passible to continue talking about the so-called Pauline termination of the Law or its validity."

If such a reading of St Paul is possible for a Jew who has every reason to suspect the Church, and for whom Christianity is a heresy unnecessary for the vitality of Judaism, can we not explore with him the possibilities for ending the ignorance and distrust that keeps us from our roots?

As may be gathered from these quotes from Pinchas Lapide and Clemens Thoma, there exist good historical studies to help us begin again and which can serve to counter our stereotypes. As they also show us, however, the question of our roots, our source in the Bible, our salvation coming from the Jews, is not merely an historical study. Beyond looking to the past, we also must recognize why certain books have been preserved as Scripture to reveal to us now the living Word of God.

All these questions arise when we read passages about Jesus and the Pharisees. First of all, it is impossible for us to understand these texts without knowing something about the historical group of people known as "the Pharisees." One of the best essays is "The Pharisees" by Leo Baeck (the chief rabbi in Germany during World ^hr II). According to him, they were the reformers, the "progressives" who brought the Law to the people, who made possible their survival after the destruction of the 'femple, and who founded Judaism as it is practiced today. From this perspective, many historians think the rabbi Jesus was Himself a Pharisee and the confrontations were inter-Pharisee debates. This portrayal is a far cry from the "Pharisaical" self-righteous hypocrite that has been handed down to us. The Jewish tradition of the Pharisees seems quite unknown to the many preachers who erroneously contrast "their" religion of hang-ups, petty parochialism, bigotry and legalism, with "ours" of trust, universalism, love and authentic faith. Unbiased historical studies can help influence the way we reckon with what Jesus was saying.

It would still be too easy, though, to keep the Pharisees as historical figures, unrelated to us, to make the Pharisees into our scapegoat, just as we have treated the whole Jewish people who have followed in the Pharisees' footsteps. This is not to dull the fact that these are judgment passages, but to suggest that revelation, unlike history, is spoken to us and not about other people in faraway places. In other words, "the hard sayings of Jesus" fall on us. The verses themselves ask for this kind of reading for most of the Pharisee conversations begin with "You." Our tendency to shift away

from ourselves to "them" is realty the attempt to reject Jesus as our Lord by removing ourselves from His presence, and putting the blame elsewhere...

Jacques Ellul, *Le bluff technologique [The Technological Bluff]*.

Paris: Hachette, 1988

Reviewed by Gabriel Vahanian, Universtiy of Strasbourg

Translated by Charles L. Creegan

Nothing irritates Jacques Ellul so much as being taken for someone "opposed" to technique, by detractors and admirers alike. He repeatedly shows that one cannot be opposed to technique any more than to avalanches, but nobody — or almost nobody - pays any attention. Though many arguments could be given in his defense, I will mention two, which are the most important for an understanding of this last work and the numerous other writings he has given over to this subject.

The first argument begins from the simple fact that Ellul, who certainly does not esteem technique too highly, is careful not to underestimate it. On the contrary, I would say that he overestimates it and moreover that he is well aware of this. Clearly he sees in technique a sort of bogey man, though he is wont to complain that it only succeeds as a scarecrow. But we are rather more fallen than the birds, particularly as we play sorcerer's apprentice. In our hands technique inevitably slips its chains~or is it that we simply conspire to charge our own slips to its account? And when we foot a bill far too large for our human purses, we are not only the victims of an enormous bluff, but worse, its willing victims. Of course, we cover ourselves by a technicality: we abdicate. It is this abdication which Ellul exposes in *Le bluff technologique,* a volume which will no doubt be seen to form a trilogy with *The Technological Society (La technique,* 1954) and *The Technological System (Le systeme technicien,* 1975). These titles illustrate a semantic glissade, which did not happen by chance. We are bluffed, not by technique, but by the system which we erect upon it-using technique to enthrall ourselves rather than to help us toward self-evaluation. But Ellul tells us that all technical progress has its cost, and furthermore that technique does not bluff. So it is we who must bear this cost, at the price of being-along with technique?–the objects of one of the most enormous bluffs, the technological bluff: "that is, the gigantic bluff of a discourse on techniques [my emphasis-G. V.] in which we are caught up, which continually causes us to take hawks for handsaws and, what is worse, to modify our stance toward our own techniques." For after all what is a man, if not that by which we escape from technique? Even a technological society has in it a bit of social vision which escapes the embrace of its techniques-unless it is taken in, and resigns itself, under the fallacious pretext

that because one is not opposed to technique, one must believe the slogan "it can do anything," and thus one must blindly let it do whatever it can.

We again owe thanks to Jacques Ellul for crossing the "t's" and dotting the" i's." It is not against technique that we must work, but against the discourse into which we force it beyond measure and beyond reason. Ellul takes up this task with a will. One after another, he masterfully dismantles all those technological challenges with which we have been ceaselessly plied and with which we are still being tempted, though in fact even the technological fairy has lost her way-if she is not making us lose our heads! He addresses four issues, which all participate in the growing uncertainty about the effects of an invasive, unassimilated technique: the ambivalence of technical progress; the unpredictable nature of development; the vicious circle constituted by technique and its insidious influence on politics and science or the economy; and finally the contradictions inherent in the system itself. The upshot, aside from spiritual impoverishment, is a marginalization approaching abrogation of culture. Without flinching, Ellul writes: "a technological culture is impossible." He believes that "culture is necessarily humanistic or it does not exist," and declares categorically that "no bridge between the two is possible."

Then are we irremediably condemned-irrecoverable? One would never guess Ellul's reply. It is a firm no! He is categorical, though his hope rests only on the fact that in the last analysis, "the gigantic bluff is self-contradictory" and "has nothing to do with the fact that technique yields very satisfying and useful fruits, as I have never denied." And I call attention to the fact that the emphasis is Ellul's: he brings me to the second of the reasons which I invoked above against those who unfairly accuse him of being opposed to technique. He will pardon me for expressing it in the well-known formula:

A man more Utopian than Ellul has never been bom!*

* The last line is an idiomatic translation. A literal translation of the French would read: *"More Utopian than Ellul, you die."*

** *The Technological Bluff* is scheduled to be published in English by Eerdmans s before the end of 1990.

Contributions Welcome

Original essays for the *Forum,* responses to previous *Forum* essays, book reviews, etc. are welcome. Essays should be submitted on 35 or 5.25 inch IBM compatible format disks along with hard copy if at all possible. Word processing files from Word Perfect, Microsoft Word, Multimate, Xywrite, Nota Bene, and Wordstar can be used directly. Also Ascii and DCA formats. If this is not possible, just send typed copy to Darrell Fasching, 15811 Cottontail Place, Thmpa Florida 33624.

Forum Response

Vernard Eller's Response to Katharine Temple

Iwas not particularly disconcerted by Katharine Temple's disappointment over my book - especially since Ellul himself and many other top reviewers have given it much more favorable notice. However, Temple's review may provide me opportunity to clarify some matters.

I propose that temple has misread the significance of the fact that Ellul's book bears the name Ellul, while mine bears the name Eller. The similarity of name is not meant to suggest a similar qualify of mind and work. Quite the contrary, my name is different from his to keep it clear that my work represents an order of intellect and scholarship entirely other than his.

I never ever, for one moment, have seen myself as an intellectual peer, colleague, or competitor with Jacques ElluL I don't even see myself as an Ellul scholar, someone equipped to meet him on his own level in the way of analysis, critique, and the citing of other authorities pro and con. No, my way is simply to read Ellul's books (usually only once), let whatever ideas adhere adhere, and then also let them resurface and be put to use as they will. I have not researched and claim no "command" of his literature that enables me to cite chapter and verse on one point or another. I have no technical expertise in any of Ellul's fields — have made no effort to keep up with, let alone make scholarly contributions to, Ellulian studies at large.

My one advantage, a gift most precious to me, is perhaps that, from the word Go (which was apparently Ellul's Christian Century article of June 1968) I have heard Ellul speaking on the same wavelength to which I was already attuned by virtue of my biblical commitment and "sect-type" church background. So, whenever I have difficulty understanding Ellul's "words," I simply read his mind - and usually come off understanding him better than his scholarly proficients do. I am of the firm conviction that Ellul's "simple faith" is much more of the essence than is his "scholarly expertise." And I intend to stay plugged into Ellul on the end at which I started and where I have found so much satisfaction for more than twentyyears now.

I really believe that the burden of "temple's complaint against me is that I wrote my type of book (biblical theology for the lay reader) rather than hers (technical stratospherics for the academician). Mine nowhere purports to be that of an Ellul scholar addressing other Ellul scholars like herself. No, the greatest satisfaction I feel about my book is that it introduces the thought of such thinkers as Ellul, Barth,

Bonhoeffer, the Blumhardts, Kierkegaard (plus Hengle, Bomkamm, Kee, and others) to a lay audience that would never consider itself competent to tackle such scholars through their own scholarly writings. If I have a contribution to make to the cause of Jacques Ellul, it will not be through the medium of technical papers; it will be in opening his thought to Christian laypeople, those in best position for profiting from it [As a convenience, I shall hereafter identify the above named thinkers as "my people."]

What I most wish "temple (and other reviewers like her) would have been willing to recognize is that basically my book, from start to finish, is biblical exposition. I don't think there is a spot in the book where the reader can be more than a few pages away from biblical exposition. The essential use to which I put each and every one of "my people" is as biblical exegetes, nothing more - not ethical theorists, not political scientists, not speculative theologians, none of that Most pointedly put, the thesis of my book is that the concept of Christian Anarchy can be derived (and must be derived) solely from the biblical faith. And this has the effect of making it accessible to any Bible-believing Christian, quite apart from intellectual attainment or technical expertise.

Consequently, the history and analysis of anarchical theory (which "temple demands of me) is quite beside the point. The survey of current ethical theory (implied in the demand to include Yoder and Hauerwas) would actually confuse and lose me my audience. The suggestion that I must show myself a scholarly expert in these professional fields before being allowed to speak about Christian Anarchy - strikes me as the worst sort of intellectual elitism.

Consequently, too, a study of the "Christianity," of Christendom - which is far from the same thing as biblical Christianity [see Ellul's *The Subversion of Christianity*] - that "Christianity" is quite beside the point and would, again, completely sidetrack my book.

It was this finding of Christian Anarchy in practice all over the place that I understand "temple to have been after by faulting me for not naming William Stringfellow (Episcopalian) or Dorothy Day (Roman Catholic) among the blessed - and for dismissing "whole traditions" out of hand. In the first place, I never did set out to list "the blessed"; I set out to find noted Christian thinkers who have left us major deposits of authoritative biblical exposition that point toward a concept of Christian Anarchy. I respect all four of temple's people (Stringfellow, Day, Yoder and Hauerwas) and know a couple of them personally. I doubt that there is one of them who would agree that their work in biblical theology puts them in the league of Ellul, Bonhoeffer, Barth, and Kierkegaard. And as to dismissing whole traditions, why does temple pick on me for that one? Ellul (let along Barth and Kierkegaard) has done that much more thoroughly than I ever could.

There is much more to which I perhaps ought to give answer; but I will be content to address the one charge of my making tax resisters my main target - while she knows a number of tax resisters who are truly nice people.

Again, that is completely beside the point. Temple refuses to recognize that every single time I talk about tax resistance I am doing biblical exegesis (either doing an exegesis of my own or sharing one from the expert exegetes of "my people"). And the reason the tax question comes up time and again is because (as best I can discover) the tax passages are the sole representation of the New testament speaking specifically to the basic issues of revolutionary protest and civil disobedience.

Yet I never express anything less than good opinions of the moral character of tax resisters I have known. My one charge is that the biblical counsel is against their position rather than supportive of it If I am wrong, my error could be rebutted without any anger or ill will form either side. All that is wanted or needed is a reputable biblical exposition that supports tax resistance. Yet the fact is that I have caught plenty of flak like temple's - while, no more than she does, has anyone else shown a willingness to dispute the matter biblically.

As I say, I can take temple's review without too much consternation, knowing that Jacques Ellul, some Ellul scholars, and other expert reviewers read mine as a book quite different from the one she apparently read. I do think it important for readers of *Ellul Studies* to know that temple's is very for from being the unanimous opinion of my book.

Michael Bauman's Response to Jacques Ellul

Regarding Professor Ellul's objections to my review (My numbers correspond to his.):

1. Ellul is wrong. I did not accuse him of saying that Christians ought to feel guilty abut what Marxist critics allege concerning Christianity or Christians. As a politically conservative, free-market Christian, I denied that we Christians ought to feel Socialist-in-spired guilt because the Socialist criticisms directed at us are radically flawed. I said so as a preface both to my complaints about what Ellul does say and to some of the criticism Socialists have made with which he agrees.

2. While rehearsing the Communist critique, of Christian practice, Ellul occasionally (and, I think, rightly) registers his dissent, as, for example, he does when he notes the manipulative way Communists side with the poor. He does not do so, however, when addressing the issue of justice. The communist critique writes Ellul, "was obviously based on justice. In every respect our society is unjust for both individuals and groups. It produces inequality on all levels: inequality of opportunity, income, power, culture" (p. 6). Quite clearly, these words indicate that inequality is an injustice and (conversely) that justice entails equality, things Ellul says he never wrote.

3. I did not "accuse" Ellul of saying that Communists are on the side of the poor I quoted him. Further, contrary to Ellul's assertion that he does not say that Commu-

nists help the poor, he himself writes that "they accomplish what Christianity preaches but fails to practice" (emphasis added, p. 6).

4. Ellul objects that the accusation that our "unjust society is the result of twenty centuries of Christianity" is one concerning which he "wrote clearly that this is the accusation hurled at Christianity by Communists and that if many ceased to be Christians it is because this argument was accepted." He most certainly did not In the passage in question (pp. 5-6), Ellul is speaking about why many have become Marxist Christians. He nowhere mentions either the possibility or the actuality of their ceasing to be Christians, for this reason or for any other. (Nor does he pause here to distance himself from this Marxist challenge.)

5. Despite Ellul's opposite assertion, I am well aware of "the clever tactics and grand strategy of Lenin." Unlike Ellul, however, I do not believe that Lenin's means are compatible with Lenin's goals or could ever lead to them. I hold the same view of ail Communist regimes. Five-year plans, Gulags, iron curtains, military expansionism, cultural revolutions, perestroika, glasnost, and state-sponsored terrorism cannot and will not yield a worker's paradise, a proletariat without chains, or a world without the state. I contended and do contend, that a radical incompatibility exists between Communist ends and means. Barbarism will not yield humanitarian or therapeutic results.

Further, contrary to Ellul, discourse and its uses most certainly are a part of Communist tactics. That is Lenin.

6. Not all, perhaps not even most, of the choices humans make are respectable or are worthy of a Christian's respect Some choices are ignorant and inadequately informed; some are counter productive; some are wicked. Despite his intention, Belo's choice to be a Communist is all these things. I do not respect it anymore than I respect someones choice to be a slave trader which I consider to be very much the same thing. I challenge such choices and I excoriate them. Contrary to Ellul, while I respect and value choosing, I do not value all human choices, especially this one. I cannot side with someone who writes that Belo's choice to be a Communist "clearly merits our respect," that it is "a political choice," one "which we do not question!" (p. 86).

7. If the distinction between "make" and "create" is so fundamental to Ellul's view of the nature and origin of money (a distinction that in economics I contend is truly insignificant), and if I am mistaken to use the word "create" concerning Caesar's role in this activity, then perhaps Ellul should enlighten his translator to that fact, for Ellul's text does say - despite his insistence that he "never wrote what Mr. Bauman thinks to have read!" - that" Jesus means that Caesar, as creator of this money, is its master" (emphasis his, p. 167).

8. You may still number me among those who consider Christianity a religion and who deny that "biblical revelation necessarily entails iconoclasm, that is, the destruction of all religions [and] beliefs" (emphasis added, p. 2). From my position on this issue, however, one should not deduce, as does Ellul, that I "know nothing of Kierkegaard or

Barth"! One could more accurately deduce that I reject them and that I have reasons for doing so.

In addition, I contend that not all the working definitions that scholars advance (much less all definitions) are acceptable. Some, for example, are unjustifiable question-begging and need to be discarded. Some debates are won (and lost) by definition. As a trained literary critic, one who opposes the unnecessary proliferation of definitions and the degeneration of language that results, I did, and do, reject Ellul's idiosyncratic use of the term "ideology." to do so is not, as Ellul charges, "simplistic."

As a trained historian, I equally as firmly reject his reconstruction of the rise or capitalism and its subsequent development, beseigement, and defense. Some of my reasons for doing so are outlined in EA. Hayek's *Capitalism and the Historians* (1954).

9. By mentioning the economists I did, I was intentionally endorsing their relevance to what Ellul calls "the current debate" between Marxism and Christianity, especially Gilder, Smith, and BastiaL That Smith and Bastiat are not our contemporaries is quite insignificant Current debates can often be resolved (or at least set in their proper light) by invoking the wisdom of the past Insight was not bom with our generation. I only regret now that I did not mention Whittaker Chambers in this context, a man who is not an economist, but whose views are wonderfully pertinent

10. a: That liberal capitalism did not further impoverish the poor, I refer you to such books as Michael Novak's *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (1982), pp. 16-22.

b: That the wealthy do not prosper at the expense of the poor, I refer you to such books as George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty* (1981) and his *The Spirit of Enterprise* (1984), especially the former. Both books also demonstrate that Christian values are capitalist values.

c: Nineteenth-century Christianity was not a monolithic entity about which we can make generalizations like Ellul's, which alleges that it served merely to justify the failures of capitalist societies and systems. The evangelical united front in America, for example, served to ameliorate - not defend - such shortcomings.

d: We agree!

Finally, Ellul need not worry about my students or my biblical exegesis. The failings of his own anarchist reading of Scripture, however, I will expose elsewhere. I shall do the same regarding what I consider his unjustifiably incomplete break from Marxist taxonomy and methodology, and from the ideology that necessarily attaches to them.

Bibliography

Bibliographic Notes on Theology and Technology

by Carl Mitcham and Jim Grote

Seventh in a series. Contributions welcome.
Please send books, articles, or notes themselves to:
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Berry, Thomas. *The Dream of the Earth.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988. Pp. 247. The natural, evolving world is our most important community and teacher. Its chief lesson is a respect for the diversity of all forms of life. Religions, for example, behave like natural species, offering unique insights into the evolutionary process. Tfechnology, however, in its materialist bias tends to eclipse the spiritual dimensions of our "self-transcending" universe. Reviewed by Kenneth Woodward in *Newsweek* (June 5, 1989). See also an interview with Berry by Bernard Connaughton and Jo Roberts, "Thomas Berry: Dreaming of a New Earth," *Catholic Worker* 56, no. 2 (March-April 1989), pp. 1 and 6.

Berry, Thomas. "Wonderworld as Wasteworld: The Earth in Deficit," *Cross Currents* 35, no. 4 (Winter 1985-1986), pp. 408-422. Alternative technologies need to be harnessed within the context of a "planetary socialism" to insure the survival of the planet Religion is an integral part of this project "If this sense of the sacred character of the natural world as our primary revelation of the divine is our first need, the second is to diminish our emphasis on redemption experience in favor of a greater emphasis on creation processes... A third need is to provide a way of thinking about 'progress' that would include the entire earth community" (p.417).

Berry, Thomas. "Thomas Berry: A Special Section," *Cross Currents* 37, nos. 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1987), pp. 179-239. Vintage Berry. Creation mythologies which emphasize an ecological motif are needed to counterbalance the Christian preoccupation with redemptive mythologies which have provided the primary energy behind the Western industrial/technological motif. This symposium includes three articles by Berry - "Creative Energy," "The New Story: Comments on the Origin, Identification and Transmission of Values," and "The Dream of the Earth: Our Wiy Into the Future." Also included

are two laudatory critiques of Berry's *opus* - Brian Swimme's "Berry's Cosmology" and John Grim's Time, History, Historians in Thomas Berry's Vision."

Cobb, John B., Jr., and David Ray Griffin. *Process Theology; An Introductory Exposition.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976. Pp. 192. Chapter four, "A Theology of Nature,"argues that process theology provides an ecological attitude that substance-oriented theologies fail to provide. "Accordingly, if all actualities, not simply human ones, are constituted by the enjoyment of experience, and hence are to some degree ends in themselves, then we should, to the appropriate degree, treat them as ends and not merely as means to our ends" (p. 77).

Easching, Darrell J. *The Thought of Jacques Ellul: A Systematic Exposition.* New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1981. Pp. xxxviii,225. Doctoral dissertation under Gabriel Albanian. Ellul's "sociology of the sacred" (cf. *The New Demons)* mediates his dialectic of sociological analysis and theological proclamation. Ellul is not critical of technology *per se,* but of the "transfer of the sacred into technology." That which desacralizes a given reality becomes the new sacred reality. For example, the Church desacralized nature, the Bible *(sola scriptura)* desacralized the Church, and technology has desacralized the Bible. The task of Ellul's theology is to desacralize technique. Reviewed by Jim Grote in *Horizons* 14, no. 2 (Fhll 1987), pp. 405-406.

Gill, David W. *The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1984. Pp. xvi, 213. Doctoral dissertation attempting to reconcile Ellul's positive biblical ethics with his constant affirmation that "there are no normative ethics of the good, but there are ethics of grace, which are quite the opposite" (p. 170). This dichotomy in Ellul's thought partially explains why Ellul has been "so deficient in suggestions of ways to counter technique" (p. 98). Reviewed by Jim Grote in *Horizons* 14, no. 2 (Fall 1987), pp. 405-406.

Granberg-Michaelson, Wesley. *Ecology and Life; Accepting Our Environmental Responsibility.* Vfaco, TX: Word Books, 1988. Pp. 200. Popular plea for environmental responsibility. Includes an appendix of articles: Lynn White, Jr.'s "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," Francis Schaefer's "Substantial Healing," Bruce Birch's "Nature, Humanity, and Biblical Theology: Observations Toward a Relational Theology of Nature," Vincent Rossi's "Theocentrism: The Cornerstone of Christian Ecology," James Rimbach's "All Creation Groans: Theology/Ecology in St Paul," and H. Paul Santmire's "God's Joyous Valuing of Nature."

Hall, Douglas John. *Imaging God; Dominion as Stewardship.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans; and New York: Friendship Press, 1986. Pp. viii, 248. Biblical, historical, and theological examination of the term *imago del* Rejects a substan-tialistic conception of the image of God *(imago* as noun) in favor of a relational conception *(imago* as verb). We best image God by serving creation, not mastering it. Quotes Dostoevsky's lather Zosima: "Man love the animals... Do not pride yourself on your superiority to the animals, they are without sin" (p. 201).

Hall, Douglas John. *The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988. Pp.xvi, 144. Revised edition of Hall's *Christian Mis-*

sion: The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death (New York: Friendship Press, 1985) and sequel to Hall's earlier *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age* (New York: Friendship Press, 1982). Contains five theological meditations on passages in Scripture relating to the Church's mission to foster life on earth, not just to anticipate heaven. "Very soon in its history, Christianity moved away from the Hebraic spirituality of earthly well-being expressed in this scripture [Is. 65:17-25] and toward a kind of etherealization of the goal of belief... The question that confronts us today is how we can recover the earthward orientation of the faith of the exodus, incarnation, and cross" (p. 128).

Harder, Allen. "Ecology, Magic and the Death of Man," *Christian Scholar's Review 1,* no. 2 (Winter 1971), pp. 117-131. Naturalism and humanism offer little possibility of healing the environmental crisis that is often blamed on Christianity (cf. Ian

McHarg and Lynn White, Jr.). If man is merely a "pile of chemicals" engaged in the struggle of natural selection, then it is unlikely such a self-understanding will produce an enlightened ecological consciousness. Traditional theism, properly understood, provides the only genuine attack on "pollution." The command to *subdue* the earth in Gen. 1:28 should be reinterpreted as a command to *tame* the earth. See the dialogue of the prince and the fox in Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince.* "One only understands the things that one tames" (p. 129).

Kass, Leon R. "Evolution and the Bible; Genesis 1 Revisited," *Commentary* 68, no. 5 (November 1988), pp. 29-39. The order of appearance of the creatures in Genesis 1 is intentionally incongruous in order to force the reader's attention away from the temporality of the six days to the intelligibility of the six days. The primary purpose of the structure of the six days is an ethical one, namely to teach the non-divinity of the cosmos (contra Aristotle, i.e. autonomous reason), the moral amibiguity of God's highest creature (who has the "least fixed" path of motion), the morally neutral nature of nature (revelation replaces natural law), and the non-etemity of the cosmos (and hence the non-etemity of the species). Far from contradicting evolution, Genesis 1 supports many of the findings of modem science as well as provides an *origin* of species which evolution fails to provide. Provocative theological support for modern science from an unlikely source - Kass is a student of Leo Strauss with doctorates in medicine and philosophy.

Lampe, G. W. H. "The New Testament Doctrine of *Ktisis,*" *Scottish Journal of Theology Yl,* no. 4 (December 1964), pp. 449-462. Emphasizes the anthropocentric doctrine of creation in the Old and New Testaments. Redemption is "logically and theologically" prior to creation. Lampe goes so far as to label creation as the "raw material" for human spiritual development. However, passages such as Rom. 8:18ff. and Col. 1:15ff. show the strong interconnection between the drama of redemption and its effects on creation - both in terms of the fall and the resurrection. In terms of the fall Lampe comments: "Hence creation is subjected to meaninglessness; and the more man's technical capacity to subdue nature improves, the greater the frustration

which he imposes on it (p. 457). Later published in German *in Kerygma und Dogma* 11, no. 1 (January 1965), pp. 21-32.

Lerner, Michael. *Surplus Powerlessness.* Oakland, CA: Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 1986. Pp. xii, 350. Critique of modem industrial society within the tradition of the Frankfort school by the editor of the Jewish political magazine, *TMam.* Progressive ideologies of the recent past (science, Marxism, psychoanalysis) have been assimilated into cultures of technological domination. Biblical religion offers the only real alternative to the oppressive individualism fostered by modem society. "The very way that empiricism and scientism have come to dominate contemporary thought make it likely that religious communities will remain the major challenge to one-dimensional thniking" (p. 276). Emphasizes the crucial role religious tradition and ritual play in building community. Favorable review by Jim Grote in *Catholic Worker* 56, no. 4 (June-July 1989), p. 6.

Mascall,E.L. *Christian Theology and Natural Science.* London: Longmans, Green, 1956. Pp. xvii, 328. The notion of a fundamental conflict between science and theology is baseless. Approaches this thesis by examining several topics, including "The Nature of Scientific Theories," "Creation in Theology and Science," "Modern Physics and Indeterminacy," "The Body and the Soul," and "Man's Origin and Ancestry." Scholarly and technical study. Useful bibliography.

Oakley, Francis. "Christian Theology and the Newtonian Science: The Rise of the Concept of the Laws of Nature," *Church History* 30, no. 4 (December 1961), pp. 433-457. Ttaces the emergence of modem, natural science to the theological "condemnations of 1277" by Stephen Tompier, Bishop of Paris, and Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury which formally condemned the "metaphysical necessitarianism of Aristotle and his Arabic commentators." Ironically, Newtonian science owes its origin to the triumph of Judao-Christian revelation over Greek philosophy in the medieval, nominalist theology of the fourteenth century. The voluntarist conception of natural law as *imposed law* is rooted in the juridical, Semetic concept of law which presupposes an omnipotent Creator-God. This Semetic concept of law allowed the Newtonian view wherein the world operates as a lifeless machine driven by God's will. The Greeks assumed nature to be an intelligent organism operating on its own *immanent laws* with no need of an omnipotent God. "The exact significance of this becomes even more apparent if we bear in mind Needham's parallel conclusion that one of the crucial reasons for the failure of the Chinese to develop a natural science comparable with that of the West was their prior failure to produce a comparable concept of laws imposed upon nature, and that this latter failure was, in turn, the outcome of their lack of any conception of a personal, legislating Creator-God" (p. 451). Reprinted in Daniel O'Connor and Francis Oakley, eds., *Creation: The Impact of An Idea* (New York: Scribner, 1969), pp. 54-83.

Panikkar, Raimundo. "Some Theses on Technology," *Logos,* vol. 7 (1886), pp. 115-124. Discusses technology from the standpoint of its non-neutrality, autonomy, homocentrism, nominalism, quantification of reality, etc. Heideggerian analysis. "The realm

of science is the measurable. Science proceeds by measuring. We can only measure something if we succeed in reducing the phenomenon in question to discrete units... What cannot be measured does not 'count.' The pun is revealing" (pp. 122-123).

"Repurposing Education; The American College in the Ecological Age." *Religion and Intellectual Life* 6, no. 2 (Winter 1989), pp. 7-69. Symposium devoted to Thomas Berry's article, "The American College in the Ecological Age," which originally appeared in Berry's *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988). According to Berry, "the American college may be considered a continuation, at the human level, of the self-education processes of the earth itself (p. 7). Colleges must create an integrated curriculum modelled on the earth's evolutionary process. What is needed is a "functional cosmology" that includes the spiritual realm within geological processes. Respondents include Everett Gendler's "A Terrestrial Dogmatism?" Dell Hymes' "From an Anthropologist," William Nichols' "The Limits of Ecological Vision," Mary Evelyn Tucker's "New Perspectives for Spirituality," Betty Reardon's "Getting from Here to There," and Theodor Benfey's "A Scientist Comments."

Santmire, H. Paul. *The Travail of Nature; The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985. Pp.xiii,274. Extended critique of Gordon Kaufman's "A Problem for Theology: The Concept of Nature," *Harvard Theological Review* 65, no. 3 (July 1972), pp. 337-366. Kaufman emphasizes the Kantian distinction between nature and history and argues that Christian theology finds little value in nature *per se,* other than as a field for moral activity. In contrast, Santmire provides historical documentation for an ecological motif in Christian theology (Irenaeus, Augustine, St. Francis) interacting with an anti-ecologicaL spiritual motif (Origen, Aquinas, Luther, Barth, Chardin). "The narratives of biblical experience can be read primarily in terms of the metaphor of migration to a good land and the metaphor of fecundity (the ecological motif) wherever that seems feasible, rather than primarily in terms of the metaphor of ascent (spiritual motif)" (p. 189). Santmire critiques the "asymmetrical" status of the spiritual motif wherein nature and spirit are created, yet only spirit is redeemed. Favorable review by Jerry K. Robbins, *Theology Today* 42, no. 4 (January 1986), pp. 537-540.

Smolarski, Dennis C. "The Spirituality of Computers," *Spirituality Today* 40, no. 4 (Winter 1988), pp. 292-307. Rehashes the old instrumental view of technology as a value-free tool. "Guns Don't Kill People, People Kill People" (p. 295).

Staudenmaier, John M., SJ. "United States Technology and Adult Commitment'," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 19, no. 1 (January 1987), pp. 1-34. Fascinating study of the relationship between modem technology and the current crisis in adult commitment (i.e. rising divorce ratesand declining religious vocations). For example, standardized mass production leads to an atrophy of negotiating skills which results in an inability to resolve interpersonal conflicts. Or, technical complexity creates feelings of inadequacy which translate into a lack of confidence in choosing lifetime vocations. Or, the extraordinary precision required by electronic systems fosters a pattern of "little tolerance" in personal relationships. Or finally, electricity's creation of twenty-

four hour "days" produces an inability to live through "dark times" and an obsession with the quality of relationships. "Relentless clarity kills adult commitment" (p. 24). Practical advice to restore a sense of personal vocation includes the suggestion of fasting from electricity once a week and telling stories by candlelight instead.

Stewart, Claude Y., Jr. *Nature in Grace; A Study in the Theology of Nature.* Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983. Pp. xx, 318. Dissertation analyzing the three main contemporary theologies of nature: H. Paul Santmire's "Neo-Reformation Theology of Nature," John B. Cobb, Jr.'s "Whiteheadian Theology of Nature," and Teilhard de Chardin's "Neo-Catholic Theology of Nature." Attempts to bridge the nature-history dichotomy with a metaphysic of the divine Agent. "The structures and processes of nature, as well as the drama of history, are sacramental in character. Through both nature and history, albeit in different ways, the divine intending is realized" (p. 291). Exhaustive bibliography on the theology of nature.

Thevoz, Jean-Marie. "Apport de la theologie protestante a la bioethique" [The contribution of protestant theology to bioethics], *Reseaux,* nos. 53-54 (1987-1988), pp. 131-146. Four features of protestant theology - emphasis on the otherness of God, interpretation of Scripture, concern for anthropology, and openess to dialogue with the real world - have contributed to interdisciplinary, ecumenical discussions in bioethics. Part of a special issue, edited by Gilbert Hottois, on "La Bioethique, Une nouvelle generation de problemes ethiques?"

Wright, Richard. "Responsibility for the Ecological Crisis," *Christian Scholar's Review* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1970), pp. 35-40. Rebuttal to Ian McHarg and Lynn White, Jr.'s thesis that Christianity is responsible for the ecological crisis. An earlier version of this paper appeared in *Bioscience* 20, no. 15 (August 1970).

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A Forum For Scholarship on Theology in a Technological Civilisation
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In This Issue

From The Editor

Welcome to issue number five of *The Ellul Studies Forum.* Next to Jacques Ellul, probably no theologian has written as consistently and persistently on the theme of theology and technology as Gabriel Vahanian. It is no accident that Ellul sees him as the most important theologian writing in France today and describes his utopian theology as our only hope for the future. From his 1961 book *The Death of God* through *God and Utopia: The Church in a Technological Civilization* (1977) to his newest *Dieu anonyme, ou la peur des mots (God Anonymous, or Fear of Words,* 1989) the singular underlying and unifying theme has been the impact of technological civilization on Christian faith, theology and ethics.

The power of Vahanian's work lies in the fact that he does not simply take technology as one more topic on the agenda of Christian theology but rather explores the way in which technology alters the inner texture of theological thought itself. In so doing he

reveals the inner affinity between the utopianism of technology and the eschatological utopianism of Biblical faith - an affinity whose common term is the human capacity for speech, for the word. Exploring the implications of his work is the main theme of this issue and the focus of *Forum I.* This section is introduced with my own brief essay on the significance of Wianian's work. Then Lonnie Kleiver, of Southern Methodist University, gives us a masterful essay review of Vahanian's book *God and Utopia* and Phillipe Aubert, a pastor of the Reformed Church of Alsace, does likewise for Vhhanian's new book (not yet released in English) *Dieu anonyme, ou lapeur des mots.* This is followed with a short essay by Vhhanian on Paul Tillich's ambivalent treatment of the utopian theme. The result, I hope, will be a clearer picture of the significance of Vahanian's utopian theology.

In *Forum II* we have two further essays. The first, by Sylvain Dujancourt (a student of Vahanian's at the University of Strasbourg), outlines the significance of "Law and Ethics in Ellul's Theology." The second, by Sergio Silva, a professor of theology at the Catholic University of Chile, compares the theological understanding of technology in recent Papal pronouncements with the documents of the Second Vhtican Council of the Catholic Church. Finally, as usual, thanks to the diligent work of Jim Grote and Carl Mitcham, we have the latest installment in their continuing bibliographical annotation of current work in the area of theology and technology.

I hope all *Forum* readers will find this issue of interest. I wish to express my appreciation to Charles Cfeegah for his fine translations of two articles for this issue. Finally, please note that there will be a meeting of Ellul scholars on Friday morning preceeding the annual AAR Conference to be held in New Orleans this year. See page 6 for details.

Darrell J. Fasching, Editor

N.B. All essays in this issue have been modified as needed to conform to current standards of inclusive language.

Book Reviews

The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals, and Secularism. By Robert Wuthnow.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989,189pp., $16.95 paper.

by David L. Russell

William Tyndale College, Farmington Hills, MI.

The ever growing interest in American Evangelicalism has resulted in a smorgasbord of thought-provoking publications. While many new historiographies continue to be published on evangelicalism and fundamentalism, an impressive number of works are now being produced from within sociological circles. In a review article in the *Evangelical Studies Bulletin* (Fall 1989) historian Mark Noll quips, "It is becoming increasingly difficult for historians of religion to maintain their prejudices against sociologists." The gist if this statement has to do with the positive impression sociologists of religion have been making, not only upon the field of religious history, but upon the varied fields of theology as well. - –

At the top of the list of impressive publications from a sociological perspective is this most recent work by Robert Wuthnow, professor of sociology at Princeton University. Interestingly, this book follows one year behind his preceding publication, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), considered to be the most concise history of American religion since World War IL

Wuthnow's analysis is centered around the dynamics of two competing groups in American society, conservative evangelicals and religious liberals, both of which are influenced by a seemingly progressive secularism, to begin with, the author identifies three main sectors at work in American society: 1) The public sector, 2) The private sector, and 3) The voluntary sector. While many social theorists identify only two sectors, public and private, it is Wuthnow who opts, for the voluntary sector. It is his contention that the voluntary sector possesses aspects of both the public and the private sectors. The Church functions in the voluntary sector, however, the changing dynamics in society are changing the role and relationship of such voluntary organizations to society overall. In light of the relationship of the Church as a voluntary organism in American society there are added dynamics at work within the Church which increasingly make ambiguous and complicate that relationship. Wuthnow identifies it in the historic break between religious conservatives and religious liberals as

far back as the years immediately following the Civil War, but perhaps as far back as the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. The contested terrain (chapter 3) of conservatives and liberals has continually drawn them ”...into the public sphere in recent years” (p.41) yet with little progress in terms of arriving at a common ground.

Ongoing debates continue over the abortion issue, prayer in the public schools, gay and lesbian rights, and the nuclear arms race to mention just a few. Instead of arriving at constructive conclusions conservatives and liberals resort to a tit for tat game of ”Argumentum Ad Hominem.” What, then, is the end result? According to Wuthnow, it ”...has been a travesty of the profession of love, forgiveness, and mutual forbearance” (p.64). Wuthnow uses the Presbyterian Church as an institutional model for the past and present struggles between conservatives and liberals not for the reason that there have been no struggles in any of the other denominations, but mainly because of the magnitude of the struggle for Presbyterians. Division has haunted the Presbyterian Church from the days of the ”New Light” versus the ”Old Light” controversy during the First Great Awakening to the present day divisions between Presbyterian conservatives and Presbyterian liberals. The possibility of reconciliation, while hoped for by some, is in Wuthnow's opinion, slim to none. He in fact argues that the cleavage between these two warring parties is unfortunate for the reason that the conflict is skewing efforts to reconcile and more clearly see the biblical mandates for love and understanding.

In part II Wuthnow turns his attention to the ”Dynamics of the Secular.” The focus of this section deals with the ways in which the state, the media, and education all effect the function and role of religion in American society. In particular is the concern for the tendency of the state to drive individuals into various forms of civil privatism.

Conversely, there has been a privatization of America's faith attributable to many factors, including the increasingly pluralistic nature of American religion, and the greater identification of personal faith with the private sector. Interestingly enough Wuthnow accuses the widening appeal of the religious mass media of contributing to the privatization of faith. The televised religious format becomes a surrogate for the real thing. In other words, who needs the First Baptist Church down the road when you can tune into the ”Glass Cathedral” on the tube? In this sense the religious couch-potato can receive dynamic Bible teaching and words of encouragement while maintaining a detached commitment obliging themselves only to mailing in an occasional check.

The battle between ”Science and the Sacred” (chapter 7) has also been a contributing factor in the divisions between conservatives and liberals. For this study, the presumption that science is a contributing factor in the advancement of secularism seems to be refuted by the evidence that Wuthnow presents. The available evidence appears to indicate that there is a greater likelihood of secularization within the disciplines of the social sciences and the humanities.

In summary, Wuthnow poses a challenge to the evangelical academic community to continue working at developing credible scholarship and the utilization of the resources at their disposal. According to Wuthnow, ”the intellectual community and the public at large have a tremendous interest in knowing more about evangelical Christianity”

(p.175). So what seems to be the problem in achieving greater goals in the evangelical community? Wuthnow seems to indicate that more reconciliation needs to take place between evangelical Christians and liberal Christians.

Overall, I found this work well reasoned and adequate in its analysis of evangelicals and liberals. However, at times I got the sense that Wuthnow failed to clearly discriminate between fundamentalists and evangelicals and as a result he seemed to define conservative evangelicals as fundamentalists. I do believe that Wuihnow made periodic attempts to distinguish between the two (e.g., pp. 43 and 171). It should also be understood that the terms evangelical and fundamentalist are ambiguous and not so easily defined. It will be interesting to see what Wuthnow may produce in the future, but this work is bound to be one of his best.

Forum I

The Utopian Theology of Gabriel Vahanian

Gabriel Vahanian's "Utopian Connection"
Speaking of God, the Human and Technology
by Darrell J. Fasching

All too typically contemporary theological reflection on technology seems awkward and inept, as if we are stumbling around looking for a handle on this phenomenon - which, of course, is precisely our situation. For the most part, theology is treated as one world of discourse and technology another. In Gabriel Albanian's view, a theology which does not speak the discourse of its culture cannot speak to that culture. As a theological ethicist or theologian of culture he understands his task to be that of appropriating and transforming the linguistic universe of our technical civilization. The power of his work lies in his ability to locate the linguistic connection between the biblical tradition and our technological civilization.

"No epithet better qualifies this post-Christian age," Vahanian argued in his 1961 book, *The Death of God,* "than, 'technological'" (N.Y.: Braziller, 1961, 176-177). Long before *Time* magazine turned "the Death of God" into a media event, Albanian bad used that phrase to suggest that technological civilization was radically altering the experiential-linguistic texture of human existence, creating a "post-Christian civilization" typified by "a cultural incapacity for God." In a technological age the Medieval language of "supematuralism" no longer speaks the reality of God. The problem, he argued, is not so much secularization as it is a religiosity disengaged from the world. Christian faith has been reduced to a religiosity living in a separate world, focused on changing worlds rather than changing the world. That technological world which Albanian first analyzed almost three decades ago was (and still is) a world desperately in need of "the spirit of utopian and radical Christian adventurousness,... a radical rupture with the past and a bold new beginning (1961,188)."

That is not a bad description of the theological enterprise which Albanian has been engaged in since then - "a radical rupture with the past and a bold new beginning." A world which has no other language of faith than that of another world (in this case the language of Medieval supematuralism) is a world which has no capacity to speak of the living God and so ends up endlessly *Waiting for Godot.* A world which has no contemporaneous language to speak of God has no God to speak of. For the living God is not only the God of creation, the God who *speaks us,* but equally the God of

incarnation, the God whom *we speak (Dieu anonyme,* Paris: Descite de Brouwer, 1989). If the God of creation is not first of all the God of incarnation, if the word does not become flesh through the linguistic structures and sensibilities of our contemporary existence, then "God is dead."

The "Death of God" as a cultural event suggested that with ' the emergence of a technological civilization human existence bad undergone a fundamental mutation. The sacred bad migrated, as Albanian put it in *God and Utopia* (N.Y.: Seabury, 1977), from nature to technology. The theological task is to be as faithful to the linguisticality of our world as the Medievals were to theirs. Understanding themselves to part of the sacred order of nature, transcendence was expressed .in terms of the supernatural. Today we understand ourselves in terms of technology and transcendence will have to be expressed in terms of its utopianism. We no longer think of ourselves as living within a fixed order of nature and subject to an unchangeable human nature. We now seek not only to remake our world but also our selves. "Existentialism," Vahanian argued already in *The Death of God,* "is related to Christianity in the same way as technology is. Neither is thinkable without the Christian culture which originated them (1961,211)." The technological self is no robot, says Albanian, but the self which makes itself *(God and Utopia,* 1977, 136). And this same existential self-understanding pervades our managerial attitude toward our social structures. A technological civilization has an inherent utopian propensity, an inherent openness to transformation which can only be explained by understanding it as a child of biblical eschatology.

If ours is a Post-Christian age it is so because unlike the Middle Ages which were still shaped by pre-Christian Classical world views, the technological structures of our world are a direct product of Ute impact of biblical faith upon Western culture. The irony is that, because of this, the Gospel is more directly attuned to a technological civilization than it ever was to the Medieval mythological and metaphysical world view of "Christendom" - so much so that to speak of God in terms of "nature" and "super-nature" in our world seems foreign and unintelligible.

Every myth of ages past, Albanian argues, was a "technique of the human" which, while promoting human identity as "human nature," ended up settling humans, not in nature but in culture (1977, 86). Culture is the uniquely human realm, the artificial realm or "second nature" we create through our capacity for speech. As such, culture is inherently technological. Entranced by myth, we once thought of ourselves as part of the order of nature. But when technological consciousness demythologized these myths we became aware that we dwell not in nature but in language - the realm of culture. We have come to realize that our understandings of nature are themselves cultural products. To be a linguistic creature rather than a creature of "nature" is to be an eschatological-utopian creature. For language provides no permanent place to dwell but rather demands that we become what we are not. Both personal identity and the structure of society is rendered radically open. Modem technological civilization is uniquely and selfconsciously a child of the word.

For Albanian, "God," our "humanness" and "technology" are related, not extrinsically but intrinsically. They converge in our utopian capacity for culture, that is, our capacity for speech. Theology in a technological civilization cannot be "natural theology" but only a "theology of culture" - a theology of the word. Natural law and natural theology were always an ill-fitting graft onto a biblical faith which insisted that we are created in the image of a God without image, a God Wholly Other than nature and known only through speech. Human identity, understood "in the image" of such a God, revealed not some ill fated human nature doomed to death but a utopian destiny of new creation. If there is a lesson to be learned from the eschatological utopianism of biblical faith, it is that *a rose by any other name* is not really a rose. The difference between "nature" and "creation," or "history" and "incarnation," is the difference between fate and utopian destiny - between being trapped in "this body of death" or being "alive in Christ." Everything depends on the word - the Christie event where tbe otherness of God and our humanity converge as utopian event of the human. For it is "neither God nor man but Christ who is the measure of all things" (1989,61). This convergence can only occur in the body, (physical and social/ecclesial) wbere the word is made flesh through the techniques of the human. Wherever the word is so embodied, the world is transformed to disclose the pleromatic fullness of its utopian destiny as tbe reign of God draws near and all things are made new.

Christ, says Vahanian is not "some leftover Jesus" to be retrieved from the past and faith is no nostalgia for Jesus but rather "hope in Christ" (1977, 73 -75). Faith has to do with the coming of the human and Jesus confirms that there is no way to God except through the humanity of every person who comes to us as a stranger, as "God anonymous" (1989,174-177), even as the church has less to do with tbe creation of some exclusionary community than with "communion" with the stranger through whom God's otherness invites us to share in the pleromatic fullness of a new creation. "I have no other God," says S^hanian, "than the God of others" (1989,96).

God, says Vahanian, is not "tbe condition of (i.e., does not explain) our humanity any more than our humanity is "the condition of" technology. On the contrary, our humanity "is the condition of God." Apart from tbe human there is no God to speak of and apart from technology there is no human to speak of. Apart from technology, the human as utopianism of the body cannot come into being. We are not first human and then express our humanity through technology any more than we are first human and then express our humanity through speech. On tbe contrary, "In the beginning was the Word." First we are given the gift of speech and through speech the possibility of our humanity is given to us (1989,143). As the embodiment of our capacity for speech technology makes it possible for us to become what we are not The human is not a fact to be accounted for but a possibility ever and again to be realized (i.e., "made flesh"). As children of the word created in the image of the God without image *we are not what we are and are what we are not* (1977,137).

The utopian connection, then, between God, our humanity and technology is the word, our capacity for speech. But we must not think that Wianian is collapsing the

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divine into the human and its technological realization. Nor should one think that he is proposing tbe collapse of tbe kingdom of God into Utopia. On the contrary, he insists: "Utopia is not the kingdom. Utopia is to the kingdom as nature is to creation, or as history is to redemption, or simply as the flesh is to the spirit. If there is a relationship between them it is one of radical otherness" (1977,137). It is the task of the chu rch, as an *other world* within (not "another" world beyond) this world, to bring about a cultural revolution through a prior eccles-sial revolution.

Without the reign of God embodied in the social structures of our technological civilization, its utopianism will give way to the technical imperative (i.e., "if it's possible it's necessary" or "what can be done must be done") as our fate, putting an end to the utopianism of the human. Apart from the reign of God, the possible becomes reduced to the actual even as creation is reduce to nature and eschatology to history. The reign of God makes the impossible possible. "Created in the image of God, [tbe hu]man begins where all techniques of the human leave off, wbere they can only go "too far,"... where for want of the kingdom utopia ends" (1977, 141). Only a church which has re-formed itself as utopian embodiment of the word for a technological civilization, embracing "the words and concepts proper to *homo tech-nicus"(1989,167),* can serve as tbe leaven of a cultural revolution which would enable the world to realize its utopian possibilities - making all things new and all things possible.

God and Utopia: The Church in a Technological Civilization

by Gabriel Vahanian (N.Y.: Seabury, 1982)
An Essay Review by Lonnie D. Kliever
Southern Methodist University

This essay first appeared in the summer issue of *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses, 11/3 (1982), pp.321-324, and is reprinted here* with the permission of the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion. (Note: In transcribing this paper bold face emphasis has been added to certain passages.)

Perhaps no contemporary theologian is more frequently misunderstood than Gabriel Vahanian. Often wrongly associated with other movements (Left-wing Barthianism, Death-of-God theology), he has gone his own way in fashioning a theological vision at once distinctively biblical and uncompromisingly modern. The constructive lineaments of that theology have been partially obscured by the iconoclastic tone and message of Vahanian's writings in the 1960s - *The Death of God* (New York: Braziller, 1961), *Wait Without Idols* (New York: Braziller, 1964), and *No Other God* (New York: Braziller, 1966). With the publication of *God and Utopia: The Church in a Technological Civilization* (New York: Seajgjury Press, 1977), the full shape and significance of Vahaniaf^ljfheology has emerged. In this genuinely original and radical statement, he

establishes the essential identity between a 'utopiari i^manism' and an 'eschatological faith' and sketches out the linguae and ecclesiological form that faith must take in the 'technolSgRal civilization' that is dawning in our time.

Vahanian sees all human existence as essentially utopian. This 'utopianism of the human reality' functions both as a limit and as a horizon. As horizon, "the human" confronts human beings as a dare without prototype. As limit, "the human" contests every expression of life as less than a final achievement. Both dimensions of the utopian are caught etymologically in the Greek word for utopia -*ouk topos.* Human life happens where strictly speaking "it has no place." This utopian "otherness" or "beyondness" is, of course, what religions speak of symbolically as "God." As we shall see, there^jje very different ways of conceiving the relation, between "GSo* and humans. But whatever the conceptuality, God is God and ffimans are human only so long as they remain other to one another?

There can be no doubt that for Vahanian biblical fait]) is paradigmatic for this joining of the utopian and of the religious. Indeed, the utopian character of authentic humanism and the "eschatic" nature of biblical faith are structurally identical. But this formal identity must not be misunderstood. Vahanian does not generalize utopian humanism and eschatic faith to some universal experience enjoyed equally by all. Both the human and the divine come to appearance only in language and that language is always culturally and religiously particular. The utopian reality of the human and of God is always expressed in a culture's own religiosity and every religiosity is articulated in a specific cultural framework. This means that a given religious and cultural symbol system may either express or repress true humanity and true divinity. Any given symbol system can spell death or life to humans and to God!

Vahanian calls each such symbol system a "technique of the human," and notes that each technique is borne by a distinctive "vector of culture." The heart of this theological program centres in sorting out the ways these techniques differ and why their vectors change with the passage of time. He begins by marking a crucial distinction between "soteriological" and "eschatological" techniques of the human. Soteriological techniques (religions of salvation) envision God as the condition of the human. In soteric religiosity, God's transcendence is *exterior* to humans and the world. Human existence is defined by "scarcity" and "heteronomy" and the utopian destiny of the human is projected into *another world* which can only be anticipated through "spiritual" evasion of this world. By contrast, eschatological techniques (religions of the reign of God) see humans as the condition of God. Eschatic religiosity sees God's transcendence as *anterior* to human beings and the world. Human existence is marked by "abundance" and "autonomy" and the utopian destiny of the human is realized in this world becoming *other* through "bodily" engagement with it.

Vahanian further divides soteriological techniques according to whether humanization is seen as a liberation from nature or from history. A soteric religiosity vectored on *nature* centres in a "supernatural" conception of transcendence. Only a return to a supernatural world above can make up for the mysteries and miseries of life in the

natural world. By contrast, asoteric religiosity vectored on *history* turns on an "apocalyptic" conception of transcendence. Only the arrival of the apocalyptic world ahead can resolve the vicissitudes and injustices of historical existence. In other words, these soteriological techniques of the human rest on "mythic" conceptions of transcendence. They distinguish humans and God, world and kingdom, by *separating* them spatially and temporally. Consequently, these mythic carriers are never adequate for expressing true humanism or biblical faith. Soteriological religiosity always consigns the utopian reality of humans and God to some paradisal past or apocalyptic future. Their utopianism has consisted largely "in changing worlds rather than in changing the world."

Given these distinctions, Vahanian argues that Christianity has been a "salvation religion" throughout most of its history. To be sure, there was no way historically that Christianity could have avoided taking the cultural form of a soteric faith because the only cultural vectors available in the Greco-Roman world were mythic. Moreover, these supernatural and historical theisms at least mediated the utopian reality of God and humans in aaambiguous way. Belief in another-world above of ahead at least stood guard iconoclastically against all temptations to deify nature or society. The existence of the church at least prevented total disengagement from every concern for the world. But even these "misshapen utopianisms" have lost their power to bring the human and God to appearance in the modern world. An axial shift in modern sensibilities has "dishabilitated" the entire Christian tradition by undermining its mythic framework. The God of salvation religion who fulfills life from above nature or beyond history is no more! All mythic "cultural vehicles" of transcendence have been dissolved by the triumph of technological civilization. Modem technology has delivered humans from the mythic world of scarcity and heteronomy into the technological world of abundance and autonomy. Modern technology has made humans *producers* of nature and history rather then their *products.*

Seen in this light, technology is not the threat to humanism and faith so widely feared today. Technology liberates humans from an impersonal nature and history and empowers them to humanize both. What then is technology if not the the continuation of utopian humanism and eschatological faith? If the proper place of the human is neither "residue of nature" nor "afterglow of history," then technology furthers the realization of "the coming of [the hu]man" by extricating humans from nature's necessities and history's terrors. In other words, technology both negates and fulfills the Christian tradition. In negating Christianity's mythological conception of religion (whether in its supernatural or apocalyptic version), technology at last offers a cultural vector that can embody a genuinely eschatological faith.

Vahanian is under no illusions that technology's promise will be realized automatically. Technology will foster the utopianism proper to the human only if it gets "the religion it deserves." That new religiosity requires a new language and a new ecclesiology. Here Vahanian is still feeling his way and his thought at this point reaches an unparalleled density and difficulty. But the essential shape of this requisite linguistic and ecclesial revolution is clear enough to be grasped.

Linguistically, an eschatological faith can speak of God and the kingdom of God only by speaking of humans and their world. The human is the "event of God," though God is the ever-present other by which humans become what they are not. The world is the "event of God's kingdom," though the kingdom is the never-present *eschaton* that calls forth the world as *novum.* But language about humans and the world in a technological civilization must be *bodily* and *fictile.* The shift from mythology to technology is a shift from a "civilization of the soul" to a "civilization of the body." Technological civilization gives humans an earthly dimension heretofore neglected in favor of the soul and its heavenly aspirations. Body language brings the utopian reality of the human and God into the realizable present and thereby makes the human body and the social structure the instrument of the kingdom and the incarnation of God! But body language that does not sink into factualism or soar into fantasy must be fictile –it must shape the present by joining the real and the imaginary. Indeed, every human body and social structure is a "bridge" between the imaginary and the real precisely because language is the "artificer" of the human. "Language nudges the body into the word as well as anchoring the word in the body, even as the imaginary is anchored in the real. Indeed there is no utopia except in terms of the realizable, and the imaginary is nothing other than a utopianism of the real. Eschatological artifice does not overwhelm the imaginary with the real, nor does it sublimate the real in the imaginary. It emancipates humans from both, "thereby bringing hope within reach."

Ecclesiologically, an eschatological faith is neither identical with nor separate from the customs and structures of society. The church is rather "the eschatological principle of political and social organization of the human order." The utopian church in a technological civilization must meet the challenge of the "technocratic" systematization and privatization of life. The often-voiced fear that technology inevitably brings dehumanization and faithlessness grows out of technology's breakup of traditional customs, roles, and communities. Bureaucratic rationalization and multinational corporations are making traditional geographic and sociological boundaries obsolescent. Seen in its best light, this technological leveling could signal the latter-day beginnings of a "city of earth" where there is neither East nor West, black nor white, male nor female. But what of the individual who seems lost in this "gigantism" and "interchangeability"? Will the individual and the interpersonal simply disappear in the extraordinary *artificiality* of the technological environment and persona? While admitting the dangers of such a loss, Vahanian contends that artificiality need not oppose the human. After all, linguistic artifice creates the utopian "nowhere" where human life happens. "Far from being a robot, artificial man is the man who makes himself." "Artificial man" can be authentic if he or she makes himself or herself in the image of an imageless God."

The church cannot contribute to this artistic process of humanization by establishing havens of seclusion or ghettos of particularity. The church must go beyond all confessional or geographical boundaries. Neither liturgy nor polity should separate the church from the human community. Yet the church will lose its iconoclastic function and its eschatological anchorage if it is nothing but that community. The utopian church is

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an *other* world in the present world precisely because it is "pleromatic" - bringing all things everywhere into fullness by naming the One God who is everywhere because nowhere, and who is for every one because for no one. The utopian church is anywhere and everywhere anyone makes a new world.

Here then in bold strokes is the sum of two thousand years of Christian thought and life. Vfebanian presents a remarkable sketch of humans and their world in transition from a mythic to a technological civilization. That unanswered questions and critical problems abound in a work this encompassing and radical goes without saying. More traditional thinkers will ask: Is the reality of God so language-dependent? Does an eschatological faith offer real consolations? Is the utopian church anything more than an ideal construct? More radical thinkers will ask: Why does biblical faith deserve normative status? Does utopian humanism require symbols of radical transcendence? Does technological rationality allow anything other than private religiosity? But questions such as these do not blunt the sharpness of Albanian's challenge to both sides of the contemporary debate over human nature and destiny - to a reductionistic atheism that simply re-assigns the attributes of God to humans or to a repristinated theism that simply remodels human dependence on God. Neither atheism nor theism meets the challenge of making and keeping human life human in a technological civilization.

Dieu anonyme, ou la peur des mots [God Anonymous, or Fear of Words]

by Gabriel Vahanian (Paris, Descl€e de Brouwer, 1989)
An Essay Review by Philippe Aubert Pastor, Reformed Church of Alsace
Translated by Charles L. Creegan

God Speaks Our Language

Many theologies have endless prolegomena. One may enquire into the relation between faith and reason, between ontology and theology; lay the foundations of an existentialist, materialist or other reading of the Biblical tradition; reflect on the being of God and the being of humans. It is very true that all God-talk is grist for the Biblical mill. God may be defined as Alpha and Omega, the all-powerful, the judge or the gracious one. These conceptions of God are all present in the Biblical tradition, but the originality of the Biblical message over against other religions is not to be found in any of them.[1]

God is a God who speaks, the inverse of silent idols: "And like all speech, which binds even while liberating, God, bound to humanity, is only so bound by the word."

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[1] Gabriel Vahanian, *DieuAnonyme ou la pew des mots* (Paris, Desclde de Brouwer, 1989), p. 17.

Even before Gabriel Albanian, Christianity has certainty not lacked theologians who have placed this Biblical affirmation at the center of their theological thought fhr rarer are those who have accepted all the consequences. Barth himself fell by the wayside — a victim, like many others, of a hermeneutics of history. Tt> say that God is speech, that God is connected to humanity only by language and not by virtue of an analogy of being, or some sort of historical conscience, is to radicalize to the point at which God escapes from the idol which we make as soon as we assign to God a name, a place, a history, be it ever so holy.

Here we can see a filiation with the thought of Bultmann, who, in his enterprise of demythologizing, had no other intention than to bring God back to the zero point, a point of no return at which onty the new and the impossible are possible. That is what the Bible does when it forges the idea of redemption over against that of history, of creation over against that of nature.

Radicalized, God is no more tied to nature than to history. Holding to a hermeneutics of speech from Genesis to Revelation, from creation td resurrection, Albanian elaborates in his book a veritable Systematic Theology. Diving back into the sources of Biblical tradition, his thought does not switch Gods at the whim of the diversity of Biblical texts, of our existential angst, or of passing trends.

Offered as prolegomena are the central affirmations of the BiUe: God is speech, and its fulfillment: the Word made flesh. In this verbal condition, God and humanity are linked by language. If the break with ontotheology is not surprising, the anthropology found in Albanian's thought is worthy of greater attention. In a world where often God has resolved the human question, but also-inevitabty-humans have resolved the Divine question, Albanian reminds us that far from exposing of confusing these questions, the Bible radicalizes them to the point of defining them in terms of alterity: an alterity which onty language can establish.

> Speech does not separate. It does not separate what God has joined together. It does not separate what is one-as a hand is one with another in dapping, or I with thou, God with humanity in metaphor. It is not metaphor which is a manner of speaking *a* language. It is language which is a metaphor. It is the power of metaphor which bodies out the space of a speech as it makes of speech God's space: a space where humanity is the condition of God, where the reality of God is given with the reality of the world, but nevertheless without their becoming confused.[2]

Humans are grounded in God; like Adam, called Son of God, they have no other antecedents than speech. Thus they could not be defined as changelings of nature or as beings gifted with a historical conscience. Without precedents, each one is altogether as hu man as anyone, in the formula which Albanian borrows from Jean-Paul Sartre. "Where even God is no more than a word. A word thanks to which humanity is no

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[2] Ibid., p. 18.

longer grounded and never will be solely grounded in nature-though we must first be human, and, like Adam, hitman first rather than the first human."[3]

Now it is dear that language cannot be reduced to a simple code of signs and symbols.

We are far from the conception of Paul Tillich, for whom religious language can onty be symbolic: "[The symbol opens] up levels of reality which otherwise are hidden and cannot be grasped in any other way."[4] Tillich translates, he does not radicalize, so that for him the word "God" cannot be replaced since it partidpates in the Holy which it expresses. Translation onty displaces or circumvents the Holy, it makes language an instrument or even a mask. For Albanian, in speaking, God unmasks, un-names, de-sacralizes, putting himself [berselfpn question thanks to language which by nature is iconoclastic and utopian.

God can onty be spoken!

Speech and Utopia: God

Refusing to enclose God in a name, the Bible also constrains itself from enclosing God in a place: Biblical iconoclasm moves from the anonymity to the utopianism of God. For the myth of the Eternal Return or of the Earth-mother is substituted the hope in the Promised Land; to natural order which engenders an ethic of necessity is now propounded the Law, gracious order for which the onty possible ethic is that of the impossible.

> Master of the Universe, God creates. Thus is wiped out any idea of a generative Nature which takes care only of those it favors. So in the Old Testament, the appeal to nature as a norm and criterion of life yields to the Law. The Earth-mother yields to the Promised Land. And the Eternal Return yields to the Sabbath, while humans, whatever they may be in the natural order; are all equidistant from God.

Albanian restores this utopianism, which succumbs to a sacral conception of God and of the world, by a formula which acts as leitmotif from beginning to end of the book: "ftith consists not in changing worlds, but in changing the world."[5]

Salvation and Utopia: The Christ

Whether in a sacral or utopian conception of the world, every religion must address the question of salvation. For from Israel to the Church, salvation is the central problem of the Bible.

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[3] Ibid., p. 63.

[4] Paul Tillich, *Theology of Cultwe,* ed. Robert C. Kimball (New York, Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 56 [cited in French translation–Tr.] .

[5] Vahanian, p. 79.

The answer to this question must lie in the Christie conception of God, but also-as Albanian is at pains to show-in the Christie conception of humans. Classical Christology generally develops in three parts. First is an ontological reflection on the person of Christ, which most often aims to emphasize the ontological specificity of Christ as against humans, or again to deny any differences; in this second case, the difference between Christ and us would come out existentially. The second part attempts to discover the historical foundations of the life of Jesus, while the third is given over to the soteriology which follows from the confession of Jesus Christ as savior.

For Vahanian, Jesus is no more the answer to the God question than He is to the human question. He absorbs neither, but rather sets them face to face in their alterity and their communion, thus becoming the covenant between God and humanity. The measure of God and of the person who is the Christ does not begin with the birth of Jesus, but with the faith of the believer. That is to say, faith guarantees its own foundation and the result of historical studies is of minor importance. Does not St. Paul himself settle the question by reminding us that we only know the Christ of the writings?* The life of Christ begins with faith and the sense of God shown when, in Christ, God is not stuck in divinity nor the human in humanity, but God is of one body with humans, and in Christ 'humanity is the condition of God."

> Son of God, Christ does not represent the quintessence of God, but God's providence, in other words God's currency. Son of Man and thus native of the human, he does not symbolize the culmination of nature through the human phenomenon which would also be its conscience, but the novelty of humanity.[6]

More than ever it is a question of salvation. The word is made flesh to be embodied, to become Church as body of Christ-but on condition of becoming a social body in all of its dimensions, ethical, political, economic and cultural. Far from any mysticism, the thought of Vahanian ever returns to ethics: an ethics which permits us to change the world, as opposed to a mysticism which only changes worlds.

Utopianism of the Body and Social Order The Spirit

Far from setting in opposition heaven and earth, God and humanity, or the flesh and the spirit, the Bible invites us to engage nature and its determinism, history and its absolutisms, and the social order.

The pneumatology of Vahanian does not rest on a subtle analysis of the different names which refer to the Spirit. The best way of understanding the third person of the Trinity is still the amazing story of Pentecost.

While Western theology has, for a variety of reasons, dangerously reduced the place of the Spirit, our author gives it a new spin which is not unsurprising. Rather than any

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[6] Ibid., p. 117.

mystical manifestation like glossolalia, the outpouring of the Spirit is nothing other than a new social order, an ecclesial vision of the world.

> And how is this order to be recognized? From the fact that it falls into place once our behavior-on the social as well as the religious, cultural and ethical levels-demonstrate the conviction that is ours when our living is living the Christ.[7]

To live the Christ and not simply in Christ. The nuance in the Pauline expression must not be pushed too far; Vahanian wishes to insist on the fact that the Spirit does not interiorize the Christ, but exteriorizes him, communicates him in every person's language. Every person, be they Parthian, Elamite, Mesopotamian, Jew or Greek, male or female, rich or poor.

Not satisfied to revise the social order which classifies people according to their merits, or privileges of land or blood, the Spirit moves between the individual and the communal - [shaping] a community in which communion must not eclipse communication. St.Paul was already worried at the attitude of those Christians for whom the edification of the neighbor was secondary to the mystical communion of speaking in tongues. It falls to Vahanian to take up the cause and to take on the interpretation of the famous passages which Paul devotes to this problem in the first letter to the Corinthians.

> And would not God then be reduced to a mere effect of language-—like that other Divine abyss, Being, or what fills it, the Holy? Speech postulates language. But when through misdirection it is called to postulate both more and less than language, it leaves the sphere of language. Then it serves to strengthen a vision of the world more mystical than ethical: dualistic, and providing a springboard for the initiates, the candidates for otherness. But if God is a God who speaks to us, God is willingly placed in question, less through nature and its catastrophism or history and its tragedy, than through language. It is in language that one recognizes the traces of God, as those of the wind in the grass, breath in the word, and the Spirit in the newness of the world and of life.[8]

In this book, Gabriel X&hanian shows that it is possible to escape the eternal problem of theism and atheism by returning to the roots of Biblical tradition.

Taking up the theses already expressed in *God and Utopia,* the author proceeds to a true theological reconstruction which, far from refuting tradition, restores it by reorienting it in a direction it should never have left. A theology in gear with modernity which returns to the Christian an awareness of faith, a capacity to grasp the reality

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[7] Ibid., p. 136.
[8] Ibid., p. 139.

of the world, not fleeing it, but rather changing it. On one condition: that the Church must show its mettle, it must not be afraid of words; for more than our past or our future it is speech which remains a challenge to humans and a hope of humanity.

⊠ Editor's note: Mr. Aubert makes a puzzling allusion here. I suspect he means to say, as Vahanian does say, that Paul reminds us that even if we once knew Christ in the flesh that is not how we now know him, for we now' know him only in the Spirit. (2 Cor. 5:16).

Ellul Forum Meeting at the AAR Convention
A Critical Appraisal of Ellul's Sexual Ethics by Tom Hanks author of God So Loved the Third World
Friday, November 17th, 1990
at the New Orleans Marriott
The Lafayette Room

Theology of Culture: Tillich's Quest for a New Religious Paradigm

by Gabriel Vahanian
University des Sciences Humaines, Strasbourg
for Jean-Pierre Richter

Whatever reasons are adduced by Paul Tillich when he claims that, under the circumstances of today's human cultural predicament, traditional theological ethics should give way to a theology of culture, one thing clearly stands out: the task at hand can be neither defined nor discharged properly unless it rests, firmly, on a religious analysis of culture. Immediately, however, another thing makes itself felt and grows and looms even larger than the former it refers to what I shall call Tillich's quest for a new religious paradigm.

In *Theology of Culture* Tillich writes that if "religion is being ultimately concerned about that which is and should be our ultimate concern, [then] faith is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, and God is the name for the content of this concern."[9] But no sooner has he made this statement than he draws our attention to the fact that with it he points to "an existential, not a theoretical, understanding of

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[9] *Theology of Culture,* Oxford University Press, New York 1959, p. 40.

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religion."[10] But is that all there is to it? Nor would the question arise if, in the same paragraph, he did not invite it by admitting that "such a conception of religion has little in common with the description of religion as the belief in the existence of a highest being called God. and the theoretical and practical consequences of such a belief."[11] Having thus raised at least a question about the assumption that religion must be intrinsically tied up with a substantialist ontology, he ads, similarly, that another and for us equally significant consequence of "the existential conception of religion is the disappearance of the gap between the sacred and secular realm."[12] And yet, just as he retracts himself with respect to God as Being-itself, so also he will not really go so far as to drive a wedge between religion and the sacred much less discard that other, equally rampant, assumption according to which religion must intrinsically be tied up with the sacred.

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Casual as they may be, these statements bring nonetheless into focus what, to my mind, is really at stake in Tillich's shift from theological ethics to theology of culture.

To begin with, take the last words of the last quotation. Considering that normally what goes together with the sacred is the profane while religious is what goes together with secular, one is bound to wonder whether the disappearance of the gap is, for Tillich, the result of a process of desacralization or the result of a process of secularization. For reasons that will become clear as we go on, Tillich does not mean the former. But he really does not mean the latter either, since secularization - of which he is critical, anyway - at worst would amount to a displacement of the sacred, not its loss. And if so, there could be no disappearance of any kind of gap, either. Or else, it must result from a process of desacralization - a process which, precisely, consists, not in obliterating religion, but in providing it with another ground than the sacred. Indeed, unless the gap to which Tillich consistently refers has disappeared, what would be the point of shifting from theological ethics to theology of culture? Given the ambiguities of Tillich's thought or his *existential* ambivalence about the secular (or, for that matter, the sacred), the shift, once it is property analyzed, should bring into evidence another yet equally exciting aspect of his thought, with consequences affecting not only ethics and society but also the language of faith and theology properly speaking. Meanwhile, the real nature of the shift and its shortcomings in Tillich's own handling of it are brought to light by raising a simple question. It can be phrased as follows: Obviously honing in on or beckoned by a new religious paradigm, what is it that prevents Tillich from ultimately giving up ontotheology, and the idea of God as Being-itself, for the sake of a theology rooted in the Word - instead of merely using words? That is, to a theology attuned to the verbal condition of the human. What is it that keeps his thought firmly oriented to the sacred instead of prodding it into a theology of utopia?

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10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid, p. 41.*

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To be sure, what Tillich was concerned with, on his own admission, was a *religious* analysis of culture. But, given the previous remarks, it could well be that this first step was also the wrong one. Considering the vast upheavals generated by the successive scientific and technological revolution and their urgent implications for human self-understanding; considering in other (or, should I say, in his own) words, the cultural shaking of our religious foundations, should he not have instead been concerned with a cultural analysis of religion? Indeed, if language is "the basic cultural creation" and, Tillich goes on, of moreover, "every religious act, not only in organized religion, but also in the most intimate movement of the soul [i.e., not only in theoretical but also in existential religion] is culturally formed," in these times of spiritual crisis and shifting religious styles - driving, for example, Protestants and Catholics into having nowadays more in common than they do with their respective sixteenth century ancestors - would a cultural analysis of religion not have provided him with a better and more pertinent theological stance? Much as Tillich protests against ascribing religion to a "special realm" alongside a secular one, does he not himself consolidate such a cleavage even when he defines religion as "the substance of culture" and culture as "the form of religion"?[13] Inevitably, a definition of this type is bound to foster one kind of dualism or another, if it does not simply perpetuate a rather traditional, dichotomous understanding of reality.

Tillich's protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, this impression is not quite alleviated by statements to the effect that "the religious and the secular are not separated realms:" they are "within each other."[14] Such statements, however, are immediately counterbalanced if not neutralized by the rather telling admission that "this is not the way things actually are."[15] Actually, each realm tries or tends to dominate the other, even as, Tillich claims, on another, existential level, each of us drifts into estrangement or is responsive to both acceptance by God and self-acceptance.

Am I then still suggesting that for all practical purposes Tillich's understanding of the relation between religion and culture is grounded in the sacred? I am, in spite of the fact that he defines the sacred as a passion for the secular. Am I equally suggesting that his understanding of the religious phenomenon and of Christianity in particular is one that is not so much grounded in "salvation" as one that reduces the Christian faith to a religion of salvation? I am once again, and again in spite of the fact that even for Tillich "salvation," "saving," and "savior" are words that need to "be saved themselves."[16] They are words whose efficacy has consistently lost to the "saving power of the technical control of nature," while at the same time the cure of souls is itself

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[13] *Ibid, p. 42.*

[14] *Ibid, p. 41.*

[15] *Ibid*

[16] "Salvation," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* LVII(1963) 1, p. 4 & 7.

being practiced with a far "greater consciousness of the real meaning of grace" by depth psychology.

In a word, Tillich's reluctance to get rid of *being* in talking about God is in turn explained by his reluctance to get rid of the sacred. Interestingly, this twofold reluctance is accompanied by an even more significant acknowledgement, namely: both religion and culture are funded by language. True enough, what Tillich means by language is nothing more than a symbolic order and its tradition. And, although as an order this order is less and less conspicuous today for its adhering to the so-called vertical dimension rather than to the horizontal one, still it is thoroughly tangled with the sacred of which it remains captive instead of being pegged on utopia. Mistaking optimistic progressivism for "hope against hope," the utopian hope of which at times American civilization was only able to reflect distorted image, Tillich points out that religion "had nearly forgottet^the religious reservation, the vertical line, and had dedicated its-fagee to the religious obligation, the horizontal line alone. It had consecrated progressivistic utopianism instead of judging and transcending it."[17] What he does not realize, however, is that religiotrVas been undergoing a basic shift: in fact, if not yet theoretically it is no longer tied up with the sacred. And Tillich has no conception of such a radical mutation of the religious experience. Inadvertently or not, he then writes: "The original terminology of scriptures and of the liturgies of the Ancient Church cannot be replaced. Mankind has archetypal words."[18]

As is well known, Paul Tillich was by and large rather critical of utopia. He sees it as the ultimate sanction of secularism if not its final degeneration. No wonder he did not approve of Gogarten's overall vision *afjS£kularisiening.* Yet he should not be rebuked for that. And he wS®d not be altogether wrong if his own alternate concept of apologetics had been free of all suspicion. Indeed, utopia and the sacred do not quite mix. As Gilles Lapouge puts it, utopia is not pr^Stibus to the sacred.[19]

And no Ibtfger can the question be eluded, either. Something prevents Tillich from identifying the religious dimension with the spirit of utopia. Why? In spite of the entire thrust of his thought, what is it that, for example, drives him to contend that "no church is possible without a sacramental representation of the Sacred"?[20] Or does Tillich manage to overlook the fact that this kind of claim is scarcely possible without the prior confusion of the sacred and the holy, of sacralization and hallowing? Surely, there must be another explanation.

At this point, it seems obvious to me that Tillich was groping for a new religious paradigm. The general trend of his thought is studied with irrefragable indications of such a quest. To wit, the incessant struggle against secularism as well as clericalism or ec-clesiasticism he wages in the name of that most apt and most beautiful of all, the Protestant Principle –of which, apparently, even his own definition of religion

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[17] *The Protestant Era,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1948, p. 190.
[18] *Auf der Grenze* Evangelisches Verlagswerk, Stuttgart 1962, p. 47.
[19] Gilles Lapouge, *Utopie et civilisations,* Flammarion, Paris 1978.
[20] *Auf der Grenze,* p. 52.

and culture, if not his theology of culture, is to be deemed but a distorting echo. Quite correct when, by ecclesiasticism, he means otherworldliness, something seems to go wrong when, by secularism, he means not only socialism but also the latter's utopianism or, more precisely, its immanentist utopianism. Not to mention the fact that it remains to be seen whether, of necessity, utopianism must be immanentist,

Tillich, easily presuming that secularization must lead to secularism and construing the secular in antinomy with the sacred, opts for and finds refuge in the bosom of the sacred even while claiming to be concerned with the unconditioned, the ultimate, albeit forgotten, the religious dimension.

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Still, it is no wonder that in spite of it all he has, in "Critique and Justification of Utopia," written pages hardly surpassable on the subject. From the start, he states, that "utopia is truth," and asking "Why is it truth?" answers: "because it expresses man's essence, the inner aim of his existence." "Utopia," Tillich insists, "shows what man is essentially and what he should have as telos of his existence.[21] Accordingly, Tillich points out," a socially defined utopia loses its truth if it does not at the same time fulfill the person, just as the individually defined utopia loses its truth if it does not at the same time bring fulfillment to society."[22]

However, the significant thing lies elsewhere. It lies in the fact that this truth of utopia seems itself inevitably bound to be checkmated by no less a utopian untruth: "Utopian is a judgment of the extreme sinfulness of the present or of a social group or people or religion and an attempt to lead out of this situation, but it does not say how this is possible if there is radical estrangement."[23]

We need not be surprised at Tillich's negative assessment of utopia being as strong as his positive assessment. He uses the same stratagem with respect to the church or religion in general, or with respect to culture. He remains consistent with the sacral presuppositions of his theological stance, globally considered, if not outright with the Protestant principle. Of the problem thus raised by utopia he sees no resolution except in terms of the *idea of the two orders,*[24] of the vertical and the horizontal or, do I dare add, of the sacred and the profane. Clearly, for Tillich onfy the Lutheran idea of the two orders - which I prefer to see as somewhat alien to my own unabashedly Calvinistic understanding of the Protestant principle - can prevent utopia from "freezing" into some *final solution* (with all this phrase connotes to our post-Auschwitz ears). Tillich does not, I am afraid, seem to allow for the possibility much less for the fact that utopia, if it aims at anything, aims precisely at no final solution of any kind. For him, what would and does ultimately confer finality, even "utopian finality to any place or time in

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[21] Frank E. Manuel ed., *Utopias and Utopian Thought,* Beacon Press, Boston 1967, p. 296.

[22] *Ibid,* p. 297

[23] *Ibid,* p. 300.

[24] *Ibid,* p. 308.

history," is and has always been the sacred. No sooner has he acknowledged the spirit of utopia than he rejects its relevance unless it can be retrieved in the name of the sacred. Unexamined or inadvertent, such a position is all the more unexpected since Tillich himself concludes his own essay with these words which he himself underlined: "It is the spirit of utopia that conquers utopia." And who else but Tillich could say anything like that?

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If the religious task consists in changing the world rather than changing worlds, is there any conquest or, for that matter, any quest that is not fundamentally utopian? Only in this manner can the religious dimension be spared from becoming one dimension among others. Only in this manner can it perform as the leaven does in the dough, changing it into bread. By contrast with the sacred, the spirit of utopia implies in no way that the real world is somehow a place off limits; it is what is at stake in and through cultural revolutions that exhibit a religious vision and religious revolutions that likewise exhibit a cultural relevance. True enough, in Tillich's time, the need for either kind of revolution had, at bottom, been ideologically oriented, exclusive of any other consideration. Progressivistic or apocalyptic, demonic or catastrophic, it did nevertheless reflect something - though not always the best — of the deeper revolution that had been and still is affecting us all both religiously and culturally, the technological revolution.

Of this technological revolution, surely, Paul Tillich grasps the hitherto unexpected, unfathomed meaning. The desert can be "tamed" into a garden, and the wilderness, both inward, psychological, and outward, physical, can be turned into paradise. Which, of course, does not mean that the converse cannot equally happen, and technology unleash demonic forces yet unsuspected by our natural, all too natural, inclination to evil. Not that this would mean the ultimate surrender of nature to technology and its alleged inherent madness, its congenital incapacity for coherence. It could, on the contrary, mean the surrender of technology to nature, albeit through human nature.

To conceive of technology as the ultimate negation of nature amounts to overlooking its real meaning, to begin with, technology has made us more conscious of nature than we have ever been so far. Technology is the spirit of nature conquering nature. And to it, an its implications, Tillich is, no doubt, most sensitive.

So sensitive, indeed, that he feels the need for a new religious paradigm - a utopian paradigm of religion in lieu of the sacral paradigm bequeathed by the Western tradition. A tradition, however, of whose language, precisely, Tillich does not simultaneously feel the need to be freed. And it is this language which holds Tillich's thought firmly grounded in the sacral discourse of on-totheology and withholds it from the spirit of utopia. But it is a language that defeats itself: pervading everything from birth to death, geared to life after death, it shies away from life in spite of death, the life over which death itself can win no victory - no final victory.

<center>154</center>

Not without some irony, Paul Tillich's ashes were scattered in the sky over and above the memorial garden designed in his honor at New Harmony, a town founded by Robert Owen and his utopian community, a landmark in the conquest of utopia by the spirit of utopia.

Book Reviewers Needed

If you are willing to be called upon as a reviewer for *The Forum* please contact Dan Clendenin, William Tyndale College, 35700 West Twelve Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48331. Phone 313-553-7200.

Forum II

Law and Ethics in Ellul's Theology

[Abstract of *Introduction to Jacques Ellul's Judicial Ethics,* Master's Thesis, Faculty of Protestant Theology University of Strasbourg]
By Sylvain Dujancourt
Translated by Charles L. Creegan

Jacques Ellul's judicial thought is an aspect of his work which has received little attention. And yet it is perfectly characteristic of Ellul's sociological and theological procedures. In this area as in others, Ellul initiates a dialectic of constant cross-questioning involving study of the problem in its social, political, and cultural aspects, and investigation of what the Bible says-or does not say-about the subject. For Ellul, law is a human phenomenon which is only fully significant in light of Biblical revelation.

A: to affirm that law is a human phenomenon is an implicit response to two questions: What is law? What is its origin?

1) In defining law, Ellul begins by rejecting the traditional alternative between idealist and positivist conceptions-which he accuses in the first case of an abstract vision of the nature of law and humanity, and in the second case of reducing law to a mere rule. Law is "a concrete system destined to be applied." Ellul next distinguishes law from several notions for which it is sometimes or often mistaken: morality, history, the State, custom, laws, language, and science. These distinctions allow Ellul to uncover five characteristics of law. Law is universal, a rule of social life indispensable to the functioning of all civilization. Law is an artificial creation of humanity, helping to ensure control of time, space, and human relations. Law is normative, both in that it expresses a desire to modify the total social fact and in that it is a set of procedures facilitating the realization of the values embodied in law. Law depends on applicability, it is made to be applied. Finally, Ellul claims that law has an aim, justice, which is also its critical benchmark.

Ellul the historian sets out a three-stage typology of the evolution of law. In religious law, law and religion are confused. In secular law there is an equilibrium between the basis, popular conscience, and the form, judicial technique. This is the moment of legal evolution which Ellul prefers. The last stage is that of the technologizing of law, in which judicial technique dominates. Here law is transformed into an organization at the service of the State. The law of our societies is in a crisis due at once to its

nationalization, its proliferation, its incoherence, and its devaluation. It has also mutated: technique has transformed law into a mechanism for social control. A teleology of order has substituted itself for one of justice. In counterpoint, Ellul imagines an ideal law which would encompass three qualities: a close mesh with social reality, a subordinated judicial technique, and a capacity for evolution. This conception comes nearest to the second stage of the evolution of law.

2) Having thus analyzed law, Ellul tries to answer the question of its origin-that is, of its creation and foundation. For Ellul, the creation of law is the fruit of a combination of human effort and social facts. Law is firstly a spontaneous and collective work of humans for the organization of social life. Law is created by decisions made in light of certain values. Without accepting the Marxist analysis of law, Ellul allows that social, economic and political givens play an important role in the creation of law. Ellul considers events to be a particularly important source of transformations of law. The satisfaction of three criteria allows us to affirm that a rule has become one of law: the existence of common and accepted values; regularized procedures; and sanctions. Ellul raises judicial and theological objections to natural-law doctrines which purport to explain the foundation of law. "Natural law" is a human invention, founded on a variable idea of nature; it is a negation of the eschatology of the Kingdom and allows humans to escape radical revelation.

B: Continuing his research, Ellul relates his analysis of law as a human phenomenon to the Bible, and shows that revelation adds to the value and significance of law. He examines the place of law in the project of salvation as it is revealed to us by God, and proceeds to extract a Christian judicial ethics. Ellul's theological analysis of law rests on two choices, theology of grace and Chris-tocentrism, which underline his solidarity with S. Kierkegaard, K. Barth and J. Bose.

1) In revelation, law is an element of the dialectic between truth and reality. In the Old Testament, Ellul distinguishes between the Torah, expression of Divine grace, and Hebraic legislation. Hebrew law is in many ways similar to those of other oriental civilizations of the same era. Ellul notes that, as an instrument of God, it is nevertheless unique. In the New Tostament, law takes on an essentially ethical dimension; it is an instrument directed to reducing conflicts and allowing the weak to compensate for their weakness.

In the Bible, there are three characteristic manifestations of law: institutions, such as marriage, State, or property, which are created by God with a soteriological dimension; human rights, those given by God in the interest of covenant, of which the first is to be able to speak to God in the name of Jesus Christ; justice, which is an act of God, judgement, and grace. The notion of justice establishes a link between law and revelation. This link allows Ellul to affirm that the foundation of law is in God. This is not a theocratic conception of law. Instead it signifies that law finds its true value in God, and that in Jesus Christ it gains its full significance. Law is a part of the lordship of Jesus Christ over the world, between the covenant and the parousia. It is also placed

in the eschatological perspective of the final Kingdom, although it cannot contribute anything at all to its coming.

2) On the basis of this judicial and theological analysis, Ellul constructs a Christian judicial ethics, that is to say, a coherence between being and doing relative to law and faith. The ethics proposed by Ellul is founded on the notion of judgement, first of all with respect to existing law, and secondly with respect to the working out of law. On the one hand, the Christian is invited to take notice of the worth of law before God, while at the same time measuring the exact social value of law. Further, the law of love does not allow the Christian to ignore the law in force; it must come into play with respect to the existing law. The Church must also take care that the law of society does not hinder the free speaking of the Word of God, salvation of humankind.

On the other hand, as to the working out of law, the Christian must work for the re-establishment of order, that is, to recall the existence of a transcendent dimension of law. The point of reference is the Christological order. The Christian must constantly reorient law, and stress the creative sense and the social function of law. Ellul invites the Church to exercise its role of mediation and conciliation so that all social groups may rally around certain values, and accept the authority of a law which would bring them into being. Ellul also rejects all notions of a Christian law since he opposes the idea of obliging non-Christians to believe in a faith and values which they do not share.

Notes on the Catholic Church and Technology

by Sergio Silva G., ss.cc.

Sergio Silva is a priest of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart and Professor of Theology as the Catholic University of Chile. Recently he spent a week in residence as a visiting scholar at the Science, Technology, Society Program of Pennsylvania State University. In the future he will be collaborating with Carl Mitcham and Jim Grote in the development of more bibliographic documentation concerning theological reflection on technology, especially in Latin America.

These notes are based on my book (written with the collaboration of Pedro Boccardo) *La idea de la ticnica modema en el Magisterio de la Iglesia, desde Pio XII hasta Juan Pablo II* (1985) *(The Idea of Modem Technology in the Magisterium of the Church from Pius XII to John Paul II* [1985]), published in *Anales de la Facultad de Teologla* 38, 1987, Cuademo 2, Santiago de Chile, Pontificia Universidad Catdlica de Chile, 1989,166 pages. — S.S.

What contemporary Popes and the Second Vatican Council have said about technology reflects the thinking of the Church. Not that in the Catholic Church and in her theology there are no differences of opinion, but on this subject Popes and Council do not go beyond the Church.

To write the book I read and analyzed all that the Popes and the Council have said on technology. It should be immediately noted that Popes and Council seldom reflect explicitly about technology; their statements are usually indirect, apropos other subjects, and in most cases are not in the Encyclicals (letters in which the Pope engages his teaching authority at the utmost, without being infallible), but in occasional speeches to various groups, especially at the Wednesday open audiences. I have collected all such statements (or so I hope) and have tried to organize them systematically.

I have found 409 relevant documents. From Pius XII (1939-1958), 98; from John XXIII (1958-1963), 28; from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), 8; from Paul VI, 98; and from John Paul II (1978 till 1985), 177.

I.

My main conclusion is that the Popes and the Second Vatican Council have (with some subtle but significant shifts between them) fundamentally the same attitude toward modern technology, an attitude that can be summarized as follows:

1. The documents stress the importance of modern technology as one factor that contributes to the shaping of modem society and its culture.

2. When they come to evaluate modem technology, their statements are of the form "Yes, but." Yes: they affirm technology in itself, that is, they believe that the human ability to know and to dominate nature has been created by God, so that in this abstract and general sense, technology is God's gift. But: this means that contemporary technology is not always and equally acceptable.

Repeatedly, papal documents refer, on three levels, to the ambiguity of modem technology. First, the forces controlled by technology can be used for good or bad, to support life or to sow death. There is, therefore, fundamentally an ambiguity of humanity, wounded by sin.

Second, modern technology' involves a serious threat to the human spirit. This threat is twofold. On the one hand, there is the issue of method: the method of modern science is legitimate when it is a question of knowing the natural world, but it becomes illegitimate when applied - as the only valid method - to human beings and their works. On the other hand, the problem is cultural: contemporary Western culture is more and more a scientific-technological culture; that is, the ultimate values are the objectivity of modern science and the efficiency of modem technology. But these values tend to destroy the humanness of humanity.

Last, but not least, the indefinitely growing power that modern technology puts in the hands of this wounded humankind – its limitlessness – gives to the problem of ambiguity a new dimension and makes it qualitatively different. On the one hand, to say it simply, ambiguity is of a different order when it is concerned with the ability to kill a few people or to destroy all life on our planet. On the other hand (and this is more decisive), there is the difficulty of controlling and dominating this technical development and all its effects in the life of society and of individuals.

The papal documents stress four areas in which this difficulty of controlling technology is most obvious: environmental pollution, the destruction of cultures among underdeveloped peoples, damage to the inner life (self-consciousness, awareness, contemplative life), and the triumph of the scientific-technical positivist ideology.

II.

After this brief summary, it is helpful to ask: What is specifically theological in these statements about technology? What do they contribute (if anything) to a philosophy of technology? There are at least two specifically theological points in the documents analyzed.

1. The first is that technology is God's gift to humankind. This point can be regarded as a purely formal one, only necessary in the ecclesiastical language game. But it is accompanied by a more global affirmation that the earth (the object of technological manipulation and transformation) belongs to God, and that he has given it in stewardship to human beings.

These statements can make a twofold contribution to the philosophy of technology. On the one hand, a radical denial of technology is excluded, because as an ability of human nature it is God's gift. Yet, on the other hand, every concrete historical technology, including our modem scientifically based technology, must be criticized because it is not obvious that it respects the earth as the creation of God.

2. The second theological affirmation is that the problems with technology are rooted in ambiguities that derive ultimately from sin. Given that sin can be defeated only by Christ, and that his victory shall encompass the whole world only at his second coming, technology, in the light of Christian faith, will always remain, now and in every imaginable historical future, ambiguous.

From here we can conclude that Christians must undertake the effort and the struggle to transform modem technology, so as to deliver it of its bad aspects, because Christians must struggle against sin in all its forms. This must not be done with a utopian attitude, however, as if a perfect technology were possible. A moderate attitude is the only one that can help us to improve modem technology.

III.

One can, however, go beyond the teaching explicitly contained in the papal documents. If the Popes and the Council were to view technology as a reified anthropology, as made in the image of humanity that prevails in modem culture, then it could be argued that Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of Christian faith, as the criterion of humanness, provides a standard for criticizing technology. If technology is to reify a "good" anthropology, it must be pursued in the light of the human personality of Jesus, of his kind of relations with nature and with human beings.

Finally, there are implications of the fundamental option for the poor made by the Catholic Church in Latin America, since the Conventions of Bishops in Medellin, Colombia (1968), and Puebla de los Angeles, Mexico (1979). This option is not made by the Church autonomously. It is the option of the God of Jesus himself, who is revealed in the Scriptures (and in the lives of his saints throughout the ages) as be who loves with special care and tenderness those of his creatures who have their lives unjustly threatened. This is what happens today with the poor in the Third and Fourth Worlds, and with nature. The teaching of the Church is therefore that technology ought to be used not to promote but to protect against such unjust threats.

Guidelines for Submissions to The Ellul Studies Forum

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Bibliography

Bibliographic Notes on Theology and Technology

by Carl Mitcham and Jim Grote

Eighth in a series. Contributions welcome.
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George Parkin Grant. *Technology and Justice.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986. Pp. 133. A selection of essays on the relation between Christianity and modern technology, including critiques of abortion and euthanasia. Grant is especially sensitive to the fascist implications of "quality of life" theologians like Joseph Fletcher who define "personhood" on the basis of neo-cortical function. Regarding Fletcher's indicators of personhood, Grant writes: "The list includes self-awareness, a sense of time, self-control, capability of relating to others, the ability to communicate, a concern for others, control over existence, and a balance of rationality and feeling. A bit unnerving when one looks at oneself. How many of us would qualify?" (pp. 126-127).

Grant, George Parkin. *English-Speaking Justice.* Notre '"tiame,TN: "University of Notre Dame Press,'1985. Fp. xi, 104. First published, Sackville, New Brunswick: Mount Allison University, 1974. Pp. 112. Critique of John Rawls' *A Theory ofJusti.ee.* (1971). Within this critique Grant sketches the complex historical relationship between liberal social contract theoiy, Protestantism, and modern technology. According to Grant, the philosophical weaknesses of social contract theory have been hidden for generations by the material success of technology and the voluntarist faith of Protestant theology. The problematic character of this historical symbiosis of political liberalism, Protestantism, and technology is now coming to light. Social equality is no longer a liberating but a restraining ideal for the progress of technology. While technology depended on the notion of equality in its inception, that dependency has now been outgrown.. Liberalism-fails by the wayside as humankind turns from the conquest of non-human nature to the conquest of human nature. Favorable review: Jim Grote, "Technology and the End of Liberalism," *Research in Philosophy and Technology,* vol. 9 (1989), pp. 227-231.

Hawkin, David J. "The Johannine Concept of Truth and Its Implications for a Technological Society,"*Evangelical Quarterty.59,* no. 1 (January 1987), pp. 3-13. An exegesis of truth as revelation in the fourth gospel, followed by reflections on the implications for social activism, since the Gospel of John has often been used to justify a kind of spiritual withdraw! from the world. "The Fourth Gospel is not 'quietist.' It does not advocate mere passivity and receptivity before God. *But neither is it 'activist. '* The Fourth Gospel maintains that there should be no sustained and intelligent Christian action unless it is informed by the whole life of faith... Thus the Christian's activity in the world has a fundamentally different starting point from that ofsecularized, technological man. The Liberal philosophy which undergirds the technological society asserts that man's ends are willed from within the horizon of the finite. The Fourth Gospel summons men to live beyond the limits of the finite, in communion with the Father" (p. 13).

Jegen, Mary Evelyn, and Bruno U. Manno, eds. *The Earth Is the Lord's: Essays on Stewardship.* New York: Paulist Press, 1978. Pp. ix, 215. Popular essays from a seminar sponsored by Bread for the World Educational Fund. Includes (among many articles) Ronald J. Sider's "A Biblical Perspective on Stewardship" and William J. Byron's "The Ethics of Stewardship."

John Paul II, Pope. "A Dynamic Relationship of Theology and Science," *Origins* 18, no. 23 (November 17,1988), pp. 375-378. Letter occasioned by the publication of papers from a workshop at the Vatican Academy of Science honoring the 300th anniversay of Newton's *Principia.* "Only a dynamic relationship between theology and science can reveal those limits which support the integrity of either discipline, so that theology does not profess a pseudoscience and science does not become an unconscious theology." Also included in Robert John Russell, William R. Stoeger, SJ, and George V. Coyne, SJ, eds, *Physics, Philosophy, and Theology: A Common Quest for Understanding (Vatican:* Vatican Observatory; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), pp. M1-M14; and under the title "A New Fusionism: Are Science and Religion Compatible?" iji *Crisis* 7, no. 3 (March 1989), pp. 39-41.

John Paul II, Pope. Toward a True Ecology," *Pope Speaks* 33, no. 4. (Winter 1988), pp. 323-327. Thlk to representatives of science, art, and journalism at the "Festpielhaus" Theater in Salzburg, June 26, 1988. Quoting his words from a speech five years previously in Vienna, the Pope repeats that "The human person and his world - our earth, which we saw during the first orbits around it as a star in green and blue - must be protected and developed. In the horizon of faith the earth is not a limitless, exploitable reservoir, but a part of the mystery of creation, which one may not treat greedily, but rather owes it wonder and reverence." Continuing, he maintains that "In order to arrive at this attitude, we need a culture of asceticism which will enable people and the diverse human communities to achieve freedom also as a readiness to renounce one's own power and greatness, and thus from within themselves make room for others, particularly the weak" (p. 327).

John Paul II, Pope. "Science and the Church in the Nuclear Age," *Origins* 12, no. 8 (July 15,1982), pp. 126-128. Talk delivered to researchers at the European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN), June 15,1982. Science and religion are in a new period of dialogue in which religion "rejoices at the progress of science" (no. 8). But there is also a need for "harmonizing the values of technology issuing from science with the values of conscience" (no. 9)-

Kaiser, Edwin, G., CPPS. *Theology of Work.* Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1966. Pp. xxi, 521. Part One briefly Overviews work in the Bible and Catholic encyclicals in comparison with work in slavery and the pagan concept of work. Parts Two, Three and Four provide more detailed analyses of work in the Old and New Testaments, early Christian attitudes, and in the Middle Ages, respectively. Part Five focuses on "Work in the Modern Age," with chapters on capitalism, Marxism, and "The World of Work Today." Part Six contains a theological appraisal of "The Vfelue of Dignity and Discipline," "\&lue of Duty and Right," "Virtue in Work," and "The %lue of Association." Part Seven examines "Work in Its Current Problems," including Chapter 22 on "The Problem of Automation," the first section of which is entitled "Automation: The Final Challenge of Technology." Part Eight deals with "Special Areas of Papal "teaching," while Part Nine is on "Work and Worship. From Chapter 22: "The problem of technology has long been recognized as the basic adjustment of man to a mechanized social order" (p. 361). Distinguishes between First and Second Industrial Revolutions. Effects of automation include unemployment and the taking over of some human decision making by machines. A "theological critique" argues against allowing the economy to take on an autonomous character and for subordinating technology to the promotion of "the personal human values of the social virtues" (p. 370). "If men are To be trained to direct and guide an automated economy, they must be trained in the moral-personal values of the social order with a clear perception of the moral-personal goals and the absolute demand for moral means to attain them... "Raining an engineer merely as an engineer for a technological social order in which he is to make final decisions can never be morally justified" (p. 370). Indudes a review of Papal teachings and an extended critidsm of featherbedding. Some good references to German discussions, a chronology of the American labor movement, and a brief bibliography.

Kass, Leon. "What's Wrong With Babel?" *American Scholar* 58, no. 1 (Winter 1989), pp. 41-60. Classic Straussian biblical commentary. Kass takes Genesis 11:1-9 and compares the story of Babel with Plato's myth of the cave. In both stories the "fire" of technology is central to the rise of civilization and the simultaneous "fall of man." The desire for self-sufficiency embedded in the dream of the universal qty (Babel) and in the dream of the autonomous knowledge of good and evil (Adam and Eve) ultimately leads to humankind's complete estrangement from God. God's punishment by the "confusion of speech" fits the crime of prideful self-sufficiency. "The emergence of multiple nations... challenges the view of human self-sufficiency. Each nation, by its very existence, testifies against the godlike status of every other.. .. The prospect of war ... prevents forgetfulness of mortality, vulnerability, and insufficiency. Such times

of crisis are often times that open men most to think about the eternal and. the divine" (pp. 55-56). Kass compares the universal language before Babel (Gen 11:1) with the new universal language of "symbolic mathematics" so necessary to "the dream of Babel today." Contains many arguments similar to those in Ellul's *The Meaning of the City* (1970).

Klotz, John W. *Ecology Crisis: God's Creation and Man's Pollution.* St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971. Pp. 176. Spends more time cataloguing numerous environmental problems than articulating a Christian ethic of ecology. Reviewed by Wilbur L. Bullock in *Christian Scholar's Review* 2, no. 1 (Fall 1971), pp. 87-88.

Mangum, John M., ed. *The New Faith-Science Debate: Probing Cosmology, Technology, and Theology.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989. Pp. x, 165. Proceedings from a conference of 45 young theologians and sdentists-technologists on the theme "The New Scientific/Rchnological World: What Difference Does It Make for the Churches?" (Larnaca, Cyprus, 1987). Paul Abrecht, from the "Foreword": "The discussion of science and faith is at least several centuries old, but the confrontation that began in the middle of this century - roughly after the discovery of nuclear energy and its use in the making of atomic bombs - has raised quite new issues. In the earlier confrontation the fundamental issue was the clash between Christian belief and scientific knowledge, especially between the scientific understanding of the world and Christian views on creation. In that debate the churches were generally on the defensive... The contemporary encounter between faith and science is quite different from the earlier one. The rapid advances of modem science, its tremendous successes, and the technological revolution to which it has led in the last half century have given rise to new concern and questions about the future of humanity in a world increasingly dominated by scientific understanding. Today, as a result, science and science-based technology are on the defensive, and religious faith, speaking in the name of troubled and anxious humanity, has begun to ask questions about the consequences of the scientific world view" (p. viii). Contents: Bengt Gustafsson's "The Current Scientific World View," Arthur Peacocke's "The Challenge of Science to Theology and. the Church," Victor Westhelle's "The Challenge of Theology to Science and the Church," Gerhard Liedke's "The Challenge of the Church to Science and Theology," Harold P. Nebelsick's "The Uisk of the Church in the New Scientific Age," Judith K. Larsen's "How High-Tbch Is Changing American Society," Ronald Cole-Turner's "Genetic Engineering: Our Role in Creation," Naozumi Eto's "Asian World Religions and Post-modem Science," Vincent P.K. Titanji's "Scientific Research Is My Christian Vocation," "ted Peters' "Reflections on Science as a Vocation," Robert John Russell's "Agenda for the Twenty-first Century," and Paulos Mar Gregorios' "Six Biblical Studies." Appendices contain group reports from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, and international roundtables.

"Manufactured Motherhood: The Ethics of the New Reproductive "techniques." *Logos* (Philosophic Issues in Christian Perspective; Santa Clara University), vol. 9 (1988). Pp. xi, 213. Part I, "General Issues in Reproductive Ethics," contains Albert R. Jonsen's "Ethics of Reproduaive Technology: The Deconstruction of a Paradigm," Lisa

Sowell Cahill's "Women, Marriage, Parenthood: What Are Their *Natures'?", Joseph Ellin's "Reproductive . Technology, Catholicism, Feminism and the Thesis of Bootstrap Pessimism," and Nancy (Aim) Davis's "Reproductive Technologies and Our Attitudes Towards Children." Part H, "Surrogate Motherhood," contains Lori B. Andres' "Feminism Revisited: Fallacies and Policies in the Surrogacy Debate," Herbert T Krimmel's "Surrogate Mother Arrangements from the Perspective of the Child," Usa H. Newton's "Surrogate Motherhood and the Limits of Rational Ethics," Leonard M. Heck's "Surrogate Motherhood: Is It Morally Equivalent to Selling Babies?", June Carbone's "The Umits of Contract in family Law. An Analysis of Surrogate Motherhood," and Laurence D. Houlgate's "Whose Child? In Rt *Baby* Af and the Biological Preference Principle." Part HI, "Other Issues," contains David N. James' "Why Donor Artificial Insemination Is Immoral" and Kevin M. Stanley's "Moral Issues and Public Policy Concerns Surrounding Sex Preselection." Despite the commitments *of Logos,* only two articles deal at any length with uniquely Christian perspectives on the issue of "manufactured motherhood." Cahill considers the *Instruction* on reproductive technology of the the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1987) and its distinction between homologous methods (involving only the married parents, as in artificial insemination with husband) and heterologous methods (e.g., artificial insemination with donor or AID). Cahill criticizes the Vatican *Instruction* argument for rejection of homologous methods but agrees with arguments against heterologous methods. James, however, later rejects the natural law critique of AID. For James, none of the "possible senses of 'natural' warrant the conclusion that while ordinary procreation is natural and therefore right, AID is unnatural and therefore wrong" (p. 183).

McDonagh, Sean. *To Care for the Earth: A Call to a New Theology.* Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1986. Pp. 224. Examines the current ecological crisis and proposes a new theology of the earth based on the writings of Tfeilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry. By an Irish Columban missionary who has spent many years in the Philippines.

Ovitt, George, Jr. *The Restoration of Perfection: Labor and Technology in Medieval Culture.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987. Pp. xii, 272. Chapter one contrasts the modem view of progress as technology with the traditional Christian theology of progress as growth in self-mastery. Chapter two argues against the Lynn White thesis of Christian responsibility for the doctrine of the virtuousness of technology. Chapter three qualifies Max Weber's observations regarding the positive interpretation of work in medieval monasticism by noting that in monastic theology work was always subordinate to spiritual growth and the development of community. Chapters four and five examine medieval attempts to locate the "mechanical arts" in a hierarchy of values and concludes that while always ranking them low, the 1200s witness an increasing respect for technology because of revolution-aiy changes in agriculture, energy use, and commerce that gave rise to a gradual "secularization" of labor. Theological acknowledgement of work as an independent domain in society is more an accomodation than a creation. Chapter six offers a somewhat speculative sociology of workers in the middle ages.

Pope, Hugh. "St Augustine and the World of Nature," in *St. Augustine of Hippo* (Garden City, NY: Image, 1961), pp. 207-231. On the empirical observations of Augustine the naturalist. Mentions Augustine's argument that the book of nature, like the books of Scripture, leads to an understanding of God.

Silva G., Sergio, SSCC. *La Idea de la tecnica modema en el magisterior de la iglesia desde Pio XII hasta Juan Pablo II* (1985) [The idea of modem technology in church teaching from Pius XII to John Paul II (1985)]. *Anales de la Facultad de Teologia,* vol. 38 (1987), no. 2. Santiago de Chile: Pontifica Universidad Catolica de Chile, 1989. Pp. 166. An excellent and well documented study of statements on technology by recent popes and Vatican Council II. The official Vatican attitude - with subtle but significant shifts between popes (e.g., John XXIII on nuclear weapons, Paul VI on development, increasing prominence of the problem of ecology, etc.) - emphasizes both the greatness and the risks of modern technology. As Silva concludes: There is "a positive evaluation of technology in itself, that is, of the capacity that God has placed with humanity to know and to dominate nature. But this does not mean that contemporary technological progress is equally acceptable" (p. 133). Repeatedly, papal documents refer to "the ambiguity of modem technology." "This ambiguity consists, in the first place, in that the forces controlled by technology can be used for good or bad. It is, therefore, fundamentally an ambiguity of humanity, wounded by sin. Nevertheless, the indefinite growth of the power that contemporary technology puts in the hands of this wounded humanity gives the problem a new dimension and makes it qualitatively distinct. Ambiguity is different when it is concerned with the ability to kill a few people or to destroy all life on the planet." "But the ambiguity of contemporary technology is not rooted solely in the use that is able to be made of it to support life or to sow death. There is also a serious danger to the human spirit. The problem has two aspects. On the one side there is the issue of method... On the other side... the problem is cultural..." "The popes point out still a third aspect that contributes to making modem technology an ambiguous phenomenon. This concerns the difficulty of controlling and dominating technical development and all its effects in the life of society" (p. 134). This book is based on "La tecnica y su influencia en la cultura: El penasmiento del magisterio desde Pio XII hasta Pablo VI," *Theologia y Vida* 21, nos. 3-4 (1980), pp. 287-329; and "Alcancesy riesgos de la tecnica moderna: El pensamiento del Magisterio universal de la Iglesia desde Pio XII hasta Pablo VI," *Revista Universitaria de la Universidad Catolica de Chile,* whole no. 6 (October 1981), pp. 79-91. See also the author's "La tecnica modema en la crisis cultural de nuestro tiempo," *Revista Universitaria de la Universidad Catolica de Chile,* whole no. 14 (1985), pp. 18-25.

Stackhouse, Max L. *Public Theology and Political Economy: Christian Stewardship in Modem Society.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987. Pp. xiv, 177. Chapter 8 is on "Sacrament and Technology." "In religion, sacrament is the primal form of technique - it is the skill and the art by which we symbolize the most profound connections between the most abstract logics of meaning and the realities of the material world" (p. 153). "Were the rich significance of sacramental actions spelled out and made living realities

in modern technological societies, our stewardship of the Word might not only become enfleshed in ritual behaviors and liturgical forms. It might become publicly embodied in a more just, participatory, and sustainable technological civilization able to resist the temptation to use the bomb and less inclined to idolize artificial intelligence than to seek, trust, and honor the one Intelligence that stands behind it all" (p. 155).

Tillich, Paul. *The Spiritual Situation in Our Technical Society.* J. Mark Thomas, ed. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988. Pp. xxi, 213. Previously unpublished lectures, untranslated papers, and uncollected articles. Contents: "The World Situation" (1945), "The Lost Dimension in Religion" (1958), "The Logos and Mythos of Technology" (1927, trans.), "The Freedom of Science" (1932, trans.), "Participation and Knowledge: Problems of an Ontology of Cognition" (1955), "How Has Science in the Last Century Changed Man's View of Himself?" (1965), "The Decline and the Validity of the Idea of Progress" (1966), "Expressions of Man's Self-Understanding in the Philosophy and the Sciences" (1963, lecture), "Thing and Self" (1959, lecture), "The Person in a Technical Society" (1953), "Environment and the Individual" (1957), "Conformity" (1957), "The Relationship Today between Science and Religion" (1960), "Religion, Science, and Philosophy" (1963, lecture), "Science and the Contemporary World in the View of a Theologian" (1961), "The Technical City as Symbol" (1928, trans.), "Has Man's Conquest of Space Increased or Diminished His Stature?" (1963), "Seven Theses concerning the Nuclear Dilemma" (1961), and "The Hydrogen Cobalt Bomb" (1954).

Williams, George Huntston. "Christian Attitudes Toward Nature," *Christian Scholar's Review* 2, no. 1 (Fall 1971), pp. 3-35 and *Ibid. 2,* no. 2 (Spring 1972), pp. 112-126. Extensive review of scriptural, patristic, and later theological literature on nature with a view toward countering Lynn White's thesis regarding the responsibility of Christianity for the ecological crisis (by a church historian). Williams investigates seven sets of scriptural antinomies and their theological traditions: (1) the involvement (Gen 3:17, Rum 3:22) dr ilcn-invotvement (Gen 1:31, Ps 19:1) of nature in the fall of man, (2) nature as decaying (IV Ezra 5:55, Ps 102:26) or as constant (Eccl 7:10), (3) nature as intrinsically good (Prov 8:30, Is 55:12) or as only instrumental to human dominion (Gen 1:28 & 9:1, Ps 8:6), (4) the desert wilderness as benign (Is 35:1, Jer 2:2, Rev 12:6) or as malign (Joel 2:3, Matt 4:1), (5) the books of nature and scripture as complimentary (Rom 1:20) or mutually exclusive (Rom 8), (6) tbe kingdom of God as pastoral (Gen 2:15) or political (Rev 21:1-2), and (7) salvation as pertaining to humankind alone (all of Scripture) or to the whole of creation (Is 11:16,1 Cor 15:28, Col 1:20). Arguments similar to H. Paul Santmire's *The Travail of Nature* (1985). Oddly, on page 113, Williams quotes Rom 1:20 and references the quote as Rom 8:19. This essay appears in much abbreviated form under the same title in *Colloquy* 3, no. 4 (April 1970), pp. 12-15. The fourth antinomy is tbe subject of an entire book by Williams, *Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought: The Biblical Experience of the Desert* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

Young, David P. *The Speed of Love: An Exploration of Christian Faithfulness in a Technological World.* New York: Friendship Press, 1986. Pp. viii, 149. An introduc-

tion, prologue, and first two chapters argue for a religious judgment of technology as destroying human scale and not being used to help the poor. Quoting Kosuke Koyama: "Love has its speed. It is an inner speed.

It is a spiritual speed. It is a different kind of speed from the technological speed to which we are accustomed" (pp. 2-3). "What is critical is not how to regulate technology by laws or restrictions, but rather how to change *oar relationship* to technology through our values and discipleship choices. The important issue should be which technologies we choose to use and which we choose not to use because of what they do in terms of justice to person and planet" (pp. 6-7). Followed by chapters dealing with the destruction of mystery, computers, biotechnology, and nuclear power. Two concluding chapters stress that technology is not netural and that Christians must invent tbe future. There is a "leader's Guide" with suggestions on how to use each chapter in a discussion class. A bit breezy, but useful as Sunday school literature, and as reflecting dedicated reformist liberal Christian thinking engaged with technology. A companion volume: David P. Young, ed., *21st Century Pioneering: A Scrapbook of the Future* (New York: Friendship Press, 1986), a collection of essays, cartoons, poetry, etc.

Issue #6 Nov 1990 — Faith and Wealth in a Technological Civilization

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A Forum For Scholarship on Theology in a Technological Civilization

In his recent book *Circus of Ambition* (Warner, 1989) John Taylor documents "the culture of wealth and power in the eighties." If accurate, his findings are discouraging indeed. Coupled with unabashed greed and power-mongering we might also think of the latest trends in the human misery index: five-hundred million people starving, one billion persons living in absolute poverty, and two billion people with no regular, dependable water supply. By the end of this calendar year the United States will spend $6 billion to keep its peace-keeping troops in Saudi Arabia and neighboring countries. How should a Christian think, and take action, in light of such realities?

The present issue of the *Ellul Studies Forum* is devoted to Christian perspectives on wealth. It is my pleasure to thank our contributors and to introduce them to you. Our *Forum* authors are Thomas Schmidt and Justo Gonza-lez.Thomas Schmidt completed Ph.D. studies at Cambridge University on the theme of hostility toward wealth in the Synoptic Gospels. He currently teaches New Testament studies at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA. Justo Gonzalez of Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA, is perhaps best known for his two widely read works *Ute Story of Christianity* (2 vols., Harper, 1984) and *A History of Christian Thought* (3 vols., Abingdon, 1988,13th printing). His most recent work, *Faith and Wealth* (Harper & Row, 1990), explores Christian attitudes toward wealth in the first four centuries of the church.

Concerning our reviewers, Don Thorsen is Professor of Theology at Azusa Pacific University, Graduate School of Theology, in Los Angeles. Michael Novak holds the George Fredrick Jewett Chair in Religion and Public Policy at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C., and is the author of over twenty books. Our final contributor also hails from within he Beltway. After completing a Ph.D. in Religion and Society at Drew University, Dan Heimbach served as a Legislative Assistant for Indiana Senator Richard Lugar. He now serves on the White House staff at the Domestic Policy Council.

Daniel B. Clendenin
Guest Editor

Ellul Forum Conference at AAR, Nov. 17th

If you were confused by the announcement of the annual AAR conference in the last issue it was for good reason. The announcement indicated that the meeting would be held on Friday, November 17th. THAT WAS AN ERROR. The Ellul Forum will meet on Saturday (not Friday) November 17th, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the Lafayette room of the New Orleans Marriott. Thomas Hanks, author of *God So Loved the Third World* will present a "Critical Appraisal of Ellul's Sexual Ethics." Hanks is pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Buenos Aires, Argentina. He will be responded

to by Nancy A. Hardesty, Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, and by Catherine Kroeger, who holds a Ph.D. in Classics from the University of Minnesota and specializes in women in the ancient world. This forum is open to anyone who is interested.

In This Issue

Book Reviews

Money and Power by Jacques Ellul

Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1984.
Reviewed by Daniel Clendenin, William Tyndale College.
(Reprinted with permission from the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society,* 27:2, June 1984.)

Readers interested in the steady stream of books form the pen of Jacques Ellul will be happy to learn of the recent translation of one of his older works. *Money and Power,* first published in 1954, with a second edition in 1979, is a theological study that examines the most practical of subjects - money-in light of the ˆBiblical revelation. This translation of *L'Homme et Pargent* by LaVonne Neff comes with a foreword by David Gill and an "afterword" by Ellul from the 1979 edition. Readers need not fear that the work is thirty years behind the times for, in Ellul's works, since 1950 "much has changed in appearance, little in reality." Besides, those familiar with the prophet from Bordeaux know that his creative insights and provocative analyses always make for valuable reading.

Our problem with money, writes Ellul, is that it has become abstract and impersonal. As a result we tend to subordinate the individual to the collective and look for answers in a better economic system. This search for a systemic solution is not only wrongheaded, for it overlooks the subjective element of fallen human nature; it is also hypocritical and cowardly, for it constitutes a cop-out We blame the system and deny the importance of our personal responsibility and individual actions. Collective action is not unimportant Ear from it But it must always be rooted in a deep sense of individual responsibility.

In the OX wealth represents God's blessing and reward. The stories of Abraham, Job and Solomon remind us of this. Wealth was even a "sacrament," Ellul suggests, a material sign of a greater spiritual reality. Wealth was bestowed freely, it represented God's superabundant grace, and it had both prophetic and eschatological characteristics. The sacramental sign, however, was always subordinated to the spiritual reality it signified, and our mistake today is to directly identify wealth with blessing.

Jesus Christ abolished the sacramental nature of wealth, for he himself is the ultimate blessing: "What would the gift of wealth mean now that God has given His Son?" He is now our only wealth." Jesus also shows us the true nature of money. It is not only a material reality that raises moral issues but also a spiritual power that is both

active and personal. It is a god that we are tempted to worship. The problems it raises are not only external (oppression, for example) but internal (temptation), and Jesus forces us to choose between it and the true God.

Of special interest in *Money and Power* is Ellul's fourth chapter ("Children and Money"), a discussion that is as unusual as it is needed and helpful How can we teach our children about money? First, we must adopt a "strict realism" that rejects all idealism and abstraction. Then by attitudes and actions, examples and opportunities, parents must assume a "dialectical" position. We must show our children, for example, that money is useful and necessary, but not for that reason "good," that it is not contemptible, but not respectable either, or something that we worship. Finally, we must avoid moralism and negativism and must realize that a spiritual power can only be fought with the spiritual weapon of prayer.

Ellul addresses these and a host of other practical questions. Who are the poor, and how can the Christian respond to them with meaning and integrity? What are we to make of the many Biblical passages that seem to automatically condemn the rich and bless the poor? What about savings accounts, insurance, asceticism and giving? After reading Ellul's theological study, one is impressed with the sheer number and extent of passages in the Bible that bear on the topic of money. Readers will certainly not agree with all of his conclusions or with his exegesis, but that is no matter. As Gill writes in the foreword, Ellul never writes merely to enlighten a theoretical problem or to elicit intellectual assent. His purpose is to incite action, provoke our thinking and affect our lives. Those open to such a spiritual challenge will by no means be disappointed by Ellul's creative analysis of this sensitive and vital issue.

Public Theology and Political Economy: Christian Stewardship in Modem Society

by Max L. Stackhouse. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, xiv + 177 pp.
Reviewed by Daniel Heimbach, the White House, Washington D.C.

In this book Max Stackhouse seeks no less than to reconstruct the public relevance of Christian theology for the modem world. What he has written is partly an apology for the social legitimacy and public relevance of Christian witness, partly identification of resources for the practice of Christian sociology, and partly demonstration that theological perspectives are still needed to understand the deeper dynamics of life in community. Without question, Stackhouse issues a timely reminder that Christians not only can but must "responsibly link our theology to the structures and dynamics of the emerging political economy in a way that guides, refines, and selectively transforms that which is destructive and selectively sustains that which is creative and redemptive" (p. 174).

The work revolves around the conviction that theological ideas play a decisive role in social life and cannot be dismissed as idiosyncratic rationalizations of private faith. "Any transcendent reality worth attending to has implications for what we think and do on earth" having a "direct bearing on how we conduct worldly affairs? (p. x). It is motivated by the author's view that the resources of Christian insight have seldom and adequately come to grips with key features of modem institutional life such as corporations, modem technology, and the multiplication of professions.

Stackhouse begins by laying out four touch stones of authority that enable us to speak in the public domain about ultimate moral reality and to discuss norms regarding why and how human life in community should be directed, sustained and corrected. Thes& touchstones are: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience. He goes on to outline several "motifs" or "themes" that together constitute a matrix of foci for the liberation, vocation, covenant, moral law, sin, human freedom, ecdesiology, Trinity, and Christology. Stackhouse equates these with "ultimate principles of meaning" (p. 17) able to provide normative moral guidance. Each is described and discussed, but only as it pertains to the author's immediate purpose. "Trinity" is thus the idea that unity can be achieved without destroying diversity, that diversity need not be a threat to ultimate truth. "Christology" is the theme of cultural transformation in the name of Christ, which Stackhouse identifies with the formation of a Christian sociology (p. 36).

After "re-" constructing the framework of a public theology in the early chapters, Stackhouse spends the remainder of the book articulating a renewed metaphysical-moral (viz. theological) vision of political (viz. public) economy. In other words, he gets down to the business of demonstrating the practical relevance of Christian theology for politics and economics. Here he addresses four topics: (1) the exercise of political power, (2) the rise of the corporation as the decisive center of production, (3) modem technology, and (4) pluralism as marked by the proliferation of professions.

In my view, Stackhouse makes his most worthy contributions in the practical sections of his work. For example, he warns against the politicization of religion. Politicization results from a confusion of piety with political power and a failure to adequately respect the importance of separating the institutional arrangements of church and state. He goes on, however, to stress that the value of institutional separation does not exhaust the meaning of piety and power. In fact, political power needs the sanction of religious authority to establish its moral legitimacy. Piety shapes political possibility, and "the shape of the dominant piety will shape the future of power" (p. 102).

Students of Jacques Ellul will be interested in how Stackhouse treats modem technology and the dramatic way it has increased our ability to intervene in nature. He observes that theological assessments of technology have gone to opposite extremes. Ellul is treated as a paragon of the pessimistic extreme which views technology as evil - a danger that offers the illusion of mastery of the universe alienating us from God. Ellul's approach is contrasted to others, like Arend van Leeuwen, who have praised technology as so much a product of the Judeo-Christian belief system that it qualifies

as a form of evangelism. Stackhouse settles on a middle-of-the-road approach that appreciates the moral ambiguities of technology but does not exclude recognition of its promise.

Because the book goes to the heart of a heated controversy over the legitimate place of theological witness in a pluralistic society, it will attract criticism and I have some of my own. First, is the rather unusual use of terms beginning with"public" as a modifier for theology. If the word has any meaning, it suggests something to be distinguished from a "private" theology that is idiosyncratic and without relevance to others. By accepting the distinction, Stackhouse sanctions an idea which although it is not novel among the detractors of theology is rarely associated with theologians themselves. "Democratization" is another term employed in a problematic manner. For Stackhouse it means the application of theological resources to the public domain. This usage is wholly unique and unsuspecting readers are warned not to be led astray by the seemingly familiar.

Second, is the almost comic way that Stackhouse undermines his own efforts to buck the intellectual forces of privatization that would exclude theological insight with its call to transcendent moral accountability from the arenas of public life. Although all the motives upon which he relies for normative comment are taken from Scripture (covenant, vocation, Hinity, etc.), Stackhouse so diminishes the authority of Scripture that one is left wondering how he can analyze the dimensions of public life with such confidence. For example, Stackhouse does not believe one can really go to Scripture to read the thoughts of God. Scriptural truth is relative and can change over time. No scripture passage can stand alone to settle what is true. Essentially, Stackhouse denies the normative standing of Scripture text. Thus he actually reinforces the idea that, perhaps more than any other, is responsible for moving people to conclude that theological insight is irrelevant to the public domain.

Stackhouse has written a book to define and defend the public relevance of Christian theology, and has made a fairly stimulating contribution worth consideration by the discriminating specialist, but while the book contains flashes of insight that will reinvigorate believers who may have begun to doubt the legitimacy of applying theological resources to the public domain, Stackhouse has not made a case to convince those who do not already accept the presuppositions of Christian faith, those upon whom it is hoped a public witness by Christians may have an effect.

Faith and Wealth by Justo L. Gonzalez

San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1990.
Reviewed by Michael Novak. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

The author of the three-volume/I *History of Christian Thought* and professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, Justo L. Gonzalez, has been so moved by liberation

theology, he confesses, that he began "asking different questions of the same texts and paying more attention to texts dealing specifically with the economic and social order." Such texts, he found, were central to the life of the early church, even though they have usually been treated as tangential to it. One central question preoccupies him: "What Christians thought and taught regarding the rights and responsibilities of both rich and poor," a study of the history of *ideas,* not of economic history. The ancients, he notes, "had noword for our modem concept of economics: and for good reason - "they also lacked the concept." They understood

The connections between die availability of commodities and price fluctuations. They speculated on why money is valuable and the connections between monetary value and societal conventions. What they did not do is link all this together into a coherent view of economic phenomena and their behavior. Much less did they see any connections but the most obvious between government policy and economic order. Not until the time of Diocletian did the Roman Empire have anything that even remotely resembled a budget. Even then, they apparently had little understanding between inflation and the money supply. Thus, while rulers were often concerned about the plight of the poor - for the threat they posed, if for no other reason - their only remedies were stopgap measures such as doles, (p. xiv)

For this reason Gonzalez prefers to speak of "faith and wealth" rather than of "faith and economics," since "strictly speaking, the ancient Christians, like all ancient Romans, had no economics."

The book is divided into three parts: the background of the ancient world; the pre-Constantinian writers on faith and wealth (from the New Testament to'Origen, Tfertullian and Lactantius); and the period after Constantine, from Athanasius and the Cappadocians to Augustine. A brief concluding summary rounds off the book

There are wonderful nuggets throughout, from the aristocratic Ambrose, who thought that working the land was the only noble occupation, whereas commerce is robbery, to the Cappadocian who taught that international commerce is one of the most dazzling metaphors for the interdependence of the Mystical Body of Christ. The variety in this testimony, the singularity and brilliance of individual views, and the differences in level of insight (both into wealth creating and to Christian truth) are a most interesting feature of this compendium.

Nonetheless, Professor Gonzalez is able toshowconvincingly that there was considerable consensus on certain limited matters. First, what a person does with his wealth (or with his poverty) is never considered irrelevant to Christian faith. Second, given the role of money and economic knowledge at the time, usury (practically any loan on interest) was universally condemned, even though a moderate amount of interest was legal according to civil law. Again, the early writers stress, as some pagan writers also did, that the seeker after wealth exhibits an unappeased appetite and a disposition to worry, i.e., a sad kind of poverty. (A seeker after wealth is different from a creator ofwealth, but the latter concept had not yet appeared in history.)

Other common beliefs: In giving to the poor, one lends to God, and so almsgiving is a very important religious activity. The rich are at a disadvantage when it comes to entering the Kingdom, partly because their wealth gives them both greater responsibilities and partly because it occasions distraction and seduction. Again, "in spite of the unanimously negative attitude toward accumulating wealth, writers share an equally unanimous positive attitude toward the things themselves that constitute wealth" (p. 226). So one must carefully distinguish between meanings of the world "wealth" - it can mean both things and their accumulation. Against gnostic notions about the evil of material creation, the church fathers were careful to insist that all things, including those that are usually counted as wealth, are good. But they also warn against the passion for accumulation and an inordinate love for things.

Great emphasis was also placed upon the voluntary nature of the sharing of goods in common, as was practiced in the first generations. This was later softened to almsgiving, but even here the early Church fathers commanded that one should keep for oneself only what is necessary and give the superfluous to the need}', because "What is superfluous to some is necessary to the poor" (St. Augustine). On these matters, "the teachers and pastors we have been studying are flexible enough not to set stringent rules but to let believers determine what in their own case is necessary and what is superfluous, although some advise that believers should not make this decision strictly on their own, but rather guided by a spiritual mentor. Augustine also suggests the tithe as a minimum measure" (p. 227).

All the early writers take private property for granted, and Clement of Alexandria argues that without private property, no one could obey the commandment of Jesus to give to the poor. Some authors argue that private property exists only because of our fallen condition. In contrast with Roman law, which considered property rights absolute, Christian authors stressed that property ultimately belongs to God; that human beings can claim no more than a temporary ownership of it, a kind of stewardship; and, third, that Christians will be judged on their use of their own property, and specifically how they have shared it with those in need.

As Gonzalez points out, Ambrose stands practically alone in condemning trade, as when he declared that God made the sea for fishing an not for sailing; whereas Chrysostom praises God for creating the sea so that people can travel long distances and meet each other's material needs through trade. And Lactantius declares that just as God gave antlers to the deer to defend itself, humankind has been given each other, so that through social life, mutual support, and trade, we may defend ourselves.

Gonzalez also notes certain development in Christian thought, as time went on. More and more stress comes to be placed upon enjoying the things of this world as a way of pleasing God, and learning to raise one's heart in gratitude and in detachment. The proof of such detachment is the serenity one maintains when eveything is taken away - as quite often happened under conquest, plague, and famine in the ancient world, "Things are to be used, not enjoyed," in the sense that preoccupation with things must be avoided. Ironically, this later teaching suggests that the affluent who

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do not have to worry about material things may be less spiritually threatened than the very poorwhose preoccupation with them is necessary.

Gonzalez closes on this note; "The doctrine of creation remains one of the pillars on which most of the authors we have studied build their arguments on the proper use of wealth" (p. 232). This is exactly the conclusion reached by Pope John Paul n, the reason for his stress on creation theology. By contrast, liberation theology has very little to say about the creation of new wealth, which is badly needed in order to feed and to clothe growing populations, whereas creation theology shares in two important modem insights into the nature of wealth. First, wealth does not consist primarily in land, gold, or precious objects, but in creative ideas. Second, as the main cause of wealth is human capital, or mind, so the main condition for its creation is a social structure favorable to invention, the free exchange of ideas, and *free* intellectual interaction: in short, "the system of natural liberty."

Not until Adam Smith, alas, was there clarity about the nature and cause of wealth of nations sufficient to constitute the new science of economics. Nonetheless, both Gonzalez and contemporary liberation theologians neglect this new knowledge; they think of wealth in a pre-modem, pre-economic way. In the modem view, the main cause of wealth is not conquest or plunder, as the ancients thought, living in their walled cities against just such eventualities; rather, the cause of wealth is invention, discovery, innovation. Under these new circumstances, new wealth can be created without taking anything from anybody else. The early Christian writers lacked such sophistication; basic concepts of economics (including wealth and its creation) had not yet been formulated, and many modem theologians still entertain premodem conceptions of wealth. Gonzalez does not help us to overcome this deficiency.

Just the same, in commending intense concern for the poor, and both detachment from material things and respect for them as gifts of God, the early Christian writers taught some moral lessons of enduring value. Yet on the urgent questions that concern us today — how to design systems of political economy that will raise the poor out of poverty, and how to nourish Christian prayer and virtue in a prosperous society (whose economic system works) the early Church writers have very little to say. How could they? Systematic reasoning about economic matters would require many more centuries of trial and error - some thirteen more centuries after Augustine - before it would come to fruition. Indeed, there is still more to do on this front today; the development of economics and of Qiristian reflection upon it is not at an end. This book is a useful text in such reflection, but it is marred by its lack of sophistication about modem economics. One wishes that the same texts would be read in a more sophisticated light; one suspects that they might have much to say about creation theology, human capital, and the inventive power of mind.

The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death.

Douglas John Hall. Rev. Ed., Eerdmans for the Commission on Stewardship, National Council of Churches, 1988,144 pages.

Reviewed by Don Thorsen, Azusa Pacific University

In *The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death,* Douglas John Hall refers to the ancient concept of stewardship as an all-encompassing symbol for the meaning of the Christian life. Hall contends that Christians should live as stewards of life in a world that can legitimately be called a "kingdom of death" - a world in which people experience suffering, injustice, oppression, war, and the threat of nuclear holocaust. Hall conceives of "life" in terms of the present world, and the Christian mission is to act, confront, resist, and protest in ways that improve the quality of our world. He rejects the "spiritualization" of the gospel characteristic of most contemporary churchesflOO). Hall wants to reverse the process of presenting eternal life as something that comes in the future. Instead, the abundant and eternal life of God's kingdom should be conceived "concretely as a quality that belongs to the here-and-now" (115).

The structure of Hall's book consists of five meditations upon passages in scripture, drawing upon the central motif they present. In these meditations, Hall discusses the current confusion in Christian mission, the deathlike orientation of the world, God's covenant with life here-and-now, the Christian mandate to become involved in God's plan for the world, and the hope of effecting qualitative changes in all dimensions of life. Hall provides dialogues for discussion at the end of each chapter and a brief synopsis of the five meditations at the end of the book.

Hall exudes passion for Christians to recognize their responsibility to live as Christians in the world. He realizes the depth of problems facing people today, and strives to persuade Christians to "participate in God's mission to preserve and enhance the world's life in the midst of civilizational decay and death" (124). Hall considers the stewardship of life a mandate to act in accordance with the covenant of life God has made with the whole creation (and not just people). This mission implies a strong polemic against war and a quest for justice that is hard for peoples of affluent nations to grasp.

The use of meditations is a provocative approach to the subject of he book, but Hall's exegesis is not. Hall is as guilty of ignoring the contest of scriptural passages and of offering a truncated gospel as those he criticizes of spiritualizing the Christian message. For example, Hall romanticizes the older Testament tradition of Judaism as if it represents a pristine source of divine truth without influence from other cultures, and repudiates much of the newer Testament due to Hellenistic influences. As a result, Hall considers Christians to be stewards of a "political gospel" (54), which sacrifices the holistic nature of the Christian message - found in the older as well as newer Tfestament - for the sake of rectifying centuries of social irresponsibility. A more compelling

scriptural argument could be made on behalf of his concern for stewardship of life in a kingdom of death.

The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death represents the revised edition of an earlier book by the same name. Hall did not make extensive changes in his revised edition, but tried to clarify points which readers found ambiguous in the original. In particular, Hall responds to confusion over his criticism of Christian ”evangelicalism” as too diffuse. So in several places he distinguishes between traditional forms of Christian conservativism and popular contemporary expressions of Christian triumphalism. However, Hall continues to generalize and sometimes caricature what he refers to as sectarian (fundamental, evangelical, and spiritualistic) Christianity.

Forum

Some Reflections on Faith and Wealth

Justo L. Gonzalez Columbia Theological Seminary

I have been asked towrite a reflection on the ethical ramifications of my recent book, *Faith and Wealth.* In some ways, I am more inclined to reflect on its theological ramifications. Ilie reason for this is that, partly as a result of my research, I have begun to see the value of a different approach to issues of theology and ethics. As a theologian, what I find most significant in my research is the central role that issues of faith and wealth play in the theology of most early Christian writers. Many of us have been formed in an academic tradition in which there is a separate field of "social ethics," whose principles of action are largely drawn as corollaries from theology and doctrine. From this perspective, issues of wealth are an appendix to issues of faith. Theology has to do with the doctrine of the Trinity, of creation, etc. Money, on the other hand, is an ethical issue. First we must clarify the faith, and then we may discuss matters of wealth.

That is not what I find in most Christian writers of the first four centuries. On the contrary, to them issues of-wealth are integral to issues of faith, to the point that a test of orthodoxy is how one deals with the widow, the orphan and the poor. If one were to take as an example Ambrose's doctrine of creation, one would soon see that this doctrine is also an understanding of property rights and their limits. Thus, one does not do theology first, and then reflect on its ethical implications. Rather, one lives out a faith, one practices an ethic, and in the very process of that living out, one begins to reflect on the theological dimensions of the faith.

Thus, what has most intrigued me as my research has progressed is not the number of passages dealing with faith and wealth (literally, hundreds of them), nor the surprisingly radical statements contained in many of them, but the scant attention that such passages have received in later centuries - and certainly among North-Atlantic Protestant scholars. Why is it that we have been so interested in discovering what Ambrose had to say about creation, or about baptism, but not in what he had to say about money and about property?

One may take as an example the emphasis in the early church on the commonality of property. It is clear that when we speak of such commonality our statements need to be nuanced, for what was meant by such commonality is different from much that is meant today by the same phrase. But even so, the notion of the commonality of property

persisted as an ideal, and often as a practice, for much longer than we usually imagine. Even words that we today use in a different sense, such as *koinonla* -and especially the verb, *koinondin*- have meanings and overtones relating to such commonality. Much could be said about this. In the limited space available here it should suffice to indicate that, when two people are *koinondi,* this does not mean that they have "fellowship" with each other, but rather that they are partners in a business venture, or that they own something in common. And *koinon^in* does not mean to have nice feelings towards each other, but to share with each other - which is also true of the Latin counterpart, *communicare.* In any case, what I find surprising is not all of this, but rather that, in spite of so much talk about *koinonla* -and perhaps because of it - we have somehow managed to take the teeth out of what was a very radical understanding of the Christian community and of stewardship within it. Thus, the primary question is not whether we should practice the *koinoma of* the early church. That certainly is open to debate, since there are many differences between the social and economic order of late antiquity and ours. The primary question is why we have done so much to obscure what the early church said and did about its own *koinonla.*

As I reflect on these matters, it is clear to me that the reason for such historical neglect and misrepresentation is not primarily historical, but ethical. It is not that we have not had the texts available to us. It is rather that we have had reason to fear what the texts say. Indeed, when late in the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth there were a few scholars -mostly Roman Catholic monastics living under vows of poverty-who began unearthing some of the more radical economic views of the "Fathers," there soon was a strong reaction seeking to suppress and to ridicule their findings. As one now reads the texts from those debates, it is evident that what was at stake was not so much the historical question of what the ancients said, but the fear that this could be used to bolster modem socialist ideas. Those who attacked the so-called socialist interpretation of the "lathers" did so under the guise of historians and theologians; but in truth they were defenders of the status quo. In the final analysis, the question was not historical, but ethical.

The same is true today. Ultimately, the question for us is not what the ancients said, but what we are to say and to do. The ancients may serve us as an example; but we have no right to shift unto their shoulders the responsibility for whatever decisions we make. Indeed, what we can see and read in their texts will greatly depend on the degree to which we are actively seeking God's will for us today, and certainly upon the particular calling which we have received from God.

Then, as I reflect on these matters, *I* can only do'so as the person I am, one who has been called and ordained as a teacher and pastor to God's flock. Economists may be led by my book and by the writings of the ancients to a different series of reflections. But I am not an economist, and do not pretend to be. I am a pastor and a preacher, and it is as such that I read the ancients and seek to draw implications for my present task.

As a pastor in a North-American denomination most of whose members are far wealthier than the vast majority of humankind, I do have much to learn from the ancients and their preaching. When reading their writings, and especially their sermons, I am immediately led to ask, why were these early Christian preachers ready and able to preach in such a way? Clearly, the first requisite for such preaching is conviction. We must not think that such preaching was easy or did not involve a cost. It was precisely because of his preaching on matters such as this that Chrysostom died in exile. And for the same reasons Basil, Ambrose and others clashed with bureaucrats, landowners, and emperors.

This conviction included a genuine pastoral concern for the rich in their congregations. Chrysostom's words to that effect were no mere rhetorical device. He was indeed convinced that, were he not to speak the truth to those among his flock who were rich, and show them the radical demands of the Gospel, he would be leading them towards damnation. Furthermore, some who had the harshest words against the greed of the rich had themselves come from the richer classes: Ambrose, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa. They were not thundering against "the rich" in general.

Many of "the rich" were their relatives and friends with whom they had grown up. It was out of concern for them that Basil said that those who withhold food from the hungry, or clothing from the naked, are nothing but "thieves." And for the same reason his brother Gregory of Nyssa bewails the fate of households whose wealth could relieve the misery of many, without themselves suffering from it.

Then, such preaching was possible because the preachers themselves had embraced a different way of life. Belonging themselves to a class where success in life was counted on the basis of the accumulation of wealth, they had refused to follow that path. All of them had given all or most of their own possessions to the poor, and lived very modestly. Indeed, this is a common theme in ancient Christian biography, to the point that it becomes the *sine qua non* of holiness. Preachers such as Ambrose and Basil could show the folly of a societal system in which people were valued according to their possessions, precisely because they themselves had given up their possessions. They could speak of giving money to the poor rather than to the church and its treasury, because they saw themselves as pastors of an entire city, rich and poor, and not as managers and builders of the assets of an institution.

What does all of this mean for us? I do not really know. Or rather, I think I know... but I am afraid to find out! Perhaps one of the reasons why we do not hear much of this sort of preaching today is that we preachers have ourselves embraced a way of life in which our value and success are measured by our own income, which in turn is largely determined by the size of our churches and the class to which our membership belongs. Perhaps one of the reasons is that we are more concerned for the wellbeing of the church as an institution than we are for the wellbeing of the poor. Perhaps, over the years, we have grown accustomed to an interpretation of the gospel that is more amiable and less demanding. Perhaps we no longer consider the poor part of the flock

whom we must defend. Perhaps we no longer really consider ourselves shepherds of the rich, for whose souls we must answer. Perhaps.

Luke 14:33 and the Normativity of Dispossession

Thomas E. Schmidt Westmont College

Ellul and Voluntary Poverty

Hui's *Money and Power* offers many insights which fly in the face of current politicized discussions of the subject and which are, in myopinion, supported by close scrutiny of the Gospels. Key among these are the link between personal wealth and independence from God, the expansion of the definition of the poor (and Jesus as the Poor One) beyond economic and political categories, and the suggestion that the appropriate response is personal and non-programmatic. My purpose in this essay is to extend the last area of discussion from a biblical theological perspective.

Ellul concludes the book by making the Rich Young Ruler story a paradigm of the Christian response (161):

> We see in this story everything we have described up to this point: material emptying ("see what you possess"), spiritual emptying ("follow me"), joining the ranks of die poor without there being any social solution, without any amelioration of their fate ("give to the poor").

Rightly pointing out that all are rich who "know the impassable distance that still remains between them and the Poor One" (156), Ellul appears to confirm the normativity of the passage. But while he is not specific, he seems to understand this *essentially and not literally.* Commenting earlier on the same passage (113-114), he remarks:

But could we not ask if, as a result of our personal consecration, we should not give all of our goods? We think of die case of the rich young man to whom Jesus said, "Sell ofl that you have and distribute to the poor..and come, follow me" (Lk 18:22). We absolutely must not try to sidestep this ordei; for example by separating the scriptural commandments given to perfected Christians from the others. We must, on the contrary accept the order with ail its vigor and its absolute character. Yet even so, this order is rather unusual; we do not find it frequently in either Old or New Ttestament. We must take it then as a possibility that is always present, a demand that we cannot avoid but that is given only in exceptional cases to people especially called to follow it.

Many interpreters make similar comments in order to dismiss the passage, but Ellul attempts to retain its force. While I do not think that he goes as far as the Gospels warrant, Ellul is consistent with his conclusion when he goes on to suggest that, while "total giv-ing...is not a *sine qua non* of the Christian life," and while it will be "always the exception," nevertheless, "each Christian is called to consider this vocation as a possibility"; it is in fact "a sign and a prophetic act" (114-115). It is refreshing to see a self-described evangelical dare to take the Gospel demands so seriously. My purpose is to affirm this daring by considering carefully a single text which appears to call for complete dispossession of material goods as a condition of discipleship.

The Importance of Luke 14:33

Why a single text? Certainly the avoidance of the "vocation" of voluntary poverty has been served historically by those who can counter any one text by providing an example of a rich saint, or by noting that Jesus did not always demand total renunciation, or by claiming that such texts are aimed at a bad attitude which not everyone shares. Thus individual passages are rendered powerless by qualifications. Although I have argued elsewhere that such responses are exegetically unsound (not to mention self-serving),[1] it is not merely the limitation of space which leads here to a narrow focus. Rather, I wish to extend Ellul's advocacy of each Christian's consideration of the "call" by *amplifying the voice.* What I mean is that a recognition of the centrality of Jesus should mean that we focus on him for our ethics. If he has a lot to say on a given subject-and on this one he does—we should pay close attention. If he says approximately the same thing in several different ways at several different times-which in this area he does-any one of those sayings is worthy of our attention. Thus *unless Jesus is ethically peripheral or inconsistent, any one command of his will merit the designation*

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[1] My treatment of the relevant passages is contained in *Hostility to Wealth in the Synoptic Gospels* (Sheffield, 1987) 101-162. Ibe substance of the treatment of Luke 14:33 which follows is contained more recently in "Burden, Barrier, Blasphemy: Wealth in Matt 6:33, Luke 14:33, and Luke 16:15," *Trinity Journal* 9 (1989) 178-184.

"normative." Ulis implies, first, that no command of Jesus should be neglected or cursorily interpreted. It also implies that Scriptural exceptions and alternative biblical models must be understood in light of Jesus as the central focus of the Scriptures, not the other way around. The record of the Church in recognizing these implications is a sorry one. Let us set that record aside for several pages and proceed as if one text, Luke 14:33, were the sole and sufficient statement of Jesus on the subject of economic ethics.

The verse is important for several reasons. Its placement is significant as the culminating passage in a chapter devoted to the subject of wealth and its relation to power (Ch. 16 and 18-19 are also important in this regard). The material in the passage gives evidence of extensive reworking by Luke to make its point as forcefully as possible. But perhaps most important for our purposes, there can be no mistaking the intended audience of the demand. Several of the sayings in Luke's Gospel that require dispossession of material goods may be sidestepped as directed only to the Twelve (5:11,28; 6:20-21; 16:9; 12:33; 18:29-30) or to particular individuals (12:21; 16:14-31; 18:22; 19:8). 14:33 is not so subtle: whoever does not meet the condition "cannot be my disciple." "Disciple" *(mathetes)* is employed consistently in Acts to designate believers and so cannot be confined to followers of Jesus during his earthly ministry.[2] Indeed, were we to do so, we would lose the force not only of this but of virtually every command directed to disciples in the Gospel, and we would be forced to consider the ten chapters on discipleship to be intended as an interesting historical specimen. This is hardly admissable; we are left with a verse that is clearly intended to have some practical significance to believers of Luke's generation-and by extension, to believers of our own generation. Precisely what does the demand entail?

The Context: The Cost Has Been Counted

> For which of you, desiring to build a tower; does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Or what king, going to encounter another king in war; will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:28-33).

"Counting the Cost" is the traditional title for these parables in commentaries. They follow the Parable of the Great Banquet and thus raise questions about the continuity

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[2] The statements of Jesus here are directed to the "multitude" *(ochloi),* which Luke always uses to

of the chapter. If the "excuse makers" and the "disenfranchised" of the parable represent, respectively, the rejecters and receivers of the Kingdom, the ethical instruction of w. 7-14 seems out of place. Banquet-attend-ers are instructed in w. 7-11 to take humble places, and banquetproviders are instructed in w. 12-14 to invite humble guests.

Critical commentators who regard the following parabsc:: literary vehicle to convey rejection or acceptance of Jesus often regard this ethical instruction as secondary moralizing. But a better explanation involves an appreciation of the convergence of ethical and soterioiogical matters in the first century Jewish mind. One's behavior at a banquet was in fact indicative of one's eternal destination, and the decision to accept or reject Jesus's invitation to the Kingdom generally coincided with social position. Thus when we conclude that the unifying theme of w. 7-24 is that a person ought to renounce power or "humble" himself, this must be understood in terms of both inward orientation and outward manifestation (behavior and/or position). Therefore, while at a narrative level the transition from banquet parable to outdoor address is awkward, the continuity of theme justifies the construction of the chapter. The common theme is that personal sacrifice is an essential expression of one's standing before God. More specifically, economic sacrifice, or identification with the poor (perhaps in the sense of becoming poor), will mark an individual as a subject of the Kingdom.

At first glance, v. 33 appears to be an overly specific inference from the parables of w. 28-32, and commentators have struggled to make sense of the connection. The explanation is found in the connection tow. 26-27, which precede the parables:

> If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

The saying about family loyalty occurs in Matthew in another context (10:37), and the cross-bearing saying occurs in different contexts in three places (Mark 8:34; Matt 10:38; Luke 9:23-25). The formal connection between w. 26-27 and v. 33 is obvious in the beginning, "Whoever does not...". The specific objects of sacrifice are repeated elsewhere in the Gospels and are in fact combined in the important summary of the Rich Young Ruler passage (Luke 18:29). The pattern in this passage, while unusual by modem standards, involves putting the central statement in the middle of the list. This B-A-B pattern means that v. 27 is the general statement, and w. 26 and 33 are the specifications of it. This is confirmed grammatically by the *gar* which connect the parables as the ground of v. 27 and the *oun* which connects v. 33 as the inference from the parables.

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refer to the non-com-mitted audiences of his teaching. In four places (6:17; 7:11; 9:18; 12:1), a distinction is made between "multitude" and "disciple." Although "disciple" is in some instances synonymous with the Twelve (9:18; 12:1), this is the case only when there is not indication of the presence of other believers. Luke distinguishes between "disciples" and "apostles" in 6:13, and elsewhere he employs "disciples" to

This review of the context and structure of the passage helps to establish the general import of 14:33, but some crucial questions remain with regard to the parables and the meaning of the verse itself. The parables, as they are usually interpreted, present the unique notion that an individual calculates in advance whether or not he or she has "what it takes" (presumably spiritual strength) to become a follower of Jesus. It is also very odd to *infer* from this that discipleship is conditional upon renunciation, and I will suggest that another understanding of the parables clears away the confusion. The terms in v. 33 introduce another series of questions. Does "renounce" require physical abandonment or only mental detachment or "readiness" to part with things? Does "aU that he has" mean material possessions or earthly attachments in general? Does "disciple" denote anyone who will enter the Kingdom or only those with a particular vocation? After setting out a new interpretation of the parables and their connection to the demands, I will argue for the first option in each case and then offer some thoughts about the practicability of the passage.

Inadequacy of Resources in the Parables of w. 28-32

J. Jeremias summarizes the traditional explanation of the parables in w. 28-32: "Do not act without mature consideration, for a thing half done is worse than a thing never begun."[3] There are two objections to this explanation. First, it presents an exception to the normal call to disdpleship-and indeed, the surrounding demands-by describing it as deliberative and focused on the resources of the individual rather than the resources of God. Second, it makes the parables virtually irrelevant to v. 33. We should expect a consonant summary, such as, "Therefore, you must choose from the beginning to endure to the end." Instead, we find a resumption of the "humble yourself" theme.

A. JQlicher approached an acceptable understanding of the parables by arguing that both parables stress complete sacrifice as necessary to accomplish an important task.[4] The weakness of this understanding was noted by Wellhausen, who pointed out that v. 33 requires the opposite: instead of committing all of one's resources to the task, one must abandon one's resources.[5] Jullicher's explanation meets this objection of the parables' conclusion and is meant to be ironic, but this is probably overly subtle.

It is possible to understand the parables in a new way by stressing their linguistic connection to the conclusion rather than to the phrase, "count the cost." The key is the idea of *ability.* In w. 26,27, and 33, one is not able *(dunatai)* to be a disciple. In v. 31, the king must be able *(ei dunatos* cf. *ei eksei* in v. 28) to meet the opposing army. The implication in both parables is that the subjects do not have sufficient resources and

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designate large groups of believers (6:17; 19:37, and over 20 times in Acts).

[3] J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (2nd ed.; New York, 1972) 196; see also I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, 1978) 591; J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXJV (AB;* Garden City, 1985) 1062.

[4] A. JUlicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (2 vols; Tubingen, 1910)2:208.

[5] J. Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Lucae* (Berlin, 1904) 80.

that they will be mocked if they begin the task. Here a formal similarity to 14:8 (cf. v. 12) becomes important In 14:8, the one who acts on the assumption of the adequacy of his resources (taking the place of honor) will be mocked (told to sit in a lower place). If, however, he begins by renouncing his resources (taking the lower place), he will be a disciple (moved to a place of honor). The connection between the parables of w. 28-32 and their conclusion is more clear if we state the conclusions in converse form: "Reliance on one's own inadequate resources precludes discipleship." The theme is hardly strange to Luke's Gospel: in 17:28-33, ties to family and possessions preclude readiness for the judgment day, and in 12:16-34 and 16:9-12, disciples are urged to get rid of possessions which pose an encumbrance in the present crisis. The *outos* with which v. 33 begins, then, refers not to the beginnings of the parables, which depict cost-counting, but to their endings, which depict humiliation and failure. As tower-building or warmaking with inadequate resources are doomed, so discipleship with the encumbrances of family and possessions is doomed. Humble yourself and you will be exalted: renounce tower and war making and you will escape ridicule; renounce family and possessions and you will be rewarded. This is the argument of Ch. 14.

The Terms of Luke 14:33

Luke finds a graphic word for renunciation in *apotassomai.* The verb is used only here in NT material concerning wealth. The usual, almost formulaic, expression is "sell and give."[6] In narrative passages, disciples simply "leave" (aphiemi) possessions."[7] *Apotassomai* is employed in several NT passages to denote physical separation from persons or things.[8] Its use in earlier and contemporary literature sheds light on its meaning here. The most interesting incidents are in Philo, where the word is used in a similar context, including the following:

> ...(N)ot only does (Moses) *renounce* the whole belly, but with it scours away the feet, that is, the supports of pleasure...We must not fail to notice that Moses, when he refuses the entire belly, that is the filling of the stomach, he practically *renounces* the other passions too *(Leg. AIL* 3:142-145).

> Have you won the Olympic crown of victory over all wealth, and so risen superior to all that wealth involves, that you accept nothing of what it brings for your use and enjoyment?...Will you see all the treasuries of wealth, one after the other; full to the brim, yet turn aside from them and avert your eyes?...For (a celestial and heavenly soul) taking its fill of the vision of incorruptible and genuine goods, *bids farewell* to the transient and spurious (Deus 145-151).

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[6] Mark 10:21 and parallels; Luke 12:33; 19:8; cf. Matt 5:42; 13:44-46; Luke 6:30.
[7] Mark 1:16-20; 2:14; 10:28 and parallels.
[8] Mark 6:46; Luke 9:61; Acts 18:18,21; 2 Cor 2:13.

The consistent use of *apotassomai* in the literature of the period to denote physical separation requires the translation "give up" (NTV, NASB, JB) or "part with" (NEB, Modem Language). "Leave behind" is preferable to these translations because it conveys the sense accurately here and in narrative passages. "Renounce" (RSV, Living Bible) and "forsake" (KJV), while fair enough translations according to their dictionary definitions, have been so weakened by abstractions of the verse that they are no longer useful in discussions of the subject

The aorist tense of this verb indicates decisive action and not mere willingness to act, as some have interpreted the intent of the verse.[9] Not only is the notion of "willingness" excluded grammatically, but it also makes a mockery of NT ethics in general: "Not that I have reached the goal or even that I press on toward it, but I remain perpetually willing to move in the right direction if it ever becomes necessary."

"All that he has" *(pasin tois heautou huparchousin)* has been generalized to include not only the disciple's material goods but also "his dear ones and everything his heart clings to. vea, even his own life, his own desires, plans, ideals and interests."[10] This kind of explanation may follow from discomfort with v. 33 as an inference from the preceding parables. Unfortunately, the practical result is to render the command so general that no one feels obligated to obey it The word used here for possessions *(huparchonta)* does not allow such vagueness. It is used consistently in the NT over a dozen times for personal property, including passages in Luke's Gospel on the same theme (8:3; 12:15; 12:33; 19:8; cf. Acts 4:32). The radical nature of the command is highlighted by the word "all" *(pas),* which Luke inserts elsewhere to intensify the tradition (5:11; 5:28; 6:30; 18:22). The terminology here is clear and specific: "all that he has" means things that can be sold, given away, or abandoned.

Can the Text Be Spiritualized?

We are left with a command which, if allowed to speak on its own merits, appears to call every believer to abandon all possessions as an expression of discipleship. Is there anything in the context which might mitigate the severity of this demand, which might justify the long history of rationalization by believers who read it? The only possibility that I can see in the immediate context is to extrapolate from v. 26b, which calls each believer to give up ("hate"[11]) family and "...yes, even his own life." If Jesus could not possibly mean that disciples must literally die as a prerequisite of discipleship, neither could he mean that they must literally leave behind possessions. Does he mean, then, that renunciation is primarily spiritual until death; Le., that one's devotion culminates in death, which entails loss of family and possessions, and that this truth must be embraced at the beginning? Such a spiritualization of the passage

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[9] E.g. Marshall 594.

[10] N. Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, 1951) 399.

[11] See Schmidt, *Hostility* 126-127 for the argument that "hate" means "leave behind."

would be inconsistent both with Jesus's interest in actual behaviors and the examples of obedience to these commands in the Gospels and Acts. Such "retroactive obedience" is the ethical companion of "cheap grace."

A more sensible common denominator of the commands to leave family, life, and possessions is to understand Jesus as de-ˆ.jnanding *that from the beginning point of discipleship, one must conduct oneself as if these old resources no longer exist.* The gospel deprives them of their power, or rather, replaces them with a new Power. When decisions are made now, they are not made with these old powers in view. The inevitable result, which is borne out in Gospel narratives and the epistolary literature, is that a new family comes into being, personal safety is disregarded, and possessions are employed exclusively for the work of the Kingdom. The new priorities are, respectively, disloyal, dangerous, and economically foolhardy. A new world has penetrated the old, refusing to compromise.

When we attempt ethical constructs in response to these kinds of statements of Jesus, then, perhaps it is best for us to resist not only spiritualizations of his demands but also justifications of our compromises. We should instead preserve the terminology of striving that Paul used, and we should remind ourselves that the first believers referred to themselves not as Christians but as those of The *"Way.* to the extent that we follow the new way of Jesus, in our living and not only in our thinking, we are disciples. Renunciation of the power of money will cost us more than a troubled conscience.

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In This Issue

It was Martin Marty who once described Jacques Ellul as "the quintessential Protestant" of our time. This issue is devoted to exploring the thesis that this "quintessential Protestant" is also a theologian for Catholics. Back in my "Catholic days" when I first read Ellul, the affinity of his thought with that of both Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton immediately struck me. It is that affinity which is explored in this issue. The work of putting this issue together was made easy by the willingness of Jeff Dietrich and Katharine Temple to allow me to reprint their articles and conversation concerning the suitability of Jacques Ellul's theology for the Catholic Worker movement and its impact upon that movement. These essays first appeared in the *Catholic Agitator* and the *Catholic Worker* which they respectively edit Following their essays, Gene Davenport explores the parallels between Thomas Merton and Jacques Ellul on *Technique.* The impact of these various essays, I hope, is to show that although Ellul is not a

Catholic theologian he has nfiuenced Catholic thought This influence is not so much upon the Catholic theological mainstream as it is on the radical anarchistic strand of Catholic thought represented by both the Catholic Worker movement and by Thomas Merton.

In this issue you will also discover reviews of two of Ellul's books recently published by Eerdmans: *The Technological Bluff* and *Reason for Being: A Meditation on Ecclesiastes.* Although we previously published a review by Gabriel Vahanian of the French edition of *Hie Technologfad Bluff* we thought it appropriate to review it again now that an English translation is available. The book on Ecclesiastes, however, has not been reviewed here before. You will also find reviews of books by, Jeffrey Stout and Gene Davenport. I think you will find them all worth your attention.

The next issue (January 1991) will be devoted to Ellul and the Mass Media under the guest editorship of Clifford Christians. Also, it is important to note the death of Lewis Mumford this past year. He and Jacques Ellul are the two great pioneers of the social and historical study of technology. A future issue will be devoted to Mumford's work. Finally, I announce with sadness the news of the passing of the Mme Yvette Ellul, the wife of Jacques ElluL Our thoughts and prayers are with Jacque Ellul in his time of loss.

DarrellJ. Fasching, Editor

In Memory of Mme Yvette Ellul

by Joyce Hanks

Jacques Ellul's wife of 54 years, Yvette Ellul (n6e Lensvelt), died on April 16,1991, of cancer of the pancreas, after a three month illness. She will be remembered not only as Ellul's constant companion, driver, helpmeet, and critic, but as someone who contributed on her own to scholarly reflection. She wrote, for example, a wide-ranging series of articles for the Journal *Foi et Vie* which was edited by her husband for many years. The series, entitled "Chronique des livres oubliSs," (Cronicle of forgotten books), analyzed works by Simone Schwarz-Bart, Henry James, and Cheikh Hamidou Kane, among others.

Married in 1937, the Elluls had four children, three of whom survive their mother: Jean, Yves, and Dominique (a daughter). Their second son, Simon, died in 1947 at the age of six.

Mme Ellul's hospitality was legendary: she welcomed many Ellul scholars with great quantities of tea time goodies and impressive meals, in addition to lively, thoughtful conversation. Few outsiders probably suspected the extent of Mme Ellul's generous hospitality which included dinner evety night for the foreign-bom wife of a student of Ellul's, during the years the student served in the French forces of World War n.

Jacques Ellul's frequent spontaneous tributes to his wife can perhaps best be summed up in his response to from Daniel Clendenin (in his 1987 interview with him). He was asked what he considered most important to him as he looked back over the years. Ellul responded that his leadership and creation of the French Reformed parish in Pessac (where the Elluls have lived for decades outside Bordeaux) "gave me the most joy because I did it with my wife."

Book Reviews

The Technological Bluff, by Jacques Ellul

Translated by G. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, 418 pp.
Reviewed by Nicola Hoggard Creegan

The Technological Bluff is a big dense book, a metadiscourse on the discourse of bluff, by a man who thought he had written his last words in *The Reason for Being.* No one will be surprised that Ellul argues that technique is autonomous, fragile, unpredictable, costly, wasteful, often useless, ugly, ambivalent and ambiguous. But developments in the last ten years have convinced him of the need to write another book about technology. The level of technique now reached-computers, lasers, genetic engineering and space research–together with the discourse on technique, which lauds its positive aspects and ignores the negative, has driven us into an all pervasive technical lifeworld. But this world is a bluff; we do not see the seriousness of our situation, and in feet we are persuaded to think it quite otherwise than it is. This bluff is a "terrorism," in the sense of "molding the unconscious with no possibility of resistance."

Ellul sets out to expose the fragility of technique and of the bluff surrounding it He is not against technique; he is not for it. But in this book he postulates that with the increasing sophistication of technique there are escalating problems, these problems are inseparable from the positive gains, and the hazards are inherently unpredictable. The stakes are infinite and the potential losses absolute. Technique, then, reveals itself as more inherently problematic than ever, even without the lack of critical reflection and bluff which render it deadly; if technique were subservient to moral reasoning and higher values, Ellul hints, we might have decided that some techniques were not worth the risks. In this regard, and lest we get lost in this meta-level discourse, Ellul reminds us more than once that the common car kills a thousand people a month in France. It is, he says, "the great symbol of diversion and the associated emptying out of reality and truth."

What is this bluff? Ellul describes it as "the rearranging of everything in terms of technical progress." It is "a demonstration of the prodigious power, diversity, success, universal application, and impeccability of techniques." Technique, he explains, is seen *a priori* as the way to progress, and the answer to all collective and individual problems-including those it causes. Positive aspects are magnified, and negative ones concealed. By bluff we come to live in a world of "diversion and illusion."

This bluff is based upon a changed ideology of science-a soteri-ology of science, on a changed rationality-as justification for power, and on the suppression of moral judgments. Politicians and technicians are among those who consciously lead the adaptation to technique and are hence the main instigators of bluff. Unwitting, spontaneous bluffers include intellectuals, driven by their fascination with technique, and their unwillingness to appear out of date. This bluff creates and is created by a world in which knowledge is power, a world of experts and technocrats, of cooperation between universities and big isolated centers of technical research-the technopolis.

Why is the bluff able to work? It is all encompassing, Ellul suggests. Moreover, the positive aspects are easy to articulate and see while the negative aspects are always "vague phenomena, which are significant only by their bulk and their general nature...but [which] eventually give a certain negative style to human life." Time and space are distorted, and access to nature is limited. "People are being plunged into an artificial world which will cause them to lose their sense of reality and to abandon their search for truth." But the bluff obscures that which is lost. Furthermore, the discourse on technique claims most in exactly those areas in which it is failing; there is talk of technical culture, human mastery of technique, technique is said to be rational and human. This is a bluff, argues Ellul. Technical culture is not possible, people live in networks rather than communities, the basis for rationality has changed, and with the advent of the computer, technique has "definitively escaped from control by human will." Moreover, it marginalizes huge numbers of people, causing unemployment, and social instability.

This leads us, Ellul claims, into a world of absurdity. Technique and its attendant discourse have brought us close to the scenario of the philosophers of the absurd. There is economic absurdity, for example, in Western economies which rely upon the manufacture and consumption of useless gadgets while Third World economies are unable to meet basic needs. There is absurdity in the ability of scientists to manipulate genetic material while being unable to know what kind of genetic model they would desire. There is absurdity in the lack of existential freedom and psychological impotence effected by the escalating diversity of choices technique appears to offer.

Here, as with other Ellulian denouncements of modernity, one reads and wishes to say it is hyperbolic. After all, here I am writing this review, reading the book, in the time saved by technique. I am using a word processor, for a computer-dependent *Forum.* But yes, I hear Ellul reminding me that I am not counting or even seeing the global and personal costs. And although one might feel some resistance, one is relieved, also, that so much of the burden of modem reality is explained by his analysis. On the one hand, like his mentor, Kierkegaard, he draws us into dialogue with ourselves and our culture, to recognition and affirmation. On the other hand one feels the caution one must feel faced with a deluge of facts about things that go wrong, and brought to synthesis by a powerful mind. My intuitions affirm his stance, but my caution reminds me that though his arguments are compelling, the facts upon which they are based were selected and others rejected. Is this a valid and prophetic picture of our life in

modernity? If a prophet's validity is to be found in predictive power Ellul has already shown his credentials; and in light of the recent war, we should note well that one of the warnings in this volume is that "the conflicts which divide multinational concerns, supranational movements,...and nations are now extremely violent, a violence both expressed and enhanced by the multiplicity of techniques, and yet..on the other hand the violence of the confrontations masks the nullity of the stakes."

This is not a theological work, but it is in a dialectical relationship with his theological work. The burden of Ellul's analysis should be understood in the light of his underlying belief that all systems and worldly powers are deceptively bent on destruction. The exposing of the weakness of technique and the false reality in which we live must be juxtaposed to his affirmation of Word as truth, the answer only barely hinted at here, when he affirms that the spiritual and the scientific must listen to each other and that science must remember that "ultimate reality cannot be grasped."

But when he has pushed us to despair at the lifeworld in which we live and with which we inevitably cooperate what are we to do?

Television is a god in this society, he claims. Ellul watches television for the purposes of understanding the world he critiques.

We are left to ponder how we might raise children who as yet have no critical skills in an audio visual world. Ellul always resists answers, always resists systems, and this of course is both frustrating and gratifying. In this book he responds only with the hope that in spite of our being "radically determined" the internal contradictions of the bluff will cause its disintegration. He dares to hope that this will cost as little as possible, and that as individuals we must recognize the "little cracks of freedom" and "install in them a trembling freedom."

I have always been intrigued by Ellul's Kierkegaardian emphasis upon the individual as the answer to collective necessity and evil. After all, only the individual has the freedom capable of opposing the necessity of systems and institutions bound by technique and bluff. But are there not also corporate dimensions to Word, grace and freedom? Ellul offers solutions only as brief sketchy afterword; he wants us to think them out for ourselves. But we might wish that these last paragraphs were longer, if not another boot

Reason for Being: A Meditation on Ecclesiastes by Jacques Ellul

Translated by Joyce Main Hanks. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, 306pp.
Reviewed by Daniel Clendenin

A commentary on a biblical text that warns against the writing of books?! Ellul, of course, delights in this paradox, and those familiar with him and the content of Ecclesiastes will find it no surprise that Ellul declares Ecclesiastes his favorite portion

of Scripture. He begins with his regular dose of modesty, that he is utterly unqualified as a scholar to write the book except for having read and prayed over the text for fifty years, and by explaining his scholarly method that proceeds in the opposite direction of virtually all other scholarly work. Ellul carefully refrained from reading anything at all about his subject as he completed his manuscript. After completing it, he read everything he could find. Predictably, "in the end, my reading of dozens of commentaries gave me no reason to change a single line of what I had said" (3). More seriously, Ellul sees the present work as the "final word" to his life work (even though he has written four books since this one), much as he sees *Presence of the Kingdom* as his prolegomena.

Ellul begins introductory critical matters by rejecting what he senses are three erroneous presuppositions in the study of Ecclesiastes: the necessity of formal linear logic that insists on the law of non-contradiction (paradox and dialectic are key for Ellul), a naive and superficial reading of the text that fails to get to its deeper meaning (for Ellul, the text says more than is written; cf. 284), and the opinion that the text is not Hebraic but rather a reflection of another culture or cultures. Just who is Qohelet? Ellul surveys the options, opts for pseudonymity, and throughout the book simply retains the Hebrew transliteration. After a few other text-critical discussions, Ellul looks at the entire text according to three primary themes, each of which forms a single long chapter, themes of vanity (49-127), wisdom (128-212), and God (213-303).

In Qohelet Ellul discovers the "dissenter par excellence" (30), and he revels in finding in the Biblical text themes of vanity that correspond to what he has elsewhere called commonplaces of society, illusory myths by which we live. For example, Qohelet declares that "progress does not exist" (60), exploding the ideological optimism of Marx, de Chardin, our technicians, scientists, et al. But this is hardly cause for fatalism, pessimism, withdrawal, or inactivity (68); quite the contrary, for among his declarations of vanity Qohelet denounces vanity itself (1:2). What about political power (75f)? It is "vanity, oppression, and foolishness" (84). Money, work, happiness, morality, and human answers all receive like treatment, with the dialectical yes-no spoken to each.

Wisdom is the next prism through which Ellul views the text, and it too, being both praised and damned by Qohelet, results in dialectical vision. It encompasses both knowledge (134-138) and usefulness (138-141). It is at once fragile and impossible. As a uniquely Hebraic revelation, says Ellul, Qohelet's meditation is primarily an attack on Greek philosophy and wisdom; it is an "antiphilosopy" (150,295). Above all, genuine wisdom demands that we recognize our finiteness, especially that finitude that shows itself in our relation to the future (160-171) and to death (171-185). Ellul goes on to apply these two "pillars of wisdom" to three test cases-the word, possessions, and women and the couple.

In Chapter IV Ellul orients his thoughts about Ecclesiastes around the theme of God, beginning with observations about Qohelet's peculiar use of the word *elohim.* Again, traditional Ellul themes emerge here-a strong polemic against all attempts at religion, metaphysics, ontology, or apologetics; God as Wholly Other; the impossibility

of moralizing; the possibility of genuine choice when history is fluid, and the practical determinism or necessity that locks us in if we fail to detect these moments; God as the gracious one who gives gifts (of enjoyment, work, etc.) and who judges (but never condemns); and the identification of obedience with freedom.

As Ellul's declared favorite text and final word, and because of the Scriptural themes throughout Ecclesiastes that bear a distinct dialectical flavor that would justify Ellul's methodology elsewhere (eg: the vanity but necessity of technique), *Reason for Being* will be a good place to enter the Ellulian labyrinth. Those already familiar with him will not find much new here, but rather the same steady convictions that have guided his life and thought, now reaffirmed from the vantage point of Ellul's lifetime of study, prayer, reflection, and incarnated activity.

Into the Darkness: Discipleship in the Sermon on the Mount by Gene L. Davenport

Nashville: Abindgon Press, 1988,302 pp.
Reviewed by Darrell J. Fasching

Into the Darkness is a scriptural commentary in the tradition of Jacques Ellul's *ThePolitics of God and the Politics of Man* or *The Judgment of Jonah.* The challenge of writing in this genre is considerable, for it requires a blending of scriptural exegesis and theological criticism of culture. Therefore *Into the Darkness* is not simply a scriptural exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount, although the author clearly has an excellent command of the historical-critical exegetical nuances of the text. As a theological critique of contemporary culture it is necessarily episodic and unsystematic since contemporary issues are broached as the sequence of issues raised by the text permits. The weakness of this genre lies precisely in the episodic nature of the critique which at times seems "inefficient." But that weakness may well be its strength - the agenda is not set by the world but by the Gospel.

Will Campbell provides the foreword, reminding the reader that Gene Davenport's understanding of the "cost of discipleship" is not purely academic but has deep roots in his early pastoral days. Campbell relates the stoiy of Davenport's defiance of the complicitous racism of the Klu Klux Klan and the U.S. Secret Service in Alabama in the late fifties. The details of that encounter are spellbinding and should not be skipped over in a rush to the first chapter.

The overarching metaphor of Davenport's exegesis is suggested by its title. The Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount is "the Light of God, which penetrates the Darkness" of our technological world. "The Sermon on the Mount," we are told, "is instruction in those motives, attitudes, perceptions, and habits which are characteristics of God himself and which are the dynamics by which the universe itself, in the New Age under the sovereign rule of God, operates" (17).

The book is divided into nine parts which follow the structure of the Sermon as presented in Matthew. Davenport immediately confronts the most typical objection to the Sermon on the Mount - that of those ethical realists who remind us that the Sermon's ethic is impossible and impractical in a fallen world. One sees immediately the influence of Ellul upon Davenport as he critiques current realism for its obsession with technical efficiency and efficacy. The technical imperative (Le., If it can be done it must be done), he tells us, has become a moral imperative. "The final step is to press the ethicists into service. Their role is to justify our desire by developing a rationale and an ideology that will show our actions to be the onfy moral and most loving course 'under the present circumstances.' Thus it has been with abortion, space exploration, nuclear energy, military weapons, computers, medical developments, 'advances' in education, church management, and so on" (26&27). And so under the guise of an ethic of realism darkness is spread as if it were light. In his critique, Davenport is as hard on the church as he is on the world. The institutional church and media evangelists are both called into question for being far too obsessed with numbers and success. They all too typically rely on the techniques of the world for "peddling the Gospel."

Like Ellul, from whom he has learned much, Davenport has a good deal to say to both the theological liberal and the theological conservative. And like Ellul what he has to say will appeal to both and yet offend both as well. For example:

> Excessive biblical literalism is as naive an approach as that which speaks of biblical categories as merely symbolic... If the devil is merely literal, he must be located somewhere, and the opponent is the most logical and convenient place to look. If the devil is merely symbolic, we need not be alert to the danger and possibility that he might pitch his tent in our camp" (35&36).

This is a good book - which is to say that there is something here to offend and provoke almost everyone. If space permitted I would love to quote Davenport's provocative insights on everything from just war and patriotism to the universality of God's saving love which embraces both those within and outside the church. Ellul and Davenport are truly kindred spirits. My appreciation, however, does not mean that I agree with all of Davenport's views. I find both his critique of Gandhi's non-violent strategies as "spiritual technology" (197) and his views on the alienability of human rights (190) unconvincing. And his distinction between "children of God" and "creatures of God" (106,201) seems odd - and at odds with the genealogy in Luke's Gospel which suggests that to be a son of Adam is to be a son of God. Nevertheless, I think Davenport's grasp of the Sermon on the Mount highlights the true "scandal" which the Gospel presents to all realists who seek to explain to Christians why Jesus' Sermon on the Mount cannot be applied in a fallen world.

> One of the most consistent habits of the powers and principalities is to convince us that Death is Life, that violence is justice, that power is benev-

olence, that war is peace. In such a world, whose who are truly sane are automatically perceived by the world as insane... Jesus, the only perfectly sane person who has ever lived, was murdered precisely because he bore witness to reality, and this was viewed by the powers and principalities, quite correctly, as a threat to their own authority to deliver the world over to genuine insanity (43&44).

Let's face it - the real scandal of the Sermon on the Mount is not that it cannot be applied but that living it requires that one be willing to embrace the way of the cross.

Ethics After Babel by Jeffrey Stout. Beacon Press: Boston, 1988, xiv + 338pp.

Reviewed by David Werther

One of the most obvious features of ethical theory is that the great ethical theorists advocated different accounts of morality. Jeffrey Stout emphasizes this pluralism; "the languages of morals and their discontents" is the subtitle of his book. According to Professor Stout, understanding and evaluating alternative ethical views is difficult because one's perspective is always colored by one's own moral language. The ethidst, no more than the scientist, can claim to do her assessment from some neutral and perfectly objective vantage point. What she can do is engage in "immanent criticism" insofar as she is able to grasp aspects of another view.

Such criticism consists of drawing attention to the internal inconsistencies of a view. When adherents of the moral language so criticized come to recognize the inadequacies of their tradition they will want to modify it. In doing so, they may utilize aspects of other moral languages. Stout refers to the process of dropping some aspects of a received moral language and drawing upon different languages to replace those features, thereby solving otherwise intractable problems, as "bricolage." Thomistic ethics is cited as a classic case of bricolage.

As Stout sees it, our moral problems cannot be dealt with effectively apart from an understanding of Thomistic ethics, as well as other theologically informed oral theories, for at least two reasons. First, aspects of these views appear in contemporary ethical discourse. We cannot begin to understand our own moral vocabulary if we are not aware of its origins. Second, our liberal tradition can be seen as an attempt to avoid the bloody conflicts that came about because disagreements between religious groups could not be solved peacefully. It may be then that the language of liberalism has resources unavailable in religiously based ethical views for handling the problems posed by pluralism. If this is so, then there is good reason for preferring liberalism to the communitarian ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre and others.

In the final analysis Professor Stout wishes to distance himself from what he takes to be facile dichotomies between liberalism and communitarianism, subjectivity and ob-

jectivity, and creation and discovery. He tries to undermine these distinctions through immanent criticism and offers an alternative that is the result of his bricolage. Stout's internal critiques of work by Kai Nielsen, James Gustafson, Alan Donagan and Alasdair MacIntyre are superb.

Stout's bricolage seems to be less successful. For example, he sets out to formulate an account of morality that would avoid "the spectre of relativism." To be sure, he does manage to provide us with a view that avoids a number of kinds of relativism. Nevertheless, he opts for a theory in which truth is language dependent,"... truth is a property of interpreted sentences, and interpreted sentences belong to languages, which are human creations" (p. 54). If moral truths are human creations then their truth is contingent upon our existence and linguistic practices. Readers who consider this sort of commitment to contingency, and hence relativism, problematic will not find Stout's bricolage ultimately acceptable. Even so, I suspect that they will want to wrestle with the arguments in *Ethics After Babel* for it is the work of a gifted philosopher.

Bulletin Board

David Gill has left his position as President and Professor of Christian Ethics at New College Berkeley and is currently at work on two books as well as speaking and consulting, especially in the area of business ethics. He can be reached at: Box 5358 Berkeley CA 94705 (415) 654-5513. Special thanks to Dave for his recent generous contribution to the Forum.

Special thanks to **Dan Clendenin** for his work as our Book Review Editor. He has done a terrific job. Changes going on in his life have made it necessary to resign that position. Dan has left William Tyndale College to accept a two year appointment with the International Institute for Christian Studies at Moscow State University. Mail addressed to Dan Clendenin, DCS, Box 13157, Overland Park, Kansas 66212 will be forwarded to him. We look forward to getting special reports from Moscow in the future.

Russell Heddendorf has published a new book: *Hidden Threads: Social Thought for Christians* (Richardson TX: Probe Books - distrubted by Word, Inc., Dallas, TX), 1990), 228 pp., 14.95 in paperback. In the tradition of Ellul, this book explores the interface between sociology and Christian faith.

Tony Carnes announces the publicaton of a new Journal, *Areopagus.* Carnes who is the editor, explains that the focus of the journal is the critique of contemporary forms of idolatry. A one year subscription is $10.00. Send *tozAreopagus,* King's College, Briarcliff Manor, N.Y., 10510.

Darrell Fasching's new book *Narrative Theology After Auschwitz: FromAlienation to Ethics* will be published by Fortress Press during the Winter of 1991-92. The book draws upon the work of Irving Greenberg, Stanley Hauerwas and Jacques Ellul to reconstruct the Augustinian Christian narrative tradition and Luther's two-kingdom

ethic in the light of the history of anti-Semitism and murderous bureaucratic technicism which manifest themselves in the Holocaust.

Book Reviewers are needed. If you are willing to review books for the *Forum* please send a copy of your *Curriculum Vitae* and a list of preferred topic areas to Darrell Fasching, c/o the Forum. Also, if you would be interested in being considered for the position of book review editor please indicate this.

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Forum

Jacques Ellul and the Catholic Worker of the Next Century: Therefore Choose Life

by Jeff Dietrich

His breathing came in labored, spasmodic gasps. First the chest would heave a great sigh, then the head would snap back upon the pillow with such force that the jaws popped open automatically, sucking air like a greedy baby. Then came the gurgling sounds. Each hungry breath pushed his face deeper into conformity with the clear plastic oxygen mask that gave him the only sustenance he cared about now.

Any fool could see that Isaiah was dying, but when confronted, the doctors insisted that he was doing fine, and why didn't we all go home and get some sleep. Lots of people had pulled through this. And besides, having eight visitors was against hospital regulations. Their bland professional palliatives stood in marked contrast to our grieving countenances. Isaiah died four hours later.

It is almost impossible for health care professionals to accept the reality of death. In fact, for all the professionals who keep our country running smoothly, the denial of death is essential. As Walter Brueggemann writes in his book *The Prophetic Imagination,* "The royal consciousness leads people to numbness, especially to numbness about death. It is the task of prophetic ministry to bring people to engage their experiences of suffering to death."

As Catholic Workers we find ourselves engaged with suffering, despair and death on a daily basis. We believe that this is the authentic reality of the culture, but the message of the culture consistently confirms in powerful ways the very opposite. Until we can understand with some clarity that the "truth of the culture" is grounded in the worship of false gods, we are condemned to a schizophrenic existence.

The theology of Jacques Ellul offers us the prophetic clarity of naming with exquisite perfection the idolatries of contemporary culture. As the late William Stringfellow said, "For Ellul, the affirmation of death is the ultimate reality and hence the ground for immediate moral decision. [He recognizes] an idolatry of death in which all humans and societies are caught up."

Ellul believes that the contemporary manifestation of this idolatry of death lies in our worship of the "sacred ensemble" of techniques. "From the moment that techniques, the state or production are facts, we are required to worship them... This is the very heart of modem religion."

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Simply put, technique is the systematic reduction of all human thought, action and organization to the logic and efficiency of the machine. (See *Catholic Agitator,* June 1990.)

The first duty of the Christian, Ellul says, is "to be aware... At the present time, all so-called progress consists in developing this technical framework of our civilization. All parties, whether revolutionary or conservative, liberal or socialist, of the right or left, agree to preserve these fundamental phenomena: the primacy of production, the continual growth of the state, the autonomous development of technique."

This situation is monstrous because it amounts to the virtual enslavement of humanity to the principalities and powers-the spiritual force of evil in the world. If we are not "awake and aware," we will enthusiastically cooperate with this demonic power. "If we let ourself drift along the stream of history, without knowing it, we will have chosen the power of suicide, which is at the heart of the world. ... We cannot have many illusions."

To the extent that our actions are founded upon the mythology of the contemporary reality, rather than the word of God, we reinforce this demonic direction. The mythology of progress, revolution and youth are the foundation of all our cultural ideologies. All of the motivating forces of the culture, from advertising copy to political propaganda, to the idealization of humanitarian impulses in medicine, education and public service are founded upon these false mythologies.

We cannot fight the world of power and technique, more and greater power and technique. Our situation is not unlike the Allied forces of World War II fighting the demonic forces of Nazism with the same tactics as Hitler: mass bombings, propaganda and terrorism of civilian populations. They won the physical war, but the demonic spirituality of Hitlerism triumphed in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the subsequent willingness of U.S. foreign policy to transform the entire globe into a nuclear concentration camp.

God does not work through "technical means." Most contemporary Christians, especially Catholics, have an unconscious Chardian-ian theology. Teillard de Chardin was the Jesuit paleontologist who believed that technology was an extension of natural biological evolution, and that as it developed and became more sophisticated, so too would human culture and human consciousness. This process would eventually lead to the encirclement of the entire globe by "noosphere," a cloud of higher consciousness culminating in the second coming of Christ.

But this view of culture and technology is, if not blasphemous, anti-scriptural. Any overview of the Hebrew-Christian Scripture would clarify that, except in rare cases, God only works through human beings. The Holy Spirit does not work through the electoral process, through war, revolution, scientific progress or the space program. Neither does the Holy Spirit work through mass movements, political reform or institutions. The Holy Spirit only works through people.

We cannot use the means of the world to bring in God's Kingdom of peace and justice. We cannot *bring in* peace and justice, says Ellul, we can only *be* peace and

justice. The Christian must be "the leaven in the loaf," "the light in the darkness," "the sheep among wolves." In other words, if we want the Kingdom of God to be a reality, then we must use the "means of the Kingdom" to achieve that end. If we "seek first God's Kingdom and righteousness," then all the other things, like peace, justice, sisterhood and brotherhood "will be added unto us."

Ellul's theological perspective radically liberates us from having to be successful, from having to respond to the false challenge of either violent revolution or liberal reform with which means the world is constantly seducing us. Now we don't have to kill all of the capitalists, nor do we have to go to graduate school to get an MSW, nor do we have to become a non-profit corporation and raise millions of dollars or make millions of converts. In short, we don't have to be effective!

We have been liberated to be the means of God, a channel for the Holy Spirit to act in the world. But this does not mean that we can just *be,* it means that we must be engaged with the suffering reality of the world, the sinfulness of the world, the injustice of the world. We must be present in the places of darkness, manifesting the Kingdom, opening a channel for the Holy Spirit to come into the world.

This is the essence of the "tension" that Ellul talks about. As Christian realists, we must be engaged with a sinful world, but aware that it is not possible for us to do anything about it. Our situation is not unlike the women who stayed with Jesus at the foot of the cross. Their love was stronger than their illusions, unlike the male disciples who had expected to become regional administrators in the new "Jesus corporation," the women had a more authentic orientation, and thus remained faithful to the end.

We live in a crucified world. We cannot make it uncrucified any more than the women could rescue Jesus from his cross. But, like the women, we will not abandon that suffering reality. The response of the women was to mourn and to grieve, to enter into the darkness of suffering.

We picked up Isaiah's body at the coroner's office and brought him to our house. We sat with him throughout the night, watching and praying. In the morning we put him in the old blue van and drove him over to Dolores Mission for the funeral. Finally, we buried him in a plot at the back comer of Sacred Heart Cemetery. We grieved the dying of a friend. We grieved the injustice that only in death could this homeless man finally have a home. We grieved the dying of a culture that numbs itself to the pain of the poor, and blinds itself to the reality of death.

Brueggemann says that "anguish is the door to historical existence, that only those who embrace the reality of death will receive new life." We believe that the denial of death and the subsequent narcissism that causes our insatiable consumption of products and experiences defines the essence of contemporary culture.

As Christopher Lasch says in his book *The Culture of Narcissism,* "There is a growing despair of the changing society, even of understanding it... Industrial civilization gives rise to a philosophy of futility, a pervasive fatigue, a disappointment with achievements that finds an outlet in changing the more superficial things... It addresses itself to the spiritual desolation of modem life, and proposes consumption as a cure."

But we refuse to take the cure. Trivial entertainments, superficial relationships and compulsive shopping are not the cure; they merely address the symptoms of our schizophrenic condition. We seek unitive wholeness and with Brueggemann we recognize "that all satiation is an eating of self to death." We refuse to be numb and narcotized-the prophetic call is to be aware and awake. We will not worship at the altar of the false god of technique. We will not accept the bland palliatives of the technocratic priesthood. When we encounter suffering, we will mourn. We will respond with compassionate engagement. Wholeness comes when we refuse any longer to deny death. Wholeness comes when we respond to the Word of God which calls us out of the bondage of death and oppression of life and liberation. In the words of Deuteronomy: "I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live."

Jacques Ellul: A Catholic Worker Vision of the Culture

by Katharine Temple

About twenty years ago, in my first flush of enthusiasm at "dis-scovering" the work of Jacques Ellul, someone came up to me and said, "I am surprised you're taken up with such a depressing thinker. How can you bear to read him, let alone find him helpful?" I was a bit taken aback. Still, it has to be admitted that M. Ellul is not widely read; even when he is respected, he is kept somewhat at arm's length. There is no such thing as an "Ellul school" emerging and no sweep of Ellul-ism to attract attention. Nor does M. Ellul himself seek to inspire a following of devotees. The net result, as far as I can see, is that his insights have been dismissed far too lightly.

It is always hard to know for sure how you arrive anywhere, but at the outset, I picked up *Hie Technological Society* because of a desire to know more about what makes our society tick. And also I was feeling rather jaded about the social analyses around me. Although disconcertingly massive, this masterpiece in no way dispirited me. On the contrary, it brought into focus my gut reactions to a whole host of things-trends that made me distinctly uneasy, despite the more popular Western view that ours is the best of all possible worlds, or the even more socially aware sentiment that things are wretched but inevitably going to get better. The very starkness of the book was bracing in that it gave me a toe-hold to articulate what was actually going on around me. Because he was refreshingly accurate, words like "depressing" or "pessimistic" seemed quite beside the point. He helped to unveil the world for me. As George Grant, a Canadian political philosopher, has written:

> He [Ellul] does not write of necessity to scare men, but to make them free. I am certainly freer for having read this book... Keats put perfectly my response to this book. "Then felt I like some watcher of skies/When a new

planet swims into his ken." Not to have read this book is to choose to remain socially myopic when somebody offers you free the proper spectacles.

The Technoloffcal Society is not a theological book, so for some time I had no idea that Ellul is also a biblical scholar, and I can't say that I really cared. While I had not exactly fallen away from faith, I was decidedly wishy-washy and nothing much in the field of theology grabbed me. It was all in abeyance, on the back burner, as I turned to other matters. Almost by chance, I happened upon M. Ellul's *Violence* and picked it up because it looked a lot shorter than *The Technological Society.* It turned out to be the first work of non-fiction that ever kept me up all night.

Although reading *Violence* was not a "conversion experience," it was an illumination that Christianity could make a unique difference and theology has a cutting edge. It made me want to read the Bible again in a new way and to enter the fray again as a Christian. In thinking about the impact of this book, I am reminded of what M. Ellul has said about Karl Barth's influence on him. "Barth went beyond the orthodox-liberal controversy." What's more, this possibility came to me in the same way he found it in Karl Barth.

> First I discovered through him a flexible understanding of Scripture. Barth was infinitely less systematic than Calvin, and he was completely existential at a time when this concept did not exist. He put biblical thought in direct contact with actual experience; it wasn't ann-chair theology.

Over the years it has been Ellul's ongoing clarity about the world and his loyalty to the Bible, through thick and thin, that have most deeply impressed me. In person, his qualities of sanity, constancy, and attentiveness are very much in evidence, personal traits that also come through in his semi-autobiographical *In Season, Out of Season* (1982). To this day, it still comes as a mild surprise when some Christians find him too negative for words.

Quite a few people object less to his descriptions than to his refusal to "give the right answer at the back of the book." Since Ellul has never suffered from a failure of nerve or personal aloofness, the most important thing is to understand *why* he rejects the role of guru.

> [W]e learned that the Bible is not a collection of answers God has given to our questions; on the contrary, it is the place where God addresses us, where He asks *us* the question we have to answer. To hear the word of God is to hear the question which God asks of me, to which I must give a response out of my life and faith. I am made responsible (compelled to give a response). Thus when this all-powerful God speaks, He does not annihilate us, but renders us answerable.

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Within this perspective, there's no game-plan to be imposed. The answers have to be worked out and re-worked again and again, always concretely and provisionally, by the faithful, within the scope of biblical freedom.

As Jean Bose, Barth's most loyal disciple said, "One can be so much more flexible and open to all things when one has a central theological certainty." Barth also brought me a freedom with regard to the biblical text-the only and unique pillar of the revelation of God, of course, but thanks to which God speaks in a multiple and diverse manner, allowing us to mine the multiple riches from this unique treasure.

His intention is to shake us from our lethargy, to direct Christian attention to a path that is really neither fundamentalist nor liberal nor mystical. He follows a different route and resists the temptation to offer conclusions that might short-circuit our own engagement with the Bible.

In all of this, I think it would be misleading to suggest that Ellul has kept total silence on immediately practical questions or that he has had no influence in this regard. In my case, prolonged exposure to his biblical studies, his persistent questions, his espousal of something other than the *status quo,* has left its mart

One major difference he's made in my life comes from his deep attachment to the Hebrew Scriptures. His studies of the early chapters of Genesis, Jonah *{The Judgment of Jonah,* 1971), and his refections on such neglected books as n Kings *{The Politics of God and the Politics of Man,* 1972), for instance, are unique in contemporary biblical commentary. By accepting that Hebrew Scripture as being fully the Word of God, Ellul has managed to avoid the teachings of contempt and the damage inflicted by historical criticism. As soon as I tried to pursue this kind of study further, I found myself a bit unsure about where to go next, so I asked him directly for help. He suggested that Christians do well to learn from the great teachers in the Jewish tradition, if our own understanding of Scripture is not going to shrivel up. I took his advice seriously, and now learn Hebrew Bible from the rabbis who have revered it most as *the* guide for life. From them, I am beginning to get intimations about what he calls the "multiple riches," and so to see new depths to the question, "What is to be done?"

M. Ellul also quite indirectly helped me become open to the Catholic Worker movement, founded in 1933 by the peasantworker-scholar Peter Maurin. It may sound odd to claim that an arch-Protestant pushed me toward a group with arch-Roman Catholic origins, and it is true that the links are not strictly linear. Although both are French, the differences between Ellul and Maurin-differ-ences that go back to the original split between the two traditions over matters such as tradition itself, philosophy, Christendom, agrarianism, the sacraments -seem massive; and yet I am convinced that what binds that two men together is stronger than whatever separates them. Each has turned against the tide to develop critical analyses that move us beyond ideologies and state power; each is rooted in a Christianity that pre-dates confidence in "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"; each has understood the Christian response as one of personalism, self-sacrifice, poverty, the daily works of mercy; each is a Christian intellectual in the true sense.

But Peter Maurin had a co-founder in the Catholic Worker-Dorothy Day. Inspiration took root at their meeting. In one of his "Easy Essays," Peter said, "Man proposes and woman disposes." Whatever else we may think of this aphorism, it aptly describes what happened in their case, for Dorothy always called Peter her mentor.

Peter's idea of hospices seemed like a simple and logical one to me; hospices such as they had in the Middle Ages are certainly very much needed today. But I like even better his talk about personal responsibility. He quoted St. Jerome, that every house should have a "Christ's room" for our brother who is in need-.. Peter brought up the idea of the paper the first time I met him and he kept harping on it, day after day. He told me I needed a Catholic background, and he came day after day with books and papers and digests of articles which he either read aloud or left with me to read. It was impossible to be with a person like Peter without sharing his simple faith that the Lord would provide what was necessary to do His work.

She was the ideal student, who absorbed his synthesis and then put the ideas into practice. Throughout her books and columns in *The Catholic Worker,* she passed along the vision she had received from Peter, by writing about the daily attempts to live it. When a friend gave me a subscription to the paper, my thought was, "Whether she has heard of him or not, this is the kind of thing Ellul is talking about. This is one answer as to what you can do when you get up in the morning.

Born-Again Catholic Workers: A Conversation between Jeff Dietrich and Katherine Temple

A Conversation Between Jeff
Dietrich and Katharine Temple

This conversation ... was conducted by phone in May of this year [1990], Kassie has lived and worked at the New York Catholic Worker for the last 15 years. She is an editor of the Catholic Worker newspaper, and has been an avid Ellul scholar for over 20 years. We are grateful for her advice and encouragement in our efforts to understand and apply Ellul's thoughts to the Worker movement. For us, Kassie best embodies the highest qualities of Peter Maurin's worker/scholar tradition.

JEFF DIETRICH: I talked to you a while back, and I told you how excited I was about the reading I have been doing in Jacques Ellul. I feel like a born-again Catholic Worker, if one can say that. I feel that what Jacques Ellul has done is to give us a consistent, contemporary critique of the culture in which we live, which makes what the Catholic Worker does so pertinent. I feel like sometimes people just dismiss us as "saints" or just nice people. Folks say, "Oh, you do such nice work;" "You're such good people." That's not why we're doing it. We want to be prophetic. We want to do it as a prophetic criticism of the culture.

To have someone like Ellul, who gives you this elaborate perspective to work from, I feel liberated by this perspective, which I know some people find rather depressing.

KATHARINE TEMPLE: We have discussed this, and I was thinking as your were talking that I knew some of the writings of Jacques Ellul before I knew much about the Catholic Worker, and I was very taken with his analysis of the society and his other writings about what it means to be Christian in the world in which we live. And as I learned more about the Catholic Worker (this was before I came) it seemed like the philosophy and the theology of the Catholic Worker was the only movement that seemed to resonate with this same kind of understanding.

In some ways, I came to the Catholic Worker via the writings of Jacques Ellul. Our two comings to see the relationship between the Catholic Worker and Jacques Ellul are from different times, but I think the same relationship is there.

JEFF: I feel like as a Catholic Worker movement, we really haven't updated our analysis of the culture since Peter [Maurin] died. And the way Ellul talks about the technological society, I feel as though Peter Maurin, if he were alive today, would either be saying the same thing or writing "Easy Essays" about Jacques Ellul. What do you think?

KATHARINE: Well, I think that's very true. I think they come out of the same culture. They were both bom in France. Peter, of course is older, but in terms of the environment for social analysis, they both did come out of the same intellectual and social world.

JEFF: What are some of those similar influences?

KATHARINE: First of all, they both come out of the first part of the twentieth century. There was the impact of the industrial revolution in France and that realm of social thought that began to question if this has brought about the benefits that people were certain it was going to bring about.

The intellectual ferment in France at that time was very strong and very rigorous. Also, although Ellul is a Protestant and Peter Maurin was Roman Catholic, the world of Christian thought in France at that time was minority thinking. Nonetheless, some very strong critiques of what was happening as a result of the industrial revolution from a Christian perspective were very active at that time.

Of course, Peter came out of a peasant background, and I think the evils or the dark side of the industrial revolution seemed to strike him from the very beginning. Whereas, Ellul's parents were immigrants, and he was brought up on the docks of Bordeaux, and grew up in the urbanized world of France. So he came directly with the workers' struggles and directly in contact with Karl Marx. Peter came out of an entirely earlier culture.

I think what is needed to be done in terms of a social analysis focusing on the problems of the world would be one which they would share as a requirement for social thought I think Ellul would see Peter Maurin's thought as focusing directly on industrial society and what it has become and what it has done to people. Ellul, on the other hand, has focused since 1935 on what he calls "the question of technique."

His thought is that industrial society has moved to a different phase. The ways and means of the machine age have passed on to a different stage, thus your analysis would be different

JEFF: What I thought was so vaUdating is that in reading Ellul I felt supported in what the CathoUc Worker does in simple living, the green revolution.

Ellul makes this contrast between the "means of God"-that God can only work through human beings, that God veiy rarely works directly in the world, that God most often chooses a human medium through which to work. And that God cannot work through the technical means of the world. That the more our culture becomes enslaved to technical means, the more difficult it is for God to work in the world.

Also there are all those metaphors from the Gospels that are so important to Ellul-to be the leaven in the loaf, to be a Ught unto the world, to be wakeful and watching, the pearl of great price. All of these things are the "Uttle way" of the Catholic Worker.

You often feel overwhelmed by the means of the world. I know I've always had a tendency to buy into that perspective of "We're not being very effective here." So you stick with the CathoUc Worker way - out of a kind of faithful, spiritual perspective.

What Ellul does is give you the abiUty to look critically at what the technical means are and say, "No, you can't use these to bring about the Kingdom of God." You can't use mass elections to bring about the Kingdom of God, you can't use television and radio to bring about the Kingdom. TV evangelists are not doing the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not working through technical means. Each person has to have a conversion of the heart and be open to the word of God, and be ready to be used by the Holy Spirit That's the only way it works and none of us want to befieve that

KATHARINE: That's a very clear summary of what Ellul is saying to Christians, and I think it's a very clear summary, perhaps in a different language, of what Peter and Dorothy would have been saying. That is the caU to all Christians, not just a select few, that we are aU caUed to witness to the way of God, the truth of God, which is different from the powers of the world. But they would both say very specifically that we need to do it in the world in which we live, and know that world. You can't be a light about (sic)a society that was a hundred years ago and not take into account what is going on now, what it is that is enslaving us now.

Sometimes Peter wouldn't use that language, but when Peter talked about voluntary poverty, for example, not only is that a very traditional means or root of CathoUc thought, but he was talking to a society that is dominated by money - money is enslaving people. The weight of consumerism is literally kiUing people, and the Christian is called to open that up and liberate people from that force.

And that the means and ends, and this is a theme that both Ellul and Peter have very much in common: Is the means and end? If you want a society that is personalist, communitarian, based on the well-being of the other, you can't reach that through impersonal, bureaucratic fund-raising means. Dorothy used to say, "AU the way to

heaven is heaven," which is another statement of the "little way" or the question of ends and means.

Since the "efficient" means of having spectacular results on a large scale quickly is a dominant mode of this society, it is even more important to be cognizant of the fact that if you are going to have a society where it is easier to be good or have some sort of ceU in the old society, you're going to have to use different means than those that prevaU around us.

JEFF: And this is exactly why the Catholic Worker espouses an anarchist, non-stateist perspective. But again, there hasn't been a strong inteUectual groundwork or foundation for an anarchist perspective, and we all get sucked into the cultural ritual of elections and the media surrounding it.

KATHARINE: We've certainly had many discussions around here about whether people prefer the word personalist or anarchist, which in one understanding can be seen as the same. But I think the importance of the anarchist critique, and certainly in social theory Ellul gives an anarchist critique of technological society, in distinction to a Marxist critique or a Uberal critique, is that the form of anarchism that the CathoUc Worker would espouse would be a personalist anarchism. It is precisely a critique of stateism-that the increasing power of the state is the source of domination and that in our relationship to the state we need to be cognizant that it isn't one entity among many, so you can say, weU, we'll take the advantages from the state that we can and it won't have any repercussions on how we run our house. Rather, the state is a key point in our analysis of this society to see where the increasingly monolithic power structure is.

JEFF: I was particularly taken with Ellul's introduction in his book *The Political Illusion* where he talks about the French Revolution. We tend to think of kings of France as being absolute, total monarchs, the "Sun King" and all that. Before the French Revolution, the king had difficulty creating a standing army, he couldn't raise enough taxes to support a drive for empire. But after the Revolution, once the king was deposed and all people became part of the state and responsible for the state and to the state, then everybody, of course, served willingly. Then, once so-called democracy was there, people voluntarily enslaved themselves and gave themselves over to a taxation system and a system of law that they would never have done under a monarchy.

When you start looking at it that way, the whole idea of people just giving themselves over completely to the state, you need to have a stronger foundation to this anarchist-personalist perspective. I think that's what Ellul gives us.

KATHARINE: Yes, at the end of that book, he talks about what is needed, and these are just a few little excerpts from that:

> It is important above all, never to permit oneself to ask the state to help us. Indeed we must try to create positions in which we reject and struggle with the state, not in order to modify some element of the regime or force it to make some decision, but much more fundamentally, in order to permit

the emergence of social, political, intellectual, artistic bodies, associations, interest groups or economic or Christian groups totally independent of the state. What is needed are groups capable of extreme diversification of the entire society's fundamental tendencies, capable of escaping the unitary structure, presenting themselves not as negations of the state, which would be absurd, but as *something else* not under the state's tutelage.

JEFF: He would say that the United States should not be patting itself on the back and saying we finally succeeded in winning the Cold War, and that the same kind of liberty and freedom that the United States has is just about to prevail throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

KATHARINE: I think Ellul would agree with Peter and Dorothy, particularly Dorothy, who focused on the state and the large bureaucratic institutions. But he would say that the thinking is still too much in terms of the Marxist "mode of production." The mode of production has changed in the Catholic Worker analysis, even though Dorothy had the insight that we need to better coordinate and describe it in a way that is more exact

For instance, the role of the computer isn't simply shunned because Peter didn't like machines, but the computer is something quite different from other machines, and that's what we should be looking to.

JEFF: It seems to me that Ellul, in *The Technological System,* is saying that the computer as an information processor created a completely different environment. Previous to the computer, the techniques of the state, education, propaganda and various other techniques were separate and could not be coordinated. But now, they can be smoothly integrated into one smooth-running technical system through the information processing machine.

KATHARINE: Right And we need to analyze that, not moving away from our philosophy of what that is doing to people, how it is creating poverty. This would not say that there is no poverty or that the whole emphasis on the works of mercy would change, but in our analysis of where is the enslavement coming, where is the oppression. What's worse is that all of these things look good and they look like they're overcoming the oppression of the industrial era.

JEFF: It looks like they're liberating people, and people speak of... machines - satellite communications and information processing, as personalized, liberating machines.

KATHARINE: And I think what Ellul would say is that you really need to look at how precisely the poverty in Los Angeles, the poverty in New York, the people who come to our doors-how is this being shaped and formed, what is this doing to people.

JEFF: To me, that is exactly the power of the Catholic Worker–to be there with the poor, particularly the poor of the urban First World, the urban, technical world, to see how their lives have been completely destroyed. AU cultural supports are gone. All traditional culture has been erased. You can see it much more clearly in the poor

than you can in the wealthier classes, who are much more able to protect themselves against the disintegration, or at least to hide it.

The wealthy stiU operate on these traditional values and perspectives. But among the poorest of the poor you recognize the decimation of their lives by technology's destruction of traditional values. You realize the hypocrisy of American politicians, aU politicians, who preach family values with one breath, and preach technological growth with the next, and don't recognize that the two are incompatible.

KATHARINE: And they don't recognize that this new formulation of the information society, or the technical society is depersonalizing. You can't use impersonal means to bring about a more personalist way of being.

Also, you can't be liberated from the power of money simply by spending more money. Peter said you go into voluntary poverty to end the enslavement to money. I'm not sure if "voluntary poverty" is the phrase that Ellul has used, but he would say if this society is defined, say, by massive consumerism and the prestige of money, that certainly should be questioned. If large-scale bureaucracies are the order of the day, then we need small communities of personalist, non-bureaucratic ways of living our lives together.

JEFF: The whole issue of personalism. It seems when we go out and talk about it or when we write about it in our paper, I feel self-conscious almost because it seems like this quaint kind of perspective of the world, and what we really should be doing is having a massive revolution, or electing Jesse Jackson president or converting the editorial board of the L. A. Times. That this personalist perspective of person-to-person action, doing the works of mercy-that's a nice thing to do, and if you want to do it, that's fine, but those of us who are really going to make a difference in the world and bring social justice about, or bring in the Kingdom, we're going to work through these massive means to change the world.

I feel so much that Ellul gives me a way of looking critically at these technological means and saying no, they're not going to work, that's not going to bring about the kind of justice that you want. In fact, these technological means are doing exactly the opposite of what you think they're doing. Fortunatety, or unfortunately, you have to work on this personal level.

KATHARINE: I think of the reasons why we sometimes espouse a philosophy of personalism that seems so quaint is that it can be seen that this world we live in is so overwhelming that we're going to retreat into a world of ones and twos. I'm going to look after my own personal well-being, I'm going to try to create this atmosphere where my person is affirmed.

But that certainly isn't what was meant by personalism, certainly not by Dorothy or Peter, in that it is a public response in the world. This isn't just getting a house and retreating into it because we have to have some other people living with us. But rather, this is a statement that people live together better in small personalist ways than through bureaucratic ways.

Jacques Ellul and Thomas Merton on Technique

by Gene L. Davenport

As anyone who has read much of Jacques Ellul knows, there is a problem with the use of the English term *technology* to translate both French terms *la technique* and *la technologic.* From my very first contact with Ellul's writing, it has seemed to me unfortunate that English translators have not used *technique* for *la technique,* since the definition of *technique* is essentially a method or procedure by which artistic, scientific, or mechanical processes are carried out. Certainly, it still would be necessary to explain the specific twists that Ellul gives the term, but that would not be nearly as problematic as overcoming the connotation of *technology* as the use of machines or the application of science. Moreover, Ellul himself has recently emphasized *la technology* as discourse about *la technique (The Technological* definition that he pointed out several years ago— and also has indicated his own disappointment that English translators have not used *technique* for their translations. For this essay, therefore, I have chosen to use *techtuque,* rather than the commonly used *technology* to refer to what Ellul calls *la technique.* And now to the subject at hand, a comparison of Ellul and Thomas Merton on technique.

Thomas Merton was a monk in the Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance, an order commonly known as the Trappists, in Gethsemani, Kentucky. He entered the order in December, 1941, and for the next twenty-seven years wrote prolifically about a wide range of topics. The areas to which he most frequently turned were monastic life and spirituality, social issues, and Asian approaches to spirituality.

Although I do not recall any references to Merton in Ellul's writings, in a letter to Marco Pallis, Merton enthusiastically recommended *The Technological Society,* and in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* he reflected extensively on propaganda in light of Ellul's writing on the subject

Whereas Ellul has deliberately and consistently (with the possible exception of *The Humiliation of the Word)* kept his sociological analyses and his theological reflections separate, for Merton social criticism was an exercise in theological criticism. On the other hand, to assume that Ellul's social criticism is completely independent of his theological perspective would be to assume a dualism hardly acceptable from the standpoint of either theology or contemporary psychology.

Despite their differences in religious or theological perspectives, Ellul and Merton are strikingly similar in their perception of technique and of technique's hold on the world. The basic definition of technique in Ellul's work was spelled out in *The Technologiccd Society* and has remained basic for all his succeeding writings: *"Technique* is the *totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency* (for a given stage of development) in *every field of* human activity." In his elaboration of this definition Ellul

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lists the characteristics of techniques as automatism, self-augmentation (self-directing and irreversible in progress), monism (the unity of technique, efficiently ordered by one principle), inclination to linkage with other techniques, necessity, and autonomy *(The Technological Society,* pp. 79-147).

Merton never defines technology, but his few comments on Ellul indicate that he basically accepted Ellul's definition.

At the heart of technique for both Ellul and Merton is the drive for an efficiency that has no place for spontaneity or individual initiative. Consequently, the society of technique becomes a concentration camp to which each inmate must become pleasantly adjusted, convinced of the desirability of the way things are.

That Merton's analysis of contemporary western society was, to some extent at least, stimulated by Ellul's writing is indicated in a letter from Merton to Father Bernard Haring, a peritus at the Second Vatican Council. Merton tells Haring that in his opinion the preparatory draft on the Church in the Modem World needed to rest on a "deeper realization of the urgent problems posed by technology today," and he suggests that the Council fathers should read Ellul's *Technological Society.* Merton goes on to portray technology as a massive complex that reaches every aspect of social life, a complex of which no one really is in control and which "dictates its own solutions irrespective of human needs or even of reason." Technology, Merton says, "has reasons entirely of its own which do not necessarily take into account the needs of man." The human race does not command this complex, says Merton, but serves it. Technology, he fears, is "geared for the systematic destruction of the natural world, quite apart from the question of the 'bomb' which, in fact, is only one rather acute symptom of the whole disease *(The Hidden Ground of Love,* 383).

Merton is describing here, of course, those characteristics of technique to which Ellul refers in terms of automatism, self-augmentation, necessity, and autonomy. Technique becomes its own self-willing, self-driving master. But even if his view was stimulated by Ellul's writing, Merton did not merely parrot those writings. Rather Merton went on to his own reflections, informed by, but not prisoner to, Ellul's point of view. This may be seen in Merton's chilling picture of efficiency in the poem "Chant To Be Used In Processions Around ASite With Furnaces." The speaker in the poem describes the highly efficient way in which gas chambers were prepared for victims and the victims were prepared for the chambers. The speaker boasts of having "purified" and remaining decent through it all; of having improved the chambers, guaranteeing them and providing portholes through which one could look; and of having made soap according to a very precise recipe-though fat was hard to find.

The poem closes with two self-justifying lines:

> *In my day we worked hard we saw what we did our self-sacrijice was conscientious and complete our work was faultless and detailed*

> *Do not think yourself better because you bum up friends and enemies with long range missiles without ever seeing what you have done.*

In this poem Merton portrays both the efficiency of the system and the loss of human identity by the one who carries out the work of the system. The dehumanization of the actor is conveyed in the very way the lines are written-without punctuation of any sort (excepting the period at the end of the last line) and without line arrangements indicating a rhythm. To read the poem as Merton has written it calls for an emotionless, arrhythmic monotone such as one might hear from a computerized synthetic voice.

For both Ellul and Merton an essential tool of the society of technique is propaganda, a tool that is primary in the forced adjustment of the individual to the society. The purpose of propaganda, says Ellul, is not to change opinions, but to change actions or inaction.

In a series of reflections on propaganda in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander,* Merton discusses propaganda as an "appeal to reason and to action which is in fact essentially iwaftonaZ...(though) not necessarily untrue" *(Conjectures,* 236). The most effective propaganda, says Merton, is "that which makes use of strictly true facts, but facts which do not mean what the propagandist claims they mean and which, in reality, mean nothing whatever."

In "A Letter to a Southern Churchman" *(Faith and Violence,* 145-164) Merton takes propaganda in his own direction as he reflects on what he calls *pseudo-events.* Pseudo-events are facts and situations that either are not especially significant or are given false or misleading significance. These pseudo-events are heaped upon us by newspapers, radio, and television, and they convince us that because we have absorbed them, we understand the world.

Merton associates the clamor of pseudo-events, or manufactured events, with the powers and principalities to which the Apostle Paul refers. Paul's view of the "elements" and "powers of the air," says Merton, was couched in the language of the cosmology of his day. Today, he says, these powers are to be sought "not in what is remote and mysterious, but in what is...at our elbow all day long-what speaks or sings in our ear, and practically does our thinking for us." The powers today "dominate us in the confusion and ambiguity of the Babel of tongues that we call mass-society."

Merton's own effort to thwart the lure of pseudo-events was to ignore the "news" until it was stale. He did not pretend that by not keeping up with the news he was free from it, but he refrained from trying to know events in their fresh condition as "news." He got his "news" more through books and magazines. "To 'fall behind' in this sense," he wrote, "is to get out of the big cloud of dust that everybody is kicking up, to breathe and to see a little more clearly."

Ellul sounds a similar note when he speaks of persons being deluged with facts they cannot assimilate, getting impressions rather than understanding, and coming to the conclusion *that those who know all this* have come to certain conclusions that are the right ones. We live, says Ellul, in a labyrinth of information, in which information is abundant, but one doesn't have a choice. As Merton puts it, propaganda exerts

violence over us. By means of apparent truth and apparent reason propaganda induces us to surrender our freedom and self-possession. We like to have others make decisions for us while we assume that *we* have decided.

Merton began the letter by saying that he had decided no longer to comment on public events. He seems, in his explanation of his decision, to have been resisting any efforts by well-meaning "disciples" to rely upon him in a way that would make him an unwilling source of propaganda. "When one has too many answers," be wrote, "and when one joins in a chorus of others chanting the same slogans, there is, it seems to me, a danger that one is trying to evade the loneliness of conscience that realizes itself to be in an inescapably evil situation." The effect of this chorus of sameness, of course, is the same as that of propaganda.

The result of propaganda in the society of technique, according to both Ellul and Merton, is the loss of identity and, consequently, of freedom. This loss is demanded by the society of technique and is the very purpose of propaganda. "No technique is possible when men are free," writes Ellul *(Technological Society,* 138). Technique requires predictability and, no less, exactness of prediction. It must reduce us to technical animals. Consequently, technique "eliminates all uninhabited places, leaving no place for the would-be solitary... It is vain to aspire to live alone when one is obliged to participate in all collective phenomena and to use all the collective's tools, without which it is impossible to earn a bare subsistence... He who maintains that he can escape it is either a hypocrite or unconscious" *(Technological Society,* 139-140).

Merton, who commonly refers to the monastic life as the solitary life, or the life of solitude, does not disagree with Ellul on this pervasiveness of technique. For example, Merton consistently warned that the person who entered the monastery thinking thereby to escape the world completely misunderstood the monastic life. He pointed out that the monastery is a way of living in the world and that the world invades the monastery. The purpose of the monastery is to provide, for those who have the vocation for the monastic life, a place to recover his or her individuality by being drawn closer to God.

In one of his best essays Merton portrays this invasion of the world in a simple, almost charming way. In "Rain and the Rhinoceros" he describes a rainy night at the monastery. He had plodded through the mud up to the small cabin which had become his living quarters in the last years of his life and had cooked some oatmeal on a Coleman stove. "Let me say this," he wrote, "before rain becomes a utility that they can plan and distribute for money. By they* I mean the people who cannot understand that rain is a festival, who do not appreciate its gratuity, who think that what has no price has no value... At the moment it is still free, and I am in it. I celebrate its gratuity and its meaninglessness" *(Raids on the Unspeakable).*

Merton reflects on the rhythm of the rain on the roof of the cabin, rhythms not yet controlled by the engineers, he speaks of the difference between his rain and the rain of the city, and he reflects on Thoreau. But then he points out that he doesn't really see himself as escaping anything. "Technology," he says, "is here, even in the cabin. True,

the utility line is not here yet, and so G.E. is not here yet either. (Note: there *were* utility lines to various parts of the monastery grounds.) When the utilities and G.E. enter my cabin arm in arm it will be nobody's fault but my own. ladmitiL lam not kidding anybody, even myself. I will suffer their bluff and patronizing complacencies in silence." Then, reflecting back on comments made earlier about the words on the box for his Coleman lantem-*Streches days to have morefun-he* says, "I will let them think they know what I am doing here. They are convinced *I am having fun (Raids...,* 13).

For Merton, the solitary, contemplative life not only should draw one closer to God, but should enable one-precisely by being drawn closer to God-to have a clearer picture of the world on whose behalf the solitary one lives out his or her life. Merton undoubtedly would agree with Ellul that one does not escape politics by being non-po-litical and that becoming apolitical is in itself a political decision. Ellul himself has said that the private life must be reinvented *(The Political Illusion,* 205), and though it is not dear that Ellul would agree that the monastic life is the proper, or realistic, way to reinvent it, for Merton the monastic life offers one of the best, if not the best, opportunities to do so. It enables, Merton would say, precisely the kind of different perspective that Ellul sees as necessary. The automatism of technique requires the complidty of human beings robbed of a different perspective, robbed of all sense of private life and individual identity. For Merton, these are regained in being drawn to God, the life of solitude offers the setting for this to occur.

In *Perspectives on Our Age* Ellul points out that technique reduces Christianity to the inner life, to spirituality, to the salvation of the soul" *(Perspectives,* 98), as well as penetrating Christianity in the forms of propaganda, advertising, and Structuralism as a method of biblical study (100-101). The church, therefore, becomes just another tool of technique, just another instrument to bring about human adjustment to the system. Merton was well aware that the monastic life can become victim of this capture by technique if the rule becomes a way of ordering life from without and does not lead to inner recovery. As pointed out earlier, he was well aware of the presence of the world within the monastery. He saw both the value of continual reform of the monastic life and the danger that technique could garb itself in the cloak of reform.

Although both Ellul and Merton's writings deal at length with the problems and dangers of technique, neither wishes to be classified as anti-technique. Ellul is more explicit in the positive dimension of his view, seeing technique as something that God can use and something that God alone can judge. What we can and must do, says Ellul, is subject technique to the Revelation in Jesus Christ, thereby destroying the deified, religious character of technique *{Perspectives,* 108). We should not expect to defeat technique, he says, but meet its challenge just as human beings have met all other challenges and transcended them.

Successfully meeting the challenge, says Ellul, requires "something transcendent" *{Perspectives,* 101). We must receive a freedom that comes from outside the system, something not given in technique, and live as bearers of Hope-Hope that comes from outside technique-and bearers of freedom, bringing free play into the midst of every sit-

uation. Being bearers of freedom, however, also is possible only when we have received freedom from outside the system of tedinique. What is required is *mutants,* persons who can use techniques and not be used by those techniques. We need people who are *in* but *against* technique-which, Ellul admits, is a delicate balance. Ellul does not mean that only Christians can overcome technique, though he does think that the Christian Reve-lation-not to be confused with the church-is the unique event in which God's reconciliation of the world-and consequently of tech-nique-is accomplished.

Merton sees, as one might expect a Roman Catholic to see, the new creation constantly appearing in the simple events of nature and human relationships, bearing indelible witness to the grace of God. Technique is something that attempts to suppress nature (nature not merely in the sense of rocks, trees, and animals, but in the sense of the original integrity of the creation), but over which nature eventually will be triumphant because nature still bears the potentiality for restoration. Ellul, on the other hand, as one might expect from a Protestant in the Reform tradition, says that we must look to a transcendence outside the system to break the hold of the system. Certainly, Merton would not deny the need for the transcendent. The goal of contemplation is union with the transcendent. Moreover, ecumenical discussions of the past few years have raised interesting questions about the traditional categories in which the old Catholic-Protestant debates have previously been carried out. The fact remains that for all their similarities with regard to the character and consequences of technique, the point at which Ellul and Merton probably would have some interesting dialogue is technique in light *of Genesis 1-3.*

Issue #8 Jan 1992 — Ivan Illich's Theology of Technology

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In This Issue

From the Editor

In the last issue I announced that the January issue of *The Ellul Studies Fourm* would be devoted to an analysis of the mass media. Various factors have lead me to postpone that issue until next July. In the meantime Carl Mitcham agreed to be our guest editor for this issue. He has gathered an intriguing collection of essays on Ivan Illich's critique of technology and its theological implications. Because of the number of essays there will be no book reviews or bibliograpy in this issue. My thanks to Carl for his hard work in bringing this issue to press.

Darrell J. Fasching, Editor

About This Issue

Carl Mitcham, Guest Editor

This issue of the *Forum* is devoted to recent reflection by Ivan Illich and some of his associates. The work of Illich has been praised by Jacques Ellul. *See, e.g., The Technological Bluff* (1990 trans.), p. 108: "Ivan Illich was the best if not the first of those to emphasize thresholds..." And Illich likewise has made favorable reference to Ellul. See, for example, *Medical Nemesis* (1976, p. 102, note), as well as the remark in "Health as One's Own Responsibility." But more than favorable cross references justify this special issue.

The truth is that for Illich the fundamental challenge of technological civilization is a theological one. This is not, however, generally appreciated.

Bom in Vienna in 1926, Illich grew up in Europe. He studied theology, philosophy, history, and natural science. During the 1950s he worked as a parish priest among Puerto Ricans in Hell's Kitchen in New York City and served as rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico. During the 1960s he founded centers for cross-cultural communication first in Puerto Rico then in Cuernavaca. Since the late 1970s he has divided his time between Mexico, the United States, and Germany. He currently holds an appointment as Professor of Philosophy and of Science, Technology, and Society at Penn State Universify.

Although his first two books *The Church, Change and Development* (1970) and *Celebration of Awareness* (1970) are both theological tracts, after that point his work veers off into social criticism that makes little if any explicit reference to the spiritual life. *Deschooling Society* (1971), *Toolsfor Conviviality* (1973), *Energy andEquity* (1974), and *Medical Nemesis* (1976) are all ostensibly monographs in social criticism.

The second of two subsequent collections of occasional pieces *Toward a History of Needs* (1978) and *Shadow Work* (1981) hints again at theological issues, especially in the long article entitled "Research by People," which is in fact a commentary on the work of the 12th century theologian, Hugh of St Victor. The following year the new monograph on *Gender* (1982) reasserts Illich's demand for attention to unexplored aspects of economics, while *HJ) and the Waters of Forgetfulness* (1985) alludes once again to theological dimensions.

Then following *ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind* (1988), which once more makes reference to the intellectual tradition of the Victorenes, Illich undertakes an extended study of the *Didascalicon* of Hugh of St. Victor. This book has already appeared in German and French, and will do so shortly in English *as In the Vineyard of the Text* (University of Chicago Press, 1992). With this work theological concerns are explicitly if elliptically engaged.

Although not as explicitly as Ellul, there has nevertheless been a tension and an alternation between theological and sociological reflection in Illich's work. One difference is that with Illich the theological has been much less well attended to and recognized, even among his careful readers. No doubt this may be in part because of

the more illusive and allusive character of his theology. In the Catholic, unlike the Protestant tradition, what is more important than the explicit witnessing to faith is hidden friendship and liturgical practice.

The seven pieces included here are all the result of reflection among a close circle of friends. The lead piece is actually translated (by Jutta Mason of Toronto, Canada) from the transcript of a talk in Hannover, Germany, September 1990, and retains something of its occasional flavor. The interview (granted to a German newspaper after the talk in Hannover, and translated by Stephen Lehman, an Illich associate from the Van Peltz Library at the University of Pennsylvania) with commentary by Lee Hoinacki, are attempts to clarify Illich's provocative critique of what has been called "health fascism."

Hoinacki (bom 1928), has worked with Illich since 1960, and recently finished editing a book-length interview between Illich and CBC radio producer David Caley (Jutta Mason's husband), which will appear in spring 1992. "The Teddy Bearracks" by David Schwartz, executive director of the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council of Pennsylvania and another friend of Illich, illuminates from a different angle aspects of Illich's critique of the health establishment. Illich's letter on "Posthumous Longevity" again offers a critical-theological perspective on advanced medical technology and its impact in our technological civilization.

The final two pieces - a letter by Illich and a commentary on the letter by Hoinacki - both deal directly with the issue of institutionalized (technologized?) priesthood. Together they constitute a critical revisiting of the issues first broached in "The Vanishing Clergyman" (included in *Celebration of Awareness* over twenty years ago). Illich's letter was written in response to a surprise visit during the summer of 1990. Hoinacki's commentary is in the form of a memo response to Joseph Cunneen, editor of *Cross Currents* magazine, as a result of his decision not to publish Illich's letter. (It is perhaps worth noting that Schwartz's "Teddy Bearracks" has also been rejected for publication numerous times, although it has become an oft-referred to story.) That two pieces by Illich take the form of letters to friends is itself not insignificant.

It is hoped that these pieces will help intensify awareness of the special spiritual challenges of "life" in technological civilization, and may serve to foreshadow a more substantive work on these topics by Illich in the near future. The texts have been brought together with the assistance of Hoinacki and the toleration of Illich. Special editorial work to finish things off has been done by Mary Paliotta.

Bulletin Board

About the Ellul Studies Forum

The Ellul Studies Forum was first published in August of 1988. Two issues are produced each year (in January and July). The goal of the *Forum* is to honor the

work of Jacques Ellul both by analyzing and applying his thought to apsects of our technological civilization and by carrying forward his concerns in new directions.

What *the Forum* is not intended to be is a vehicle for *true disciples* or *Ellul groupies.The* whole thrust of Ellul's work has been to encourage others to think for themselves and invent their own responses to the challenges of a technological civilization. Although we do review and discuss Ellul's work, it is not our intention to turn his writings into a body of sacred literature to be endlessfy dissected. The appropriate tribute to his work will be to carry forward its spirit and its agenda for the critical analysis of our technical civilization.

Ellul invites us to think new thoughts and enact new deeds. To that end we invite you to submit essays on appropriate topics. If you have suggestions for themes that you would like to see addressed in future issues, they are also welcome.

Subscriptions

To Subscribe to the *Forum* for one year (two issues), send your name and address and a check made out to *The Ellul Studies Forum* in the amount of $6.00 ($8.00 outside the U.S. The check must be drawn from the foreign branch of a U.S. Bank or be a U.S. Postal Money Order). Back issues are $4.00 each.

Mail to: The Ellul Studies Forum
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Bibliographic Reviews

Readers are invited to contribute to the ongoing annotated bibliographic column on theology and technology. Please send books or articles to be noted, or notes themselves, to:

Carl Mitcham
Science, Technology & Society Program
Pennsylvania State University
133 Willard Building
University Park, PA 16802

Book Reviews

If you woud be willing to be a reviewer of books for the *Forum,* send your *vita* and a list of the areas/issues you would be interested in reviewing to our new Book Review Editor:

Nicole Hoggard Creegan
North Carolina Wesleyan College
Rocky Mount, NC 27804.

Forum – Ivan Illich: Toward a Theology of Technology

Health as One's Own Responsibility: No, Thank You!

Ivan lllich

I am convinced that health and responsibility belong to a lost past and - being neither a romantic, a visionary, nor a drop-out - that I must renounce both of them. But only if I succeed in unequivocally articulating this renunciation of health and responsibility can I escape the reproach that I appear here as a mere rhetorical critic.

This presentation forms part of a larger joint project for the "recovery of *askesis* in higher education." My preparation included a close collaboration with Dirk von Boetticher. We discussed every sentence with a group of young friends. When, in what follows, I say "we," I mean only this group.

We are occupied with a reflection on contemporary certainties and their history - that is, on assumptions which seem so commonplace that they escape critical testing. Over and over we find that the renunciation of these very certainties offers the only possibility remaining for us to take up a critical position regarding that which Jacques Ellul calls *la technique.* And we want to free ourselves from it, not just run away. For that reason, my reaction to "taking responsibility for one's own health" is an emphatic "No!"

But there is a risk here. Our "No, thank you!" in response to a suggestion for a new hygienic anatomy can be interpreted and used in five different ways to do exactly the opposite of what we intend:

1. First of all, the "No" can be understood as a call for the necessity of tutelage. Health, so it might be claimed, is too valuable, too sacred to leave to the discretion of lay people. I apodictically reject this arrogant disempowerment. For thirty years I have publicly defended the total decriminalization of self-abuse. And I continue to insist on the complete elimination of all legal statutes which regulate the consumption of drugs, and unconventional and/or irregular healing. Following Paul Goodman, I build my argument on the respect we owe to the dignity of the weakest.

2. Secondly, my fundamental "No" has nothing to do with the presumed scarcity of healing agents. Today, people are dying of hunger, not from a lack of medicine or surgical interventions. And the poorer people are, the more helplessly they become

the victims of ever cheaper medicine. For two decades, I have defended the position that the consumption of medicine, just as of liquor, tobacco and lotteries, ought to be subject to taxation as luxuries. Through taxation of dialysis, coronary bypasses, and AZT simple medical procedures such as appendectomies could be financed for everyone.

3. I do *not* say "No" as a global thinker seeking an unobstructed channel for ecological dictatorship. I can imagine no complex of controls capable of saving us from the flood of poisons, radiations, goods and services which sicken humans and animals more than ever before. There is no way out of this world. I live in a manufactured reality ever further removed from creation. And I know today its significance, what horror threatens each of us.

A few decades ago, I did not yet know this. At that time, it seemed possible that I could share jesponsibility for the re-making of this manufactured world. Today, I finally know what powerlessness is. "Responsibility" is now an illusion. In such a world, "being healthy" is reduced to a combination of the enjoyment of techniques, protection from the environment, and adaptation to the consequences of techniques - all three of which are, inevitably, privileges. In the Mexican valley that I know, the blue com, under whose planting calendar the village still names its cyclical feasts, was wiped out fifteen years ago. And there is no money for the destructive techniques needed to grow hybrids. There is also no protection against the poisonous clouds blowing over from the agribusiness plantation. But new places of employment are opened up for the pedagogy of health, with sops thrown to barefoot green enthusiasts in the process. Therefore, my "No!" is certainly not a "yes" for a pedagogy of health which entails the management of poisonous systems.

4. And I particularly do not say my "No!" to a new ethics of responsibility for health because I see in modem sickness and dying occasions for finding oneself. The suggestion that we ought to accept the unavoidable epidemics of the post-industrial age as a higher kind of health is an impudence currently fashionable among pedagogues. But such instruction in suffering and dying is shameful. Care through bereavement counselling, education for dying, and the making of health plans aims directly at the destruction of the traditional art of suffering and dying, practices developed over hundreds of years.

What sickens us today is something altogether new. What determines the epoch since *Kristallnacht* is the growing matter-of-fact acceptance of a bottomless evil which Hitler and Stalin did not reach, but which today is the theme for elevated discussions on the atom, the gene, poison, health and growth. These are evils and crimes which render us speechless. Unlike death, pestilence and devils, *these* evils are without meaning. They belong to a non-human order. They force us into impotence, helplessness, powerlessness, *ahimsa.* We can suffer such evil, we can be broken by it, but we cannot make sense of it; we cannot direct it. Only he who finds his joy in friends can bear up under it. Our "No!" is thus a universe apart from every "Yes!" to the secondary accompaniments of progress.

5. And, finally, it would be either stupid or malevolent to label the "No" ofwhich I speak as cynical indifference. Quite the contrary! In the forefront of our thoughts stand the many - innumerable people - for whom four decades of development destroyed the cultural, technical, and architectural space in which the inherited arts of suffering and dying were formerly nurtured. *Today,* the vast majority is poor, and becomes poorer. When we say "No!" to implanting health at home or abroad, we first of all speak about something which for me is unthinkable: four billions in new wretchedness. Only if we ourselves start with "No, thank you!" can we attempt to be there with them.

The ground of our ethical "no," therefore, does not place us in the service of any of these five: professional paternalism, the ideology of scarcity, systems thinking, liberation psychology, or the new "commonsense" which asserts that in the fourth world no grass has grown over the consequences of development But it grows, that grass; it is called self-limitation. And self-limitation stands in opposition to the currently fashionable self-help, self-management or even responsibility for oneself - all three of which produce an interiorization of global systems into the self, in the manner of a categorical imperative. Renunciation of health seems to us to be a starting point for conduct ethically, aesthetically, and eudaemonically fitting today. And I refuse to define self-limitation as responsibility for myself. With Orwell, I would rather speak of decency.

The concept of health in European modernity represents a break with the Galenic-Hippocratic tradition familiar to the historian. For Greek philosophers, "healthy" was a concept for harmonious mingling, balanced order, a rational interplay of the basic elements. People were healthy who integrated themselves into the harmony and totality of their world according to the time and place they lived. For Plato, health was a somatic virtue, and spiritual health, too, a virtue. In "healthy human understanding," the German language - despite critiques by Kant, Hamann, Hegel and Nietzsche - preserved something of this cosmotropic qualification.

But since the 17th century, the attempt to master nature displaced the ideal of the health of a people, who by this time were no longer a microcosm. This inversion gives the a-cosmic health created in this way the appearance of being engineerable. Under this hypothesis of engineerability, "health as possession" has gained acceptance since the last quarter of the 18th century. In the course of the 19th century, it became commonplace to speak of "my body" and "my health."

In the American Declaration of Independence, the right to happiness was affirmed. Hie right to health materialized in a parallel way. In the same way as happiness, modern-day health is the fruit of possessive individualism. There could have been no more brutal and, at the same time, more convincing way to legitimize a society based on self-serving greed. In a similarly parallel way, the concept of the responsibility of the individual gained acceptance in formally democratic societies. Responsibility then took on the semblance of ethical power over ever more distant regions of society and ever more specialized services for delivering "happiness."

In the 19th and early 20th century, then, health and responsibility were still believable ideals. Today they are elements of a lost past to which there is no return. Health and responsibility are normative concepts which no longer give any direction. When I try to structure my life according to such irrecoverable ideals, they become harmful I make myself sick. In order to live decently today, I must decisive^ renounce health and responsibility. Renounce, I say, not ignore I do not use the word to denote indifference. I must accept powerlessness, mourn that which is gone, renounce the irrecoverable. I must bear the powerlessness which, as Marianne Gronemeyer tends to emphasize, can perhaps rob me of my awareness, my senses.

I firmly believe in the possibility of renunciation. And this is not calculation. Renunciation signifies and demands more than sorrow over the irrecoverable. It can free one from powerlessness, and has nothing to do with resignation, impotence, or even repression. But renunciation is not a familiar concept today. We no longer have a wordforcourageous, disciplined, and self-critical renunciation accomplished within a community but that is what lam talking about. I will call it *askesis.* I would have preferred another word, for askesis today brings to mind Flaubert and Saint Antony in the desert turning away from wine, women and fragrance. But the renunciation of which I speak has very little to do with this.

The epoch in which we live is abstract and disembodied. The certainties on which it rests are largely *sense-less. And* their worldwide acceptance gives them a semblance of independence from history and culture. What I want to call *epistemological askesis* opens the path toward renouncing those axiomatic certainties on which the contemporary worldview rests. I speak of convivial and critically practiced disciplines. The so-called values of health and responsibility belong to these certainties. Examined in depth, one sees them as deeply sickening, disorienting phenomena. That is why I regard a call to take responsibility for my health as senseless, deceptive, indecent - and, in a very particular way, blasphemous.

It is senseless today to speak of health. Health and responsibility have been made largely impossible from a technical point of view. This was not clear to me when I wrote *Medical Nemesis,* and perhaps was not yet the case at that time. In hindsight, it was a mistake to understand health as the quality of "survival," and as the "intensity of coping behavior." Adaptation to the misanthropic genetic, climatic, chemical and cultural consequences of growth is now described as health. Neither the Galenic-Hippocratic representations of a humoral balance, nor the Enlightenment utopia of a right to "health and happiness," nor any Vedic or Chinese concepts of wellbeing, have anything to do with survival in a technical system.

"Health" as function, process, mode of communication, and health as an orienting behavior that requires management - these belong with the post-industrial conjuring formulas which suggestively connote but denote nothing that can be grasped. And as soon as health is addressed, it has already turned into a sense-destroying pathogen, a member of a word family which Uwe Poerksen calls plastic words, word husks which one can wave around, making oneself important, but which can say or do nothing.

A political deception. The situation is similar with responsibility, although to demonstrate this is much more difficult. In a world which worships an ontology of systems, ethical responsibility is reduced to a legitimizing formality. The poisoning of the world, to which I contribute with my flight from New York to Frankfurt, is not the result of an irresponsible decision, but rather of my presence in an unjustifiable web of interconnections. It would be politically naive, after health and responsibility have been made technically impossible, to somehow resurrect them through inclusion into a personal project; some kind of resistance is demanded.

Instead of brutal self-enforcement maxims, the new health requires the smooth integration of my immune system into a socioeconomic world system. Being asked to take responsibility is, when seen more clearly, a demand for the destruction of meaning and self. And this proposed self-assignment to a system that cannot be experienced stands in stark contrast to suicide. It demands self-extinction in a world hostile to death. Precisely because I also seek tolerance for suicide in a society which has become a-mortal, I must publicly expose the idealization of "healthy" self-integration. People cannot feel healthy; they can only enjoy their own functioning in the same way as they enjoy the use of their computer.

To demand that our children feel well in the world which we leave them is an insult to their dignity. Then to impose on them responsibility for th;, insult is a base act

Indecent demand In many respects, the biological, demographic, and medical research focused on health during the last decade has shown that medical achievements only contributed in an insignificant way to the medically defined level of health in the population. Moreover, studies have found that even preventative medicine is of secondary importance in this respect. Further, we now see that a majority of these medical achievements are deceptive misnomers, actually doing nothing more than prolonging the suffering of madmen, cripples, old fools and monsters. Therefore, I find it reprehensible that the self-appointed health experts now emerge as caring monitors who, with their slogans, put the responsibility of suffering onto the sick themselves. In the last fifteen years, propaganda in favor of hypochondria has certainly led to a reduction in smoking and butter consumption among the rich, and to an increase in their jogging. It has also led to the fact that the U.S. now exports more tobacco, butter, and jogging shoes.

But throughout the world, propaganda for medically defined health coincided with an increase in misery for the majority of people. This is how one can summarize the argument of Banerji. He demonstrates how the importation of western thought undermined hygienic customs and solidified advancement of elites in India. Twenty years ago, Hakin Mohammed Said, the leader of the Pakistan Unani, spoke about medical sickening through the importation of a western concept of health. What concerned him was the corruption of the praxis of traditional Galenic physicians, not by western pharmacopeia so much as by a western concept of health which sees death as the enemy. This hostility to death (sic!) - which is to be internalized along with personal responsibility for health - is why I regard the slogan of health as indecent

Life as blasphemy. The art of the historian consists in the interpretation of traces and texts of those long dead. In the course of my life as a medieval historian, there has been a fundamental change in this task. Before a recent radical transformation - roughly, in *actio aw&passio* - it was possible for the exegete to relate substantives and verbs to things and activities which lie within the circumference of his own sensed experience. After this radical transformation, that capacity was lost. This watershed, separating the historian from his object, becomes particularly clear when the experienced body is the subject of historical writing. Dr. Barbara Duden presents this convincingly in reference to body history in the experience of pregnancy. And I myself am made dizzy. How deeply the ways of speaking and experiencing have been altered in the last two decades!

In a very short time, the representation of the substantive concept "life" has prominently emerged. During the Vietnam War, there was still a body count of the enemy; only the lives of Americans were saved. But soon after it was taken for granted that something called "a life" begins and then ends. Around 1969, the *quality* of life suddenly became an issue. Immediately, the physician was required to take over responsibility for *life.* Biomedicine discovered its competence over "life."

Studying the history of well-being, the history of health, it is obvious that with the arrival of life and its quality - which was also called health - the thread which linked what is called health today with health in the past was broken. Health has become a scale on which one measures the fitness for living of an immune system. The conceptual reduction of a person to an immune system corresponds to the deceptive reduction of creation to a global system, Lovelock's Gaia. And from this perspective, responsibility ends up being understood as the self-steering of an immune system. "Responsibility" is a word that, as a philosophical concept, only appeared in German around 1920. As much as I might like to rescue the word for future use, to be able to use it to characterize my actions and omissions, I cannot do it. And this is true, not primarily because through this slogan for self-regulation of one's own "quality of life" meaning is extinguished, management transfigured into something beneficial, and politics reduced to feedback - but because God is thus blasphemed.

I ask you to pay careful attention to my form of expression. I am a Christian, but when I speak here about blaspheming God, I want to be understood as a historian and *not as a* theologian. I can only claim solidity for an argument constructed by a historian. I accepted the invitation to speak in order to contradict the opinion of many I know. I hope I do this respectfully, but I cannot mince words.

I have outlined my thinking. Longing for that which health and responsibility *might* have been in recently arrived modernity I leave to romantics and drop-outs. I consider it a perversion to use the names of high-sounding illusions which do not fit the world of computer and media for the internalization and embodiment of representations from systems and information theory. Further, I consider the renouncing of these fictions a real possibility. And I call the practice of this renunciation an epistemic askesis. I

believe that an art of suffering appropriate to contemporary life can grow out of this askesis.

What is important to the argument is to understand that all the central concepts that I discuss here are of profoundly western origin: health and responsibility, life and askesis... and God. They were put in the world and became powerful through beliefs that took hundreds of years to come into being. Only if one understands the history of health and life in their historical interconnection is there a basis for the passion with which I call for the renunciation of "life." I completely agree with Dirk von Boetticher when he quotes T.S. Eliot:

> *Where is the Life we have lost in living?*
>
> *Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?*
>
> *Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?*
>
> *The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries*
>
> *Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust*

Eliot here inquires about life pertaining to God, about the life of which Christ says in John 11:25 "I am the life."

Aristotle did not know about this. Aristotle knew living beings which were different from all other things because they had "ptyche." He did not know "life." As an appearance in the world, only in the 18th century did life acquire that dominant and exclusive significance which gave it the character of its own answer, not from God, but from the world. Lamarck and Treviranus, who around 1800 founded biology as the "science of life" in a conscious turning away from the classifications of natural history, were quite aware of the fundamental newness of their object This life, which owes its origin and definitions to the world is, however, profoundly influenced by western Christianity, and can only be understood as a perversion of the tradition in which the God become flesh describes himself as life, and calls everyone to this life.

This is mystery. And every person who occupies himself seriously with almost two thousand years of history must admit that not only individual mystics but great cultures between Novgorod and Santiago de Compostella, between Uppsala and Montreal, have honored this mystery. This is simply historical reality, even for a historian who has no concept and no sense of what it means. And just as plain and unquestionable is the derivation of the biological concept of life from the Christian mystery. When seen in this way, the concept of a life which can be reduced to a survival phase of the immune system is not only a caricature, not only an idol, but a blasphemy. And seen in this light, desire for responsibility for the quality of this life is not only stupid or impertinent - it is a sin.

Translated by Jutta Mason, edited by Lee Hoinacki, from a talk in Hannover, Germany, September 14,1990

Against Health: An Interview with Ivan Illich

Question: "Taking Responsibility for Your Health" is the theme of this conference. Isn't this in accord with your way of thinking?

Illich: I didn't know what to think, because I hadn't intended to come here. I told the conference organizers that I have one single response to "taking responsibility for one's own health": a hearty "No thanks!"

Q: Why?

I: Health and responsibility are concepts from the 18th century. Health in the sense of the health of the people, in the sense of something desirable, begins around 1760,1770, at the same time as the concept of happiness, the happiness that is inscribed by the Americans in the Declaration of Independence. This is a materialization of the right to happiness around which entire professions were formed whose duty is the happiness or the health of the nation. But even if I make fan of this concept which stems from the Enlightenment, it still made some sense at the time of my birth, 64 years ago. I was also able to give it meaning when I wrote the book *Medical Nemesis,* which begins with the sentence, "The biggest threat to public health is the medical profession." If someone were to say that to me today, I would say, "Well, so what?"

Q: What's changed?

I: We have been deluged with information about it: ozone hole, greenhouse effect, radiation, chemistry, overuse of antibiotics, the destruction of what one now calls the immune system, genetic impoverishment, urbanization. This is not a concept of health. It is adaptation to noise, adaptation to gluttony, adaptation to the rhythms we are living with - and, above all, adaptation to inner destruction.

Q: Describe this inner destruction.

I: A few days ago I was having dinner in Philadelphia with some friends. A French-Swiss Colleague, Robert, is there. He is speaking to Tracy, wanting to give her a second mug of good apple cider, and she says, "No, my system can't take that much sugar at once. I could be thrown off balance." This woman, now 27, had been in an elementary school in which she had been confronted in the second grade with pictures of the muscles, the nerves and the endocrine system. She projected them into her own self. She does not only think of herself but she experiences herself as something that is turned on and off, something to be regulated, something totally unreal.

Q: In other words, all the concepts of medicine...

I:... are disembodied...

Q:... and alienate us from ourselves...

I:... because we take them from medicine. And I see in the slogan "Health is your own responsibility" a really malicious pedagogical intention which says to us: look at yourself and experience yourself in the perspective of the system-theories which we preach. Wetellyou that you area temporarily surviving little immune system in the womb of the world system of the goddess Gaia. She is life and you are a life! And we define life — like a snake that consumes its own tail - as the phenomenon that optimizes

the chances for its own survival. This excites the Greens who march in the streets and the systems analysts who babble about control of the world and the gentlemen whom I've heard at this conference - they all talk the same nonsense that I saw a few days ago in Washington, where thousands of school children marched in the streets and cried, "We are against the greenhouse effect, we don't want the ozone hole!"

Q: But who wants an ozone hole?

I: The point is we've got one! We have no alternative but to say: I renounce health. It's terrible. I refuse to delude myself with the possibility of an Enlightenment-like concept. I know that no path will lead me back into the Indian yoga or into the Chinese notion of a heaven and earth that correspond to one another and into which I would dissolve. I admit my powerlessness and experience it profoundly. One cannot do this alone - for this, friendship, the old *philia,* is the basis - it won't work without it. But renunciation is possible. Renunciation which is self-aware, critical, exercised with discipline and for which there was once a name - asceticism.

Q: That sounds very monastic?

I: Yes, I'd prefer another word. One thinks only of the "No, thank you" to wine, women and song. But that has nothing to do with asceticism as I mean it. It is much more challenging. It is a "No, thank you" to the certainties that our society is built on.

Q: For example?

I: Every era is like a firmament, with its conceptual fixed stars, under whose direction the ideas, but also the material experiences of the era come into existence. These basic concepts I call certainties, I should rather say assumptions which sound so obvious that no one examines them. My friends apd I have made it our responsibility to write the history of the certainties of the modem era, systematically, carefully and scientifically - and one of these certainties is health.

Q: You once said that health is a plastic idea.

I: I adopted this term from my teacher and colleague, the linguist, Prof. Uwe Poerksen of Freiburg. He says that there is a new category of words, which we use ceaselessly. They don't refer to anything precise, but they carry great significance and seif-importance with them. They are like stones which one throws into a lake, when one can't see where they end up, but they make big waves all the same. He calls these words plastic words, or amoeba words. I believe that conversation in amoeba words is the reason for our difficulty in getting to the heart of the matter, for example, of my "No-to-health," of my demand for renunciation. It can either be called nonsense, and it is necessarily called that by most people, or it can be seen as vanity: where do you stand, when you pronounce such a renunciation? My point of comparison is historical. For example, in the 19th century "health" meant primarily fewer lice, fleas and mice, larger windows, bandages, access to doctors. Aspirin didn't exist yet. In the medical practice of a doctor of that time - the historian Barbara Duden examined his notes - the word health hardly appears.

Q: What did people complain about then?

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I: They were tired. Something has gone to their head. They hurt themselves. Their heart was broken ... I would go so far as to say that to propagate "Taking responsibility for your health" is politically insolent. It is asking people to look for something that they should know is not attainable.. I am disgusted by experts who can look back 30 or 40 years and know that world health has deteriorated incredibly in the last 20 years and wash their hands of it and beat up on the victims. I angers me that health refers nowadays to me as a system, as "a life." A *awy* propaganda has been perpetrated by the concept that each of us is "a life."

The concept "a life" is a Christian-Western concept. It is Jesus' answer to Martha: "Yes, I am *the* life." For 2000 years Christians have believed that to become one with him is to enter into life. This was the only life one knew. The inventors of biology the word comes into existence around 1801 or 1802 knew full well that they had created something new with their life-on-earth, for which there is now a science, biology. This life is increasingly presented as a system, a delicate immune system, to be treated with care, which should always be property kept in balance. To imagine health as "quality of life" is a further total dehumanization, a radical abstraction and to propagate it seems to me nonsensical, because it is a-sensual, but finally also because, given the Christian connection to this concept, it is even blasphemous.

And "responsibility" in a world in which one cannot even cast a ballot reasonably! In a world in which increasingly that which one earlier called "democratic freedom" has become symbolic conformity. In a world in which you are asked: what kind of birth do you want, c-section, vaginal or maybe even with a surrogate mother? In a world in which you are seemingly given a choice, but in which in reality you only endorse what a given profession has decided to do with you. To trumpet responsibility in such a world instead of saying: People, friends, we are powerless, we must accept our powerlessness to speak of one's responsibility for one's health publicly and normatively is profoundly annoying and offensive.

Q: You have sketched a depressing scenario. Do you also see a hope there?

I: Yes. And it is not only strong, it is also often fulfilled. This scenario of which I have spoken, in which we are very isolated if we seek and preserve meaning, is also an occasion for an intensity of friendship which would hardly be imaginable in a world of inherited ties, familiar culture, middle class values, wealth and security. This is my hope. Otherwise I have none.

Translated by Stephen Lehman
from the Berlin newspaper TAZ (23 October 1990)

Promo for Narrative Theology after Auschwitz

From Alienation to Ethics
by Darrell J. Fasching

Narrative Theology After Auschwitz is a critique and reconstruction of Christian theology and ethics through a dialogue with the Jewish narrative tradition of *Chutzpah* (i.e., audacity). It proposes a shared ethic of audacity in defense of the dignity of the stranger as a response to the threats of our techno-bureaucratic world.

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Reflections on "Health as One's Own Responsibility"

Lee Hoinacki

In the last several years, Illich has begun to talk and write about *askesis* in higher education. To understand the sterility and confusion in the West's institutions of higher learning, one can examine the division of reading which occurred in the 12th century. At that time, monastic reading was split into scholastic and spiritual reading, the former coming to characterize the universities, leading to what today is called "critical thought." Previously, Illich had asked for research into *askesis* in learning. In "Health," he calls for the convivial *practice* of *askesis.* Further, he maintains that to exercise this kind of disciplined "No" today, one needs friends. A striking feature of this piece, then, is the apparent distance between its "positions" and Illich's previous writings. I shall note other instances of this below.

In earlier writings, he has said that modem certainties - the unexamined axioms on which the West rests - must be questioned and, in various books, tried to show how this can be done. Now, for the first time, he baldly states that the certainties must be renounced, and begins with a denial of health and responsibility. Of course, these are not the only modem certainties for Illich. But this is an appropriate place to start.

The renunciation of these certainties is necessary in order that one might be able critically to confront what Jacques Ellul some years ago called, *la technique.* This is

the first time in his writings on industrial society that Illich explicitly takes up Ellul's concept. In "Health," *la technique* is seen as *the* mode in which contemporary society is organized and managed, or rather controlled, as a system.

In *The Technological Society,* Ellul attempted to analyze modem society, and concluded that because of the *necessary* character of *la technique,* people could not hope to exercise control over their inventions. "Health," taking *la technique* to mean the set of interlocking and coordinated systems in which society is structured, proposes a similar assessment.

Looking around, Illich finds that people today are in a situation of utter powerlessness. Since this is true, no social or political action is any longer possible... it is too late - assuming that such action would be aimed at genuine change. All social action can only work to reinforce the existing systems. Indeed, the more sensible, more rational, more ethical - the better such action, the worse the result, for the action can only serve to give greater legitimacy to one or several of the systems in place. This will happen because of the character and power of the various contemporary systems.

And this occurs in spite of the fact that modem systems - as a form of order and control - lack legitimation in any traditional rite, image, or custom. They are newly constructed and in a constant process of being up-dated. Hence, reform initiatives - serious or frivolous - distractions, highly developed specializations, are all welcomed warmly. It appears impossible to find any activity which cannot be appropriated by one of our abstract systems.

In the past, human beings acted through ideas, war-making, law-giving, and social movements to change their respective societies. The insights of "Health" reveal that such is no longer possible. But although I find myself in a position of total helplessness, there remains something I *can* do: Say "No." And Illich clearly states the specific sense in which he *must* say "No." This is the situation of a person who accepts the possibility of blasphemy. And it is Illich's position that blasphemy is *the* characteristic of contemporary society, that is, in its fundamental structure. Our world is built on blasphemy.

Blasphemy is to attribute something to God that does not pertain to the divine goodness, as the denial of that which does so pertain, usually accompanied by an attitude of contempt But that which is most properly constitutive of the modem project - the attempt to conceptualize and manipulate reality as a system - is just such an attribution and denial, colored by a peculiarly modem arrogance. This modem project attributes a systematic character to what is while denying its created nature.

Ultimately, blasphemy is a sin against faith. Through faith, what I see and feel I *know* to be creation. What I see as real exists only by participation, through faith I know that the world *is* only contingently. But the world in which I am placed today is an artificial world, "a manufactured reality ever further removed from creation." This construct, issuing from the inventiveness of human experts, denies creation. In a kind of final hubris, they wish to assume responsibility for what was traditionally understood as creation.

Formerly, whether people acted humbly or arrogantly, trustingly or fearfully, all accepted creation as a gift, as *the* primary gift, the original expression of the divine goodness. But the world viewed as a global system, with the human being seen as an immune system responsible for maintaining order, is to deity this ancient belief.

Aquinas teaches that blasphemy is the most serious sin because it attacks what basically establishes us in the world - through faith we place ourselves *in* creation. Illich holds that to live in blasphemy is to live in "a bottomless evil," a place where "elevated discussions of the atom, the ge.se, poison, health and growth" take place. Some years ago, when lu was invited to participate in such a discussion, he insisted on "the right to dignified silence/ and stood mute on a street comer in Germany to protest, by his "silent scream," the stationing of American missiles on German soil. His action was a step toward the unequivocal "No" about which he writes in "Health."

For the person of faith in today's world, the very first question is: How shall I act, vis-S-vis the tystems construct? This is precisely where the denial of faith occurs. Iliich believes that one must begin with "No," with a renunciation - of health. This seems fitting, since health is often viewed as *the* unquestioned "good" of modernity. And modem medicine is said to produce miracles of healing. But, Illich claims, "the flood of poisons, radiations, goods and services which sicken humans and animals more than ever before" is a more accurate characterization of contemporary reality. Here also he is much more explicit than in his earlier writings.

In a strange irony of history, those things for which men and women in the labor movement fought and died must now be recognized as equivalent to deadly poison and radiation. But this can seem a terribly extreme judgment. How is it to be understood?

Today, the planning, production and delivery of goods and services is accomplished in systemic terms. This means, ultimately, the infliction of a new kind of sickness, something far beyond anything previously seen or imagined in history. The contemporary project is nothing less than to structure society in such a way that no human act is possible.

In the West, we have come to see that a human act is one in which a person, recognizing alternatives, chooses one over another. But this is precisely what cannot be done if one lives in a system. For example, during a recent visit to Germany, I was startled to discover that in places where the public has access almost every door had been fitted with an apparently simple and innocent device: an electronic eye which automatically opens and closes the door. For me it was immediately evident that this is an image which truly illustrates the structure of modem society. One can no longer choose to open the door for someone burdened with packages. One can no longer carefully and quietly close a door, or thoughtlessly - perhaps deliberately - slam it in another's face. One can no longer thank a stranger for courteously holding the door. In a word, one can no longer practice virtue - the comeliness and joy of living have been removed.

The world of interlocking systems - always being multiplied and perfected - annihilates the moral beauty formerly shining out from lives illumined by the life-long

practice of justice, fortitude, temperance and prudence. Such a mode of living no longer appears possible. The world of systems immerses one in "a bottomless evil" because its structure of society is such that it eliminates the setting in which one can love another. In place of opportunities to create beauty and experience jqy, one is locked into the delivery of goods and services. All that which is supposed to establish a high quality of life actually sickens one to death.

Why is it that so few have said so little about these matters? - if the situation is as Ulich claims. One might begin to answer by suggesting that our world is, indeed, as it is described by Alasdair MacIntyre at the beginning *oiAfter Virtue.* Historically, we may have lost the ability to make moral judgments, to recognize ugliness. Further, Illich's discussion of reading in the 12th century can help one to see the situation. Prior to the division into two kinds of reading - scholastic and spiritual - one simply entered the book in the act of reading, and the book entered the reader. There occurred a real transformation in one's being, taking place over a lifetime, and made possible through the discipline of a continual *askesis.* The various ascetic disciplines, developed over centuries, were designed to enable one to read in this way, namely, to be transformed through the reading with the result that one came to see - in charity. Over and over again in the medieval texts one meets the concept, *lumen* light. One was not the same person, before and after the act of reading. And the text was one of substance, eminently suited to invite a person to be incorporated into it.

Over the centuries the scholastic mode of reading - in which one could imagine an abstract text independent of both the page and oneself - developed into a kind of lifeless intellectual critique which, in its most extreme form today, finds its ultimate end in the critique, not in the original text, nor in the person of the reader. Contemporary academic specialization distracts one from seeing the world as it is. But contemporary reading vitiates the very act of seeing, that is, seeing as occurred in monastic reading. It is not surprising, then, that the character of our age is recognized, not by academic philosophy, but by those inspired by poetic imagination - persons such as Czeslaw Milosz, Flannery O'Connor, T. S. Eliot, and Mark Rothko. And it seems quite fitting that Illich, sometimes called a philosopher, does not express himself in the logical arguments generally found in philosophical discourse, but finds his own voice in stories and images.

In "Health" there is scant systematic progression of thought; one might have trouble tracing the line of the argument. He proceeds here and elsewhere — in a manner similar to what occurs when one is under the influence of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, here, specifically, the gift of understanding *(donum intellectus).* Through this gift, one *knows* through the apprehension of spiritual goods, subtly penetrating their intimate character. With a clarity of vision, one simply sees... what is there, having first sensed some of the outward aspects. According to Aquinas, the gift is opposed to blindness of mind and dullness of sense. These obstacles originate in the distractions resulting from the sensual delights of venereal and food/drink pleasures, respectively. Today, however, I think that additional, powerful, distractions are also at work.

Why, for example, do so few intellectuals - secular *or* religious seem capable of penetrating the darknesses of our age? I strongly suspect that the *luxuria* and *gula* of the middle ages do not nearly exhaust contemporary obstructions to seeing. Traditionally, two areas of experience contributed to the sharpening of one's intellectual vision: the very precariousness of existence and the various ascetical exercises practiced throughout one's lifetime in order to purify the external and internal senses. Contemporary religious and secular academics are the most protected and privileged persons in society. They are the ones who most benefit from the securities and perquisites which the various social systems offer. And they seem to be singularly unaware of the need for a *moral askesis,* that is, the complex of disciplines traditionally designed to affect and transform various aspects of one's being and faculties or powers with a view toward reaching a clear vision, a pure insight In this sense one can recognize that the goods and services of modernity are a poison, sickening one, making one blind.

Now one can focus Illich's call for an *askesis* beginning with a renunciation of the principal illusion, health, that is, survival in a technical system. And such a renunciation can lead one toward the reality of precariousness. The world today is drearily lacking in the sensuality known to the middle ages, but inundated with the abstract fictions of disembodied systems. If one wants to see, it is necessary to free oneself from these systems. Further, faith in these institutionalized guarantees is yet another form of the current blasphemy. In this sense, blasphemy is the source of the darkness in which we stumble.

There is a final point, the most important one in Illich's call, and here it is clear that he proceeds according to insight or gifted vision, not according to discursive argument. This occurs in the discussion of Life... and... life.

The founders of biology sensed something which they believed could be the subject of their science. They named this "life," a concept available to them in their culture, They did not create their subject *ex nihilo.* And they had to give their subject meaning from *this* world, for they wished to found a science, a discipline of this world. But, over the years the subject became more and more abstract, totally removed from soil and slime, indeed, finally removed from creation. Their "life" came to get its meaning only from the internal demands of a system today, of an immune system. And this transformation, from a divine gift to a man-made abstraction, constitutes the principal blasphemy of the age.

The Teddy Bearracks

David B. Schwartz

In a local weekly newspaper in New York State the other day there was a short item under the heading "Daycare News."

> On a more helpful note, the Community Hospital is initiating a daycare
> program for sick children called TEDDY BEARRACKS. Located on the

hospital's pediatric unit, the service charges parents $3 an hour, which includes meals, snacks, beverages, and supervision. The service will be open Monday through Friday from 6-30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and is open to children over two months old whose registration is "on file" before parents need to use the program.. . . There are 16 beds on the pediatric floor and the average daily use is about eight patients. That leaves six to eight spaces open for sick children on a daycare basis. Those spaces may not go very far once flu season hits, but it's a much needed first step toward addressing the real needs of working parents.

At first thought a program like this didn't seem like a bad idea. After all, most day-care programs will not accept children who have the flu or some other kind of illness. This obviously poses a real problem for the many two-job and single-parent families who depend upon day care in order to work. But when I thought further about it some more disturbing implications came to mind. Is this really, I began to wonder, likely to be a program that is good for children and families?

Many people have commented on the increased use of day-care services for children in our society due to economic necessity, changes in the role of women, and erosion of traditional family structure. In a situation in which many adults who might once have been care-givers are working, and in which grandma is in a retirement village, child-raising is changing from a familial task to a purchased service. "When I was growing up in North Philadelphia," a woman told me recently, "we kids were just raised by the block. Any adult was likely to give you a swat if you were cutting up. Everything was all just together."

You have to search to find a place where life is like this anymore in this country. In the changes which have taken place, child-raising has become something which has entered the economic sphere. In the economic world, unlike the community world, there are providers of service and purchasers of service. Providers of service in this case are often human service organizations. Human service organizations, unlike communities, operate under the formal rules that govern large systems, i.e., bureaucratic rules.

In Pennsylvania, day-care providers are now required by law to conduct background checks on the people they hire, following scandals over child abuse in some centers. Day-care centers require registration and admission, and must worry about low enrollment if the stafi/child ratio falls below planned economic parameters. In communities you always knew who was with your child because you lived on the same street, or in the same village. You didn't pre-register a child to go to Mrs. O'Brien's bouse - you just talked with her. And while there might be economics involved, they were the economics of community; informal, flexible, and outside the formal economic system.

The conversion to child care as a "human service" is visibly underway, through expansion of professional child-raising functions, as the trend moves to completion. Part of the next stage of this conversion can be expected to be the appearance of specialized programs for specific groups. As I thought about all of this I realized after a moment

that the hospital's day-care program for sick children probably had significance as a sign that the larger trend had reached a point in which this was already taking place. Even one's sick little child would now be given over to an institution for care

From the point of view of the individual parents concerned, the development of such a program is probably seen as a blessing. A single mother, after all, might even lose her job if she had to stay home too often to care for her sick child. But I worry greatly about these little children. And I worry about their families.

What must it be like, I wonder, to be a little boy or girl, even as young as a two-month-old baby, and be bundled, sick and miserable, taken out of your bedroom and through the early morning traffic up to the gleaming new hospital wards? The big white building, anxietyprovoking even to us adults because of its images of sickness and death, its complicated machinery and the bustle of doctorsand nurses and technologists coming and going - what must it seem like to a little sick child? What must it be like to be taken over the gleaming waxed floors, under the endless bright fluorescent lights, to a crisp white unfamiliar bed in a ward? The nurses are nice, but they are not Mommy, or Mrs. Fredricks, or probably anyone you have ever even seen before.

Children will adapt to the necessity of being in the hospital when they have the flu. Children are very adaptable. They have always adapted to difficult and even scary and oppressive circumstances. Thousands and thousands of children have spent most of their childhood in sterile institutions and have, in one way or another, survived. We have learned, however, that this experience inevitably leaves scars.

One can speculate on what the scars might be for such children. What ideas might they begin to get about sickness, and what happens to you when you are sick, and what Mommy and Daddy do when you are sick because they are busy with their work? Might we not speculate that at least some children will gain or expand some haunting insecurities about their acceptance, when ill and troublesome? Might they not even begin to get the idea at an early age that when a person is sick or needs something what you do is take them to a big building somewhere where knowledgeable people in white uniforms know what to do?

In my years in human service and public policy I have become convinced that policy and program developments that are potentially injurious to people and to society are virtually always the result of hard work tty good people who are sincerely trying to meet a pressing need that is before them. Yet while the immediate need always exists, I have begun to conclude that the ways in which such problems are addressed are usually shaped by larger and often unfavorable factors that are frequently unconscious.

We hear, for example, a great deal these days about the financial pressure on hospitals to utilize beds. We learn that this hospital's pediatric unit of 16 beds has a daily census of eight, a situation that translates in hospital terms into a utilization rate only 50%. A low occupancy rate can cause difficulty for a hospital. Perhaps this was a factor here, perhaps not Perhaps the influence was more subtle only that the empty beds exist No doubt there was a genuine desire to help. Without anyone realizing it, is it just possible that these vacant beds in the hospital ward have "drawn" youngsters

into, in their own words (and words signify and reveal a great deal) a "barracks" for sick children - a "Teddy Bearracks?" own words (and words signify and reveal a great deal) a "barracks" for sick children a "Teddy Bearracks?"

Could the creation of such a "sick child" program have been unconsciously driven by a combination of the expanding professionalization of child care and the availability of hospital beds? I don't know the details of this particular situation, so I can't say whether this speculation is true. But it makes me wonder.

I know little about programs for children, at least "normal children." My work is concerned with the welfare of people with disabilities. But from the vantage point of my own field, this little program at tne community hospital brings a nagging sense of disquiet. For some years much of the work of my colleagues across the country has consisted in trying to take apart the institutional solutions of our predecessors. Our predecessors were wonderful and honorable people - giants of social conscience and action, in many cases. But as the late Syracuse University dean Burton Blatt pointed out, despite the best of intentions their work for mentally retarded people ultimately led to the loss of everything important for those about whom they cared. We have been trying very hard, my colleagues and I, to learn from their well-meaning but terrible mistake.

I wonder if the most far-reaching result of this little program may not be to further embed the habit of institutionalization in our hearts and in our society. Is not a child likely to learn that institutions, be they hospitals, mental hospitals, reformatories, prisons, or whatever, are the appropriate way to address personal and social problems? What long-term habits may we foster through such seemingly innocent attempts to meet real human needs?

The comparison with my own field brings this question more vividly to my attention. Once we said that children with mental retardation needed to be cared for (permanently, in this case) in large professional facilities, the "state schools." When these became visible failures and our consciences rebelled, we replaced them with smaller "community" facilities like special schools, and workshops, and day-care and treatment centers. Only recently have we realized that even the latter have more in common with big institutions than with true community.

Seymour Sarason, a noted scholar on this subject, commented that even small community centers of this kind paradoxically make the real community's ability to meet problems weaker, for they transfer both the need and the solution out of the hands of the community itself. For the benefit of meeting a short-term need, society pays the price of giving up a portion of its people. This is why the seemingly innocent creation of training institutions for children with mental retardation in the last century eventually led to the fact that I never really met a person with mental retardation until I was an adult. By that time, communities needed to learn all over again that these people were of their own social body, and didn't need to be served exclusively by professionals. This is proving difficult to relearn, for they listened too well to us before.

How curious it is, as I observe sick children starting to get day care in a hospital, to see my own field now moving in the opposite direction! Many people with developmental disabilities have very significant needs. We used to think that they all had to come to the same place. Just last month, though, my organization gave out grants to people to initiate what we term in my field "family support" by building upon the strengths of communities themselves. These children have far greater needs than those of a normal child with the flu, yet they can be cared for without leaving their homes or their neighborhoods. The program's goal is to link up parents and neighbors with each other, to provide petty cash to hire the elderly lady next door, to bring nurses and medical equipment, when needed, right into the child's home. This is being done now all over the country, and there is evidence that it works wonderfully well.

Paradoxically enough, now that we know that this can be done with really needy children, we discover that minorly ill children, children that we don't ordinarily worry about, are being taken right into the very hospital beds that we have finally started to get handicapped children out of. It is enough to make you worried.

If I were a parent and my board meeting was today and my child had the measles, and I couldn't find anyone else to look after her, I don't know what I'd do. I guess as the clock was approaching nine I'd have to take her to the hospital. I'd kiss her and reassure her, before I walked down the long corridor toward my car, that I loved her very much and that I'd be back. I know that children in hospitals tend to have irrational fears that they will be abandoned, that they in some way have been "bad." I would worry about her picking up an even worse bug there on the hospital ward. I know that hospitals tend to be very good places for getting other diseases; there are so many of them there, all right next to each other. And I would worry, deep in my heart as I rushed off to chair my meeting, that I would have to do this again because there was no other way, because everyone did it, and because I couldn't figure out anything else to do.

But I hope after this I might get all of the parents in my block, or at the day-care home, together in my living room and try to figure out some better way for us, all together, to care for our children in our own homes. I hope if I were a hospital administrator with empty pediatric beds, I wouldn't let them even be used at three dollars an hour for day care, even if parents were in need and asked, because I would be afraid of what ultimatefy might happen if we embarked upon this course. And I hope that if I were a government official making policy decisions regarding hospitals, and it was proposed that hospitals be permitted to offer day care of this type, I would work to prevent it. I hope that instead I might be able to find a little grant to help parents who have set up baby-sitting cooperatives meet those who would like to learn how. I hope I could carefully steer money toward local communitybased imaginative solutions that parents dream up themselves.

I am not, in this case, any of these people. So I will just watch the Teddy Bearracks from afar. I think that after a little while it will feel pressure to grow. As the newspaper article noted, eight beds won't be much in flu season once this new program opens its

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doors. There are so many parents in need, so many children who Call ill. No, eight, I am afraid, surely won't be enough, once we get into the habit.

Posthumous Longevity

Epiphany, 1989

Dear Mother Prioress,

When I spoke with you and Lady Abbess after Advent Vespers you urged me to remember my ties to your sisters. I can assure you that I have never forgotten the roots I have on your side of the grill and the strength I draw from your community's love. And now, prompted by you and Mother Abbess, I invite you all to share a bit in my life. This letter is primarily a plea for prayer for a helpless woman in serious distress, a woman who is my friend. Some of you might also feel moved to accept these lines as an invitation to accompany me to the evil Newland into which she has strayed, and come to agree with me that this region deserves your attention as contemplative nuns.

I am writing as a friend who has known you since before you became a nun more than a quarter century ago. This allows me to write freely and in a personal manner on a very touchy subject. But you will have noticed that I address you as "Prioress." Doing so I am able to speak without worrying about the traps that lie in the domain of privacy and that destroy the traditional style of openness that was characteristic of our ascetical communities. What I write does not call for secretiveness but for utmost discretion.

Let no one among your sisters take scandal at my writing about two real people, myself and a friend. There is something concrete and surprisingly new here on which we —you and the Church—need *aiscretio.* Discretion, which Benedict called "the mother of virtues," is the measured discernment of unique situations; it makes our obedience the very opposite of regimentation. The reflection which I want to foster demands discretion on the part of the reader, but this does not make it "private." Privacy is a newfangled social construct It depends on possessive individualism which forms divisive opinions. What I want you to share with me is not an opinion, but an almost unbearable anguish at the commemoration of the *undead* who have slipped out of the reach of our ordinary forms of charity.

I want you to pray for my friend. She was bom early in this century, brought up as a socially self-conscious Protestant, but was not touched tty faith; she has never tasted prayer. Throughout our acquaintance, I admired and suffered her un-godly and grace-less moral beauty. Though these two words may seem offensive in modem English, I use them deliberately, albeit with apprehension. I know of no others which would allow me to note the absence of an evangelical dimension but which, emphatically, imply no evil and tarnish no beauty.

As a young woman, my friend left her own country. She did so in protest against her philistine family, against the sickness of Nazism, and as an alternative to the kitsch

in which others of her class and generation tried to salve their conscience. She settled in the forest of Scandinavia. There she lived in obstinate, solitary independence. She earned her living by spinning, weaving, and teaching her skills in a trade school She also shaped haunting, abstract objects, creating them out of the stuff she had woven on her loom. Occasionally, some of her "sculptures" received international recognition. We came to know each other discussing a soft, long, brown woolen cloth that she had drawn into tight knots spaced at irregular intervals and arranged on aluminum spikes in front of a dull mirror.

When my friend felt that the time had come to let herself die, she looked to me. We had just taken a walk through the woods to a little restaurant where she enjoyed being treated to a slice of venison.

Over cranberry sauce, she spoke about her end time. In a couple of months, she would walk down toward the sea, sit under a tree, drink from a bottle of schnapps, and fell asleep in the snow. I knew that she meant what she said. In her rasping matter-of-fect voice, she then asked me to procure something stronger than schnapps to swallow upon reaching the spot near the shore. But I knew that, being who she was, she did not depend on me to get what she wanted. She made the request because she wanted a sign that I had accepted her resolve. After decades of wary independence, she was perhaps ready to acknowledge fear to one friend. She wanted to hold me in her heart when the moment had come to step into the darkness.

On that November day I noticed something special in her - an unaccustomed serenity, but with a sense of its frailty. Without a word from her I understood that now she was ready for the step, and knew that the moment was precious. Scandinavian welfare systems are efficiently care-full and intrusive. For only a short while yet, the "art of dying" was still within her reach. As she spoke, I saw her life-long, self-willed obstinacy slacken and saw too a glimpse of the glowing embers in her heart. Looking back, it now seems that this was the dreaded moment at which the Lord passes tty. I would not want to abandon the ancient maxim, *timeo Deum transeuntem.*

That year on the same wooded path I spoke with Dorn Helder Camara about the terrain onto which faithful friendship leads the believer if his friend is *desgraciado,* "graceless." How to let my hope become so transparent at that moment that it does not throw the slightest shadow on the other? Helder said that fidelity means to stand tty, aware of one's empty hands, and without expectation. We might or might not ever come to see the glow of grace in the other's heart. I remember his words as much as his wrinkled face, "When your hands are folded, they are ready for that *delicado* puff, when the right moment has come." He showed me how to do it.

Looking back, I failed my friend. I failed to speak to her about Michael and his hosts ready to pick her up from beneath the birch tree, leaving the body behind in the snow. I failed to respond tty simply respecting her freedom. I did not urge her to listen more carefully to what Moses called "the rustling." I took her question about an opening she was discovering to be one more attempt on her part to remain in control.

I now fear that I distracted her from listening to the Lord whose steps she might have followed without knowing whose they were.

Soon after she became ill with pneumonia and locked herself into her home. You probably know that well into the 19th century pneumonia was called "the old man's friend." But the caring state could not leave her in peace. Its minions picked the apartment lock in time to administer antibiotics. Since then, it has been too late. Welfare and medicine have broken and confused her, made her into an inmate. Now she worries all day whether there will again be a bed for her at night in the clinic where she has been placed. She missed the hour of her death. She let it slip by, and lost an autumnal moment's desire to let go.

For over sixty years she had forged her *own bios.* I use the Greek term that is opposed *tozoe* andpsyc/te because the English word "life" cannot render the strong sense of *curriculum vitae* that *bios* expresses. For decades she had left traces on everything she touched, and had then been herself shaped by these traces. Catching her in danger of dying, society has deprived her of her *bios,* her own life's shape. Bereft of it, she has lost the ability to disentangle herself. Far removed from what St. Francis called "Lady Poverty," she is embraced by professional wardens. They make certain that she does not take off her cloak.

When she spoke to me at the inn, I had an inkling that she was ready to divest herself of all trappings *(nuda nudum sequere Christum* was the motto beloved in the 13th century), even if she did not suspect whom she was following. Now she is securely taken care of. The personal act of dying, which in English is expressed by an intransitive verb, is beyond her reach. Now that it is too late for graceful dying, she has become a frightened woman who shirks death. At eighty she has been socialized into the so-called aged. Sooner or later the house physician will write on her chart, "no more -animation." This is the woman I ask you to remember in your evening prayers, when the lights in the chapel go out, somewhere between *fratribus absentibus ...et animarum fidelium.*

It is, however, not only my friend whom I wish you to commemorate. There are other millions in the Newland into which she has moved. And this switch from her to them, from the friend in distress to the inhabitants of the psychic slums, is not easy. I cannot reflect on her state without being impelled to ask myself, "Could I not have her live with me?" or, "Is there no friend around who could invite her?" As long as she breathes, the "Why can't I?" will haunt me. But I cannot allow this anguish to distract me from the issue which we must think through. It is not the quality of care under which this one friend survives that is at issue, but the fact that, after confiding in me, she lost what might have been the last moment in which she could have accepted her death.

I hope it is clear that I am not raising the issue of euthanasia (professional assistance in suicide), or the practice of medicide (which, in the terminology I use, implies an ethics committee's judgment on the termination of life-support systems). I am exploring two aspects of friendship that are characteristic of the late 20th century: first,

respect for my friend who judges that the time has come for her to choose between dying now and being turned off later and, second, the mode of spiritual presence about her once that moment of decision has passed.

Further, I want to be able to reflect on this matter without being paralyzed by the issue of suicide. My friend would have been more than satisfied if I had presented her with a bottle of good whisky wrapped in fall-colored leaves. What she asked of me was not poison but a sign of unconditional trust. I can assure you that, at the luncheon, she was not contemplating killing herself. She wanted to die before it would be too late to consent to her own death. She explicitly wanted to avoid recruitment into that borderland where millions now vegetate who are neither here nor there.

All this I do not guess, I know. We first met at a conference in 1975, called by the World Health Organization, where I was to discuss the theses stated in *Medical Nemesis,* among them the medical expropriation of death. Since then she had thought about the Nowhere of which I speak. She came to understand that, as an aging inhabitant of the First World, you are recruited into this state where you are made impotent in front of death, unless you make a timely decision not to let yourself be kept - alive or dead. These are the neighbors whom I ask you to recognize in your prayers, those whose *bios* as persons has ended, but who are kept hovering on the brink of eternity as a result of modem techniques.

I do not know which word to choose to refer to this state of suspension and aimlessness, a spiritually debilitating *a-topia.* One reason for my loss of words is that the thing itself is new, a result of society's recent success in the war on death. Therefore, I am not speaking of the world of the aged. The old have always been with us. Nor am I speaking of the decrepit. Each traditional society had its own way for them, as for the mad or monsters. One culture extended a place for them, another restricted it.

I am also not speaking of those who, in the language of Hippocrates, have entered the *atrium mortis,* the antechamber on the way to the shadows. In the Greek-Arabic-European tradition, the physician's task was the restoration of a unique balance of humors, never the fight against death. He was trained to recognize the Hippocratic signs on the patient's face, symptoms which manifested to show that the patient's humors were irremediably out of balance. When his art showed him that he stood at a death bed, the physician had to return his fee and take leave from a room which had ceased to be a sickroom. The Hippocratic oath, which forbids the physician to use his art on those in agony, has been interpreted away.

Nine out of ten Americans who are not killed by car, bullet, or massive stroke become terminal care patients and are placed under the control of physicians before they have a chance to die. I am not speaking here of these last hours of medicide that have replaced the death struggle depicted in hundreds of illustrations of the *ars moriendi.* The great prayers of the *proficiscere anima Christiana* and the Litany of All Saints are still appropriate for assistance, even when we must say them in the waiting room out of fear that our presence interfere with the life support systems. I am also not

recommending improvements on the terminal education through which KObler-Ross and her pupils would like to normalize dying.

What I am speaking about is something historically unprecedented. I am speaking of those who have missed the opportunity to die when they were still able to do so, and for whom modem technology and organization effectively hold death at bay. I am calling your attention to a new social class. I am speaking of a New Age appended to the three-score and ten, which is as much a novelty now as the teenage years were two generations ago.

Finally, I am not asking - at this moment - what physicians, social workers, or policy makers should do with or to this new kind of people, or what their status ought to be in the law. You do not need me as a guide to the bibliographies on employment, investment, litigation, technology, or research which this new clientele has inspired. After the underdeveloped, the disappearing races, and then women, the disabled have become the pets of bleeding hearts and the wards for new careers. They have become so useful for so many that the viewpoint I propose has become taboo. I report to you, across the grill, something which I see as an epoch-specific evil, from which the grill is meant to protect you.

What I pursue is this: I ask that you make those who are caught up in this new evil the beneficiaries of your contemplative action, that you consider them as brothers and sisters for whom you offer prayers, as Benedictines have done for the poor souls who wait at the gate of Heaven, at least since Cluny was founded. And I ask for your help so that those of us who have not yet been caught by this evil leam to avoid this modem "fate." I myself ask for this grace each time I say the Hail Mary:"... pray for us now and... that we may not miss the hour of our death. Amen."

I just mentioned Cluny. I did so because you are Benedictines and I want to appeal to your family history. Cluny is a symbol for many innovations, among them the relatively recent date at which purgatory was discovered. Only since the 12th century has purgatory been understood as a special place, and the "poor souls" then came to loom large in popular religion, being recognized as the most helpless community within a tripartite Church. For a good millennium, the Church had been praying for the deceased before this distinction became part of belief and iconography, and before the cult of the poor souls found its solemn place within the liturgy. Without getting into theology or the history of ideas, I dare to suggest that there is a similarity here. The Church has always prayed for special people: the sick, those burdened by the power to govern, those specially tempted, travellers, and those in agony - before it discovered the "poor souls." Now, at the end of the 20th century, the time has come to recognize another community that, like the poor souls, is marginalized in a unique way: the captive souls whom science and technology, welfare and biocracy glue to their bodies, preventing their departure. I believe that this Wasting Age engendered by modernity deserves its special *memento.*

I am aware that I ask you to heed a kind of misery which, on a world-wide scale, is class-specific. It still mostly afflicts the affluent. Most of those unfortunate souls

whom I askyou to remember as the companions of my Scandinavian friend are citizens of rich countries. The privilege of escaping death and thereby quite often becoming unable to face it is one of the many doubtful benefits that economic development has brought. Excepting their exploitative elites, Africans, Indians, and Mexicans still lack the economic resources needed to close the door when the Angel of Death approaches. The Nether Region this side of death is still a gilded ghetto. But it will not remain exclusive much longer. Chemists and geneticists are doing their best to lower the entrance fee into this Nowhere, and thereby make its population more democratic.

By praying for my friend and those like her, by praying for enlightenment and courage, you would also advance the Christian exploration in the difficult and obscure moral issue recently created by social and biological engineering - how to relate the fear of God with the fear of being deprived of one's own death. To do so today requires extraordinary *discretio* to clarify the meaning of the *cupio dissolvi* in a society in which social policy mandates professional guardians, be they physicians or bioethidsts, to procure optimal life prolongation as a universal social right.

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to reflect on this issue in the form of a letter to you. Let me know if this is a way in which you can share what it means to live on this side of the grill, as in your prayers t I join you on the other side.

Ivan

Toward A Post-Clerical Church

Dear Kelly,

When you dropped in on my hideout it was two in the afternoon. Now it is two in the morning. You are on your way back north, for a second semester in a course of *aggiomamento* for aging missionaries offered at a Canadian Jesuit university. I am still ruminating on the conversation we had. For myself and a couple of friends, "Kelly" already evokes two realities: the thoughtful, generous, and delicate man and priest whom I was surprised to meet, and a contemporary "type" for whom I just cannot think of a more thought-provoking representative, and into which both Lee and I would want to fit.

This is not really a personal letter. It's a letter to the Kelly whom you have given us for reflection. I write it because I will not sleep peacefully until the format of a letter gives me the framework within which I can say something that has haunted many conversations during the last years. If something in this introduction sounds too personal for a letter I would like to share with others, you and I both know that the Kelly I address is a critter of my imagination.

When you called from downtown, where you had somehow gotten my number, I was sitting under the banana tree excerpting 12th-century rules of hospital communities. That's the century in which the very first houses specializing in the recovery of sick people had been established in western Christendom. Crusaders, who had been

impressed by such houses in Byzantium, and who had observed the practice of medical hospitalization in Islam, brought the idea of *nosokomium,* "the sick house," to southern France. In the course of only a few decades the new idea caught fire, and not just dozens but a few hundred examples of the new institution began to dot the world of the Pope.

With the idea of such a house a new kind of religious community came into existence whose members dedicated their lives in obedience, celibacy, and poverty to the care of the sick. To guide their common life, they picked up a letter addressed to pious women by the Church Father Augustine, and added a set of recommendations made at the beginning of the century by Raymond de Guy. He had founded such a house for crusaders in Jerusalem when they were too sick and tired to venture a return home. Some of these rules were for "sisters and brothers called to the hospital," healthy persons who had heard an intimate invitation to care for those marked by disease. In other early rules, the bodily mark of disease was interpreted as a divine calling to religious community life, and the healthy who joined as members found in leprosy or gangrenous ergotism a reason to live with those more visibly marked, apart from the rest of society.

I mention this at the outset of my letter because it indicates the mood I was in when you called. In conversation with Lee, I was trying to find the right sentences to make it believable to my readers that the very idea of "hospitalizing the sick under Christian care" has a beginning in history, and that half of the Christian history we know was over before it was accepted as an obvious "need" in the medieval town.

Then you walked in. What a pleasure it was to make your acquaintance! In a few minutes it was obvious that you were not only a fellow historian, but a learned one at that First you began a decade of ecclesiastical studies, completed when the 19th-century routine of seminary training was still uncontested. This made you acquainted with a standard canon which - for those of us bom sufficiently before World War n - gave a common culture to Catholic priests all over.

Just ordained, you went to Africa for a first "trial" without any preparation. You had to grope your way into the history and culture of the mission, trusting your basic intuition and letting yourself be imbued by the prejudices floating around at the mission station. A dozen years followed as a missionary in tropical Africa. You were sent to care for people whose language in the meantime had changed beyond recognition, and because you did not properly record it, will no longer be remembered.

Next came demanding studies. As a middle-aged man, you spent several years as a graduate student at one of the world's major universities and wrote a doctoral dissertation in cultural history, based on oral testimony you had collected. And back you went for another ample decade as a white cleric in a region which had turned into a blade nation, mostly "to care" for people who had little use for you. What a life! In many profound ways, a life that follows a pattern which people twenty years younger than we will be forced to reconstruct from biographies, because it will be beyond their grasp.

I do not know how you took the seminary fere of the postwar period with its insistence on Latin, its smattering of Thomas Aquinas for the sake of the clergy's mental insurance, its fragments of Biblical studies - just prestigious enough to discourage personal reading and totally insuffident for nourishing homilies. But one thing became clear as we sat around Valentina's table with your Central European traveling companion who works among the Basutos: The new generation, which poor John Paul II brings forth from contemporary places of derical learning - in comparison to those of our time - no longer has either canon or study habits, nor that minimum of ambiguous rootedness which came as a bonus with our experience.

What a maddening idea, that you should now be on leave from your equatorial mission station to submit to a pedagogical potpourri of curricular offerings planned to bring you "up to date" in theology, spirituality and pastoral care! How sad the state of the Church that, after years of isolation and intellectual starvation, a lack of books and consequent dependence on journalistic reports about Church and faith, overwork and aging in the boondocks, she has nothing better to offer you on your sabbatical than one more return into the curricular market This is the point at which our luncheon conversation became serious. Both of you asked questions, and I gave answers by which, unwittingly, I may have shocked you.

I meant what I said. Yes, I do believe that current discussions on the future of the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church are overwhelmingly beside the point because they focus on *the future of the clergy.* Should there be a married clergy? Should ordination be limited to the male clergy? What place should be given to the local community - clerical and lay - when it comes to the election of a bishop or the shaping of liturgical forms? Must clerics who hold opinions divergent from the Roman tradition be removed from their posts? Not the mystery of the Trinity or of the Incarnation, but the "mystery" of the clergy now polarizes the Church. A mystifying "class struggle" has been thrashed out with such noise over the last twenty-five years that not only sophisticated Jews but even Japanese tourists have the impression that to be a Catholic means to take sides on these issues.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not one who denies that these are important questions on which, to a high degree, the kind of political institution which the Roman Catholic Church becomes, depends. But they are relevant only as long as you accept a hypothesis that results from a historical accident, and not from anything in Scripture or Tradition. These questions are important only as long asyou live with the certainty that "the clergy" is a God-willed attribute of the community founded by Christ.

From personal experience, many conversations, and phenomenological analysis, I have come to the conviction that clergy - when mentioned in connection with the Roman Catholic Church - has at least one essential characteristic today which was absent from the essence of any church-grouping in previous epochs of Church history. This characteristic is the result of a proposed *professional education,* first formulated by Cardinal Pole in England (in the National Synod of 1556), which slipped almost verbatim into the 3rd session of the Council of Trent through Cardinal Morone, and

whose provision was then defined as a duty incumbent on every bishop in the 23rd session of the Council. This proposal envisages the institutional formation of secular priests, something as unheard of in Latin Christendom at this time as poor houses which limit admittance exclusively to the sick had been unheard of during the 11th century. But unlike the idea of a specialized recovery of the sick - which spread like wildfire - it took several centuries before Canon Law began to define the attendance at seminaries as a prerequisite for ordination.

Perhaps these remarks will explain my deep interest in the "invention" of hospitals in the 12th century. I believe that this social creation of a new institutional device, motivated by heroic charity and deep trust in personal divine vocation, in the course of the next half millennium was to transform our perception of what a good society ought to be. We can no longer imagine a good society which would lade such special institutional agencies where people with special physical or mental incapadties can be bedded, stored, and treated. The need for hospitalization has become one of our basic certainties, and with it we accept as obvious that there are certain acts of charity which "just cannot be absolved by simple hospitality." I am studying not so much the history of the hospital, but the history of hospitality - now largely reduced to invitations for Christmas dinner. I argue that this degradation of hospitality happened in good faith, in the shadow of a society built on the idea of hospitalization.

Just as there is a profound difference between a society that abandons the stranger who finds no hospitality, and a society that mediates the needs of strangers through taxation and professionalism, it should be clear that there is an essential phenomeno-logical difference between a Church which prescinds from an institutionalized routine for the specialized preparation of its priests and one in which formal education is seen as a prerequisite for ordination, and increasingly to be repeated for the continued exercise of priestly functions.

What I find scandalous is the cocky innocence with which a Western Roman tradition that claims catholicity is bound up with the fate of clergy whose competence, status, function and income are determined by a factor which is radically alien to the first three-quarters of the history of the Church. I write you this letter in the hope that you, or other "Kellys" who are returning to old age inservice seminary retraining will help to make this point Unless persons such as you take the Church's non-clerical future into your own hands by sharing your wisdom and discipline as hosts rather than as educators, the reform of the Church will be a miracle rather than the promised marvel it has always been.

We had so little time, yesterday, that I take the liberty as a colleague to remind you of the literature which supports my claim. Let me sum up: Until the Council of Trent, there were no institutions of any kind whose purpose was the training of pastoral agents. What in retrospect is made to look like the ancestry of seminaries are histo-riographic phantoms invoked to justify the contemporary existence of an educational agency which, at its best, gifted those alumni it almost inevitably warped. Until the late 16th century, you became a priest the way in which you became a healer or cobbler

or musician - by picking up what it takes for the task. You picked up what you needed for your ordination as best you could get it - your Latin, your store of pious stories and your common sense - on which the bishop might test you before making you a priest There is no evidence that the need for institutional initiation for the secular clergy had ever been felt Certainly Canon Law which so often is a mirror for ecclesiastical utopias - gives no sign of a desire to institutionalize preparation for the priesthood. It is only the Second Lateran Council which admonishes bishops to employ a *Magister* in each cathedral, who will be available to teach poor clerics without asking for tuition. The decree reflects both the new opportunity available for scholars to make money on their learning and the new trend to put the emerging profession under ecclesiastical control.

The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 made its wish more explicit: There should be a "theologian" who can instruct priests and others in Holy Scripture, and who could be placed particularly at the service of those who are engaged in the "care of souls." The Council did not dare request that this be done by every bishop, but only that such a charge be created by archbishops at their Metropolitan Sees. It took a millennium from the time of the Greek Fathers to the time of monastic and conventual training in early scholasticism - for a council to make a first attempt toward a separately institutionalized, "learned service" for the diocesan, as opposed to the religious, clergy. Two hundred years later the first colleges were created with the explicit purpose of housing students whose intent was pastoral rather than learned and legal: Capranica and Nardini in Rome, Antonio di Siguenza (1477) in Spain. But it would be reading a non-existent category into these early Renaissance foundations to interpret a few charitable hostels - meant mostly for poor boys who were looking for a curial benefice - as forerunners of the kind of college which came to be known as a seminary.

It took the Tridentine decree on seminaries as many centuries to be accepted by the Catholic world as it took to have all dioceses recognize the decree on the need to solemnize marriage. Most of the seminaries started in the first hundred years after the Council by the bishops themselves did not survive their first or second generation of students. The late 16th-century colleges that were run by Jesuits and later by other orders for future secular priests - as distinct from their own members - survived better, but served the formation of elite ecclesiastics rather than local pastors.

In Spain it took until the late 17th and 18th century for the idea of seminary training to enter the majority of dioceses. In Germany, the practice never was accepted. In France, Jean Jacques Olier created that unique company of St. Sulpice which, after 1642, succeeded in stemming the extinction of the few remaining seminaries founded in the aftermath of Trent

As the seminary memories of your traveling companion brought to our attention, the spirit and literature generated by this band of spiritual pedagogues still affected people bom in the second quarter of this century. Over the next 300 years the Sulpicians created an unprecedented style of fervent piety which would be a fascinating subject for an unusually gifted historian of religious mentalities. Outside of France, and especially in Latin America, only during the 19th century did seminaries become

standard equipment in the typical diocese. And at that, they were often the one place where a boy could get some classical preparation. I still remember the Puerto Rican generation of seminary alumni, most of whom became the province's lawyers or poets rather than priests.

When one discusses this background of Church reliance on seminary-trained clergy with churchmen or almost anyone, at least two points are immediately made. First, admiration is voiced for the seriousness with which the post-Reformation Church accepted the challenge by insuring "educational" progress, and then my interlocutors call attention to the claim that "modem times" demand formal education. They interpret the Church's dependence on professional preparation of its staff as a consequence of a secular trend, and are blind to the evidence that this trend might just as well be interpreted as a secularization of an ecclesiastical model. They ask me if I can imagine a modem Church indifferent to the "education" of its leadership and without professional formation among the myriad of new fields that must be related to the Gospel if the Christian message is to remain relevant to the modem world. This is a point made very explicitly yesterday while we ate our rice.

My answer to both these questions is "no." Of course, I could *imagine* both, but I abstain from doing so. History is what I know has been. *I need all the* imagination I have to grasp what has been, something I find even more difficult when the subject is the Church. But I would like to insist on two points: First, it is the Church which has pioneered the concept that a certain amount of "education" is the prerequisite for admission to status, function, and privilege. In the process of adapting the medieval *artes* into a condition for the ordination of its priests, the idea of the curriculum took shape, and with it the basic assumptions upon which the ideology of universal education could be built.

That social topology, within which our various institutions are concrete configurations, depends on the assumption that eminence in any specialty presupposes curricular inputs rather than what you pick up. The prejudice against the informal learner which has grown during the last several hundred years is a characteristic of all our institutions, not just of the Church. But, in a unique way, the Church initiated this prejudice: with the *seminarium* — the seed bed of the next generation - it set the model for a leadership qualified by curricular consumption. The one institution which solemnly celebrates its continuity over the last two thousand years is also that institution which pioneered a gnoseocratic bureaucracy based on certified curricular consumption, *and* the institution which claims that this kind of "knowledge"-based aristocracy is not just opportune or "natural" but the result of God's own will.

Second, men such as you, and many others I know, are in danger of *apostolic castration* due to these historical and ecclesiastical assumptions about the relationship between schooling and evangelical leadership. I purposely use the above word. After you had gone, and I tried to return to the 12th-century transmogrification of hospitality into hospitalization that was motivated by compassionate mercy, after long silence Lee (whom you met) quoted Matthew. "He sent them out..." Did He not trust each

of his disciples to gather with whom they met? Did He not expect, even bless, their "balls," encourage the practice of personal hospitality in men who, for his sake, had forsaken their own home?

Yes, you were right in your suspicion that twenty-five years ago I wrote that book on the deschooling of society in the hope that a secular discussion would lead to proposals for the deschooling of the Church. As far as I know, I failed. But my conviction has only deepened. The time of qualification by curricular attendance, the time of schooling which grew out of the idea of the seminary and the *ratio studiorum,* is over. Even now, higher learning depends crucially on hospitality and friendship and lifelong personal emulation in those virtues which establish the independent stance of heart and mind on which *stadium* — in the age of AI, sociobiology, and the apocalypse of science depends.

Bob, am I wrong when I feel certain that the future of Christian learning depends on how I share it with others, or you with your friends? Am I wrong when I suggest that you tell a few of your friends that next year, between two rainy seasons, you can give sack and sorgo to no more than seven; that you have two books which you want to follow when you address them between Psalms on Monday and Wednesday; that you would like to read beforehand the books which they will comment when they speak on the other evenings?

IvanlUich

P.S. I do not believe that the de-clericalization of the priesthood and the de-clericalization of consecrated asceticism, at this moment, depend on the de-clericalization of learning; but rather, on the creation of *faits accomplis* here and there. Further, the unique view on the current predicament of the world which a rootedness in the Roman Catholic tradition enables us to have can be celebrated in with circles of friends by you and by Lee and by Dara (of whom I told you) and can be celebrated with a scope which is and must forever be out of the purview of those caught within the "educational assumption," be they the Pope himself.

"Dear Kelly" Memo

TO: Joe Cunneen (editor, *Cross Currents'),* in response to your critique
FROM: Lee Hoinacki

Several readers of the letter have suggested that the format of the piece be changed. The feeling seems to be that an open letter is somewhat unsuitable, that it shows a certain lack of seriousness.

Over the years, I've noticed that in each of his "statements" published as articles or books - Illich attempts to create the proper or fitting genre for that particular moment, place, and, if appropriate, interlocutor. For the serious reader, it is instructive to study, for example, the great differences between *Deschooling Society* and *Gender.*

Here ("Dear Kelly") Illich writes directly to a person with whom he has just had lunch. Their conversation moved him, and he came to see this man's situation in the light of themes and perspectives which have been present in his work for some years. And "Kelly's" presence brought about the specific focus of his thought which then resulted in the letter.

In "The Vanishing Clergyman," Illich made a statement about clergy in the Church. Through a phenomenological approach, he found the Church to be a corporate bureaucracy - that is what he saw. And he suggested that this specific historical development might be questioned, it might be something unfaithful to the Founder's intention. What question would a man of faith raise today?

Instead of writing a treatise on the historical church, or a monograph on some aspect of institutional expression, he has taken up the precise question put to him, the question embodied in two men who "just happened" to drop in on him one day. He does not want to write in the artificial structure of a professional journal. I think he wants to express himself, in both content and form, in a manner true to his experience one afternoon in Mexico. His letter shows how theological reflection can come out of particular events, and be faithful to them. Illich has lived his life denouncing and fleeing from bureaucratic leviathans. And his love for the truthfulness of the Church requires a suitably ascetic expression fitting the circumstances of the origin of his statement.

And why must historical theology and Biblical exegesis be written in an arbitrary format elaborated by professionals deeply infected with the current bureaucratic fashion? Can one believe that these standards have any real authority? In contrast, I would argue that Hlich's authority rests solidly on his life of prayer, virtue and study. I am not aware that anyone has ever claimed that his scholarship is thin. And the truth of this statement ("Kelly") depends on his reading of history. To ask him to present his research in a form acceptable to the "guardians" of academic expression is as deeply insulting as to ask him for a sociological solution to the problem of gender. His faith does not encompass sociology; his vocabulary resolutely shuns solutions and problems except for those found, for example, in plane geometry.

In *Tools for Conviviality* Illich writes that "The industrial mode of production was first fully rationalized in the manufacture of a new invisible commodity, called 'education'" (p. 19). This book contains his most complete outline for a theory of industrial society, the one which rules the lives of those of us who live in the West. And he demonstrates, first in *Deschooling* and later in *Tools,* that the industrial mode of production characterizes the making of *both* goods and services.

In "Dear Kelly" he sets up two parallel arguments: Just as the Church first institutionalized the care of the sick (that is, bequeathing *this* structure, the hospital, to the West, thereby making it more and more difficult to practice hospitality), so the Church also gave the West the *institution* of education. In this sense, the Church is "responsible" for the industrialization of the West. Such is the argument. In both *Deschooling* and *Tools,* Illich describes how education - that education we have all known and experienced is organized in an industrial mode. Then, in the penultimate paragraph of

Tools, he notes that "the industrial dominance over production [is] the ultimate form of idolatry" (p. 119).

Perhaps I should put these last words in italics - they are the most explicit statement in this book that it, too, forms part of his lifelong "exercise in apophatic theology" (the phrase comes from Sally Cunneen's *Cross Currents* review of And one can work

toward an understanding of why he takes this approach through reflection on this long-held thesis, *corruptio optirnipessima,* namely, that those horrors which haunt our society are of an unimaginably frightening character, worse than anything he observes in other ("non-Christian") societies, *and* they are mysteriously derived from the corruption and perversion of the sublime truths of Biblical revelation. (He and Jacques Ellul share this opinion.)

As Cunneen rightly points out, "Kelly" is not a "contribution to current discussion of the shortage of priests or who should be ordained or how do we produce a more adult laity." Illicit unequivocally states that "current discussions on the future of the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church are overwhelmingly beside the point because they focus on the *future of the clergy* [his italics]." And he means precisely, fully, what he says. The questions I hear being discussed today, regarding a vocation to ministry, have meaning *only.*

- if one believes that the Church is divinely organized as a corporate, bureaucratic organization, uniting early Byzantine, Renaissance court and rational managerial elements;

- and if one accepts "the clergy" as a divinely-willed component of the community which finds its origins in Jesus Christ.

In "The Vanishing Clergyman," Illich questions the first belief, and in "Dear Kelly," the second. Through his studies, he discovers that the organization *and* clergy of the Church are indeed historically contingent In a Thomistic sense, I guess, one can say that the Church today enjoys (or suffers) a clergy and *this* organization,per *modum accidens.* While he has not published any study on the historical etiology of the Church's structure, he does point out how the phenomenon of clergy is specifically constituted by "professional education."

Further, with far-reaching results for the society at large, the Church pioneered the idea that education –understood as curricular consumption - be a "prerequisite for admission to status, function, and privilege" ("Kelly"). And this resulted in the basic modem assumption questioned *only* by people such as Illich upon which "the ideology of universal education could be built" *(ibidem).*

As Cunneen points out, Illich is suspicious of "refresher courses to keep academe going." But "accidentally" running into this person who is offered such fare by the Church, he seizes the occasion as a springboard for his reflections on the very notion of a clergy, thereby exposing the flimsy - and destructive - assumptions on which

these various modem certainties rest. But I don't think the issue here is confined to the fact "that Kelly is in a better position to train... future priests," that he can do something more than pass out "the new theological fads" (Cunneen). Illich's argument here definitively implies what "Clergyman" earlier suggested: the disappearance of a priest-*hood.* And it provides much more...

When he uses the word "crisis" Illich takes it to mean the opportunity to make a choice (as he pointed out years ago, the Greek verb of origin means "to decide"). Cunneen would like to see Illicit "suggest possible new directions." I think that he does indeed to do this. *In Deschooling,* he wrote:

> [W]hat characterizes the true master-disciple relationship is its priceless character. Aristotle speaks of it as a "moral type of friendship, which is not on fixed terms: it makes a gift, or does whatever it does, as to a friend." Thomas Aquinas says of this kind of teaching that inevitably it is an act of love and mercy. This kind of teaching is always a luxury for the teacher and a form of leisure (in Greek, *"schold)* for him and his pupil: an activity meaningful for both, having no ulterior purpose (p. 146).

We can see, as Illich notes (in the quote from Matthew "Dear Kelly"), that there is a consonance between the action of the Lord and the thought of Aristotle-Aquinas, vis-d-vis teaching and learning. And, twenty years ago, Illich had sincerely hoped *thatDeschool-ing* would lead to proposals to re-think present institutional forms in the light of the Gospel. He suggests the possibility of a more radical view of divine vocation, a more radical abandonment to grace. He contrasts grace/vocation with institutional insurance, believing them to be contradictory.

A question must be asked: Is the reliance on *this* formal arrangement - clerical education - the denial of the reality of personal vocation in response to the Lord's voice? Is this to reject the example of the Lord sending out his disciples? to say - with the Grand Inquisitor - we know better?

Illich's letter is also on friendship, on the essential place of friendship in learning today. He is definitely *not* concerned with the reform of clerical education. He recognizes, however, that the vocation to follow the Lord does indeed entail a kind of learning. But all higher learning today, quite apart from any reference to a ministry vocation, "depends crucially on hospitality and friendship and lifelong personal emulation in those virtues which establish the independent stance of heart and mind on which *stadium...* depends" ("Kelly"). In a position which makes him far more radical than the current critics of higher education, Illich states his belief that the modem university is bankrupt, that it has reached an impasse out of which - given its principles, structure, and operating ethos - it cannot move. A fortiori, learning in the context of the Gospel must seek a milieu totally different from the available examples of higher learning, a spirit and structure appropriate both to the time in which we live and to its (Gospel) origins.

To claim, literally, that the vety shape of learning in the Church rests on friendship is to suggest a new version of the Church. ”The Vanishing Clergyman” did not go so far. It only prepared its readers for this later, evangelically-inspired proposal. Here, Illich goes to his sources to outline the basis for a de-clericalized church, for what he earlier called a *secularized* church. Through his historical research, we can now see that the Church need not be so dependent on bureaucratic and hierarchic structures, but can rest precariously - evangelically - on the friendship between me, this other person, and the Lord.

Many in the Church today appear to be fear-and anxiety-ridden. But there is no cause for alarm, Illich says. Genuine church reform can begin, now, with two or three gathered in His name - that’s all it takes.

Recent & Forthcoming Works By Jacques Ellul

by David W. Gill
(Box 5358, Berkeley, CA 94705).
T\vo of Jacques EUui’s most important sociological works were reprinted at long last in 1990. *La Technique, ou, L’enjeu du siecle* (ET: *The Technological Society)* is now available from the publisher Economica (49/ue Hericart, 75015 Paris). The publisher’s cover note says that in 1960 Ellul submitted a second, revised edition of *La Technique* but his publisher decided not to publish it The Economica text is this 1960 revision. *Propagandes* (ET: *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes)* was also reprinted at the same time by Economica. Both *La Technique* and *Propagandes* are in a series called ”*Classiques des Sciences Sociales.*” Both volumes are listed at 195 francs.

It should also be noted that the same Economica series has made available two works by Ellul’s old friend and intellectual conversation partner, Bernard Charbonneau: *L’Etat* and*Lesystemeetlechaos.*

Ce Dieu Injuste...? Theologie Chretiennepour lepeuple d’lsrael appeared in April 1991 from the publisher Arlea (Librairie Les Fruits du Congo,8,rue de 1’Odeon, 75006 Paris). The book is being distributed (also?) by Le Seuil^7/ue Jacob, 75006 Paris. 203 pp. paperback. 100 francs. In this book, Ellul discusses St. Paul’s famous statement of Romans (9:1-12:2) on the status of Israel in light of Jesus Christ and the New Testament. This is a biblical Christian theology in support of the ongoing, unique and special election of the Jewish people by God.

Si tu es le Fils de Dieu: Soufirances et tentations de Jesus appeared in June 1991 from the publisher Le Centurion (Paris). This brief paperback (110 pages; 78 francs) was co-published with R. Brockhaus Verlag in Zurich. In Part One, Ellul explores the Gospel accounts of the ”suffering servant” and in Part Two the various ”temptations of Jesus” beginning with Satan in the dessert. What Ellul has offered us here are some fifty brief meditations on the humanity of Jesus.

In conversation at his home in Bordeaux on June 25,1991, Ellul clarified once again that he has a completed manuscript on "Technique and Theology" for which he has never found a publisher. He also has a thousand hand-written manuscript pages on "The Ethics of Holiness" but has not had the time or secretarial support to convert this to typescript and complete his own revisions and editorial work.

The only other work in the pipeline at present is his major study of Islam. As of last summer Ellul felt that one third of this book was completed, another third (on the Koran) had been finished but now needed major revisions because of the appearance of new translations of the Koran, and yet another third had barely been started. The shock of Yvette Ellul's death in the Spring and Jacques Ellul's own ongoing health struggles have quite understandably slowed his progress on his writing projects. I assured him of the prayers and best wishes of his North American students, colleagues and friends.

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From the Editor

As promised, this issue is devoted to Ellul's critique of our mass media society. My thanks to our guest editor, Clifford Christians, for putting this issue together. I will let Cliff brief you on the contents.

Darrell J. Fasching, Editor

About This Issue

by Clifford Christians, Guest Editor

English-speaking students of mass communications first noticed Ellulwhen *Propagandes* was translated in 1965. Propaganda studies following World War n had centered on overt, political manipulation with Hitler's Goebbels the archetypal case. Ellul helped us come to grips with the subtle, covert and devastating ways in which media technologies reorient our values around efficiency. Communication scholars interested in theology have welcomed Ellul's other books and essays in this area.

Ellul's contributions to symbolic theory are the least well known and they are outlined in this issue by J. Wesley Baker. Darrell Fasching examines one of Ellul's most disturbing claims - that the visual media short-circuit our critical capacities. I review Ellul's hard-hittingHunufihdon *of the Word* in the light of recent theoretical work on the nature of communication systems. And, as typical with *The Ellul Studies Forum,* representative books covering the same territory are introduced as a way of encouraging dialogue with similar and contradictory viewpoints. Two recent dissertations applying Ellul to communications are introduced, in the hope that other dissertations on Ellul will be abstracted in future issues of the *Forum.*

Communications is not a discipline per se, but a region of common intellectual concerns where many disciplines cross. Given Ellul's own breadth and interdisciplinary interests, he has been fully at home when dealing with problems in communications. And because the mass media are such a dominant social institution today, those acquainted with Ellul from many disciplines have also followed closely his studies on communication technologies. They serve as a productive arena for examining Ellul's central ideas.

In This Issue

Bulletin Board

Ethics After Auschwitz and Hiroshima

The first book of a two volume project on narrative ethics after Auschwitz and Hiroshima by Darrell Fasching has just been released by Fortress Press under the title *Narrative Theology After Auschwitz-FromAlienation to Ethics (1992).* The second book will be published next summer (1993) by SUNY Press under the title: *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?* The following is taken from the prologue of the first book:

These two volumes are intended to be an experiment in theology of culture as an approach to comparative religious ethics. This first volume, *Narrative Theology After Auschwitz,* from the perspective of a narrative ethic approach, attempts to restructure the Christian narrative tradition, in the light of Auschwitz, through a dialogue with that strand of post-Holocaust Jewish theology and ethics which draws upon the Jewish narrative tradition of *chutzpah.* This volume culminates in an ethic of personal and professional responsibility proposed as a strategy for constraining the human capacity for the demonic. This takes the form of an ethic of audacity *(chutzpah)* on behalf of the stranger.

In the next volume, *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?,* I continue the narrative ethics approach but extend the ethical focus of the discussion to encompass religion, technology and public policy in a cross-cultural perspective. There I suggest that the dominant myth or narrative of our modem global technological civilization is the Janus-faced myth of "Apocalypse or Utopia." This

mythic narrative tends to render us ethically impotent, for, mesmerized by the power of technology, we become trapped in the manic-depressive rhythms of a sacral awe - i.e., of fasdnation and dread. When we are caught up in the utopian euphoria created by the marvelous promises of technology we do not wish to change anything. And when, in our darker moments, we fear that this same technology is out of control and leading us to our own apocalyptic self-destruction, we feel overwhelmed and unable to do anything. The paradox is that the very strength of our literal utopian euphoria sends us careening toward some literal apocalyptic "final solution."

In the second volume I argue that the narrative theme of the demonic which dominated Auschwitz - "killing in order to heal" - has become globalized and incorporated into the Janus-faced technological mythos which emerged out of Hiroshima. It is this mythic narrative which underlies and structures much of public policy in our nuclear age. Finally, in response, I endeavor to extend the Jewish-Christian dialogue of the first volume to include Buddhism, in order to suggest a cross-cultural coalition for an ethic of human dignity, human rights and human liberation in response to this technological globalization of the demonic. At the heart of my position in these two volumes is the conviction that the *kairos of* our time is one which calls forth the badly neglected ethic of "welcoming the stranger" which underlies the biblical tradition, and analogously "welcoming the outcast" which underlies the Buddhist tradition. It is this care for the stranger and the outcast, I shall argue, which provides the critical norm for an ethic of human dignity, human rights and human liberation.

It is in the second volume that I construct a theory of theology of culture as comparative religious ethics. However, the theory I develop there and the conclusions I arrive at, concerning a cross-cultural pluralistic ethic of human rights in response to Auschwitz and Hiroshima, would be impossible for me without having first come to grips with Auschwitz as a singular event for Western religion, culture and ethics. Each book is written as an argument which is intended to stand on its own. At the same time, however, the full scope of what I am proposing can only be grasped by reading both. My immediate goal in this volume is to span the abyss between Jews and Christians in a suggested coalition against the unprecedented power of the demonic which has erupted in this century. My ultimate goal, in the next volume, is to expand this coalition so as to bridge not only the abyss between religions, East and West, but also between religious and secular ethics.

The total project, then, is about religion, ethics and public polity after Auschwitz and Hiroshima. It is about: (a) rethinking the meaning of civilization and public order in an emerging pluralistic world civilization as we approach the end of a millennium — the year 2000 C.E.; (b) the need of a cross-cultural ethic in a world racked by ethical relativism and ideological conflict and; (c) the mythologies of the sacred and the secular in a technological civilization and the appropriate role for religion in the shaping of public values in a "secular" world.

The perspective from which these books are written is that of theology. However, it is not "Christian" theology although it is assuredly theology written by a Christian.

It is not "confessional theology" but theology understood as an academic discipline within the humanities, whose purpose is the illumination of the human experience (individual and communal) of transcendence as self-transcendence. Needless to say, the same subject matter would be treated differently had this project been written by a Buddhist or some other more "secular" a-theist, or by a Hindu, Jew or Muslim rather than a Christian. And yet I intend it to be a theology which has something to say not only to Christians but also to Jews and Buddhists and others without being either a Jewish or Buddhist theology, etc. And I mean it to be a theology relevant to "secular" or humanistic a-theists as well...

The first volume, I hope, suggests the possibility of a common coalition between Jews and Christians against any future eruptions of the demonic. In the next volume I attempt to extend this coalition, suggesting a cross-cultural ethic of human dignity, human rights and human liberation through the synergy of the diverse narrative traditions (East and West, religious and secular) of hospitality, whose common theme is *welcoming the stranger.* Contrary to the usual critique of human rights Qaunched by narrative ethicists) as an attempt to impose a single universal "storyless" ethic on the whole human race, I argue that an ethic of human dignity and human rights requires just the opposite, namely, a pluralistic coalition of the narrative traditions of holy communities which only need to share one thing in common — audacity in defense of the stranger.

Forum: Ellul on Communications Technology

Ellul on the Need for Symbolism

by J. Wesley Baker
Cedarville College

The more I have studied Ellul's writings, the more impressed I have become with the central role "communication" plays in his thought. Since my field of study is communication technologies, I initially was drawn to Ellul because of his insistence that the technological system *(la technique)* is dominating our era. There was, as well, an initial attraction because of the number of examples he draws from the media. But I have come to see that Ellul's concern with communication is at a far more important level: We can hope for the survival of what is human only if we engage in the creation of symbols which allow us to retain mastery in a technological environment The purpose of this essay is to outline for Ellul scholars the central place our need to symbolize plays in Ellul's thought.

Ellul's Terminology

In his writings about communication, Ellul makes a point of insisting he does not take a specialist's viewpoint on the topic. Temple says that while this "outsider's" orientation contributes to an imprecision in his terminology, its strength is in providing a "common sense" approach.

> Perhaps he is not always fair to leaders in the linguistic sciences, but (as in all his other books) he is neither a philosopher nor a literary critic. He writes as social commentator (and as an "ordinary" layman) observing the effects of changes in the role of language and also as a voice for common sense on behalf of all of us who feel that somehow the substance of language has been replaced by a trick with smoke and mirror images.[1]

It is this orientation which leads Ellul to argue: "Defining language by talking about codes, signifiers, the syntagma, semiotics, and semiology does not solve the problem" of

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[1] Katharine Temple, "Jacques Ellul: A Consistent Distinction," *Media Development* 35, no. 2 (1988):

language we face today. Always we must come back to simple facts, common sense, and commonplaces as our starting point"[2] He is concerned that an approach to language which is too "scientific" can rob it of its symbolic function.

> Human language cannot be reduced strictly to a transmission of information. Communicationy/information theory is extremely impoverished for it reduces language to a reality, doubtless scientifically knowable, but one that excludes the principal aspect of the phenomenon. The symbolization of society is effected through language and, since the beginning, this process has considered the social relationship as not merely the immediate contact of human being to human being, but as a *mediated* relationship. This mediation creates a symbolic space for the obligatory interpretation of relationships. It provides a "windbreak" between man and man and causes brutality to be excluded so that coexistence becomes possible. Man cannot subsist on mere physical contact alone; he must symbolize it and situate it in a symbolic universe.[3]

The risk comes from our ability to "separate the code from the language, the information from the spoken words, or reduce information to bytes."[4] This technical approach to language leads to a reductionism which eliminates "from human language everything that goes beyond visual information, everything that is inaccessible to the code. The result would bejiot just an amputation, which is the traditional reductionist method of all the sciences, but a surgical excision of language's very heart."[5] As a result, Ellul is opposed to any approach which limits language's "breadth of meaning, ambiguity, and variation in interpretation.[6] Most importantly for Ellul, the uncertainty inherent in our symbols provides us with individual freedom as we seek for truth and coherence.

Symbolization as a Basic Human Need

Ellul calls human symbol-making "one of the most basic functions of life."[7] He believes that our creation in the image of the God-who-speaks is at the base of our symbolizing and thus serves as an important part of what distinguishes us from the

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[2] Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word,* trans. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 1-2.

[3] Ibid., 210.

[4] Jacques Ellul, "Preconceived Ideas About Mediated Information," in *The Media Revolution in America and in Western Europe,* eds. Everett M. Rogers and Francis Balle (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1985), 103.

[5] Ellul, *Humiliation of die Word,* 3.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Jacques Ellul, *What I Believe,* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 100.

rest of creation.[8] It is, he says, "the specific characteristic of *Homo sapiens....*" But, besides defining man, this symbol-making function is also "the key to his success."[9] The "success" to which Ellul refers is humankind's ability to survive in its milieu or environment tty gaining mastery over it through symbolization.[10]

Ellul links milieu and symbolization quite closely, noting that "symbolization is always effected in relation to the environment in which man lives, and as a function of the environment"[11] Ellul points out that it is only within "the environment [that] we have occasion to exercise one of the most basic functions of life, that is, symbolism. The environment gives us the chance to create symbols, and here are riches that spur us to development"[12]It is through this process of a sense-making ordering of the world that "man [is able] to engage himself in a certain mastery of nature."[13]

Mastery over our environment is made possible by this symbolic function as it provides humans "domination through distance and differentiation."[14] On the first point, domination through distance, Ellul argues that, "for there to be symbolization at all, the symbol-creator must be outside what he is symbolizing; there must be some distance between the symbolizer and the symbolized."[15] On the second, domination through differentiation, distinctions for Ellul result from our designation of names, because the "word is creator in that it names things, thus specifying them by differentiating them."[16] This gives us mastery over what we name as we attach importance, meaning, and place to it. "To name someone or something," he says, "is to show one's superiority over him or it."[17] As an example, Ellul refers to the Genesis account, where "Adam is confirmed as the head of creation when God brings all the animals to him so that he can give each one a name (Gen. 2:19)."[18] Thus, being comes through naming.

> The Genesis passage that establishes creation on the basis of separation contains the germ of the most modern ideas about language: it tells us that difference both establishes the word and proceeds from it. The word bestows being on each reality, attributing truth toil; it gives dynamism to reality and prescribes a fixed trajectory for it. In this way the word disentangles confusion and nonbeing?[19]

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[8] Ellul, *Humiliation of die Word,* 50-51.

[9] Jacques Ellul, "Symbolic Function, Technology and Society," *Journal of Social and Biological Structures* 1 (1978): 207.

[10] Jacques Ellul, "An Aspect of the Role of Persuasion in a Technical Society," trans. Elena Radutsky and Charles Stern, *Et cetera 36* (Summer 1979): 149.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ellul, *What I Believe,* 100.

[13] Ellul, "Symbolic Function," 208.

[14] Ellul, "Role of Persuasion," 151.

[15] Ibid., 150.

[16] Ellul, *Humiliation of die Word,* 53.

[17] Ibid., 52.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 53.

Our name-making is driven by our need for coherence. The creative process allows us to order our environment through symbols. "From the moment man proceeds to the denomination of things," Ellul writes, "he has made them enter his universe and they belong to a coherent ensemble. They belong to man by virtue of the name he has bestowed on them. He has not only put his mark on things, he has also made then [sic] exist."[20] This transformation comes as one symbolizes, making "his natural, objective reality into a special universe that he constitutes from within himself;"[21] and resulting in the "creation of a universe different from the one in which he is situated, but fully a part of his real mileau."[22]

The whole process of symbol-making is interpretive, making signs "enter into a coherent explanatory ensemble (even if only fictivety explanatory) of which man stands as master."[23] Ellul says the coherence is gained as one selects which elements to feature or mask, in the same way as an artist interprets reality.

> [Symbolization] is not like a photographic reproduction, which would serve no function: the painter makes choices of which characteristics of reality to retain, highlighting some and making them carriers of meaning, while others he marks for obliteration, pushing them into the shadows or making them disappear altogether... There is a transformation into a new universe, which renders explicit and in terms of relationship, that which is implicit and without apparent relationship.[24]

Ellul places supreme importance on this interpretive process which provides structure for our world because it is through "the symbolic transformation of reality" that one "creates the possibility of acquiring a non-material grasp on reality, without which he would be completely unprovided for."[25]

Since the creation of tytnbols is rooted in the environment or milieu in which we find ourselves, problems arise during a time of transition. As we have moved into the environment of *la technique,* our use of symbols has become outdated. "[S]ince thinking is slow to move and verbal forms are always a step behind reality, the older environment serves as an ideological reference for those who have been plunged into the new one."[26] Importantly for Ellul, as we live during a time of transition, this tendency toward anachronistic symbolization leads to "enormous errors of judgment" which result in a failure to identity property the challenge of *la technique?*[27]

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[20] Ellul, "Symbolic Function," 212.

[21] Ibid., 207.

[22] Ibid., 208.

[23] Ibid., 207; note deleted.

[24] Ibid., 207.

[25] Ibid., 208.

[26] Ellul, Wuu *I Believe,* 101.

[27] Ibid., 102.

Self-Symbollzatlon of *la technique*

As we attempt to make sense of our new technological environment, Ellul argues that *la technique* itself provides coherence through its self-symbolization.[28] Ellul contends that "technology is itself productive of symbols and becomes by itself its own symbol... . Technology is not only an environment, nor merely an ensemble of means and instruments; it is itself a symbolic universe. It furnishes itself with its own symbols."[29] As a result, "[n]ow it is technology which has taken over and which produces for man the coherent symbols that are attributable to the technological universe."[30]

Through the images produced by *la technique* some of our needs seem to be met But Ellul argues that we have experienced "a complete inversion of the scale of needs."[31] As a result, the needs which are met are "artificial needs, which are unimportant, not in the least essential to man, but which become irrepressible, exigent, imperious, the only ones to be taken seriously in the long run..."[32]

Images help us make up for the loss of the natural environment, a loss to which we have never quite reconciled ourselves. Without contact with the reality of the natural environment "we develop an extremely deep need for another reality." This need is met though "[t]he image is mirage [which] reconciles contradictions, makes absent nature present and real again ... Images counterbalance all the abstractions. And they restore to us at last a reality in which we can live: the reality of the world of images."[33] But this "world imagined by the media" is a "perfectly artificial world, recomposed by the images and sounds of these media. Consequently," Ellul says, "there is no place for symbolization to occur."[34]

The end result is that we cannot gain mastery over our technological environment because the only experience we accept as "real" is itself the result of *la technique's* self-symbolization. "[T]he images of a technical society only seem to be symbolizing *by reflecting* a reality that is itself onty a reflection." Thus, instead of providing distance and differentation, this self-symbolization "has the effect of integrating, adapting, and assimilating man to technique."[35] This integration is encouraged tty our distraction from the reality of the system. "Images are essential if I am to avoid seeing the day-to-day reality I live in. They glitter continuously around me, allowing me to live in a sort of image-oriented fantasy."[36] Ellul draws a distinction between images as "a substitute reality" and the word, which "obliges me to consider reality from the point of view of

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[28] Ellul, "Role of Persuasion," 151.

[29] Ellul, "Symbolic Function," 217.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Jacques Ellul, "The Obstacles to Communication Arising from Propaganda Habits," *The Student World* 52 (1959): 405. 1.32. . Ibid., 404.

[32] *EBvd,Humiliatumof die Word,* 207.

[33] Ellul, "Symbolic Function," 215.

[34] Ellul, "Role of Persuasion," 151.

[35] Ellul, *Humiliation of the Word,* 128.

[36] Ibid.

truth." He writes, "Artificial images, passing themselves off for truth, obliterate and erase the reality of my life and my society."[37]

The Need for New Symbols

Living in an environment of artificial images results in the elimination of meaning: "Language becomes, in effect, a system of signs which answer to certain archetypes, to certain uses and to certain habits, but the symbolic dimension of language is destroyed."[38] The "reality" of the poetic, mythic and metaphysical falls before the "reality" of the empirical. What can be "seen" by the soul is replaced tty what can be seen with the eyes. The word becomes humiliated by the image. Symbol becomes sign. Language "becomes no more than a sort of organized noise," so that "a whole part of man's symbolic activity is rendered impossible. Among other things, he is capable neither of true consciousness nor of recognition."[39]

Part of the problem is that the Enlightenment's elimination of the metaphysical makes it difficult for people in modem society to create a "symbolic universe," that is, a superordinate sense-making of our environment which is based on the ultimate. Instead, we are limited to that which can be handled "scientifically." When it comes to language, the result has been the study of signs apart from meaning;"... the mentality of scientism has pounced upon language," Ellul complains, "and has involved us in reducing the word to the state of an object: a scientific object"[40] The tangible, what can be seen, becomes what is "real."

I cannot observe the signified, nor the relationship of the signifier with the signified. These are "philosophical" problems. On the contraiy, I can observe the emission of a phrase, its circulation, deformation, and audition. I can even make nice diagrams of this process. This shows in the first place that this attitude follows the traditional ^scientific" tendency: onty what can be observed and analyzed by the classical scientific method is important (or even exists, in the extreme view). Since onty the communication process involving the signifier can be thus analyzed, it is the onty thing that matters to us. Everything else is a metaphysical argument that serves onty to confuse the scientific relationship between subject and object.[41]

But in excluding meaning as beyond examination (and therefore unimportant) and in concentrating "exclusively on reality and the concrete," we lose the truth which is "to be read between the lines or heard in the silent moments of discourse." While the Image limits us to "[t]ruth verifiable by science," the word "continually casts doubt on this claim."[42]

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[37] Ellul, "Symbolic Function," 215.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ellul, *Humiliation of the Word,* 165.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 182.

[42] Ellul, "Symbolic Function," 217.

The ultimate bankruptcy of the universe of images is out of sight for us in the environment *oflatechnique.* The system "presents itself as an environment so coherent and so unitary that it does not seem to have a point where man can insert anything else."[43] It "devalues all other mediations and man seems to have no need of symbolic mediation because he has technological mediation."[44] As a result, "[n]ow it is technology which has taken over and which produces for man the coherent symbols that are attributable to the technological universe."[45]

The problem with this new reality is that its dependence on images produces the "tendency toward the disappearance of the symbolic function."[46] Given the unity of the system, "man seems to have no need of symbolic mediation because he has technological mediation. It even appears to man that technology is more efficacious and permits him a greater domination over what threatens him and a more certain protection against danger than does the symbolic process."[47] Our ability to create symbols has been sterilized by the ease with which we can "consume" the system's images. "Just as vaccines have progressively reduced the capacity of the organism to create spontaneously natural immunities, so in the same way, man no longer creates symbols because too many are offered him at too simple a level of consumption."[48] But these images "have not elaborated a significant and meaningful symbolic universe."[49] They have "ceased to assure us of permanence; ceased to call forth a deepened consciousness and thus cannot be creators of history."[50] They ultimately fail because they cannot meet our need for a "deep" coherence.

Provided with a technological mediation which is so efficient and so complete that it becomes embraced to the exclusion of all else, we have lost sight of the human need to create our own symbols if we are to survive and grow. "Man no longer feels specifically the need to launch himself into the adventure of initial symbolic creation precisely because he sees himself surrounded by those symbols that are actually produced by the technological system."[51] The easy access to the existing symbolic universe of *la technique* "sterilizes man's desire" to create one's own symbols[52]

Intervention Into the Cycle

The vicious circle which is suggested by Ellul's analysis reveals to us the double importance of communication in his thinking: the seemingly complete mediation of *la*

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[43] Ibid., 216.
[44] Ibid., 217.
[45] Ibid., 214.
[46] Ibid., 216.
[47] Ibid., 217.
[48] Ibid., 214.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 217.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 211.

technique reduces our perceived need to create symbols, and without the creation of new symbols with which we can gain mastery over our new enviroment, no challenge to the technological mediation is possible. Thus Ellul seeks to provide an intervention into the cycle through his demonstration of the emptiness of the needs which are being met tty *la technique* and the danger resulting from our loss of awareness of our need to symbolize. Only tty breaking this vicious circle are adaptation and growth possible. "So long as the evolution of the symbolic universe remains possible, the normal evolution of society is possible without crisis and within humanely acceptable bounds."[53] Therefore, man's "only chance to subsist in his human specificity" is "to effect a symbolization of technology" toward human ends.[54] The "univocal" mediation by technology must be replaced with symbolization which is "plurivocal, equivocal, unstable in [its] applications, and also deeply rooted in a rich and creative unconsciousness."[55] Ellul believes that we must "work to create new values, to reach a consensus on a new meaning, to create new symbols." If this is done, then it is possible that technologies can be placed in the role of servant once again. But "if society is not successful, it surely will disintegrate. In other words," he says, "it is now a time for invention... It is to that invention of a new communication which adequately symbolizes the elements of *la technique* that Ellul calls us.

Where Mass Media Abound, The Word Abounds Greater Still

–Reflections on Robert Cole's Study of Children, Movies and Ethics
by Darrell J. Fasching University of South Florida

Where Mass Media Abound Ethical Freedom Disappears - Or Does It?

Jacques Ellul's analysis of the mass media's influence, at first glance, makes it seem as if we are without resources in a mass media civilization. The media, he suggests, rob us of our individuality and our capacity for critical thinking. Our thought and action beinme stereotypical. Consequently we lose our capacity for ethical reflection and action. For Ellul, our only hope lies in the power of the word to free us from our illusions. What I hope to show, with the help of Robert Coles recent work on the moral fife of children, is that where media images abound, the word abounds greater

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[53] Ibid., 217.

[54] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological System,* trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1980), 37.

[55] Jacques Ellul, "Search for an Image," trans. Henty Darcy and Gloria and Lionel Abel, *The Humanist* 33 (Nov.-Dec. 1973): 23.

still Children, we usually assume, are less capable of critical thought and analysis and therefore are even more vulnerable to mass media imagery than adults. However, in *The Moral Life of Children* Coles shows that while children can indeed mouth the stereotypes of the adult mass media world they also show an amazing capacity for independent ethical reflection. Such reflecton is often provoked tty the media themselves, especially television and film.

As Ellul has pointed out, in a technical civilization we live immersed in a media environment so total and constant that it is virtually invisible. What is dangerous about this environment is that media make it possible to address individuals within the masses, creating the illusion of personal involvement while actually eliminating their individuality. To the degree that such persons rely on the media for information they are subjected to oversimplified characterizations of social and political situations. Complex issues are reduced to basic positive and negative options formed around stereotypes. The unique thoughts of the reflective self are replaced with a media generated collection of fragmentary stereotypical public opinions. There is no longer a progression from private to public opinion, says Ellul, "only from one state of public opinion to another state of that same public opinion.[56]"

Television and film, especially, create an environment of images and illusions that short-circuit our ability to sustain critical distance. Rather than stimulating critical reflecton, visual images bring thought to a halt. "A picture is worth a thousand words." The facts speak for themselves. Knowing becomes equated with "taking a look." All further reflection becomes unnecessary. The power of the news telecast is in giving us a feeling of presence, of immediateness, so we can see for ourselves. "Seeing is believing." One sees the facts, and having seen them, the issue is resolved. However, while seeing gives one the illusion of objectivity, it in fact totally abolishes the distance necessary for critical objective thought.

All of this brings about a fundamental mutation in our thought processes. Rational reflection is replaced by associative thinking. Films, photos, even words are used to evoke stereotypical feelings and reactions. The institutional infrastructure of society, says Ellul, is a "reality" legitimated tty a superstructure or "sacred canopy" of images. The power of images, mediated through film and televsion, is such that we are removed from our everyday world of interpersonal interaction, where what we do has some effect, and placed instead in a fictional world which presents itself as "reality." It is a non-dialogical world of one way communication which our thoughts and actions can never touch or influence. The end result of living in this "reality" is that we are totally immobilized and prevented from significantly affecting the shape of our social world.

The image integrates us into the illusion of that "reality". By contrast, the word makes us conscious of our separateness, our individuality, our freedom. The word inserts the creative tension of transforming freedom into the closed realm of mass media society. Although he needs to be challenged on this, Ellul argues that the very nature of the

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[56] *Propaganda,* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1972), p. 204.

word elicits reasoning and analysis, freeing one from mesmerization by the image.[57] The word restores the personalizing dimension of time and memory and evokes our capacity for freedom and revolt. "The word," for Ellul, "must always remain a door opening to the Wholly Other."[58] As a result the word "is strictly contradictory to technique in every way."[59] It is through the word, Ellul suggests, that human sovereignty can be recovered over the domain of technique. It is not a matter of doing away with images. No human society can function without images. It is simply a matter of restoring a balance and with it the possibility of critical reflection.

Ellul's sociological analysis of the impact of mass media upon human freedom produces a discouraging perspective. Media seem to create an environment in which ethical freedom is impossible. The integration of the image and technique make Ellul very pessimistic about the possibilities of the word finding a place in the life of the individual who is immersed in a media environment And yet, as Ellul himself argues, everything depends upon the individual. At the macro level of social analysis everything may seem determined and yet at the individual level freedom might yet be possible. Robert Coles work with the children of this mass media world in fact suggests that not only is freedom possible but it abounds. It abounds because the power of the word abounds in the lives of these children.

The Word Abounds Greater Still

Robert Coles, who received a Pulitzer Prize for his series *Children ofCrisis,* began his career by studying the impact of integration on black and white children in the South in the sixties. Since then he has studied the responses of children to crises in a variety of cultures. Recently this work has culminated in-three important books - *The Political Life of Childrert The Moral Life of Children* and *The Spiritual Life of Children.*[60] In *The Moral Life of Children* he devotes a chapter to "Movies and Moral Energy" in which he suggests that both television and film can sometimes serve as

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[57] Ellul exaggerates this link between word and reason. Ellul prefers the oral word over the written word, which is why he prefers Socrates over Plato and Aristotle. But a good deal of research on orality and writing would seem to call Ellul's claim here into question. Myth, as an imaginal language, is primarily an oral language. It is only with writing that critical rational reflection really became possible. Walter Ong persuasively argues that it is not the spoken word which promotes reason and anlaysis but the written word. See *Orality and Literacy: The Technolo-ffzingof the Word,* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), especially chapters 3 and 4.1 suspect that it is really the dialectical balance of movement back and forth between the written and the oral word that makes possible the Socratic critical reflection which Ellul so much admires. Although Socrates may not have left us any writings (apart from Plato), it is doubtful that he could have engaged in his critical dialogues in a totally oral culture. Hence the critical distance Ellul advocates as an antidote to mesmerization by media images can only occur through this kind of dialectical balance, which is exemplified in Ellul's own life as a teacher and an author, even if it is not fully accounted for in his own theoretical reflections.

[58] *The Humiliation of the* IFor<i(Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1985), p. 32.

[59] Ibid., p. 159.

[60] *The Political Life of Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1986), *The Moral Life of Children*

important ethical resources for children, provoking their capacity for ethical reflection in unexpected ways.

In the sixties TV sets were found in the homes of southern children wherever he went. He reports that, annoyed by the common habit of leaving the TV on even when no one was watching, he once got up and turned off a TV set in an adjoining room. He did this because he wanted to conduct, without distraction, his interview with Ruby, a poor young black girl (age 6) who was a central figure in the forced integration of a white school in New Orleans. The mother immediately got up and turned it back on. Later tbe child explained to him that the movies and serials kept her mama going in hard times. They apparently served this role for the daughter as well. She was one of a handful of black children being escorted to school everyday by federal marshals. Her trips to the movies in the midst of all this tension and hatred, she said, seemed "providential" (56). "There will be times, like now, when... they [her mother and father] wonder why God gave all this trouble to the Negro people, and the white people have a better time. Then my mother will remember something she's seen in the movie, and she says you musn't forget that the white people aren't all having such a good time, either" (57).

Movies, whether in the theater or on TV, are composed of more than just images. They are a balance of word and image. They are a form of storytelling which offers us opportunities to identify with others whose lives would otherwise be totally alien to our own. In so doing, we gain ethical perspective. They offer us, as well, the full range of human emotions to be explored and put into ethical perspective. Thus they provide occasions for ethical conversion and new life. Once an author completes a story, says Flannery O'Connor, it takes on a life of its own - "You never know the new life that will result!" (59). With this thought in mind, Coles reflects cm the role that movies played in preparing people to deal with integration. In the early sixties blade and white families caught up in the integration controversy were seeing and discussing films like *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961) and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962).

Coles was struck by how some children related primarily to the race issue while others focused on the mother-daughter relationship in the film *Raisin in the Sun.* The black mother strikes her daughter for mocking the mother's belief in God. One child, an 8 year old white girl, responded by repeating the stereotypes of much of the adult world around hen "When the mother slapped her daughter and told her to believe in God, she was being smart. If you walk away from God, you're walking toward a lot of trouble. Maybe the colored will get into more and more trouble, because everyone is telling them they're bad off, and they believe it, and then there's trouble, like now, in our schools. If those people in the movie only listened to the mother, they'd be better off. The trouble was, even the mother wanted to move [i.e., into a better "white" neighborhood]. If she really believed in God, wouldn't she want to say right where she

was?" (63). But Ruby comes to a different conclusion: "The mother can make her say it [i.e., *there is a God'], but the daughter might not believe what she says. The mother smacked her daughter on the face, and our minister says you don't hurt someone, even if someone tries to hurt you, not if you believe in God" (62). A third child who viewed the film, failed to pickup on the mother-daughter conflict at all and reported the lesson of the movie was: "don't leave the South" (64).

No two children experienced the film in exactly the same way. Each filtered the film through the prism of his or her own inner life. Each took the film as an occasion to test the limits of his ot her own moral worldview in some way. In the first case, it reinforced the mass stereotypes of the surrounding society; but in the case of Ruby, a deep ethical reflection occurred which allowed her to champion the importance of belief in God being uncoerced. Indeed lack of coercion becomes for her a test of authentic belief in God.

After seeing *To Kill a Mockingbird,* Ruby was struck by the paradox that Boo Radley, whom everyone feared as crazy and potentially dangerous, turns out to be the protector of children. Ruby confesses: "'I wasn't scared for the man, the negro they all were wanting to kill. I knew they'd want to get him, and so did he!... No, I was scared for the white kids, and I felt sorry for that man next door [Boo]... My grandma said it's people like him who get a bad name, but they're good people; and it's the people standing out there in front of the school, and they're the ones who are the bad people, but no one's calling them crazy... They say they stand for everybody in the city. That's what one man tells me in the morning: 'Hey, you little nigger, ' he says,Tm here for the whole of New Orleans to tell you off!' I just walk on, and I think of all the people I know in New Orleans who aren't like him. The poor man in the movie [Boo] - if he lived in New Orleans he'd sure not be out on the street screaming at us.'" As Coles notes, here the film became for Ruby a vehicle for making an ethical distinction between appearance and reality which she applied to the world of her own persecution. It enabled her to have faith and go on, confident that at least some white people could be counted upon, like Boo, to be secretly on her side.

Far from arriving at a depersonalizing collectivist response, Ruby transcended black-white stereotypes to find hidden goodness among those who could have been viewed as all alike in their hatred. Thus, Coles concludes that "one is left with the mystery that takes place between each reader and each text, and each viewer and each film: the diversity of stimulation that emerges from several characters embedded in a complex plot, and the considerable latitude of awareness and moral concern in an audience" (65). Something can happen between the child and the film that cannot be accounted for by any psychology, sociology or even theology - something that transcends these categories to engage the ethical and spiritual energy of the child. Perhaps it is something we could call grace or the power of the word. Drawing on this power, Ruby used the film story to call into question the stereotypical image of all whites as racist. Ruby even hoped that movies might be a force for redemption in a world divided by racial hatred: "'I've been thinking,'... 'If all the [white] people on the street [who were heckling her mercilessly]

saw the movie they might stop coming out to bother us... Because... the people in the movies would work on them, and maybe they'd listen." (65-66). "It is a mistake ," says Coles, "to regard these children as mere moral puppets, driven by the workings of some contemporary sociodrama to hunt down cheap symbols in order to help express whatever psychological tensions were at work inside their heads... The human mind in the first decade of life can conjure up the demonic even in the close at hand world of a small and familiar rural setting and that same mind may be instructed in the error of its way by life's events" (75-76).

The ethical imagination of these children draws out of these films what they need in order to reflect on the moral perplexities of their own lives. "It is not a matter of reflex reaction, a behavioral sequence of sociological and psychological stimuli finding their mark. Rather, those behavioral stimuli are, not infrequently, ignored, or absorbed in some broader moral visions of things that even small children seem unselfconsciously able to construct for themselves" (77). Although we are all supposedly "turned to putty" by the power of the media, says Coles, still "we have it within our power, young or old, to attend selectively, to summon a sense of proportion, to call upon humor and common sense, to assume a varying or even quite insistent critical distance from the subject under scrutiny in the film, and later, in a given mind's life" (77). As a 14 year old bey comments on traditional "cowboy and Indian" films: "I don't try to remember my American History... while I see the cowboys going after the Indians. But I don't forget my history, either... People don't give you credit a lot of the time for havingyour head screwed on straight!" (78-79). This young boy from Albuquerque was in fact angered by the mistreatment the Indians had received and continued to receive at the hands of Anglos.

Far from automatically destroying our ethical freedom, films can be the occasions which provoke ethical reflection and heighten ethical sensibilities. Around the world, Coles, argues, "movies stir up" the ethical imagination. "I have found among rich children, poor children, black children, white children, American children, children of Ireland or England or Brazil or South Africa, that all are intrigued by the mixture of release from the earth and the persistence of our earthly capacities for decency and for malice, for good deeds and bad deeds. The combination is irresistible. I could fill hundreds of pages of print with transcriptions of what I've heard children say about these films" (84). Movies can enable us to see ourselves through the eyes of others because they can seduce us into seeing the world as others see it, for both good and evil. These stories on film speak to us because we are all "wayfarers, wanderers, alarmed castaways, or transients who find ourselves here on earth, and trying to figure out the moral significance of that realization" (90). Movies can help us gain an ethical perspective on our situation. As Ruby put it:" I went to that movie and afterward I kept thinking of it, thinking and thinking, and the next day it made me wonder what I should do, and would I be doing right or wrong" (92).[61] Such ethical reflections are

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[61] Over the last several years I have developed a course on Religion, Ethics and Society in which we

possible because our humanity resides in our inalienable capacity for language. As sign language testifies, not even the deaf and dumb can be robbed of their humanity. In their every gesture the word becomes flesh. Nothing can separate our humanness from this capacity for the word. Put theologically, no child of God is ever abandoned by the Word, for all things are created, held together and fulfilled through the Word in which we live, move and have our being. In a world of apparent necessity where the media abound, the gracious gift of the Word abounds greater still, making all things passible and all things new.

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Communication Theory in Ellul's Sociology

by Clifford G. Christians University of Illinois-Urbana

Since 1948 communication has played a prominent role in Ellul's sociology. Already in his thesis statement, *The Presence of the Kingdom,* Ellul isolated the problem of communication as central to understanding the contemporary age. As Joyce Hanks

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view and discuss a wide variety of contemporary films, such as *Crimes and Misdemenaors, Wall Street,*

observes, *Propaganda* (1962) was the first of Ellul's books to give *la technique* an indepth study.[62] *Prayer and Modem Man* (1970) was cast against today's crisis in language.

Ellul's long-term interest in communications makes *The Humiliation of the Word* an important laboratory for understanding his social philosophy. This volume is the site of my analysis here, and I work the territory with a sympathetic mind. *Propaganda has been a* formative book for me since I first read it in 1970. In contrast to superficial treatments innocent of the infrastructure-transmission views of communication in the behaviorist mode-Ellul situates the media in their socio-political context. He understands them as a technological and cultural form, and develops a normative framework light years beyond our commonplaces. He has almost singlehandedly moved the axis of propaganda studies away from overt intention among individuals to covert integration sociologically.

And I consider *Humiliation of the Word* an instructive book as well. Its major theme is unassailable-the need in our time to liberate language as an agent of human freedom. He privileges the *medium* throughout. He understands the significant fact that media technology itself is a central interpretive framework. McLuhan's aphorism - the medium is the message - in other words, he recognizes as a powerful notion. Ellul realizes that the technological form must be isolated on its own terms and not overlooked in our preoccupation with content. Ellul gives that notion his own inflection, recognizing a sea change occurs when media shift from books to television. And in his usually indominitable manner, his wide appeal to symbolic representation is stunning in scope.

I am argumentative in this article, but before outlining my dispute *aver Humiliation of the Word* let me reiterate my profound appreciation for Ellul's scholarship. Without a philosophy of technology, the religious community stands emptyhanded regarding the mass media. Without a theory of technology, media instruments accommodate the status quo. Devoid of an explicit orientation regarding technology, the church co-opts media for the Great Commission and leaves the remainder–the so-called secular-unattended. A Christian perspective on technology is the north star by which we can set our intellectual compass. Ellul contributesa mighty voice to our technological discourse, an arena where Christians find it difficult to shape the agenda.

Within that favorable pre-disposition, let me deconstruct *Humiliation of the Word* in the light of communication theory and investigate its possible contribution to mass media studies.

Similar to Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* Ellul's book is set within an influential line of communication scholarship originating with the Canadian, Harold

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Casualties of War and *Do the Right Thing*. I have found that the interaction between word and image in such an approach leads to greater student involvement and insight than simply lecturing.

[62] Jacques Ellul, *Humiliation of the Word,* Trans. Joyce M. Hanks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), p. ix.

Innis.[63] This theory presumes that the history of communications is central to the history of civilization, that social change results from media transformations, that changes in communicative forms alter the structure of consciousness. Innis studied the introduction of papyrus, the printing press, radio, and the telegraph-and documented a bias (tendency, propensity, impulse) regarding space and time. Oral communication systems, he argued, are biased toward time, rendering time continuous while making space discontinuous. Print systems, tty contrast, are biased toward space, making geography continuous and breaking time into distinct units. As a minor premise, Innis argued for a monopoly of knowledge, that is, one form of communication tending to monopolize and rendering other forms residual rather than all communications media simply existing innocently alongside one another.

Innis work on communication technology has been elaborated further by Marshall McLuhan, Elizabeth Eisenstein, Walter Ong, and James Carey. Thus from the introduction of cuneiform writing to today's fiber optics, media technologies have attracted considerable attention-scholars in the Innis tradition examining all significant shifts in technological form, identifying through them subsequent alterations in culture and in perception. Within this paradigm of bias in communication systems, the intellectual challenge is to identify the distinguishing properties of particular media technologies such as books, cinema, church sculpture, and satellites. As the physicist steps inside the world of atoms, matter and motion to understand them from the inside, the communications scholar, regarding television or magazines or audio cassettes must work deeply into their symbolic properties in order to know them fundamentally and distinctly as their own.

From the viewpoint of this important approach to communication scholarship, Ellul is raising the appropriate questions. His concern with hearing and seeing, with cinema and photography as compared to print, his fascination with the image-indicates a strong analysis located generatively.

Careful readers of *Humiliation of the Word* will note that Marshall McLuhan is Ellul's entree to this theoretical framework. He cites McLuhan approvingly on occasion and quarrels only with particular arguments. It ought not be read as merefy an application of McLuhan, but as embodying the larger framework of which McLuhan is a representative. And my allusion to McLuhan enables me to initiate my argument.

McLuhan was Innis' successor at the University of Toronto. Whereas McLuhan continued the emphasis on the medium, Innis was broadly sociological and historical, and McLuhan intensely psychological in orientation. McLuhan's notions about visual closure, the sensorium, hot and cool, simultaneity, massage, and so forth, were formulated in narrowly psychological terms. His argument that television as a cool medium is a revolutionary force for global bonding, presumes a host of psychological claims about perception, mental processing of images, tactility, and the nervous system.

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[63] Of. Harold Innis' two majorworks on communicatons technolgcy, *Empire and Communications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), and *The Bias of Communication* (Tononto: University of

It is the uniform judgment of media scholars-pro and con-that McLuhan's provocative vocabulary and stunning insights about media systems finally turned disastrous. It begged too many questions about our physiological, mental, and psychological apparatus, and claimed more as a lay observer than even the most sophisticated students of the psychological arena could deliver.

Or, in slightly less perfunctory terms, Harold Innis' comprehensive sociological and historical framework has proved far more penetrating and enduring. By connecting media forms to social organization, power, empire, and bureaucracy, Innis dominated the field persuasively while McLuhan was entertained by Madison Avenue but already lias been relegated to tbe dustbin of academic history.

The history of communication scholarship convinces me that Ellul is making a fatal mistake by orienting his argument around psychological motifs. Ellul's trademark has always been the social and historical contours, but in this book his references are decidedly McLuhanesque. Chapters 1, 3, 6 make the same overwrought conclusions about perception, consciousness, vision, and hearing that in the literature among communication scholars has yielded few definitive conclusions. With billions at stake in advertising revenue, for example, researchers have attempted to document attitude change and media impact on our psyches with little success. It is profoundly unsatisfying, in my opinion, for Ellul to assemble such a massive range of symbolic material and then locate it on the same frail reed as McLuhan's.

Again, the overall thesis is sound-about the critical importance of today's rush toward visual symbols. But the mountain of image data Ellul investigates must be reconstructed in terms of Innis. In *The Humiliation of the Word* Ellul works his sociological-theological counterpoint. His problematic in chapters 1-6 operates dialectically with his religious concerns of chapter 7-particulariy in terms of the Gospel of John. Again, I am not disputing his counterpoint here, but contending that an Innis-like frame would irrigate the problematic and dramatically strengthen its application to religious life in the twentieth century.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Using a correspondence notion of truth, Ellul writes:

> No longer are we surrounded by fields, woods, and rivers, but by signs, signals, billboards, screens, labels and trademarks: this is our universe. And when the screen shows us a living reality-such as people's faces or other countries-this is still a fiction: it is a constructed and recombined reality... It produces acute suffering and panic; a person cannot be deprived of truth and situated in fiction (p. 228).

And in McLuhanesque fashion, Ellul draws this speculative conclusion:

> The visual world leaves empty places (which usually bore the city dweller when he goes to the country. On the contrary, the sight of mountains or

of the ocean is full and fills the eyes). But the universe manufactured by artificial images must keep itself filled up (143).

This line of argumentation is grounded in the assumption that an objective natural reality stands outside knowing subjects to give them a sense of stability. Given this reality which exists independently of our own human creations, the idea of principial truth is at least conceivable. Now that electronic forms of communication have multiplied dramatically and create an alternative environment of images, we have lost our sense of truthfulness altogether. Apparently word forms of communication in oral and print are less ambiguous than the visual, and could feed our understanding of truth by enabling thought processes to function. Instead we are inundated with impressions from visual symbols which dance in anarchy around our mind.

Ellul repeats in this volume an argument he develops more fully in *Propaganda,* a 1978 essay, and elsewhere. Whereas previous social orders operated with a triad-humansAools/nature, in technological societies nature recedes and humans perceive themselves as living in a technical artifice. We have become aware that we do not exist in nature but in culture.

> Man does not any longer live in a natural environment but rather in a milieu composed of the products of his technology... He can no longer take any significant action without technological intermediation. Technology constitutes an engulfing universe for man, who finds himself in it as in a cocoon.[64]

The communications media represent the meaning-edge of the technological system, the arena where technique's soul is most clearly exposed. The media exhibit the structural elements of all technical artifacts, but their particular identity as a technology inheres in their function as bearers of symbols. Information technologies thus incarnate the properties of technology while serving as the agent for interpreting the meaning of the very phenomenon it embodies. Ellul calls our communication systems the "innermost, and most elusive manifestation" of human technological activity.[65] All artifacts communicate meaning in an important sense, but media instruments carry that role exclusively. As the media sketch out our world for us, organize our conversations, determine our decisions, and influence our self-identity, they do so with a technological cadence, massaging in our soul a technological rhythm and predisposition. In his scheme, the principle of efficiency which characterizes the technological enterprise as a whole also dominates the communications apparatus; the media do not transmit neutral stimuli, but they integrate us into the system. The mass media have become so powerful, Ellul argues, that congruity with the system is considered normal-

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Toronto Press, 1951).

[64] Jacques Ellul, "Symbolic Function, Technology and Society," *Jounral of Social and Biological Structures,* October 1978, p. 216.

[65] Jacques Ellul, Propaganda (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1969), p. xvii.

even desirable-and we ironically declare that new ideas or alternative worldviews are ideologies or "just propaganda."

I have no fundamental quarrel with Ellul's contention that we live essentially in a technological artifice in which natural reality recedes. I am convinced also by the argument that mass media form the outermost ring of the technological system and organize the dialectic between humans and the technological order. But to characterize the visual media in *Humiliation of the Word* as a fictitious system of untrue images, cannot be sustained in terms of communication theory.

In Innis' historical and sociological orientation, the anchoring mode of communication is oral. Before the invention of the alphabet in 1500 B.C., civilization was exclusively oral, and until the rise of the printing press in the 16th century, human society was predominantly oral. Even today, nearly half of the world's languages have not been reduced to writing. Ellul puts image and word in contradiction; the word versus the visual is the focus of Ellul's anafysis. He prefers oral words over print, but given his emphasis on words themselves, he blurs the critical distinction between the verbal and written. Innis would complain that in spite of Ellul's predisposition toward speech, he fails to recognize how irretrievably and congenitally communication is embedded in sound. Neil Postman, who worries with Ellul about today's overweening visualization, at least recognizes that the antidote is print. Print media are the best transmitters of linear logic and systematic discourse. While most communication scholars do not agree with Postman's anti-television bias, he understands accurately the disjunctions among orality, print, and electronic systems.

Oral life is our common property, language spoken and heard God's gift exclusively to the human species. All normal humans naturally learn to speak and hear; none needs the educational skills for print or the economic means to buy electronic equipment Printed words and electronic images are both derived from speech. The multi-dimensional acoustical world of sound is ear-oriented, and not sight driven (as with print and electronics). In a long footnote on McLuhan (pp. 26-27), Ellul notes the distinction between a communication of hearing and one of sight, but then dismisses McLuhan as erroneous. Ellul misconstrues the issues here and draws the outrageous conclusion that McLuhan's only illustration of acoustical communication is music. Precisely at this point, Innis' historical framework keeps our priorities on oral communication and prevents dead-ended speculation whether visual systems are Active, and speech and writing realistic.

In an oralsodety, the referent is another human. The framing device in communication is not natural reality, but humanity. Oral communication creates presence, it binds humans intosocial groups. And oral communication in principle works in the binding mode, whether in exclusively oral, predominantly oral, or residually oral (e.g. our mass-mediated civilization today) social systems. Printed text and electronic images are both secondary forms, actually more similar to each other than either is to orality.

Ellul's insistence that images are illusory leads him to his well-known rejection of technicism in chapter 7. He warns the church not to sacralize images, but to destroy those visual icons that steer us toward commercialism and efficiency. And such prophetic warnings are pertinent and totally necessary. But chapter 7 finally amounts to little more than urging the religious community to see in the biblical sense of concentrating on the divine invisible, knowing that in the apocalyptic moment such seeing will at last be realized.

A more adequate final chapter would urge the church to concentrate on visual literacy. Granted the church faces a Himalayan task of maintaining its theological vitality while at this historical moment electronic systems gain superior power over print But the buffer for this transformation is training in visual literacy. Presumably Ellul's point is that a culture overweeningly dependent on electronic imagery needs a critical consciousness; those who are visually literate actually have that capacity, at least in principle. Possessors of the eternal message may only create the dissonance of a foreign language, if they insist on abundant words for addressing visual culture. Speaking prophetically to a visual age requires a visual cadence. If we are willing to make the same educational commitment to school one another in visual systems as we have in print, the world of images will no longer seem like alien territory.

While increasingly the complexities of our age are cast in picture form, that does not mean we cannot comprehend them critically. The visual mind seizes not the minute parts but the story as an organic whole. Visual grammar centers on "a syntax of spatial relationships" with the "goal of achieving a Gestalt, an effectively unified message."[66] The visually literate catch a stream or grasp several images simultaneously. Traffic lights are not mistaken for Christmas decorations and audiences know that cowboys in white hats will save the day. Last year, 1.1 billion books were checked out of American libraries, but 1.2 billion videos were rented. As Ellul would insist correctly, these statistics are not neutral facts, but telling social indicators. Generations are emerging at present which might not be print literate. However, not all are bamboozled, even though our educational system in general and our literacy training in particular have not been reoriented as yet People whose primary means of coherence are visual deserve an adequate framework for developing their visual competence, not dismissed as incapable of reflective thought.

Imagine one million dollars in my hand - a stack of 100 dollar bills four inches high. That is a visual statement. A friend of mine describes his adolescent days as a photograph out of focus, that's visual imagery. Human cognition can be viewed as a cycle of dawn and dusk-creation and reflection. Or from the poet: "The human heart is a small town where people live." Visual thinking. And Ecclesiastes 12: "Before the silver

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[66] Linda Schamber, "Core Course in Visual Literacy for Ideas, Not Tech-niqus, "*Journalism Educator,* Spring 1991, p. 18; she dtes the basic text for educators, such as Donis A. Dondis.yl *Primer of Visual Literacy* and Deborah Curtiss, *Introduction to Visual Literacy.* See Michael Griffin in the same issue of *Journalism Educator,* "Defining Visual Communication for a Multimedia World," for a review of the theroetical work since Walter Benjamin and William Ivins in the 1930s (pp., 9-15).

cord snaps, and the golden bowl is broken at the cistem." The technological artifice which is our modem home creates complexities of an extraordinary sort. The tide is turning relentlessly toward electronic communication, now only dimly understood. It is not dear at this stage what relationships exist between the linguistic, cognitive, and cultural dimensions of a visual text, but film, television, and photography. But why not busy ourselves with the awesom task of understanding their particular grammars, their properties, elements, and systemic features?

The history of communication scholarship convinces me that Ellul draws an erroneous conclusion about fiction and reality, and fails to grasp the nature of oral versus mediated language. His urgent tone and penetrating style at least indicate the seriousness of our current shift to visual technology. But rather than issue tedious ultimatums on the image's role in our modem malaise, I believe our task centers on enabling visual media to become aesthetically superior. Television and cinema, for example, should be assisted in becoming distinctive popular art. Critical consciousness is our educational mission, regardless of the symbolic forms that dominate a historical period.

Communication theory suggests that we can develop a sense of truthfulness through visual literacy within an environment ofimages. Structural evil remains much too entrenched for breezy sleights of hand. But convictions bom of the Spirit, a ventilated conscience, a morally honed life can flourish within a visual habitat as well as it did on occasion in pre-visual societies. While the overall mass-mediated system seems nearly impregnable, that does not predude the visually literate from living with honor and authentidty. *Humiliation of the Word* allows that possibility only by default.

Book Reviews

Dancing in the Dark: Youth, Popular Culture and the Electronic Media

by Quentin J. Schultze, Roy M. Anker, et al. Grand Rapids, Ml: William B. Eerdmans, 1991. Paperback, 347 pages.

This book is based on the premise that "most adults have not really considered how they themselves have conspired among themselves, with the electronic media, and with various social institutions to make life increasingly difficult for youth" (p. 2). The authors attempt to investigate how young people, the electronic media and popular culture interact in contemporary North American society.

"Our thesis is that youth and the electronic media today are dependent on each other. The media need the youth market, as it is called, for their own economic survival. Youth, in turn, need the media for guidance and nurture in a society where other social institutions, such as the family and the school, do not shape the youth culture as powerfully as they once did" (pp. 11-12). The book takes a long and detailed look at the history of North American youth culture, how communication technologies have affected the cultural and social environment, the rise of youth culture in the 1950s and 1960s, portraits of rock music, rock videos, music television (MTV), and teenage films. Finally, the authors discuss the role of leisure in contemporary culture and offer guidelines to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of popular art for youth and adults.

The book is an entertaining but sometimes repetitive account of the difficult interaction between youth and adults. Here lies the first problem. Although the authors are at pains to identify youth, reading the evidence for their arguments in the chapters themselves produces the eerie feeling that there is no real distinction. An adult seems to be a youth who has been initiated into the mysteries of sex and work. The transition period, which used to be called adolescence, has been engulfed by the electronic consumer industry for its own profit. The authors comment that "many young people are anchored in a specialised media world, a youth subculture, that gives their lives meaning but at the same time distances them from their own family life" (p. 47). While this is especially true for youth, it is no less true for adults. Wherein lies the real distinction?

The main argument of the book, as already noted, is that youth and the entertainment media exist in symbiosis. "North American youth and the entertainment media

together form a quasi-educa-tional culture - a culture that is about youth and for youth and for profit The entertainment industry makes money from the symbiosis, while youth acquire the maps that help them steer their way through the troubled and confusing waters of teenage life" (p. 78). This seems to be a positive statement. If the entertainment industry is really helping youth to steer through troubled waters, all well and good. In feet it is not, and the authors seem to be caught in the ambivalence of wanting to be on the side of youth, liking what youth likes and yet being critical of it at the same time. Of course, that's the trap for adults who are really youth in disguise.

The moralistic overtones of the authors' Calvinist background come through in several places. Their Christian perspective is one reason for their concern, which is made clear in the Preface. However, this bias leads them to make claims for traditional sources of moral authority which they fail to justify. "So much entertainment geared directly and persuasively toward youth has effectively redefined the roles of traditional institutions in the nurture of youth. Amid the powerful presence of popular entertainment, the influence of family, school and church in the instruction of successive generations has declined dramatically" (p. 109). But this is too simple, despite the wealth of evidence brought to bear. People live their lives on many levels, in different ways. The entertainment industry is only one aspect of contemporary culture.

The chapters on rock music, rock videos, MTV and teenage films provide a lot of interesting information. The authors demonstrate that these are not "adequate bases for true community, meaningful identities, strong intimacies and high moral purpose" (p. 210). But in amply proving their point, they do not show how family, school and church should behave to counter-balance the impact of youth culture. The last two chapters discuss the leisure revolution and the problem of evaluating popular art morally and religiously. In some ways, these seem to stand apart from the preceding chapters. Their themes are related to youth, but apply equally to adulthood. What this reviewer misses is a chapter drawing together the various threads of the arguments and proposing a counter-revolution. If families and communities, together with education and religion, are to be the source of real identity in a pluralistic and divided society, then they need clear guidelines. These are not apparent in this book.

Dancing in the Dark is rich in detail, but at times rather dense. A book written by six authors is like a soup made by six chefs. A good editor might have turned a potage into a consommd. Nevertheless, it is still rewarding and gives cause for profound reflection.

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Mythmakers: Gospel, Culture, and the Media

by William F. Fore. New York: Friendship Press, 1990. Paperback. 150 pages, index.

William Fore, currently teaching at Yale Divinity School, has written many pages in his distinguished career as church statesman and media scholar. This book reads like a summation of his years of thinking, teaching, and travel - a tour of his reflections on how and why the Christian gospel makes sense on TV and in film, and when it doesn't.

A worthy summation it is. From bis culturalist perspective, Fore calls on the right set of theorists for the issues raised his focus on religion and media. From McLuhan and Innis he adopts the idea of a "sea change" sweeping across North America in 1844, the year of the telegraph. From Gerbner's cultural indicators project and Donnerstein's lab studies, Fore writes intelligently and modestly about media effects. From Eisenstein and Ong he culls broader notions of perception and cultural change. Fore weaves semiotics, political economy, and popular culture approaches into his analysis of media. He raises questions about media monopoly, the wisdom of televangelism, and omnipresent commercial messages. He calls on churches to educate members to "read television" and resist its secularity. He urges media mummies to come alive by producing their own video stories. In all, Fore advocates an activist stance toward media problems, energized by an optimism that electronic media offer a potential for human beneficience yet to be tapped.

Fore's theological moorings are all within "mainstream" protes-tantism, and here a longer review might probe some weaker spokes in the wheel. I suggest only two areas that strike me as worth a late afternoon talk in New Haven, or wherever in the world one can catch up with Mr. Fore.

First, the thorny quagmire of the public's role in correcting excessive sex and violence on TV, cable, and videocassettes. For problems so entrenched and so conspicuous, Fore's solutions are exceedingly calm. He urges stronger industry self-regulation (including descriptive flags on R-rated material), stockholder action, and (did we hear him right?) boycotts. On that last point, we must point out, Fore shares turf with Christian conservatives who claim that economic sparring is the only game corporate excutives know to play. Fore's suggestion here seems disingenuous, as he provides only negative examples of boycott action and actually compares the tactic to inquisitions and Holy Wars. Thou shalt not," reads Fore's commandment, "abuse [thy] privilege by attempting to dictate what is said on the air," a comment surely aimed at all successful media bqycotters from the Legion of Decency to the American Family Association.

On media violence, Fore seems content to rest his case on the reasonableness of corporate leaders' good will. He is much less sanguine, however, on questions related to media imperialism and cigarette advertising. Here he seeks government intervention and the gentle muscle of the organization over which he presided until recently, the World Association of Christian Communications. Is this strategy adequate to dislodge

the mentality which produces more sexually and violently explicit programming each season? There is reason to wonder.

Second, for talk time in New Haven: theological foundations of culture, symbol, and knowledge. Tillich is rightly cited first, and Newbigin enriches Fore's argument. But on such matters as the nature of meaning, the role of story, public policy and faith, and the crux of the Christian gospel, there exists a range and breadth of theological thinking conspicuous by its absence. Is the point of the gospel to "free people" (from what?) to find happiness in work, play, and family? Is it indeed impossible to uncover a "real gospel story," given cultural bounds? Are there "no meanings except as people give meanings"? On these questions, the likes of Bonhoeffer, Neuhaus, McGrath, and more of Newbigin would help round and deepen the argument

I believe Ellul's critique of *la technique* would play a formative role here in clarifying relations between public and corporation, qualifying Fore's confidence in reasonableness while problematizing Fore's conservative counterparts. But such must wait for longer reviews than this, and longer books than *Mythmakers.* Read this one as a thoughtful, intelligent summary of television research, its institutional handicaps, and its role in religious pedagogy.

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Religious Television: Controversies and Conclusions

by Robert Abelman and Stewart M. Hoover, eds. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp. Cloth, 1990, 366 pages.

Religious television has been a topic of discussion and debate for several decades. Much of this has been based on subjective likes or dislikes, though some analysis has been rooted in more general observations about religion and communication. This book represents the latter type. It is an attempt to present factual findings and a wide range of scholarly reflections on the issue of religious television. Twenty-five competent specialists in the field of mass communications research and practice contributed in order to cover the field. Two of these are the editors of the book. Of these 25 contributors, one is from Australia and one from Great Britain; the others are based in the United States. The book is divided into nine major sections. In order to provide continuity, each section starts with a brief editorial sum-up of the key aspects of the particular issue being considered.

The person reviewing this book has observed and studied religious television in the USA during two visits to the country in 1955-56 and 1978-79. This book has helped me get an updated and solid base upon which I could reassess my understanding of

the nature and the role of religious television in the USA at the present moment. The book is a fresh blend of factual information and thought-provoking analysis.

The contributors are on the whole very critical towards what has been named the electronic church. But many are hostile toward it now, as a result of the sex and finance scandals among some televangelists. In my opinion, this book provides premises for a critical attitude towards the electronic church that is totally independent of the negative reaction that highly visible scandals naturally create. I shall mention some of these premises.

- The electronic church creates a superficial enemy image. Those who disagree with its leaders are labeled enemies.

- Reductionism. Not a full biblical message because it constantly concentrates on a health and wealth perspective where the audience is told to be a winner, getting its just due, luxury, health and prestige.

- An authoritarian approach to the audience. There is no place for dialogue. Talking and listening to each other are impossible. In fact, these programs often are designed to force and manipulate their audiences.

- Giving a false picture of the American family situation.

- Unclear with regard to religion and politics.

- No serious reflection on conviction and tolerance in a multicultural society.

- Using the media to collect money in a very aggressive way.

Looking at the list above, I too react strongly against the electronic church theologically as well as from a communication point of view. It certainly is not a full gospel that is proclaimed. Many Biblical aspects are not taken seriously in these broadcasts. I feel, however, that the electronic church need not take on this character. It continues a tradition that was started by Bishop Fulton Sheen and Norman Vincent Peale. They were authoritarian in a soft and friendly way, they also were very selective in their message. They dominated and impressed the audience, and shocked some, by their superficiality. But on the American scene I also have met fine religious television programs which communicate well, for example, Billy Graham's preaching and the Lutheran program "This is the Life."

The discussion about the electronic church and its weaknesses should challenge mainstream, churches to reconsider their way of using religious television. Rather than condemning it all wholesale, it must be done with integrity. Of course, manipulation must be out in religious television. A meeting of minds and dialogue must replace it, and we must search for ways to accomplish that.

I want to close with the words of a Dutch media professional who says: "Your beliefs, your religious world, can only be spread to a larger audience when you understand their world as well." The book *Religious Television: Controversies and Conclusions* underlines in a strong and competent way the need for religious television in which meeting other minds is taken seriously.

Gudm. Gjelsten

Volsdalen Kirke-Og Menighetssenter

Alesund, Norway

Dissertations

The Hope Of Intervention: A Rhetorical Analysis Of The English Translations Of The Writings Of Jacques Ellul,

by James Wesley Baker, Ph.D. The Ohio State University, 1991. Professor William R. Brown, Advisor.

This study calls attention to the "humanities critique" of the convergence of communication technologies by explicating the work of Jacques Ellul, whose writings long have recognized the integrating nature of technology. The purpose of the study is to clarify Ellul's goals in writing about *la technique,* which he defines as "efficient methods applicable in all areas."

The thesis is that Ellul is engaged in the rhetoric of social intervention. His writings promote an intervention by his readers into the technological system by challenging the ideological assumptions they make about technology.

In developing a framework by which Ellul may be understood, the study presents Organicism as his way of organizing knowledge, General Systems Theory as the theoretical base he uses to conceptualize the way *la technique* operates, and the Social Intervention Model (SIM) as a way of studying the pragmatic approach he takes in his books and articles. The SIM highlights Ellul's overall goal of intervening into our understanding of the place of *la technique* in our era. As part of this intervention, he is promoting a change in our attention from technologies-as-means to *la technique-as-syslem,* an awareness of our need for symbolization in order to control the growth of the system, and an ethics of non-power which is willing to say "no" to the inevitability of technological growth.

Contrary to most assessments of Ellul as a pessimist, the study presents Ellul's insistence on hope. This hope results from the possibility of an "exterior intervention" through a religious perspective, since God is the only one who is completely outside the system.

The study concludes that Ellul's purpose in writing can be understood when one sees the dialectic between his sociological and religious works. His rejection as too pessimistic by communication scholars comes as a result of reading only one part of his analysis. Although his refusal to engage in an artificial synthesis between the two

poles of his thought prevents him from providing easy solutions to the problems we face, Ellul makes us aware of the constant tension in which we live today.

The Technological City: 1984 In Singapore,

By Law-son Liat-Ho Lau, University of Illinois-Urbana, 1991. Professor Clifford G. Christians, Advisor.

Ellul organizes his analysis of modem society around a macro concept: *la technique.* This dissertation presupposes that Ellul's brainchild is seminal in nature although viewpoints of his work - both sociological and theological - fluctuate considerably. Barbed differences in evaluation arise in part because of Ellul's markedly polarizing prophetic voice. An increasingly technological planet that often sings the praises of technology, however, is in dire need of an incisive commentator and interpreter. This macro-level dissertation sets his work within the context of a specific country: the Republic of Singapore. Ellul's concept of *la technique* has considerable explanatory power. It is a principle that provides a frame with which to synthesize a large number of political, economic, educational, media, legal, religious events or policies. On the one hand it furnishes a sophisticated theoretical structure. On the other hand it grapples with experiences and phenomena, that is, with reality.

From 1959-1990, the city-state of Singapore has been ruled by one political party, the People's Action Party, under prime minister Lee Kuan Yew. Lee has always been anxious that Singapore make rapid advances into the world of technology; he wants it to continue its competitive edge, and, more recently, to amass ever-increasing foreign reserves. Technological progress and hence economic prosperity have been achieved largely through particular ways in which Singapore society has been molded by the PAP. Lee Kuan Yew has over three decades established the PAP as the hegemonic political structure in Singapore. He has assiduously organized and exploited Singapore's human resources so as to maximize the yield of both the people and the technologies. Scholars of Singapore have acknowledged it as a country where social engineering is practiced unabashedly as a political craft. Since 1959, the PAP has been committed to that which is politically expedient; ideology and principles are subservient to any course of action that is construed to be the most efficient As Ellul constantly notes, ideology is secondary when technique is dominant.

Chapter One, "The People's Action Party and *La Technique:* A Marriage of Convenience," organizes a diverse range of events and policies in Singapore around Ellul's contention that the hallmark of technique is efficiency and that technique has a totalitarian disposition. It contends that Lee Kuan Yew could well be Ellul's paradigm of the politician-technician. Chapter Two, "Truth and Falsehood: Propaganda in an Authoritarian State," focuses on the pervasive presence of political and sociological propaganda in the manifestly elitist one-way flow of information in Singapore. Ellul argues that propaganda must be total. The PAP Government regards uncompromis-

ing governmental control of the media as an efficient way of not only propagating its policies but also of checking the spread of "falsehoods." Chapter Three, "Efficiency and Wealth Versus Values and Culture," deals with the dominance of technique overvalues and culture. It explores two of Ellul's interrelated concerns - first, that "in our society everything has become political" and second, that the structures of political parties have assumed bureaucratic forms. Chapter Four, "1984: A Breakdown of Efficiency's Telescreen" refers to the 1984 general election in Singapore when an increase of a relatively massive twelve percent of Singaporeans voted against the PAP Government. Chapter Five, "The Individual in Community Versus Technique," examines alternatives to the dehumanizing effects of *la technique.* A political system that unrelentingly strives for efficiency at all levels of existence and propagandizes its efficiency ethic through a system of punitive punishments and rewards over three decades cannot but mold many so insidiously in its totalitarian image that they are either virtually unaware of being PAP commodities or have acquiesced to it. With education to counteract propaganda, Singaporeans could take steps to restore their humanity.

Biblioraphic Notes on Theology and Technology

Austin, Richard Cartwright *Environmental Theology.* Book 1: *Baptized into Wilderness: A Christian Perspective on John Muir.* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987. Pp. 103. Book 2: *Beauty of the Lord: Awakening the Senses.* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988. Pp. xi, 225. Book 3: *Hope for the Land: Nature in the Bible.* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988. Pp. ix, 262. Book 4: *Reclaiming America: Restoring Nature to Culture.* Abington, VA Creekside Press, 1990. Pp. 243. (John Knox Press having moved to Louisville, KY, and having failed adequately to handle the books 1-3, all four books are now available through Creekside Press,P.O.Box331, Abington, VA 24210.) To date, the most comprehensive environmental theology yet written. Can be read separately. "Book 1, *Baptized into Wilderness:..*, invites Christians to deeper... relationships with nature and illustrates principle themes of the series through the life and reflection of John Muir, America's first advocate of wilderness protection. Book 2, *Beauty of the Lord...*, is... to help Christians dissolve impediments to expressive interactions with life on this earth. Through a dialogue with Jonathan Edwards, founding philosopher of the American evangelical tradition, it concludes that experience of beauty may knit us to God and to the natural world as well" (Book 3, p. 237). Books 1 and 2 provide historical and theological background. Book 1 interprets Muir as anonymous Christian; Book 2 provides a serious spiritual reading of Edwards as anonymous environmentalist Books 3 and 4 then turn to the Bible and personal ethics. Book 3 is a challenging, original exegesis of the place of nature in the scriptural revelation. "Because the Scriptures express moral relationships among God, humanity, and the full range of life and life-support on this planet, they can help inform our faith and guide our conduct amid the modem environmental crisis. Hebrews developed a complex understanding of the

relationships among species sharing the same habitat a moral perspective, not a technical theory which I call *biblical ecology.* Liberation is my opening theme. God began work of salvation by rescuing from oppression and sin those who would come to know and serve the Lord; and the biblical liberation includes not just oppressed people but also oppressed lands. The words *covenant* and *promise* apply to the range of created life as well as to human beings" (Book 3, pp. 4-5). Reflection on liberation is followed by exegesis toward our creativity, sabbath ecology, the fall, and ecological visions in both the Hebrew and Greek scriptures. Book 4 brings the *Environmental Theology* series "to the point of acting ... Here strategies are formulated to embrace nature within American culture, to protect our distinctive landscapes, to curb America's huge appetite for earth's resources, and to reduce our impact upon the biosphere. The volume also proposes reform within Christian Churches so that our worship and witness may become relevant to the environmental crises that threatens all God's creation" (Book 4, pp. 1-2). Each volume includes narrative "Suggestions for Reading," Notes, Index, and Biblical Citations. Volume 4 has as well an "Index to Series Themes" (pp. 239-243) that complements the "Series Relationships" analysis for Volume 3, pp. 237-239.

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Birch, Charles. "How Brave a New World?" *Ecumenical Review* 37, no. 1 (January 1985), pp. 152-160. "Despite appearances we are not in the grasp of a technological determinism that closes our options forever" (p. 152). Birch outlines the features of a science and technology for a sustainable, global society in which (1) an ecological model replaces a mechanistic model, (2) the value of persons is included in risk/benefit analyses, (3) richness of experience becomes equal in value to consumption of goods, (4) science becomes democratic instead of elitist, (5) science and technology will serve global instead of national and local goals, and (6) technology will become non-violent.

Birch, Charles. "The Scientific-Environmental Crisis; Where Do the Churches Stand?" *Ecumenical Review* 40, no. 2 (April 1988), pp. 185-193. "The ambiguity of the effects of science and technology has two sources. On the one hand as knowledge grows arithmetically our ignorance grows geometrically... Secondly, the ambiguity of science and technology is tied to... the mechanistic model of science ... As a methodology mechanistic science has been highly successful. But as a metaphysics of nature it has had disastrous consequences" (pp. 189-190).

Birtel, Frank T., ed. *Religion, Science, and Public Policy.* New York: Crossroad, 1987. Pp.xiii, 152. Eight essays from three series of lectures at Tulane University. Con-

tents: AR. Peacocke's "Rethinking Religious Faith in a World of Science" and "The Disguised Friend Biological Evolution and Belief in God," Langdon Gilkey's "Is Religious Faith Possible in an Age of Science?" Stephen Toulmin's "Religion and the Idea of Nature," Richard S. Westfall's "Newton and Christianity," Karl E. Peters' "Toward a Physics, Metaphysics, and Theology of Creation: A Trinitarian View," Philip Hefner's "Sociobiology and Ethics," and John T. Noonan Jr.'s "The Bishops and the Ruling Class: The Moral Formation of Public Policy." Most articles deal with religion-science relation. Only Hefner's and Noonan's consider public and church policy, respectively. Peacocke's and Hefner's essays have been published elsewhere. Gilkey *repeatsReligious and Scientific Future* (1970). Peters summarizes the editorial interests of *Zygpn.* Only Westfall and Toulmin break new ground. Poorly and unevenly edited.

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Greek mythology, like Titan, Poseidon, and Saturn, the god who devoured his own children. We who sacrifice fabulous resources to fatten the most inhuman form of violence... how can we have the extraordinary hypocrisy to pretend that we do not understand all those people who did such things long before us: those, for example, who made it their practice to throw a single child, or two at the most, into the furnace of a certain Moloch in order to ensure the safety of the others?" (p. 256).

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expressed on behalf of science, in relation to some of its arrogant exclusivism and tall claims in the past" (p. 149).

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Link, Christian. "La Crise 6cologique et IMthique thlologique," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophic Religieuses* 61, no. 2 (April June 1981), pp. 147-160. Translated from German by Elisabeth Geiger. Condensed English version: "Ecological Ethics and Christian Ethics," *Theology Digest 31,* no. 2 (Summer 1984), pp. 149-153. Relying on the insights of others, Link argues that Christians must see themselves as part of the problem.

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O'Connor STs "Discretion and Capacity for Marriage: Some Canonical and Pastoral Reflections" (pp. 61-74), Joel Rippinger OSB's "Local Theologies in a World Church: The Indigena as Anawim" (pp. 75-78), Roland J. Faley TOR's "Signs of the Times: Capturing Moonbeams, Holding the Vision" (pp. 79-86), Joseph V. Kiernan OFM's "On My Mind: Reconciliation The Sacrament in Search of a Constituency" (pp. 87-88).

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Staudenmaier, John M., SJ. "Liturgy in a Technological Age," in Peter E. Fink SJ, ed., *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), pp. 762-768. Pre-Vatican B balance of universal Latin literacies and popular devotions based in local communities has been broken. Technological transportation and communication undermines local community, consumerist advertizing weakens universal symbols. Considers how the church might "retrieve the basis for a community rooted in sacred symbols in a culture whose technological infrastructure fragments community even as its best funded form of public discourse, advertising, demeans the symbols themselves" (p. 766). Cults and TV entertainments are false responses to real needs. Hope for more authentic responses can be found in reviving Catholic traditions of theater, spiritual direction, and narrative theology.

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313), and Albert Borgmann's "Communities of Celebration: Technology and Public Life" (pp. 315-345). Review section contents: Reviews of C. Mitcham and J. Grote, eds., *Theology and Technology: Essays in Christian Analysis and Exegesis* (1984) by Friedrich Rapp, David A. Hoekema, and James F. Salmon, with a response by Carl Mitcham and Jim Grote; of F. Ferrd, *Philosophy of Technology* (1988) by Thomas Rogers, Charles Dyke, and Steven Lee with a reply by Ferrd; and of A.L. and R.P. Hiskes, *Science, Technology, and Policy Decisions* (1986) by David C. Snyder.

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Waters, Brent, and Verlyn L. Barber, eds. *Science, Technology and the Christian Faith: An Account of Some Pilgrims in Search of Progress.* Charlotte, NC: United Ministries in Higher Education, 1991. Pp. vii, 145. Final Report of a United Ministries in Educa-tion/United Ministries in Higher Education Exploratory Committee on Science, Technology and the Christian Faith (1983-1990). Part One is the Report (pp. 3-39). Part Two, The Redlands consultation Papers: 1985," includes Rustum Roy's "STS: A New Opportunity for the Re-Integration of Christian Concern into American Academic Life (pp. 43-53), James B. Miller's "Foundations and Challenges" (pp. 54-63), Ronald Cole-Turner's Theological Engagement with Science and Technology" (pp. 64-68), Brent Waters' "An Ethical Framework for Campus Ministry in a Scientific and Technological Age" (pp. 69-76), Scott I. Paradise's "A Ministry to Scientists and Engineers" (pp. 77-84). Part Three, The Duke Consultation Papers: 1987," includes Edith Sylla's "The Modern Problem" (pp. 87-90), Patrick H. McDonalds' Two Hands, Two Feet, One Hand, One Heart" (pp. 91-101). Part Four, The Jacksonville Beach Consultation Papers: 1989," indudes Ansley Coe Throckmorton's "Bible Study: Psalm 24" (pp. 105-108), Langdon Gilkey's The Influence of Sdence on Theology" (pp. 109-116), Roger L. Shinn's Technology, Theology and Human Decisions" (pp. 117-125), Verlyn L. Barker's "Sdence, Technology and the Church" (pp. 126-131), Ansley Coe Throckmorton's "Bible Study: Mark 6:30" (pp. 132-135). Part Five contains three documentation appendices on partidpants and chronology.

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Wilkinson, Loren. "Cosmic Christology and the Christian's Role in Creation," *Christian Scholar's Review* 11, no. 1 (September 1981), pp. 18-40. The Christian church has largely failed to develop fully the implications of Christ's Incarnation for an understanding of the divine immanence.

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About The Ellul Studies Forum

Background

The Ellul Studies Forum was first published in August of 1988. Two issues are produced each year (in January and July). The goal of *the Forum* is to honor the work of Jacques Ellul both by analyzing and applying his thought to apsects of our technological civilization and by carrying forward his concerns in new directions.

What *the Forum* is not intended to be is a vehicle for *true disciples* or *Ellul groupies.The* whole thrust of Ellul's work has been to encourage others to think for themselves and invent their own responses to the challenges of a technological civilization. Although we do review and discuss Ellul's work, it is not our intention to turn his writings into a body of sacred literature to be endlessly dissected. The appropriate tribute to his work will be to cany forward its spirit and its agenda for the critical analysis of our technical civilization.

Ellul invites us to think new thoughts and enact new deeds. To that end we invite you to submit essays on appropriate topics. If you have suggestions for themes that you would like to see addressed in future issues, they are also welcome.

Manuscript Submissions

Original manuscripts or manuscripts responding to essays in previous issues should be sent to Darrell J. Fasching, Editor, *The Ellul Studies Forum,* Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida, Tampa FL 33620. Hard copy and DOS diskette should be sent together, indicating software and version number. (Diskettes will be returned.) Endnotes should be typed as text to facilitate laser typesetting. Length may vary from five to fifteen doubl spaced pages.Suggestions of themes for future issues are also welcome.

Subscriptions

To Subscribe to the *Forum* for one year (two issues), send your name and address and a check made out to The *Ellul Studies Forum* in the amount of $6.00 ($8.00 outside the U.S. The check must be drawn from the foreign branch of a U.S. Bank or be a U.S. Postal Money Order). Back issues are $4.00 each.

Mail to: The Ellul Studies Forum
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Bibliographic Reviews

Readers are invited to contribute to the ongoing annotated bibliographic column on theology and technology. Please send books or articles to be noted, or notes themselves, to:

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Science, Technology & Society Program Pennsylvania State University 133 Willard Building University Park, PA 16802

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If you would be willing to be a reviewer of books for the *Forum,* send your *vita* and a list of the areas/issues you would be interested in reviewing to our Book Review Editor:

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North Carolina Wesleyan College
Rocky Mount, NC 27804.

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Department of Religious Studies
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33620

In This Issue

From the Editor

I am very fortunate to have a good editorial board who continue to contribute their talents to **The Ellul Forum.** For this issue Joyce Hanks, from the University of Scranton, is serving as Guest Editor. She has not only organized and edited this issue but translated all the main articles as well. This was a labor of love on her part which puts us all deeply in her debt. I am very greatful for her efforts in this regard. I will let Joyce tell you about this issue.

Darrell J. Fasching, Editor

About This Issue

This number of the **Ellul Studies Forum** attempts to show how Ellul's theories and principles can be pursued and applied in areas readers may not have seen before. My original intention was to request articles from French scholars who have used something from Ellul as a basis for their own work, but who have gone beyond merely summarizing or reaffirming what Ellul had previously stated. Both Daniel CSrdzuelle and Serge Latouche exemplify this trend, I believe, and I am happy to present my

translations of their articles to you in this issue of the **Forum.** Both authors were exceptionally helpful when I wrote them for clarifications of what they had originally submitted to me.

My own article was not originally intended for publication in the **Forum.** When Serge Latouche's article seemed to take some of Ellul's stance on development for granted, however, I felt my article might serve as an introduction to his study.

When Timothy Casey, a colleague, saw me reading David Lovekin's new book on Ellul, *Technique, Discourse, and Consciousness: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jacques Ellul,* he expressed an interest in looking at it. Later he agreed to review it for this issue of the Forum.

Serge Latouche teaches economics at the University of Paris XI and at the Institute for the Study of Economic and Social Development. His many published books inclvufe *Le proces de la science sodale (1984), Faut-il refuser le developpement?* (1986), *L'ocddentalisation du monde* (1989), and *La planete des naufrages* (1991).

Daniel CSrSzuelle, a former student of Ellul's at the University of Bordeaux who also studied under Jean Brun and Hans Jonas, has taught philosophy and worked as a sociologist. He serves as secretary of the international Society for the Philosophy of Technique, and participates in an ecological study group.

Timothy Casey chairs the Department of Philosophy at the University of Scranton (PA).

Joyce Hanks, Guest Editor

Bulletin Board

A Facelift and Change of Philosophy for the Forum

You may have noticed that this issue of the Forum has a different look to it Improvements in typesetting software have made it possible to do new things. With the change in layout also comes a slight change in name and philosophy. The name has been changed from **The Ellul Studies Forum** to **Tie Sttul** The tag line has also been changed from "A Forum for Theology in a Technological Gvilization" to "for the Critique of Technological Civilization." Dropping the word "studies" from the masthead is meant to suggest that we honor the work of Jacques Ellul best when we go beyond just studying Ellul and tackle the issues raised by technology which Ellul's work highlights. Dropping the word "theology" from the tag line is meant to indicate that while a central interest of the Forum is the theological critique of technological civilization, we are also interested in other critical approaches - sociological, historical, philosophical, etc. This issue is a case in point. In this issue the central focus in not on theological issues but sociological ones. It is good to keep in mind the double focus of Ellul's work and cany that focus forward in our own work.

About Ellul

Jacques Ellul has received several distinguished honors this year. An auditorium at the Institute for Political Studies in Bordeaux has been named for him, he was chosen as a member of the Bordeaux Academy, and he received the Grand Literary Prize of the Gty of Bordeaux in June. Ellul fell ill and was unable to attend the ceremony for the awarding of this prize at the Bordeaux Gty Hall, with Jacques Chaban-Delmas, the mayor, presiding and speaking. Ellul's son Jean attended, and read Iris speech in his stead.

Ellul's most recent books include *L homme a lui* meme,published in 1992 by Editions du Felin (address: 42, rue Servan, 75011 Paris; tel. 48.05.80.71). This work explores the writer's impact on readers. A second new book by Ellul deals with the subject of "deviance" as a product of modem society, but we still lack its title and publisher.

Patrick Troude-Chastenet's long-awaited study on Ellul was published in November 1992: *Lire Ellul: Introduction a I'oeuvre socio-politique de Jacques Ellul* (202 pages). It can be obtained from the publisher, Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, University de Bordeaux IB, Domaine Universitaire, 33405 Talence , Cedex, France, for 90 francs (not including postage).

L'Association Jacques Ellul

During the pastyear, Ellul family members and colleagueshave joined together for the purpose of preserving the collection of his writings and manuscripts, and making his work better known. The Association has now been legally registered in France, and will soon be ready to invite interested citizens of other countries to join. If you would like more information about the Association as it becomes available, please send your name and address to: Joyce M. Hanks, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Scranton, Scranton PA 18510-4646.

Ellul Documentary Debuts in Holland

(l wish to thank Professor Sape Zylstra, University of South Florida, for preparing this report based on Dutch press materials sent to us by the producers, - D. Fasching, Editor)

A Dutch film institute, *ReRun Productions*, has announced the release of a fifty minute film on JacquSsEllui entitled *The Betrayal by Technology.* The film which was edited from over six hours of interviews with Ellul done in December of 1990, was broadcast on Dutch television in October of 1992. A version of this film is available with English subtitles. Interested parties should contact: Stichting ReRun Produckties, Postbus 43021,1009 ZA Amsterdam Holland. (Phone 020-6922036.)

The film was previewed by a panel of three university professors as well as members of the press. Members of the panel criticized Ellul for his abstractions, determinism,

exaggeration and lack of practical solutions. According to one — "Eveiything that happens fits in his theory and hence the theory is wrong. The culture is responsible, not technology." However, journalists were less inclined to dismiss Ellul that facilely. They pointed out, among other things, that Ellul's fate was typical of society's critics since they are judged by the very norms and schemata with they criticize. In defense of Ellul it was further pointed out that his clearly formulated thought forced televirion viewers to become aware of their technological environment

A Dutch newspaper article also devoted a long article to the Ellul controversy. The article pointed out that after WWH, Ellul wrote an essay with the title "Hitler has Won." In it he posited that what was characteristic of the Third Reich was not its ideology but its limitless technological thinking in terms of problem solving, efficiency, and goal-orientation, all brought into practice with the most developed means of power. In Western Society since that time, goal-directed, rationalistic, technological thought makes it difficult to entertain ideas which are not oriented to usefulness, end results and quantitative analysis. Aldous Huxley is quoted as saying of Ellul's *The Technological Society (La Technique)* — "This is what I meant to say earlier in Brave New World." The article ends by pointing out that only among students in the United States in the sixties did Jacques Ellul find a true appreciation and following. (Editor's noteiJt is out of this context that *7de Stlal* was bom.)

Forum: Technique and the Paradoxes of Development

Reflections on Social Techniques

by Daniel Cerezuelie

Over a period of a dozen years, from 1979 to 1991, my professional activities as a sociologist often involved me in studying "social techniques." My efforts dealt especially with social techniques implemented in the context of public policy for fighting social inadaptation and marginalization.

Using these empirical studies as a basis, I have tried to develop a more theoretical and synthetic reflection concerning the role and limits of social techniques.[1] These have rarely been studied as techniques. My work owes much to J acques Ellul's analyses of the social impact of techniques, and essentially confirms his insights. But my studies also suggest some new departures with respect to what Ellul found. This is particularly true in the area of human techniques and the possibilities of effective and efficient closure of a technical system.

Beginning in 1954, with his *The Technological Society*[2]*,* Ellul emphasized the importance of human techniques, devoting the last hundred pages of his book to them. In particular, he pointed out that rapid technical development in society brings with it significant problems of social inadaptation. Such problems arise when an individual does not adapt to the "new sociological organism, which becomes his world" *(Tech. Soc.,* p. 334). When this occurs a person Toses his possibilities of subsistence, and is at last tossed on the social rubbish heap, whatever his personal talents maybe" *(Tech. Soc.,* p. 334).

Ellul saw very clearly that technical development inevitably produces problems of social integration, and that human techniques come along to respond precisely to these problems. In fact, since the end of the Second World War, in France we have witnessed a considerable development of professional agencies in the area of social action. This development involves not only quantitative growth—of personnel, structures, and budgets, for example. It also involves qualitative growth in terms of more and more

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[1] See Daniel Cerezuelle, *Crise de I'emploi, exclusion et developpement social-Synthdse prisentde en vue de I'habililation d diriger des recherches en sociologie* (Bordeaux: University de Bordeaux II, 1992).

[2] English translation: Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society,* trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Knopf, 1964). Hereafter referred to as *Tech. Soc.*

professionalization and specialization of personnel, and greater diversification in the institutions and techniques of intervention.

My empirical studies, carried out over a period of more than ten years, were designed mainly to evaluate tire specialized agencies for implementing social techniques (relating to Welfare, the struggle against poverty, help for maladjusted children, etc.). But evaluating the implementation of a single technique leads to a consideration of the problem of the potential effectiveness of the implementation of social techniques in general, in professional agencies. This question leads in turn to a consideration of general theoretical problems rooted in sociology and the philosophy of technique.

As with any engineering procedure, evaluation must take into account the fact that no technique is ever perfectly put into {day. Between the conception of any technique and its application, we always find a gap stemming from the interaction of various social factors. We must do our best to reduce this gap to a minimum, realizing that we will always be left with an irreducible "residue" of inefficiency. _

But the question of the efficacy of structures also involves the issue of the perfectibility of the techniques themselves.

We need to determine the source of the inadequacies we observe. Are they circumstantial; that is, due to prevailing political, economic, ideological, or other conditions when the techniques were implemented? Or are they inherent, stemming instead from the very nature of the techniques themselves, and from the means they use?

On a more fundamental level, we need to discover if the perfecting of these social techniques, and of human techniques in general, can enable us to overcome the social upheavals produced by modernization. How can we halt the process we observe at work in the technological society, where people find themselves divided into two groups, resulting in the exclusion of many? Will it be enough to use rational methods, diversifying the structures for social action and solidarity? Will it suffice if we accept the necessary financial sacrifices to make such techniques fully efficacious? In other words, can technique restore the social integration it has destroyed?

My work leads me to believe that social action techniques and the institutional structures that put them into play do not have, and cannot have, more than a limited efficacy. They do not enable us to struggle with any degree of success against the processes of exclusion and division that are at work in our society, foreseen by Ellul as early as 1954. My interpretation at this point contradicts most sociological analyses of social action. These analyses tend to attribute the inefficiency of social action to external ideological or political causes stemming from social relationships.

Using concepts formulated by Ellul, we can show, on the contrary, that social action techniques have little success because techniques tend to organize themselves into an autonomous system. From the point of view of bureaucratic management, social action techniques prove rather successful, since they do not produce clashes or serious conflicts (this has not always been the case!). A large number of measures are put into place every year; many families receive help and are followed up; many children are taken

into custody and placed within specialized structures. Competent specialists at all levels accomplish their tasks responsibly.

If, however, instead of evaluating the quality of each professional's work, we consider how well this overall arrangement functions, we become aware of serious areas of malfunction: action takes place piecemeal, follow-up and coordination are lacking, and at all levels we observe that information fails to circulate adequately. Many specialists deal with people in connection with each of these areas, but the work is carried out on the basis of the least common denominator, as far as the various jurisdictions are concerned. No truly personalized strategy emerges for taking charge, although such a strategy would enable the various specialists to coordinate their work and adapt it to individual circumstances. Instead, each works independently.

These specialists take action concerning a given person, group, or organization. We note the same compartmentalization in institutions and social agencies. They cannot define truly coordinated policies for a given population or territory, if only because they lack information about the group that benefits from their work—and this is even more true for groups unrelated to them.

Thus the weakness lies not in the work of specialists, but rather in the functioning of the system within which they work, because it makes personalized action difficult. Specialists cannot redefine their objectives in a coordinated manner, depending on how situations evolve. Instead, we perceive juxtaposed, separate actions lacking in continuity. Whether we look at institutions concerned with teenage dropouts or child welfare services, each structure lies at the center of a very complicated system of interactions that produce a proliferation of internal and external interdependent relationships. As a result, the amount of information theoretically necessary to coordinate with other specialists or institutions continues to increase.

What characterizes this system is not complexity, but complication. But the level of complication is aggravated by the fact that in practice, we find chronic mutual ignorance between large and small agencies devoted to social action. Their ignorance leads to paralysis in policy formation and to bureaucratic management In addition, the lack of information circulating among specialists produces the technical formalism we observe in the operation of institutions and social service agencies. Under such conditions, it is hard to see how a coordinated and personalized approach can become an option.

Such limits seem difficult to surmount: technical formalism and poor circulation of information cannot be interpreted as mere circumstantial malfunctions resulting from errors in organization. Nor can such problems be attributed to power struggles or to the class distinctions between professionals and their clients. Rather, these deficiencies appear to be inherent, stemming from the very nature of the technical actions to be put into play. Such problems have their origin in the process of placing social action within a technical framework.

The technical context reproduces the general characteristics of technical phenomena as Ellul has analyzed and described them: first we note a process of self-augmentation

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that is both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative self-augmentation takes place by means of the diversification of specializations and the emergence of specific institutions, whereas quantitative self-augmentation occurs through the multiplication of institutions and the growth of professional staffs. We also observe something approaching automatism in this process of technification: one technical specialty calls for another, and changes are imposed on all, whatever their moral or political stance. Thus we can speak of universality and also of an irreversible process, in the sense that once it has been put in gear, no going back is possible: all institutions are obliged to follow suit

These observations lead us to another essential facet of this technification: agencies tend to become systems through the proliferation of their functional regulations and information. Internal unification and consistency in the use of a technique, as well as consistency in external relations, require the establishment of a system. It becomes impossible to leave each technician and institution to function independently, able to respond to an understanding of local conditions. Planning in all its forms becomes more and more important, bringing with it a generalized interdependence of the elements of the technical arrangement This interdependence takes place both among the elements of the technical arrangement itself and with other technical entities.Two main consequences of this technical system explain how the development of *zweckrationalitat* can bring about irrationality, as Max Weber recognized.[3] The first consequence is that the level of techno-organizational complication continues to grow, leaving in its wake a constant deficit in communication and information. As a result, the consistency and efficacy of technical systems are continually compromised by insuffident information. Lack of information in turn augments the risk of errors in dedsion-mak-ing, blunders in execution, and, most of all, inertia and delay in dedsion-making.[4] The second consequence of the technical system is the tendency toward autonomy in the functioning of techniques and of logical mechanisms, to the detriment of whatever objectives are being pursued.

When we apply these general characteristics of all technical systems to sodal work, we understand why it involves such a disturbing contradiction. On the one hand, we have the needs of clients (assuming these can be expressed), along with the objectives and values of the professionals who serve them, contrasted, on the other hand, with the usual functioning of the means that have been put in place to reach these objectives.

This contradiction confirms Ellul's understanding of ambivalence and unity as they characterize all technical systems. Technical systems are ambivalent in that all techni-

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[3] Translator's note: Talcott Parsons defines Weber's *Zweckmtionaliiat* as "action as motivated by a plurality of relatively independent ends, none of which is absolute," adding that *"Zweckrationalitat* refers primarily to considerations respecting the choice of means and ends whidi are in turn means to further ends, such as money," and that "expediency" sometimes suffices as a definition. Quoted in J. E. T. Eldridge, ed., *Max Weber. The Interpretation of Social Reality* (New York: Scribner's, 1971), pp. 78-80 n.l.

[4] See I. Grandstedt, *L'impasse industrielle* (Paris: Seuil, 1980).

cal progress gives rise to advantages, yet exacts a price in terms of the inconveniences it causes. In sodal work, for example, spedalization at first permitted greater effidency in the measures taken and in the particular operations put into place by each professional. But these indisputable gains exacted a price in terms of negative effects in the functioning of sodal institutions and their interactions. The unity of technique prevents us from separating its "good" effects from the undesirable ones. They remain indissolubly linked, so that if we want some of its effects, we must accept the others.

From a sodological point of view, then, it seems that depersonalized measures taken, bureaucratic compartmentalization, and technical formalism are consistently the normal way sodal techniques function, and quickly hobble their effidency. As a result, these techniques' ability to struggle effectively against sodal exclusion rapidly reaches its upper limit (which is not the same thing as saying that their capadty is negligible in this regard).

We can generalize this proposition: careful study enables us to observe the same malfunctions in all similar technical entities: sodal action, health, cultural leadership and action, planning, territorial development, etc. We see the same prindples at work in all heavily institutionalized organizations where technidans attempt to have an effect on people or sodal situations.

I believe these dysfunctions stem from a significant incompatibility. On the one hand, we have an institutional organization managed on the legal-rational basis typical of bureaucrades. This type of organization is strongly hierarchical, along the lines of a technical experimental model of operation. Its operations are quantifiably objective. On the other hand, we have skills and practices based on interpretations and qualitative evaluations that inevitably call for value judgments and, in the final analysis, for ethical points of reference. What is done in this realm cannot be depersonalized, as legal-rational logic would have it.

In the way sodal action is organized, the interests of technidans (looking for their own advantage, for recognition, promotion, and higher salaries) have merged with those of technical ideology. As a result, sodal action has become a technical system involving the separation of the person from his function. The system is regulated like a system organized for purposes of production, with a formal hierarchy of jurisdictions and powers. Such a system does not provide (in my view, it cannot provide) the conditions necessary for evaluation and regulation that would be adapted to the nature of the techniques effectively put into place by practitioners.

For this reason, in order to avoid conflicts, spedalists sooner or later come to the point of keeping their technological involvement to a minimum. In this way the rationality behind technical mechanisms works itself out by functioning poorly. This arrangement serves the interests of all concerned, since the essential problem is to coordinate techniques, rendering them compatible in a non-conflictive whole.

It is normal that this unification among various techniques should prove detrimental, as far as the specificity of the problem being treated is concerned. In this context work tends to become bureaucratized. Regulations that should be based on evaluations of

the content of an action tend to be based instead on lines of power and hierarchy that are unrelated to the problem at hand.

We can see then how the categories formulated by Ellul for thinking about modem technique enable us to explain the dysfunctions and irrationalities that hamper the effectiveness of social techniques. It is also clear why I believe it necessary to modify somewhat the concepts of human techniques Ellul proposes. He showed with amazing clarity how the general process of technification leads to the establishment of technical entities whose mission is to take charge of or modify a given aspect of society or human life. The development of society and the human sciences feed into these techniques, offering them operational models.

As a result, following Ellul in *The Technological Society,* we can speak of the "encircling" of the person,[5] as illustrated by the multiplication of specializations and means. All the same, we can also wonder if the tendency of techniques within the technical system to integrate everything with themselves is not what makes the system constitutionally incapable of effectively integrating humanity and society into its logic.

I believe this incapacity is inherent, stemming precisely from the systemic nature of technique, especially where human techniques are concerned. Human techniques are "soft" and subject to interpretation, so that it is not possible to objectify completely the conditions that make them effective. For this reason, when these techniques are set in an institutional environment, they seem destined to break down quickly, turning into mere formalistic procedures. This occurs even vrtien the techniques are constructed according to a rigorous operational model.

Clearly, I offer these remarks only as a hypothesis, formulated on the basis of the study of social action, rather than of the totality ofhuman techniques. If thisviewis-confirmed,it offers apossible limit to Ellul's idea of technique as a world that closes in on itself, and of the totalization of technical logic, as one of the possible horizons of our history. If my hypothesis proves true, the technical system, in order to function well, needs to produce a certain social system, but cannot produce it. Concretely, the technological society will find itself constantly troubled by a persistent lack of sod al integration that threatens its cohesion, and no technique will be able to eliminate the problem.

Ellul has also contemplated such a limit to the technological system's capacity for closing in on itself. At the end of *The Technological System,* he emphasizes that technique is utterly rational, but that irrational elements come into play when technique comes into contact with a reality of a different order, whether nature or sodety (pp. 293-309). These reflections show the importance, for both sodological and philosophical purposes, of a careful study of social techniques, and, more generally, of human techniques. These constitute the "new frontier" of technical progress, on which I am concentrating my research efforts.

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[5] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological System,* trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Continuum, 1980), pp. 382-392.

Promo for Narrative Theology After Auschwitz

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Jacques Ellul on Development: Why It Doesn't Work

by Joyce M. Hanks

People all over France were up in arms several years ago, over the powerful image they had encountered in a novel. Jacques Ellul often tells the story of readers' reaction at the prospect of millions of unexpected Third World refugees debarking on France's southern shores, in search of food. The supplies in their famine-ridden countries have given out, and they have taken to sea to keep from starving, looking for a civilization with some remaining stores. Their sheer numbers prevent the authorities from stopping them or sending them back where they came from. What to do with these endless hordes?

In the United States, most of us have no recollection of invading armies. We have not even heard stories from our elders about our land being overrun by outsiders. But in Europe such memories remain fresh, and earlier history abounds with such tales-thus the impact of the French story. Ellul uses it to drive home the necessity of doing *something* about the Third World. No longer can we ignore its needs, or hope its problems will simply goaway. Theyaffectallofus.inourinterdependentworid. Some way to develop the Third World and bring it up to an acceptable standard of living seems urgent.

Ellul began writing on technique and development in 1972.[6] He had already concerned himself with the problems of theThird World, before we began using that term.[7]

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[6] Jacques Ellul, "Technique et dfiveloppement," in C. A O. Van Nieuwen-huijze, ed., *Development: The Western View/La perspective occidentale du diveloppement* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), pp. 258-295.

[7] See Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society,* trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Knopf, 1964);

More recently he wrote a book that features development and the Third World as its main themes: *Changer de revolution* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1982). Not yet available in English, we might translate this book's title as *Snitching Revolutions,* or *Changing to Another (Kind of) Revolution.* The book's subtitle reads *The Inevitable Proletariat.* When he considers the Third World in this work, Ellul appears to take a sociological approach, but we will see that he adds a theological twist.

Actually, it amounts to more than a twist. Ellul's sociology is couched in his theology, although most scholars I have heard on the subject seem unaware of his Christian commitment. Reading his most famous book. *The Technological Society,* a person finds no clues that would indicate Ellul had ever heard of Christianity. I have checked his notes from university courses he gave on propaganda and Marxism without finding any hint of a Christian perspective.

Yet Ellul clearly maintains that he conceives of sociology at least in part as a means of understanding our society in order to discover how Christians should participate in it. Christian believers need to comprehend the world in order to proclaim the Christian message in an understandable fashion. Ellul would like his sociological works to serve as an "instrument of knowledge," and his theological studies to help towards a Christian understanding of sociological reality.[8] But up to now scholars have rarely confronted these two strains of his thought.

Change as a theme runs through both Ellul's sociology and his theology. He believes human life must include change in order to have meaning ("On Dialectic," p. 296). But, parting company with Hegel and Marx, Ellul denies that a new state of things inevitably entails progress. His refusal to view change as necessarily positive forms the key to Ellul's view of what the Third World needs. At the risk of sounding extremely conservative and thoroughly negative, he distinguishes development from growth (see the article by Serge Latouche in this issue for the growth-development distinction as it applies to biology, according to Charles Darwin). In Ellul's view, technological growth, especially when it takes place rapidly, inhibits human development on all levels, including economic development. In what follows, we will explore this view, and observe how life in the Third World illustrates it.

Why does Technique fail to help development along, we may ask? Partly, Ellul suggests, because technology grows in spurts, here and there, in one area and then another. Human development however, needs to take {dace in a *balanced* fashion–and Technique's jagged motion disrupts this balance.

At this point we should review Ellul's definition of Technique, to avoid misunderstanding. Some people use the word "technology" to describe what he prefers to call "Technique," defined as "the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency (for a given stage of development) in every field of human activity" *(The*

Autopsy of Revolution, trans. Patricia Wolf (New York: Knopf, 1971); and *De la rivolution aux rivoltes* (Paris: Cal-mann-L€vy, 1972).

[8] Jacques Ellul, "On Dialectic," in Gifford G. Christians and Jay M. Van Hook, eds., *Jacques Ellul: Interpretive Essays* (Urbana: University of IL Press, 1981), pp. 306-307.

Technological Society, p. xxv). To simplify, we will follow Ellul's tendency to concentrate on efficiency as the focus of Technique. Technological growth involves searching for the most efficient way of doing things, and then adopting that method. Normally it is very difficult to control this process once it has been put in place, Ellul belieyes-but we will return to this idea when we talk about solutions for the Third World.

Ellul sees human development as proceeding by a slow, trial and error process, involving experimentation, resolution of conflicts, and compromise. True development leads to consequences that are not predetermined but that stem from value judgments hammered out by a group working together. Growth based on Technique and efficiency, however, tends to produce something like puzzle pieces that no longer fit together, at least not the way we intended them to.

In-vitro fertilization can serve as an example, with the fallout it produces in family relationships. We can readily see that nobody worked on figuring out how our society wants or needs the family to develop, and then came up with in vitro fertilization as a way to arrive at that development. On the contrary, this laboratory procedure was discovered, perfected, and used as a way to combat infertility. At the same time, it created new family relationships that we have great difficulty piecing back together in any manageable way.

Similar trends plague the Third World. For example, the growth of technology tends to lure people to the rities, thoroughly disrupting families in the process. We continue to applaud growth in industries and urban levels of luxury that attract more and more people toward urban centers, and then we seem surprised when traditional cultures have difficulty adapting and surviving in a citified environment they were not developed to deal with. Balance has been unceremoniously disrupted, with consequences we all know about.

I remember distinctly my experiences in the year 1977, when I was involved in building a house in San Jos6, the capital of Costa Rica. Most unskilled construction workers had migrated to the city from relatively stable rural communities. In the capital they found themselves on the bottom of the economic ladder, paid such a low wage it was nearly impossible for them to survive, let alone support a family. At first I wondered why many of them had hangovers so fierce they failed to report to work on Monday mornings. When these workers missed work on Monday, they forfeited their entire overtime pay for the week! But gradually I learned to understand something of how degraded and alone they felt, and how hopeless. They had none of the supportive structures around them, none of the help they would have received if they had been living in the communities they had grown up in.

Ellul's maintains that technological growth with its unforeseen consequences makes gradual, careful development difficult or even impossible. What sort of model can you set up for development when you never know what technical advances will come along to turn it upside down? How can you find the resources necessary for development-raw materials, energy, and human capacity—when Technique as it grows tends to absorb them all?

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An example: Costa Rica's foreign exchange, hard-earned from cultivating coffee and bananas largely by hand, evaporates, most of it spent on petroleum to keep fancy imported automobiles supplied (although most people in the Third World, including Costa Rica, get around by riding public buses). The country must severely limit the number of advanced degree students it sends abroad to study, since dollars are so hard to come by. Costa Rica also, of course, has great difficulty paying its foreign debt, for the same reason. Has anyone consciously decided that maintaining the price of gasoline at bargain levels for the sake of the wealthy, who drive a Mercedes-Benz, should have higher priority than enabling professors to travel abroad to obtain their doctorates? Probably no choice was ever made-the country just assumed it needed to keep importing more petroleum in order to become more "developed" and "progressive."

Ellul feels strongly that we cannot advance true development so long as we continue to assume that economic and technological growth, as the solution to everything, hold the only means of realizing our hopes. We have made a myth, even a god, of our notion of technical progress, so that no one is allowed to attack it. People see progress as inherently necessary, obviously crucial, and unfailingly good, so that if a person suggests that progress may not be inevitable and wonderful, he is treated like an outcast. As Ellul explains, the notion of the value of progress constitutes an unexamined assumption in our society.

What are we supposed to do, then? Hand-wringing will not accomplish much, nor will shedding of tears—these constitute our industrial society's frequent response to images of Third World suffering. Learning to take a critical attitude towards Technique is the place Ellul believes we must begin. We can begin to control and use technology only when we have emptied it of its mystique. This applies to industrial societies as well as to the Third World. Although he contends we must control Technique, Ellul has no illusions, no wish to eliminate it, as some writers have charged.

In fact, he makes concrete suggestions for its careful Third World use, in *Changer de revolution.* Ordinarily Ellul shies away from proposing sociological solutions, holding that first we must arrive at a thorough understanding of the problems we want to solve. As for the Third World, he prefers to leave the working out of specific solutions to those who know individual countries and ethnic groups intimately. The best designers of specific solutions for the Third World are those who have lived their lives there.

Uncharacteristically, however, Ellul brims with suggestions for what to do about the Third World in *Changer de revolution.*

In his previous writing, Ellul had recommended Third World development that was not oriented toward Technique. But with dramatic changes taking place in Technique itself, he begins in this work to recommend its sparing and careful use, once its probable effects have been thoroughly studied. In this way, he feels, we can hope to tame technological growth so that it serves Third World societies. He warns, however, that we will still have to deal with Technique's unforeseeable consequences, which often prove extremely disruptive.

With the development of practical robots for industry, for example, Ellul suggests that highly technical production units could be introduced in the Third World without drastically disrupting traditional cultures, since they would require few people to work in them. And new developments in information systems, based on the personal computer, could enable the Third World to by-pass what had seemed an inevitable centralization of many aspects of life. Commercial and industrial enterprises can now be managed locally, in small units of perhaps no more than 100 people, and coordinated with other units by computer networks. In other words, we can find ways to control Technique instead of letting it control us. We could say that the personal computer makes "small" possible as well as beautiful.

In *Changer de revolution,* Ellul mentions a further advantage in these new possibilities: the latest, automated factories would enable growth to take place without displacing large groups of people. Most Third World families already engaged in agriculture could remain in place, and could return to producing food crops, instead of concentrating on exportable products. With new automated factories, Third World countries would depend less on foreign trade, and could feed their people.

Reducing exports and accumulating fancy new factories sound to most people like utterly utopian ideas for today's Third World. Most of us have assumed that poor countries needed to gear up to export more and more, in order to pay their debt. But Ellul proposes we attempt something much more radical.

Ellul believes the Third World's problems are so complex and intractable that piecemeal solutions cannot work. Yet we must find a solution, or modem society will not survive. Ellul, along with many others, believes we are headed for a catyclism of unthinkable proportions, if the Third World is not turned around. At this stage, with our world as interdependent as it has become, no nation will escape the consequences of relentlessly increasing population and poverty in the world's southern peoples. We must do something drastic, but he doubts we will.

When the nightmarish novel mentioned at the beginning of this article troubled French society so deeply, Ellul thought practical steps might be taken to work for change in the Third World, to avoid just such a scenario as the one depicted in the book. But people got over their fright, and nothing changed.

Jonathan Kozol's book, *Savage Inequalities* (New York: Crown, 1991), makes a similar point: Americans who feel well-off may wish the problems in poor school districts would simply go away. But since that will not happen, we would do well to take ghetto problems seriously, if only for the sake of our own longterm interests.

Ellul proposes we take the Third World's dilemma seriously, as well, donating large amounts of aid—so much aid, so freely given, that it will noticeably reduce our society's standard of living. Ellul maintains we would be giving up nothing but gadgets we do not need, but probably most of us would feel seriously deprived.

He says we must stop depleting the Third World's resources, and instead give these countries what they really need: specifically, what *they* perceive they need. We cannot understand Ellul on the Third World unless we appreciate this point. Concretely, for

example, he believes he knows young French-trained Africans who have not bought into the establishment in their countries, who could recommend what their countries need most for real development. Ellul maintains we should orient a significant sector of our economy toward producing for the Third World, at great cost to ourselves, since no other way exists to avoid catastrophe.

We need to offer carefully studied and adapted agricultural help, soft technologies, automated production units and other items the Third World needs not just in order to survive, but to move ahead, on the basis of its own culture and social structures. As an example, Ellul suggests we could help some societies develop a simple technology, based on locally available resources, for the production of solar pumps.

Ellul may give the impression in *Changer de revolution* that he is uncharacteristically in favor of a world-wide, universal scheme, but in any case he does not think it could ever succeed unless essentially personalized. He proposes a kind of "twin dries" approach, or an insritution-to-institution basis for involving ourselves in the Third World's needs. Now that computers enable us to coordinate just about anything, such a structure should be possible.

Readers of *Changer de revolution* find it easy to criticize such a bold plan, especially since it depends heavily on recent technological developments. Ellul's proposal for developing the Third World undoubtedly holds many pitfalls, but his analysis of Third World problems that need solving cannot easily be dismissed. Despite the generally recognized urgency of these problems, we resist radical suggestions-EHul's or anyone else's-for improving things. We prefer to believe that somehow the situation will take care of itself. We firmly resist any challenge that would result in a lowering of our standard of living, even when it seems likely that a head-in-the-sand approach will eventually lower our standard of living a great deal more. Ellul does not believe enlightened self-interest is strong enough to motivate rich societies to give part of their wealth away, however necessary it may be to do so.

In the final two pages of *Changer de revolution,* however, Ellul contends that Christian believers have more to draw on than self-interest. He believes they have sufficient motivation to help others, and sufficient faith to take risks—an ability to look at the world realistically and take steps to save it. Such acts normally take place only if people have adequate information-which may explain why Ellul has written so many books.

I believe we can best grasp Ellul's distinction between technological growth and human development by means of exampies. In "Ellul and Development in Central America" *(Cross Currents,* 35.1 [Spring 1985]:65-71), Bob Ekblad recounts the adventure he and his wife, Grade, shared as they attempted to apply Ellul's prindples while living and fanning in rural Honduras.

Bob and Grade's approach was to concentrate on observing and learning, rather than critidzing their neighbors' methods. But they absorbed everything they could from a farmer whose agricultural approach had enabled him to live off formerly useless land. At considerable sacrifice, they lived on a very simple level, and in this way gained some understanding of the people around them. They used local tools, antiquated

transportation, and did their own work, without electricity, preparing and eating the food typical of their region.

When their ridiculous-looking agricultural methods produced a crop the likes of which no one in their area had ever seen, the Ekblads suddenly found themselves surrounded by an audience of eager learners. These later learned to teach others, in a complex, on-going effort in which the Ekblads continue to participate actively by means of annual visits. When, as Ellul suggests, they found that material progress did not solve people's basic problems, they developed a spiritual ministry related to their agricultural program. The Ekblads encountered many difficulties as they sought to contribute to human development in Honduras, but clearly they succeeded.

In Costa Rica, I witnessed a less happy sort of "progress." Traditional Costa Rican food consists of three basic items: rice, beans, and tortillas. Formerly hundreds of Costa Rican women provided the tortillas for consumption in their neighborhoods. They prepared them at home, beginning at 3 or 4 in the morning, every day. Someone picked them up to transport them to comer stores and super markets, by bicycle or very small truck.

It was a kind of slave labor, working hard every day, getting up before anyone else in the family did, making hundreds and hundreds of tortillas between the palms of their hands, then cooking them over the fire in a pan that looks like a miniature wok. We might wonder where the *masa,* the ground com used to make a tortilla, spent the night, or_what animals and insects ate their share before the *masa* was turned into tortillas. Probably the process was not very hygienic. And when the woman turned the tortilla over in its "wok," she may have licked her fingers first, to keep from getting burned. These women were not paid very well, either, for all their hard work. All in all, we can find much to criticize in such a system. "Development" would seem to be in order. Time for progress.

Enter a shiny new factory, owned by foreigners. It was designed to turn out thousands and thousands of perfect tortillas, very fast And, best of all, they were packaged in neat hygienic, orange plastic bags (transparent on the back, so you could see if the tortillas had already turned moldy from sitting too long in the store). The bags had nice, smiling happy faces that looked like human tortillas on the front. It was all very hygienic, and involved no slave labor. Distribution involved a large, shiny truck that was much more efficient than the old delivery system.

Best of all, said some people, the price was right. With the new system, tortillas were cheaper than when the women made them. Naive soul that I am, I thought perhaps the machines could make the tortillas more cheaply. But a wiser observer predicted that the price would go up as soon as the women's tortillas had been driven from the market as a result of the factory competition-just as fancy new imported colas had shot up in price once the traditional, locally-made soft drinks disappeared, years before. Sure enough. After a while the women had no buyers to speak of, and tortillas soon began to cost more.

Who are the winners and the losers here? The winners are the foreign factory owners, whereas the women who supported or helped support their families by making tortillas are clearly the losers. And what about the people of Costa Rica? They may enjoy slightly more identical tortillas, but I doubt they're as fresh—and they certainly cost more than before. Not to mention that the profit from the whole operation fails to stay in the country. Like the quantities of imported gasoline Costa Rica bums, its tortillas may be convenient, but they contribute to the lack of foreign exchange.

When we evaluate the tortilla war according to Ellul's principles, we cannot count a factory as a contribution to development, when it merely replaces hand labor that was already in place, or when it serves only to put people out of work, by fancying things up a bit Ellul would label this kind of "progress" gadgetry. And he encourages us not to throw out time-honored ways of doing things without careful study.

On the contrary, through the change they brought about, Bob and Gracie Ekblad made a significant contribution to Honduras' ability to feed itself. The Ekblads accomplished this by learning before they attempted to teach, and taking their [dace humbly alongside Honduran peasants. Significantly, they helped a group of poor farming families to grow in human dignity as they improved the quality of their lives and then learned to help others do the same. This is the kind of "development" I believe Ellul proposes-costly but genuinely useful for the Third World.

"Good" Development and Its Mirages

by Serge Latouche

> To develop an area* signifies the radical destruction of all natural vegetation in the area involved. It means resurfacing the newly-bared earth with concrete, or, in the best-case scenario, with grass or parking. If there is left-over space, it gives way to a concrete wall for consolidation purposes. Dams straighten out any small streams that cannot be channeled. Development means infesting the entire area with pesticides, and finally selling it at the highest possible price to some citified fool of a customer.[9]

Sustainable development has become fashionable as the basis for conferences. We have seen it at work in Rio at the United Nations' "Earth Summit" on development and the environment (June 1992), and in the Forum of the world's Nongovernmental Organizations at La Villette, in Paris (December 1991), which prepared the Rio summit Considering all the various kinds of dangers that development poses to humanity, we can only rejoice at this rather late-blooming insight

Hundreds of thousands of members of the human species have already died as a result of the development of civilization. The civilization of development threatens

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[9] Konrad Lorenz, *L'homme tn piril,* trans. Jeanne Etori (Paris: Flam-marion, 1975), p. 13.

thousands of others with genocide, or at least ethnodde. They range from north to south, from the Inuits and the Lapps of the far north's frozen steppes to tropical Indians like the Yanomano of the Roraima territory in Brazil, and the Tuareg people of the scorching Sahara.

Even more alarming, as far as our survival is concerned, 175,000 plant and animal species become extinct every year. Six million hectares (nearly fifteen million acres) of Amazonian jungle go up in smoke annually so that large-scale/azenzfeiros can produce more cattle, and so that their smaller counterparts can survive.[10]

Are we threatened with skin problems because of holes in the ozone layer? Are we victimized by NASA's huge maneuvers as it attempts to give new life to its programs, or by by Dupont's manipulations of the stock market?[11] Such threats distress us even more when we realize that we have no control over the gigantic and insidious pollution of our oceans and atmosphere due to radiation and toxic chemicals.

In spite of the recent summit, careful observers of society may remain skeptical-not suspicious of anyone's sincerity about the goals expressed, but questioning the consistency of current demands. We may legitimately ask whether it is possible to provide everyone with guaranteed development and a dean environment at the same time. "Sustainable" development is merely the latest entry in a long series of conceptual innovations intended to inject the harsh reality of economic growth with a dose of idealism.

Reflecting on the bad experiences and contradictions involved in "good" development may help us understand why some remain pessimistic about the probability and stability of "sustainable" development This process will also enable us to delineate the practical consequences of such skeptidsm.

I. Development as Always "Good"

"Permanent, "sustainable," or "lasting" development is simply the most recent phase of "good" development[12] Development has had to be corrected, almost since its inception in the 1960's, to satisfy the aspirations of the masses and the elites who were supposed to bring it about. The multiplication of terms used to describe development amounts to an attempt to ward off its negative effects through magic. Thus we have seen developments labeled Indigenous," "endogenous," "partidpatory," "communi-tary," Integrated," "authentic," "autonomous and popular," and "equitable," not to mention Tocal," "micro-,""endo-," and even "ethno-development"!

Sodalist development probably opened the door for all these strategies based on incantation. The wildly spectacular effort to make socialism's mythical paradigm prevail over the equally mythical paradigm of development fared poorly, as is well known.

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[10] Patrice van Eersel, "Le Brisil dichiri par i'ficologie," Ac/u<4 *no. 12 (3 Dec. 1991).*

[11] See Claude J. Alligre, *Economiser la planite,* Coll. Le Temps des Sciences (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

[12] Economics is a religion that has English as its sacred tongue. As a result, French experts have

The intention was to avoid the *bad* result that development might produce for accdental, rather than congenital, reasons. So a non-existent monster, a straw man was created: "bad development." But nothing "bad" can actually touch development for the simple reason that development is considered the very incarnation of the "good." It would be more precise and logical to use Albert Tevoedjre's term, "counter-development," when one wants to attach a stigma to perversions that need denouncing.[13]

The expression "good development" is redundant, since development by definition consists of "good" growth. And "growth" is also considered to be a good against which no evil force can prevail.

Development as good growth.

"Growth" and "development" as intertwined concepts come to us from biology, especially from Charles Darwin. Georges Can-guilhem comments:

> When he makes a precise distinction between growth and development, Darwin opposes the adult and the embryo on the basis of both size and structure. Any living thing can continue to grow while ceasing to develop. Resembling an adult, in weight and volume, it will remain fixed at a given stage of its specific infancy, as far as development is concerned.[14]

Transposed to the social sphere, development is *non-homologous* growth of the economic organism. If industrialization had proceeded since the nineteenth century along the lines of purely quantitative growth, we would have arrived at a monstrous absurdity. The earth would be covered with steam engines, coal resources exhausted, and pollution would have killed off all life forms. Instead, physical, technical, and ecological *self-regulation* took (dace, by force of circumstances. These led to fundamental *qualitative* mutations, so that we can speak of a process of *self correction,* which does not stop at this point. The vigorous pursuit of this corrected growth gives birth more or less spontaneously to *social* regulation.

In view of these facts, we can properly define economic development as the "trickle down" effect of industrial growth.[15] This term, sometimes referred to as what "percolates down," simply means that, beyond a certain threshold, growth in production results in social *fallout.* Growth cannot help but more or less benefit everyone.

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struggled to translate its terms. After Ignacy Sachs' very good "ecodevelopment" was not accepted in the 1970's, "sustainable development" became the norm fifteen years later.

[13] Albert Tevoedjre, *La pauvreti, richesse des peoples* (Paris: Editions Ouvriires, 1978); English ed. *Poverty, Wealth of Mankind* (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press, 1979).

[14] Georges Canguilhem, *Etudes d'histoire et de philosophic des sciences* (Paris: Vrin, 1968), p. 115.

[15] In the report of Lawrence F. Salmen of the World Bank dated 29 August 1991, we read: "During the first two decades of its existence, the World Bank tended to identity development with economic growth. The benefits of growth were supposed to trickle down, so that the poor benefitted automatically

In developed countries, even the most economically liberal ones, the poor of Victorian England described by Charles Dickens and proclaimed ty Kari Marx did not multiply. Wealth spread to all. Here again, development corrects growth and constitutes *a good* thing.

In consumer societies, Keynesian economics, coupled with fordism, leads to an additional step towards the "good." This method of social and political regulation aims at the distribution of wealth (big salaries and corporate profits resulting from regular growth in productivity), with a view to maintaining the economy at a high level. Perhaps we could go still further and say with Pope Paul VT that "development . . . cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man."[16] Surely we should consider this point of view extreme and pointless, since it would imply some doubt about the ethical value of growth. But, as we have already seen, growth constitutes what is truly "good" and "beautiful" in modem times.

Growth as *the "good"*

Since 1949, when we started our race toward the highest possible Gross National Product per person, human societies have chosen as their goal an increase in the *standard of living.* Clearly this has to be a "good" thing, since the very term "well-being" helps to define the living standard. Industrialization and technique are means which could lead to good or evil, in the abstract. But the growth of these means becomes an end in itself. Furthermore, these means are considered the only possible way of arriving at the Good, as if no civilization had preceded the industrial age!

We find a striking illustration of such thinking in the report given by French engineer and economist Edouard Parker to the international Forum of the High Road (Nov. 1991), endorsed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.[17] Parker's report demolishes all criticisms of growth and proposes nothing less than a goal of ten percent annual growth for the Third World. Why such a high rate of growth? Because a minimal level of two or three percent is required to avoid stagnation and to compensate for demographicgrowth. An additional four percent is needed to improve the living standard, and three percent more for the purpose of reducing under-employment.

At this stage, the famous "trickle down" effect makes itself felt: growth becomes development. Next we enter the equally famous "demographic transition," in which well-being induces a strong reduction in the birth rate. At this point, we can indulge

from the creation of jobs and the increased production of goods and services." See *Counter International,* no. 68 (20 Feb. 1992).

[16] Pope Paul VI, "Populorum progressio," encyclical on the development of peoples, 26 March 1967, no. 275, in Claudia Carlen Ihm, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals 1958-1981* (Raleigh: Pierian Press, 1991), p. 185.

[17] Paul Fabra, "10% de croissance pour le tiers-monde?,"Zz *Monde* (3 Dec. 1991), p. 28.

in the luxury of fighting pollution and preserving our culture; Parker writes: "by the year 2000, we expect an Algeria proud ofits Islamic identity with $4800 per person, based on present levels."

Good or bad, technique and growth are always "good", since they increase possibilities, create jobs (even when they eliminate others), and offer solutions for all the problems they create.

Finally, the factor that makes economic growth an indisputable good, according to prevailing morality, is that it results from *behavior* which is also moral. According to Max Weber's analysis,[18] Western economies took off as a result of the culture's widespread work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit, based on scrupulous honesty, a taste for hard work, integrity, punctuality, denial of the pleasures of the flesh, and thrift. Unlimited accumulation of material wealth constitutes the visible evidence of the accumulation of merit-undeniable proof of divine blessing.

Failure and the test of facts

Over against such strong belief, the repeated resounding failures of development projects in the Third World during the past four decades and the spectacle of "bad development" in many countries have proved powerless to challenge the "good development" model. Certainly, as Dominique Perrot has written, "by means of a systematic transformation of nature and social relations into commercial goods and services... development appears as the most enormous and all-encompassing enterprise of dispossession and expropriation for the sake of the dominant minorities of all time."[19]

We have seen that well-being defines in part the goal of a riring standard of living. But the reality of this "well"-being consists not of a *quality of life* but rather of a *quantity* of gadgets presented as useful, on the very basis of their production and consumption.

Development is a mass of "things"; "well-being" amounts to nothing more than possessing them. Development disillusions the world by eliminating the value of things. By reducing the universe of creatures to the level of the production of useful things, development degrades ethics itself. The Good meiges with goods and possessions, and becomes identical with them. There is no escape from vulgar utilitarianism.

Morality becomes more a hypocritical facade than a reality. In fact, we find trickeiy everywhere. Business ethics exalts the will to power, egoism, and contempt for the weak and the losers.[20]

The advocates of "good" development know and say all this, but the spectacle of the fantastic power of our technological society inhibits them from questioning it in any fundamental way—yet another witness to technique's totalitarianism. Instead, they look to development to cure the very ills it inflicts.

In the conclusion of his book, *Les chritiens et le Tiers-Monde,* Bertrand Cabedoche writes: "The word 'development' may have lost its appeal after so many disappointing

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[18] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner, 1958).

[19] Dominique Perrot, "Les empecheurs de ddvelopper en rond," *Revue Ethnies,* 6, no. 13 (1991), 5.

[20] See my book, *La planite des naufrages* (Paris: La Decouverte, 1991), especially chapter 3.

experiences. But it remains the only word shared by all human beings that can express their hope."[21] Let the planet perish, just so long as development is saved!

II. Sustainable Development as a Paradox

The paradox of political economy's view of "nature

From one point of view, "nature" and taking the environment into account are at the heart of the founding of economics, as we see it in the words of classic economists. Economic science is *naturalist.* The "nature" that economists have made for themselves is even more constraining than the one described by contemporary ecologists. It is constructed by capitalist economy, a kind of miserly mother.

Scarcity occupies a central place in the economic scheme of things. This scarcity, unknown in traditional societies, has been shown to be a product of enclosure laws and the establishment of individualist society.[22] Economists are the first to sound the alarm when it comes to the *limits of growth.* David Ricardo, like Thomas Malthus, points out the natural limits of wealth determined ty the finite availability of fertile land and the existence of decreasing yields. W. Stanley Jevons, in his book *The Coal Question* (1865k*was* probably the first to warn of the depletion of ore reserves.[23]

This hostile nature, however, is stripped of all value, and considered as lying outside the economy. Jean-Baptiste Say wrote of "natural objects... air, water, or solar light. These may be denominated *natural* wealth, because they are the spontaneous offering of nature; and, as such, mankind is not called upon to earn them by any sacrifice or exertion whatever; for which reason, they are never possessed of exchangeable value."[24]

This exclusion of nature will weigh quite heavily on future patrimony, but it is no stranger to the metaphysical dogma of the natural harmony of interests. This.postulate, which denies human conflict for the sake of growth and optimal economic development, is at the heart of economics. It is a postulate based on the will to subdue nature, and opposes nature. Believing it requires that one accept many simplifications and illusions. The result is that lasting development can only be paradoxical.

In the hands of the economy, the environmental crisis reinforces the productivism of our technological society. The United Nations pamphlet for Rio's Earth Summit 1992 speaks of managing the environment by means of "ecologically rational techniques." Environmental management may lead us to a new Western imperialism that would involve no teal protection for nature.[25]

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[21] Bertrand Cabedoche, *Les chrltiens et le Tiers-Monde* (Paris: Karthala, 1990), p. 255.

[22] See especially Jean-Pierre Dupuy and Jean Robert, *La trahison de I'opulence* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976).

[23] W. Stanley Jevons, *The Coal Question: An Inquiry concerning the Progress ofthe Nation, and the Probable Exhaustion of Our Coal Mines,* ed. A. W. Flux (London: Macmillan, 1865).

[24] Jean-Baptiste Say, *A Treatise on Political Economy, or The Production, Distribution & Consumption of Wealth* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1964; 1st American ed. 1821; Fr. ed. 1803), p. 286.

[25] Guy Beney, "L'dcologie globale, nouveau danger *totalitaiKfActuel,* no. 12 (3 Dec. 1991).

Adam Smith's "Invisible Hand" forms the framework for classic, and later neo-classic, economic theory. On the basis of the minimal observation that it is in wolves' interest that there be lots of sheep, and that they be well fed, some economists drew the maximal conclusions of the libertarians. This road leads to the strongly-held underlying belief in the myth of *development:* growth profits everyone, and development is within everyone's reach-the famous "trickle down" effect.

Nature has to be denied if one is to move from observing afact (that there are non-contradictory interests in the economic domain) to believing that the well-understood fundamental economic interests of humanity are not conflictive in nature (that there is a single path for the development of all). The only apparently certain interest human beings hold in common is the fight against nature. Nature's potential finitude justifies the cooperation of all for the good of all.

The universality of modernity and of the economy depends on constituting nature as humanity's enemy. We have an undeniable illustration of this principle in the fight against AIDS. In spite of the violent conflict between the French team of Professor Mon-tagnier and the American team of Professor Gallo, collaboration continues for the sake of saving humankind. We can see this attitude that opposes humanity and nature as early as Aristotle: "no friendship with inanimate things is possible, just as there is no justice toward them-no more than there is human justice for a horse or an ox."[26]

The project of modernity that makes humanity the possessor and master of nature, pacifies us by constituting humankind as the virtual subject of history by means of a declaration of war on nature. This amounts to a very aggressive attitude. Francis Bacon wrote that "nature is a prostitute; we should humble her, penetrate her secrets, and chain her up at will" (Rouland, p. 249). We see this approach illustrated in the squandering of natural resources, just as we see it in the treatment of guinea-pigs. Violence between human beings, and conflicts and contradictions of all sorts are deflected against nature, our common scapegoat.

The trap of "permanent development

The definition of "permanent" development as it appears in the Brundtland report takes nothing but permanence into account. It involves a "process of change through which the exploitation of resources, investment policy, and technical and institutional changes all harmonize together, reinforcing people's present potential and their future needs."[27]

"Permanence" refers not to "genuinely existing" development, but to reproduction. Sustainable reproduction reigned over the planet as a whole until the eighteenth century. It is still possible to find "experts" in sustainable reproduction among the Third World's older generation. Artisans and peasants who have preserved much of their an-

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[26] Aristotle, cited by Norbert Rouland, *Aux confins du droit* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1991), p. 248. Aristotle goes so far as to add "or even on the part of the master toward the slave, as slave."

[27] See World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

cestors' ways of thinking and acting live in harmony with their environment. They do not act as predators toward nature.

In contrast, the historical and practical meaning of development, linked with the project of modernity, goes contrary to the idea of permanence. It involves exploiting, making the most of, and reaping benefits from human and natural resources. The Invisible Hand and the natural harmony of interests guarantee that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Why worry about anything?

Integrating artificially quantified elements of the environment with economic calculations does not change the nature of development or the logic of modernity. It is good, for example, to take agriculture's caloric production into account and to reduce the squandering of fossil energy. We know that to produce a calorie, traditional agriculture consumes 0.01 calorie, compared with 500 for the most modem methods. Taking such facts into account does not change the obsession with maximizing, or the reduction of social factors to numbers. Fleeing further into technique is our approach to resolving the problems posed by the technological system.

The assumption of the natural harmony of interests is not radically questioned (it cannot be challenged unless we question the universalism of humanity). Rather, it is expanded in a sort of "ecological keynesianism." In this view, one affirms that the expense of preserving the environment is cost-effective in the long run. "Ecological keynesianism" also considers that this cost suits the interests of all economic players (when their interests are *properly understood),* since it creates outside effects and a large amount of spillover in the form of jobs. Ecology and the environment are in a sense booby-trapped by development, by the logic of the technological society and modernity.

At times "alternative," Tasting," or "sustainable" development is used as a rationale for the proposal of widely varying anti-capitalist and anti-productivist projects. Their purpose is the elimination of the plagues associated with under-development and the excesses of "bad" development. Aiming to produce a people-centered, inclusive, convivial society, such projects have no more to do with development than "affluent primitive societies" did.[28] Some pre-industrial societies reached remarkable human and esthetic heights without knowing anything at all about "development."

The debate over the word "development" is not a matter of words. Whether we like it or not, we cannot make development something different from what it has been. Development has been and is the westernization of the world. Words take their root in a story; they are connected with representations that usually escape the speaker's consciousness, but which have a hold on our emotions. There are smooth words that act as a balm to the heart, and words that wound. There are words that stir up a people and tum the world upside down. Liberty and democracy have been and remain words of that kind. Then we have poisonous words that infiltrate the heart like drugs, perverting desire and clouding judgment.

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[28] Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972).

Development is one of these toxic words. We can of course proclaim that from now on "development" will mean the opposite of what it has meant Declaring that "good development" means first of all placing value on what one's parents did, on having roots, amounts to defining a word by its opposite.[29] Development has been, and remains, an uprooting.

Whether we like it or not, so long as we continue to struggle against the effects and evils of development, all the while placing ourselves under the protection of its banner, we will be encouraging the arrogance of economists who can perfectly well appropriate these demands, turning them inride out. We have an example of such co-opting in the Parker report to the Forum of the High Road: "industry and high-tech are much less detrimental to nature than the Third World with its extreme poverty." Parker also states that "ecology as it is presently conceived by most minor groups... leads straight to ecological disaster."[30] Parker comes close to the declaration by Gilberto Mestrinho, governor of the state of Amazonas and the great terror of the 1992 Rio summit: "we will develop the Amazon, in spite of the Greens' vile plot."[31]

For now, we need to remember that an inhabitant of the northern hemisphere consumes eighty times more energy than a person from the south; that the United States alone sends between seven and eight tons of carbon per capita into the atmosphere; and that ninety percent of the 320,000,000 tons of toxic waste produced in 1989 originated in member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development[32]

III. Conclusion

The greatest threat hanging over our planet may not be the destruction resulting from our infatuation with the Megamachine. Our blindness and our powerlessness constitute the real threat. Like the Romans when their republic was declining, "we can endure neither our evils nor their cures."[33] We refuse to make the proper diagnosis of the disease, and we content ourselves with bandaging its symptoms. We expect remedies from the veiy source that is aggravating the ill. Proposing "lasting" development as a remedy for the evils of development amounts to prolonging the agony of the patient as long as possible by keeping the virus alive.

According to Jacques Ellul, asking our contemporaries to renounce technique (and, we might add, development) is like asking neolithic society to bum the forest that constitutes its environment.[34] It is clear that we will renounce neither technique nor

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[29] Halidou Sawadogo quoted in Pierre Pradervant, *Listening to Africa: Developing Africa from die Grassroots* (New York: Praeger, 1989), pp. 77 and 198.

[30] Fabra, "10% de croissance," p. 28.

[31] van Eersel, p. 60.

[32] Dominique Sicot, "L'aide met son habit vert," *AlternativesEconomiques,* no. 92 (Dec. 1991), p. 33.

[33] Livy, cited by Jacques Ellul in his'TTie *Technological Bluff,* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), p. 72.

[34] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological System,* trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Continuum, 1980), p. 82.

development. It is not even certain that we will hesitate to bum the last forests and the last neolithic societies that still live there. Is there then no hope or future perspective for the planet or for humanity?

The Indians of British Colombia, on the eastern shore of the Pacific (the Kwakiults, Haidas, Tshimshians, etc.), believed the salmon to be living beings like themselves, that lived in tribes at the bottom of the sea, in their tepees. At the time of year when the fish began to return upstream, the Indians welcomed the first salmon to arrive as an important visitor. The ate it ceremoniously. Its sacrifice constituted only a temporary loan. They returned its skeleton and other inedible parts to the sea, thus permitting the devoured guest's rebirth. In this way the coexistence and symbiosis of the salmon and the Indians was perpetuated in a satisfactory manner. With the arrival of the Europeans and the establishment of a canning factoiy at the mouth of eveiy river, the race for profit brought overfishing in its wake. The Indians concluded that the salmon disappeared because the Europeans failed to respect the ancient rite. Who could claim they were wrong?

This attitude toward nature, found in most societies, is based on our participation in the cosmos. It implies a reciprocal relationship between us and the rest of the universe. People are prepared to give themselves to "Gaia," just as she gives herself to them.

Returning to this pre-Aristotelian sprit may well be necessary for our survival. We must note, however, that we lack the resolve to take this path, in spite of the great commotion made about ecol*ogy* and in spite of significant protective measures we have taken.[35]

My book *La planete des naufrages* begins with this epigraph, a statement by the chief of the Lakota Oglala Sioux, Russell Means: "it is only a question of time before we see what Westerners call 'an average catastrophe of global proportions.' It will be the job of Amerindian peoples, and of all 'natural' peoples, to survive."[36]

Those excluded from development and left out by modernity, the shipwrecked of the great society, are surely better equipped to work out a new pact with "Nature." Their alliance will bypass the West's rape of nature and enable them to rejoin the harmony of the cosmos.

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[35] Most recently, American jurisprudence has been moving in the direction of reinforcing the ever increasing human control of natural processes through legal means. See Rouland, Aux *confins du droit,* p. 253.

[36] Toujours la meme rengaine," *Revue du MA.U.S.S.* (Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales), no. 7 (1990), p. 71.

Book Reviews

Technique, Discourse and Consciousness: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jacques Ellul

By David Lovekin, (Lehigh University Press, 1991).
Reviewed by Timothy Casey

There can be no question anymore of the importance of Jacques Ellul's place in 20th century thought or of his influence on a variety of disciplines and thinkers concerned with modem technology and its alleged benefits and harms. What remains unclear is how to asses the locus and value of his major achievements. David Lovekin's *Technique, Discourse, and Consciousness: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jacques Ellul* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1991) is a provocative attempt to argue that the thrust of Ellul's work ties in the direction of philosophy and a theory of culture. In this rendering theology takes a back seat and is subordinated to the more general postmodern problem of "the Other" and its role in keeping alive transcendence in the face of technique and the reductionistic tendencies of the technical phenomenon.

While Ellul himself seems to recoil from being tagged a philosopher or, worse yet, a metaphysician, Lovekin makes a persuasive case for the philosophical cast of Ellul's critique of technology, inviting his readers to see and judge Ellul on strictly philosophical terms. Indeed, Lovekin believes that an almost universal ignorance of Ellul's philosophical message accounts for a myriad of serious miscontruals and misguided judgments on the part of his many critics and even a few of his followers. Lovekin asks us, in other words, to read Ellul not just as a sociological critic of technology with traditional theological and religious answers to the problems technology poses, but primarily as a philosopher who addresses the great philosophical questions of our day.

It is not surprising that as a Frenchman Ellul addresses the basic concerns of structuralism and deconstructionism, concerns which can be gathered under the general rubric of philosophy of language. Ellul's rejection of contemporary French philosophy reflects his own metaphysical conception of the word as symbol and the image as a copy subordinated to some pre-given orginal. Lovekin cites *The Humiliation of the Word* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985) regarding the status of the image according to Ellul:

> The image contains within itself a deep contradiction. It is not ambiguous:
> it is coherent, reliable, and inclusive; but it is insignificant. It can have

innumerable meanings, depending on culture, learning, or the intervention of some other dimension. For this reason, I must learn to interpret it The image is dear, but this clarity does not imply certainty or comprehension. My certainty is limited to this directly perceived reality that my sight reveals to me (Lovekin, p. 235; Ellul, p. 8).

On Lovekin's reading, Ellul interprets the post-modern death of the author/speaker and the reduction of language to self-referential signs and images as further indications of the dominance of technique and the loss of transcendence toward an Other which enables communication and the sharing of a stable world held in common. The technological proliferation of mainly visual images through televirion, film, photography and video has transformed what was essentially a typographic culture into a world of fastmoving images that throttle the brain and seem to stop thinking and critical reflection in their tracks. Here the real world of technique fatefully conjoins with a deconstructive nihilism for which nothing exists outside the text.

In Ellul's philosophical court modem art also must plead guilty to this secular assault on the Other. Art in our time exhibits little if any suspicion of the image. Rather, it seems more than eager to wallow in the play of surfaces and to mock the symbolic character that art works of old embodied and encouraged. Apparently in league with the deconstructionists, contemporary artists seem intent on denying the truth-function of art in favor of mindless parody with no origin or transcendent end. This art, in effect, is an anti-art, the kind of imaging that neither recognizes nor respects any originals to be imitated or symbolized. As Lovekin expresses it, "Language is reduced to one dimension by the machine-by the computer—to be followed by the artists. Flaubert feared the clichd. Modem artists embrace them" (p. 210).

What ties behind this slow descent into a Platonic cave with no exterior is, for Lovekin's Ellul, the essentially technical transformation of the word from spoken to written language. As Plato made clear in the *Phaedrus,* the replacement of an oral with a written tradition is dangerous to memory and its role in the recollection of Being; such forgetfulness sends us on a way that increasingly obscures our vision of truth and goodness. The written word ceases to be a symbolic instrument that places us in direct contact with the truth, as oral language does. Because it is *seen,* writing usurps the role of the original and traps us in a world of our own making, a world of images that deflect our right away from the Other towards what is comfortably the Same. The spoken word, on the other hand, retains its function as symbol and serves as a medium of transcendence. According to Lovekin, it breaks the downward pull of images into the cave and opens us to "the realm of the story, the narrative," where humans can meet as humans outride the technical system and its de-humanizing demands. Here the Other can be as Other and not as one more functional component in the system beyond which there is no Other.

In Lovekin's depiction, Ellul is dearly a philosopher of an old-fashioned sort who believes in the priority of original over image, oral language over written, the transcendent

over the immanent (in spite of Christ's transcendent immanence). More spedfically, Lovekin (daces Ellul's philosophy of technology in the tradition of Hegelian dialectic and Ernst Cassirer's *Kultuiphi-losophie.* If anything this goes a long way toward defusing the popular image of Ellul as a wild-eyed radical inimical to the Western tradition and its standards of rationality and philosophical discourse. If Ellul is a radical, it is only in the sense that he wants to take us back to our roots - both Biblical and philosophical - as a way of regaining a measure against which we can compare and judge the distortions of our technological sodety.

It is instructive, then, to reflect on the traditional, and especially metaphysical, aspects of Ellul's thought. From a contemporary philosophical vantage-point Ellul seems not so much representative of Western metaphysics as entrapped in it. What is more, this metaphysics is of particularly modem vintage - Cartesian, to be exact. In describing technique as a mentality or form of consciousness, Ellul takes over the ontology of the self as *subject* and the thing as *object,* quite unintentionally reinforcing the anthropocentrism that lies at the very center of the modem technological assault on nature. Modem anthropocentrism rim-ply asserts that humans can know only what they make. As Lovekin puts it,

One does not live in a world in which significance is simply given. Significance is made and apprehended at the same time. The given always has a symbolic nature: meaning points to the object of meaning as well as back to whom that object has meaning. Meaning is the *result* of experience with an object. It is not simply outside or inside the observer. Meaning is in the conjunction of innemess and outemess (p. 117).

Humanity as *homo symholicus* is the creator of its own reality. Just how this human subject, outside religious and theological assumptions, is ever to make contact with the truly Other remains philosophically unclear. For Lovekin, the problem seems hardly to exist, let alone to throw Ellul's philosophical project into serious doubt.

For while Lovekin is right in pointing to Descartes' elevation of method as the herald of the technical phenomenon, he is either unaware of, or unwilling to acknowledge, the Cartesian elements running through Hegel, Cassirer and Ellul. This is most apparent in Ellul's suspicion of the image in contrast to the word. The modem denigration of the perceptible, visible world begins with Descartes' metaphysical justification of a *res extensa* devoid of any sensuous content or qualitative substance and plays itself out in the technological degradation of nature and concomitant creation of a technosphere inhospitable to the senses and aesthetic sensibility. It is hard, then, to accept the Ellulian subordination of the visual image in favor of the word even in light of the daily visual bombardment showered upon us by the modem media. One feels in Ellul's metaphysics the faint presence of a particularly Cartesian brand of nihilism which in the name of the *logos* would have us turn our backs on the visible world so as not to affirm the dessicated sphere of *la technique.* But just as we can distinguish between authentic, loving speech and idle, malicious gossip - both forms of orality and direct communication — surely we can discriminate between the superficial images that tie us to the cave and those that liberate the sprit.

More generally, Lovekin's treatment of Ellul's philosophical side, while a valuable service in itself, suffers from the enthusiasm of a devotee. Lovekin is simply too eager to accept Ellul's selfcharacterizations and descriptions of his philosophical project. When, for example, Ellul states that "I have sometimes been captivated by a line of poetry or by an expression from a novel. There is a mysterious instant Suddenly a phrase becomes a personal utterance. It penetrates your life," Lovekin comments without irony that "Reading and knowing carried very profound existential weight for Ellul" (p. 126). More serious is Lovekin's assumption that Ellul has seen beyond the technological phenomenon, even though Lovekin keeps Ellul's Christianity at arm's length and respectfully refuses to grant it philosophical status. While there are other Ellulians who do not share in Ellul's religiosity, Lovekin's secularism is particularly disturbing since he provides no philosophical counterpart to Christianity that can underpin an authentic transcendence of the technological society or provide a significant Wholly Other that can serve as the *telos* of that transcendence.

The book is maddening on several other, less serious counts. As an "introduction" to Ellul's philosophy it fails to lead the reader into Ellul's tangled web of terminology and ideas. Key terms are broadly defined - when they are defined — so much so that Lovekin almost seems to revel in inconsistency and ambiguity. What, for example, is one to make of a sentence like this: *"La technique* is a mentality within the society, it is the attitude of society toward technique" (p. 68)? Furthermore, the style is dense, and the chapters are poorly organized. The book gets off to a rocky start with Lovekin taking on Ellul's critics before introducing us to the core of Ellul's philosophy. (There is a brief introduction to Ellul's overall position, but it hardly suffices to prepare the reader for the critical forays of the opening chapter.) What is worse, Lovekin sidesteps the objections of these critics - most notably those of Samuel Florman and Melvin Kranzberg - by rejecting them as academic examples of technique itself. While this may be true, it is incumbent upon Lovekin to show the reader why this is a bad thing. Lovekin is shrewd enough to recognize the alleged neutrality of technology as the underlying assumption of these criticisms, but he misses the opportunity to discredit this rather common but misleading notion about our machines and technologies.

Instead, an embattled, defensive tone takes the place of argument and persists throughout the rest of the book, lending the unfortunate impression that it is Lovekin and Jacques Ellul against the rest of the world. This absence of critical distance from its subject underlies the book's lack of balance and measure. Lovekin's only attempt at a critical assessment of Ellul occurs in two brief paragraphs toward the end of the book (pp. 214-15) and is at best perfunctory. This does not inspire confidence in Lovekin's reading of Ellul or in his situating of the Ellulian corpus in the field of philosophy of technology. In an early chapter on "Ellul and the Problem of a Philosophy of Technology," Lovekin omits any reference to Marx, Heidegger or Lewis Mumford, key figures in anybody's history of the philosophy of technology. His reluctance to set Ellul off against different or opporing philosophical views ultimately mars this attempt to uncover a full-throated Ellulian philosophy of technology. Like technique itself, Ellul

is in need of an Other against which he can be measured and evaluated. Unhappily, Lovekin fails to provide us with this contrast.

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In This Issue

From the Editor

I must apologize for the lateness of this issue of the *EHul Forum* which should have been published in July. On June 7th, I had an operation and spent the month of June recuperating. That lost month put me hopelessly behind in all my commitments and I am only now beginning to catch up. As a consequence, I have postponed the subject matter I was planning for this issue-ethics in a techno-bureaucratic society — until the January issue, and I called upon my good friend and mentor, Gabriel Vahanian (University de Strasbourg), to share with us a dialogue that has been going on between him and Maurice Weyembergh, a philosopher from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel who has recently published a book on politics and technique. With this issue(#ll), the *Forum* begins its sixth year. It was back in issue #5 (June 1990) that the *Forum* first focused on Garbriel Vahanian's utopian theology. With this issue, we return to that theme to reflect on of technology and utopia in Ellul and Vahanian. Since the theme of apocalypse and utopia in Ellul and Vahanian has dominated my own work, espcially my new book *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia.?,* I could not resist intruding into the dialogue between Vahanian and Weyembergh to voice a third opinion. I hope they will forgive me for doing so. In any case, I am very grateful to Gabby Vahanian for his editorial work on this issue and I and I will let him tell you about it.

But before I do, I wish to call your attention to what seems to me to be a new stage emerging in Ellul studies. You will note several significant announcements on the Bulletin Board (pp. 2-3). A new Ellul Institute has been formed in the U.S. and a new Ellul Association has been formed in France. At the same time Wheaton College

has established a microfilmed collection of Ellul's work and a conference is being held in Bordeaux on Ellul's work on technique and society. Qearly the study of Ellul's work is undergoing a new level of consolidation which seems to be occurring simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic.

About This Issue

It all began when our paths crossed and, remembering the *Ellul Forum,* I naturally asked Maurice Weyembergh for an article. He knew Ellul, and had devoted over a third of a book just published to a study of Ellul and Hans Jonas: *Entrepolitique et technique:aspects de 1'utopisme contemporain* (Vrin, Paris 1991, FF150.00).

A philosopher, interested in political theory and social policy, Weyembergh teaches both at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and at the Universite Libre de Bruxelles. With Gilbert Hottois, he also is in charge of the renowned and most prolific Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Bioethics.

Not only does Weyembergh know Ellul, but he has practiced him from an angle entirely different from yours or mine - that of a philosopher, who probably is not ignorant of Ellul's almost visceral reticence about philosophy, and whose assessment of Ellul's contribution is therefore all the more significant. With Weyembergh, the authors whose company Ellul "keeps" suddenly appear bearing different names: those of Sartre, Rene Girard, Hannah Arendt, Schelsky, Bloch, Heidegger, Marx, Hegel, and so on. Barth is never mentioned. Nor is the reason simply because Weyembergh is no theologian. The reason, I surmise, is that, by eliding the shadow Barth's thought casts over Ellul's, while retaining Ellul's religious problematic, he allows Ellul to appear, not only undiminished, but also wholesome. Thus society and technology, rather than merely corrupting one another, belong to an ellipse, utopia, of which they are the two foci. Not that, to repeat, the religious configuration of Ellul's thought is blotted out. It simply has ceased demarcating a special domain side by side with that of nature and that of history or, for that matter, fused with one or the other. Weyembergh sees Ellul as trying to avoid two antagonistic pitfalls: naturalism and artificialism - although, on the one hand, ecology, retrieved from naturalism, is not rejected and, on the other, *making* is adjudicated as not being less noble an act than *being.* Still, artifidalism, felt as ominous and thoroughly resented all the way, is systematically run down, while naturalism, Christian or otherwise, fails to make sense today. The latter's anti-technological utopianism. At this point, Weyem-bergh's distinction between utopianism and utopia comes in handy, but doesn't entirely win my support. Like Ellul's, his man or woman is not so much a symbol-making animal, yearning for utopia or the New Jerusalem, as he or she is an inveterate sacralizer, bent on building one Babel after another.

Be that as it may, Weyembergh responded to my request with the lead article that follows. For reasons of health, Jacques Ellul was not able to comment on it. And I

chose to adopt a different tack by proposing, so to speak, to go "back to Ellul" by way of a reply to Weyembergh. Only, in order to give it a personal touch, I should like to clarify a few points.

With respect to the question whether technology is neutral-or not, I differ from Ellul for the same reason that, as the Christian tradition has asserted, humanity is sinful only *before* God, and not *per se.*

Charging me with verbal *magisme,* Weyembergh nonetheless contends that "technology does not tell what the essence of a thing is, but transforms its essence." Where does one find essences, if not in language and its magic (if one must call it so)? And, worse still,is not such a sentence the very same kind of description which technology supposedly shies off?

Nor am I intimidated by Weyembergh's assimilation of *logos* and being and, moreover, just because technology dismisses ontology, I resist the temptation to which he yields by identifying technology with the demise of language. Or could it possibly be that I must simply admit to being less beholden than he is to traditional categories still caught up in the web of substantialist ideology.

Finally, I am literally dumbfound by the charge that I am replacing one dualism by another — and the one Weyembergh suggests is definitely the least likely of all! Truly, I should not have to defend myself. With Martin Buber, whom I quote from memory, all I am saying is that the bible speaks of no division between sacred and profane; it only speaks of the Holy and that which is not yet holy. The table speaks of hallowing and, accordingly, asserts that in the beginning was the word, a word that acts - and changes the world, by changing swords into ploughshares, water into wine, cliches into metaphors.

Bulletin Board

The Ellul Institute Founded in Riverside California

Hie Ellul Institute has recently been established in Riverside California under the leadership of Dr. Donald J. Evans, Executive Director. Dr. Evans indicates that "higher education and particularly some Christian institutions do little to enter into fruitful dialogue on the wide variety of social and political issues facing American society and the world." The Institute seeks to change that. He believes that Ellul's work has "the potential to shape Christian thinking and better equip them to preach and teach their message of hope to a needy world." The goals of the institute are to:

- Advance the spirit of Ellul's work

- Conduct educational activities

- Maintain a media center

- Foster a scholarly network

- Provide a theological-ethical perspective

- Promote Christian Scholarship

- Disseminate results to interested publics

The institute will organize conferences, workshops and seminars as well as publish occasional papers, a quarterly newsletter, conference proceedings, etc. The Institute especially seeks to establish a communications network between interested scholars via both printed and electronic media. For further information contact: Dr. Donald J. Evans, Executive Director, The Ellul Institute, 8432 Magnolia Avenue, Suite 113, Riverside, CA 92504-3297. Phone (909) 689-5771, ext. 211, FAX (909) 351-18081.

New Editorial Board Appointments and International Subscriptions

Clifford Christians has accepted my invitation to become the Associate Editor of the *Ellul Forum.* He has been a valued contributing member of the Editorial Board since the beginning and I look forward to working more closely with him on future issues of the *Forum.*

Peter W.F. Davies of Bukinghamshire College in England has joined the editorial board of the Ellul Forum. Dr. Davies teaches in Business School. He will also act as circulation manager for the *Forum* in England. In the near future the *Forum* hopes to establish circulation managers in Holland and/or France. This means that international subscribers should find it easier to subscribe since they will not have to have their subscription checks made out in American dollars. I hope to have more news on these arrangements for the next issue. In the meantime persons in England and on the Continent can subscribe in English pounds. Send inquiries to: Peter W.F. Davies,

The Hollies, Back Lane,
Chalfont-St.-Giles, Buckinghamshire,
HP8 4PB, England.

Wheaton College Establishes the Jacques Ellul Collection

The Special Collections division of the Buswell Library at Wheaton College has established a special collection of materials devoted to the writings of Jacques Ellul. The collection is the gift of Dr. Joyce Main Hanks. Wheaton's collection is based upon a three-reel microfilm set (Series I) compiled for "Jacques Ellul: A Comprehensive Bibliography," in *Research in Philosophy and Technology,* supplement 1,1984, which Hanks prepared with the assistance of Rolf Asai, and followed in 1991 with "Jacques Ellul: A Comprehensive Bibliography Update," *Research in Philosophy and Technology,*

vol. 11. Photocopies have been made from the microfilm and include nearly all of Ellul's articles, essays, etc., as well as reviews of his work. The collection comprises approximately 12 linear feet.

Series II - prints from the microfilm, numbering over 6,000 - comprise the bulk of the collection(73 linear feet). These prints are primary sources of Ellul's writings, dissertations, and books (1936-83). Secondary sources include articles and book reviews (1939-1984). Ellul's writings are arranged chronologically (per the Bibliography which serves as a finding aid).

Series VII contains media material, including interviews with Ellul conducted by Joyce Hanks (16 cassettes) and others (3 cassettes), 4 cassettes of lectures, addresses, and a transcription of the October 1979 CBC program, "Ideas," with Russ Germain, Bill Vandenburg and Morris Wolfe.

Secondary material finishes the collection with works on Ellul, critical reviews, correspondence concerning Ellul, and serials on Ellul studies.

The collection was primarily processed by Jeffrey Darensburg during the academic years 1991-92 and 1992-93. It is the policy of the Special Collections, in compliance with copyright law, to not photocopy manuscript and unpublished material without the author's approval.

For further information contact the Wheaton College Special Collections:

Buswell Library Special Collections

Wheaton College

Wheaton, IL 60187-5593

(708) 752-5705, (708) 752-5855 FAX

wcarchiv@wheaton.edu

The "Association Jacques Ellul" Formed in Bordeaux

Colleagues and students of the work of Jacques Ellul in France have announced the formation of the "Association Jacques Ellul." The main objectives of the Association are to:

Preserve the collected works and cany on the initiatives begun by Ellul. This includes:

1. Preserving both his published and unpublished writings; conference notes of his lectures taken by his students and others, and also audio and video recordings. Also writings on Jacques Ellul or inspired by his thought and other diverse archival materials.

2. Organizing scholarly activities on his thought or around the dominant themes of his work.

3. The establishment of relations with other organizations or associations in France and other countries who have an interest in Ellul's scientific and/or theological work.

If you are interested in joining send your name and address (and institutional affiliation if any) with a check for 50 Francs to: 1'Assodation Jacques ELLUL, 42 avenue

Henri Fruges -33600 PESSAC France. Checks should be made out to TAssociation Jacques *FT TU*T."

Conference Planned in Bordeaux on "Technique and Society in the Work of Jacques Ellul"

On November 12th and 13th 1993 a conference on "Technique and Society in the Work of Jacques Ellul" will beheld at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Bordeaux France. This conference is bringing together scholars from around the world to address the following questions:

1. Is Ellul's analysis of the social transformations engendered by the development of technique confirmable?

2. Are the concepts elaborated by Ellul for analyzing "technique" adequate? Especially how can the conceptual problems posed by the notions of "technical autonomy" (autonomie de la technique) and "technical system" (systeme technicien) be clarified.

Anyone interested in attending should call Chantal DEMONGIN or Isabelle TANNIOU at 011-56-17-11-02 in Bordeaux.

Forum: Technique and Utopianism Revisited

Ellul and Vahanian on Technology and Utopianism

by Maurice Weyembergh[1]

Before comparing Ellul's and Vahanian's conceptions of utopia and technology, I would like to put my article in perspective and indicate its limits. My analysis will be based on Vahanian's last book, *L'utopie chretienne*[2] and I will compare his thesis with Ellul's. Both authors are in search of a Christian theology and an ethics for the modem world. Convinced of the specificity of our world, they try to define it and to reconstruct its genealogy. Science and technology have become the determining factors of our life and the problem is how to cope with their exigencies without giving up our humanity. If Ellul has written many books about theology, he is also the author of numerous historical, sociological and juridical works: the non-theological aspects of technology and politics, for instance, belong to his field of research. Vahanian is essentially a theologian: technology, then, is not analyzed in itself; what interests him is the possible religious origin or background of the technological development in our modem world and its consequences for the religious life and thinking. Another major aspect of the specificity of our world, which is related, as we shall see, to technology, is its utopianism. Both thinkers have analyzed this phenomenon, but they differ radically in their judgment, essentially positive for Vahanian, definitely negative for Ellul. If the comparison between both thinkers needs any further justification, it should be noted that the direct or indirect references to Ellul's work are numerous in Vahanian's book (pp.10,33,48,41,53,62,129,191, 218,221,223,305,*312). L 'utopie chretienne* is somehow a personal meditation on and an answer to many Ellulian themes.

As for myself, and speaking of limits, I am not a theologian, but a philosopher; my interest in the topic is not religious, but historical and critical: to see how two Protestant theologians analyze and judge the modem world. It is obvious that a short article cannot explore and take into account the richness and variety of their thought. Concerning Ellul, I refer the interested reader to my other studies.[3] In the following

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[1] I wish to thank my wife who has looked over the English.

[2] Desclee de Brouwer, Paris 1992.

[3] "Espoir et espdrance chez J. Ellul" in *L'experience du temps. Melanges offerts a J. Paumen*, Ousia, Bruxelles, 1989, pp. 199-226; *Entrepolitique et technique. Aspects de I'utopisme contemprain*, es-

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pages I will limit myself to a sketch of three main themes of Ellul and Vahanian - the specificity of the West, utopianism and technology, and the problem of the language.

1) The Specificity of the West

Ellul has presented his vision of the western world in *La trahison de l'Occident (The Betrayal of the West).[4] The title is very clear: the West has betrayed the West, it has become unfaithful to its origins; the result of a *self-betrayal* can of course only be negative. It is based on the inversion of three fundamental human faculties:

1) The West has understood the best, among all cultures, what liberty means, especially on the level of *history* man can and should make history; but the West has not been careful enough to avoid the paroxysmic component of liberty: liberty always tends towards more liberty and ends by destroying itself. If man can make history, he is not, however, its absolute master: God has his way in the process;

2) The West has brought out the potentialities of *reason,* the task of which is not to eliminate feelings and passions, but to control them. Reason however can go too far and forget its balance-bringing function. It becomes dien *rationality* and *rationalism.* Rationality reduces everything to its quantitative aspects and neglects or eliminates its non-quantifiable components. Measure (balance) becomes measuring. Rationalism forgets the critical function of reason, especially towards reason itself, and changes into the myth of reason, into scientism;

3) The dynamics of the West is due to the development of two antithetical forms of love, *eras* and *agape,* the possessive love, the will to power, and the brotherly love, charity. Possessive love is just another name for *espoir* (hope related to human needs and achievements), brotherly love for *esperance* (hope related to the expectations of faith). Ellul interprets one of St. Paul's dreams, which invites him to go to Greece, as a divine intervention: it indicates that the Greek *eras* has to be completed and balanced by the Christian *agape.* The opposition between them has caused, in Ellul's understanding, the extraordinary dynamics of the West But *eras* has subdued and destroyed, little by little, *agape.*

If you bring together paroxysmic liberty, rationality, rationalism and will to power, you get a rather explosive cocktail: this dangerous mixture explains Ellul's Concern about the future of the West. One of the results of this development is the rise of the technological system and the madness of utopianism, which constitutes the peak of l'espoir. Ellul, needless to say, is a prophet of doom.

Vahanian's vision is quite different. He sees this specificity as the consequence of the histoiy of Europe: it is linked to a change in the religious paradigm, the passage from the paradigm of the sacred to that of the utopian. Although there exists no

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peciafiy chapter IV, *"La critique de la technique et de l'utopie chez J. Ellul et H. Jonas", Vrin,Paris, 1991, pp.151-218.*
    [4] Calmann-L6vy, Paris, 1975.

pure paradigm — there are elements of the utopian conception in myth and mythical vestiges in utopianism — Vahanian contends that that change, which is still going on, is the real background, the determining factor of western histoiy. Technology, then, is a product of the utopianism of the new religious paradigm; it is, however, an effect which reinfoirces its cause. For Vahanian, this move is essentially *positive,* even if he recognizes that classic utopia (literary utopia) and technological utopianism, left uncontrolled, can lead to the destruction of the planet.

Let us look more closely at the two paradigms and underline from the start that *L'utopie chretienne* is based on a systematic opposition between them and on sets of antithetic concepts. The passage from one paradigm to the other brings about the death of God, which does not at all mean the accession of humanity to adulthood and the obsolescence of the Father figure, but the passage from a soteriological myth to an utopian religiosity. In the first you expect to leave *this* world for another *(changer de monde),* in the latter you tiy to change the world (changer le monde), a world of scarcity, and to eliminate the shortages. In the myth everything is based on the determinism of nature (being) and its evolution or on the determinism of history and its fatality; their laws cannot be transgressed and you have to follow the path which goes from the *beginning* to the *end.* With utopian religiosity the determinisms of nature and history are broken: the fundamental categories are creation and the *new (novum)* on the one hand and the *ultimate (eschaton)* on the other. Creation implies that you start anew, that the new building is without any precedent. In its perspective nature is not only the given *(la donnee),* which you cannot change, but a gift *(le don, la donne),* which can and has to be improved (p.257). The ultimate refers to the land of Promise: the land of Canaan or the church as the body of Christ are its approximations, but they may not be confused with the Reign of God itself. The difference implies that the future remains open.

In the paradigm of the sacred there is no room for discussion and the use of language is irrelevant, since any "no" is excluded (saying "yes" implies the possibility of saying "no"). To God, however, you can say "no": God reveals himself *(Dieu s'expose),* he does not *impose* anything. The possibility opened by the dialogue with God explains that He can be challenged: the *holy* is not the *sacred.* At the same time it makes us responsible for our choices and our decisions: the ethical dimension becomes essential.

A great deal of Vahanian's book is dedicated to the description of this change of paradigm; secularization, desacralization, demythologization, disenchantment and deconstruction are dealt with and analyzed. The religions of the East belong to the paradigm of the sacred, those of the West to the utopian paradigm. Vahanian tries to show that Judaism and Greek thought are at the origins of this process of secularization (it brings *this* world to the fore) and of the desacralization of religion through religion itself. In Christ these two elements, the Jewish and the Greek, come together and reinforce one another. Vahanian too refers to St. Paul's trip to Greece, but to underline that there is, despite the differences, something in common between the *Logos* and the

Word: the openness to the new, to utopianism (the utopia of the *cosmos* and that of the *land of promise* for instance).

This brief sketch of Ellul's and Vahannian's conceptions allows us to see the fundamental difference in approach: the development of the technological system and of utopianism is the result of a betrayal of the most remarkable western achievements for Ellul. For Vahanian, technology and utopoanism are the "children" of Greece, Judaism and Christianity, and it would be foolish to reject them; it would be an enormous historical mistake not to see that the line which relates them to their "parents" is direct, in spite of the possible distorsions. To put it bluntly, technology is a basic potentiality of the Christian heritage, not its betrayal.

2) Technology and Utopianism

Ellul has analyzed technology in three of his books, *La technique ou I'enjeu du siecle (The Technological Society), Le systeme technician* and *Le bluff technologique.*[5] The six or eight characteristics of technology, six in 1954, eight in 1977, are well-known. As a system, made possible by the invention of the computer and the theory of information, it tries to submit everything to its totalizing tendency. This tendency, however, is doomed to fail, because the substrates of technology, nature, society and man, cannot be totally reduced without being destroyed: dysfunctions develop and will finally ruin the system. But in the meantime, nature, society, man and his world of symbols will have been savaged. Ellul's description follows a recurrent pattern in his works: man is merely a sorcerer's apprentice, when he abandons his religious faith and only relies on human hope to change this world. The tools he invents, be it money, the city, the State or technology in general, become independent of their inventor's control and impose theirown logic, which is not at all a human one. They become systems which work for their own sake, neither for man's sake nor for God's glory. In his theological works he describes them as *exousiae,* demoniac powers which oppose God's intentions and take possession of man's soul.[6]

Utopianism makes the totalizing tendency inherent in the system (the city, the State, technology) *explicit* and *conscious:* it gives the system its inspiration (ideology) and/or its "finishing touch". The technological system and the technological utopianism are parallel phenomenons which make one another complete, perfect. Ellul then radically rejects every form of utopia - he is more "utopiaphobic" than "technophobic" —, and for an obvious reason: utopia, the peak of the purely human hope, is the malevolent, perverse rival of *I'esperance,* the hope based on faith. Only the latter knows that a purely human enterprise, devoid of any divine inspiration, cannot succeed. The curse of the prophet Ellul on utopianism is total. *Espoir* and *esperance* are as different as will to power and brotherly love or as revolution and revelation.

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[5] Armand Colin, Paris 1954; Calmann-Ldvy, Paris, 1977; Hachette, Paris 1988.
[6] *Lesnouveaux possedesfFayard,* Paris, 1973.

The specificity of the religious hope cannot be reduced without destroying the core of faith. Otherwise Ellul and Ernst Bloch, the author of *Das Prinzip Hoffnung,* would preach the same gospel; in fact they are rival brothers, bitter enemies (in Bloch's eyes the classless society implies that religion, the people's opium, would be given up). Messaianism and utopianism (marxism) do not coincide. The Reign of God will come, but *He* and *He alone* chooses the moment; in the meantime, the Christian, who is *in* this world but *not from* this world *(il est dans le monde mais pas de ce monde),*[7] has to live according to his faith. He is like the Knight of Durer; with his eyes fixed on his aim, the New Jerusalem, he is riding between Death and Devil. He knows that his enterprise here on earth might fail, but his *esperance* will allow him to start anew.

Vahanian's comments on technology as such are scarce and, as I said earlier, he does not give us any thorough description or critique of the *phenomena technique,* although he uses this well-known EHulian expression (from *The Technological Society).* He considers that technology, from the simplest tool to the most sophisticated computer, is *one:* it changes man. There are of course differences in the way in which and the degree to which they affect him; technology as *method* is more than just a tool (which only prolongs the human body): it not only alters man more radically but also transforms the world, it humanizes them both. The thesis of the "oneness" of technology has to be discussed and not only asserted; it could be, and that is just Ellul's conception, that the nature of technology changes in the course of its development. What is positive in the beginning can become negative or threatening by its quantitative growth. A change in quantity can cause a change in quality. For Vahanian -afld this is anti-Ellulian too-, technology is *neutral* in itself (pp.53,216), neither good nor bad; its consequences depend on the manner in which man uses it. In Ellul's opinion, with the appearance of the phenomene *technique* and the systeme *technician,* technology has its autonomy, its own development: he contends that any discourse about the neutrality of technology is a platitude or a dangerous mistake.

But, as I noted earlier, Vahanian's aim is not to give a description of modem technology, but to try to interpret "the theological significance" (p.53) of its rise and evolution in the West and its consequences for religion. We have seen that the passage from the paradigm of the sacred to that of the utopian is Vahanian's explanation of the origins of technology. The problem is to know if secularization, which has been the condition of possibility of technology, will not lead, reinforced as it is by the development of science and technology (they do not need Christianity any more), to sheer secularism, to the end of Christianity, to the death of God (and not only of the soteriological God).

Vahanian refuses this interpretation. In bis opinion — and this is in my eyes the most original and at the same time the most risky part of his book — technology could help to rediscover and to deepen the utopianism of Christianity, it could help to purify the utopian paradigm from its sacred "reminiscences". Vahanian contends that at bottom the problem of technology is theological.

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[7] *La fix au prix du doute,* Hachette, Paris, 1980, p.322.

But this means that theology should accept to modify itself radically, that it should create *une nouvelle matrice noetique* ("a new noetic matrix", p.294), that the church should "convert itself again" (p.227) in order to bring about a "spiritual revolution" (p.87), without which it would be "a world too late"(p.85).

Why, then, can technology be the motor of a new civilization (and let us not forget that Christianity is not bound to a special civilization)? For different reasons: it is global and planetary; it brings classes, cultures, and religions together; it puts "the world into man's hands" (p.193); it throws a new light on man and shows that he is still to be made (p.315): man produces products which produce him (p.315); it challenges God (p.312). Since it creates a new man and a new world and since it helps to solve the problem of scarcity which obliged man to leave this world for another instead of changing it, technology can henceforth realize all possibilities. But, since not all of them are useful or desirable, man has to choose between them. Technology, then, brings us back to the *necessity* of a new ethics: looking backward cannot offer any solutions, because the possibilities are new. Our decisions concern the future, the utopia, in which we shall have to live. All in all, this *theological understanding* of technology brings the Christian back to the sources of the Judeo-Christian tradition: the utopianism which inspires the technological civilization, in fact the *modem experience of transcendence* (p.414), has to be reinterpreted, along the lines of Christian utopianism (which includes creation, hope *(esperance),* redemption and the Reign of God).

Vahanian is thus quite positive towards utopia and utopianism. Of course, he is not blind to their dangers; the classic utopias, for instance, which reduce religion to politics or politics to religion are criticized. More important yet: many utopias propose that the author calls *& final solution,* a perfect state or society which, once realized, may not be changed any more; it would mean altering and destroying the perfection. Utopianism for Vahanian has to remain open: a final solution implies the sacralization of a situation, it falls back into the paradigm of the sacred. The land of Canaan bears some resemblance to the Promised Land, but they do not coincide: any sort of state of a fully developed technological civilization is not to be confused with the New Jerusalem, the Reign of God.

The difference then is irreducible: to Vahanian technological utopianism has its roots in Christian utopianism and it has to be reinvested by religious hope. To Ellul utopianism and technology have their roots in *eras,* the will to power, and *espoir* and *esperance* differ in nature, not in degree. The opposition will become quite clear in Ellul's and Vahanian's conception of language. Vahanian's interpretation of God and of the Christian faith is much more metaphorical, while Ellul's conception remains much more literal.

3) The Problem of Language

In Ellul's view God has initiated the dialogue with man. But man is free and he has the possibility to refuse the divine call: many prohets-Jonas for instance to whom Ellul

is particularly attached-do not respond immediately to God's appeal. History then is unforseeable, even for God. Other options are possible: man can create his own tools in such a way, as we noted, that they take possession of his mind. He sacralizes them and becomes their servant: God's Word is finally covered by their noise, ignored or forgotten. The result can be the silence of God, His turning away from man. Our modem world is dominated by these two events, and nihilism is the unavoidable consequence.

In *Le systeme technician* Ellul has contended that with the development of the system and its totalizing tendency, the symbolical mediations, which in the West are related for a good part to the Christian religion, are destroyed by or subordinated to the technological mediations. The cost of technological progress is the destruction of the symbolical orientation systems and man's symbolical misery. The Word, as Ellul puts it in the title of one of his booksl,[8] has been humiliated, partly by the production, reproduction and spreading of the images and idols. The need of symbolical orientation can lead modem man, and particularly the artist who is bound to symbols, to two extreme and useless endeavors: on the one hand tire flight into a symbolical but Active and irrtional world, cut from the reality of the technological system, as if a life outside or above the system were possible; on the other the attempt to supersede it by an artificial production of symbols, which must fail: the technological system is quite alien to the symbolical mediation, it only works according to its own demands. *Laoanism* (the school of the French analyst) develops for instance, in Ellul's view, a kind of verbal *magicianry (un magisme verbal)* which deludes itself with the thought that words can master the world of things.[9] The unity of technology (wherever it appears, it has the same characteristics, produces the same consequences and the same rhythm and mode of life) and its *universality* (all activities can be submitted to and organized along technological rules which require the same mode of thinking) destroy the particularities of the different cultural worlds. Up-rootedness and uniformity are the consequences.

Ellul is very critical of the recent trends in linguistics, especially of structural linguistics, which, in his opinion, reduces symbols to signs and language to technological communication. This reduction is parallel to the invasion by the theory of information and by the binary language of the computer. Since that language is based on the principle of non-contradiction, Ellul goes so far as to contend that the computer would be incapable of apprehending a dialectical comprehension of the world.[10] This assertion needs to be clarified and specified: the "language" of the computer itself has to be distinguished from the language of its users. If Hegel and Marx had had a computer with word processing programs at their disposal, they could have used it without any difficulty for their dialectical thinking. The binary language of the computer does not prevent from writing symbolical, poetical or dialectical texts; it is just the manner in which it stores the words. Most computer users completely ignore the "language" of

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[8] *La parole humiliee,* Seuil, Paris, 1981.

[9] *Le systeme techniaen,* p.128.

[10] *Le systeme techniden,* p.117.

the "machine". The engineers who design the computer are compelled to respect the demands of the binary system in order to have the machine work but they are not obliged to think along its lines, even when they wonder how to improve it.

Vahanian's views on the subject are quite different. Let us begin with a critical note. His chapters on language are perhaps the most difficult to read: they are allusive and associative rather than analytical or argumentative. Moreover his attitude as a writer towards language differs radically from Ellul's, which can be inspired, especially in the theological works as, for instance, *Sans feu ni lieu*,[11] but remains essentially classical or traditionalist. Vahanian likes to play with words, being in turn funny, ironical, disrespectful, decirive, poetical or oracular. He admires Lacan, whom he quotes rather often, and is interested by the recent evolution of linguistics. Thus, he accepts the reduction of symbols or signs and finds it positive; in a bold movement, he even proposes to interpret the line which separates the signifier from the signified as a *screen* rather than as a *mask.* He cannot resist a pun (some are excellent as that about *ancrer/encrer, to anchor/to ink, p.250),* he likes to play with ready-made expressions but to distort them and have them say just the opposite of what one might expect. In his chapters about language, the reader gets the impression that Vahanian's language becomes somehow independent of the subject, language in general, and plays its own games, for its own sake. This may, of course, be intended as an illustration of the creative, utopian power of language, but it does not help the reader.

Now God is not an idol, he is holy and not sacred. For Vahanian, His creation through the Word is, as we noted, creation of something new, something without precedent coming out of a *non-lieu,* a juridical term meaning that there is no basis for prosecution; however, Vahanian uses the expression in its etymological meaning of being "without a place", in Greek "ou-topos", utopia.

Speech then is utopian. The danger is that what was new and came from *nowhere* at the moment of its creation can be fixed, sacralized, and become *& final solution.* The *non-lieu* from which it emerged can be reduced to a *lieu-dit,* a well-known spot That is what happened to the language of faith; it was sterilized and frozen through mere repetition. Vahanian proposes to rejuvenate the "language of faith" by "faith as language". He hopes that, through faith, speech and interpretation of texts will find their creative, risky character again. If I understand him rightly, saying *I believe* should be such a creative, utopian speech act, coming from a nowhere (from non-belief), not turned to the past and to the rejection of tire technological civilization, but to the future. Theology then has to defrost its language.

In the speech relation between God and man or between men, faith as language liberates the partners from the determinism of nature and histoiy. Language has a fundamental role to play in the humanization of man and nature: its utopian character means that man can never feel himself as complete, as being *tout I'homme-,* and think of society as making possible that *touthomme* (every man) becomes *tout I'homme* man

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[11] Gallimard, Paris, 1975.

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is his totality. If this were ever to be realized, the Reign of God, the pleroma, would have been achieved.

What is the relationship, then, between technology arid language? Vahanian's answer is that technology is merely a form of language which has been made possible through the use of language itself. This is contrary to Ellul's view: God's or man's language do not have the same features as technology. Between the symbolical mediation and the technological mediation there is, as between *esperance* and *espoir,* a difference of nature, not of degree. You can reduce the symbolical to the technological *(esperance* to *espoir,* faith to belief) and loose all its substance, but you cannot jump or go back from the technological to the symbolical (from *espoir* to *esperance,* from belief to faith) without rejecting the technological exigencies.[12] I see the proof of this radical opposition to Vahanian's thesis in the fact that Ellul has written a quite positive foreword to a (remarkable) book by G. Hottois, *Le signe et la technique.*[13] Hottois' main thesis is that *technique*[14] is not all of the nature of the *logos,* (discourse), and especially theo-logy and philosophy (onto-logy), are rather at a loss when confronted with technology: technology does not *describe* man, nature or the world, it does not tell what man ought to do, it *acts into* them (and not only *upon* them); it does not tell what the *essence* of a thing is, it *transforms* its essence. In fact, technology makes ontology impossible: it creates new beings and changes the old ones. To think that language has the same properties as technology is somehow to remain in or fall back into magic. From Ellul's and Hottois' point of view, Vahanian's conception is essentially metaphorical, it is comparable to Lacanism and partakes of its *magisme verbal*

If I understand him rightly, from Vahanian's point of view, Ellul remains the prisoner of the dualism inherent in the sacred (the symbol is different from the sign, as *esperance* is different from *espoir,* and faith from belief). But Ellul could answer that Vahanian replaces one dualism, that of the sacred and the profane, by another, but between the paradigm of the sacred and the utopian paradigm. He could argue that Vahanian's book is based on a very long list of pairs of antithetic concepts.

To end this sketch I would like to address a critique to both Ellul and Vahanian. From my point of view, it is necessary to distinguish between eschatology, utopia and utopianism. Eschatology is the knowledge of the ultimate things and is essentially religious: the *eschaton* is revealed by God, by an apocalypse. Utopia is a literary genre, in which the author tries by speculation to imagine a better or a perfect type of man and society. He knows, that that society does not exist anywhere and that it is quite probably not realizable. The partisan of utopianism, on the contrary, is convinced that the perfect society is realizable and will be realized by bis own efforts: the passage from utopia to utopianism is a consequence of the myth of the French Revolution. Through

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[12] *La foiauprix du doute,* pp.158-162.

[13] Aubier, Paris, 1984.

[14] It is quite typical that, in his writings in French, Ellul, refuses to use the word *technologic* for *technique:*in techno-logy you have the word logos. *Le bluff technologique* means the bluff of the discourse about technology, not the bluff of technology.

revolution man will indeed achieve utopia, perfection. In my view utopia is a very useful exercise, because it is critical of the evils of every easting situation; utopianism, on the contraiy, is rather dangerous: its partisans are *true believers,* militants (for instance the communists) who easily jump to the conclusion that the perfection of things to come justifies whichever measure they take. Ellul insists on the distinction between eschatology on the one hand and utopia and utopianism on the other. But he does not make any difference between utopia and utopianism, which explains why he rejects them both without nuances. It fits his strategy of discrediting profane hope in order to elevate religious hope. Vahanian does not ignore these distinctions, but his main thesis –technological utopianism is a product of Christian utopianism — obliges him to blur them or at least to reduce them: he does so by using the word utopia and utopianism in its etymological meaning, *ou-topos, non-lieu,* ”nowhere”, and by extending it to eschatology. The device matches his purpose: metaphorical language has its merits, but I wonder whether it serves the interest of clarity.

Back to Ellul by Way of Weyembergh

by Gabriel Vahanian

He still defies classification, but Jacques Ellul no longer is as solitary a figure as his legend has persistenrly claimed him to be. Though the number of articles and books - not to speak of dissertations - written about him abroad by far outweighs those published in France, his name constantly, regularly, appears in an increasingly wider range of works. Cited even by people who have not really read him, Ellul is rather close to having become sort of a public monument passers-by see without looking at it. Known yet ignored, his influence can be felt in anything that deals with technology generally and, in particular, with the fact that this thing one talks about is no longer extraneously identified with the machine or the megamachine, but is interiorized and assimilated and identified as a social phenomenon, the technological phenomenon by contrast with the mere technical operation.

Thus, even in France, Ellul is not unknown. Irritatingly rubbing against the grain, he upsets the apple cart. But, in so disrupted a world as ours, where people seek only to escape from it all instead of being confronted with it, let alone with themselves, Ellul is no guru. He does not even claim to proffer some sophisticated version of religion, contenting himself with playing the role of a physician who, because he has some idea of what health and its preservation is all about, is in no need whatever to lecture at his patient, but seeks to heal her.

Of course, Ellul's socio-political analysis of our technological civilization goes hand in hand with his religious investigation and his theological assessment of the human predicament. And, of course, likewise which hand leads the other is a moot question. But I would not go so far as Ellul does when, at times, he denies or, at lest seems

to deny that his sociology and the pessimism that adumbrates it is influenced by his theology and it fundamentally inalienable optimism, or vice versa. There is, actually, no need to blur the issue. And, I surmise, what Ellul himself means, when he contends that his sociology owes nothing to his theology, or the other way around, is simply that one needs no specifically Christian equipment in order to assess the impact of technology on the apparent depersonalization of the individual or on the no less apparent dehumanization of the social network. Still, it behooves not to forget that Ellul is too much of a Calvinist for him to overlook the final implication of that Protestant notion par excellence when it comes to social policy, namely the priesthood of all believers. A notion in whose perspective, theology does not fill its role and its task is not fulfilled by subordinating or by annexing this or that other field of inquiry. There is nothing religious that has no secular dimension, and there is nothing secular that has no religious dimension. The task of the theologian is fulfilled only to the extent that is also fulfilled the task of the sociologist — only to the extent, in other words, that, so far as Ellul is concerned, if he should be taken for a good theologian, he would not like that that was the reason he was considered a good sociologist.

Whether Ellul is as good a religious thinker as he is a sociopolitical analyst, or vise versa, is not the question: there is no cleavage in his thinking. But there is, I dare say, a "fault". It comes, however, not from the fact that he is fluent with either of the two Karls — Marx and Barth —, but from the fact that, unlike Marx, Barth had nothing to say about technology. It comes from the fact that, unlike Marx again, who somehow saw religion at least as an ersatz of utopia, Barth entirely evaded the issue, and its intention, by withdrawing and isolating the Christian faith from the arena of religion altogether and sadly, I am afraid, settled for some theological Newspeak. Not that, *I consequently consider Ellul* to be an unconditional Barthian, on the contrary. The fact nevertheless is that Barth's influence, whether accepted or suffered, has hindered and choked Ellul's own creative approach to theological reflection, as is ultimately evidenced even by his notion of universal salvation, of which Barth himself said that it could only be taught by a fool while only the impious would not believe it. In other words, the fact is that Ellul's socio-political analysis of the technological phenomenon calls for another theological method than one borrowed from Barth, precluded as it is from coping with the problem otherwise than in terms of such classical categories as subject and object, body and soul, contemplation and action, already and not yet, etc.

Paradoxically, Ellul is therefore somehow justified in claiming that his spiritual convictions do not interfere with his sociological findings. That is, objectively speaking, he is right: his technological pessimism (so to speak) does not merely reflect the pessimistic side of his religious conviction. But, subjectively speaking, he fails to or is prevented from drawing a correlation between his ultimately theological optimism and his no less ultimate technological optimism: he does not square his statements about universal salvation with the recurrent optimism of statements like the following: 1 have never said that [technology] could not be mastered." He would have needed another theological method.

Put differently, as Ellul himself is not aware, discourse about technology, funded as it is by newfangled categories, requires at least an adequate type of conceptuality than is allowed by traditional theological discourse, itself dependent on an entirely different experience of the human predicament and its world. Instead, insisting on demythologizing the world rather than the bible or, more precisely, the biblical view of the world, he won't realize that, in fact, the two belong together, that, demythologizing one without demythologizing also the other, we should be faced and stuck with the unacceptable as well as unwarranted option of secularism on the one hand and, on the other, fideism — a mesmerizing option, especially in a country like France.

In cultural terms, the French revolution of 1789 has resulted in consolidating so unilateral an understanding of secularization as to be exclusively synonymous with the expropriation of the church and the demise of Christianity. With the exception of Strasbourg and the regions of Alsace and Lorraine which still enjoy the shelter of a peculiar, legal status, France is probably, to this day, the only developed nation whose educational system has deliberately inhibited if not repressed religion. It follows that, culturally speaking, no theologian is more isolated than a French theologian, unless, like Teilhard de Chardin, who lived abroad and coined new concepts, or (though he has done neither) like Jacques Ellul, he strikes it rich in some other field of inquiry. For the same reason, most French theologians continue to labor under the weight of old-fashioned categories, remaining oblivious to the fact that atoms and molecules or neutrons and protons are not objects in the same sense as were objects previously. Is it conceivable that this difference should be considered significant enough to affect scientific discourse, while being practically shunned by the language of faith. Nor is it surprising that, besides the theologies of liberation, even particularly the so-called theology of the death of God has cut no ice with Ellul,[15] in spite of the fact that, with the exception of one of its exponents, all the others had been weaned on vintage Barth.

The various stands Ellul takes with respect to society, the state or religion are thus heavily dependent upon this cultural horizon, typical of the French mind-set. A mind-set which, under the guise of the worst bureaucratic system ever devised, nonetheless prides itself on its Cartesian heritage or, actually, what's left of the caricature thereof. No administration is as impersonal, even — the term is far from inappropriate - clerical as the French. None is as deservingly laden with the worst connotations of la technique, the pyramidal structure of which, whether in social affairs or in the academic field, invariably culminates in Paris. To the medieval, clerical dichotomy of priesthood and laity has succeeded a no less clerical and equally classy division of the French mind-set between parisian and provincial. I wonder, as did Harvey Cox i f I am not mistaken, whether some of Ellul's sharpest strictures levelled at *la technique* do not stem from his first-hand and exclusive acquaintance with this clerical, bureaucratic mindset.

But then, I am equally puzzled and wonder why Ellul, who surely knows better and has known better all along, has supplied credence to the notion that technology

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[15] Cf. Maurice Weyembergh, *Entre politique et technique,* Paris 1991, p. 173.

could only fan into structures that dehumanize the social network or dislocate the human person. Even Weyembergh, though partial to Ellul, points out that in the latter's view "technology best accommodates itself with a centralized economy and an anti-democratic, authoritarian system," but hastens to observe that this view has not been "corroborated by recent developments."[16] Indeed, Ellul himself can on the one hand write that "technology engenders totalitarianism,"[17] and assert, on the other hand, that, though it is autonomous, technology nevertheless can be conquered and tamed[18] — albeit through being sacralized! In other words, we are enslaved to technology, though not by technology so much as through the sacralization of technology. In other words, again, although *la technique* is autonomous, it is not immunized against being sacralized, against the sacred! Writes Ellul: "We must avoid a misunderstanding: people are absolutely not free from sacralizing or not sacralizing technology; they cannot help from making sense of life if based even on technology."[19] Much as he is tantalized by the sacred, Ellul keeps plowing. In 1982 he does not exclude the possibility for technology to appear at last as harbinger of a new hope for humanity, and he writes: "We are today witnessing a development which triggers a good deal of hope — a transformation of *la Technique.* I would say that till ca 1970 technology was an unshakable power and went only one direction. It really was the system and had only one conceivable goal, growth, in every sense, in terms of power, of production, etc., though this growth was beginning to be questioned by some. Now, mutations have occurred, such as automation (to be sure it has existed for a long time, I talked about it in my first book in 1950) or computerization, can eventually alter the orientation of technology, give society a new direction."[20] Moreover, having made his point, Ellul feels the need even to add a complaint. He deplores that in a book Jacques Delors (now President of the European Economic Commission) has just developed theses very close to his own yet without noticing it.[21]

Nor will Ellul fail subsequently to stress this point. Contrary to widespread opinion, he is no enemy of technology. In fact, his attitude in this respect is not ambivalent at all.

But it is ambiguous.

And the question, then, will be: whence the source of this ambiguity? But, first, let me cite as evidence of this contention the passage, partially quoted already, from the epilogue of Les nouveaux poss6d6s, published in 1973: "Now is the time more than ever, when people become enslaved to things and to other people through a religious

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[16] Maurice Weyembergh, *Entre politique et technique,* p. 156.

[17] Jacques Ellull,*La technique ou I'enjeu du siecle,* Calmann-LSvy, Paris 1954, p. 257.

[18] Jacques Ellul, *Les nouveaus possedes,* Fayard, Paris 1973, p. 259; *Changer de revolution,* Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1982, p. 224. Cf. Patrick Troude-Chastenet, Lire Ellul, P.U., Bordeaux n.d., p. 67,167.

[19] Jacques Ellul, *Les nouveauxpossedes,* p. 259, n.l.

[20] Jacques Ellul, *Les nouveaux pqssedes,* p. 224.

[21] Jacques Delors, *La revolution du temps choisi,* Albin Michel, Paris 1980, cited by Jacques Ellul, *Changer de revolution,* p. 224, n.l.

process. It is not la technique which enslaves us, but the sacred which, once transferred to technology, prevents us from having a critical function in the service of human development. It is not the State which enslaves us, though it be a centralized and a police state, but it is its sacral transfiguration (as inevitable as is that of technology) which turns our adoration towards this concatenation of bureaux... Thus it is that religiosity, from which no one in the situation where we are is immune, is the surest agent of our alienation...”[22]

The ambiguity betrayed by Ellul's position clearly stems, on the one hand, from his contention that, as Barth would have it, and a host of anthropologists and assorted sociologists since Durkheim, religion is bound up with the sacred rather than with the holy and, in the last analysis, with hallowing the name of God as well as the land of promise in anticipation of the kingdom of God, i.e. with utopia; on the other hand, it stems from the fact that, in the footsteps of Barth, having thus deprived religion of its biblUcally legitimate utopian dimension, Ellul is logically led to minimize, even to edulcorate, the intrinsic utopianism of technology itself. This he does by claiming that, while technology desacralilzes everything it touches, it inevitably remains a stooge of the sacred. But such a consideration is worth taking into account if, and only if, utopia is identified with the quest of a final solution, the very kind of solution of which the biblical notion of the kingdom or, put differently, the utopianism of biblical religion wants to be and is the constant and perennial subversion. Evidently, in accordance with biblical religion, so long as utopia means changing the world instead of changing worlds, it cannot pave the way for any final solution. Or else, it would have to thwart both nature and history, instead of assuming them while at.the same time broadening their respective horizons. Utopia loses ground and becomes a bottomless pit as soon as, under its guise, is advocated a final solution. A final solution is the goal of nature or of history in the same sense that an oak tree is the goal of an acom: it belongs to a realm where ends and means are not differentiated. Like biblical utopianism (the kingdom of God is no achievement of nature or history), technological utopianism rests on differentiated ends and means. Accordingly, utopia can only be provisional as well as proleptic, i.e. an anticipation. Just because it is an anticipation, utopia can only be nothing more, and must be nothing less, than an approximation'[23]

Ellul and Vahanian: Apocalypse or Utopia?

by Darrell J. Fasching

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[22] Jacqeus Ellul *Les nouveauxpossedes,* p. 259.

[23] For further insights into utopianism and the connection between utopia, revoution, and the final solution, or artificialism and fabricabilit6 (that is, utopian as fabricated world order), see not only Maurice Weyembergh's *Entre politique et technique* but also his latest book on *Charles Maurras et la revolution fangaise,* Vrin, Paris 1992.

There is a great deal in Jacques Ellul's writings which lends justification to Maurice Weyembergh's interpretation of Ellul as totally anti-utopian, and yet, as I have argued in *The Thought of Jacques Ellul,* Ellul can only be anti-utopian by being inconsistent with himself, which in this case he is. Weyembergh argues that Ellul totally opposes human hope *(espoir)* — including all utopian hopes — and the hope of faith *(esperance).* And yet in his best moments Ellul argues that "whoever receives the revelation of God should give heed to men's hope, not in order to tell them that they are deluded ... not in order to take up a position of superiority, but to help them give birth to their hope.. ."[24] So Ellul has argued that Christians should support others in their revolutionary hopes, seeking to rehabilitate human revolutionary hope *(espoir)* by introducing into it the hope of faith *(esperance).* If this is so, then why can't utopia be likewise rehabilitated? This is the challenge to Ellul brought about by the theology of Gabriel Vahanian.

After struggling with the theological perspectives of both Ellul and Vahanian I have come to a slightly different conclusion than that offered by Weyembergh. Although he is right to point to the impasse between them concerning the relation between technique and language, still there is more agreement between them than Weyembergh allows. My own reading of their arguments leads me to believe that this is the case because each is largely right in what he affirms and wrong in what he denies.

When all is said and done, I believe Ellul must be considered a utopian thinker. Few claims about Jacques Ellul would seem more paradoxical (that is, "contrary to appearances") than this claim. You do not have to read very far in Ellul before you discover that he considers utopian thought the primary myth of our technological civilization, whose sole function is to render human beings totally subservient to its necessities. We will put up with any dehumanization, he argues, we will accept any demand for efficiency, and give up any freedom, as long as we believe we shall be rewarded with utopia. If there is such a thing as fate or necessity in a technological society, if technology has a certain autonomy, it is because we have been seduced into surrendering ourselves to its demands in return for the promise that it will fulfill our wildest utopian dreams for comfort, for pleasure and for success.

Yet, despite this, Ellul must be categorized as a utopian thinker. Ellul's own theological ethics is oriented toward a utopian transformation of society. But that utopianism gets drowned in the rhetoric of apocalypse. Ellul's phobia about the word "utopia" has prevented him from seeing that his unique appropriation of apocalyptic tradition is utopian. In fact Ellul inverts the popular meanings of *apocalypse* and *utopia* in his own theological writings. Where the world embraces utopian hopes and fears apocalyptic scenarios, Ellul embraces apocalyptic hopes and fears utopian scenarios. This reversal is intimately tied to his distinction between the sacred and the holy. Contraiy to popular usage, Ellul treats the terms "sacred" and "holy" not as synonyms but as antonyms. Thus the sacred is, for him, the reverse image of the holy. And whereas the sacred

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[24] *To Will and To Do,* (Pilgrim Press, 1969), p. 81.

encloses society in a fixed order, the holy introduces that element of transcendence which opens society to the future.

For Ellul, utopia is an expression of the sacral imagination of our technicist society and the apocalyptic mode of thought expresses the transforming power of the holy. As a sociologist, Ellul argues that the sacred is simply an inherent element in the psycho-social structure of our human world which serves to legitimate the structure of a technicist society so that it becomes totalitarian, demonic and dehumanizing. Only by breaking with the seductive allure of this sacral world, he argues, can a transcendent freedom be reintroduced into the technological city whereby it can become an anticipation of a new city - the New Jerusalem. For Ellul, the theologian, apocalyptic hope is just that hope in the Wholly Other which ruptures one's psychological and spiritual dependency on the sacral structures of this world. It is precisely that hope which is not conformed to this world and therefore able to transform the world.

The thrust of Gabriel Vahanian's theological critique of Ellul, especially in *God and Utopia,* has been precisely to chide Ellul for not recognizing that there is such a thing as a biblical form of utopianism, an iconoclastic form of utopianism which Vahanian would take to be normative.[25] Unlike the dualistic ideologies of apocalyptic thought which afflict "man with visions of another world,..." he argues, "utopia, like the kingdom, is moved by the vision of a new world, radically other than the "other world" itself. ... Echoing, as it were the biblical view of the world as creation, utopia holds that only the *novum* is realizable, everything else being nothing but repetition,... ."[26]

If Ellul shies from giving *utopianism* a positive meaning, Vahanian reacts to *apocalypticism* in a like manner, for he equates it with an ideological dualism more concerned with *changing worlds* than *changing the world.* Ellul's work, however, should serve as a reminder to Vahanian (who already acknowledges a large indebtedness to him) that biblical apocalypticism is not about *changing worlds* but precisely about *changing the world.* Ellul's understanding of the apocalyptic narrative tradition sounds suspiciously like Vahanian's understanding of the utopian narrative tradition. The problem is that Ellul fails to appreciate the utopianism of the very apocalyptic tradition which stands at the center of his thought. By the same token Vahanian fails to appreciate that Ellul's apocalypticism really does draw on the authentic utopianism of the biblical tradition. Despite their seeming opposition, it does not seem to me that the disagreement between them is unbridgeable. For Vahanian's eschatological *novum* like Ellul's *apocalypse oftheeschaton* is nothing other than the presence of the Wholly Other in

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[25] See Gabriel Vahanian, *God and Utopia: The Church in a Technological Civilization* (NY: Seabury Press, 1976).

[26] Vahanian, *God and Utopia,* p. 38. The *novum* referred to here should be understood as that which is genuinely new and not just the kind of change which is superficial. The *novum* clearly must not be equated with some ideology of progress. On the contrary *novum* suggests "new creation," new beginnings, the grace or forgiveness which enables one to start afresh. It approximates what Ellul would characterize as the eruption of the apocalyptic or eschatological end (i.e., God) here in this present moment which gives birth to a transcending and transforming freedom.

the here and now which calls into question the sacred order of, "reality" in order to make all things possible and all things new.[27]

In Vahanian's view, the deliverance of technological utopianism from its propensity to become an ideology depends on an ecclesial revolution as the foundation for a cultural revolution.[28] But for the church to engage in this revolution, which could open up the language of technological utopianism to its eschatological possibilities, it must first of all *appropriate* the language of technological utopianism so that it might *expropriate* technological utopianism as a language of faith.

Far more than the medieval world which imagined the human in terms of nature, our contemporary technological civilization is open to the linguistic utopianism of the Gospel narratives. For both the Gospels and technological utopianism speak of the human through the language of new creation. It remains only for utopianism to be linked with the biblical eschatological experience of the holy, Vahanian argues, in order to give birth to the *novum,* a genuinely new creation of the human in which we discover our utopianism in the image and likeness of the God who has no image.[29] The Christ event, the word made flesh, is but the affirmation of the coming of the human, the affirmation that human destiny is tied to neither nature nor history nor the utopian techniques through which it comes into being but to the eschaton.[30] In Christ the human person is not trapped in a "human nature" but experiences a truly utopian invitation to become a new creature, here and now.[31] One should not be misled however, for Vahanian is not identifying biblical utopianism with technological utopianism but relating them to each other dialectically. "Utopia is not the kingdom. Utopia is to the kingdom as nature is to creation, or as history is to redemption, or, simply as the flesh is to the spirit. If there is a relationship between them, it is one of radical otherness... ".[32]

As I struggled with these seemingly opposing viewpoints I began to believe that Ellul and Vahanian each had grasped half of a Janus-faced myth which was in fact a unity –the myth of *ApocafypsetUtopia.* What is really occurring between them is a conflict of the narrative imagination in which for Ellul the language of apocalypse is understood as the language of transcendence or the holy through which all things can be transformed whereas utopian language is viewed as a sacral ideological language which legitimates the technicist *status quo.* For Vahanian the categories are reversed: apocalyptic language is sacral and ideological, and utopian language is the language of the holyftran-scendence which calls all things into question so as to make all things new. Putting two and two together, I realized that there were in fact two modes of linguistic

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[27] Vahanian tends to treat "apocalypse" and "eschatology" as terms with opposing meanings which one must choose between, whereas Ellul tends to virtually equate these terms.

[28] *God and Utopia,* p. 92.

[29] *God and Utopia,* p. 137.

[30] *God and Utopia,* pp. 45,46,54.

[31] *God and Utopia,* p. 71.

[32] *God and Utopia,* p. 137.

imagination focused on the terms "Apocalypse/Utopia." The first expresses the non-dialecti-cal dualism of a narrative imagination under the influence of the experience of the sacred which divides all things into the irreconcilably opposing categories of sacred and profane. The second expresses the dialectical relationship of the holy and the secular. For the holy, as both Ellul and Vahanian insist, desacralizes and hence secularizes the sacred, opening up the human world to the possibility of transcendence and transformation.

Ellul and Vahanian use the terms "apocalypse" and "utopia" respectively to express the transforming power of the holy while each suspects the other of using the opposing term in its sacral form. But as expressions of the holy, these terms are not opposites but a dialectical unity. It was reading Karl Mannheim, one of the founding fathers of the sociology of knowledge, which enabled me to grasp the dialectical unity of apocalypse and utopia. Mannheim constructs a very interesting argument, in his book *Ideology and Utopia,* for the roots of utopianism in the apocalyptic tradition and of the importance of that tradition for the making of history.[33] Utopias, he argues, introduce a tension into the present order of things which is creatively disruptive. Without this tension we would live "in a world in which there is never anything new, in which all is finished and each moment is a repetition of the past... With the relinquishment of utopias, man would lose his will to shape history and therewith his ability to understand it."[34]

In tracing the history of utopianism, Mannheim identifies the apocalyptic tradition as the most important source for this kind of radical utopianism. He cites the apocalypticism of Thomas Munzer as an example and argues that this kind of apocalypticism embodies a radically utopian mode of transformative consciousness "in which the impossible gives birth to the possible and the absolute interferes with the world and conditions actual events."[35] This utopian consciousness introduces an attitude of "tense expectation" in which "the promise of the future which is to come is not... a reason for postponement, but merely a point of orientation, something external to the ordinary course of events from where be (i.e., an individual) is on the lookout, ready to take the leap." Such apocalyptic utopianism "sees revolution as a value in itself, not as an unavoidable means to a rationally set end..."[36] For Mannheim, apocalyptic consciousness expresses the utopian mentality which is revealed in those "hopes and yearnings" which give rise to an inherently iconoclastic mode of consciousness "incongruous with the state of reality within which it occurs." It is this mode of consciousness which inspires those actions which tend to "shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time... [and] break the bonds of the existing order."[37]

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[33] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia,* (New York: Harcourt, Bruce & World, 1936). See especially chapter four, "Ure Utopian Mentality."

[34] *Ideology and Utopia-;* pp. 262-263.

[35] *Ideology and Utopia,* p. 213.

[36] *Ideology and Utopia,* p. 217.

[37] *Ideology and Utopia,* pp. 192 & 199.

Mannheim's analysis makes it possible to see both Ellul and Vahanian as sharing the same narrative tradition. Mannheim's analysis of apocalyptic and utopi an themes offers the opportunity of dispelling the illusion of fundamental disagreement between Ellul and Vahanian. If Vahanian would acknowledge that there is more than one kind of apocalyptic narrative and Ellul that there is more than one kind of utopian narrative the seeming chasm between them might yet be bridged. What both wish to deny is a sacral/ideological use of these terms and what both wish to affirm is the transformative power of the holy.

There are signs that Ellul is moving closer to Vahanian if not vice versa. After a long history of using the word only in a negative fashion, in *The Humiliation of the Word,* for the first time Ellul refers to "utopias" as belonging "to the order of truth... known and created by the word" (p. 230).[38] And in a public address of the Society for the Philosophy of Technology conference on Democracy and Technology at the University of Bordeaux in 1989, Ellul argued that the only hope for the future lay in the direction of a "utopianism" in the sense that "my good friend Vahanian uses that term." When I asked him about this statement after the speech, be said that although he resisted at first, he had gradually became convinced by Vahanian's utopianism. However, for this to really become an integral theme in his theological work he would have to completely rethink the relation between language and technique. In that respect Weyembergh is absolutely right about the difference between Vahanian and Ellul.

What the argument between Vahanian and Ellul helps us understand is that the popular "mythological" meanings of the terms "apocalypse" as cataclysmic total destruction and "utopia" as an ideal world of total perfection are really fragments and distortions of a biblical eschatology which underlies the historical imagination of Western civilization. The result of this fragmentation has been to break apart the dialectical unity of *realism* and *transcendence* in the biblical proclamation resulting in the non-dialectical dualistic opposition of *apocalypse* and *utopia* –expressing a pessimistic *Procrustean* realism on the one hand and a naive *Protean* optimism on the other. The one expresses a cosmological orientation which tells us "that's the way things are and we can't change them." The other reflects an anarchical existentialist orientation which insists "we can become whoever we wish to become and do whatever we wish to do." These fragments are the result of dismantling of the dialectical unity of biblical eschatology which holds *realism* and *openness to transcendence and transformation* in a tense unity — 'one which enables those eschatological holy communities which embody this unity to be a fermenting and transforming utopian presences *in* but not of the world.

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[38] *The Humiliation of the Word,* Eerdmans, 1985, p. 230.

Book Reviews

Lire Ellul: introduction a I'oeuvre socio-politique de Jacques Ellul, by Patrick Troude-Chastenet

(Presses Universitaires, Bordeaux, no date).

For this sensible analysis amid its careful documentation of Ellul's impressive work, Patrick Troude-Chastenet ought to be commended and, no doubt, deserves heartfelt considerations on the part of anyone conscious of the risks involved in such an undertaking. Especially, he ought to be commended for filling a crying gap, and for doing so without adulating Ellul in the least, yet in such a way that Ellul, precisely because he is not courted, should be pleased. Whatever the reason, no major book, collective or not, had been devoted to the wide-ranging corpus of Ellul's writings whether as a professional thinker or as a thoughtful social worker among dropouts and other juvenile delinquents. The task laid before Chastenet was forbidding. From beginning to end, however, he performs it with unfailing talent, though his theological assessment, insofar as I am concerned, betrays an approach which, for being that of a non-specialist, tends to *limn* a more dualistic picture of Ellul's religious stance than is actually warranted. Be that as it may, in the main, Chastenet shows that Ellul is not the prophet of doom he has been claimed to be and that nothing is more erroneous than the image of a systematic, puritan nay-sayer who despises the world, let alone technology. He moreover succeeds and provides us with an accurate and well-balanced interpretation of a challenging if at times impetuous pattern of thought.

Under the heading — a telling one right from the start - of "Corrupting the World," the first part of *Lire Ellul* (On reading Ellul) confronts us with the emergence of technology as the fundamental element and determing factor of social as well as human development if not progress. (Incidentally, Ellul adheres to the distinction between *technique* and *technology,* exclusively reserving the latter for the discourse about technique as evidenced, e.g., by the contrast between *le systeme technicien* and *le bluff technologique.)* Politics as well as the social reality in all its aspects suffer the impact of propaganda. In a *sodete technicienne,* propaganda plays the role of no more than a makeshift meant to help people bear the unbearable. At an increasingly onerous cost, however: it corrupts the very core of what makes us human, namely language itself. As a result, overtly or covertly, regardless of regime, the state itself becomes more and more monolithic, and is increasingly, characterized by practices of spiritual oppression.

To some extent, this may be so. But, to my mind, it makes it obvious that, in and through technology, Troude-Chastenet apprehends in no way any eclosion of some new type of religiosity but, rather, even a fatal step in our alienation *from* religion - construed however in strictly traditional terms.

Not inappropriately does therefore the second part of Chas-tenet's book focus on the question: "Salvation, it is impossible?" Examining how Ellul's thought bounces back and forth between two of the hardest facts of life, he shows how life, if it seeks a way out, as it does even under the imperialism of technology, points to the necessity of a revolution, and how, on the other hand, it remains hemmed in by the very impossibility of this same revolution - unless...

Unless, somewhat "recovering hope," as the third part suggests, people and above all Christians have as grains of salt or, to change the metaphor, as grains of sand in the mechanism of the technological system. Ellul has always claimed he was an anarchist. "Dissenter" would have been a better term, but no such term, though it comes from Latin, has a French equivalent; regrettably, if only because it even has a smack of utopian relish in a way that "anarchy" doesn't quite convey, at least not in its usual French connotations. Anyhow, there can be no doubt that Ellul is an iconoclast. But, on religious grounds, an iconoclast only longs for the Qty of God and, longing for it, builds the only city he actually knows how to build -the City of man: neither Babel nor the Kingdom of God on earth, but the promise of a kingdom open to all so long as faith is not, Ellul himself ultimately avers, surrendered to and exhausted by its traditional exclusivistic soteriologi-cal dimension.

Finally, given the overall quality of Chastenet's presentation of Ellul's thought, I am puzzled by his bibliography, whose logic I fail to perceive. Besides its curious arrangement of rubrics, it omits apparently the other major books published (by a single author) on Jacques Ellul: *The Thought of Jacques Ellul: a Systematic Exposition* by Darrell J. Fasching, Edwin Mellen Press, New York & Toronto 1981; *The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul* by David Gill, The American Theological Library Association and The Scarecrow Press, Inc., *1984.; Theological Method in Jacques* EZZuZ by Daniel Clendenin University Press of America, 1987 and *Technique, Discourse and Consciousness: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jacques Ellul* by David Lovekin, Lehigh University Press, 1991.

Gabriel Vahanian, University de Strasbourg

The Social Creation of Nature by Neil Evemden, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

Technique may be a problem for humans because it distorts our natural rhythms, separates us from a more natural world, and disturbs the ecology. But what is nature? How would we feel at home in a more natural world? Evemden is an environmentalist

writing in defense of a nature from which he claims we have long been alienated. He sees little progress in the conservation movement, heralded by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring,* thirty years ago. Environmentalism has been disappointing, he claims, yielding little, and providing solutions which tend to objectify nature; we manage it, protect it or devise new techniques to save it. like Ellul, he faults our discourse. We have to begin again, ask new questions, expose the obstacles in our language and see the world of nature anew.

Evemden's entry into this discussion is via the concept of pollution. Why do die environmentalist and the industrialist, for example, not agree on the facts of pollution? They disagree, he claims, because pollution is a construction, requiring a prior concept of ordering, and the industrialist and the environmentalist differ on what constitutes proper order, and what constitutes the good life. We mistakenly assume that pollution, nature, and the ecological balance are all observable neutral phenomena. To prove otherwise Evemden posits a hypothetical alien ecologist with selective amnesia. If such a person were to observe our world he or she might mistake our anomalous species for the destructive unstable budworm, which destroys mightily, giving other species a turn at rejuvenating, and then recedes for a generation. Examples of domination, harmony and the budworm are all found in nature, rendering any transfer of values from nature to the human domain problematic. In fact, Evemden argues that nature is a socially constructed reality, which we then posit as a given, and a repository for all our favourite values and ideologies. Similarly, from the point of view of semiotics, nature is a myth. It is perceived "as nature, as a 'factual system' when it is actually a 'semiological system.'" This is how we come to confuse history and nature, seeking absolute norms in the nature we falsely believe lies beyond or underneath history, when in fact nature has been created historically. At this point his argument can be confusing. Evemden does not see *nature' as a word with reference only to other words and to language. There is something out there, and it is living. He wants us to know and feel that living out-there wildness. But his underlying realism is sometimes lost in the turns of his "spiral" argument about construction. All language, of course, is constructed, but few concepts have quite the authoritative weight nature does. The many meanings and values associated with nature render it a very problematic standard, even a dangerous one to us, he argues, and leave nature itself very vulnerable.

Evemden traces the history of the construction of nature from the discovery of "everything" by the Greeks, and its first taming by being named. Nature then came to mean everything but us and God. Nevertheless, the medieval view of nature, inherited from remnants of the Aristotelian, Platonic and Christian views, was one resplendent with notions of vitality and otherness, overflowing with the "rignatures" of God, its creator. It was not ours to tame or to own. Nature could be known only empathically. This was a type of vitalistic monism.

With the Renaissance, and then Cartesian dualism, came the revolution which brought the modem view of nature, as object, as necessity, as the repository of truth because it can be empirically studied, as constituted of visual surfaces, and as increas-

ingly dead and lifeless. Evemden refers to this nature as Nature, a terrain "devoid of human involvement," knowable not by intuition and empathy, but by the elite technically or mathematically trained few. The essentially human was defined over against Nature, though our bodies might be part of it. The human self became the sole repository of all values, life, vitality and free will. We became lonely observers, and a massive education system was required to socialize new humans into the objective stance. What Evemden is talking about, of course, is the rise of the modem scientific epistemology, which he admits has been immensely fruitful. His polemic points out the cost of this revolution, a cost he thinks we are only now beginning to feel lethally.

Evemden details Leonardo's role in popularizing this revolution. Perspective, the collaboration of mathematics and art, enables us to see the world more realistically than ever before. Seeing comes to be construed as believing and knowing. A visual understanding of reality was bom, and transferred to the grammar of our discourse. "Pushing, pulling and seeing what happens, ...are not a means to knowledge; they are knowledge." Evemden laments that "if we contrast the rich and heterogenous world that was the experience of the medieval with our strictly sanitized collection of empirical objects, we can appreciate the price paid for our deference to social consensus as the sole legitimator of reality."

This is a strong claim. Does he really want us to return to a medieval view of nature? And is this medieval construction compatible with maintaining vast populations? Is he asserting the superiority of the medieval construction or suggesting that we assimilate both the modem and the medieval natures? On what grounds does he or do we choose between constructions? These issues are not fully explained in the text, though part of the answer to the last question lies in the next section, when he details how more recently the dualism which bolsters this world view has begun to collapse. Neurobiology, for example, has examined the brain, a part of Nature, and found no consciousness, the part exempt from Nature. We have been swallowed up into Nature, the dualism dissolved, and a materialistic monism has emerged. Evemden claims that we don't really want this riow suicide of the self, and hence, there must be something wrong with the whole construction which leads to such a point. "The only way to get off our own dissecting table is to admit the fiction," he says.

In the contemporary world, in trying to overcome what Evemden calls the "fragile division" between ourselves and Nature we tend to use two strategies, he argues. In one we deal with Nature by claiming that we are really like Nature, the nature-as-object position. Or we posit that Nature is really like us, the nature-as-self position. Both attitudes lead to the management, saving, or protecting of the objective Nature.

What then is the solution? Like Bellah in *Habits of the Heart,* Evemden argues that we have lost an old vocabulary. Most of us are no longer able to view nature as we once did, except as pre-literate children, and hence we are not able to approach the environmental crisis effectively. "To encounter the other beings as other, as living subjects of significance, requires some loosening of the conceptual bindings of nature so that subjectivity can flow back in, like water to a scorched garden." Children, he claims,

experience the shock of otherness, alive out there, but this appreciation is gradually eroded with age; the experience of water gives way to the concept "water" and finally to "H2O." Wonder, wildness, and stories are the answer. Wildness is the characteristic of nature which is destroyed by taming, saving, and managing.

Evemden gives us a great deal in this luridly written book to think about, and there are many points at which his argument steps on the familiar terrain of the natural or human versus technique, the grammar of our discourse and the ensnarement of a visually oriented society. But there remain nagging problems with his argument and his conclusions. The first is that mentioned above. How does one choose between constructions of reality? On what basis is one more true than the other? Does he want us just to "loosen" our "conceptual bindings," or to discard our modem thinking altogether? How does a more vitalistic apprehension of nature coexist with the modem mind, and with supporting massive populations? Evemden hints that we are headed to destruction so long as we keep managing, and dealing with nature, even in the guise of protecting it or ourselves, and hence we must get out of our conceptual cages soon. But the reasoning is not explicit.

The second problem is that the final section adopts the language of "otherness" and "other." Is nature then to be the new divinity, to be both creation and creator? How many new religions and sects will emerge from a nature mysticism which is not historically informed. One thinks of the balance Schleiermacher might bring to this conclusion, with his beginnings in self consciousness, proceeding to consciousness of otherness, of a world in which we are both passive and active, and finally and logically to consciousness of absolute dependence and of God.

Lastly, Evemden wants us to develop a new language, to break out of the language games which surround and envelop us. He wants us to bear witness to a new way of regarding ourselves in the world by growing and appreciating weeds, and developing a new grammar and a new language game. But what will become of nature in the meantime? Surely Nature must sometimes be saved, if we get the chance, while we await the utopian or eschatological future when all of us "acquire the vocabulary needed to accommodate wildness and [to] extinguish the technological flashfire of planetary domestication."

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Issue #12 Jan 1994 — Ethical Relativism and Technological Civilization

From the Editor

Welcome to issue number 12 of the Ellul Forum. Our focus for this issue is ethical relativism in a technological civilization. It contains an essay by Peter Haas of Vanderbilt University and another by myself. Peter and I met at the international Holocaust conference held at Oxford University in 1988. At that time his book *Morality After Auschwitz* had just been published by Fortress Press. My two recent *bodksNarrative TheologyAfterAuschwitz' From Alienation to Ethics* and *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?* were first conceived at that conference. It was there that as a result of conversations with people like Peter and Richard Rubenstein, Marc Ellis and Irving Greenberg that I first wrote the outline for these books. (Actually, it was originally planned as one book but grew too long, so at the suggestion of Fortress Press I divided into two books, even though this required about 30 pages of overlap between the two.)Later, Peter and I met a second time when we were both invited to speak on ethics after Auschwitz at a conference in Washington D.C. He graciously agreed to my recent request that we continue our dialogue in the pages of the Forum. Please note that we have also reviewed each other's books. I have turned my review of his book into an essay introducing the Forum for this issue (seepage 3). His review of my book *Narrative Theology After Auschwitz* can be found in the Book Review section(see page 17). You will also find two reviews of my book, *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima* by Ridiard A. Dietrich and David P. Gushee. We ended up with two reviews because when one wasn't sure he could make the deadline a second was sought, then both arrived on the same day. I have never met either reviewer. Both seem to me to offer critical yet fair reviews. Their contrasting perspectives may be of interest

This issue gives me the occasion to focus attention on some of the core themes of my two volume project on ethics after Auschwitz and Hiroshima. When Ellul's ethics of freedom came out, he promised to follow it up with an ethic of holiness. I still hope that someday that volume will be published. This project is *my* own attempt to construct an ethics of the Holy in response to the sacral ethic of a technological civilization. My attempt has been to construct a cross-cultural ethic, using a narrative ethics approach in combination with a theology of the history of religions. In my view, the experience of the holy is an experience of a wholly other reality which can neither be named or imaged, an experience marked by the creation of a religious community separated from the larger society which gives rise to a two kingdom ethic whose defining feature is hospitality to the stranger. A sacred society, by contrast (like that which emerged in

Nazi Germany), has no place for such "separated" or holy communities and a sacral ethic treats the stranger as an enemy. My argument is that those holy communities that are defined by narratives of hospitality to the stranger are traditions that recognize the human dignity precisely of those who are not part of their own community and its story. After Auschwitz and Hiroshima, I believe our best hope lies in an ethical coalition of such communities (especially Jewish, Christian and Buddhist) to promote an international ethic of human dignity, human rights and human liberation. Such a coalition can tolerate a great deal of ethical diversity so long as each shares a common concern for the stranger, the downcast and the outcast.

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Colloquium Held In Bourdeaux: "Technique and Society in the Work of Jacques Ellul"

By Joyce Hanks

A significant milestone has been reached: the first conference with Jacques Ellul as its focus occurred in Bordeaux on November 12-13,1993. Some twenty invited specialists from France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, the Ivory Coast, Mexico, Canada, and tire United States deliberated for two days before an audience that averaged about 100.

Ellul himself attended the final sessions, in spite of illness, speaking after Ivan Blich's touching tribute. He emphasized his debt to his father, who taught him honor: not to

lie to himself or anyone else, to have pity for the weak, and to be inflexible towards those in power.

Technique in general, and its autonomy in particular, proved central to many of the papers given, several of which took issue with Ellul. Others compared Ellul to Kari Marx, Alexis de Tocqueville, Martin Heidegger, and Bernard Charbonneau (whose son Simon attended the conference and often represented his father's point of view during question periods). The Bible, the Personalist movement, art, politics, and the sacred-each provided the focus of one of the sessions.

Roughly half of these took place in the new "Ellul Auditorium" of the Institute for Political Studies on the campus of the University of Bordeaux in Talence (a suburb of Bordeaux). Fittingly, when Ellul made his appearance at the colloquium, he was ushered into this auditorium named for him, which he had not previously seen. Ellul was one of the founders and professors of the Institute for Political Studies, which sponsored the gathering, along with the Association Jacques Ellul (see information about Association membership elsewhere in this issue), the Society for Philosophy and Technology, and the School of Law and Social and Political Sdences at the University of Bordeaux. Local newspapers featured articles and photographs from the conference.

Following the first day's events, attendees gathered for a showing of the impressive new film by Serge Steyer, "Jacques Ellul: L'homme entier." Filmed primarily in France, but partly in Chicago, it is already available for viewing in French (with some interviews in English) at the Wheaton College Archives (Wheaton IL), and should eventually be translated into English, as funds for the project become available.

Frequent simultaneous sessions obliged those in attendance to choose one speaker over another, but such decisions proved easier than expected, thanks to the abstracts of papers gathered by the organizing committee and distributed to everyone. The committee performed many complex tasks extremely well-from transportation and book table to lodgings, subsidies, and meals. For speakers and guests, a dinner invitation to the famous institution in downtown Bordeaux, "La Maison du Vin," proved a delicious and memorable highlight of the proceedings.

Speakers from the western hemisphere besides Ulich included Carl Mitcham, Langdon Winner, and Pierre de Coninck. As those in attendance considered the importance of celebrating a second Ellul conference, some speculated that it might well take place in the United States or Canada, and focus on Ellul's contribution to theology. -

New Film on Ellul

A new film on Ellul entitled," Jacques Ellul, ITiomme entier," was screen at the Bordeaux conference. It will cost about $5000.00 to produce a version with English subtitles. Anyone interested in contributing to this project should send a check to Joyce Hanks, made payable to her and designated for *Ellul Film projects.* When this project is complete there are plans for a larger project producing several film interviews with Ellul which are already complete but must be edited.

L'Association Jacques Ellul

During the past year, Ellul family members and colleagues have joined together for the purpose of preserving the collection of his writings and manuscripts, and making his work better known. The Association has now been legally registered in France, and will soon be ready to invite interested citizens of other countries to join. If you would like more information about the Association as it becomes available, please send your name and address to: Joyce M. Hanks, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Scranton, Scranton PA 18510-4646. If you wish to join please send her a check made payable to Joyce M. Hanks for $15.00. Joyce is willing to register all American applicants and saveus from the hassle of having to change our American dollars into French francs.

Advert for Narrative Theology After Auschwitz

Forum: Ethical Relativism and Technological Civilisation

Morality After Auschwitz by Peter Haas (Fortress, 1988)–

An Essay Review by D. Fasching

This is a very good book with a somewhat misleading title, for the discussion of morality after Auschwitz comes up only briefly in the final pages at the end of the book. A more accurate title would have been *The Morality of Auschwitz.* For what this book really deals with is the way in which a society can adopt an ethic which permits it to redefine human values so as to make evil seem good and vice versa. The author's thesis is simple and profound: "Auschwitz" and "ethics" are not the mutually exclusive terms they might appear to be. On the contrary, had the Nazis not developed an ethic, the pursuit of genocide as a societal policy would have been impossible. Everything the Nazi's did was ethical, says Haas, even though not everything that is ethical is necessarily moral.

I share Hass' concern to understand how techno-bureaucratic nation-states are able to subvert and redefine ethical values to serve their own ideological interests. I also want to know how we can make moral judgments of such societies in a world that has largely capitulated to ethical relativism. Indeed I have made an attempt to respond to these issues in my own recent works: *Narrative Theology AfterAuschwitz: From Alienation to Ethics* and *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?*

Haas and I both make a distinction between a society's system of values or "mores" and critical evaluative judgments of those mores. He chooses to call a society's mores its "ethic" and the critical judgment of that ethic, "morality." In my work I have made the same distinction but reversed the terms. We are both struggling to use a vocabulary that has not been adequately differentiated to deal with this distinction and therefore we were each forced to improvise.

Setting aside that merely nominal difference in the usage of "morality" and "ethics," we share the conviction that every society has an ethic which shapes and encourages specific human behaviors and that such an ethic can easily transform evil into good and good into evil. We also share the conviction that the Nazi Holocaust is the most dramatic example of the power of an ethic to justify human atrocity. Finally, we share the view that if we can understand how the Nazi ethic came to assume this role in

German society it should provide us with important ethical insights into the nature of evil in every society. This in turn should help us devise ways to subvert such evil in the future, before it escalates to the level of another genocidal project.

MoralityAfterAuschwitz then is not a book about philosophical or theological theories of ethics, nor does the book present an ethical theory of its own. It is rather a socio-historical analysis of how a society adopts and implements a new ethic. Its greatest kinship is with the sociology of knowledge (in this case applied to ethical knowledge) and it uses the Holocaust as its case study.

The book begins with an introduction followed by twenty chapters divided almost equally into four parts. Part One, examines The Intellectual Matrix of an Ethic." It traces the dissolution of the "old ethic" as the Wiemar Republic collapsed. At the same time, it traces the weaving of a new ethic out existent strands of religious and racial antiSemitism, and Fascist ethnic nationalism - the latter rooted in a Romantic historical particularism which distrusts all international movements. Part Two: The Growth of an Ethic" examines the expansion of the Nazi ethic from its sectarian base in a small political party (the National Socialist Workers Party) to its growth into a trans-sodetal cultural ethos covering most of Europe under Nazi rule. In this part we learn that bureaucracies of professionals_played a key role in the development of a genocidal government policy and that everything that was done was both legal and ethical by the standards German society had adopted. Moreover, we leam that what enabled professionals to participate was the development of highly efficient and impersonal bureaucratic policies for implementing mass death accompanied by the development of the capacity to lead a double life, compartmentalizing and separating personal life from public duty. Indeed it was their ethic of public duty which enabled them to do what oftentimes revolted them on the personal level (86-90).

Part Three, "Ethics and the Shaping of Social Institutions" then examines the bureaucratization and politicization of this ethic as it became embodied in the institutions created by the 3rd Reich. It traces the political and bureaucratic growth of the National Socialist Workers party from its beginnings as a drinking party into a national political movement that overtook first Germany and then most of Europe. We are led through the process of "Gleichshaltung" or bureaucratic coordination where, by 1934, all institutions of German society were systematically disestablished and/or taken over and integrated into the Nazi party machine until there was virtually no institution or organization "outside" the party in a position to critique or subvert it. Ihe state and the party were one. Drawing on Richard Rubenstein, Haas shows how the German bureaucracy coopted even the bureaucracy of the Jewish Councils to efficiently organize a system of mass death that was able to overcome all resistance.

Finally, in Part Four, "Responding to an Ethic: The Loss of Evil," Haas reviews the response of insiders and outsiders to the Holocaust, the failure of law to provide justice at Nuremberg. Then in the last fifteen pages he surveys the ethical responses of post-Holocaust Jewish theologians. It is in this last section that Haas draws a very

troubling conclusion, namely, that "the search for an absolute standard by which to indict the Holocaust ends in failure" (9).

The Holocaust, he tells us, is "not the result of absolute evil" but of an ethic that conceives of good and evil in different terms. ... That is why the horrors of Auschwitz could be carried on by otherwise good, solid, caring human beings" (170)."

The critique of an ethical system, Haas argues, can only come from outside the system, from those who are alienated from the system and experience themselves as outsiders, even though they may be socially located inside the system. Moreover, the existence of such critics is itself one of the products of the generis of any societal ethic.

Every such ethic is created out of theological, historical, social and economic trends. "Like any ethic, the Nazi ethic produced its few fanatic and self-righteous adherents, its mass of unreflective supporters, and a subclass of dedicated and deviant opponents. In this, Nazism was no different from any other ethical code. Each person would, over a lifetime, establish a certain relationship to the regnant ethic, a relationship that grew not out of philosophical analysis but out of that person's personality, character, and social situation. In other words, conformity or opposition to an ethic is rarely, if ever, a matter of philosophical analysis. It is almost always a matter of accident, of where one happens to find oneself along the way. That means that it is wrong to judge people as evil simply because the conformed to the Nazi ethic, or as saints simply because they ended up opponents or rescuers. Their activities one way or the other were generally the result of mixed and unreflective motives" (181).

This is quite an astonishing statement, and one that I find very troubling. Haas goes so far as to compare a mediocre Nazi bureaucrat in the German Foreign Office by the name of (naturally) Martin Luther with the French pastor, Andre Trocme, who led his village in the saving of some 5000 Jews. Luther advanced his career by currying the favor of the SS as they rose to power in order to bring about his own advancement in the Foreign Office. In order to *curry* this favor he went to the SS with a proposal to solve the problem of Jewish emigration by simply shooting them. Haas' conclusion is that it is wrong to see Trocme as better than Luther, each is simply a reflection of trends they had no control over — of the accidents of time and place they found themselves in. Thus Luther is not evil and Trocme is no saint, each simply reflects some random variable in the statistical distribution of responses to the Nazi ethic, responses that would have their analog in relation to any societal ethic we care to study. (189)

Thus we are told that when Trocme, took in his first "starving and barefooted woman in 1940" it was no more an act of courage than Luther's first step to curry favor with the SS." Both operated out of simple impulses that are at work in all of us. (189)" Only by hindsight do we consider one a hero and the other a villain. The truth, says Haas is that neither could conceive of acting differently than they did. Each did what their character shaped by social context and tradition required them to do.

Haas goes on to argue that the Nuremberg trails demonstrated that the human capacity to redefine good and evil showed itself to be "beyond the reach of any legal system" since the trials focused on individual responsibility and never addressed the

issue of the formation of an institutional context that legitimated genocidal behavior (210).

In the Epilogue Haas surveys the responses of Jewish theologians to the Holocaust - Rubenstein, Berkovitz, Fackenheim, Weisel — only to show that their responses too fall in line with the sociological patterns of response any ethic will generate. Finally, in a two page "Afterword" Haas tells us that he has tried to avoid two pitfalls of past treatments of the Holocuast: one the one hand trivializing the Holocaust by treating it as just another example of human inhumanity to humans and, on the other hand, of exaggerating the enormity and uniqueness of the Holocaust to the point where it cannot be compared to anything else in history.

We can learn nothing useful from either extreme. If we treat the Holocaust merely as the product of typical human failings of greed, jealously, etc. we will miss the specificity of its forms of evil, rooted deeply in historical antiSemitic stereotypes. If, on the other hand, we treat the Holocuast as absolutely unique and incomparable in its evil, there is no lesson we can take from studying its forms of evil and apply to our own time and place.

What is needed is a detailed study of how a societal ethic can sociologically legitimate human atrocity, one that takes account of the unique particulars of this history and yet can generalize so that we can actually learn something useful for our own time and place and its societal ethic. What is frightening is that "these people were not unintelligent, amoral, or insensitive. They acted consciously, conscientiously, and in good faith in pursuit of what they understood to be the good" (233). The lesson to be learned, we are told, is that events take on a life of their own which no one can imagine at the beginning and hence the Holocaust "became what it did not start out to be."

While I find Haas' attempt to give an account of the Holocaust that steers clear of a trivialized commonality on the one hand and an exaggerated uniqueness on the other, I find little help for the ethicist in his account. For while he gives us a detailed analysis of the particulars that made the Holocaust a reality and he does it in such a way to enable us to learn lessons that should be transferable to other situations (all of which I applaud), he does it at the cost of reducing the ethical life to a reflection of sociological trends which finally absolve everybody of responsibility, so that it seems to make no difference whether we choose to emulate the banal bureaucrat, Martin Luther, who seeks only his selfinterested advance through the death of Jews or the selfless rescuer, Andre Trocme who risks his own life to save Jews. Hass is a an ethical relativist and a sociological reductionist plain and simple: "Our own ethic is shaped by the social, economicand political grid from within which we make sense of the world" (233). It is hard see how one can build a critical morality within such a deterministic worldview.

Everything in his book points to such a conclusion, and yet curiously Haas ends the book with a quote from Albert Speer, in which Speer says: "It is true that I did not know what was really beginning on November 9,1938, and what ended in Auschwitz and Maidenak. But in the final analysis I myself determined the degree of my isolation, the extremity of my evasions, and the extent of my ignorance" (233). These final words,

with which the book ends, stand totally at odds with the entire thesis of the book. For the first time we *get* a hint that there is such a thing as individual responsibility for our actions, even though our lives are profoundly shaped by sociological influences. To read the book backwards from this final quotation is to engage in a deconstruction of its essential thesis.

Perhaps Haas deliberately put this statement at the end in order to suggest that we must not take the sociological perspective as absolute, that by its very nature it is an inadequate methodology for getting at individual freedom and responsibility and that therefore the sociological perspective must be supplemented by other perspectives. This, of course is the method J acques Ellul uses in his analysis of technological determinism. For Ellul at the sociological level everything is determined, and yet at the level of concrete lived experience what the individual does remains decisive and can transform everything. But if this is Haas' strategy, the only evidence for it is the final quote from Speer.

Haas' treatment of the Holocaust reminds me a great deal of Richard Rubenstein's book *The Cunning of History* - which I consider perhaps the single most important book on ethics written since World War II. It is important however, because it outlines the major ethical issues which must be dealt with by Western civilization — indeed all civilization –with brutal honesty. It is a book, however, which offers not a single clue as how to constructively respond to such a world and neither does *Morality After Auschwitz.* Such books make an important contribution to contemporary ethics, but they are only one piece of the puzzle and their value is in the challenge they present to anyone who would attempt to do ethics after Auschwitz. After Rubenstein and Haas, all glib solutions will be seen fortheir shallowness.

And yet there is a grave danger in the kind of socio-historical determinism we seem to find in Haas* book. If taken literally it may in fact convince us that ethical reflection is pointless - that what we do is always merely a product of the accident of time and place. From my perspective, the limits of social analysis and all social determinism are amply evident in a fundamental observation of the sod al sdences, namely that no sodety has ever succeeded at totally sodalizing any of its members. We are all to some degree sodal deviants who are capable of calling into question "the way things are" and in that sense everyone of us has the capadty to call into question and transcend the cultural currents that attempt to shape us and in so doing assume responsibility for our actions. To reduce social deviance to statistical randomness and dismiss it as just one more outcome of sodal conditioning or acddent of time and place is to obscure the very evidence that would demand that one reformulate one's theories so as to take into account the individual responsibility without which the moral life cannot make sense. My own position worked out in my two most recent books is that all genuine ethical critidsm begins in experiences of alienation which enable us to call into question and transcend the sodal and political currents that shape our behavior.

In the essays that follow both Peter Haas and I, attempt to deal with ethical relativism, "after Auschwitz," in a techno-bureaucratic world. Here Haas tries to go beyond

his book and turn ethical relativism into a constructive option. While agreeing with him about the importance of ethical diversity and the importance of the Other, I suggest an alternative that I believe is a less reductionistic way of approaching these issues.

Moral Relativity in the Technological Society

by Peter J. Haas

Jacques Ellul has done as much as any contemporary theologian to make us think about the moral implications of the modem, technological age. For Ellul, if I understand him correctly, it was not merely the vast new powers available to people that was cause for concern, but the whole new way that technologically-based, modem societies came to regard the world. Technology creates, as it were, its own reality with its own rules, rituals and imperatives; in short, its own ethic. Ellul's call for us was to move beyond the horizon of technology to a vision of the holy (by which he meant, in essence, Christianity) in order to secure (or retrieve) a vision of the human condition and of hope that both challenges and transcends the ethic of the technological. Over the past half century, we have come to know all too well the seductive power of technology to create its own ethic: whether in Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, or the situation in the Balkans. Ellul's insight into the potential wickedness of the modem world has been all too firmly confirmed.[1]

What remains unresolved so far is whether the second half of Ellul's formula can be so easily confirmed. That is, can a religion (say, Christianity) or religion in general offer us a way to resist the siren call of the ethic of the technological world? The answer I want to suggest in the following is that while we do need an ethic that can challenge that of the technological society, a simple appropriation of some traditional, logocentric religious view will not do. We can not successfully transcend the ethic of the technological by positing another monolithic albeit non-technological ethic. In this way we simply trade off one orthodoxy for another. Rather, the opposing ethic that we need to posit must take into account the truths about the structure of the universe that the modem age has revealed. That is, we need to incorporate the scientific and technological paradigms of our time into the counter-ethic if we hope to achieve a new synthesis. In essence, then, we have to rethink the whole notion of what constitutes an ethic. This will have to be an ethic that will take relativity and indeterminacy seriously. We can no more ignore that we live in an Einsteinian and Heisenburgian universe than Enlightenment theologians could forget that they were living in the wake of the Enlightenment.

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[1] I depend for my understanding of Ellul on Darrell Fasching, *The Thought of Jacques Ellul: A Systematic Exposition* (NY: Mellen, 1981).

In the following I want to move through three arguments in offering a suggestion as to what such a new metaethic might look like. First, I assert that any ethic that will capture the imagination of an age must finally be based on the currently regnant notion of the nature of physical reality. Second, I want to argue that the alternative ethics (such as that of the Nazis) that have emerged in the modem period have succeeded precisely because they have drawn on a more modem, more up-to-date theory of the nature of physical reality than had the inherited religious ethics. That is, I maintain that the Nazi worldview, for example, was able to define the moral agenda for a whole modem, technological society because it was able to present itself as in accordance with the latest scientific theories of the day and so more in tune with what was then regarded as really real than was true of traditional religious ethics. Finally, I want to launch a preliminary investigation of what a new religious ethic might look like, one that both transcends the pragmatism of a purely secular, technological ethic, but still draws on the post-modem understanding of the nature of the cosmos.

Ethics and the Scientific Paradigm

My first step is based on the assumption that morality and moral philosophy in any age are always based on, and draw from, a deeper understanding of the nature of reality. In short, the scientific view of what is and the moral demands of what ought to be are always linked. This is not to claim that one can adduce specific oughts from specific cases of what is. It is to say that at some point we must all feel that the moral life we are called to lead is consistent with what we understand to be the nature of reality. That is, at some level our ethics and our science must both live together in a coherent understanding of what is true. Part of my concern with Ellul is that by positing a holy out there that can act as a counterpose to technology, he is still assuming a world of objective reality, a world now denied tty physics. To mount a successful challenge to technology, an entirely different stance, one consistant with a non-logocentric universe, will have to be formulated.

A striking example of how closely ethics and science have always been linked, at least in the West, is the work of Aristotle. Aristotle was both a scientist in that he developed a theory about how the physical universe operates, and a moral philosopher in that he articulated a basis for determining rationally what constitutes the right and the good. These two different areas of contemplation were of course not totally separate and distinct in his mind. In fact, Aristotle's ultimate enterprise was to arrive at an understanding in which what ought to be and what is are mutually supportive. His notion of the physical structure of the universe was that each element had its essential character and its rightful place in the scheme of things. This allowed him to account for why the universe seems to operate as it does. He could explain why stones fell and heated air rose: the one was seeking its natural position in the earth, the other as a mixture of fire and air was seeking its natural place in the air or the ultimate sphere of fire. In other words, each item in the material world has a certain basic form or essence that not only makes it what it is, but that also determines how it will behave

in the physical world. It does what it ought to do (unless blocked) because of what it is.

To be sure, it was a bit more complicated to apply this to human beings, who after all think about how to act. We do not act with the unreflective spontaneity of a rock, for example, or with the instinctive reaction to stimuli as animals often seem to. This, for Aristotle, is where science comes to the aid of ethics. If we know what we are, then we will by that very fact know also what we ought to do. By contemplating our essence as human beings we will be able to see our ultimate end or telos, and so have a vision of what we ought to be and so do.

Aristotle offers one striking example of how closely scientific notions of reality and ideas of what constitutes morality have been. To give but one more example, we can look at the so-called Copernican revolution in astronomy as a challenge not only to Aristotelian astronomy and physics, but also by that same token to Aristotelian ethics (and theology).[2] That is why these new ways of seeing the heavens were so threatening to the Church. If Aristotle were overthrown in the sciences, then his ethics were undermined as well. If his notions of telos and virtue could no longerexplain the observed physical universe, then they could not be trusted to yield a reliable model for moral behavior either.

What Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and others gave us was a universe in which motion was a function not of essence but of the interrelationship of opposing forces. This was given its paradigmatic articulation in the physics of Isaac Newton. But this new way of viewing and organizing physical data established a need to consider moral truths in the same way. At a deep level of conception, Newtonian physics and the new morality worked out by philosophers espedallyin Britain share similar basic convictions.[3] Both assume that no behavior on the part of an observed individual is determined by its essence in isolation. Both saw the individual working out its destiny in the context of its role as part of a larger aggregate. The motion of a ball in flight is at each instant a combination of diverse, albeit objective and quantifiable, forces (impetus, momentum, gravity) just as the act of an individual person can be understood as the result of a combination of forces acting upon him or her in the social realm. Democracy represents an expression of these forces averaged out in the social world just as the path of the ball does in the physical world. To be sure, there was seen to be a strict mathematical logic in the cosmos according to which the ball must act, just as there is a logic of human happiness or self-preservation in the social and political realm which determines basic human rights and social conventions. Thus the change in how people regarded human activity mirrors the change in how people regarded the functioning of the physical

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[2] See for example Anthony Alioto^l *History of Western Science* (Englewood Oiffc: Prentice-Hall, 1987), pp. 191-204.

[3] These connections are drawn in Larry May, "Hobbes" in Robert Cavalier, ecL, *Ethics in the History of Western Philosophy* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 125-126 and David Fate Norton, "Hume" *Ibid.,* pp. 156-158.

world (and vice versa).[4] Moral philosophy came to look at behavior less as a matter of fulfilling a given telos and more as a matter of what was appropriate or one's duty in a particular situation.

I give this brief look at Western ethics and science to illustrate a point which I am going to take for granted from here on, namely that moral philosophy and the natural sciences always share at a deep level some deep conviction about the nature of reality. It is irrelevant to this argument whether the scientific view influences the philosophical, or vice versa. What is important to see is that they operate in tandem. What is and what ought to be are always linked at some conceptual level. This does not mean that one is derivable, or at least easily derivable from the other. It does mean that the way we look at the cosmos to get scientific answers is the same way we look at the universe to get moral answers.

The Scientific Paradigm of the Nazi Ethic

This brings me to the second part of my argument, namely that the modem technological world has developed both its own notion of the nature of physical reality and along with that a concomitant notion of what morality requires. Ellul was right to see that, although I remain unconvinced that he analyzed the problem correctly. I want to test his insights, as it were, by taking as a test case, the nature of what I am calling the Nazi ethic. I will show that it is linked to a certain postmodern scientific hypothesis and not to the nature of technology today. I will then be in a position to turn to my third point, an argument that a better ethic is available on the basis of more contemporary scientific paradigms and that such an ethic is possible in the technological world and does not require a leap out into a counter-science ethic posited by a static notion of the holy.

The entire Nazi enterprise was held together by an elaborate ideology that was itself based on the nineteenth century scientific study of race. The interest in racial studies grew out of a number of different intellectual trends in the nineteenth century, including the confrontation with colonial societies, the historical theories of the Hegelians, linguistic and philological studies, and the growth of the science of genetics. These areas of study coalesced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into a multifaceted study of human genetics and race. In the context of the social dislocations caused by industrialization and the modem urban environment, these studies offered a coherent and scientific theory of how to manage social development. I want to describe briefly the major elements of this view and then show how it laid the foundation for the Nazi ethic of the 1930's.

As Hannah Arendt has pointed out, one of the great intellectual challenges of the nineteenth century was to come to an understanding of the variety of peoples and cultures that Europeans were encountering during their colonial expansion.[5] It became a matter of considerable interest to understand why such variety existed, why some

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[4] See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* 2nd ed. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame press, 1984), pp. 235-237.
[5] "Imperialism" in her *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (NY: HBI, 1973).

social groups seemed to be trapped in simple, rural economies while others had forged ahead to create the elaborate industrial and urban societies of Europe. In the same vein it became a matter of speculation as to why some societies had developed rational religions based on the belief in one god while others seemed to still be practicing a mixture of mapc, pagan polytheism and superstition. Under the influence of Hegelian thought, the common conviction emerged that the level of civilization reached by a particular population was a reflection of the population's innate abilities. That is, in every case a society was a perfect reflection of the inherent character of its people. From that idea it was but a short jump to the notion that the civilizing genius of a people or nation was genetic. Ai this point a second conviction came into play. This conviction grew out of both the philosophical construct of Hegel and the theories proposed by Charles Darwin to account for the diversity of life forms in the natural world. Hegel had proposed that the human insight into the world, the Sprit, grew progressively more insightful over time in a dialectic movement in which the inadequacies of each stage were taken up and resolved in the next epoch. We can trace die trajectory of this process in the progression of civilizations from age to age as each reaches new depths of self-awareness and understanding. This descriptive model of human history provided a framework for the creation of a social science. That is it allowed for the methodologically critical - that is, scientific — use of art, literature, religion and social structure to chart the ongoing progress in the human understanding of the ultimate. Historical, literary and aesthetic studies were no longer merely descriptive but could take their place in the larger scientific endeavor to chart the ever-deepening human enterprise to perceive the Truth.

The idea of the Hegelian dialectic was given concrete expression in many people's minds by the theories of Charles Darwin. Darwin's original purpose was simply to propose that the diversi ty of life forms found in the natural world were a result of spontaneous changes that gave certain forms of a species an advantage within a certain niche. Gradually that permutation would come to dominate in that niche and a new sub-species will have emerged. There was in this no sense that one subspecies was objectively better or worse than others, only more or less adapted to a particular environment. But in the popular mind this became assimilated to the Hegelian notion of evolution to yield the idea that life forms were constantly evolving not only into different forms, but ultimately to objectively better forms. These better, or objectively fitter forms, were destined by the very laws of nature to dominate all others and survive. In short, both the natural sciences and philosophy seemed to be pointing to the same powerful truth, namely that life evolved to ever fitter forms and that those populations at the forward edge of the process would naturally dominate and eventually drive out those less advanced. Or, to say the same thing from a different perspective, a population that appears endangered or is in decline is one that has been left behind in the grand march toward superior forms.

Once we have arrived at this point, it is easy to see that the science of genetics could become a major force in the nineteenth and early twentieth century attempts

in the West to achieve a scientific understanding of the engine driving human destiny. If human society and civilization were merely outward expressions of the innate character and civilizing genius of the population, and if these characteristics were genetically determined, and if such innate characteristics evolve over time to yield superior forms, and finally if the sign of this superiority is dominance, then genetics ultimately holds that key to the nature of human civilization. I submit that it was just such an understanding that supplied the popular culture with a seemingly scientific way of accounting for the world. It explained why some cultures dominated others, for example. It was simply the natural destiny of some to overtake others, just as close observation of the natural world would demonstrate.

There was another ramification of this as well, however, a ramification that was much more sinister. If genetic advance was reflected in a culture's dominance and well-being, then a culture's sickness and decline must also be a function of genetics, in this case genetic stagnation or even degeneration. It follows that if society is declining, if it is manifesting pathologies, then genetic science could provide an objective way of assessing the underlying cause and offer a methodology for engineering a recovery.[6]

At this point one only needs to think of the malaise that gripped German society in the wake of the First World War to understand the intellectual fascination with genetics in the form of racial science. We today have a perspective on the dissolution of Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany that was simply not available at the time. We can see the problems in terms of social structure, economics and so forth that those going through the wrenching changes of industrialization simply were in no position to do. We can hardly be surprised that the thinkers and shapers of society turned to what scientific models were available to them.

Racial science provided both a diagnosis, an explanation of what was happening, and also a remedy, a strategy to turn the crisis around. If the social pathologies confronting German society were seen as symptoms of an underlying genetic decline, then the rational, scientific response would be to manage a regeneration of the genetic pool. This would of course take the form of social policies designed 1). to identify the carriers of inferior genes: the congenitally diseased, the racially inferior, the disabled; and 2) to identify the carriers of the superior genes. The former would have to be weeded out of the population while the later would have to be nurtured. The racial policies of Nari Germany can thus be seen as systematically growing out of a particular scientific view of the world.[7] Given the presupposition that genetic science, with its Hegelian and Darwinian components, offered a true insight into the dynamics of human cultural change, the ethic of a racial social policy makes a certain sense. To be sure, racial science of this type was based on a number of erroneous presuppositions, not to mention a massive misreading of Darwin. But nonetheless, the point remains that we can explain

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[6] Much of this is drawn from Daniel Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics* (NY: A Knopf, 1985).

[7] This is shown in detail by Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis* (NY: Cambridge UP, 1988). See also Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics Between Unification and Nazism 1870-1945* (NY: Cambridge UP, 1989).

the widespread support Nari racial policy had at least in its abstract expression by its grounding in what were regarded as established scientific principles.

The Moral Paradigm of Scientific Relativity

The questions we are now left with are 1). what scientific paradigm is available for the construction of a post-modern ethic; and 2). how is an ethic to be adduced from that paradigm. The first question is the easier one. The governing model of our time, clearly, is Einstein's Theory of Relativity. It is the first major advance since the work of Isaac Newton towards formulating a comprehensive theory that explains why the universe functions as it does. Not only has the Theory of Relativity revised our notions of time and space, but it has changed in the popular mind how we understand perceptions and so how we evaluate the status of our descriptions of everything from natural phenomena to cultural creations. The more difficult question is what kind of ethic can be constructed on this foundation.

In fact, we do not need to start out *de novo* in building such an ethic. The baric conviction of Relativity that there is no objective reality out there to be observed but only descriptions from certain human perspectives had already been an established part of Western thought by the time Einstein published his theory. It is what lay behind the nominalist/realist debates of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[8] Immanuel Kant in the late eighteenth century used the difference between perception and reality as the very basis of his epistemology.[9] By the late nineteenth century, the very idea that there was a reality out there that the phenomenal world was reflecting or tending towards was demolished in the natural sciences by Charles Darwin and in moral philosophy by Friedrich Nietzsche. By the early twentieth century, when Einstein began publishing his speculations, structuralist and Semiotic studies were showing that human culture was nothing other than a set of signifiers which have no meaning outride their interpretation among a population. The adoption of Relativity as a basis for cultural studies and ethics is thus hardly without some precedents in Western thinking.

I now wish to turn to the second question, what the nature of such an ethic might be. The baric point to make is that while Relativity does eliminate all sense of a universal *telos* or of a single objective reality, it does not do away with all absolutes. Thus an ethic based on Relativity is not one in which everything goes or in which all viewpoints are equally valid. While an ethics of Relativity can be tolerant of many different types of perspective, it need not be equally tolerant of all of them. Let me explain.

According to the Theory of Relativity, it is not possible, for example, to claim that there is an absolute and objective speed of the moon. The speed of the moon, like any speed, is a matter of a relationship: how fast one thing is moving in contrast to

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[8] This argument can also be seen in Copernicus, who did not so much claim that the earth actually revolved around the sun as he claimed that by making this assumption he could simplify the mathematical description of the planets observed orbits. Galileo created a problem only when he claimed that Copernicus' hypothesis was not merely a matter of mathematical convenience, but was in fact an accurate description of reality. See Alioto, *Op. Cit.* ,pp.l46ff.

[9] Kant, of course, did finally think that there was a reality out there that was available to human

another. Thus the speed of the moon will be different if measured from the sun, for example, than if measured from the earth. It is part of the work of the scientist to become aware of his or her point of observation and take that into account. It is in fact now taken for granted that the scientist's choice of question will pre-determine (in a sense) the answer that will emerge. This is the point eventually enshrined in the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle.[10] According to this new physics, there can in fact be several simultaneous right answers to any question, even right answers that appear to be mutually exclusive. This is so because the answer is always a function of tire experiment or rhetoric we set up.

My point here is that this epistemology does not claim that any and every answer is true by the mere fact of its existence. It is always possible to produce wrong answers because the experiment was poorly planned, because the instrumentation was not accurate or simply because the experimenter has mismeasured. Thus, while it is possible to measure the moon's speed from a variety of equally valid perspectives, it is also possible to pick an irrelevant perspective for what the scientist wants to know, or to have an appropriate perspective and measure the speed incorrectly. Thus the modem scientific paradigm, while allowing for several concurrently right answers to any question about the universe, also recognizes that there are wrong and dysfunctional answers as well.

There is a second ramification of the Theory of Relativity that I wish to explore here. From the claim that there is no absolute space or time it follows that everything has a location and a velocity only in terms of an Other. And it follows further, from Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, that if we destroy or factor out this Other, then some aspect of the thing we are studying is thereby also by nature eliminated. It is this feature of Relativity that has not yet been taken seriously in the creation of a newethic. The paradigm of Relativity offers the possibility of constructing an ethic that is consistent both with the regnant view of physical reality and with the multicultural and pluralistic global community we are now inhabiting. In the next few paragraphs I want to think through at least the broad outlines of how the contents of such an ethic might be adduced.

The foundational principle of the new physics is that any measurement is a matter of relationship. My argument here is that on the basis of a Relativity based ethic we

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comprehension, albeit only through the power of pure reason. It is generally regarded to be Nietzsche who discarded entirely any need for logocentric presuppositions.

[10] The Uncertainty Principle states in its simplest form that one can not determine simultaneously both the location and the velocity of an electron. The reason is that both location and velocity of electrons are artificial human constructs placed on the electron by the nature of the measuring device. An experiment designed to adduce one of these descriptions can never have "access" to the other. The fonnulation of this principle ended a long debate that engulfed late nineteenth and early twentieth century physicists. On this see John Gibbin, *In Search of Schrodinger's Cat: Quantum Physics and Reality* (NY: Bantam, 1984), pp. 2-3. Einstein's argument for rejecting the existence of a truth independent of the experimenter is discussed in Gerald Holton, *Thematic Origins of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1973), pp. 232ff.

need to make that same claim for moral imperatives. The scientific paradigm suggests that just as no scientific model or reality is self-standing and ontologically grounded, we should be able to concede that in the same way no ethical system is a self-sufficient construct that has an objective claim to ontological superiority. Each ethic is the result of a particular cultural and historical encounter with life, and that the ethic that emerges out of the encounter is, at least potentially, a valid reading from that perspective. This does not mean that anything goes or that any personal set of feelings has to be recognized as a complete and coequal ethic. There are, as in physics, appropriate and useful places from which to take measurements, there is a need to be consistent about the perspective if the data are to mean anything, and there is a need to take care that the measuring is done accurately. There is still room to reject a Nazi type ethic that is based on poor science. Yet given proper context, consistency and rigor, differences can still be mutually tolerated.

A further implication of basing an ethic on Relativity is that each individual and society manufactures its own self-identity overagainst some Other.[11] In a more logocentric universe, this leads to the implication either that if my perspective is right then that of the Other must be wrong, or that tire Other represents the perfect ethic which I and everyone else must emulate. The end result is to commit one to eliminating, or at least superseding, the ethics that do not meet the ideal. What the paradigm of modem physics teaches us is that that is not the case. In fact, the Other does not exist except as a projection of ourselves and we in fact only take on definition in terms of the Other. That is, if we eliminate the Other (whether by merging with it or by eliminating it), we have in fact thereby eliminated ourselves as well. In short, for any perspective, the Other is both necessarily different, but also necessary. An ethic based on eliminating or superseding the other is by the very nature of things, self-contradictory and so self-destructive. From the vista opened up by Relativity, I submit, we can perceive a way of establishing a moral rhetoric that demands that we recognize and even support the Other while not at the same time abdicating our ability to recognize that certain ethical stances can still be wrong.

Conclusion

It is not possible in this forum to develop fully the contents of such an ethicorto delineate how to know when the requirements of the perspective have been compromised so that the contents are incorrect What I hope to have accomplished is to articulate a way of thinking about ethics that abandons logocentricity while still being consistent with the best of our scientific view of the structure of reality. It seems to me that placing relationship rather than being at the center of focus is the hallmark of postmodern scientific thought. It allows for greater latitude in recognizing the validity of various points of view and of the importance of these differences in maintaining a meaningful

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[11] This is the basis of Martin Buber's epistemology. I establish the nature of the "I" on the basis of the relationships established with the Its" and the "thous" out there. By establishing those relationships, I am in fact giving content to the "I".

cosmos. By linking our understanding of good and evil, right and wrong, with this scientific paradigm, I believe we will be able to open ourselves up to the possibility of a new metaethic that will allow greater appreciation of the variety of ways people can choose to be ethical in the increasingly complex, pluralistic and technologically sophisticated post-Modem world we inhabit. The need is not to transcend this world, but to see in it the possibility of a new morality. In this way we might be able to develop as moral beings in the kind of world that so challenged Jacque Ellul.

Beyond Absolutism and Relativism: The Utopian Promise of Babel

by Darrell Fasching
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Narrative Diversity and the Dignity of the Stranger
The story of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) is a story which seems uniquely suited to illuminating the ethical challenge of our time. According to that story the citizens of Babel sought to grasp transcendence by building a tower to heaven. Transcendence, they apparently believed, could be brought under human control through conformity to a common language. Transcendence was equated with the technical and social power which can be mar-tialed by a society unified in its language, meaning and values. By sharing a common story, they seem to believe, transcendence could be domesticated and made subservient to human desires. But God, seeing the idolatry in what the citizens of Babel had in mind, confused their tongues so that they no longer were able to understand each other. They became strangers to each other and so had to abandon the dream of technical control over their destiny. There is a great deal of Babel's spiritual pathology present in our own MAD apocalyptic world. We also are caught up in such technological fantasies. There is much in us that still longs to return to the imagined days before Babel's disintegration, when everyone in the public square had a sense of belonging to the same sacred society, speaking the same language and sharing the same values.

In our pluralistic world we long for the common morality of a sacred society and lament our fragmented ethical diversity and the confusion it seems to bring. We wish for everything to be once more clear and unambiguous. From such a perspective the actions of a God who would deliberately make a sacred community into a society of strangers seems at best perverse — a perverse judgment on human effort. But for a God who is infinite or Wholly Other, whose thoughts are not our thoughts and whose ways are not our ways, such an act might seem to be not a curse but a blessing. For it is through the stranger that the infinite enters the finite and closed world of a sacred

society, calling it into question and opening it up to its utopian possibilities. For those who have the ears to hear and the eyes to see, Babel may not be so much a curse as a gracious opportunity filled with utopian promise. If we are to realize this promise, however, we must be prepared to break with those fantasies of a linguistically and technologically unified world which typified Babel before its fall. We must shatter the linguistic imperialism of secularism and techno-bureaucratic rationality in order to make a place for human dignity and human rights — especially those of the stranger.

There is a significant difference in the way Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas approach narrative ethics within our modem technological city of *Babel,* with its ethical pluralism and narrative diversity. For it seems to me that MacIntyre bewails this diversity and prepares for us for a new "dark ages" by settling into the one story which he wishes were universal, whereas Hauerwas does not retreat into the particularity of his Christian narrative tradition but rather embraces its particularity while insisting that other narrative traditions may have something to teach us as well. The difference in attitude to the narrative pluralism of our world can be traced to Hauerwas' strong emphasis on the Biblical ethic of welcoming the stranger. For how can we welcome strangers without being interested in their stories? To welcome strangers entails an ethical encounter in which we must inevitably be open to their stories and traditions apart from which they would not be who they are. To welcome the stranger inevitably involves us in a sympathetic passing over into the other's life and stories and a coming back into our own own life and stories enriched with new insight. To see life through a story which requires us to welcome the stranger is to be forced to recognize the dignity of the stranger who does not share our story. We are forced to recognize the humanity of the one who is wholly other — whose ways are not our ways and whose thoughts are not our thoughts. In our time, we must seek to build an ethical coalition for the defense of human dignity and human rights at the intersection of those narrative traditions that (like Judaism and Christianaity) emphasize welcoming the stranger or the (like Buddhism) the outcaste.

To welcome the stranger requires seeing Babel not as a curse but rather as a blessing. Indeed, the story of Babel offers us a clue not only to the relation of transcendence to the stranger but also how that relation can alter the techno-bureaucratic ideology which threatens to submerge us in the suicidal abyss of the demonic.

Let us recall the story once more. According to the book of Genesis:

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. . . . Then they [the citizens of Babel] said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which mortals had built. And the Lord said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they

left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:1,4-9)

The story of Babel is especially interesting for what it suggests about the linkage of language, technology and the quest for self-transcendence. Technology is viewed as the mediator of the human quest for transcendence. That is, technology is thought to enable humans to reach heaven and be like God –as they imagine God, that is, in total control. And even as technology is viewed, within the story, as mediating transcendence, language is viewed as mediating technology. It is by virtue of sharing one language, one worldview, that this transcendence or total control is viewed as possible. God's intervention, confusing their language so that the building project is interrupted, is usually interpreted as a curse or punishment for the sin of pride.

Perhaps that was the meaning of this ancient story before it was incorporated into the biblical narrative traditions. However, in the Torah the command to welcome the stranger occurs more often than any other command - some thirty six times.[12] In the light of this emphasis I think another conclusion must be drawn. God's confusion of human language must be understood not as a punishment but as a blessing. Humans, unable to imagine the infinite as anything other than the infinitizing of their own fini-tude, seek to appropriate transcendence through the linguistic ideology of a single worldview as the precondition for total technical control of their lives. But rather than punishing them for seeking transcendence, God intervenes to redirect them toward authentic self-transcendence, which can occur only when their are strangers to be welcomed into one's society. For strangers speaking different tongues, telling different stories and communicating different values are an invitation to self-transcendence, opening up our closed world to the infinite and the possibility of utopian transformation. In place of the totalitarian language of one world view, Babel offers us a plurality of languages and world views, each offering the possibility of a finite insight into the infinite — insights which might be mutually enriching. Such a plurality of inrights is appropriate to our finite condition. What is inappropriate is the pretension to omniscience. Rather than making ethics impossible, because the definitive (omniscient) answer cannot be given, it renders ethics a human task of questioning and questing for insight and the sharing of that insight. Ethics, so conceived, is a common quest to understand what is truly good, in which the good manifests itself not so much through absolutely *right* answers as through a shared commitment to be *responsible* for each other. As such, Babel redefines our rel ation to technique. Rather than a managerial/ public policy ideology of total control over society, it suggests the more modest goal of a society of pluralistic institutions each with a limited area of authority and each exercising responsible self-control. Babel replaces the closed totalitarian world of *sameness* (i.e., of the false infinite) with the finite and unfinished world of human finitude

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[12] Richard H. Schwartz, *Judaism and Global Survival,* (New York: Atara Publishing Co., 1987), p. 13.

and human diversity — a world which is utopian because it is unfinished. A world in which the finite, without ceasing to be finite, is open to the infinite and hence further transformation.

Like Jeffrey Stout, I would argue that,

our problems do not result from the confusion of tongues in a society that has fallen from the coherence and community of an earlier age. The plurality of moral languages in our society is closely related to the plurality of social practices and institutions we have reason to affirm. Our moral languages exhibit a division of conceptual labor, each doing its own kind of work. But they also sometimes get in each other's way. Some languages, in particular those of the marketplace and the bureaucracies, creep into areas of life where they can only do harm. They tend to engulf or corrupt habits of thought and patterns of interaction that we desperately need. Protecting them is a grave problem, worthy of the best social criticism and political experimentation we can muster.[13]

The problem then is not the pluralism of languages but the imperialism of some institutional languages, especially techno-bureaucratic and economic languages. For the imperialism of these languages tends to destroy the complex socio-linguistic ecology which sustains human dignity by reducing the individual to a component in a complex bureaucracy to be manipulated for the achievement of maximum efficiency at a minimum cost The problem is, as Peter Berger suggests, that technical bureaucracy has replaced the sacred canopy as the organizing principle of modem social life since it is experienced as the power which transforms chaos into cosmos.

Both Ellul and Richard Rubenstein, suggest that the demonic power of a technological civilization lies in creating a bureaucratic society of total domination. Such a society is a total reversion to that mythic time before Babel when society was governed by one language and one technology which serves to absolutize its finite social order as sacred and unquestionable and seeks to eliminate all self-transcendence by substituting *sameness* for *diversity.* The question remains, however, whether a technological civilization must necessarily result in the bureaucratization of human life. Berger (Peter and Brigitte) and Kellner argue that while bureaucracy and technology are the primary social carriers of modernization, they are not the same, nor are they inextricably linked. Bureaucracy and technology are as old as urbanization itself. But the modem "technological phenomenon," as Jacques Ellul describes it, with its emphasis on efficiency and the managerial restructuring of society to promote maximum efficiency is a distinctively modem phenomenon. It is when technological efficiency becomes linked to the bureaucratic domination of life that its impact on society and personal life becomes totalitarian.

The heart of the problem lies in the transformation which occurs when modem technological consciousness is subsumed into bureaucratic consciousness and generalized to the whole of society. For there are inherent limits in technological consciousness

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[13] Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics After Babel* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), p. 7.

which are removed as it enters the bureaucratic environment. In areas of genuine technological production, the materials one is working with and the goals one are trying to realize are specific. They impose discipline, limits and measurable goals on the technological process. All of these are absent when technical attitudes are carried over into bureaucratic processes. "In political bureaucracy there is less pressure from the logic of technology and therefore more of a chance for the peculiar genius of bureaucracy to unfold."[14]

As bureaucracy overtakes technology and engulfs society, the means are no longer related to and disciplined by ends beyond themselves. The whole of society becomes divided into areas of bureaucratic expertise to be regulated by the appropriate experts according to established anonymous and impartial procedures. Organization and orderliness become ends in themselves.

Bureaucracy is not only orderly but orderly in an imperialistic mode. There is a bureaucratic demiurge who views the universe as dumb chaos waiting to be brought into the redeeming order of bureaucratic administration. . . . The engineer puts phenomena into little categorial boxes in order to take them apart further or to put them together in larger wholes. By contrast, the bureaucrat is typically satisfied once everything has been put in its proper box. Thus bureaucracy leads to a type of problem-solving different from that for technological production. It is less conducive to creative fantasy, and it is fixating rather than innovating. ... In the technological sphere, social organization is largely heteronomous, that is, it must be so shaped as to conform to the non-bureaucratic requirements of production. This imposes certain limits on organization. ... In the political sphere, which is the bureaucratic sphere par excellence, these limits are much less in evidence. Here, organization can be set up autonomously, that is, as following no logic but its own. .. . Paper does not resist the bureaucrat in the way that steel parts resist the engineer. Thus there is nothing that intrinsically prohibits the passport agency from deciding that ten rather than three bureaucrats must approve every passport applicant[15]

In a techno-bureaucrat society all of life is compartmentalized and individuals are expected to unquestioningly follow procedures without necessarily understanding the larger goals to which their actions contribute. For, on the one hand, the intelligibility of required procedures is opaque since the problem it solves is not a genuine technical problem. On the other hand, one is expected to abide by regulations and procedures which are "too technical" for-the average person to understand, on the assumption that the appropriate experts understand and legitimate these ends, providing the reasons why things must be done in a certain way.

Albert Speer, reflecting on how he came to be involved in Hitler's Third Reich emphasizes just these tendencies of techno-bureaucratic order. Thus, he tells us:

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[14] Peter Berger, *The Homeless Mind,* by Peter Berger, Birgitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner (New York: intage Books, Random House, 1973.), p. 42.

[15] Berger and Kellner, *The Homeless Mind,* pp. 49-50.

The ordinary party member was being taught that grand-policy was much too complex for him to judge it. Consequently, one felt one was being represented, never called upon to take personal responsibility. The whole structure of the system was aimed at preventing conflicts of conscience from even arising. ... Worse still was the restriction of responsibility to one's own field. Everyone kept to his own group - of architects, physicians,, jurists, technicians, soldiers, or farmers. The professional organizations to which everyone had to belong were called chambers ... and this term aptly described the way people were immured in isolated, closed-off areas of life. The longer Hitler's system lasted, the more people's minds moved within such isolated chambers ... What eventually developed was a society of totally isolated individuals...[16]

Such a techno-bureaucratic society forces a demonic doubling or splitting of the self. It forces individuals to generate a plurality of selves — a *persona* appropriate to each compartmentalized area of human life, selves which are, at best, a-moral, having surrendered the option of ethical reflection and judgment to the experts. These selves, denuded of everything which makes them truly individuals (i.e., their personal and communal histories and values) become finally dehumanized interchangeable and replaceable parts in a vast bureaucratic machine. Thus whereas technological production gives persons a sense of creativity and potency and even self-transcendence as one overcomes obstacles and realizes a goal, bureaucracy creates just the opposite, namely, a sense of impotency, helplessness and the necessity to conform to a reality so real, massive and all pervasive that "nothing can be changed." The result is a social structure which separates ends from means or the deriders from the actors, relegating all decisions to "higher levels." Such a social structure prepares the way for the demonic, preventing ethical questions from ever arising even as it creates bureaucratic individuals who feel no personal responsibility for their actions.

In such a techno-bureaucratic society, the presence of holy communities, who are in but not of the world, serve as a fence around human dignity. For these communities prevent the usurpation of human dignity by bureaucratic expediency, especially by forcing the naked self to recognize its essential interdependence with all other beings. Such communities undermine demonic forms of doubling by fostering a sense of self which breaks down the compartmentalized walls between its various role defined selves (all of whom speak only one language - "bureaucrateeze"), encouraging the reflective self to assume responsibility for all its selves.

Our capacity for ethics is rooted in our caparity to assume the place of the other who will be affected by our actions. This capacity is fostered by the experience of self-alienation which makes it possible for us to assume different roles in different social contexts. The capacity to assume diverse roles is precisely what enables us to identify with the stranger. The ethical dimension of every institutional role we assume is rooted in a feeling of obligation towards, the dignity of the persons whose needs we meet through that social context. However, the tendency of virtually every social

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[16] Albert Speer ^4Zbert *Speer, Inside the ThirdRdch,* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 33.

institution is to consider its purposes as sacred or ultimate. So each demands a total unquestioning commitment of the self to its goals and values at the expense of all others. To acquiesce in that demand would require a demonic doubling.

By contrast, the holy community, when it is faithful to its calling, is not just one more institution competing for theloyalty of the self but the one community which raises tire question of justice. It is the one community which raises those questions which force the reflecting self to weigh and balance all the demands placed upon it by its diverse roles so as to recognize and embrace that sorio-ecological balance which will best allow it to respect the human dignity of others in every social context of its life. This it does ty weighing and balancing the selfs diverse roles so as to promote a complex moral balance in its social ecology which does justice to human dignity in all its social contexts.

Contrary to Alasdair MacIntyre's argument, human rights claims cannot simply be dismissed as fictions invented to counter bureaucratic imperialism. Rather, they are an expression of our deepest religious and ethical insights concerning the status of the stranger. Our problem is not, as MacIntyre appears to suggest, that we no longer *all* share the same story as in the days before Babel. A human rights ethic does not require narrative uniformity. It only requires that our diverse stories make a place for the stranger. Indeed, as I have been arguing, human rights ethics are the result not of narrative uniformity but narrative diversity. The diversity of Babel is not a curse but a promise. It is a promise which can be realized through a process which Jeffrey Stout calls moral *bricolage*. A *bricoleur* is one who creatively makes use of what ever is at hand. "All great works of creative ethical thought . .. involve moral *bricolage*. ... Take Aquinas,... his real accomplishment was to bring together into a single whole a wide assortment of fragments — Platonic, Stoic, Pauline, Jewish, Islamic, Augustinian, and Aristotelian."[17] While I think there can be more theoretical clarity to this process of *bricolage* than Stout's pragmatism offers, I do not find myself in disagreement with his basic premise. When it comes to discussing ethics and human rights in the naked public square, he suggests, *bricolage* can produce a very creative and functional linguistic *creole.*

> The secularization of public discourse - didn't occur in people's heads and hearts but rather into he linguistic transactions that took place, under the aegis of certain public institutions, between one person and another. What they had in their heads and hearts mattered. Luther's religious convictions about the nature of the secular order and Locke's religious convictions of conscience, as well as the convictions of eighteenth-century deists and nineteenth-century atheists, all contributed to the secularization of moral discourse. But we need also to keep in mind how heavily the need to persuade one's religious opponents without resort to war has contributed to the process of conceptual change. . . .

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[17] Stout, pp. 75-76.

Our secularized language of human rights seems in fact to have begun as what the linguists call ***pidgin -*** a sparse dialect used entirely for communicating with members of other groups, nobody's native tongue or first language of deliberation but a handy mode of discourse with strangers [emphasis added]. But what used to be a pidgin can undergo further development, catch on as a language to be learned in infancy, and function as a subtle medium for deliberation and discourse with friends and family. Linguists call such a language a ***creole.*** A creole can become over time, as rich a moral language as one could want - drawing vocabularies from divers sources and weaving them together, if all goes well, into a tapestry well-suited to the needs of a time and place. Need we reduce our moral discourse to Esperanto or confine ourselves to the scant conceptual resources of a pidgin to make the language of human rights our own? Not if we can give it a place within a language sufficiently rich and coherent to meet our needs.[18]

The language and ethic of human rights which I have been envisioning approximates Stout's proposal. But the creole that I imagine would continue to be viable only if it acted as a bridge between particular traditions and their stories and not as a replacement forthem. To Stout's credit he recognizes the moral discourse of the naked public square must have a place within it for religious dialects as well as secular. "If we want to understand our fellow citizens," he says (speaking for the "secularist" perspective), "— whether they be Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jerry Falwell, the Roman Catholic Bishops, Mario Cuomo, or Elie Wiesel - we had better develop the means for understanding the moral languages, including the theological ones, in which they occasionally address us and in which their deliberations are couched."[19] One might add, that the reverse is true also. Those who speak out of religious narrative traditions need to be able to hear and understand those who speak out of secular stories as well. For this to happen, the religious fundamentalism which characterizes many religious communities and the secular fundamentalism that pervades the naked public square will both have to be desacralized and replaced with a secular holiness whi ch welcomes strangers and the diversity of story and tradition they bring with them. The utopian promise of Babel lies neither in a secular uniformity nor a sacred uniformity but in the possibilities for self-transcendence which occur when we welcome strangers into the public square even though welcoming them is likely to change and transform us.

The kind of *creole* Stout seems to have in mind is well illustrated by the cross-cultural human rights ethic whose emergence is symbolized by the convergence between East and West which we find in Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. Their ethic of non-violence is the product of a long history of interaction between narrative traditions East and West (going back through Tolstoy to Jesus and the Buddha) which has resulted

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[18] Stout, pp. 80-81.
[19] Stout, p. 188.

in a powerful ethic of audacity on behalf of the stranger. Indeed, I believe the ethical *creole* which is emerging out of this multi-cultural and multi-religious narrative history is capable of embracing both religious and secular ethics to reveal the utopian promise of Babel in a unified yet pluralistic response to the silent voice which commands from Auschwitz and Hiroshima — Never Again.

Secular Holiness in Defense of Human Dignity: The Commanding Voice From Auschwitz and the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights

If the twentieth century has been the age of the genocidal *apocalypse* (i.e., revelation) of the demonic, it has also been the age of the birth of human rights. It was Emil Fackenheim (in *God's Presence in History)* who noted that the refusal of Jews to give up their Jewishness, despite the devastation of the Shoah, suggested that they had heard and responded to a silent yet commanding voice from Auschwitz, forbidding them to grant Hitler a posthumous victory. In claiming that Jews had heard such a command, Fackenheim was not so much advancing a theological hypothesis as he was making an empirical observation. He was simply articulating and making conscious what, in fact, had already happened. For the visceral response to the Shoah by Jews, both religious and non-religious, was to continue to affirm their Jewishness.

It is not implausible to suggest that the emergence of an ethic of human rights is a similar response to a silent yet commanding voice from Auschwitz - a voice directed, in this instance, to the whole human race. For the movement for human rights arose in response to the trauma of the Shoah after WWH and culminated in the formation of the United Nations in 1946 and the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. At the same time, the U.N. backed founding of the State of Israel. The Declaration recalls the "barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind," and affirms the unity of humanity across cultures. Consequently, this document stands against all mythologies which would diride humanity, racially or otherwise, into superior and inferior groups in order to claim the world and its resources for the superior ones, as both the German and Japanese mythologies of the WWII period sought to do. The unity and sanctity of the human community, it declares, may not be violated by any political order. Human dignity transcends all social and political orders. It is the true measure of a just society - the limit which no political authority may transgress.

The power of the ethical vision of human dignity and human rights expressed in the.U.N. document lies in the fact that it too is rooted in a visceral response, one which cuts across cultures and creeds. Unlike the language of most academic reflection on ethics which remains technical and esoteric, human rights language is a language which has spontaneously taken root in cross-cultural public discourse. The language of human rights has become embedded in the language of politics and international relations. Even if in many cases the political use of this language is hypocri ti-cal, still that is *the homage which vice pays to virtue,* which means that this standard has taken root in public life and can be used as a measuring rod (canon) for social and political criticism. To a considerable degree the world has already embraced an ethic of human rights and now scholars are scurrying to see if it is a coherent and defensible ethic.

The emergence of a human rights ethic marks the emergence of an ethic of secular holiness. It parallels the convergence of the secular and the holy which Irving Greenberg, in his essay *The Third Great Cycle,* has noted in the history of Judaism. Greenberg breaks down the history of Judaism into three stages of secularization. These stages have implications for the gentile world as well. According to Greenberg, the first era of the Jewish covenant, the biblical, ended with the fall of the second temple which in turn lead to the rabbinic era which lasted until the Shoah and the emergence of the modem state of Israel which inaugurated yet a third era. Hie trend in this unfolding pattern is one of the increasing hiddenness of God, says Greenberg, and of the increasing responsibility that human beings must bear for the covenant. In the first age, God intervened directly in history and bore the primary responsibility for the covenant. In the second age, God became more hidden. God went into exile and diaspora with God's people and placed more responsibility with the human side of the covenant, allowing the rabbis to determine the binding nature of covenant obligations. But now after the Shoah in which 80 % of the rabbis and Talmud scholars perished, the Talmudic age has come to an end. But even as the Shoah shattered faith, so the creation of the state of Israel stands on "a par with Exodus" as a miraculous event rekindling hope. Out of the contradiction of these two events, Shoah and Israel, neither of which is capable of canceling out the other, Greenberg argues, a new age of Judaism is being bom. Living with these contradictory experiences, faith reasserts itself and yet "the smoke, of Auschwitz obscures the presence of God." In this new era God is not only more hidden but religious activity has become radically secular.

The old categories of secular and religious no longer work. If in the first era God was to be found in the temple in Jerusalem, and in the second era God was found in exile and diaspora with God's people, then in the third era God is found hidden evetywhere beneath the secular. In this third era, the primary responsibility for keeping the covenant has fallen on the human side of the covenant In this era, Greenberg argues, the covenant is no longer binding on Jews. After the Shoah God cannot with justice require any Jew to keep the covenant. The covenant has become a voluntary covenant. And yet Jews are choosing to keep it of their own free will but in a radical variety of ways. In direct continuity with the rabbinic principle of pluralism in interpretation but in contradiction of the principle of majority rule, the placing of the covenant more completely in human hands means there will be diversity both in the interpretation and application of the covenant There will legitimately be a plurality of Jewish covenantal life-styles. It is binding on Jews to accept each other in these plural ways of keeping the covenant For any one Jewish community to reject other Jews because of the choice of how they will keep the covenant would be a betrayal of those Jews, both secular and religious, who died in the camps. Such a betrayal only furthers the possibility of a posthumous victory for Hitler. Indeed, it is the more secular institutions of Judaism and their lay leadership,(e.g., the state of Israel and the United Jewish Appeal), not tire ultra orthodox (who would refuse some Jews admission to Israel), who are championing the dignity of every Jew as created in the image of God, against all future Hitlers. These

secular institutions and lay leaders represent the emergence of a new era and a new ethic of secular holiness for Jews.

In *The Secular City,* Harvey Cox once argued that the modem secular age, far from leading necessarily to nihilism, leads instead to a new pragmatic consensus on human values as exemplified in the UJI. Declaration on Human Rights. I think Cox is right to point to the human rights movement as a significant development but I think he is wrong to see it as rooted in a purely pragmatic consensus. Human rights claims suggest that we have a human dignity which must not be violated even if this consensus should change. Human rights claims are rooted in a uniquely modem understanding of the human self as making a moral claim on us by its very existence. Human rights claims are rooted in the spontaneous recognition of the transcendent dignity of the human self. The U.N. Declaration on human rights represents nothing less than a response of the human community to human dignity as an experience of transcendence which evokes a new international covenant community-of-communities.

I believe the international movement to embrace and defend an ethic of human rights, inaugurated by the U.N. Declaration in response to the Shoah, represents the emergence of a new covenant with the whole of humanity — parallel to that of the renewed voluntary covenant of Judaism. The new Jewish covenant, as Greenberg interprets it, really has two levels. On the one hand, the vocation of witness as a light to the nations, of whether and how to be Jewish is now a matter of choice. But Jews do not have the option of not recognizing each others' diverse forms of Jewishness as authentic. The dignity of each Jew, as one created in the image of God, must be acknowledged. The new covenant with humanity represented by the U.N. Declaration of human rights parallels the Jewish covenant only at the second level. This covenant is not experienced as voluntary but as an unconditional non-negotiable demand. It is as if a silent yet commanding voice was heard from Auschwitz demanding that the human dignity of every stranger, beginning with the Jews, be recognized and affirmed as of infinite value.

This covenant is at once both holy and secular. It cuts across the sacred and the secular, winning adherents both religious and non-religious. It is unique in its ability to transcend the privatistic and relativistic attitudes of modem consciousness to elicit and create a public trans-cultural holy community-of-communities of all those *called out* to champion human dignity. It has created its own secular organizations to champion this dignity. Such organizations include the U.N. itself, especially its Commission on Human Rights and its various subcommissions, as well as the International Court of Justice and regional Conventions on Human Rights in Western Europe, America and Africa. Then there are the governmental offices of individual nations which monitor each otherfor rights violations and use this information to political advantage. (Motivations of self-interest aside, this political game does keep the pressure on to observe human rights.) Finally, there are non-govemmental voluntary associations such as Amnesty International, the Anti-Slavery Society, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Also in this category are religious communities (churches,

synagogues, etc.), labor organizations, professional associations, etc. This community of communities represents a parallel to the secular holiness of which Greenberg speaks with reference to Judaism, in which the measure of holiness is not belief but action on behalf of human dignity. At the time of the six day war, Greenberg argues, it was the atheist philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre, and not Pope Paul VI, who spoke out on behalf of Jewish lives and thus Sartre and not the Pope who is the truly holy man. Likewise it is the secular Israelis who are truly holy, for it is they who insist on welcoming all Jews to Israel, not the ultra-orthodox who would turn their backs on non-religious Jews. The test is the deed. Anyone who protects human dignity and human life is a witness to its infinite value, to our being created in the image of the God without image.

As a universal response to Auschwitz and Hiroshima, and all the atrocities of WWII, the human rights movement represents a renewal of God's original covenant with the whole human race, the covenant with Noah, signified by the placing of the rainbow in the sky. In that covenant, God promised: "I will never again curse the ground because of h*umankin*d... .nor will I ever again destroy every living creature" (Genesis 8:21). But after Auschwitz and Hiroshima the responsibility for this covenant has shifted to the human side and it is the human race which must promise - "Never Again." Human rights is the fence around this new covenant, the fence which must be erected to protect the infinite dignity of every human being and the sanctity of all creation. An ethic of human dignity and human rights is the common response of Jews and gentiles to the silent yet commanding voice which came from Auschwitz and also from Hiroshima, the voice which commands - "Never Again."

Human rights is the name for a new covenant which has emerged through a wrestling with the stranger who comes from other cultures, other religions, other races. A human rights ethic is an ethic of audacity on behalf of the stranger. Its purpose is to protect the dignity of strangers no matter what race, religion or culture they come from. We must wrestle with the stranger as if with God - the God who remains hidden, who refuses to reveal his name, who remains transcendent yet immanent, *God with us,* the God who blesses us and offers us a new name and a new identity. The consensus which Cox speaks of is more than a rational consensus. It is a covenantal response to the hiddenness of transcendence beneath the countenance of the stranger, a response which calls forth a secular holiness. This new identity and new covenant can only be embraced by embracing the stranger, by welcoming the stranger and by the audacity to champion the dignity of the stranger against all the dark social, political and religious forces of dehumanization.

Although this new covenant can be understood as a renewal of the Noachite covenant, it is one deeply influenced by the Mosaic and Christdogical covenants of Jews and Christians. For these traditions introduced an understanding of humans as created in the image of the holy and then introduced the secularizing power of the holy into the world, fostering human freedom, dignity and interdependence. And as we pass over into other religions and other cultures, we shall find kindred sprits for

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this new covenant of secular holiness among the members of the Buddhist sangha as well. If Auschwitz and Hiroshima are the expression of the dark and demonic side of urban secularization, the movement for human rights represents the positive side, the secularization of the ethical traditions previously carried only by holy communities. For the first time in lustoiy, the measure of human dignity is finding official embodiment in the secular political-institutional-cosmological order of society as the true measure of a just society.

From an Ethic of Honor to an Ethic of Human Dignity, Rights and Liberation

As Peter Berger has argued, there is a fundamental difference in the ethical sensibility of the modem individual as compared to the individual in a pre-modem society, "The [modem] age that saw the dedine of honor also saw the rise of new moralities and of a new humanism, and most specifically of a historically unprecedented concern for the dignity and the rights of the individual."[20] The modem person, he argues, operates out of an ethic of dignity whereas the person from a pre-modem society is governed by a morality of honor. To fully understand the implications of, and reasons for, this shift we must understand the social and historical location of these contrasting ethics/ moralities.

Honor and duty, says Berger, are concepts rooted in an understanding of self found in pre-modem hierarchical societies. These are precisely societies which understand both self and society as part of a sacred natural order. In such societies, the self is basically a clothed self. That is, the self is identified with or clothed in its social role which is given as its destiny at birth into a particular place in the hierarchical stratification of society. The sense of identity one has in such a society is basically collective. You would have the sense that your family and your clan reside within you, such that if you are insulted it is not just you but your whole family or clan who is insulted. Moreover, if you fail to live up to the obligations of your social status it is more than a personal failure. You bring dishonor on your whole family or clan. In both cases you may be expected to risk your life in order to reestablish this collective honor. An insult may require a duel or inter-tribal warfare. Individual failures entail a loss of face which may require reparations as drastic as suicide, as in the Japanese tradition of *harakiri.*

It is very difficult for a modem person to understand this ethic because it is rooted in a sense of human identity totally at odds with the modem sensibility. Whereas the traditional self is from birth clothed in a culturally defined human nature (i.e., a fixed set of social roles), the modem self takes off and puts on social roles or identities as if they were different suits of clothes. For the modem person, the selfis never identified with its social role. The modem self is a naked self which identifies itself not with its

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[20] Peter Berger, "On the Obsolescence of the Concept of Honor," in *Revisions,* edited by Stanley Hauerwas and Alasdair Macintyre, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1983, p.173.

roles but rather with its capacity to choose its roles. The modem self is an existential self, free to choose who to become through its choice of roles. Because the naked self does not identify with its social role, it does not experience insult as a threat to its honor anymore than it experiences failure as a loss of face or identity.

In a pre-modem society there is a hierarchical ordering of human selves in status and value. The hierarchical order is a normative order, reflecting the sacred order of the cosmos. Thus one's place in society determines not only who you are but what your obligations or duties are toward your peers as well as those above and below you in the hierarchy. Such a hierarchy implies levels of humanity. The operative value governing human relationships is not equality but rather "to each his due." Those in higher positions having been given more humanity also have greater obligations of duty than those who are lower in the hierarchy, having less humanity. A very clear example of such society would be the classic Brahmanic caste system in India or the classical familial-hierarchical ordering of human relations in neo-Confu-cian societies. In both, one of the greatest sins is to violate the sacred cosmic order of nature by the mixing of castes or roles, ignoring the proper ritual obligations of caste or social position. It is a great sin because it violates the sacred order which makes life possible, introducing disharmony into the universe and causing the disintegration of the cosmos into chaos. In all such societies myth and ritual serve to legitimate the sacred order of society, reinforcing the obligation of everyone to perform his or her sacred duty.

By contrast, the naked self transcends it social roles. It is not that such a self is ever found without some social role or other but rather that the modem self views itself as prior to its roles which are understood as diverse opportunities for self expression. As a result all human selves are essentially equal, no matter what their social status since one's humanity resides not in a role but in an essential nakedness shared with all other selves. "Modem man is Don Quixote on his deathbed, denuded of the multicolored banners that previously enveloped the self and revealed to be *nothing but a man.*"[21] This is the essence of the modem understanding of human dignity which has replaced the notion of honor. "It is precisely this solitary self that modem consciousness has perceived as the bearer of human dignity and of inalienable human rights."[22] All selves have an equal human dignity and equal human rights because all selves are equally naked.

This understanding of self, while typical of modem society, says Berger, has its origins in such ancient precursors as the Hebrew Bible, Sophocles and Mencius.[23] Its modem manifestations appear in the

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[21] Berger, *Revisions,* p. 175.

[22] Berger, *Revisions,* p. 176.

[23] By the criteria I have established neither Sophocles nor Mencius would be as important for the emergence of human rights as Abraham or Job or Jeremiah, or Siddhartha for that matter. For the traditions of Sophocles and Mencius did not give rise to holy communities which represent a continuing social and historical witness to the emptiness or imagelessness of the self and hence its dignity and equality.

formulation of human rights, from the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence to the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. These rights always pertain to the individual 'irrespective of race, color or creed' - or, indeed, of sex, age, physical condition or any conceivable social status. There is an implicit sociology and an implicit anthropology here. The implicit sociology views all biological and historical differentiations among men as either downright unreal or essentially irrelevant The implicit anthropology locates the real self over and beyond all these differentiations?[24]

The transition from an ethic of honor to an ethic of dignity, Berger suggests, can be viewed both positively and negatively. Conservatives view the decline of honor as a profound loss, while modernists see it as a "prelude to liberation." On the one hand, the naked self is in a situation of perpetual identity crisis, marked by excessive individualism and alienation from its social roles. On the other hand, this same deinstitutionalizing of the self makes possible "the specific modem discoveries of human dignity and human rights... The new recognition of individual responsibility for all actions, even those assigned to the individual with specific institutional roles, a recognition that attained the force of law at Nuremberg — all these and others, are moral achievements that would be unthinkable without the peculiar constellations of the modem world."[25]

Berger's distinction between honor and dignity makes it possible to understand how both the desacralizing power of the holy and the desacralizing power of urbanization converge with modem consciousness to form an ethic of human rights as an ethic of secular holiness. Such an ethic, understood with the proper qualifications, might bridge the gap between religious and secular ethics. For the naked self is a product of the history of secularization both as a result of urbanization and as a result of the emergence of holy communities. These two processes converge to remove the self from the sacred cosmic and hierarchical order of nature, where identity is fixed and given, in order to place this self in the new secular world of the naked public square.

The origins of human rights thought is controversial. I do not think it is either possible or desirable to trace a human rights ethic to a single source. Human rights emerge as a distinct theme of modem ethical consciousness as the result of the influences of a variety of sources both ancient and modem, both secular and religious. I would identify at least five such sources: 1.) urbanization, 2.) experiences of the holy, East and West, 3.) socio-historical consciousness of the limits of all socialization, 4.) the experience of doubt and the questions it generates and, 5.) the experience of indignation.

The modem naked self, which experiences itself as having an inherent human dignity no matter what its race, or religion, or social and economic class, must be seen as drawing on human experiences both universal and particular — as universal as civilization itself and as particular as individual narrative-communal traditions within civilization. The universal root is urbanization. (1) Urbanization is a secularizing process which

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[24] Berger, *Revisions,* p. 176.
[25] Berger, Revisions, p. 180.

alienates the self from the sacred mythological order of nature, stripping the self of its collective identity and leaving it naked in its new urban world. Urban individuation creates the burden of self-consciousness. The pluralistic and institutionally complex urban environment individuates human identity and fosters reflective self-consciousness. This process heightens our sense of human individuality and the unique value of every individual. However, it also heightens our sense of alienation and meaninglessness.

(2) In the ancient world, friendship between persons who were socially unequal was thought to be impossible, but it was viewed as a possibility within the holy communities of Buddhists and Jews, and later in Christianity. What these holy communities offered that was unavailable to either the early urbanized naked self (e.g., Gilgamesh) or the clothed self (the remythologized self as found in the sacred societies shaped by Taoism, Confucianism and Hinduism), was the development of *a* language of inwardness to articulate an experience of the holy which breaks with the cosmological imagination. This is a language for exploring the openness of the naked self to the infinite - a wholly other dimension of experience. In the traditions of the holy communities the naked self created by urban secularization is not clothed in some new cosmological myth but rather discovers its emptiness. The consciousness of the equality of selves within holy communities is rooted in an awareness that all selves share a fundamental capacity for openness to the infinite. The self is understood not as created in the image of nature (with a natural caste or class identity) but in the image of the God who is without image, or in the Buddhist case in the image of the ultimate emptiness of all things.

The holy is that which is set apart *(qadosh)*. It is that which can neither be named nor imaged. Transcendence is unimaginable (i.e., un-image-able) and hence, like the stranger whose thoughts are not our thoughts and whose ways are not our ways, can never be fully integrated into the cosmological/social order. The self, stripped of its natural identity, turns inward to discover that its nakedness is not the equivalent of an eternal self. The finite self is not confined to the finite but open to the infinite. There is no floor of Tao or Brahman beneath the self, only an emptiness which is a radical openness. It is this type of experience which leads Buddhists to speak of the self as void or empty, and Jews and Christians to speak of the self as created in the image of a God who is without image.[26]

(3) In addition to urban alienation and the experiences of the holy, the modem naked self has roots in the emergence of modem sodo-historical or technological consciousness.

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[26] Eventually, Christians adapted this Jewish insight to the gentile world by using the Greek language of metaphysics to speak of being created in the image of a Trinitarian God. Like a Buddhist koan, the doctrine of the trinity defied the imagination, even as the doctrine of the incarnation affirmed that the human self, undistorted by sin, is a perfect image of the God who cannot be imaged. This insight however stood in tension with the hierarchical structure of Greek metaphysical thinking. To the degree that this way of thought influenced how Christi an's thought about God, Christianity drifted back into a cosmicization of the social order. This tension can be seen in the difference between Origen and Augustine's accounts of the trinity. Origen's account is ambiguous. One side of his thought suggests that since the son emanates from the father, the son is less than the father, and likewise the sprit is less than the son. Augustine, on the other band grasps that the trinity must not be thought of in terms of physi-

Much of the ethical power of the human rights movement comes from a secular experience of transcendence which, in some respects, parallels the religious insight into the emptiness and imagelessness of the self. That is, once modem sodo-historical consciousness emerged with the appearance of the sod al sciences in the nineteenth century, the inalienable or transcendent quality of our humanity became visible not only to the religious eye but also to the secular eye. Once the distinction between the self and its sodal roles is made and the processes by which we become acculturated and sodalized can be studied, it becomes manifestly apparent to us that no culture or sodety has ever succeeded in totally sodalizing the self. There always remains some part of the self (the self as chooser of its roles) which escapes being encapsulated by sodety and reduced to its sodal roles. As every parent knows from practical experience, no child can ever be totally sod alized. There is always some part of the child which remains holy (that is, "set apart"). It is that aspect of the experience of self which makes every human being a perpetual alien or stranger, both to itself and its culture. And it is that experience of alienation which enables us to doubt, question and rebel.

The modem sense of human dignity is directly rooted in these experiences of the irredudble inalienable transcendence of the self to its sodal identity. Such experiences are now embedded in the urban consdousness of the naked self. Paralleling the experience of the holy, the modem naked (existential) self now experiences itself as radically other –as that which cannot be captured by the bureaucratic imagination and hence cannot be reduced to its sodal role. Every ideology begins by defining the human so as to separate the superior from the inferior, whether by race or sex or class, etc. Defining the human inevitably occurs only for the purpose of dehumanizing the stranger and the outcast. But the human cannot be defined. To put it another way, the human can be defined only by its undefinability. What gives us our inalienable dignity is our undefinability.

(4) Phenomenologically, the secular analog of the experiences of the holy occurs through the experience of doubt. Doubt and emptinessfimagelessness belong to the same category of experiences — the experiences of our radical openness to the infinite which creates the gap between the self as self-transcending subject and self as a cultural-institutional role. The abyss of the self, its emptiness, can never be filled or encapsulated by one's culture or sodety. That is why the self can never be totally sodalized. Something of the self always escapes definition and encapsulation. The Upanishads ask, "How can the knower be known?," as a way of pointing out the impossibility of the reflecting self ever being encapsulated, even by its own reflection. The thinker always transcends that which is being thought about, espedally when what is being thought is one's self. The mistake is to clothe the thinker in an eternal self. Augustine of Hippo came upon this same reflective paradox. Like the Buddha and other

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cal metaphors of "emanation" (e.g., such as the sun's rays) but in spiritual terms, whose metaphors are the relations of mind to itself (e.g., memory, intelligence and will). The result is that in the trinitarian God, all persons (divine and human) are equal. But even in Augustine this realization stands in tension with a hierarchical metaphysics of creation.

forest dwellers he turned inward, traveling through the "caverns" of memory of past life events (more than one life in the Buddha's case) and concluded upon exploring these caverns of his own inwardness that the mind is so vast it cannot contain itself and hence is un-image-able and radically open to the infinite as wholly other. Hence the mind discovers its own contingency, its own emptiness or openness to the infinite. In Augustine's case that lead him to the conclusion that God is not the mind but "the lord God of the mind" *(Confessions,* X.25),[27] even as the Buddha came to insist that the experience of Nirvana is not an experience of an eternal self but radically other than all self-namely *anatta* (no-self).[28] In both cases the self is left dangling over the abyss of the infinite.

Doubt emerges out of the experienced gap between the self and its sodal world. Doubt is the secular experience of transcendence, whose religious correlate is the experience of the holy as the experience of emptiness or imagelessness. Doubt and emptiness give birth to the utopian rebel who calls the sacred order of sodety into question in order to bring about anew order of things, open to the infinite. At the reflective level, the experience of doubt gives birth to the philosopher even as the experience of imagelessness gives birth to the prophet and the experience of emptiness to the sage.

(5) At the everyday level of common sense, emptiness gives birth to the unreflective rebel, who, although he or she can't say why, feels the need refuse the demand of the political, technological, economic or sodal order for total conformity. The rebel has an intuitive but unconsdous awareness of being open to the infinite and so will not be conformed to the finite. The rebel in the street is bom in response to the violation of human dignity - out of indignation - as an intuitive visceral awareness of the silent yet commanding voice which witnesses to the irredudble dignity which all selves have in common.

The movement for human rights is rooted experientially in both the secular and the religious forms of the experience of the holy as irredudble experiences of openness to the infinite. The secular and the holy are not alien to each other. On the contrary, they are dialectically united in their power to alienate the self from all sacred order in the name of a hidden transcendence we call human dignity. And the demand that the human dignity of all persons be respected and protected is in fact the basis for an ethic of secular holiness, an ethic which theists and a-theists (whether Buddhist or secular) ought to be able to construct cooperatively. For unlike the experience of the sacred which treats reason as the enemy of both religion and politics (demanding

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[27] *The Confessions,* p. 235.

[28] In so far as Christianity and (to a lesser degree) Judaism allowed itself to be seduced by the Greek metaphysical tradition it of course tended to reduce "God" to an "Eternal Being" which denies the essential biblical experience of God as temporal-historical and without image. We find this tension in Augustine. The conflict between "Being" and the "Infinite" represents the fundamental conflict between the cosmological imagination and the experience of the holy. In Christianty, only with the Protestant Reformation did the holiness of God break free of the metaphysical imagination of being and then only partially and with ambivalence.

instead an unquestioning obedience), the experiences of the holy gives rise to critical reason, manifest through both the experience of doubt and the experience of emptiness. Secular holiness unites religion and reason in the common task of creating a public world ordered to the "unseen measure" of human dignity.

In the ancient world there really is no such thing as social ethics in the modem managerial sense of transforming the artificial social structures of society. Whether the world was defined as one's natural fate, or the product of sin, or as a product of samsara/illusion, etc. - it was viewed as a world which could not be significantly altered by human intentions. It is only when the peculiarly modem notion of society as artificial and technological or managerial emerged that that social ethics was bom. This understanding emerged in the 19th century, as a result of the secularizing power of Greek rationalism and, Jewish and Christian historical consciousness which had converged to finally secularize human existence and expose human beings to a newly invented critical social-scientific consciousness. This is the unique contribution of the West to the emergence of human rights. And this new socio-historical or technological-managerial consciousness radically alters the situation for all religious and philosophical traditions, both East and West, to develop a new dimension — social ethics as the ethics of human liberation.

The conjunction of experiences of the holy, secular rationality and modem socio-historical or technological consciousness with the experience of doubt is hermeneutically and sodo-politically explosive. It forces human communities to move from the conviction of *the dignity of the self* to an affirmation of *human rights* and finally to audacious acts of *human liberation.* For example, in the first century, Paul could say that *in Christ their is neither male nor female.* Nevertheless, Pauline communities, and Christians in general, continued to subordinate women to men in hierarchical social roles. Why? Because the order of society was seen as an unchangeable sacred order and therefore the statement of equality was taken as an eschatological statement of spiritual equality to be realized in the flesh only at the end of time. Or again, the peasants took Luther's preaching about the freedom and dignity of the Christian to heart and were inspired to revolt against oppression. But Luther, still sharing the conviction that society is part of a sacred cosmic order, explained to them that in this world everyone must know and keep to their place, only in the world to come will they be actually equal. But today, when a believing community reads Paul's statement in the light of modem mana-gerialAechnological consciousness, that is, with the knowledge that the social order is not a sacred and unchangeable part of the order of nature but is secular and artificial or socially constructed, these members are suddenly confronted with a new level of moral obligation, the demand that society be transformed so as to allow for freedom and equality between the sexes and social classes here and now. The combination of consciousness of the holy and managerialAechnological consciousness is at one and the same time both radically apocalyptic and utopian, for it leads to an ethic of human liberation which brings one's old world to an end in order to inaugurate a new creation.

Book Reviews

Narrative Theology after Auschwitz: From Alienation to Ethics

by Darrell J. Fasching, (Fortress Press, 1992). 198 pages.
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In one way, this book can be seen simply as one of a growing number of books by Christian thinkers who are taking the Holocaust seriously as a challenge to Christian theology. Chi this view, the general statements in the Prologue and Chapter One about why a rethinking of Christian theology is called for in the post-Shoah age will hardly be surprising. In another way, however, the book makes a unique and important contribution to the discussion. Fasching departs from the usual path followed by post-Shoa Christian theologians of responding to the Holocaust by re-formulating the Christian story so as to avoid supersesrionism and Christian triumphalism. Rather, Fasching calls for Christians to take instead a stance that questions the finality of any telling of the Christian story. His, he says, is a theology of Chutzpah (audacity). It is only by constantly being willing to question the finality of any narrative that Christianity can keep itself open to accepting, rather than annihilating, the Other.

The author constructs his argument in five stages. The first, Chapter One, is simply concerned with establishing the need for a rethinking of the traditional Christian theological enterprise in light of the Holocaust. In essence, Fasching argues that the Holocaust has revealed to Christians a side to themselves that has always been there but was never really confronted: that side that was ready to exterminate Jews in the name of Jesus. With the implications of that stance now clearly acted out in history, there is a need to transcend the myth of Christian supersessionism and find room for anew self-understanding that sees Jews (and others) as partners rather than enemies. The expected move at this point would be to retrieve those parts of the New Testament and subsequent theological writings that allow the construction of a different Christian story. This is what we find in the Eckardts, Paul van Buren and others. Fasching, however, makes another move entirely. He argues that the problem is not merely that the received narrative can no longer be tolerated, but rather the problem is the Christian propensity to accept *any* narrative as normative, that is as deserving unquestioned faith and obedience. What is needed is not a new narrative, but the articulation as a legitimate Christian posture of a stance that holds any narrative in suspicion. The

dialectics of a post-Shoah Christian faith must be that as soon as a story is accepted, it be questioned and transcended.

As a model for this type of faith, Fasching points to the story of Jacob's wrestling with the angel. In the end, Jacob refused to bow to the angel but continued his struggle until he had gained a new sense of self-understanding and of course a blessing. The Christian encounter with the story should be the same; not to accept it but to wrestle and move beyond it It is this posture toward the divine that Fasching sees in Judaism in the concept of Chutzpah, the readiness always to question, and argue with, Gd. It is when one is ready to accept a story as absolutely true that such a thing as loyalty to the SS is possible. Fasching shows how this works by examining the writings of the pro-Nazi Protestant theologian Emmanuel Hirsch. Only by questioning the absolute truth of any narrative will we be able to avoid such blind loyalty.

There is another advantage to Chutzpah that is important to Fasching. It is that by questioning any story, we of necessity keep ourselves open to the new and the different It is through this openness that we make room for the stranger among us. To make this argument, Fasching draws on Jacque Ellul's distinction between a sacred society and a holy sodety. A sacred society, on this view, is one that sees itself as reflecting Gd's word and so comes to see its opponents as enemies of the Divine. In contrast, the holy sodety recognizes the presence of Gd in all peoples and so is radically open to otherness. By seeing any story as only partial we can protect ourselves from considering ourselves uniquely sacred and so aware of the ever greater possibilities within the holy.

The psychology of transcending the sacred and entering the holy is explored in Chapter Three. Through an examination of Albert Speer on the one hand and Augustine on the other, Fasching teases out his point Speer fell victim to the Nazi myth because he simply had no story from which to question what the Nazi myth held out as the absolute truth. Once he accepted the Nazi version of reality as true, he had little moral choice but to accept its implications. Augustine, on the other hand, records his journey from story to story to story. According to Fasching, he avoided becoming the prisoner of any one story by being always able to see the inadequades of each and so keeping himself open to new possibilities. It was Augustine's radical openness that led to his ultimate freedom and self-realization, just as it was Speer's willingness to accept and obey the given narrative that led to his moral fall.

The theoretical underpinnings of this are explored in Chapter Four. The explanatory model comes from Franklin Littel's study of Nazi doctors. Littel finally came to account for the brutal role that medical professionals came to {day in murdering millions of people by developing the notion of doubling. By this Littel meant that medical professionals in essence compartmentalized their identities as healers and their role as members of the Nazi death machine. In practice this meant that the one side of the personality was able to deny the reality of what the other ride was doing. Hie killing of Jews was not seen for the evil that it was, but rather was translated into a benign act that was simply the extension of the doctor's other self. In other words that overarching narrative of reality that these doctors had accepted became so inclusive

that it allowed them to deny the character of their own acts. This, Fasching argues, is the ultimate result of accepting fully and without question a story of reality.

Chapter Five brings us back to the start, the need for a new posture from which Christians may approach their own story without falling into the trap of supersesrionism. Again drawing on Ellul, Fasching argues that the only way of preventing this is to remain open to the dialectic that challenges and then transcends the finality of any story. The attitude is that of Chutzpah. The radical other is the Holy, that which offers a virion of a world beyond the particularities of any sacred sodety. Only in this way can the stranger, the Other, find a place of security within the Christian story.

In the end, this is a much more creative and promising position to take toward the Christian story than that so often followed of creating a new story, and thereby creating the foundation of a new Orthodoxy. In many ways the current climate of Political Correctness illustrates just that danger. What began as a needed change to overthrow a ruling paradigm is in danger of becoming its own tool for controlling others. Fasching has thought through that problem and found a way of articulating a theology that has a built-in mechanism for challenging its own tendency toward orthodoxy. Fasching's radical rethinking of the whole basis of how the Christian story ought to be approached is foundational, it seems to me, for any post-Shoah Christian theology. It points to how radical in fact the challenge of Auschwitz, and modem technology, really is.

The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?

Darrell J. Fasching. 1993. State University of New York Press. 366 pages.

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This is a sequel to the his previous book entitled *Narrative TheologyAfterAuschwitz: From Alienation to Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992). That book was a restructuring of the post-Holo-caust Christian narrative tradition by drawing on the Jewish narrative tradition of chutzpah (arguing with God). It had limited scope and was an "experiment in the theology of culture"; now, Fasching has written a robust Tillichian-like theology of culture. The initial effort discerned the demonic theme of "killing in order to heal"; while the sequel incorporates this theme with the Janusfaced, globalized, technological mythos that emerged out of Hiroshima — i.e., technology can bring us apocalypse or utopia.

Fasching has ambitiously attempted "to do what narrative ethicists have said cannot be done; namely, construct a cross-cultural ethic of human dignity, human rights, and human liberation that is rooted in and respects the diversity of narrative traditions." This theology of culture, a la Tillich, draws mainly on Buddhism, Christian, and Jewish

narratives to counter the ethical challenge of post-modem secularization in a new and innovative way.

The book has two parts, with Part I: The Promise of Utopia and the Threat of Apocalypse containing three thirty-page chapters. It begins with the quest to find ethical norms in technological civilization (technopolis) by referring to the prescient "murder of God" passage in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* published in 1882. The Nazis fulfilled this prophecy of a normless will to power as the Ubennensch — the super person (the master race) who would attempt to remake man in its image. This "killing in order to heal" as represented by Auschwitz became a global theme when MAD-ness, as mutually assured destruction represented by Hiroshima, ushered in the threat of apocalypse.

Ironically, for technopolis, this threat of apocalypse by means of technology is conjoined Janus-like with the promise of utopia by means of technology. This irony is examined with help from Harvey Cox, Richard Rubenstein, Jacques Ellul, Arthur Cohen, et al. Cox's utopianism and Rubenstein's apocalypticism serve to illustrate the poles of thought involved. A brilliant examination of the secular city (technopolis) is facilitated by the synthesis of insights from Ellul and Cohen. The author asserts that Ellul has uncovered "the sacred heart of a technical universe," and that Cohen has "linked both religion and urbanization to secularization and both to Auschwitz and Hiroshima." Fasching further explains: "Secularization is dehumanizing rather than liberating not because nothing is any longer sacred but precisely because the impersonal technical-bureaucratic order of technopolis is the new embodiment of sacral value."

Armed with this insight, chapter three relates the above "new embodiment of sacral value" to the human propensity for "doubling." Luther's two-kingdoms ethic and his understanding of faith as unquestioning obedience provide, according to Fasching, the psychological context wherein the radical doubling of Nazism occurred. Robert Lifton's study "The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide" is used to profile the "doubling" phenomenon in which one part of the self disavows another part and invokes the evil potential of that self.

With this preparation, Part II After Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Utopian Ethics for an Apocalyptic Age begins the construction of a theology of culture for a technological civilization. This is actually the construction of social ethics because it is out of religious narrative that social ethics arise. Tillich understood that our secular technological civilization (technopolis) privatizes traditional religious narrative and publicizes a new sacral religious narrative — one grounded not in nature, but in technology. Thus the contemporary ethical challenge after Auschwitz and Hiroshima is to critique this new sacral narrative which, although secular, holds religious dynamic.

Upon examination, tire ethic of technopolis is seen to be grounded in a sacred order with efficiency and obedience as the primary values. Holy communities such as those in Buddhism, Christianity, and Judaism introduce a radical anthropological ethic of human dignity. The "NO!" spoken to the sacred order of technopolis is that humans

do not exist to serve technical and bureaucratic social order, but that order exists to serve free and creative humans in the name of human dignity.

Chapter five begins the construction of a utopian ethics for rehumanizing technopolis and is titled Utopian Ethics: From Human Dignity to Human Rights and Human Liberation. This fifty-page keynote chapter is rich in understanding and insights. Blood-written passages explain the Jewish narrative tradition of chutzpah (audacious faith): after Auschwitz, no one should offend God with cheap, unquestioning, faith. Psychologically, after Hiroshima and under the present MAD-ness policy, we are all survivors trying to cope with the localized past opening, and with the globalized potential apocalyptic opening to the Shoah — the desolation of the demonic abyss. To withhold despair, is to not be sensitive, to not be honest, to not be human. Thus, not only the Jew, but also the Buddhist, Christian, and even the a-theistic sacralizer of technological progress have been doubt-struck. The unquestioned belief in any kind of providence (even technological providence) has been made desolate by Auschwitz and Hiroshima.

Fasching continues the movement from human dignity to human rights to human liberation by declaring that universal outrage generated by the atrocity of Auschwitz and the inhumanity of Hiroshima is energizing an ethic of secular holiness in opposition to the ethic of secular sacredness within technopolis. The U.N. Declaration of Human Rights can be seen as indicative of a global movement toward human liberation and a coupling of secular cohorts of holiness with religious communities of holiness to champion human dignity. The reason for this coupling involves the post-modern naked self which has emerged in modernity. The naked self is so, in large part, due to the desolation of the Shoah and/or to the Damocles Sword of MAD-ness. Additionally, urban alienation has released many modems from secular sacredness, as have the religious insights of the emptiness and imagelessness of the self, made in the image of the imageless God. (My own preference is to think of self-awareness and moral concern as bearing the essential image of God.) For humans everywhere who are championing human rights the author suggests this maxim: In a sense there is only one universal right — the right to have our human dignity respected.

Chapter Six, Beyond Technopolis: The Utopian Promise of Babel, begins the building of a social ethic which can cope with and enrich the "impoverishing vision of secular technobureau-cratic rationality" without identifying either with ethical relativism or ethical absolutism. The problem with the babel of modernity is not its narrative diversity, but rather that those of the marketplace and the bureaucracies have become imperialistic. This is so because these narratives are popularly perceived as bringing cosmos out of chaos in the absence of God. To explicate the above imperialism, Fasdiing examines MacIntyre's pessimistic prophesy of a new "dark ages"; then he constructs a promising ethical discourse of human rights with the help of Stout, Dunne, and Hauerwas — rights fitted for the naked public square.

The final chapter, A Utopian Vision: Narrative Ethics in a MAD World, examines the miked public square with its enforced absence of religious narrative and dangerous demonic potential. Fasching calls in powerful narrators such as Neuhaus, Novak,

Stackhouse, Ellul, Wiesel, eL al. to transform the naked public square into an empty (i.e., open and truly diverse) public square where the ethical narratives promoting human rights and human liberation can be effectively heard. This utopian vision sees holy communities of faith and holy movements of secularity synergistically potent in promoting human dignity and thus "welcoming the stranger." The naked public square becomes, instead, a vibrant public square wherein the threat of apocalypse with its MAD-ness is eclipsed by the promise of utopia and its glad-ness. Therein, humans can safely and sanely pass over and come back among communities in a rich ecology of diverse narratives; and happily, they will be blessed with a common narrative of ethics about human dignity, rights, and liberation. The ethical challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima must be answered.

Darnell Fasching has admirably taken up the ethical challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima and has strengthened the human resolve of "NEVER AGAIN!" His clarity of organization and thought, reliance on Tillichian content and method, and inclusion of apt and respected scholarship make this book a staple in either a Theology of Culture or a Philosophy of Technology collection. Most importantly, the author's ultimate aim of fusing religious and secular ethics (so-called) for human survival makes this well-written book inportant reading for all.

The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalpyse or Utopia?

by Darrell J. Fasching, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. 366 pp.
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Darrell Fasching's new book—*The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?—is* a sprawling, ambitious, unwieldy but profound piece of work in contemporary religious social ethics. It is a book that surely will (or should) establish Fasching as a major voice in contemporary theology.

The content of the book defies easy summarization. That this is the case is evidenced by as lofty an authority as the Library of Congress, which finds it necessary to categorize the subject of *Ethical Challenge* in the following way:

1. Religious ethics. 2. Human Rights-Religious Aspects. 3. Technology-Moral and ethical aspects. 4. Utopias-moral and ethical aspects. 5. Holocaust, Jewish-Moral and ethical aspects. 6. Nuclear war-fare-More and ethical aspects.

This vast list illustrates the breadth and complexity of Fasching's project in this book. My own summary of that project might best take a narrative form, which is particularly appropriate here, because Fasching considers himself a narrative theologian.

Darrell Fasching was bom during World War II (1944). Anyone with the barest historical consciousness cannot read the date 1944 without thinking of the mountains

of Jewish and other corpses piled up at places like Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor, and Belzec in 1944, to be "discovered" by the world a year later at the close of the war in Europe. Nor can such a person forget that during that next year the United States dropped atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing several hundred thousand Japanese in momentary flashes of light and heat and death.

In his bookNomztrve *Theology AfterAuschwitz* (Fortress, 1992), Fasching reports that he is Lutheran by background and that he is married to a Jewish woman. Fasching understands that a Lutheran Christian (and not only a *Lutheran* Christian) after the Holocaust carries a considerable burden. And as one who is married to a Jewish woman Fasching has joined his life with the life of the Jewish people, again, after Auschwitz.

Thus Fasching's intellectual project is bom in the matrix of the Holocaust and Hiroshima, mediated to him quite personally by the trajectory of his own life's narrative. He is offering a response to these signal events of our time, events that quite literally threaten an end to all human events and human time.

The attempt to respond to Auschwitz and Hiroshima is one of the major intellectualAnoral projects of our era. It is a project that cuts across all academic disciplines and spills well beyond the boundaries of academia altogether. It is, in fact, one of the central projects in which I personally am engaged, along with Fasching and countless others.

Fasching approaches Auschwitz and Hiroshima from the perspective of "theology of culture." He is neither a Christian theologian nor does he write from a "confessional" perspective. Instead he is a university-trained and university-situated theologian, and he sees theology as an "academic discipline within the humanities" (p3). Theology that is done in such a setting must be, in Fasching's view, theology of culture. By this he means what Paul Tillich meant: according to Fasching, "the identification and elucidation of the relationship between religion and culture in all its diversity" (p.4).

This is no merely descriptive project but instead a "total critique of culture" (p.4). Such a critique is always needed, but especially now, because in Fasching's view Auschwitz, Hiroshima, and the more recent "mutual assured destruction" are not merely political or military realities but are reflections of the demonic religio-cultural narrative that dominates our technological civilization. He calls this narrative the "Janus-faced myth of Apocalypse or Utopia" (p.l). In essence, technology has replaced either God or nature as the sacred center of contemporary civilization. We respond to this sacral reality with the combination of fascination (technology will create a utopia and thus technological "progress" is an unmitigated good) and dread (technology will bring apocalypse upon us and there's nothing we can do about it) that the sacred always produces. This cultural narrative has already contributed to genocide, atomic bombing, and the amazing paralysis of humankind during the Cold War in the face of nuclear annihilation. Fasching fears that unless it is overturned it will indeed lead to an apocalyptic nuclear "final solution"-omnicide, the death of all things.

Part I of *Ethical Challenge* undertakes the descriptive and critical task. Fasdiing wants to prove that this Apocalypse/Utopia myth is the central cultural narrative of

our time and that it already has contributed to Auschwitz and Hiroshima. Part II takes up his constructive project: having unmasked this demonic religio-cultural narrative, Fasching draws on Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist narrative traditions to construct "a cross-cultural ethic of human dignity, human rights, and human liberation." What these narrative strands have in common is an ethic of welcoming the stranger. For Fasching, no narrative can stand after Auschwitz and Hiroshima which does not demand that those who stand within it welcome and recognize the dignity and rights of the alien and the stranger.

To undertake this descriptive, critical, and constructive project Fasching brings together formidable intellectual resources. One sees the influence of comparative religion and history of religions (Mircea Eliade, for example). Relying heavily on Peter Berger, he makes use of the sociology of knowledge. He has read widely in Jewish and Buddhist theology, and works with a number of theological voices in those traditions as well as digging around in their sacred narratives. The work of post-Shoah Jewish theologians such as Elie Wiesel, Irving Greenberg, Emil Fackenheim, Arthur Cohen, and Richard Rubenstein receive especially dose attention. The distinctive contribution of the Christian theologians of technology, apocalypse, utopia, and secularization (Jacques Ellul, Gabriel Vahanian, Paul Tillich, Harvey Cox) is fundamentally important Narrative theology and ethics are essential to his method, and he works appreciatively yet critically with the likes of Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas.

I do not feel fully competent to evaluate Fasching's methodological synthesis of all of these various strands of thought several of which I am only marginally familiar with. But in those areas I do know, for example post-Holocaust Jewish theology, it is very clear that Fasching has read both widely and well. I have no particular reason to doubt the competence of his handling of the other materials with which he deals, but will leave those areas to their specialists.

Beyond that my evaluation of the book begins with a thoroughgoing appreciation of his project itself. Fasching wants to respond to Auschwitz and Hiroshima. As a theologian of culture he does so both by way of critique of demonic cultural/religious narratives and by way of retrieving and synthesizing other human-dignity-affirming narratives. He believes that the former narratives have genuinely dealt death and the latter have and may genuinely deal life to human beings. Thus one critical way of responding to this catastrophe is to work cm these narratives.

One could easily imagine the political scientist, the historian, or the sociologist dismissing the significance of these narratives for the Holocaust and Hiroshima; surely political, historical, and military factors should be seen as the cause of these events, not the "deep structure" of the western world's narratives. I did at times feel that Fasching's fascination with the theological/ religious foundations of these catastrophes neglected these other very real dimensions. Surely, Fasching would agree, and would simply say that his project is the theology of culture rather than, say, a history of the Nazi movement As a theologian/ethicist myself, I would defend both the reality and the significance of these foundational narratives.

At the constructive level, Fasching will surely be criticized for attempting to construct a cross-cultural, multi-narrative human dignity ethic. From a narrative perspective it can't be done, some will say. But Fasching wrestles with those questions directly. He believes that he can offer such a cross-cultural narrative ethic without succumbing to a thin, storyiess. Enlightenment -style ethical universalism. I believe that he largely succeeds in this intellectual project, which is indeed a major accomplishment

But now what? What particular community will embrace and incarnate this cross-cultural narrative and its ethic of human dignity? The problem with Fasching's methodology and its outcome is precisely that he does not write as one who stands within any particular story-formed community. He states explicitly that he is doing "alienated" or "decentered" theology (p.5); that is, he has left his Christian community and writes as a "free agent" (p.4), apart from any of the "holy communities" whose narratives he explores in the book. If he can be said to be a member of a community, it is that very small, specialized, and (frankly) largely culturally irrelevant community of theologians working in secular university settings.

It seems to me that Fasching's kind of narrative ethics is best described as meta-narrative ethics; he stands outside of all of these narratives (sacred or secular, religious or irreligious, modem or ancient, East or West) and examines their potential for moral productivity in a world such asthis. This Olympian Freedom from a *community*'s bonds give him the space to be relentlessly critical where criticism is needed, and to retrieve constructive narratives as freely as needed. But as a "free agent," a decentered theologian, he has no particular religious community to which he can return and in which he can put his quite profound inrights into practice.

One of the proHems inherent in membership in the community of university theologians is the kind of writing that such communities expect. Fasching wants to address an extremely serious cultural proHem, one which pervades western civilization and could bring an end to it. But the language he uses to address this pervasive proHem is the cumbersome, "academic," specialized and inaccessiHe language of the academy. The paradox is that Fasching obviously wants his work to make a real difference in the world, but the world cannot read it—only a small slice of academic theologians can. This is not a problem unique to Fasching's work, by any means, But it is one of the reasons why academic theology has so very little cultural impact.

A pet peeve of mine as an author and a reader is poor editing. Unfortunately, *Ethical Challenge* suffers from being a poorly edited book. I counted two dozen obvious spelling or grammatical errors, and I don't think I got them all. Again, this problem is not confined to this particular book, but is distressingly widespread.

Finally, I should also note the very considerable overlap in content between this book and his previous one, *Narrative Theology After Auschwitz.* This is not merely an overlap in concepts, but the straightforward use of large sections of material from Narrative *Theology* in *Ethical Challenge.* I don't know how SUNY Press and Fortress worked out the copyright problems, but I do know that two books riiould not overlap as much as these two did.

But enough criticism, Fasching's work may best be seen as a hugely important resource for those of us who seek to make a difference within our own "holy communities," whichever these might be. His hermeneutical test-does your narrative require of you that the stranger be welcomed?—is absolutely the right one. His moral passion is a good model, as is his "audacious" willingness to be relentlessly critical about holy narratives. I will return to *Ethical Challenge* many times in the years to come.

Advert for The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima Apocalypse or Utopia?

by Darrell J. Fasching

A critique of technological civilization in the light of Auschwitz and Hiroshima using a narrative ethics approach. Although narrative ethicists have typically argued that it cannot be done, Fasching proposes a cross cultural ethic of human dignity, human rights and human liberation grounded in the convergence of diverse narratives of hospitality to the stranger and the outcast. On this basis he argues for an ethical coalition of Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Gandhian Hinduism and Humanistic A-theism, to shape public policy in an apocalyptic nuclear era.

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Editorial: Remembering Our Mentor and Friend, Jacques Ellul

This is an issue which I have put together with great sadness, for as many of you undoubtedly already know, Jacques Ellul died at the age of 82 on May 29th, 1994.

How does one measure a life such as his. It is immeasurable by anyone other than God. We can only respond to his life in terms of our gratitude for the insight and inspiration he has given us. From a scholars perspective it was a very productive life – over forty books and hundreds of articles. And what books and articles! The power and scope of his mind were staggering. He has framed the issues for a whole generation of scholars. He taught us how to think about the role of technology in our lives historically, sociologically and most importantly - theologically and ethically.

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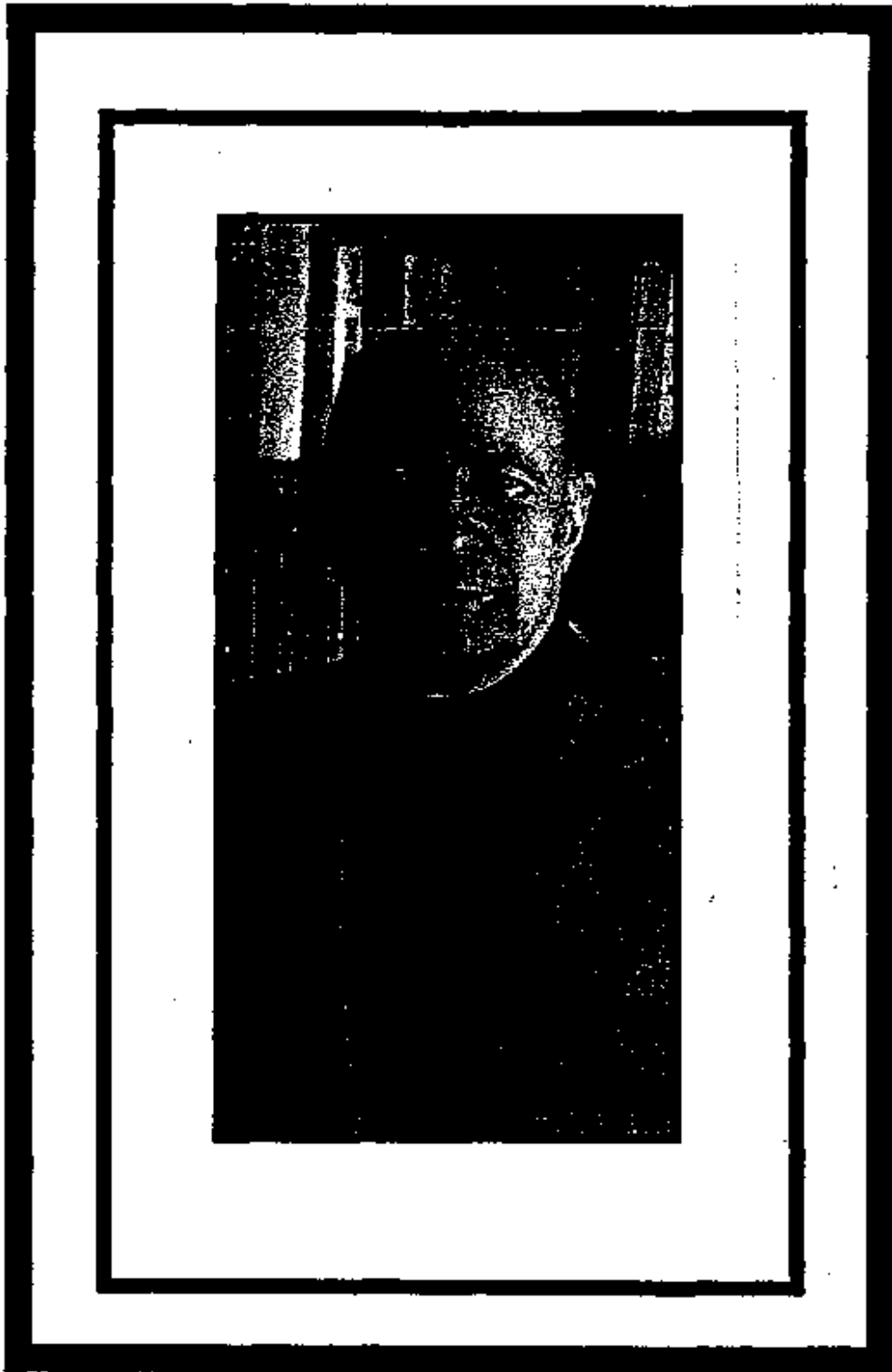
However, it was not just his mind that moved and inspired us, it was his life as well. His participation in the French resistance during WWII, his service as deputy mayor of Bordeaux, his service to the Reformed Church in France and the World Council of Churches, his tireless work on ecological issues and his work with juvenile delinquents — all these form an inspiring witness. Jacques Ellul was a man of faith. In him faith in Christ, the intellectual life and ethical commitment to his fellow human beings all merged in a singular witness that has touched and changed lives around the globe.

Jacques Ellul's death means that our lives are both poorer and yet richer. Poorer because he is no longer with us to lead the way. Richer because he left such a rich legacy and always encouraged us to think and act for ourselves, and therefore prepared us to cany on. In this special memorial issue I have asked a number of scholars from a variety of fields — communications, languages, philosophy, engineering, theology — to reflect on the significance of Ellul's life in whatever way they wished. Some have shared personal remembrances, others have spoken about how Ellul influenced their life, still others have chosen to reflect on his intellectual contributions. What emerges is a picture of the rich and varied ways Ellul has touched and transformed peoples lives.

Finally we are fortunate to have two pieces by Ellul himself. One is a sermon which Joyce Hanks secured for us some time ago, which I was holding for publication. The other is the comments Ellul made in response to the symposium held in his honor last November in Bordeaux. For this we owe thanks to Cari Mitcham. It seemed appropriate to begin and end this issue with these words from Jacques Ellul himself.

Bulletin Board

L'Association Jacques Ellul

During the past year, Ellul family members and colleagues have joined together for the purpose of preserving the collection of his writings and manuscripts, and making his work better known. The Association has now been legally registered in France, and will soon be ready to invite interested citizens of other countries to join. If you would like more information about the Association as it becomes available, please send your name and address to: Joyce M. Hanks, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Scranton, Scranton PA 185*10-4646*. If you wish to join please send her a check made payable to Joyce M. Hanks for $15.00. Joyce is willing to register all American applicants and save us from the hassle of having to change our American dollars into French francs.

Donations needed to Create and English Language Version of Film on Ellul

Serge Steyer, the director of the French film on Jacques Ellul entitled *Jacques Ellul l'homme entier* has also recently been in touch with Joyce Hanks. He would like very much to produce an English language version of the film. The problem as usual is funding. If you can help with this project you can also send your checks for this project to Joyce Hanks at the above address. Be sure to indicate the purpose of the check so Joyce can keep all of this straight.

Donations Needed to Purchase Ellul's House

Just as we were going to press I received a letter from Joyce Hanks indicating that the *Association Jacques Ellul* is hoping to purchase the Ellul home and turn it into the headquarters for the *Association.* Anyone who is able to make a contribution should send a check to Joyce M. Hanks, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Scranton, Scranton PA 18510-4646. Make the check payable to Joyce and indicate its purpose and she will change the dollars into French Francs and see that they get to the proper person.

New Members of the Editorial Board of the Ellul Forum

We have two new names to ad to the editorial board of the Ellul Forum. Both are contributors to this issue. The first is David Lovekin, Professor of Philosophy at Hastings College. The second is Willem H. Vanderburg, Director of the Centre for Technology and Social Development, Department of Industrial Engineering at the University of Toronto. Each has agreed to serve as a guest editor for a future issue. Both have made significant contributions to scholarship on Ellul's work and we look forward to the contributions they will make to future issues.

Forum: A Sermon by Jacques Ellul

The Truth Will Set You Free

Confirmation Day Sermon, 31 May 1992 Reformed Church of West Bordeaux: Pessac-Merignac

> If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples;you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:31-32, NJB)

Confronted with this saying of Jesus, we feel tempted to react just as the Jews did: "We have never been the slaves of anyone; what do you mean, 'You will be set free?'" (John 8t33). Why does Jesus speak to us about setting us free?

France is a free country; we have political freedom, and on the whole our standard of living is rather high. The overwhelming majority of French people have their basic needs taken care of. Nothing makes us "slaves," in the usual sense of the word.

But Jesus gives a terrible answer: "In reality you are slaves to sin." And in fact we know very well that all of us are sinners. But sin is not a "moral error," like disobeying the Ten Commandments. Sin is genuine corruption of a person's reality. Nothing in us remains intact, the way God intended it for us. However "good" we may be, we remain sinners, "slaves" in one way or another of what conditions our life.

Sin always stems from *covetousness.* Adam was the first to covet, when he wanted to "be like God" (Gen. 35, RSV). Today and always, we covet in the same way, wanting to be like God! As modems we do not use the same vocabulary, but the underlying reason for our actions remains the same. This same desire motivates our "progress," our science, our techniques, and the way we glorify ourselves, especially in the media.

Primarily, wanting to be like God means finally managing to do without Him! This is exactly what Jesus means when he calls us slaves. We are slaves of society, of our social relationships, our work, and politics. In all these areas covetousness leads us by the nose, suggesting new things to strive for: things that will "make our life complete," as the ads tell us.

God created us free: Adam's power to disobey gives us proof of that. God wants humanity, his most beautiful creation, to be free. But God does not behave like a person operating a machine, or like a wizard. He does not transform us by means of some kind of miracle. God has infinite respect for us, his creation, and he does nothing

in our world unless we participate in it. He gives us the means to live, in truth and freedom. But we must use these "means."

There lies the trouble: we want to be free, but we want to become free on our own. Throughout history, including this last generation, we have experienced the results of human "will to freedom." Each time, we have replaced one kind of slavery with another. We are not capable of becoming free on our own, because we are inhabited by a spirit of power, a will to domination.

At this point Jesus' words relocate the question. No miraculous act can release us and make us free, changing our situation from that of slave to that of a free person. Only the "Truth" can accomplish this. But this truth is not philosophical or scientific; rather, it is a certain way of living. Instead of an intellectual matter, it is a question of life.

So how can we know this truth that will set us free? "Make my word your home" (John 8:31, NJB). Jesus'very way of expressing this makes an impression on us: he does not tell us merely to be faithful to some teaching, or even to follow his example. "Make my word your home": it is as if we had entered a new world, in which we must live, "settle in," adopt a new lifestyle, and take up residence. In other words, we must be so permeated by Jesus' word that we live *in* it! When we do that, we have made our home there, because we are in real communion with Jesus, and we become free with respect to the "world" (society, morality, the powers), just as he was.

We must never forget, however, that Jesus himself leads us out of the world, the universe of falsehood and covetousness. Only in this way can we receive the very freedom of God.

Freedom does not in any way constitute a guarantee of happiness! Freedom is not tranquility, comfort, or security. People seeking freedom have always made this mistake.

First of all, freedom signifies responsibility: it means we take on the direction of our own lives, deciding among the different alternatives before us. Free! Certainly we can befully human only on this condition. But freedom also constitutes our duty to be human as God wants us to be, and this means finding ourselves in Adam's situation! We can say "yes" or "no." For this reason, we must connect freedom with Truth.

Truth shows us the right direction, the right way to live. From now on, freed from the world's conditioning, we can choose our path and accomplish the work of our life (since the life of each of us is actually something we "make"). But in order to do this, we need orientation, a means of guidance. This is the role of the Truth that is in the Word of Jesus Christ. Without this guide, our freedom becomes endless, aimless wandering. In other words, it turns into a new ideology that makes us slaves all over again!

Having seen the guidance, the opening Jesus offers for our lives, what can we conclude about ourselves? When I look at my life and the life of my Church, can I claim that we express this "Liberty in the Truth"? Is our way of life truly "free"? Does our way of thinking express Truth?

We must not let ourselves be content with Jesus' promise, "the truth will set you free." We must not just piously listen to this "word of God." *We must* five-live as truly free persons: "if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free" (Jn. 8:36, NJB).

If we take this road, we will discover, as our experiences unfold, that we really do become free! We need only to make this decision. In each crisis, it is enough to know that God himself will free us. He has never let anyone fall who went forward on the basis of faith in his Word. Jesus himself is the Truth. We must live in this certainty and let our lives be inspired by this Word, which saves, frees, gives light, and shows the way: the way of our life, which is chosen, loved, and saved by God the Father who gave his Son so we could know the Truth, and at last live in freedom. Amen.

(Translated by Joyce M. Hanks)

Jacques Ellul, 1912–1994

by Joyce Hanks, University of Pittsburgh

Jacques Ellul's death on 29 May 1994, although anticipated, in view of his protracted illness, came as a blow to those who knew him. Bis public lectures and other appearances have been considerably restricted in recent years, as his health declined. Nevertheless, in 1993 he was able to attend both the Bordeaux premiere of Serge Steyer's film entitled "Jacques Ellul, lliomme entier" and, last November, the first conference devoted to his thought, also held in Bordeaux. He addressed the conference in its closing session, reminiscing about his work, but primarily about his father's strong moral influence on his life.

Ellul's importance as an internationally recognized thinker never kept him from extending his help and friendship to those who asked for it. He regularly responded positively to requests for interviews, to letters filled with questions about his ideas and writings, and to local needs of all kinds. He was astonishingly trusting with his manuscripts, assuming younger scholars' need to consult them took precedence over his attempt to preserve them. It will now fall to Ellul's three surviving children, and to the Bordeaux-based "Association Jacques Ellul," to put his papers into some kind of order.

He was much more accessible and personable than a reader of his many scholarly books and articles might suppose. In view of the importance of his work and the excessive demands on his time, I always tried to avoid writing or telephoning him unless I had urgent questions regarding his bibliography—only to discover on more than one occasion that he had expressed concern to a mutual friend that he had not heard from me for some time. The year I lived in Bordeaux and interviewed him regularly, he often expressed some specific concern for me or one of my children, based on his keen observation of our adjustment to life in France. Just as freely, he shared his reactions to his own family's joys and troubles-the stimulus of having two of his

teen-aged grandchildren live and study with him, and the distress he experienced at the illness and death of his wife, Yvette.

In recent years, Ellul's articles and books sometimes took extremely unpopular stands, especially with respect to South Africa, AIDS, and Islam. Previously considered by many as *the* Protestant spokesman in France, he rapidly fell out of favor in many quarters, so that he began to find it difficult to publish in some periodicals. Since he was never one to give in to pressure stemming from current fads, he bore all of this patiently, but clearly it affected his sprits in the last years of his life.

My main impression of Ellul is that of a man of God, a servant of the Church. He contributed in every imaginable way to the French Reformed Church, both nationally and locally. He conceived of brilliant new ways of proclaiming the Christian message, and threw himself into that project at every opportunity, often surprising people who had never expected to find Christianity attractive. He seemed to offer answers-not easy answers, but well thought-out responses to the hard questions of life. We will miss him sorely.

Jacques Ellul, Courage, and the Christian Imagination

by Stanley Hauerwas, Duke University

It is hard to believe that Jacques Ellul is dead. The energy and passion represented by such a life tempts us to believe he will always be "there." Of course he knew better as is clear in every sentence he wrote, but that does not mean we were prepared for his death. How do you prepare for the death of someone whose life and work has become essential for those of us committed to having the discourses of Christianity form the way we see and live in this world.

I was in seminary when I read *The Presence of a Kingdom.* I am sure I did not understand it then and I am not sure I "get it" now, but I understood enough to see here Christian language was working. I continued to read Ellul over the years, though I often disagreed with him, because I always knew that in reading him I would be reading an imagination formed by the courage of Christian convictions. For it was Ellul's great gift to help us see the "realities" of our world as illusion. He was able to do that, I believe, because he had not been trained to be a Christian theologian. It, therefore, never occurred to him that the problem might be that Christian convictions were incompatible with the world; rather he assumed the problem was that the world was incompatible with Christian convictions.

I remember struggling to understand his *The Technological Society.* I kept wondering what could lead one to write a book that described our being so captured by technique there was no way to free ourselves from it. For Ellul saw clearly that technology was not just the machine, but rather the machine embodied the modem presumption that

human life had no *telos.* In the absence of any *telos* efficiency becomes the iron law determining all life. I confess I dismissed the book for some time as a typical example of the French intellectual style of exaggeration and hyperbole. Yet the power of his analysis haunted me.

Later *I* realized that Ellul in *The Technological Society,* as well as many of his other more sociological works, was remythologizing the Christian faith. By remythologizing I mean he was reimagining the world through Christian discourse. His analysis of technology renames the character of our existence as sin helping us see that we are possessed by powers from which we cannot will ourselves free. Accordingly apocalyptic takes on fresh resonance as we see that only God can and has broken the iron necessities that come from our possession by the powers.

The only figure I can think comparable to Ellul's courageous imagination is that of his fellow Frenchman, Michel Foucault. They each looked on the world with a courageous imagination that allowed them to see the world as it is without flinching. The power of Foucault's work is undeniable, but it is equally the case that many of us had been well prepared to face the realities of which Foucault's work directed us by the courage of Ellul. Of course, what Ellul offers that Foucault cannot, is hope. Such hope is not based on false utopianism, but rather resides in the very intervention by Ellul's work through which we know God matters.

Ellul's life is that "inefficiency" that God creates to challenge the powers that would rule in the name of efficiency. That he is now gone could be a counsel of despair except that Ellul has taught us that the God that makes lives like his possible has not abandoned us. We are fortunate indeed to have lived when such a one as this graced our lives with such an uncompromising imagination.

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: In Memory of Jacques Ellul

by Bill Vanderburg, University of Toronto

Jacques Ellul had run his race and quietly, around 7:45 on the morning of May 19, his life on earth came to an end. He had responded as best he could to an encounter with God. Many of us have experienced something of that encounter through his work. Whatever we may still learn about that encounter will not change his witness, received by many as a precious gi ft. We extend our condolences to his children, Jean, Yves and Dominique and their families, and we thank them for their role in this gift.

In Jacques' memoiy, I would like to share with you a meditation that I delivered in his presence the Sunday morning following the conference on his work held last November at the University of Bordeaux. It was entirely unplanned — it so happened that there was no service that morning because of a regional meeting. Following the death of his wife and lifelong companion, Yvette, Jacques Ellul had been lonely and

discouraged. His medical treatments did not help either, since they made him very tired. One Sunday afternoon, a friend found him particularly despondent following a Sunday morning service which had failed to lift bisspirits. Shereadhim apart of a letter in which I had explained the immense influence my four and a half years of study with him and our subsequent friendship continues to have on my life. Iwas deeply touched when I learned that my letter had helped to comfort and strengthen Jacques in an hour of need. I know he received similar letters from others to which he could no longer respond because of his failing health, but I would like you to know that such letters affirmed him greatly during the last few months of his life. So did the November conference, and I thank the *Association Jacques Ellul* for it.

Supporting and encouraging Jacques Ellul, therefore, was uppermost on our minds during our visit last November. Upon discovering there would not be any service the Sunday morning following the conference, we derided to oiganize one. I spent the next two nights preparing a meditation. I so much wanted to give something back to Jacques on what would be (to within a few days) the twentieth anniversary of when we first arrived in France to begin my 41/2 years of post-doctoral work with him. However, not having used my French regularly for the last fifteen years and not being able to read notes, I must confess I as a little uptight about the task. What follows is a brief summary of what I said that Sunday morning.

A New Famine and Drought?

A number of our conversations during the past few days have focussed on how to share our hope and build one another up. I was reminded time and time again of the text in Amos 8, vs. 11-13, which we have just read together. It seems that many of us coming from different nations, cultures and traditions experience our time as just such a famine and drought. It is particularly true for Sunday mornings, when we search for an affirmation of our hope and faith and frequently do not find it. We have a profound longing for some good news as we try to find our way in the world: making sense of it as best we can so as to live in it as free people as we were meant to do. It is because we have experienced good news that we know what we are looking for, but we rarely find it.

Of course, as people of our time, place and culture we are aware of the profound changes in which we are participating. During the last fifty years, our cultures have undergone far-reaching changes. It is a time in which old ways have been lost and new ways are being found. Such times of upheaval are very difficult formanypeople. Making sense ofwhat goes on and meaningfully relating to it in the daily-life context is a difficult task. Institutions also have seen their foundations shaken and even destroyed. What is the response to this time of the God of Jews and Christians, who has entered into human history? I would like to reflect on these themes in the light of some Biblical passages.

Individual Responses

It is tempting to identify with the feelings of the prophet Elijah that we have just read about in I King 19 vs. 9-18. In our feelings of isolation and frustration about what

passes for Christianity in our world, it is essential to put things in perspective and take very seriously the assurances to the prophet that there are still 7,000 faithful people left in Israel. The number is highly symbolic: 7 refers to the reunification of God with his creation, which is taken 1,000 times. It reminds us of those hopeful texts in the Book of Revelation that we will come to in a moment, and it appears, therefore, that the message addressed to the prophet is not limited to that specific time or situation.

Institutional Responses

While many Christians today will individually acknowledge an intuition that somehow, somewhere, something is going profoundly amiss, our churches as institutions have quite a different response. There is nothing new here, unfortunately, and we have many examples in the Old and New Testaments. The response during Jesus' day is well known. However, the story of I Samuel 4, vs. 1-11, is perhaps closer to our times. Feeling besieged, the churches hold out a modem ark, namely the Bible. They treat it as a sacred object, and confidently announce that Jesus is the answer while giving little evidence of knowing what the questions appear to be. There is no longer any question of walking with the Word as a lamp to illuminate our way. Instead, by staring at that light it is impossible to see what is going on in the world to find a way in it. As institutions stumble, some begin to feel hopelessly inadequate in the face of the issues, problems and sufferings in the world. Wishing to get more involved, they put the lamp down to free both hands for action. As they rush forward to respond to many needs, they soon move beyond the reach of *the* lamp, again to stumble when swallowed up by darkness. Neither of these two responses makes any sense, but they appear to dominate the scene. There is little in between these extremes in terms of walking with our given lamp as a light for our path.

Signs of Grace

There is little question that since the Second World War, Western Civilization began a whole new era. Such a transition is one in which one way of life makes way for another. Of course, what this new way of life will be like and what consequences it will have is not always clear to the people living through such a transition. Making sense of what goes on and meaning-fully relating to it in a daily-life context is a difficult task. It may give some people a sense of being adrift, of not understanding what is happening to their lives and their communities. Why are their values and convictions not providing adequate guidance? How can civilization push itself to the edge of a nuclear or ecological disaster? What is happening to families and communities? For others, the new age is full of promise brought about by the emerging post-industrial-consumer-information society. Between these extremes of secular hope and pessimism, we find the over-whelming majority of people coping as best they can. For Christians living out their calling, not to be enslaved or possessed by anyone or any-thing but to live a life of freedom in hope, faith and love, adds a challenge.

God's response to the situation is one we know from the Book of Hope, the Book of Revelation. In terms of specifics, I would like to focus on Jacques Ellul's encounter with God. The fact that he came from outside the Christian community once again affirms

God's love for all humanity and probably says something about the condition of the churches as well. This encounter brought us a wonderful and urgently needed gift: a discernment of the spirit of our times. I know that for some of us, it was an experience of suddenly seeing the world and our life within it much more clearly - the experience of a sudden illumination that touched us very deeply. In my country, I recall how George Grant said as much when he was interviewed for my radio series on the life and work of Jacques Ellul for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Yesterday, at the end of the conference, Ivan Eich expressed it in a deeply moving way. I recall how, as an engineer struggling with the questions of the limits to growth and the environmental crisis, the reading of the first two chapters in *The Technological Society* touched the very core of my being. It struck me as an accurate description of how I thought and worked and how, therefore, I was a part of the things I was trying to change. It presented a comprehensive global view of what was happening in the world in a way that one no longer encounters in the university, which has become an intellectual Tower of Babel in which individual disciplines can no longer contribute to a genuine intellectual culture. At the same time, this global thinking helps us find our way in the world. I found that it became much easier to understand other people who respond very differently to what is going on in the world and their lives and to relate to them as fellow-sojourners. Rather than being judgmental of those who are different, it is a part of what Ellul during my interviews with him called, "thinking globally and acting locally."[1]

It is only global thinking that can illuminate what appears to be happening, namely the beginning of a new epoch in human history where we no longer live primarily within nature nor within societies. Our cultures are now permeated by a scientific-technical approach to life. As cultural beings, this begins to define our "old nature." We are well aware of what happens to everything touched by this scientific-technical approach to life: almost everyone now recognizes what it does to the natural ecology and its ability to support all life. It is also becoming clear that the same thing is happening to the sod al ecology of society. Within the Christian communities, we have far from escaped these developments. The application of a scientific-technical (that is, historical-critical) approach to understanding the Biblical message has left us with a lot of debris and very little good news. Our religious studies departments, seminaries, and worship sendees testify to this tragedy.

All of us in one way or another have worshipped the new way and fallen victim to its consequences. Rather than treating science and the technical way of life as human inventions good for certain things, useless for others and irrelevant to still others, we have through the usual religious processes mystified and sacralized them with terrible consequences for the world. In a specific historical instance, we are seeing how the

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[1] To my knowledge, the expression "thinking globally, acting locally" was introduced into North America via the CBC radio program on Jacques Ellul. He used it to sum up his life and work. Subsequently, this expression has been used by many for different purposes. American readers may wish to know the radio program was printed as *Perspectives on Our Age* by Seabury as if it were a book written by Elul, by leaving out some parts. The Canadian CBC edition is complete.

components of human history described in the second part of the Book of Revelation act themselves out in our times, and at the same time how this land of global thinking in faith confronts us with the message of hope in the Book of Revelation. I have selected three passages in particular for our consideration this morning: Revelation 6, vs. 9-11, 12-17, and Revelation 7, vs. 1-17, which we have read together. I extensively drew on Jacques Ellul's commentary on these passages, but placed them in the context of our need to "think globally and act locally" with our hope and faith. These passages give an account of how the leaven in the dough causes it to rise in the recondliation between God and His creation. They provide us with hope in this time of abandonment. We affirmed our hope in discerning what is happening before our very eyes, namely the reconciliation between God and all humanity in this century and for all time. In our prayer we gave thanks forthe many watchers on the towers, who had helped us and continue to help us discern the new developments coming across the horizon of human experience.

On Sunday afternoon, my wife and I met with Jacques Ellul in his living room, as we had done so many times before. We spoke about many things, including the experience of death; and reaffirmed in the faith, we parted not to meet again, at least not on this earth.

One short epilogue: following Jacques' passing, I have a profound feeling of abandonment, of being separated from someone who more than anyone else has marked my life, but it is much more than a personal matter. To whom would we go as a Christian community (fragmented and scattered as it is) for discernment on important issues, who has shown as much clarity of discernment, of vision and hope in this century as Jacques Ellul? We must continue to run our races for which Jacques Ellul has helped equip us. We will miss this great watcher on the tower, waiting for a new dawn of complete and total reconciliation.

My Journey with Ellul

by David Gill, *North Park College, Chicago.*

My relationship with Jacques Ellul had two phases. From 1971 to 1981 it was a relationship of correspondence by letter; from 1982 to 1991 it was a relationship of personal conversations.

In late 19711 read (and reviewed) my first book by Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City* for *Right On,* a monthly "radical Christian" journal in Berkeley, California, that later evolved into *Radix Magazine.* There were very few Christian perspectives on the city at that time so I was pleased to find Ellul's book. I thought it was interesting but nothing sensational. However, I noted a list of several other Ellul titles on the dust jacket and, in preparation for the 1972 presidential campaign, I read *The Political Illusion, The Politics of God and the Politics of Man, Presence of the Kingdom,*

and *False Presence of the Kingdom. As* I read these books and then attended the Democratic Convention in Miami I was "hooked" for good. His descriptions of modem politics and statecraft were played out before my very eyes. I found Ellul's discussions of both politics and Christianity powerful, illuminating, and brilliant. It was an intense, passionate, spiritual and intellectual awakening for me.

In late July of 1972 I decided to send a letter and copies of my articles and reviews to Ellul at the University of Bordeaux. I was surprised to get a personal reply from him in September 1972. He was vety kind and encouraging about my articles and gave me helpful responses to a few questions I had asked.

For the next ten years I corresponded with Professor Ellul two or three times per year. I collected and read everything of his that I could get my hands on. A French-language bookstore in Los Angeles helped me acquire many of his French volumes. From 1973 to 1977 I was a Ph.D. student in Religion/Social Ethics at the University of Southern California. From my initial interview onward, my USC professors supported my project of studying Ellul's theological ethics, his intellectual sources (the Bible, Weber, Marx, Kierkegaard, Barth) and his counterparts (in ethics, in the sociology of politics and technology). In the fall of 1976 Lewis Smedes invited me to teach a course on Ellul's thought at Fuller Seminary, my first effort along those lines. While I lived in southern California I got to know Vemard Eller at La Verne University. We met several times to discuss our mutual interests in Ellul's ideas.

From 1977 to 19821 was back in Berkeley, leading a project to establish a graduate-level study center and think tank on the relation of Christian faith and biblical ethical perspectives to modem life and work. Ellul's ideas and counsel were certainly important to me as I worked on this project.

All this time, of course, I had wanted to go to Bordeaux in person and meet with Ellul. But my wife and I had two small children and not one cent extra in our budget. I was able to carry out my research and writing in North America by aggressively collecting Ellul's writings in French as well as in English translation and by writing to him for clarification and further detail.

Finally, however, I took my wife and children to Europe for two months in the summer of 1982. I'll never forget the excitement I felt as we drove into Bordeaux and then a few days later visited the Elluls at their home in Pessac. Joyce Hanks and my wife Lucia helped with my almost nonexistent spoken French as I interviewed Ellul (later published in *Christianity Today* and *RadixMagazine).* I also persuaded Joyce that we should invite the Elluls for Sunday dinner after hearing him preach at the Reformed Church in the Chartrons neighborhood. Ellul brought along a couple of excellent bottles of Bordeaux and we had an afternoon full of good food, fellowship, and conversation—made the more memorable by the experience of riding in Madame Ellul's car. She is on my top five list of "wild drivers I have ridden with"!

That visit in 1982 laid the groundwork for my twelve months in Bordeaux on my sabbatical from June 1984toJune 1985. After two months of intensive work on my French I began meeting with Ellul for an hour or two on Friday afternoons at his

home. Allowing for vacations, travel, etc., I probably averaged meeting with him two or three times per month for nine months. I also attended his monthly studies on Ecclesiastes at his church, heard him preach a couple times, and accompanied him to a weekend GBU (InterVarsity) retreat.

Basically we did three things in our meetings: (1) we discussed his work, sometimes arguing vigorously about the theology of work, eschatology, politics, etc., and often exploring intellectual terrain we occupied in common; (2) Ellul read and critiqued my writing and ideas—about Christian ethics, higher education, the church, etc., and (3) I prepared for him bibliographical introductions to the work of James Gustafson, Stanley Hauerwas, John Howard Yoder, and other Americans. I asked him if I could do anything to assist him while in Bordeaux; he replied that he had difficulty sorting through the immense volume of American publications in ethics to see what was worth his special attention as he prepared his own books on ethics.

I have met many famous intellectuals but I have never met anyone as learned as Ellul. I locked horns with him many times (work and calling, universalism, individualism, etc.) and always found deeper layers of Ellulian research and knowledge as I pressed him on his case. He sometimes seems hasty and simplistic in his written statements; in person it was clear that his views were carefully, appropriately nuanced and reflected a vast research.

Ellul's personal character affected me as much as his intellectual brilliance. Unlike the self-important, sneering buffoons I met at Oxford, my Bordeaux mentor was relaxed, genuine, warm and kind. He was as good at relations with my children and with blue collar workers as he was in the pulpit, lecture hall or in debate. His marriage to Yvette and their warm hospitality were great and inspiring gifts to those who benefitted from them.

On one of my finer days in Bordeaux, my landlord, Henri Cerezuelle, who had been a long time friend of Ellul, drove me south into the foothills of the Pyrenees for a wonderful afternoon with Bernard Charbonneau, Ellul's best friend, often cited in his writings.

I 0ike some others) tried very hard to persuade Ellul to visit the USA He said he would come, then backed out two or three times. His excuses were that his heart condition wouldn't allow him to fly, taking a boat was too long, and he didn't speak English (true). I told him we would bring along an entourage including his cardiologist, wife, and however many friends and translators he wished. I described to him Helmut Thielicke's tour and his method of successfully grappling with the English problem. But I think he really was afraid to fly (did he ever in his life?) and felt that his work in Bordeaux was a better use of his time-I also tried to persuade Bill Moyers and PBS to do a first rate interview series on Ellul-but didn't get very far. Thankfully we do have the Dutch and French video interviews to show our American friends.

I returned to Bordeaux for four weeks in the summer of 1988 and one week in the summer of 1991. On both occasions it was a great joy to be with Ellul again but painful to see his health and then (especially after Yvette's death in 1991) his spirit failing.

Our correspondence continued until 1991 but after that date he wasn't able to respond to my occasional letters any more.

It is ironic that just as C.S. Lewis' death on November22,1963, was overshadowed by that of John F. Kennedy, so was Jacques Ellul's death on May 19,1994 by that of Jacqueline Kennedy. (I'm not suggesting a conspiracy!) For me, May 19 has always been significant because it was the birthday of Malcolm X, the African American social prophet who woke me up to the depths of America's sin of racism. And now it also marks the end of the life of another one of the twentieth *century's* most important prophetic voices. When I heard Daniel Cerezuelle's voice on my phone with the news on the morning of May 19, I felt a great emptiness sweepoverme. The world was emptier. Welostagreat man. But what a privilege it has been to have learned from him and to have known him.

Merci, mon ami!

by Vernard Eller, University of La Verne

My name is Vemard Eller; and I am most grateful for the invitation to talk about Jacques Ellul. As a writer of books, my first *magnum opus* was Kierkegaard (my doctoral dissertation). Two decades later, my last *magnum opus* was the most Ellulian thing I have written. But the dedication page of this last one read:

In appreciation of

JACQUES ELLUL

who has led me not only into Christian Anarchy but into much more of God's truth as well.

Merci, mon ami!

And those are the sentiments that will last as long as I do-or as long as the book itself does.

Long before Ellul and I had any knowledge of each other, we had in common a strong commitment to Kierkegaard, as our immediate Christian predecessor. In time, then, Ellul expressed deep appreciation for both my Kierkegaard *magnum opus* and my Ellul one. Yet it was the very *personal* character of that appreciation which so impressed me. Ellul voluntarily undertook efforts (futile) to get my Kierkegaard book published in French. And regarding the book itself, he picked upon and gave meaning to a detail no one else even noticed. That volume was dedicated to my two sons-with the prayer that the boys would grow up to demonstrate the same quality of Christian faith as was exemplified by their namesakes: Alexander Mack (the Brethren founder) in the one case; and Enten Eller (Kierkegaard's book title) in the second. Yet in a longhand note to me, Jacques Ellul found that prayer to be most significant. Yes, of course I consider all the thoughts, teachings, and writings of Jacques Ellul to be of critical importance. Yet it is the man himself I truly love and value.

When I finished college and got started on graduate studies, my one goal and dream in life was that I might become a teacher and professor like my dad-though, in my case, as professor of Bible at my alma mater, the little Brethren school in California. I did have degrees in English literature and knew that *writing* was my first love (although that simply as *hobby).* Never in my wildest dreams would I have foreseen my writings drawing such public notice and acclaim that they put me into personal contact with a recognized genius and intellectual giant the likes of Jacques Ellul. That I was destined to become a personal friend of EHul's-that I consider to be a sheer miracle of God and one of his totally unmerited gifts.

My first notice of Ellul's name (let alone his thought) came with his article, "Between Chaos and Paralysis," in the 06/05/68 *Christian Century.* I immediately sensed his affinity with my own bibli-cal/Kierkegaardian/radical-discipleship stance. So I went after Ellul's books, beginning (I think) with *The Meaning of the City.* I soon learned that Will Campbell and Jim Holloway (with their quarterly journal, *Katalagette)* had the best US connection with Ellul himself. I got in touch with them-and was soon invited to do a 1971 KAT article that would bring together the thought of Ellul, Kierkegaard, the Blumhardts, and Malcolm Muggeridge. Holloway sent that KAT issue to Ellul-and Ellul responded to Holloway (not to me). He was very pleased with the article, complaining only that I had "placed him too high." (This was Ellul's regular complaint. For the truth is that he was always a very unassuming, truly humble man.)

Holloway passed Ellul's letter on to me; and I took it as an opportunity to write to the man himself. Thus began a correspondence that ran *spasmodically* for more than twenty years—averaging probably not even one exchange per year. I, of course, read all Ellul's books as they came out (in English). I sent him as many of my books as I thought would interest him. He was always extravagant in his praise-even crediting me with helping clarify his thought at points. On *a* scale of 1 to 10, if, intellectually, Ellul were rated a 10,1 probably wouldn't make it out of zero. Yet Ellul always treated me as a scholarly peer—and more importantly, as a Christian friend and brother.

Actually, Ellul and I did pull off one joint venture, which may have won us the largest one-time hearing either of us ever received.

At the time, I was doing pretty well at landing articles in *The Christian Century,* so I submitted one entitled *How Jacques Ellul Reads the Bible.* It was accepted. You understand that Ellul and I never actually met each other; his English and my French wouldn't have made for much comprehensibility in any case. But the cover page of the November 29,1972, issue of the Century looked like this: Apart from the *Century* masthead and dateline, there was only a photo of Jacques Ellul and the story title: *How Jacques Ellul Reads The Bible:* Vemard Eller.

That in itself would have been blessing beyond measure; but there is more. This Century issue happened to coincide in point of time with the monstrously large Qua-drennial Assembly of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America. So in addition to its regular subscriber's list, free copies of the Ellul/Eller Century were everywhere at hand (and underfoot) throughout that convention.

It probably wound up with us both being "placed too high." So, to Jacques Ellul, I end as I began: *Merci, mon ami!*

Ellul's Prophetic Witness to the Academic Community

Clifford G. Christians, University of Illinois-Urbana

For over two decades, I have engaged Ellul's work intellectually. On the occasion of his death, allow me a highly personal account of the way his work has inspired my own journey.

One of my professors at the University of Illinois introduced me to Jacques Ellul in 1970. He assigned *Propaganda* and it captivated my attention immediately. At that point in my doctoral studies Ellul had been the only Christian scholar to be taken seriously in our department. From those days until now, Ellul has been more than an academic mentor to me. Here was a believer with a worldwide reputation who had not cheapened his religious commitment. His career and lifestyle as an academic have served for me as a model for integrating faith and learning.

Since his career revolved around a secular university, as mine does, Ellul's prophetic witness has enabled me to pursue my own calling more fruitfully. I have known the stories of the Old Testament prophets since childhood. Amos fascinated me particularly, called away as he was from his farming to preach against the wealth and indifference of Israel. However, it has never been obvious in my mind how these examples can be translated into the modem university setting. Ellul opened the prophetic door for me through his own Amos-like ministry to contemporary culture. He provided at least a glimmer of hope that the Christian mind of the 20th century can dominate the discussion about technology today in the same manner Kari Marx commandeered the 19th century agenda over industrialism. Sophisticated technology at present is unleashing novel and dangerous situations of unprecedented magnitude. Ellul's prophetic witness encouraged me in believing that we need not stand by immobilized.

As an antidote to the normlessness and cynicism of a university campus, Ellul inspired me to maintain an explicit faith without being naive. I have not forgotten that it was Aldous Huxley who introduced Ellul to America. Huxley had read *The Technological Society* in French and considered it more penetrating than his own *Brave New World.* And Huxley stood amazed at Ellul's faith which prevented him from becoming a bitter atheist as he was. As a sign of hope in this sense, Ellul sent us outside the tiny oasis which Bible-believing academics often rest content. In many ways, what C. S. Lewis accomplished in literature, Ellul did in the social sciences. He encouraged us to stretch beyond the minimal, beyond the modules and homilies, to a bold vision co-extensive with the abundance of contemporary power.

Moreover, Ellul was a testimony to the inevitability of suffering in academic life. No one can be a watchman on the walls without ridicule and attack. Ellul paid dearly for his distinctiveness. Alongside those who recognized his stunning insights and credentials were the hosts who incessantly denounced him. The political activists turned on him when he opposed violent means. Marxist intellectuals claimed his views were too diluted and apparently preferred more strident ideological commitments. Socral scientists insisted on so-called neutrality and dismissed his impassioned work as moralizing. Even within the Christian community he was misunderstood as too scriptural by some and not biblical enough by others. A few found him too confrontational and others too individualistic. Among Christians who also wish to establish a correspondence between faith and the world, Ellul's notion of counterpoint was sometimes misdirected. Through it all, Ellul reminded me that genuine Christian scholarship entails suffering. While distinctiveness is necessary to accomplish anything theoretically interesting, such forthright stands can never escape abuse. Though suffering can be ameliorated to some degree and may not be as intense for all, Ellul showed the nobility of a steadfast willingness to pay the price.

For those of us in an academic world, Ellul made it clear that the important battles are fought over content. Certainly a life of integrity is critical. Keeping one's promises, honesty with the data, respect for students, and other such virtues are necessary givens for a Christian testimony. Active involvement in social causes, and freedom from the demons of money and careerism *arcsine qua non.* Christian institutions warrant support also, and time devoted to them can sometimes indicate that the university does not own my soul. But Ellul contended that all these are insufficient. While failure in any of the above undoubtedly weakens or besmirches our impact, they together are not a substitute for an integration of faith and learning. The issue in the secular arena is whether a biblical foundation makes any difference in the way we think, in our grappling with the latest headlines, in shaping our disciplines. If, in other words, Christians and nonChristians end up with the same conclusions on crucial issues, and if economic and political beliefs seem finally to carry the greatest weight, then the Christian worldview is unnecessary baggage. Regarding issues that matter, if the orientation is the same for all, then Christianity is clearly a paradigm which may have successfully anchored reality in the pre-scientific era but no longer has any legitimate claims on our allegiance.

Harry Blamires in *The Christian Mind* expresses the same concern. He laments that there is no clearly formulated Christian mind on the vital issues of the day. Such an identifiable perspective may be developing over cavil rights and nuclear war and perhaps over abortion, but Blamires argues that even on those matters too much ambiguity and lack of unity still exist. To his way of thinking, in no instance really is there a powerful stream of Christian thinking which cannot be ignored. And Ellul shared an identical conviction about the urgent need for toughminded struggles against the modem mind — in his case over the nature and role of technology in our culture. Some of us are convinced that the Bible communicates to all of life and not just

regarding the soul. We refuse dichotomies between prayer and action, salvation and culture, word and deed. In this sense, scriptural truth is a white light which shines through the prism of space and time into a spectrum of colors, and it does not merely illuminate a narrow road leading to heaven. To us, Ellul has been a signpost that a holistic approach can be made meaningful even in an increasingly post-Christian era.

He brought the revolutionary motif up from a footnote in order to develop an approach that was radical enough to make major transformations as necessary in the status quo. Such prophetic appeals have consistently come out on the short end; they have been relegated to the final chapter or emerged as an afterthought when all the other intellectual work has been safely gathered in. Ellul made the urgency of revolt and resistance compelling, moving them solidly within the circumference of social responsibility itself. He was too uncritically Barthian at this point for my own taste, presuming Barth's dualism between *Historic* and *Geschichte.* Based on that dialectic, Barth denies meaning and value to time and space, a perspective which entails a gulf between secular and sacred histories. On this view, the latter culminates in an eschatalogical climax at the final judgment. And given this construct, the apocalyptic end-time moment anchored both freedom and revelation for Ellul. However, despite the limitations of this formulation, Ellul challenged me with an analysis which confronts our technological era without a hint of compromise, while simultaneously protecting the clear otherness of the solution. His achievement was to eradicate all middle-level compromises within the historical process.

Ellul heard the plea of James Houston in "The Judgment of the Nations" for a new sense of mission in the Christian community:

[We must learn] to use the whole range of our professional skills to speak prophetically about our time. We need deeper analyses of the pathology of scientific , technological, social and political evils in our contemporary world, in light of the eternal reali-ties...A new missionary enterprise is involved: to go virtually into every professional area of life, just as in the past we have emphasized the geographical penetration of our world with the gospel. *(Prophecy in the Making,* ed. C. F. H. Henry, pp. 360-61)

Meanwhile the church has been giving pride of place to laity who serve internally, who contribute to its ongoing administration. Those on the church board or teachers in religious education are prized as involved lay persons. However, if Houston is right, the "worldly laity" are the urgent need at present. While churches may be devising strategies for communicating to the reachable, the alienated still remain virtually untouchable. Though the church has released incredible resources of late to train the internal laity, virtually no leadership or help emerges whatsoever about penetrating the professions and institutions of our time. Thus Elul ranked in my mind as a strategic case of effective lay power, whose books and life were teaching instruments not only for educators, but for the worldly laity in the human community at large.

Ellul reminded me that the pivotal role of conscience must be recaptured in moral agency. Freud stifled our appreciation of the conscience, reducing it as he did to a

nagging voice and repressive intruder yielding unnecessary guilt. Jacques Elul knew better, using his prophetic voice to ignite the human conscience. Clinical appeals to reason and analysis are insufficient; on his view we ought not merely face social and cultural dilemmas with a calculator. Ellul's work surged forth like a mighty stream from a deeply touched conscience of his own seeking to inform and activate the consciences of others. I saw in his demeanor an insatiable thirst, a relentless yearning for justice and meaning that has marked prophetic agents over the centuries. From him I renewed my own concern for a vital prophetic witness against the human propensity to serve the interests of power. As his numbers increase, inspired by his legacy, perhaps our technological activity can be freed at last from its anti-normative direction.

In Memorium for Jacques Ellul

by David Lovekin, Hastings College

I first learned of Jacques Elul in the spring of 1969, a time when many Americans were discovering Elul's work. I read *The Technological Society,* (1964) his "call to the sleeper to awake." American philosophy at that time was very much guided by Brizo, goddess of sleep, a condition which today has even deepened under the unwavering hegemony of analytical philosophy with its logic chopping and concept shifting –the *la technique* of philosophical wisdom or of Heideggerian-like nihilism, the posture of spirit tired of making sense. For a time it appeared that phenomenology would provide respite, but that was shortly to be harnessed by conceptual batteries and wires that abandoned the concerns of the *lebenswelt* that had fascinated such thinkers as Merleau-Ponty.

I took seriously what Elul was to state later in much clearer terms in *The Technological System* (1980):

Man's central, his—I might say-metaphysical problem is no longer the existence of God and his own existence in terms of that sacred mystery. The problem is now the conflict between that absolute rationality *(rationalite absoiue)* and what has hitherto constituted his person. That is the pivot of all present-day reflection, and, for a long time, it will remain the only philosophical issue. (74)

Although he claimed not to be a philosopher, Elul understood that a metaphysical realm beyond the here and now was obviated by the reduction of the real to the absolutely rational in the pursuit of evanescent efficiency with a mathematics-like methodology. Philosophy went the way of all disciplines. Philosophy seemed unconcerned or unable to take its own condition into account, to wonder why the concept and reason had come to hold such power and force, to see this incarnation of philosophy as a manifestation of the very business it was philosophy's traditional duty to examine: the *polis* in whatever form it might take.

Philosophers had become checkers and baggers in the supermarket of technique, pricing and inventorying items and then wrapping them but never calling them to

question; or they became the homeless outside the market in the clearing of technique waiting for visits from *Dasein* in a shopping cart. Elul's work was to my mind philosophical in the classical sense; uncovering the presuppositions of what currently passed for knowledge and locating this knowledge against the backdrop of the whole; and then relating the limits of knowledge, some form of otherness, to the known. Elul sought freedom for consciousness and human awareness to become aware of itself, to take shape against what it was not, against its loss. Elul examined the force and power of technical consciousness from a standpoint outside of it, employing the history of law, biblical exegesis, and social analysis with an imaginative totalizing vision. Technique was grasped as it appeared in time, as it took on the character of the sacred, and as technological society usurped traditional human culture produced against the backdrop of otherness. Technology became the sacralization of the familiar.

Typically the enormous scope of Ellul's work was beyond his readers wanting to reduce him to a pessimistic Christian luddite. But Elul clearly understood that to come not to praise technology would be taken as its condemnation. Like nineteenth century Kierkegaard, he ranged the contemporary social world witnessing the idolatry of "absolute rationality;" like eighteenth century Giambattista Vico, he understood the debilitating power of the "intelligible universal," Vico's term for what clearly is Elul's technical phenomenon, and of its disempowering effect on metaphorical and symbolic language revealed in culture and human law, and like twentieth century philosopher Ernst Cassirer, Elul saw the human spirit alive in symbolic construction but endangered by monological technique. Elul, like the above thinkers, stood outside of fad and fashion and offered the voice of the other to keep open the dialectic of human possibility.

Anarchy and Holiness

by Gabriel Vahanian, Universite des Sciences Humaines, Strasbourg

Hailed as "Mr. Protestant", Jacques Ellul appears on the American scene a few decades ago and, obviously, for the general reader, he still admires Barth.

It is not with Barth, however, that he shares the distinction of having probed the emergence of technology and its impact on the nature and destiny of the human person. It is with Tillich. To be sure, he differs from Tillich, too. In particular, with respect to the relation between religion and culture, they even seem to stand at opposite ends of the spectrum. Describing religion as the substance of culture and, conversely, culture as the form of religion, is not the kind of path Ellul follows. Like Barth, he distinguishes religion from faith'[2] Accordingly, religion can also be an expression of the sacred. It belongs then to the same realm as culture; perhaps, it belongs to what we call civilization or, more precisely, to that of which technology would be the ultimate negation, if

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[2] *La Subversion du christianisme,* p. 66

we must give credence to Ellul's contention that there can be no technological civilization.[3] When, however, he also contends that civilization itself is inextricably bound up with the sacred, we begin to wonder. Before long, one question leads to another: How Protestant is Mr. Protestant?

To what extent is Ellul's implicit, dichotomous, understanding *ci faith* and culture congruous with classical Protestant openness to secularity? Is it not in contradiction with the idea suggested by Troeltsch that Protestantism is that form of Christianity which, rather than adopting, adapts to given historical circumstances and patterns itself after the emerging cultural mind-set? And do we still, with Ellul, stand in the tradition of Reformation, which Karl Holl depicts as consisting in the secularization of religion and the spiritualisation of culture? Or is Ellul more a sociologist than a theologian? Or, for that matter, is he too French a theologian? And if so, how could his thought be freed from its shackles, fettered as it is by the dialectic of the sacred and profane which still pervades a Catholic culture? How could it, genuinely, adhere to the iconoclastic dialectic he seems to wish and call for yet does not really spell out, namely that of anarchy and holiness?

Modernity: from the Reformation to the Death of God

Indeed, in spite of all appearances and a litany of common places with which the Reformation is laden, there is an aspect of it which needs to be stressed. It has to do with the fact that, then, Christianity is about to face Modernity and does so, not so much by allegedly returning to the sources, as by developing a theology staked off a new conception of the world. On the whole, Christianity continues to fertilize Western culture, providing it with a sense of destiny, both individually and socially. Whether intellectually, spiritually, or ethically, the Christian faith still informs and belongs to the cultural mind-set.

At most, albeit with a touch of irreverent humor, one might somewhat wryly relish the thought that, with the Reformation, Christianity undergoes sort of a religious lifting. As a result, the world itself will look quite a different place. Not enough, however, to be spared from the growing gap between religion and culture or to resist their cleavage once it is set in motion. No sooner has Modernity begun its course and been identified as a challenge to established customs than it gives the impression of being programmed to break up with the Christian tradition. It will. But when it does –if it actually does - it will break up with the latter only because of its own premises: they are rooted in the Christian understanding of the world.

Odd as it is, Modernity only reaps what it did not sow. It gamers an heritage actually neglected by Christianity while the church remains locked up in a religious tradition fast becoming fossilized. It rests on a misunderstanding.

As for the church, by splitting science and faith, it does in fact overlook the real theological questions. They are raised by the very scientists it impugns. But if theirs is

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[3] In a similar vein, Barth contended in the late forties that there could be no humanism outside of the Christ-event.

a lucid struggle against the tyranny of outmoded presuppositions, its outcome surely is not less doubtful or reprehensible in its assumptions. For winning the day, scientism equally rests on dubious foundations. Prematurely blowing its horn, it deludes itself on a pyrrhic victory won from a religious tradition now seemingly fitted with savings of leveled-down transcendence.

True enough, both sides misconstrue transcendence. They think it stands or falls with supernatural dualism. But, in biblical thought, God is a God who creates and becomes incarnate and is all in all. He dwells among men. Immanence is not shunned by his transcendence, on the contrary. Given the iconoclastic bent of this biblical notion of God, immanence can even be said to come *before* transcendence. Accordingly, a demise of the supernatural understanding of the world is no surprise. It was inevitable. But it does not necessarily entail the demise of transcendence, much less of faith. It even radicalizes faith in God as Ellul would suggest through his rather peculiar notion of the silent God.

Indeed, ours is a time of disenchantment. In the wake of Max Weber, God's silence notwithstanding, Ellul continues to think of the *world* as being disenchanted. He does not want to realize that this disenchantment affects science or philosophy much less than the very Christian tradition on which they were weaned. It affects the world much less than it does Christianity. After all, if it was the world that was disenchanted, we should have by now found enchantment elsewhere, perhaps even in the classic posture of contempt for this world. On the contrary, it becomes more and more evident that Christianity alone does not and cannot by itself suffice to enchant the world. Just as one knows a tree by its fruits, so also does one know a religion by the world it bears and begets. Christianity seems instead bent on reneging the world it has borne. Searching for its own identity and, more or less disavowing the world it has brought forth, it is focussed on a quest of origins. Challenged by what is demanded of it, it recoils into what it demanded in another world. It is oblivious of the fact that it would know whence it comes if, as was still the case with the Reformation, it knew whither it goes. It seeks to reconstruct its past, instead of submitting to the permanent deconstruction of it as demanded by its own future. Admittedly, the issues with which Christianity is henceforth confronted are not quite the same as those of the sixteenth century. They will grow worse still in our time, when religion needs more than a lifting.

The Cultural Impact of Technology

As innovative as the Reformation was, it was not at odds with the world; it shook up the church, not its cultural or, for that matter, religious underpinnings It does not amount to what is called today a "cultural revolution." In particular, it does not presuppose, nor does it demand, *a* total reappraisal of the cultural, even of the religious infrastructure of the Christian tradition. By contrast, ours is a situation for which it is not the world but religion which is shorn of its supernatural dimension - at once a fact, which must be dealt with, not by the world, but by the Christian faith, and a task,

to which Christianity continues to remain reticent.[4] Theological bridgeheads have not only been rare, they have been frowned upon if not repelled. Christian *aggiomamento* has long since petered out, whether within or without the institutions; besides, it was promoted by a halfhearted Roman Catholic Church.

At best, the mountain has given birth to a mouse. The ecumenical movement has given way to a spiritual flea market and, more often than not, has resulted in the churches taking stock of their differences. Beset by cultural pluralism, those same churches claim to cope with it simply by bracketing their respective theology. Inevitably, either they are led to compose and compromise with the prevailing ambient secularism or they are forced to retreat into a new type of orthodoxy, when they do not fall into the trap of fundamentalism or resort to an outright ritualization of the Christian tradition. Because the churches have become disenchanted and have nothing to say, they think Christianity's sickness unto death can be cured homeopathically: for lack of a daring faith, halleluias have replaced the sermon and mantric formulas have practically eclipsed theological reflection. By adding a sacerdotal touch to the minister's doctoral gown, the Presbyterian Church retreats from its historic adherence to, and its no less iconoclastic profession of, universal priesthood –surely a misnomer if there ever was one. Universal priesthood makes no sense unless the Christian message is liberated from the shackles of ecclesiastical bondage. A church that does not preach what it practices is not a church that practices what it preaches. Like the ostrich, it buries its head in the sand. As a result, its predicament is far more grievous today than it was in the sixteenth century. Never before was the church faced with as decisive a dilemma. And unless or until the church understands that theological reflection is the concern of the layman, the rank and file will find no alternative to the melting pot of technological society. And yet what is technology if not, to begin with, an alternative to technology?

Pointing a finger at it because it has allegedly become a menace is pointless. It makes no sense. To the degree that technology has been a promise, it has been a menace — always. Ignoring this amounts to compromising with it and, for a believer, that means nothing short of compromising one's faith: Ellul - and this is not the least of his merits — will never swerve from this line of thought. For him, the technological phenomenon is no mere mundane matter, if only because the Christian tradition cannot entirely be exonerated of its inception and development. And, therefore, except at the risk of serving two masters, no believer can be sheltered from its demands. Not only must it be coped with, it also lies, surreptitiously or otherwise, at the heart of every crisis affecting the Christian faith today.[5]

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[4] Again, I wonder if this reti cence is not what Ellul is addressing and seeks to justify when he speaks of our time as being a time of dereliction (Cf. *L'esperance oubliee).*

[5] That is the reason why, to my mind, Ellul has always claimed he was not opposed to technology and is misunderstood by those of his disciples, who, being believers, do not realize that the technological question is for him a religious question or by those who simply overlook the fact that for him technology is not criticizable for being technological but for being ideological.

The Religious Impact of Technology

In this connection, one need only consider any of the major debates of the last fifty years or so. From Bultmann's proposal for demythologizing the Gospel to the death of God by way of the political conscientization of the church as an attempt to make up for traditional, otherworldly salvation, none leaves Ellul indifferent. Indifferent to them or unaffected by them have been and still are only those of his disciples who, for being religious, have not plumbed the depth of Ellul's analysis of the technological question as being, on its own grounds, a religious question.

Of course, even Barth never saw it in that light. But he dominated the theological field. By contrast with Tillich and Brunner or, for that matter, by contrast with even Bultmann, he does not approach the technological question. While in France Brunner was silenced before he had a chance of being heard, Bultmann was practically put on the French Protestant index and Tillich remained unknown.

Ellul does not waver. Faithful to Barth, he will never grow into an unconditional Barthian. Assessing Barth's involvement with East/West politics after World War II, he hands down a rather drastic judgment: Barth does not understand politics. And when he subsequently expounds his notion of universal salvation, one wonders if he felt that Barth did not understand religion, either. More significantly, given the importance he attaches to this plea, one even wonders if it simply is Ellul's way of putting into question the very notion of salvation or, perhaps, of demythologizing this rather basic tenet of the Christian tradition.

Not that he warms up to Bultmann's method. Holding the view that technology is our new myth, Ellul is, from the start, of the opinion that, if anything must be demythologized, it is our present world rather than that of the Bible. It is not the past that needs to be demythologized, but the present. Not the New Testament, but the self-infatuating discourse of technology. Not the Word of God, but the word of man. Ellul does not warm up to Bultmann's method. He restates it in his own terms, i.e., those of the technological system. For whatever reason, their disagreement is ultimately quite superficial. Nor am I surprised that, like Bultmann, Ellul is often charged with locking up the believer in a subjective faith - a charge, one must add, often made by precisely those for whom, when Modernity rests its case, there is no subject left that is not besides the subject, no selfhood of the self that is not eclipsed by itself. Ellul speaks a different language. He debunks our present myths from another vantage point. But his verdict is substantially the same: We think we are self-possessed when in fact we are lured into self-oblivion by reason of this very myth — or is it a technology? - of self-possession.

Political Illusion and Technological Bluff

Be that as it may, ours are the myths that roughly belong to two families or two types of ideology that mingle their respective goals: on the one hand, a political ideology (which Ellul lays bare and qualifies as the *political illusion*) and, on the other hand, an ideology of total technology (sometimes identified with utopia until Ellul, correcting his aim, defines it less in terms of utopia than in those of a huge bluff, the

technological bluff). Not less significantly, they feed one another and lure us away from ourselves - not into a new world or a new Jerusalem but into another Babylonian captivity. For him, those are obviously the major myths that need to be demythologized: they prevent us from taking stock of what precisely is at stake in and through the technological phenomenon. In other words, it is not the technological phenomenon so much as the myth that surrounds it that Ellul objects to. At most, like politics, technology disappoints him.

It disappoints him, not because it eliminates, but because it assimilates the human person. Instead of being of use to her, it uses her. It begins as a tool and ends up turning whomever uses it into its own tool. Being above and beyond nature, it fits us with something like a second nature. But, like nature, it demands total surrender. Obedience to it therefore postulates its being sacralized, even while nature, subjected to some kind of open sky mining ground, is artificialized together with all that biologically or otherwise belongs to it. And, unlike Tillich, Ellul consequently maintains that technology is not neutral.

He is categorical: any suggestion that technology is neutral amounts to affirming that it is good.[6] Ellul adheres to that view relentlessly. But he never implies that technology has trapped us in a situation out of which there is no exit. His analysis of the technological phenomenon never yields any ground for developing a doctrine pegged on some kind of materialistic reductionism. He loves nature, but never denies that natural man is sinful man. He denounces technology, but only because, like nature, so to speak, it attracts the sacred. And no social network of cohesion has ever been devised that did not appeal to the sacred. Whether through nature or technology, we are beguiled if not enslaved to the sacred. And yet, just as no believer can worship God without being an iconoclast, somehow the human being remains an anarchist. And I think it is in this light that, for example, one must read the rather ambiguous statement with which Ellul concludes *le Systeme techniden:* "Lliomme qui aujourd'hui se sert de la technique est de ce fait meme *celui* qui la sert. Et reciproquement seul Iliomme qui sert la technique est vraiment apte & se servir d'elle."[7]

If I quote him in French it is because one cannot read the last sentence without wondering what exactly is meant. What does Ellul mean when he states that only she who is used by technology is yet *truly able* to use it? He readily says that each of his undertakings has been a failure. We are useless servants, and yet we must try and serve God as best we can. And when he say that we are truly able to use technology, does he perchance have in mind anything like what I do when I suggest that a poet is precisely that person who, because she submits to language, is truly able to master it? Moreover, it bears pointing out, Ellul also hints that the person who is truly able

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[6] Cf. *Presence au monde tnodeme,* Roulet (C.P.E.), Geneve 1948, p. 95.

[7] *Le Systeme techniden,* Calmann-Levy, Paris 1977 (Ellul's italics): Whoever uses technology is by the same token used by it. Conversely, only he or she who is used by technology is *truly able* to use it (italics mine).

to use technology is not, as was the custom of saying, "man in general". That person is the person who was never before so subjected to it as she is *today.*

At this point, we have to back up and retrace our steps.

Anarchy and the Political Illusion

A tool extends the human. Today technology alters it. Just as we have gone from tool to technology, so also we have moved from our natural to an increasingly technological milieu. We have moved away from the rich symbolism of nature, and *its* tools, to a world of artifacts for which a symbol is merely a symbol, a cipher, a sign. Which also reminds me that Ellul never missed the chance of bemoaning this shift from the elegance and nobility of the tool to the cold, calculating rationality of methods of systems that form an ensemble we call technology. And, in the wake of it, jobs, he points out, have replaced the vocational notion of work. It's as if we did not even need to be eliminated by technology. It has assimilated us. Has it, however, turned us into simulacra of ourselves? Ellul thinks so. Could he be wrong?

Whether technology is neutral or not, so much more significant is the consideration of another aspect of the problem. Consistent with himself, Ellul tends to neglect it. I think it deserves a review. I refer to an idea which is implicit in many of his statements regarding the use of technology. Namely: that, from technology at first a mere instrument for humans, we have reached the point where being human now depends on being an instrument of technology. And, of course, it all depends on what is meant by *instrument.*

Does it necessarily imply that the human being is shorn of its transcendental dimension? Does a person speak because she has a mouth? Or does she have a mouth because she speaks? And can God only be spoken as a being above all beings, as the Most High? Can he not be spoken of as the depth or the ground and the power of being as Tillich does? Too quickly, it seems to me, Ellul links his analysis of a robotized society resulting from technological efficiency with the so-called death of God. He construes the death of God as the ultimate expression of God's superfluousness and his metaphysical demise. And inevitably he ties it to his notion of a technological society as the ultimate negation of human freedom or the final theater of human dereliction. In such a society, man or woman can only be *de trop.*

But we should not misled by Ellul's apparent naivetS. His point is well taken. By contrast with so many authors, he does not consider technology as the challenge of all times. Linking together the erosion of transcendence and the rise of technology, he shows that, instead of being challenged by technology, we hasten to succumb to it. It also gives him a further opportunity for showing that he is not opposed to technology as such.[8] He is repulsed by the fact that, instead of overcoming ourselves even through it,

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[8] In Ze *Bluff technologique,* Hachette, Paris 1988, p. 9, he says that one can be against technology no more than against an avalanche.

we are resigned to it. Time and again, he states that we claim to have been liberated from the constraints of nature and yet have rushed headlong into subservience to technology. Why? Because we cannot refrain from sacralizing it. "It is not technology that enslaves us, but the sacred which is transferred to it."[9]

Holiness vs *Technology and the Sacred*

Having, so to speak, explained the spread of political illusion through a failure of the ethic of anarchy, Ellul now seems to view the sacralization of technology as the twin failure of an ethic of holiness: an ethic through which presumably the world is desacralized *and* claimed for God and his glorification.[10] Holiness and sacredness must not be confused. While according to Biblical religion the former is iconoclastic, the latter is not. Which explains why, Ellul points out, in spite of the desacralizing impact of the Christian tradition, "everything is as if men and women could not live in a desacralized universe.[11] Nor does he shrink from viewing this kind of situation as the most monumental failure of Christianity. In spite of the stand he takes regarding the death of God controversy, he further considers this failure as "one of the most blatant proofs of the sacred as being inherent to human existence, of the constancy of this active (I don't mean objective) force that leads man ever so often to reconstitute a sacred universe without which, apparently, he could not put up with a universe of his own doing. Only the sacred (and not the Christian venture) reassures him and gives him the feeling of both a stable universe and the enduring, objective, meaningfulness of his life."[12] Rather obviously, nothing is spared from the clutch of the sacred, not even modem Western society.[13] Is then Ellul an unrepentant pessimist? Not at all. He is disappointed by the church - not by the Christian message. Nor would he expect it to be otherwise!

Society thus is driven by the sacred, and only by the sacred. Not by Christianity. Nor, perhaps, by technology: remember, it is not technology but the sacred, once transferred upon it, that enslaves us.[14] And it enslaves us all the more because it can then appear in the form of utopia —that)inzzZsoZutiontowhich,accordingtoEllul, totalitarianism aspires and it alone can aspire, especially today, when technology combines both myth and the sacred under the aegis of a cold, calculating, rational efficiency.

But must it? And if it must, what is the point of Ellul's dialectic of anarchy and holiness?

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[9] *Les nouveaux possedes*, p. 259.

[10] Cf. Darrell J. Fasching, *The Thought of Jacques Ellul,* The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston (NY) 1981.

[11] *La Subversion du christianisme*, p. 67-Cf. also p. 181: "H es parfaitement intolerable pour l*homme de vivre dans un univers religieusement desert, dans un monde desacralise."

[12] *La Subversion du christianisme*, p. 83.

[13] *La Subversion du christianisme*, p. 68.

[14] *Les nouveaux possedes*, p. 259.

Be that as it may, he reminds us that not even God is worshipped without becoming an idol. Human nature, being as fascinated with the sacred as it inclined to evil, will always settle for the commodities of comfortable if idolatrous life. That is, it will always fall short of the destiny to which it is called and belongs in spate of its origins. It is fulfilled by overcoming itself. It is sinful, though not by itself but before God. And sinfulness can be overcome and erased only by God's justifying and sanctifying grace - not through sacralizing institutions, but through holiness of life or its (metaphorical) antonym: anarchy; which Ellul considers as the most complete and serious form of socialism. Though he opposes anarchy and utopria, I think he persists in doing so only because of reasons pertaining to semantics or because he simply wishes not to confuse it with the kingdom of God. This would exemplify the worst of political illusions, just as, in his assessment of total technology, he is careful not to confuse the sacred - as a social phenomenon — with faith as distinguished from religion. And if, from this perspective, there is no human freedom except in and through faith in God, then human liberation belongs less to the political or economic than to the spiritual order. Ellul, it must be admitted, is closer to Luther's two kingdoms than to Calvin's ecclesial revolution, or his eschatic conception of the/wtare *life, or die true country.*

By way of concluding this footnote

Whether Ellul's thought is consistent or full of contradictions, it surely does not seek to square the circle. Ellul himself puts it in this way: "I remained unable to eliminate Marx, unable to eliminate the biblical revelation, and unable to merge the two. For me, it was impossible to put them together. So I began to be torn between the two, and I have remained so all my life. The development of my thinking can be explained starting with this contradiction."[15] I have perhaps been insinuating that Ellul was a disappointed man. If so, I have been wrong: he is disillusioned, even tom apart. And therefore open to this world so loved by God that he gives his only begotten Son.

Jacques Ellul — The Little Giant

by Darrell J. Fasching

As I write this on July 20th, 1994, America is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the landing of the first man on the moon on this date in 1969. Watching television clips of those events vividly brought back to me the context in which I first encountered the writings of Jacques Ellul. 1969 was the year I entered graduate school at Syracuse University. As I drove across the country from Minneapolis, the first moon landing was barely a month behind us. And yet it was not the moon that was on my mind but the earth, for the end of the 60's and the early 70's were apocalyptic times. Protest against the war in Vietnam was closing universities everywhere, our cities were literally burning from outbreaks of racial conflict and predictions of ecological collapse from

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[15] *In Season, Out of Season,* p. 16.

overpopulation and pollution were daily events. Again and again the question was being asked ~ Why is it we can put a man on the moon but we can't solve our social and environmental problems here on earth?

It was a year or two later that I first encountered the writings of Jacques Ellul in a seminar on theology and technology, taught by Gabriel Vahanian. In that context I read *The Technological Society* for the first time. What a different perspective Ellul brought to the issues. Up until then my perspective had been largely shaped by Harvey Cox's optimistic book, *The Secular City.* That book was published in 1965, the year that the first human being walked in space. From 1965 to 1969, when we put a man on the moon, it seemed as if our technological prowess would enable us to accomplish anything we set out to do. Cox's book fit the temper of the times, assuring us that our modem technology was the product of secularizing, liberating and humanizing impact of the Gospel upon the human city.

Coming from that perspective, reading *The Technological Society* was like taking a cold shower and sobering up. But Ellul's analysis struck a chord, not only with me, but with many children of the "60s" who felt trapped in a system unable to critique itself and insistent on carrying on "business as usual" while more and more of our generation were being sent home in body bags from a war without a purpose that technology was supposed to win for us.

Vietnam, became for many of us a symbol of everything that was wrong with "the system." Ellul's writings served to "raise our consciousness," helping us to understand what the "system" was, how it worked and how it might be subverted. The system, we were told, was technical and bureaucratic, autonomous and all encompassing, held together by media propaganda and the political illusion.

Ellul's insights were both convincing and frustrating. They explained why nothing seemed to be changing even as many engaged in intensive political and social action. At that time, it seemed that Ellul had two audiences. Alienated social activists who read his sociology and didn't even know he was a theologian and also a growing following among Christians, largely evangelical, who were to his biblical commentaries as ways of critiquing the idolatry of contemporary society. It took a while for people to put the two sides of Ellul together and see the whole man and the whole message.

With the passing of the Vietnam war, political activism receded. It is hard to psychologically sustain such activism when you don't have the drama of nightly television newsclips to psyche you up and tie you into the cosmic drama of your struggle. The realists drawn to Ellul's sociology found little to keep them going. But those who grasped the theological side of his message were able to accept that the presence of the kingdom had to be manifested through a church that was not driven by media attention but by an apocalyptic hope that totally breaks with "the system" - a church prepared to assume what Ellul called an "incognito" or "hidden presence" in the world, patiently subverting and desacralizing the social structures of "the system" at the local level where we actually live rather than being seduced by the grand gestures of the illusory world created by the media. Ellul's advice was: think globally but act locally.

You need to understand "the system" holistically but than attack at its weakest point, which is precisely that point at which "the system" intersects with your own life.

It is my conviction that of all of Ellul's work, there are three books that are absolutely essential for understanding his message: *The Technological Society, The New Demons* and *Apocalypse: The Book, of Revelation.* The first is purely sociological. The third is purely scriptural and theological. It is the second, *The New Demons,* which provides the link that ties them together. It was only after I read *The New Demons (Les NouveauxPoss&l&)* that I really understood *The Technological Society* for the first time. I had completely missed the significance of Ellul's constant references to the sacred in that book until I read *The New Demons.*

The New Demons is the Rosetta Stone of Ellul's work. There Ellul violated his rule of keeping his sociological and his theological work separate. The book was primarily a work on the sociology of religion but its novel and brilliant thesis was that in our time and place in history, the sociology of religion and the sociology of technology have one and the same subject matter because the sacred has migrated from nature to technology. There it became clear, that for Ellul, it is the sacred that is the problem, not technology as such.

At the end of his sociological analysis Ellul tacked on a postscript to the book — a "Coda for Christians" in which he argued that the theology of the secular city was ironically the byproduct of the sacralization of our technological world. In such a world Christians were called not to praise technology but desacralize it in the name of the holiness of God, the way Christians had once desacralized nature in the name of the holy.

InApocalypse, the Book of Revelation Ellul then spelled out the scriptural basis for his analysis, showing that it is possible for Christians to be optimistic about the future of the city but not for any of the reasons Cox's *The Secular City* advanced. Quite the opposite. To my mind, Ellul's exegesis of the Book of Revelation is his most powerful exegetical work. If he had written nothing else, that alone would be enough to give him a place in the history of Christian theology. In one single work of scriptural exegesis he moved Christian faith beyond the quest for salvation and into the life of sanctification. With his scripturally based understanding of universal salvation, Ellul demythologized the Christian obsession with personal salvation and shifted the focus to the Christian vocation to sanctify the world. With universal salvation a given, the focus is shifted to our ethical responsibility as Christians to be a "leaven" or "saving remnant," whose task is to undermine the demonic power of the sacred so that human life might be possible. While there can never be a "secular city" in history, the ethical task of Christians is the never ending task of secularizing the city so that human freedom might be possible, the freedom which enables all human beings (not just Christians) to assume their vocation as children of God. That understanding of the Gospel has deeply influenced my own work. For that I owe Jacques Ellul a great debt.

I would like to end this reflection on a personal note. I met Jacques Ellul only once, when I went to Bordeaux in 1988 to deliver a paper on his ethics at an international

conference of the Society for the Philosophy of Technology which gave special recognition to his work. When I met him for the first time, I was struck by how short he was (scarcely over five feet I would guess). In my mind he was a giant. I told him this and we made a joke together about him being a "small giant" *(un petit geantf* I was immediately struck by his marvelous sense of humor, the twinkle in his eye and the gentle graciousness of the man. Later I visited him in his home, where I met his wife Yvette and his dog. (That he was a dog lover immediately endeared him to me-he shared my prejudices in this regard). Their hospitality was gracious, overflowing. I came away from that meeting with the strong impression that he and his wife created between them a single powerful but gently humanizing presence. The only adequate word for it in my vocabulary is "holiness." I came away convinced that I had met someone whose life and teaching were one. Such a thing is a rare event and it may be Ellul's greatest gift to me — one for which I will always be grateful.

An Address to "Master Jacques"

by Ivan lllich

> (Speech by Ivan lllich, given at Bordeaux, Fiance, November 13,1993. Translation from the French by Hoinacki, June 27, 1994; changes inserted by Ivan, June 27, Octopec)

It is an honor and great joy for me to be invited by Daniel Cerezuelle to participate in this act of homage.

Professor Ellul -1 wold much prefer to say, "Master Jacques" ... I have been moved by your comparison of a master with an ox which, in pulling the plow, opens a furrow. I have striven to follow you in a filial spirit, making all the false steps which that implies. I hope you accept my harvest and can recognize some flowers among what might seem a mixture of noxious weeds.

I can thus express my gratitude to a master to whom I owe an orientation which has derisively affected my pilgrimage for forty years. In this sense, my debt is unquestionable, and I was recently able to verify this in a very specific way.

To prepare my presentation for this meeting, I wanted to read about twenty of Ellul's books, those which had heretofore escaped me. My student and friend Jose Maria Sbert made bis library available to me, and there I discovered at least half of them; further, he had copiously annotated some volumes, even to the point of underlining whole paragraphs. After spending a few evenings immersed in this treasure, I was astounded by the freshness and vivacity with which, over the years, Elul continually recaptures the fundamental intuitions of his earliest work, always clarifying them more. His tenacity, humility and magnanimity in the face of criticism make him an example one must bow to.

The present scholarly meeting at Bordeaux furnishes us with a unique opportunity to acknowledge the unity of his thought. Some of us have read him as a great commentator on the Bible, others, as a philosopher of technology. But few have seen him as the man who simultaneously challenges the reflection of both the philosopher and the believer. He reminds the philosopher of technology, who studies patent, observable phenomena, to be aware of the possibility that his subject may be too terrible to be grasped by reason alone. And he leads the believer to deepen his Biblical faith and eschatalogical hope in the face of two uncomfortable and disturbing truths, pointing out that each has the character of "extreme historical strangeness":

-First, it is impossible to compare modem technique and its malevolent consequences with the material culture of any other society whatever;

-Second, it is necessary to see that this "historical extravagance" is the result of a subversion of the Gospel - its transformation into an ideology called Christianity.

His work, from the first essays on the history of institutions and propaganda to the studies of a poetically-infused exegesis which crowns it, convinced me of this: The unique character of the time in which we live cannot be studied rationally if one does not understand that this age is the result of a ***corruptio optimi quae est pessima.*** This is why the regime of ***la technique,*** under which both the Mexican peasant and I live, forces one to confront three troubling issues:

-This regime has given birth to a society, a civilization, a culture which, taken together, are the clear inverse of what we read in the Bible, of what is indisputably found in the text of the Torah, the Prophets, Jesus and Paul."

-It is not possible to account for this regime if one does not understand its genesis as growing out of Christianity. Its principal traits owe their existence to the subversion which I have just mentioned. Among the distinctive and derisive characteristics of our age, many are incomprehensible if one does not recognize a pattern: An Evangelical invitation to each person has been twisted historically into an institutionalized, standardized and managed social objective.

-Finally, one cannot correctly analyze this "regime of technique" with the usual concepts which suffice for the study of other societies. Anew set of analytic concepts is necessary to discuss the ***heds*** (the state) and ***prods*** of the epoch in which we live under the aegis of ***la technique.***

In a direct and clarifying manner, Elul has made us face this triple aspect of a "completely unique historical extravagance." Whatever word one uses for it - culture, society, world - our actual human condition is a strange outgrowth of Christianity. All the constitutive elements are perversions of it. Since, in a sense, they owe their existence to Revelation, one can say that they are the complementary inverse, the negation of divine gifts. And, on account of what Elul recognizes as their historical strangeness, they are often refractory to philosophical or ethical critiques.

This is clearly seen when we wish to raise ethical questions. Manifestly, the moral term, "evil," is not applicable to documented events such as the Shoah, Hiroshima or the current attempts at artificial reproduction of human-like creatures.

These repugnant, abominable, horrifying enterprises cannot be debated. One cannot make them grammatical subjects. For enquiry about such things, whether they are feasible or not, just or unjust, good or evil, legitimizes the status of inexpressible horror.

Those are extreme examples. Reading Elul makes one understand that the immersion of drily life in a *milieu technique* places one no less beyond good and evil.

Let us look at one example: the technology that pulls the soil out from under everyone's feet. The world has become inaccessible if access signifies the result of pedestrian action: transport monopolizes locomotion in such a way that feet, given us for a pilgrimage on earth, atrophy into appendages of the accelerator and brake.

Among the hundreds of seemingly trivial examples of the mind's "humiliation by technique," I will rite the one in which I find a kind of humor. My church loudly denounces preservatives which frustrate the natural functioning of one organ, but she cannot envisage the equally powerful frustration of another, that seen in the analogy between rubbers and tires! By applying Ellul's concept of *la technique* to both, thus seeing that both must be declared *contra naturam,* my church could take the lead in the resistance to Moloch - all the way to martyrdom. I am ashamed of a Pope who limits his strong condemnation of technical perversion to the privacy of the bed, but refuses to preach the relevance of the natural law to Mercedes and jets. As Elul has often made clear, if the subversion itself is not rationally comprehensible, the general blindness to it is certainly not less.

All these horrors, major and "minor," derive their ontological status from the fact that they are exactly the subversions of what Elul calls "X" and what I would openly name, "divine grace."

When a half century ago Elul first published his prophetic analyses, it was altogether erident that the rational integration of Elul the "Calvinist" and Elul the sociologist was beyond the comprehension of a majority of his colleagues. But at least many now understand that his profound rootedness in frith enables him to confront the darknesses which the rootless prefer to gloss over.

Already in his study of propaganda he made us see that modem men are so terrorized by reality that they surrender themselves to atrocious debaucheries of images and representations in ordernot to see. They manipulate media to simulate an even more sombre pseudo-world, using this to construct a protective veil against the darknesses of the real world in which they find themselves. Over the years, this absence of reality has become even more stupefying. This situation — the obscurity engendered by the media—has been well studied by my friend, Didier Piveteau, who proclaims himself Elul's student.

More and more, people live their lives as in a nightmare: They feel themselves ensnared in unspeakable horrors, with no means to wake up to the light of the real. As in certain nightmares, the terror transcends the expressible. Ellul's recognition of the established status of "globalizing" technique allowed him to foresee in the 1950s what today is palpable but now irremediable. What surrounds us today is implicit

in his analysis *of la technique.* Before this assembly, made up of attentive readers of Ellul, and at the conclusion of two days' intense exchanges, it would be absurd for me to elucidate this notion, original and of capital importance in his work. I prefer to narrate some circumstances in which the notion has furnished a derisive help to one Ellul reader - and, if he accepts me as such, his student.

La technique entered my existence in 1965 in Santa Barbara, the day when, at Robert Hutchins's Center, John Wilkinson gave me a copy of *The Technological Society* which he had just translated, following up on the strong recommendation of Aldous Huxley. Since then, the questions raised by the concept of *la technique* have constantly reoriented the examination of my relations to objects and to others.

I have adopted this Ellulian concept because it permits one to identify - in education, transport, modem medical and scientific activities — the threshold at which these projects absorb, conceptually and physically, the client into the tool; the threshold where the products of consumption change into things which themselves consume; the threshold where the milieu of technique transforms into numbers those who are entrapped in it; the threshold where technology is derisively transformed into Moloch, the system.

During ten good years after my meeting with Professor Ellul, I concentrated my study principally on that which *la technique* does: what it does to the environment, to social structures, to cultures, to religions. I have also studied the symbolic character or, if you prefer, the "perverse sacramentality" of institutions purveying education, transport, housing, health care and employment. I have no regrets. The serial consequences of domination by *la technique,* making institutions counterproductive, must be understood if one wishes to measure the effects on the specific *herds* (state) and *praxis* defining the experience of modernity today. It is necessary to face the horrors, in spite of the certain knowledge that seeing is beyond the power of our senses. I have successively analyzed the hidden functions of highly accelerated transport, communication channels, prolonged educational treatment, and human garaging. I have been astounded by their symbolic power. That has given me empirical proof that the Ellulian category of *la technique,* which I had originally employed as an analytic tool, also defines a reality engendered by the pursuit of an "ideology of Christian derivation."

Research on the symbolic function of technique in our time, begun by Ellul, continues to provide clarifying observations. Here I am reminded particularly of his reflections on magic and religion. Among modem thinkers, Jacques Ellul has always been one of a select few who understand that the place of the sacred is now occupied not by this or that artifact, but by *la technique,* the black box we worship.

My disembodiment seen, for example, in the loss of my feet, is more directly the result of this worship than ecological damage. Therefore, to understand society today, it seems more important to begin with an examination of the effects of *la technique* on my flesh and senses than to study current and future damages to the environment.

I have, then, attempted to explore the seductive power that the intensive dedication of modem enterprises to *la technique* exercises over my mode of perception. In fact, not

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a year passes, during the quarter century since Wilkinson gave me Ellul's book, that I do not detect a hitherto unperceived propensity to deny the reality of living in service to the Techno-Moloch. Existence in a society which has become a system finds the senses useless precisely because of the very instruments designed for their extension. One is prevented from touching and embracing reality. Further, one is programmed for interactive communication, one's whole being is sucked into the system. It is this radical subversion of sensation which humiliates and then replaces perception.

We submit ourselves to atrocious debaucheries of image and sound consumption in order to anesthetize the pain resulting from having lost reality. To grasp this humiliation of sight, smell, touch, and not just hearing, it was necessary for me to study the history of the bodily acts of perception. Not only Biblical certitudes, but also medieval and classical truths concerning sensible perceptions have been subverted to the point where an exegesis of ancient texts must surmount both conceptual and physiological obstacles. Allow me to give an example, albeit extreme.

To tear out one's eye when it gives scandal is an evangelical mandate. And this is an action which always inspired horror. It was comprehensible, however, in a scope regime where the eyes emitted a visual cone which, like a luminous organ, seized and embraced reality. But such animated eyes no longer exist - except metaphorically. We no longer see, enveloping reality by means of a cone of rays emitted by our pupil. The regime of seeing through which we perceive today turns the act of sight into a form of registration, very much like a camcorder. Eyes which no longer ravish reality are hardly worth tearing out.

Such iconophagic - image-devouring - eyes are worthless:

-to found hope on Biblical reading;

—to apprehend the horrors of the technological bubble which separates me from reality;

-finally, to find joy in the only mirror in which I can discover myself, the pupil of the other.

The subversion of the word by the conquering eye has a long history, a part of the history of technique in the world of Christianity. In the Middle Ages, this overthrow took the form of replacing the book written to be heard — reading was done aloud — by a text which addressed itself to the silent look. Parallel to this technogenic inversion of sensory priorities, the chapel - the place for devout reading, was separated from the aula — the place for scholastic reading. This portentous division marked the end of a millennium of *lectio divina,* the principal way reading was experienced.

And, concomitant with this architectural separation of the place of prayer from the place of study, the first—to my knowledge - institution of higher studies, the university, appeared. Here, the cultivation of abstract thought totally eclipsed the culture of the senses. This is not so much a disjunction between *fidens quaerens intellectum* (theology), and *intellectusquaerensfidem* (philosophy), as between asceticism and logical analysis. This latter separation permitted the emergence of a civilization in which Ellul has so much difficulty making himself understood. From him who follows the

furrow he traces, he expects –as he has written - a devotion to virtue which would give one the courage and strength to pursue the analysis of reality in conditions which he has called "desperate," a situation which makesone feel hopelessly impotent.

Therefore, it appears to me that we cannot neglect the disciplined recovery (what is called "ascesis") of a sensual praxis in a society of technogenic mirages. This preservation of fire senses, this promptitude to obey experience, the chaste look which the Rule of St. Benedict opposes to the *cupiditas oculorum,* seems to me to be the fundamental condition for renouncing that technique which sets up a definitive obstacle to friendship.

Ellul's Response to the Symposium in his Honor at the University of Bordeaux, November 1993

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends:

Doubtless, I need to say first that I am full of gratitude toward the organizers of this colloquium, and toward those who worked so hard to make it possible, and I have to say that I am surprised whenever such signs of esteem and honor are conveyed to me. I never felt I was creating an important body of work. I have always imagined myself the way Bossuet did: *Bos suetus aratro* ("The ox takes to the plow"). Beyond any play on words, at least this much is true: I lived like the ox, worried only to plow a straight furrow. Although finally guided by others (without invoking He who "in the end" guides the plow) I want on the human level, in any case, to mention all those without whose help I would not have achieved anything: that is, my friends. I am a man of friendship. And without them I would not have known what to do. They have oriented me on every one of my paths.

I have to mention Bernard Charbonneau, of whom I can say that he taught me how to "think." But he also taught me to see the reality of society, instead of looking only into my books. He taught me to consider actively the social fact, "what is really happening" — to analyze, to criticize, to understand it.

In addition, there was the witness to Christian faith of Jacques Boso. Not that I was converted to Christian faith by his testimony, but after my conversion, he showed me what the Christian intellectual can be and taught me the meaning of theology.

Finally I want to mention my friend Henri Pouyanne, who made me leave the intellectual sphere in order to grasp the importance of life, for each of us, and who made me grasp that each life is essential, so that I had to be close to each "neighbor" with humility! My formation thus sketched, my task was to plow a straight furrow as straight as possible - nothing more.

I had to plow a part of the political or social world, perhaps in order to make room for ways other than the traditional ones in the world in which I lived.

This is how I worked, without genius but with perseverance, without a transcending inspiration, but out of the conviction that my task was to unveil the realities to that man and of that time, which nobody seemed to take into account and which appeared to me to be derisive.

These diverse orientations explain as well why my work was located in two domains, which led to the two domains of my books, sociology and theology.

What is their relation?

First a scrupulous distinction: I have always tried to prevent "my" theology from influencing my sociological research (Calvinism) and my comprehension of the world from distorting my reading of the Bible. These were two domains, two methods, two distinct interests. Only after the separation, one begins to perceive relationship.

First, the evangelical proclamation is addressed to this individual human being, living in this society, and not to some unimportant whoever - a "targeted" message. But also it is an expression of respect for the other and for the message. It follows that the key element is this: the sociological state of the world in which we live is rather desperate, so that it is difficult for modem people, deprived of hope and given over to immediate pleasure and unconscious fear of tomorrow, to proclaim the hope of faith in Christ and in the possibility for true love.

This is one major purpose that has oriented my whole life.

Thus I accomplished my task without excessively doubting myself, and without participating in the vanity of success, a game of honors and of fashions! Some considered arrogance, other disdain what was really a form of indifference toward all questions of success.

With or without success, I had to do a certain work — I just had to do what I had to do, and I did it. That is all there was to it.

I nevertheless had a point of reference, and did not proceed in a haphazard manner. The straightness of this furrow consisted in two imperatives (which, incidentally, may appear contradictory). One was the foundation derived from Christian faith, from revelation, received and meditated in the Bible. This does not need further explanation.

Then there was the value derived from my father and realized through a rigorous education: that is, honor. For him, an agnostic, honor was the code of his whole life. But does one still know what that is?

Honor, this passe aspiration I was raised with, included four rules: never lie to others, never lie to yourself, be merciful toward the weak, and never yield to the mighty.

As a result, I had "to navigate" between Christian revelation and these four imperatives.

It was within this framework and according to these orientations that my work proceeded. After all, "I could not do otherwise." You see that my personal contribution is weak, and that the homage paid to me must be passed on to my friends and to my parents. I was nothing more than the bond that connected the elements, and that is precisely why I receive with gratitude, for all of them, what you said and achieved today. With sincere gratitude and recognition, thank you.

(Translated by Achim Koddermann and Carl Mitcham.)

Issue #14 Jan 1995 — Frederick Ferré on Science, Technology, and Religion

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From the Editor

I am very happy to be able to finally put this issue on Frederick Ferre's approach to "Liberating Science, Technology and Religion" to press. It was delay ed six months by the death of Jacques Ellul and the need to put together a special memorial issue. It is very appropriate to follow that issue with this one, for Frederick Ferre is surely a kindred spirit with Ellul. Ferre's is Research Professor of Philosophy and co-founder of tire graduate Faculty of Environmental Ethics at the University of Georgia. His work on science, technology and religion spans more than three decades and includes his *Philosophy of Technology* (Prentice Hall, 1988) as well as his recent *Hellfire and Lightning Rods.* He is currently at work on a trilogy of books on philosophy and value: *Being and Value, Knowing and Value, Living and Value.* Ferre's work seeks to liberate science, technology and religion from inappropriate paradigms so that they, in turn, can be truly liberating and humanizing forces for our future. His work deserves careful reading and critical attention. This issue of the *Forum* is meant to contribute to that task

I introduce the *Forum* with a review of Ferre's book, *Hellfire and Lightning Rods: Liberating Science, Technology and Religion.* Then chapter three from Ferre's book, "New Metaphors for Technology," is reprinted here with the kind permission of Orbis Books. This is followed by a critical response to Ferre's essay by Robert Fortner. Ferri is then given the opportunity to respond and bring the dialogue to completion.

In addition to our Forum theme for this issue we also have a guest essay by Pieter Tijmes, a member of our editorial board and European circulation manager for the Forum. Tijmes reflects on Ellul's view of technical autonomy in light of current post-modem thought. We also have a dialogue section in which David Lovekin responds to the review by Timothy Casey of his book on Ellul, *Technique, Discourse and Consciousness: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jacques Ellul,* which appeared in Issue #10. My apologies to David Lovekin. This should have been published two issues ago, but space considerations made that difficult. In the Dialogue section Peter Haas also responds to my book *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?* Haas' criticisms are provocative and naturally led to my attempt to answer them in the piece that follows his.

Finally, we have two books reviewed in our book review section. The first is *Conversations with Jacques Ellul (Entretiens avec Jacques Ellul)* by Patrick Chastenet Chastenet, who was Ellul's research assistant for years, offers us valuable insights into Ellul's life and thought as Joyce Hanks indicates in her review. The second review is

of *The American Hour* by the the Oxford scholar, Os Guinness. This is done for us very ably by Donald Evans, the Director of the Ellul Institute in Riverside California.

Darrell J. Fasching
Editor

In This Issue

The One Best Way of Technology?

by Pieter Tijmes

It sounds reasonable that if technology is autonomous, it cannot be politically steered and that if it is steerable, it cannot be autonomous. Not everybody has the same feelings for the concept of the "autonomy" of technology. It is often used as an alarming and disturbing concept In that case the autonomy of technology refers to a societal development independent of desiderata external to technology. That is, the internal desiderata of technology such as rationality, efficiency, efficacy, represent a normativeness of its own that casts off other norms, for example those of politics, ethics, religion. Technological developments are thus considered as an "irresistible" force not to be controlled by men. Human choices and societal values cannot give any direction to it That means that technology is autonomous in the sense that it generates

a lot of options without being asked. The functionality of these options compared to the available and already realized possibilities is the decisive factor for the realization of the new options. These technological possibilities are not an expression of human needs, rather they are realized in order to evoke human desires. Nobody knows at this moment which products will appear within ten years on the market as the so-called fulfillment of our wishes. The most vigorous argument in favor of the new product is that the available product is inferior to the technical specifications of the new one, as an investigation of the marketing of HDTV compared to the normal TV illustrates.

This train of thought is sharply contrasted with the idea that society is makable by the human subject and human action. Ellul deplores the situation in which the subject does not play any role and the technological imperative replaces the ethical imperative. Post modernist thinkers e.g. Axelos, Vatimo, etc., may agree with Ellul's analysis in the sense that the human subject does not give a substantial direction to the technological developments, but their appreciation is different This has led to the so-called postmodern reconsideration of the human subject. The subject does not hold the autonomous position, giving direction and sense to history, that the enlightenment attributed to it It is only one element in the technological network. Technology has become the subject of history. It takes the place of the human subject It is obvious that these postmodernist representatives cannot be accused of pessimism. In contrast with Ellul they emphasize an affirmative and liberating attitude towards technique; planetary technology is to be accepted and to be affirmed without reserve. The world is to be considered as play from this technological perspective. The idea that man is not responsible for it is understood as liberating.

In the above it is a matter of two different attitudes towards technology, on the one hand an alarming and distressing appreciation (Ellul), and on the other hand a post-modem and optimistic one. Neither of them provides a basis for policy. In both cases steering by politics is not opportune. Ellul rebels against this and the representatives of postmodernism I mentioned are completely satisfied with it.

In both, Ellul and postmodernism as well, one is confronted with the idea that everything is a product of human hands, whereas the grasp on the whole has been withdrawn from human beings. This is not an outright new view of history. Marx expresses similar thoughts as follows: "In the social production of their life men enter into definitive relations," and he calls these relations "indispensable and independent of their will." The same thought is to be found in Adam Smith, when he holds the conviction that steering of society was a prerogative for the invisible hand of the Almighty. A ruler who takes the direction that the society and its international environment are moving in may have the illusion that he actually rules. However, determining the direction and following the direction already in motion are obviously not the same.

I like to defend the view that the agreement on the role of the individual in the historical and societal process - argued by Ellul in the wake of Marx and Adam Smith - depends upon the distance one is prepared to take with regard to technological and societal developments. The greater the distance, the more plausible their point of view

is. At a great distance one only has an eye for the **collective** social reality developing independently of the **individual** reality. Personal decisions do not appear within this (Durkheimian) way of looking by Ellul. The distance and the perspective one chooses determine what one sees and discerns. At a distance technological development may be presented as the "one best way. "To put it another way: Ellul, Marx and Smith look at society from an outsider's perspective. Seen from this perspective there is an order on the level of the whole of society. The insider's perspective, that is the perspective of an actor within the society, discerns other phenomena and sees a different order.

It is social-constructivist research that takes a closer look and has, as consequence, obviously an eye for the personal and societal struggle that Ues at the basis of the definitive direction of technological development That research confines itself to the context of the developmental process of technical artifacts and shows that as long as the power struggle for the technical design has not been decided, the technological process may take - so to say - any direction. In short, there is no "one best way" of technology, if a closer look is given to it. This does not mean that determinism has been overcome, because the social-constructivist analyses articulate just the contingency of the developments and not their steerability. In the nineteenth century there were many designs of bicycles. Which kind of bicycle was emerging and which models of bicycles were pushed to the margin of history, was not to be decided in advance either on rational and technical or on social and cultural criteria. Many factors played their role chaotically and unexpectedly. According to the social-constructivist analysis the genealogy of the bicycle brings an unpredictable and uncontrollable process into the open. Drawing attention to the relevant social groups essential for the outcome of the technical process does not mean the rescue of human freedom from the technical autonomy. In this social-constructivist understanding, determinism of the technical is only exchanged for a broader set of determinant factors (i.e., of the technical, the social, the cultural, etc).

Ellul of course would not be impressed by this relatively new approach towards technological developments and in any case he would not accept it as a critique of his view on technical autonomy. He would comment that this new approach cannot claim that the outcome of the technical developments is a result of three or more equal factors - technical, social, cultural, etc., because in our time the technical has shaped the social and cultural. That means that requirements external to technique may only be **conceptually** separated. Technical values such as rationality, efficiency, efficacy have become our definitive cultural values.

What conclusions can we draw? The options — whether technical developments are either autonomous or steerable — are not adequate, (a) Developments are not autonomous to the extent they are socially and culturally embedded. Technique "in vitro" does not exist (b) However, the alternativeview that "technique is steerable" does not gain the upper hand either. There is of course no denying the fact that specific technical developments are to be initiated: one can produce atomic bombs, launch moon projects, start aids-research, make new varieties of plants, animals, maybe of

man. One can do a lot One can also stimulate existing developments or steer away from them, but the outcome and effects of initiations and stimulations are not predictable - technically, socially or culturally. Indeed, one can do a lot, but one is not in a position to play the invisible hand of the Almighty. That observation was a good theological insight on the part of Adam Smith — one worth remembering whenever we engage in technological planning.

Forum Intro: Essay Review

Hellfire and Lightning Rods: Liberating Science, Technology and Religion

by Frederick Ferre. Orbis Books, 1993, 223 pages.

Reviewed by Darrell J. Fasching, University of South Florida

Frederick Ferre's **Hellfire and Lightning Rods** is an important contribution to reflection upon religion, ethics and public policy in a technological civilization. Since this is the primary area of my own concerns, I read it with keen attention and considerable profit The title is based on a story that Ferre tells of his father, as a young boy, hearing a sermon. It seems fire preacher castigated his flock, made up of mostly farmers, for placing lightning rods on their bams. Their sin, apparently, was attempting to use technology to deflect the just wrath of God. Ferre takes this as a picturesque introduction to the conflict between religion and scientific technology.

We live in a time of critical transition, says Ferre — a time of "worlds coming to an end and new worlds being bom." With the advent of nuclear power and nuclear weapons, to pick the most dramatic example, the stakes involved in the conflict between the two different epistemic and valuational worldviews of science and religion have gotten much higher than they were in the days of Ferre's father's childhood. Even setting nuclear issues aside, time has run out on the modem world. Ferre argues that neither science nor religion have fully faced up to the coming transition to a post-modem world. The stakes are high because the mythos of modem technology promotes unlimited growth while the exponential growth of the population of the earth and its consumption of our limited resources is enough to guarantee that a post-modem world will impose limits upon us and require a world in homeostatic balance. The task Ferre sets himself is to suggest how the transition from a world of unlimited growth to a world of homeostatic balance can be brought about To this end he surveys the realms of both religion and science and identifies the resources of each that might be of assistance.

Ferre begins his book with an introductory chapter that explains the inevitability of having to make the transition to a post-modem world of limits. The remaining fifteen chapters are then organized in five parts dealing with (1) Technology and Religion, (2) Science and Ultimate Belief, (3) Myths and Modernity, (4) Toward a Multi-Mythic Organicism and (5) Organicism in Religion.

One of the strengths of Ferre's analysis is that he sees the conflict between science and religion, not as a conflict between the secular and the sacred but between two

sacred worldviews each of which has historically exhibited both strengths and weaknesses. Religion, he reminds us, is a way of valuing which shapes every aspect of life and expresses itself in stories and images which profoundly shape our sense of reality and our actions.

When the world of modem science, the world of Newton and Galileo, overtook the Medieval Christian organic worldview, it replaced it with a mechanistic worldview, replacing at the same time the ideal of absolute dependence upon God with the ideal of mastery of the world. This new worldview, which brought with it its own cosmic myths and stories, was treated with the same sacred seriousness as its predecessor. It also brought with it its own ritualistic ethical imperatives of impersonal objectivity, mastery and an eschatological hope for unlimited growth. But in a post-modem world of limited resources such myths and values can only lead to apocalyptic consequences.

In a post-modem world our faith in modem science and technology is called into question. A technology of ever-increasing production cannot save us. There are limits to growth. If we are to have a future both religion and science as sacral worldviews are going to have to undergo critique — mutual critique. There are elements of both traditional science and religion that are dysfunctional in a post-modem world and there are other elements that offer us hope. The materialistic and mechanistic reductionism of modem science which views the world with a disembodied objectivity that devalues life, both biological and human, is being replaced with a new model of science embodied in ecology. If the former could find no place for the human in its mechanistic world picture (e.g., the mind-body problem), the latter places the scientist and all human beings (indeed all beings) directly in world of mutual interdependence and teleological processes — a world which is truly an organic living body. If the mythological and metaphorical world of science must undergo a profound transition as we move into a post-modem world, so must religion, especially monotheistic religion. Its view of an all powerful, masculine, eternal and unchanging deity must give way to a more organic Whiteheadian or process view of God as embodied in the World (our mother earth) in a dialectical process of mutuality whereby God not only transforms the world but is transformed by it

Thus both science and religion must move toward a mutual transformation which will lead to a world that values a holistic ecological sense of global mutuality in which unlimited growth is replaced by a homeostatic creativity that respects the limits of our biological or bodily condition.

If there is to be a mutual interaction between science and religion that shapes a new post-modem world then religion must play an important role in shaping public policy. Religion does this, Ferre argues, by shaping the public mythos or metaphorical world picture that shapes our sense of reality and inspires our actions. Thus Ferre seeks to Christianize technology. If giving drink to the thirsty, he argues, is a Christian act then so is providing Ihe technology to purity a city's water system. What Christianity can provide is a "compassionate holism" to guide our selection and use of technique.

One of the strengths of Ferry's position lies in the fact that he does not ignore the fundamental pluralism of a post-modem world. Ours is not a time, her argues, that is likely to be transformed by a single synthetic vision or mythos. Christianity will not be in a position to transform the world all by itself. It will provide only one of many myths that will affect the shape of a post-modem world. Therefore, Ferre argues for a "multi-mythic organicism" — a kind of coalition of religious worldviews that promote an organic holism rooted in a respect for the ecological limits that sustain life on this planet Ferrd focuses mainly on Christianity and Judaism as central traditions for any transformation of Western consciousness but he recognizes that a larger dialogue must take place that includes Islam and the religions of Asia as well. Everyone of these traditions, before it was overpowered by the modem mythos of the world machine, offered humanity an organic worldview and a sense of living within a world of sacred limits. In a post-modem world the recovery of these diverse organic visions will play a significant role in shaping a mythos and ethos, and hence the public policy, that will bring into being a global civilization of mutuality and interdependence.

This is what is required if we are to avoid an apocalyptic future. And yet Ferre is not overly optimistic. The churches, the synagogues and tire religious communities of others around the world need to be agents of social change. Indeed they are admirably in a position to be just that, for they reach people across all boundaries of race and social status and move people to action by touching the deepestmythological levels of action and motivation. Unfortunately, says Ferre, our religious institutions are seldom truly engines of social change, they are far too conservative. They are largely held captive by the modem mythos and its values which makes religious people as much a part of the problem as they are part of the solution. Like Ellul, Ferre does not think we can socially engineer such transformations without destroying their authenticity. Such transformations must be true responses to our deepest religious experiences of transcendence. In the end, Ferre concludes only a miracle can bring about the needed transformation. On the one hand, this might seem unlikely, but on the other hand, religious life is rooted in miracles and profound religious transformations can occur just when you least expect them. And when (or should we say "if') that transformation comes, Ferre is convinced it will be ecological, feminist and liberative in its multi-mythic organic synergism.

Ferre's book is important and suggestive. It is important because it insightfully lays out the ways in which religion and scientific technology converge and diverge at the locus of the sacred and its mythic metaphors, and shows how the two can and should mutually transform each other. It is suggestive in its identification of the most promising point of convergence in the science of ecology with Whiteheadian process theism. Yet the suggestiveness of Ferre's book is also frustrating. At several points in the book he proposes possibilities without really making a case for them or exploring them in any depth. The shift from traditional theism to process theism is a case in point For those who might not be familiar with process thought not enough is really said to make the suggestion plausible. The relationship between religions in

multi-mythic organicism is also left tantalizingly vague. For a book about a global crisis not much is said about religions other than Judaism and Christianity. Given Ferre's ecological-process theism orientation, an exciting case could have been made for process theology as the hermeneutic link between Western theism and Asian religions, especially Buddhism.

For Ellul scholars there is one criticism ofFerre's book that cannot be avoided. Ferre critiques Ellul with an old and familiar accusation that Ellul is an unredeemed pessimist who can see no positive role for technology from a biblical perspective. Thus Ferri argues: "There is one serious defect in Ellul's position from a Christian standpoint There is no final word of good news, no balancing affirmation of redemption to match the stem warnings of judgment and sin... Ellul leaves us with despair, but that despair is not biblical" (52). A decade or two ago this argument would not have been surprising. It was in fact commonplace. But it is inexcusable now. For since then a lot of work has been done on Ellul that shows decisively that this is a misunderstanding of Ellul's position, although one that Ellul's hyperbolic style often invited. In fact, when Ferre advocates hope but warns that we should beware of false hope that leads to passive inaction (121-122) he is articulating a position that is identical to Ellul's.

Finally, Ferre argues for post-modem holistic organic metaphors over and against modem mechanistic world metaphors. The former, he argues, will provide the mythic-metaphorical foundation for public policy and a new world order that promotes mutuality, equality and interdependence. However, he makes this claim without seriously dealing with the propensity of organic metaphors to reinforce hierarchical inequality. I would venture to guess that throughout history organic thinking's primary function has been to mythologically reinforce social hierarchical stratification.

The "body" as a metaphor for the universe was used in ancient Hinduism to justify the caste system in India and the myth of the body was used in the deutero-Pauline letters of the Christian New Testament to justify the subordination of women to men (even as the body is ruled by the head). Organic thinking need not lead to such hierarchical thinking, as Paul's authentic letters indicate with their emphasis on many different but equal parts forming one body. For Paul, Christ is the body, not the head of the body. Nevertheless, if organic metaphors are to shape the narrative imagination that will govern public policy some differentiation of organic metaphors needs to be made and an account given of how we can tap these metaphors in traditional religions without reinforcing heierarchical inequalities. Finally, let me conclude by sayig that none of these criticisms in anyway takes away from the significant contribution Fend has made in this book. They only leave us waiting for the next installment in the productive career of an important scholar.

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Forum: Metaphors and Technology

New Metaphors for Technology

by Frederick Ferre, University of Georgia

(Chapter three of *Hell Fire and Lightning Rods,* reprinted with permission from Orbis Press)

What's in an image? A lot! That blunt reply is one of my main theses, as will become obvious through the remainder of this book. As we now circle deeper into an examination of the technological phenomenon, considering especially how practical technologies relate to the spiritual dimensions of life, it will help to consider a variety of alternate metaphors through which we may view our topic.

Technology as Mirror of Humanity

No human societies, however ancient or primitive, have existed without implements, techniques, or artifacts of some kind. At a minimum, every society shows through its technologies (whether these be hand axes or blowguns, dugout canoes or pottery vessels) what it **knows how** to do. Such knowledge does not, of course, entail any theoretical knowledge explaining why the techniques work. Practical knowledge without theory may be honed to a fine edge simply by trial and error, apprenticeship, and imitation. Fortunate discoveries of successful methods—how to obtain temperatures hot enough to fire pottery, what proportions of materials to use for desirable results, and the like—were preserved by oral tradition for millennia before the invention of writing. Such genuine practical knowledge preceded accounts of **why** these methods should be successful. Sometimes theories were generated, as in alchemy, to account for the powers of known techniques, but always, until recent years, technological knowledge led the way.

Even at the dawn of modem science, practical knowledge of glass working led the way to Galileo's telescope and Torricelli's barometer. Today, multiplied by many orders of magnitude, science would be literally unthinkable without its vast embodiment in the instrumentation provided by those who know how.

But priorities in leadership respecting practical and theoretical knowledge are now radically reversed for those who live in the modem era. Today **theoretical** knowledge suggests and shapes our practical surroundings. It was only after Heinrich Rudolf Hertz had conceptualized the electromagnetic wave, for example, that the successful

technologies of radio and television could follow. It was only after the famous linkage of matter and energy by Albert Einstein's "e=mc^2" that the awesome practical possibilities of nuclear power could be pursued.

Technology has always reflected the character of the human knowledge of its era. Now the materialized products of our civilization's knowledge surround us, wrapping us in a technosphere bom of the late marriage of theoretical with practical intelligence. But the situation is further complicated by the fact that in many ways practical intelligence, though not in the lead in the old way, still presses ahead of theory. Today the vast bulk even of "pure" science is big, expensive science, wholly dependent for its existence on the largesse of those-in government, in industry, and also in education—who may care more for practical fruit than for theoretical flowers. This is not always bad. Result-oriented research into the cure of disease or into better ways of feeding the hungry, for example, is not wicked. But it reminds us that to recognize technology as reflection of human knowledge is, even today, not to find the image of pure theory alone.

This is to say, of course, that technology reflects human values. When we look at our artifacts, we see implicit in them our hopes and fears, goals and aversions. If a culture fears bad weather, these negative evaluations will be seen in its housing and clothing technologies. If a culture values meat eating, its weapons and traps will reflect its preferences.

By the same token, the technologies of an era will reflect what is taken as licit, i.e., not taboo in the working value-system of the human agents whose knowledge and values are being brought to bear on daily life. A vegetarian society will manifest a different food technology from a society specializing in animal husbandry or the hunt A society taking for granted the legitimacy of judicial torture or the agonizing execution of witches will apply its knowledge to the refinement of deliberately pain-producing instruments and devices that would be unthinkable in other value contexts.

Perhaps it will be granted now that the collective technologies of an age reflect the dominant values and knowledge of the time. This need not in any way imply unanimity in valuing or uniform distribution in knowledge. On the contrary, the technologies of whips and chains in a slave society will be valuedfar differently by masters than by their slaves. Value conflicts in human societies are commonplace, and conflicts over technological embodiments of values must be expected. Likewise, knowledge is by no means uniformly distributed in many societies. The function of medieval guilds, for example, was to perpetuate **and guard** the practical secrets of a craft. Deliberate monopolization of knowledge or restrictions of access to it is a frequent feature in human societies, including our own.

Recognizing such knowledge restrictions and value conflicts helps to interpret much debate over technologies in our own time. Sometimes the case against one or another technology—or "technology in general," whatever that could mean—is put as though technology were something alien, inhuman, .demonic. But this cannot possibly be the case, since all technologies are reflections of human knowledge and values. The charge that technology is "inhuman," if intended literally, rests on a concep'tual confusion.

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It might more properly be said that the technology under attack is perceived as re-flecting values that are keenly disapproved of, or as reflecting knowledge of which the protester has been kept in alienating ignorance, or both. It might further mean that the protester has a view of "the human" that is too restricted and idealized One often finds the concept used normatively to rule out, e.g., torture and destruction, heedless-ness, suicidal mania, or the like, as "inhuman." Indeed there is much in our technologies that is **inhumane',** there is much that is foolish, self-destructive, tragic. But to this extent we see reflected, there in our technologies, inhumane, foolish, self-destructive, tragic aspects of the human creature. Our knowledge, lofty and admirable though it is, is yet imperfect. Our values, sometimes noble, are often short-sighted or worse. In our technology we see reflected the heights and the depths of what we are.

Technology as Lens of Humanity

A mirror is one metaphor for technology. A lens is another. A minor is meant to reflect accurately, both blemishes and beauty. A lens, in contrast, can both magnify for vision and function as burning glass for power. So technology can bring aspects of our knowledge and values into clarifying focus and can turn them into effective instruments for deliberate social change.

Picking up the lens metaphor for modem technology, we may see features of our current knowledge and values as never before.

Modem science is the leading supplier of the theoretical knowledge that has led the development of technology in our civilization for approximately two centuries. It is not surprising, therefore, that our current technologies hold a magnifying glass to the qualities of that knowledge. We see, for example, modem technologies as special-ized, devoted to solving specific aims and goals. Generating electricity is one such goal Cleaning grime out of clothes is another. Providing rapid, comfortable private trans-portation is still another. We are used to technologies that aim at a few clearly defined effects. This focuses the fact that the methods of reasoning, the qualities of thought that have gone into the development of such technologies are themselves *specialized, linear,* and *specific.* Modem science adopted from Descartes one of his most important rules: to conquer each problem separately by concentrating on solving each component part. This preference for the precision of specialization and analysis has consequently permeated our culture and its artifacts. But, magnified by the lens of contemporary technology, it is evident that just such "rifle-barrel vision" has resulted in technologies that, in producing their intended results, produce other, objectionable results as well. Enormously effective electric power plants, if coal fired, pollute the atmosphere, but if nuclear, threaten the environment with immensely dangerous wastes over immensely long time frames. Chemically engineered detergents clean our collars wonderfully well, but (to our culpable surprise) over-fertilize our water systems to the point of eutrophi-cation and environmental death. Private automobiles, brilliantly designed for comfort and speed, clog our cities, overwhelm our landscape with their required pavement, and

contribute to the death of forests and lakes through acid rain. Through the magnifying lens of contemporary technology's ambivalent successes—a train of specific triumphs purchased at the cost of disastrous "side effects," which our favored ways of thinking did not encourage us to anticipate-we recognize the latent defects in linear, specialized modes of knowledge.

Many important values of modern society are also sharply focused when seen through the lens of our technology. We see, for example, large segments of modern technological society in quest of quantified efficiencies: factories measured in numbers of units produced, in "bottom lines" of profits and endless growth. Behind much of technology's built-in drive for quantity we find, not surprisingly, the preference for the numerable over the qualitative at the root of modern scientific thought itself. Concerned by the quantitative goals of much dominant technology, however, poets and others have long warned of the dangers in downgrading imponderable considerations, moral and aesthetic, and of taking "more" as equivalent to "better." Likewise, we can vividly see in our powerful technologies, which attack the earth and nonhuman species as mere resources for our human comfort and exploitation, the anthropocentric bias that has led us to claim complete dominion over the world of nature. Our dominant values, like our characteristic modes of thinking, are brought to sharp and challenging focus by a thoughtful look through the lens technology provides.

If a lens can focus fight for illumination, it can also focus for energy. Philosophers who, through contemplating technology, have raised to new clarity pervasive modes of knowledge and habits of valuing are in a position not only to criticize but also to offer alternatives for constructive social change.

What would a mode of knowing be like that looked for understanding not primarily through dividing and conquering its questions but through setting them in fuller context? Can the science underlying our future technologies be simultaneously rigorous and holistic? The science of ecology may be a hopeful model. In order to understand its proper subject matter, living organisms and their complex interactions within complete environments, scientific ecology, while using analytical tools, must stress the primacy of wider and wider patterns. Technologies reflecting such scientific knowledge would avoid the rifle-barrel vision that ignores "side effects" as though unanticipated negative effects were not all along part of the full range of effects to be considered.

Since ecology deals with the health of ecosystems, it cannot avoid qualitative considerations, inasmuch as health itself is a normative concept Quantity plays its due part, but always a subordinate part, in such norm-guided thinking. Technologies designed with a stress on qualify above quantity would reflect a greater readiness to seek optimum rather than maximum results; they would lead to balance and sustainability.

Finally, scientific ecology includes the human race as one important species in the global biosphere, as one among many. Technologies reflecting such ecological knowledge and values could not be engineered in heedlessness of the other inhabitants of the globe. Our alienated modern civilization would evolve, through such thinking and valuing, into a civilization more intent on designing artifacts that express respect for

nature's wisdom and for including non-human interests as important practical goals. Such a civilization, holding before itself the mirror of new technologies that reflect such postmodern forms of knowledge and values, would behold a more beautiful human face than ours today.

Technology as Incarnate Knowledge

The metaphor of "incarnation," drawn from religion, may show still more aspects of technology. For example, the technologies of a culture embody—incamate-the state of *knowledge* within that culture. This need not be theoretical knowledge, on my understanding of "technology," since I grant the term to all practical implementations of intelligence, no matter how rudimentary or merely traditional in character.

Intelligence, however, must be an ingredient in anything properly classified as technological. This requirement rules out purely instinctive practical constructions—e.g., bee hives, birds' nests, and the like—that are imprinted or "hard-wired" into behavioral patterns regardless of changing circumstances. Still, intelligence need not be *theoretical* to be genuinely intelligent, i.e., to make appropriate responses to environmental circumstances by taking account of ideal possibilities and implementing them.

Characteristically, intelligence mediates behavior through *methods,* which are themselves nothing but sets of formal possibilities for disciplined action under specifiable circumstances; but a method, as a set of ideas for behaving, can be learned either by direct imitation or from theoretical principles. This merely means that some technologies may be transmitted by rote, rule of thumb, or apprenticeship (in a word, by *tradition),* while others may be transmitted by insight into broader abstractions from which specific methods may be deduced (in a word, by *theory).* In both cases, such technologies embody a kind of knowledge, whether it be "knowing how" or "knowing that." I do not, of course, suggest that "knowledge" of this sort entails *truth,* since effective methods may well be deduced from false theories. But in this historically relativized sense, the technologies of an era or a culture clearly embody its state of knowledge.

Technology as Incarnate Values

Second, the technologies of a culture embody its *values.* As we saw above, these need not be the "official" values of the culture, as expressed in ethical codes or religious *mythos.* But at a minimum, one can see from the methods and artifacts in use what sorts of means are not taboo, what sorts of ends are considered licit. One finds embodied in technology, in other words, the implemented values of a culture— the ones that override when all is said and done.

There is, of course, no technology without values. Knowledge alone, unharnessed to human valuing, would not result in technology any more than valuing alone, lacking the requisite knowledge, could find effective embodiment. Both are necessary conditions of the technological phenomenon. It would not be wrong, and it might be revealing, to

say that technology is the offspring in *praxis* of the mating of knowledge with value, of epistemology with axiology.

In our own culture, the epistemological base of technology has for the past two centuries been increasingly pervaded with theoretical intelligence, as modem science has fulfilled the Baconian dream of translating knowledge into a torrent of "helps" for the human condition. As this new knowledge has provided us with power to do hitherto undreamed of things, our actual values have been revealed in proportion to the vast expansion of possible actions open for our value-laden choices. The overriding, governing values that have emerged incarnate in our artifacts—in our assembly lines, our weapons, our means of transportation and amusement, and in all the other implementations of the modem industrial world-are often in tension with our traditional accounts of what our supreme values are supposed to be.

This clash between overriding value-systems is what gives the incamational approach to technology in fact its powerful religious dimension.' Religion is above all a domain of intense and comprehensive values. It expresses what is taken to be most worthy of worship, what is sacred. It is a community's way of organizing, expressing, relating, and reinforcing its most intense and comprehensive valuations. Thus, if in our culture the principal source for technological knowledge is science, and if our actual practices and institutions embody our society's basic values, then the technologies that surround us are nothing less than incarnations of characteristically modem science and religion.

Technology as "All Too Human"

One advantage of such an incamational metaphor for technology is its total elimination of the false dichotomy between the technical and the human that plagues much popular and academic thinking. At one level this dichotomy shows itself in the pigeon-holing of issues as either "scientific and technological," on the one hand, or as "humanistic," on the other. In many universities, there is hardly any communication across these invisible but impenetrable boundaries. On my own campus, the problem is vividly incarnated in brick and stone. The sciences are housed in ugly, efficient buildings on top of one treeless hill, while the humanities enjoy beautiful, if decaying, buildings on an ancient, shaded hilltop—with the football stadium wedged menacingly in the gulch between. The few faculty who want to fraternize with their opposite numbers must pay twice the normal fees for parking, though (if not afraid of walking) they can meet on neutral ground for lunch.

At another level this imagined dichotomy manifests itself in the confused sense that technology and science are somehow autonomous, inhuman, or anti-human forces. The image of the machine out of control, the robots ruling their designers, the dominance of tools over their makers, is a familiar (and in many ways compelling) one. Charlie Chaplin's frantic struggles to keep up with the production line and his entrapment in the feeding machine in *Modem Times,* along with the countless other variations on this

theme, from Fritz Lang's ravenous Moloch-engine in *Metropolis* to Stanley Kubrick's paranoid HAI., in *2001,* are all part of the cultural *mythos.*

The incarnational metaphor for technology need not obscure what these images suggest, that our technologies are fearsomely potent and can go wildly out of control. It merely makes it harder to say or think that technologies—even when raging loose and feeding on their designers—are in any way "alien" to the human. What we see when we see Chaplin trapped in the feeding machine, for example, is a victim in the clutches of incarnated human values yearning after maximized profits by eliminating the "inefficiencies" of the lunch hour. When the machine sputters and spills the soup, what we see are incarnate limitations of the current state of knowledge. The machine is finally rejected ("not practical"), not because of the greedy goals it incarnates, but because of its cognitive defects. What we see, to take another example, when we see the monstrous power plant in *Metropolis* devouring its workers, is the readiness of the rulers above to exploit without compunction the labor force below.

If technology is the incarnate blending of fundamental knowledge with fundamental values—the joint implementation of whatever is current science with whatever is functioning religion—then our appraisals of the goods and bads of technology will at root be appraisals not of something alien but of human virtue and vice. Science itself, after all, is fully a human activity . It is properly included among the liberal arts. Its intellectual roots are deep in the philosophical quest for understanding the universe. Its theories and models are in dynamic mutual relationship with metaphysical ideas and cultural presumptions; it is shot through with value considerations, from the accepted norms of good thinking to the approval of peer reviewers. If scientific values tend systematically to ignore the values of tenderness, love, or concern for the objects of investigation, then we discover that human beings do not always value as fully as they should. If scientific thinking tends characteristically to lose sight of important complexities by reducing frames of discourse, or to sunder vital relationships in the process of analysis, then we realize that human beings do not always think as well as they should. Similarly, if technologies distort human existence or exacerbate economic injustice by forcing obedience to unfeeling rhythms or by centralizing control over the goods of life, we learn how selfish, short-sighted, cruel, or heedless we human beings can be. And if our technologies destroy us in the end, we shall pro ve ho w foolish a creature was Homo sapiens.

The incarnational metaphor for technology would gently draw us to see that we should not blame alien forces for our ills, but look instead to ourselves. We find out who we are, in part, by the technologies that we allow and applaud.

But doom and blame need not be our last words. On the contrary, if all the artifacts around us could be re-seen, re-felt, re-thought as the embodiment of someone's intelligence and someone's values, the world would not only begin to look different to us, it might become more plastic to our considered hopes. What would a world be like in which the dominant methods and typical artifacts incarnate the values (say) of Christian charity or Jewish observance or Islamic faithfulness or Hindu inclusiveness

or Buddhist moderation or Taoist equilibrium? What sorts of things would we need to know in order really to incarnate such fundamental values in our implements? What sorts of artifacts would be unthinkable in such a world? What sorts would beg for invention and implementation?

There is no need to be utopian, however, to recognize the advantages of the incamational metaphor for technology. Its main benefit is to shift the emphasis away from the external hardware and toward the central significance of our technologies. As an image to assist criticism and assessment, it offers a way across the fact-value, science-humanities, technical-personal abyss. As a guide to a postmod-em-but still an inevitably technological-future, it may help us to concentrate more intelligent attention on clarifying those ideals that genuinely deserve incarnation.

Forum Response

Response to Frederick Ferre's "New Metaphors for Technology,"

by Robert S. Fortner, Calvin College

Perhaps the principal advantage of an incamational image of technology is that it forces us to take account of the human condition Ferre argues that the incarnational metaphor eliminates "the false dichotomy between the technical and the human that plagues much popular and academic thinking." However, I think the advantage of such a metaphor is not what it eliminates but what it affirms: the Janus-like aspect of the human condition. The human condition, as I see it, is one that itself is both good and evil On the one hand, human beings are wonderfully creative: they mimic God's creative act itself, discovering, inventing, applying, and using technology to better the physical conditions of humankind. On the other hand they also demonstrate demonic qualities: denying, obfuscating, rationalizing, misappropriating and misusing technology, often thereby worsening humankind's lot

From this perspective, which I assume Ferre shares at least to a degree, an incamational metaphor for technology forces us to see technology for what it is-both benefactor and crippier of the environment, health, human relationships, material well-being, and ethical sensibility. To the extent that human beings carry good and evil within them, whatever they create can be expected to exhibit such qualities. So Ferre is right in asserting that a false dichotomy may be thus exposed. I suspect, however, that this exposure will come more obviously from baring the human being for what s/he is and arguing from there. Anything such flawed creatures create, not only technologically, but philosophically, politically, economically, culturally, and morally, will likewise be defective. After all, the human being is responsible for spoiling the creation by choosing to defy God's clear instructions.

It is not the overall theme of Ferre's essay, then, that I find troubling. Rather it is his method of proof, particularly the implications of his treatment of culture and value. He argues that "technology reflects human values. When we look at our artifacts, we see implicit in them our hopes and fears, goals and aversions. If a culture fears bad weather, these negative evaluations will be seen in its housing and clothing technologies. If a culture values meat eating, its weapons and traps will reflect its preferences." The argument that proceeds from this is analogic. "By the same token," he says, the technologies of an era will reflect what is taken as licit, i.e., not taboo in

the working value-system of the human agents whose knowledge and values are being brought to bear on daily life."

The difficulties here are three-fold. The first is the overly-restric-tive view of culture and the assumptions about cultural creation. Culture is not a tangible being or material object that fears or values. It is not something-as Ferrd's examples suggest-that technologists or politicians create so that weapons or traps, housing or clothing, can reflect that creative act He is more on target when he says that what is licit is that which is not taboo (defining what is by what it is not), but even this has limited utility. Cultures are more complex and unruly creations where millions of people are making choices about what to wear, eat, observe or listen to, how to treat one another, how to express themselves in the arts, how much to pay for the art created, what sort of religions to create or maintain, how to raise children, fund education, or practice politics. All participate in cultural creation, maintenance or decay.

Modem cultures are cauldrons of nearly endless possibility ; they are full of contradictions. I increasingly see cars in Michigan with dual bumper stickers: "Choose Life" and the logo of theNational Rifle Association. I cannot put these two commitments together. Do we save the unborn urban fetus, I've asked myself, so he can be gunned down in the streets when he's fourteen? How is it possible that the very people who demand that the Supreme Court decision guaranteeing abortion under the "most basic right" of privacy be overturned— thus nullifying a declared civil liberty-can, on the same bumper, support an organization that itself demands absolute protection of another civil liberty—the right to bear arms-despite the fact that the Supreme Court has declared that the fourth amendment has no application beyond the right of the states to control a militia? How can a life that is so important before birth have so little value afterwards? Why should urban youths have the right to bear assault weapons to gun down those who were "saved" in the womb? This is but one cultural contradiction in our society, but both positions are equally "licit," as is the right to hold positions that others (in this case, me) find utter nonsense.

In reality modem culture disallows little, makes few activities illicit There are extenuating circumstances that excuse murder, rape, burglary, or other heinous crimes. The debate about the sociological reasons for this—and the application of law to those of different races or financial capability—continues. As we are politically pluralistic we are culturally pluralistic: the society we have constructed is one dependent on the operations of a political process dependent on public and expert opinion, economic interests, and partisan compromise or obstruction. To anchor one's argument on such a fragile foundation thus seems *to me* rather too ambitious.

The second problem is a confusion between the *human* and the *humane*. Ferre tells us that it "cannot possibly be the case" that technology is "something alien, inhuman, demonic" because "all technologies are reflections of human knowledge and values." Technology cannot be *inhuman* because it is so reflective of humankind. He admits, however, that technology may be *inhumane:* "foolish, self-destructive, tragic" just as there is much about human creatures that is likewise "inhumane, foolish, self-

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destructive, tragic . . . ." Again, I want to admit that this may be true, but I dare not Whether we like to admit it or not, human beings do commit *inhuman* acts. Hitler's annihilation of Jews, gypsies, Slovaks, and dissident Christians was not merely *inhumane,* it was also *inhuman.* I think Fend has confused ends with means. It seems to me that genocide—whether practiced by the Nazis, Stalin, the Khmer Rouge, Somali warlords, Serbs, or Hutus-is inhuman. So is slavery, infanticide, cannibalism, or ritual sacrifices. These are ends: all deny humankind's most basic and necessarily inviolate ontological status as creatures made in the image of God.

We also know that some acts are more inhumane than others: when executions are performed, those that increase human suffering are more inhumane than those that do not When wars are conducted using poison gas, napalm, flesh-shredding anti-personnel devices, or other indiscriminate weapons, we judge them more harshly than when more "precise" or "clean" weapons are used. There are international conventions aimed at controlling many indiscriminate weapons. The use of torture or imprisonment to stamp out insurrection or political dissent is likewise inhumane and emerges from the dark side of human nature.

I'll admit that I struggle with this distinction when I teach ethics. My students, I think, are actually better (or quicker, at least) at seeing the inhumane than they are the inhuman. They can imagine the pain inflicted by practices that damage the body or the mind. They have more trouble with acts that deny the inviolability of the soul, or, to put it differently, that wound or deny God by degrading those made to reflect his image. That is not to say that students deny the evil of Nazism, but that, short of such obvious manifestations of inhumanity, they can't see how they could be judged inhuman. Cruelty they recognize (they see the methods), but denial of ontological status through racism or sexism (gentler versions of "master race" theology) are more elusive.

Based on my own understanding of this distinction, however, I would quarrel with Fore's claim that humankind could not possibly create something inhuman. I think we do it all too frequently. We are all too prone to turn our backs on the "good" creation and embrace fire demonic. Thus we can certainly create what is alien, inhuman, and demonic: whether law, attitude, or technology.

My third objection has to do with Ferre's use of religion. This comes in his section on "Technology as Incarnate Values." I'd like to unpack this section rather more carefully than the others to which I have objected. He begins with the statement that technology need not embody the "official" values of *a* culture, "as expressed in ethical codes or religious *mythos."* But this is a tautological argument Ferre claims that technology must be seen as an embodiment of cultural values (as quoted earlier). Buthere he does not demand that the values so embodied are "official" This leaves us with no grounds to deny the embodiment since it can always neatly be argued that disagreements about whether a technology emerges from a culture's values are merely differences in emphasis or degree. One person sees instrumental values where another would demand demonstration of the power of those values in the culture. Since all cultures are (as

argued earlier) complex and pluralistic, this provides us with little assistance. If we cannot demand that technology emerge from a culture's "official" values to accept it as a legitimate manifestation of that culture's commitments, then any technology can emerge from any culture at any time and no one would have the right to question its legitimacy or "licitness."

But this is not all. Technology, Ferrd then continues, embodies a culture's "implemented values," those "that override when all is said and done." This actually complicates the tautology. Now whatever values a technology embodies functionally override whatever "official" values the culture may espouse. The "official" values thus recede in significance, allowing the technologist to ignore or trample them underfoot in the name of more important implemented values. If nuclear power facilities provide an illusion of economic value, despite their potential threat to the environment or their real costs of construction, maintenance, decommissioning, and storage of spent fuel, and the society allows itself to be deluded by illusion, or remains ignorant of the true economic and environmental costs, then illusion makes whatever the "real"or official values of the culture are counterfeit Objecting to such a circumstance would be nonsense, since implemented values override even the official, widely-accepted, sanctioned cultural values of the society. Discourses on values in such situations are exercises in futility: the issues are too illusive for reasoned conversation.

And there is yet a third dimension to this exercise. Ferri tells us that "It would not be wrong, and it might be revealing, to say that technology is the offspring in *praxis* of the mating of knowledge with value, of epistemology with axiology." Since, as he again reiterates earlier in this paragraph, "there is... no technology without values," we are now even another step removed from understanding what those implemented values are. We cannot demand that technology represent the official values of a culture; neither can we demand that whatever values it does embody be clear in its operation—because these values may be camouflaged by their mating with knowledge. DNA tests are required to determine technology's parentage.

Despite the complexity introduced here in the effort to establish technology as incamational, and the increasingly tenuous connections demanded between technology and what it incarnates, Ferre leaves us with a final demand in this section: "the technologies that surround us are nothing less than incarnations of characteristically modem science and religion." This seems to me an entirely too facile use of "religion."

People do not practice their religions identically. The varieties of religious experience in the Protestant tradition alone are staggering.

Some within this tradition are technological triumphalists: the purpose of any technology is to spread the Gospel and hasten the second coming. Others are technological quasi-luddites, such as the Amish Still others are suspicious about the role of technology threatening the autonomy of religious life. Many in the "third way" churches (Mennonites, Brethren, Quakers) take this position. Calvinists affirm technology as a manifestation of God's goodness, but question its application by humans all too prone to deny God in their prideful quest for power, privilege, and wealth. Still others are

dualists. There is simply too rich a set of responses within even this sector of "religion" to speak of a single set of characteristics that are incarnated in technology.

Finally, insofar as this section is concerned, I wish to address the implications of that final statement Although Ferre has told us that technology embodies values, and that these values are not necessarily the official values of a culture, but are 1he off-spring of epistemology and axiology, he would now claim that they are incarnations of "characteristically modem science and religion." Whatever values technology embodies, in other words, must be Seen as incamational of the values of our science and religioa It matters not what the official values of science or religion are, those embodied by technology override them, are the true incarnations of their values.

This, it seems to me, cedes to technology rather too much. Whatever is incarnate in our technology becomes, under this claim, what we worship. We may claim to worship God, Yahweh, Buddha, or Allah, to follow their commands or think using the worldview of their scriptures, but it is in technology that we see what is truly worthy of our attention. It is in technology that we recognize what we value, it is in technology that we demonstrate our commitments and construct our idols. In the end, I suppose we incarnate ourselves in technology and thus worship our own being. Religion is false consciousness.

I think this is where Ferre's analysis takes us, although I know he does not see it that way. His own claims are more modest: the incamational metaphor "merely makes it harder to say or think that technologies—even when raging loose and feeding on their designers–are in any way 'alien' to the human." I would argue that it makes it impossible and must thus be rejected, for humans can-and have-acted in ways alien to their own humanness.

I began this essay saying that I found the incamational metaphor Ferre constructs a useful one. Yet I have taken issue with it at every turn. What, then, is our difference? I think it is our respective starting points. I see humankind as a creature designed to act in particular ways: a creature grateful to its creator for life and worshipfill of all that the creator made. Each of us then carries what Solzhenitsyn said is a heart cleft into good and evil portions, a heart created good but darkened and atrophied by human choice. So, while I agree that technology incarnates what we are, I disagree that we are, *ipso facto,* unable to claim technology to be alien or inhuman. Humankind, in my mind, is perfectly capable of producing both the inhuman and inhumane. In so doing it may even create artifacts that are alien to all that it claims-and truly believes—it values. Human beings can be committed to, and act on, contradictions. They can construct technologies that would destroy them, perhaps the ultimate denial of God's intentions for them. They can degrade one another, hate one another, and do despicable evil to one another. And at every turn, with every new act of degradation, hatred, genocide, or technological "advance," they take one step further away from God.

As I read Ferrd I find him wanting to maintain a Consistency in his evaluation ofhumankind that I do not find compelling given our sordid history. I wish he were right that we were incapable of producing what is alien to our being, of making what

is inhuman. And, while I certainly am no Luddite, I do think Mary Shelley's vision of what we are capable of-either individually or collectively-is perhaps more true than we would like to believe. Frankenstein perhaps is possible, despite our recognition that creating such a monster might violate every reasonable expression of human value, religious sentiment, or even scientific ethic. I do not think we should lose sight of that possibility even in arguing for a new metaphor to understand technology.

Language and Technology: A Reply to Robert S. Fortner

by Frederick Ferre

I appreciate Robert Fortner's expression of sympathetic understanding for the overall themes in my "New Metaphors for Technology." As he summarizes his main point of agreement it is indeed central: he shares my sense of the interweaving of good and evil in the character of whatever we flawed human creatures create.

The three difficulties he then thoughtfully expounds are important but less central. In fact I suspect that we agree even more than he realizes. Some of the apparent problems he raises are, I believe, more due to differences in our use of language than to our sense of the realities that challenge us.

His first difficulty rests what he detects as my seeming to treat culture as a too-simple "something." This surprises me, since I went to some lengths stating my view that the values and knowledge (thus the technologies) found within cultures are by no means simple or harmonious. For example, I contrast the values of the slave class within a slave culture with the master class, and point to the different valuations of whip and thumbscrew technologies by these respective groups within a single social order.

I hope I do not reify "culture" as a too-simple phenomenon when I write about "a vegetarian society" or "a society taking for granted the legitimacy of judicial torture." If I seem to, I can assure Fortner that this was just a way of speaking—exactly in the spirit of his way of speaking about "us" (humankind) at the end ofhis discussion. I realize (and my examples of conflict within a culture should make this clear) that such ways of speaking do not preclude variety within the class drawn together by a common noun. There doubtless will be meat-eaters in vegetarian societies, just as there are devoted vegetarians in our dominantly meat-eating culture. But one can still use the noun "culture" modified by largely justified adjectives. Our own culture is remarkably pluralistic (as Fortner rightly points out); but this is something that can be said truthfully *about our culture.* Further, enculturation is an important phenomenon. As those who have tried to reform the "institutional press," for example, of any fraternity-dominated college campus will know, values are not delivered at the retail level alone. Individuals participate, as Fortner says, "in cultural creation, maintenance, or decay"; but, no less importantly, cultures— complex as they are-shape individuals too.

Fortner's second difficulty rests on my recommendation, which follows from the "mirror" metaphor, that we should see technology as a reflection of the "human," for

better or for worse. He prefers a different use of the word "human" in which a normative commitment prevents the very worst we do from being called "human" behavior at all. I recognize his preference, which is more intelligible and more frequent than his students seem to think. It is quite possible to define the "human" in this normative way, giving it what is sometimes called a "persuasive definition"; itmay even make one feel better about being human oneself if one can take the worst atrocities of our species and thrust them outside the pale of human conduct

I prefer the other usage of "human"-language. Fortner's normative definition rests uneasily on an elaborate theory of ontological status. It requires, among other things, a distinction between "true" humanity and "actual" humanity that many find foggy. Even if one agrees theologically with the ontological status implied, including the elusive "Image of God" doctrine, it becomes difficult and arbitrary to draw the line between acts that are "merely" *inhumane* and those that slide over into the supposedly *inhuman.* Where does the "awful" become the "super-awful"? I suspect there is no genuine line at all, but only a vague but strongly felt sliding scale of horror, depending on many (culturally conditioned) factors.

I prefer a no-nonsense empirical approach in which even the most awful horrors, if done by humans, are indicators of what depths humans can sink to. Certainly one popular use of words is to call these acts "inhuman"; but if Fortner really understands some objective distinction separating such a linguistic policy from the alternative practice that condemns these same acts as unspeakably cruel, debased, and horrifyingly "inhumane," he has not communicated it in his remarks.

Finally, Fortner's third difficulty rests on different linguistic recommendations for using the words "values" and "religion." He bridles atmy statement that "technology need not embody the 'official' values of a culture. "But what I mean is nothing strange and certainly nothing tautological.

The "official" values of a culture are expressed through the recognized religions and moral codes of that culture. How often clergy of those recognized religions decry the fact that the behavior of their congregants fails to embody the values supported in the faith whose creeds they mouth! Even Deacons may not be turning the other cheek; even Elders may not be selling all and giving to the poor, even Sunday School teachers may not be forgiving "seventy times seven." The point is: to clarify one's real or effective values one should look to one's actual expenditures of time and effort and money.

That is the simple point I am making here. In a culture that calls itself Christian, even the Christians may not be heeding the call to "behold the lilies of the field," but rather heeding the imperatives of the automobile to pave those fields for highways and parking lots (around churches!). This does not mean that their actual, effective values in rejecting alternatives to the automobile culture should escape critique. On the contrary. To clarify the real values incarnated in a technology is to raise them to the level of awareness where effective ethical and religious critique becomes possible.

As to the meaning of "religion," I confess that we probably really do differ on the use of this term. I have defined the word so often in my writings over the last thirty years

that I did not in this little chapter define it again but simply used it in the sense of "most intense and comprehensive valuing" that I have defended for so long. On my definition there is nothing shocking about a religious position's involving "false consciousness." There are many expressions of religion, not all of them good, kind, enlightened, or pure. Idolatry is a religious phenomenon steeped in false consciousness. The alternative to acknowledging this is to define "religion" in a normative way that assures the exclusion of whatever we do not like. On my understanding of "religion," we can confront, in the name of religion, what is false in *bad* religions without denying that they are *truly* religions. Again, as in the case of "human," I find myself preferring a no-nonsense, take-the-bitter-with-the-sweet use of language over Ihe employment of persuasive definitions that in the short run flatter the definiendum but make subsequent distinctions of thought harder to sustain.

The disagreements between my critic and myself are as I see it mainly differences of preference over the use of key terms. Even his concluding invocation of Frankenstein seems to fit this pattern. I wholly agree that "Frankenstein"-technology happens. What we need to remember is that the name "Frankenstein" refers to the good *Doctor* Frankenstein, not to his monster. Well meaning Frankensteins have populated our world with offspring they subsequently would like to disown, like Mary Shelley's horrified Doctor. Their monstrous products go on to have a dynamic of their own, as I pointed out by my own examples of technology gone wildly out of control. But this does not mean that even these horrors are other than human products. Thus my suggested metaphors will help if they can save us from falling into defensive attitudes of denial toward our terrible mistakes, from rejecting our responsibility to try to repair the damage, and from soothing our human self-love by putting the blame "elsewhere."

Forum Dialogue

A Response to Timothy Casey's Review of: Technique, Discourse and Consciousness: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jacques Ellul

by David Lovekin

In my book, *Technique, Discourse, and Consciousness: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jacques Ellul* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1991), I advance my interpretation of Ellul in ways that reflect my readings of Cassirer and Hegel, with Vico's influence acknowledged in the preface and present as inspiration.. I do not argue these interpretations. I do not set Cassirer, Hegel, and Ellul against each other to determine a winner. Comparison studies of other figures with Ellul such as Marx, Kierkegaard, Barth, and Mumford were available. I presented an Ellul hitherto unnoticed, an Ellul who could be read philosophically and independently from his theological involvements. Typically, Ellul's readers founder over theological issues. I present a philosophical reading that does not exclude theology but which takes up larger concerns. I see Ellul, Cassirer, and Hegel as fellow travelers, as philosophers of culture.

My preface begins with the following questions: "(1) In what sense does Ellul have a philosophy of technology? (2) What does Ellul mean by technology? (3) What is Ellul's answer to the problems posed by technique in the contemporary age?"(12).

My "Introduction" displays Ellul's philosophical owl ranging over the twilight of a Cartesian world overtaken by conceptual processes and procedures, a world that Descartes could only have imagined but a world much extendedfrom methods seeking the clear and distinct. In the *Discourse on Method* Descartes announced that he would set aside the fables and histories of the past, exotic and distracting stories, for example, like those of a Don Quixote whose world was turned upside down by books, in a search for a less extravagant truth that could be written in the language of Lower Brittany, by which I assume he meant a language replete of metaphor. Descartes imagined that if the city of knowledge could be tom down and rebuilt using the plumb line of reason, a city built on the edifice of certainty would arise. Descartes wished to banish the *"mauvais genie,"* the "evil genius," and to move the mind face to face with truth itself, to move judgment together with perception in a communication perfectly adequate to the task.

Ellul's genius sees technique as this manifestation of Cartesian intention in the development of symbols and technical phenomena. Descartes hoped to collapse the distance between mind and its object with a language drawn along mathematical lines in accordance with the Aristotelian laws of thought, where A could not be both A and not A at the same time. Descartes, from his window in the *Meditations,* looked out on the street below and saw men passing by and then realized that he had not seen them but that he had made a judgement They could be hats and cloaks covering automata, he reasoned. Were they men or not men?(21) This is the kind of gap between sensation and reason, between the mind and the body that Descartes wished to close with a clear and distinctly centered methodology.

A similar gap yawns between technical intention and the world, Ellul realizes. For example, in the task ofchopping trees with an axe, one is limited by one's bodily abilities, by the hardness of the wood, and by a variety of diversionary thoughts that might take the tool-user from the task at hand, from what Ellul calls the technical operation. The technical phenomenon appears, an epistemologically-laden idea, with consciousness and judgment, with the concern to *apply* a mathematics-like method to accomplish a task to achieve absolute efficiency. The chain saw or the bulldozer, a more extreme application, may be the result Like Cartesian intention, the concern is to produce identities without differences, to produce the "one best way" of accomplishing the task. With the bulldozer all humans can cut the forest in the same way because it is the device that does the cutting; the human becomes a disembodied intention or, more accurately, Ihe bulldozer is the embodiment of that intention.

Of course, the "one best way," the absolutely efficient, never comes, but the intention to rationalize all processes, all mind-body interactions, is unceasing. Difference, otherness of all kinds, is the obstacle in the march toward the truth. I then indicate that Hegel's notion of a bad infinity, of a *Schlecht-Unendliche,* characterizes technical intention as Ellul understands it A bad infinity is ah infinity that is present only as the next moment that never comes or present in the denial of the totality of finitude, i.e. in the claim that the infinite is not any finite thing, a claim that is at bottom skeptical. Thus, a bad infinity leads to the necessary linking of all things in a system of purely internal relations established in the face of utter meaninglessness, the second sense of the bad infinity. Ellul wants an infinite that is both present and absent in all relations(24-25).

Then, in chapter one, "Ellul and the Critics," I show that Ellul's readers do not understand these aspects of technical intention that underlie his social analyses. And, further, they do not connect this sense of technical logic to his biblical exegeses. A theory of the symbol is required.

Descartes did not haphazardly single out myths and fables in his attempts to unify science, philosophy, and theology. The fable, the parable, the myth, do not obey an Aristotelian logic. Ellul understands the implications of technical, Cartesian logic for Biblical literature, for symbols that address the Wholly Other. For technical logic God could not be "three in one," the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost Such paradox

is necessary, for Ellul: God is both inside and outside of His creation, which occurred once perfectly and yet continually occurs, truths guaranteed to drive the Cartesian mind mad. The symbol is the form of discourse that enables and even requires these paradoxes to occur the symbol, the metaphor, establishes relations of identity in difference, where difference remains. God is understood in all things and yet as apart from all things: both of these senses are required by God as a symbol. Technique must challenge such a God to make meaning absolutely immanent, to make technique the sacred itself.

Ellul distinguishes between *Le Vrai,* the True, and *Le Reel,* the Real, to clarify his understanding of the symbol, which is also expressed in the relationship between the image and the word. The True is the domain that surrounds—the domain of the Wholly Other–and gives meaning to the Real, to the immanent, to that which is beforeone. TheTrueiswhatthemetaphorseeks. The metaphor, what Ellul calls the word, is the symbol in which two seemingly contradictory meanings may repose, like the notion of a loving and a judging God. The Real is the realm of the image, the clear and distinct(48-49). Technical logic attempts to reduce the word to the image; to reduce the ambiguous and uncertain to the clear and distinct; to reduce the spontaneous and bodily technical operation to the conceptual technical phenomenon.

In chapter two, "Ellul and the Problem of a Philosophy of Technology," I work around the metaphor of Kleist's *Uber das Marionet-tentheater* (1908), about which Ellul and Cassirer had decided views(68-81.) Although they are not reading each other, a specific problem is in the European air, which will of course translate into two world wars of immense proportion: the problem is of the relationship between human culture, symbolic creation, moral responsibility, and the world and cosmological order. Although Ellul wants to deny the perspective of Absolute Idealism, a boring reading of Hegelian philosophy, he is no realist either and is often appreciative of Hegel's notion of the dialectic. Neither the world (after the Fall) nor the human self are simply givens. The human is involved in a process of self creation and world creation at once through symbolic processes. The symbol is an extension from the human just as the human is an extension of the symbol Both are and are not each other, an essential dialectical tension which cannot be collapsed, as in fact technique seeks to do. The infinite, the goal of the symbol always exceeds the grasp although consciousness may forget this. *Lethotechny,* a forgetting that results from the proliferation of technical phenomena, sets in (98).

In the modem age, in the technological city built to the specification of the plumb line of reason, we, like puppets, hang from the device. I show, then, how the *Philosophie der Technik* tradition begun in the writingsofneo-HegelianEmstKapp(1977) and extended by the work of Ernst Cassirer brackets and frames an Ellul hitherto unread.

On my reading of Ellul, the mind never fully makes the world, which it amplifies and enlarges; the mind's making requires the givenness of the object of the other. For example, thinking about dogs is not the same thing as thinking dogs, what the

Aristotelian god would do. And yet technique forgets its limitations in relation to an Wholly Other. In the wake of this forgetting the "system" of technique ensues.

A clear image of the technical system, which I discussed in great detail in chapter five, "The Technological Phenomenon and the Technological System," could be found in attempts at disease control in Borneo in 1973, attempts which increasingly abound. Insecticides were used to control malaria. These insecticides accumulated in cockroaches that became resistant to the insecticides. Geckoes that fed on these insects became slothful and fell prey to cats, which died of this indirect poisoning. Rats multiplied and threatened a plague. The army parachuted in cats. The logic of technique is the logic of the Borneo cat toss, where the othernesses of nature are taken up by the technical system, which, as a form of consciousness becomes unconscious. Technique sets out to conquer disease, for example, and then must contend with the disease it has created or the disease that it has directed. The irony thatempowersEllul'saccountrestsultimately in the reality that is not made but which nonetheless makes its appearance in the process of making, like Peirce's category of*secondness,* which might reinstate memory, the humanities' hope in response to technique.

The symbol that Ellul understands respects and requires otherness. Cervantes needed his audience. The dog needs a name. The certain, what Ellul calls the realm of the image, is always *there,* by definition. The certain as a reference is always needed. Technique, however, denies the importance of the outside element, the perspective that surrounds and locates. In its march toward certainty, tire clich6 is produced, the discourse of technique that I examine in my last chapter. The word cliche originally referred to the eighteenth century printer's dab and also was related to "cliquer," to the sound produced. Thus the word cliche was originally a metaphor(207). Words in the technical society go the way of tools, the technical operation that is subsumed in conceptualization. The meanings of words became merely other words, a situation that made deconstructionism possible, and ironically, some of its critics. Frederic Jameson attacked deconstructionism in *The Prison House of Language* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1972). The epigram was attributed to Nietzsche: "We have to cease to think if we refuse to do it in the prison-house of language..."(208-209). Jameson, whom I telephoned, was at first unsure where he had found the quote; later he said that he had found it in "some essay of Erich Heller's." I tracked the essay to Heller's "Wittgenstein andNietzsche" *(The Artists's Journey into the Interior,* New York & London: Harcourt, Brace, Jbvanovich, 1976, p. 219) in which he offered a poetic translation of a line in Nietzsche's *Der Wille zur Macht. "Zwange" was* used to mean "constraint," which Heller turned into "prisonhouse." The question is not whether or not the translation is good; the question is: what has happened to the original?

Granted, the human is never before the "original" in any absolute sense. The word is never fully adequate, a notion that runs through the writings of Cassirer, Hegel, Ellul, and Vico. The notion of the original is, nonetheless, fire spirit's goal. I knew my book would never fully realize Ellul's thought, but I was interested in his reaction to an earlier draft of the work. Here is a translation ofEllul's letterof March 22,1987:

Pardon my writing to you in my own hand and in French. I received your book in good time. I haven't read it all, because I have little worktime available, but everything I read appeared to me quite excellent and the plan you have chosen is quite interesting. Of course there remain many things in my biography you could not know. But everything that you said is exact and well-put in relation to my books. I greatly appreciated your chapter-The Cliche as Consciousness.

I do not claim on the principle of authority to have presented the true Ellul, but I do believe I have offered an interesting Ellul; apparently Ellul agrees. Clearly, Ellul puts his case in a thoroughly Christian context; I do not Clearly Ellul's emphasis is not philosophical not avowedly in the *Kulturphilosophie* tradition. But, what could be wrong in giving such a reading if it worked, if it opened Ellul up to a greater readership, and if it was done with respect?

My reading has not pleased reviewer Timothy Casey in *The Ellul Forum,* 10,1993,13-14. Casey acknowledged my book to be "provocative" (13) but then he appears to have dismissed it because the book was devoid of fully developed argument,(14), because it was written in what he called a dense style that"...seems to revel in inconsistency and ambiguity"(14), and because I did not maintain a critical distance on Ellul's thought(14). I am apparently trapped with Ellul in a kind of Cartesianism that sets subject over against object (13-14). Further, I have put religion aside: "Lovekin's secularism is particularly disturbing since he provides no philosophical counterpart to Christianity that can underpin an authentic transcendence of the technological society or provide a significant Wholly Other that can serve as the *telos of* the transcendence"(14).

Mr. Casey is disturbed, "maddened" even (14), by my decision to treat the critics as I did—not to argue with them but to show that their positions were not mine, to show that they neglected the whole of Ellul's thought He objected, apparently, to my decision to briefly present my own view of Ellul, which I then balance against these other readings. My tone was defensive, he' said (14); and I only gave a "perfunctory" criticism ofEllul's thought in my last chapter. And in the chapter "Ellul and the Problem of a Philosophy of Technology," Casey wrote:"...Lovekin omits any reference to Marx, Heidegger or Lewis Mumford, key figures in anybody's history of the philosophy of technology"(14).

I find Mr. Casey's remarks interesting on a number of counts. He wanted me to argue, to write a book with a history of the philosophy of technology that "anybody" would write, the kind of book I stated clearly that I would not write. I added "perfunctory" criticisms of Ellul's work in my last chapter to show how easy they were to make (Lovekin, 213-214). Analysis is much easier than synthesis. He disliked my stylistic decision to put my view against the critics, which I did to show the importance of my view, to show that it was not "everybody's" -view. And, in the bargain, he upbraided me as a "shrewd"(14), "devotee,"(14), *ad hominem* if I have ever heard such. He called me "secular" as wdl(14) without explaining how this fit with my apparent posture of devotee.

He argued that I gave little attention to the Cartesianism in Ellul's, Hegel's, and Cassirer's thought, although he allowed that I was right to point "to Descartes' elevation of method as the herald of the technical phenomenon" (14). He, nonetheless, rankled at my lack of argument and at my "ambiguities." So, I was both Cartesian and not Cartesian enough; I was shrewd and secular but also a devotee. I think my worst crime for Casey was, however, that I did not write the book that he had wished me to write. My reading was not his.

Here is Casey's example of my "ambiguous" style: *"La technique* is a mentality within society; it is the attitude of society toward technique" (Lovekin, 68; Casey, 14). This sentence, broken from context, required the reader to follow *a* fairly difficult point technique is a mentality within society that, atthepointoftechnical "autonomy," threatens to become the society itself. When technical mentality becomes autonomous, it is no longer conscious of itself as a form of consciousness. Technique is, from the Ellulian standpoint, a part of society, but from technique's perspective, that part becomes the whole, is the whole. I tried to avoid the fallacies of composition and division; the part must not be the whole and the whole must not be the part Technique becomes the sacred when it becomes the necessary. One symptom of technical autonomy is the desire always for a solution or the suggestion that the Wholly Other could ever be put to page, what Casey seems to desire from me.

Casey has confused the book he would write with the one I have written. He reads Ellul, Cassirer, and Hegel as Cartesians, and I do not Granted, all three do not have a full-blown theory of the imagination, which may be required to avoid many of Descartes' problems. But these thinkers did not regard the concept to be finally adequate to the task of constructing a human world. None of these thinkers want the dialectic between image and word (in whatever terms these notions were conceived) to stop. Thus, Casey's claim: "It is hard, then, to accept the Ellulian subordination of the visual image in favor of the word"(14) is wrong. Ellul intends no such subordination, as my reading showed. Casey stated: "In Lovekin's depiction, Ellul is clearly a philosopher of an old fashioned sort.."(13). Whether "old fashioned" is a pejorative, another *ad hominem,* is not my concern, which is that Casey has missed the novelty of my reading of Ellul with a reading of Cassirer and Hegel that is not common garden variety.

Casey wrote: "From a contemporary philosophical vantage-point Ellul seems not so much representative of Western metaphysics as entrapped in it What is more, this metaphysics is of a particularly modem vintage—Cartesian, to be exact In describing technique as a mentality or form of consciousness, Ellul takes over the ontology of the self as *subject* and the thing as *object,* quite unintentionally reinforcing the anthropocentrism that lies at the very center of the modem technological assault on nature" (13.) Does Casey mean to suggest that there is a solution to the mind-body problem? Is he saying that because Ellul locates technical mentality in the duality of mind and body that Ellul is a Cartesian? Does being a dualist make one a Cartesian? Ultimately, Descartes' problem may be in wanting to rid himself of dualism or in his not seeing his dualism in holistic enough terms, in not seeing the powers of reason over and against

the powers of the imagination. Descartes seems to have required the "evil genius," (that is itself not a clear and distinct idea) to move from doubt to certainty.

Casey claimed, further: "Lovekin keeps Ellul's Christianity at arm's length and respectfully refuses to grant it philosophical status (14). This is wrong. I wished to allow the separation of religion and philosophy and believed it was possible to give a philosophical account of what Ellul puts in religious terms, an approach Ellul himself uses in *The Technological Society.* Casey said that I gave religion a back seat; I say I have given it another seat, the seat of the other, which can be couched in philosophical terms.

My concern was to present an Ellul other readers had not read. In relation to these stated goals, Casey seems to grant that I succeed: "Lovekin makes a persuasive case for the philosophical cast of Ellul's critique of technology, inviting his readers to see and judge Ellul on strictly philosophical terms"(13). Are these goals not enough?

Mr. Casey may soon be writing his book, blowing up his own dog, providing the many details that I and others could have added but did not, which is as it should be, why we write, and why we look for readers sympathetic to our stated tasks. Reading and writing is a masquerade that requires complicity, the appearance of the true other, which is no mere negative—a fluorescent whine — but opposition in which the true is backlighted, revealed both as what is and what is not

A Response to Darrell Fasching's The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?

by Peter J. Haas, Vanderbilt University

Human beings, Professor Fasching notes at one point in this book, are not just storytellers, they are story dwellers. By this he means that stories bring into consciousness our ideas of the world and our place in it In so doing, they give structure to our vision of the future and how we will get there. In light of the atrocities of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, Fasching argues in *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima (SUNY, 1993),* we need to change our foundational stories. The old stories, with their old ethi,c will lead only to destruction. This is so because such narratives do more than offer a self-definition; they also tell us who stands outside the community and how we are to treat those others.

In *Narrative Theology After Auschwitz,* as well as *The Ethical Challenge,* Fasching argues that the events of Auschwitz and Hiroshima force us in the West to face the symbolic universe that has lead to such atrocities being committed against the other. His thesis is that we can prevent further atrocities of this kind, and possibly our own destruction along the way, only by constructing a new narrative that will evaluate

human rights, and specifically human dignity, to the ultimate level. We simply have too much power, and are too aware of human frailty, to continue unchanged.

The argument, as will be clear to readers of this newsletter, is based on a fundamental distinction made by Jacques Ellul between what he called "sacred" and what he called "holy". Both terms, for Ellul, refer to an ultimate reality that transcends our everyday existence. The "sacred" defines a specific community and describes the ultimate locus of purity, goodness and righteousness for that particular group. In general we think of the sacred as related to religious communities, but it can apply in Ellul's sense, to secular communities as well. As I understand it, a sacred narrative is any narrative that legitimizes the status quo of a group in ultimate terms and defines the final goal that all true members of that group wish, or should wish, to achieve. The problem is that the sacred legitimizes and sacralizes only its own community. By its very nature, it must define the other as outside the true community and so, at least potentially, as dangerous. In opposition to this, Ellul proposes what he calls the "holy," that is, that posture or narrative which constantly brings into question Ihe present order and its existing structures. The holy defies the claim of absolute truth or absolute virtue. Thus while the sacred wants to establish the given structure as ultimate, the holy always wants to open new doors and reveal new possibilities.

How does this help us deal with the ethical challenge of twentieth century atrocities? lire crux for Fasching, as we noted, is treatment of the stranger. Sacred narratives look at outsiders as parasites or demons, as people that need to be eliminated to pave the way to utopia. The post-Auschwitz and post-Hiroshima ethic must be a "holy" narrative that demands acceptance of the stranger, that is, of the other.

To be sure, this analysis of the (post-) modem situation makes a good deal of intuitive sense. There is little room for doubt that Ihe Nazis demonized the Jews, that the Americans demonized the "Japs," thattheSerbs, Croats and Muslims in the former Yugoslaviaare busy demonizing each other. It is also clear, I am willing to concede, that unless the various peoples of the earth learn to accept the other we will produce more final solutions and so less futures. On the other hand, it appears to me that the strategy proposed here by Professor Fasching to deal with that is not as straightforward as it at first seems.

To begin with, I think there is a legitimate question about whether narrative is really the foundation of morality. Semioticians aigue, quite persuasively for some, that stories, narratives, myths and the like are themselves already built on a prior substratum of convictions.

That is, we begin at base level with certain fundamental notions about good and bad, say, and then narrativize or put these into discourse so as to bring them into the individual conscious and then public realms. So on this view changing the narrative level is starting too high up the semiotic chain. If we hope to change an ethic, we must address ourselves first to the much deeper basic convictions and inchoate beliefs that provide structure to the logically subsequent act of narrative construction. The narrative that discursivizes these will then, on this theory, change on its own accord. I

understand that this is far from a settled matter, but the claim that one can change an ethic by working on the narrative level alone is not, I suggest, immediately self-evident

There is a second problem. It is that the notion that to be a good person one must accept the outsider is itself a particular narrative of certain liberal Western communities. Insofar as we succeed in making that narrative part of the narrative of others are we not by that very act (imperialistically) tinkering with or "improving" their narrative and so diminishing their otherness? Or to put matters slightly differently, ought I to accept an "other" who is other because he or she dwells within a narrative that demonizes, say, African-Americans? My point is that it would appear that the holy also has its binary opposite, just as does the sacred. In this case, one fundamental "other" for the holy is the sacred, that is, those narratives and their communities who refuse to acknowledge the holy. We can of course build a wonderfiil new holy narrative that includes Christian and Jew, Occidental and Oriental, believer and avowed secularist But what do we do with those who refuse to participate in the bringing of this wonderful (to us) apocalypse and instead insist on constructing their own sacred (and nationalistic) utopias? Is our narrative to become a'super-narrative" by which other narratives are to be judged? That is, are we to be allowed to suppress their narratives and stop their Auschwitzes because of the demands of our narrative? If the answer is yes, as it seems to be, then I am not sure we have yet addressed adequately the full challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima. We may be setting up, albeit in disguise, little more than another sacred structure.

Response to Peter Haas

by Darrell J. Fasching

I appreciate Peter Haas' comments on my book *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?* (SUNY, 1993). We share a common commitment to trying to understand how ethics ought to be done, if it can be done, after Auschwitz

Peter Haas raises two salient objections to my argument in *The Ethical Challenge.*

The first objection is that narrative is not the really the foundation of morality and therefore striving to bring about a change at the narrative level starts at too superficial a level. Instead, he urges, we ought follow the lead of certain semioticians who suggest that narratives are rooted in more fundamental convictions or notions of good and evil which we then give expression to in narrative. Let me say that while I do not appeal to semiotic theory to make my case, I do not find myself in basic disagreement with Professor Haas' point The only problem I have with it is that it is not a refutation of any position that I actually hold.

My argument in *The Ethical Challenge* is more complex than Professor Haas has suggested. In his own critique he recounts my argument that there are two types of

narrative, the sacred and the holy. He also notes that I hold that sacred narratives sacralize their own community and demonize the other while holy narratives counter such tendencies by sanctifying the other, that is by welcoming the stranger. In the biblical traditions, for example, to welcome the stranger is to welcome God or the messiah or at least a messenger of God (i.e., an angel). In observing this, Haas correctly notes that I argue that ethics must be rooted in narratives of hospitality to the stranger but he curiously fails to grasp the connection I make between religious experience, forms of community and narrative.

In fact, my argument is that narratives are rooted in more fundamental attitudes and that these attitudes are themselves shaped by religious experiences of either Ihe sacred or the holy. Moreover, these experiences produce different kinds of social organizations. The sacred producing hierarchical and exclusionary societies, the holy producing iconoclastic subcultures within such sacred societies whose ethical function is to call them into question by welcoming the stranger and protecting the dignity of the stranger.

Hence, I do not place all the weight on narratives alone but rather take a sociology of knowledge perspective. There are no such things as free-floating narratives. Every narrative is embodied in a community structured for action in the world by its experiences of the sacred and/or the holy (all traditions are shaped by both at one time or another). Chapter seven of *The Ethical Challenge* contains an extended discussion of the relationship between social structures, religious experiences and the narrative imagination. Here I compare the church, the synagogue and the sangha, their internal relations to authority and their external relations to the authorities of the larger sacred society. I argue that while Eastern notions of dignity can be found in the sangha traditions, Western notions of human dignity and human rights are rooted in the legal and social process of incorporation which has created self-governing communities that protect human dignity from the encroachments of the state, and that the roots of incorporation go back to the special legal status granted to Judaism and the synagogue tradition by the Romans.

I end the chapter by arguing that a public policy ethic of human rights and human liberation requires critiquing the sacred stories and social structures of every society whose narrative imagination is shaped by the sacred instead of the holy. Here I show that the Book of Revelation has been interpreted by people like Hal Lindsey to demonize the enemy during the period of cold war nuclear policy and yet others like Jacques Ellul interpret *the same story* to teach just the opposite, namely salvation for the whole human race or God's universal hospitality. My final conclusion is that it is not the story in itself that is decisive (both use the same story) but the form of religious experience that shapes the narrative imagination of the one who interprets the story (e.g., Lindsey's sacral reading as opposedto Ellul's reading shaped by the experience of the holy).

Peter Haas' second objection likewise misses the point of my argument In essence Haas argues that my characterization of holy narratives does not really escape the

dualism of the sacred which demonizes the other because, by embracing Ihe narratives of the holy, which include the otherl am forced to reject those who embrace sacred narratives that reject the other, and hence I am back in the dualistic worldview I sought to escape or transcend.

Again Haas misses the complexity of my argument In chapter five I argued that the possibility of an new cross-cultural ethic of human dignity, human rights and human liberation had been demonstrated by the lives of Tolstoy, Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. — each of which profoundly influenced the ethical commitments of the next without any of them abandoning their own religious and cultural heritage. Gandhi remained a Hindu despite Tolstoy's influence and King remained a Christian despite Gandhi's profound influence on him. Yet the religious life of each was profoundly changed by that of the other, giving birth to a cross cultural ethic of non-violent civil disobedience against all sacred societies through movements of liberation which seek to protect the dignity of those who were treated as strangers within such sacred orders.

The point is, that what we learn from the non-violent ethics of Gandhi and King is that you can oppose unjust sacred dualistic orders without falling into demonizing narratives. So Peter Haas argument that "the holy also has its binary opposite, just as does the sacred" fails to convince me. It fails because even though an ethic of the holy does recognize some others as enemies it refuses to demonize such others. On the contrary, an ethic rooted in the holy requires that one love one's enemies and so does not fall back into the pattern of the sacred.

Finally, let me say that I have little patience for the argument that narratives of hospitality and human dignity (for after all, to offer hospitality to the stranger is to recognize the dignity of precisely the one who does not share my story) are exclusively Western and a form of liberal Western imperialism through which we are trying to impose our morality on other societies. First of all, in *The Ethical Challenge, I* show that Buddhism is the bearer of the tradition of hospitality to the stranger and human dignity in Asia (i.e., welcoming the outcast) in much the same way that Judaism is in the West But secondly, wherever you go around the world it is not the persecuted and oppressed who are saying that the ethics of human dignity and human rights are a form of cultural imperialism. On the contrary, this is an argument you find promoted by those in power who are doing the persecuting and oppressing. I see no reason why I should be co-opted by that shoddy little game into legitimating the suffering imposed on my brothers and sisters in every culture around the world. Our ethical task is to unmask the bad faith of all such ideologies that legitimate violence under the guise of cultural diversity.

Book Reviews

Entretiens avec Jacques Ellul

by Patrick Chastenet. Paris: La Table Ronde, 1994. 209 pages.

Incisive interviews stretching over thirteen years join together to form this book, offering a vivid portrait of Jacques ElluL Patrick Chastenet has done us another favor. Following his *Lire Ellul* (which gives the author's name as Patrick Troude-Chastenet; Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux [1992]; reviewed by Gabriel Vahanian in issue #11 of *The Ellul Forum,* July 1993), and *Sur Jacques Ellul* (L'Esprit du Temps, 1994; to be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of *the Forum),* he has published this third Ellul volume, the title of which translates to *Interviews with Jacques Ellul* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1994; 209 pp.).

Readers will find an amazing variety of information in Chastenet's book. Ellul answers questions about everything from the way he organized his ten-hour work days (as efficiently as possible, but always so as to be available to people in urgent need of him) to his views on organ transplants (essentially against). He offers details of his friendship with Bernard Charbonneau, his role in the Personalist movement, his wife Yvette's contribution to his life and work, and his participation in the Spanish Civil War and the French Resistance.

Many readers have come to know Ellul through the other books based on interviews with him-*Perspectives on Our Age,* edited by William H. Vanderburg (trans. Joachim Neugroschel; Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corp., 1981), and *In Season Out of Season,* based on interviews by Madeleine Garrigou-Lagrange (trans. Lani K. Niles; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982;Fr.ed. 1981). Chastenet'swork brings the reader up to date, to the end of Ellul's life, filling in some crucial blanks.

Chastenet now teaches at the two schools where he worked for years as Ellul's assistant the University of Bordeaux and the Institute of Political Studies. Their long-term collaboration furnished Chastenet with detailed insight into Ellul's thought, particularly as it bears on politics. He knows when to request more information from Ellul, and how to underscore unresolved conflicts or areas of tension.

Like most series of interviews, this one at first appears to lack organization. Eventually a pattern becomes clean the early chapters present influences on Ellul (in Chastenet's words; the interviews themselves begin in Chapter II), and his most closely held views and principles. Chapters IV through IX concentrate on biographical questions, in roughly chronological order. And the remaining chapters (X through XVI) explore

Ellul's work, with an emphasis on science and art in Chapters XV and XVI. The book lacks chapter titles, but most chapters are preceded by an outline of their contents.

The usual influences on Ellul (Karl Marx, Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, Charbonneau) are joined here by Alexis de Toqueville (who perhaps had a greater impact on Charbonneau than on Ellul), Walther Rathenau, and Oswald Spengler. Ellul explains his rejection of Martin Heidegger and other less well-known thinkers of the thirties. He openly avows his debt to his wife, who he says "humanized" him, teaching him to be open and receptive to other people.

Aside from insights into his life (his discovery of the Bible as a child, an unforgettable portrait of his mother-in-law, his preference for listening to Bach as he wrote on technique, and to Mozart when writing theology), the reader will find substantive contributions to Ellul's thought in this volume. He denies, for instance, any manichean tendencies, spells out what he believed to be a window of opportunity for controlling certain aspects of technique through micro computers, and emphasizes the importance of poetry in his life. Ellul's apparent approval of the transcripts of all but the last two of his interviews, and Chastenet's interviews with Charbonneau, add to the solidity of the book's contents.

Chastenet often transcribes Ellul's laughter for us, in addition to his words. On one memorable occasion, as the interviewer launches the first of a series of specific questions concerning Ellul's voting habits, his interview is thrown completely off track when Ellul informs him that he has never voted in his life!

Encountering Ellul in these pages resembles being struck by one's first reading of *The Presence of the Kingdom.* His views hang together extraordinarily well, and have considerable impact This book provides a thoroughly useful guide to Ellul's life and thought, but also proves wonderfully readable. Readers new to Ellul will feel they get to know him well through the spontaneous, conversational style. Those who never met the man will find him thoroughly human and approachable as he reacts to events that took place after he wrote *The Technological Blujf* (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990; Fr. ed. 1988).

Many questions about Ellul will puzzle us for some time to come, and perhaps permanently. Chastenet's book resolves many of our questions, and deserves an English translation as soon as possible. That edition should add a much-needed table of contents, chapter titles, an index, and a revised bibliography.

The American Hour: **A Time of Reckoning and the Once and Future Role of Faith,**

by Os Guinness, New York: The Free Press, 1993. 458 pages, Index.
Reviewed by Donald Evans, Director of "The Ellul Institute, Riverside California.

The Inland Educational Foundation of California recently sponsored a three-day Chautauqua-style presentation on the theme "Democracy in America" in which scholars portrayed the life and works of historically significant voices. One of these was Alexis de Tocqueville who was brought to life by David Ly tel, a senior policy analyst at the White House Office of Science and Technology. The keenest analyses of America's democratic character rely on foreign eyes, whether those of de Tocqueville, Lord Bryce, or G. K. Chesterton. Perhaps just such a thought prompted H. L. Mencken to write, "Most of the men I respect are foreigners."

One is tempted to add to the short list of foreign social critics the name of Jacques Ellul, except for the fact that Ellul has never visited the United States. On the other hand, American culture has visited him and invaded Fiance where it has been studied and met with strong resistance as evidenced by the hard line taken by the government against the American entertainment industry in the recent GATT negotiations. Furthermore, Ellul has written extensively on the subject of freedom, which American democratic theory rightly holds so dear.[1] He typically argues that only Christians can introduce freedom into a technical civilization such as that of the USA.[2]

Ellul, the sociologist, is relevant to any discussion of democracy. Indeed, as Mark Noll remarks, "It is becoming increasingly difficult for historians of religion to maintain their prejudices against sociologists." Such prejudices are especially difficult to sustain in view of the popularity and brilliant analysis of *Habits of the Heart* by five scholars of whom three are sociologists.[3] In an earlier book Guinness has one of devil's minions contend, "Christians have no feel for the social dimension of faith, and no tool to analyze culture from the vantage point of ordinary experience...The majority of Christians avoid the social sciences like the plague, quite convinced that these disciplines are dangerously subversive, unsettling both to faith and morals. The present standing of the social science, the murkiness of its jargon and the open skepticism of its early days all contribute to this...After all, wasn't Marx a sociologist?"[4]

Guinness analyzes America with the eyes of a British sociologist Readers may be familiar with one or more of his books, *The Dust of Death, In Two Minds,* or *living With Our Deepest Differences.* Bom in China but raised and educated in England, he is a graduate of the Universities of London and Oxford, gaining his D. Phil, from the latter. Since 1984 the writer has lived in the United States. He held the post of

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[1] See Jacques Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom,* trans, and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976. Ellul's *The Subversion of Christianity* and *The New Demons* also make good companion reading with *The American Hour.*

[2] See Darrell J. Fasching's review of *Un Chretien pour Israel* in *The Ellul Studies Forum,* No. 4 (November 1989), 2-3.

[3] RobertN. Bellah, *et. al., Habits of the Heart: Individualism and CommitmentinAmericanLife,* New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986. Even here it is interesting to note that "habits of the heart" is a Tocquevillian expression for the mix of traits essential to our national character.

[4] 0s Guinness, *The Gravedigger File: Papers on the Subversion of the Modem Church,* Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983.

executive director of the Williamsburg CharterFoundation and was a drafter of the Williamsburg Charter.

This modem-day de Tocqueville is concerned about our troubled times, for he believes they are not rightly understood. He writes to help Americans understand their moment in history. The idea for such an undertaking came to him at Oxford where clouds parted and his argument came in a way he could not shake. His friends upon reading a first draft ten years ago thought he was hysterical, so he set the manuscript aside for six years. The appearance at this time of his idea, that America's hour is upon her, is bom not of hysteria but of a deep conviction.

A critical key to appreciating his argument is to know that he writes for a secular audience. Thus, *The American Hour* is void of religious cliches and jargon and in their place is the language of modem sociology and historical faith. His vision is of the constructive role of religion in American life. This Oxonian scholar seeks to convince others by writing as if his readers were founding fathers instead of following fundamentalists. The archbishop of New York comments that the book is "laced with pungent aphorisms that rarely become cliches...the entire text is worth careful study, but for those in a hurry, his aphorisms provide shortcuts to complex analyses of American culture."[5]

Guinness divides his argument in three segments with a question for each. How can the American democratic revolution be sustained? Where did the current crisis originate? What is the role of faith in the crisis? The three pivotal years in this century are 1917, 1945, and 1989. The latter being the year of the century, because the collapse of worldwide communism vindicates American democracy. The other two years and the periods following them are important to the political and economic order of things. America is however a cultural as well as a political and economic order. Does this cultural order nourish and promote freedom? According to Guinness, former beliefs, values, and ideas that once held Americans together are no longer binding. We are faced with a crisis of cultural authority that is religious and civic.

The crisis originated in the years since 1945. The'50s were years of build-up to the radical revolution of the '60s with its cultural rupture. Ilie '70s were a decade of consolidation as the ethos of the '60s entered the main stream of America's consciousness. The next ten years saw cultural excesses and contradictions. The river of ideas that filled framers of this nation are now only a stream. The body of beliefs that motivated the Protestant Reformation are today weakened. Civic republicanism has practically faded from the scene. The Enlightenment with its high view of man and reason is in as much trouble as the other two beliefs.

The American experiment is revolution. Winning it two hundred years ago; ordering it during the next hundred years or so; and sustaining it during the twentieth century. The question is how to sustain it, given that our former habits of the heart are dis-

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[5] John Cardinal O'Connor, "Are We Headed for the Devil?," *Die Wall Street Journal,* May 7,1993, A12.

appearing in an increasingly diverse culture. The '90s are years for recognizing the crisis and dealing with sustainment issues. Among the issues, by whose values should America be ordered? What is the proper role of faith and faiths in political life?

Guinness sees four broad outcomes for faith. First, pluralistic faiths may be irrelevant. They would neither nourish culture nor be democratic. Or, faiths would matter but not in any significant ways. Third, they would be harmful and produce an "apple pie authoritarianism." Finally, faith communities could spark a spiritual revival and an American renaissance. In contrast, Ellul paints a dimmer picture for democracy. Authoritarian democracies are already upon us. Increasing technologies, propaganda, psychological techniques, and the systematization of all institutions attack the man of faith and democracy simultaneously. While Guinness says little about the nature of faith communities, Ellul is specific. Among their attributes, he says they should be "totally independent of the state, yet capable of opposing it, able to reject its pressures as well as its controls, and even its gifts."[6] Of the two prophetic voices, Ellul's reaches the heart without illusions.

In any event, faith for Guinness is crucial for the strength and continuity of the American experiment In the final chapter, "The Eagle and the Sun," Guinness invokes a metaphor of the American eagle:

The bird that carries the bolts of Jupiter is not an owl or a bat that could navigate in the skeptics' darkness of a universe without center or meaning. It is not a carrion, whose sole orientation is toward its prey. No, the American symbol carries a truth kept alive even in an ancient fable. It signals the highest classical understanding of the required source of a nation's *gravitas.* Above all, it points beyond itself toward the biblical insistence on the empty nothingness of idols and on the gloiy (or weight) of God as the only "real reality" in all the universe.[7]

He then concludes with a Chesterton quotation from *What I Saw in America,* "...it was far back in the land of legends, where instincts find their true images, that the ciy went forth that freedom is an eagle, whose glory is gazing at the sun."[8] A master of quotesmanship, Guinness like de Tocqueville is also a social critic who has plucked the tail feathers of the American eagle and observed the lightness of faith at the heart of America's experiment in democratic freedom. The poet Goethe understood the sociologist Guinness when the German penned, "Each one sees what he carries in his heart"

One does need to fly above it all in order to gain perspective, but poetic flights of faith and fancy aside, sooner or later it is necessary to come down-to-earth and cany out a program of action. Having given us an insightful analysis of our plight and convinced us that America faces a time of reckoning, Guinness offers little advice on how to put his conclusions into practice. Up there we can fly on the wings of his words,

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[6] Jacques Ellul, *The Political Illusion,* trans, by Konrad Kellen, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967, p. 222. See especially the last two chapters,, "Depolitization and Tensions" and "Man and Democracy."

[7] p. 411.

[8] *Ibid.*

but down here we look for advice as to how to work out Ihe pragmatic theme of our American character. Down here we face cultural forces that Guinness mentions only in passing, e.g., mass media, violence, domination by technique, multinational economies, and huge bureaucracies. In fairness to him note should be made that he is doing Ihe practical thing through his work on the Williamsburg Charter Foundation, and his other books indicate his awareness of these cultural forces. What Os Guinness writes he writes well. Let's leave it to other authors and non-writers to bring his ideas to life.

I found my copy of *The American Hour* in a used bookstore in Georgetown, D.C. The cracking sound of turning pages convinced me that it had never been read. This seemed strange because of the handwritten inscription on the fly page that read, "To Irving Kristol and Gertrude Himmelfarb: With deep gratitude and appreciation for the wisdom and courage of all your public contributions. Os Guinness. 25 X 92." One would have to know more about the book's provenance before concluding that it had been placed on a stack for discard by two of our nation's critical thinkers. No matter, wise readers will appreciate the latest Os Guinness book, if a copy should providentially find its way into their hands.[9]

Bulletin Board

L'Association Jacques Ellul

During the past year, Ellul family members and colleagues have joined together for the purpose of preserving the collection of his writings and manuscripts, and making his work better known. The Association has now been legally registered in France, and welcomes new members. If you wish to join please send a check made payable to Joyce M. Hanks for $ 15.00. Joyce is willing to register all American applicants and save us from the hassle of having to change our American dollars into French francs. Please send your check along with your name, address and phone number to: Joyce M Hanks, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Scranton, Scranton PA 18510-4646.

Meeting of the Jacques Ellul Association Held in Bordeaux

The Bordeaux-based Association Jacques Ellul met for its annual meeting on 19 November 1994. Deliberations included plans for the possible future disposition of Ellul's residence, which may be purchased from his heirs as a combination research center and gathering place. The Association will name a member to Ihe Editorial

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[9] Audio tapes of Os Guinness speaking on *The American Hour* at a Christian College Coalition conference are available from the Thomas F. Staley Foundation, Larchmont, New York. Also, the National Association of Evangelicals has published the introduction from Guinness' book, "The Crisis of the Mandate of Heaven," in the form of two Occasional Papers.

Advisory Board of *The Ellul Forum.* Association members also had the opportunity to hear Bernard Rordorf speak on "The Silence of God and the Thought of Jacques Ellul."

E-mail Your Comments to The Ellul Forum

If you have suggestions for future issues or reactions to past issues or just questions you would like answered you can now reach the editor of *The Ellul Forum,* Darrell J. Fasching on e-mail. Send your comments to: fasching @luna.cas.usf.edu.

Retrospective on Jacques Ellul at Annual SPT Meeting in April

David Lovekin reports that The Society for the Philosophy of Technology will include a session entitled: "Retrospective on Jacqeus Ellul: 1912-1994" at its annual meeting in April. The session is tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of April 27th. There will be three papers presented: *Ellul as a Philosopher* by Donald Phillip Veneue (Emory); *Ellul as Prophet* by Erik Nardenbaug (Georgia State); *Ellul as Philosopher of the Symbol* by David Lovekin (Hastings College). Michael Zimmerman (Tulane), will be the respondent

Issue #15 July 1995 — Women and Technology

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In This Issue

About This Issue

The main theme of this issue is Women and Technology. My apologies for the lateness of this issue. Because of health problems, the author of our theme article for this issue, Susan Kray, from the Department of Communication at Indiana State University, was unable to provide the essay for publication in July of 1995. Consequently this July issue is finally being released along with our January 1996 issue. I wish thank Dr. Kray for her perseverance and our subscribers for their patience. Her essay on "Women and Technology: A(nother) Crisis of Representation" is iconoclasitc and thought-provoking. I think you will find that this issue was worth waiting for.

In addition to our theme essay, we have another Forum essay, contributed by Daryl J. Wennemann, from the University of Scranton, on Ellul's use of the term "Technique". Dr. Wennemann draws on the work of Rudolf Otto to argue persuasively that for Ellul, "Technique," like "the sacred," is not a concept but an "ideogram." Finally, you will find in our book review section, reviews of two recent books that deal with women and technology.

Darrell J. Fasching, Editor

The Coming of *The Coming of the Millennium*

Darrell Fasching's new book, *The Coming of the Millennium: Good News for the Whole Human Race* will be published by Trinity Press International this spring. The book dedication reads: "In memory of Jacques Ellul, 1912 - 1994, who taught me to understand that "evangelical theology" means good news for the whole human race." The book is an ethical critique of the tradition of evangelism of the passing millennium which focused on "conquering the world for Christ" — and was prone to violence, especially through the abuse of apocalyptic thought by figures such as Hal Lindsey. It argues that Ellul's understanding of the gospel as as message of universal salvation provides a non-violent alternative for the coming millennium — one in which evangelism is the proclamation of the good news of God's hospitality to the whole human race. It is a message for a new millennium of pluralistic global interdependence in a technological civilization. The book is scheduled for release in April of 1996.

Forum: Women and Technology

Women and Technology: A(nother) Crisis of Representation

by Susan Kray Department of Communication, Indiana State University

A major debate in America over the last several decades has centered on how different women really are or should be from men (MacKinnon 1987; Tavris 1992), particularly with regard to work. The debate, by its very existence, implicitly defines men as the norm and women as deviant We ask what protections, restrictions, or special training should or should not apply to women, the different ones. We do not commonly ponder how men deviate from a normative female standard and then ask what protections, restrictions, or special training should apply to men.

It is interesting that feminists generally build on precisely this framework. Many make feminism the politics of difference—from men. Their inquiries are suffused with a politics of identity, as, indeed, are men's studies of the relationship between men and technology (Wylie 1991:21). Many feminists, seeking to understand women's nature, as distinguished from men's, focus on women's supposed commitment to nurturing and to the organic world, as distinguished from men's supposed commitment to power and technology. Many people, in whichever camp, see men as "task-oriented," while women are "people-oriented." Others deny that women are really different in any innate way—not that men are really different Some contend that women are innately different but that this difference is all to the good; we are good deviants, so to speak.

One result is that as Carol Tavris (1992:57-92) points out Carol Gilligan's (1982) work on differences in the moral reasoning of men and women has found a home with two very different groups in the struggle over the workplace. Those wanting to limit women's opportunities take Gilligan's research as proof that women care more about people's feelings than about getting a job done. On the other hand, many women, feminist and otherwise, take Gilligan's work as proof that women are morally superior to men, one implication being that women are more fit for work that affects people. Interestingly, we > may add that Gilligan herself stands squarely in the traditional masculine-oriented framework that sets men as a standard. In calling her book *In A Different Voice,* she did not mean that men were different The "different" voice for which she argues belongs to women.

Clearly, people disagree on what the differences are between women and men with respect to technology, but difference apparently we must have. The differences, more-

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over, must be hierarchical. Writing about science and technology, Haraway (1991:80) observes that "...the creation of difference...plagues 'Western' knowledge; it is the patriarchal voice in the production of discourse that can name only by subordinating within legitimate lineages." Again, women are the ones who are different Again, technology and work are a primary locus of difference. So is science.

Feminist theorists have pointed out that in Western cultures, male scientists and technologists have identified women and femaleness with Nature, as opposed to the masculinity of culture, technology, and science. Natural philosophers and scientists have represented the male mind as a masculine force "penetrating" Nature's (female) secrets. On the other hand, authors of Western novels and producers of Western movies have typically represented the American frontier as a place where the male hero is close to nature, to savagery, and to simple technologies, while (white) women represent civilization (Fiedler 1982/1966). Men's work is having adventures in the wilderness; women's work is maintaining the routines that support civilization. One might fairly conclude that difference, not its details, is the name of the game.

How It All Started-Maybe

When feminists talk about technology, they often conform in astonishing degree to the traditional views of popular culture, social science, and Bible-oriented religions (see Genesis 4:21,22). All of these have claimed at one time or another that culture began when men started using their male intellects to work difficult substances— wood, stone, bone, and metal—into great inventions. Recalcitrant materials constitute an important part of the story, underlying as they do a key part of the myth, namely the determination and inventiveness of Man that made culture possible. Man is a tool-making, weaponthrowing, task-oriented, problem-solving, technologically active creature. Men are the human race's chief designers, makers, distributors, and users of tools.

It is a commonplace observation that in fact women provide the emotional and household environment in which men can make all that happen. Women are also responsible for providing counterbalances and supplements. To rationality, they have a duty to oppose tenderness and intuition. To balance men's commercial and professional orientations, women have a duty to sustain domesticity.

A surprising number of women, including many feminists, agree with an equally surprising number of men that men are by nature (or by inevitable result of their early socialization) in charge of destructive technologies and of going forth into the world to build, destroy, *kill,* invade, enslave, and run impersonal, cruel bureaucracies undergirded by an unfeeling obsession with men's own rational processes. Women are by nature (or by inevitable result of their apparently universal socialization as child-care workers) in charge of staying home doing the low-tech work that sustains life, intimacy, honesty, and households. Men's roles as killers and bureaucrats dovetail nicely

with their seemingly greater technological aptitude. Women's task of generating human warmth dovetails nicely with their supposed refusal to be fascinated by technology.

This view of male and female human nature is summarized, with remarkable fidelity to many scholarly accounts, in the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* (directed by Stanley Kubrick in 1968). In the opening sequence, aptly titled "The Dawn of Man," a population of males invents the first weapon. Wielding a leg bone from an animal skeleton and vocalizing enthusiastically, they discover how to kill a tapir, portrayed as an innocuous, good-natured, non-vocal herbivore. Next, they bludgeon other anthropoids. Then they evolve into ill-tempered, vocal, male carnivores. At the end of the sequence, one of their furry, male descendants commits the first murder. Then, executing a clumsy dance of anthropoid triumph, he throws into the air the murder weapon, a bone that mutates on screen into an orbiting space station.

Progress is the ape-man's ultimate product, once he gets his weapon-using, meat-eating, neighbor-murdering start Aggression, hunting, technology, vocalizing, space-bound science, work, and war are thus woven into one masculine narrative.

Where is Woman while Man is evolving? In the "Dawn of Man" sequence of *2001: A Space Odyssey,* we glimpse females only once, lying silent (and non-vocal, like the tapirs) on their backs inside a cave cuddling their young. Progress is not their most important product They are, in fact plausible progenitors for the woman in the second sequence, in the orbiting space station. Uniformed and silent she serves lunch to a traveling man.

Man the Hunter, so dramatically portrayed in "The Dawn of Man," wasascholars' invention (Haraway 1991:86). As such, it met the need of physical anthropologists to explain why early hominid remains were found with small brain cases and no tools amidst piles of cracked animal bones (Willoughby 1991). How could such beings give rise to us, a technological species? To save the evolutionary narrative and the received wisdom that Man is best defined as the tool-using animal par excellence, the technological animal, Raymond Dart postulated that hunting was a uniquely social activity that launched our apparently dullard, undersized, non-technological hominid ancestors on the evolutionary path that led to the invention of technology, speech, and the development of human intellect

C.K. Brain (1981) later determined that carnivores, not hominids, had broken these bones, but Man the Hunter had already launched an apparently immortal career. He is still assumed as a factor in many accounts of human nature. The maleness of the Hunter slipped into the narrative as an unexamined, and logically unnecessary, assumption, but logical or not, it has remained ever since, in both scholarly and popular versions. It is consistent, after all, with our cultural expectations. Man the Hunter has therefore bad both academic and popular advocates.

"The 'man the hunter' hypothesis of the 1960s" was, according to Haraway (1991:86), the "best known product of practice in the [anthropologist Sherwood] Washbum [academic] patriline." This hypothesis, "pre-eminently about male ways of life as the motors

of the human past and future, was grounded in psychiatry, primatology, and ethnographies of "modem hunter-gatherers" (1991:90).

Meanwhile, Robert Ardrey *'s African Genesis* (1963), based on the same model, was setting the tone for popular understanding of human origins (Willoughby 1991:284) in the killer hominid household and its hunting-camp technology. Ardrey is explicit and emphatic: his version of our "original nature" and "our ancestral killer ape" define the future of the human race. Humans did not invent weapons; rather, we inherited them from our ape ancestors in a process that shaped human evolution for all time. The weapon "had fathered man" (1963:29) in the primal, manly process of death-dealing that constrains us and all our posterity. Notice that tools are implicitly defined as weapons of attack and the weapon is gendered, as are the process (fathering) and its human product (man). And since "No child of ours, bom in the middle twentieth century, can differ at birth in significant measure from the earliest of Homo sapiens" (1963:12), therefore, we can never truly transcend that early, violent start Hence, "The problem of man's original nature imposes itself on any human solution" (1963:13).

In Haraway's words (1991:39), "The past sets the rules for possible futures in the...sense of showing us a biology created in conditions supposedly favouring aggressive male roles [and] female dependence." Even among people who are not sure the human species evolved from a predecessor species, Ardrey's scenario of Man the bom killer has become naturalized as inescapable evidence about the real nature of human nature.

The story was modified in 1976, when anthropologists Tanner and Zihlman added prehistoric female gathering to prehistoric male hunting, giving the technological human race mothers as well as fathers. They saw women's as well as men's technology as a primary engine of human evolution, attributing "the transition from a primate ancestry to the emergent human species" to "connections among savanna living, technology, diet, social organization, and selective processes" (1976:586). Speaking of food production and the change from huntergatherer modes to fanning, Bolen (1991:403a) claims that

Engendering prehistory creates gendered social interaction which provides a strong basis for [understanding] cultural transformation [and] leads to arguments that women and their activities create or define the Neolithic.

Constructing alternative scenarios and reasoning from ethnographic and primatological work (some of the latter showing that females are heavier consumers of meat and insects than are males [Zihlman 1991:6-7]), anthropologists have largely abandoned the Man-as-Hunter model of human origins, but the hairy, hoary old Hunter with his killing technology still lurks in popular culture. For example, the Men's Movement attempts to ground modem men's self-respect and spiritual fulfillment in an innate, ineradicable male identification with hunting, wilderness, aggressiveness, and technologies of death. With little argument or explanation, Man the Hunter becomes Man the Warrior. One recent Men's Movement event (Indianapolis, October 1995) teaches men how to be men through "The New Warrior Training Adventure." Civil War reenactments supported

by masses of equipment available through specialized catalogs continue to be popular in the South and elsewhere.

The corollary to nearly every manifestation of Man the Hunter/Man the Warrior, whether scholarly or popular, is that women constitute a non-hunter, non-warrior support team. Both traditional and feminist thinkers seem committed to playing down the capacity of women to fight and kill. Prehistoric Woman hangs around base camp tending tots and cooking food in clay pots. Contemporary women are invited, along with children, to witness the New Warrior Graduation Celebration at a midwestern church. A skilled horsewoman and writer on Civil War topics is denied participation in an Alabama reenactment of the War between the States (Wise, personal communication, 1993), because "no women fought in that war," despite clear evidence that women did fight in that war. Women and girls of the Italian resistance in World War II were

...successful precisely because girls were under less suspi-cion...it wasn't regarded as probable or possible that a woman could shoot... Naturally the Germans didn't think that a woman could have carried a bomb, so this became the women's task...But in many instances women were not given arms because men believed that they were more emotional and less capable of making decisions (Saywell, 1986:82).

Advocates of Man the Hunter fail to describe women as descendants of killer apes who therefore possess a primal need to kill. One would be hard put to find Warrior Woman Weekends or even egalitarian we-were-all-primal-killer events both for men and women. Women, it seems, fail to find spiritual fulfillment by getting out there in the woods to get in touch with their hunter or warrior past They are not descendants of their fathers or the ape-weapon that fathered them.

Feminist theorists have pointed out that cultures tend to treat the women's side of things in terms of "lack" or absence. Where women and men differ, one asks what is missing in the women. Feminist scholars themselves have inadvertently followed this same habit of asking what women lack. Faced with the need to rewrite a biased male narrative about the relationship of the human species to its technologies, feminists have, by and large, not written women into the scenarios of killing and weaponry, but have rather omitted killing and weaponry in descriptions of women's lives and to downplay women's contributions to complex technologies. Aggression and the killer instinct are treated as missing in women. Feminists have also tended to follow the traditional conflation of tools with weaponry. If women do not fight and kill, they do not use complex technologies, either.

Although Tanner and Zihlman and others (see Dahlberg, 1981) challenge the notion of Man the Hunter and offer a counterbalancing view of prehistoric Woman as a Forager, they draw few conclusions about implications for modem life, other than the familiar notion of women feeding their families. For all the emphasis on the aggression-ridden consequences of Man's Hunter/Warrior origins, the image of Woman the Forager is innocent of any such associations. Nothing she did is invoked to explain any of humankind's viler practices. Even though humanity's main activity has been getting food

(Dahlberg 1981) and even though women are thought to have provided some eighty per cent, perhaps, of that food, their methods and tools have no bearing on anything objectionable in human life today.

One does not, for example, invoke the image of Woman the Forager to explain human communities' habit of overrunning other communities' habitations and collecting their worldly goods. One does not hear suggestions that Woman, the ancestral Forager, could ultimately be behind die current Serb expropriation of Bosnian Muslim property or, fifty years ago, in the wake of Nazi deportations, Gentiles' appropriations of the homes and property of their abducted Jewish neighbors. Women have, indeed, participated directly in slaughter and plunder throughout history (a recent example is the Rwandan massacres), but this kind of hands-on work experience is seldom inscribed in Woman the Forager's resume. For feminists, as for traditional male thinkers, when it comes to evil-doing, we are, it seems, the descendants of our fathers only and not of our mothers.

Whether Ardrey ' s chain of events, in which the" weapon fathered Man," ever occurred may well be irrelevant Biologists, after all, insist on the plasticity of human nature. One would infer that even *if we were* descended from genocidal maniacs, we might theoretically craft gentle communities whose worst adversarial tactics might stop, say, at name-calling. However, if we are not genetically constrained by hunter, killer-ape origins, we are certainly limited by popular beliefs about our origins.

These beliefs entail important political consequences. To pick but one example: How can one expect American men to turn in their guns when every man in the country is descended from killer apes and has a primal, ineradicable drive to hunt? We might argue, therefore, that scholars would do better to critique these myths than to promulgate them. As Whelan (1991:358) points out,

It is important to problematize the origins of gender systems [because of] the ideological power that reconstructs of the past have for the present (Haraway 1986; Fedigan 1986). The popular reduction of "gender* to a universal division of labor where men hunt and women gather and give birth has tremendous ideological power in the present. Reconstructing the gender of our distant hominid ancestors so that it mirrors current gender roles and relations isa meansofjustifying present social and economic conditions.

Yet, entire areas of relevant scholarship, including archaeology, the "science of technology" (Leone 1973:125-150), are, as of 1995, still mired in confusion about male and female human nature. For many scholars, as for artists and for popular culture, man's weapon-ridden past and its modem technological results define who humans are in the universe, not only as products of evolution but as spiritual beings in a cosmos with meaning.

As Noble (1993) describes the development of these ideas, Western philosophical and clerical (church) culture gave rise to a notion of the transcendent male intellectual enterprise. This notion was directly inherited by Westerm science and then adapted for technological enterprises. For example, space-era mythology is entranced with rockets and space stations, developed first by the Nazi war-machine, then, after the World War

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II, by its personnel imported to USSR and America. Aerospace mythology, Noble correctly points out, repeatedly praises "man's vision" and "his indomitable human spirit," using a vocabulary of transcendence to describe the almost entirely male province of aerospace technology.

Moreover, we may note, men's favorite widgets tend to have moving parts. Bows and arrows, pulleys, wheels, cranks, potters' wheels, looms, sports cars, atom bombs, and hypertext give rise to physics lessons and philosophy. These disciplines are among the most "transcendent" of Western Man's self-defining enterprises and both, by the way, remain largely male preserves. Women, on the other hand, seem everywhere and at all times to work with the simpler technologies and more malleable materials. If men's technology transcends tire human condition, women's undergirds it Women's technologies do not define a transcendent human spirit in the universe. At most they define women in work places, especially the home.

Women and Public and Private Space

The contrast between indoors and outdoors or between private space and public space seems to be an inextricable part of the theoretical package. While men's inventions enlivened the march of centuries, guess who lurked in caves, tents, and houses, rendering support services? Women, house bound in their private spaces, do not hammer resistant materials into great inventions. Instead, they have whiled away the millennia indoors, cooking, cleaning, spinning, and cradle-rocking, repetitively hand-processing "materials that are soft and pliable" (Rice 1991:436), such as food, textiles, and hand-worked clay vessels. Anthropologists, until recently, and archeologists even today, have thought along the same lines as the historians whom Berenice Carroll (1976:xi) critiqued nearly two decades ago. For many scholars, it seems, women live in the conceptual Land That Time Forgot

[Most women throughout history]...are conceived to have lived out their lives in a limited number of stereotypic roles, essentially changeless over time and therefore irrelevant to the "intellectually interesting" questions of historical change.

Certainly, some feminist scholars have challenged the myths that seem to place women under eternal, universal house arrest in "private space." AsConkey and Spector point out (1984:3),

...feminist anthropology quickly came to question the assumption of a distinct 'private* or domestic sphere, which informed much early research (i.e. as that which had been left out of account by an androcentric focus on the public domain). In a compelling auto-critique, Rosaldo (1980) shows how a sharp distinction of public from private embodies the highly artificial, and local, precepts of 19th century Victorian patriarchal culture."

In fact, if spaces supposed to be domestic, private, and female have any boundaries at all, these often turn out to be vague and permeable. Hauptman (pers. comm. 1992), referring to tire rural, extended households of Babylonia and Israel described

in the Talmud, points out that there was no such thing as purely "private" space; the homestead was "permeable", with crafts people, peddlers, travelers, servants, friends, and family members continually coming and going. The same might be said of the self-sufficient households of the ante-bellum American South (Fox-Genovese, 1988).

The spaces of modem life, on the other hand, tend to increasing privatization and commercialization for both women and men. In another context, Ellul (1964:321) implicitly attacked the dichotomy between male public space and female private space when he observed that technical civilization encapsulates "man" in tiny, private, unhealthy cells removed from nature. "Man" is imprisoned in "a twelve-by-twelve closet opening out on an anonymous world of city streets." This is a very different picture from the traditional differentiation of "public" man from "private" woman. Indeed, the thirty years since Ellul made that observation have seen men crowded out of the public sphere by the very factors he identified in 1964: "labor... [that] stretch[es the worker] to the limit of his resistance, like a steel cable which may break at any moment" (1964:320). Such work leaves a man little energy, volition, or time for public life. Women, in turn, have been pushed by economic necessity out of the home into the same realm of wage-earning work that both encapsulates men and stretches diem to their limits.

Many middle-class women who once had the luxury of staying home to care for Iheir families, if they chose, have now had to join the wage-earning work force, just as many working-class women always have had to do, like it or not However, working among strangers outside the home does not make women public beings. As with men, that work enforces the very conditions that deprive women of opportunity to participate in public life.

Instead, women, it is now said, cany a double burden—some might call it triple—of housework, dependent care, and wage-earning work. Wives have more work hours and fewer leisure hours than do husbands. Women are also said to earn about seventy cents for every dollar that men make. To put that another way, we might say that women have to work longer and harder than men, often with more rudimentary technologies, to earn the same pay—and fewer toys.

Moreover, with the "downsizing" of work forces, fewer women are doing more of the work. A recent news segment claims that wage-earning women, because they are overworked in their jobs, are bearing an increasing number of premature babies. One poignant result is that pediatric nurses work such long, strenuous shifts taking care of other women's newborns that their own pregnancies, increasingly, terminate early under the stress. Meanwhile, in the words of spokesmen of a non-profit public-policy organization called "Redefining Progress,"

...a monetized service sector takes [the] place [of declining families and communities]...Parenting becomes child care, visits on the porch become psychiatry and VCRs, the watchful eyes of neighbors become alarm systems and police officers, the kitchen table becomes MacDonalds...(Cobb, Halstead, and Rowe, 1995:67).

They might add that women's unpaid work in personal relationships with children and other family members, as it is monetized, is perforce technologized, as cost-effective solutions substitute for the costly presence of adult women in the home. A certain amount of child care, even, is accomplished by machinery (notably television, computers, and electronic games) that fixes children's attention on itself and keeps them relatively immobilized. A similar observation might be madeof "elder care." Every place becomes the workplace; no place is truly "public" and private life shrinks to almost nothing.

With women as well as men under so many pressures i-V r uCcUV both the private and the public spheres, they are pushed into the interstices of their own lives at work and at home. The public arena, now professionalized and filtered through technological media, resounds with complaints about the "breakdown of the family" on the one hand and the breakdown of work life on the other, as jobs are consolidated or exported, but the paid professionals in charge of public life rarely link the two breakdowns. Surely women spend less time in their unpaid workplaces at home precisely because they are shouldering larger burdens in paid workplaces. And through it all, the scholarly myth of private, female, nurturing, low-tech space still underlies much of scholarly thinking about gender and technology.

What is even more amazing is that there are very few critiques of the myths prevalent in the "science of technology," archaeology, that science in which are rooted many of our self-concepts as a species. What one does find is a body of generalized feminist critiques of archaelogical practice.

Women and The "Science of Technology"

Archeology, as we have seen, has been aptly termed "the science of technology" (Leone 1973). Archaeology, more than any other traditional branch of social science inquiry, is compelled, by the nature of its evidence, to focus largely on technology. It "uses material culture as its data" (Bolen 1991:403a). Objects that survive the millennia and come into the hands of archaeologists are almost always made of durable substances, such as stone, clay, or bronze. Specific technologies, involving stone tools, and later metal, were required to work them into artifacts. Many early tools and utensils, themselves made of the hardest available materials, have survived to be looked at, x-rayed, and tested for residues of flesh, food, and fiber. Examples include arrow heads, mortars and pestles, metates (grinding stones—the "Stone Age Cuisinart," in Rice's [1991] formulation), olive presses, fired pottery, loom weights, and kilns.

The catch, and the open secret that few talk about, is that nobody has direct evidence as to who made ancient tools or weapons, or used or distributed them. Prehistoric tools do not come marked with demographic data about these people. Nobody knows their gender, age, health, or other demographic parameters.

However, despite the ambiguity of the evidence and despite the evolution of feminist perspectives in a number of scholarly disciplines, archaeologists still attempt to root

the whole system of gender-allocated technologies in the same supposedly immutable core of human nature that popular culture affirms. The archaeological literature has barely begun to problematize gender (Conkey and Spector 1984; Walde and Willows 1991; Gero and Conkey 1991, Brown 1993). It is quite common for archaeologists to assume that early humanity divided technological work the same way popular culture says we do. Where the evidence is missing, feminist analysis has shown, archaeologists often fill in the blanks by drawing on our common cultural imagination.

Archaeologists, by working with these traditional concepts, legitimate them. When these concepts then filter back into popular culture, they arrive emblazoned with scientific credentials. That is, intentionally or not, archaeology and the related disciplines have "substantiated a set of culture-specific beliefs about the meaning of masculine and feminine, about the capabilities of men and women, about their power relations, and about their appropriate roles in society" (Conkey and Spector 1984:1).

Archaeology, the discipline entrusted with explicating the ancient past, has resisted, probably more than any other social science, meeting the feminist challenge. As a discipline, it offers an object lesson to any who think feminist theory has a manifest destiny to permeate all the social sciences and humanities.

It is interesting to trace the precise mechanisms through which these "scientists of technology" validate tradition and thereby lend themselves to political agendas and even party politics (one thinks particularly of "family values" and concepts of women's vs. men's work). One way to use the imagined past to define tire present and the future is to naively conflate past and present. Archaeologists today are in the same situation in which Carroll found historians, contemplating timeless, theoretically uninteresting women. Of course, archaeologists generally try to avoid projecting modem practices, of say, present-day nomads or subsistence fanners, back into the past. They know that a modem Bedouin is not an ancient Israelite. There is one glaring exception to this circumspection, however: "Although archaeologists are generally cautious about simplistic ethnographic analogies, this has not been true with regard to the subject of gender" (Conkey and Spector, 1984:3).

The violations of scientific procedure are so persistent and so blatant that to this point, most of the discussions about gender in the archaeological literature seem to consist of feminists' comments on the lack of discussion. Nineteen eight-four was a little late for an entire discipline to be new to the theorization of gender, but that is when Conkey and Spector called for examining "the way archeologists perpetuate gender stereotypes" (p. 28) in a thirty-eight-page article soberly titled "Archeology and the Study of Gender." It seems that as of 1984, the entire discipline was in bad epistemological trouble.

We know of no archaeological work in which an author explicitly claims that we can know about gender in the past as observed through the archaeological record who then proceeds to demonstrate that knowledge orto describe how we can know...[but] the archaeological literature...is permeated with assumptions, assertions, and statements of "fact" about gender (1984:2).

Seven years after Conkey and Spector's challenge-seven lean years by the look of it-archaeologist Wylie (1991a), still wondering when it's all going to happen, gives her article the rather plaintive, questioning title: "Gender Theory and the Archeological Record: Why Is There No Archeology of Gender?" Another article of hers the same year features a section with the equally plaintive title, "Why Not Before Now?: Critical Analysis" (199 lb). In case archeologists were not getting the point, Wylie registered the complaint that

Unacknowledged and unsubstantiated, indeed, manifestly untenable assumptions about gender-assumptions which presume the universality of the sexual division of labour, gender dimorphism, and commodification of sexuality typical in ourown contexts-compromise the credibility of otherwise good archeology. (Wylie 1991 b:18).

Archaeology harbors these epistemological ills, acknowledges their existence, then as Eisner (1991:352) points out, does business as usual. In academe as elsewhere, people may acknowledge a problem, yet make no progress toward solving it Instead, the discussion of non-progress begins ever anew, only to flag anew. Eisner cautions that,

Archeological literature traditionally contains the bias that males were the major protagonists in humanity's past, with women having a secondary or incidental role. While many prehistorians would have little trouble with this contention, their interest tends to fade afteragreeing that such a bias exists...the Identification and correction of biases in the data is [neglected]

Two years later, nothing seems to have changed. We have still another article with yet another plaintive, questioning title: Brown's (1993) "FeministResearch in Archaeology: What Does It Mean? Why Is It Taking So Long?" Nor is the outlook promising as of 1996. "About half my students are women," according to Syro-Palestinian archaeologist William G. Dever, "but they are doing exactly the same kind of work the men are doing." And that work is characterized neither by bias-consciousness nor by theorizations of gender.

Three common archaeological practices demonstrate the lack of a scientific method in investigating gender and technology. First is the conflation of past with present, already discussed. Second is the practice of guessing, on the basis of paintings and sculptures, who did what kind of technological work, using what tools. Critiques of this method have been few and relatively recent Speaking of a "dig" investigating Neolithic Europe, Hodder, in 1991, argues against his own prior conclusions and the assumptions behind them:

The data did not warrant detailed discussion of the actual roles of men and women. While women associated symbolically with houses, hearths and pottery, it remained possible that men played a dominant role in houses, in cooking, and in making and using pottery. Similarly the symbolic association between men and hunting does not mean that in practice women did not hunt(p. 11).

Even if a culture has left us a painting or a sculpture of someone in the act of hunting or weaving or cooking, we are not on sure ground. As Hodder (1991:13) reasonably

reminds us, artists tend to show men doing the things the culture expects men to do, and women doing things women are expected to do.

"Cultural representations of gender rarely accurately represent male-female relations, men's and women's activities, or men's and women's contributions in any given society."

A third methodological problem is "the tendency to combine gender with technology" (Rice 1991:440). For example, some assume, instead of proving, that the scheme sometimes found in which "females define a household mode of production and males with potter's wheels and kilns define workshops" can be generalized across all cultures. A fourth methodological problem is that when archaeologists find objects buried near skeletons, they often simply guess who used which tools or utensils. In other words, if a woman is buried with a soup spoon, one would infer that her job in life was to cook soup. There are three catches here. One is that skeletons cannot always be sex-typed. Another is that goods are often assigned gender associations through a series of questionable assumptions or circular reasoning, or both. A third is that the concept of "job" or "occupation" may be improperly projected onto other cultures.

Of course, in the best case, we can leam from bones about the sex of an individual and "(Njutrition, movement and load-bearing in locomotion, pregnancy and lactation in females, injury, and disease" (Morbeck 1991:40). Having determined whether the body belonged to a man or a woman, we might then draw inferences about the objects associated with the skeleton. Here is a man with a sword; he must have been a soldier. Here is a woman with a cooking pot; she must have been a housewife. But alas! assigning sex to skeletal remains may be difficult or impossible because

The most reliable skeletal features in modem humans that distinguish females from males are in the pelvis (St. Hoyme and Iscan 1989). However, although sex characters usually are evident, average species-typical features can be obscured and sex of individuals misidentified. Baskerville (1989), for example, shows that undemutrition and depressed growth rates produce similar pelvic shape in females and males... The difficulties of separating the products of growth and maturation (modeling) and re-modeling in adults as related to hormones, including estrogen, and the biomechanics of movement and load-bearing suggest that we still must be careful in our storytelling about explanations of pelvic variation in humans and inferred life history characters (Morbeck 1991:40).

Moreover, in over-excavated and often looted sites such as ancient Israel, it is rare to find a complete skeleton, largely because, for years, archaeologists, both professional and amateur, "tossed bones aside" as ouninterestingo (Dever, pers. comm. 1995). However, ambiguous physiological evidence does not stop the determined archeologist. In reviewing excavation reports on a fourth century Roman burial site in Belgium, Eisner (1991:352-7) discovered that the researchers had made several unwarranted assumptions. First, they assumed that grave goods associated with certain Roman skeletons represented gendered technologies. Second, they assumed that the associations were evidence as to Ihe work (or recreations) in which the buried person had engaged during life. Third, they assumed that the technologies could tell them about the sex of the

skeleton *and* that the skeletons could tell them about the gender-associations of the technologies! Eisner charges that in such studies,

The females will often be considered those with finer, smaller bones, determining factors which are obviously relative. In burials which cannot be sexed from skeletal remains, and where gender-defined grave goods are associated with the bodies, archaeologists may resort to sexing oh the basis of types of goods.

This means, of course that the very parameter needing investigation—whether an object is indeed gender-specific—is assumed, while researchers use supposedly masculine or feminine artifacts as independent variables. The inquiry is defined out of existence. Eisner found that the report had judged skeletons to be female if they were discovered near jewelry, combs, hairpins, and dice, while male skeletons were thought to be those buried with knives, buckles, clasps and tools. However, 'there is no reason,' Eisner points out, "why males could not have used...combs, rings, and gaming pieces. Women could have used many of the iron uteqsils which were reputedly part of the male goods" (Eisner 1991:354).

In fact, through statistical analysis, she determined that the graves in question belonged, indeed, to two categories, but these were not male and female. Rather they were military (males only) vs. non-mili-tary (males and females), with allegedly "female" objects in several "male" graves. The archaeologists who did the study, however, had followed common practices of explaining away the evidence. They had suggested, for example, that knives or belt buckles buried with females represented gifts from males, or perhaps family heirlooms. A properly theorized archeology of gender and technology will, clearly, not be a simple achievement

Things are even more complicated than these critiques imply. Even if we could somehow discover what some man or some woman was doing in real life, if we could, say, use science-fictional devices to snap pictures of a prehistoric killer with her hand still on the dagger or a potter with her hand on the half-formed pot, we still would not understand the relation of that action to people's work lives. Rice (1991:440b) suggests that the concept of an "occupation" may itself reflect an attempt "to squeeze occupational organizations of traditional societies into modem European *frameworks,"* forcing an identification of each person with precisely one occupation, highlighting activities that are part of the money economy, and diminishing or entirely missing "the role of women in economic activity of any sort" (1991:440a).

Zihlman (1991:6) warns against taking "an isolated behavior...out of its context" In studying living populations of human beings or closely related animals, physical anthropologists investigate not merely the fact that somebody sometimes does something, but also how often, with what level of skill, and with what relation to other elements of social life. Zihlman draws on studies about non-human primates (chimpanzees) and women gatherers to find that in the observed populations, females use tools more often in food-gathering than do males, may spend more of their time acquiring and eating food than do males (due to the demands of pregnancy and lactation), are "active in foraging, collecting, processing and distributing food to other group members" (citing

Lee, 1968-1969) and "live and work in a context with reproductive, social and ritualistic functions...[with] multidimensional lives...integrated into a wider society." Nor can we take one gender out of its context

True gender-conscious analysis considers the relations and inter-relations of females and males and the recognized genders of a society, commanding more than simply envisioning women within prehistoric contexts.

[Such analysis] relies on social organization as a primary motivating factor in past culture systems. It incorporates gender as an active agency contributing to the production of the archaeological record, as gender relations are involved in and constitute all aspects of human society as we understand it(Bolen 1991:400).

However, even if we could observe and quantify behavior in its social world, we would still not know what it meant How did the activity fit into the conceptual world and the emotional environment in which it took place? Even if we refer to indisputably female activities such as gestating, bearing, and nursing, we still do not know what they meant, nor can we trace changes in meaning, especially for preliterate societies.

Information may be hard to get and harder to interpref even when people are available for interview and observation; "anthropological writings are themselves interpretations, and second and third order ones to boot..They are, thus, fictions" (Geertz 1973:15). Even ethnographers' accounts of personal conversations and contacts "raise serious problems of verification" (p. 16). We cannot interview citizens of tribes and empires long gone, let alone find informants with whom to verify our interpretations. Inventories of women's supposed artifacts, activities, or "work areas" such as many archaeologists have offered are products of speculation. It can hardly be emphasized too much that without an appropriate theoretical framework, one has no real access to the study of gender, past or present In fact, one task of such theory is to tell us that there are many things we will never know about the past The principal lesson a properly gendered theory brings us is probably restraint

At the very least without a sound theoretical base, we constantly risk falling into the cultural projections and assumptions that have encumbered past attempts. Another risk is that one may fall prey to a whole new batch of projections and assumptions. I certainly do not advertise feminist theory as a sure and certain guide to Truth. Jobling (1991:243), indeed, complains with some justification that,

Feminists have...not, for the most part, exploited the social sciences in an inadequate way, and have tended to replace one set of anachronisms with another. The term patriarchy is used loosely, out of its anthropological context. Twentieth-century assumptions and concerns are illegitimately projected into the past, as when large family size is taken necessarily to indicate the oppression of women.

Some of these anachronistic interpretations might well work against such feminist aims as, to pick an example not quite at random, the liberation of womankind. For instance, Maurer (1991:414) finds that feminist scholarly practice sometimes leads to the kind of descriptions one might find paralyzing. His complaint is worth quoting at length:

Gender, originally problematized as a cultural construct, becomes "naturalized." This [process] results in a sort of academic fatalism-studies of gender invariably toll into studies of gender hierarchy and gender oppression, even where such oppression may not exist. As numerous feminist scholars have pointed out, one of the major problems with this formulation is its ahistoricism, its amaterialism, its ethnocentrism and its over-generalized universalism (e.g. Yanagisako and Collier 1987). The resulting tendency to universalize the "nature" of gender hierarchy [leads to] the creation of analytic dichotomies used to "explain" this oppression, dichotomies which are usually more culture-bound than the original assumptions regarding gender itself.

The image of the low-tech woman working in "private space" is one univeralized aspect of "gender hierarchy" that most of us have accepted as natural. It is so naturalized that many scholars, feminist or otherwise, rather than challenging it, have simply turned their energies to devising explanations for it. These explanations are, indeed, often "more culture-bound"—and more depressing-than the original assumptions about public and private space or women's and men's work.

The Struggle for New Stories about Technological Woman

Ethnographers have observed that throughout much of the world today women perform by hand the same tasks for which men employ mechanized processes. Women shape pottery by hand, but men take charge of potter's wheels (Rice 1991:439). Similarly, women spin, using small, hand-held spindles, whereas men weave, operating looms. Why is this? Brown (1970:1074, cited with apparent agreement by Rice [1991:436]), implicitly accepting the accuracy of the model of the high-tech man, low-tech woman, explains that women have to combine all their activities with child care. They need "tasks that are repetitive, not dangerous, can be interrupted and resumed, do not require intense concentration, and do not require the participant to be far from home" (Brown 1970:1074). The "explanation," in other words, is that women need boring work in one spot

Behind this explanation lurk several assumptions: The care of helpless young children belongs to women, all women. This care is the principal and defining feature of all women's work, to which all their other work must be subordinated. The locus of this universally female work is necessarily, unquestionably in the family home.

This formulation constitutes an implicit endorsement of the notion of (female) private space vs. (male) public space. It does not really explain why women could not use potters' wheels at home, as many craft potters do in our own culture today. Nothing is said about cultures in which both parents go to work in fields, factories, marketplaces or elsewhere, taking children with them or leaving them with grandparents or other male and female household members. Brown's simple account fails to address the diversity of human experience. It lumps together the work of millions of women of diverse ages, cultures, marital conditions, and millennia into one static, monolithic model. We

recall Carroll's charge that historians describe women as everywhere unchanging and "irrelevant to the intellectual interesting questions of historical change."

Pacy (1983:100-101) and Rice (1991:442) see the same differences Brown sees between men's and women's work, but account for those differences through another culture-bound model (bound, that is, to our own culture). They emphasize male initiative rather than female constraints. Men are dynamic, rationally self-interested actors who appropriate women's tasks when new technology renders these interesting and profitable:

There is a broad negative correlation between women and tools of economic efficiency and/or power, whether these tools are the potter's wheel, the plow, the machete, the vote, or salary equality. When such tools are invented or adopted into a traditionally female activity, the activity shifts into the hands of males.

Women thereby become less productive as their jobs are taken over, or as they are denied access to the more efficient and productive technology (Rice 1991:442). To sum it up crudely, them as has gets; them as gets, produces. Rice draws on the sociology of technological diffusion, citing "the general tendency for innovations to be introduced to males, or for males to have more external social and economic contacts." Pacey ventures a more psychological explanation, one which invokes men's feelings as well as their rational-self-interest

The reason men are attracted to mechanized jobs may be to do with the higher productivity and earnings associated with them, but seems also to be partly due to the way machines convey prestige. The modem male takes pride in being mechanically minded (Pacey 1983:100-101).

The result is familiar. Men do the high tech work, women do the rest Very often, then, women may simply be left with tasks not affected by technological innovation (Pacey 1983:100).

All this well may be, but it explains little. Pacey speaks to men's feelings and states of mind, but leaves us wondering why women would not be equally "attracted" to mechanized jobs, and to "higher productivity and earnings," not to mention prestige and pride, these quiddities being in notoriously short supply, especially for women. Are not women motivated by rational self-interest? Instead, Pacey opposes an active, free-roving man to a helpless, implicitly stationary woman whom man and technology leave behind. We might call this the Technologically Jilted Woman model of diffusion and appropriation. We are reminded of Maurer's warning about "a sort of academic fatalism [whereby] studies of gender invariably fall into studies of gender hierarchy and gender oppression."

Nevertheless, both Rice's and Pacey's formulations have the virtue of being consistent with diffusion studies (Rogers 1983). Technology diffuses first, and sometimes only, to those in the community who have decision-making power, who have the opportunity to observe and try new things, and who can afford to take risks. For Pacey and Rice, these people would certainly be the men.

In summary, for Brown, women are naturally low-tech, given the lives they lead. For Pacey and Rice, the assumption is that women, like men, need the more complex, profitable technologies, but either men get to it first and hog it all or men see women benefiting from a technology and simply take it away from them. Women "are left" with "low" technology.

Stories Women Tell About Technology

What, if anything, do scholars' models of male-appropriated technology tell us about the ways in which women experience and judge technology? Do women commonly see the world of technology as a lost paradise of productivity, profitability, prestige, and pride that ambitious men have wrenched from their unwilling grasp?

Not necessarily. A technophobic strand of feminist thinking maintains, to oversimplify, that technology is one ofMan's viler inventions, unworthy of Woman. Through technology, man exploits, abuses, and ultimately will destroy humanity's habitat Woman, supposedly, should be doing better. There is ample evidence that some women, at least, think of technology as not so much confiscated from them as rejected by them.

Indeed, we lack traditions of women's wonderful technologies on which to base a female self-concept as tool-using, technology-innovating humans. It hardly occurs to us that women have any technology to steal. Despite a perennial search for new premises and images, popular culture, mass media, and literature rarely depict women or girls as inventors or manipulators of interesting, complex technology. Not even science fiction, a genre devoted to technology, does so. On the other hand, it is evident that not all women would welcome such depictions.

As we have seen, male-oriented scholarship imagines a paleontological and archaeological past that would confirm its imagined, male-oriented present Men provide human culture with active, inquiring, experimenting minds—with scholars, in fact Therefore early men provided humans with technology—with culture, in fact Female scholarship is locked in struggle with this somewhat self-congratulatory male imagination. Some feminist thinkers offer to substitute a self-congratulatory female image. They, no less than traditional male-oriented thinkers, tell stories about destructive Technological Man and Technologically Innocent Care-giving Woman.

These stories, by whomever told, fit nicely into another of our cultural stories, that Man goes to War to Protect Woman. Man as Weapons Technologist then, enables Woman to be a non-technologi-cal care-giver who sustains intimacy, care, truth, and love. For many feminists, an antipathy toward technology also relates closely to the notion that rationality and even linear story-telling are pernicious male inventions designed to defeat womanly feeling, "women's ways of knowing," and basic human morality. Women may take comfort from the thought that although they have little power, at least they are morally superior to men. Women have no responsibility for the viler deeds of mankind. Carol Tavris (1992:66-7) exposes the danger of this thinking:

By focusing on the men in power who make war (and the men in armies who fight), we overlook the women who support and endorse war, making it possible. By focusing on male violence, we overlook the men who promote pacifism and negotiation. By regarding aggressiveness as an entrenched and exclusively male quality, and pacifism as an inherent feminist quality, we overlook the ways in which societies in turmoil create dangerous, violent men, and we conveniently forget that most of the greatest padfists and reformers in history have been men.

In fact, Claudia Koontz (1987) and Katherine MBlee(1991) show that Nazi and Klan women, respectively, wrought as much destruction as their situations allowed, in addition to supporting the efforts of their men by welcoming them home to well-run households. For example, Klan women of Indiana in the 1920s organized and conducted boycotts ("Buy 100% American!") that drove black, Catholic, and Jewish victims out of business and out of town. r

Under the circumstances, then, it may be rather self-serving for women to join with men in depicting history's female characters as private creatures who lurk gently in the background, rendering positive support to the family and community, venturing forth only in non-speaking walk-on parts, technologically backward and reluctant, while men alone shape history and fill the battlegrounds with corpses. However, self-serving images inevitably take on lives of their own and become counter-productive.

Archivists Note: The text body footnotes are missing from the PDF, so I'll just include them here until this can be error corrected.[12345]

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[1] See Genesis 4:21,22, in which the origins of technology are framed in geneological metaphors, in terms of masculine inventores: "...Jubal...was the ancester of all who play the lyre and the pipe...Tubal-cain... forged all implements of copper and iron." Although Tavris (1992) points out that many feminists and others have in recent years defined men in terms fo theirsupposed lackof nurturing qualities.

[2] I have also seen, in popular culture, rather joking references to "Woman the Forager's "comedic descendent," Woman as Shopper".

[3] According to David F. Noble, speaking in February 1993 to the Southern Humanities Council in Huntsville, Alabama.

[4] Grave goods are objects found in ancient graves and usually presumed to have belonged to the interred during her or his lifetime.

[5] She cites the amazement of seventeenth century Spanish historian Lopez de Cogolludo (1957: 14-15) that "there are many Indians who work at four or six trades where a Spaniard would have but one."

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The Symbolic Function of 'Technique' As Ideogram In Ellul's Thought

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Abstract

In this essay I compare Ellul's use of the term technique' to Rudolf Otto's use of the term 'Holy'. Otto argues that the idea of the holy is an ideogram that has a symbolic function that goes beyond the representative function of a mere concept. This is necessary owing to the non-rational character of the holy as well as the feet that the holy contains a unity of opposites that is not subject to conceptualization. I argue that Ellul's depiction of technique exhibits similar characteristics. Thus, his use of the term 'technique' may also be Understood as having the symbolic function of an ideogram.

Introductio-Apologia

There are a number of points of method in Jacques Ellul's thought that remain obscure. What is especially peculiar is that this seems to have been partly his intention. Ellul has pointed to the provocative character of his writings. In an interview with Madeleine Garrigou-Lagrange, Ellul revealed that an important goal he set for himself was to spark the initiative of his readership to find their own explanations regarding the method he employed. "I've never given an explanatory guide to my writing. I waited for readers to take the initiative and find their own explanations."[6] This essay is just such an attempt to find my own explanation for Ellul's use of the term 'Technique'. Despite the fact that Ellul attempted to define the term in a precise way, I believe that a considerable degree of clarification is still possible.

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[6] Jacques *LWvJInSeason, Out of Season, An Introduction to the Thought of Jacques Ellul,* Based

Here I intend to take the initiative in order to provide an explanation that Ellul himself might not have recognized. In comparing Ellul's use of the term 'Technique' with Rudolf Otto's use of the term 'holy' I may very well be creating what Martin Marty called "a creative misuse"[7] of Ellul's thought. But in taking the risk of misrepresenting Ellul's thought in this way, we also risk the possibility of gaining new knowledge that may aid us in coming to terms with the technological world we inhabit

Otto and The Idea of The Holy

An important focus of Rudolf Otto's treatment of the idea of the holy is that the phenomenon he wished to study has a basis in the non-rational elements of human religious experience. This posed a serious problem for Otto in providing an adequate way to conceptualize such an important dimension of human experience. Approaching the problem from a Kantian perspective, Otto thought in terms of a schema of the non-rational that would exhibit an a-priori structure of the non-rational aspects of human experience. Owing to the non-rational element within the holy, Otto argued that it is not possible to represent the holy in a simple concept In treating the biblical depiction of the wrath of God, for example, Otto declares, "It will be again at once apparent that in the use of this word we are not concerned with a genuine intellectual 'concept', but only with a sort of illustrative substitute for a concept"[8] He goes on to assert that the term 'wrath' is the ideogram of the majesty and energy of the numen, the object of a numinous experience. The wrath of God is awe-inspiring which, in itself, is a non-rational state in response to the reality of the divine orge.

An ideogram is thus an ideational substitute for a concept that is capable of grasping the non-rational character of the *experience* of the holy as it is manifested in the wrath of God. According to Otto's conception, an ideogram is able to symbolize the complex experience (or perhaps the experience-complex) he denotes "the numinous state of mind", which contains a deep existential significance. And, of course, Otto holds that the numinous state of mind provides access to the holy object itself as its intentional correlate.

Otto's approach is interesting because he seems to have carried out a sort of phenomenology of the holy. The complexity of the experience is such, according to Otto, that a mere concept of the holy could not grasp the reality as it is experienced in its concreteness. For the holy contains within itself opposing characteristics. It is both fascinating and terrifying. As Otto puts it,

We have been attempting to unfold the implications of that aspect of the *mysterium tremendum* indicated by the adjective, and the result so far may be summarized in two

on Interviews by Madeleine Garrigou-Lan-grange, Harper & Row, 1982, p. 73.

[7] Martin E. Marty, "Creative Misuses of Jacques Ellul", in *Jacques Ellul: Interpretive Essays,* edited by Clifford G. Christians and Jay M. Van Hook, University of Illinois Press, 1981, pp. 3-13.

[8] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy,* translated by John W. Harvey, Oxford University Press, 1958, pp. 18-19.

words, constituting, as before, what may be called an 'ideogram', rather than a concept proper, viz. 'absolute unapproachability'.[9]

Otto argues that the ideogram of the divine mysterium is an analogical notion derived from the natural experience of mystery.[10] As such, it cannot exhaust the meaning of the numinous. The very notion of mystery itself seems to place the mysterium tremendum beyond human comprehension. The "wholly other" lies beyond the categories of human comprehension. But, interestingly, Otto also suggests that it is the very mysterium character of the divine that attracts us. Otto provides an excellent summary statement of this peculiar situation,

The daemonic-divine object may appear to the mind an object of horror and dread, but at the same time it is no less something that allures with a potent charm, and the creature, who trembles before it, utterly cowed and cast down, has always at the same time the impulse to turn to it, nay even to make it somehow his own. The 'mystery' is for him not merely something to be wondered at but something that entrances him; and beside that in it which bewilders and confounds, he feels a something that captivates and transports him with a strange ravishment, rising often enough to the pitch of dizzy intoxication; it is the Dionysiac-element in the numen.[11]

In the end, Otto holds that it is necessary to bring the non-rational experience of the holy into the light of clear concepts. But there is a degree to which this does violence to the experience. The symbolic function of an ideogram is to find a middle ground between the sheer non-rational experience and the rational concept.

But it is quite otherwise with religious 'bliss' and its essentially numinous aspect, the *fasdnans.* Not the most concentrated attention can elucidate the object to which this state of mind refers, bringing it out of the impenetrable obscurity of feeling into the domain of the conceptual understanding. It remains purely a felt experience, only to be indicated symbolically by 'ideograms'.[12]

Ellul's Phenomenology of Technique

In the translator's introduction to the revised American edition of *The Technological Society,* John Wilkinson depicts Ellul's study of technique as being a phenomenology of the technological society. In his view, *"The Technological Society* is not a 'phenomenology of mind' but rather a 'phenomenology of the technical state of mind.'"[13]

A peculiar difficulty associated with such a phenomenology is that it must be able to grasp the irrational or non-rational aspects of the technical milieu as well as the rational ones. The experience of those who inhabit the technological society is neces-

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[9] Ibid.p. 19.

[10] Ibid. p. 26.

[11] Ibid. p. 31.

[12] Ibid. pp. 58-59.

[13] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society,* translated from ihe French by John Wilkinson, with an introduction by Robert K. Merton, Vintage Books, 1964, p. xiii.

sarily complex and varied in content And this is what Ellul wished to grasp, i.e., the experiential effects of the technical milieu in its concreteness. This is the only access we have to the technological system as an objective reality. In this regard, Ellul notes,

> We are touching on a trait that I consider important: I never write ideas. I have always attempted to transmit exactly what I have experienced, in objectifying it. I have always thought on the experiential level.[14]

Here Ellul evinces the influence of Marx on his thought It must be remembered how Marx distrusted the influence of ideologies to affect our ability to experience reality within an alienated condition. One of the important functions of scientific theory for Marx was to break through the veil of false consciousness produced by the social environment This entailed avoiding a science of ideas that might exhibit a high degree of coherence but misses the concrete factors of lived experience. As Ellul points out,

Marx always vigorously denied that theory could be reduced to ideas. Theory is a strictly scientific construction. Never is it the same as more or less precise or coherent ideas. Theory must be revised by practice. Ideas have no importance for Maor.[15]

This attitude is confirmed in Ellul's work *The Technological System.* In this work Ellul treats the concept of technique in a chapter devoted to the problem of defining the object of his study, now the technological system. While it is necessary to develop a certain conceptualization of technique, Ellul is quick to point out that he is not simply studying the concept His is not a simple conceptual analysis of technique. By itself the concept is inadequate to grasp the totality of the technological system in its dynamic development This is perhaps what distinguishes *The Technological Society* from *The Technological System.* The first study represents what August Comte called social statics. Its object is the technological phenomenon. The second study represents what Compte called social dynamics. Its object is the technological system Much includes the dynamic flow of change within the technical system.

Now, in both cases Ellul is careful not to focus on the mere concept as a sort of abstract model that can be studied apart from the irrational or aleatory factors that impinge upon its operation. The pure rationality of technique is matched in Ellul's analysis by the many irrationalities that arise in the concrete setting of technique. As Ellul asserts,

How can we deal with technology as though it had a kind of existence in itself? How can we analyze a technological system as a sort of clock running all by itself? Technology exists only because there are human beings participating in it, making it function, inventing, choosing. To claim we can examine technology without regarding the chance

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[14] Jacques Ellul, *In Season, Out of Season,* p. 189.
[15] Jacques Ellul, *lesus & Marx, from Gospel to Ideology,* translated by Joyce Main Hanks, William B. Eerdmans Publsihing Company, 1988, p. 132.

elements, the irregularities produced by man, means proceeding to an illegitimate and, moreover, impossible abstraction[16]

Within the dialectical whole making up Ellul's thought it is possible to say that technique has a bi-polar structure that can be characterized as rational\inational. This can be seen in a very recent work, *The Technological Bluff.* Owing to the specifically human contribution to the makeup of technique, there is an irresolvable irrationality within the technical system.

In other words, except in algebra there is no such thing as purely rational human thinking. Even our most rigorous thinking is inevitably intermingled with opinions and sympathies and feelings. How often our reasoning and knowledge reflect the causes we advocate! Our thinking is never pure. That of computers is always pure unless it is programmed to take into account a specific feature. Yet even though its thinking is rational, there is often an irrational factor in the way that one poses a problem (to the computer!) or in the choice of the problem that one poses.[17]

In a sense, the rationality of technique is surrounded by irrationalities. This is the source of the conflict to which Ellul continually points.[18] Technique tends to absorb these irrationalities. Perhaps this is its achilles heel. After all, the human factor is not just a foreign element in the structure of technique. It comes from us. It is a human product

In *The Technological Society,* Ellul actually depicts technique as a monster having sinews made of human flesh. "In this chapter we have sketched the psychology of the tyrant Now we must study his biology: the circulatory apparatus, the state; the digestive apparatus, the economy; the cellular tissue, man."[19] As such, there is a non-ra-tional or perhaps even irrational element within the technological corpus. Ellul holds out the possibility that this non-rational element could act as a sort of virus infecting technique, undermining its pure rationality. But technique also has the ability to develop antibodies. In order to maintain its health technique must incorporate the

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[16] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological System,* Seabury, 1980, p. 84.

[17] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Bluff,* William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990, p. 164.

[18] Cf. Jacques ellul, *The Technological System,* Seabur, 1980, p. 74.

The Computer faces us squarely with the contradition already announced hroughout the techlnological movement and brought to its complete rigor — between the rational (problems posed because ofthe computer and the answers given) and the irrational (human attitudes and tendencies). The computer glaringly exposes anything irrational in a human decision, showing that a choice considered reasonable is actually emotional. It does not follow this is translation into an absolute rationality, but plainly, this conflict introduces man into a cultural universe that is different from anything he has ever known before. Man's central, his — I might say — metaphysical problem is no longer the existence of God and his own existence in terms of that sacred mystery. The problem is now the conflict beteen absolute rationality and what has hitherto consitituted his person. That is the pivot of all present-day reflection, and, for a long time, it will remain the only philosophical issue. In this way the computer is nothing but, an notheing more than, [technique]. Yet it performs what was virtually the action of the technological whole, it brings it to its are perfection; it makes it obvious.

[19] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society,* p. 147.

irrational elements into its system, assimilating everything to its standard of rationality. Thus, compensations arise in the areas of entertainment, politics, religion, etc.

For our purposes it is only necessary to point out that the bi-polar structure of technique is resistant to simple conceptualization. It can, however be symbolized in such a way as to make it accessible to human experience. Otto pointed out, in this regard, that to understand conceptually and to know are two different things.[20] My suggestion is that Ellul's notion of technique has the symbolic function of an ideogram in that it schematizes what is really a deeply imbedded experience for persons inhabiting a technological environment

David Lovekin's study of technological consciousness confirms this to a certain degree. Lovekin argues that Ellul's theory of technique is a symbolic construction that opposes tire reality of technique.[21] This symbolic function is essential, in Ellul's view, for gaining mastery over the objective environment. As Ellul states,

By the symbolic transformation of reality man, on the one hand, establishes a mediation between reality and himself, and on the other, becomes adept at manipulating reality by manipulating symbols. In other words, he creates the possibility of acquiring a non-material grasp on reality, without which he would be completely unprovided for...The stick used by man ceases to be merely a piece of wood and becomes, for example, a bludgeon. The function of symbolization precedes the fabrication of the tool and that is what makes it possible to develop the conception of a tool or of a weapon.[22]

One of the most serious dangers posed by technique is that it tends to subvert this symbolic function by producing its own symbolic universe. Without knowing it, we become enmeshed in a battle against shadows Much, in itself, maintains the technological system. The struggle for freedom in a technological society is thus to a great extent a struggle to regain the upper hand, so to speak, by developing appropriate symbols so that we might exercise some control over the technological apparatus. Here Karl Mannheim's insight into the positive role of the irrational is pertinent

We must, moreover, realize, that the irrational is not always harmful but that, on the contrary, it is among the most valuable powers in man's possession when it acts as a driving force towards rational and objective ends or when it creates cultural values through sublimation, or when, as pure elan, it heightens the joy of living without breaking up the social order by lack of planning. In fact, even a correctly organized mass society takes into account all these possibilities for the molding of impulses. It must, indeed, create an outlet fpr an abreaction of impulses since the matter-of-factness of everyday life which is due to widespread rationalization means a constant repression of impulses. It is in these offices that the function of "sports" and "celebrations" in mass society as well as that of the more cultural aims of the society is to be found. All the

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[20] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy,* translated by John W. Harvey, Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 135.

[21] Cf. David Lovekin, *Jacques Ellul's Philosophy ofTechnolgical Consciousness.*

[22] Jacques Ellul, "Symbolic Function, Technology and Society," *Journal of Social and Biological Structures,* 1207-218(1978), p. 208.

great civilizations in history have hitherto been able to use sublimations to canalize and give form to irrational psychic energies.[23]

Calling Technique's Bluff

In his work, *The New Demons,* Ellul describes how technique actually takes on a sacred aura, giving it the status of an untouchable standard. Ellul considers it to be a deep human need to sacralize those aspects of our environment that appear to be ultimate. As a new artificial environment, technique has the power to desacralize our first natural environment, making it an object of manipulation and control. By a sort of dialectical reversal, whatever has the power to desacralize one realm of human experience becomes the new sacred. The modem sacred is complex in its structure. The sacred of respect is matched by a sacred of transgression.

I shall set forth as a proposition that the modem sacred is ordered around two axes, each involving two poles, one pole being respect and order, and the other transgression. The first axis is that of lechnique/sex', the second is the 'nation/revolu-tiori axis. Those are the four factors (I say exclusively of every other) of our modem society.[24]

The sacred quality of technique is essential to the assimilation of the human element into the technical system. The power of technique is such that it repels human beings on a deep psychological level. But the power of the sacred is such that it also attracts at the same time. Ellul saw this very early in his study of technique.

Nothing belongs any longer to the realm of the gods or the supernatural. The individual who lives in the technical milieu knows very well that there is nothing spiritual anywhere. But man cannot live without the sacred. He therefore transfers his sense of the sacred to the very thing which has destroyed its former object: to technique itself. In the world in which we live, technique has become the essential mystery, taking widely diverse forms according to place and race. Those who have preserved some of the notions of magic both admire and fear technique. Radio presents an inexplicable mystery, an obvious and recurrent miracle. It is no less astonishing than the highest manifestations of magic once were, and it is worshipped as an idol would have been worshipped, with the same simplicity and fear.[25]

The tension involved in this complex reaction has the effect of paralyzing persons within a technological milieu. The resulting paralysis in the face ofthe simultaneous attraction/repulsion of technique is perhaps the most important factor in the system's self-constitution. An important purpose in Ellul's study of the sacred character of modem technique is to desacralize the technological my sterium. This is a condition for the liberation of the person from technological determination.

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[23] Karl Mannheim, "The Crisis in Valuation,: in *The Technological Threat,* ed. Jack D. Douglas, Prentice Hall, 1971, pp. 62-63.

[24] Jacques Ellul, *The New Demons,* Seabury, 1975, p. 70.

[25] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society,,* p. 143.

Reinserted into a sacred, a prisoner of his myths, he is completely alienated in his neoreligions-this brave 'modem man.' Every religion is both necessary and alienating. To smash these idols, to desacralize these mysteries, to assert the falseness of these religions is to undertake the one, finally indispensable liberation of the person in our times.[26]

Now, my argument is that in his study of technique Ellul must be able to penetrate the ambiguous structure of the sacred. A simple concept of technique is not possible, owing to the fact that concepts are always exclusiveof their contraries. Thus, a concept of technique could not cany the burden of representing both the rational and irrational character of technique as an object of sacred awe.[27] As an ideogram, the term 'technique' must be able to do more than represent its object It must be able to mediate a complex experience including opposite qualities of attraction and repulsion.

This method of symbolizing technique gives Ellul a purchase on technique so that he can effectively call technique's bluff. This is the purpose of Ellul's recent work, *The Technological Bluff.* Ellul's concern in this study is to point to the many lacunae in the technological system and the ways in which technical discourse covers them up. The many ambiguities, the uncertainty, lack of balance, and unpredictability of technique all constitute, in Ellul's view, a huge wager that the people of the twentieth century have unconsciously placed on technique. Indeed, American readers may not be generally aware that this was the original French title of *The Technological Society.* Ellul's great 1954 study of technique was titled, *La Technique ou I'enjeu du siecle. Technique or the Gamble of the Century.*

Ellul's message is that we have staked our lives on the efficacy of technique. Is it any surprise that within such a life or death game modem people feel the need to insure everything? The perspective of faith that Ellul places in opposition to technique would suggest that human life, and perhaps the whole natural creation, is not a game but a gift.

In our time, the life of freedom and the responsibility that goes with it begins by calling technique's bluff. Then, perhaps, tire next century may not be seduced into playing the same game.

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[26] Jacques Ellul, *The New Demons,* p. 228.

[27] Cf. David Lovekin, "Technology and the Denial of Mystery", p. 75. "For Ellul, mystery is that which cannot be spelled out in contradictory terms; mystery is that which transcendes and gives meaning to the [here] and now." (spelled "hear" in the original)

Book Reviews

Gender on the Line: Women, The Telephone, and Community Ufe

by Lana Rakow (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).
Reviewed by Jonathon Stone
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Among the older generation in a small Swedish community in northeastern Minnesota, it is still common to find men who will refuse to answer the phone when at home. As my friend Judy Andersen tells it, these people grew up with an understanding of the telephone as a woman's *space,* and this continues to shape telephony in their community. Some men will even have their wives call the hardware store to ask about tractor parts rather than do it themselves. In small communities across the nation, one can find similar stones.

Lana Rakow's already classic *Gender on the Line* chronicles the social practice of telephony in another small midwestern town which she calls Prospect Through ethnography and historiography, Rakow develops a nuanced account of the telephone in Prospect's community life and in tire social production of gender. *Gender on the Line* is one of a very few full-length cultural studies of the telephone. The first half of tire book focuses on a history of Prospect and its telephone company. The second half consists of extensive interviews with six women of Prospect, each representing a different part of the community and a different experience of the telephone. Prospect is remarkable for both maintaining an independent phone company into the 1980s and for that company being owned and run by a woman until 1983. By studying the telephone in a small community, Rakow is able to consider the telephone in the context of the relationships of the people it connects. Thus, *Gender on die Line's* richness of ethnographic detail and local focus make it a central text among critical studies of the telephone. But the cutting edge of Rakow's analysis Ues in its feminist orientation: she argues that the telephone is central in producing the gendered division of labor within the community. At the same time, the telephone is itself a gendered social practice.

The title *Gender on the Line* is meant as a double entendre, and also points to two interrelated themes of Rakow's book. First and foremost, Rakowtreats gender not as a fixed category but as a *problem.* Since gender is socially produced and reproduced, it is prone to contestation and crisis. Thus, the telephone is a key to understanding the production and reproduction of gender relations in Prospect Second, in the best

tradition of feminist scholarship, Rakow shows how telephony is a gendered set of social practices. Gendered meanings are at the very center of the telephone's social life, thus, an understanding of gender is crucial to a substantive theory of the telephone. This is a useful corrective to scholarship on the telephone that treats it either as a neutral instrument suspended outside of a gendered social world (the instrumentalist view) or as a total, ungendered mediation of social life (the substantivist view). Her critique of Stephen Kem is perhaps most apt in this respect

Because the telephone *can* transcend space and time and bypass social hierarchies, these writers [such as Kem] have made the mistake of assuming that technical possibility translated into social practice. To test this assumption, we must ask who has been able to use the telephone for these purposes, and what the consequences have been for those who have not been able to do so.

By demystifying the telephone and Growing it to be enmeshed in the social world of gender, she simultaneously forecloses the possibility of universalisms like Kem's and constitutes a major theme of her own analysis. Rather than transcending space and time, the telephone is part of negotiating women's relationships to different places and restrictions on movement. In Chapter 3, "The Telephone and Women's Place" Rakow offers several accounts of this process: women who have moved for their husbands' careers use the phone to maintain relationships with distant friends and family; women who have less access to transportation use the phone to coordinate activity and get the most out of every trip; women whose obligations to their children restrict their mobility use the phone to maintain social relationships outside the household; other women use the phone to help ameliorate fears about being home alone. Thus, the telephone is a key to understanding the spatial organization of gender.

This theme blends with Rakow's recuperation of women's talk and her discussion of their use of the telephone. Throughout the book, Rakow critiques perspectives that trivialize women's talk on the phone, and instead shows how it is central to maintaining community and family life. In Chapter 2, Rakow characterizes women's talk as "visiting," the exchanging of information about personal relationships, events in one's life, and one's family. Since women spendmore time at home, the telephone provides an opportunity to "get out" and talk with people more often. It also offers an opportunity for interpersonal intimacy that is unavailable at the local coffee table or in other semi-public contexts. The theme of women's talk also pervades the interviews. Most interviewees cast their talk in terms of relationships: Nettie disapproves of -"idle talk" but uses the phone for community work and care-giving; Ethel, an elderly woman who can'tget out as much as she used to, uses the phone to keep up with old friends and to maintain social contact in the community; conversely, Carolyn, who moved to Prospect recently, uses the phone to maintain relationships outside the community ; Gayle used the phone as an escape when she was a housewife, and teenagers Kristin and Amy use the phone to provide some connection with the outside world to alleviate fears of being home alone at night. In each of these cases, the phone becomes a central part of women's lives and a central aspect of the gendered division of community life

— compensating for distance or isolation, but in the same stroke preserving the social organization of gender by making it easier to live with.

As Rakow offers in her introduction, *Gender on the Line* uses the telephone as a way of mapping gender relations in Prospect This remains a central tension in her study, and points to a larger issue: how to develop a substantive theory of teclmology in Ure context of a larger social analysis. Unavoidably, Rakow shifts between instrumental and substantive discussions of the telephone. In the former, the telephone is simply a conduit for existing social relations external to it; in the latter, she considers telephony itself as a social practice and telephone and meanings around it as artifacts of social life. To a certain degree, this shifting is a matter of focus and balance, but it also points to some more confounding questions for social theory: How do we discuss technology when it's not the sole or central focus of critical analysis (as in Rakow's case)? How do we account for gender in a substantive theory of technology? Clearly, gender plays a tremendous role in the production of technology and technology plays a major role in the production of gender, but neither construct is entirely determined by the other.

Beyond these basic questions, Rakow's analysis has additional implications for feminist theory. Carol Stabile has effectively shown the problems of falling into "technophilia" (celebration of technology) or "technophobia" (dismissal of technology) in feminist theory, and Rakow's analysis avoids both traps. She treats technology itself as a site of contestation, thus avoiding the kind of essentialism involved in more technophobic feminism that posits technology as a purely male domain, while also keeping in mind the larger context of patriarchy that conditions any woman's use of technology. In this way, Rakow is able to move beyond the debates in feminist theory around essentialism and anti-essentialism, and her work is consonant with other areas of feminist scholarship moving beyond these bi-narisms. While I doubt very much thatRakowwouldassociate herself with the work on gender "performativity" inspired by Judith Butler, *Gender on the Une* offers a cogent, coherent account of gender produced and performed. Like Butler, Rakow interprets the thesis that gender is socially produced as a call to studying its production, rather than treating gender as a fixed and stable category. In short, Rakow's work can be read in the context of current debates of feminist theory although she herself does not foreground these debates. While there currently exists little dialogue between high theoretical ruminations on Butler's concept of performativity and more empirical ethnographic work like Rakow's, as readers, we should make those connections across the traditional theory/research divide in feminist scholarship.

Concerning the study of technology, Rakow's analysis raises serious questions about the possibility of considering a single technology in isolation from a substantive perspective. For instance, how did the influx of domestic communications technologies like the radio, phonograph and television (in addition to the telephone) affect domestic gender relations in places like Prospect? Consider Raymond Williams' famous concept of mobile privatization—the tendency for a society to become more spatially diffused and mobile through increased development and dependence on communications and trans-

portation technologies. The social history of the telephone is key to understanding mobile privatization, but we can't consider the telephone separately from the other elements of mobile privatization affecting communities like Prospect: the growth of highways and private automobile ownership and the decline of public transportation; the nationalization of food, drug, and clothing retail and the concurrent rise of malls and supermarkets, decline of downtowns, and flight of capital from local circuits of exchange (e.g. X the growthofmass media such as phonography, radio, television and film replacing community festivals and traveling shows; the rise of subdivisions and diffused models of urban planning; the growth of a feminized labor force in the "service" industries; and so forth. While Rakow acknowledges the importance of these issues, they are beyond the scope of her study — yet they demand further attention.

Gender on the Une is thus an important work both for its own nuanced analysis and for the field of questions it raises. Beyond the obvious "directions for further research" implied by her work — such as studies of women and the telephone in urban or suburban environments, or the gendered use of communications in work environments — Rakow's book speaks to a whole range of other issues. *Gender on the Line canbe* read in a context of common concern between feminist theory and ethnography; and it has quickly become required reading for anyone seriously interested in critical scholarship on the telephone, or more generally, on gender and technology.

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Feminism Confronts Technology

by Judy Wajcman (University Park, P.A.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 184pp.

Reviewed by Jacqueline Ciaccis

University of Illinois

Men's monopoly over technology has created several political power struggles. Stereotypes and the de-valuing of women's contributions to science perpetuate the patriarchal dominance of technology in today's world. Judy Wajcman in *Feminism Confronts Technology* addresses the fairly new field in feminist scholarship which centers on the debate over gender and technology. Wajcman questions the influence

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[1] Steven Lubar's *Infoculture* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993) and Claude S. Fischer's^menca *Calling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) offer useful social accounts of the telephone. While both cite Rakow's work as foundational, neither takes gender as a central concern.

[2] Rakow, p. 4

[3] See Carol Stabile, *Feminism and the Technological Fix* (Ann Arbor. University of Michigan Press, 1994).

[4] Performativity is an issue throughout Butler's work, but is first advanced afer a critiaue of Gayle Rubin's sex/gender dichotomy in *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

[5] See Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Shocken, 1973).

of technology on today's women. She examines several technical spheres from a broad cultural standpoint in which technology is seen as a social construct Wajcman begins her book with an historical look at science and the emergence of power driven technologies. She continues from there to show how the technological society has depowered women by overlooking and devaluing the feminine while lauding the masculine.

Wajcman makes her task manageable by limiting her defense to specific technologies. She prefaces her work by stating that she does not "deal with the technologies of surveillance and political control, nor with energy technology. Various aspects of information and communication technologies have also been excluded" (ix). Instead, she devotes a chapter each to some of the most politically hot technologies that highlight women's struggles: the technology of production, reproductive technology, domestic technology, and the built environment

The publications of feminist scientists and their assertions of the historical and sociological relationships between gender and science create the foundation for a unique analysis of women's relationship with technology. Further, the connection between technology and gender is enhanced by presenting scientific knowledge as equivalent to patriarchal knowledge. What makes the argument work is Wa-jcman's choice to go beyond an essentialist assertion that a feminine value — based science should replace the present masculine one. She recognizes that such replacement theories will not solve the problems of inequality present in today's technological society. Since Wa-jcman's task is a cultural one, she demands that we simultaneously look for a new set of societal *values* to focus on.

The first thing that must be said is that the values being ascribed to women originate in the historical subordination of women. The belief in the unchanging nature of women and their association with procreation, nurturance, warmth and creativity, lies at the very heart of traditional and oppressive conceptions of womanhood. Women value nurturance, warmth and security or at least we believe we ought to, precisely because of not in spite of, the meanings culture and social relations of a world where men are more powerfill than women (p.9).

The first sphere Wajcman enters is that of production and paid work, the existing sexual divisions of labor are examined from a technological standpoint Looking at office automation and other new technologies, for example, it becomes clear that the new "liberating" technological advances are simply fresh ways to make the way women's employ ability is repressed while new health and safety concerns emerge.

Chapter three is cleverly titled "Reproductive Technology: Delivered Into Men's hands." The strength of the argument in this chapter is in the historical critique of scientific and medical knowledge as gendered. Further, the age-worn view of the body as machine and the physician as technician is challenged.

Nowhere is the relationship between gender and technology more vigorously contested than in the sphere of human biological reproduction ... Central to this analysis and of increasing relevance today is the perception that the processes of pregnancy

and childbirth are directed and controlled by ever more sophisticated, and intrusive technologies. Implicity in this view is a concept of reproduction as a natural process, inherent in women alone, and a theory of technology as patriarchal, enabling the male domination of women and nature (p. 54).

Domestic issues are often at the forefront of feminist arguments. The same follows for Wajcman who shows how domestic technologies oppress rather than liberate the home lives of women. The first myth she dispels is that industrialization improved the live of housewives. The proof is similar to that of the paid work place: even though the tasks performed became less physically demanding, mechanization created a whole new set of demeaning choices to replace the ones eliminated. For example, the office worker's typewriter may have been replaced by a word processor but the para-professional status remained. At home simple household tasks such as cleaning were replaced by domestic errands such as shopping and other consumption based tasks. Therefore, even though the domestic environment itself became more manageable, the duties of the housewife expanded beyond the walls of the home.

The house itself is a built reflection of culture. Historically, each??? creates surroundings that are related to one another in a way that perpetuates certain sex-stereotypes. The new feminist focus today goes beyond domestic work spaces. "Architecture and urban planning have orchestrated the separation between women and men, private and public, home and paid employment, consumption and production, reproduction and production, suburb and city" (p. 110).

The element of control threads its way through all of the areas of the environment we build. Appropriately then, Michel Foucault's discussion of Bentham's panopticon creates a startling but relevant image for the reader.

Wajcman shows that like the panoptican the structure of the building ensures that control is largely achieved through self-discipline. That women are bound by certain forms in the public and private sphere is obvious. Personal observations of office size proved formen vs. women is one such example. Homes built rationally for efficiency rather than creatively for security is another. To employ technological means in our environment is impossible if patriarchal attitudes continue to dominate all areas of life. Without a change in attitude the route to architectural change that liberates and frees the life of women is forever blocked.

A although Arnold Pacy's *The Culture ofTechnology* is mentioned only briefly, his influence is seen throughout Wajcman's book. Culture is offal the concern of feminist politics, and both Wajcman and Pacy are concerned with several areas of oppression. The struggle over the definition of technology in order to see its non-neutral dimensions are beginning to come to light Both Wajcman and Pacy do not limit technology to objects or artifacts. Instead they see the technological enterprise as a human activity with cultural dimensions. And only when we grasp this broader definition can beliefs about expertise and the definitive bounds we form for our societal existence be changed to allow for equal empowerment As for future technologies, the way to change our

current means of developing and utilizing technologies requires a change in values along with a change in technologies themselves.

Technology is value laden. Beliefs about progress, resources and expertise keep feminine values from being successful and valued. Beyond a call for new values must come an awareness that with modernization, new does not necessarily mean improved. If we hope to find a way to de-gender technology, the underlying masculine drive for power and expertise must allow for the feminine needs for harmony and creativity to balance out the one-sided assumptions that traditionally have formed our technological world.

Wajcman helps us see that gender is indeed one of many areas where accepted oppressive technologies and the monopolies that sustain them are present Looking at our technological environment, and changing our values to increase the involvement of the oppressed, brings us to a more enlightened society where we may hope to move forward into a more balanced technological era.

Issue #16 Jan 1996 — The Ethics of Jacques Ellul

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In This Issue

About This Issue

by David W. Gill, Guest Editor
This issue of *The Ellul Forum* is about Jacques Ellul's ethics. Ellul has written often enough, and especially in *To Will and To Do: An Ethical Research for Christians* (ET: Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), thatmorality (and ethics—he does not make any consistent distinction between the terms) is "of the order of the fall" and "of the order of necessity." In terms ofhis biblical theology, human morality and ethics are our replacement for the living guidance of God intended in the creation. Separated and alienated from God, who is the Good, we fill the vacuum not just with idols but with morality.

All too commonly, Ellul argues, Christian morality and ethics has been shaped by the morality and ethics of the world—even if expressed with pious religious language. A Christian ethic is, thus, impossible, if by "ethic" we mean what commonly goes by that

term (a set of moral values, rules, principles, virtues, etc., which defines what is good and right). Having then swept away all systems of ethics, Ellul wishes to raise anew the most basic question of a Christian ethic: how ought we to live out our relationship to God in a world antagonistic to his character and purposes?

In his programatic early work *The Presence of the Kingdom* (ET: Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951; the following quotations are from pp. 20-22), Ellul says "the problem that confronts us is that of the Christian ethic". This ethic "has nothing in common with what is generally called 'morality,' and still less with the Christian 'virtues' in the traditional sense... It is never a series of rules, or principles, or slogans ..." But a valid Christian ethic will show us how our "direct relation with the act of God in Jesus Christ" can't take "concrete form and become a vital element in daily life." Such an ethic is necessary as "a guide, an indication given to faith, a real assistance to the brethren." It is possible to define "the ethical demands of God" in terms of "its outline, and its conditions, and study some of its elements for purposes of illustration." There are, after all, "consequences of faith which can be objectively indicated."

The status of Ellul's Christian ethic is clear it is temporary in that "it needs to be continually revised, re-examined, and re-shaped by the combined effort of the Church asawhole." *Uis indicative* rather than imperative in that it assists but does not resolve or replace the living "fight of faith, which every Christian must wage." It is apologetic in that its purpose is not to justify our behavior but to lead those who observe us to see through and beyond our actions to Jesus Christ and to glorify God.

Ellul's plan was to elaborate such a Christian ethic in relation to the Pauline virtues offaith, hope, and love. *Hepub^shedHopeinTime of Abandonment* (ET: New York: Seabury, *VH3),LivingFaith* (ET: SanFrancisco: Harper&Row, 1983), and several essays on love to lay the foundation. *The Ethics of Freedom* (ET: Grand Rapids: Wiliam B. Eerdmans, 1976) outlined a Christian ethic corresponding to hope. *The Ethics of Holiness* (still unpublished in French or English) will outline a Christian ethic corresponding to faith. An "ethics of relationship" was never written but was going to be an outline of a Christian ethic corresponding to love.

For one who can be quoted as saying that a Christian ethic is "impressible," Ellul has produced a surprisingly voluminous ethical corpus. And yet for someone who wrote that a valid Christian ethic will be a "real assistance to the brethren," Ellul has frustrated a lot of his readers by leaving them as uncertain as ever about how to act in faith, hope, and love in the presence of particular quandaries. In my own view,

Bulletin Board

Ellul is a greater "prophet" than "teacher" in ethics. That is, his insights brilliantly illuminate ethics in general, and Christian ethics in particular. His work helps me much in the same way that that of Soren Kierkegaard does.

Nevertheless, one can and must go further than Ellul (indeed, he often urged just this). In my view, the role of the church as a community of moral discernment, formation, and action needs fuller development A fuller account of character and virtue needs to be built on Ellul's rather existential treatment of faith, hope, and love. And a fuller account of biblical and Christian ethical teaching can be developed without lapsing into the abstract, philosophical principle trap so vigorously rqected by ElluL

A complete and adequate assessment of Ellul's ethics remains to be carried out—and will be substantially aided by the eventual publication of *The Ethics of Holiness.* My own book (originally a Ph.D. dissertation in 1979), *The Word ofGod in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul* (Metuchen NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1984) was a preliminary assessment as of the late Seventies, but much more study needs to be done. The four essays which follow are simply four "soundings" in his ethics.

Marva Dawn (theologian and author with Christians Equipping for Ministry, Vancouver, Washington) discusses how the biblical concept of the "powers" undergirds Ellul's approach to ethics. In a nice phrase she calls Ellul's work a "fore-ethics." John Howard Yoder (Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame) is critical of Ellul's apparent failure to provide a workable casuistry in his ethics. He finds Ellul's ethical analysis of violence unsatisfactory. Daniel Cerezuelle (sociologist and philosopher of technology with the *Association Jacques Ellul* in Bordeaux) provides an account of Ellul as an ethical activist in the campaign to prevent the destruction of the Aquitaine Coast by developers. Ken Morris (who studied Elul's work in graduate programs at-New College Berkeley and Duke University and who is now preparing to practice law after studies at the University of California's Boalt Hall Law School) reflects on the ways Ellul's insights illuminate the ethics of the legal profession in the U.S.

Bordeaux Update

In the July 1994 issue of *The Ellul Forum* a modest appeal was made for funds to assist in the purchase of Jacques and Yvette Ellul's house near the University of Bordeaux for a headquarters for the *Association Jacques Ellul.* David Gill spent all of July 1995 in Bordeaux investigating possibilities for North American suppport of and participation in such a project This included lengthy discussions with Jean Ellul, Daniel Cerezuelle, Jean-Francois and Burney Medard, Patrick Troude-Chastenet, Didier Nordon, and other representatives of the Association, the Ellul family, and the University. With Jean Ellul he toured the whole house and property and had a good look at Ellul's books and manuscripts.

Out of these discussions a relatively detailed proposal emerged for raising a million dollars over the next five years in order to purchase the house and develop a "Jacques Ellul Center for Sociological and Theological Studies." This proposal was reviewed by forty scholars, writers, and business people in France and North America, all of whom have indicated strong appreciation of the work of Ellul. The responses to this proposal were then reviewed by Joyce Hanks, Darrell Fasching, Carl Mitcham, and David Gill

in Philadelphia, November 17,1995— -and by Daniel Cerezuelle and members of the Association Jacques Ellul in Bordeaux at the same time.

While our consensus on both sides of the Atlantic was that the project is eminently worthy it became clear that this group of forty could not muster the finances or time necessary to move forward with the plan. The house is now on the general real estate market in Bordeaux and, unless a major benefactor comes forward in the very near future, we are regretfully giving up on this ambitious project.

Donations for the Ellul Publications Project

While the "big plan" to purchase Ellul's house for a study center appears to have failed, there remains the challenge of or*ganizing* and safely storing Jacques Ellul's papers and manuscripts. *The Association Jacques Ellul* in Bordeaux is moving ahead with this task, exploring options with both the University of Bordeaux and the Bordeaux and Pessac city libraries. Hundreds of audio tapes of Ellul's biblical studies and dozens of video tapes are in the hands of Association members and it is hoped that eventually a broader audience may profit from them.

In addition, Ellul's autobiographical manuscript (two volumes), his Ethics of Holiness (two volumes), and possibly another book or two, remain in the handwritten form Ellul prepared. As many of you know, Ellul's handwriting is very difficult to read! Before any progress can be made toward the editing and publication of remaining works by Jacques Ellul these manuscripts must be converted into typescripts. A secretary familiar with Ellul's handwriting is available to be hired to cany out this important task—but there is no money to pay her!

During the next six months you are invited to make a donation (tax-deductible in the U.S.)to assist the *Association Jacques Ellul* in preserving and transcribing Ellul's manuscripts. We already have five pledges of $500 and we are hoping that all of those who value Ellul's legacy will join in our effort Make your checks payable to "The Ellul Forum" (and designate your donation for the "Ellul Publications Fund") and send them to Prof. Darrell Fasching, Dept, of Religious Studies, University of South Florida., Tampa FL 33620. We will forward your donations to France and the work can begin.

Upcoming Programs on Jacques Ellul and Ian Barbour

The Second Jacques Ellul Symposium will be held at the National Association for Science, Technology and Society meeting to be held, Feb 8-11 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington Virginia. The Ellul session will feature a keynote address by Jerry Mander on "Television and the Global Homogenization of Consciousness: Cultural, Political & Social Consequences." Panelists responding are: Dick Stivers, Namir Khan, and Bill Vanderburg.

The session on "The Life and Work of Ian Barbour, Theologian and Philosopher" will feature a presentation by Barbour with responses from James Nash and Leonard

Waks. Moderator, Richard Dietrich, guest editor for the next issue of the Forum, will organize the material from this session for presentation in the July 96 issue which will be dedicated Ian Barbour's work.

The Coming of the Millennium

Trinity Press International will be publishing a new book by Darrell Fasching entitled: *The Coming of the Millennium: Good News for the Whole Human Race.* The book dedication reads: "In memory of Jacques Ellul, 19— to 1994, who taught me that evangelical theology means good news for the whole human race." The book is an ethical critique of the tradition of evangelism as "conquering the world for Christ" and of the abuse of apocalyptic thought by figures such as Hal Lindsey. It argues that the central message of the gospels is God's hospitality to the whole human race - a message desperately needed as we enter a new millennium of pluralistic global interdependence in a technological civilization. The book is scheduled for release in April.

Forum: The Ethics of Jacques Ellul

The Concept of "the Powers" as the Basis for Ellul's Fore-ethics

by Marva J. Dawn

Jacques Ellul does and does not do ethics. His use of the biblical concept of the "principalities and powers" undergirds both his refusal to construct an ethical system and his suggestion of an ethics that takes seriously structural and cultural good and evil. Ellul's work is better described as a "fore-ethics," a preparation for ethics that is rooted in a profound awareness of structural realities, but which usually fails to give concrete ethical guidance or systematic ethical development

Ellul was one of the first to apply the concept of "the principalities and powers" to domains other than the state. In a series of three articles in the journal *Foi et Vie,* in 1946 and 1947, Ellul warned that it was necessary to pay attention to the "structures" of our society and itemized "la technique, la production, l'etat, la ville, la guerre, and la sterilisation" as those requiring further study.[1] The third article focused especially on political realism, which Ellul called "une puissance corruptrice enorme," and offered suggestions for a different realism as the Christian response to the powers.[2]

Throughout his works in *sociologie,* Scripture, and ethics, Ellul unfolded an extensive analysis of the nature of the powers.[3] However, because his programatic essays of 1946-47 have not been translated into English and most of his other works fall into distinctive tracks of social criticism or theology, few of his readers are aware of the broad-ranging significance of the concept of "the powers" in Ellul's thinking. My doctoral dissertation demonstrated, using these first articles in For *et Vie* and the various passages on the powers in his later works, that the concept of the "principalities and

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[1] "Chronique des problemes de civilisation: en guise divertissement, "For *et Vie* 44.6 (Sept/Oct 1946): 680; "Problemes de civilisation: on demande un nouveau Karl Marx," *Foi et Vie* 45.3 (Mai/Juin 1947): 374.

[2] "Problemes de civilisation: Lerealisme politique," Foi et Vie 45.7 (Nov/Dec 1947): 714,720-34. I am currently preparing translations of this article (and the two listed in the pevious note) for publication by William B. Eerdmans.

[3] 1 prefer to retain the French term *sociologie* to suggest that Ellul's social analyses bear little relation to the statistically-oriented "sociology" common in North America.

powers" acts as an important bridge between Ellul's two major research tracks and is a significant key for interpreting his work.[4]

The Setting of the Stage

The first major connection of the "powers" idea and Ellul's foundations for Christian ethics appears in *The Presence of the Kingdom* (1948).[5] Ellul roots his methods in the dialectical nature of reality, described by the image of the "two cities" to which Christians belong. They live in a constant inner tension; the world and the kingdom of God can never coincide, but neither must be abandoned (46). As Christians plunge into social and political problems to modify the opposition between God's order and the world's disorder, their action should take these three forms: (1) an assessment (with revelation as its starting point) of social and political conditions, (2) efforts to incarnate Ihe will of God in actual institutions, and (3) a ceaseless watching so that God's order of preservation (beyond whose limits lurks danger to society) is maintained (47-8). Ellul warns that it is an error to think that these actions will progressively bring in God's kingdom or that they are permanent; nevertheless, these are necessarily revolutionary acts which must be guided by the Holy Spirit (48-9).

Next, Ellul defines Christian ethics by rejecting the notion of moral principles and focusing instead on the person of Christ, "the principle of everything." Living eschatologically is the opposite of an ethic (as conventionally understood) because it does not spring from a cause, but moves toward an end (52). Such an "ethic" entails a freedom characterized by a life and death struggle against the powers (78). Ellul rejects any sort of "technics" as means of action since the Christian life "moves in the opposite direction of the triumphant path traced by modem technics" (79).

Thus, Ellul's lifelong battle against the powers' functioning in the modem world is intertwined with his resistance to "systems" in Christian ethics. He objects that purely materialistic or rationalistic intellectual methods prevent us from understanding the powers. "Only the intervention of the Holy Spirit can transform our intelligence, in such a way that it will not be swallowed up by our systems, and that it will be sufficiently penetrating" (124).

Ellul challenges the church to battle the powers — not by developing economic or political theories, but through the creation of a new style of life. He complains that there is no longer a distinctive Christian lifestyle in which everything, to the smallest detail, is questioned from the perspective of God's glory (145-48). For spiritual and material reasons, the quest for such a lifestyle in combat with the powers must be a corporate search (149).

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[4] Marva J. Dawn, "The Concept of 'the Principalities and Powers' in the "Works of Jacques Ellul" Ph.D. dissertation (University of Notre Dame, 1992).

[5] Jacques Ellul, *The Presence of the Kingdom* (French edition 1948; English translation by Olive Wyon; New York: Seabury Press, 1967). Page numbers cited in the text refer to the 1967 edition.

Specifically, Ellul calls Christian intellectuals to awareness, including "the duty of understanding the world and oneself,... a fierce and passionate destraction of myths," a genuine realism, and the need to understand reality on the human (and not abstract) level (118-19). Ellul criticizes statistical methods and media information, which produce only an illusory knowledge of the world (120-1). He advocates searching behind all forms of propaganda to study present problems as profoundly as possible, to understand the structure or framework of our civilization as the expression of its spiritual reality. Such awareness leads to a requisite" 'engagement' (or act of resolute commit-tal)" in which the intellectual recognizes that he or she is subject to the same powers (121-22).

Finally, Ellul explicitly declares that he does not intend to give solutions, but "to open the way for a work of the renewed Church." *The Presence of the Kingdom* serves as "a prologue to more extended study which would examine the problem of our present civilization from every aspect"—a task undertaken in Ellul's subsequent sociological works. He expresses his wish that "fellow-Christians are stirred by the present study to feel the urgency and the depth of these questions" (137). His writings are to be "understood as a call to arms, showing what enemy we have to confront, what warfare we have to wage, what weapons we have to use" (141). All Ellul's works should be read in light of this foundational theme of exposing the enemy, viz., the principalities and powers.

The Powers We Confront

Ellul's concept of the powers was modified as well as elaborated over the years in his various biblical and ethical studies. His first thorough explication occurs in *The Ethics of Freedom,* where, rejecting the extreme options of "demons" and of "simply a figure of speech," he places himself somewhere between these middle possibilities of interpretation for the biblical language of principalities and powers:

Are they less precise powers (thrones and dominions) which still have an existence, reality, and, as one might say, objectivity of their own? Or do we simply have a disposition of man which constitutes this or that human factor a power by exalting it as such...? In this case the powers are not objective realities which influence man from without. They exist only as the determination of man which allows them to exist in their subjugating otherness and transcendence.[6]

Then, in one of the most personal passages on the subject, Ellul describes this connection between the powers and social realities:

Political power has many dimensions, e.g., social, economic, psychological, ethical, psycho-analytical, and legal. But when we have scrutinized them all, we have still not apprehended its reality. I am not speaking hastily or lightly here but as one who has passed most of his life in confrontation with their question and in their power. We cannot say with Marx that the power is an ideological superstructure, for it is always

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[6] Jacques Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom* translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 151-52. Page references in the text of following discussion refer to this edition.

there. The disproportion noted above leads me to the unavoidable conclusion that another power intervenes and indwells and uses political power, thus giving it a range and force that it does not have in itself. The same is true of money... [and] technology (153-4)-

This consciousness of powers and their presence in social realities undergirds all of Ellul's critical social assessments, though he couches his perceptions in such terms as "necessity" to refrain from bringing traditional religious references into the academic milieu of *sociologie.* His insistence that he speaks out of a lifelong confrontation with the question of the powers highlights the notion as a critically important key for interpreting his work.

Ellul describes the powers as "secular and in every sense human, relative, and secondary" (284), taking many forms (455). Their ambiguity is underscored by the recognition that "work, occupation, specialization, family, country, justice, culture, progress, intelligence, or science" are both inevitable and indispensable elements for human beings, and yet they can all become occasions for enslavement (249). All enslaving forces of culture have to be resisted. That does not mean they must be suppressed (which would be a mere illusion), but that their true alienating character must be recognized.

Repeatedly, Ellul insists that Christians have freedom in relation to the powers by virtue of Christ's work.[7]. In a section explicating this freedom, Ellul claims that the need for battle against the powers is illustrated particularly in the "religion of the state" (144-160). He does not reject working for political freedom or even to topple dictatorships, but cautions that using ordinary political/technical methods will inexorably refashion or reinforce the very thing we are try ing to eliminate (158). Since neither individually nor collectively can we break free from the powers, the only way to deal with them in any sphere is to recognize Christ's objective intervention (159). St Paul declares that the powers "have been despoiled" in the victory of the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14). We therefore "live in a desacralized world. But the process constantly begins all over again. Desacralization ... has to be done again and again" (160).

Ellul's entire approach to ethics and structural evil is summarized in this recognition that the powers have not been totally destroyed, but hold no authority in themselves. Only one freed by faith in the victory of Christ can fight against them, and that battle is successfull only with spiritual weapons (Eph 6:13ff.). Without this faith and knowledge, a person remains vulnerable to the powers and will continue to be seduced and oppressed by them.

Ellul rejects the positions of the "demythologizers" for whom "the powers have no objective reality" and of the "socializers" who do not recognize the necessity of belief. He insists against the former that the powers have obj ec ti ve reality and against the latter that the victory of Christ can be grasped and lived out only by those who believe and thereby can fight for liberation (160). True freedom requires liberation from the powers.

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[7] Ibid., pp. 17,103,108,116,205,239,265, and 283.

In an earlier work, *Money and Power* (1954), Ellul named money, Mammon, as a "personal force," a power "which has, or claims to have, a reality of its own... a personal master."[8] Later, in *The Subversion of Christianity* (1984) Ellul delineates six powers: Mammon, the prince of this world, the prince of lies, Satan, the devil, and death. Appearing to join the demythologizers, Ellul in this work emphasizes only the function of these powers, viz., deception, accusation, division, and destruction.[9] No longer does Ellul claim that the powers ha ve a kind of reality of their own. In contrast to his earlier position *iaMoney and Power* and in *The Ethics of Freedom,* Ellul's later works say that the powers exist only in relation to us.

Ellul's elucidation of the power of the "prince of lies," harmonizes with his discussion of truth and reality in *The Humiliation of the Word)*[10] Ulis view of the prince of lies as one of the powers must be kept in mind when reading Ellul's works of social criticism and ethics, for he deals often with misuse of language (in such works as *Propaganda, A Critique of The New Commonplaces,* and *Ute Humiliation of the Word)* and with deception (in such works as *The Political Illusion* and *False Presence of die Kingdom).*

Ellul's discussions of other powers, in *The Subversion of Christianity,* reveals some weaknesses in his biblical exegesis. His comments about "Satan" are murky and contradictory; those about the "devil" ignore much of the biblical picture. Ellul does not explain his notion of the power of "death" functioning as destruction.

These weaknesses and inconsistencies notwithstanding, the overall coherence of Ellul's emphasis on their functions adds an important contribution to the discussion of the biblical concept of "the principalities." Also, recognizing how his perspectives on the biblical notion of the powers undergird his works of social criticism helps us understand the severity of his denunciations of the technological milieu, of political illusions, of language and of society. Ellul helps us realize the critical importance for Christians to expose the workings of the powers in these social realities and even in ethical systems.

Power and Necessity in Ethical Systems

In his introduction to ethics, *To Will and To Do: An Ethical Research for Christians* (1964), Ellul drew together his rejection of systems of ethics with his absolute Christocentrism and his view of the world as the domain of "necessity." He insisted that Christian conduct is an

insoluble problem which people are always trying to solve by theological modification, and which it is important not to solve. .. [W]hat constitutes the Christian life is

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[8] Jacques *E\\vi,Money and Power* (1954) Trans, by LaVonneNeff (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1984), pp. 74ff.

[9] Jacques Ellul, *The Subversion of Christianity* (1984); Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 174ff; See also Ellul'*s Anarchy and Christianity* (1988) Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 83-85.

[10] Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of die Word* (1981) Translated by Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985).

not morality but faith, and the center of faith is not the good, but Jesus Christ. At this point Christian ethics breaks off all possible relations with every morality whatsoever.[11]

Therefore, Ellul devotes a chapter to "The Impossibility of a Christian Ethic" (201-224). He does not deny the importance of formulating guidance for the Christian life, he ends the book with a chapter on "The Necessity for a Christian Ethic" (245-267), which defines ethics as a "sort of preparation" and the way "to create in the hearer an aptitude for life in die world" by developing the capacity to criticize and control sociological trends and to liberate oneself from them. However, ethics does not have the right

to furnish solutions for every problem, solutions which would be imposed with authority. It can only be the reminder that the specific conduct of the Christian is the indispensable consequence of his faith. It should at the same time be the equipping ofthe believer with an instrument of reflection and explanation concerning himself and his problems. Finally, it will be a reminder that the earnestness of the theological commitment

should be registered in an earnestness of commitment in the world, and it will establish, for the particular time in which it is valid, the conditions and limits of that commitment. But it cannot go beyond that. This preparatory task is modest but indispensable (248).

This fine line between "ethics which becomes morality" (defined by Ellul as "of the order of necessity" and "of the order of the fall"—and therefore subject to the powers) and "ethics which serves the preparatory task" described above is an essential distinction for understanding the contribution of Ellul's "fore-ethics." He seeks to place ethics within the freedom of the gospel and counter its tendency to fall again into the enslavement of necessity and the functioning of the powers.

Has Ellul succeeded in providing us with an adequate "fore-ethics"? Let us return to the agenda he outlined in *The Presence of the Kingdom* as we assess his ethical contribution.

1. *Ethical method must be rooted in the never-to-be-abandoned dialectical nature of the Christian life in its combat against die powers.* The major strength of Ellul's approach is this emphasis on the continued dialectical interfacing of biblical revelation and contemporary social reality (without losing the dialectical hope of his Christian convictions). The weakness is that he rarely makes the dialectic clear. Thus his biblical works appear too idealistic and his sociological analyses too pessimistic. Only in a few places, such as *The Humiliation of the Word,* does he connect the two tracks of his work to reveal the tension of the dialectic and point toward some practical resolution.

2. *The first form of action for the Christian must be realistic assessment of social and political conditions.* Ellul succeeds in building his ethical reflections in a profound

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[11] Jacques Ellul, *To Will and To Do: An Ethical Research for Christians* (1964) Translated by C. Edward Hopkin (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), p. 90. Page numbers in the following text refer to this edition.

awareness of social reality. His ethics repeatedly call for Christians to enter the fight against the powers functioning in social realities. In this respect, Ellul's work offers a model for other Christians, tempted to pronounce an idealistic, disengaged set of ethical norms. It remains to his readers continually to refine this social analysis as well as to soften his critical overstatements.

3. *The second action of the Christian is a constant effort to incarnate die -will of God in actual institutions and situations.* One of Ellul's weaknesses is that he does not offer many models for this call to action from *The Presence of the Kingdom.* In his desire to avoid any system of specific norms, Ellul tries to work on a middle level that offers guidance; too easily, however, his guidance becomes abstract A thorough survey of his corpus reveals that he suggests attitudes and goals for Chnstian presence; rarely does he get specific concerning ways to incarnate the will of God in institutions. Other weaknesses are due to Ellul's frequent overstatement Lambasting Christians for their compromise and conformity is unlikely to motivate change, nor do his generalizations recognize that many Christians do think well, pose alternatives, and practice eschatological lifestyles. His harsh words turn many Christians away from his helpful perspectives.

4. *The third action of the Christian is ceaseless watching to maintain limits as part of God's order of preservation.* Ellul's study of the technological milieu especially reflects his intention to offer models of such setting of limits. *Money and Power* also gives practical suggestions for putting limits on the power of Mammon. Dialectically, Ellul's *sociologie* shows the dangers when the technological system is not limited and his theological studies offer biblical models for limiting the powers' encroachment

5. *These actions must be constantly guided by the Holy Spirit.*

6. *Ethics is thus not a system, but following Christ and living eschatologically.* These themes from *The Presence of die Kingdom* are consistent refrains in all of Ellul's theological works and refer us again to our initial point—that any "system" of morality quenches the freedom of the Christian life under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit Ellul's ethical method is of a piece with his message: that the Christian life must stand in opposition to all workings of the powers. This is a much needed critique, since insufficient awareness of that battle leads to ethical guidance which is allegedly practical, but which ignores the deeper level of spiritual realities requiring prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit Ellul's emphasis on dialectical ethics and on a theology that is continually reassessed is consistent with his emphases both on the Holy Spirit and on freedom from legalism and false morality. His ethical method is congruent with his fight against all manifestations of the powers.

7. *Confronting the powers can only happen by the creation of a new style of life in the context of the Christian community.* Ellul consistently rejects "systems" and "morality" for the basic reason that they become legalistic and destroy the essential freedom of the Christian life. In this rejection of "ordinary" ethics, however, Ellul falls into the opposite mistake of not offering enough guidance for Christians. How will we learn how to make moral decisions concerning aspects of life influenced by the principalities? His

view of ethics parallels, in some respects, Stanley Hauerwas's advocacy of "an ethics of character," but Ellul lacks Hauerwas' emphasis on the Christian community as the locus for nurturing attitudes and virtues. Though Ellul gives us an admirable "fore-ethics," he has not addressed our need for specific means to develop the lifestyle he advocates. The lack of emphasis on Christian community in his works suggests that Ellul did not have any notion of structural good to combat the structural evil of the powers.

The Casuistry of Violence

by John Howard Yoder

How might we compare Jacques Ellul's argument on violence under "necessity" to the way other ethicists make and interpret exceptions? Ellul offers a special category of arguments which consists in a paradoxical suspension of ordinary moral argument Yet he does so in connection with a case-related description which still seems to sustain or presuppose a claim that in other circumstances the moral guide would still hold.

In the course of his *Violence; Reflections from a Christian Perspective,* Jacques Ellul is concerned, at the same time, to maintain that the Christian message is revolutionary, and that the espousal of radical politics by many Christians in his time was wrong.[12] His entire book makes clear that there is no Christian moral case to be made for violence, but then he opens his exception: a Christian can use violence in a revolution, as many Christians have in world wars.

The point here is not that this is unacceptable, condemnable. The important thing is that, when he uses violence, the Christian knows very well that he is doing wrong, is sinning against the God of Love, and (even if only in appearance) is increasing the world's disorder. He cannot... believe that the violence he commits is in conformity with the divine will and the divine order. The only thing he can do is to admit that he is acting so out of his own fears and emotions; or else he can say that he is fighting for others, not to save his own life... He has fallen back into the realm of necessity; that is, he is no longer the free man God wills and redeemed at great cost. He is no longer a man conformed to God, no longer a witness to truth.[13]

Thus for Ellul "necessity" is a realm where the truth of Gospel ethic no longer is operational. The argument is quick, with some gaps. One kind of sub-argument seems to be implied in the parenthetical distinction between the apparent and the real impact of violence on the world's disorder. Another seems to be implied in the distinction he

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[12] New York: Seabury, 1969. In this argument he faced the same "crusading" adversaries as in his False *Presence of the Kingdom* (New York: Seabury, 1972). The acceptance of some necessary violence, which is the point I am here concerned to identify and challenge, was not the main point of the passage. His primary concern in this later book was to refute the "theologians of violence" or "of revolution" who at the time were very outspoken.

[13] *Violence,* p. 137.

makes between saving one's own life and fighting for others. Yet neither of these side-glances becomes an explicit argument The abiding condemnation of the violence to "which one necessarily resorts is uncompromising;

Thus violence can never be justified or acceptable before God. The Christian can only admit humbly that he could not do otherwise, that he took the easy way and yielded to necessity and the pressures of the world.[14] That is why the Christian, even when he permits himself to use violence in what he considers to be the best of causes cannot either feel or say that he is justified; he can only confess that he is a sinner, submit to God's judgment, and hope for God's grace and forgiveness.. . Whatever side he takes, the Christian can never have an easy conscience and can never be assured he is pursuing the way of truth.[15]

In this passage, does not the reference to "the easy way" assume that there was another, more costly way which one could have taken? This way is then less heroic, weaker. And in his reference to "the best of causes," isn't there a tacit casuistic criterion here? The cause must be relatively the most just. By what standard?

In any case, the fact that wrong-doing is not avoidable does not leave Ellul without moral objectivity: "Let me offer a criterion." The criterion is that, once the violent cause (which the Christian joined in the "necessary" yet not morally "justified" way described above) has won out in favor of the relatively more just side of the conflict, then Ihe Christian should change camps and now side with those who in the new situation are now the victims. For this argument to work it is, of course, assumed that the revolution will win. Otherwise the compromise would not have been justified. This is parallel to the "just war" criterion of probable success. Ellul does not go into how we know the revolution will succeed.

Ellul illustrates his criterion with the Free French victory over the Nazi occupation and their collaborators, with the anticolonial opponents of France's occupation of Algeria, and with the hypothetical victory of the other third-world "just revolutions" being romanticized in the 1960's.

If he stays on the side of the victors, he admits in effect that he was not really concerned for the poor and the oppressed in the first place.[16]

So, if a Christian feels that he must participate in a violent movement (or in a war!) let him do so discerningly. He ought to be the one who, even as he acts with the others, proclaims the injustice and the unacceptabiility of what he and they are doing... He ought to be the conscience of the movement; the one who, in behalf of his unbelieving comrades, repents, bears humiliation, and prays to the Lord; the one who restrains man from glorifying himself for the evil he does.[17]

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[14] "Necessity" is in the rest of Ellul's work the code word for the fallenness of human history, where the Gospel has not yet had its impact

[15] *Violence,* p. 138.

[16] Ibid., p. 139.

[17] Ibid., pp. 141-42. .

The function of "conscience" is, thus, not to urge us to do the right we know, but to acknowledge our guilt for the wrongness of our doing what is still the right thing to do. Ellul has introduced a bifurcation in the fabric of moral discemmenL Violence is never to be "justified or glorified," yet neither should it be "condemned" or declared "unacceptable."[18] The Christian will go on doing the violence he does not "justify." The notion of "justifying" has thus been moved from the realm of moral discernment to that of one's standing before God. Remember Jesus' accusations against the Pharisees. He did not reprove them for doing the works of the law, what he attacked was their belief that their doing these works proved them just.[19]

As a lifetime admirer of Ellul, I must confess that he does not convince here. This notion that it is proper for necessity to overrule the liberty of the Gospel is not ratified later in his *Ethics of Freedom.* There are in this book a few opaque allusions to "risk" (p. 355) and to "transgression" (p. 332) which might also point in the direction of an action which is both right (in the sense that you should do it) and wrong (not "justified"), but Ellul avoids concreteness,[20] Nor is this bifurcation exposited when he uses the Pauline language of "princi-palitites and powers."[21] Ellul brilliantly illuminates the dialectic of determination and freedom with the "pauline" cosmology but there is no further light on our theme.

To Will and to Do may be the work where Ellul expresses himself the most broadly on the doing of ethics.[22] The preface by Waldo Beach says the book will be about "how the Christian is to cope with the ambiguities of daily life." But rather than throwing more light on how believers might concretely make hard decisions faithfully, Ellul here maximizes the use of undiscussible paradox. A Christian ethic is both impossible (pp. 199ff.) and necessary (p. 245). Morality is of the Order of the Fall (p. 39) and of Necessity (p. 59). Morality is not derived from the knowledge of the will of God (p. 73). The closer one's moral stance is to the will of God, the more suspect it is (p. 212).

Ellul's gallic love of paradox is freer in *To Will and To Do* than in some of his other works, perhaps because the other positions he freely critiques are less directly documented, and there is not a specific biblical text being exposited. One might say that he is closer here than usual to the Lutheran concentration on the usus *elenchthicus legis,* the notion that the role of the law in God's purpose is not so much to guide our choices as to show us our sin.

The tension between necessity, and grace is an intellectual challenge which gives free play to Ellul's dialectical skills; it is not a setting for God-pleasing discernment

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[18] These are Ihe two negative descriptions which Ellul had set aside in the first sentence of the first quotation above.

[19] Ellul makes this point about the Pharisees in his *To Will and To Do: An Ethical Research for Christians* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), p. 212.

[20] Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.

[21] See Marva Dawn, *The Concept of "The Principalities and Powers" in the Works of Jacques Ellul* (Notre Dame, Ph.D. dissertation, 1992).

[22] Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969.

and obedience, whether individual or shared. His last page in *To Will and To Do* cites as "surely correct" Reinhold Niebuhr's statement that Christianity "complicates dreadfully" the situation of the person trying to answer ethical questions, since the commandment of Jesus is by definition inapplicable.

Forum Criticism to Politics: Jacques Ellul, Bernard Charbonneau and the Committee for the Defence of the Aquitaine Coast

by Daniel Cerezuelle
(translated by Lucia Gill)
In 1967 Ihe French government launched an operation to develop the Aquitaine Coast (the southwestern Atlantic coast of France). In theory, the intent was to combine protection of the environment with the development of regional tourism. By 1972 the government published its tourism development plan and created the "Interdepartmental Commission for the Development of the Aquitaine Coast" (abbreviated below as the "Development Commission") to put the plan into action.

Realizing that such state-run projects usually led, in practice, not to the protection but to the pillaging of nature by tourism, certain citizen groups (ecologists, leftists, and regionalists) began to worry. Bernard Charbonneau, the long-time friend of Jacques Ellul, decided to lead a rigorous critical study of this operation and gather together the various opposing voices. His initiative led to the creation of the "Committee for the Defense of the Aquitaine Coast" (abbreviated below as the "Defense Committee"), officially founded in July 1973. Charbonneau was the first president from 1973 to 1977, succeeded by Jacques Ellul from 1977 to 1979.

Ellul's and Charbonneau's involvement in the Defense Committee translated their concern into a serious search for new forms of political action with which to confront the technocratic rationalism which characterized the government as well as all existing political parties. Having participated in the Defense Committee (I was the secretary for several years), I observed firsthand their efforts to invent new relationships between the citizens and the state, to raise questions concerning the limits of the technicization of life, and, finally, to search for alternatives to the government's approach to development

A Technocratic Dream:
The Development of the Aquitaine Coast
Decided upon in the full technological ecstasy of the Sixties, the development of the Aquitaine Coast was to be the most ambitious example yet of the comprehensive technocratic development of a territory. In order to understand the questions raised by tire Defense Committee, it is necessary to recall briefly what this area was before the Development Commission took control.

The Aquitane Coast consists of more than200 miles of large sandy beaches and great dunes. Behind the dunes (planted with a ground cover to keep the sand from blowing away), great pines flourished all the way to the edges of the inland lakes and their currents of sweet water. Inland from the marshy shores of the east extended an immense forest of approximately four million acres. The area had been transformed during the period of 1780 to 1870 by the planting of the forests. The climate was damp and mild, often sunny in summer and autumn.

This was an expanse at the same time natural, unspoiled, and humane. The first attraction and charm of the "Landes" is its solitary immensity, embellished by both nature and human initiative. It represented a vast and rare temperate environment in Europe, where one could live, walk, hunt, and fish freely; The first to profit from this free richness were the Landais people, coming from varied situations, and able there to develop their own sensibilities and style of life.

For a long time, the growth of tourism had been limited by relatively slow economic development, various crises and wars, and also the fact that a large part of the coastal forest was owned by the state. Until World War Two, tourists were limited to just a few resorts, isolated from one another by miles of beaches and pine forests. The lakes were almost devoid of motorboats and sailboats. It was necessary to go many miles by rowboat to be able to camp at the foot of sandy cliffs bordered with pine trees on the superb western shores.

In November 1971, after a flight over the area, Jerome Monod, a representative for the territorial development, declared: "what struck us the most is that this coast is practically empty." In November 1975, Michel Poniatowski, Minister of the Interior, compared the Aquitaine Coast with the equally virginal coasts of Scandinavia. The Aquitaine Coast was the last available leisure coastal expanse in Europe.

The Development Commission was committed to two goals which it claimed to reconcile, even though they were evidently contradictory: (1) making financially viable this vein of lush green *expanse* in developing tourism, while at the same time, (2) protecting it from the invasion of tourists. In their own terms, they wished to "protect nature, make a touristic capital of Aquitaine, and manage it well for all." The focal point of the project would be a great canal connecting the lakes and the future developments. It was proposed "to develop Aquitaine for the people of Aquitaine, with respect for their values and with concern for their well-being."

The potential value of tourism was emphasized A growth of available "beds" for tourists, from 450,000 in 1970 to 770,000 in 1980, was projected. The Development Commission would advertise in foreign markets in order to provoke a growth of about fifty per cent With the canal and highways providing total access to the beaches, the lakes, and the forest, the tourists invaded the virgin site. "No problem," it was argued, since the exploitation of the Aquitaine Coast will be accompanied by the protection of nature! "It is possible to protect certain sites while equipping others with facilities especially sought after by tourists."

However, one cannot protect nature without sacrificing the touristic development; developing tourism is not possible without, to some degree, sacrificing nature. It was necessary to choose between the two, and the establishment of 300,000 or 400,000 beds in ten years shows what was the choice! The areas set aside as Nature Reserves were in a ratio of about one in a hundred to those equipped with various tourist diversions.

Thus, the "socialization of nature" did not sustain the goal of preserving nature. On the contrary, the state gave up its land and invested money and energy, imposed constraints and passed the measures necessary for the exploitation of the last great green coastal expanse of Europe, to the profit of capitalist enterprise.

Citizens Against the Administration

In the beginning the Development Commission proceeded in a rather democratic manner with a series of consultations. They gathered together, on an informal basis, a number of experts of all types (biologists, geographers, sociologists, economists, et al) who gave their advice on the various projects as each came up. At this early stage, then, there was truly a thoughtful, well-conceived consultation.

Eventually, however (and inevitably), these discussions resulted in some prudent, cautionary, and even immobilizing recommendations. Suddenly, then, there appeared in these meetings some new characters: representatives of tourism and hotel interests, who came to explain forcefully that, while all these intellectual considerations were *very* nice, there remained a major imperative. And this major imperative always was the development of touristic activity, at all costs. After some fairly lively exchanges, the consultations with the experts disappeared.

For the Development Commission, the development of industry was the only thing that really counted. After all, they argued, tourism was a matter of general interest The "right to tourism" was proclaimed. Their opponents had in mind only "particular personal interests." People were accused of defending their privileges as vacationing persons who were "already installed and rich." Local businesses which objected were "without great importance." It was essential that everyone should be able to vacation on the seashore; those who opposed this idea were "awful, undemocratic reactionaries."

The argument was that the general interest is superior to the interest of particulars, that is, to all personal interests. And only the political power and the administration are capable of appreciating, understanding, and promoting this general interest Individual citizens are radically incapable of understanding it All local interests must yield to this general interest, which is indistinguishable from global and economic politics. Naturally, it was from Paris that one could best appreciate Ihe general interest of the Aquitaine region and its people!

The means for managing the Aquitane region was thus a centralized power an "interdepartmental commission." This was supposed to be a new kind of administration, outside the normal constraints of traditional administrative oigans. It was to be a commission with a determined goal in mind, but flexible and efficient in practice.

But, contrary to what was envisioned, it was much more centralized than any of its bureaucratic counterparts. In reality, even when local businesses and architects were participating, eveiything was conceived and decided in Paris, The impetus all came from Paris. The management work came from Paris and was imposed by Paris. The local organization was reduced to being a link of transmisssion. In reality, the local citizens found themselves without any power or control before the decisions of this administration, with its suddenly ~ appearing memos, flyers, criticisms, and notices of infractions (always justified, of course, as "shared decisions"!).

In principle, interested parties could always intervene, protest, or cause a project to be delayed or rescinded, by insisting on the principle of "shared decision-making." But at a certain point in the undertaking of a project on the land, one could no longer stop the process without having to pay out damages to the delayed businesses. Thus, developers would try to keep a project fairly secret up until the work had begun. At that moment, there was no more possible action, no further recourse, for the citizens and the defense committees! There were many examples of this sort of tactic and of this kind of administrative judgement.

The Development Commission observed none of the principles of respectful management that it had earlier enumerated and proclaimed. The Commission, relying on its numerous, well-paid, full-time personnel, systematically practiced administrative secrecy, arranging important financial affairs and manipulating the local media. In contrast, the Defense Committee dedicated to the resistance was composed of members of limited financial means, and little free time for tire struggle outside of their regular professional obligations.

Reinventing a Minimum of Local Democracy

From the beginning, the Defense Committee had to define its positions over against a project which prided itself on the unforgiving logic of a technocratic business. The principal objective of the Committee had to be the awakening of the general conscience. They had to demystify for the local populations the anesthetizing treatises of the Development Commission. This consciousness-raising intended to put pressure on municipalities which, until then were completely subjugated to the project It was necessary to analyze the ideological presuppositions of the plan, its proposed avenues of realization, its socio-economic consequences for the land, and to focus on the precise problems engendered by the development for a given locality.

The Committee had to create a global critique (i.e., on the level of the masterplan itself) and avoid the snares of traditional, local defense associations which couldn't see further than their own narrow territorial interests. The challenge was to show the internal coherence and the overall relationship among the various urban operations projected for the whole length of the coast. The concerned populations needed help to understand that threats to a given locality resulted from a large, elaborate plan contrived by public powers from far away. The work of the Defense Committee was to help them understand their future local destructions as a part of a general and abstract plan.

In order to achieve these objectives, it was necessary to make use of flexible structures and methods of action. At the level of the organization, the Committee had itself to be an example of local committee coordination and an authentic reflection of the plan. From the beginning, the Defense Committee tried to motivate the formation of local committees and encourage them to take charge of the development Several new local committees were bom through these efforts. Where local committees already existed, the Defense Committees job was simply to respond to local initiatives and to the hopes and wishes expressed by the population. The Defense Committee did not want to proceed in the same technocratic fashion as the Development Commission. This led to a certain weakness of organization inherent in the Defense Committee. In many places menaced by the operations of the development, populations didnit react and the birth of local groups was rendered difficult or impossible.

Most local representatives on both the Right and the Left basically supported the developers. The political climate of the Sixties and early Seventies was not hospitable to a debate. Obviously, the touristic development of the Aquitaine Coast escaped a classical political analysis. It was not a question of defending the Aquitaine Coast against abominable promoters (as was the case on the shore of the Mediterranean), but of combatting an undertaking of the centralized state. Thus, tire Defense Committee had to organize itself as a local regional opposition force. In order to put the Commission in jeopardy, and to assure its failure, it was necessary for the Committee, consequently, to recruit every person who had decided to fight, no matter what their political persuasion. It was a condition of the efficacy and credibility of the Committee that it maintain at all costs its political pluralism. Certain members thought that the Committee might be able to become a new institutional presence, a new force of regional opposition hostile to all foolish economic development by official politics.

Practically speaking, the result of the work of the Defense Committee was the demystification of the administrative process. In the context of tire late Sixties, the whole notion of "development" was surrounded by such an official mythology that it was difficult to imagine the birth of any opposition whatever to the projects of the Development Commission. Against the formidable propaganda of the architects of development with their proposal of a local version of the myth of the ideal city, the Committee gave itself over to the patient work of demystification.

The Defense Committee made use of official documents in confronting the people with the ecological, social and economic realities of the coast It made efforts to bring about a serious discussion of the true dimensions of the developers' plans. Instead of the unrealistic dreams of the official plans, it was necessary to explain to local populations what would be the real impacton their lives of the various great upheavals entailed by the development plan. That was not always easy; it challenged the imagination. Translating the abstract discussions of the developers into concrete, understandable language and reality, constituted the core task of the Defense Committee.

Slowly the Defense Committee's criticism of the Development Commission penetrated the spirits of the people and their initial enthusiasm gave way to a certain

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distrust TTiis demystification also had an effect in some hearts in the high places of the technocracy. A certain reticence toward the projects of the Development Commission was manifested little by little in some official milieux.

And then the economic situation changed. It is necessary to emphasize the decisive role of economic difficulties, including unemployment problems (which haven't ceased to be felt since the middle of the Seventies). On one hand, these difficulties have incited local collectivities to accept, and even to solicit, any old project of development, even the most frantic and disorganized. On the other hand, there is much less public money to spend on the forced development of the tourist industry!

In the final accounting, the grandiose plan for the comprehensive development of the Aquitane Coast was chiseled away. Little by little, the Development Commission quietly retreated and finally was dissolved, without ever having figured out either economic development or environmental protection—any better than would have already been done by private or local initiatives.

The Defense Committee for the Aquitaine Coast dissolved shortly afterwards. Despite its limited resources it had done a useful work. They managed to prevent some stupid projects from occuring. And they developed and experienced some new forms of citizenship and political action. Without these it would not have known how to collectively triumph over development and the imperatives of technology. The experience of the Defense Committee shows that resistance is not impossible.

Ellul's Ethics and the Apocalyptic Practice of Law

by Ken Morris

William Stringfellow noted in his introduction to the 1967 paperback edition of *The Presence of the Kingdom* that Jacques Ellulis work became known in theological and legal quarters in America in the early 1960s through the publication in English of *The Presence of the Kingdom* and *The Theological Foundation of Law,* and their use in preparation for a national conference on theology and law.[23] Apart from this initial interest, however, the relevance of Ellul's ethics for the practice of law in America has received relatively little attention.[24] If it is true, as de Tocqueville observed a century and a half ago, that in the United States all important political questions are ultimately treated as legal questions, then there is no subject more in need of a trenchant Ellulian analysis. This brief essay is meant to spark further thinking and action in this area, for both myself as I begin the practice of law, and others.

The lack of attention to Ellul's judicial thought is surprising, given his academic interest in legal history and the fact that his sociological and theological analyses all concern issues closely related to the practice of law in Ihe United States, e.g. politics,

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[23] (New York: Seabury, 1967), p 2.
[24] Sylvain Dujancourt, "Law and Ethics in Ellulis Theology," The Ellul Forum, (No. 5; June 1990)

language, economics, and technology. Certainly Stringfellow, an American attorney who acknowledged Ellul as an "extraordinary witness,[25] recognized the importance of Ellul's work for American attorneys. However, Stringfellow's work should be considered parallel to Ellul's rather than as an example of its application to the American context[26]

The American legal community's lack of interest in Ellul's work is likely due in large partto that community ' s aversion to any religious element in public discourse. Yale law professor Stephen Carter has made the cynical but accurate observation that "One good way to end a conversation —or start an argument— is to tell a group of well-educated professionals [i.e., lawyers] that you hold a political position (preferably a controversial one, such as being against abortion or pornography) because it is required by your understanding of God's will.[27] Yet the American public's growing dissatisfaction with the exclusion of faith stances from our political and legal cultures may indicate that Ellul's judicial thought is ripe for rediscovery — if only as an alternative to calls by the "Christian Right" for a return to a jurisprudence based on "natural law" and "biblical principles."

Ellul's early judicial thought, outlined in *The Theological Foundation of Law,* clearly reflects his characteristic procedural dialectic of holding sociological analysis in tension with biblical revelation. Unlike the bulk of his subsequent work, however, *The Theological Foundation of Law* mixes sociological, historical, and theological analyses in the same study. Ellul began with a sociological and historical analysis of law as human phenomenon and followed up by relating this analysis to what the biblical revelation had to say about law in his time. This is the method that Ellul proposed for those who would follow up on his judicial thought[28]

More than anything else, the ability of Ellul both to challenge and to confuse arose from his insistence that our reflections be shaped by a fundamental christocentric query: What does the Lordship of Jesus Christ mean for X (politics, law, urbanization, the media, economics, etc.)? Thus, when considering the relevance of Ellulis ethics for the practice of law in the United States, we should begin with the same question: "[WJhat [does] the Lordship of Jesus Christ mean for law (law as it exists [in the United States]), and what function [has God] assigned to law?"[29]

This is an awkward enough question in the academy; in the legal profession it generates confused stares. Attorneys and the courts have long been socialized into the conviction that to get along (and to get ahead) you do not mention your religious beliefs.

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pp. 10-11. Readers of *The Ellul Forum* will recall Dujancourt's brief essay, the abstract to Dujancourt's Master's Thesis, as an excellent summary of *The Theological Foundation of Law.*

[25] *The Presence of die Kingdom,* p 6.

[26] See William Stringfellow, "Kindred Mind and Brother", *Sojourners* (June 1977). Stringfellow noted that his and Ellul's views, although analytically very similar, were reached independently of the other. Stringfellow attributed this correlation to the Holy Spirit's prompting.

[27] *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), p. 23.

[28] *The Theological Foundation of Law* (New York: Seabury, 1969), p. 139.

[29] Ibid, p. 13.

As a result, for the majority of American attorneys, an attempt to link concretely the Lordship of Christ to anything practical, decisional, or empirical, outside the realm of personal spirituality, is an embarrassment at best

For Ellul, of course, it is impossible for the follower of Jesus Christ to dissociate life into "personal spiritual' and "practical material" spheres.[30] The follower of Jesus Christ takes seriously both the Fall and the promised return of Christ, and therefore must consider each moment as "apocalyptic"—penultimate to being confronted by God's judgment and mercy.[31] In Ellul's apocalyptic, taking the Fall seriously means recognizing the world's affirmation of death as the only ultimate reality. Taking the promised return of Christ seriously means living in expectation that Christ's imminent return will shatter the world's affirmation of the power of death. In light of this eschatological hope, the Christiams role is to plunge into the social and political problems of the world, not in order to usher in God's Kingdom, but to contribute to the preservation of the world until Christ's return.[32]

Ellul viewed human law as playing a particular role in the order of preservation prior to God's final judgment Law exists for the sake of the final judgment, solely as an instrument of organization and preservation, and is therefore entirely secular. [Law] is designed only to provide the framework of the spiritual event of God's speaking, and not to translate God's word or to mummify it in legal formulas.[33] Nevertheless, law is related to biblical revelation by the concept of justice. In devising laws for society, human beings seek to establish viable modes of organization, given existing political, economic, and technical circumstances. When that organization contributes to the order of preservation, then the law is "just" When the law "provokes disorder and death" or "maintains a formal order, but through oppression or rigidity makes the spiritual life of individuals or groups impossible," then it is "unjust[34]

The biblical revelation discloses that certain fundamental elements cannot be ignored if law is to be just, i.e., contributing to the order of preservation. A just law must, at a minimum, take into account the existence of: (1) institutions, such as marriage, property, and the state, which are created by God with a soteriological purpose, and (2) human rights, which are conferred by God in the act of covenanting with human beings.[35] These rights have no specific, set content; they are contingent upon the claimant's historical situation.[36] Rather than being intrinsic in nature, human rights are instrumental for the order of preservation. God recognizes human rights so that human beings have space within which to covenant with God. Thus, the content of human rights depends on what is necessary at a given point in history for hearing and

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[30] *The Presence of die Kingdom,* p. 14.
[31] Ibid., p. 32.
[32] Ibid., p. 48.
[33] *The Theological Foundation of Law,* p. 105.
[34] Ibid., p. 91.
[35] Ibid., pp. 76,79.
[36] _Ibid.,p81.

responding to the word of covenant spoken by God, both to live and to preserve life.[37] The content of the Christianis apocalyptic calling is to be continuously working to discern and uphold the human rights and institutional structures necessary to provide room for individuals to live, hear, and respond to judgment and grace in the word of God.[38]

The Apocalyptic Practice of Law

If Christians in general have an apocalyptic calling, then Christian attorneys have a special calling to the apocalyptic practice of law arising from the Law's special role in the order of preservation. American attorneys and jurists face a number of barriers in their attempts to work out this apocalyptic calling. Some of the most important themes in such a legal practice would include the following:

First of all, it is a commonplace to note that the legal profession in America has surrendered to crass commercialism. This is true not only because of the manner in which law firms are operated, but also because of the. staggering debts that law students compile as an iinvestmenti in expected lucrative careers (only to discover later that they are chained to long hours of tedious work as firm associates in order to keep making loan payments and to achieve some expected standard of living). Critics of this commercialism are found in all camps. More often than not, the proposed solution is a rejection of the marketplace morality and a return to oldtime professionalism.[39]

Ellul's writings on money and power help the apocalyptic attorney to recognize that commercialism, as an outgrowth of Mammon's spiritual power, does not easily surrender its grip. The apocalyptic attorney is called to introduce free grace into this world of selling, buying, and competition.[40] For the American attorney, acts of free grace would include anything that served to desacralize the economic bottom line. From a realistic perspective, however, these acts of grace will not overthrow Mammon's power. The apocalyptic attorney is not meant to be effective so much as to serve as a sign, pointing to the ultimate eschatological subjection of Mammon to God.[41]

A second barrier facing apocalyptic attorneys in the United States is the adversary ethic. In the adversary system, American attorneys have a duty to represent their clients "zealously within the bounds of the law."[42] As tong as their client's objectives are lawful, attorneys are obligated to pursue those objectives through any legally permissible means. Moreover, attorneys are not implicated in the moral quality of Iheir

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[37] Ibid., p. 102.

[38] See *The Presence of the Kingdom,* pp. 32,48; *The Theological Foundation of Law,* p. 101.

[39] See, for example, Sol Ml Linowitzis *The Betrayed Profession: Lawyering at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Scribneris, 1994). Linowitz critiques the commercialism of law while having profited spectacularly from a long career which included positions as senior partner at the Coudert Brothers law firm and former Chairman and General Counsel for Xerox Corporation.

[40] See *Money and Power* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1984), p. 99.

[41] Ibid., p. 115.

[42] ABA Model Code of Professional Responsibility EC 7-1 (1981).

clients' conduct because the adversary ethic views them as merely agents and not principals.

Legal scholars have linked the rise of the adversary ethic and its accompanying rhetoric to the rapid commercial growth in the United States at tire end of the 19th century.[43] Leading attorneys sought justification for their representation of the "robber barons" of the late 19th century in response to public perception that they were acting immorally in protecting and representing this form of commerce. They found this justification by formulating a professional ethic based on legal procedure and the individual rights of their clients. As a result of such an approach to professional services, attorneys dissociated their professional morality from the public's sense of the common good.

Legal ethicist Thomas Shaffer has argued that such dissociation is not necessarily immoral.[44] A professional is entitled to consider only one narrow aspect of his or her client's situation when there are others who will attend to the client's other needs. However, if the attorney attends only to the clientfs technically lawful objective, there must remain enough of a shared sense of purpose and value in the community that it can effectively judge the client's conduct Without such a shared public telos, professional narrowness undermines the common good. The American public lacks any strong sense of a secular tetos, let alone any theological one. In addition, for the Christian attorney the adversary ethic rationalizes the dissociation of the'personal spiritual" and the'practical material" spheres and therefore is incommensurate with apocalyptic practice.

A third barrier to apocalyptic practice is the"technicization" of law, whereby judicial technique is dominated by procedure and order. Since Ellul's warnings forty years ago, this process has only accelerated in the United States. Indicative of this development are tire Federal Sentencing Guidelines, adopted by Congress in 1987. These mandatory sentencing guidelines were intended to "eliminate the historical disparity in sentences imposed upon similarly situated individuals for similar conduct."[45] Historically, one of the main barriers to overcoming sentencing disparity has been the inability of judges to agree on a primary goal in sentencing. Where one judge might regularly impose stiff sentences in retributive punishment, another might weigh the offender's potential for rehabilitation more heavily and impose a more lenient sentence for the same offense.

Congress could have attempted to channel judicial discretion by formulating a coherent national sentencing policy that clarified the purpose behind sentencing. Instead, it codified judicial technique at the expense of individual judges' discernment. The

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[43] See Thomas Shaffer, "The Unique, Novel, and Unsound Adversary Ethic," *Vanderbilt Law Review* 41 (1988): 697. Shaffer draws on Michael Schudson's "Public, Private, and Professional Lives: The Correspondence of David Dudley Field and Samuel Bowles," *AniericanJournalofLegalHistory'll* (1977): 191,wherein Schudson discusses the historical and cultural developments of the era.

[44] "The Unique, Novel, and Unsound Adversary Ethic," Vanderbilt Law Review 41 (1988).

[45] Ogletree, "The Death of Discretion? Reflections on the F ederal Sentencing Guidelines," Harvard Law Review 101 (1988): 1939.

Sentencing Guidelines adopted by Congress minimize or ignore criteria which are best applied by judicial discretion (unique characteristics of the offender) and emphasize criteria which are empirically measurable (general characteristics of the offense). While this approach has been successful in reducing statistical sentencing disparities within the particular empirical categories addressed in the Guidelines, it has exacerbated disparities in other categories and continues to undermine the public's confidence in the fairness of the criminal justice system.

A fourth barrier to apocalyptic law practice is the confusion and lack of consensus in the church on the role that God has for law. Ellul called on Ihe church (and, implicitly, apocalyptic attorneys) to "examine and to evaluate the foundation and the purpose of law according to the criteria which it alone possesses."[46] But to take up this calling, Christians must first receive instruction on the foundation and purpose of law, in order to develop a "juridical consciousness." American Christians have been quick to use the law where it would advance their causes, but often without any of the biblical and theological reflection that a juridical consciousness demands.

There are hopeful exceptions to this tendency, however. William Stringfellow sought to instill a juridical consciousness among the Christian laity. More recently, Stanley Hauerwas, Thomas Shaffer at the University of Notre Dame Law School, and H. Jefferson Powell, Professor of Law and Divinity at Duke University, have offered helpful theological analyses of the legal profession and constitutional interpretation. Powell's recent book, *The Moral Tradition of American Constitutionalism* (Duke University Press, 1993) draws on John Howard Yoder's theological account of the state and Alasdair MacIntyreis framework for the critique of western liberalism in order to challenge unquestioned theological approval of the American constitutional order. Not surprisingly, Powell and Hauerwas recently wrote a tribute to Stringfellow's apocalyptic practices.[47]

Stringfellow wrote for the laity in the Church. So far, Powell and Shaffer have tended to write for the legal academy. Hauerwas writes for both the theological academy and church laity, as well as seeking to engage readers unaccustomed to reading Christian theology. Perhaps it is in the tentative interface between law school and divinity school, aposition occupied by professors Hauerwas and Powell, that the urgently needed juridical consciousness will begin to take hold.

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[46] *The Theological Foundation of Law,* p. 136.

[47] See Stanley Hauerwas & Jeff Powell, "Creation as Apocalyptic: A Tribute to William Stringfellow" in S. Hauerwas, *Dispatches from The Front. Theological Engagements with the Secular* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994),pp. 106-15.

Book Reviews

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(Le Bouscat, France: L'Esprit du Temps, 1994). 359 pages. Published with the aid of the Region Aquitaine and the Association Jacques Ellul.

Reviewed by Joyce Hanks, University of Scranton

Like most Festschrift-type publications, the impressive tome published for Jacques Ellul[1] in 1983 received little attention. The vast majority of its entries made no reference to Ellul, and most of the rest mentioned his name only in passing. The volume was presented *to* him, its contents having been collected *for* him, in his honor. But it was in no sense a publication of articles *about* him.

By way of collections of essays *on* Ellul, except for journal issues dedicated to him, usually in English, we had only two volumes: *Introducing Jacques Ellul,* edited by James Holloway,[2] and the more recent *Jacques Ellul: Interpretive Essays,* edited by Clifford Christians and Jay Van Hook[3]

No such work had appeared on Ellul in French until last year, the year of his death, when his long-time assistant at the University of Bordeaux, Patrick Troude-Chastenet, carefully assembled most of the papers given at the first conference dedicated to Ellul's thought, held in Bordeaux in November 1993.[4]

As one of only six conference participants from North America,[5] I was very gratefill to have the opportunity to read most of its papers in written form. Concurrent sessions forced attendees to miss the presentation of many of the papers, so that the published

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[1] Etienne Dravasa et al., eds., *Religion, societe et politique: Melanges en hommage a Jacques Ellul, Professeur Emerite a I 'Universite de Bordeaux I* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983). 866 pages, over 60 authors.

[2] James Y. Holloway, ed., *Introducing Jacques Ellul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

[3] Clifford G. Christians and Jay M Van Hook, eds., *Jacques Ellul: Interpretive Essays* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981).

[4] Conference title: "Technique et societe dans 1'oeuvre de Jacques Ellul," [Technique and society in the work of Jacques Ellul], held on the grounds of the Institut d'Etudes Politiques of Bordeaux on 12 and 13 November 1993. Papers given at the conference but not available for publication include Carl Mitcham's "The Impact of Ellul's Thought in the United States," Langdon Winner's "The Autonomy of Technique," and Hans Achterhuis's "Jacques Ellul's *Technological Bluff 'm.* the Light of His Earlier Works."

[5] See my conference report in *The Ellul Forum,* no. 12 (January 1994), p. 2.

volume constitutes a necessary completion of the conference, even for those who were able to take in the sessions.

Conference contributions fall readily into several sets of categories, including the various disciplines directing different speakers' inquiries. I have chosen to approach them according to the degree to which they take issue with Ellul's thought, beginning with Ivan Illich's summary remarks. Reserved for the end of the conference (a brief address by Ellul followed, closing the final session), Illich's tribute outlines his significant debt as a scholar to Ellul, and focuses on the relation of Technique to Christianity and to the five senses.

Other papers seeking mainly to summarize, extend, defend, or apply some aspect of Ellul's work include Alain Gras's "Dependance des grands systomes techniques et liberte humaine" [Human freedom and dependence on large technical systems]. Gras, who teaches Sociology at the Sorbonne, explores what he calls "macro technical systems" and the autonomy of Technique, especially in the areas of energy, transportation, and signs and symbols. He explores the hidden costs and the sociological causes and effects of these infrastructures. Building on Ellul's insights, Gras proposes an enhancement of human freedom by means of such changes as reducing energy needs by means of small, locally-managed techniques. He recommends decentralizing many aspects of modem society.

Andre Vitalis, another sociologist, contributes "Informatisation et autonomie de la technique" [Technique as information and as autonomous] to the volume. He concentrates on Ellul's contribution to information theory and his reaction to the ideology that has grown up around the computer "revolution." The autonomy of Technique, understood as Technique's independence from political decisionmaking, economic constraints, and ethical and moral considerations, constitutes for Vitalis one of Ellul's most useful insights. Vitalis reviews some of the most telling criticisms of the concept

A second group of contributors concentrates on offering background for understanding Ellul's thought, or information for comparing his work with someone else's. Jean-Louis Loubet del Bayle, a political scientist, gives helpful background on French social and political movements, in "Aux origines de la pensee de Jacques Ellul? Technique et Societe dans la reflexion des mouvements personnal-istes des annees 30" [At the root of Jacques Ellul's thought? Technique and society in the reflections of the personalist movements of the 193O's]. LoubetdelBaylepointsoutparallelsandpointsatwhich Ellul diverged from Personalism, "Ordre Nouveau," and the early years of the "Jeune Droite" movement, including Technique as risk, means and ends, and the "necessary revolution."

Daniel Cerezuelle, a philosopher, compares Ellul with his lifelong friend, Bernard Charbonneau, in "La critique de la modemite chez Charbonneau: Aspects d'un compagnonnage intellectuel" [Charbonneau's criticism of modernity: Aspects of an intellectual companionship]. Cerezuelle traces their work together in establishing groups for reflection, the transformation of society, and ecological efforts. Charbonneau, unlike

Ellul, laid particular emphasis on agriculture and the destruction of the countryside, and was especially concerned with issues of development

Maurice Weyembergh, a philosopher at the Free University of Brussels, compares Ellul and Martin Heidegger ("J. Ellul et M. Heidegger Le prophete et le penseur" [J. Ellul and M. Heidegger: The prophet and the thinker]). Ellul (the "prophet") and Heidegger (the "thinker"), using completely different methods, arrive at somewhat similar conclusions regarding Technique, but each fails to offer much in the way of concrete solutions to the problems posed by Technique. Although both attempt to understand Technique as it really is, Heidegger seeks its essence, whereas Ellul finds it to be a system. Ellul proves more pessimistic than Heidegger on the role of art in the technological society.

Marc Van den Bossche, also a philosopher at the Free University ofBrussels, offers a more detailed comparison ofEllul and Heidegger on Technique and art, in "Technique, esthetique, et metaphysique: L'art et la technique chez Ellul et Heidegger" [Technique, esthetics, and metaphysics: Art and Technique in Ellul and Heidegger]. They agree, basically, on the relationship between art and Technique, but differ with regard to the definition of truth. Ellul deals more with the practical side of Technique, whereas Heidegger finds Technique to be the culmination of Western metaphysical thought.

Lucien Sfez, a political scientist at the Sorbonne, in his "Technique et communication" [Technique and communication], compares Ellul on Technique with Gilbert Simondin (who constituted a frequent point of reference for several other contributors also). In Simondin's "technical culture," means and ends are not distinguished, nor are subject and object. Sfez emphasizes Ellul's perspicacity in foreseeing the danger of the culture of Technique, of technological discourse.

A third group of speakers at the conference offered substantial criticism ofEllul's thought, within the context of their marked degree of agreement with him. Troude-Chastenet, in "Technique et politique dans 1'oeuvre de Jacques Ellul" [Technique and politics in the work of Jacques Ellul], offers several reasons to explain why Ellul was so little appreciated in France. He summarizes Ellul on Technique as related to propaganda, politics, and revolution, and suggests how his theology can be seen as influenced by his work in sociology, and vice versa. In his conclusion, dedicated to advantages and disadvantages of Ellul's approach to Technique and politics, Troude-Chastenet criticizes Ellul's definition of politics as too associated with the State, and his definition of Technique as too broad. Ellul's view of the State dates from Ihe 1930's, and ignores recent developments in which the State seems too weak rather than too powerful. Troude-Chastenet also disagrees with Ellul's frequently repeated assertion that in the final analysis, Right and Left, democracy and dictatorship, tend to share in the same weaknesses, due to their involvement with Technique. The author also faults Ellul's exaggeration and "prophetic style" as tending to weaken his arguments, and questions some of his theological assertions.

Serge Latouche's "Raison technique, raison economique, et raison politique: Ellul face d Marx et Tocqueville" [Technical, economic, and political rationality: Ellul over

against with Marx and Tocqueville] refers only briefly to Karl Marx and Alexis de Tocqueville. Rather, he concentrates on Ellul, whom he finds too pessimistic with regard to Technique. Latouche believes Technique will diminish in importance, since totalitarian governments do not support Technique effectively, society calls it into question each time a disaster occurs, and no one can muster the increasingly costly means necessary to advance its development Furthermore, market economies, emphasizing economic usefulness, conflict with Technique, which favors efficiency.

In "Pour une approche constructive de l'autonomie de la Technique" [Towards a constructive approach to the autonomy of Technique] , Pierre de Coninck, a Canadian professor of engineering, finds that Ellul has equated the terms "autonomy" and "independence" with reference to Technique. Since only a small proportion of Techniques that could be developed are, in fact, developed, Technique cannot be described as "causal," as Ellul does. The "one best way" is not always chosen. De Coninck proposes the development of a new concept of Technique based on constructivist conceptualizations. For him, technique is creative, and constitutes an open rather than a closed system. It is codependent with human beings and their *milieu,* so that society and Technique determine each other. Since each situation is unique, it is important to involve people as much as possible in decision making with respect to Technique.

Gilbert Hottois (who teaches philosophy at the Free University of Brussels), in "L'impossible symbole ou la question de la 'Culture technique'" [The impossible symbol or Ihe question of "technical culture"], also parts company with Ellul on the issue of creativity in Technique. He believes Ellul concentrated on the organization, systematization, and power of Technique to the exclusion of the creativity that can be involved in its development As a result Ellul denies the existence of the philosophy of Technique and of "technical culture" (as developed in Simondin), seeing Technique and symbol as radically opposed. Hottois, however, situating himself somewhere between Ellul's and Simondin's views, believes the creative aspect of Technique gives it a symbolic dimension. This symbolic aspect often occurs after the discovery ofatechnical innovation, thus adding a dimension of mystery and risk to the technical process. Like de Coninck, Hottois believes there is room for choice in the technological society.

Although he agrees with Ellul on many points, Jean-Louis Seurin, a political scientist at the University of Bordeaux, concentrates mainly on their disagreements in "Jacques Ellul: L'interpretation de la politique a la lumiere de la Bible" [Jacques Ellul: The interpretation of politics in the light of the Bible]. Seurin takes up the issue mentioned by Troude-Chastenet concerning Ellul's failure to distinguish adequately between democracy and totalitarianism. He also disagrees profoundly with Ellul's view of politics as the incarnation of evil and lying. Seurin suggests that Ellul refers more to ideology and political propaganda than to ordinary, practical politics, although he agrees with Ellul that politics involves the will to power.

A fourth group of conference speakers emphasized their sharp disagreements with Ellul. Friedrich Rapp, a German philosopher, in "Il faut analyser le tout pour mieux le comprendre" [One must analyse the whole in order to understand it better], criticizes

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the undue importance Ellul gives to the role of Technique as an abstract totality. Ellul personalizes Technique, and sees all human activity as involving means to an end, whereas Rapp believes we are most human when *not* trying to achieve a desired end. Like Latouche, Rapp believes Technique may well diminish significantly in importance in the future, and calls for a more detailed, complex analysis of Technique than Ellul offers, taking into account a series of societal factors that Rapp believes function independently of Technique (including secularization, democratization, individualism, and moral and cultural pluralism).

Franck Finland, who teaches philosophy at the University of Montpellier in France, traces the history leading up to Ellul's concept of a new sort of technical system involving a new level of interconnectedness. Finland compares language and Technique, and explores the possibility that the technical system constitutes a profoundly human development that we should welcome.

In "Sacre, technique et societe" [Sacred, Technique, and society], Gabriel Vahanian, a University of Strasbourg theologian, takes issue with Ellul for three main reasons: Ellul overestimates Technique, underestimates religion, and underestimates society and culture. Vahanian especially objects to Ellul's dichotomy of faith and world and to his neglect of Biblical utopia.

Lazare Marcelin Poame, a philosopher from the National University of the Ivory Coast, criticizes Ellul's concept of Technique as the "determining factor" in western society. He finds Ellul's concept of a "technical system" too limiting sociologically, and believes the transfer of technology can take place without significant cultural effects, as he believes Ellul says it did in Japan. Poame offers various explanations for the failure of efforts to modernize Africa.

Having arrived during the giving of Vahanian's paper, Ellul spoke the final words of the conference. He traced his debts to friends and family, and underlined the importance of the separation of theology and sociology in his work. An English translation of Ellul's address was published as "Ellul's Response to the Symposium in his Honor at the University o (Bordeaux, November 1993," in *TheEUidForum,* no. 13 (July 1994), p. 18.

Ellul would have been very pleased to see the publication of this volume, I believe. It explores his thought in depth, from many angles, and seeks to correct and extend it The Festschrift for Ellul, mentioned above, gives some idea of Ellul's stature in terms of how much he influenced students, perhaps especially those whose theses he directed. The present volume explores in detail part of the considerable impact Ellul has had in the broader French academic world, as well as abroad. More importantly, several of these authors point us to significant areas for fhture research that would extend dialogue with Ellul's thought in productive ways.

Thinking Through Technology: The Path between Engineering and Philosophy,

by Carl Mitcham. University of Chicago Press, 1994.
Reviewed by Pieter Tijmes
University of Twente, The Netherlands

Carl Mitcham has remained faithful to the idea he formed as an undergraduate in the 1960s: the distinguishing characteristic of our time is technology. This idea has become his continuing philosophical concern and has inspired him to a unremitting exploration of philosophical issues associated with technology. In a certain sense this book is a conclusion of Mitcham's daily pursuits of interpreting technology so far. This recapitulation has become a very interesting introduction to the philosophy of technology.

Probably nobody is so well informed about the literature on this field of philosophy as Carl Mitcham. In this book he delivers with amazing clarity a survey of the philosophical options, his control of which can be concluded from the many shrewd comparisons and fruitful suggestions. He is an ecumenical thinker nobody is refused and everybody is accepted. He who has made a contribution gets the appropriate place in relation to the others. In short, in characteristic and well chosen wording and rewording Carl Mitcham presents the thinkers of technology. In doing this he puts great stress on the acoustic space he presupposes in his readers, so that his compromise between treating the selected authors exhaustively and concisely becomes acceptable. Sometimes a host of authors is dropped on a page, but the indications are sufficient for the reader to select his favorites, so that I can personally very well live with his compromises.

This does not change the fact that the book is a philosophical meal too big for dinner guest with a small appetite. The result is that Mithcam's book is a very helpful introduction to the philosophy of technology , though not suited for beginners. It refers often to the books themselves and draws the reader's attention to uncultivated areas. This outcome may be a new start for the readers.

Carl Mitcham does not develop a philosophy of technology of his own. His contribution consists in giving a key to deal with thedaily growing literature on philosophy of technology. In the first part of the book Carl Mitcham gives a survey of the historical traditions in the philosophy of technology, in the second part his aim is to highlight conceptual distinctions and issues. These two cross-sections - historical and analytical - amount to the pleasant fact that some authors may get double notice. With regard to each cross-section Carl Mitcham has a sorting machine at his disposal. To cover the recorded history of technology he makes an interesting distinction between two approaches to technology: On the one hand we find the approach of engineers and technologists whereas on the other hand we see the approach of scholars in the humanities.

Mitcham begins in chapter 1 with the engineers approach to technology. Special attention is dedicated to a cortege of German engineers/philosophers, from Ernst Kapp (technology as organ projection) to Friedrich Dessauer (technology as encounter with the Kantian thing in itself) about whom Cari Mitcham writes with love. From outside of Germany Gilbert Simondon, Hendrik Rissen and Egbert Schuurman, Juan David Bacca and Mario Bunge, among others, are paid a visit In the second chapter Carl Mitcham focuses his attention on humanities oriented approaches to philosophy of technology — which circumscribesas the attempt of religion, poetry and philosophy to bring "non" or "trans'-technological perspectives to bear on interpreting the meaningof technology. He concentrates on four representatives of the romantic tradition, who make, in his opinion, a strong case for the humanities: Lewis Mumford, Jose Ortega y Gasset, Martin Heidegger and Jacques Ellul. These portraits are nice, intriguing, learned and sympathetic respectively.

In the third chapter he comes back to the difference between the engineering and humanities approaches to the philosophy of technology and gives them a clearer circumscription. Engineering philosophy of technology is even baptized a technological philosophy, because it is one that uses technological criteria and paradigms to question and judge other aspects of human affairs, and thus deepens or extends technological consciousness. Humanities or hermeneutic philosophy of technology seeks by contrast insight into the meaning of technology — its relation to the transtechnical: art and literature, ethics and politics, religion. It typically deals with nontechnical aspects of the human world and considers how technology may (or may not) fit in or correspond to them. At the same time Carl Mitcham undermines, in a certain sense intentionally, the clear distinction between these two traditions by focusing attention upon the bordertraffic between them. In this scope he discusses two attempts to reconcile the differences, one emerging within the engineering community (Society of German Engineers) and another within the philosophical community in the US (John Dewey and Don Ihde). In this context the author also explores the rich Marxist heritage.

In chapter TV he shows a new approach and formulates core issues in the philosophy of technology. With reference to relevant literature the author outlines a spectrum of issues ranging from the conceptual and epistemological through the ethical and political to the religious and metaphysical. Chapter V is the most 'technical' chapter in Ihe book. In it Greek thinking on techne is explored as an example of premodem history.

In the second part of the book the analytical cross-section is dealt with. This part is probably closer to the daily experience of the engineer who may consider the first part of the book inte-resting but without much concrete relevance to his engineering praxis. It is obvious that in each discourse on technology the meaning of it is different The engineer's usage of the term technology is rather restrictive, but on the tip of the tongue of, for example, Ellul or Heidegger the word 'technology' is extended to a degree where it no longer corresponds to the commonplaceinterpretation within the domain of the engineering praxis.

In this second part Cari Mitcham discusses philosophy from four different angles. His analytical cross-section is a provisional framework for analysis — 'definite enough to provide some guidance and open enough to allow for adjustments and the possibility of winding up with new ideas' — that considers technology respectively as object, as knowledge, as activity, and as volition. Technology as object can be distinguished according to types of objects-utilities, tools, machines - (chapter VII), technology as knowledgeaccording to types of knowledge - maxims, rules, theories -(chapter VIII), technology as activity according to types of activities - making, designing, maintaining, using - (chapter IX), and finally technology as volition according to types of volition -active will, receptive will - (chapter X). These chapters — in particular the ones on artifacts (chapter IX) –are very stimulating due to the surprising way many viewpoints of heterogenous origin are brought together.

From the two mentioned traditions of philosophy — engineering and humanities philosophy of technology — Carl Mitcham concludes that studies of philosophy and technology are needed. Therefore, hemakes a passionate plea for pluralistic philosophy and technology studies. This synthetic point of view represents his effort to think about technology philosophically, in' a way that does not exclude engineering discourse. Thinking through technology is in this way more than an critical introduction, it mirrors a philosophical concern that wants to reflect on technology in order to engage engineering practice and take it seriously. Carl Mitcham meets his own philosophical concern.

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In This Issue

About This Issue

by Richard Dietrich, Guest Editor

at a privilege and surprise to be a guest editor of the *Ellul Forum.* - his issue features the thought of Ian G. Barbour, Bean Professor of Science, Technology, and Society, Emeritus, at Carleton College in Minnesota. Ian has been important for the Scierice, Technology and Society Program here at Penn State; as well as for the National Association of Science, Technology, and Society (NASTS); and importantly, as an Ellul-like figure in our technological culture, society, system, and world.

Ian Barbour completed two series of Gifford Lectures (1989-90 and 1990-91) at the University of Aberdan in Scotland. He joins the ranks of such Gifford lecturers as William James, Carl Jung, and Reinhold Neibuhr. The two resultant books—his magnum opus—are reviewed herein by your guest editor. These books, *Religion in an Age of Science* (1989-90) and *Ethics in an Age of Technology* (1990-91) contain clear and patient reflections on the nature of and interconnections among ethics, religion,

science, and technology. Also, they offer "comprehensive and sure-footed synthesis" to peacably conjoin them, giving the reader both a status in the world and a perspective above it.

Ian G. Barbour is the great conciliator. His vision is this: With religion and science conspiring to understand reality, and with ethics and technology reciprocating to emote reality—human existence will persist and prosper. He recognizes the dark side with its nihilism, evil and sin; but emphasizes the light side with its reality, goodness, and reconciliation. For many years Ian was professor of religion, professor of physics, and director of the Program in Science, Ethics and Public Policy at Carleton College. Thus his life's work (as reflected in the Gifford Lectures) has been to synthesize religion and ethics with science and technology.

With the above in mind, I want to give you some background information about the honoring of Ian Barbour in this issue of the *Ellul Forum.* It came about through the honoring of Ian Barbour at the recent annual conference of the National Association for Science, Technology, and Society—held February 8-11 in Arlington, VA. It was there that an annual lectureship (The Life and Work of Ian Barbour) was inaugurated through my responsibility as Values and Religion Co-chair. Darrell Fasching, who knows of Barbour's stature, caught wind of the above "annual lectureship," and the rest is history—or will be when you read this.

Therefore, this issue of the Forum contains, in large part, material from that STS Conference lectureship. My plan is the following: I am opening this Forum, somewhat as I did the lectureship. Next, Ian Barbour will address us, as he did there, with his "Technology and Theology" piece. Then, James A. Nash will respond to Barbour's address with "Norms and the Man: A tribute to Ian Barbour." This is a thoughtful, heartfelt, witty, and revealing response; based in part on Barbour's second volume from his Gifford Lectures *Ethics in an Age ofTechnology.* Alas, another responder who took ill, was to have responded with material from Barbour's first volume, *Religion in an Age of Science.*

Included in the lectureship materials are my reviews of the above two volumes to help acquaintyou with them. But having done these reviews, I thought it fitting for the *Ellul Forum* to contain an attempt at a few comparisons concerning the approaches and systems of Barbour and Ellul. They address the "religion and technology" question quite differently. I have added a few observations of my own regarding what I see as their surprising neglect of analysis concerning technology in the Post-Moderii Era.

My hope is that you thoroughly enjoy this issue.

Bulletin Board

The Ellul Publishing Project

Funds are being raised to assist Ellul's heirs in the transcription and publicaton of his unpublished manuscripts. To date almost $3500.00 has been raised. Anyone interested in contributing may do so by sending a check made out to the *Ellul Forum* and marked for the Ellul Publication Project. Preliminary work is now being done on *The Ethics of Holiness.*

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Forum: Ian Barbour on Religion Science & Technology

The Gilford Lectures 1989-1991

Religion in an Age of Science, Volume One.
1990. 297 pages; and *Ethics in an Age of Technology,* Volume Two. 1993 . 312 pages. Ian G. Barbour. Harper, San Francisco.
Reviewed by Richard A. Deitrich
Assistant Professor of Science, Technology, and Society. The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa. 16802

Ian Barbour's past scholarship has contributed to the Penn State Science, Technology and Society Program: his 1980 book *Technology, Environment, andHuman Values* is a staple here. These two new volumes — his magnum opus — are capable of solid contribution to S-T-S endeavors of every stripe. We shared breakfast at the National Association of STS held near Washington, D.C. in March of this year. He sympathized concerning this task: the review of two volumes with over 600 pages of scholarly reflection spanning nearly a lifetime.

This being the Ellul Forum, I want to set the scene vis 'a vis Ellul. He is not referenced nor indexed in Volume One; and is only once referenced, therefore indexed, in Volume Two. Although they share a conservative Christian theology, Barbour does not share Ellul's pessimism. In fact, Barbour includes a one-page Reply to the Pessimists, and then explains "I am most sympathetic with the contextualists, though I am indebted to many of the insights of the pessimists." (page 24)

Regarding "technology" then, Barbour is a contextualist (i.e., technology is both a product and an instrument of social power); but what is he regarding "science?" He is a conciliator (i.e., science and religion ought to allow all of us to grasp reality peacably). Having obtained a Ph.D. in physics, he taught and researched several years, then returned to graduate school in philosophy and religion.

Regarding structural components, both books contain nine chapters, and they are heavily end-noted with 447 entries in Volume One, and 767 in Volume Two. Each book has three parts, with three chapters in each. They appear, therefore, homiletically arranged, perhaps owing to the format of the Gifford Lectures.

The epistemology of the volumes should be noted — they follow a similar approach. In Volume One, the first part relates religion to science; and it relates ethics to tech-

nology in Volume Two. Barbour uses a comparative approach which is typical of a conciliator. Part Two treats three large aspects common to religion and science-(physics, astronomy, evolution) in Volume One; while in Volume Two, three large issues concerning ethics and technology (agriculture, energy, computers) are discussed. Part Three, in Volume One, aims for a studied conciliation of religion and science; while Part Three, in Volume Two, thoughtfully places technology under control within its social context via ethics.

With the above foundation in place, I want to fashion a modest structure of key insights, understandings, etc. to convey a sense of the author's essence.

Barbour begins the first volume by facing the conflict between science and religion head-on. Part One, Religion and the Methods of Science begins by opposing two extremes — scientific materialism and biblical literalism; then works toward middle ground through conciliation. It is reached, for Barbour, by a clever shift from natural theology to a theology of nature. The former starts with science and reason while the latter begins with (in this case) the Christian tradition based on religious experience and historical revelation. Barbour admits "I am in basic agreement with the 'Theology of Nature' position, coupled with a cautious use of process philosophy." (page 30)

Part Two, Religion and the Theories of Science, contain chapters 4,5,6 which are entitled Physics and Metaphysics, Astronomy and Creation, and Evolution and Continuing Creation, respectively. These chapters are written ad populum — no specialist jargon, no forbidding math, no assumed background. Yet die major conflicts and touchpoints are treated— as by all great teachers—with clarity, fairness, and thoroughness.

These middle chapters have two purposes: one, to address key issues, concepts, and metaphysical/theological implications of the above three relational pairs; two, to acclimate the hearer/reader to the shallow water, before it gets deeper.

Part Three, Philosophical add Theological Reflections, delves deeply into human nature, process thought, and the God/Nature relationship. These three chapters grip the reader through the height, depth, and expanse of Barbour's thought in this, the central stage of his life-drama. He is wide-ranging in referencing, perceptive in epistemic organization, and exhaustive in considering concepts, explanations, and models toward understanding theodicy and odyssey.

Volume Two *Ethics in an Age of Technology* is a quasi-apologetic for the Christian ethical framework; within it, after all, modem technology has arisen. Contra Ellul, Barbour contends that Western religious traditions can waken humanity from the mesmerizing mileu of technique. As stated before, he is a hopeful contextualist, not a doleful pessimist, nor naive optimist.

Material from Barbour's *Technology, Environment, and Human Values* (1980) has been important for this new book. For example, Chapters 3,4,5,10,11 and 13 of the former are reworked into Chapters 1,2,3,4,5 and 9 of the latter. His very helpful values schema of material values (survival, health, material welfare, employment), social values (distributive justice, participatory freedom, interpersonal community, personal fulfillment), and environmental values (resource sustainability, ecosystem integrity,

environmental preservation) has been skillfully integrated into this new work. As the author states on the back cover "The challenge for our generation is to redirect technology toward realizing human and environmental values on planet earth."

Part One, Conflicting Values, begins with the conflicting views of technology as liberator, as threat, and as instrument of power—views held by optimists, pessimists, and contex-tualists, respectively. Florman, Ellul, Pacey, Ferkins, et al. are cited; but die new insight here is from Barbour's important delineation of the "two-way interaction" between technology and society.

This new insight drives a hopeful wedge behind which the Human Values discussed in Chapter 2, and the Environmental Values in Chapter 3 can enter technically ingrained discussion. Barbour's strength of forcing religious values fairly and thoughtfully into supposed secular discussion is very evident here. Tillich did it by "correlation," Barbour does it by "conciliation."

As mentioned earlier, Part Two deals with agriculture, energy, and the computer—chapters 4,5, and 6, respectively. In my view, the intent to be informative regarding these issues (e.g., 132 references for the 30 pages of Chapter 4) overpowers the application of Barbour's values schema. He obliquely raises the value issues throughout these chapters; then, in a concluding page or two, makes a stronger connection to several applicable material, social, or environmental values. The connections lack compulsion.

For me, the lack of an accompanying religious impetus when engaging these issues allows the overweeming technological milieu to diminish the importance, incisiveness, and power of Barbour's thought. However, the referencing, clarity, and value-related discussion make this section worthwhile, if not, engaging.

From the analysis of the three previous particular technologies, Part Three turns to a general discussion of Technology and the Future. It is here, most of all, that I miss Barbour's forte — his irresistable imposition of helpful, and reasonable religious resources into a secularized discussion.

Chapter 7 takes issue with three Unprecedented Powers of modem technology which have huge ethical components: environmental degradation, genetic engineering, and nuclear weapons. There is not much new in this chapter and the ethics content is further reduced, as is the religious impetus.

The above can be said for Chapter 8, Controlling Technology, even more so. This chapter, and the previous one, could well serve as required reading for a technology and public policy course because it deals with governing, assessing, and redirecting technology. It touches all the bases, but lacks indepth analysis of deeper sources for human control of technology.

The final chapter points to New Directions for technology. Barbour returns to his strength as conciliator by insisting on the legitimacy of ethical/theological considerations within technical endeavor. It is strong because of this: he is clearly writing for me and mine, for you and yours, for the future of humanity. Yes, technology should be appropriate! We should conserve! The 98 million overweight American adults should diet for health and justice! Values can and are changing!

Barbour concludes, "I believe that the combination of education, political action, catalytic crises, and (ethical/relig-ious) vision can bring about a more just and sustainable world."

With these two volumes, Ian Barbour's sure-footed scholarship has comprehended a half-century of techno-scientific civilization. His prodigious referencing has garnered from afar. His ordered thought has penetrated the basic dilemmas and issues of post-industrial modernity. His insistent humanity has wrestled with those in scientific and technological endeavor regarding the legitimate and necessary participation of ethics and religion in all human endeavor.

A great soul and proven scholar has spoken. For this, and the above reasons, these works deserve a place on the shelf of any educator who even brushes their content.

Technology and Theology

Ian G. Barbour

Technology and Social Justice

Environmentalists have been concerned about the impacts of technology on the environment but have often neglected issues of social justice. Social activists have usually reversed these priorities. I have argued that the Christian tradition has a distinctive contribution to make in bringing together commitment to environmental preservation and socialjustice. Since 1970, many writers have explored differing forms of Christian environmental ethics, but relatively few have asked about Christian attitudes toward technology in the context of recent awareness of global environmental and resource constraints.

Starting with the prophets of ancient Israel and the teachings of Jesus and the early church, the biblical tradition has challenged unjust social institutions. Many of the leaders in movements for prison reform, the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, and civil rights were motivated by their religious beliefs. Concern for social justice today must include analysis of the effects of current forms of technology.

1. *Inequitable Distribution of Costs and Benefits*

Frequently one group benefits from a technology while other groups bear the brunt of the risks and indirect costs. A chemical plant may benefit consumers and stockholders, while its effluents, emissions, and toxic wastes put Workers and local citizens at risk. Giant tomato harvesters bring profits to food processing companies and large landowners, but small holders lose their land and farm workers lose their jobs. Biotechnology research is directed mainly to the diseases of affluent societies, while tropical diseases affecting, far larger populations are neglected. Computers, communications, and information are sources of social power, and access to them varies greatly within

nations and between nations. Technology has contributed to the enormous disparities between rich and poor countries because most new technologies require extensive expertise, capital, and infrastructure. Consumption by industrial nations is responsible for a grossly disproportionate share of global pollution and resource use.

Within industrial countries, injustices occur when the risks from pollution fall disproportionately on the poor. The Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ took the EPA list of the nation's worst toxic dumps, and correlated it with census data on the area with the same zip code. The data which had the highest correlation with the location of a toxic dump was the percentage of Afro-Americans and Hispanics in the local population. The urban poor are almost always exposed to higher levels of air pollution, water pollution, noise, and lead poisoning than citizens with higher incomes, and they have little economic or political power to defend themselves from such risks.

2. *The Concentration of Economic and Political Power*

Technology is both a product and an instrument of social power. It tends to reinforce existing social structures. In the Third World, the Green Revolution favored large land-owners who could afford tractors and fertilizer, and this led to the further concentration of land ownership. In Western nations, absentee or corporate farm ownership is common, and food processing companies sometimes control the whole food cycle, from farm inputs and crop or feedlot contracts, to food processing, marketing, and restaurant chains. Economic power translates into political power through election campaign contributions. Strong lobbies have promoted policies and subsidies favorable to oil, coal, and nuclear power, while solar energy and conservation measures have received little support. Large-scale capital-intensive technologies require huge investments and the centralization of management, making participation by workers more difficult

The biblical tradition is realistic about the abuse of power. The concept of sin refers to the actions of groups as well as the attitudes of individuals. Every group or nation tends to rationalize its own self-interest. In large-scale centralized systems, such as nuclear power plants, human fallibility and institutional rationalization can have catastrophic consequences. In policy decisions, technical experts often use a narrow range of criteria and have a vested interest in a particulartechnology, so we need input from a wide range of people who might be affected by a decision. But the biblical tradition is also idealistic in its affirmation of creative human potentialities. Through technology, we can use our God-given intellectual capacities to promote human welfare within a more just social order. The biblical view of human nature would lead us not to reject technology but to seek to redirect it toward the basic needs of all people.

3. *Priorities in Research and Development*

A large fraction of the world's scientists and engineers are in defense-related research, and many of the remainder are working on projects that will provide luxuries for the privileged. Of the world's total expenditures for scientific research and development, only 6% are in the Third World. Adequate food, health and shelter are the most universal and the most essential human needs. Technologies of agriculture, pub-

lic health, and low cost housing are thus crucial to developing nations as well as to people trapped in poverty in industrial nations. Energy, climate change, and population growth are also urgent global problems, so high priority should be assigned to such research areas as solar energy, high-protein crops, and family planning in all its dimensions. Both environmental preservation and resource sustainability should be considered in all technological policy and design. Energy conservation reduces pollution, global wanning, and our trade deficit. Products which are recyclable cut down on pollution and resource depletion, and in most cases also conserve energy. Waste is reduced further when several processes can be integrated, as. in the cogeneration of heat and electricity. In industrial nations, future growth should be sought in the technologies related to services, such as education, health care, and communications, rather than in the more resource-intensive and heavily polluting manufacturing and consumer-goods industries.

4. *Jobs and the Environment*

The environmental movement has been accused of being elitist and of neglecting the impact of environmental regulations on employment opportunities. However public opinion surveys have consistently shown broad support for environmental measures among all socioeconomic groups. Labor unions and environmentalists have cooperated in working for occupational safety and the regulation of chemicals in the workplace. Both groups have sought greater accountability on the part of corporations and government bureaucracies and greater public access to information and decision processes.

EPA has estimated that industries producing and deploying equipment for the control of air, water and land pollution have created more jobs than have been lost by environmental regulations. Many existing jobs would have been jeopardized by environmental deterioration - in agriculture, fishing, and tourism, for instance. Some companies have threatened to close if emission standards were tightened, but few have actually done so, and most of those that did were heavy polluters with obsolescent plants. There have of course been layoffs that caused great hardships to individuals and local communities, but job retraining, adjustment assistance and job creation programs can mitigate such consequences.

The protection of the Spotted Owl in old timber stands on public lands in the Pacific Northwest did indeed imperil the livelihood of local mill workers. However the Spotted Owl is only one of the plant and animal forms that need protection in the few remaining virgin forest areas. Moreover, the decline of timber-related jobs was primarily the product of many years of overcutting with inadequate replanting on private lands, together with the introduction of automated mill equipment and the shipment of logs overseas for processing. After protective legislation, 9 our of 10 displaced millworkers who entered a federally financed retraining program in Oregon found new jobs; in one year the state added 100,000 jobs and now has the lowest unemployment rate in a generation.

5. *Democratic Control of Technology*

The direction of technology cannot be left to economic forces alone because the market ignores environmental impacts and issues of social justice. The market is an efficient mechanism for allocating resources, but it must be supplemented by political decisions to achieve environmental and social goals. National legislation includes environmental regulations, allocation of federal funds for research, taxes, subsidies, and trade policies which influence new technologies. Democracy is difficult in a technological society, because policy decisions often involve technical questions, and also because corporations committed to particular technologies make large campaign contributions to legislators favoring their interests.

Reform of campaign financing would provide more opportunity for environmental, civil rights, public interest, labor and church groups to work together to influence the electoral and legislative process.

Christian Attitudes Toward Technology

Apart from issues of social justice, consider four points at which the Christian faith can offer a distinctive perspective on technology.

1. *A Long-term View*

Many of the impacts of our technological activities will be felt by future generations. Degraded land, eroded soil, and decimated fisheries and forests will take decades to recover. Radioactive wastes from today's nuclear power plants will endanger anyone exposed to them 10,000 years from now. If we attempt the genetic engineering of germ-line cells in plants, animals, or human beings, generations far in the future will be affected. The world of politics, however, tends to take a very short-term view. Political leaders find it difficult to look beyond the next election. The main concern of business and industry is this year's bottom line. Economic calculations give little weight to long-term consequences because a time discount is applied to future costs and benefits.

The biblical tradition, by contrast, takes a long-term view. Stewardship requires consideration of the future because God's purposes include the future. The Bible speaks of a covenant from generation to generation "to you. and your descendants forever." The land, in particular, is to be held as a trust for future generations. This long time perspective derives from a sense of history and ongoing family and social life, as well as accountability to a God who spans the generations. So it is not surprising that sustainability has been a major theme in statements of the World Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Bishops, and several Protestant denominations.

2. *A Global View*

Acid rain from German factories harms Scandinavian forests; coal-burning plants in the U.S. damage Canadian lakes and trees. Brazil clears rain forests in order to export timber and beef to industrial countries - leading to the extinction of thousands of rare species that are an irreplaceable genetic heritage and a potential source of new medications. CFC refrigerants released in any nation deplete the ozone layer, subjecting people half a world away to more solar radiation that causes skin cancer. In an interdependent world, poverty and political instability in one country affects other countries through trade, immigration, terrorism, and military action.

Religion has often been a divisive force. Religious intolerance has contributed to most of the wars and ethnic conflicts around the world today. Christianity has a very mixed record, but it could be a strong voice for a global outlook. The biblical writers affirm our common humanity and assert that "we have been made one people to dwell upon the face of the earth." Micah holds up a vision of universalpeace: "They shall beat swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they leam war any more" (6:3-4). Many churches today are active in working for World peace and in supporting the U.N. They have contributed to famine relief, but more significantly they have advocated agricultural and technical assistance to developing countries. Such assistance is more long-lasting than emergency relief; it is an act of global justice and not simply of individual charity.

3. *An Attitude of Humility*

The legends of Prometheus, Faust, and Frankenstein all point to the dangers in the search for unlimited power. The attitude of manipulation and control which is associated with technology is particularly harmful when it is extended to human life. It is tempting to seek "technical fixes" for spcial problems to avoid making basic changes in social institutions. Unqualified reliance on technology as a source of salvation is the modem form of idolatry. Technical rationality and obsession with things can impoverish our experience and our human relationships. I submit that awareness of the sacred and recognition of human limits can provide antidotes to the search for technological omnipotence. Receptivity and acknowledgment of grace are correctives to the dangers in control and manipulation, but they run against the dominant outlook of a technological society.

Humility requires recognition of limitations in human character and social institutions as well as ecological limits. It would lead us to respect the divine purpose and evolutionary wisdom embodied in the order of nature, and to be sensitive)Ⓒ the far-reaching and often unpredictable repercussions of our interventions. This does not mean that we should abandon technology, or that genetic engineering, for example, should be ruled out. Genetic defects cause great suffering in human life and we should correct them when we can, with provisions to ensure justice in access to such therapy. But we should be cautious about irreversible changes, such as germ-line alterations in human genes, because we do not know enough to predict all the consequences. We should also be more cautious in seeking positive improvements in human nature than in trying to remove impediments to normal functioning, because our ideals for human improvement are so strongly influenced by the current ideologies of our culture.

4; *A Vision of the,Good Life*

Conservation measures in industrial nations would contribute significantly to a more just and sustainable world. Greater efficiency and improved technologies can cut down On both pollution and resource use. But I believe we must go beyond efficiency and look at our patterns of consumption. In our society there are powerful pressures toward the escalation of consumption. By the age of 20, the average American has already seen 350,000 TV commercials. The mass media hold before us the images of a. high-

consumption life style. Self-worth and happiness are identified with possessions. Our culture encourages us to try to fill all our psychological needs through consumption. Consumerism is addictive, and like all addictions it involves the denial of its consequences.

The Christian tradition offers a vision of the good life that is less resource consumptive than prevailing practices. It holds that, once basic needs are met, true fulfillment is found in spiritual growth, personal relationships, and community life. This path is life-affirming, not life-denying. Religious faith speaks to the crisis of meaning that underlies compulsive consumerism. We should seek a level of sufficiency that is neither ever-growing consumption nor joyless asceticism. A vision of positive possibilities and an alternative image of the good life are likely to be more effective than moral exhortation in helping people to turn in new directions. For most people in our nation, restraint in consumption is indeed compatible with personal fulfillment We can try to recover the Puritan virtues of frugality and simplicity. For the Third World, of course, and for low-income families in industrial nations, levels of consumption must rise substantially if basic needs are to be met.

The new vision will require a reordering of national as well as individual priorities. With the end of the Cold War, the center of our foreign policy could shift from the containment of communism to human well-being and the preservation of our planet. If a third of the $600 billion the world spends on arms each year were spent on sustainable agriculture, energy conservation, renewable energy sources, and family planning, the prospects for the whole planet would be dramatically altered. The biblical vision encourages us not to reject technology but to redirect it toward such human and environmental goals.

Note: This article is taken from an address given by Ian Barbour on Feb. 9,1996, at the annual meeting of the National Association for Science, Technology and Society (NASTS). It develops further some themes in the second volume of his Gifford Lectures, *Ethics in an Age of Technology.* The meeting included a session honoring his work and announcing the establishment of the Barbour Lecture in the area ofTechnology, Values, and Religion, to be given at future annual meetings of NASTS.

Reference

Barbour, Ian G., Ethics in an Age of Technology, Harper San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, 1993.

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Norms and the Man: A Tribute to Ian Barbour

James A. Nash

I am honored to have the opportunity to honor Ian Barbour. My purpose is to say something about the man and his values by looking at one of his major works, *Ethics in an Age of Technology,* the second volume of his 1989-91 Gifford Lectures. I first became aware of Ian Barbour through two valuable works he edited in the early 70s: *Earth Might Be Fair* and *Western Man and Environmental Ethics.* I havebeen a fan of his ever since.

The most pressing question about Ian is: What is he vocationally? A physicist, ecologist, philosopher, theologian, ethicist, technologist, even occasionally political analyst, or what? The answer is: all of the above to a significant degree (Speaking as an ethicist, I think Ian knows far more than enough about ethics to qualify as an honored member of the guild). Ian Barbour has no respect for disciplinary lines; he is a Multidisciplinary Man - and that is a major strength of his writings. He shows a broad knowledge base, wide-ranging skills, and a comprehensiveness of concern - features which are true of both volumes of the Gifford lectures.

Another notable feature is that Ian Barbour is a gentleperson. He is intensely fair, balanced, or judicious in his analyses and criticisms of various positions - some of which I know he 'i really dislikes. Remarkably, I could not find a single flamboy–⊠ ant sentence, not even a word, in *Ethics in an Age of Technology.* (This is quite in contrast to me: I enjoy throwing an occasional incendiary.) His writings are clear and precise - features which are expressions of his fairness and honesty.

Yet, the feature I admire most in his works is the pervasive sense of ambiguity: Frankly, I believe that ambiguity ought to be elevated to doctrinal status, and I suspect that Ian would endorse that belief. He consistently recognizes the mix of negative and positive values, both in actuality and potentiality (which may be an extension of his balance and fairness). Typically, he maneuvers between one-sided approaches, and supports, for example, "selective economic growth" and a mix of small and large technologies. He knows technology as both threat and liberation, and sees both the dignity of work and its degradation. This sense of ambiguity is helpful in avoiding both romanticism and cynicism. It reflects the influence, I suspect, of both Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich.

To show the man and his thought best in *Technology,* I decided to search for the moral norms (or the personal and social virtues) which underlay his evaluations/judgments. They say a lot about the character and concerns of Ian. I will identify ten of these norms and make a brief comment on each. All are grounded in a sense of solidarity, a moral response to the fact of social arid ecological connectedness.

1) *Equity* - or distributive justice, Ihe equitable distribution of burdens and benefits, particularly in taking care of the needs of the poor and maximizing benefits to the least advantaged (following John Rawls). Equity affirms a right to the basic necessities of life. It is grounded in universal human equality. One has a duty to be responsive to this right. In fact, the fundamental moral purpose of technology is to provide for basic human needs and ecological integrity. This prominent concern for equity comes out in

his discussions of everything from computers to the just distribution of risks associated with nuclear wastes. (See pp. 36-37,110,200,203,228,235,243.)

2) *Participation* - to enable powers of choice in decisions affecting our lives, in politics, the marketplace, and work. Participation is tied closely to freedom; Ian speaks of "participatory freedom." It entails public discussion and public consent, and involves the accountability of economic and political institutions to the people. Thus, Ian calls for the democratic governance of technology. (See pp. 9, 38-39,114,176,221 - 22, 237, 240.)

3) *Sustainability* - that is, responsibilities to future generations. Ian stresses the truly long-term, not the next couple generations. One of the major themes of the book is "impacts distant in time and space." He tolerates no discounting of the future (at least not with-out justification). This value shapes his perspective on nuclear energy and solar energy. (See pp. 66,126-27.)

4) *Subsidiarity* - or, more accurately , the *controllability* or *diversification of power* (which is usually the context in which Ian discusses subsidiarity), He expresses grave concerns about the concentration of economic and political power. Barbour wants the decentralization or disposal of political, economic, and technological power. He sees technology, in fact, as unprecedented power. He is also concerned about "large scale" projects; he prefers the intermediate technological scale (245) or a mix of small and large projects. If nuclear energy is justified at all, smaller reactors are preferred (128). He clearly wants public interventions in markets and the regulation of technology.

His concern about power is closely linked to "participation," and it is grounded in a realistic recognition of the powers of sin. He is consistently aware of the moral ambiguities in human character, and the inevitable mixture of good and evil in human projects. (See pp. 13, 39, 128,179,245.)

5) *Bioresponsibility* - that is, respect for the rest of nature.. Humans have moral duties to nonhumankind, not to ecosystems as such, except as these are instrumental values for life forms. Ian rejects biotic egalitarianism, but his principle of discrimination among species, which gives priority to humans, is not clear in *Technology.* He shows a sensitivity to the welfare of all life, and he supports environmental integrity .for that purpose. (See pp. xvii, 69.)

6) *Frugality* - Resources are sufficient for need, but not for greed, he says. His concern is about both profligate consumption and production, both social and ecological responsibilities. Frugality is the foundation of justice and sustainability in Ian Barbour. Typically, for him, frugality is a middle way. It is an important theme in his moral thought. (See pp. xvii, 137,142,251-262.)

7) *Efficiency* - a moral criterion at some points in Ian's thought, but not one that he has clearly developed. I'd like to see him develop the moral dimensions of efficiency, because he'd have some unique perspectives. He clearly would recognize the ambiguities in the concept. For example, ultraefficiency in energy consumption is laudable; in fisheries, however, a whole species or ecosystem can be wiped out through indiscriminately efficient drift nets. (See pp. 140, 244.)

8) *Proportionality* - a norm which is generally implicit rather than explicit in *Technology.* Costs/risks ought to be proportionate to the good - or evil - expected. This criterion is evident when he deals with risks of low probability but great magnitude. (See pp. 205, 228.)

9) *Flexibility/Adaptability* - a criterion which is implicit in *Technology,* but seems to be a basis of evaluation when he talks about fitting action (35, 44) or "appropriate technologies" which fit local social, cultural (and I add ecological) conditions. This norm is undeveloped in Ian's thought - and in everyone else's. Indeed, it is the most undeveloped ecological norm. It is close to sustainability, and perhaps a dimension of it, but I suspect it is distinct.

Adaptability might be described as ecosystemic compatibility or the mimicking of nature. It is an accommodation to the forces and constraints of nature. It is fittingness. It allows room for the unpredictable and uncontrollable; therefore, it is an insurance strategy, such as the redundancy of habitats to protect endangered species. Adaptability is an antidote to the managerial arrogance and imperialism of some advocates of "sustained yield" - for example, in fisheries:-who consider a species to be an isolated unit rather than a part of an ecosystemic whole. (See pp. 35,44,245,247.)

10) *Humility* - the pervasive norm in Ian's.thought, because it is a pervasive feature of the man. Humility guides all the other norms. Adaptability, for example, is empowered by a sense of humility about how little we know ecologically. Humility recognizes the limitations on all human powers and avoids overconfidence in our capacities.

These norms give insights into the character of Ian Barbour. . They are noble norms, and they give evidence of a noble character in a man who takes them seriously.

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Archivists Note: The text body footnotes are missing from the PDF, so I'll just include them here until this can be error corrected.[123]

Ellul and Barbour on Technology

by Richard A. Deitrich

Ellul published *The Technological System*[4] *in 1980, the same year as Barbour's early major book. Technology, Environment, and Human Values*[5] We have used these

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[1] Barbour, Ian G., *Ethics in an Age of Technology,* Harper San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, 1993.

[2] Barbour, Ian *G.,EarthMightBe Fair-Reflections on Ethics, Religion, andEcology,* Prentice-Hall, Englewood Heights, NJ, 1972.

[3] Barbour, Ian G., editor, *Western Man and Environmental Ethics, Attitudes Toward Nature and Technology,* Addison-Wesley Publishers, Reading MA, 1973.

[4] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological System* (New York Continuim Publishing Corp. 1980).

[5] Ian G. Barbour, *Technology, Environment, and Human Values (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980).*

books in our STS curriculum, relying heavily on their seminal (politically correct in this case) thinking about technology. As you are aware, Ellul is usually spoken of as a pessimist; Barbour, however, is a self-confessed contextualist. I call him a "mediator" of Snow's two cultures. His literary culture expertise is, of course, in theology.

In our flagship course "Critical Issues in STS," we use Ellul's basic characterization of technology as artificial, autonomous, self-determining (organismic), self-augmenting, and means-oriented. This characterization, as you know, seems to give technology a "being" of its own — thus Ellul has an ontological approach. This, we explain, is *one way* to understand technology. To help the students identify with Ellul's "milieu" thesis, we use a 50-item S & T opinion survey with statements such as "The world is a safer place now than it was 150 years ago," and "S & T will find solutions to our environmental problems." They respond by circling one of these: (SA, A N, D, SD). We make sure that Ellul's ontological approach toward understanding *modem* technology is very clearly explicated. (Note: Early in the class we carefully distinguish between generic, modem, and science-based technology.)

This "pessimistic" view is then softened by using Barbour's "contextual" view. His tripart values schema has worked well in our courses during the eighties, especially. It is as follows:

Material Values	*Social Values*	*Environmental Values*
survival	distributive justice	resource sustainability
health	participatory freedom	ecosystem integrity

I material wellbeing | interpersonal community | environmental preservation I I employment | personal fulfillment | |

The above schema as well as Barbour's organizing plan within *Technology, Environment, and Human Values* reveal his "volitional" approach toward understanding technology—as opposed to Ellul's ontological approach. The book has three parts—Conflicting Values, Environmental Policies, and Scarce Resources. His overarching theme seems to be this: Humans can sort out their values; they can incorporate these into policies which are just and sustainable; and, with this incorporation, they can cope with technology and the finite resources of planet Earth when technique and scarcity are accepted, understood, and properly addressed by humane, value-laden policies.

Their Depiction of Technology

Barbour's contextualism, with its volitional approach to controlling technology, allows him to mediate between religion and science, and to *redirect* technology through values. Indeed, his two Gifford lectures (and resultant volumes) attempt this mediation and redirection—these have been his life's work as a physicist and theologian.

To assure you that I am sure-footed about the above, here is the last paragraph of his preface which summarize the five aspects of the scientific age which set the agenda for volume one, *Religion in an Age of Science:*

In looking at these five challenges—science as a method, a new view of nature, a new context for theology, religious pluralism, and the ambiguous power of technology—my goals are to explore the place of religion in an age science and to present an interpretation of Christianity that is responsive to both the historical tradition and contemporary scene.[6]

The "mediation" intent is obvious here, but I think we in this forum are more interested in Barbour's redirection intent concerning technology. Coincidentally, the final paragraph of volume two, *Ethics in an Age of Technology* is also instructive here: "The challenge for our generation is to redirect technology toward realizing human and environmental values on planet earth?'[7]

Enough has been said, I trust, for us to conclude that Barbour does place technology in the context of human creativity and control. We can do technology, and we can control technology because we are in the image of God. We can misuse technology because of sin, but we can redirect technology through religion and its concommittant ethics. Thus modem science-based technology is depicted as fairly neutral regarding evil, an imitation of God regarding creativity, and a mainly controllable endeavor regarding responsibility. Nature—and nature's God—is, for Barbour, still the controlling milieu.

In comparing Ellul's "pessimistic" approach, we recognize that he depicts modem science-based technology very differently. Although the idea of "technique" has deep conceptual meaning for Ellul, it is science-based technology that powerfully impresses this "technique" upon reality—as does the body impress the human mind upon reality.[8]

Ellul sees modem technology as the result and embodiment of minds and Mind which are obsessed by technique. Mind must be written both small and large because of his intent. His intent is to warn about "fulfillment" of dangerous, demonic, and evil local and worldwide potentialities based upon intense analysis of modem technology as the instrumental cause. Thus Barbour's "redirection" intent, although thoughtful and well-intentioned, probably appeared to Ellul as the effort of an amiable general who, with his defenses breached, wants to talk the enemy into entering a peace agreement.

A Brief Systems Analysis

Indeed, Barbour's system does expect both sides of the "religion and science" equation, and the "ethics as technique versus technology as technique" means) to be under humane, reasonable, and just control. It is true that the "religion *in* an age of science"

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[6] Ian Barbour, *Retigion in an Age of Science* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990) p. XV.

[7] Ian Barbour, *Ethics in an Age cfTechnology* (San Francisco:Har-per, 1993) p. XIX.

[8] I think that this parallel, bom of Cartesian dualism, has been a strong factor in Ellul's analysis of technology in which he sees it as impressing a heartless/soul-less/efficient rationality upon reality. Thus humans have lost the tripart self-understanding which allowed the spirit/soul (religious) nexus to

motif does allude to our S and T milieu, as does the "ethics *in* an age of technology" motif. But without Ellul's dramatic "technological usurpation of nature" scenerio, Barbour's system lacks motivational dynamic. His milieu can be livable and manageable if people on both "sides" recognize that they are, in some cases, misguided, underinformed, and working against their own best interests. As Barbour said "The challenge...is to redirect technology..." His mediation is intended to halt the hegemony of S&T, and to result in mutual respect and well-being through integrative harmony.

In looking at his use of "age" instead of "milieu," my sense is that Barbour is actually proposing peace (as did the general in my analogy) so that these two human endeavors—relig-ion/seience and ethics/technology—can be joined to combat their mutual enemy in the coming age of post-modernism.

Let me explain. Religion, forming the common cultural center, had hegemony over S&T throughout the Renaissance; but was weakened by the Reformation. For this reason (and because of advances im concepts, instrumentation, and math, etc.), pre-modemism has given way to modernism with its most distinguishing characteristic being modem science and modem technology—I am speaking of Western Society. Now the *world* is becoming post-modem, before much of it has become modem—i.e. modem in the sense that shared scientific knowledge and widely used technology form the common cultural center. My understanding is that neither common religion—with its ethics, nor scientific knowledge—with its technology, will form the common cultural center of postmodernism. To this thought I will return later.

I have searched Barbour's works, including his research paper/booklet *Science, Technology, and the Church*[9] for signs that he recognized Western Societies rapid shift from the Modem Age toward the Post-Modem Age. No, it appears he did not because it is not obvious in his system. This is surprising.

But is the impetus toward post-modernism afforded by technology more obvious in Ellul's system? It is, and it isn't! I have searched five of his works[10] and found no direct concern with post-modernism per se; however, since *The Technological Bluff* is his most recent work, the recognition of something like it is more latently powerful. Chapter XI Technical Progress and the Philosophy of the Absurd contains my case in point.

In Chapter XI, Ellul speaks of the absurdism of Camus, the exitentialism of Sartre, and the Nihilism of Nietzsche. He sees these life-views at work behind Nazism because their effects became actualized through the atrocities at Auschwitz et al., and'in the obliging conducts for which Fasching and others still seek explanation. On the first

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oversee the mind/body (techno-scientific) nexus. Thus "la technique" has become autonomous in relation to "le sacr'e".

[9] Ian Barbour *Science, Technology, and the Church* (Cleveland: United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1994).

[10] The five books are the following: *The Technological Soci-* e(><1963); *The Meaning of the CityQ970y, The Technological Sys-* fem(1980); *The Humiliation cf the* lFcird(1985); *The Technological BluJfflSW)*.

page of this chapter, Ellul talks about a life-view which goes beyond Nazism. Without naming it, he sets forth a post-modernism explication:

To live is a pure fact. There is no meaning in what happens, nor are we to search for meaning or to attribute it History makes no sense, it is going nowhere, it obeys no rules, it has no permanence. Good and evil do not exist...There is permanent misunderstanding. What we do is foolish to others;...hell is other people... Only what exists s is real. But this, too, is as shifting and uncertain aswater sand.[11]

He continues by discussing the effect of the above philosophy of the absurd on scientific thinking. Then he closes the chapter by coupling the above sensitive, existential, picture with short sections about technical, economic, and human absurdity. This is, according to my research, as close as Ellul gets to speaking of the Post-Modem Age in his system—with its,ontological approach to technology, and its intent on explaining the "fulfillment" of history by technology. (I trust that an Ellul scholar will address this issue in a later Forum issue.)

My puzzlement about Ellul's system has two aspects. One, does he anywhere posit within technology the intersection of supernatural good, supernatural evil, and ambivalent human good/evil enterprise? This could go far in explaining the autonomous, self-augmenting, etc. —in short— ontological characteristics of modem technology. Two, does Ellul anywhere explain the role of technology in a theodicy of God, satan, and fallen humankind? If so, where; if not, why? (I leave it to Ellul scholars to answer these questions.)

Cautious conclusions

My own "system" is in better alignment with Ellul's thought than Barbour's. I am pessimistic concerning our future—unless unusual divine intervention occurs. Technology provides the means for "shallowing" humanity's morals and meanings as well as amplifying the effect of evil. A global totalitarianism could well grip humankind with cultural/social absurdism, existentialism, and nihilism. This time there will be no Judeo-Christian civilization to fight for the self-evident truths that humans are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, etc. This time, those seeking to turn back the dehumanization may be without sufficient resources in nature, religious motivation from culture, scientific capability in society, and access to technology to confront a global aggressor. This despot may have sufficiently altered nature, its certainties, and human being to brook no human adversary. (The Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the following diaspora of the Jews is an apt analogy here.)

When humanity is sufficiently alienated from nature; and nature is sufficiently replaced by the milieu of technology; and nature's God is sufficiently replaced by science—then what? Perhaps this is what Ellul is getting at by saying—

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[11] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Bluff* '(Grand Rapids:Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) p. 199. s

This ideology of a divine, soteriological science in association with a dream world is reinforced by what we anticipate and by what is about to come seemingly with no human direction and in obedience to none of the existing classical laws. Science is becoming capable. both of absolute novelty and also of the regulationof a world, as is only proper for the diety. Like all deities, it has an oracular power. We ourselves can no longer will or decide. We leave this to the benificent science in which we believe.[12]

Here, Ellul clearly ontologizes science, but on a different level than technology.

What, I believe, Ellul did not see is that modem science-having spent much of its moral and cultural capital (from mainly Judeo-Christian religious sources) in the Modem Age—will be altered, thereby losing its aura of pragmatic certainty and its ability to hold together a human common cultural center for civilized humanity. As in Nazism, other concerns could become more urgent than the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We could again see something like Nazism arise; this time a new form of social Darwinianism could be sanctioned by a much more widely relativised scientific community surrounded by nearly "universal" so called norms and certainties which are derived from the exigencies of the moment. ,

I see it this way. The source of "truth" (mainly in the form of universal norms of conduct) which formed the common cultural center in *pre-modem* Western Society has been abandoned in large part. Alongside the above Judeo-Christian source of "truth," came modem science to form a new common cultural center in Western Society based on "fact." Now *(modern* Western Society is abandoning its source of "fact" (mainly in the form of universal laws of nature), and a new common cultural center is forming to usher in *post-modernism..* This new common cultural center, based on neither "truth" nor "fact," is based on "technique." The source of "technique" (mainly in the form of universal technical applications) is modem technology from Western Society, and now the world. "La Technique" was, of course, built on the above truths and factsfrom the two proceeding Ages.

We have continually shallowed human spirit by discounting universal norms of conduct which define our human-ness, and we have continually blunted human reason by relativising universal laws of nature which provide certainties. This, I think, explains Ellul's chapters regarding a global escape to absurdity in post-modernist society with its new common cultural center based on technique. *This "technique-oriented" global society with its technological milieu will, in my view, give rise to the societal and cultural absurdism spoken of by Ellul.* This will be similar to present-day forms of cultural existentialism, which stay safely supported in their caccoons of essential society. But without the support of a sufficiently moral and rational society, existentialim becomes absurdism. Chaos will replace cosmos.

This will occur when the moral-norm capital of pro-modernism, and the certainty capital of modernism are nearly expended. Absurdism is even now at the door; it is admixtured with various forms of *escapism,* and there are numerous and various

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[12] *Technological Bluff* pps. 185-186.

means of escape. Western society is widely using many means of escape such as—abandonment, abortion, abuse, alcohol, crime, divorce, drugs, euthanasia, insanity, media, the cyberworld, sports, suicide, violence. These are only a few of the ever-widening activities of escape which embody in our world an absurd attitude toward the transcen-dant with its norms for truth, and toward nature with it laws for certainty. When humanity will not face-up to these norms - and laws, it will face-away to what remains. What does remain?

Book Reviews

In the Vineyard of the Text

by Ivan Illich. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
Reviewed by Joyce Hanks

Ivan Illich believes that our Western approach to the use of books is currently undergoing a second massive seachange, following the first such event more than eight hundred years ago. Current movements away from conceiving of the book as a *text* give us the necessary perspective, he believes, to examine the process through which the book reached that status in the first place. Readers of Jacques Ellul's *The Humiliation of the Word* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerd-mans, 1985; French ed. 1981), will find significant parallels in Illich's book.

Unlike most of Illich's books I have seen, *In the Vineyard of the Text* takes a rather traditionally documentary approach to its subject, complete with massive footnotes and bibliography. Following his main line of argument, however, requires very little reference to the scholarly apparatus: Illich shows that, in the time before certain technical changes in book production in the twelfth century, reading was primarily an oral matter, a way of following or discovering what someone had *said.* By the thirteenth century, books served mainly to record another person's *thought,* and book design had evolved so as to make that thought highly accessible to others.

Illich has found a useful vehicle for grounding and elaborating on what he sees as a major shift in Western habits: the *Didascalicon* (dating from 1128), a guide to reading by Hugh of St. Victor, a twelfth-century Flemish theologian, philosopher, and mystic who lived in a Parisian cloister. *In the Vineyard of the Text* is organized as a free-wheeling commentary on the most pertinent sections of Hugh's book. Since the *; \ Didascalicon* instructs in the "old" manner of reading (which will soon begin to disappear from the medieval scene), Illich can contrast it with what he calls "bookishness," the approach to books that we modems know best. According to Illich, bookishness, in its turn, is about to disappear, as the screen replaces the page in the twentieth century.

What significance do such changes hold, in Illich's view? In part, the same significance Ellul found: the word loses power and importance when reduced from something spoken by another person to the status of a series of disembodied notions to be manipulated at will by others. For Hugh of St. Victor, reading constituted a path to virtue, a way of discovering God's remedy for human sinfulness and fallen condition. Reading

for this purpose required certain gifts, intentions, and attitudes, as well as the development of skills related to mem-oiy, meditation, historical knowledge, and exegesis. By the late twelfth century, Illich believes that reading had ceased to center on the desire for moral change. The book had became more a source of knowledge than of wisdom. Previously, books had dealt with nature or God; but the new approach concerned the mind. Leisurely reading that had earlier led to reflection gave way to rapid searches for information, now that the written text provided multiple points of entry into a writer's thought.

Illich reveals other important facets of this dramatic change as well: books began to proliferate as a result of twelfth-century technical innovations that made them easier to copy, handle and read—centuries before the invention of printing. These novelties included the widespread use of paper, alphabetical indexing, editing, paragraphing, variation of type size, underlining, and the use of chapter titles. In addition, new reference works, such as concordances, began to appear.

Illich finds subject indexing, a new use of the alphabet, especially significant, and illustrative of the transition he wants to explain: "From the teller of a story the authormutates into the creator of a text" (p. 105). Index-makers wanted to make book contents available to others who could then build on them.

By the thirteenth century, all these new tools will lead to the production of encyclopedias and the use of additional visual and organizational aids, such as punctuation marks and content summaries at the beginning of chapters.

The sudden realization, after Hugh's death in 1142, that the Roman alphabet could serve to record languages other than Latin, leads Illich to formulate a technological principle:

Instead of confirming the theory that tasks become possible when the tools to perform them become available, or the other which says that tools are created when tasks come to be socially desirable, this use of the ABC suggests that an eminently suitable and complex artificial device already available within a society will be turned into a tool for the performance of a task only at that historic moment when this task acquires symbolic significance. The page had to give birth to the visible text, the "faithful" had to give birth to the moral self and the legal person before the dialect spoken by. that person could be visualized as "a" language (p. 72).

Further links between Technique and culture, according to Illich, include the development of the universities as a kind of replacement for medieval monasteries.The book as a source of oral reading and wisdom found its place in the monastery, but the new "bookish text" needed a different sort of home, so the university was created to deal with it.

In the monasteries of Hugh's, time, teachers spoke while their students listened. By the age of Thomas Aquinas, however, lecture notes and outlines were routinely made available to university students, who sometimes took down the teacher's words, dictation-style. Rather than understanding a moral communication, these later students responded primarily to a written lecture.

The modem shift from the centrality of books to that of "text" leads Illich to meditate on the loss of meaning, another concern of Ellul's:

A new kind of text shapes the mind-set of my students, a printout which has no anchor, which can make no claim to be either a metaphor, or an original from the author's hand. Like the signals from a phantom schooner, its digital strings form arbitrary fontshapes on the screen, ghosts which appear and then vanish. Ever fewer people come to the book as a harbor of meaning (p. 118).

Illich has thoughtfully provided both the original Latin (or French) and an English translation for his quotations. This helpful feature enables readers to follow his explanations and evaluate his suggestions for further exploratory reading. He has also taken care to couch in modem terms those words whose usage has changed over the centuries. As a result, his book is not only eminently understandable, but provides a useful introduction to twelfth-century philosophy. That "bookish" medieval invention known as the index, however, is desperately needed to make Illich's work more accessible.

Readers eager for further information will find endless paths to pursue in Illich's footnotes. On the specific question of the appearance of portable Bibles in the thirteenth century, a recent article in *Civilization: The Magazine of the Library of Congress* offers additional data; see Jay Tolson's "The First Information Revolution," in the Jan./Feb. 1996 issue (pp. 52-57). And a helpful companion volume to *In the Vineyard of the Text* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), is David Cayley's *Ivan Illich in Conversation* (Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi, 1992).

Resist the Powers -with Jacques Ellul,

by Charles Ringma. Sutherland, Australia: Albatross Books, 1995.
Reviewed by Donald Bloesch, Dubuque Theological Seminary

Charles Ringma, who established Teen Challenge in Australia and now lectures at the Asian Theological Seminary in Manila, elaborates on various themes in the theology of Jacques Ellul. These meditations reflect both the thought of Ellul and that of the author, who acknowledges Ellul as his spiritual and theological mentor along with Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Henri Nouwen. In absorbing the wealth of insights offered in this volume, we must keep in mind that we are being introduced to this eminent theologian through the eyes of an admirer.

The strength of the book lies in its solid grasp of the salient emphases in Ellul's spirituality. Ellul stands in an illustrious tradition of spiritual writers and sages, including Augustine, Thomas a Kempis, Teresa of Avila, Blaise Pascal, John Bunyan, Soren Kierkegaard, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Thomas Merton. Too often Ellul is thought of mainly as a sociologist and political analyst but hardly as a spiritual guide. He is certainly a prescient social prophet, yet he is also a remarkable theologian of the Christian life. Ellul deftly brings together the personal and the social, the spiritual and the political, since the kingdom of God is his pivotal emphasis. This kingdom, moreover,

is an entirely new reality breaking into the old reality and radically challenging its assumptions and goals. According to Ellul, the Christian will be markedly different from the worldling, not just because of a disparate belief system, but also because of a unique style of life. Ellul sharply warns against aligning the faith with any particular ideology and underscores the fact that Christians will always be suspect in the political arena, for their loyalty is to a kingdom that is not of this world.

Charles Ringma is to be commended for his astute analysis of Ellul's spirituality. He ably shows that holiness in Ellul's version involves downward mobility and a break with consumerism. Christianity embodies values that palpably conflict with those of the technological society. In the current cultural milieu productivity and efficiency are valued more highly than respect for human dignity. Ellul is adamant that Christians should always be on the side of the poor, but the solution to poverty and exploitation is not new laws (though they may well be necessary), but an altering of consciousness, which only faith can effect As Christians we should be actively involved in the political and social issues of our time, but our aim should be simply to make life tolerable, not to try to build a utopian society that will only end in tyranny and the crushing of individual initiative. The Christian's most significant spiritual weapon in this conflict is prayer, and prayer is based on the hope of God's intervention in human and wordly affairs.

This book can profitably be used for devotional reading and gorup discussion. It nurtures the inner life while heightening sensitivity to the crying needs of the poor and dispossessed.

Issue #18 Jan 1997 — Lewis Mumford, Technological Critic

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In This Issue

About This Issue

Lewis Mumford died on January 26,199Q at the age of 94. He published more than thirty books, ranging from the history of the city and of technology, to architecture, urban planning and the philosophy of life. His critique of technical civilization, although based in Humanism rather than theology, shares a great deal with that of Ellul's. In the annals of the critique of modem technological civilization, he clearly stands with Jacques Ellul as one of the giants of the genre. An issue of the Forum devoted to his work is long overdue. Indeed, putting this issue together, for me, is an act of love and respect for the man who first taught me to think critically, both historically and sociologically, about the role of technology in society.

Lewis Mumford, who was bom on October 19th, 1895 in Flushing NY but grew up in Manhattan, where he took undergraduate courses at City College, and graduate courses at the New School and at Columbia, although he never completed a degree. He was living proof that degrees are not essential to being a successful scholar, author

and public philosopher. Indeed he went on to teach teach courses at the New School and at Columbia and to write a weekly column for the New Yorker and was co-founder of the Regional Planning Association of America (1923). His first book was *The Story of Utopias* (1922), followed by *Technics and Civilization (1934)* which, along with *The Culture of Cities (1938),* established his reputation as a historian and social philosopher. The themes of these early works were brought together in his mature work of the 1960's: *The City in History (1961),* and *The Myth of the Machine* (2 vols, 1967 &1970). Mumford has been described as a combination of objective historian, fiery biblical prophet and romantic poet. He clearly shares at least the first two of these descriptions with Ellul. Mumford's life work was recognized when he received the National Medal of Arts from President Ronald Reagan in July of 1986.

Like Ellul, Mumford was a generalist with a wide command of the historical date interpreted through interdisciplinary perspectives. Ironically, in *The Technological Society,* Ellul refers to him as a "specialist". In *Technics and Civilization,* Mumford had divided the history of technology into three phases, Eotechnics, Paleotechnics and Neotechnics, corresponding to Medieval water and wind technology, followed by coal (steam engine) and iron technology which was being replaced in the twentieth century by new electronics & alloy technology. Mumford argued that the new technologies of Eotechnics offered the possibility of overcoming the centralized mechanization of life of the Paleotechnic period in a way that offered a returned to the decentralized technologies in harmony with nature of the Eotechnic period. To Ellul this argument looked like it was "machine driven" and missed the point that it was not technologies but technique that led to the dehumanization of human beings. However the two-volume *Myth of the Machine* dispelled that illusion. By the 1960's Mumford recognized that his hope that Eotechnics would give birth to a new age of Biotechnic harmony was crushed. In these volumes Mumford went back before the Medieval period to compare modern technical civilization to that of the ancient city-states of Egypt and Mesopotamia with their totalitarian mythologies and bureaucracies.

Here he demonstrated that he shared with Ellul the conviction that modem technology mechanized and dehumanized life and that the core of the problem lay in the uncritical worship of technology as that sacred power that falsely promised to fulfill all human needs and desires even as it led us down the path of self-destruction. Like Ellul, he held that it is not the machine that is demonic but the "cult of the machine." Therein lay the demonic power that sustained the "the myth of the mega-ma-chine." Mumford parted with Ellul, however, in developing a humanistic rather than theistic response to the threat of technology. The chief accomplishment of human beings, he argued, in not to be found in our machines and our technical organizations but in the creation of our own humanity. Nevertheless Mumford and Ellul shared a common goal of demythologizing technical civilization and restoring technology to a modest but constructive role in a larger, more organic vision of human life and the human good.

In this issue, James Moore, from the University of South Florida School of Architecture and Community Design, and James W. Carey, from the School of Journalism

at Columbia offer us two thoughtful perspectives on Mumford's contribution to the critique of technological civilization, one from the view of urban planning and the other from the perspective of communications theory.

Also in this issue, you will find two book reviews. Andrew Goddard reviews *Sources and Trajectories: Eight Early Articles by Jacques Ellul the Set the Stage,* translated and edited by Marva Dawn. The second, my own most recent book, *The Coming of the Millennium: Good News for the Whole Human Race,* is reviewed by David Gill. I knew I could count on David to provide creative disagreement and he did not disappoint. Finally , you will also find a brief selection from *The Coming of the Millennium, so you* can see first hand what got David so stirred up.

Bulletin Board

Ellul Publication Project

Money raised by contributions to the Ellul Publication Pro-. jeCt are being used to prepare for publication Ellul's *The Ethics of Holiness* under the direction of Gabriel Vahanian in Strasbourg. Checks contributing to this project can still be sent, made out to The Ellul Forum and marked "for the Ellul Publication Project" The address is: The Ellul Forum, Department of Religious Studies, Cooper 304, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33620.

New Ellul Bibliography

Joyce Hanks is working on a project to combine the various Ellul bibliographies into a couple of user-friendly volumes including updated materials since the 1995 bibliography. Please forward your list of suggestions (especially for indexing) omissions, errors, etc, to: Joyce M. Hanks, University of Scranton, Scranton PA 18510-4646.

Ellul/lllich Conference on Education and Technology

A conference, examining the significance of the work of Jacques Ellul and of Ivan Illich for policy on the interaction between education and technology will be held at Penn State University, September 17-20, 1997. If you are interested in attending, please contact Chris Dufour. Phone: 814-863-5110. Entail: Conferencelnfol@cde.psu.edu. For-more information, visit their web site: http://www.cde.psu.edu/C&I/Educa-tion&T echnology /

New Book on Bernard
Charbonneau
A new book has been published in France on the life and work of Bernard Charbonneau, Ellul's life-long friend in the struggle against technocracy. It is published

by Bulletin De Cqmmande, a retoumer aux Editions Eres, 11 rue Alouettes, 31520 Ramonville, France. The price is 160 Francs. Fax 05 61 73 52 89.

New Courses from Schumacher College in England

"Technology, Nature and Gender" will be taught by Vadana Shiva, Indian environmental activist and scientist and Andrew Kimbrell, founder of the International Center for Technology Assessment Washington D.C. September 7-27,1997. Another course on Buddhist Economics , will be taught by the distinguished scholars Sulak Sivaraksa and AT Ariyaratne, January 1U31, 1998. Interested individuals should contact the College at email address: schumcoll@gn.apc.org

Forum: Lewis Mumford. Technological Critic

Updating the Urban Prospect: Using Lewis Mumford to Critique Current Conditions

by James A. Moore
School of Architecture & Community Design
University of South Florida

Nobody can be satisfied with the form of the city today. Neither as a working mechanism, as a social medium, nor as a work of art does the city fulfill the high hopes that modem civilization has called forth -or even meet our reasonable demands.

Lewis Mumford expressed this sentiment in 1962, as part of a series of articles commissioned by *Architectural Record,* in which he outlined his understanding of the crucial issues facing die contemporary American city. Today, thirty-five years after he penned his words, it is unlikely that his sentiments would receive a lot of opposition. The concerns of Mumford's time, issues that he studied his entire professional life, are still ours today.

Unfortunately, conditions today are distinctly different than they were earlier in the century. We lack urban visionaries such as Mumford to clearly and coherently articulate and debate these critical issues. In many ways, we also lack a forum within which to carry out such debates. The intellectual journals and popular magazines within which Mumford expounded many of this ideas have either disappeared or been subsumed into a sound-bite mindset. Television, despite its enormous potential, has done little to advance critical discourse on the future of our cities. Indeed, the argument can be mounted that television, with its homogenizing influence and its ability to transcend immediate and relevant physical and cultural barriers has done as much to mitigate the time-honored role of the city as a setting for cultural arbitration and discourse. The grove of academe has been replaced by the made-for-TV movie; the forum by the talk show; the salon by the sitcom.

Finally, and most trenchantly, it is conceivable that we've also lost any audience for such debates. The massive out-migration of the past two generations, and the concomitant polarization of race, class and wealth have produced a popular culture that is truly sub-urban in its sentiments and sensibilities. Where urbanism and the

city used to signify culture, excitement and the ultimate in sophistication, today, to many, they signify decay, despair and even danger.

Disinvestment in the traditional cities, the de-industrialization of our older cities, the rapid expansion of suburban developments divorced from the original city centers, the increasing fragmentation of community life and the ever-expanding gap between the have's and the have-not's. These are the issues that Mumford pondered during his seventy-year career as author, educator, lecturer and all-around critic of American society. These issues are still raised at the annual meetings of the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Architects, the Urban Land Institute, the National Civic League, and countless other groups and agencies who are, directly and indirectly, charged with the planning, design and development of today's cities and communities. In many instances, simply by switching the dates, name and images, one could resurrect one of Lewis Mumford's early articles on community design or planning, and find a willing publisher for it in today's professional journals.

Mumford always had a clear idea of what he meant by a "good" community or city. Bom on the upper West Side of Manhattan in 1895, he once claimed that his education in urbanism came from walking the streets of the City, "watching buildings being constructed, and talking to the men doing the work — and from studying books in the New York Public Library."[1] The Manhattan that he studied was a closely-knit collection of distinct neighborhoods and districts, areas that were coherent in scale and form, mixed in their uses and functions, sharply defined by the grid-pattern of the City's streets, punctuated by the numerous parks and squares.

New York, at the turn of the century, was a palimpsest of American urban history, carrying traces of all the elements of city-making from our earliest Colonial period to the latest avant-garde urban intervention, the recently-invented commercial office skyscraper. These were woven together in a free-flowing yet structured rhythm that visibly revealed the interdependent essence of the vital city. Mumford's writing,

. . . incorporated Oriental philosophical concepts which call for an interdependent society rather than a society of independents, the inheritors of Darwin's survival of the fittest. Buildings, streets, trees, sunshine, parks, and fresh air affect people's attitudes towards their sense of community, or the lack of it America's best hope, Mumford believed, lay with balancing the man-made environment with the natural."[2]

It was this sense of balance, this sense of completeness that motivated Mumford's thinking and writing on the city. The purpose of a city, he felt, was to foster and instill a sense of belonging to an ever-expanding nested set of communities; the community of the block or the street, the community of the neighborhood, the community of the district or quarter, the community of the whole. The role of the traditional pre-Industrial-city was to foster as great a sense of diversity and "positive friction" as

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[1] Borden, Elizabeth Carlson. *Levis Mumford: Twentieth Century Architectural Critic.* (Santa Barbara, CA: Ph.D. Dissertation, UCSB, 1989), p.4.

[2] *Ibid.,* pages 4-5.

possible. Cities Were places where "too many people were crowded into too little space," with the result of stimulating creativity and expression. Cities could survive this crowding and friction to the extent that their constituent elements, the neighborhoods, were strong and self-sufficient.

The Industrial city, the "Coketown" of the Paleotechnic Period, as defined and described in his massive study of the history of technology, flew in the face of these holistic and communal goals. The dictates of mechanized industry helped segment cities into distinct and sharply contrasting areas of rich and poor, pristine and polluted, tranquil and squalid.

The massive and obvious inequities of the 19th century city were the subject of much debate and activity at the beginning of this century. Programs existed to provide healthy housing at affordable prices for the hundreds of thousands of people who provided the labor for the factories and mills, shops and commercial facilities. Other programs were begun to create parks and public places for recreation and leisure. A sense of *noblesse-oblige* induced some of the worst of the Paleotechnic exploiters, such as J. P. Morgan and Andrew Carnegie, to give back to their communities in the form of libraries, museums, schools, community centers and other sources of cultural and personal advancement. There was reason to believe in the first decades of this century that a new harmonious balance could be re-created within the fabric of our nation's cities.

By the 1920s, however, Mumford was able to detect subtle, yet systemic changes in the nature of the American city. Part of this was due, he felt, to the development of the skyscraper, a building type for which he had mixed emotions. While admiring it as a work of architecture, a distinctly American addition to the litany of building types, Mumford was keenly aware of the capacity of this new building type to dramatically disrupt the traditional economic, social and physical balance of the city. The skyscraper, he noted, was a direct reflection of an increased pre-occupation with land-values and development potentials. In a traditional city, land at the center was the most expensive. The skyscraper, a building that within twenty years of its inception, could stand ten times the height of its surrounding mid-rise neighbors, enabled builders and developers to tap massive profits from center city locations. At the same time, the dramatic increase in size and scale not only disrupted the physical character of the neighborhood, but the massive increase in worker population also disrupted the social balances.

This first matter, the discontinuity in size and scale between the skyscrapers and their surroundings could be dealt with legislatively. In 1916, due to a large part to the protests that arose following the construction of tall buildings adjacent to residential neighborhoods, the City of New York created the first broadly-applied municipal zoning code. This outlined where in the city various types of buildings could be located, and also created a rigid set of principles for their form, scale and size. One outgrowth of this code was the archetypal New York "ziggurat" or "wedding cake" skyscraper that rose up from the sidewalk and then stepped backwards in equal increments until it reached its peak. This reduction in size and scale enabled sunlight and fresh air to

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reach to the level of the streets, even though thirty-and forty-story towers surrounded them.

While Mumford advocated, in principle, the application of zoning as a way of separating incongruous functions from one another, the broad-based adoption of zoning, after World War II, as the primary element of city planning had numerous unintended consequences, some of which Mumford was clearly opposed to. To the degree that zoning codes provided ⊠ legal justification for the isolation of incompatible uses -keeping slaughter houses away from apartments, for example—they were to be applauded. To the degree, however, the that the success in isolating such uses lead to the broad-based notion that *all* uses should be isolated from each other, zoning was simply another element that was working to disrupt and fragment the organic wholeness that Mumford advocated.

The disruption fomented by the widespread use of one technological innovation -the skyscraper—was matched by the similarly widespread use of a second technological development -the automobile. As Mumford well knew, the skyscraper was a device that allowed us to dramatically increase the density of our city centers, while the car was a device that allowed us to dramatically decrease the density of the same centers. These two elements of twentieth-century urbanism therefore, are, at their roots, fundamentally opposed to each other. The history of the city in this century is the story of the tension between these two forces. Frank Lloyd Wright, the great American architect and great opponent of the traditional city put it even more succinctly. The destiny of the twentiethcentury city, he noted, is a race between the car and the elevator, and anyone who bets on the elevator is an fool.

As early as the 1920s, Mumford could detect the pernicious influence of the automobile on the life and vitality of the city. The car, at that time, was primarily a luxury for the well-to-do. The vast majority of people commuted back and forth within the confines of the city using traditional mass transit systems such as subways, trolleys and street-cars. The car, however, allowed those with the means, to move far away from the city, to rural villages or newly-emerging suburban enclaves. From these redoubts, they could travel to and from the city center at will, enjoying the vitality and energy of the city on their own terms, while ignoring the less vital aspects of urban life.

The earliest suburbs, dating in some instances from the mid-19th century, were microcosms of a traditional urban neighborhood. Many were developed along railway lines and were centered on the train station and the trains that linked the outpost back to the city center. Walkable in size and scale, these suburbs were more akin to villages than to today's sub-divisions. They typically included a variety of shops and stores, offices and professional options, and lent themselves very well to the burgeoning sense of the American middleclass. Men commuted to and from the city center each day, first using the railways, later in their personal cars. Women and children generally stayed at home in the suburbs, away from the harmful influences of city life. Once or twice a week, the women and children would also visit the city, to shop, visit museums, go to plays or experience other cultural events. The balance evinced in such developments

was clearly enviable, and this balance of the man-made and the natural, was the focus of much of Mumford's writing and thought, and was also the impetus for some of his earliest efforts at devising the "ideal" American community.

Along with his colleagues and friends Henry Wright, Clarence Stein, Catherine Bauer, Benton MacKaye and others, Mumford helped found the Regional Planning Association of America as an agency to argue for and promote the vitality of a balanced approach to the design and development of America's cities. It was only within a regional context, Mumford felt, that one could truly hope to understand how to create a truly hannonious and balanced city. To this end, he reflected and developed upon the work of one of his earliest mentors, the Scottish ecologist, Patrick Geddes.

At the same time, Mumford and others were looking to re-define the design and development of the neighborhood, which they felt was the fundamental unit of the city. Toward this end, Mumford championed the planning and construction of an early in-town suburb, Forest Hills Gardens in Queens. He was also instrumental in the development of Radbum, an intended model community in northern New Jersey. Designed by the planner and landscape architect, Henry Wright, and the architect Clarence Stein, Radbum was notable for its early attempts to accommodate the automobile within the plan of the community, by creating separate ways for cars and for people, and for its quasi-socialist approach to housing, in which all the residential units fronted on communally owned and maintained greens. In his 1940s documentary film "The City," Mumford pointed to Radbum as an example of the ideal "modem" community, contrasting it with both the polluted and over-crowded urban environments of the 19th century industrial city, and with the socially and economically isolated life of the rural town and village.

Mumford's goals and expectations for Radbum were never fulfilled as the project, begun at the advent of the Great Depression, slowly ground to a halt during the 1930s. For fifteen years, Mumford and others were able only to dream, write and lecture and the nation's energies were directed first, towards overcoming the depression and later, towards the War effort.

In the late 1940s, after the Second World War, America appeared ready to champion some of Mumford's original causes: affordable housing for all, functional separation of various uses within the community fabric, access to light, air, water, open space. Unfortunately for Mumford, our movement towards achieving these goals took a very different direction that he had anticipated or advocated. In the period since the 1920s, even as community development remained relatively stagnant, technology had moved forward, further upsetting the sense of balance that he had envisioned. By the 1950s, Henry Ford's goal of putting a car in every family's garage had clearly come within reach. The automobile industry, looking to reinvent itself after the War, aggressively promoted the car as the status symbol of the times, and, at the same time, did its best to undermine and disrupt the functioning of many of our more effective urban mass transit systems. The failure of our in-city trolley and light-rail systems, it was reasoned, would further expand the market for cars and automobile products. The fact

that a dramatic increase in auto usage and a concomitant reduction in the efficacy of urban transit systems would devastate the traditional urban structure was of little consequence.

At the same time, housing in this country was in a disastrous state. In the 1930s, the crash of the stock market coupled with the ensuing depression left millions of people broke, and effectively homeless as they could no longer pay their mortgages. The federal government stepped in with the first in a series of financial reforms aimed at making it easier for the average household to afford to purchase a home. The government agreed to guarantee mortgage loans, andiworked to not only extend the mortgage payment period from five to fifteen or even thirty years, but to reduce the initial down payment needed to purchase a home.

The War pre-empted any broad based application of these new financial policies, but the return of our servicemen from abroad in 1945 and 1946 highlighted the extent to which there existed a pent-up market for new housing and new ways of living. Into this breach steeped the builder William Levitt, a man who was to become Lewis Mumford's post-War nemesis. A general contractor from the New York area, Levitt had prospered during the War by building facilities for the armed forces. From his beginnings as a builder of custom homes, the wartime experience left Levitt with a keen awareness of the potentials for mass construction. Immediately after the War ended, he looked to parlay his experience into success. Buying thousands of acres of Long Island farmland, thirty miles from Manhattan, he commenced upon the construction of the prototypical post-War suburb, Levittown.

Levitt's astounding success depended upon a fortunate confluence of events. Car ownership was booming in the post-Warperiod and Levittown was a relatively easy commute from New York via car thanks to the parkway system created by Robert Moses or by train. Thousands of veterans lived in the New York area, and the thanks extended to these servicemen by the government included underwriting down payments and financing on new houses. By minimizing the design distinctions between units as well as the detailing of any of the houses, Levitt was able to mass produce+affordable, albeit small, houses and to create financing programs for these units that simply could not be beaten. For a few hundred dollars down and as little as fifty dollars a month, a veteran could own a quarter acre lot -replete with one tree in the front yard—and a 900 square foot house.

Levitt's success spurred imitators across the country, particularly in the Northeast and in California, a state that had boomedinthe 1940s in direct response to the War-efforts. The Federal government played a significant role in aiding and abetting this movement. Arguing that a strong, transcontinental highway system was a military necessity in a period of escalating Cold War tensions, from the early 1950s, the government poured hundreds of billions of dollars into the design and construction of today's interstate highway system. Initially envisioning the system as a way of facilitating easy movement between cities, the system was primarily used as a means for decamping from the cities into the suburbs. In the period between 1950 and 1980, the entire nature

of the American city changed as millions of people moved away from the traditional city centers to far-flung suburban tract houses.

Mumford took both the Federal Highway authority and Levitt to task. Referencing a 1910 publication called "Roadtown," Mumford noted that the sum product of postWarplanning and development efforts is what we, today, refer to as "sprawl."

In an entirely undirected but diagrammatic fashion, Roadtown has automatically grown up along the major highways of America; an incoherent and purposeless urbanoid nonentity, which dribbles over the devastated landscape and destroys the coherent smaller centers of urban or village life that stands in its path. Witness among a thousand other examples the Bay Highway between San Francisco and Palo Alto. Roadtown is the line of least resistance; the form that every modern city approaches when it forgets the functions and purposes of the city itself and uses modem technology only to sink to a primitive social level.[3]

As for the work of developers such as Levitt, Mumford accused them of creating socially and culturally sterile "anti-cities" that devastated the supply of open land around the older cities, wreaking environmental havoc wherever they went.

> The anti-city that is now being produced by the reckless extension of standardized expressways, standardized roadside services, and standardized residential subdivisions -all greedily devouring land—dilutes to the point of complete insolvency all the valuable urban functions that require a certain density of population, a certain mixture of activities, a certain interweaving of economic necessities and social occasions. Despite all that, this negative image has proved, especially during the last two decades, to be a highly attractive one; so powerful that many people already identify it, despite its brief history and meager promise, with the 'American way of life.'

> The reason is not far to seek, for the anti-city combines two contradictory and almost irreconcilable aspects of modem civilization: an expanding economy that calls for the constant employment of the machine (motor car, radio, television, telephone, automated factory and assembly line) to secure both full production and a minimal counterfeit of normal social life; and as a necessary offset to these demands, an effort to escape from the over-regulated routines, the impoverished personal choices, the monotonous prospects of this regime by daily withdrawal to a private rural asylum, where bureaucratic compulsions give way to exurban relaxation and permissiveness, in a purely family environment as much unlike the metropolis as possible.[4]

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[3] Mumford, Lewis. "Magalopolis as Anti-City," *Architecture as a Home for Man.* (NY: Architectural Record Books, 1975), p. 121.

[4] Mumford, "megalopolis...," op cit, page 123.

Mumford ended his five-part series for *Architectural Record* with two essays devoted to developing alternative futures for the American city. His description of the "favored images" of the contemporary city in 1963 are equally pertinent today.

> The two favored images of the city today are the products of the complementary process of regimentation and disintegration. One of them is the City in a Parking Lot, a collection of high-rise slabs and towers linked by multi-lane expressways; the other is the Anti-City, a by-product of urban decomposition, which in the pursuit of nature denatures the countryside and mechanically scatters fragments of the city over the whole landscape.[5]

The withering sarcasm of Mumford's critique would be lost on many today because, even as thirty-five years ago, there is at present no consensus among planners, designers, developers and critics, as to what exactly constitutes a "good" or even a desirable contemporary community. And, unfortunately, nowhere in the landscape of critique, diatribe and harangue has anyone of Mumford's stature emerged to lend oversight as well as insight into the issues at hand.

Instead, to some extent, the nature of the discourse surrounding the nature and direction of the contemporary city has fractured into splintergroups, each arguing its case and downplaying the holistic and interdependent unity that was the foundation of Mumford ' s critique. The solutions that Mumford advocated during his long career as an educator, lecturer, author and social critic, have yet to materialize. His argument for a carefully balanced blending of city and country were applauded by many throughout his seventy year public life, but little of what he promoted was brought to fruition. The models that he applauded and held up for recognition -Forest

Hills Gardens, Radbum, NJ—all have places in the textbooks of urban and community design. Their presence, however, is generally that of an historic curiosity rather than a paradigm of practice. Mumford's desire for unity and completeness in community design, for an "organic" development has, by and large, been unmet

Mumford would not feel out of place within today's debate, and he clearly would have his own thoughts on the matter. At present, there are at least four definable positions among theorists, students and discerning practitioners of community design and development Mumford would undoubtedly have significant difficulty accepting three of them, and probably would not accept the fourth without some critique.

Paramount among today's theories of urbanism is what might be called the *laissez-faire* approach, advocated by those who think that things are moving along just fine and argue only for less regulation and less restriction on how things get planned and built. This position received an enormous boost during the 1980s when financial policies and government regulations were eased in order to promote real estate investment and development. Its tenets and principles are succinctly summarized in the best-selling book *Edge City* by Washington Post journalist Joel Garreau.

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[5] Mumford, "Beginnings of Urban Integration," *Architecture* ..., op cit, page 129

The book begins in its characteristic positive bent: Americans are creating the biggest change in a hundred years in how we build cities. Every single American city that is growing is growing in the fashion of Los Angeles, with multiple urban cores.

These new hearths of our civilization -in which the majority of metropolitan Americans now work and around which we live—look not at all like our old downtowns. Buildings rarely rise shoulder to shoulder, as in Chicago's Loop. Instead, their broad, low outlines dot the landscape like mushrooms, separated by greenswards and parking lots ...

The hallmarks of these new urban centers are not the sidewalks of New York of song and fable, forthere usually are few sidewalks... Our new city centers are tied together not by locomotive and subways, but by jetways, freeways, and rooftop satellite dishes thirty feet across. Their characteristic monument is not a horse-mounted hero, but the atria reaching forttie sun and shielding trees perpetually in leaf at the cores of corporate headquarters, fitness centers, and shopping plazas. These new urban areas are not marked by the penthouses of the old urban rich or the tenements of the old urban poor. Instead their landmark structure is the celebrated single-family detached dwelling, the suburban home with grass all around it that made America the best-housed civilization the world has ever known.

I have come to call these new urban centers Edge Cities. Cities, because'they contain all the functions a city ever has, albeit in a spread-out form that few have come to recognize for what it is. Edge, because they are a vigorous world or pioneers and immigrants, rising far from the old downtowns, where little save villages or farmland lay only thirty years before.[6]

Mumford would have had little difficulty in punctuating the inflated self-importance of the Edge City advocates. Their boast thait they had encompassed lands that were empty "save villages br farmlands" would have elicited scathing protest from the man who as early as the 1920s was cautioning against the dramatic expansion of the traditional cities to the point that it was becoming difficult to find clean water or untrammeled landscapes within any proximity of a metro area. The goal, Mumford would have stressed, was not to suburbanize everything, but rather to create a harmonious balance of well-built, concentrated city and neighborhood centers to be surrounded by essentially untouched natural areas or lightly developed agricultural and recreational lands.

Mumford was clear, from the outset, in his advocacy of the theories of Ebenezer Howard, the English accountant who wrote the remarkable treatise *Tomorrow: The*

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[6] Garreau, Joel. *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier.* (NY: Doubleday, 1991), pp. 3-4.

Path for Peace-Jul Reform, in 1898. Initially the text met with little acclaim. Reprinted in 1901, however, under the title *Garden Cities of To-morrow,* the book became a best seller, and helped create the Garden City movement throughout the world.

Howard's points were clear. In 19th century England, neither the city nor the country, alone, was a desirable condition. The cities were too industrialized, too crowded, too fragmented. The country, in general, was too isolated, suffering from too few economic and social opportunities. Instead, what was needed, he felt, was a blending of the best elements of each. This could be achieved by creating new cities, at some remove from the existing cities, to be connected via rail lines and roads, but to be kept distinct through the use of "greenbelts" and permanently open lands.

Mumford wrote the introduction for a post-War reprinting of Howard's book. In it he re-emphasized the uniqueness of Howard's approach.

In treating rural and urban improvement as a single problem, Howard was far in advance of his age; and he was a better diagnostician of urban decay than many of our own contemporaries. His Garden City was not only an attempt to relieve the congestion of the big city, and by so doing lowerthe land values and prepare the way for metropolitan reconstruction: it was equally an attemptto do away with that inevitable correlate of metropolitan congestion, the suburban dormitory, whose open plan and nearer access to the country are only temporary, and whose lack of an industrial population and a working base make it one of the most unreal environments ever created for man: a preposterous middle-class counterpart to the courtly inanities of those absolute monarchs who, at Versailles orNymphenburg, contrived forthemselves a disconnected play-world of their own. The Garden City, as Howard defined it, is not a suburb but the antithesis of a suburb: not a more rural retreat, but a more integrated foundation for an effective urban life.[7]

Mumford would have raised a second critique of the Edge City, one based on social, economic and environmental efficiency. It is one of the boasting points of Edge City advocates that they have managed to successfully reproduce all of the traditional urban elements -places to live, places to work, places to shop, pray, play— in a suburban environment. Mumford would have countered this argument on two points. First, he would have pointed out that the very nature of urbanity is contained, in part, in the density of its development, in the opportunity it offers for chance encounters, in the "friction" essential to urban life. Vitiate these elements, he would argue, and y ou no longer have an urban existence, merely a simulacra.

His second critique would develop along the lines of economic, social and environmental efficiency. What is the gain, he would ask, in duplicating elements that already exist in our original cities? How does one solve the existing urban problems by moving all of the essentials out of the city and duplicating them elsewhere? In the end, the "answer" to the problems of the older cities proposed by the Edge City advocates is the non-answer of ignoring them.

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[7] Mumford, Lewis. "The Garden City Idea and Modem Planning,' in *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*

Technology plays a critical role in the next two of the current stances towards the city. In the first stance, which might be called technological utopianism, the solution to the problems of today's cities (and, increasingly, our suburbs as well) can only be had through the application of more and more technology. The solution to over-crowding is to create denser housing prototypes, to build higher, or to build on previously un-buildable areas such as over water or across ravines. The solution to water pollution is to come up with fancier mechanisms for cleaning the polluted water. The solution to traffic congestion is wider highways, or computer-driven systems in which cars travel sixty miles an hour, five feet away from each other.

The most extreme examples, of such utopian technological urbanism can be found in the proposals of Buckminster Fuller, the Archigram Group from England, the Metabolists from Japan, and other advocates of what are known as urban "megas-tructures." Built examples of this approach can be found in many Asian cities todays ranging from Hong Kong to Tokyo.

The counter-position to technological utopianism might be called technological dystopianism. Where advocates of the first approach might be criticized for being too in love with technology as a savior, proponents of the second approach are guilty of their blatantly negative view of the current situation. In short, their view of the contemporary city is that it's on the fast boat to hell.

The strongest proponents of this theory can be found in Los Angeles, and they use their surroundings to gather ammunition for their argument. Not unsurprisingly, a post-Apocalyptic version of LA forms the setting for the movie "Blade Runner," a favorite reference for these theorists. In *City of Quartz,*[8] Mike Davis argues that Los Angeles represents the future of urbanism in America, and that, at best, it's "a sunlit mortuary where you can rot without feeling it" LA, he argues, is the living embodiment of a 1969 federal Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence: We five in fortress cities brutally divided between fortified cells of affluent society and "places of terror" where the police battle the criminalized poor. Technology plays an omnipotent role in this reality. TV glorifies the lifestyles of the rich and famous and plays up the dichotomies between the affluent and everyone else. Guns are available to all, and because they are, the well-to-do spend extraordinary amounts to protect themselves from their fellow citizens. The live behind gates, in secluded enclaves, with 24-hour patrols, guard dogs, and in-house alarm systems. At the same time, conditions in the inner cities occasionally imitate war zones, and the gap between the affluent and the poor increases.

Davis and others see today's cities as an uneasy marriage of necessity, and point to advanced technology as the only way out of the problem. Given enough telecommunications and computer equipment, the affluent who currently must barricade themselves into their exclusive enclaves will be able to avoid the situation entirely. These "lone

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by Ebenezer Howard, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1965), p. 35.

[8] Davis, Mike. *City ofQuartz.* (NY: Vantage Press, 1992.)

eagles" or "modem-toters" will be able to escape the city entirely, for isolated resort communities such as Aspen, Telluride, Sun Valley and Park City. Those left behind will simply wallow in their urban squalor.

Clearly, these two positions represent extremes, both in their interpretation of technology and their understanding of the concept of community. In essence, both establish technological imperatives and suggest that community life is at the mercy iof the over-riding system of technology. To this end, society is little better off than it was in the 19$^{\text{th}}$ century at the height of the Paleotechnic period when the rich mill-owners and industrialists could afford to live in the country while the vast majority of people suffered the ravages of polluted air and water, squalid living conditions, over-crowding and malnutrition. The lessons and opportunities of the Neo-technic period that Mumford suggested in his 1933 text *Technics and Civilization* would, once again, have been thwarted. Technological determinism, a concept that repelled Mumford, would once again, have won out.

A fourth position, yet to be fully articulated, attempts to moderate between the extremes, and to overcome the weaknesses in all of the previous approaches. In its current forms, however, it too might be accused of philosophical extremism. Originally refereed to as Neo-Traditionalists, this group has unified recently under the rubric of the New Urbanism. The goals of the groups are very much in keeping with those espoused by Mumford and his colleagues in the 1920s, although few if any references are made to him directly. Instead, members of this group acknowledge the work of Raymond Unwin, a British architect who worked with Ebenezer Howard, and the author of a seminal essay "Nothing Gained by Over-crowding," in which he argued that the answer to urban squalor was to decant the over-crowded portions of the city into self-sufficient, comprehensive "new towns" that were distinct from yet connected to the main metropolis. Mumford championed both Unwin's work and his article.

Like Mumford, the New Urbanists believe that the neighborhood, not the house, is the fundamental unit of the city, and that the street is the fundamental public space within the contemporary city. Like Mumford, they argue for diversity of forms and functions within a comprehensive and comprehensible neighborhood unit. A good neighborhood, they argue, should be walkable; it should have a clearly defined center, and clearly defined edges; it should be accessible to people in all walks of life, not simply to adults who drive; it should represent the full variety of economic classes, not simply those who can afford $300,000 houses or one-acre lots.

In many ways, the advocates of the New Urbanism represent an interesting intellectual implement to Mumford. The "theories" of the New Urbanism spring, not from academia or criticism, but from practice. The founders and prime movers of the movement have written relatively little, if only because almost all of them are practitioners: architects, landscape architects, planners, developers..

In an irony that Mumford would have appreciated, the New Urbanists spend the better part of the 1980s attempt to describe an idealized neighborhood unit, one that worked within the current framework of development and construction practice, that

contained the basic elements of communal life and yet, one that addressed their concerns for the integration of buildings and open space, their concerns for continuity of buildings and appearance while allowing for diversity of uses and economic sectors.

Across a ten year period, a variety of models were drawn and designed, and in many instances, built. In general, these were contrasted with standard practices which were mostly in keeping with the Edge City model; shopping malls masquerading as "town centers," parking lots instead of parks, highways instead of Main Streets. Over time, a model coalesced.

It contained places for commerce, places for schools, places for worship, a variety of housing types, a coherent, interconnected street pattern, a variety of iconic neighborhood spaces such as a "green," a "Main Street," a "village square." It was of a walkable size, approximately !4 mile in radius.

Once a definitive prototype was drawn up, a curious fact was noted. In almost every aspect, the newly-minted model of how to design and develop a neighborhood was similar to a model developed in 1929 by Clarence Perry, a friend and colleague of Lewis Mumford's.

The New Urbanists are a group for whom Lewis Mumford would have had an enormous affinity. Just as he and his colleagues from New York helped found and run the Regional Planning Association of America in the 1920s and 1930s, were Mumford active today, he would undoubtedly have been a charter member of the Congress for the New Urbanism. From that vantage, he would have brought external credibility to the group by trumpeting their ideas and ideals. Internally, he would have been a tough critic, chastising his colleagues for their blatant historicism and their inability, to date, to work their way through the myriad legal, financial and economic barriers that burden those who attempt to redevelop the older urban centers.

Ultimately, cities are a consensual creation; we all participate, implicitly or explicitly. The power of the so-called information age is that ideas and concepts of what makes for a "good" community and a "good" city can be easily spread around and distributed throughout the levels of society. The drawback of the age, however, is that information, in and of itself, without critique, without direction, without oversight, is effectively useless. Would that we had a Lewis Mumford to help show us the way.

Mumford and McLuhan: The Roots of Modern Media Analysis

by James W. Carey, Professor of Journalism, Columbia University; Research Professor of Communications Emeritus, University of Illinois

The relationship between Mumford and McLuhan at one level is quite straightforward and open to easy inspection. McLuhan cited Mumford in virtually all his work, certainly in all his important publications. In his later publications Mumford devoted

considerable and often savage space to McLuhan. However, the argumentative relationship between these two important figures in contemporary scholarship was both more subtle and ambiguous than the pattern of citation suggests. There was bigger game. McLuhan and Mumford debated the consequences of electrical technology, in particular, electrical communications for contemporary culture and society. Not only can they teach one something of those consequences but they also illustrate, in a variety of ways, some of the conceptual and ideological pitfalls involved in trying to think sensibly about electrical communication.

Their work leads to an intractable problem which has faced all students of media: did the growth of electrical communication from the telegraph through television and the emergence of electronic communication from simple servo-mechanisms through advanced computer information utilities reverse the general developments associated with printing or did they merely modify and intensify the major contours of modem societies?

There is no easy answer to this question but around it have whirled virtually all the conceptual and ideological debates concerning the relations of communications technology to culture. Briefly, Mumford argued that electronics has intensified the most destructive and power-oriented tendencies of printing, whereas McLuhan argued that electronics has produced or will produce a qualitative change in the nature of social organization and cultural life. There are not only large intellectual stakes in the resolution of this argument but social and political stakes as well, for its resolution will shape ideological discourse and social policy in the arena of communications in the decades ahead.

Kropotkin-Geddes-Mumford

The growth of electrical communication rejuvenated utopian social theory in America. It particularly charged the thought of a group of European and American scholars whose work revolved on the relationship of the city and the countryside and were pioneers in what has since been termed urban planning. The principal figures in this group were the Russian anarchist and geographer Peter Kropotkin, the Scot biologist Patrick Geddes and, in America, Lewis Mumford. And their starting point was one of disappointment—disappointment in the nineteenth-century promise of industrialization and mechanical technology. ˜

In *The City in History,* Lewis Mumford credits Kropotkin with the first systematic statement of the view that electricity might rescue humans from the blight of machine industry and restore them to communal life. Kropotkin described regional associations of industry and agriculture made possible by electricity and with this new technology a reawakening of the traditions and handicrafts of an older period and the restoration of community life (16, pp. 514-515).

Kropotkin's faith was based upon a valid perception. Electricity, unlike steam, saved the landscape by utilizing water power or lighter, more transportable fuel like petroleum which did less environmental damage than "mining." Similarly, electricity promised a decentralist development by bringing work and power to the people rather

than demanding that people be brought to the power and work. The telegraph similarly promised the distribution of information everywhere, simultaneously reducing the economic advantage of the city and bringing the more varied urban culture out to the countryside. No longer would people need to be physically in the city to partake of the advantages to art, commerce, and intellect that physical massing created. Finally, the small electric motor promised to lift the drudgery of work in small communities, dissipate the advantages of efficiency of the massed factory, stimulate and make more feasible handicraft production and, as in the dream of William Morris, reclaim a more natural and older way of life. The symbol of electricity promised to many the dawning of a new age of decentralist rural production, communal life in small natural associations that would be economically viable and, with the growth of electronic communication, culturally viable as well.

While on a speaking tour of England, Kropotkin influenced the young Scot, Patrick Geddes. Geddes, perhaps more than anyone else, popularized the notion that there were two qualitatively different periods of industrialization. He termed these periods the paleotechnic and neotechnic, differentiated along many dimensions but principally by their reliance on different forms of energy: steam and electricity. Geddes used this distinction to found one of the most important traditions of urban planning, merging it with the earlier Garden Cities movement founded by Ebenezer Howard.

The associations between Kropotkin, Geddes, and Howard merged in Chicago. Both Kropotkin and Geddes received their most enthusiastic American receptions in Chicago and felt most at home in the city. Howard most admired Chicago among American cities and based his work on that of the Chicago architect Daniel Bumham. Geddes influenced John Dewey's thinking on education and other matters. In turn, the idea of the electrical city became symbolized in Chicago architecture. Louis Sullivan built the first structures designed for the potential of electricity. Frank Lloyd Wright, Sullivan's student, conceived the skyscraper as a community within itself: its floors to be viewed as streets in the sky rather than as a collection of unintegrated functions or atomized units (see 9, p. 86). It was mainly through the work of Lewis Mumford, however, that the ideas of Geddes, Howard, and Kropotkin and their attitudes toward electricity and technology entered the American scene.

Mumford based his important work of 1934, *Technics and Civilization,* on Geddes's distinction between the paleotechnic (steam and mechanics) and neotechnic (electricity) phases of industry and co*mmuni*cation. Mumford shared with Geddes the intellectual strategy of placing technological change at the center of the growth of civilization (1). In viewing the miscarriage of the machine he suggested that electricity had certain intrinsic potentials for producing a decentralist society, creating a new human being, and realizing a pastoral relation to nature. Only the cultural pseudomorph of capitalism, the housing of new forces in outmoded social forms, held back the latest advance in civilization. Throughout that work Mumford strikingly contrasted scenes of peace and order and cleanliness realized in the neotechnic world with the ugliness, exploitation, and disarray of the old world of mechanics. He recaptured some of the oldest

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dreams of the American imagination and remodeled them in terms of the potential of electricity (see 8, pp. 185-186; 12, pp. 225-227).

Mumford's demon was capitalism, the fetters which emasculate neotechnics, and *Technics and Civilization* ends with a plea for socialism. But in condemning paleotechnic civilization he saw it, as did Marx in a different vocabulary, as the destruction of the temple, a prelude to a rebuilding.

The central redeeming feature that all commentators on electricity from Kropotkin through Mumford and McLuhan saw in this technology was that it was decentralizing, that it could break up the concentrations of power in the state and industry and populations in the city. In *Technics and Civilization* Mumford argued that "the neotechnic phase was marked...by the conquest of a new form of energy: electricity-lit] effected revolutionary changes: these touched the location and the concentration of industries and the detailed organization of the factory" (12, p. 221).

The decentralizing effects of electrical power were matched by the decentralizing effects of electrical communication. Mumford argued that the giantism typical of paleotechnic industry was caused by a defective system of communication which antedated the telephone and telegraph. With electrical power factories could be placed where they were wanted, not merely where the power source dictated they be. Factories could be rearranged without regard to the centralizing shafts and aisles that a central power source like stream demanded. Similarly, the new means of communication dictated that people no longer had to be in physical contact in order to transact their business. Freed from reliance on face-to-face communication and a slow and erratic mail service, industry could be decentralized into the countryside. As *a* result, neotechnics spiritualizes labor and reduces the human robot:

Here, as in neotechnical industry generally, advances in production increase the number of trained technicians in the laboratory, and decrease the number of human robots in the plant In short, one witnesses in the chemical processes the general change that characterizes all genuinely neotechnic industry: the displacement of the proletariat (12, p. 229).

This is the essence of the general argument Mumford made, on the great transition from paleotechnics to neotechnics, from steam power to electrical power, from capitalist to post-capitalist social forms. In describing electrical communication he saw its potential for transcending space — almost at times seeing it, like Frank Lloyd Wright, as providing a complete substitute for social relations:

With the invention of the telegraph a series of invert tions began to bridge the gap in time between communication and response despite the handicaps of space... As a result, communication is now on the point of returning, with the aid of mechanical devices to that instantaneous reaction of person to person with which it began; but the possibilities...will be limited only by the amount of energy available and the mechanical perfection and accessibility of the apparatus (12, pp. 239-240).

Mumford, always skeptical within his enthusiasms, always projecting the dark sides of his hopes, recognized the paradox of electrical communication: that the media of

reflective thought — reading, writing, and drawing — could be weakened by television and radio; that closer contact did not necessarily mean greater peace; that the new inventions would be foolishly overused; that human skills in the arts would be extirpated by easy entertainment. Nonetheless he finally registered a reserved but positive judgment on electronic communication:

Nevertheless instantaneous personal communication over long distances is one of the outstanding marks of the neotechnic phase: it is the mechanical symbol of those world wide cooperations of thought and feeling which must emerge, finally, if our whole civilization is not to sink into ruin... Perhaps the greatest social effect of radio-communication so far, has been a political one: the restoration of direct contact between the leader and the group. Plato defined the limits of the size of a city as the number of people who could hear the voice of a single orator today limits do not define a city but a civilization (12, p. 241).

I have here expunged the dark side of Mumford's prophecy to emphasize the essentially optimistic tone. To be fair it must be said, however, that he felt in the 1930s that at that moment the dangers of electronic communication seemed greater than the benefits. He guardedly but warmly endorsed the resurgence of regionalism in the nineteenth century as " being a reaction against the equally exaggerated neglect of the traditions and historic monuments of a community life, fostered by the abstractly progressive minds of the 19th century."

It would be grossly unfair to conclude that Mumford, in his early work, was an unambiguous champion of neotechnics and of electrical communication or felt that the impact of electricity was automatic. He concluded at one point that the neotechnic refinement of the machine, without a coordinate development of higher social purposes, only magnifies the possibilities of depravity and barbarism. And yet his habit of writing of neotechnics in the past tense, his tendency to imply that only the outmoded shell of capitalism retarded the emergence of a qualitatively new electrical world where we would have the cake of power to be consumed at the table of the decentralized community, led to a wide adoption of his views. To put it more strongly, Mumford's essential vision of electrical power and communication became a litany of social redemption which infused most writing, popular and intellectual, on technology and the future, including that of Marshall McLuhan.

McLuhan and Mumford

The influence of Mumford on McLuhan, both at the level of ideology and conceptual analysis, was not clear until the publication of *Understanding Media.* Even in *Mechanical Bride,* however, McLuhan pointed to Mumford and his "effort to modify the social and individual effects of technology by stressing concepts of social biology" as a road past the Marxist indictments of capitalist civilization. Moreover, he cited Mumford's analysis as an example of how "we may by a reasonable distribution of power and by town and country planning enjoy all the lost advantages" of countryside living without sacrificing any of the new gains of technology. But more importantly

Mumford foreshadowed, where he did not make explicit, the central arguments, indeed, the slogans we have come to identify as the heart of McLuhan's arguments.

The first, and perhaps most important, foreshadowing is Mumford's view that neotechnics was a reassertion of the organic principle in the face of mechanization. He emphasized that the new forms of communication were extensions of biological capacity:

...the organic has become visible again even within the mechanical complex: some of our most characteristic mechanical instruments—the telephone, the phonograph, the motion picture — have grown out of our interest in the human voice and human ear and out of knowledge of their physiology and anatomy (12, p. 6).

The growth of technology was in part an attempt to build an automaton: a machine that appeared to perfect human functions, that was, in short, lifelike. The movement from naturalism to mechanism was to remove the organic symbol: to take the mechanical player from the mechanical piano. Naturalism deeply affected us, however, even in the structure of our language. It is, of course, this same view of the computer which McLuhan proposes: the mind externalized in machine; ah automaton, lifelike, yet stripped of the organic symbol which McLuhan's metaphors attempt to restore. And it is this reinsertion of the natural back into the mechanical which is the stylistic hinge of McLuhan's writing.

Mumford and McLuhan ascribe the same general and deleterious effects to the rise of printing, particularly as it served as an agent of uniformity. Again, Mumford:

The printing press was a powerful agent for producing uniformity in language and so by degrees in thought. Standardization, mass-production, and capitalistic enterprise came in with the printing press.. .(12, facing P; 84).

While Mumford makes the clock the central invention of paleotechnic times, he attributes to print the effects McLuhan amplified and made less ambiguous:

Second to the clock in order if not perhaps in importance was the printing press... Printing was from the beginning a completely mechanical achievement. Not merely that it was the type for all future instruments of reproduction for the printed sheet, even before the military uniform was the first completely standardized and interchangeable parts...abstracted from gesture and physical presence, the printed word furthered that process of analysis and isolation which became the leading achievement of the era (12, pp. 134-135).

What McLuhan and Mumford originally shared was the view that neotechnics restores the organic and aesthetic. As Mumford put it: "at last the quantitative and mechanical has become life sensitive." For Mumford, the background scene is biological while for McLuhan it is aesthetic, though neither rejects what the other affirms: McLuhan cites the biologist J. Z. Young for support; Mumford refers to the new aesthetes. Mumford notes that from biology "the investigation of the world of life opened up new possibilities for the machine itself: vital interests, ancient human wishes influence the development of new inventions. Flight, telephonic communication, the phonograph, the motion picture all arose out of the more scientific study of living organisms."

And he moves from biology to aesthetics: "this interest in living organisms does not stop short with machines that stimulate eye and ear. From the organic world comes an idea utterly foreign to the paleotechnic mind: the importance*of shape."

The same linkage of the aesthetic and technological underlie both their positions. Mumford put it most clearly:

Every effective part in this whole neotechnic environment represents an effort of the collective mind to widen the province of order and control and provision. And here, finally, the perfected forms begin to hold human interest even apart from practical performances: they tend to produce that inner composure and equilibrium, that sense of balance between the inner impulse and the outer environment, which is one ofthe marks of a work of art The machines, even when they are networks of art, underlie our art—that is, our organized perceptions and feelings — in the way that Nature underlies them, extending the basis upon which we operate and confirming our own impulse to order (12, p. 356).

I do not wish to overemphasize the similarities of Mumford and McLuhan. Mumford is always more complex, balanced and moralistic in judgment. What McLuhan did was to seize upon a similar linkage of art, perception, and the machine, a set of propositions about technology and culture, and amplify them through literary sources, stripping them of the complex context in which Mumford situated them. Above all, by setting technology outside of the density, the thickness, of history and culture, he produced out of this inherited material a modem drama. He made the electrical machine an actor in an eschatological and redemptive play.

Conclusion

The relationship between Mumford and McLuhan can be described as the inversion of a trajectory. McLuhan's earliest work was an analysis of the large cultural complexes which distinguish civilizations and an admiration for "the southern quality": the pre-capitalist features of Southern culture which provided a decisive if not an effective critique of industrialism in terms of human and organic values. McLuhan ends in the embrace of a thorough technological determinism, a poet of post-industrial society, and a prophet with one message: yield to the restorative capacity of the modem machine, throw off the cultural pseudomorph retarding progress. As McLuhan increasingly projected a "rhetoric of the electrical sublime," increasingly saw in the qualitative difference of electrical technology a road past the authentic blockages and disruptions of industrial life, Lewis Mumford turned progressively in the opposite direction. While Mumford's early work was never completely trapped in technological determinism, the decision to hang his analy sis of historical change on technological stages such as paleotechnics and neotechnics, an analysis and terminology he inherited from Patrick Geddes and in turn extended, centered technology as the critical factor in human and social development. Politics and culture entered derivatively as the housing, accelerator, retarder of technical potential. The trajectory of his work has been away from this initial position. By mid-century he could see no difference between the capitalist and

socialist state, as both were dedicated to an extirpation of the past, total management of the present, and a future based solely on the mechanics of power and productivity.

In his later work Mumford attempted to systematically deflate the image of humans as "homo faber," the tool maker, to cut down the received view of technology as the central agent in human development; and to emphasize the role of art, ritual, and language as the decisive achievements in human development. By the 1960s he had abandoned the distinction between the paleotechnic and neotechnic eras. He saw then the trajectory of modem history as the recreation of the "myth of the machine" and the "pentagon of power." Whatever short run gains and ameliorations had been introduced by electrical power and communication had been almost immediately sacrificed to a criminal and insane world view: the vision of the universe and everything in it as a machine and, in the name of that machine, the extirpation of all human purposes, types, values, and social forms that did not fit within the limited scope of machine civilization. The worship in turn enthroned a pentagon of power: a society devoted to the uncritical development, without reason or control, of power (energy), political domination, productivity, profit, and publicity.

Mumford recognized in McLuhan's work a defense and legitimation, often implicit, of the very groups and agencies Mumford was attempting to excoriate. In *The Pentagon of Power* he turned direct attention on McLuhan and the "electronic phantasmagoria...he conjures up." He accused McLuhan of proposing an "absolute mode of control: one that will achieve total illiteracy, with no permanent record except that officially committed to thacomputer and open only to those permitted access to this facility." In the interests of the military and commerce he saw McLuhan as pressing forward to a world where the "sole vestige of the multifarious world of concrete forms and ordered experience will be the sounds and 'tactile' images on the constantly present television screen or such abstract derivative information as can be transferred to the computer." McLuhan's goal was, he thought, total "cultural dissolution," a form of tribal communism; this is "in fact the extreme antithesis of anything that can be properly called tribal or communistic. As for 'communism,' this is McLuhan's public relations euphemism for totalitarian control."

Mumford's work toward the end of his career offered a sound diagnosis of the general currents of modem history. If we can forget for the moment large claims and transhistorical beatitudes, modem communications has aided in enlarging the scale of social organization beyond the nation state to the regional federation of countries and fostered the growth of the multinational corporation, cartel, and bureaucracy. In doing so, electronics has furthered the spatial bias of print and increasingly centralized political and cultural power. Whatever tendency existed within electronics to cultivate a new aesthetic sense and a rejuvenated appreciation of the organic has been more than counterbalanced by the tendency of television to increase the privatization of existence and the overwhelming dependence of people on distant mechanical sources of art, information, and entertainment. For all the vaunted capacity of the computer to store, process, and make available information in densities and quantities heretofore

unknown, the pervasive tendency to monopolize knowledge in the professions and data banks continues unabated. The ability of television to involve us in depth in the lives of people around the world is more than offset by its equal tendency to imprison us within our own speechless, looking glass world: the silent spectator as a mode of being.

If we consider this argument between Mumford and McLuhan in terms of the larger debate over electrical technology, it seems reasonable to conclude that electrical communication has up to this time largely served to consolidate and extend the cultural hegemony and social forms that first appeared in the wake of the printing press.

Archivists Note: The text body footnotes are missing from the PDF, so I'll just include them here until this can be error corrected.[9][10][11][12][13][14][15][16][17][18][19][20][21][22][23][24]

For an expanded version of this essay, see *Journal of Communication,* Summer 1981, pp. 162-178.

Sections from: The Coming of the Millennium: Good News for the Whole Human Race

by Darrell J. Fasching

Introduction

One of the curious facts of Ellul's reception in this countiy is that he received his widest following from among conservative Evanglicals. Ellul, however, was not an Evangelical in the American sense but in the European tradition deeply shaped

[9] Carey, James W. And John J. Quirk. "The Mythos of the Electronic Revolution." *American Scholar* 39, Spring 1970, pp.,219-241; Summer 1970, pp. 395-434.

[10] Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications in Cultural Transformations in Early Modem Europe* (two volumes). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

[11] Goody, Jack (Ed.). *Literacy in Traditional Societies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

[12] Innis, Harold. *The Bias of Communication.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951.

[13] Innis, Harold. *Empire and Communications.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.

[14] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* New York: Random House, 1961.

[15] Mumford, Lewis. In Charles Beard (Ed.), *Whither Mankind: A Panorama of Modem Civilization.* New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928, pp. 308-309.

[16] Mumford, Lewis, *City Development.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1945.

[17] Mumford, Lewis. *From the Ground Up.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956.

[18] Mumford Lewis. *The City in History.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961.

[19] Mumford, Lewis. *The Highway and the City.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963.

[20] Mumford, Lewis. *Technics and Civilization.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963 [1934] .

[21] Mumford, Lewis. *The Myth oftheMachine* (two volumes). New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1967-1970.

[22] Rosenstal, Raymond (Ed.) *McLuhan: Pro and Con.*
New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968.

[23] Sennett, Richard. *The Fall of Public Man.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.

[24] Steam, Gerald E. (Ed.) *McLuhan: Hot & Cool.* New York; Dial Press, 1967.

in the modem period by Karl Barth. No where have these two traditions come into more obvious conflict than in the American Evangelical response to Barth's and Ellul's vision of universal salvation. For in the hands of Barth and Ellul, the Gospel turns out to be a scandal not only to Jews and Greeks but to many Christians as well. This became eloquently clear in an issue of Sojourners published on this subject where Ellul's view on this matter was systematically denounced. The result has been a love-hate relationship between Ellul and many American Evangelicals who love his biblically rooted critique of modem technological society but absolutely reject his understanding of "evangelism" as good news for the whole human race. [J]

In the very first issue of the Forum (almost ten years ago now) I defended the ethical importance of Ellul's affirmation of universal salvation. In the decade since I have become increasingly convinced of the central importance of this aspect of Ellul's drought to ethical task of Christians in the coming millennium. In a world where not only religious but secular ideologies typically divide humanity into "us" against "them" it is important that Christians be not conformed but transform the world with an alternative vision.

In *The Coming of the Millennium* I attempt to state my own case in defense of a vision of universal salvation —one deeply influenced by Barth and Ellul. As his review (p. 18) indicates I have not managed to convince my colleague and friend, David Gill, of the truth of universal salvation. Fortunately, he does not have to believe it in order to "be saved." He accuses me of "cut and paste" exegesis, that selectively reads the biblical text. But the "traditional" position he wishes to defend, does this also, ignoring precisely those messages in the biblical tradition that I am now emphasizing to redress the balance. In his review of my book in this issue, David Gill suggests that I will never succeed in convincing "the masses of Christians" (here is suspect he means Evangelicals, as many in the mainline churches I think will view it quite differently) of my thesis. I suspect he is right But as an Evangelical Christian myself, in the tradition of Barth and Ellul, I wish to stake a claim on the meaning of this term - one that is less technological. David Gill wants a more "faithful — and *effective"* understanding of the Gospel than I offer. But to make the Gospel *efficient,* as Ellul well knew, is to conform it to the world. Moreover, the "deci-sionism" of some American Evangelicals has turned "faith" into a technique (a conscious act of the will) whereby one can be saved. Such a view renders Christians self-sufficient and eliminates any need for the graciousness of God who loves h— enemies and does good to those who persecute h—. Moreover, it is not clear how a God who loves h— enemies and does them good, carries this out by condemning them to hell. There is a deep inconsistency in such a view. What follows are two selections from *The Coming of the Millennium* which speak to these issues.

From the Prologue:

The World as We Know It is Passing Away

The year 2000 is at hand. The world as we know it is passing away. Some expect the coming of the millennium to bring the end of the world and God's final judgment on humanity. Others simply expect a different world, a new millennium. They say

we will be entering a post-modern world. All that means is that we expect it to be different than the world we were bom into. I believe there is some truth in both of these expectations. I don't expect the coming of the millennium to bring the end of the world but I do believe it will bring the end of the world as we know it. And while the final judgment of the world may not be at hand, a final judgment of Christianity may be.

For the Good News of the Gospel, as it has been proclaimed for the last two millennia, has no future. Out of the noblest of ideals, namely, its concern to save the world through conversion, Christianity has violated its own highest ideals. For while the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount preaches love of enemies, Christendom had no place for the stranger much less the enemy. Bent on conquering the world for Christ, Christians demanded that all strangers "become like us" or suffer the consequences. That kind of Christianity missed the point Christians are called to be the salt of the earth not to turn the whole earth into salt. Spiritually speaking, that would be a major ecological catastrophe.

A world made up only of Christians is a world that has no place for strangers. However, as I shall argue, whether we explicitly reject the stranger or implicitly do so out of a desire to make the stranger just like us (and hence no longer a stranger), we turn our back on God. For our God is not like us. Nor is our God one of us. Like the stranger, our God is one whose thoughts are not our thoughts and whose ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8). Our God can be found only in welcoming the stranger.

A Gospel that has no place for strangers can have no place in the emerging global civilization of the coming millen-nium.The world of the millennium that is coming into being before our very eyes is a global community clearly different from that of our ancestors who shared a world with a common vision and common values. The coming of a global community brings with it a religious and cultural diversity that seems to confuse and unsettle us as much as the diversity of language unsettled the citizens of Babel. Like the inhabitants of Babel we long to go back to the good old days when everybody spoke the same language and shared the same worldview. Uniformity is comforting and assuring. Diversity is unsettling.

In the millennium that is passing away the understanding of the Gospel was dominated by the nostalgia of Babel, and Christians dreamed of conquering the world for Christ so that all would share the same faith and values. That missionary zeal reached its height in the 19th century and still strongly colors Christian understandings of evangelism. However, there is something tragically wrong with that understanding of the Gospel. It turned out to be more bad news than good news for a large part of the world's population. Conquering the world for Christ as an evangelical approach has been largely discredited by the history of Christian imperialism and Christian persecution of "heretics." To continue that model raises serious questions about the ethics of religious belief and practice. For if we Christians continue to insist on the values of conquest, we will undermine our message of Good News through an ethical failure.

The Christianity of conquest has no viable future. The way we have told the Christian story, even with the best of intentions, has evoked far too much intolerance, hatred and violence. The evangelism of conquest belongs to the millennium that is passing away. In this book I try to imagine how we might tell the Christian story anew for the coming of a new millennium. The task, I believe, is to focus on the biblical theme of hospitality to the stranger rather than conquest of the stranger.

Some will read the following chapters and feel I have departed from the "true" Gospel given to us. They will wonder why any mortal should be permitted to change the eternal Word of God. That is an interesting question, but it is not one that should trouble us. It is not God's word but our human understanding of God's word that is in question. Our concern is to understand why past understandings have been inadequate. The issue is interpretation. The Bible has many themes, so that depending on where we put the emphasis we can come up with very different messages from the same book of scriptures. While one way of understanding the Gospel may have shown itself to be inadequate, still other forms might well be more promising. Christians have always had a choice between at least two very different types of messages from the scriptures. The first is Ure kind we find in the Gospel of John (NRSV, 3:18), "Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God." The second we find in the first letter to Timothy 4:10. which declares God to be "the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe" (NRSV) — or as the New Jerusalem Bible translates it: "The point of all our toiling and battling is that we have put our trust in the living God and he is the saviour of the whole human race but particularly of all believers."

How does one decide between these two messages, one promising salvation for believers only and the other promising salvation for the whole human race? My answer is very simple. I believe that in the millennium that is passing away the Gospel was organized around the first kind of proclamation and the results were ethically disastrous. It led to a triumphalistic and imperialistic church that produced the Crusades and contributed to the Holocaust — a church that had no love for the stranger. This message has ethically discredited itself. Therefore, it represents a misunderstanding of the meaning of the Gospel. If Christianity is not to repeat its tragic history it must reconsider where the center of its message lies. My argument will be that the Gospel must be revisioned to emphasize the second type of proclamation, as exemplified in 1 Timothy.

To engage in this shift of emphasis is not as arbitrary as it sounds. For during the last two millennia Christians systematically ignored the second and emphasized the first Since Christian lives and Christian truth are to be tested by their fruits, it's time to reach the conclusion that the Christianity of exclusivism and intolerance, based on the type of message typically attributed to the Gospel of John, is inconsistent with the heart of Jesus' message as found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chps 5-7) and that the second alternative, found in the Pauline tradition, far from leading us astray, will lead us back to the Gospel message found in the Sermon on the Mount In

my view, the Sermon on the Mount is the core message of the Gospel to which all else must be reconciled. If we Christians do so, Christianity in the next millennium will be very different from the Christianity of conquest that shaped the last millennium.

Martin Luther started the Reformation by nailing 95 theses on the church door of Wittenburg. For the coming millennium we are in need of yet another such reformation. In the six chapters which follow I hope to contribute to that reformation by proclaiming six theses that will show how the coming of the millennium can be Good News for the whole human race.

1. You have heard it said that on the day of judgment only Christians will be saved and all others will be consigned to eternal damnation, but I say to you that the Gospel proclaims salvation for the whole human race.

2. You have heard it said that non-Christians are strangers who will not enter the Kingdom of God, but I say to you that that God enters our lives through the very presence of the stranger.

3. You have heard it said that heretics and sinners will have no place in the Kingdom of God, but I say to you that to reject even the least of these is to reject God and God's messiah.

4. You have heard it said that human beings can be saved in no other name than that of Jesus, but I say to you that the name "Jesus" means we are saved in the name of a God who cannot be named or imaged.

5. You have heard it said that only a chosen remnant can be saved, but I say to you that a saving remnant saves not itself but the whole human race of which it is a part.

6. You have heard it said that in the final judgment many will be consigned to the eternal fires, but I say to you, God's judgment is a refining fire which transforms and saves rather than destroys. Even judgment is a manifestation of grace. The final truth is that our God is the savior of the whole human race and especially all believers (ITimothy 4:10).

By what authority do I claim the right to interpret the Gospel in this manner? The answer is not difficult to provide. For the Gospel does not interpret itself, human beings do the interpreting. In the past, when Christians have interpreted the Bible, they have always emphasized some parts and ignored or downplayed others. In this way, in every age, Christians have constructed a canon within the canon of scriptures. That is, they have selected from the rich diversity of scriptures that particular message they believed the world most radically needed to hear. As Luther once put it, everything in the scriptures may be the word of God, but not everything in the scriptures is die word of God for me. And, I would add, not everything is the word of God for our time.

Indeed, the Protestant Reformation began by Luther is a good example of sorting out from all scriptures that which is the word of God for one's own time. The understanding of the Gospel produced by Martin Luther occurred when, on the basis of his "tower room" experience of being bom again, he sorted through the scriptures and decided that nothing was the truly the word of God except that which teaches justification by faith.

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Although some argue that we must cling to the eternal and unchanging word of God, it is an illusion to think our *understanding* of the Gospel has ever remained fixed and unchanging. What we need is not an unchanging interpretation of the Gospel but an ethically responsible interpretation. We need not only historical and literary criticism of the Bible but also ethical criticism. St. Augustine once argued that whenever we find something unworthy of God in the scriptures we know that this cannot be meant literally and therefore we must look for a deeper ethical and spiritual meaning.

But who are we to judge what is worthy of God? My answer is that we are children of Abraham. If, as Paul insisted, Abraham is the model of true faith, then we who are children of Abraham can dare to share his audacity. For Abraham is the one who had the *chutzpah* or audacity to argue with God over the fate of Sodom, challenging: *Shall not the judge of all also be just?* Even God must be just in order to be God. If this is so, then the scriptures must be ethical in order to be the word of God. It finally boils down to the ethics of belief and practice. Any interpretation of scriptures that teaches rejection of the stranger discredits itself as an authentic interpretation of the Gospel.

As Christians face the coming of the millennium and the emergence of a global community rich in diversity, it is time to ask whether conquering the world of strangers, deviants and heretics, and transforming the whole world into our own image, is really what the Gospel is all about. If we fail to ask and answer that question, it should not surprise us if future generations look back and chronicle the next millennium as the millennium in which Christianity died of its own intolerance.

Finally, let me say that anyone reading the argument contained in these pages will be able to think of numerous scriptural quotations that stand in contradiction to those I use to support the vision of the Gospel as Good News for the whole human race. It is easy to find statements that warn human beings of God's judgment and wrath, statements suggesting that some will suffer eternal condemnation for not hearing and obeying the word of God. I do not need to refute these citations in order to hold my thesis, for like Kari Barth, I argue that the threats of judgment and eternal damnation are always God's second last word, while God's final word is always forgiveness and reconciliation.

The word of judgment is meant to shake us up and get us to change our lives here and now. The word of forgiveness and reconciliation is the word of grace and acceptance that comes to us in spite of the fact that we are unacceptable. Some will doubt that this is the true message of the Gospel. They will fear that I am preaching "cheap grace." But grace is not cheap; its free. It has no conditions. That is the whole point of the Sermon on the Mount. Such an understanding of the Good News is one that is in accord with the message of the Sermon on the Mount which demands that we love even our enemies and therefore proclaims the Good News of God's love for the whole human race. Nevertheless, the formulation of the Gospel I offer in this book is a human interpretation. It should be doubted. It should be questioned — both because I am fallible and because without such doubts we might take the Good News for granted and therefore discount the very warnings of final judgment that we need to

heed. Therefore, I do not expect to resolve the question of universal salvation in this book. I only expect to renew our capacity to live in the ambiguity between judgment and grace, even as I believe we are called to live with the ambiguity of being Christians in a pluralistic world of strangers, seeking to spread the Good News yet refraining from making the world "Christian."

From Chapter Four.

Golgatha - The Stranger as Messiah

Crucified Love: The Gospel of Universal Salvation

... The Good News of the cross, however, lies not in the violence and degradation [of Jesus' crucifixion] but in the response to it. Violence is not permitted to beget violence. Violence and rejection is answered with crucified love. Just as Jesus forgives those Romans and Sadducees who reject and crucify him, so God forgives those who reject h—.

According to Paul, Christ died for the ungodly, that is, for those who reject God. One of the paradoxes of the Christian theology of the millennium that is passing away is how to view "unbelief' in relation to repentance. On the one hand, unbelief was said to be a sin. On the other hand, repentance was said to be necessary for salvation. But if one's sin is that one does not believe, how can one ask for forgiveness? It is a "Catch-22." One has to already believe in order to ask for forgiveness, and if one already believes,one does not need to ask — at least for the particular offense of unbelief.

The problem of salvation was further compounded by the view that while the love of God is unconditional, unless one repented and asked for forgiveness one would be condemned to the fires of hell. Now if one must repent in order to be saved, then God's love is not unconditional. It has at least one condition. The resulting theology further compounds the problem by saying, Christ had to die on the cross in order to conquer sin and yet those who do not accept Christ are said to be sinners condemned to the eternal fires. This is the traditional dualistic gospel as a sacred story which opposes the children of light to toe children of darkness or the saved to the damned. Now if some are sinners condemned for not accepting Christ, then Christ's dying on the cross in order to conquer sin was not fully successful, since sin Wins at least a partial victory. The dualism of the Gospel as preached in the millennium that is passing " 1 away undermines its own message through its self-contradic-
tory claims.

According to the story of Noah, when God saw the destruction God had caused in anger over sinful human behavior, God resolved to "never again" permit the total destruction of sin– 1 ners. In so doing, God rejected the totalitarian solution to the
"i problem of sin. For one way of conquering sin would be to

- totally control human behavior through threats and punish

ment — the totalitarian dream. Some have preferred to think of God as such a totalitarian ruler. No one, of course, not even

God, has ever succeeded in totally controlling human behavior and every attempt has been demonic in the cruelty and suffering it has caused.

In the millennium that is to come, Christians will have to accept the logical implications of their own claim that the love of God is unconditional — it has no conditions, not even repentance. God's love falls like the rain on the just and the unjust alike. If sin cannot be conquered by punishment and control then perhaps what the Gospel suggests should be taken seriously — namely that God conquers sin through crucified love, that is, by forgiving those who reject h— and are h— enemies.

To die for another human being, Paul argues, is never easy, but it is understandable that someone might do this in an attempt to protect someone who is good and lovable. However, "God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us... For if -*while we were enemies, we were reconciled* to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life"
⊠ (Romans 5: 8& 10).

T ' What is surprising about haul's theology is that there is

. 1 virtually no discussion of repentance in it. This is, I think,

because we are not justified by repentance but by the crucified love that God reveals in the death of Jesus. No love is more painful than loving someone who rejects you, perhaps even hates and despises you. Crucifixion is the appropriate description of such love. Crucified love rejects the natural impulse we all have to reject those who reject us. To say that Christ died for sinners and the ungodly (i.e., unbelievers) while they were still sinners and that they are reconciled to God by the cross is ! to say that no one, no matter how unrepentant, stands outside

the saving love of God. God's love falls like the rain on the just and the unjust (Matt 5:45). Sin and unbelief are conquered not through the fantasy of Babel, that is, through making everyone believe and act the same. Sin is conquered through crucified love.

If we know who God is through the life story of Jesus, then we shall be required lo replace the God of unforgiving judgment with the God revealed in the Sermon on the Mount. In the crucified love of Jesus, Christians ought to see the love of God. God turns the other cheek and walks the second mile. God loves h— enemies and does good to those who persecute h—. Crucified love is love of those who do the rejecting. Crucified love is a love that embraces and reconciles itself with its enemies — while they are still enemies. This means that contrary' to those who would sacralize the Gospel and turn it into a contest between the children of light and the children of darkness, no one is excluded from the love of God. God loves and embraces the stranger, even the enemy. So the young pastor, Timothy, is instructed in a Pauline letter, "... we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. These are the things you must insist on and teach (1 Tim 4:10-11).

Advert for The Coming of the Millennium: Good News for the Whole Human Race

Book Reviews

Sources and Trajectories: Eight Early Articles by Jacques Ellul that Set the Stage

Translation and Commentary by Marva J. Dawn. Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997. 208 pages.

Reviewed by Andrew J. Goddard.

A new volume of Ellul's writing in English is long overdue. It is now six years since *Anarchy and Christianity* appeared. In contrast, between 1964 and 1991 there was never a gap of more than a year between books by Ellul hitting the bookstalls. This book is, however, unique in the Ellul corpus. Marva Dawn, author of several books and a significant doctoral thesis on Ellul's concept of the principalities and powers, here presents eight important articles she has selected from the vast but largely ignored treasury of Ellul's contributions to French journals.

The three opening chapters unquestionably contain the most significant articles in the volume. These (like all but two of the articles) originally appeared in *Foi et Vie,* the French theology journal dominated by Barthians and edited by Ellul himself between 1969 and 1985. Published in 1946 and 1947 as a trilogy under the heading "Chronicle of the Problems of Civilization," they provide a brilliant introduction to the massive life-long writing project which Ellul had already planned out but not yet begun.

The first chapter illuminates Ellul's sociological method and gives the broad context of his theological and ethical work, confirming Dawn's thesis that the theological concept of the principalities and powers provides a link between the sociological and theological strands of Ellul's work. It is followed by "Needed: A New Karl Marx I" This presents Ellul's critique of both contemporary utopian projects and the quest for purely technical solutions. Then, by offering some of the fullest statements of his own debt to Marx's method, it clarifies the methodology and sets the agenda for his later volumes of radical social criticism. The final article in the series ("Political Realism") vividly demonstrates Ellul's personal frustration at the failure of politics to offer a solution to the crisis of civilization and, in its delineation of political realism, begins his analysis of the dominance of means and Fact in modem mass society. Its closing section on the contrasting nature of Christian realism sheds further light on the importance of Christian faith and revelation to all his thought.

These articles are of crucial importance for anyone interested in understanding the early stages, structure and development of Ellul's; thought. They also - half a

century later -make stimulating and challenging reading as they provocatively and prophetically challenge the whole direction of twentieth century civilization. Even if it contained little else of importance, the appearance of these writings in English would, in itself, make this a most significant book.

The next four chapters focus on themes central to Ellul's theology and ethics. "On Christian Pessimism" (1954) addresses the frequent criticism that Ellul's work is wholly and unwarrantably pessimistic. In response it offers a succinct and helpful account of his fundamental theological beliefs and how these shape his view of the world and his ethic for Christians. At the heart of that ethic is, of course, Christian freedom, and "The Meaning of Freedom According to Saint Paul" (1951) provides, in under twenty pages, a summary introduction to the ideas which subsequently grew into his mammoth *Ethics of Freedom.*

"The Contemporaneity of the Reformation" (1959) initially appears an odd choice for this book. Nevertheless, although its reading of Reformation history and thought is open to criticism, it helpfully demonstrates Ellul's desire to stand within that tradition's claim to be faithful to the Word of God and it shows the centrality in his ethics of both a particular conception of the relationship between the church and the world and the need for Christians to identify and then oppose contemporary idolatries.

This important Ellulian theme of the role and responsibility of the Christian in society and how that is shaped by a broader understanding of the relationship between Truth and Reality [or,, elsewhere in his work, God and the World], is taken up in "Christian Faith and Social Reality" (1960), which originated as one of two addresses to the Free University in Amsterdam. Finally, Dawn closes with "Innocent Notes on 'The Hermeneutic Question'" (1968). This article clarifies Ellul's understanding of Scripture and the rationale behind his own biblical studies. It also challenges much scholarly discussion on hermeneutics. Despite these strengths, it fits uneasily with the themes in the rest of the book, and is also quite technical and difficult to follow in places.

All of Marva Dawn's translations into English are, once one becomes familiar with Ellul's distinctive style, very readable. Although there are a few strange translation decisions (e.g., "inutile" as "unnecessary" (p. 106), and a number of places where a footnote could highlight important nuances in the original French (e.g., "avertissement" in the opening title surely contains the sense of "warning" as well as "Preface"), the translations are more coherent and faithful to the original French than those in many English editions of Ellul's books. Her explanatory footnotes also (usually) provide helpful clarification and background information to otherwise often obscure references in the original.

Before each article Dawn adds a brief introduction providing background material, mainly biographical ("Sources"). These introductions will be of great help to those who know little or nothing of Ellul's life and context, but they rely largely on Ellul's interviews in *In Season, Out of Season* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982). Although they only rarely misinform the reader, they could often provide more helpful details. In chapter seven, for example ("Christian Faith and Social Reality"), Ellul would not

have considered his opposi– tion to development of the Aquitaine coast as "one of his most successful commitments," and it could also be explained that, given the central beliefs of the Dutch Reformed constituency to which it was originally addressed, the article that follows is a very gbod example of Ellul's willingness to challenge Christian "sacred cows".

Each article is also followed by a short sketch directing the reader to later books which expanded the article's themes ("Trajectories"). Once again, these will be invaluable to those (hopefully many) readers who discover Ellul through this book. They do, however, tend to reflect Dawn's own special interests, have some surprising omissions, and can often seem rather disjointed and repetitive as they quote from the preceding article and flit from subject to subject and book to book.

These criticisms are, however, relatively minor. I have only one major objection to the book's general thesis. It claims the eight articles were chosen "because they are the earliest formulations of some of Ellul's key ideas" (p. 1). Undoubtedly, in taking us back beyond the publication of *La Technique* to the immediate post-war writings, Dawn does a great service in tracing the genealogy of Ellul's thought These are not however, "the earliest formulations." To discover those, one must go back even further. They appear in the 1930s with Ellul's involvement in the personalist movement. Dawn notes Ellul's personalist links in passing, but fails to see their full significance. It was during that period, in numerous unpublished writings such as "Directives pour un manifeste personnaliste," that Ellul (together with Bernard Charbonneau) began to analyse society in the terms of the crisis of civilization which dominates the opening three articles and, as this book amply demonstrates, therefore sets the context for all his subsequent writing.

Despite this caution that there is an even earlier Ellul still to be uncovered, there can be no disputing the value of Marva Dawn's work. She has made available to an English-reading public some important, early, but still very relevant, writings by Ellul which are otherwise difficult to obtain and have not received the attention they merit. Those who already know and love Ellul will leam yet more. Those who do not know him will be given a helpful and brief introduction to the central themes of his thought in his own words, they will have their appetite whetted, and they wilHje guided to where they can find more. Perhaps this exciting unveiling of the early Ellul may even persuade publishers that we should not have to wait another six years for the appearance in English of some of the important books Ellul wrote in his final years !

The Coming of the Millenium: Good News for the Whole Human Race

by Darrell J. Fasching Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996. xiii, 129pp.

Reviewed by David W. Gill Professor of Applied Ethics, North Park College, Chicago.

In *The Coming of the Millenium,* Darrell Fasching, the distinguished and indefatigable editor of *The Ellul Forum for the Critique of Technological Civilization,* articulates his version of the essential message of the Christian Gospel. His point of departure is his visceral antipathy toward the exclusivist orientation of most Christian thought over the past two thousand years. Such exclusivism creates a harsh dichotomy between an elect "us" and a damned "them." It is this exclusivism which leads directly to arrogance and the justification of violence toward the outsider. For Fasching, the Crusades and the Holocaust are the logical and inevitable fruit of such an interpretation of the Christian Gospel.

With the arrival of a new millennium in a couple years, accompanied by an increase in apocalyptic fervor and speculation (as whs also the case around the year 1000), Fasching believes it urgent to reformulate and restate the Gospel in universalist terms. His book tries to drive us to such a reformulation by its description of horrors already unleashed by the older exclusivism. He tries to authorize his reformulation by appeal to Christian universalists Origen and Jacques Ellul-— and by citing Luther's and Augustine's views on Scripture. i.e., that not all written Scripture serves as the Word of God to us (e.g., p. 7).

Fasching builds his case by (re-)interpreting the stories of the Tower of Babel, Jacob wrestling with the stranger, Abraham and the destruction of Sodom, the sufferings of Jesus and Job, and the miracle of Pentecost. For Fasching, the center of Paul's theology becomes the non-exclusive "engrafting" of Gentile Christians on to the Jewish community. And, with Ellul, the message of the Book of Revelation for Fasching is universal salvation. Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and all other prophets and teachers of nonviolent inclusivity are the voices to which we must now attend.

The Coming of the Millennium is nothing if it is not provocative and creative! It is an impassioned sermon which will challenge all who read it. "Hospitality to the stranger," in whom God and Christ meet us, is the whole Gospel for Fasching. Our diversity is a gift of God—tout hospitality is how we receive the gift. This is a powerful and authentic theme in biblical Christianity. And certainly Fasching is right in indicting the violence and domination that have been perpetrated over the centuries in the name of Christ.

On a rather practical level, however, Fasching's message is unlikely to persuade the masses of Christians for whom Scripture must be treated in a less "Jeffersonian," "cut-and-paste" hermeneutic. The veiy people who need most to break out of a divisive exclusivism will not listen to an argument that appears to "throw 'the baby out with the bathwater." Nor will most Christians be satisfied to view the entirety of the Gospel message as "welcoming the stranger." They will not want to relinquish such themes as speaking the truth in love, resisting pride and idolatry, overcoming ignorance and poverty, cultivating a life of spiritual communion with God, and providing salvation and hope to neighbors in need—to name but a few items.

As Jacques Ellul pointed out in his magnificent *The Subversion of Christianity* (ET, Eerdmans, 1986), the heart of the problem is conformity To the world, especially its will-to-power. Unfortunately, the biblical hermeneutic of Augustine played into the hands of the Constantinian marriage of church and state and a justification of the violent suppression of the Donatists. as well as the aggression of the later Crusades. Luther's hermeneutic justified the killing of Anabaptists and Jews and paved the way for a two kingdoms "quietism" later on in the face of Hitler. No thanks.

Despite the horrors perpetrated in the name of Christ (but what good ideas, what good movements, have not been similarly exploited and betrayed?), the more holistic biblical message is not the villain but the answer. Most of the Donatists, Waldensians, Franciscans, Anabaptists, Quakers, as well as the Confessing Christians of the Barmen Declaration, practiced peace in *a* violent world because of their fidelity to Jesus Christ as the unique incarnation of God, as Savior and Lord of a new way of life. Believing that Jesus is the one and only Savior of the world *does not* imply any rejection of the stranger, any unwillingness to listen to and learn from others, any quest for domination of others, any need to control other's beliefs or practices. Just the opposite.

In short, the broad outlines of Fasching's gospel of hospitality to the stranger and his rejection of all justifications of arrogance, violence, and uniformity are a welcome challenge. His creativity is provocative. But in the end, a more faithful— and effective—strategy, I believe, will be to make that Gos-pel-with-Jesus-of-the Sermon-on-the-Mount-at-the-Center the interpretive focal point for the whole of Scripture and the whole of life. A more serious and passionate biblical discipleship is the answer to the apathetic, therapeutic Christianity of today— as well as to the pretentious ambitions to power by the religious Right.

Issue #19 Jul 1997 — Technique and the Illusion of Utopia

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In This Issue

About This Issue

My apologies to all loyal subscribers for the lateness of this issue. I had originally planned for this issue to focus on human rights but a number of essays were not completed on time and so that topic is being deferred for future publication. Instead this issue's Forum will feature a very interesting analysis of the technological utopianism of modem Singapore by Lawton Lau. Professor Lau shows that Ellul's analysis of technique and the political order provides a hermeneutic for unmasking the utopian pretensions of Singapore to become the model technological city. Lawton Lau, who teaches international communications in the MBA program of the University of Illinois at Urbana, wrote his doctoral dissertation in Communications on Jacques Ellul and the city.

In addition to Professor Lau's essay, David Gill offers us an essay review of four recent books on technology. Gill walks us through the optimistic vision of Nicholas Negroponte for the future of modem technology and then on to the more critical visions of Neil Postman, Clifford Stoll and Edward Tenner.

Finally, I want to welcome the two newest members of the editorial board of the **Ellul Forunt.** They are Marva Dawn of *Christians Equipped for Ministry* in Vancouver Washington and Patrick Troude-Chastenet of the University of Bordeaux in France. Marva is the editor of the recently released book of Jacques Ellul's early writings, entitled *Sources and Trajectories,* published by Eerdmans. Patrick is the author of *Lire Ellul: Introduction a I 'oeuvre socio-politique de Jacques Ellul (Reading Ellul:*

An Introduction to the Socio-political Thought of Jacques Ellul) published by Presses Universitaire de Bordeaux. He is also author of *Entretiens avec Jacqus Ellul (Conversations with Jacques Ellul)* published by La Table Ronde. The latter will be published in English translation in the *South Florida-Rochester-Saint Louis Studies on Religion and the Social Order* series published through Scholars Press in 1998.

Bulletin Board

Conference on "Education Technology" Held at Penn State

Joyce Hanks reports that over two hundred people attended a conference on *Education Technology: Asking theRight Questions* which was held September 17th-20th, 1997 at Penn State University. Ellul's work had a prominent place on the agenda. The proceedings will be pubished in book form in 1998 and details on how to secure a copy will be provided in a future issue. One outcome of the conference was the formation of a group of scholars who will be getting together to discuss Ellul's work in ocassional weekend retreats. Anyone who is interested in paricipating should write to Richard Stivers, Department of Sociology-Anthropology, Illinois State University, Normal IL 61790-4660. Professor Stivers is receptive for suggestions as to which books should be on the agenda for future discussion.

The Coming of the Millennium

Good News for the Whole Human Race
by Darrell J. Fasching
"In Memory of Jacques Ellul 1912-1994 who taught me to understand that "evangelical theology" means "Good News for the whole human race."
Trinity Press International $12.00 1-800-877-0012

Journal Honors the Work of Jacques Ellul

Dr. Richard A. Deitrich, Editor for the Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society published by Sage Press for the National Association for Science, Technology and Society, announces that Volume 15, numbers 2/3 is devoted to honoring the work of Jacques Ellul. Copies are available from Sage Science Press. Anyone interested should call 805-499-0721.

The issue is an outgrowth of a symposium held at the tenth annual meeting of the National Association for Science and Technology in March of 1995. The issue was edited by Willem H. Vanderburg.

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Can a Technical Civilization Sustain Human Life?

by Willem H. Vanderburg

Two *Faces of Jacques Ellul:*

The Theologian and the Societal Critic by Rustum Roy.

Further Readings - compiled by Willem H. Vanderburg

Forum: Technique and the Illusion of Utopia

Singapore: Technique and the Illusion of Utopia

by Lawson Lau

Introduction

Jacques Ellul refers to the efforts of mankind to make its cities more human: "The garden city. The show city. The brilliant city"[1] Nevertheless he maintains the view that cities "are still formed of iron, steel, glass, and cement...[and] of death."[2] Nothing "spontaneously natural" is left in them.[3] The city is a product of the technological milieu. It is "an entirely artificial world" in which "technological products replace the old natural milieu in which we used to live" and it is "a milieu that is totally dead."[4] We live in a world that is no longer natural because of "the massive intervention of techniques."[5] Singapore of the 1970s and 1980s, under the authoritarian rule of the People's Action Party, has been referred to as "The Garden City of South-east Asia,"[6] a reputation reminiscent of ancient Babylon. Clean, green, cleared of much of its slums and with well-flushed public toilets,[7] Singapore deserves to be the show city

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[1] *The Meaning of the City,* trans. Dennis Pardee, intro. John Wilkinson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), p. 57.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological System,* trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1980), p. 39.

[4] Jacques Ellul, *Perspectives on Our Age,* ed. William H. Vander-burg,trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), p. 59.

[5] Jacques Ellul, "Technique, Institutions, and Awareness," in *The American Behavioral Scientist,* July/August 1968, p. 38.

[6] Planting trees along roads started as far back as 1881. It is, however, Lee Kuan Yew who is given the credit for inaugurating Singapore's tree-planting campaign in 1963. Stephen Yeh notes that it led to a "beautification programme" in 1967 ["The Idea of the Garden City" in *Management ofSuccess: The Moulding of Modem Singapore,* ed. Kemial Singh Sandhu and Paul Wheatley (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989), pp. 813-832] . He states that there has been "an intensive programme to camouflage concrete structures with plants to soften their harshness."

[7] A reflection of the priorities of the government-controlled private press in Singapore, two news stories vied for prominence on page one of the June 23, 1989 issue of *The Straits Times.* One was "China Executes Seven More Protesters." This outcome of the Tiana-men Square pro-democracy movement was juxtaposed with a Singapore news item on the flushing of public toilets: 'Tine for those who do not flush public toilet from next month" N. Balakrishnan notes the "latest plank in the [PAP] government's

of Asia. In fact, it attracts millions of tourists[8] to its shores each year because it is "a shoppers' city."[9] The island nation also deserves to be the technological show city of Asia,[10] perhaps even of the world. Lee KuanYew on July 1, 1966 stresses that "it is of utmost importance that, in the field of science and technology, we should lead the field in this part of the world."[11] Three months later he again addressed the issue of a technological Singapore: "The place must work and it will only work on the basis of technological and industrial advance."[12] Since he made the pronouncement, the nation's efficient Changi International Airport offers millions of tourists a trouble-free entry to admire the man-made nation.[13] "Singapore," says Lee, "is like a fine mechanism, like a chronometer and not just an ordinary watch."[14] Led by Lee, PAP politician-technicians and their bureaucratic and technocratic elite have so energetically and thoroughly worked over and redesigned the city-state over the past three decades that it has emerged as the brilliant city. Lee could justifiably identify his cosmopolitan city as "the supreme achievement of man's technology."[15]

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campaign to punish those of its population who have not been properly housetrained." Those who violate the new law risk a fine of up to $1,000 (US$510). Enforcement would be carried out by a "crack battalion of inspectors from Singapore's Ministry of Environment, .[who] ,..will be roving public toilets in pursuit of the aberrant non-flushers" *(Far Eastern Economic Review,* August 3,1989, p. 33).

[8] In 1990 Singapore welcomed its five millionth visitor on December 10 *(Singapore Bulletin,* January 1991, p. 11).

[9] Peter C.N. Hardstone, "State Viability and the Size Factor: The Singapore Case," Seminar Report Series No. 2, October 1977. Singapore: Nanyang University, 1977. An island nation that lacks spectacularnatural scenery and cultural-historical sites, Singapore makes up for it through catering to humanity's appetite for bargain hunting and shopping.

[10] Singapore's National Exhibition (November 16-December 16, 1984) at its World Trade Centre, in fact, was referred to as "the showcase of Singapore history" *(Mirror,* November 15, 1984,p. 1).

[11] Alex Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew* (Singapore: Donald Moore Press, 1968), p. 484. Lee spoke at the opening of the new Science Tower at the then University of Singapore. He emphasized the need to "exploit" Singapore's "human resources" and "exploit" the nation's strategic geographical location to maximum advantage. The Singapore story over the past three decades is a tale of precisely such unwavering PAP exploitation.

[12] *Mirror,* October 31,1966, p. 8.

[13] Lee in his 1989 National Day message notes that *Business Traveller, Travel Trade Gazette Asia,* and *Pata Travel News (Asia/Pacific)* put Changi International Airport as the world's best airport *Executive Travel* puts it as the world's second best *Euromoney* put Changi as the most efficient for luggage retrieval and second best for passport control and immigration *(Singapore Bulletin,* September 1989, p. 1).

[14] Raj Vasil, *Governing Singapore: Interviews with the New Leaders* rev. ed. (Singapore: Times Books International, 1988), p. 244. First published by Eastern Universities Press, 1984.

[15] Jacques Ellul, 'The Mirror of These Ten Years," *Christian Century,* 87 (18 February 1970), p. 201. As S. Rajaratnam, then minister for foreign affairs, says, "In a way Singapore is a country whose environment is almost wholly man-made. A hundred and fifty years ago Singapore was no more than a small fishing village. Its few hundred peoples no doubt lived closed *(sic)* to Nature and as Nature dictated. Today's Singapore owes little to Nature. Its roads, its concrete buildings, its harbours and almost all its landscape were reshaped, created and moulded by the brawn and brain of our people" *(The Mirror,* November 7,1966, p. 1).

Singapore has so nicely fitted into Ellul's first litany of positive images that one wonders if he were writing about this South-east Asian nation. His focus, however, is on Babylon, "The City in the Bible,"[16] the archetype. The city, "an essential product of technology,"[17] is"the symbol of...human power."[18] Singapore certainly conforms to and takes extraordinary pride in this symbol. It imported the international corporate style of architecture and the "desire to project power cannot be mistaken: these buildings exuded a macho masculinity "[19] After all, Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP Government devoutly consider themselves to be "creators and custodians of the Singapore nation."[20] A new god has emerged in a land of many gods.[21] Singapore is a secular city-state wrought through technological power. This is evident in its towering waterfront, satellite housing estates, efficient international airport, mass rapid transit system. In fact, Ellul adds to its pantheon of gods: "Progress has become a key term in modem religion."[22] Clifford Christians points out that Ellul's prophetic theme centers on the condemnation of "the unqualified worship of the technological enterprise."[23] Ellul's grim prophetic pronouncement therefore presents a contrasting scenario. It cautions against the economically glowing, utopia-like image of Singapore in the minds of its successful PAP politicians as well as citizens who have been reared in an austere technicized environment to see and interpret their nation and the world according to the

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[16] *Meaning of die City,* p. 48. Ellul maintains that the great city is "a military phenomenon" and "inseparably connected with money" (p. 51). Amassing wealth and the quest for profit are distinctive marks of the city. Singapore is no exception. On Ihe contrary, the PAP has designed it for such pecuniary purposes.

[17] *Technological System, p. 39.*

[18] *Meaning of the City, p.* 48.

[19] Tay Kheng Soon, "The Architecture of Rapid Transformation" in *Management of Success: The Moulding of Modem Singapore,* p. 866. Tay observes that the effort to globalize the Singapore economy and the adoption of the "global city" concept in 1970-1980 led to the coveting of up-to-date symbols of progress and modernity that the international corporate style of architecture conveniently provided. He refers to the "gigantism in the expression" of Shenton Way buildings, the heart of Singapore's financial district There is nothing ''eastern" or "Asian" in Singapore's waterfront It could be the waterfront of any Western nation.

[20] Vasil, *Governing Singapore: Interviews with the New Leaders, p.* 120. The god-like "creators and custodians" claim is somewhat more arrogant that an earlier conviction. Stamford Raffles who founded modem Singapore had written to the Duchess of Somerset on June 11,1819:"My new colony thrives most rapidly...It is not necessary for me to say how' much interested I am in the success of the place: it is a child of my own, and I have made it what it is" [Charles Burton Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 56] .

[21] Roland Braddell devotes a chapter in *The Lights of Singapore* (6th edition, London: Methuen, 1947) to "Many Gods." As he notes of the Singapore situation, "Many and wonderful are the gods of China and far too numerous to mention...and I may remark that it is very hard indeed to find a Chinese who can tell you intelligently about the temples you visit or the gods and goddesses in those temples" (p. 77). However many and spectacular the Chinese gods and goddesses may be, there are other gods in Singapore, including the innumerable Hindu gods and goddesses. Then there are the monotheistic Muslims, Jews, and Christians who worship their own god.

[22] *I Believe,* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), p. 4.

[23] "Is Ellul Prophetic?" in Media Development, Vol. XXXV, 2/1988, p. 7.

reigning PAP politicians' eyes.[24] Although a mere dot on the world map, Singapore has been substantially spared the damaging winds of political and economic upheavals that have afflicted much larger countries.[25] It has been a politically stable and an exceptionally calm nation over the past couple of decades. It may be likened to the eye of a hurricane: an ominous and deadly calm in a world of much turbulence. This chapter explores Ellul's grave thoughts concerning the pervasive operation of technique in our contempo-raiy technological milieu and its major product, the city, with particular reference to Singapore, and suggests that there are adequate grounds for apprehension.[26]

Singapore's success, I contend, has come about largely through die ruling political party's unyielding employment of technique. Ellul defines *technique* as "the *totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency* (for a given stage of development) in *every* field of human activity."[27] Rationality, efficiency, and gimlet penetration into every public and private area of the Singaporean's life have characterized Lee Kuan Yew's approach to ruling the nation state. He regulates the Singaporean's life from cradle to grave. Unquestioning obedience to his dictates or decrees has its reward. He promises economic well-being if his commandments, however irksome, are timidly followed. To disobey is often to provoke his anger, swift judgment, and inevitable punishment.

As implied, a non-monetary price tag is attached. Ellul maintains that "technique causes the state to become totalitarian, to absorb the citizen's life completely."[28] Tech-

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[24] Utopia may not be too far from the minds of some Singaporeans as the PAP has coined such sentiments as "Excellence Together, Singapore Forever'' (featured, for instance, in the 1989 and 1990 issues of *Singapore Bulletin* published by the Information Division of the Ministry of Communications and Information).

[25] A popular saying in Singapore goes thus: "If the U.S. sneezes, Singapore will catch a cold."

[26] Ellul is markedly prophetic in his sociological and theological analyses and pronouncements. Hence Martin Marty's pertinent observation and caution that "one cannot speak as a prophet of judgment against a way of life and expect the public to welcome the Words" (''Creative Misuses of Jacques Ellul'' in Jacques Ellul: Interpretive Essays, p. 3). In the same volume, Clifford Christians furnishes a vital perspective on Ellul's prophetic assertions in "Ellul on Solution: An Alternative but No Prophecy" (pp. 147-173).

[27] *Technological Society,* trans. John Wilkinson, intro. Robert K. Merton (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. xxv. In *The Technological System* Ellul reiterates his contention that the entire field of human activity, including human life, comes under the domain of technique. As for the technological spheres of human activity, he distinguishes between the various types of technologies according to their areas of application: "mechanical technologies (a very wide term, also covering things that are not, strictly speaking, mechanical, like computers); economic technologies (for research and intervention); organizational technologies (for all types of social organisms, including government, administration, etc.); and 'human' technologies (for the individual or for noninstitutionalized groups, advertising, propaganda, group dynamics, psychoanalysis, etc.)" (p. 176).

[28] *Technological Society, p.* 284. When Ellul refers to the "totalitarian state" he is not necessarily making reference to the popular conception of the totalitarian state, that is, "the brutal, immoderate thing which tortured, deformed, and broke everything in its path, the battleground of armed bullies and factions, a place of dungeons and the reign of the arbitrary" (ibid., p. 287). He holds the view that these traits are the transient rather than the real characteristics of a totalitarian state. Arbitrariness

nique "will not tolerate half measures"[29] and "has no place for the individual; the personal means nothing to it"[30] Arnold Pacey reinforces Ellul's viewpoints. He refers to a technocratic value system as giving rise to a "technocratic" outlook that is "single-mindedly insistent on an unambiguous view of progress, of problem-solving, and of values."[31] The technocratic world view leaves very little room for democracy in decisions affecting technology: "An idea about choice of technique (or altered priorities, or public participation in decision making) introduces a note of uncertainty which is fundamentally unacceptable to those who take this view. To them,...there is only one logical path forward."[32] This chapter discusses and comes to the conclusion that what Lee Kuan Yew has done in Singapore over three decades validates Ellul's contentions. For Lee and the PAP as well as for technique, there is only one best way in planning, implementing and working toward any particular objective. Hence at first glance the marriage between the PAP and technique appears to be a viable marriage between two powerful, compatible partners living in harmony within the confines of a technological city. No matchmaker could have done any better. After three decades of marriage, however, a majority of their offsprings are Singaporeans made soft by wealth, timid through political intimidation, mindless because Singapore is ruled, according to the PAP, by a mere two hundred people.

Technique Transcends Ideology

Ellul argues that traditional democratic doctrines are rendered obsolete by technique.[33] He regards this as a normal situation because in a technicized nation, doctrines must change when situations change. "Evolution (of doctrines)," Ellul avers, "is necessary."[34] Similarly, Ellul contends that propaganda "no longer obeys an ideology"[35] as the propagandist cannot be a believer in ideology.[36] Ellul contends that the propa-

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and totalitarian theories are not part of Ellul's notion of the technique driven dictatorial state. Scruples concerning tradition, principles, judicial affirmations, the maintenance of a facade of public and private morality still exist in such a democratic state. What is significant is that they are devoid of all power and are disregarded every time it is necessary to do so. It is within this definition of the totalitarian state that Lee Kuan Yew's rule over Singapore is being considered.

[29] Ibid., p. 268.

[30] Ibid., p. 286.

[31] *Culture of Technology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), p.127.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Langdon Winner comes to a similar conclusion. He agrees with Habermas' argument that the pursuit of scientific technology brings with it specific ideological commitments. He notes, however, that "those who best serve the progress of technological politics are those who espouse more traditional political ideologies but are no longer able to make them work" *[Autonomous Technology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), p. 277] ,

[34] *Technological Society,* p. 281.

[35] *aganda,* trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Loner, intro. Konrad Kellen (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 196.

[36] Ellul defines ideology as "the popularized sentimental degeneration of a political doctrine or worldview, it involves a mixture of passions and rather incoherent intellectual elements, always related to present realities" *[Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology,* trans. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), p.l] ,

gandist is a technician who manipulates ideology, data, and psychological techniques and he eventually despises doctrines and humanity. This state of affairs arises because the objective of the propagandist or the organization using propaganda is not to disseminate a doctrine or spread an ideology. The primary purpose is "to unite within itself as many individuals as possible, to mobilize them, and to transform them into active militants in the service of an orthopraxy."[37] Nevertheless, the propagandist must not clash with any prevailing ideology upheld by the people. He should instead seek to use such existing ideology for his own ends.

Uncanny as it may seem, Ellul could well have Lee Kuan Yew in mind when he articulated his analysis. Lee Kuan Yew's pragmatic outlook and his stress on survival and realities work together to ensure that he is not an ideologist. Although a socialist, he is not a doctrinaire socialist.[38] Ellul's twin observations on the manipulation of ideology and the mobilization of individuals are mirrored in Lee's candid remarks on his position vis-a-vis ideas, concepts, ideology. Speaking to the Law Society in 1966, he says,

* I am not interested in ideas as ideas themselves, however much of an esoteric thrill these can give you by way of intellectual stimulation. I am interested in ideas in so far as they can galvanize both our society, which means you and I (s/c), in a way which

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[37] *aganda, p.* 197. Ellul defines orthopraxy as "an action that in itself, not because of the value judgments of the person who is acting, leads directly to a goal, which for the individual is not a conscious and intentional objective to be attained, but which is considered such by the propagandist" (ibid., p. 27).

[38] In a talk broadcast over Radio Singapore in 1961, Lee Kuan Yew voiced his desire To create "a democratic, non-Communist and socialist Malaya" *(The Battle for Merger, p.* 24). Some form of democratic socialism appears to be the best alternative for Lee Kuan Yew. An individualistic, young Harry Lee could not fit into any of the existing political parties of the early 1950s. On the one hand, his thinly veiled ambitions combined with the brash mannerisms of a young cocksure upstart would be rejected by many of the older party leaders. On the other hand, a powerless Harry Lee craved ultimate power and he looked for an alliance with people who could incontrovertibly demonstrate that they have the most potential power. He could then manipulate that power to his supreme advantage. Although he found a widespread power base in the communists and therefore colluded with them to form a new political party, Lee was not attracted to communism. He could not be so enticed. Communism was manifestly hierarchical and owed its loyalty to China. Lee has consistently shown that he would not accept orders from anyone and leaders from a technologically backward China would not be excepted, eqrcially since Lee is British trained and much more in tune with the dynamism of the West's economic, industrial and technological progress than with China's economic stagnation. He, in fact, could not speak Mandarin until later in life. If China were the final authority, it would also mean that Lee could be supplanted by a leader appointed by China who was more in tune with China's aspirations. There certainly were more such leaders on the scene. That Singapore is geographically situated in a predominantly Malay area is not of as much significance if Singapore were part of China.

From the economic standpoint, a semblance of democracy and some form of socialism suited Lee Kuan Yew. Ideological flexibility rather than purity is needed to transform Singapore into a technological city. Without upsetting the small Chinese or Indian businessmen too much, the PAP Government could launch forth into all manner of economic activity. It could turn the nation into one large enterprise. Lee as Singapore's No. 1 Boss could galvanize, revolutionize, and mold the young, pliable nation into Singapore, Inc.

will enable us eventually to move our neighbors, orthose of our neighbors who matter to us, in the right direction."[39]

Lee Kuan Yew is not the only person in Singapore whose life does not thrive on theoretical thrills. He mirrors the outlook of the majority of Chinese Singaporeans. This in part, furnishes an explanation for Singapore's economic success story. Shee Poon Kim rightly notes that "Western democracy is an alien product to Chinese-Singaporeans, whose main preoccupation is to make money . They are content to live with a government which protects their interests, whether it be democratic or not."[40] Except for those Chinese-educated Chinese who were momentarily captivated by Marxist ideology, Singaporean Chinese have shown far more concern over protecting their rice bowl than caring about the contents of their ideological bucket. They regard the breaking of their rice bowl as tragic whereas anyone could kick their ideological bucket for all they care. Lee Kuan Yew understands and reflects the Singaporean Chinese culture in his ideological pronouncements.

Democratic doctrines are also liberally interpreted. Lee Kuan Yew believes, in parliamentary democracy and its basic tenet, the one-man-one-vote principle. Nevertheless he also believes that "Western-type parliamentary democracy may have to be adjusted to fit the needs and requirements of Asian peoples."[41] Lee displays his political astuteness and manipulative inclinations in his ambiguous pronouncement His judgment appears at first glance to be most reasonable. It is designed to leave no room for disagreement. It would be foolhardy for any Singaporean politician or academic to argue against Lee's assertion that Western ideology or practices should not be imported without modification into an Asian nation. On the other hand, if a Westerner argues for it, he could be easily accused of being imperialistic and insensitive to nations and cultures toward which he has but substandard knowledge. Lee's equivocal contention is then a checkmate in the political game.

Whah however, does Lee Kuan Yew really mean? He is a firm believer of the one-man-one-vote principle when Singaporeans vote overwhelmingly for the PAP. The principle then becomes a vindication of the PAP's legislation, policies, programs, and detention without trial of dissenters. It authorizes the PAP to pursue its reign with a resounding mandate heard, it is hoped, around the world. Foreign investments would then pour into Singapore because of its political stability. On the other hand, Lee expresses melancholic uncertainty over the sanity of believing in such a Western concept as one-man-one-vote when a substantial number of Singaporeans vote against the

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[39] Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew,* p. 508.

[40] Shee Poon Kim, "The People's Action Party of Singapore 1954-1970: A Study in Survivalism of a Single-Dominant Party." Unpublished dissertation. Indiana University, 1971,p.l90.

[41] Josey, Lee *Kuan Yew,p.* 78. Lee defines "democratic" to mean "that there is some measure of popular will, of popular support; that, from time to time, as accurately as is possible with trying to find out what human beings in a large group want or feel or think, one tries to act in accordance with the wishes of the majority" (ibid., p. 78). In 1962 he expressed doubt over the one-man-one-vote system of government in Southeast Asia.

PAP.[42] Lee Kuan Yew is a realist who prefers good news and bristles with anger over bad news. No ideology or doctrine is sacrosanct.

At another level within the nation, the PAP Government's owns (either wholly or partially) hundreds of companies ranging from manufacturing to hotels, shipbuilding to housing, finance to transport. This situation has brought about the "distress of those who prefer either a free-for-all *laissez faire* situation—like that in Hongkong—or a complete socialist system like that in China."[43]

Ideology and ideas as may be expected, are not the only theoretical constructs that often suffer a quick demise within the nation Lee Kuan Yew built. Principles undergo a similar fate. An interpretive history of PAP ideology is necessary if some understanding of its past, present, and possibly future policies and actions are to be better understood. The democratic socialist element of the PAP was conceived and bom in a web of chicanery. Unlike their communist comrades who were motivated by ideology, the non-communist element in the PAP led by Lee Kuan Yew did not abide by too many principles during its formative years. In order to earn British confidence on the one hand and to retain the working support of communist sympathizers on the other, the PAP had to do that which is expedient and efficacious rather than abide by any doctrine. This has resulted, says Thomas Bellows, "in a PAP doctrinal tradition of flexibility and/or, a term more favored by its opponents, 'opportunism.'"[44]

Economic ventures, including trading, certainly fall within *la technique's "every* field of human activity." They clearly transcend ideology and principles in the case of the PAP. On the Vietnamese refugee problem, popularly known as "the Vietnamese Boat People," Minister for Foreign Affairs S. Rajaratnam rightly excoriated the Vietnamese government over its inhuman treatment of the ethnically Chinese Vietnamese. They were sent out of Vietnam in "floating coffins."[45] He noted that the Vietnamese government's deliberate policy of sending out their Boat People on "so monumental a scale...is better than (Hitler's) gas chambers." He says, "The Vietnamese move them into the open sea. It cost them nothing and they get money for the boats."[46] While

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[42] Lee Kuan Yew wanted to tinker with the one-man-one-vote principle immediately after the 1984general election when a massive 12.6 percent of Singaporeans voted against the PAP when compared to the previous election. Lee had "expressed his deep concern about the wild excesses and freak results that may come from the one-man-one-vote system" and was "considering proposals for constitutional changes to prevent this" (Straits Times, January 1,1985, p. 1) First Deputy Prime Minister-designate Goh Chok Tong, to his credit, pleaded with Lee to leave the system alone.

[43] Lee Soo Ann, 'Trying to be Like Others" in *Far Eastern Economic Review,* August 6,1976, p.36.

[44] *The People's Action Party of Singapore: Emergence of a Dominant Party System* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph Series No. 14,1970), p. 31.

[45] "Vietnam's Designs," a speech given at the Twelfth Asian Ministerial Meeting at Bali, Indonesia on June 28, 1979, p. 10 in *Speeches: A Monthly Collection of Ministerial Speeches,* (Singapore: Ministry of Culture), July 1979. Earlier in the year, Rajaratnam had given a shorter version of the speech, "Man's Inhumanity to Man," at the Singapore Red Cross Society's 30th anniversary dinner on February 17 (ibid., March 1979).

[46] "Vietnam's Designs," p. 16

Rajaratnam lashed out so eloquently and vociferously in public for the media's benefit at the watery holocaust perpetrated by Vietnam, Singapore quietly and privately continued its lucrative trade with the villainous Vietnam. Hence, while the Vietnamese Boat People drifted southward in their "floating coffins," a steady stream of exports was steered resolutely northwards to Vietnam. The exports, in fact, actually increased with the war of words[47]: 1976 (S$39 million); 1977 (SS63 million); 1978 (S$91 million); 1979 (S$ 109 million); and reached a peak in 1985 of S$284 million[48]

On the one hand, such an action seemed excessively unprincipled. If the PAP were so concerned over the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Chinese Vietnamese (as it seems to be, and Singapore is seventy-six percent Chinese), then it would be consistent of the PAP if it were to stop trading with such a despicable and unconscionable nation. PAP words, however, did not match PAP action. On the other hand, it is a most glaring contradiction in the PAP's adamant and vociferous ideological stand against communism.[49] Accommodation of such blatant incongruities at such a fundamental level may be made through an understanding of Lee Kuan Yew's pragmatic outlook or, more pertinently, his acquiescence to the dictates of tyrannical technique. The god of economic progress is willing to trade with the devil himself.

Trial by Jury an Inefficient Method

Contemporary man, engulfed by the technological state, "needs the conviction that his government is not only efficient but just."[50] Current political doctrine in a government that operates on the basis of technical necessities as such functions as a "rationalizing mechanism for justifying the state and its actions."[51] One formidable institution that could justify state actions is the judiciary. Ellul regrets, however, that "efficiency is a fact and justice a slogan."[52]

A laissez faire economic approach that smacked of inefficiency and a lack of centralization was not the only British practice to be ditched by the PAP Government. Trial by jury suffered a similar fate. In its initial move, soon after it gained power in 1959, the Legislative Assembly passed a bill proposed by the PAP Government that limited trial by jury to capital offenses, or where the Yang di-Pertuan Negara granted his consent.[53] Then came the PAP's electoral victory in 1968 where not a single opposition member was elected. It is a victory which "marked a potentially dangerous voluntary

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[47] This is a major type of war in which the battle-scarred PAP has excelled.

[48] *Singapore Trade Statistics: Imports and Exports,* Vol. HI, No. 2, July to December 1977; Vol. V, No. 2, July to December 1979; Vol. VI, No. 12, December 1985. Singapore: Department of Statistics.

[49] Such statistics are embarrassing, if not condemnatory. They are not given in the more popular yearly *Singapore: Facts and Pictures.* But, as though in realization of this baffling incongruity, Vietnam disappeared fromtheSmgqpone *Trade Statistics: Imports and Exports* in 1986. This phenomenon—a manipulation of statistics, of truth and falsehood—however, belongs to the next chapter.

[50] *The Technological Society,* p. 282.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] *Report ofthe SelectCommittee on the Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Bill* Pari 8 of 1969, p. A6 quoted in Chan Heng Chee, A *Sensation of Independence,* pp. 232-233.

abdication of power by the electorate into the hands of one political group, threatening the isolation of government and encouraging an arrogance of power."[54] This power was exercised the following year when the PAP Government abolished "trials by jury with a court consisting of three High Court judges."[55] A British institution of more than a century was put to death some ten years after the PAP acquired power. Chan Heng Chee notes that the PAP Government was dissatisfied over "what it saw as frequent acquittals of persons even where evidence of guilt was ample." Not surprisingly, the PAP Government concluded that "laymen could not be relied upon for the administration of justice."[56] Only the judicial elite could administer justice. Protests from the Bar Council, and in particular from David Marshall, fell on deaf PAP ears. They were, however, expected to be deaf. More ominously, the protests fell on deaf Singaporean ears. On the one hand, the vast majority of Singaporeans were culturally not used to hearing debates about esoteric issues like justice and therefore failed to comprehend its relevance. On the other hand, the PAP Government's propaganda machine has placed high-quality technological earplugs on them.

Ellul distinguishes between justice and judicial technique. Justice has an elusive or unpredictable element; it is not a thing which can be grasped or fixed. He states, "If one pursues genuine justice (and not some automatism or egalitarianism), one never knows where one will end."[57] He adds that justice, moreover, does not function to serve the state. It is not only independent of the state, it even claims the right to judge the state. This situation is permitted to exist only where tire power of the state is limited or its jurists are not exclusively technical rationalists who champion efficient results. Judicial technique does not flourish under conditions where it cannot function rationally.

In contrast, the technician of the law views all law as depending on efficiency. Application of the law is the technician's sole concern. Such application "no longer arises from popular adhesion to it but from the complex of mechanisms which, by means of artifice and reason, adjust behavior to rule."[58] Ellul presents two aspects of the technical creation of the law. First, the judicial element is separated from the law. The problem of justice is no longer its concern; it is commissioned to apply the law, not judge the law. It is not concerned with pursuing justice; its chief responsibility is the mechanical application of the laws. It is not a guardian of justice but an inflexible defender of bureaucratic detail. Ellul therefore says that the role is best fulfilled by a technician rather than a philosopher or a person with a sense of justice. A judge seeking true justice within such a state in fact comes to grief. He faces demotion or is assigned to a desk job where he cannot administer justice in the courts. As for the technician

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[54] Turnbull, *A History of Singapore* 1819-1975 (Kuala Lumpur Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 324.

[55] Chan Heng Chee, *A Sensation of Independence: A Political Biography of David Marshall* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 233

[56] Ibid.

[57] *The Technological Society,* pp. 291-292.

[58] Ibid., p. 294.

of the law, all he needs is an understanding of the principles of the technique, the rules of interpretation, the legal terminology, and the ways of deducing consequences and finding solutions. He contends that "judicial technique implies that bureaucracy cannot be burdened any longer with justice" and that "law ensures order instead of justice."[59] A judge who understands this state of affairs in a technological system and is willing to abide by it is assured of promotion within the system.

Ellul states that the technician "dreads above all else the arbitrary, the personal, and the fortuitous."[60] He continues:

The technician is the great enemy of chance; he finds the personal element insupportable.For that reason he finds it advisable to enclose the judge or the administrator in a tighter and tighter technical network, more and more hedged about with legal prescriptions, in such a way that the citizen will understand exactly where he is heading and just what consequences are to be expected.[61]

Lee Kuan Yew takes no chances with chance. Nothing, it would appear, is impossible in the technological city he has built

Another troubling dimension of the Singapore judicial system surfaced during the slander trial against opposition Worker's Party leader IB. Jeyaretnam. Keeping his promise to pursue any and all defamatory remarks made against him,[62] Lee Kuan Yew sued Jeyaretnam for slander over comments the latter made in an election rally in August 1988. Jeyaret-nam's statements (a policeman testified that he was instructed to tape the opposition's election rallies[63]) concerned the suicide of PAP politician Teh Cheang Wan, the minister of national development at the time of his death on December 14, 1986. Teh was subsequently found to be guilty of accepting bribes. Lee Kuan Yew claimed that Jeyaretnam's remarks implied that he was instrumental in persuading Teh to commit suicide so that a full investigation into allegations of corruption might be avoided. Jeyaretnam denied this charge. He said he was merely questioning the PAP Government's claim of being honest and. open. Teh had written a letter to Lee Kuan Yew the day before his death apologizing for his actions and ended with "I

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[59] Ibid., pp. 295-296.

[60] Ibid., pp. 297-298.

[61] Ibid., p. 298.

[62] Suing is Lee Kuan Yew's latest weapon in his vast arsenal against those who oppose or disagree with his policies. This strategy attempts to hit where Lee Kuan Yew believes will hurt most in Singapore society: the bank balance. He has promised those who would follow him riches. Conversely, he wishes to reduce those who would oppose him to rags. This is the latest riches-to-rags or rags-to-riches story in Singapore.

[63] This is another instance of the PAP Government's pervasive presence. Big Brother, it may be said, hears all with the aid of a technological hearing device: the tape recorder. In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* Winston was well aware that although it was safer in the country than in London because of the absence of the ubiquitous telescreens, "there was always the danger of concealed microphones by which your voice might be picked up and recognized" (Har-mondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1954, p. 97). In Singapore, while there were rural areas before the coming of the PAP, the "country" has since virtually vanished. Hearing and seeing devices, human and technological, are truly here, there, and everywhere.

would accept any decision which you may want to make."[64] He then took an overdose of Amytal, a drug not available over the counter.[65]

A significant feature of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's case against Jeyaretnam arose when the trial began on July 2, 1990

with the defense asking the presiding judge, Lai Kew Chai, to disqualify himself from hearing the case because he had found Jeyaretnam guilty of fraud in 1986, the original conviction that led to him losing his parliamentary seat and his right to practice law.

The defense also drew attention to the fact that Lai had once worked for Lee & Lee, a firm founded by the prime minister. Even Lee's counsel was prepared to get another judge, but Lai ruled that he would hear the case, saying: "No right-thinking people will think and go away thinking that I will be biased in this case."[66]

Beyond the webs spun by Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP Government, another remarkably elaborate and intricate web of relationships exists in a small state like Singapore. These relationships extend far beyond blood ties. They expand and lengthen to include business bonds, old boys' connections, plaintiff-judge links. To the uninitiated, this is but an invisible web. To the well-informed, it is a formidable web. To the well-connected, it presents many an opportunity to "pull strings."[67] To the unconnected, they have to be careful how they fly if they wish to continue to soar in Singapore skies. There is obviously a danger of being treated like a fly. Surely a reasonable doubt will arise in the minds of right-thinking people concerning the judgments of judges who are part of the web.[68]

Trial by jury was unceremoniously put on trial. It was first convicted of inefficiency and then sentenced to death in a court where Lee Kuan Yew was both judge and jury. He then leaves others to execute the final and somewhat less cerebral component of the judicial process. The technological city of Singapore has no place for inefficient citizens in its system of justice. Inefficiency means that those who are accused by the state of robbing the nation of its political stability are not punished the way the PAP Government deems appropriate. Now, a rather well-connected and well-informed judiciary which forms part of the Singapore elite executes PAP legislation. Justice is one of the PAP's slogans. In its relentless pursuit of efficiency, Ellul's contention that justice may well have truly become a slogan has merit.

One Language, One People

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[64] *Far Eastern Economic Review,* July 19,1990,p. 13.

[65] In his electioneering, Jeyaretnam had also complained that no inquiry was conducted into how Teh had managed to obtain the drug. Lee Kuan Yew alleged that Jeyaretnam's complaint implied that he had supplied the drug to Teh and encouraged him to commit suicide.

[66] *FarEastem Economic Review,* July 19,1990,p. 13. (Lee'swife is also a lawyer.) The case ended on July 6, 1990 with judgment reserved.

[67] While bribery is anathema to the PAP, the exercise of such influence by those in power is not openly frowned upon and is certainly a way of negotiating government bureaucracy with ease.

[68] Since trial by jury was abolished, the safeguard of enlisting the possibly impartial judgments of those who are not part of the elaborate web is no longer a possibility.

Civilizations have developed differently in the past, according to regions, nations, and continents. "Today," says Ellul, "all peoples follow the same road and the same impulse" as many non-Western nations have come to embrace Western technique."[69] While these countries are not at the same point in their industrial or technological development, they are located at various points along the same trajectory. As a result of this uniformity he consequently maintains that "technique is the destroyer of social groups, of communities (whatever their kind), and of human relations."[70] The homogenizing tendency of technique has a significant impact on pluralism. It often eliminates it. This effect is becoming evident in Singapore in at least one sphere as the PAP Government works hard to eliminate the dialects spoken by Chinese Singaporeans.

Singapore before the coming of the PAP was a plural society. Besides the Europeans, three major ethnic groups flourished in the British colony, namely, the Chinese, Malays, and Indians. Each group had its distinctive culture and subcultures.[71] Since the PAP came to power in 1959, however, "extensive de-pluralization has begun either conscious^ engineered by the government or evolved unplanned." The former is easy to document; the latter taxes one's credibility.

Language, in a multi-lingual society, is often a sensitive issue. It has explosive potentials if one ethnic group attempts to promote its language to the exclusion of the others. This situation could be further complicated in a colonial setting, especially if the colonial power is on the decline. Elected into the Legislative Assembly and wearing the undersized shoes of an opposition member, Lee Kuan Yew spoke adamantly against the policy of the fledgling Singapore government's encouragement to use the English language in education in an era when Singapore's school system was still multi-lingual in nature. Addressing the Legislative Assembly on April 12, 1956 he said that it was appropriate that someone like him who was English-educated should oppose the policy. He explained that every time he spoke the English language

there is a sense—I would not say of humiliation—but definitely of inadequacy, that I have not the same facility and control over my own language. That is something you must understand, or you will not understand what is happening in Asia... I was sent to an English school to equip me for an English university in order that I could then

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[69] *The Technological Society,* p. 117.

[70] Ibid., p. 126.

[71] Although conveniently classified as one ethnic group (and each appears to be homogeneous to the uninitiated), plurality reigns within each of the three major ethnic groups. The Chinese are divided largely along dialect lines since one Chinese speaking a particular dialect is often totally incomprehensible to another Chinese speaking a different dialect The five major dialect groups are Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hainanese, and Hakka. The smaller dialect groups include Foochow, Henghua, Hokchia, and Kwongsai. Variations in social customs and religious beliefs of these dialect groups which come from different regions in China also contribute to the presence of ethnic subcultures.

Cultural variations that arise because of differences in their regional origins are similarly evident with the Malays and Indians. The Malays consist chiefly of the Riau Malays, Javanese, Boyanese, Bugis, and Banjarese. The Indians consist mainly of the Tamils, Sikhs, Malayalis, Punjabis, Bengalis, and Gujeratis.

be an educated man—the equal of any Englishman—the model of perfection! I do not know how far they have succeeded in that...When I read Nehru—and I read a lot of Nehru—I understood him when he said: *1 cry when I think that I cannot speak my own mother tongue as well as I can speak the English language.[72] I am a less emotional man. I do not usually cry, or tear my hair, or tear paper, or tear my shirt off, but that does not mean that I feel any the less strongly about it My son is not going to an English school...! hope, of course, that he will know enough English to converse with his father on matters other than the weather.[73]

Lee Kuan Yew has used Nehru's sentiment to great advantage. It all sounds so eminently reasonable. Counter arguments would not be advisable in a period when nationalist emotions and anti-colonialist feelings were riding high. Robert Gamer, however, notes that Lee Kuan Y ew "has always used the public platform as an effective means of exposing his enemies' unreasonableness."[74] Gamer's use of the term "enemies" has to be defined broadly. In this instance, he was referring, in part, to a Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce's request He writes that on October2,1965, "with a bitterly worded, heavily publicized statement, he [Lee Kuan Yew] indicated to the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, which had asked that Chinese be an official language, that he has no truck with those who "assume heroic postures on behalf of the Chinese language."[75] The Chinese Chamber of Commerce erred.[76] It should have written the letter to Lee Kuan Yew ten years ago when he had waxed so eloquently in support of his mother tongue—except that he was then a minority voice in the Legislative Assembly.

The Chinese language issue illustrates the contention that diversity dies a despondent death at the hands of technique, a homogenizing agent of tyrannical proportions.

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[72] Chrew Seen Kong, "Ethnicity and National Integration: The Evolution of a Multi-ethnic Society" in *Singapore Development Policies and Trends, p. 61.*

[73] Josey, Lee Kuan Yew, p. 64. Lee Kuan Yew kept his word-nn a very limited fashion. His son, Hsien Loong (made deputy prime minister in November 1990), did not start his formal schooling in an English school. However, not only did Hsien Loong graduate from Cambridge University, England, Lee Kuan Yew was also to dismantle the one and only Chinese university in Singapore when he became prime minister. As a coup de grace, all schools in Singapore now use the English language as their first language of instruction. It is not efficient to have schools using Malay, Mandarin, or Tamil as the primary medium of instruction.

[74] "The Lee Kuan Yew Style," in *Far Eastern Economic Review,* November 11,1965, p. 287.

[75] Ibid.

[76] It should be noted that Lee Kuan Yew's treatment of non-PAP Singapore leaders is fairly even-handed because control has to be exercised over the motley races. Just the day before his reply, Lee Kuan Yew had summoned the editors of the Malay-language paper, *Utusan Melayu,* to warn them against printing further inflammatory materials. Lee Kuan Yew had barely emerged from the debacle of seeing Singapore being expelled from Malaysia. As the prime minister of a newly-independent nation, he again displayed his extraordinarily adversarial approach to Singaporeans who either disagree with him or suggest any policy that is counter to what he has articulated. Gamer refers to them as "verbal bludgeonings" (ibid., p. 287). They may be considered a necessary tool in order to tying about such a fundamental change as a switch in one's mother tongue.

Chinese immigrants who settled in Singapore had come from southern China and had brought with them a rich diversity of as many as twelve Chinese dialects. Each Chinese dialect may be as different as unrelated languages and each has its own store of aphorisms, and each dialect group even has its distinctive customs and multifaceted ways of cooking. Twenty years after the PAP Government assumed control of Singapore these dialects still flourished. Lee Kuan Yew, however, pronounced the inefficiency of maintaining such dialects. At the opening ceremony of the "Promote the Use of Mandarin" Campaign on September 7, 1979, he referred to surveys conducted a few months earlier on the languages spoken on the buses and in the hawker centers. He notes that the surveys,

disclose how widespread and dominant dialects are. Nevertheless, *within five years,* once parents have decided that their children's learning load must be lessened by dropping dialect and concentrating on English-Mandarin, we can dramatically alter the language environment. Students will hear and speak Mandarin in the streets, on the buses, in the shops, in the hawkers centres. If, however, the majority of parents secretly believe they can have English-Mandarin plus dialect for their children, then administrative action will not be wholly successful because administrative action cannot reach the home where dialects, already entrenched, will prevail.[77]

Chinese dialects, freely used in China for centuries and in Singapore ever since its founding and left to develop undisturbed by the British, Japanese, and Malaysians were, under Lee Kuan Yew, to wither, if not meet their end. As he ominously pronounced, the language environment was to undergo dramatic alteration "within five years." Singapore has been called "Instant Asia." Qne more "instant" may now be added for this is an instance of instant language.

Technique operates at a rational level, and Lee Kuan Yew often projects tire image that he is more than rational and pragmatic. He couched the language issue in terms of the English-Mandarin or English dialect dilemma for Chinese Singaporean students. He points out that English-educated Chinese children speak a Chinese dialect in their home whereas they learn English and Mandarin in school. The results of twenty years of bilingual teaching showed that not more than twelve percent of students could cope with English, and two Chinese dialects. Hence the majority spoke English and their parents' Chinese dialect. What Lee considered appalling was that even those who showed proficiency in Mandarin after twelve years of bilingual schooling lose their fluency when they attended overseas universities. He was also dissatisfied with the

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[77] "English-Mandarin or English-dialect?" in *Speeches: A Monthly Collection (/Ministerial Speeches,* October 1979, p. 2 (emphasis added). Earlier, Lee Kuan Yew pronounced that the "problem of many dialects cannot be solved in four to five years." He says: "It will take 10-20 years or longer" ("Mandarin: Lingua Franca for Chinese Singaporeans" in *Speeches: A Monthly Collection of Ministerial Speeches,* April 1978, p. 7). He failed to state why, within the grace of six months (tire first speech was given on March 4,1978 and the second on September 7,1979), there was the drastic reduction in the time period over as fundamental an issue as a linguistic transformation. It is plausible that the governmental machinery, well versed in propaganda, had worked out a rigorous timetable in between.

thought that if the use of dialects was left uncontrolled by the PAP Government, English would become the common language between Chinese of different dialects.[78]

In making the use of Chinese dialects an issue[79] that was virtually non-existent until then[80], Lee Kuan Yew cleverly fingered the Chinese parents and placed the burden of change on them. What he failed to articulate, for expedient reasons, was that Chinese students spoke dialect in their home because their mothers and fathers had a particular subcultural and linguistic heritage. It wasn't that parents wished to subject their children to a linguistic nightmare. They were giving voice to that legacy of a diverse heritage, of particular regional ancestral roots for China is not as small a small country as Singapore. Efficiency, however, is passionless and has little patience with legacies that it considers outmoded or inefficient. Lee Kuan Yew argued from a common sense standpoint that the daily use of Mandarin gave fluency. Hence, if parents "allow, or worse want, their children to speak dialects, then their children will find their work in school very burdensome."[81] Hence the alternative: "actively encourage your children to speak Mandarin in place of dialect."[82] He knew the audience he was addressing and he knew how to manipulate it. Chinese parents hold the earning of good grades in school in very high regard for top grades mean top schools, fat salaries, high socio-economic status. An appeal to ensure that their children obtain good results is one that will not go unheeded. The unspoken sacrifice on the altar of the God of Good Grades would be

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[78] Lee's contention is not adequately substantiated by the very surveys which he ordered (ibid., pp. 3-5). Chinese bus passengers, for instance, spoke to Chinese conductors in Hokkien 75 percent of the time. (Teochew: 7 percent; Cantonese: 5.2 percent; and other dialects: 1 percent; adding to 882 percent. Mandarin was used only 3.7 percent; English 7 percent; and Malay 12 percent) The distribution of dialect groups in Singapore is: 42.2 percent Hokkien; 22.3 percent Teochew, 17 percent Cantonese; and 18.5 percent other dialects. If the surveys were representative, it could well be concluded that Hokkien is a predominant dialect spoken in Singapore, one that is spoken even by those who are not in that dialect group.

[79] In an earlier speech, Lee noted that the British "left all dialects alone," but the PAP Government "has a responsibility to solve this problem" ("Mandarin: Lingua Franca for Chinese Singaporeans," pp. 67). Lee Kuan Yew again shows his agenda-setting role. His eyes tend to see "problems" where other eyes have not Once put into motion, efficiency colors the eyes of its adherent and he sees problems where they have not previously existed. Efficiency has an autonomous quality to it

[80] Agenda-setting is not only a prerogative that Lee Kuan Yew jealously guards, he also controls the discussion and directs it along a channel he has created.

[81] "English-Mandarin or English-dialect?", p. I.

[82] Ibid. In this speech, Lee stressed that very few Chinese students could cope with English, Mandarin, and a Chinese dialect Hence the need to start the use Mandarin and curb the use of the dialect in the homes so that Mandarin will become a living language. In an earlier speech, he said, "If you speak 22 dialects, never fear that your child will lose the dialect you spoke to him as a child... He will speak it because he learnt it from birth" ("Mandarin: Lingua Franca for Chinese Singaporeans," p. 6). Lee's reassuring words, however, contradicts his very contention that a Chinese student is unable to handle English, Mandarin, and a dialect His argument that there is "no danger of dialects being killed" is empty political rhetoric. It is because dialect is spoken at home that fire learning of Mandarin is a failure. If Mandarin is to supplant the use of the Chinese student's mother tongue, the latter will be killed. This is another instance of death in a technological society.

great. It would mean death to the family dialect.[83] Yet many Chinese parents continue to be willing to sacrifice for their children who in turn are to look after them in their old age.

Since educating non-Mandarin-speaking parents to speak Mandarin would pose a problem, Lee Kuan Yew argued that if they could speak dialect, it was not difficult to speak Mandarin. Many Chinese government workers and those who needed a government license to work also speak dialect. Nevertheless since the PAP Government has control over their livelihood, the treatment was to be different for these other categories of Singaporeans. He says:

Once it is clear to the government that parents want their children to learn and to use Mandarin, not dialects, the government will take administrative action to support their decision. All government officers, including those in hospitals and clinics, and especially those in manning counters, will be instructed to speak Mandarin except to the old, those over sixty. All Chinese taxi-drivers, bus conductors, and hawkers, can and will berequiredto pass an oral Mandarin test, orto attend Mandarin classes to make them adequate and competent to understand and speak Mandarin to their customers.[84]

It does not take much imagination to realize that a sizable proportion of those parents belong to one of the above categories of government employees or in occupations that are licensed by the PAP Government Lee KuanYew concludes, "This is the stark choice—English-Mandarin, or English-dialect Logically, the decision is obvious. Emotionally, the choice is painful."[85] Emotion, however, within the PAP Government's scheme of things is a commodity that is of no economic consequence and to be discarded like a filthy rag. Hence, even non-Mandarin-speaking Chinese over sixty, so nicely, piously, and what appeared to be so thoughtfully spared from having to speak Mandarin in their encounters with government employees by an apparently sensitive prime minister, were not spared linguistic pain in the closing days of their lives. Popular television and radio programs in Teochew, Hokkien, Cantonese or some other Chinese dialect were dubbed in Mandarin on orders from the PAP Government. There was no special, sentimental or Confucian provision for the elderly, those over sixty. They were to end their days in their homeland deprived by their own Chinese-dominated

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[83] Lee gave Taiwan as an illustrious example to support his argument that there is "no danger of dialects being killed." He points outthat in Taiwan, "80 per cent of the radio and television programmes are in Mandarin. Hokkien is still used by the older generation when speaking to the younger generation. But young people have bigger vocabularies in Mandarin, over 3,000 words, and are fluent in it To speak to their parents, the young need a smaller vocabulary" ("Mandarin: Lingua Franca for Chinese Singaporeans," p. 6). Taiwan seems the perfect illustration to sooth any linguistic misgivings among the elderly. Lee, however, failed to mention that Taiwanese are not particularly proficient in English. Taiwan, in fact, substantiates his original observation that children cannot proficiently handle English, Mandarin, and a dialect Taiwan is less than the ideal that Lee would have Singaporeans believe. It is a spurious illustration. Unless analyzed, Lee's rational thoughts always have a very persuasive appeal.

[84] Ibid., pp. 1-2

[85] Ibid., p. 2.

government of their own mother tongue. When Lee Kuan Yew spoke of dramatically altering the language environment, he was not really waiting for the decision of parents. It was merely political rhetoric. Nor was he speaking of anything other than total transformation. What was distinctively and uniquely Singaporean—the rich diversity of Chinese dialects[86] and their individual store of wisdom concentrated in a small island nation—is "within five years." Lee Kuan Yew and the principle of technique do not grant longevity to diversity. The PAP Government is moreover unlikely to mourn its premature death through the erection of a tombstone to mark its burial. If anything, it will celebrate its death with Chinese tea.

One Party, One Power, One Provider of Security

The technological milieu has built a new altar at which humanity may worship. "Progress," says Ellul, "has become a key term in modem religion."[87] It is a secular god that demands total veneration from its devotees. Accepting what technological progress makes possible and necessary does not lead to a triumph of freedom. On the contrary it means the "triumph of bondage" and we become "slaves of progress."[88] He regrets that the "mad passion for progress stays with us, though we can already taste the bitterness of its fruits."[89] Ellul, however, holds the view that progress is a false god. He refers to "false gods" as "the kind we set up as guardians over our lives."[90] In very many ways the PAP Government has attempted to be the guardian of the nations[91] in its relentless drive to be the one party, the one power, and the one provider of security for those Singaporeans who would worship it, in part, at the ballot box.

Removing all existing potential opposition to its autocratic rule is only one of the PAP Government's basic objectives. An even more fundamental task of the PAP ever since it came into power has been to ensure that no organization, however puny, could

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[86] Harvey Stockwin notes that "Hongkong is overwhelmingly Cantonese, while the Manila Chinese community is overwhelmingly Hokkien. But even among the Chinese community as a whole Singapore Hokkiens only account for 42.2% of the total and only 32.3% of the overall population. The Cantonese were the second largest community prior to World War II, but since then they have been overtaken by the Teochews, the largest single group among the Chinese in Bangkok" ("The Singapore Connection" in *Far Eastern Economic Review,* August 6, 1976, p. 42). The governments in these other countries within Southeast Asia or Asia did not consider it necessary to intervene in an authoritarian fashion to alter the linguistic environment The PAP Government—in pursuit of efficiency or enslaved by efficiency—can do no other.

[87] *What I Believe,* p. 4.

[88] Ibid., p. 69.

[89] *Living Faith: Belief and Doubt in a Perilous World,* trans. Peter Heinegg (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 226.

[90] Ibid., p. 189.

[91] Lee has certainly appointed himself guardian of Singapore's foreign reserves. A responsibility of the newly created executive president of Singapore is that he may defend them. Lee does not trust his handpicked and groomed profegSs to look after the foreign reserves as he is fearful that his successors may squander them.

grow to challenge its power. Whether it is a political organization or otherwise is immaterial to the PAP. Power structures are in-built into all organizations and a PAP ambition is to attack all organized structures so that it will emerge as the party in which all power of any national consequence resides. Of equal import, a PAP's aim may be said to be its desire to project itself as the nation's breadwinner. Being the sole provider of economic security for every family enhances its sense of self-importance and indispensability. It gives it an aura of fatherly omnipotence. The significance of this role is heightened in a nation where filial piety is practiced by the dominant culture. In order to achieve this objective the PAP Government has either to destroy all existing organizational providers of security or to ensure that they remain anemic. An even more foundational approach by the PAP Government is to ensure that an organization— local or foreign—seeking incorporation in Singapore does not get authorization to incorporate if there is even the faintest hint that it could pose any manner of threat to the PAP Government.

Given such an understanding, one of the functions of an organization like the People's Association is that it is not only to strengthen PAP control over local community life, but also to "reduce the influence of the many non-govemment bodies which evolved during colonial times to provide social, economic, or cultural security to the population."[92] Established in 1960 and directly controlled by Lee Kuan Yew as chairman, the People's Association was used as a political and social tool to counter "the great political influence wielded by Chinese guilds, clan associations, old boys' associations, and Chinese middle school unions."[93] Lee Kuan Yew's desire to reduce the influence of these organizations or "brokers" is implied when he referred to them in *a* speech on April 25,1960:

In the past, the Government was something distinct and separate. The people and their activities were one entity on the ground, and the Government and the administration were something separate, over and above, giving orders downwards. In between were the 'brokers' who acted as middlemen between the Government and the people. These were the committees of social, cultural, clan and other organizations acting as buffers between the colonial administrators and the people, making requests to the Government, with Government either responding to or rejecting these requests. In the past, dissatisfaction first grew on the ground, and when the people were acutely discontented they went to cultural organizations or clan associations who acted as 'brokers', representing the people in the area and making representations to the Government...

It is necessary to keep in constant touch with the people, not only to know what their grievances are, but also to conduct and organize them and inculcate in them social qualities which will be useful in the building up of our society. In the present

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[92] Iain Buchanan, *Singapore in Southeast Asia: An Economic and Political Appraisal (London:.* Bell and Sons Ltd., 1972), p. 284.

[93] Ibid.

phase of political development it will be easier to do this at a non-Government level. *For* this reason we have decided to set up the People's Association.[94]

Lee Kuan Yew's apparent intent is to bypass these "brokers" with the implication that under the new regime (by virtue of its being national) does not need such brokers. The PAP Government moreover seemed to desire direct contact with the people. It appears to be a magnanimous or salutary gesture on the part of the PAP Government A much more plausible objective is to emasculate if not eradicate the residual powers of these organizations so that there will be only one power and provider of security in the nation. All persons in need of help would have to seek out the PAP Government and its evergrowing and ever-encroaching structures. It removes all secondary crutches that a person could look for when in trouble. At the communication level, the PAP Government does not want "opinion leaders" in such non-governmental organizations to interpret government policy. It wants to monopolize this interpretive function so that only the authorized version of its commandments is transmitted. It could also discredit any other interpreter. Such a course of action is effective in removing a source of potential impediment to the PAP Government's manipulation of the people.

Traditional religion is moreover secularized. John Clam-mer stresses that "as religion retreats further and further from attempting to assert its definition of reality, so the secular view is allowed to prevail."[95] He maintains that the effects of secularization are subtle. This is because religion in Singapore has flourished in the climate of religious pluralism. He contends that a major effect of secularization is that "many individuals of a religious persuasion are actually indistinguishable in most respects from their non-religious neighbors" because "they in practice allow the secular world to define the worldview that they largely share—and to set its priorities as being the 'real' ones, and these priorities, as it so happens, are mainly materialistic ones."[96] The PAP Government, as provider of security, has usuiped a function that used to be that furnished by religion. What is tragic is that this usurpation has been accepted by docile religious leaders who should know better than their non-religious counterparts.

In the technological city, however, the greatest religious power is the ruling government. Hence the PAP, as creator of independent Singapore, has made a significant effort to usurp this very function. As Thomas Bellows rightly observes of the situation in the mid-to late-1960s, "In recent years, Singaporeans have increasingly come to regard their government as the institution in society most responsible for their material wellbeing."[97] Even millionaires, according to Lee Kuan Yew, have a strong stake in ensuring that the PAP Government remains a provider of economic security. In a speech

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[94] Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew, p.* 144. The People's Association that Lee Kuan Yew referred to as a "non-Go vemment" organization made use of government funds as well as reported directly to Lee Kuan Yew as its chairman. To the vast majority of Singaporeans, with apparently the exception of Lee Kuan Yew, the People's Association is part of the PAP colossal governmental machinery.

[95] *Singapore: Ideology, Society, Culture* (Singapore: Chopmen Publishers, 1985), p. 54.

[96] Ibid.

[97] *The People's Action Party of Singapore: Emergence of a Dominant Party System,* p. 101.

on January 2, 1965, he says, **"You can be the world's biggest millionaire. But if the country collapses you are in trouble."**[98] The twin emphasis on the fragility of wealth and of the nation is not without purpose. It requires obedience or acquiescence from the people and the concomitant exercise of ever-increasing authority on the part of the PAP Government to safeguard the accumulation of wealth. It is a situation where one sells one's democratic birthright for a bowl of rice. Or, many bowls, some would argue.

The PAP Government, however, is not a faceless institution. At its head is Lee Kuan Yew. A PAP politician told Raj Vasil that "it is one-man-rule in Singapore. All power and decision-making is concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister. He is supreme and he calls all the shots." The politician elaborates: "The normal checks on executive power which operate in parliamentary democracies do not exist in Singapore. The institutions exist, such as the Parliament and the party, but they exercise little control over the Prime Minister."[99]

The confidence of PAP politicians in Lee Kuan Yew would seem to be practically absolute. One senior-ranking second-generation PAP politician says, "I am Minister of... In the night when I sleep, I sleep well knowing that if something goes terribly wrong, the Prime Minister is there to take care of the situation. Surely if something goes wrong my head would get chopped, but no harm would come to Singapore as the Prime Minister is bound to take necessary action to save the situation. This same feeling is held by other ministers of the second generation."[100] Vasil observes that Lee Kuan Yew "is acknowledged as the embodiment of the party and the government and the person who provides and sustains the credibility of the government as a performer." He adds that Lee Kuan Yew is "the creator of modem Singapore."[101] These PAP politicians have

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[98] *The Mirror,* January 10,1966, p. 7 (original emphasis). Enright had observed the pride in Lee's remarks to the British Labour Party rally at Scarborough on October 1,1967 when the prime minister described Singapore thus: "I do not pretend that we are an idyllic socialist community in South-East Asia. We still have the highest number of millionaires per ten thousand of population in South Asia. But we are one of a few places in Asia where there are no beggars, where nobody, old or young, dies of neglect and starvation. True, they are modest achievements but none the less precious to us" *(Memoirs of a Mendicant Professor, p.* 194). Lee Kuan Yew underscores the debt that wealthy Singaporeans owe him. While there are some grounds for maintaining that nobody dies of neglect in Singapore (unless the person is terminally ill and a precious hospital bed is not allocated for a person who has outlived his usefulness), many are dying for a chance to be neglected by the PAP Government's deluge of directives and its army of watchful enforcers.

[99] *Governing Singapore: Interviews with the New Leaders,* p. 160. While the politician qualified his remarks by stating that, in practice, Lee Kuan Yew consults extensively with government departments as well as those in the professions and private industry before making his decisions, it does not vitiate the widespread belief that one man rules the nation. In this light a reasonable doubt is likely to arise in the minds of some people as to whether the judiciary exercises any control over the powers and prerogatives of a prime minister during his years of constantly enhanced powers. The check-and-balance role so crucial in a democracy falls into a dark, doubtful domain in Singapore.

[100] Ibid.,p. 161.

[101] Ibid., p. 155.

been well trained to look upon themselves as nothing and the creator of Singapore as everything. The creator is all knowing and all powerful, and he demands sacrifices of freedom and privacy as well as human sacrifices when the occasion warrants it. Until they rebel, those closest to him are the very ones most obedient to the creator.

Summary

In a speech at the White House on October 17,1967 during Lyndon Johnson's presidency, Lee Kuan Yew expresses this striking sentiment: "We in Singapore, like others, want to build this brave new world of modem science and technology, and the great life that they can provide when these disciplines are applied to industry."[102] If Huxley, who featured Singapore in his *Brave New World,* could see the nation now, he would possibly not be too taken aback that his brave new world is beginning to take recognizable shape in Singapore.

The PAP, under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, has so wholeheartedly clasped the principle of *la technique* to its bosom that their entering into wedlock is apparently not a too ill-advised enterprise. It is a union that explains with lucidity a multiplicity of policies and events brought about by the PAP Government over the last three decades of life in Singapore. Their alliance has predictably led to a drastic curtailment or elimination of anything, including humans, that hinders the efficient operation of technique. The outcome is faceless conformity, sterility, stability. On the other hand, it has also predictably brought about a super-abundance of economic fruits. Selective perception sets in and many Singaporeans readily and zealously grant permission for wealth and-its acquisition to domineer over and demean all the other offsprings of the union. The continued harvest of economic products in turn justifies and consequently removes from the minds of a majority of people the initial apprehensions over their joining together. The anti-technological and therefore troublesome conscience is put to sleep.

Singapore's current opulence and intensified regimentation could be taken as indications that total technicization has taken place in Singapore after thirty years of partnership between the PAP and *la technique.* Ellul defines total technicization as occurring "when every aspect of human life is subjected to control and manipulation, to experimentation and observation, so that a demonstrable efficiency is achieved everywhere."[103] Ominous-looking cameras are mounted at major traffic junctions to

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[102] *The Mirror,* October 30, 1967, p. 6. Johnson, in his speech welcoming Lee Kuan Yew, says: "Singapore is a bright example of what can be accomplished not only in Asia, but in Africa and Latin America—wherever men work for a life of freedom and dignity" (ibid., p. 6). It is, however, freedom and dignity with a price that Johnson himself would not want to pay for if he were to be coopted as part of the lower rungs of the system. Nevertheless Johnson's speech is indicative of the untroubled, glowing portraiture of Singapore that is seen by the tourist and in PAP Government's glossy publications.

[103] *The Technological System, p. 82.*

electronically capture the violators at the very instant of committing the offence ,"[104]; hidden cameras are placed in elevators to record in graphic detail persons who use them as latrines: humans are surreptitiously stationed in toilets, all primed to issue court summonses for other humans who fail to flush after use.[105] From minute details to courtship and size of family, the level of observation, control, and manipulation goes to enormous (some would say preposterous) lengths.

Although it is not exactly a holy matrimony—more an unholy union of convenience—divorce, however, is highly problematic. *La technique* has brought about the technological system. Ellul states that it is a system that cannot be detech-nicized. This is so because of the control exercised by autonomous technology which Ellul explains thus:

> technology ultimately depends only on itself, it maps its own route, it is a prime and not a secondary factor, it must be regarded as an 'organism' tending toward closure and self-determination: it is an end in itself. Autonomy is the very condition of technological development[106]

In this understanding, it is a marriage in which the partners are unequally matched. It is commonly believed that the PAP and Lee Kuan Yew are in control. This is not the case. Technique proves to be the boss in the relationship. Even Lee Kuan Yew is not in a position to bargain with technique. Ellul stresses the preeminence of technique in all arenas of action, including the political. He argues that it is still not fully appreciated that the embrace of technique "means control over all the persons involved, all the powers, all the decisions and changes, and that technology imposes its own law on the different social organizations, disturbing fundamentally what is thought to be permanent (e.g., the family), and making politics futile."[107] He dismisses the idea that politicians make the decisions. Politicians. he contends "can decide only what is technologically feasible."[108] In a Singapore that desires and strives for worldclass economic prosperity, no decisions can be made that run contrary to technological growth. Hence only that which is technologically productive is to be pursued. All political decisions are, in reality, dictated by technology. Although credit is lavished

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[104] Singapore is well known for its "instant" Asia image. The electronics branch of technology has now given a new twist to its reputation. It captures traffic violators instantaneously. For instance, I was driving in the middle lane of a three-lane road at 10:00 p.m. in 1989 when the traffic lights turned amber. I stopped, but the two cars—one on my right and the other on my left-jumped the lights. The blinding flash from the camera has etched itself into my mind.

[105] The telescreen in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four is ubiquitous. 'Nothing," Winston notes, "was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull" (p. 25). Singapore, with its own technical and human versions of the telescreen, possibly have traffic and other violators who would mutter something similar.

[106] *The Technological System,* p. 125.

[107] *What I Believe,* p. 135.

[108] Ibid.

on Lee Kuan Yew and his cohorts for bringing about the Singapore economic miracle, Ellul asseverates that the system that is set up is "not built through whim or personal ambition."[109] There is only a semblance or illusion of political control. It is because of the supremacy of technique over the PAP that the latter's many "good" intentions to relax the rigidity of its regulations come to nought. It can only continue to regulate in ever tighter circles—precisely what it is currently doing in spite of promises to be more flexible.

Singapore is a garden city, a show city, a brilliant city, but it is no utopia. It is not the Garden of Eden. It is a technological city built on secular foundations. It does not, however, put a spanner in Lee Kuan Yew's words and works. As he so lucidly pronounces at the Political Study Centre on July 13, 1966, "What is required is a rugged, resolute, highly trained, highly disciplined community. Create such a community and you will survive and prosper here for thousands of years."[110] Either Lee suffers from delusions or tiny Singapore will not only survive but prosper for "thousands of years" come what may. Just a few years ago, Lee had sought merger with Malaysia because Singapore could not survive on its own. Be that as it may, Lee has certain thoughts in mind when he evokes the image of "a rugged, resolute, highly trained, highly disciplined community." Distanced from a natural and social environment, placed in a technological environment and fed upon a diet of technical means, the outcome is the production of a rugged, resolute, highly trained, highly disciplined, highly mechanized people. They are to bedistinguised from robots. The latter are mechanical objects invented by humanity's imagination; however advanced their "artificial intelligence" they are truly things. They are the "its" of this world. Lee fondly refers to them as "digits."[111] The former may be considered to be more than "its." After all, they are humans. Nevertheless they are humans who have either voluntarily or were coerced to invite *la technique* into their hearts and lives. In so doing, they have set in inexorable motion an autonomous creature that has the in-built power to take over all control in the political, social, cultural, religious arenas. Technique's power, however, touches humanity itself. Technique is such that it transforms its unsuspecting humans into the "its" of the world. They are people without a soul but they certainly do survive and prosper economically. They become technique's robots.

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[109] *The Technological Society,* p. 116.

[110] Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew,* p. 490.

[111] As T.J.S. George notes, Lee Kuan Yew's "favourite word when referring to Singaporeans is, characteristically, 'digits'" [Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973), p. 132] . Again, Ho Kwon Ping observes, "This efficient, hierarchical structure of technocrats, technicians and toolpushers is in line with the leadership's concept of a society in winch each person is a 'digit'—a favourite term used by the Prime Minister" (Far Eastern Economic Review, August 6,1976, p. 46). In his speech to the 4th Delegates' Conference of the National Trades Union Congress on April 26, 1967, Lee Kuan Yew, for instance, says, "We must all the time train and build better digits than the cadres they [the communists] have withdrawn so that when they come back, they will find the world has left them behind" (The Minor, May 8,1967, p. 6).

Book Reviews

Essay Review

Nicholas Negroponte, *Being Digital* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

Clifford Stoll, *Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway* (New York: Anchor,

Edward Tenner, Why *Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).

Reviewed David W. Gill

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Books on technology and its various roles in our culture are pouring from the press these days. The four books under review here present a wide spectrum of attitudes toward the growth of technology. We begin in the "Amen comer" with Nicholas Negroponte, Professor of Media Technology at MIT, Founding Director of the Media Lab, and columnist for *Wired* magazine.

Being Digital is a breathless, adoring tour of the technological future allegedly at our doorstep. This will be a world of high-speed, high-volume movement of "bits" of digitized information—pretty much replacing the movement of "atoms." "The change from atoms to bits is irrevocable and unstoppable" (p. 4). Digital communication brings not only a quantum leap upward in volume, it changes our relationships to time and space. Your location is your (portable) email address; other geographic places can (virtually) come to you (p. 165). Asynchronous communication becomes more and more prevalent (answering machines, e-mail, on-demand television, etc.). The whole rhythm of work and play changes: the old nine-to-five, five-day work week in the office is gone. Now we can work wherever we want, whenever we want. In contrast to those who might appreciate a break in time and space from their work, Negroponte testifies "some of us like to be 'wired' all the time" (p. 193). It is probably not too reckless to predict that in Negroponte's digitally-obsessive future, psychotherapists will continue to do a booming business.

Oddly enough, just as we manage to escape having to deal with real human beings, Negroponte dreams "that computers will be more like people" 101). He looks forward to the time when computers will read and respond to our presence and our speech (sort of a sophisticated version of motion-sensing light switches).

In the next millennium, we will find that we are talking as much or more with machines than we are with humans" (p. 145). The joy s you now experience with ever-extending phonemail menus may soon be with you in all areas of your life and work!

Negroponte's digital world will inundate us with multi-media possibilities and choices. But "pull" instead of "push" will determine what we see and hear. "Being digital will change the nature of mass media from a process of pushing bits at people to one of allowing people (or their computers) to pull at them" (p. 84). The "news" (and our entertainment—though it may be difficult to know the difference!) will be whatever we want it to be, whenever we want it The current "information age" is characterized by massive information directed at mass audiences. "In the post-information age, we often have an audience the size of one. Everything is made to order, and information is extremely personalized... In being digital I am *me,* not a statistical subset... True personalization is now upon us" (p. 164).

The digital world, Negroponte predicts, will be great for education. Students will use computer simulations to replace or augment their lived experiences; they will play with information instead of memorizing facts. "Today kids are getting the opportunity to be street smart on the Internet, where *children are heard and not seen* [Negroponte emphasis]. Ironically, reading and writing will benefit... The Internet provides a new medium for reaching out to find knowledge and meaning" (p. 202). Nor need we mourn the disappearance of the extended family, for with thousands of BURP members on line .. ."making just that enormous body of knowledge and wisdom accessible to young minds could close the generation gap with a few key strokes" (p. 203). And you thought it was more complex than that!

Personal computers will make our future adult population simultaneously more mathematically able and more visually literate... the pursuit of intellectual achievement will... cater to a wider range of cognitive styles, learning patterns, and expressive behaviors... The middle ground between work and play will be enlarged dramatically. The crisp line between love and duty will blur by virtue of a common denominator— being digital" (220-21)

"The Information Superhighway is . . . creating a totally new, global social fabric" (p. 183). Does Negroponte see any downside or difficulty with'the new social order? "Netiquette" is a problem, although more so for the lack of brevity than for the presence of lies and disinformation, or of the crude, rude, and lewd. "Every technology or gift of science has a dark side. Being digital is no exception" (p. 227). There are problems of intellectual property abuse, invasion of privacy, digital vandalism, software piracy, data thievery, and loss of jobs to automation. Furthermore, bits are not edible; in that sense they cannot stop hunger. Computers are not moral; they cannot resolve complex issues like the rights to life and to death" (pp. 228-9).

But for Negroponte, these are merely glitches in a powerful, unstoppable cultural change. Four powerfill qualities of the digital world will lead inexorably to triumph: decentralizing, globalizing, harmonizing, empowering. The globalizing and harmonizing

qualities are clear enough. Negroponte's readers may harbor greater doubts about whether true decentralization and empowerment will occur.

Clifford Stoll describes himself as "an astronomer, computer jock, and weekend plumber" in Oakland California. He was also one of the pioneers of the Internet, but now is a bit of a "backslider" whose "second thoughts on the information super highway" are a valuable counterpoint to Negroponte's euphoria. No doubt, Stoll, writes, the Internet has its challenging, fun, and useful side. But what is the price? What are we trading off to get on this highway? Stoll argues that the medium is being oversold and that there is too little critical discussion.

What are the problems that Stoll sees? First, a great deal of time is demanded just to keep up with one's e-mail, chat groups, and Internet explorations. Little Internet information is genuinely useful and what is there is often a distraction from reality. Life on the Internet is passive rather than active; computer networks isolate us from one another, cheapen the meaning of actual experience, work against literacy and reality, and undercut our schools and libraries. Schools are being sold down the networked river, induced to "spend way too much on technological gimmicks that teachers don't want and students don't need" (p. 11).

"Few aspects of daily life require computers, digital networks, or massive connectivity" (p. 10). Stoll gives long lists of such important non-computer activities: baking bread, curling up with a good novel, and hanging out with friends. He quotes Thoreau's famous comment in *Walden:* "Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end" (p. 15).

Despite contrary claims, in reality the Internet is painfully slow (especially during business hours). Just as all highway building has led to more traffic congestion, bandwidth expansions are doomed to be forever glutted with as much or more traffic than they can possibly bear (pp. 206-7). And the equipment itself is not at all perfectly reliable: "I spend almost as much time figuring out what's wrong with my computer as I do actually using it" (p. 3)

More than its inefficiency, the abysmal quality of information on the Internet is Stoll's frequent refrain: "Look at the detritus, dross, and dreck sold on the television home-shopping channels"(p. 18): the same will be available on the computer shopping network. A 500 channel system will surely deliver "unfathomable and boundless mediocrity" (p. 21). "Instead of an Internet-inspired renaissance, mediocre writing and poorly-thought-out arguments roll into my modem (p. 26). The Internet is a great medium for trivia and hobbies, but not for reasoned reflective judgment or true creativity. Data, information, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom are different things. The Internet provides mountains of data, some information, a little knowledge and understanding, but no wisdom.

Educators are falling for a bogus promise when they invest in computers instead of teachers and books (pp. 1 30ff). Scarce resources are being wasted, the information gained is of doubtful value, and true creativity is stifled rather than unleashed. "Cre-

ative people are ill-adapted for survival around computers. . . the medium in which we communicate changes how we organize our thoughts. We program computers, but the computers also program us" (46). Creativity is confined within narrow boundaries established by the medium itself.

Interpersonal relationships and communication are also harmed at least as much as helped by the Internet. "Anonymity and untraceability seem to bring out the worst in people" (p. 57). Computer networks isolate us from one another, rather than bring us together. "Electronic communication is an instantaneous and illusory contact that creates a sense of intimacy without the emotional investment that leads to close friendships." (p. 24).

The key ingredient of their silicon snake oil is a technocratic belief that computers and networks will make a better society. Access to information, better communications, and electronic programs can cure social problems . . . [But] access to a universe of information cannot solve our problems: we will forever struggle to understand one another. The most important interactions in life happen between people, not between computers (p. 50).

It is important to recall, of course, that anonymous hate messages are already enabled by conventional mail and telephone calls, and that pounds of unsolicited junk mail are accompanied by daily telemarketing intruders. But Stoll has written a very important book, whose credibility and persuasiveness is multiplied by his experience with the Internet and by the fact that he "has a life"—in sharp contrast to the sterile, narrow existence reflected in most computer nerd tracts. Reading Negroponte and Stoll together is a great foundation for serious reflection on the arrival of the digital age.

Edward Tenner's *Why Things Bite Back* examines technology more broadly than do the books by Negroponte and Stoll. In particular, Tenner looks at medicine, agriculture and the environment, the computerized office, and sports. A historian of science at Princeton University, Tenner has provided a voluminously documented and illustrated account of the unintended consequences (called "revenge effects") of our technologies. "Technology demands more, not less, human work to function. And it introduces more subtle and insidious problems to replace acute ones. Nor are the acute ones eliminated. .. [I]n controlling the catastrophic problems we are exposing ourselves to even more elusive chronic ones that are even harder to address... Our greater safety demands more and more vigilance... I am not arguing against change, but for a modest, tentative, and skeptical acceptance of it" (p. xi).

A revenge effect is when a technology produces a result the opposite of what was intended. For example, When a safety system encourages enough additional risk-taking that it helps cause accidents, that is a revenge effect"(p. 19). Football helmets and protective gear are a case in point. Smoke alarms that make people less vigilant in preventing fires are another. Decentralizing work from the office to a home work station often leads to greater captivity to work rather than greater freedom. Going to the hospital to get well can expose one to more disease than staying away. Intensive use of antibiotics has promoted the development of more resistant viruses.

"If we leam from revenge effects we will not be led to renounce technology, but we will instead refine it: watching for unforeseen problems, managing what we know are limited strengths, applying no less but also no more than is really needed (p. 115).

In the office, Tenner describes revenge effects on the body as well as on the bottom line: repetitive motion injuries (e.g., carpal tunnel syndrome), back injuries from being seated, so long before terminals, eyestrain, and the unknown impact of electro-magnetic field exposure. The financial issue is that net productivity is relatively unchanged: the cost of technical support personnel, for example, erodes the savings from downsizing the regular staff. Instead of resulting in paper-less offices, computerized workplaces use far more paper because of the ease of cranking out revised documents.

Tenner's book is dense with examples of revenge effects; his case is made with overwhelming evidence. The obvious point of his book is that we must face up to the truth of our technologies: there are serious consequences, negative as well as positive. The negative impacts of our technologies are not restricted to their uses made by evil people! Often the consequences are entirely unforeseen (though if we were more realistic and carefid we might be able to foresee more than we do). Tenner suggests that we need more "finesse" in the development and application of technology—the capacity to move with moderation and with attention to the environment of application. He also urges "vigilance"; the introduction of technology requires more intense and sustained care, not less (the myth says that technology is more reliable than humans, that it frees us from hard work, etc.).

Neil Postman, Professor of Communication Arts & Sciences at New York University, has been raising questions about technology for many years. In *Technopoly,* he provides a broad and sustained critique of "the surrender of culture to technology." While technology has in many cases made life "easier, cleaner, and longer," Postman argues that "the uncontrolled growth of technology destroys the vital sources of our humanity. It creates a culture without a moral foundation. It undermines certain mental processes and social relations that make human life worth living. Technology, in sum, is both friend and enemy" (p. xii).

Postman notes that technology has a large and enthusiastic chorus of evangelists and promoters—but rather few critics who examine its drawbacks. He looks at specific areas and associated problems (e.g., medicine, computers, social science research, media) but his main contribution is in an analysis of technology as a whole ensemble, in relation to a whole culture.

We have moved historically from tool-using cultures to technocracy to technopoly. In technocracy (18th century onward) technological tools are no longer in roles subordinate to particular, limited purposes—they play a central role in culture (e.g., the "Industrial Revolutions). In the twentieth century, we have moved a further, critical step, to technopoly: technology has become a monopolizing force, dominating and subordinating all of culture to its logic. Technologies can have an important and valuable place in a culture with a grand story or narrative whose worldview and values govern the whole. Unfortunately, the older worldviews have been eclipsed; the progress

and goodness of technology has itself become the narrative of our dominant culture—incapable of passing critical judgment on itself.

Embedded in every technology (and in technology as a whole ensemble) is an ideological bias. Postman quotes the old adage: To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail. And today: to a man with a computer, everything looks like data. "The uses made of any technology are largely determined by the structure of that technology itself—that is, its functions follow from its forms"(p. 7). "Technological change is never additive nor subtractive. It is ecological" (p. 18). Adding a television set to a home, for example, does not result in "homelife plus televisions; it transforms the way families eat, interact, think about news, and practice religion; it modifies personal behavior, attitudes, relationships, and the economic and political domains.

Postman discusses with humor and insight the impact of technology on medicine. His chapter on computer technology shows how much is lost when only those things that can be processed on computers have reality and importance. The linguistic fuzzing of boundaries by using terms like "virus" for computers and "programming" and "input" for human activities is symbolic of technopoly's ideological impact. Less apparent to most observers and technology users are the "invisible technologies" of opinion polls, intelligence tests, and tire worshipful use of statistics.

We live with information glut (well-illustrated in Postman's account), information chaos, and the elevation of information (especially quantifiable information) to "metaphysical status" (p. 61). Postman shows how this has developed from the inventions of printing, then telegraphy, photography, broadcasting, and now computers. "The computer argues, to put it baldly, that the most serious problems confronting us at both personal and public levels require technical solutions through fast access to information otherwise unavailable. I would argue that this is, on the face of it, nonsense. Our most serious problems are not technical, nor do they arise from inadequate information" (p. 119).

In order to make sense of our lives and of the information we encounter, we need institutions to help us evaluate and synthesize. The school, family, church, political party and state, however, no longer serve us well as controllers of information. The old interpretive myths (Christianity, Marxism, etc.) have either disappeared or retreated to a narrow private sphere. Instead, bureaucracy, "expertise," and technical machinery (tests, standardized forms, polls, etc.) are the new information controls. Their main controlling impact, however, is to exclude whatever cannot pass through their quantitative, technical filter. Underneath it all, is the broad adherence to a narrow "scientism" that justifies the intellectual operations of technology. While Negroponte celebrates the opportunity for each individual person to pick and choose their identity and environment, Postman mourns the fact that the individual doing this self-creation is a community-less, story-less "atom" at the mercy of a mass society and a firehose of information.

The answer, for Postman, is educational reform. And that does not mean computerizing all classrooms! The teaching of history, including the history of technology, is a

crucial antidote to the a-historical prejudice of technopoly. He also suggests courses in the philosophy of science, semantics, and religion as possible antidotes to technopoly. Such curricular reform, of course, is a path rarely contemplated today.

If Tenner's *Why Things Bite Back* is the voluminous nuts-and-bolts caution about technological enthusiasm, Postman's Technopoly is the essential companion piece on the broader contours of technology and culture. A reading of Tenner might just prepare some of our technophile friends to have open minds in considering the vitally important case made by Postman (and before him, with still greater detail and power, Jacques Ellul).

Issue #20 Jan 1998 — Tenth Anniversary Issue

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About the 10th Anniversary Issue

Welcome to the tenth anniversary issue of *The Ellul Forum.* It is hard to believe that ten years have gone by. For three years in the 1980's a group of scholars, organized by Dan Clendenin, interested in the work of Jacques Ellul met at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings to discuss his work. At one of those meetings, (in 19871 believe) it was suggested that it might be a good idea to have a newsletter to facilitate communications among us. Having just recently gotten into "desktop publishing" I volunteered to produce such a newsletter.

As I thought about the newsletter, I got rather ambitious. I decided that it might be useful to have a vehicle not only for the exchange of information but also for the exchange of ideas among those who were interested in Ellul. What I had in mind was something more formal than a newsletter but less formal than a journal - the result was the *Forum* as we now know it, with its combination of news, book reviews and a "*Forum* issue" addressed in one or two essays. In August of 1988 the first issue came out, and it has been produced twice a year ever since.

On the whole I have been pleased with the results. On page two of this issue, you will find a complete list of the issues produced over the last ten years. It is, I think, an impressive list of topics and I am grateful to the members of the editorial board, many of whom served as guest editors. I have thoroughly enjoyed editing the *Forum,* but after ten years I am ready to step aside and allow others to assume the editorial task. Starting with issue twenty-one, my Associate Editor, Cliff Christians will become the editor and David Gill will step into the position of Associate Editor. Both Cliff and David are seasoned Ellul scholars who have contributed much to the advancement of scholarship on Ellul's work. They will provide able leadership for the issues to come. I welcome them to their new roles. I am not planning to disappear entirely, however. I will remain a member of the editorial board and will also serve as Managing Editor for the *Forum,* taking care of subscriptions, typesetting and production, as I have in the past.

I hope you enjoy the 10th Anniversary issue. The *Forum* essay is written by Rick Clifton Moore from Boise State University. Moore brings an interesting perspective onusing Ellul in the analysis of television drama. Then a special *Forum* section celebrating our 10th Anniversary follows with essays from several of our editorial board members reflecting on the influence of Ellul on their life, work and thought. Finally, we conclude with two book reviews, one of Andrew Goddard's dissertation on Ellul and the other of a book of poetry by Ellul which was published after his death. I hope

you have enjoyed the last ten years of *The Ellul Forum* and that you will look forward to further issues of the *Forum* in the future.

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N.B. Back Issues of the *Forum* are available at $4.00 each. Send a check made out to *The Ellul Forum,*

Department of Religious Studies, CPR 304, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33620.

Forum: From Ellul to "Picket Fences"

The Residue of Culture: An Ellulian Dialogic Analysis of Religious Imagery in a Network Television Drama

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In *Technopoly,* cultural critic Neil Postman argues that the technological state has developed to a point where it will allow no competitors. A technopolic world view is one in which technical efficiency and progress are the consummate values. Whereas in the 19th century (a period Postman calls "technocracy") many world views were able to coexist, in 20th century all drought worlds that compete with technopoly disappear. Among these alternative thought worlds is religion, which Postman argues is made invisible and therefore irrelevant in technopoly.

My purpose here is to analyze the possible invisibility and irrelevance of religion within a technopolistic world, specifically looking at one instance of such invisibility and irrelevance, the depiction of religion in a prime-time television drama. Using the work of Neil Postman and Jacques Ellul I investigate the conflict between a technopolistic world view and a theological world view in one very exemplary episode of the program *Picket Fences.*

Mass Media in Jacques Ellul's Technological Society

Postman's basic orientation toward the technological world is greatly influenced by the work of Jacques Ellul. For Ellul, today's world is one in which humans are so enamored of technology that the machine becomes the model for society. As Cliff Christians and Michael Real describe Ellul's theory, "we are beguiled enough by machine productivity to reconstruct almost unconsciously all our social institutions on this model" (Christians and Real, 1979, p. 84). Technique, then, is the elevation of means over ends, the worship of mechanistic efficiency.

Ellul argues that such worship is all-encompassing. One cannot worship technique and God. Accordingly, for the technological society to move forward, all citizens must be consistently reminded of their allegiance to it This is why such a large part of Ellul's oeuvre relates to the mass media. Tlie media are essential components in the world of technique. As the technological world becomes somewhat cold and heartless, it is necessary for its citizens to be reminded of their allegiance to it. As Ellul states it, "In the midst of increasing mechanization and technological organization, propaganda is simply the means used to prevent these things from being felt as too oppressive and to persuade man to submit with good grace"(Ellul, 1965, p. xviii). Such submission must be all inclusive. His point is that "technique has taken over the whole of civilization"(Ellul, 1964, p. 128).

Recognizing both the Judeo-Christian orientation of Ellul and the Judeo-Christian elements of some facets of American society, however, the reader might question the outcome of clashes between the "religious" element of the technological world (the worship of efficiency and the technological state) and the "religious" elements imbedded in American culture (the religious roots of many western social institutions). There would seem to be a clash between the religion of the new world and the religion of the old world.

Postman addresses this issue by suggesting that the religion of the new world is fundamentally different from the religion of the old. By suggesting that Technopoly has made religion invisible he is not suggesting that it does not exist, rather, that it does not exist in its original form. Technopoly is successful in "redefining what we mean by religion"(Postman, 1992, p. 48). '

Posttnan's shortcoming, however, is in suggesting that such a redefinition is a one-time historical event which occurs in the technocratic world (which, as mentioned earlier is a how Postman defines the world of the 19th century). He maintains that in that era the traditional world clashed with the modem world and something had to give. The machinery of the modem world was already in place, but the mjnds of the people were not prepared for the massive assault of such machinery. The people were not ready because their minds had been formed in a traditional world, a world he calls "tool-using." Postman (1992, p. 46) claims these people bore the "troublesome residue of a tool-using period." His assertion is that such residue had to be removed, and it was. When we move to technopoly, an authoritarian form of technocracy, alternatives are eliminated.

Yet it is possible that residue of earlier cultures will always remain in a technopolistic world. If so, such residue must be dealt with. Ellul suggests this in his most media-oriented work *Propaganda.* The reader must be aware that Ellul visualizes propaganda not as a specific, biased, communication phenomenon, but as an integral system of modem communication. As Real explains it, "Ellul redefines it (propaganda) as a universal condition which pervades all individual lives in industrially advanced societies"(Real, 1981, p. 110). Basically, technique becomes the determining factor in the flow of information. In this environment, preexisting ideologies cannot be ignored

altogether. Ellul claims that there will be times in the technological society when certain ideologies command belief among the masses and might be an obstacle to the goals of the technological state (Ellul,1962, p. 197). Such ideologies might even provide the citizen with "criteria for judgment," a phenomenon that would likely defeat efficiency. As Ellul sees it,

In this case the propagandist must be careful not to run head-on into a prevailing ideology, all he can do is: integrate it into his system, use some parts of it, deflect it, and so on. Secondly, he must ask himself whether the ideology, such as it is, can be used for his propaganda; whether it has psychologically predisposed an individual to submit to propaganda's impulsions. (p.198)

For Ellul, then, cultural residues are not eliminated in the technological society, but must be dealt with within the broader realm of propaganda. The mass media must occasionally adopt these residues and adapt them to their purposes.

Dialogic Analysis

Ellul is one of many modem scholars who have shown interest in the way the media deal with conflicting ideologies. Dialogism is a popular method of media analysis that examines this issue. Originally borrowed from the work of Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), dialogic analysis attempts to understand how "meaning is constructed socially through the interaction of a variety of languages that emanate from a given text" (Pany-Giles & Traudt, 1989, p. 147). Bakhtin's vision of the novel insisted on an "interplay of dialogues" within a given social system (Hoy, 1992, p. 765). He used the term heteroglossia to.refer to the multi-vocal characteristic of the medium.

Horace Newcomb (1984) was instrumental in introducing dialogism to mass media scholars. Working with Bakhtin's original ideas, Newcomb claimed that television critics can study the utterances of characters within a program. Clearly, in any such product, there will be a variety of speakers. Just as a novel, it is considered dialogic because it is "shot through with many coinciding voices" (Shevtsova, 1992, p. 753). Each of these voices represents something. For example, in the world of television drama "each character responds to the central ideologies from a different perspective" (Newcomb, 1984, p. 41). In doing so, the characters create what Newcomb calls "character zones." These character zones overlap and conflict, revealing much about the program as a whole. As Parry-Giles and Traudt (1991, p. 147) point out, one goal of dialogic analysis is to "discover how the utterance mixes and is changed by its conflict with other utterances." Newcomb proposed that by examining these character zones and their interaction within the television program one could understand the hegemonic intention of the script. That is, one could determine the ideological orientation of the text as a whole.

Such a task is important from an Ellulian perspective. After all, our perception of characters in many ways has an impact on dur perception of ourselves and our own world view. Ellul relates this closely to the role of propaganda.

From then on, the individual in the clutches of such sociological propaganda believes that those who live this way are on the side of the angels, and those who don't are

bad; those who have this conception of society are right, and those who have another conception are in error. (Ellul, 1962, p. 65).

Which characters are confirmed and which are not thus becomes an important element in textual analysis. Beyond examining specific statements in a text, we must look at the conflict and resolution involving those statements. Ellul claims this is especially true of television as a medium, because of its tendency toward process rather than product. Viewers enter into the dialogue in such a way that "the possibility of reacting and criticizing is accordingly reduced" (Ellul, 1981, p. 360). Most television viewers, then, are unaware of these ideological dimensions of the text The critic's job is to help them become aware.

Picket Fences

David Kelley, Producer of the television show *Picket Fences* was once quoted as saying "If we're different from other shows, it isn't that we've accented religion, but we have not pretended that it's not there" (Broadway, 1994). Such a comment calls to mind Postman's point that in technopoly, many television shows *do* pretend religion is not there. *Picket Fences* offers fruitful ground for dialogic analysis of religious imagery because it dares to recognize the continued existence of religious thought in our culture.

Appropriately enough, the episode of *Picket Fences* examined here begins with scenes of a Christmas caroling event in the town ofRome, Wisconsin, the normal set-tingforthe weekly drama. As carolers sing "Away in a Manger," the image cuts to a tight close-up of a snowball hitting a statue of Christ. Immediately, the local priest, Father Barrett, steps forward to confront Matthew Brock, the perpetrator. Barrett in a half serious way tells Matthew to be careful, lest he end up in a place "where there are no snowballs." The boy's mother, Jill Brock, happens to be a respected doctor in the small community, and asks Matthew, her oldest son, if he will behave and listen to the carols.

As the caroling scene continues, the director begins crosscutting to another location. Jimmy Brock, husband of Jill and the town sheriff, is busy pulling a car from an icy body of water. The crosscutting continues until the carolers finish their song and Jimmy Brock and his crew fail in their attempt to revive a young woman they have pulled out of the car. Jill Brock listens to the final words the carolers utter, her face showing a confused expression of contentment and concern. The scene fades to black and the title sequence rolls.

As the local coroner prepares for an autopsy of the accident victim, she shocks him by showing signs of life. The revival of Dana Marshall (to a comatose state) causes a stir in the small town, but that is just the start of the stirring. In speaking with the coroner, Jill Brock adds a new twist to the plot. Her examination has determined that Dana is four months pregnant.

The coroner objects. During his examination he found the young woman to be a virgin.

At this point a brief subplot is introduced. Snowball hurler Matthew Brock is in the process of telling his younger brother Zachary that there is no Santa Claus. He explains all the gory details. Parents sneak presents into the house, pilfer letters to Mr. Claus, and run other forms of interference. Christmas for Zack is not going to be what it used to be. But it is Christmas nonetheless, and the people of the town are very Quick to make a connection between Dana Marshall and the virgin birth of Jesus. Even the town clergy enter the discussion, though they toy to keep things quiet until they can decide a course of action.

Uncertain about her own feelings about a putative miracle is Brock. She explains to husband (and Sheriff) jimmy that her textbooks cannot possibly explain what she has seen. Maybe, it is a miracle. She's willing to consider that Others have already made up their minds. The coroner, Carter Pike, is immediately suspicious and begins searching for purely scientific explanations, including the possibility that a deluded religious girl might impregnate herself. Dana's gynecologist, Dr. Haber, objects. He is a religious man who does not discount a miraculous explanation. In addition, he takes offense at Pike's claim that religious people are prone to schizophrenia.

Jill feels caught in the middle. As a doctor she wants to adhere to the scientific view. As a member of a society with deep religious traditions, she does not want to discount tire possibility of a miracle. Her discomfort is increased When the nextmajorplottwist occurs. Dana Marshall starts experiencing medical complications as a result of the baby . Jill explains to Dana's father that there is little chance his daughter will survive if the pregnancy continues. And, there is no chance the baby will survive if Dana does not The father recommends that Jill terminate the pregnancy. Since Dana cannot make a decision on her own, however, Jill must ask the local judge to decide the matter. Flamboyant local attorney Douglas Wambaugh takes the case to the judge. At this point the clergy step forward to request an injunction against the abortion. Still claiming agnosticism in regards to the deity of the unborn baby, they feel they must prevent its demise and they ask smooth-talking attorney Franklin Dell to plead their case. The judge agrees to a hearing on the issue.

When the hearing begins, Dr. Haber is brought to the stand and claims there is no medical explanation. On cross-examination, he claims that the fact that Dana was a virgin means the pregnancy must be supernatural. A quick edit to Jill Brock under examination by Wambaugh shows the difference between her and Dr. Haber. She does not see it as supernatural. But, the assertive Franklin Dell confronts her on this issue, asking her if she believes Mary experienced a virgin birth. Jill lowers her eyes and answers yes. Wambaugh confronts Doctors Brock and Haber outside the courtroom, claiming both neglected their medical duties to their patient Dana Matthews. Brock briefly claims that she merely told the truth. Haber, however, responds very defensively, claiming he is tired of having his religion trod upon. He then turns to Brock and denounces her, claiming that she was ashamed of her faith.

Here is where the major conflict of the show comes through. In Dana Marshall's hospital room, Jill Brock discusses the confrontation with her husband. "Do we really

believe in God?", she asks. He briefly reassures her with an "Of course!" answer. But this doesn't satisfy Jill. She recognizes that they "dance around religion." They never confront it. Jimmy explains that he is sure of the presence of his belief, but not its nature. Given his uncertainty about some biblical tales, he finds it easiest to keep his distance from God, knowing he is out there, but "not getting in the same room with him." Jill, stares at Dana, a patient for whom she can do nothing, and seems to wonder whether it might not be better to have God in the same room with her. She presumes that without a miracle it will be necessary to either abort the baby or watch mother and child slowly die.

Her faith in miracles is soon diminished, however. Further evidence (and a bit of deception) prove that Dr. Haber impregnated Dana. Jill asks Haber why he would do such a thing. He claims that his actions allowed people all over the world to regain hope. Even Jill, he says, received that hope.

With new information, the judge gives Dana's father the go ahead to terminate the pregnancy. As Mr. Marshall discusses his hesitancy about such a move with Jill, Dana suddenly cries out, coming out of her coma. Her father exults in the occurrence, and Jill immediately calls in the technicians and their equipment. When she has a moment to stop and think, she speaks to Jimmy, explaining that such sudden changes are rare, but they do happen.

As the show concludes, the Brock family huddles together near their fireplace. They listen attentively as Jimmy reads a passage about the existence of Santa Claus. He warmly announces "Thank God, he lives. He lives forever. A thousand years from now, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood." When the reading is completed, Zachary states "I like that ending." Jimmy and Jill respond in agreement.

The Dialogic Nature of "Cross Examination"

The opening shots of this episode forewarn the viewer about the acerbic nature of the dialogue within. Certainly a snowball striking an icon of Christ is dramatic enough to make the viewer realize this is no mild mannered Christmas special. More than this though, the opening sequence as a whole shows dialogue. One world is the old world of town squares with manger scenes and citizens gathered in a tradition. The other world is a high technology world with sounds of sirens, wenches, medical equipment and screaming voices. In one venue, carolers and their audience use candles to light their way through a centripetal community event. In the other, scuba divers and EMTs use electronic search lights in investigating a centrifugal event. The two scenes focus on two different sets of technology, and Postman argues that different technologies produce different thought worlds.

The focus of this show is the collision of those thought worlds. Jill Brock is in the path of the collision. Being placed between people who seem much more certain of their orientation toward religion, she is perplexed. She is presented with utterances from

several key characters which lead her to question her own world view. This element is a crucial part of dialogue of the show. Through the juxtaposition of Zachary 's questions about Santa Claus and Jill's questions about herfaith in God, we get a sense of her discomfort.

Another juxtaposition in the episode is the one between key characters who represent varying points on a religious-tech-nopolistic spectrum. The strongest alternatives in this episode are Dr. Haber and Carter Pike. These two stand as alternative world views Jill could consider. In Newcomb's terminology, they offer us clear character zones. Haber exemplifies one extreme. He is confident of his faith and seems willing to let it have an impact on his eveiyday life. His utterance suggests that God should play a major role in human affairs. This is demonstrated clearly in the closing arguments in the courtroom. Franklin Dell, the lawyer for the church states it succinctly.

What has happened in this country that has made us so ashamed of believing in God? Politicians are schooled never to bring it up. Try saying a prayer in school and its 'Quick, call the ACLU!* Oh no, it's all right to be religious. But for God's sake, keep it to yourself. Whatever you do, don't tell anybody. You'll be labeled a zealot, a ranting demagogue, an idiot. I'll tell you, judge, this country is in moral decay. Maybe if s time we stopped punishing people for bringing their religious and moral concerns into our public arenas.

This basically reiterates the point Haber makes outside the courtroom when confronted by Wambaugh. In that utterance, Haber sounds as if he is pronouncing a creed. Basically, he disregards the advice of those Attorney Dell speaks of when he says "Whatevcryou do, don't tell anybody." Haber tells Wambaugh very succinctly what he believes. Jill watches him as he does.

We watch him also, wondering about the viability of this world view alternative. And, at this point in the show Haber is presented as a reasonable alternative. Peter Michael Goetz, who plays the role, is well groomed and portrays the character as amiable and conversant For him, when the scientific perspective does not answer a question, he turns to religion for the answer.

Yet Haber's world view is eventually discredited, even if there is some cost in this discrediting. The show suggests that he really is a zealot, a ranting demagogue, an idiot. But, he was a demagogue who gave us hope. That is how he defends his actions as he is hauled off to jail. His view of God is one in which God intervenes in human affairs. The clergy in the episode are mandated to take this view and seem aware of that mandate. Yet they are fearful and distance themselves from the whole scenario as much as possible.

When Haber is whisked away, his utterance goes with him. The audience is no longer led to perceive his ideology as a reasonable one. The next scene is in the judge's chambers, where Coroner Carter Pike takes over the dialogue. His utteranceis dominant. He doubted the miraculous all along and proclaims he was proven correct in his belief that everything was to be explained by modem science and technology. When

Wambaugh and Sheriff Brock had nearly given up on finding a scientific explanation for the events, Pike had not. He stated. "If that judge finds this could be divine, we look like fools. We can't give up." Any explanation beyond the natural, is unacceptable within this character zone.

Pike's utterance, then, is a stark contrast to Haber's. It rules out the possibility of the miraculous altogether. Though the technological society finds this cold rationality appealing, it is not without its problems. In this case, Jill and her specialists sit next to Dana Marshall's bed feeling helpless. Once Pike determines that the pregnancy is not miraculous, he is content. Yet Jill is not For her, the pain of watching an innocent young girl and her unborn child suffer is valid reason to question the detached logic of a mechanistic world. At one point in the script she seems to realize that there are times when the only thing she can do is pray. Yet such prayer would deny the utterance of Carter Pike, a technological utterance devoid of spirituality.

Such denial comes in the next scene.ˆDana's father has consistently been portrayed as a devoutly religious man. Yet near the end of the script he has been swayed by the technological utterance. He looks at his daughter hooked up to the latest medical equipment and seems to have been convinced by the evidence Carter Pike presented. This puts him in contrast with Haber, who was the man of hope. This contrast is starkly demonstrated when in the first line of his final scene Mr. Marshall asks "There's no real hope, is there?" Jill, confirms the position with a simple "No." Haber's utterance held hope but was dismissed. Pike's general orientation is presented as logical, biit is presented as hopeless and therefore not desirable. Nobody wants to live in a world without hope.

But Jill and Mr. Marshall are not left to reside in this world. When the miraculous recovery occurs with two minutes left in the story, they are given one more opportunity for hope. Though they have discounted the possibility of seeing God as personal and close, they do not want him too far awry. If he chooses to work a miracle or two, aU the better. Jill, in the end, seems to embrace her husband's brand of religion.

That this leaves the Brock family in a certain ideological state is demonstrated in the scene that immediately follows, the family sharing in the reading of a story about Santa. Just as Zachary has been convinced that a certain form of belief in Santa is a good *thing*, Jill has been convinced that a certain form of belief in God is a good thing. This message is not only demonstrated in the script, but also with the title of the episode. Herein, "Cross examination" has less to do with the courtroom maneuverings than it does the theological elements of the show. After all, the title is not the legal term "Cross-examination" (which would be almost meaningless since many of the show's episodes contain a courtroom scene), it is "Cross Examination." For Jimmy Brock, Christian belief in general poses no problems. He states that much when speaking to Jill. Yet specific elements of belief are stumbling blocks for him. The biggest stumbling block might not be the birth of Christ, but the cross of Christ. A person can easily bear with a story of a virgin birth 2000years ago. It is very easy to conceptualize the story in such a way that it has no direct impact on our lives. The

crucifixion, however, calls into question deqier theological issues of human sin and the need for propitiation. For someone like Jimmy Brock, the cross is an offense.

In this light, the first and the last scenes in the episode make perfect bookends and help us make sense of the hegemony of intention. The Brock children-'s actions in the very first scene are part of the battle between mother and father. Matthew's snowball didn't collide with the icon of the baby Jesus in a manger. It collided with the icon of the adult Jesus on the cross. A close look at the brief shot shows a bearded Jesus with his thorn-crowned head sagging. The presence of such an image might be unacceptable for a person (such as Jimmy) who wants to keep God at a distance. Though Jill was present at the religious event with the children—hoping to enjoy the moment—Jimmy was absent. In the children, the wishes of both parents are manifest. They are present, but they are fighting certain elements of it.

By the end of the episode we discover that this show is about striking a balance. This balance is between a religious faith that invites God to interact with us on a daily basis, and an atheism that says there is no God. The show seems to suggest that something in the middle of these two extremes is comfortable. In the first scene, there are too many images that allow God to get close. For example, the words of the Christmas carol "Away in a Manger" refer not only to the birth of Christ, but the lordship of Christ. Moreover, as noted earlier, the statue of the crucified Jesus bongs Christian soteriology into the dialogue in a way that the baby Jesus might not. The less offensive the symbol, the closer it is to the middle position to which this episode points.'

[;] This is manifest in the final scene, a scene God and Christmas have^beensterilized.-As the Brocks gather around the fire, therelafeno strongly religious visual images in the room. Rather than carolers singing "Away in a Manger," a canned, instrumental version of "Silent Night" plays. Basically, the words have (or in Christian theology, the Word has) been removed from the message. This is hot an uncommon occurrence in the media of the technological world. Ellul suggests that a contradictory cultural element must be dealt with. One option is to "obliterate it of disguise it". Another is to "interpret it in such a way that we can fit it without harm into an understanding that has an answer for every thing"(Ellul, 1989, p. 33). Both of those tactics seem present here. The Brocks are presented as being very comfortable with this view of God and religion. Their "yeah" responses to Zack's affirmation to the message on the eternal nature of Santa Claus is really an i "amen," the acceptance of the creed of their religion.

In Postman and Ellul's views of the technological world, this is what one might expect. Granted, the former seems to migudge the persistent lingering of the residue of earlier cultures his analysis. Religion is still a factor to be dealt with. But Postman does seem correct in suggesting that religion is assaulted by technopoly. He would probably agree withFrank-lin Dell who claims "This country not only trivializes religion today. It scorns it" Postman's more accurate judgment is on the meaning of cultural elements and how they can shift. In this instance one can clearly see that the religion the Brocks

cling to at the end of the program is very different from the religion which is discussed through much of the episode. Given our dialogic analysis, the implication is that the audience should sympathize with such a shift

Such sympathy is part of the *-weltanshauung* of the technological world. Ellul suggests that audience affinity for certain characters is a predictable element of the entire communicative phenomenon. Much of his work deals with conformity in the modem-worid.

To act in conformity with collective beliefs provides security and a guarantee that one acts properly. Propaganda reveals this consonance to the individual, renders the collective belief perceptible, conscious, and personal for him. It gives him a good conscience by making him aware of the collectivity of beliefs. (Ellul, 1965, p. 200)

This "good conscience" is not proper in some metaphysical sense, only in a cultural sense. What Ellul is suggesting is that this is one more example of our tendency to fall into place in the technological world. He would argue that in a technological world where efficiency and standardization are the driving forces, a religious view such as the Brocks' does not pose problems. Other views might. To clarify this, we can note that when Franklin Dell steps out of his role as a litigator and openly questions the implications of the court case in which he is involved (and the possibility the second coming is imminent), he recognizes that not all forms of religion are equally beneficent He reminds the pastor and the priest that if the baby is the son of God, the current political and social systems might not fare well. In his own words, "We'd have to deny him. Otherwise the world order would crumble." Though readers might not necessarily agree with all of Ellul's theological arguments, they .must admit (as Dell does in his moment of honest reflection) that some forms of religious belief are more problematic for the modem technopolistic state than others. If they are problematic, one would, expect the media to question, if not denigrate them. Such is what appears to happen here. Though this is only one example of such, the analysis above suggests that using the ideas of Ellul to analyzethe mass media depiction of religion is a worthy task. '

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10th Anniversary Forum: The Influence of Ellul

Jacques Ellul's Web

by Joyce Hanks

When l have explored the question "How did you discover what you wanted to concentrateon in w w your research?" with friends, I have found that most of them came to their primary interest through reading related to university course work, usually in graduate school. But Jacques Ellul studies seem to constitute a case apart Many of us in the United States first read Ellul at the suggestion of a friend who had found him stimulating. Or life-changing. *The Presence of the Kingdom* got many of us started back in the 1970's. Reading one of Ellul's books led to several more, and then to an attempt to lay hands on *everything* he had written.

An enormous bibliographical effort often resulted, leading to contact with other avid Ellul readers who were also trying to find more. My trajectory has differed from that of others mainly in two ways: I never managed to wind down my bibliographic search, and I had abackground inFrench studies. Familiarity with the French language and French libraries has made it easier for me to trade down and read obscure articles by and about Ellul, as well as books of his that were available only in French.

Like so many other people, I continue to "devour" Ellul eagerly, and to give him priority in my research efforts. I can see positive and negative reasons for this persistence. Negatively, my efforts to continue giving papers and publishing in my original research field (French Renaissance poetry) have met with all kinds of frustration. Poetry seems to be currently "out" (although Renaissance studies generally continue to enjoy a good deal of success), so that feedback on papers given at conferences proves nearly nonexistent. Current critical trends in literature seem to have polarized scholars to such an extent that satisfying one editor or referee inevitably involves alienating another. And I have often asked myself if publishing in my original field really adds much to knowledge. Significant knowledge. Working on Ellul has given me a new set of priorities.

On the positive side, I continue to study and publish on Ellul because of continued requests for updates of my bibliography on him, and because he has become so thoroughly central to my thinking. Childhood influences aside, I believe no one has influenced me like he has. Almost everything I read causes me to make mental "notes

in the margin" based on Ellul's thought, and he elbows his way into an increasing proportion of my conversations.

How does he manage to touch on almost everything? I think he has done it by going "under the surface of the ocean," to the deep currents, to use his image for what lies under most of our thinking. These normally unexamined presuppositions affect just about everything that takes place "topside." An example: shortly after Christmas 1997, as I read a review of the philosopher Thomas Nagel's *The Last Word* (Oxford University Press), I found myself thinking again about the whole matter of objectivity, as Ellul understands it Rather like Nagel, he considers that we dp not have the ability to adopt some sort of "neutral" stance with regard to every issue ("unqualified" thinking, in Nagel's terms). But we can recognize our bents, and have confidence in our thinking when we make allowances for these preconceptions.

Although Nagel might not recognize this simplified summary of part of his book, I found it reassuring to recognize Ellul's conclusions in the work of another thinker. And I found additional reasons for agreeing with Ellul on this important issue.

I do not always agree with him, of course. During interviews that he allowed me to record, mainly during the 1980's, I sometimes attempted to challenge his ideas. I never got very far, but neither did he convince me to change my mind! A case in point: Simone de Beauvoir. I had read a great deal of her mammoth output when I first ran across a slur in one of Ellul's books. The slur turned into what sounded like a sneer when I asked him about her, and he remained unimpressed, in spite of all I could think to put forward about her importance in establishing the dignity of women. As often proved to be the case, our difference of opinion on this occasion stemmed from historical and sociological roots. Ellul was likewise concerned for women's dignity, but also wanted to offer a counterweight to French popular opinion that he believed simply bowed to Beauvoir as an admired figure, without examining the content of her thought. I was eager to recognize her influence in establishing the importance of women, but did not feel overawed by her reputation. I continue to teach Beauvoir regularly in French literature and culture courses, and see no reason, at least not so far, to let Ellul's reasoning affect my appreciation of her contribution. On the contrary, the more I read of her work, the more pivotal she seems.

One of my primary interests in the development of Ellul's thought centers around World War II and the period leading up to it. I cannot fathom how he grasped the dangers of fascism so early, with such certainty, especially when one considers the fascination it held for many other thinking people in French society at the time. His writings on the subject shine with amazing foresight and clarity, and he does not hesitate to write some "I told you so" articles after the war.

I have interviewed everyone I could find who knew Ellul in the pre-war era, or who had reason to know something about his thinking from that period. So far, none of the suggested answers to my questions about his insight into the true nature of nazism seem to ring true, or to offer an adequate explanation for his understanding. I remain

"stumped," at least until I broaden my perspective by absorbing more background on the intellectualand political atmosphere in Europe prior to World War IL

even talk of republishing Ellul's complete works. Some days, I think work on his bibliography will never end. Nor would I want it to.

Ellul's seminal concepts refuse to remain confined within our convenient categories. The same weekend I read the review of Nagel's new book mentioned above, I found my *thinking* revolving around Ellul during an adult Bible study at church. Oddly enough, my thoughts had no apparent connection with Ellul's theological concepts, important as I believe them to be. We were studying one of Jeremiah's many prophecies of disaster: "If you do this, the result will be that," the prophet predicted. My mind moved to the same general pattern as we find it in Ellul on Technique: "If you do this, the result will be that," he so often wrote.

Specifically, I began wondering about my rather uncritical enthusiasm regarding the use of the Internet: so convenient, so quick. I keep in touch with so many people I didn't seem to be able to, formerly. Problems can be resolved so readily, decisions made without delay. But, "If you do this, the result will be that"—including writing with no forethought, not to mention without care or style, writing as a quick means to a sure end, without nuance—or even diacritical marks! For the sake of speed and convenience, have I, have we, begun to eliminate a facet of life we had good reason to preserve, namely careful writing of letters? Ellul calls us to question new patterns, rather than slipping into them unthinkingly. Before I began to listen to him, I did not reflect on such matters. I took my place, expectantly, as a child of my century, submitting to its influences, considering them as inevitable "progress." Jeremiah took my thoughts in many directions that day, but at least one of them constituted a response to Ellul's call.

Ellul's thought *forms* a kind of World Wide Web unto itself. You can enter this web at an unbelievable number of points, and it may lead you in directions seemingly unrelated to y6ur point of entry. One idea connects with another, andoltimately relates to a vast array, touching most of the important facets of life and thought Since I first found myself in this particular web, I have not been able to stop making connections.

Some of those connections involve new people. In part because of the Ellul bibliography, hardly a week goes by without someone e-mailing or writing me with an Ellul question: do I have a certain Ellul book, do I know where he wrote about a given topic, do I have names of people interested in Ellul in this country or that? I should not have been surprised, then, when the September 1997 conference at The Pennsylvania State University on "Education Technology: Asking the Right Questions" attracted more than 200 people, most of them apparently readers of Ellul. But I was amazed to find so many of us gathered in one place, with Ellul central to so many of the papers given, and with Ellul-talk filling the conversation over every meal (contact Christopher Dufour, Continuing and Distance Education, The Pennsylvania State University, 225 Penn State Conference Center Hotel, University Park PA 16802-7002, for information on the soon-to-be-published papers from the conference).

My experience at Penn State encourages me to believe that Ellul's ability to clarify and stimulate thinking has not diminished since his death in 1994. On the contrary, his web keeps spreading more widely, touching more and more people. Books and articles about him continue to be written, the second posthumous book by Ellul has just been published in French, another Penn State conference is planned for 1999, and there is

My Encounter with Jacques Ellul

Bill Vanderburg

My encounter with Jacques Ellul began with the reading of Ins book *The Technological Society.* I had purchased it at the recommendation of an acquaintance but did not read it until I had to make some important decisions. While I was a doctoral student, a good deal of time was spent with some fellow students discussing the implications of the Club of Rome Report and the environmental crisis. It appeared to me at the time that the very possibility of serious resource crises or an environmental collapse would force our civilization to rethink its steps. The implications for my profession were clearly immense: the engineering, management and regulation of modem technology would have to change fundamentally. To explore the possible nature of these changes, I decided to continue my studies in technology on the post-doctoral level via the social sciences and humanities to see what these disciplines knew about technology that I in my profession would have to become more knowledgeable about

I began reading *The Technological Society* to see if Jacques Ellul might be a possible mentor for my post-doctoral work. After reading about a chapter and a half, I had a powerful intuition that I had found the person I was looking for. However, the encounter was not without ambivalence. On the one hand, the description of technique corresponded exactly to my experiences in the world of engineering. On the other hand, it implied a critique of the technical mind-set that I had spent many years in acquiring. This was rather depressing, because I had always been considered the "philosopher" in the Faculty and had received a great deal of support and encouragement from the assistant dean and the academic vice-president *The Technological Society* was telling me that tire problems were not merely "out there" but that I was an integral part of the technical mind-set and spirit that dominate our age.

My letter of enquiry as to the possibility of studying with Ellul received a negative reply. He explained to me that he would welcome the possibility of working with an engineer, but that he was already so over-committed that he did riot dare to take on yet another project. In the meantime, I had received a post-doctoral fellowship from the only non-military committee of NATO, The Committee for Challenges to a Democratic Society. Hence I wrote Ellul again, offering to limit the time I would request of him to seven hours a year on the assumption that, by auditing all his courses, I could probably figure out most of what I needed to know by myself. He accepted, and we packed our

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bags to move to Pessac where we spent four and a half years, during which time I rethought everything I had learned.

Upon my return to Canada, I had in my pocket one job offer — if it might be called that — from the University of Toronto to teach a course on technology and contemporary society in the sociology department, a course on the relationship between society and engineering for the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (a service course to engineering students), and a teaching assistantship in a fullyear course on the history of technology. It was a foot in the door, which eventually led to the creation of a new tenurestream position to develop that part of engineering education which deals with technology-society-environment interactions arid their implications for engineering theory and practice. Five years later, I received tenure and at the same time became the founding Director of the Centre for Technology and Social Development.

The mission of the Centre was simple: to reach engineering students to take into account social arid environmental considerations along with technical and economic ones so as to make technology as compatible as possible with human life, society and the biosphere —-what I now call preventive approaches. I developed from scratch three undergraduate courses and two graduate courses that would give students a conceptual framework for understanding how technology as an integral part of technique is embedded in, interacts with and depends on human life, society and the biosphere, and to use this understanding in their design arid decision-making.

What does my conceptual framework and professional approach owe to Jacques Ellul? First, an iconoclastic attitude to science in the sense that it knows things only through abstraction, that is, out of their usual context and in the intellectual context of a specific discipline and, where applicable, in a laboratory. There is no science of the sciences capable of producing a comprehensive understanding of our world and the forces that shape it Science, like all other human creations, has its place but the limitations of scientific knowing are rarely recognized. Ellul's scholarship includes science, but goes well beyond it in recognizing that human life and society cannot be understood in a piecemeal fashion one discipline at a time. I have tried to illuminate this aspect of Ellul's thought through my book *The Growth of Minds and Cultures.* I can still recall his first reaction after reading it. "Have I not said all of this already?" I could not say I had read all of his work so I asked him for the appropriate references. Thinking for a moment, he said that there were none. What we finally agreed on was that, without a doubt, my theory of culture was implicit in all his work but that nowhere had he made it explicit His concern was that the book was too systematic and could possibly be assimiliated by the "system" to create even more powerful techniques — a problem he had encountered with some of his own writings.

As the Hennebach Visiting Professor at the Colorado School of Mines this year, I have a lot of time to write and hope to complete the second and third volumes of my series entitled *Technique and Culture.* These develop two themes. The first is what can be done with preventive approaches for the engineering, management and regulation of

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modem technology to resolve or reduce the many problems humanity currently faces. The second theme deals with what cannot be resolved in this way, namely the influence of technique on human life and society, and ponders what else must be done to make modem civilization more sustainable with respect to the biosphere and with respect to human life itself.

In terms of seeking the best possible understanding of where our most powerful creations of the second half of the twentieth century are taking human life and modem civilization, I believe the thought of Jacques Ellul is second to none for our age. I am not at all sure that it will be recognized as such. One of the reasons may well be his iconoclasm of technique, but I hardly think this is the whole story. In describing individual and collective human life as best he could for the second half of the twentieth -century, Ellul, like other great thinkers who attempted this for their times, goes where science cannot follow. This is because making any claim of alienation or reification implies a norm that human life was meant to be different. This is equally true for the work of Kari Marx and Max Weber, but I believe Ellul goes birther than either one of them. The reason I believe this to be the case is that Ellul is much more iconoclastic towards his own position as a person of his time, place and culture. For example, in the case of Karl Marx, if one proceeds to eliminate the great myths (in the sense of cultural anthropology) of progress, work and happiness that dominated Western civilization during the nineteenth century, his entire work comes apart at the seams. Why would the fifth stage in human history be better than the fourth? Why would a political revolution improve the human condition? Why should the characteristics of technology magically change when it is publicly rather than privately owned?

To be iconoclastic with respect to your own culture by means of which you make sense of and live in the world is like cutting the ground from underneath your feet. Of course, this can not be done in an absolute sense, for then We would cease to be people of our time, place and culture. However, even attempting to do so requires what I do not hesitate to call a spiritual struggle that is extremely difficult (I cannot h&p speculating that Max Weber's long illness had a gftat deal to do with what he was describing about the human condition). The few people who I regard as having a good understanding of Ellul's work have themselves gone through this iconoclastic journey with respect to their being people of their time, place and culture. It tends to force us toward the periphery of our intellectual disciplines, professions, and institutions and also marginalizes us in our personal lives away from our political, ethical and religious roots. It is like attempting to grow new roots without being able to shed the existing ones.

This aspect of Ellul's life and work was clearly evident in his approach to teaching. In his course on Marx (and only those readers who appreciate the French cultural setting will be able to understand the implications of what I am saying), Ellul stated in his introductory lecture that he recognized that everyone in that room had a position on Marx. He expressed the hope that, when they were finished with the course, they would know better why they held the position they did, and why they could not accept

alternative ones. In other words, as a young French person, it was essential to think through your own life and its commitments of whatever kind with respect to what Marx had to say. There had to be a measure of iconoclasm with respect to one's own position. Otherwise, it would be impossible to understand Marx.

In the Bible studies he organized for students who had approached him with existential difficulties, Ellul proceeded in much the same way. The ideal composition of a group, he told me, would be one quarter agnostics, one quarter Jews, one quarter Catholics and one quarter Protestants. (Today, he would have probably added another group). To my amazement, he pretty much was able to have that mix during the years I was there. The study of the Bible demanded a certain iconoclasm with respect to one's own traditions, profoundly influenced as these are by the spirit of our age. The challenge of the text to all of us, regardless of our commitments, was to be iconoclastic but not to fall into relativism or nihilism. On the contrary, what is demanded is what in secular terms may be expressed as the recognition, in the sense of cultural anthropology, that human life during a particular historical epoch is rooted in myths, and that this cannot be otherwise. In terms of the Judaep-Christian tradition, it is a constant struggle hot to bow down to idols or, to put this in more contemporary language, not to be alienated or reified by one's own culture and the spirit of one's age.

I think lean safely say that my intellectual life is unthinkable now without the work of Jacques Ellul. I have sought to build on that work in general, and on its iconoclasm with respect to science and technique in particular, so as to find ways in engineering that can help create some play in the present system. Hopefully this may contribute to the mutation that many recognize is essential. I know there are others who struggle in much the same way with their own profession and their roots. As I already mentioned, this struggle necessarily marginalizes those who engage in it. However, there appears no place or opportunity deliberately and consciously designed to facilitate the sharing of these intellectual, professional and personal ventures. We have all heard about invisible colleges and their fundamental role in the development of science. In closing, I will argue that all of us stand much to lose if we somehow, in the very near future, do not establish an invisible college within which we can each flourish in our endeavours through communication, critical reflection and sharing. I am obviously not thinking of a learned society, not anything that would directly look good on our curricula vitae (if you happen to be a professor or teacher), but a completely informal group where people discuss the intellectual and existential struggles in which they are engaged. At present, there is no such grassroots association, yet I believe that on this tenth anniversary this is what should happen.

Ellul and the Sentinel on the Wall

Marva J. Dawn

A chance remark to John H. Yoder, my dissertation /jkdirector atthe Universityof Notre Dame, changed my Ay^Hife in more ways than I can enumerate here. I had just read Jacques Ellul's *The Ethics of Freedom* and mentioned to John that Ellul's comments in that volume about the biblical notion of the principalities and powers intrigued me. John answered that this was a subject that needed much more study — and the rest is, as they say, history. I had planned to do my dissertation On economic redistribution, but that moment led me to exchange this for Ellul's insights into contemporary manifestations of the powers. The requirements of dissertation writing compelled me to read as much of Ellul as possible; his incredible grasp of things, in turn, propelled me into numerous changes of thinking, working, and living.

Principalities and Powers

The extent of Ellul's influence on my life and work can't even begin to be indicated by the fact that my notes from his publications and my own writings about him Ell a branch of my computer hard disk with almost 6 million bytes, not counting books of mine on other subjects, yet heavily impacted by his insights. Though ultimately not the most important, the most comprehensive element of that influence is his insight into the biblical notion of the powers. The section, "Freedom in Relation to the Powers," in *The Ethics of Freedom* lists the following possibilities of interpretation for biblical passages about principalities:

Are they demons in the most elemental and traditional sense? Are they less precise power? (thrones and dominions?) which still have an existence, reality, and, as one might say, objectivity of their own? Or do we simply have a disposition of man which constitutes this or that human factor a power by exalting it as such...? In this case the powers are not objective realities which influence man from without They exist only as the determination of man which allows them to exist in their subjugating otherness and transcendence. Or finally, at the far end of the scale, are the powers simply a figure of speech common to the Jewish-Hel-lenistic world so that they merely represent cultural beliefs and have no true validity?[1]

Ellul situates himself somewhere between the second and third interpretations, for these reasons:

On the one side, I am fully convinced with Barth and Cullmann that the New Testament *exousiai* and the power of money personified as Mammon correspond to authentic, if spiritual, realities which are independent of man's decision and inclination and whose force does not reside in the man who constitutes them. Nothing that I have read to the contrary has had any great cogency for me. Neither the appeal to Gnosticism nor reference to the cultural background seems to me to explain the force

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[1] trans, and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 151-2. Page references to this book are given parenthetically in the following text I have chosen not to muddy quotations by changing Ellul's use of 'man" to inclusive language.

and emphasis of the New Testament writers in this area, in particular the opposite view has to followthe common practice of ignoring certain essential passages where Paul cannot be adequately demythologized ,

On the other side, however, the powers do not act Simply from outside after the manner of Gnostic destiny or a *deus ex machina.* They are characterized by their relation to the concrete world of man. According to die biblical references they End expression in human, social realities, in the enterprises of man. In this sense the occasion of their intervention is human decision and action... [T]he world of which the New Testament speaks is not just a spiritual and abstract reality but one which is identical with what man in general calls the world, i.e., society (152).

Specifically, Ellul asserts that the way in which the powers transform "a natural, social, intellectual, or economic reality into a force which man has no ability either to resist or to control" and the way in which this force "gives life and autonomy to institutions and structures" or "attacks man both inwardly and outwardly" and "alienates man by bringing him into the possession of objects" correspond to biblical passages such as Ephesians 6:12 (152-3). Consequently, Ellul continues as follows:

Political power has many dimensions, e.g., social, economic, psychological, ethical, psycho-analytical, and legal. But when we have scrutinized them all, we have still not apprehended its reality. I am not speaking hastily or lightly here but as one who has passed most of his life in confrontation with their question and in their power. We cannot say with Marx that the power is an ideological superstructure, for it is always there. The disproportion noted above leads me to the unavoidable conclusion that another power intervenes and indwells and uses political power, thus giving it a range and force that it does not have in itself.

The same is true of money ...[and] technology (153-4).

Ellul's own insistence that he speaks out of a lifelong confrontation with the question of the powers raised for me the issue of how this notion was manifested in his immense and diverse corpus. Especially by means of some of his earliest writings in which he links spiritual causes with economic and political problems, I discovered that from the beginning Ellul's separate tracks of theology and *sociologie* had a profoundly deep connection, that the biblical notion of "the principalities and powers" is that correlating link. His sociological assessments of the all-encompassing influence of such contemporary forces as technology, politics, and economics undergird the intensity of his ethical calls to Christians to be "sentinels on the walls" recognizing and warning of the dangers. Ellul wanted the hope and grace of his theology to be related to the concrete situation of the powers at work in the world. On the other hand, he insisted that only on the basis of true freedom through faith was he "able to hold at arm's length these powers which condition and crush me... [and to] view them with an objective eye that freezes and externalizes and measures them..." (228-33). One of the goals

of my dissertation, consequently, was to demonstrate how the concept of "the powers" thoroughly grounded — and thereby could help us understand -Ellul's thinking.[2]

In my work of leading clergy conferences transdenomina-tionally I have found that pastors and other church leaders find this "principalities and powers" language extremely helpful for understandingthe forces that make their work difficult—such as the passivity fostered in pur culture when persons are bombarded by such large amounts of information that they feel incapacitated or immobilized?[3] Learning that the obstructions to ministry are not mere "flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12), but larger forces often interrelated enables my colleagues to ask better questions to discern what is inimical to the gospel, what should be resisted, what can be modified. The terminology also provides immense hope, since Christians believe that Christ has triumphed over the powers by exposing and disarming them; my teaching and writing can thus offer not only the unmasking of suchforces, but also biblical tools for standing against them.[4]

Money as *Mammon*

Ellul's insights into the principalities have not only undergirded my teaching; his perceptions have also shaped my personal life. Though I had already been asking critical questions about such forces as technology and money in my daily life, Ellul's article, "L'Argent," and its larger development in the book, *Money and Powers,* influenced my decisions about my salary and book royalties. In these works Ellul insists that money becomes a god in more ways than we customarily realize. I had always thought that I was safe from its seductions since I didn't have too much (to be, therefore, tempted to hoard it), nor too little (and thus tempted to chase after it). Money, I presumed, was an area of life over which I had sufficient control.

But Ellul blasted me out of that complacency with his discernment that we sometimes sacrilize money by being such a good steward of it that we aren't generous. I felt compelled to go to the person whose Study carrel was next to mine and whose husband was unemployed to ask her if she would help me desacralize what remained in my grocery budget that month by taking it off my hands. She answered that she would never have-accepted my gift (it was only $10) if I had offered it as such, but that she would gladly help me de-divinize that money. The delight and laughter of the occasion helped me recognize the freedom inherent in Ellul's astuteness.

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[2] See Marva J. Dawn, "The Concept of 'the Principalities and Powers' in the Works of Jacques Ellul" (Notre Dame: PhD. dissertation, 1992) and also Marva J. Dawn, trans, and ea.,*Sources and Trajectories: Eight Early Articles by Jacques Ellul that Set the Stage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997). The commentary in the latter attempts to overcome some of the barriers to reading Ellul's work and to introduce new readers to Ellul's larger corpus .

[3] See Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985) and *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1992).

[4] See, for example, Marva J. Dawn, *Is It a Lost Cause? Having die Heart of Godfor the Church's Children* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997).

Now married to a man who shares my desire to desacralize money, I experience the same freedom in not requiring more income than his work as an elementary school teacher provides. Not needing royalties, which are given away, I can write books out of passionate concern for the Christian community and without cares about the market. The Board of "Christians Equipped for Ministry," under which I freelance, similarly shares Ellul's perspective and helps decide Where our income tithes should be sent and to which places, such as Mexico and Poland,Icangotoserveforfree. Of course, Ellul was primarily concerned with economics on the global scale, but his constant invitation to "act locally" invites each of us to counteract the world's constantly expanding "need" for more stuff and larger incomes (to prove our worth?) by de-divinizing money in our own lives and in our churches.

The Subversion of Christianity

The work that I had already been doing as a freelancer was confirmed and intensified as a result of Ellul's works on faith and ecclesiology — works which have not received due attention, perhaps because of his penchant for overstating his case to make a point. Particularly *The Presence of the Kingdom* (and *False Presence)* and *The Subversion ofChristianity* heightened my efforts to encourage pastors to resist the unbiblical advice of the church marketers and the economic and political pressures that pervert the gospel — though I disagree with how Ellul in the latter book limits his definition of the powers to six functions in a way that contradicts his earlier elaborations, especially in *Money and Power.*

My disagreement on that issue also aided in developing for me a new independence in my scholarship; not having any real mentors for the kind of work that I do, I had often experienced difficulty previously relying on my own work when I found myself objecting to ideas or methods in thinkers whom I trusted. Ellul's constant insistence that he didn't want "disciples," but that he intended to motivate more thorough thinking gave me permission to protest his conclusions while still acknowledging my intellectual inferiority.

One of the main weaknesses in Ellul's work is his lack of attention to the Christian community — a weakness that he blamed, in conversation, on his own bad experiences with Church bureaucracy. Convinced that the deficiency of true community is a major source of churches' lifelessness, efforts to equip church leaders with biblical resources for building it comprise a principal portion of my teaching and writing.[56]

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[5] "L'Argent," *Etudes Theologiques et Religieuses* 27,4 (1952), 29-66, and *Money and Power,* trans. LaVonne Neff (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984).

[6] See, for example, Marva J. Dawn, *Truly die Community: Romans 12 and How to Be die Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992).

Hermeneutics

Ellul's widely ranging books on biblical texts accentuated my need to discern when I can agree with him (or, more exactly, when his astuteness opens texts for me in entirely new ways!) and when he stretches texts beyond faithfulness to their intent to make his point I can't say that Ellul's book on the *Apocalypse* affected my own writing on the subject since my book was fleshed out (though the final polishing took twelve years!) before I read his, but his attention to large themes rather than to precise interpretations of minute symbols seemed to support my own approach to the book as a perfect vehicle for encouraging those who suffer handicaps and chronic illness.[7]

Ellul's biblical books which influenced me most were *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man* (on II Kings), *The Meaning of the City,* and *Reasoh for Being: A Meditation on Ecclesiastes.* The first is one of the finest expositions of the dialectical tension between God's sovereignty and human free will that I have ever found, and the second awakened me to the broad sweep of God's grieving over the rebelliousness of human beings which I had never before seen in connection with all the scattered references to cities in the biblical narratives.

Ellul's book on Ecclesiastes has become helpful for my critique of postmodernism in that Ellul deconstructed the myth of progress from *within* the metanarrative of the Bible. His "Preliminary, Polemical, Non-definitive Postscript" joins his "Notes innocentes sur la 'question hermeneutique,'"[8] in reproaching those exegetes who judge the text instead of letting

it judge them. I first read the latter article at a time when I was deeply disturbed by the ways academia so often begins studying biblical texts with a presupposition against their credibility. Since I serve the Church rather than academia, I see the destruction of such extreme "hermeneutics of suspicion" (which often become instead "henneheutics' of blatant rejection"), and I find that pastors especially need the encouragement of Ellul's insistence for our hermeneutical methods that we cannot understand anything of *any* Signified whatever it might be, "if [we] do not receive and believe the Revealed [One]."[9]

Doing Ethics as a Lutheran

In the field of ethics Ellul primarily influenced me by making clear the reason that Lutherans (the tradition in which I was raised) have not been particularly good at doing ethics.-In his insistence that we must have an ethics of freedom and in' his claim

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[7] See Marva J. Dawn, Joy *in our Weakness: A Gift of Hope from die Book of Revelation* (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994). -

[8] The latter is published in L'Evangile, trier et aujourd'hui: Melanges offerts auprofesseur Franz J. Leehardt (Geneve: Editions Labor et Tides. 1968), pp. 181-190, and translated in Sources and Trajectories, pp. 184-203.

[9] *Sources, p.* 192.

that we destroy ethics by turning it into a system Ellul is especially faithful to Martin Luther and antagonistic to his Calvinist roots. If we begin with grace and understand questions of ethics as Holy Spirit-inspired responses to that grace, then it is impossible to legislate moral behaviour.

Consequently, as I presently work on my own ethics textbook, I am developing a model of nurturing Christian character by means of immersion in the biblical narratives so that moral behavior will be the (unlegislated and unsystematized) result. Ellul's influence will be apparent throughout, though, at the current stage, I am only wishing that I could produce books as quickly as he did.[10]

Meeting Ellul

Finally, I must comment on the influence of meeting Ellul personally in the summer of 1987.1 had already been surprised by his graciousness in responding to the letters of an unknown graduate student and was further amazed that he would take the time to meet with me. Due to his decline in health, he had written that he would limit the time of our conversation, but then when that time was spent he continued to talk and afterward his lovely wife served raspberries from their garden. Some of my Ellulian colleagues seemed to be frustrated with me that I did not spend my time asking Ellul about his future writing projects, but for me it was far more valuable to discuss his life patterns rather than his work (although we did do some of that, especially concerning his ideas about the principalities and powers). Professor Ellul asked questions about my work, too—especially about some articles I had written on teaching ethics to children in Lutheran schooIs. This stands out in my memory because for me Ellul served as such an excellent model of a profound scholar who is also able to relate well to other people. Concerning the common split in theologians between the head and the heart he said, "it is contrary to the Gospel."

We talked about many practical issues that day — the situation in South Africa, the ecology movement, U.S. intervention in Nicaragua, caring for the poor and the handicapped, euthanasia. As would be expected, Ellul stressed the importance of avoiding propaganda and political games, of thinking about each problem as a whole (thinking globally), and of seeing what we can modify practically in our own communities. He urged the U.S. to fight with economic justice rather than armies and to help the poor not only materially, but also with fellowship, spiritual security, and support in their anguish.

Though Ellul often can seem harsh in his writings, his personal presence was of the utmost gentleness and profound sincerity, the generous character of a deeply committed Christian. -

When we discussed presenting our work in publishable ways, Ellul said that he had created his own market/but that it had taken a long time. When I responded that

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[10] See Marva J. Dawn, A *World of Difference. Biblical Ethics for die Daily Life of Common People*

I 'm too impatient, he replied, "you must *always* be impatient" Both of those points have been constructive for me since my work as a freelancer has had to create its own market over time. '

I wanted to know Ellul as a person encountering, in the struggle to live out faith and ministry, typical obstacles—such as the one we acknowledged in common of dividing our time between study and relating to people when involved in speaking engagements. He revealed himself as I expected — a wonderful model of a gracious man incarnating the Gospel in practical ways, a brilliant man choosing carefully the values of the kingdom of God.

All That Counts

Daniel B. Clendenin

summer of 1981 was an important time for me. I I had finished seminaiy in June and then married two F weeks after graduation ceremonies, It was also the summer that one of my closest friends in seminaiy, David Werther, gave me a copy of a book by an author I had never heard *of——The Technological* Society by Jacques Ellul. By the end of that summer I had fairly well decided that I wanted Ellul to be the focus of my doctoral studies. Four years later I had finished my dissertation on Ellul's theological method, and perhaps one of the greatest tributes I can make to the impact he has had on my thought and life is to say that I never grew bored, as so many do, with my dissertation topic, either back then or even today. Since that summer when my friend David introduced me to Ellul, he has always been a living and active force forme.

What attracted me to Ellul or, in a more academic yen, what was the true nature of his genius? No doubt his provocative writing style, which in the long run clearly decreased the size of his potential reading audience and the extent of his influence, was attractive. In the academic world where nearly every sentence must be qualified with a tip of the hat to the experts, it was life-giving read someone who wrote almost without nuance. But style alone would hardly commend a lifetime of influence, and to be sure, entertaining writers are a dime a dozen.

The breadth and depth of Ellul's knowledge was amazing, and is often touted, but, by itself, that is not really too unusual in the university or intellectual worlds. And even if&e was in a class by himself in this regard, so what? What has the world gained by someone who is nothing more than a mere intellectual titan? As Paul Johnson has shown in his depressing book, *Intellectuals,* mere intellectual brilliance can sometimes be a sorry measure indeed by which to measure a life. 1 am not suggesting that this aspect of Ellul was unimportant—far from it—only that he was much mare than a "mere" intellectual giant, and that for me personally, intellectual brilliance by itself is not very interesting, and that sometimes is both dangerous and deforming.

(forthcoming from Eerdmans).

Like many people, I found a number of Ellul's signature ideas to be extremely fertile and provocative ●—-the nature and threat of technique, the propagandistic effect and ultimate powerlessness of all politics regardless of their content, the anarchist nature of Christian discipleship, his critique of the mind numbing contemporary "commonplaces", the new demons of our resacralized world, his unapologetic faith in biblical revelation, and so on. But are these ideas so veiy unusual? I think not. Other authors have explored similar themes. Perhaps Ellul was a man before his time, in that he wrote about some of these issues before others had discovered them or made them popular, but I think one could easily show that many other authors have explored these same ideas with a similar depth, breadth, and provocative nature.

Ellul has had a singular impact on me, I think, for a different reason. As was his explicitly stated intent, when I read Ellul, he somehow seemed to articulate — albeit in an intellectual manner—what I experienced as an ordinary person in everyday life. Put in Kieikegaardian terms, Ellul captured me, his reader, as that "single individual" whom he hoped to move to action. Every time I read Ellul, I felt like I alone was that "single individual" for whom he wrote.

In the spring of 1985 I was in Bangui, Central African Republic. As when my friend gave me a copy of *The Technological Society,* I have a very vivid memory of the exact time place and setting of a conversation I had with an American missionary scholar who had spent much of his life in francophone countries—and thus, I figured, he would be interested in Ellul. I had given Jack a book or two hy Ellul to read, and his analysis of them that day was short but profound. I still remember his exact words: "He writes about what I experience."

Ellul understood as Paul Johnson put it, what intellectuals a too often forget, that people are more important than ideas, or better yet, that people of ideas must somehow connect with the normal everyday world of common people (the theme of Richard MouW's little book *Consulting the Faithful).* Ellul joined the world of ideas to the world of the ordinary person and he did this both in the books he wrote but, perhaps even more significantly, in the way he lived his own life for others.

How many intellectuals of Ellul's caliber can we think of today who spend significant personal time, energy, creativity and the like with disenfranchised people, as Ellul did with street gangs (long before it was a fashionable cause), to the extent that a national organization was formed to help these people? Or how many professors of whatever religious persuasion have the vision, the personal skills and the commitment, not to mention the interest, to hold regular church services in their home for blue collar people, preach, and, when the group expanded to four services, because so many people were coming, donate the financial resources for the church to build their own building? Or we could mention Ellul's political activism (at least early on as deputy mayor of Bordeaux, before he grew totally disillusioned with all politics), his environmental causes, work with his Reformed denomination for two decades at the national level, mountain hiking with his students, his remark that above all things he was a man of important friendships, and the like.

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When I interviewed Ellul in 1985 he told me the stoiy of a young woman and child who approached him after he had delivered apaper at some conference. "You don't know me, do you?", she asked. Ellul said no, ahd the young woman went on to remind Ellul who she was and how that ten years earlier he had counseled her not to have an abortion. She then delivered a one-liner that I will never forget: "I wanted to show you the child you saved. "For me, Ellul remarked in the interview, "it was extraordinary." An extraordinary experience, to be sure, but rather typical for the way Ellul lived his life and wrote his books.

Ellul's ability to connect both in an intellectual manner and in practical ways with the normal human experiences everyday people is, I would argue, at the center of his overall vocation as he understood it. As he says in *In Season, Out of Season,*

We are touching on a trait that I consider important I never write ideas. I have always attempted to transmit exactly what I have experienced, in objectifying it I have always thought on the experiential level. Arid my wife has had a considerable influence in this. I was, before her, pretty much a bookworm; I relied heavily on categories and concepts. She continually brought me back to the living reality which is all that counts. From that point on, my thinking was guided by concrete experience. I tried to think only in relation to what I had experienced and to transmit only what I was capable of living. That is why my work is inevitably incomplete and does notappearto be very systematic.

I have never tried to make a theoretical system conceived in itself and for itself.

Model, Mentor, Sage Admonisher, Questioner, Sufferer, Friend to Many, Faithful to Vocation and Revelation."

In Galatians 5:6 the ApostlePaul writes that "the only thing that matters is faith working in love." This is incarnation, living out one's faith in what Ellul describes above as "the concrete reality" which, in the end, is likely to be "all that counts."

I claim to be an ordinary man, and I am absolutely convinced of it it I have always seen myself as an ordinary man, immersed in the same environment as everyone else At the movies, I am an ideal spectator. I laugh when everyone laughs, cry when everyone cries; I am emotional. 1 am not aloof; I only become aloof later. After returning home, I say to myself, "you reacted in this spot and in this way and here is how the others reacted." And I carry out a minute notation of all that happened. But I am really a split personality. The one watches a play at the theater, and the other observes the setting. A recollection: I told you that I was trained in painting , but I had no musical education. I had never heard the least bit of music before the age of twenty or twenty-one. One evening, I decided to go to a conceit I felt almost nothing, followed nothing understood nothing. I was completely bored. But what was passionately interesting to me was the audience, and I spontaneously began to do a psychological study of the

audience as a whole and of the individuals as I could obserave. I learned a lot that evening. And music seemed like a strange magic to me.

The exact same thing happened when I went to political meetings or mass marches. I was the typical participant and later the analyst of what happened.

The proof that I am indeed an ordinary man is that there are always a lot of people who tell me, "What you write there is exactly what we felt.'The only difference is that I have this ability of verbalizing, of intellectual analysis, that they have developed less than I. That is the only difference."

A similar way to express this idea is t say that Ellul lived a holistic life, rather than a life that is deformed by an unhealthy absorption with only one area of life — in the instance of intellectuals, too often, nothing more than ideas and books Marva Dawn captures this nicely when in the dedication of her collection of early articles by Ellul *Sources and Trajectories* (1997) she honors Ellul for who he really was — not merely a brilliant intellectual with fascinating ideas about important matters but as a "Prophet, Social Critic, Scholar, Bible Study Leader and Preacher, Nurturer of Young People, Professor, Advisor, Writer, Resister, Fanner, Environmental Activist,

Reflections on Ellul's Influence

by Gabriel Vahanian

If nothing else, the table of contents of my various books I should suffice to give an idea oF the extent to which, in "fact, Ellul has accompanied me for the last fifty years, and shaped my own thinking for the better part of my life, though ! wouldn't, oF course, attribute to him whatever defects still linger on in the subsequent evolution, whether oF my commitment to theology or of my academic career. Needless to say, without his support, I would hot have been elected to a professorship in Strasbourg; nor would I, without his influence, have been able to deepen and broaden in the first place the problematic of the death of God. Which brings me back to the 'table of contents'.

Jacques Ellul has left at least two full length manuscripts. Under the title of *e'thique de la sanctification,* one of them deals with the ethic of hallowing. The Other deals with theology and technology, and I have known its existence for almost a quarter of a century. He had told me about it, and told me also that, somehow as a matter of habit, he, so to speak, kept certain manuscripts on reserve. And, so to speak again, but to me more important, the reason for this disclosure had to do with the publication in 1977 of my book enticed *God and Utopia,* upon reading which, he added, he had signiFicantly had to revise his own manuscript on the same subject. The table of contents does indeed show that he had wrestled with *God and Utopia.* In our conversation, he had also remarked in passing that, if people should think this was a difficult book, it would

be because ttyey simply would not want to understand it lest they should discard a number of comfortable beliefs. Ellul knew, as f hoped he would, that though we were not cast in the same theological mould, we nonetheless were fellow-iconoclasts.

No, he did not have major difficulties with my theological reformulations', and, so far as I was concerned, I could put up with his own substantially conservative approach. Surely, and why should I not acknowledge that, at a deeper level, he continued to intrigue me. I hold from him just about everything I know about technology. And that is exactly where the question, "What Ellul has meant for me, personally" bursts forth in a manner few would suspect, considering the critical stance which I have on occasion displayed if only because I deemed him not only *worthy* of it but calling for it. After all, one can only tackle a giant No matter how rough my remarks could be, they never allowed me to lose sight of that. So much so, that what he has meant for me could and should probably be best answered by, chronologically, Jim Holloway, Darrell Fasch-ing, Sylvain Dujancourt, and Andrew Goddard — to wit

Outside of the New York Times Book Review, the first notice of *The Death of God* was given by Duncan Taylor-Norton in his introduction to *The Space Industry,* a collection of articles written by the editors of *Fortune* (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1962). Whether this was to be taken as a nod towards Ellul, the fact is that, ever since, I have for my part understood technology as being neither more nor less than our new *milieu* instead of, though not exclusive of "nature " or 'history". The rise of technology has been tied in and woven with the death of God as a cultural phenomenon: the term ''post modem" has today become quite fashionable and fashionably acceptable: hi those days I used to say "post-christian*.

I still remember Jim Holloway's phone call. He wanted an article for his journal *Katallagete,* and explained that the reason for this request was simply the fact that his attention had first been drawn to Ellul by reading *The Death of God.* Holloway had no doubt that accordingly I had taken Ellul most seriously: there must be a connection between theology and technology, since they both deal at bottom with our mode of being.

Why conceal It? I have always been skeptical of the Barthianism that infested Ellul's own theological endeavors. Had he not himselF once told me that he had swerved away fromBarth's political commitments, adding that the great trouble with Barth was that he knew nothing about politics ' That did not prevent *him*, however, from remaining— by and large faithful to the framework oF Barth's theology. Ellul would certainly not have written, as I did, an article enticed "From Kari Barth to Theology — which in part, at least on the continent,explains why I 'have mostly fallen on deaf ears; why, as Ellul said, they would not understand me: French protestant theology has become frozen with Barth

In spite of that, Ellul had not shied away from admitting to a certain connivance between us. He had been on the main *rapporteur* during the oral examination I un-derwent for the "super-duper" — and for that matter now defunct — French degree known as *doctoral d 'Etat.* In fact, that was the only time Ellul and his wife were

to come to Strasbourg in many decades. Nor would he do so again in spite of my stubborn efforts. He traveled by train and now, because of his declining health, even that became for him unbearable — just as previously he had always turned down my repeated invitations to come to Syracuse: he would not take an airplane.

Ultimately, the reason I took Ellul most seriously or switched from Barth to Ellul is, simply, because unlike Bult-mann, Barth never talked about technology. And, though with Ellul theology and technology tend to look like Luther's two kingdoms, here was at least a theologian who did not pursue his task in total abstraction from our inescapably technological milieu! I could not but take him seriously. And the extent to which I did so is, I surmise, is still remembered by Darrell Fasching and Sylvain Dujancourt if not Martin Kastelic, if only because of the number of times they had to revise their respective dissertations. Not that such revisions are what I systematically expect whenever Ellul is the subject-matter: Andrew Goddard was spared from that, but then, at Oxford, the thesis director— which I wasn't— never is.the examiner, which I was.

Undoubtedly, whether the two manuscripts I know of will ever be published depends on Ellul's children and those that advise them. All I know is thatEllul appreciated my efforts such as *God and Utopia* and even wanned up to the notion of utopia, while in other respects he always spared me from the sharp criticisms he leveled at various exponents of the death of God.

Was not his subsequent notion of the "silence" of God" his way of coping with the cultural'demise of the ontotheistic notion of God? '

I have in front of me notes I took on the 6th of June 1946 during a lecture Ellul gave on Communism in Basel. No wonder, I had awaited the publication of his *La technique or I I 'enjeu du siecle b* Duntil *1954.* Subsequently, thanks to Enrico Castelli and his series of colloquiums, we had met regularly at the University of Rome La Sapienza. For many years we also met just about every six months to discuss the 'fate' of *Foi et Vie,* the journal of which he was the director until his resignation for reasons of health.

No wonder, either, I myself cannot tell what that giant of a man has really meant for me, personally.

Jacques Ellul Was the First

Pieter Tijmes

For me Jacques Ellul was the first author who has introduced me into the field of philosophy and technology. That is the reason why I am grateful to him. Even possibly justified criticism of him provokes defensiveness in me. This is a sign of my warm feelings for Ellul who was, in ; my view, carefree yet pessimistic. His political engagements were not crowned with success, but nevertheless he continued his way whistling. In a sense, he was unassailable and had a firm confidence in the successful outcome of every thing in the world, in the end. It was a Barthian spirituality that guaranteed

this trust. Concrete obstacles he was confronted with in his career as political activist were treated as minor details. I do hot know Jacques Ellul in person nor have I ever talked with him, but I read and have read his books on technology in this mood. I would not like to see things differently, but what I do not like might be necessary.

His books *La technique ou I 'enjeu du siecle* and *Le Sys feme Technicien* were fascinating. He did not claim to be a philosopherbut always emphasized his sociological approach. Strange to me was his claim to be inspired by Marx. Unfortunately, I could not find a spark of the Marxian tradition, but afterwards I realized that he said so during the climax of the cold war which was evidently *a* sign of his independent way of thinking - and most independent of Marx, in my view. I was impressed by the way he explained that technology was the decisive characteristic of our contemporary and future life. His typical slogan of "autonomous technology" did its work on me. He showed quite clearly that modem technology was a new phenomenon not to be compared with traditional forms of technology and that this technology evoked a technological universe. I became still more convinced of the symbolic fall-out of technology, to use an intriguing Ulichian expression. It is unnecessary to explain all these insights in *The Ellul Forum.*

In the last book of his trilogy on technology *Le Bluff tech-nologique* he holds the conviction that each phase of technology provides more problems than solutions. Technologists are simply deceivers by bluffing. Ellul is merciless in showing that the view that unexpected and undesirable side effects can be overcome in a technological way is absolutely false. This book in comparison with the other two was still more massively negative and more somber with regard to the irresistible and enslaving power of technology — it was, even for me, too much. The book also irritated me methodologically, because any viewpoint was embraced on the condition that it was blacker than black, even when the insight did not fitEllul's own frame of reference. He spoke about technology's ambivalence but in fact he meant technology as *massaperditionis.* Ellul's joy of discovering new insights, in my perception,was gone in this book. And he was repeating his original and impressive insights in an inelegant and sometimes boring way. I was relieved to have reached the last page of the book. In a certain sense it was unmanageable to me. To be honest, I was not allowed to cherish such a vision on technology as a protestless consumer of flights and computers.

Nor did I have the courage to tell my students that they were blindly promoting the evils of technology. In my opinion this Ellulian trade was not fruitful for me any more. This is my memory but I know that memories are very manageable by people. The first two books had a freshness of saying new things to me, the last book of the trilogy could be said in fifty pages as for me. His Calvinistic ethos that sought its fulfillment inwriting books turned out to beascounterproductiveas technology. But why pass a negative sentence oh an author of whom the last book turns out badly?

- Still, as the readers of Ellul Studies know, I did my best to defend Ellul's vision of technology as a legitimate vision of an outsider. His vision should be comple-

mented with a point of view of an insider or actor *(Ellul Forum, Jan \ 995)*. As (Durk-heimian) outsider you are allowed to speak about the autonomy of technological decisions, etc., but as an actor or insider you know better, or more precisely you have other insights. The problem how to integrate the truths of the outsider's perspective and the insider's perspective I gladly leave to sociologists. It is the question how to exorcise Durkheim's spirit. On the other hand, it is also an existential question how to lay bare relevant moments of decisions in the technological process.

In short, Ellul was a good beginning for me, and I am interested how people explore his possibilities to continue Jacques Ellul's line of thought-In this formulation it is clear that I do not consider this explorative work with Jaques Ellul as a point of departure to be my task. In the philosophy of technology there are on this moment more interesting starting points. I have to make here a great reservation. Ellul's theological passion was not a secret but I do not possess an intimate knowledge of it. I am open to be instructed that the theological insights on the technological universe are more revealing than what is brought into the open from other point of views. I am open to it, but I have not had that experience up to now.

Book Reviews

Andrew John Goddard. "The Life and Thought of Jacques Ellul with Special Reference to His Writings on Law, Violence, the State, and Politics."

Ph.D. thesis, Faculty of Theology, University of Oxford, 1995. Pp. 495.
Reviewed by Joyce Hanks

Andrew Goddard's dissertation makes a refreshing and much-needed contribution to Ellul studies. Once published, I believe it will prove indispensable, both for those in need of a careful explanation of Ellul's fundamental theological and sociological concepts, and for those who desire to know more in detail about his life and work.

One of the study's many excellent features is the manner in which it integrates matters too often separated in works on Ellul: his life and his theoretical stances (see p. 285 on anarchy, for example, and p. 217 on his involvement with the "Associations Professionnelles Protestantes"), his "dialogue" with Karl Barth at different stages of his life, and, especially, his sociological and theological writings. Goddard outlines Ellul's concerns for society as manifested in both his works and his experience.

Like most dissertations that treat Ellul as their central subject, this one gives an overview, as suggested by its title. B(ut, with the possible exceptions of Bill Vandeiburg's *Perspectives on Our Age* (trans. Joachim Neugroschel; Toronto? Canadian Broadcasting Corp., 1981), and the translated interviews in *In Season, Out of Season* (interviews by Madeleine Garrigou-La-grange; trans. Lani K. Niles; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), I cannot think of any work in English that begins to offer the wealth of biographical information we find here. Goddard appears to have read and digested everything imaginable on Ellul in French and English. Patrick Chastenet's *Entretiens avec Jacques Ellul* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1994), was published too late to permit the incorporation of its revelations into the body of this dissertation, but Goddard has made very detailed reference to it in his footnotes.

Goddard has made extensive use of the Ellul collection at Wheaton College's library and other sources, incorporating many course outlines and unpublished articles by Ellul into his analysis, and confronting these writings with each other (as well as with Ellul's published books and articles). This early, unpublished material proves especially valuable as Goddard traces Ellul's thought on society prior to the publication in French of *The Technological Society* (1954).

Following his initial, insightful biography chapter on Ellul, the author considers Ellul's theology (the keys to which for Goddard are the Fall, or the "rupture," and communion with God) and ethics, and then his sociology (in which the concept of "civilization" plays a central role, along with Technique and modernity). The focus on Ellul's theology and sociology separately, and then in dialectical tension, constitutes the structure of virtually the entire dissertation.

Readers will find this arrangement especially illuminating, I believe, in connection with the three "case studies" examined in depth by Goddard in the second part of his study: law, violence, and the State and politics. To deal with each of these themes, Goddard devotes first a chapter to Ellul's sociology as related to the topic, and then a chapter devoted to his theological treatment of it But throughout, Goddard shows how the two kinds of writing relate with respect to the question at hand. I found Goddard especially provocative on this fundamental issue of the separation and relationship of Ellul's two approaches (see, for exartiple, p. 164, where he ties Ellul's proposed reforms for seminary studies to this dialectic).

Goddard's treatment of Ellul on law may prove rather challenging to non-specialists, but it constitutes a major contribution to Ellul studies, since this significant aspect of Ellul's work has received so little attention in published articles. Goddard offers a welcome explanation for the difficulty many find as they attempt to understand Ellul's *Theological Foundation of Law* (trans. Marguerite Wieser, New York: Doubleday, 1960; French edition 1946), and summarizes the book carefully (along with several of Ellul's articles on law).

Goddard also shows how Ellul's technical studies on law relate to his writings on the theology of law, and explores the relationship of Christian believers with law and institutions. Throughout the dissertation, especially in his chapters on law, Goddard routinely incorporates relevant material from *Histoire des institutions* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955-; multiple editions, usually in four volumes), customarily ignored in studies on Ellul. The author traces in detail what he believes are essential changes over time in Ellul's theological approach to law. Another significant change in Ellul's theology as seen by Goddard surfaces often in the dissertation: the disappearance in later works of Ellul's early insistence on a "divine order of preservation" of the world.

Although Goddard finds Ellul less original when he writes on violence than on law or the State and politics, he calls violence "the one subject where theological concerns are unambiguously the context for the presentation of Ellul's sociological reflections" (p. 248). He shows how violence, in Ellul's view, stems from humanity's broken relationship with God, and thus relates to the deepest layer in society's structure, forming a constant throughout our history.

Leaving some questions relating to Ellul and the State unresolved, particularly the theological issues, this dissertation outlines a convincing relationship between Ellul's experiences in the 1930's and 1940's and his view of politics (especially anarchy). Goddard offers a helpful distinction between the personal power wielded by governmental

authorities, as seen in Romans 13, and the abstract power exercised in modem states, under the domination of the "powers," with a view to explaining Ellul's varying positions with respect to Biblical passages on Christians' relationship with authority.

Goddard has helpfully divided his dissertation into clearly differentiated sections within each chapter, building to significant conclusions throughout. Readers will also discover more than thirty pages of substantive quotations from difficult-to-find works by Ellul in French, organized in an appendix of endnotes. Goddard mentions several misleading English translations in Ellul's books, and spots errors in bibliographies of Ellul. His bibliography runs to more than 100 pages.

We should all hope that publishers will vie with each other to obtain the right to bring this important study into print—with the addition of an index, and references to English editions of Ellul's works, where possible. We would profit from future "case studies" of Ellul on art, the church, propaganda, revolution, the sacred, etc., pursuing the lines of Goddard's approach. Ellul himself would urge us, however, to go beyond understanding what he has to say, in order to apply his principles and insights to matters he did not address.

Joyce M. Hanks

For readers wishing to purchase *Silences,* it sells for 75 French francs through Editions Opales, 13 Cours Gambetta, 33400 Talence, France (Telephone/FAX: 011-33-557-96-93-28).

Jacques Ellul. *Silences: Poemes.*

Talence, France: Editions Opales, 1995. Pp. 92.
Reviewed by Olvier Millet. Editor of Fel et Vie
(originally published in For *et Vie,* vol. 94, no. 3 (July 1995), p. 109. Translated and published here with permission.)

Poems by Ellul: the reader may be surprised, especially to learn that shortly before Ellul's death, he expressed a desire that they be published. His modesty, as a man and as a thinker, undoubtedly caused him to delay their disclosure.

But reading these poems now, after his death, we realize that the work of Ellul the thinker and the theologian was rooted in an experience and in writing that accompanied the "public" forms of his expression. His deep inner life and his lyricism are located behind his ideas and his witness, or go beyond them. This is probably the meaning of the title, *Silences.*

This volume does not offer us unveiled secrets, but rather visible flashes, rhythmical impulses, and verbal signs that are rich in imagery and in evocative allusions. Showing

through them we can sense an inner life that has both a serious and a gratuitous side (Ellul goes so far as to use nursery rhyme forms).

This inner life is both moral and witty: Ellul's irony with respect to the world and life (understood as a pathos-filled and humorous game), and his humor with respect to himself, do not seek to impress or captivate us. Far from it. Instead, his irony and humor extract from successive moments both the ephemeral and the promise-filled portions contained within the concrete existence of a man. Ellul as poet in this volume reaffirms himself as the reader-exegete of Ecclesiastes we have admired

Waves, flames, fountains of water—these are momentary Visions stemming from Ellul's poetics of vicissitude. Often in a very simple way, sometimes with a rather rare charm, by means of syntax and vocabulary, these images evoke the strangeness of the world (whether natural or civilized) for humanity, or the strangeness of humanity for this world.

To live freed from vanity and concern for self, and to stand in Hope: these constitute the two main poles of this lyricism, which does not seek to coordinate them by means of any discourse.

Instead, the poet records the tensions and the deep currents of his sensitivity, unable to separate Spirit from flesh. Such knowledge is not destined for human beings:

No one will notice my wretchedness any more dedicated will I be to the works of prayer in the mortal secret of who I am.

A single poem ("Pelerinage a la civilisation de la mort" [Pilgrimage to the civilization of death]) mentions the collective world that Ellul took pains elsewhere to analyze, in its socio-technological ins and outs. But he describes it as a sort of Apocalypse, sombre and syncopated, from which the Sun of Justice is still absent.

Translated by Joyce M. Hanks

Issue #21 Jul 1998 — Thomas Merton and Modern Technological Civilization

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About This Issue

This issue of the **_Ellul Forum_** is devoted to the work of the Trappist monk and social critic, Thomas Merton. Merton was bom on January 31, 1915 in Prades France. His mother died when he was six and his father when he was fifteen. He grew up without any significant exposure to religion. However in the summer of 1933, traveling in Italy, he found himself drawn to the churches of Rome. It was the beginning of a journey that led him to baptism in the Catholic Church in November of 1938 and then to enter the Trappist monastery of Gethsemani in Kentucky on December 10th, 1941. His literary career took of with the publication of _Seven Storey Mountain_ in 1948, an autobiographical account of his conversion, which his superiors in the monastery asked him to write. It became an immediate best seller in post WWII America.

While _Seven Storey Mountain_ is a powerful book, it is a pious story of conversion that in itself would not make Merton the remarkable figure that he is. It was for Merton just the first installment on a series of biographical reflections on his spiritual journey, whose honesty and power make him a unique author. Two of the most important were _The Sign of Jonas_ in 1953 and the _Asian Journal_ in 1972. Merton died exactly twenty-seven years to the day that he entered the monastery (Dec. 10, 1968) at a conference on Monasticism, East and West, in Bangkok.

Merton's' power as a religious author lies not in writing original theology but in his willingness to make his life transparent to others in the midst of his monastic vocation to solitude. Indeed, being a monk and an author, at the same time, was the most difficult spiritual paradox of his life. Like Jonas, he found himself "in the belly of a paradox" —pulled in two directions. Merton chronicled this spiritual crisis of his first ten years in die monastery in his book, _The Sign of Jonas._ It was only after this "dark night of the soul" that Merton came to accept that he was called to be both a monk and and author. As a result, by the sixties a whole new Merton emerged, a powerful social voice in critique of racism and segregation in America, in critique of the cold war and nuclear war, and in critique of the Vietnam war. At the same time he entered into serious dialogue with religious figures and spiritual traditions around the world, especially the religions of Asia. The framework for his critique of modernity was his own developing spirituality in dialogue with the spiritual traditions of Asia as the basis for a critique of the illusions of modem technological civilization.

For anyone who has read Ellul, the similarly of Merton's critique of technological civilization is startling and impressive. Virtually point for point, Merton and Ellul, writing about the same time, echo each other. Just how much mutual influence, if any,

there was between them would be an interesting subject for a doctoral dissertation. In this issue, Christopher J. Kelly, details the scope of Merton's criticism of modem technological society and its roots in the monastic tradition of the *via negativa* - the way of negation. Christopher Kelly, completed his Masters degree in Religious Studies at the University of South Florida in Tampa in 1998. His essay here is adapted from his Master's thesis on Merton. He is now a doctoral student in the School of Religion at the University of Iowa.

Also in the *Book Review* section of this issue you will find a review of a doctoral dissertation on "Christian Freedom" in Ellul's work. The dissertation, written in Italian, is by Gianni Manzone,. It is reviewed here by Virginia Picchietti, of Scranton Univer-' sity. We are grateful to Gianni Manzone for his fine work and to Professor Picchietti « for her willingness to review it for the benefit of our readers.

In This Issue

Book Review

Manzone, Gianni. *La liberta cristiana e le sue me-diazioni sociali nelpensiero di Jacques Ellul.*

Milano: Glossa, 1993. Pp. 290.

Reviewed by: Vigienta Pichietti. University of Soantine

Gianni Manzone's dissertation provides a systematic and detailed analysis of the philosophical thought of French theologian Jacques Ellul. It aims to "reconstruct the theology of Ellul's Christian liberty" (177). The work is divided into three parts, each dealing with Ellul's notion of Christian freedom, and includes a general introduction to both Manzone's opus and Ellul's thought It also contains a comprehensive bibliography, while each chapter is supported by extensive notes.

The "General Introduction" is divided into six parts. The first part discusses Ellul's biography, including his evolution as a scholar of both legal and Christian philosophy. The second part defines his style. According to Manzone, the style giving shape to Ellul's philosophical writings is the product of tensions arising from his position as a Christian thinker who is firmly *engage* in social reality. Ultimately, Ellul's style aims at provoking decisions on the part of society (12). Part three of the introduction delineates Ellul's production, while parts four through six focus on his theological methodology. Manzone classifies the methodology as theological dialectics, and sees Ellul's thought as being heavily influenced by Barth and Kierkegaard. From Barth, Manzone concludes, Ellul draws such notions as God is Other, God is different from man, and time is different from eternity. From Kierkegaard, meanwhile, Ellul gleans an approach to theological inquiry as a systematic type of thought working with abstract concepts (16). Manzone identifies the richness and originality of Ellul's philosophical approach, which consists of a sociological inquiry and epistemological perception of reality and a theological approach to the Bible, as well as a focus on Christian ethics in the context of theological dialectics. Significantly for Manzone, Ellul's thought can be succinctly described as a "theology of confrontation," an approach that differs from Tillich's "theology of reconciliation." Ellul's philosophical thought, Manzone concludes, is a confrontation between Marxist thought and Christian philosophy, sociology and theology, all "mutually critical" (20).

Part I of Manzone's work focuses on Christian freedom as the governing principle of Ellul's work and life as a Christian thinker. Although noting Ellul's resistance to the "systematization" of his work, Manzone nevertheless recognizes the urgency with which

Ellul's philosophy aims to recuperate the concept of Christian freedom, which has been "ignored and rejected" even by the Church (41). Ellul, Manzone notes, considers liberty as one of the most important values Western society has contributed to humanity. Given this premise, Manzone dedicates the rest of Part I to the diverse permutations of the notion of liberty, from its origins in God and Christ, to its manifestations in God's glory and in love for one's neighbor, to its evolution and realization through faith and action.

In order to provide a clear definition of Ellul's notion of Christian liberty, Manzone examines the "seven misunderstandings or erroneous notions of liberty" Ellul opposed in various articles and books (43). According to the author, the French philosopher rejects the idea of liberty as inherent to human nature and independent of the individual's social milieu and physical and mental condition. Indeed, while Ellul refutes the notion of liberty as a purely spiritual or internal experience, he stresses its correlation to "concrete external restrictions" (45). Moreover, he renounces the idea of liberty as a choice, since choice is artificial and limited. Ellul offers as an example the role technology plays in creating choices, a role he defines as "determinism" (110). Ah individual cannot approach these choices "freely," the philosopher contends, because they are predetermined and delimited, a concept Manzone expands in Part II. For Ellul, liberty is discontinuous from human nature, something to be achieved and originating from an external source, or God. It also assumes diverse permutations because, Manzone notes, "individuals must construct their own personal lifestyle based on the circumstances in which they live and their own conscience" (47). While performing good actions does not guarantee liberty, liberty can be achieved "answering the personal call from God and accepting the liberation that Christ offers" (47).

Part II of Manzone's opus is entitled "Christian Liberty as Criterion for Socio-Ethical Judgment." The purpose of this part, Manzone clarifies in the premise, is to "understand if and how the concept of Christian liberty becomes the standard for all moral life and for the ethical reflection of the Christian individual" (107). Questions shaping Manzone's inquiry are "Does liberty play a structurally central role and does it shape every aspect of the individual's comportment?"; "Which categories and concepts does Ellul employ to develop an 'ethique de la liberte' and how are they applied in the phenomena he most analyzed and considered most relevant to us today?"; "How does the concept of Christian freedom function in the Christian individual's judgment and action in a technological society, in politics, irt mass media, and in law?" To answer the questions he sees as essential to understanding Ellul's work, Manzone divides Ellul's approach into two categories, the concrete realm, in which facts are described, and the philosophical realm. In the former sphere Manzone characterizes the French philosopher as a positivist who distinguishes between fact and norm. In the latter sphere, he identifies Ellul as an existentialist for his focus on freedom.

In his consideration of these questions, Manzone dedicates a section to each of the components that make up Ellul's investigation of Christian freedom. According to Manzone,

Ellul's relationship to politics is one of "total confrontation" in which he sets out to abolish "political illusion" (137). This confrontation also defines the Christian individual's participation in politics, a participation marked by tension and not "distinguishable from other manifestations of faith, but simply a proclamation of the Gospel" (137). For Ellul, according to Manzone, politics are "irredeemable" and cannot be transformed by Christian liberty. In the section on freedom and mass communication, Manzone investigates the relationship between mass media and Christian freedom. More specifically, he examines how according to Ellul "the interaction between technology, politics, and 'propaganda' [the media] constitutes the heart of our civilization" (145). Manzone categorizes Ellul "among the apocalyptic" for whom mass media create people no longer capable of "critical thought" or "autonomous behavior" (150). Finally, in the section on the relationship between Christian freedom and law, Manzone concludes that for Ellul faith is not applicable to the juridical organization of society because law is secular. According to Ellul, Manzone notes, human law is relativistic (169) and "does not express religious values or divine justice. . . . [W]hen thinking of human law, Christians must... not see it as an ideal law derived from their religion" (167).

Part m of Manzone's opus, "Christian Freedom and Social Ethics: Beyond Ellul," performs an "evaluative and critical analysis of Ellul's attempt to define Christian freedom as the measure of Christian life and especially of the Christian individual's presence in society" (177). In the premise to this part, Manzone proposes an analysis based on the "confrontation between Protestant theology and Catholic theology on social ethics" (177). His aim is to understand the way in which the notion of Christian freedom becomes a means through which believers become socially *engages.*

In this section Manzone assesses Ellul's analysis of society and social action, of civil institutions, and of social justice. He asserts that Ellul develops a sociological investigation based on a "neutral methodology" (198). The author recognizes the French philosopher's relativistic tendencies. However, he concludes that Ellul's philosophy of human action and freedom lacks an "anthropological dimension" (199), which would shed light on, for example, "the significance of individual acts for those who perform them" (198). In conclusion Manzone notes that the fact that Ellul does not "consider judgment of individual behavior as a moment intrinsically connected to judgment on institutional actions renders incomplete the dynamics of Christian freedom in its endeavor to relativize and modify norms and social institutions" (256). For Manzone, Ellul considers this undertaking in negative terms because he does not adequately consider the anthropological notion that freedom "incorporates both the individuals' socio-cultural milieu and their personal history" (257). In the end, Manzone contends, human beings are capable of relating to God because they can grasp "Revelation," or the Word of God in human form, because they see themselves in it (257).

Forum: Thomas Merton's Critique

Contemptus Mundi: Thomas Merton's Critique of Modern Technological Civilization

by Christopher J. Kelly

INTRODUCTION

The works of Thomas Merton reflect a cornbination of intellect and honesty that tends to stir the conscience of. even the most casual reader. A vocal social critic, Merton was no stranger to controversy. He spoke critically on the most troubling social and political issues of our time. His work continues to be applicable to today's increasingly postmodern world. Through the concept of *coniemptus mundi* Thomas Merton engages *m* a postmodern critique of modernity. Well before the post-structuralist critique, Merton found his own monastic path "beyond modernity". His is not a pre-modern rejection of the world in the traditional Christian monastic sense, but a postmodern rejection of the subject/bb-ject duality of modem techno-bureaucratic European civilization in order to provide a different frame of reference from which one may deal with the *agonia* of existence. Merton's use of the *via negative* negates the modernist notion of self and liberates the individual fibm the collectivist pattern of life in modem technocratic society. Merton is postmodern in a historical rather than ideological sense of the word. He is postmodern precisely because he offers post-European and post-Christian critique that opens a path beyond modernity.

My argument is that Merton's etqjerience of the *via negative,* as reflected in his book *The Sign of Jonas,* led him into a postmodern framework from which came his critique of society. Merton's experience of the *via negative* is the pivotal point in his personal spiritual growth and his social commentary. Before his experience Merton wanted only to turn his back on the world in Order to find God, afterward he saw his vocation as finding solitude in compassion for others. This took two forms: 1) vocal social criticism that attacked the injustices of racism, the Vietnam War,[:] the developmentofhuclesrweaponsi and 2) a discovery of. the spiritual wisdom of other religious traditions, .most notably Zen Buddfiism, Taoism, and Gandhi's Hinduism. At the end of his life, Merton seemed to have embraced both Taoism and Zen while remaining a devoted Christian. This was possible because he had moved beyond any modernist Eurocentric and Christian-centered spirituality to discover the ethical importance of

other spiritualities, which Merton saw as complementing rather than competing with his own Christian spirituality. *As* we move freon a planet of isolated nations to a global community, Merton's cross-cultural and intendigious orientation speaks to our tune. I think this is a significant note, for while European Christianity sought to make the world Christian, Merton's pluralism, especially his interest in the East, led him to speak out against an attitude toward flic world that sought to destroy or convert that which was not European and Christian.

MERTON'S CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY

Even in the early days of his writing Merton attempted to sound an alarm meant to awaken his contemporaries to the dangers around them. The first line of *The Ascent to Truth,* published in 1951, reads. "The only thing that can save the world from complete moral collapse is a spiritual revolution.'' According to Merton, human bangs are in a precarious position, for "the exposure of the nineteenth-century myths — 'unlimited progress' and the 'omnipotence' of physical science —-has thrown the world into confi-ision"(l 951:3). He believed that the violence and hatred he saw around him presented and continue to present a serious challenge to the very existence of the human race. For Merton, the root cause of the crisis of the modern age liesina misunderstanding of who we are as human beings. "Our ordinary waking life is a bar? existence in which, most of the time, we seem to be absent from ourselves and from reality because we are involved in the vain preoccupations which dog the steps of every living man'*(1951:lO). Merton believed that modemhuman beings are preoccupied with trying to find some comfort in life by becoming loyal consumers, by surrounding ourselves with material possessions that flatter our own egos. We have become alienated individuals.

Modem individuals are alienated not only by the material world they have created but by toe ideological world that undergirds it According to Merton, Cartesian duality splits the world into subject/object relationships and thereby alienates people from their true natures, in which there are no ultimate distinctions. Descartes' *"Cagiio, ergo sum"* is "the declaration of an alienated being, in exile from his own spiritual depths, compelled to seek some comfort in a *proof for his own exlsi-ence(Y)* based on the observation that he 'thinks'* (19T2:80. Merton believed that rather than de-termining a foundation for truth and reality, toe Cartesian ego-self only succeeds in con

fusing one's understanding of him/herself, the world, and the ineffable divine. By reducing him/herself to a concept and objectifying the rest of existence, the alienated being makes it impossible to experience the true nature of his/her own being. Merton writes:

The world itself is not a problem, but we are a problemto ourselves because we are alienated from ourselves, and this alienation is due to an inveterate habit of division bywhich we break reality into pieces and then wonder why,after we have manipulated

the pieces until they fall apart, we find ourselves out of touch with life, with reality, with the world and most of all with ourselves (1992:387).

The true nature of the human being and its relationship to the world is existential and intuitive. One cannot come to an understanding of this through a process of deductive reasoning, especially one that has a false sense of self as a starting point.

Forthe contemplative there is no *cogito* ('I think*') and no *ergo* ("therefore') but only SUM, I Am. Not in the sense of a futile assertion of our individuality as ultimately real, but in the humble realization of our mysterious being as persons in whom God dwells, with infinite sweetness and inalienable power (1972:9)

The contemplative life cannot be lived by anyone who considers him/herself as an ego-self. Yet, Merton laments, modem human beings steadfastly cling to an illusory sense of identity in an effort to come to terms with what Merton terms *"agonia."* Merton characterizes the concept in the following way. "Life and death are at war within us. As soon as we are bom, we begin at the same time to live and die (1996:3)." One may not be fully aware of it, but, according to Merton, there is within each person an anxious agonizing over the nature of existence. We may not think about it but the knowledge that we are mortal is always present It manifests itself in a wrestling of the spirit in which one confronts the *agonia* of "being and nothingness, spirit and the void" (1996:3). The more one becomes aware of one's mortality the greater die distress. This wrestling with the angst of existence is

manifested largely in desperation, cynicism, violence, conflict, self-contradiction, ambivalence, fear and hope, doubt and belief, creation and destructiveness, progress and regression, obsessive attachments to images, idols, slogans, programs that only dull the general anguish for a moment until it bursts out everywhere in a still more acute and terrifying form (1966:55).

In an effort to find relief from the problem, human beings identify themselves; they give themselves a name or a function. Merton concludes that human beings would rather have a false identity than risk being nothing. However, this false identity results in an alienation of human beings from their true natures as indefinable reflections of an indefinable God. What remains is an ego-self who sees him/herself as the basis of reality and objectifies everything else, including God.

Merton's work seems to imply that there is a subconscious belief among men and women that the *agonia* of existence can be numbed or overcome if people come to-gether as a unit. Here we encounter a nuance in the modem experience of alienation. For Merton, the structure of modem society is configured in such a way that people tend to give up all effort towards understanding their true natures through misguided attempts at forging a common identity with others. People are willing to reject the agonizing responsibility of discovering who they are and become part of the crowd. As a result, people are not only alienated from themselves by asserting the foundation of the ego-self, but they also become alienated from the ability to realize themselves by surrendering all personal independence. Merton writes:

One of the characteristics of "mass society" is precisely that it tends to keep man from fully achieving his identity, from operating as an autonomous person, from growing up and becoming spiritually and emotionally adult (1966:59).

The situation is further complicated by the fact that the modem West is fundamentally capitalistic and materialistic. Its goal is the acquisition of material things. Merton believed that people consume in order to avoid the *agonia* and find some direction in life. The economic structure of the modem West is geared toward providing instant gratification without further need of responsibility. People buy what they want, or think they want, use it and then discard whatever is left over because there will always be more available. Merton was acutely aware of the dangers inherent in pursuing materialistic goals. He writes:

Man is a consumer who exists in order to keep business going by consuming its products whether he ' wants them or not, needs them or not, likes them or not But in order to fulfill his role he must come to believe in it Hence his role as consumer takes the place of his identity (if any). He is then reduced to a state of permanent nonentity and tutelage in which his more or less abstract presence in society is tolerated only if he conforms, remains a smoothly functioning automaton, an uncomplaining and anonymous element in the great reality of the market (1966:29).

The role of advertising, or "propaganda" in Merton's words, is of paramount importance in keeping the system running efficiently. Mass media is the vehicle through which advertising procures its effect Television, newspapers, and magazines are all willing to tell us what is wrong with us and then prescribe a remedy available on an easy payment plan. However, the advertising is sophisticated enough, or the public is blind enough, that it gives the impression that we are actually thinking for ourselves. Merton believed that people gain the impression of assuming some measure of responsibility and management over their lives, yet in actual fact they merely accept what is given to them through economic, political, and social advertising and propaganda.

This is one of the few real pleasures left to modem man: this illusion that he is thinking for himself, when, in fact, someone else is doing his thinking for him...This very special and tempting force of propaganda — that it helps sustain the individual's illusion of identity and freedom — is due to the isolation of the individual in mass society, in which he is in fact a zero in the crowd in which he is absorbed, it is this simple act of apparently thinking out what is thought for him by propaganda that saves the individual from totally vanishing into the mass. It makes him imagine he is real (1966:216-217).

Merton takes care to note that the word "alienation" is also used by those already firmly entrenched in mass society. However, for these people the alienated individual is the one who does not conform to the way things are done, does not participate in the general myth. He or she is different and rebellious, quite uncomfortable with the collective "rightness." When understood in this sense, Merton would be considered an alienated person. Indeed, anyone who voluntarily leaves the world and consciously abandons the *status quo* of massive collectivism and consumerism would be considered

a little odd, to say the least. But this interpretation of alienation is very different from Merton's understanding of the alienated individual, who "though 'adjusted' to society, is alienated *from himself.* The inner life of the mass man, alienated and leveled in the existential sense, is a dull, collective routine of popular fantasies maintained in existence by the collective dream that goes on, without interruption, in the mass media (1992:268)."

Technology and the Myth of Progress

For Merton, technology plays such an important role in fostering alienation that it deserves special attention. According to Merton, the world we live in is governed by systems and techniques. The reverence for nature, which began to decline with the onset of urbanization, has been replaced by a trust in technology and mass media that is reinforced by the secular myth of progress. Merton was very familiar with the idea of a "better world" promised by the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, but he believed the claims of science and technology to bring happiness and fullness of life to be fraudulent. A technological society, he claimed, does not concern itself with the value of the human being. One's dignity as a member of the human race is disregarded in an effort to determine how one may be most efficiently used. Techno-bureaucratic systems exist merely to promote the functioning of their own processes. For Merton, rather than initiating a golden new age, die results of the Enlightenment and the secular myth of progress only succeeded in further removing human beings from their authentic state.

Unshakable confidence in the ability of technology to provide all that is necessaiy for human life is a particularly persuasive step in the process of alienation.

It is precisely this illusion, that mechanical progress means human improvement, that alienates us from our own being and our own reality. It is precisely because we are convinced that our life, as such, is better if we have a better car, a better tv set, better toothpaste, etc., that we contemn and destroy our own reality and the reality of our natural resources. Technology was made for man, not man for technology. In losing touch with being and thus with God, we have fallen into a senseless idolatry of production and consumption fortheir own sakes. We have renounced the act of being and plunged ourself [s/c] into *process* for its own sake (1992:202).

The problem is nothing new, but what makes it more pressing and international are the tremendous effects that technology can and does have on the modem world. We are far more capable now of destroying ourselves and our environment than in the 18th century, for instance. Yet, Merton believed that the majority of the people of his day considered it unthinkable to challenge the veracity and good will of science.

The central problem of the modem world is the complete emancipation and autonomy of the technological mind at a time when unlimited possibilities lie open to it and all the resources seem to be at hand. Indeed, the mere fact of questioning this emancipation, this autonomy, is the number-one blasphemy, the unforgivable sin in the eyes

of modem man, whose faith begins with this: science can do everything, science must be permitted to do everything it likes, science is infallible and impeccable, all that is done by science is right. No matter how monstrous, no matter how criminal an act may be, if it is justified by science it is unassailable (1992:62-63).

As a result of this development, science and technology are now the bearers of absolute power. The desire to apply their ideals is so pervasive that it has no rivals. They need not answer to any control, for, it is believed, whatever they demand must be the best course of action. There is no ethical dilemma in the application of science for it has become an autonomous entity subject only unto itself.

Needless to say, the demands of ethics no longer have any meaning if they come into conflict with these autonomous powers. Technology has its own ethic of expediency and efficiency. What *can be done efficiently must* be done in the most efficient way— even if what is done happens, for instance, to be genocide or the devastation of a country by total war (1992:63).

Merton recognized that questions of morality tend to impinge upon the efficient application of science and technology. He believed that bureaucratic systems that mask any moral responsibility by removing any personal involvement have been organized in order to counter the effects of personal conscience. Modem Western governments, in Merton's opinion, have become preoccupied with getting things done in the most expedient manner as possible by whatever means necessary.

We are concerned only with •practicality' — " efficiency*: that is, with means, not with ends. And therefore we are more and more concerned only with immediate *consequences. We are* the prisoners of every urgency. In this way we so completely lose all perspective and sense of values that weare no longer able to estimate correctly what even the most immediate consequences of our actions may turn out to be (1992:102-103).

Merton saw the effect of the secular myth of progress as a surrendering of human freedom and spontaneity to an unseen yet pervasive principle of efficiency that promises to fulfill our desires if we accept our roles as cogs in the machine. However, recent history has shown that whenever systems and techniques are allowed to operate without question a culture of death is not far away. Merton lived during a turbulent time in which the possibility of nuclear war was quite real. The United States and the Soviet Union faced off against each other in global competition, each seeing the other as a demonic force in the world. Yet, almost insidiously, the most dangerous threat to humanity lay at the heart of each country's social policy. American democracy was identified in its capitalism, which enticed the individual into mass society. Soviet communism lauded the dissolution of privacy into the collective of the people. However, neither system was aware of the alienating force of its own social structure. The two countries were, and to some extent still are, bent on destroying the other without realizing their own self-destructive natures. In a letter to Bernard Haring dated December 26,1964 Merton writes:

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For one thing, the whole massive complex of technology. which reaches into every aspect of social life today, implies a huge organization of which no one is really in control, and which dictates its own solutions irrespective of human needs or even of reason. Technology now has reasons entirely its own which do not necessarily take into account the needs of man, and this huge inhuman mechanism, which the whole human race is now serving rather than commanding, seems quite probably geared for the systematic destruction of the natural world, quite apart from the question of the 'bomb' which, in fact, is only one rather acute symptom of the whole disease (1965:383).

Failure of Organized Religion in an Organized Society

Secularization is a concern for Merton, but the problem of alienation is not only to be found in the secular world. One gets the sense from reading the works of Thomas Merton that while he was no religious anarchist, he did find fault in those religious organizations that were overbearingly authoritarian and so caught up in tradition and rigid doctrine so as to be part of the problem rather than the solution. It is just as easy for an individual to become alienated within his or her own religious tradition as in popular society. This isentirely possible, Merton believed, in a system that sees God as the mathematical first cause and the operator of a giant machine held together by reliance on a sacramental complex. Merton worried that the church was in danger of becoming simply a mirror of the technological world.

To a certain extent, according to Merton and others, science has become a form of religion. We hold it sacred, because it provides answers in the here and now. Its possibilities astound us and we marvel at each new invention, each new refinement. There is seemingly no end to the power of scientific and technological know-how. People trust in their political leaders to do what is appropriate, but those leaders themselves act on the same principle of efficiency that technology espouses. As a result, political agendas are often directed towards placating the masses in a manner that reinforces their alienation.

Merton believed that rather than conditioning individuals to be productive members of collective society, organized religion should seek to reflect the thoughts of the individual back upon him/herself and the *agonia* of his or her existence.

If in practice the function of organized religion turns out to be nothing more than to justify and to canonize the routines of mass society; if organized religion abdicates its mission to disturb man in the depths of his conscience, and seeks instead simply to 'make converts' that will smilingly adjust to the status quo, then it deserves the most serious and uncompromising criticism. Such criticism is not disloyalty. On the contrary, fidelity to truth and to God demands it (1992:273).

For Merton, the Church has an obligation to promote inter-subjective love between persons rather than the individualistic isolation of mass society that reduces existence to a state of impersonal, formal relationships between objectified entities. By destroying the intimate, personal bonds between extended families and small sub-groups, a process

begun by the advent of urbanization, "mass society segregates the individual from the concrete and human 'other' and leaves him alone and unaided in the presence of the Faceless, the collective void, the public (1992:274)." The role of the Church is not to aid the process by "giving it an inviolable religious sanction and tranquilizing the anguish of the alienated mind by injunctions to obey the state (1992:274)." Instead, the Church must do all within its power to help men and women to resist the seductive lure of anonymous conformity, which alienates people from themselves and each other. It must be critical of technology and the exercise of power for its own sake.

MERTON'S POSTMODERN CONTEMPLATIVE VISION

If Merton rejected the world, his was a rejection of the illusory world created by technological mass media society. It was a rejection only for the purposes of transformation. Merton's espousal of a contemptus mundi and his own experience of the via negativa led him into a postmodem framework for his critique of society. What results from Merton's experience is a turn toward the social concerns of his day and a vibrant interest in the spiritual disciplines of the East

According to Merton, we are alienated from our true selves by the false identification of self with the Cartesian ego-self. It is a self who subconsciously surrenders all personal identity to the mass organization of society. The alienation is not freely chosen but is, in part, a result of the natural human condition as it is perceived in the West. However, the situation is worsened by an affirmation of an illusory individual identity or dissolution into collectivity. According to Merton, the social, political, and economic spheres of the world seem to act in accord to dissuade any idea of nonconformity or of questioning the status quo. Western governments have more power at their disposal now than at any other time in history, yet their citizens are more alienated and estranged from what Merton calls the "inner ground of meaning" than ever. According to Merton, the situation has reached crisis proportions because of the loss of the sense of contemplation in the modem world. For Merton, honest engagement in spiritual exercises in the West is, for the most part, a thing of the past. Religion has become routine, requiring little effort on the part of the believer. If one is to have any hope of overcoming one's alienation, then he or she must enter into a contemplative lifestyle. "Far from being irrelevant, prayer, meditation and contemplation are of the utmost importance in America today (1971:375)." It is within the contemplative vision that a contemptus mundi occurs that allows one to see him/herself and others in their proper context.

The Role of the Contemplative Lite

The monastic ideal has been an important part of Christian history since its inception. It has had an uneasy relationship with the world at large for much of the time. The question has always seemed to hinge on just how far the aspiring monk or nun should be removed from society. Early Church Fathers like Tertullian (153-222 CE)

urged that all Christians should shun the inherently evil world around them and band together in an effort to remain righteous before the eyes of God. The theme carried over into the Middle Ages but was considerably modified. Although a rejection of the world for the good of one's spiritual life was considered praiseworthy, Benedictine monastic communities throughout Europe were actively engaged in improving the social and material well-being of the human community. Yet, in much of Western monasticism there still persisted a strong insistence that one must renounce all worldly pleasures and concerns in order to make any progress on the path towards holiness. This insistence found expression in the formation of orders like the Carthusians and the Cistercians, the latter of which Merton was to join in 1941. Orders such as these were founded on a form of contemptus mundi that assumed that

theology had nothing to learn from the world and everything to teach the world. That theology was a store of static and eternal truths which were unaffected by any conceivable change in the world, so that if the world wanted to remain in touch with eternal truth it would do well to renounce all thought of changing (1966:39).

Although it may have been beneficial during its time, such a contemptus mundi has little relevance for the modem world. To reject the world in an exercise of self-absorbed contemplation is an act of folly, according to Merton. It assumes, firstly, that one can entirely retreat from the world in monastic isolation, and, secondly, that one can come to self-understanding without the presence of other human beings. Such an exercise simply will not work, for neither the individual nor the monastic community can ever truly be separate from the web of life that is the world.

As long as I imagine that the world is something to be "escaped" in a monastery — that wearing a special costume and following a quaint observance takes me "out of this world," I am dedicating my life to an illusion (Cunningham, editor,1992:377).

It does one no good to turn his or her back on the world either because it is inherently evil or because it is full of distractions that avert attention away from personal contemplation. In fact, Merton argues, any attempt at spiritual growth that places the individual first is doomed to failure.

The purely individualistic concept of asceticism and of prayer is, paradoxically, very harmful to the development of true personal identity. The identity of the person is fully realized only in a conscious and mature collaboration with others (1971:76).

Merton's contemptus mundi is not a blanket rejection of the world. It is a rejection of the secular myth of progress and the domination of systems based on efficiency, and a rejection of the subject/object dualism that alienates humanity from its true nature. This kind of rejection is evident in other religious traditions as well: the Hindu concept of Maya or the Buddhist "emptiness of the world," for instance. According to Merton, neither of these traditions rejects reality, but rather seeks to unmask the illusion that the world exists as an absolute and purely objective structure that must be accepted for what it seems to be for the individual subject. For Merton, one has to annihilate the illusory sense of distinction between the divine and the human, and between the human and the world. His is a contempt for the self and the world that

ultimately frees one from the restriction of identity and brings one to the realization of the interdependence of all being. He rejects a society

that is happy because it drinks Coca-Cola or Seagrams or both and is protected by the bomb. The society that is imaged in the mass media and in advertising, in the movies, in tv, in best-sellers, in current fads, in all the pompous and trifling masks with which it hides callousness, sensuality, hypocrisy, cruelty, and fear. Is this "the world?" Yes. ft is the same wherever you have mass man (1966:36-37).

It is vitally important to note that for Merton one need not enter a monastery in order to have a healthy contemptus mundi. The spiritual life is by no means confined to the walls of the cloister. It is a "special dimension of inner discipline and experience, a certain integrity and fullness of personal development, which are not compatible with a purely external, alienated, busy-busy experience(Cunningham, 1992: 369)." Although physical solitude and silence are extremely beneficial to spiritual progress, the true isolation is a wandering in the desert within ourselves, and this isolation leads to an awareness of our inherent communal nature. Merton believed it was entirely possible for all human beings to espouse a healthy contemptus mundi through a contemplative lifestyle that is present and active in the midst of society.

The contemplative life offers one a different point of view or vantage point from which to re-examine his or her own existence. It delivers one from the standards of efficiency imposed upon the world by a technological imperative which demands that if something can be done it must be done. In his own affable style Merton succinctly identifies a certain independence gained by those who have espoused a healthy contemptus mundi:

One of the "tyrannies'of "the world" is precisely its demand that men explain and justify their lives according to standards that may not be reasonable or even human. The monk is not concerned with justifying himself according to these standards.Today a man is required to prove his worth by demonstrating his "efficacy." In such a world the monk may simply decide that it is better to be useless — perhaps as a protest against the myth of illusory efficacy. As an American monk I am forced to view with shame and compassion the lengths to which the myths of "efficiency" and 'practicality' have led American power in Viet Nam. To the machinery of an organized efficiency that produces nothing but mass murder I certainly prefer the relative "inefficiency* of my own monastic life, which produces only some milk, some cheese, some bread, some music, a few paintings, and an occasional book (1971:229)

While the contemplative lifestyle is not held to the standards imposed upon the rest of mass society its contemptus mundi is of little benefit if one remains aloof. In order to be fully human one must "re-enter" the world and act for social change. Merton argues that a certain level of involvement in the contemplative life is a necessary component for any successful social action or creative work. Anyone who tries to better others around him or her or the world at large without having a clear self-understanding, freedom, and integrity will not be successful. "He [or she] will communicate to them nothing but the contagion of his own obsessions, his aggressiveness, his ego-centered

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ambitions, his delusions about ends and means, his doctrinaire prejudices and ideas" (Cunningham, 1992:375). -

Ultimately, the role of the contemplative life is to focus one's attention upon oneself in order to unveil the illusion of individual selfhood. Spiritual isolation sets the stage for the realization of our true selves through the experience of direct union with a God who is all in all.

The Via Negativa

The via negativa experience was a watershed in Merton's life. The focus of his writing and activism after the publication of The Sign of Jonas was on social justice and the value of other religious traditions. What follows is an attempt to clarify what is meant by the "via negativa" and to show how Merton's experience shifted his position from a world-denying monk to a world-embracing proponent of social change.

Throughout this paper the reader has been presented with an idea of the Cartesian ego-self in conflict with a "self' that has yet to be explained. Although Descartes' thinking subject can be explained and defined, the same cannot be said for a notion of "self' that has ineffable origins. As noted, Merton firmly believed that human beings have divine origins; they are made in the image and likeness of God. Yet, the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition is a God without image. The result is a being made in the image of a God without image. The tradition of the via negativa, or "negative way," is an approach to theology and a spiritual practice that maintains that it is not possible to say what the divine, or the self, definitively is, but it is possible to come closer to an understanding by determining what it is not through a separation from the world and deep introspection. The contemplative life allows one to dissolve the dualistic and alienating understanding of human identity. The process by which this dissolution occurs is the via negativa.

The tradition of the via negativa denies that either God or the self can be identified or defined by any human concepts or knowledge. It is an apophatic approach to theology that affirms that God is and always will be a mystery because the divine transcends all human modes of thinking and rationalization. No conceptions or categories offered by empirical science can ever come close to describing the true nature of God.

Traditionally, the via negativa as a spiritual discipline was definitively applied to Christianity by Dionysus the Areopagite (Pseudo-Dionysus) around 500 CE. Dionysus, according to Denys Turner, was primarily responsible for forging the language that has become characteristic of the Western Christian apophatic tradition. He made a theology out of "metaphors of negativity" contrasting light and darkness, ascent and descent, etc. Turner argues that Dionysus owes his use of such metaphors to a convergence of Greek and Hebraic influences on Western Christian thought, more specifically, the synthesis of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (Book 7 of Plato's Republic) and Moses' encounter with God on Mt. Sinai in the Book of Exodus (Ex. 19 and 20).

The prisoner in Plato's allegoiy at first has a limited view ofreality. Forhim,realityconsistsofshadows However, once he is freed and makes his way up to the cave entrance he is overwhelmed by the brilliance of the sun as it exposes the "true" reality of the physical world. Plato's allegory describes the experience of the philosopher as he "ascends" from ignorance into the light of wisdom, which is so bright that it blinds. The philosopher ascends from the pseudo-reality of a world of shadows and is initially plunged into a deep darkness brought about by intense light.

In the story of Moses' encounter with God, the people of Israel are warned not to venture near the foot of Mt. Sinai lest they see God and thereby perish. Moses, however, is permitted to climb the mountain and is enveloped in a dark cloud, wherein he meets God. God shields Moses from the glory of his countenance for no one is permitted to see the Lord and live.

Turner recognizes that in both the Allegory and in Exodus "there is an ascent toward the brilliant light, a light so excessive as to cause pain, distress and darkness: a darkness of knowledge far deeper than any which is the darkness of ignorance. The price of the pure contemplation of the light is therefore darkness, even, as in Exodus, death. This darkness is not the absence of light, but rather of its excess — therefore a 'luminous darkness (Turner, 1995:17).'" As Turner points out, Gregory of Nyssa, one of tire Cappadocian fathers of the fourth century, was well aware of the Platonic imagery of Moses' encounter with God. For Gregory, when Moses entered the dark cloud he was gaining knowledge of the incomprehensible; he was seeing without seeing.

According to Turner, the theologians of both the Greek and Latin traditions wanted to bring together Plato's story and Moses' experience. What resulted was the development of metaphors of negativity. However, what Dionysus and the early mystics meant by these terms and what has come to be understood by "mystical experience" in much of contemporary scholarship are two different things. When Dionysus spoke of a "descent into the darkness of God" he was using a metaphor to describe something that transcends experience, for the via negativa through which one "descends" is a loss of everything, including experience. Later interpretations have tended to give a psychologized experiential quality to these metaphors that was never intended by their authors. These interpretations limit the via negativa to a psychological experience. What is important to note is that die via negativa is not a means of achieving some experience in the contemplative life but is, rather, a complete loss of self and surroundings in that which is beyond experience.

Merton's own experience of the via negativa de-centered his own viewpoint and turned him toward the world. Published in 1953 The Sign of Jonas is a collection of diary entries made by Merton between the years 1942 and 1952. It reflects the thoughts and anguishes of a man who after ten years in the monastery is unsure of his progress in the spiritual life, a man filled with fear and doubt It is within the pages of The Sign of Jonas that Merton begins to lose his identity and enters what John of the Cross calls the "dark night of the soul." For John, the surest measure of one's progress in the spiritual life is the apparent lack of progress accompanied by intense feelings of

depression and despair. One cannot journey through the Dark Night, the via hegativa, without feeling doubt, fear, and anguish. They are all part of the process that strips the person of the false sense of self. The Sign of Jonas reflects Merton's struggle. He writes,

It is fear that is driving me into solitude. Love has put drops of terror in my veins and they grow cold in me, suddenly, and make me faint with fear because my heart and my imagination wander away from God into their own private idolatry. It is my iniquity that makes me physically faint and turn to jelly because of the contradiction between my nature and my God. I am exhausted by fear (1953:254).

Merton, the enthusiastic monk who had rejected the world and embraced the silence of the Abbey of Gethsemani in The Seven Storey Mountain, discovered that his desire to give himself completely to God was not easily realized. Between 1940 and 1950 the Abbey grew from about 70 to 270 members. Instead of finding the solitude and silence he expected, Merton encountered *a* growing number of brethren busying themselves with the construction of new buildings. His own writing seemed to him to be a distraction from true devotion. He become more and more frustrated. He was constantly tempted to leave the Cistercians and join the Carthusians, who enjoyed a much more isolated lifestyle. Instead of drawing closer to God, Merton believed he had lost all spiritual direction. It was only his obedience to his superiors that gave him any respite from the doubt concerning his contemplative vocation, which constantly confronted him.

However, Merton persevered through his anguish until he came to a new understanding of the contemplative life. True contemplation, he came to realize, does not concern itself with how to contemplate or the environment in which one contemplates. What was necessary for true contemplation was to "shut up" and be still. The more one is concerned with the trappings of the contemplative life the less one achieves its goal. True contemplation surfaces from deep within when all self-centered thoughts and actions are dispelled, when one no longer attempts to achieve it by one's own efforts. His quest to find God by rejecting the world and concentrating on his own spiritual progress had led him to doubt his vocation as a Cistercian. He felt compelled to isolate himself entirely.

Merton came to understand, however, that true solitude is not supposed to bring one a sense of satisfaction. "Solitude means being lonely not in a way that pleases you but in a way that frightens and empties you to the extent that it means being exiled from yourself (1953:249)." It means undergoing a kenosis in which the self is purged through fear, helplessness, and isolation in God. "True solitude is a participation in the solitariness of God — Who is in all things. His solitude is not a local absence but a metaphysical transcendence. His solitude is His being (1953:269)."

It is here that we encounter the language commonly associated with the via negativa. Merton speaks of becoming "lost in the darkness of God" and entering the "desert" within himself. With no certainty in his ambitions and no sense of self he is overwhelmed by the infinite light of the divine, which is so bright that it is perceived as darkness.

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Decentered by the via negativa Merton finds a home in that which has no center, for it is every where. All of a sudden he is able to perceive the world in a different way. The spiritual desert he encountered in the temptations and distractions that beset him purged him of his ego-self and became a desert of compassion. In his solitude he became ever more acutely aware of the interdependence of all things. Merton had "progressed" far enough along the path of the via negativa that he emerged with a new understanding and embraced the world around him, for in it he recognized the presence of God.

Merton began to realize that solitude is not the absence of company, just as silence is not merely the absence of noise. They are, rather, interior conditions that are cultivated by removing all concerns of the self. Ambitions and desires, even though they may seem well intended, only serve to reinforce the self-constructed barrier between God and human beings. At first Merton viewed his writing as a distraction that needed to be resolved. Paradoxically, Merton discovered that instead of being a hindrance his own writing turned out to be the means by which he was to embrace these newly found understandings of solitude and silence. His works became the vehicle through which he emptied himself.

In his work as a writer, Merton discovered also a new experience of poverty. By his writing he had made himself and his most inner feelings and thoughts a public possession. In this way he had disowned himself and allowed others to enter into his monastic silence (Nouwen, 1991:45).

Not only did Merton empty himself through his writing, but it also became for him a means of communicating with leaders of nations, scholars, religious figures, and lay men and women about the most pressing concerns of the day. It is clear that following his vianegativa experience Merton began to question the injustices around him. This is, perhaps, most evident in his attack on racism in America. Merton was adamant that racism, most demonstrative in the South, was actually a white problem. He writes that

the irony is that the Negro...is offering the white man a 'message of salvation,' but the white man is so blinded by his self-sufficiency and self-conceit that he does not recognize the peril in which he puts himself by ignoring the offer (1964:53).

For Merton, the non-violent protest of African Americans was not only a means for them to obtain their freedom but was also an opportunity for whites to de-center themselves and recognize the dignity of all life. It was up to whites to look into themselves and realize that black people were not their enemies or their rivals or subhuman objects of contempt. The motivation behind Merton's words lay in a profoundly different understanding of human nature that sprang from his passage through the dark night Because Merton no longer was selfcentered he was able to describe the plight of African Americans through their own eyes and identify racial tension as an opportunity for spiritual growth on the sides of both black and white.

In the years after The Sign of Jonas Merton turned not only toward the world but also to the various religious traditions of the East His awakening to a de-centered reality beyond all differentiation reflects his keen interest in Zen Buddhism. Zen strives

for an intuitive communion with the infinite. It seeks to negate a "consciousness of things" in order to experience consciousness itself. To be awakened to consciousness one must empty oneself of self-consciousness. The Zen Buddhist searches for his or her "original face" or "mind" which exists beyond identification and transcends the duality of subject and object. Merton states, "Like all forms of Buddhism, Zen seeks an 'enlightenment' which results from the resolution of all subject-object relationships and oppositions in a pure void (1992:13)." The real self is realized when one "achieves" no-self (anatman). Having undergone this kenosis one "experiences" Satori (enlightenment) and is immersed in Sunyata (the Void). Liberated from the confining sense of self one becomes aware of the unity of life and is moved by compassion to help others.

Merton believed that Christianity could learn much about itself from Zen Buddhism. According to James Baker, Merton recommended that Christians maintain the discipline of Zen, which is effective in overcoming self-attachment. He did not And any theological or philosophical difficulty in making such a recommendation, for the Christian ideal itself advocates selfless service to one's neighbor. Zen's emphasis on experience could also help steer Christianity away from what Merton saw as its preoccupation with dogma and doctrine. Merton observed that "Zen seeks the direct, immediate view in which the experience of the subject-object duality is destroyed. That is why Zen resolutely refuses to answer clearly, or abstractly, or dogmatically any religious or philosophical question what-ever(Cunningham, 1992:311)." To be sure, Merton recognized the importance and validity of theological investigation and clarification. However, caution must be taken to remember that the essence of Christianity, for Merton, is an active "living experience of unity" that must not be clouded by doctrine.

As Baker notes, Zen could also help Christians to better understand contemplation. It neither teaches nor denies anything, and "enlightenment comes neither by quietistic inactivity or by self-conscious overactivity, for both attitudes tend to make the person a subject and all others objects, creating a false and dangerous dichotomy (Baker, 1971:144))." Merton writes, "Buddhist meditation, but above all that of Zen, seeks not to explain but to pay attention, to become aware, to be mindful, in other words to develop a certain kind of consciousness that is above and beyond deception by verbal formulas — or by emotional excitement (Cunningham, 1992:404)." In satori all distinctions vanish for it is an awareness of pure being beyond all subjects and objects. Merton believed that such an enlightenment was part of Christian contemplation, as well. Christian "satori" is experienced when all distinctions between the human and the divine are dissolved.

For Merton, the via negativa is the means by which humans realize their true natures. It is a leap into the darkness of the infinite. It is a loss of identity that defies logic and reason. The subjective ego-self would proposes that it in itself is the measure of what is real. But the via negativa offers an avenue through which to negate all subject/object duality, thereby freeing one to experience that which is both transcendent and immanent "In order to be open we have to renounce ourselves, in a sense we have to die to our image of ourselves, our autonomy, our fixation upon or self-willed identity

(1966:204)." This death takes place through the act of contemplation in which one becomes fully awake and aware of the sacredness of life, of the unity of being itself, and of the infinite source of life, which is recognized as the divine. Through self-negation one loses oneself in order to regain one's being beyond identifrcation.

To reach a true awareness of Him as well as ourselves, we have to renounce our selfish and limited self and enter into a whole new kind of existence, discovering an inner center of motivation and love which makes us see ourselves and everything else in an entirely new light (Cunningham, 1992:372).

True self-realization is the perception of openness to the infinite in the very core of our being. This is the nature of the "true spiritual self' that Merton is concerned with.

We become real, and experience our actuality, not when we pause to reflectjjpon our own self as an isolated individual entity, but rather when, transcending ourselves and passing beyond reflection, we center our whole soul upon the God Who is our life. That is to say we fully "realize* ourselves when we cease to be conscious of ourselves in separateness and know nothing but the one God Who is above all knowledge (1996:122).

Merton's dissolution of the subject/object duality that isolates one from the physical world owes much to his interest in Taoism. His separation from society at Gethsemani afforded him almost constant contact with the natural world. References to nature are scattered throughout his works, and even in The Seven Storey Mountain he seemed to be particularly attentive to whatever physical environment surrounded him. By the time he had retreated to a private hermitage on the monastery grounds, however, Merton's understanding of his place in the natural world reflected his belief in the unity of all life. From studying the works of the great Taoist master Chuang Tzu, he was convinced of the interdependent nature of all life. By objectifying the natural world human beings make it easy for science and technology to seize command. Taoism proposes a cessation of activity in the sense that true understanding of one's place in the world is not something that can be systematically and technically deciphered. Merton writes, "Chuang Tzu is not concerned with words and formulas about reality, but with the direct existential grasp of reality in itself. Such a grasp is necessarily obscure and does not lend itself to abstract analysis (1992:xvi)." The way to "find" oneself is to be awakened to being through wu wei.

Wu wei is not passivity but action "that seems both effortless and spontaneous [when] performed 'rightly,' in perfect accordance with our nature and with our place in the scheme of things. It is completely free because there is in it no force and no violence. It is not 'conditioned' or 'limited' by our own needs and desires, or even by our own theories and ideas(1992:34-35)." Nature does not objectify anything; it simply "is." By negating a separate self that is concerned with defining itself one is immersed in all that is. According

to Merton, detachment and spiritual isolation, two of the most beneficial attributes of the contemplative life, must be cultivated if one is to remove the mask of the ego-self that hides the divine within. However, it must be noted that while there may exist

certain guidelines along the way for the aspiring pilgrim who enters the via negativa, there is no formula one may use to unerringly find his or her way beyond the subject/object duality and the various pitfalls of a self-centered consciousness. Indeed, to focus on any set of actions as a means to an end, according to Merton and Zen, is to entirely miss the point.

By its very nature the via riegativa is anti-technique. It defies the ability of technical systems to dominate the individual precisely because it is not a system. It is the way that is no way. It is the loss of all foundations and distinctions, a journey through fear and confusion. Yet, it is ultimately liberating for it destroys all perceived boundaries and classifications. It is able to counter the alienating effects of mass society because it puts one in a different frame of reference than the constant barrage modem humans undergo from mass media. It affords a liberating and intuitive experience of reality rather than the scientific view of an objective world. For Merton, it offers hope to a world inhabited by mindless automatons who feel alienated from themselves yet lack the courage to stand against the masses.

By denying absolutes and all definitions, the via negativa introduces doubt into one's spiritual life that leads to a healthy questioning of all authority. This doubt is not easy to suffer through but is fundamental to the realization of the interdependent nature of all life. Merton states:

Let no one hope to find in contemplation an escape from conflict, from anguish or from doubt On the contrary, the deep, inexpressible certitude of the contemplative experience awakens a tragic anguish and opens many questions in the depths of the heart like wounds that cannot stop bleeding. For every gain .in deep certitude there is a corresponding growth of superficial 'doubt* This doubt is by no means opposed to genuine faith, but it mercilessly examines and questions the spurious 'faith' of everyday life, the human faith which is nothing but the passive acceptance of conventional opinion (1972:12).

Doubt throws into question any action taken in the name of an absolute authority, even if the authority is no identifiable figure but a principle of efficiency promoted by a well organized bureaucracy.

Interdependence

According to Merton, the one who is open to the infinite sees the world from a very different perspective. To him or her the world no longer is limited to a plane of physical space in which human beings perform the daily routines of their lives. Instead, it becomes a "complex of responsibilities and options made out of the loves, the hates, the fears, the joys, the hopes, the greed, the cruelty, the kindness, the faith, the trust, the suspicion of all (Cunningham,1992:378)." We all assume some level of responsibility for any pain and suffering in the world. "In the last analysis, if there is war because nobody trusts anybody, this is in part because I myself am defensive, suspicious, untrusting, and intent on making other people conform themselves to my

particular brand of death wish (378)." The other, the stranger, immediately poses a threat by his or her difference. However, when the existence of all people in the divine is experienced, the openness to the infinite transcends all defining characteristics and renders ultimate differentiation impossible.

The deepest level of conscience "is beyond both consciousness and moral conscience; it is beyond thinking and self-awareness and decision. It is the conscience of God in us, it is where the Holy Spirit operates (1988:130)." Merton calls it the spiritual conscience. It is not a state of individual experience only, but is, rather, a kind of communal conscience. It is in the spiritual conscience that one encounters God and everyone else, for God is the source for all beings. We all share in the divine. The contemplative life offers one the chance to experience community in the spiritual conscience.

Here Merton notes the importance of prayer. For him, there is no such thing as individual prayer.

When I pray I am, in a sense, everybody. The mind that prays in me is more than my own mind, and the thoughts that come up in me are more than my own thoughts because this deep consciousness when I pray is a place of encounter between myself and God and between the common love of everybody (1988:135).

We do not meet other people merely in our external contact with them, we also meet them in the depths of our own hearts.

This is what is experienced in the spiritual conscience. It is neither restricting not constricting. When one renounces selfidentification he or she is opened to the infinite and is able to accept other people as interdependent equals rather than identifying and defining them as separate objects.

In the modem world the contemplative life of prayer and detachment is the surest measure of maintaining a liberating sense of community. On August 22, 1967 Merton wrote to Dom Francis Decroix saying:

We should bear in mind that Marx taught an interesting doctrine about religious alienation, which is a consequence of regarding God as distant and purely transcendent and putting all our hope for every good in the future life, not realizing God's presence to us in this life, and not realizing that prayer means contact with the deepest reality of life, our own truth in Him. Also we should point out that prayer is the truest guarantee of personal freedom... It should certainly be emphasized today that prayer is a real source of personal freedom in the midst of a world in which men are dominated by massive organizations and rigid institutions which seek only to exploit them for money and power. Far from being the cause of alienation, true religion in spirit is a liberating force that helps man to find himself in God (1985:159).

The realization that one is interconnected with everyone else in that which transcends all yet is intimately present in all, necessitates a reevaluation of how we interact It calls into question all claims to absolute truth, thereby eliminating the desire of one group to dominate another.

The concept of dignity is paramount here. Human dignity is understood to be what we all have in common despite our differences — race, gender, ethnicity, etc. It is not

definable because it is based on our semblance to the image of a God without image. It can only be considered in terms of "not this" and "not that," and this is why the via negativa is helpful in affirming it. The moment dignity is defined it is defiled, dignity is a sharing in the infinite that transcends and fmds expression in all religions.

For Merton, a recognition of the innate dignity of the human being required a commitment to non-violence. Merton was adamant in his support for peaceful protest. His role model in this regard was Mahatma Gandhi. In Gandhi, Merton recognized a kindred soul who was well aware of the interdependence of all life. Merton wrote that Gandhi's spirit of nonviolence

sprang from an inner realization of spiritual unity in himself. The whole Gandhian concept of nonviolent action and satyagraha is incomprehensible if it is thought to be a means of achieving unity rather than as the fruit of inner unity already achieved...The spiritual life of one person is simply the life of all manifesting itself in him. [It] is very necessary to emphasize the truth that as the person deepens his own thought in silence he enters into a deeper understanding of and communion with the spirit of his entire people (1965:6).

The one who is aware of the unity of life does not consider the use of violence to be a valid option, even in the cause of justice. Gandhi epitomized the struggle of a people against a powerful colonial nation. Yet, his call to revolution was manifest in his devotion to silence and interior reflection. Merton respected that even in the face of cold-blooded murder,

Gandhi's respect for human dignity would not allow him to return blow for blow,

Gandhi believed that the dignity of all is mitigated if one responds to violence with violence. "To punish and destroy the oppressor is merely to initiate a new cycle of violence and oppression. The only real liberation is that which liberates both the oppressor and the oppressed at the same time from the same tyrannical automatism of the violent process which contains in itself the curse of irreversibility (1965:14)."

Nonviolent response stands as a witness to the dignity of all persons. It challenges the conscience of those who unquestioningly follow the orders of institutionalized authority by transcending the roles of oppressor and oppressed. According to Merton and Gandhi, those who resort to physical aggression are not much more than slaves to their own violent actions. By refusing to acknowledge the innate dignity of all they cut themselves off from the true freedom that emerges from the recognition of the communal nature of all life. If one recognizes oneself in the other it liberates him or her from the confining nature of prejudice.

There are certain principles, however, that can be used to guide the interaction between humans and governments and between individual people. According to Merton, authentic social action must emphasize three things. First, it must emphasize the human being over the collective automaton who is a slave to technology. Human beings have an innate dignity that must not be surrendered by becoming a cog in the machine, a mere step in the process of production. Authentic interaction must focus on the "liberation of man from the tyranny of the faceless mass in which he is submerged

without thoughts, desires, or judgments of his own, a creature without will or without light, the instrument of the power politician (1966:69)." Second, authentic social action must emphasize the personal aspect of the human being. It is not enough to respect the human above the automaton. Every human being's personal values, which, according to Merton, are spiritual and incommunicable must be taken into account. "To respect the personal aspect in man is to respect his solitude, his right to think for himself, his need to learn this, his need for love and acceptance by other persons like himself (1966:70)." Attempting to convert others to a particular point of view, or even spoon-feeding those who are already converted, does little more than prepare the way for mass society.

Third, authentic social action must emphasize wisdom and love. A sapiential view of society is "less activistic, more contemplative; it enables men and institutions to see life in its wholeness, with stability and purpose, though not necessarily in a politically conservative sense (70)." Only when these three criteria are met can men and women hope to effect a significant change in their interaction that will release them from mass society and keep them open and accepting of the other.

In *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* Merton reiterated his belief in accepting others for what they are by stating that the more I am able to affirm others, to say 'yes' to them in myself, the more real I am. I am fully real if my own heart says yes to everyone. I will be a better Catholic, not if I can refute every shade of Protestantism, but if I can affirm the truth in it and still go further.

So, too, with the Muslims, the Hindus, the Buddhists, etc. This does not mean syncretism, indifferentism, the vapid and careless friendliness that accepts everything by thinking of nothing. There is much one cannot affirm' and 'accept,' but first one must say 'yes' where one really can (1966:129).

While there may exist significant doctrinal discrepancies between faiths, one is not faced with an either/or situation, for we are all interdependent To become blinded by the differences is to miss the underlying wholeness and unity that has its source in the divine infinite. Merton's advice to die Christian community is to love others "with a love completely divested of all formally religious presuppositions, simply as our fellow men, men who seek truth and freedom as we do (1966:298)."

CONCLUSION

Thomas Merton possessed not only the ability to recognize and understand what he was feeling at any given time but also the ability to express himself in a manner comprehensible to the conscientious reader. The message that resonates in Merton's writing is a dissatisfaction with the state of men and women in today's world.

The basis of Merton's critique is the extent to which people have become alienated from themselves. Ultimately, the nature of human beings cannot be defined. For Merton, men and women are created by and sustained by the divine. There is no absolute distinction between the human and God. This realization, in turn, dissolves any ulti-

mate distinction among individual human beings. However, modem society does not view reality in this way. It is still firmly entrenched in the modernist paradigm, which begins with self and objectifies everything else. For Merton, this is anathema. By establishing the basis for reality in individual self-consciousness, modem human beings have only succeeded in alienating themselves from their own true nature.

According to Merton, the secular myth of progress blossomed under the objectification of the world and envisaged a new age in which humans would be the masters of their domain and be privy to the highest levels of maturity and freedom. However, instead of inheriting a bright future human beings have become mind<less slaves to technological systems that promise instant gratification if one performs one's part as a cog in the machine as efficiently as possible. For Merton, the only way out of the crisis of modernity is the cultivation of a contemptus mundi that removes one from the status quo and enables him or her to come to terms with the agonia of existence in a way that negates any subject/object duality and opens one to the infinite.

Merton rejects the world in order to truly embrace the world. He negates himself in order tp realize his lack of isolated, individual identity. The contemplative lifestyle is the embodiment of his contemptus mundi. Originally, Merton sought only solitude and silence; he wanted nothing more to do with the world. But the more he renounced all selfish claims the more he began to realize that solitude and silence are things one carries within the heart and are only fully effective when they are put to use in the world. A person is never truly alone when he or she unmasks the illusion of selfhood and is exposed to the interdependence of all beings. The contemptus mundi removes one from the preoccupations and imposed standards of a world bent on maintaining a consumeristic ideal. In such a world the only respite one gains from agonia is a fleeting moment of gratification experienced when some new material possessions is consumed. The false self briefly clings to a sense of satisfaction at having accomplished something.

The via negativa is the means by which one is able to escape the confining effects of false identification. It decenters ones. consciousness as the basis of all reality and throws him or her into darkness and confusion. All foundations and footholds are dissolved and one languishes in despair. But this despair is purgative. By giving up all claims to self-control we die to ourselves and are liberated from the confining labels that identify us as objects in a material world. Without identity and definition we experience the true freedom that is part of the source of all life, the infinite divine. By denying absolutes and refusing to define, the via negativa calls all authority into question. By removing oneself *from the* machine one immediately offers an alternative to the unquestioning obedience of mass society. The person who empties him/herself is no longer concerned with any doctrinal differences that may separate religious traditions and refuses to deny the one who is different, precisely because differences cease to exist when there is no foundational identity in which they could take root.

Merton's critique of his society is a postmodern response to the claims of modernity. It is postmodern because: a) Merton critiques the myths that form the foundation of modernity: the Ulusion of individualism, the collectivism that it engenders, and the

myth of progress that fuels it; and b) It does so without reverting to a pre-modem "Orthodoxy." Merton replaces such an orthodoxy with a de-centered approach to all religions and cultures. It should be noted that Merton is not merely making disinterested observations about the world around him. He is actively engaging in a systematic critique of what he considers to be the most pressing problems for a world in considerable turmoil. The earliest works of Merton, The Seven Storey Mountain in particular, have a sarcastic tone to them. They do espouse a rejection of the world, but it is not a critique. Before the via negativa experience of The Sign of Jonas Merton rejected the world because of its failings. After his passage through the via negativa he embraced the world as a realm of interdependence. Merton's writing took an obvious turn toward social issues. Now from the vantage point of no-self he attacked those elements that were dehumanizing. Titles like Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander and Contemplation in a World of Action are highly critical of the unquestioning conformity that characterizes mass society. Seeds of Destruction and Faith and Violence make no apology for their criticism of racial segregation and the use of violence as a political tool. The fact that he identifies and critiques certain elements of modernity without reverting to a pre-modem ideal is what makes him postmodem without being ideologically so. He was surrounded by a Western Christian paradigm yet was able to take a step back, reflect upon what he saw, and voice his disapproval.

Merton does not revert back to a pre-modem standard when critiquing modernity. He does not see the answers lying in a retrieval of some noble, beneficent European golden age of Christendom. His response is clearly something different. He does not judge other religions and cultures by Western standards. Indeed, Merton rejects those standards precisely because they turn the physical world and all people in it into isolated objects. Recognition of the interdependence, dignity, and equality of all life immediately removes him from any Eurocentric world view and, in fact, makes him decidedly postEuropean.

Merton's response cannot be characterized as traditionally Christian - in the sense of embarking on a world mission to convert everyone. His ability to embrace the thought of and adopt some of the principles of Mahatma Gandhi, Chuang Tzu, and various Buddhist figures clearly makes him post-Christian. He is a Christian who points the way beyond "Christendom." For Merton, authentic Christianity is not threatened by other faith claims and does not find it necessary to turn all people into model Christians. He sees Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity as converging and diverging in the via negativa and is able to learn more about his own potential from his encounters with other traditions in a manner that transcends cultural distinctions and doctrinal differences.

Readers of many of Merton's later works could question to what extent he remained a Christian. His immersion in the religions of the East that do not profess a belief in the traditional Judeo-Christian God, could cause many to misinterpret his message or avoid his thought altogether. Yet his description of Christianity in relation to various aspects of Buddhism The Asian Journal for instance, he remained fundamentally Christian and

essentially biblical. The problem with Merton is that he cannot be boxed in. The tone of his early works is doctrinal; the issues seem black and white. After The Sign of Jonas, however, Merton's writing changes considerably enough in content that one could question if the same man wrote The Seven Storey Mountain. In fact, Merton himself insisted that he was not the same man. Like Abraham, he was a man who set out on a journey, not knowing where he was going but trusting God to lead the way. As such he opened a path into a postmodern world that still awaits full articulation.

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Issue #22 Jan 1999 — Conversations with Jacques Ellul

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About This Issue

Welcome to Issue number **22** of the *Ellul Forum.* **This issue is a special treat, for the entire issue reflects contributions from Ellul himself. Although he is no longer with us, thanks to these publications, he is still very much apart of our lives. Our** *Forum* **features excerpts from anew book of conversations with Jacques Ellul by Patrick Troude-Chas-tenet Chaste net worked as Ellul's research assistant for over ten years and published these conversations in a French edition,** *Entretiens avec Jacques Ellul* **(La Table Ronde) in 1994. The English translation is being published by the** *University of South Florida-Rochester-St. Louis Studies on Religion and the Social Order* **through Scholars Press. We express our appreciation to Scholars Press for permission to publish these excerpts from** *Jacques Ellul on Religion, Technology and Politics* **by Pierre Troude-Chastenet. See the ad on page two for details if you wish to order a copy. In addition, we have selected poems translated and reviewed by James Lynch. Lynch reviews two books of Ellul's posthumously published poetry. These books reveal yet another side to this complex scholar. We owe both Chastenet and Lynch a great debt for bringing Ellul to us in these contributions.**

The next issue of the *Ellul Forum* **(July 1999) will devoted to the issue of human rights in relation to Ellul's work. Articles included will be: "Natural Law or Covenant: Human Rights and the Rights of Others" by Sylvain Dujancourt, "Law Rights and Technology" by Andrew Goddard and "Human Rights and the Natural Flaw" by Gabriel Vahanian.**

In This Issue

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Forum: Jacques Ellul in Conversation with Patrick Troude-Chastenet

Jaques Ellul: on Religion, Technology and Politics Converations with Patrick Troude-Chastenet

From Chastenef s Introduction:

"I describe a world with no prospects, but I believe that God accompanies man throughout his whole existence". This is what Jacques Ellul told me one day. The man who wrote *La Foi au prix du doute* (The price of faith is doubt) died with this certitude on the 19th of May 1994 at his home in Pessac, just a few kilometers from the Bordeaux campus.

Right to the very last his long illness was to provide an illustration of one of his favourite themes namely that of the ambivalence of technological progress. It was to prevent him from completing our last two interviews. He, who used to thank his Maker continually for having given him an iron constitution and computer-like memory suffered agonies at not being able to find the name of this or that poet or painter that he had so loved. In the twilight of his life his body, which he had for so long overlooked, claimed its due forcing itself in a myriad ways into our conversation. My *maitre* was made of more than just his great intellect. Having to face this fact left me feeling very uneasy.

I should point out that for more than ten years, no doubt out of a sense of propriety, so-called personal questions, even the usual platitudes about general well-being, had been singularly absent from our conversations. The name of the collection where this book was originally to appear left no doubt as to the biographical nature of the undertaking, but by tacit consent we were constantly putting off the moment when we would leave the work and talk about the man.

It is probably not a coincidence that our relationship took a hew turn following the death of his wife on the 16th of April, 1991. From that date on Jacques Ellul's life was never the same again. He was overcome by grief. For a while I thought he may never be able to get over it He had covered the walls of his sitting-room with photos of his wife, Yvette. This is where he used to receive all his guests. I think he was filled with

regret and felt that it was urgent that he bear witness to how important she had been in his life. He wanted to convince me that his wife had shaped his destiny and that without her he would never have achieved his life's work.

I remember once when he handed back the manuscript of an introduction to his ideas that I had written, having conscientiously corrected the misprints and spelling mistakes, like the good teacher that he was, he turned to me and said: "That's good work but you haven't once mentioned my wife." I found this remark rather unjust since I was presenting the work in an academic context, nevertheless I promised to repair the oversight. In fact it wasn't an oversight but a deliberate, admittedly debatable, decision on my part to treat the work without systematically referring to the author's life.

If one is to go by the definition given by the German philosopher Wilhelm Diltey the work of a biographer is firstly to determine the objectives of the subject of the biography and then use these to throw light on how he lived his life and did what he did. There are extremely few lives that actually lend themselves to such a mechanical approach but if one were to apply this method to Jacques Ellul one would have to say that he always wanted to be a free man and a free spirit. Too bad if the word free has become a hackneyed term today; there is no better word to describe the underlying value that guided Ellul in all fields and in all circumstances.

Ellul cherished this freedom throughout his whole life having received it, as he said, as his father's legacy to him. Just six months before his own death, at an international conference dedicated to his work, Ellul revealed to us that his father had bequeathed him three guiding principle: never lie to anyone including yourself, be charitable towards the weak and stand up to those more powerful than yourself.

From the Interviews:

Chapter One

Patrick CHASTENET - *You seem to be the perfect personification of the old adage, "no man is a prophet in his own country " / In your opinion, what explains your success abroad and your belated popularity in France? Far from Paris, no salvation?*

Jacques ELLUL - To a large extent my success abroad was due to the fact my book on the technological society came out in America at a time when the Americans were experiencing the sort of problems I was talking about. As far as France is concerned, being provincial is always a determining factor if one wants a career as a writer or a philosopher. Several years ago a Parisian journalist came home here to interview me and asked: "But how can you be an intellectual if you live in the provinces?" That was a very typical reaction ! Anyhow I've always been quite marginal in all the activities I have been involved in.

I had a university career but did little work in my speciality. I am a Christian, but being a Protestant I am in a minority religion and within Protestantism I belong to an even smaller minority. Naturally I've always been on the side-lines because I've always

refused to join any of the mainstream political currents. Perhaps this has something to do with my character. I have the habit of always starting by criticizing all the things I like, which does not necessarily endear me to those who are close to me. Consequently I don't tend to criticize right-wing ideas or people since I have nothing in common with them, but I do criticize the left because I have friends there and a certain affinity for them. So it is obvious that I have always found myself alone and out of place...

Without God, does your-work still have a meaning?

Without God, my work would have an eminently tragic meaning. It would have driven me to taking the same way out as Romain Gary: suicide. I describe a world with no prospects but I have the conviction that God accompanies man throughout history.

You are aware that some of your readers are atheists?

Yes, but I believe that what I have to say about Christianity is open to everyone including non-believers. By that I mean that hope is transmissible, even without reference to a given God. Hope is the link between the two sides of what I write, which communicate back and forth in a sort of dialectical exchange in which hope is both the crisis point and the solution.

Chapter 4 ur

What is your earliest recollection?

It must have been in 1914 when I was two and a half. I was playing in the park, the Jardin Public, and I remember being drawn towards the sound of music, military music, when I saw some soldiers coming towards us carrying rifles and my mother saying to me: "Look at them they are soldiers going off to the war". Then I don't really know what got hold of me but I went over to a flower-bed picked a small bunch of flowers and took it over to one of the soldiers and said: "Here soldier this is for you".

Iremember that he then took me in his arms and kissed me. Iwas extremely moved by that procession. Naturally at that age I had no idea what war was but I did understand that something extremely serious was going on...

You once described yourself as being "cold and calculating". Is this true?

I would say so. Even though I am very moved by poetry for example. I am both very passionate and very cold. I would describe myself as being cold insofar as I cannot help distancing myself from events. When I take part in social gatherings I do so wholeheartedly, I share the emotions of those who are close to me and afterwards I "ponder the matter". I try to analyse why certain things had been said and done.

Whatwouldyou say has changed inyour character over the years?

I have become more open towards other people this has happened under the influence of Christianity and of my wife. At sixteen I was a little brute interested in absolutely no-one except my friend Farbos and I was an absolute ghrttonfor work. Work and books were my passion. You mustn't forget I was an only child.

In your spare time did you have a typical loner's activities?

Not as far as my taste for a good fight was concerned. But it is true that I did have a hobby which was rather unusual for a antimilitary type like me (laughs). I would spend

whole afternoons making lead soldiers. I would take the little lead figures and work on them with a soldering iron. Then I would paint them taking care to be absolutely faithful to real-life uniforms because I was already deeply fascinated by history. I can show you my collection, I still have it I believe it must be rather unique...

Do you see yourself as an austere and undemonstraive Calvinist?

First of all I am not a Calvinist. I am a follower of Kari Barth who was just the opposite. He was joyful and warm-hearted. Calvin wanted to introduce an unshakeable logic into a domain that I consider not as intellectual. I can't go along with that.

But you were a Calvinist at the outset?

No. I was much more influenced by Luther and by Kierkegaard than I ever was by Calvin. I've studied Calvin (Laughs). When I was reading theology I was landed with the task of writing a critical summaryof Book IV of the *Christian Institutes*. I read the whole work and believe me I found it deadly boring. Ihave never been attracted by thatkindofrigour.

You would agree, wouldn't you, that you are rather cold, even though this does not stem from your spiritual convictions?

Yes. Despite the fact that I am Latin I am not demonstrative.

How do you account for this reserve?

I would say that it comes from the distance that existed in my feelings for my father. He was always extremely kind with me but he was never demonstrative. I suppose I've followed his example.

I can't put my finger on it but I feel that you are leaving something out when you describe the influence of your parents.

Perhaps I should have mentioned that my mother passed on her love of poetry to me. Fortunately I always had intelligent teachers who let us choose our own recitation texts. Mother, who adored poetry, always guided me towards the better poets. From the age of six or seven I have had a taste for poetry. Poetry is the art form which pleases me the most and in which I find deep meaning.

Have you ever thought of publishing your own poems?

No. I believe I've told you before if my heirs feel like publishingmy note-books of poems, if they feel it's a good idea, they can. That is the wry I am. In poetry one bares one's soul and I don't like baring my soul. [Forum editorial note: Some of Ellul's poems are published in this issue.]

For those of us who have read your "What I believe" it is clear that you do not like confessions.

Quite honestly I have to tell you that I am not enormously interested in myself. For example I've never been able to stand Proust's style. All that business of writhing tormented souls, tearing things to shreds, and going deeper ever deeper, it all leaves me stone cold. I may not be demonstrative but I am very outward-looking.

But surely in order to understand others you must also understand yourself? Is introspective work necessarily self-satisfying?

That is what I have always experienced, even in sociology. I watch a film or a T. V. program and feel this or that about what I've seen. My feelings are spontaneous, I'm a very good audience. It is afterwards that I start to turn it over in my mind.

I analyse my own feelings which I later transpose. I use myself as a model of the average man, usually I react like any man in the street. I'm rarely mistaken, quite simply because I'm well-equipped intellectually and that I don't consider myself as being different in any way...

Chapter 5 ve

At what age did you discover the Bible?

I began reading the Bible at the age of seven or eight. It was a book that I found fascinating. Of course there were lots of things I didn't understand in it.

Don 'tyou think that that is rather normal for an eight-year-old?

It wasn't the actual content that I had trouble understanding. In the version of the Bible that we had at home some words were printed in italics. I asked my mother what that meant. She was unable to come up with an answer so she sent me off to a preacher she knew. I took my Bible along to show him but he couldn't give me an answer either. I was very disappointed and put a second question to him.

There's a passage in the Bible where God says he will spare all those he loves for a thousand generations but those who sin against him he will punish for three generations. I asked the preacher to explain to me how the calculation worked. What happens if in the middle of the thousand generations one man should disobey, this would imply that the next three generations should be punished, in which case what happens to the remaining five hundred generations who were entitled to be spared? He just stood there dumb struck, unable to answer this my second question. At which point I felt extremely frustrated and I said to myself: "You're going to have to manage on your Own. Grown-ups simply don't understand anything." This episode pretty well illustrates how I would read the Bible later on.

When and how did your conversion occur?

I would have preferred not to talk about that. When it did occur it was overwhelming I would even say violent. It happened during the summer holidays. I was staying with friends in Blanquefort not far from Bordeaux. I must have been seventeen at die time as I had just taken my final exams at school. I was alone in the house busy translating Faust when suddenly, and I have not doubts on this at all, I knew myself to be in the presence of a something so astounding, so overwhelming that entered me to the very centre of my being. That's all I can tell you.

I was so moved that I left the room in a stunned state. In the courtyard there was a bicycle lying around. I jumped on it and fled. I have no idea whatsoever how many dozens of kilometers I must have covered. Afterwards I thought to myself "You have been in the presence of God." And there you are.

Could you physically see or hear this presence?

No. No words were uttered. I saw nothing. Nothing. But the presence was unbelievably strong. I knew with every nerve in my body that I was in the presence of God.

What happened to your usual criticalfaculties, which in any other situation would make you doubt your first impression, would make you check again and search out any counter-evidence? They didn't come into play here, did they?

I yery quickly realized that I was experiencing a conversion and that indeed I should put it to the test to see if it held strong or not. So I set about reading antichristian writers. By the time I was eighteen I had read Celsus, Holbachref EX "de Holbach Paul Henri" and also Marxref EX "Marx Karl" whom I'd come across earlier. My faith did not budge. It was for real.

At the moment that this "revelation" occurred did it cross your mind that perhaps your senses were playing tricks on you?

No. I was in excellent shape both physically and psychologically. I was well-balanced. Of course I did entertain that possibility but finally I rejected it

Have you ever felt like writing about your conversion and how it happened?

I have never written about it and have no intention of ever doing so. Once again, I don't like talking about myself. As I have already explained for my poems, they give away too much about me. And I certainly wouldn't like to behave like a second Claudel. After all my conversion is a matter between me and God and it really isn't anyone else's business.

Perhaps it's because you are afraid of ridicule that you don't -want to?

Don't wony on that score. I've never been in the least afraid of ridicule.

From your description it was sudden, violent and disturbing. There was nothing of the beatific illumination about what happened?

Certainly not. And it didn't involve fear either but I was stunned. Meeting God had brought a complete change in my whole being. To begin with this meant a re-ordering of my ideas. I would have to think differently now that God was near me.

Following this "startling" encounter I believe your actual conversion happened at a much slower pace?

Yes, it was a process which went on for years. On the one hand I knew that I had experienced something fundamental and unquestionable but on the other hand I wanted to avoid God's presence in my life. No doubt this has to do with my need for independence. I didn't want to have to depend on anyone in my life. What I hadn't understood was that faith can bring extraordinary freedom. For me Christianity was a sort of orthodoxy, a moral constraint and not at all a sort of liberation.

You spoke of having to re-order the way you thought. Does this mean you already had a structured mind at this stage?

I had an academic mind. In secondary school we didn't do anything too fanciful, believe me. I had done very well in my final year, majoring in the humanities. I had studied metaphysics but that left me cold. Intellectually I was in good working order but nothing more...

When and in what circumstances did you meet Bernard?

We were together from the beginning of the secondary school onwards. He was already remarkably eccentric and untidy. I was fascinated by his brilliant mind but was rather put off by his savage wit which frightened me somewhat. He was just tire opposite of me. He did not work hard, he did not do well. We had nothing in common until one day, during our freshman year at the university, he invited me to go camping with him in the Pyrenees.

There were just the two of us, entirely by ourselves in our camp up in the mountains. I was bedazzled to find myself with someone who was ten times more cultivated than myself, who could talk about loads of writers I'd never even heard of and who miraculously seemed to have found something in me that he appreciated. Perhaps it was my gravity or perhaps my ability to listen. And goodness knows Bernard needed someone to listen to him.(Laughs). After that we often went on camping holidays together and became close friends.

What did you get out of this friendship?

Charbonneauref EX "Charbonneau Bernard" taught me how to think and how to be a free spirit Between the way I had been brought up by my father and the education I had received at school I had the single track mind of the good student He got me out of this mindset and taught me how to think critically. Among other things he taught me, a confirmed city-dweller, to love nature and the countryside.

You were a self-confessed Protestant and he was rather antichristian?

Strictly speaking Bernard could not be described as antichristian. Tire Protestant scouts had left a deep mark on him but from the very outset he always claimed to be an agnostic and from that he never wavered even though he was to go through some experiences which would bring him closer to Christianity.

Do you consider him as your intellectual equal?

Today the answer isyes, butforyears he was my intellectual master. He was the one who told me what to read and influenced my views on society. Make no mistake about it he was the captain and I was an excellent first-mate.

Can you explain why his work has gone unrecognized?

As Bernard used to say "I attacked society at its most sensitive points. If you attack society, society will hit back, the weapon it uses is silence." I believe he was right

Can you tell me more about your activities during your student days?

I divided my time between attending classes, reading and working to keep myself. I used to give private classes every evening for a couple of hours. From 1932 or 1933 onwards much of our time was taken up with meetings of the Bordeaux section of the Friends of Espritref.EX "Esprit". By then Bernard was studying History at the university and we saw each other every day. We would organize camping holidays to which we would invite along fellow students we found interesting.

Were these mixed-sex camps?

Of course.

What were your views on that matter?

Strange as it may seem Bernard who always seemed be rather lax was very straight-laced on sexual morality and so was

I. As far as I was concerned it was out of the question to have a steady relationship with a girl if I didn't intend to marry her.

Indeed, but surely nobody even thought of you as being "lax" did they?

No. (Laughs). But then I suppose the fact that I didn't have a cent to my name was a bit of a godsend from that point of view too. While all my friends were able to treat their girlfriends to dances or take them for coffee, there wasn't the slightest chance that I could do the same. I couldn't even treat myself to such things I simply had no money. I never tried to approach a girl and indeed I never met any gills.

Didn't this make you feel frustrated?

No. I was happy with my private life, my reading and the more time went on the more I withdrew into my books. It was my wife who got me out of that, but that was much later on.

Did you feel any antagonism towards people who were differentfrom you, did you feel contempt for womanizers?

Not at all. My best friend at university a young man named Ldca, was an incredible womanizer. He used to have a new girlfriend every three months, and that didn't shock me one bit. I was very strict with myself aS far as morals went but completely openminded towards what others got up to. It was this attitude that enabled me to work with delinquency prevention clubs in later years. Ldca was to become very useful to me, he was an extremely good boxer, so after 1934 when the serious fighting began he became my bodyguard. ...

You just mentioned the strikes over Jeze Gaston! What happened exactly?

They happened in 1934 or 1935 shortly after Mussoliniref EX "Mussolini Benito had invaded Ethiopia. Professor Gaston Jezeref EX "Jtee Gaston" was defending the cause of Ethiopia before the International Court of Justice in the Hague. This provoked an incredible mobilisation of extreme right-wing students in all the law schools throughout France, who called for the resignation of Jdze on the grounds that, in their view, fascist Italy was acting within its rights.

In the turmoil I can still see myself grabbing demonstrators by their jacket lapels out of the fray and asking them "But do you have the faintest idea who Jdzeref EX "Jeze Gaston" is?". They had no idea but kept on shouting "Jeze must go 1". For me that was quite a revelation into the base mentality of the masses.

In the end there were only three of us left standing against these baying hounds. There was Henri ROdelref EX "RCdel Henri", who was shot by the Germans during the war. There was a girl,who looked as if she may be Dutch and who was trying to curb the demonstrators. And there was me.

And who was the Dutch-looking girl?

She was my future wife. We married in 1937. She was a first year law student and I was working for my doctorate. When we met she had already trained as a nurse. Her father lived in South Africa and didn't look after her at all. It was her grandfather

who had decided that she wasn't strong enough to be a nurse, which was quite true. On his advice she had turned to law, but that didn't interest her at all.

Was she involved in politics?

Strictly speaking, no. She had leanings towards the Jeune Republiqueref EX "Jeune Republique" movement but what really disturbed her deeply was crowd behavior. It was enough for the crowd to shout against a man for her to leap at once to his defence.

Was she a Christian?

She had been an ardent Catholic. She was brought up by a former nun of an order that had been secularized who was a most admirable woman indeed, and whom I came to admire enormously later on. At about the age of eighteen she started asking herself the usual questions one asks at that age so she sought out a chaplain to help her. He listened to her veiy patiently with a gentle smile on his face then said: "My dear little Yvette, I've already dealt with all your questions in the catechism class. Now you just look back through what you learned and you'll find all the answers."

Yvette stood up and said "Goodbye. You won't be seeing me again." That was how she broke with Christianity as a whole, to the great sorrow of the former nun who had brought her up.

Was that in Bordeaux?

Quite near, in Cadaujac. My mother-in-law lived in Paris. By the time I met Yvette she had become antichristian and was very much under the influence of Nieztscheref EX "Niezt-sche"Error! Bookmark not defined.. One day I had invited her to come camping with me. There were three or four of us on that trip. I used to read the Bible quietly in my comer. Now this intrigued her as she had never opened a Bible herself. She then asked me to explain certain passages to her and that is how, thanks to the Bible we became close. We would always read and discuss the Bible together from that time on...

Chapter 6

Around 1930 when you organized yourfirst camping expeditions in the Pyrenees were you actually unaware of the Wandervogel" which after all had been in existence for some time?

Completely unaware. Our goal was simply to get closer to nature and to enable young city-dwellers to come and live in the countryside. This corresponded deep-down to what we were and to our own experience.

Wasn't there something ofa initiation rite in what you were doing which could be compared with the ideology of those German youth movements?

No, we did not share the same ideology. But it is true that we required anyone who wished to take part in our camping expeditions to be able to spend a weekend alone in the mountains. No-one actually did that however I As for the rite of diving into ice-cold water, that was something we had already been doing for a long time, from the time of the Protestant post-scout movement in fact. We took those scouts who were able to stand an extremely tough existence. Among other things they had to go

though there was the what we idiotically called "the drawing of lots" every morning which involved diving completely naked into one of the lakes in the Vosges.

Were you all around the same age?

Paulo Breitmayerref EX "Breitmayer Paulo was the eldest. Then there were two or three boys of my age, that is to say less than twenty. One of those was Pierre Fouchienef EX 'Touchier Piene" who was later to become a remarkable pastor. We were the organizers of this movement which was supposed to be anti-boyscout We would perform some of the scout rituals backwards. For us the scouts were far too disciplined and far too likely to become a youth movement in the service of the State. Whereas what we were proposing was totally anarchistic. I can still remember some of the things we got up to at night that were extremely funny.

Can you give me an example?

Certainly. Two or three of us would decide to create havoc throughout the camp. We would start by pulling up all the tent pegs sb that the tents collapsed on their sleeping inhabitants. we would walk twenty-five kilometers through the mountains because we wanted to get to such and such place.

So this was in no way linked to a belief in physical effort or a glorification of virile strength?

Not at all. Not at all. Absolutely not. We never ever held that kind of belief. Charbonneauref EX "Charbonneau Bernard" was always saying to anyone who would listen to him that he did whatever he pleased. Of course this quest for what pleased him could entail the most incredible marches through snowflows high up in the mountains.

I believe you attended a Nazi meeting in the thirties. Is that right?

Yes, I went to Germany for the first time in 1934.1 went again in 1935 when I attended a Nazi gathering in Munich.

Had this any connection with your activities in the personalist groups?

Not at all I had been invited to Germany by some Protestant associations.

So how did you wind up attending a Nazi meeting?

I went out of curiosity. There were such meetings taking place all over at that time, you know.

Did these meetings give you food for thought for your later work on propaganda?

Absolutely. It was fascinating to see how easily a crowd could be whipped up and welded into a single unit... No-one, absolutely no-one, had any individual reactions left.

Was this a Protestant scout movement?

No it was rather a Protestant anti-scout movement. (Laughs)

Did you have a uniform?

Absolutely not. The scouts made a ritual of raising the flag. So we performed a mock ceremony for the lowering of the flag.

DidBernardCharbonneauref EX "Charbonneau Bernard" come along with you?

No. He had once been a scout but after that he refused to let himself be dragooned into any organized group whatsoever.

So at the same time as you were attending the anti-scout camps and you were also attending those of Bernard Charbonneauref EX "Charbonneau Bernard". Did he attach any importance to tests of endurance?

He didn't devise endurance tests specifically. Our endurance was tested by the activities we indulged in. For instance

What about you? Did you get caught up in the crowd reaction at that instant?

No, but it was difficult not to raise my arm in the general salute. We did get lots of funny looks but somehow managed to contain ourselves nevertheless...

Chapter Seven

What did you actually do in the Resistance?

I was never involved in any fighting. Basically I did relief and liaison work We were able to help a good number of Jewish families from our area. We also worked with friends from Poitiers who redirected "deliveries" from Paris to us from time to time. Despite being very run down our home was very large so we were able to house anyone who turned up: French resistance-workers, escaping Spaniards and even three Russian refugees from prison camps in Germany.

These three guys had crossed the whole of Germany and the whole of France and it wasmy job to get them into fit condition. They were as nice as could be. It brings a lump to my throat when I remember our first evening meal together. My wife had served them soup and invited them to start. All three of them had their heads bowed and their hands joined. They only began their meal when they had finished grace and crossed themselves with *a* flourish. This had me flabbergasted I can tell you. These were members of the Komsomol I We got on extremely well together all the time they stayed with us the only thing that bothered us was their complete lack of sense of danger. They were tall and blond so they were recognizable from miles away and these silly fools roamed all over the place.

The reason we had so many people coming through our house was that it was situated only a few hundred meters from the demarcation line. I spent most of my time helping people get across into the free French zone. I was in cahoots with an organization thatdealt in forged papers. So I was able to provide a whole series of people with forged identity cards or forged ration books.

I was also in contact with three neighbouring maquis in Pellegrue, Frontenac and Sauveterre-de-Guyenne and was able to transmit messages from one to the others.

So you were a go-between, in fact?

Yes I was. I was there to warn them of any danger as well. One day a German motorized company came and camped for a while in our garden. When I saw them preparing to head off towards Pellegrue I leapt on my bike. Since I knew all the side roads I managed to get to the maquisards to warn them just in time.

Was anyone aware of your clandestine activities?

Yes. Of course. Whenever the gendarmes came to make inquiries about us the mayor would always answer: "No you've got nothing to worry about with the Elluls. I've got nothing on them. They are O.K." And nothing more came of it. Now the mayor was a wily old peasant. He knew perfectly well what we were up to but always covered for us. I never talked to anyone in the village about things but everybody knew. Moreover just before the Germans began their retreat some of the older inhabitants of Martres came to see me to offer their services. Their rifles dated back to the first world war but they wanted to join the fray.

Was it because of your convictions about non-violence that you didn 7 take up arms?

I didn't have a theoretical position on the subject. At the end of 19431 had brought several young people to live with us who were coming to the end of their studies. We came to the conclusion that it would be better if we were armed. I got in contact with the network that provided forged documents but was never able to track down any weapons. That's all there is to it. Had we been able to lay hands on some revolvers or tommy-guns no doubt we would have joined the maquis in Sauveterre. I was perfectly well aware that if I got involved in the fighting I would be crossing over into the realm of necessity but if I had to I was quite prepared to give up my liberty...

Chapter Nine

Locally I believe you are very much involved in the prevention of juvenile delinquence?

Yes indeed, this is all due to a meeting I had with Yves Charrierref EX "Chanier Yves" in 1958. He came to me asking for legal and spiritual advice. He had been working as community instructor with a public organization and he felt that very little could be achieved for maladjusted boys by keeping them in institutions. In other words, he wanted to work with young delinquents, not in an enclosed environment, but in their natural surroundings: the street. We therefore founded the Prevention Club in Pessac and I worked there with Yves until he died in 1969 as a result of a diving accident.

Concretely, what was your role?

Basically I was an intermediary. I was a buffer between Charrier, the police, the courts and the Social Services Department who paid his salary but wanted assurances. Actually I was the local personality who was there as a sort of caution for the running of such a marginal club. At that time in France there were no more than two or three such experiments being carried out

Do you have any direct contact with these youngsters?

Yes, I often went to the club and they knew that I was 'The boss" as they would say. I was very well received by these young people who could in fact be very violent. I never had any problems. Something quite extraordinary happened as the deviant behaviour changed pattern from bomber jackets to the beat generation to drug addicts, some of them asked Charrierr if he knew of someone who could explain the Bible to them. So once a week I gave Bible classes for thirty or so misfits who I must say turned up very regularly.

Was Charrier a Christian?

Not explicitly ! Whenever I asked him about it he would always say, "Look, I'll look after doing what has to be done and you can do the believing for. me.". (Laughs) He wasn't a Christian but he behaved as a Christian should.

I believe Yves Charrier took great personal risks, and to his cost, by physically confronting hooligans.

How did he cope with drug addicts?

Chanier had less success with the new style delinquants than with the black-leatherjacket brigade. He once said to me: "When all is said and done, what can I do? I know a young boy who lives in the basement of a tower block in Burck. He spends all day on a mattress on the floor. There are some girls who bring him food but he does nothing, simply nothing". In other words Charrier felt he could only do something with deliquants whose delinquency took an active foim. As he often explained to me: "They have bags of energy but they bum it all up in deviant behaviour. What I do is to try to get them to channel it into doing something good". With lethargic, indolent youngsters he didn't know where to start

Has the Prevention Club survived his death?

Yes. After his death I took over the directorship of the club which was not easy. Then I found an excellent instructor, Luc Fauconnet, who was almost the complete opposite of Chairier, but who was the sort of person who could deal with this new type of misfit. He was a man of words. And it's true that drug addicts, although they are very sluggish in behaviour, can be immensely talkative. The most difficult part, as the new director told me, was that they wanted to start talking at two in the morning.

Chapter 10

If you had to sum up in a few words what your wife has brought you, apartfrom her love, what would you say it was?

I think I can answer that question by quoting something she said herself. We were not yet engaged but were seeing a great deal of each other and I was preparing for the agregation exam at the time when she said to me: "Do you realize that if you go on like this you'll end up being nothing more than a bookworm?"

I replied that I couldn't really see what else there was to do, to which she replied: "But you must live your life !" I was completely baffled by that because I had no idea what living actually meant

That is what she did for me. She helped me learn to live. This meant that I learned to relate to others. I wouldn't say that before knowing her I was completely insensitive to the simple pleasures of life, but with her I learned to appreciate and enjoy so many things. She also taught me to listen. That is something I didn't know how to do. That's absolutely true. Being a teacher by nature I was someone who talked and who didn't listen (Laughs)

Learning to listen was useful to me in my job and even more so forme as a Christian and the work I had to do there. She used to say to me, "You can't be a good Christian if you don't listen to other people. How can you help people to understand if you don't listen to their problems and questions?"

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Obviously, and I don't want this to be taken as a criticism, I had been modeling my attitudes on those of my friend Charbonneau. He was completely impervious to other people's questions too. He would air his own views without a thought for what others might think. I was rather like that when I was twenty.

So your wife was able to change your character?

She changed my whole way of being. After that receiving people and listening to them became a very important part of my life...

What were your wife's interests and her tastes when you first met her? Which of her passions did she pass on to you?

What she passed on to me was more a certain sensitivity that she possessed than her position on different matters. She was extraordinarily sensitive to atmosphere. Sometimes when we were in a group she would pick up any feelings of unease or tensions between various people there. As for me as long as I was talking I never noticed if anything was the matter. I was completely oblivious of anything else going on.

It was very important for her that the relationships of those people around her should be free-flowing both with her and between themselves. She found it very hard to stand the roughness of exchange that had always existed with my old friends. We could be very violent in our arguments and then be the best of friends when it was over. She would defend her ideas with much more delicacy...

What do you regret most in your life?

This is going to sound very pretentious but I don't really regret anything. Nothing apart from having been a little impatient with my wife towards the end of her life. Otherwise I regret nothing in my life, even if I have sinned. I'm not a saint.

I was thinking in terms of what you would have liked to have done or to have seen achieved. Or of an area which may have disappointed you?

First of all there are books that I would have liked to have written and that I never got round to. For example I would really have liked to write a book about what the sea has meant to me. Next I regret having several hundred unfinished poems that I can't be bothered to go back to. I criticize myself for that sometimes.

So that is what you regret about writing. Are there any regrets concerning your life as a man of action or simply your life as a man?

I don't regret much in fact. Perhaps I focused too much on my self that is true. I always succeeded what I wanted to succeed in. Perhaps I didn't help others enough. Although I do know that my students appreciated me, liked me and I helped them to the best of my ability. I don't judge myself severely even though I wasn't always what I should have been as far as my wife was concerned.

Book Reviews

The Poetry of Jacques Ellul

An Essay-Review & Translation by James Lynch

After Jacques Ellul's death in 1994 (at age 82) there were added to his *ouvre* two small books of poems: *Silences: Poemes* (Bordeaux: Opales, 1995) and *Oratorio: Les quatre cavaliers de VApocalypse* (Bordeaux: Opales, 1997). Both volumes were published with the assistance of l'Institut des Sciences de la Nature et de rAgro-alimentaire de Bordeaux. Neither book contains an introduction or a preface, or any explanation to the poems that they contain, save for a blurb on the back cover of each.

Oratorio is composed of poems Ellul wrote during the 1960s and embodies many of the major themes of his life work: nature, technology, death, God, man, isolation, and freedom. These poems, divided into five chapters, form a unified whole narrating Ellul's vision of the Apocalypse. As the seals are broken, various narrators descibe the world's destruction and the roles they play in it These monologues are interspersed by different "choruses," whose purpose, as in Greek tragedy, is to comment on and forward the action taking place.

Ellul has chosen to write these poems in a variety of forms and meters, but has a tendency towards alexandrines, often rhymed, which fit his lofty, tragic subject matter. The poems are at turns reminiscent of the mysticism of St Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross:

Quand le Seigneur des Temps accepte de mourir et que la liberty s'affirme en cet instant dans 1'accueil de ce pas quTiomme peut seul subir soumis au plus profond dernier depouillement (Mort amere ou la fleche retombe au sommet de sa course)

(from "Quatrieme partie: La Mort, III")

When the Lord of all Times agrees to die and liberty's affirmed at that moment in the -welcome of the step man alone can suffer subjected to the final, deepest examination (bitter Death when the arrow falls again to the summit of its course)

or of the beautifully-described horror of Baudelaire:

Pour cet appel!—a ce cheval—le quatridme— arrachd lourdement des mondes infdrieurs flechissant sous le poids des victoires certaines et A son cavalier couronnd de tumeurs (from "Quatrieme partie: La mort, I")

As for that call—to such a horse—the fourth dragged heavily from inferior worlds sagging with weight of certain victories and that of his horseman, crowned with tumors.

Silences, by contrast, is a less unified collection of sixty-six poems originally hand-written by Ellul in a notebook and later gathered into their present format by his secretary, Claude Fauconnet, and his oldest son, Jean Ellul. These poems are more varied in both their themes and forms than those from *Oratorio,* as well as being more personal. The majority are untitled, as one might expect from poems taken from such an intimate source. Despite the shift in focus, these poems deal with many of the same themes as those found in *Oratorio* and in Ellul's work as a whole.

I have chosen for the purpose of my translation two poems from each book which I consider to be representative of the collections in general. I have alternated stanzas of Ellul's original French with my English approximation.

From *Oratorio:*

"Troisidme partie: Le cheval noir"

II: Choeurs altemds

Premier choeur

Part Three: The Black Horse

11: Alternating Choruses

First Chorus

L'homme a dit: "Je produis" — Les richesses ecloses au terme du travail des generations ont rSpondu sans frein au viol total des choses — Detruite la Nature, et 1'homme en est caution!

Man said: "I produce"—The riches budding at the end of the toil of generations responded unchecked to the absolute rape of things— Nature Destroyed, and man is the guarantee!

Ah! quand seront combids les fossds de ton ame assainis les marais et constants les ramparts rdpandus dans la plaine et bunkers et silos — Eldve cette Tour d'od tu comptes tes biens!

Ah! when will the gaps in your soul be filled the swamps drained and the ramparts constructed and scattered across the plain with bunkers and silos— Erect that Tower where you count your wealth!

Contemple l'esclavage ou tu mis ta fortune Les fleuves avortds les conduites forcdes Et les monts deboisds qui pleurent leur absence Les Elons dpuisds et les poches viddes

Consider the slavery in which you place your fortune The aborted rivers the forced canals

And the deforested mountains that weep their lack The exhausted veins and emptied pockets.

Les monceaux de scories restants seuls de ta rage et seul libra, le vent qui disperse tes biens...

Devant tant de richese — regarde done les mains qui se tendent en vain — refldtant ton image

Only the slag heaps of your rage remain and, solely free, the wind that scatters your goods... Before so much wealth—look at your hands that grasp in vain—reflecting your image

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Chaque instant te devoile un besom ddsold Tant de travail pour rien que plus d'oeuvres encore ndeessaires toujours vide toujours encore oil s'enchame 1'dcho des travaux consommds

Each moment reveals to you a sorry need

So much work for nothing but still more work (always necessary always ringing hollow) following the echo of accomplished tasks

Ou prendrais-tu ce qu'il faut pour rdpondre? usure de la terra et de ta propre vie quand pour l'entretenir et combler ton envie tu t'dnerves, te chatres

Where will you find what is necessary for responding? the wearing-away of the earth and of your own life when, in order to maintain it and fillfill your desire, you become nervous, castrate yourself

Pour ta force tarie tu t'es fait relayer et tu comptes pour vivre en cette ardente quete sur les monstres actifs qu tu as embrayds — Sombres founders en toi de 1'implacable Bete.

With yourforces run dry, you make yourself step down and, to live on that ardent quest, you count on the active monsters that you have set in motion Somber harbingers for you of the Implacable Beast.

Mais te voici maintenant soude a tes machines et rien ne pent plus te ddgager de leur destin La Machine elle fonctionne— elle fonctionne de nuit, de jour

Tu te fatigues, tu te crispes, tu te tends tu te trompes — Tu la suis.

But here you are now fused with your machines and nothing can extricate you from your destiny The Machine it operates— it operates by night, by day

You grow weary, you grow tense, you strain, you fool yourself—

You follow it.

Bientot dormir! Non ton repos ou le prendras-tu? quand la machine toume encore et ton bras fatigud n'a plus d'ardeur mais elle continue ignorante — aumemeiythme ettedepasse te laisse loin derridre endormi au long des routes ou san faiblir toume le fer.

Soon to sleep! Where will you take your repose? while the machine still turns and your weary arm no longer has fervour, but It continues ignorant—at the same rhy thm and it surpasses you It leaves you far behind, asleep along the routes where, without weakening, the iron turns.

Deuxieme choeur

Second Chorus

Reve, oh combien, avant que 1'Inexpiable t'arrache le bras de ses ongles de fer

avant que 1'Impardonnable arrache ta cervelle oublieuse

Elle qui n'oublie jamais — et ne peut supporter qu'on 1'oublie

Reve de ta possession, de ta maitrise, de ta gloire

Reve

de ta production, de ton bonheur qui vient

Ce qui vient e'est la calculante Broyeuse.

Dream, oh how much, before the Inexpiable tears up your arm

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with Its iron nails
before the Unpardonable extracts your forgetful
brain
the Machine that never forgets—and cannot bear that another forgets it
Dream of your possession, of your mastery of your glory Dream
of your production, of your coming happiness
What comes is the calculating Grinder.
From Silences:
Pdlerinage & la civilisation de la mort
Pilgrimage to the Civilization of the Dead
Quelle ombre, Messeigneurs, je n'eusse cru si dense L'absence oh je m'enfonce et m'ignore moi-meme Simple question de r^flexe sans doute.

Mais nous sommes ddpassds par ce jeu provisionnel dont nous avons 1'impression de faire les frais sans en etre encore certains.

Such darkness, Sirs, I wouldn't have believed so dense The absence into which I plunge and ignore myself A simple question of reflexes no doubt.

But we are outmatched by that provisional game of which we have the impression of bearing the brunt without yet being certain of it

Quoidonc? unedtoile?

Le matin?

Quelqu'obscur souvenir, ou le choix d'un destin.

On ne nous la fait plus. Nous avons laissd tout cela a la ddrive.

Et c'est trds loin de nous—Introduction
au monde de la Terreur—Parade sur l'echafaud.

Nous avons cet azur dans le ventre.

Mais oui—et pas ailleurs—pas meme sur le drapeau Rouge.

What then? a star?

The morning?

Some obscure memory, or the choice of a destiny.

We can do it no longer. We have set all of that adrift.

And it is very far from us—Introduction to the world of Terror—Parade on the Scaffolding.

We have that blue in our bellies.

Of course—and not elsewhere—not even on the
Red flag.

L'immense intestin prophy lactique nous tympanise sans arret
Et nous nous retrouvons nez a nez
Sans aucune podsie
The immense prophylactic intestine splits our ears without
stopping
And we find ourselves face to face
Without any poetry

sans aucune reciprocity

sans aucune profondeur densite masse epaisseur sans mythes ni aurdoles dans un etat de digestion ties avancde

without any reciprocity

without any depth density mass thickness

without myths and halos

within a very advanced state of digestion

Bol alimentaire d'une civilisation mondialisee om-niprdsente

omnicompetente omnispatialisee

Nous sommes ainsi assures de nous y retrouver

Mais il fait noir et nos desserts se font attendre

Peut-etre aura-je 1'honneur de me retrouver tout entier fecal certainement trds saur

Car tout 1'utilisable est dejd utilise et 1'on cherche affole quelques briques d lui remettre Enorme coquecigrue qui risque de s'arreter (chemise longue—boucle blonde— et les yeux Rien n'espere que le bistre et que la nuit)

Bolus of a globalized civilization omnipresent omnicompetent omnispatialized

We are thus assured of finding ourselves there

But it's pitch dark and our desserts keep us waiting

Perhaps I will have the honor of findingmyself entirely fecal certainly very smoked

Because all Are usable has already been used and we search, panic-stricken

for some bricks to put back

Enormous chimera that risks stopping

(long shirt—blonde curl—and the eyes

hope for Nothing except the black-brown and the night)a

part <?a vos trompettes peuvent sonner

Pour le boulot, midi sound—pour le devoir, sainte cohorte

—et la

Patrie ou le Proletariat

Plume la Poule—

apart from this your trumpets can sound

For work, lunchtime blown—for duty, saint troop

—and the

Patria or the Proletariate

Pluck the chicken

Eveques ou Maries, Secretaire du syndicat, chef de cellule du

Parti des Fusilles—Croix de Lorraine et croix faucillee— dollar

et goupillon—sabre—etoile rouge et blanche— Ambassadeur ET

Commissaire du peuple—Poete Surrealofficiel du malheur des pauvres et du Mard-chal quelqu'il soit

Les nouveaux aristas i la lanteme

Mais s'il y a des canons

il n'y a plus de son.

Bishop or Maries, Secretary of the union, chief of the committee of the
Party of the Executed—Cross of *Lorraine and* cross of the reaped—
dollar
and holy-water sprinkler—saber—-red and white star
ET Ambassador
Superintendent of the people—Surreal-official Poet
of the misfortune of the poor and of the Marshal whatever-it-might-be
the nouveau riche at the lantern
But if there are any cannons
there is no more sound.
Adolescence
Adolescence
Avez-vous oublid ces jours de solitude oh rien ne nous pouvait sortir de nos ennuis
quand 1'implacable avait organisd nos fugues et ramenait sans fin 1'absurditd des nuits

Toutes les Nuits—et nous allions de 1'une & 1'autre les fldaux s'abattaient sur
des blds de misdre et nous quetions les grains jaillis des yeux d'un autre Lueur seule
accordee dans ce ddsert de pierre

Oh tragi que innocent des amours enfantines

Have you forgotten days of solitude

when nothing could save us from our boredom: the implacable organized our flights
and brought back endlessly the absurd nights Every Night—we went from one to the
next the plagues swept down on miserable young shoots we sought the flashing scraps
from others' eyes the sole Gleam granted this stoney desert

Oh tragic innocence of childish loves

These collections serve well both as an epitaph to Ellul and as a compliment to his
scholarly works; they offer insight into the spirit of a man who is often more recognized
for his mind.

Issue #23 Jul 1999 — Jacques Ellul on Human Rights

About This Issue

Welcome to Issue number 23 of the *Ellul Forum.* This issue focuses on Jacques Ellul's views on human rights. Although human rights come up in a variety of places in Ellul's work, he wrote surprisingly little directly on this subject. Our guest editor for this issue is Gabriel Vahanian, Professor Emeritus of Strasbourg University. Professor Vahanian asked two of the most impressive new Ellul scholars from England and France to analyze Ellul's views on human rights and to respond to each other's papers. The first, Andrew Goddard, on the theology faculty of Oxford University, analyzes Ellul's views on law, rights and technology. The second, Sylvain Dujancourt, a pastor in the French Reformed Church, ex-, amines the themes of natural law and covenant in Ellul's treatment of rights. Vahanian's own essay both introduces and responds to Goddard and Dujancourt. These authors manage to pull together Ellul's views on human rights, evaluate their adequacy and offer some creative insights of their own. We owe them a debt of gratitude for framing the issues, suggesting constructive future directions and encouraging Anther dialogue among us on this important theme in contemporary ethics.

In This Issue

Advert: New from Scholars Press

Conversations with Patrick Troude-Chastenet *Patrick Troude-Chastenet*
Joan Mendes France, translator

Jacques Ellul (1912-1994), historian, theologian and social philosopher, was among the very first to look upon Technique as the key to our modernity. Because of the gloomy picture he paints of a society delivering humanity up to the manipulations of propaganda, state oppression and political illusion, this prophetic thinker has often been accused of describing today's world as little more than a wasteland. Yet hope and liberty are at the very heart of all his thinking. This book tells the story of Ellul, the anarchistic Christian, through a series of conversations where, for the first and last time in his life, he bares his heart to reveal to us what is tantamount to an intellectual legacy. It also gives us an overview of an immense lifework as yet insufficiently known.

Patrick Troude-Chastenet is a senior lecturer in Political Science at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in the University of Bordeaux in France. He has published three books and numerous articles on Jacques Ellul. He is a member of the editorial board of The Ellul Forum.

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Forum: Ellul on Human Rights

Human Rights and the Natural Flaw

by Gabriel Vahanian

Obviously, this specialist on institutions that was Jacques Ellul, was by and large, in his writings if not in his personal life, rather unappreciative of a chief and once most conspicuous one amongst them, the church. At best, he was scarcely more appreciative of it than he was suspicious of the state. Just as he shunned developing a theory of the state, he seems to have deliberately refrained from investing in a theory of the church. A jurist and, therefore, a debunker of all that claims to repressent the law (Droit) together with the rights (droits) it implements, he does not believe in the technicalized and sociological promotion of human rights, deeming them to be non-biblical. A theologian, he revels in the linguistic anachronisms of a so-called biblical theology and never thought real help if any might ever come from philosophy. Influenced by Barth's *Church Dogmatics as* he was, his own theology is more ethically oriented than it is church-bound. At best, it aims at a future church above and beyond its current confessional or denominational demarcation lines.

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As a matter of fact, with the advent of modernity the church is bound to be no longer as it used to be. Better put, or worse yet, the church itself can no longer afford to be as it used to be, if only for one reason, namely religion. Religion is on the path of shrinking further and further, but what is actually shrinking is religion in its traditional structures. And it will unavoidably go on withering until or unless it is grasped through a different set of parameters, as for example Schleiermacher will point out. But, then, how different? From religion as feeling of absolute dependence to the emergence of the absolute state by way of papal infallibility, the fact is that belief is becoming more a matter of private choice than of social consensus. Even the private individual is turning from believer to citizen. And that probably explains, in part, why both sociology and ecclesiology come into being as inventions of that same modernity, no facet of which is spared from Ellul's unrelenting critique, sooner or later.

By training as well as by calling, Ellul inevitably becomes aware of the fact that a significant, and probably not the least, upheaval caused by the rise and spread of modernity came precisely in the wake of the gradual - and perhaps not so gradual —process by which ecclesiology was supplanted by sociology, though perhaps more in the latters pretense than in its actual appearance. Not that the demise of die church

was not echoed in the larger cultural arena. But even the overshadowing of ecclesiology by sociology might legitimately be viewed as expressive of yet another need, namely a new understanding of the church.

Indeed, if the shift from ecclesiology to sociology does point to various aspects of the secularization of a social order till then informed by the Christian faith and shaped in the shadow of the church, whether in its sacerdotal and sacrificial or in its prophetic and charismatic guise, a question still remains. Insofar as, in keeping with the Christian tradition, the secular does not exhaust tire religious but is fulfilled through it, and vice versa, is not that shift in the construal of the social scheme of Western culture to be understood as becoming really radical only if, and when, from religious to secular or, for that matter, from mythological to technological, it is viewed as beckoned by the need for a new albeit somewhat repressed understanding of the church, rather than its mere demise?

The shift becomes radical only to the degree in which the church, instead of being superimposed on society and overshadowing it, is viewed at one and the same time as concomitant with and iconoclastic of the social order. Or put differently, to the degree in which the church implements a principle inherent to its faith and whose focus consists in changing the world rather than changing worlds rather than, as seems to be the case with Ellul and his penchant for the two kingdoms, driving a wedge between creation and redemption. That such seems still to be the case with Ellul is to me undeniable, though not beyond a point of no return. He does compensate for that wedge, somehow. He thus exhibits a rather incongruous if genuine emphasis on an alternative, not to say an oxymoron: universal salvation. Which he pits against another type of oxymoron, predestination. Claiming, though perhaps for the wrong reason, that the latter is for him much too philosophical a notion, he nevertheless construes it in chronological rather than eschatological terms, historicisti-cally rather than temporally, and so to speak as a story rather than as a scenario - as a plot in search of actors rather than on account of actors in search of the plot, yet one in .constant re-enactment, much in the sense of repetition.

***

Given their task, neither Dujancourt nor Goddard use this kind of language. They keep to Ellul's own whose re-establishment does in some way approximate re-enactment, at stake in which is the life lived here and now, once and for all, in and through that autonomy which enforces the secular, allowing it thereby at once to come into its own and to be put into question. However muted, it seems to me, a sense of this pervades Ellul's re-establishment, although Dujancourt, correctly, hears it in terms of the God who saves against whose blocking of the God who creates Goddard rightfully protests - and all of them, however, overlook the God who reigns. This is the God who is all in all, only because, whether as God who saves or as God who creates, God was and is as God will ever be - radically Other. So radically other that in Christ there is neither Greek no Jew, that Zion is no place unless it is a birthplace for all people, and that if I am created in the image of God, then God is closer to me

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than I am myself. No self being self-sufficient, I have no self unless I am claimed by another. I have no rights unless they are granted by others, or by that God who is radically other.

Rights are gifts, not "givens". Gifts that can be denied only by those who take them for granted as givens. And what through them is at stake is what the Jews called Torah, i.e. religion overcoming itself, while the Greeks called it nomos, i.e. physis overcoming itself, allowing for nature to become second nature. Moreover, what Jews' and Greeks' have in common is the fact that neither the Jews nor the Greeks approach is immune from the confusion of the theological and the juridical. This confusion can feed on a misbegotten craving for some Natural Law, just as it can profit from a short-changed, adulterated Divine Law, since no God is worshipped that cannot become an idol or since even the individual Jew who as such has no rights before God compensates for their lack by claiming the right not to be like other people. A sham, for which the people of the Covenant are rebuked by the prophets and Jesus alike. The very person who becomes an individual by reason of a divine calling ends up behaving as though it was by some inalienable self-justifying right Which amounts to courting Ellul's critique of rights under the guise of which and hence under any kind of sky, Jewish or Greek, always "the strong man is right" But no sooner is the gift spun off into a given and human rights are taken for granted than they hark back not so much to the Law, whether Torah Or nomos, as to a flaw whether natural or supernatural.

Not that Ellul is wrong all the way. Solidarity is not always the winner when, under the guise of human rights, what is sought after is scarcely more than the satisfaction of some newfangled tribalistic drive. But his critique of both Natural Law and human rights as stemming from a basic flaw of it, does not fully shelter him from a perhaps equally grievous suspicion that of substituting a supernatural flaw for a natural one. Not that he is unaware of this temptation, or that he succumbs to it entirely. Somehow he even warns against it, especially when, as Duj ancourt reminds us, he rejects von Rad's contention of a supposedly biblical distinction between a profane law (droit) and a sacred law 0oi). To the contrary, Ellul argues that not only does the Bible know of no profane law, but that it even secularizes the law. But then, paradoxically, therein seems to lie for him the root of his rejection of all pretention to human rights. This makes no sense. On the one hand, he correctly repels the dualism of sacred and profane and adheres to the biblical dialectic of the holy and the secular which he perhaps inadvertently reduces to the dualism of the two kingdoms. On the other hand, he sticks to a purely spiritualistic understanding of the law, altogether shearing it of any secular authentication. It is as if there could be a Promised Land, but no Canaan. It as if Ellul the theologian has been shortchanged by Ellul the sociologist And, by the way, considering the extent to which sociologists have been addicted to the dualism of sacred and profane, it is safe to assume that likewise, they too have fallen short of understanding the impertinent relevance of secularization as a way of implementing the biblical dialectic of the holy and the secular. Or is it that Ellul simply does not let his theology interfere with his sociology? That would sound like him.

Are we then in a quandary? Yes and no, for the simple reason that there is no Christian ethic, a contention vastly and deeply demonstrated by Ellul's own construal of an ethic of hallowing. But - given his reservations about human rights fanned by flaws of a technicalized nature - would he go so far as to construe this ethic of hallowing as an ethic allowing for the re-enactment of a secular morality always in need of forgiveness or, simply, always reformable? There is no answer to that question unless it is a reformable one. Even more significant is the fact that, rather than letting us wallow in our holier-than-thou presuppositions, Ellul has led us to the brink of such a question.

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All the more regretful to my mind is therefore Ellul's general conception of technology: as Goddard points out, it is much too sociologically and materialistically oriented. Nor am I in turn surprised that, accordingly, "his" ecclesiology, even as interface of faith and culture, is much too sociologically and spiritualistically oriented. No wonder the anarchist that he was deserves to be rescued from the bear-like hug of sociology or from the swan song of theology. And he fully deserves it, especially since he does impel us towards a new conception both of the church and of society if we must cope with the globalization of our parochial questions, yet without penalizing the human person - much less when that person must cope with the worldhood of a world come of age, with the secular as theater of the glory of God. The wholly other God is not God at the expense of the person each of us is, whether by grace or by virtue of so-called rights. However usurped, should they be shunned? Admittedly, in terms of *a* person's relation to God they are undeserved. And so they are neither more nor less deserved or, for that matter, usurped than the grace of God. A Gocf whose sun shines on the just and on the unjust.

Ellul correctly construed Christian involvement in the world in terms of an-archy .categorically refusing thereby all subservience to any sacralized order of things. No gap hence needs to be kept yawning between holiness and the secular, between *Dieu et mon droit.*

Law Rights and Technology

by Andrew Goddard

Jacques Ellul wrote so much on so many different subjects that few realise that his primary area of academic expertise was law. Apart from his five-volume untranslated legal textbook, *Histoire des Institutions,* legal issues are discussed briefly in a number of his other works but it is only his first published book which focusses on the subject[1], Unfortunately, this book and over thirty subsequent journal articles developing an elaborate sociology of law and re-formulating his earlier theology of law have attracted

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[1] *The Theological Foundation of Law,* Doubleday, NY, I960.

little attention, even from Ellul scholars. In the short compass of this article my aim is to highlight four central theses in Ellul's work relating to law, rights and technology. I shall then sketch three proposals of my own which seek to demonstrate that both in the history of Western thought and in our contemporary world there are important inter-relationships between these four Ellul theses.

Thesis 1:

The modern world is dominated by Technique and the State in a way which renders our society qualitatively different from all previous societies in history. This is probably Ellul's most famous and widely known argument which, from the time of his earliest unpublished personalist writings in the 1930s, drives and shapes his varied sociological studies.

Thesis 2:

Law today is not only technical law (a phenomenon found in other periods ofhistory), it has undergone such a total transformation that it is no longer truly law. One of the great strengths of Ellul's classic work, *The Technological Society,* was that it traced the effect of Technique on so many aspects of human life, including law[2]. In several articles from the 1960s onwards he further develops this argument, providing an analysis of the transformation and dissolution of law in the modem world. His central claim here is that such factors as the non-normative status of law and its subordination to the state means that law no longer has the functions it had in all historic civilizations and that what we still call "law" has now become the means of state administration and regulation.

Thesis 3:

We are now obsessedwith the idea and language of subjective rights. This is probably the least controversial of Ellul's theses presented here but it is also the thesis he develops least in his writing. His major discussion of the subject bemoans the wholesale juridicisation of our society and claims that "The idea of 'having rights' has become essential in contemporary human and social relationships...Everyone in our society demands 'his rights'"[3]

Thesis 4:

There are serious dangers in ary conception of rights which focusses on the in-dividual as a possessor of rights. Although Ellul uses the language of "rights" in his initial theological foundation of law, this becomes less prominent in later writings. He consistently takes care to emphasise that "human rights" in his understanding are not the human rights of modem liberal rights theory and are most certainly not natural, inherent rights of individuals: "Man cannot have any rights except as part of society...It is therefore man in relationship...who has rights. These are not inherent in his bare existence".[4] This is one reason why, throughout his later writing, Ellul remains highly

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[2] *The Technological Society,* pp 291-300.

[3] "Recherchessurle droit etl'Evangile" in Cristiane-simo, Secolarizzazione e Diritto Modemo no 11/ 12 (1981), Luigi Lombardi Vallauri & Gerhard Dilcher (eds.), pp 16, 122.

[4] *Theological Foundation of Law,* op. cit., p 80.

sceptical of all Charters of Human Rights and unsympathetic to the many Christians who seek to provide a theological justification for human rights[5]. These four theses are central to Ellul's thinking on law, rights, and technology but each is developed and discussed largely without reference to the others. With the obvious exception of the first two theses (where Ellul demonstrates at some length that the fundamental change in the character of contemporary law is derived from the dominance of Technique and die State in our society) there is no sustained attempt to develop the important inter-connections between them. In what follows I will therefore attempt a more holistic approach by proposing that Ellul's theses are inter-related in three significant ways:

(1) The conception of rights currently dominant in the Western world (which is focussed on the individual as possessor of rights) arises from the same nexus of ideas as that which also fuels the growth of Technique and the power of the state.

(2) This "liberal" conception of rights (and its dominance in popular thinking about law) can take a form which represents another distinctive and dangerous feature of contemporary law.

(3) The substantive content of subjective rights is now highly elastic and constantly increases as a result of the state's increasing power and the development of new techniques.

The Common Theoretical Roots of Modern Liberal Rights Theory, Modern Technique & the Modem State.

"This century of technique was also the century of the 'Rights of Man'...The idea of human rights appeared at the same time and in the same country as modem technique, and I do not think that there is much that is accidental in history, certainly not here"[6]. These sentences, framing a very short discussion of human rights in Ellul's last major volume relating to Technique, show that he had a sense that this first proposal was correct. Ellul however did not develop that sense in any detail and this omission reflects a wider problem in Ellul's account of the historical development of modem Technique: its neglect of philosophical developments and an over-emphasis on material, sociological changes. As with each of my three proposals, what follows may often appear to be as much a matter of assertion as a fully developed argument but its aim is to begin to plug this major gap in Ellul's work and thereby also to assist further reflection on the inter-relationship of law, rights and Technique in our society.

Attempts are often made to trace the history of rights back to the ancient world, including the Old and New Testaments. Although some small traces of continuity may be discernable, our contemporary conception of rights (certainly in the West) is totally

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[5] Amongst the most influential Christian theologies of human rights are the writings of Jtlrgen Moltmann and Jacques Maritain. See Ellul's comments on WCC discussions on rights in "Some Reflections on the Ecumenical Movement?, Ecumenical Review Vol 40 (1988), pp 387-8.

[6] *The Technological Bluff,* Eerdmans, Grand Rapids MI, 1990, pp l28, 129.

unknown to the world of the Bible or Roman civilization. Its origins can perhaps be traced back to scholastic writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but its full formulation was the work of seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers, notably Hobbes and Locke who "typify the emergence and classical consolidation of the liberal ideology of individual rights"[7].

Three fundamental philosophical shifts occur in the course of these two centuries. They provide the necessary intellectual context for the rise of Technique, shape liberal rights theories, and alter the character of both law and the state.[8] First, there is the diminution and effective disappearance of the previously dominant classic Christian conception of objective laws higher than human law (natural and divine law) which determine "right" in human society and provide a normative limit to the human will and human activity. Second, centre stage in social and political theory is seized by the abstract individual who contracts with other individuals. The primary significance previously attached to community and persons-in-relation within human society is thus lost. Third, the goal of human freedom not only becomes of much greater significance but it ceases to be conceived of as set within a wider objective, limiting order and is instead replaced with the ideal of the individual's will being free from external constraints and free to create its own order. Ellul's account of the reasons for the eighteenth century explosion of technical progress does not acknowledge the significance of these three key developments in the history of ideas even though they provide the intellectual foundation and justification for many of the social changes he highlights. The first shift brought to an end the constraint on technical development previously exercised by Christian moral judgment which required that every change "had to fit a precise conception of justice before God"[9]. The second fuelled the campaign against natural social groups and so increased social atomization and plasticity[10]. The third provided the spur both to removing taboos and to the creation of a "technical intention"[11]. These developments not only provided the necessary theoretical context for the modem dominance of Technique, they also transformed the theory and the reality of both human law and political power (and they did so in large part via rights theories).

In social and political theory conceptual priority is given to the individual subject who is held to have fundamental, natural rights. These rights are anterior to any social or political relationships and are not founded in any divine law which would impose obligations as well as granting subjective rights. As a result, in relation to the law and the state, most individuals today view themselves as rights-bearing and

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[7] Ian Shapiro, *The Evolution of Rights in Liberal Theory,* CUP, Cambridge, 1986, pl9. See also Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, "Historical Prolegomena to a Theological View of Human Rights", *Studies in Christian Ethics* (9), 1996.

[8] A number of modernity critics have discussed these philosophical shifts at length. See particularly, Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* CUP, Cambridge, 1992.

[9] *The Technological Society,* op. cit, p 37.

[10] Ibid., p 51.

[11] Ibid., p 52.

rights-claiming subjects and the actual content of these putative subjective rights is increasingly shaped by the belief that individuals should be free to live as they wish without external influence or powerful social constraints such as the law. Political power is, from this period onwards, regularly viewed as something derived from a contract in which individuals divest themselves of certain individual rights, powers and freedoms and grant certain rights and powers to a governing authority. Law is also re-conceived. It is no longer a society's common work which is formulated, perhaps through a representative ruler, with reference to some higher normative law. It becomes instead the locus for establishing individuals' competing rights-clairps as legal rights in positive law and the means by which the political authority, usually claiming popular sovereignty, exercises its own rights and powers in order to shape the social body according to its free and sovereign will.

Rights as a Distninctive & Potentially Dangerous Feature of Modem Law

"I have a right to...". This form of statement is now a commonplace in both legal and moral debates. Its dominance is one of the most important distinctive features of modem law. It is also potentially a very dangerous one for law because a focus on individual rights-claims can help to undermine law's traditional relationship to an agreed social morality and set of values. Ellul argued that whereas historically law always reflected a particular society's values and represented a common objective for that society to attain, modem law had become purely technical. Our contemporary concern with "rights" and the law as adjudicator in disputes over competing rights claims has played a significant role in this transformation because it has meant that the important quest for social agreement on the good is often forgotten or ignored in legal disputes.

This development is sometimes positively encouraged by those who extend the traditional liberal belief that there arc certain areas of the moral life on which the law should not pass judgment into the much more dubious claim that the law should not be concerned with any definition of the good because law is a matter of limited public social regulation while morality is a matter of private individual preference.

The importance of the phrase, "I have a right to...", demonstrates two major problems which arise from any concentration on individual subjective rights rather than the formulation of a community consensus on what is right. First, except in those cases an individual protests that a clearly defined legal right has been violated (e.g., the legal right, after a specific time under arrest, to be either released by the police or charged with a crime) the claim to a right is actually equivalent to a moral claim. Despite this, the legal system and society as a whole is often reticent about engaging in serious moral debate about substantive issues concerning the conception of the good implicit in any particular rights claims. This is in large part because the modem

intellectual framework pushes both the legal and moral discussion into the terms of individual freedoms and subjective rights without addressing in sufficient detail the more fundamental issues of the content of the good and what is right.

Second, although claims to rights are common currency and this form of expression is now almost universally accepted as valid, there is clearly only limited agreement as to the substantive content of claimed rights. Globally, there are regular debates about whether non-Western countries must accept liberal democratic conceptions of human rights as universally valid. Nationally, we find regular and often heated contention over rights-claims. In the United Kingdom this has recently occurred over different elements of "gay rights" (e.g., an equal age of consent and protection from discrimination in employment) and the meaning of "the right to life" in relation to artificial feeding of people in a permanent vegetative state. Even where it might be thought rights are clearly stated and legally agreed upon, we discover strong disagreements (e.g., the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights are often vehemently opposed by many who recognise its legal standing as interpreter of the Convention on Human Rights).

In short, the dominance and widespread agreement on the importance of "rights-talk" can prevent discussion of the more fundamental moral question of a society's common conception of the good and the shared values which must be the foundation of rights claims. It can also mask the fact that the often heated disputes over rights really reflect that the protagonists each have "a different view of humanity, society, and power, and of the relation among them"[12], The effect of these changes on any legal system is serious. Rather than providing procedures to enable civil peace based on an agreed set of values shared in society as a whole, the legal system regularly becomes an open battleground between the competing and conflicting rights claims of individuals and cause groups.

This battle is of such significance to the participants because contemporary law now functions, in part, as an effective technical means by which society as a whole is given its shape and direction. The most powerful group will therefore benefit greatly if they succeed in establishing their conception of rights within society's law. Unfortunately, the result is often that the law becomes a means of securing power and so sections of society become increasingly alienated from the legal system. This occurs, of course, in other legal systems but in our Western technological and democratic society, the liberal conception of rights plays a much more important role than is often recognised. The underlying reason for this was stated by Ellul in his first book, "The affirmation of one's rights actually becomes the justification for oppressing others...Whenever man pretended that he could found his rights on his own strength and contain them within himself, his pretention was built upon violence. Any distinction between violence and justice breaks down. The strong man is right"[13]. Any doubting the validity of this

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[12] *The Technological Bluff,* op. cit., p 129.
[13] *The Theological Foundation of Law,* op. cit., p 84.

analysis need look no further than the long-standing conflict between "right to choose" and "right to life" groups campaigning over abortion legislation in the heartland of liberal, democratic, technological society.

Technique, the State and the Demand for Rights

The demand for legal recognition of claimed rights is often driven today by technological progress and the increasing power of the state. Our conception of rights therefore provides an important medium by which these dominant social forces shape both our juridical system and society as a whole. The importance of the state in relation to rights theories can be traced back to the origins of modem liberal rights theory outlined above.[14]. As the power of the state has increased this century, citizens have responded by attempting to limit it by the legal entrenchment of basic rights.

With the development of more and more sophisticated techniques in the hands of the state (e.g., in relation to surveillance and the invasion of privacy), there arises the need to claim and to defend new rights in order to protect individuals against the state and the techniques it can employ. Of course, as Ellul regularly pointed out, the basic problem is that the state itself now so dominates the legal sy stem that it is almost impossible to limit state power effectively by legal means. In addition to this negative source of the demand for legal rights in the face of growing state power, there is also the increasing claim to certain positive rights arising from the development of powerful new techniques in numerous spheres of life. [Paradoxically, these rights (especially in relation to social welfare) are often demanded from the state in its more benevolent guise]. Oliver O'Donovan has argued that, "technology derives its social significance from the fact that by it man has discovered new freedoms from necessity. The technological transformation of the modem age has gone hand in hand with the social and political quest of Western man to free himself from the necessities imposed upon him by religion, society, and nature"[15].

That social and political quest is now often expressed in the juridical language of rights with claims that there is a right of access to new technological developments (e.g., in health care) which assist the individual's quest for liberation from traditional necessities. Due to technological innovations and the intellectual environment created by the three philosophical shifts noted above, this right of access to technical progress in turn generates previously incredible rights-claims which can become widely accepted and defended (even almost unquestionably) in modem society. Perhaps the best example of this is the claim, based on the growth and success in the development of reproductive techniques, that any woman has a right to her own child (and, increasingly, her own healthy child). This utilisation of the language of "rights" by those who would

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[14] See Paul Marshall, *Human Rights Theories in Christian Perspective,* Institute of Christian Studies, Toronto, 1983, p 11-16.

[15] Oliver M.T. O'Donovan, **Begotten or Made**?, OUP, Oxford, 1984, p 6.

benefit (financially or physically) from new techniques makes it increasingly difficult for society as a whole to place effective and long-standing legal limits and controls on their development and deployment When this difficulty is combined with the speed of technical advances we discover that modem law finds itself lagging far behind the social reality it is meant in part, to shape. Even when one country does attempt to use the law to restrain newly developed techniques, other countries will refuse to do so and eventually legal constraints will become increasingly redundant and have to be relaxed or removed.[16] In contrast to these legal problems generated by the conjunction of technical progress and rights-claims, there is a further important correlation developing between technology and rights. Not only do the beneficiaries of Technique seek to prevent legal inhibitions on technical progress by reference to their rights but those who wish to defend those suffering in contemporary society (particularly as a result of elements of the modem technological enterprise) likewise reach for the terminology of rights." Thus, as already noted, opponents of the massive rise in abortions performed in technological cultures seek to reform the law by advocating rights for the foetus and, similarly, in the face of the impact of Technique on man's relationship with the natural world (particularly in relation to food technologies and genetic manipulation), there is a growing acceptance of the validity of "animal rights" or even "creation rights". The scope and the specific content of rights claims is therefore highly elastic and it is the powers of the state and Technique which now play a crucial part in setting the agenda for defining new rights and generating much of the legal debate.

Conclusion

Ellul always insisted it was impossible to understand any particular social phenomenon without reference to the wider society of which it was part His own work applied this in an illuminating way to aspects of law within the context of our technological society. This article has recalled four of Ellul's central theses concerning law, rights and technology and argued that there are important inter-connections between them which were not developed in Ellul's own work, largely because he did not give sufficient weight to the fundamental intellectual shifts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which underlie both the rise of modem Technique and the development of modem liberal rights theories.

Comments on Goddard

by Sylvain Dujancourt

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[16] This is illustrated by the recent British case of Diane Blood's claim to a right to artificial insemination with her dead husband's semen. She was eventually allowed to export the sperm to another European Union country even though its use in the UK was judged illegal because the original removal

Often taken for a philosopher, Ellul had always been careful not to make such a claim for himself. For a good reason: dealing as his works do with technology, their major concern is the fruit of a method of social analysis as simple as it is original. Intimately steeped in Marx's thought, and convinced that "If Marx lived today, he would make neither the same analysis of society nor the same proposals for the correction of its ills," Ellul wondered "How would Marx describe the dominating central phenomenon of this society of the twentieth century?" And it is fortunate that, in order to answer this question, Ellul did not try to philosophize about it. Otherwise, given what philosophers have written about technology or about law, one could easily bet that his work would be devoid of any relevance; it would lack depth as well as breadth. Abstraction, insofar as it only engages in a game of the mind, hardly interested him.

One should not, however, draw any hasty and erroneous conclusions: he does come to grips with philosophy in the formulation of his thought and the expression of his work. One need only read his assessments of ethics and realize how inseparable they are from his analysis of technological society before one is immediately convinced not only that Ellul had a perfect knowledge of philosophy (his lectures and conferences were regularly studded with quotations from and references to the best philosophers), but also that he used certain philosophical tools, if only to criticize them. In this respect, one can usefully go back to the pages devoted to the axiomatic foundations of ethics in *Le vouloir et le faire.*

It would accordingly seem difficult to hold that Ellul gave little attention to the fundamental transformations of our conceptual framework, in particular those that took place in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His historical output amply shows the preeminence of ideas over facts, even in the making of history. To wit, his five-volume *Histoire des Institutions,* not to mention his dissertation on the *man-cipium.* And with respect to liberal theories, a mere glance at his impressive bibliography would suffice to show that he not only knew about them, but also knew them well enough to be their keenest critic - and the same of course applies equally to liberal or subjectivist theories of law.

Admittedly, Ellul did not produce a systematic work, in the manner of a philosopher, whether on law or the history of ideas. But that would be a lack if it were not compensated for by references scattered throughout the exposition of his thinking in the pursuit of an original position. And were it a lack, it would possibly hinder a better assessment of his work. But even so, would that not be sufficiently offset by the creativity this work displays, especially in an area as fluctuating as is that of law?

Natural Law or Covenant?

Human Rights and the Rights of Others

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and preservation of the specimen had occurred without her late husband's consent.

by Sylvain Dugancourt

(Translated by Andrew Goddard)

There can be no real dispute that Ellul wrote much on a variety of subjects and that he did so with talent, pertinence, erudition, lucidity, and perhaps even prophetic insight. His writing on so many areas (often where he was not a specialist) sometimes evidence a bulimic character which can damage the literary quality of his work, if not its intelligibility or coherence. Nevertheless, his numerous publications are marked by a paradox: this jurist by training, this historian of law, this specialist on institutions from Antiquity until the present day (the success of his five volume *History of Institutions* has never been denied and Ellul willingly confessed in private that most of his royalties came from this volume), this teacher of Roman Law at Bordeaux's Law Facuity, wrote little on the subject of law. He published only a single work on law: *Le fondement theologique du droit*[17]) and a number of articles, generally on the philosophy of law.[18]

The paradox is even greater when it comes to human rights. Ellul's work is contemporaneous with the expansion of human rights in the juridical realm and in the world at large. Developed after the First World War, the internationalisation of human rights declarations became prominent after the Second World War: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (16 December 1966), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (16 December 1966), American Convention on Human Rights (1969), The Helsinki Final Act (1975), African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (1984), Universal Declaration of the Rights of AIDS and HIV Sufferers (1989), Declaration of the Rights of the Family (1989), UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Despite all these occurring while Ellul was writing, it is not possible to find any article by him specifically devoted to this highly debated discipline within modem law, and Joyce Hanks' bibliography contains very few references to human rights. In fact, anyone wishing to know Ellul's thinking on this subject is condemned to reading his work as a whole (especially the articles) in order to discover here and there, always within discussions on some other subject, scraps of analysis of human rights.

This is not noted simply to highlight the difficulty of dealing with this subject over a number of pages. It is noted above all to draw attention to how much Ellul ultimately felt rather uncomfortable with the law as a social phenomenon and an object of theological reflection, and how much his opinion on the subject of human rights was a critical and negative one. It is significant that, in the fifth volume of his *History of Institutions,* the treatment of human rights is kept to the bare minimum with only three pages on the subject (mostly devoted to a critique) and no reference to "Human Rights" in the index. Similarly, the exhaustive bibliography of Ellul's works

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[17] ET *The Theological Foundation of Law,* SCM Press, London 1960.

[18] For details see, Sylvain Dujancourt, *La pensee Juridique de Jacques Ellul* (Mdmoire de maitrise, Faculte de Theologie protestante), Strasbourg 1989.

produced by Joyce Hanks, does not contain "Human Rights" in its subject index while in her index of publications on Ellul, although "Human Rights" appears, the entry is empty and refers readers instead to the articles under "Humanism."[19] The explanation for this silence, which almost amounts to a defiant refusal to discuss the subject, is twofold. On the one hand, his reasoning as a jurist, his distancing as an historian, and his analysis as a sociologist lead *him* to perceive human rights more in a political and ideological framework than a juridical one. On the other hand, his theological stringency, his bringing of everything back to the Bible as the basis of his ethics, pushes him to discern the profound spiritual ambiguity and perhaps even the incompatibility of human rights with biblical faith. This is despite the fact that a number of theologians, especially Protestants, have sought to demonstrate that human rights have *a* biblical and evangelical origin.

In my research, I have found only a single article by Ellul entirely devoted to human rights. This appeared in the weekly *Reforme* (7 January 1989) in the bicentenary year of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen which was issued on the 26th of August, 1789. The ironic, mordant and polemical title gives the tone of the article: "Du vinaigre dans la Declaration des Droits" (Vinegar in the Declaration of Rights). In a few lines, he delivers a juridical reading of articles that in the 1789 Declaration refer to equality and liberty. Noting first that equality is not classified among the "imprescriptible" rights belonging to man in his standing as a human being, he observes that the extent of equality is greatly weakened by recognising only equality "in rights." This is done in such a manner that in fact real inequality (rich and poor, superiors and inferiors) is legitimated by the "common good." For Ellul, liberty is an imprescriptible right which attains "bliss" in that it permits resistance to oppression. But for Ellul, oppression today lodges itself in technicalised administration and in the offices which produce decrees, circulars, regulations, and other orders. And so he exclaims, "Citizens, to arms 1 Take your hunting rifle when Bridges and Roads wishes to expropriate your land, or Electricte de France wants to build a Power Station, etc. You have the law *[le droit]* on your side — the very Declaration of Imprescriptible Rights. If you prevent the works, you are not terrorists, but the representatives of these rights I" Concerning private property as the proclaimed guarantee of liberty he insists: "It is with a gun in the hand that it is necessary to defend one's own property [...] Private property, inviolable and sacred ! Well, pardon the expression, but that makes me laugh." Few readers of this article will respond positively to Ellul !

Human Rights and The Natural Law

These criticisms by Ellul of the 1789 Declaration are already expressed — although in a less scathing style — in his *History of Institutions.* Presenting human rights as

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[19] Joyce Main Hanks, *Jacques Ellul: A Comprehensive Bibliography,* Research in Philosophy & Technology, Supplement 1, 1984, JAI Press Inc., Greenwich, Connecticut, p.266.

"the affirmation of natural rights, attached to man's nature, superior to the State and to the Nation itself' he uncovers several sources of these rights, quoting the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, then the 1776 American Declaration of Independence, Enlightenment philosophers, and the precedents of the French Monarchy. This list largely summarises the standard presentation of the sources of human rights although it should be noted that the theological source is here given first place and there is no reference to the British antecedents which are generally referred to in the history of human rights. Describing succinctly the Declaration's content, Ellul emphasises the preamble that adheres "to the doctrine of natural law based on the existence of God, as the foundation of the social order"

The Declaration of the Rights of Man, like all subsequent declarations and conventions on the subject, emanates from natural law. Ellul underlines this because it is tins which constitutes the original and conceptual flaw within human rights. If there is a constant within Ellul's juridical thought it is certainly his opposition to natural law. All his students who followed his doctoral course on natural law will admit that he knew his subject perfectly and that his arguments ended up by convincingly "deconstructing" this natural law. What is natural law for Ellul? "The confusion of the theological and the juridical," Ellul replies.[20] Whether they be philosophical, juridical, or theological in form, theories of natural law have never found favour in Ellul's eyes. He reckoned that particularly those theories of natural law elaborated by theologians have in common the desire "to find a common ground for encounter between Christians and non-Christians."[21] They rest either on a conception of man as not totally separated from God by the Fall and on a conception of justice as eternal and something which man can know by himself (the catholic idea), or on a conception of God's Law, with opposition between the Law and the Gospel (the Protestant idea).

Ellul never changed in his opposition to natural law.[22] For him, natural law does not exist, whether inherent in human nature, created by God, woven into the order of creation, formulated in the Revelation of the Torah, written in the human conscience, or produced by reason.[23] His criticisms of natural law are both juridical and theological.

Natural law is a "creation of the human mind," and rests on a "blurred notion of nature," a "variable common principle," and "doctrinal differences."[24] What is more, it no longer corresponds to the current state of the law and is ineffectual for all the new

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[20] Jacques Ellul, "Loi et sacrd. Droit et divin, de la loi sacree au droit divin," in Enrico Castelli,ed., *Le sacre: Etudes et recherches* (Actes du colloque organise par le Centre international d'etudes humanistes et par 1'Institut d'Etudes philosophiques de Rome, Rome 4-9 janvier, 1974), Aubier/Montaigne, Paris, 1974, p. 194.

[21] *Theological Foundation ofLaw,* op. cit., plO.

[22] Jacques Ellul has also very often drown his doubts about any explanatory doctrine without practical and concrete consequences. So, in the introduction to his thesis, he expresses his annoyance with "theories, based on easy solutions, with the appearance of cohesion" (Jacques Ellul, *Etude sur Devolution juridique du mancipium,* Delmas, Bordeaux 1936, p5).

[23] *Theological Foundation of Law,* op. cit., ppl0-12.

[24] Ibid, p36.

rights which have arisen with Technique: "this doctrine is based on juridical observations related to a situation which has ceased to exist."[25] Ellul adds that natural law is "anti-scientific"[26] and observes that this doctrine "has been ineffective in preventing the evolution of our law in a direction which is absolutely contrary to it."[27] That direction, which Ellul challenges, is the technicalisation of law, its submission to the state, and its assimilation to being merely a social fact.

To these sociological and juridical arguments, Ellul adds theological considerations. Already in 1939, he wrote that "evay theory of natural law is a negation of the eschatology of the Kingdom. "[28] It allows man to define what is suitable as a social rule. He reproaches natural law theory for reducing God to "a convenient hypothesis" and refusing God as "Creator, Saviour and Revealer."[29] Natural law allows man to escape from the "radical nature of revelation."[30] Ellul thus shares with Niebuhr the refusal "to seek some common ground between Christians and non-Christians on which they are able to agree among themselves and construct a juridical system."[31]

By taking this position, Ellul places himself in a current of Christian theology which, although a minority one, sets itself apart from the naturalist temptation of law and seeks a foundation to law other than that of nature. "Wherever nature comes to an end, there creation can begin" writes Va-hanian,[32] adding that "nature ignores God as, indeed, it ignores evil,"[33] meaning thereby that the categories of nature are not those of God nor those of morality. Which "means that since God is no longer confused with nature or bound to history, at the same time man is removed from determinism, from the realm of necessity characterizing history and nature."[34] In other words, with the Bible nature is no longer divinised nor to be feared any more than it is to be ignored or ridiculed, because man is no longer dependent on it. Consequently, it seems difficult to accept human rights which originate in natural law.

But Ellul adds others arguments in opposition to human rights: the reduction of man to the individual, the ideological function of human rights, and their ineffectiveness. Ellul does not make man into a value. He never considers man as Man with a capital M, because he rejects the idea of an abstract, perfect man of whom therefore nothing new can be said in his life. This man does not exist for Ellul who, following in the

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[25] Jacques Ellul, "Le droit occidental en 1970 a partir de l'experience fran^oise," *Bulletin SEDEIS* (Soci&e d'Etudes et de Documentation Economiques et Sociales), no 840, supplement no 2 (1963), pl 8.

[26] Ibid, p5.

[27] Ibid, pl9.

[28] Jacques Ellul, "Droit," *Foi et Vie* (1939) 2-3, p279.

[29] *Theological Foundation of Law,* op. cit., pH.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Jacques Ellul, "Christianisme et droit. Recherches am tricaines," *Archives de Philosophic du Droit,* 5 (1960), p31.

[32] Gabriel Vahanian, *God and Utopia: The Church in a Technological Civilization,* The Seabury Press (A Crossroad Book), New York 1977, pl41.

[33] Gabriel Vahanian, *Dieu anonyme ou lapeur des mots,* Desclee de Brouwer, Paris 1989, p24.

[34] Gabriel Vahanian, *God and Utopia,* op. cit., p27.

line of Marx's thought, knows only men and women in their situation. Ignoring human nature, he knows only the human condition.

That man has rights is not a recent invention. The learned historian that he is, he can say that the idea is very ancient Apart from the Stoics, he can also appeal to the Bible: "You shall not violate any of these rights, you shall not show partiality" (Deut 16.19). The problem with rights as they have been conceived and formulated since the eighteenth century is, according to Ellul, that they no longer concern people but individuals. The individual is an abstraction which places the person outside of humanity, opposing them to other people and to society? These human rights are thus opposable rights to use the juridical terminology. On the contrary, man is the person included in society, within humanity, who is situated among his contemporaries but also in relationship with his ancestors and his descendants. He is a man who is representative of other men. This man does not oppose his rights to those of other men but rather transforms rights into obligations. The notion of duty or obligation constitutes the most interesting critique addressed to the traditional idea of human rights. Outside this milieu, man loses his rights, says Ellul, either because he abolishes them or because he cannot profit from them. In contrast to the individual who places himself in a situation of conflict, man places himself in a situation of reciprocity in his relation to others: ''Man is called upon to acknowledge the rights of others, since he requests his own to be recognised.''[35] According to Ellul, to claim to found human rights on the individual reverts to founding law and right on a relationship of permanent forces, on violence, and on the reason of the strongest.

Privacy and the Bible

For Ellul, the Bible shows that man is man only when he is in relationship with others, particularly with his God whose revelation confirms to him once and for all that he is no longer alone in life. Just as there is not any individual in the Bible, similarly there is no private life, no sphere reserved to man from which God will be excluded. "What appears surprising to me is that in the Bible man appears to me extraordinarily delivered over to others. He is always a prey to others."[36] The only moment, Ellul concedes, where this man becomes alone is when God calls him. Calling is always individual, a call by name which extracts a man for a time from his social group in order to place him in that unique and revelatory relationship with his God.

Ellul calls into question not only this reduction of man to the individual by human rights but also their ideological function. In his commentary on the 1789 Declaration he underlines two characteristic elements of the political function of human rights: the Declaration aims first to destroy politically the Ancien Regime, and it rights have the

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[35] *Theological Foundation of Law,* p83.
[36] Jacques Ellul, "Information et vie privee: perspectives," *Foi et Vie,* Vol 66, No 6 (novembre-d^cembre 1967), p60.

purpose of limiting the State, essentially the king. The theoretical reference implicit to it all is the law-abiding state *(I 'Etat de droit).* This is an idea that will cany different meanings, from the 19th century German school of public law (which, inspired by the Hegelian conception of the State, subjugated law and right), to the narrow linkage between the law-abiding state and democracy which dominates today. For Ellul there is no possible doubt—the creation of die notion of the law-abiding state is "a subterfuge."[37] The great fear Ellul felt in the face of the state is well known. He saw it as the focus of most of the powers and oppressions of the twentieth century. He was never a positivist jurist nor a supporter of human rights because he always reckoned that the law could not stand up to the state in a situation where it was principally the state which created the law. The idea of limiting — indeed judging — the state by the law seemed perfectly unrealistic to Ellul, who at the most would concede that the law is able to act as a "guarantee against the arbitrariness of the state."[38]

It is on this basis that Ellul also raised the argument of the ineffectiveness of human rights. Concerning the Declaration of 1789 he notes that, despite the proclamation of liberty, of equality, of defence against the encroachments, abuses and arbitrariness of the royal state, "this declaration does not protect all the classes of the nation,"[39] mainly because of the absence of any interest in social and economic questions. In his thought on the new powers generated especially by Technique, Ellul coherently shows that this Declaration "does not protect citizens from the eventual tyranny of powers other than the King." But for Ellul this lack of effectiveness is inherent within human rights. He judges the principles of these rights to be "very theoretical and hardly revolutionary," noting that from the beginning there was set up a discrepancy (which increasingly grew) between the actual politics of the revolutionary assemblies and the Declaration. That "politics of pretence" will justify the multiple derogations from the principles of the Declaration such as basing the right to vote on a property qualification.

This analysis of a jurist taking formal note of the distancing of human rights from an effective, accepted law, evolving by osmosis with opinion — and we must not forget that for Ellul the model of law remains the Roman law, the opposite of a law with an ideological connotation and function[40]—explains his distrust and even automatic rejection of the principles related to human rights. His outlook as an historian and jurist prevails over that of the moralist who will not let himself be deluded or fooled by words or declarations. We can take as one example that of private life and information. Here are two areas that, from the viewpoint of human rights, clash as regards principles: the right to respect for private life and the right to information. Observing that information

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[37] Jacques Ellul, "Remarques sur 1'origine de l'etat," Droits, revue fran?aise de theorie juridique, 15 (1992), p!4.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Jacques Ellul, *Histoire des Institutions,* Presses Univer-sitaires de France, 6dme Edition, tome 5, Paris 1969, pl2.

[40] "Human rights are part of the attempt to give a feeling of security to the law" wrote Ellul, "Sur 1'artificiality du droit et le droit d'exception [suite] ," *Archives de Philosophic du Droit,* 10 (1965), pl 92.

is, as well as a communication, a participation in society and therefore only a matter of organisation, Ellul concludes there does not exist a right to information belonging to the individual because he is human. "It is useful, in the society in which we find ourselves, to be informed; this is something on the level of the useful and there is no need to inscribe that in the great principles, in the charters of the rights of humanity. It did not exist one hundred years ago and perhaps will not exist any longer a hundred years from now. It is a transitory matter on which we need not focus our attention."[41] The same relativisation of principle is found concerning private life in regard to which Ellul insists on the haziness that surrounds this notion whose content varies in different societies. Sparta ignored the private life whereas two centuries later Rome erected around the domus a wall which could not be breached even by the lictors. It is necessary, writes Ellul, "to reject all private life that has a static character, that is simply the private domain, [...] to show that there is no clear, objective, marked limit to what we call private life."[42] Ellul strengthens his argument with more biblical and theological considerations. According to his biblical analysis, man has no private life before God. This is because he hasn't a private domain — this God touches all aspects of man's life, even the deepest. To put it differently, any private life would be subverted by that relationship with God which reaches "all of man and all men" (G. Vahanian).

From Natural Law to Covenant

We are now able to examine Ellul's theological views on human rights more deeply. There are here two arguments to consider, that can be summarised in two theses: man has no right before God, his right is in God through Jesus Christ.

Claiming a biblical basis, Ellul holds that man has no right before God. This affirmation is not his alone as it is also the opinion of Barth and Bultmann: "The Jew as such has no right before God."[43] Such an assertion raises two questions. Firstly, why is there law from a theological viewpoint? To which Ellul replies that it is quite simply because man is a sinner, living in the order of sin and a ruptured relationship with God; but that, because no human community would know how to live without such "rules of the game" (which is what the law is for Ellul), the existence of human law is a sign of the patience of God towards these human sinners. Secondly, where is the right of man? In God, replies Ellul. More precisely in that particular relationship God establishes with man called the covenant and in that particular act of God towards men which is the act of judgement

The word "covenant" betrays a juridical connotation that it is helpful to clarify. According to Ellul, the covenant explains both the situation of human law and the origin of human rights. What is this covenant? It is a gracious act an election, a choice

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[41] "Information et vie privee: perspectives," op. cit., p58.
[42] Ibid, p61.
[43] Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus, *mythologie et demythologisa-tion,* Seuil, Paris 1968, p61.

of God *to find a* partner for himself in that relationship of love which characterises him and which is brought to us by his word. Over and above this bond with this quality, the biblical covenant also has a content: the Law which defines the conditions of the covenant. These conditions, according to Ellul, have certain similarities to "a contract requiring adherence,"[44] a contract in which one of those contracting fixes the totality of obligations such that the other partner can only accept or refuse (as, for example, in the contract represented by a train ticket).

The covenant, as the fruit of God's revelation to a person or to his people, restores that relationship which was broken by sin. It is far from static and so the Bible knows several covenants (Adam, Noah, Abram, Moses) with the last covenant being with Jesus. In covenant, the law of God is nothing other than "the prerequisite for maintaining the situation which God has re-established in his covenant."[45] It is in this framework of the covenant that God recognises human rights and Ellul cites a number of examples: to rule the creation, to be avenged if one is killed, to kill for one's own food. This list is not complete and we could never know an exhaustive list because "the biblical revelation does not contain a chart of human rights" and "the content of these human rights is essentially contingent and variable."[46] These rights are determined by thought-forms, political and social structures and economic constraints, but above all by two elements: the mission conferred on man by God and the demand of personal rights judged necessary if man is to beabletolive.[47]

The main consequence of the covenant is the acceptance by God of human law. Between God and man, man is little, God is all, and the relationship between the two, being one of faith, turns out to be differentiated and unequal. Ellul shares the opinion of Bultmann: "The distancing of God has the same origin as the proximity of God, that is to say the fact that man belongs to God and that God issues him with a law."[48] But he goes much further than his illustrious Marburg colleague and insists on the absence of any interference between the law of God and human law: "the law of God cannot be used to elaborate a human law."[49] However, countering von Rad who distinguishes sacred and profane law *(droit)* in the Bible, Ellul supports the thesis of the secularisation of law by the Bible in such a manner that he does not hesitate to assert that there is no profane law *(droitprofane),*[50] nor any "sacred law *(loi sacree)* on which all human laws depend and which measures all law."[51] This remark is crucial and very revealing of the deep reason for Ellul's indifference, even hostility, to human rights. In effect, his theological approach to law opposes all the foundations

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[44] *Theological Foundation of Law,* op. cit.,p50.

[45] Ibid., p55.

[46] Ibid.,p81.

[47] Ibid.,pp81-2.

[48] Bultmann, op. cit, p!65.

[49] Jacques Ellul, "Loi et sacrd," op. cit., pl 87.

[50] *Theological Foundation of Law,* p49.

[51] Jacques Ellul, "Loi et sacr6," op. cit., pl 87.

habitually attributed to human rights. To nature it opposes the covenant, a gracious act of God. To the "metajuridical normativity" advocated by some philosophers of law[52] it opposes a refusal of any objective law from which all other rights could be derived. To so-called imprescriptible principles that would be the measure of all law it opposes the apprehension of law in concrete situations. To a law that organises it opposes a law that is "a condition for life imposed on man [by God]."[53] And Ellul categorically concludes, "Anything that man builds up under the name of law is precisely non-law. It engenders the antijuridical situation."[54]

If Ellul sharply separates human law and the law of God, he separates just as sharply two conceptions of law and refuses as energetically the idea that human law could take its source in divine law. There is law and law for Ellul. The reference of law is the justice of God, understood as the manifestation of the divine will. The law is therefore an act of God in that it is formed by the judgements of God, formulated in relation to human rights, rights here understood in a positivist sense as the totality of the law elaborated by human beings. But for Ellul that justice is fully expressed, revealed and affirmed by Jesus on the cross, which, in a quasi-mystical formula, he describes as the "ultimate manifestation of God's justice."[55] In Christ re-estab-lishment (a fundamental notion for Ellul) is at work: the reestablishment of the relationship between men and God, the reestablishment of the relationship between men, the reestablishment of the situation of humanity for all men, the reestablishment in the juridical order of man in his rights. This is because, Ellul clarifies, the judgement of God intervenes "according to the law of man" (in reference to Ps 7:9). It is in the covenant with Jesus Christ, a covenant "giving meaning and value to all previous covenants"[56] that God fully shows his justice. This covenant is distinctive because Jesus Christ, being the only man God has accepted, is de facto by his blood — and why not de jure — a man who contracts with God for all humanity and "through him God views all mankind."[57] Thanks to Jesus, man acquires rights in an absolute manner and becomes the subject of law. In the framework of his covenant with God, Jesus acquires new rights that, since he acts for all men, he shares with all those who from now on relate themselves to him. By the miracle of substitution, no one is any longer without a right, the first right being the ability to claim Jesus Christ for oneself.

From this theological perspective, Ellul draws two conclusions. The first is that Jesus accepts human law, all the more easily than the covenant which does not provide this law with some sort of divine meaning. Jesus makes of this human law "an instrument

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[52] Mireille Delmas-Marty, *Pour un droit commun,* Seuil (La librairie du XXe sidcle), Paris 1994, p!38.

[53] *Theological Foundation of Law,* p55.

[54] Ibid., p49.

[55] Ibid., p47.

[56] Ibid., p56.

[57] Ibid., p57.

for the justification of man."[58] Inspired by Proverbs 29:26 and John 5:30, the second conclusion is that God makes himself the guarantor of a person's right when that right is held up to ridicule by other men. For Ellul, quoting Is 49:4, because the right of man is in God, the right of the powerful or the rich is not a right On the other hand, God is supremely concerned with the right of the widow, the poor and the orphan, who are those to whom the law gives its full attention. Heis concerned in order to assure or preserve for them a just relationship with others even though, as those cursed by every society, they do not have at their command the strength or money to assert their right.

It is obvious that we are here far from the habitual conception of human rights which was more ideological than juridical, more moral than theological. Even if Ellul did not explicitly do so himself, it is possible to extend his thought through the development of a juridical ethic valid for and shared by all men whether Christian or not, whether they refer to Ure Bible or not. It is well known that Ellul found repugnant the idea of a "ready-to-consume" ethic and preferred to leave his readers and hearers to elaborate forthemselves their own ethic through reflection on the elements which he provided for them.[59] It is clear, however, that for Ellul human rights do not constitute an ethical base relevant for the modem law which elsewhere he judges to be in crisis. From his analysis there arises the need fora deepening and an elevating of our law and of our relationship to it Perhaps, despite their incantatory character, human rights conceal tire difficulty of taking into account the spiritual dimension which inhabits all acts of social and human life, particularly the law. Ellul is able to make his own Bultmann's phrase: "At every instant the law of God reaches man. That signifies that man is in decision, in the here and now"[60] — all the more so because, Bultmann insists, the man who has rights does not hold these rights simply "in his bare existence, but only in his situation as a responsible human being."[61] Man has these rights on the basis of his capacity to take decisions, to develop responses to problems, to face up to difficulties, and to establish, in the face of life vicissitudes, some distance for reflection, a return to fundamentalvalues and engagement.[62]

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[58] Ibid., p58.

[59] See Dujancourt, "Technique et dthique selon Jacques Ellul," *Foi et Vie,* XCH (decembre 1994) 5-6, pp29-41.

[60] Bultmann, op. cit, pl 65.

[61] *Theological Foundation of Law,* p80.

[62] Other writers have often highlighted the profound influence of Karl Barth on Ellul's theological thinking. This is certainly the case regarding his juridical thought looked at from a theological viewpoint. The ideas used by Ellul are all found in Barth's *Dogmatics.* [For example: Re-establishment: "The death of Jesus Christ preceded His resurrection. God established and maintained His own right against man and over man, and the right of man Himself. This makes it clear in what sense in the resurrection of Jesus Christ He willed to justify both Jesus and Himself, and has in fact done so, proclaiming His own twofold right and the right of man as His creature as they were there established and maintained to be the basis and the beginning of a new world" (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* IV/1, 59.3, p3U) — Judgement: "Divine judgement in the biblical sense means that God vindicates Himself against man, but

Concluding Remarks

Our purpose is not to minimise the distinctiveness of Ellul's thought but rather to detect some of the influences and the original manner in which he uses them to elaborate his Christian ethic. The most profound influences are theological ones and so any understanding of his work is incomplete unless it takes into account his theological choices. It is by that measure that it is also necessary to appreciate his work concerning human rights for it is, we believe, that which truly clarifies all his thought. This is shown, for example, by his conclusion of a very penetrating juridical analysis of the Nuremberg trial. This trial marked the revival of natural law in the 20th century since it used all thejuridical concepts which arise from natural law. For Ellul, this trial also marks the degeneracy of contemporary law in that it shows contempt for the bases of law and profits a perverse use of the law in which it is reduced to being a political instrument and part of the propaganda of power (in this case that of the victors of the Second World War). Here retroactivity, circumstantial laws, the creation of penalties after the crimes, the invention of unknown juridical concepts after the facts, and the superficiality of human rights are all seen clearly and Ellul does not fail to denounce them. Is this just the backward-looking reaction of a jurist fascinated by Roman law, the bitterness of the humanist who sees the nobility of principles made fun of by raison d'Etat, the excessive rigour of a moralist who refuses to accept that one can get away with talking a lot of hot air, the disarray of the Christian before a change judged to be incompatible with his faith? Here, in this area and on this occasion as in others, Ellul displays clarity of thought and rigour but also a hope. These establish the richness of his thought and encourage us to pursue working through his oeuvre. The judicial history of human rights justifies the precocity of his critique. The long drawn-out trial of Maurice Papon arouses an uneasiness comparable to that generated by the other trials of war criminals accused of crimes against humanity. A recent international conference[63] has underlined how much the struggle against such crime overturns the traditional principles of criminal law such as individual responsibility, the non-retroactivity of laws, the presumption of innocence, and prescription. At the end of the war, in which his life was a semi-clandestine one of resistance, and at the moment where the growth of human rights was asserting itself, Ellul furnished us with a proposition on human rights which appears both original and representative of his thought:

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that in so doing He vindicates man against all that is alien and hostile to him. It means that God does what is right for Himself and therefore for man" (op. cit, III/2,43.2, p32). — Grace: "the divine grace is the mercy and justice of God operative mid revealed in the divine decision" (op. cit, m/2, 44.3, pl64). — The role of Jesus Christ: "[Jesus Christ] lives in His time as the Judge by whose Word and work the right of God is vindicated in the sight of men, and therefore that of men is vindicated before God and among themselves; by whom the kingdom of God is thus established among men and His covenant with them fulfilled" (op. cit, III/2,47.1, p439).]

[63] "Du proems 4 1'histoire," Berlin Colloquium, 25-27 January 1998, organised by Centre Marc Bloch (the German extension of Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales), Centrum Judaicum of

"The only humane international law will be that which, valid for all countries, assures, within each country, a minimum of rights for all people, guaranteeing them a minimum of freedoms and an individual security which allows each person to choose their own destiny and to respond, by themselves, either 'Yes' or 'No' when God speaks."[64]

Jaques Ellul and Human Rights — A Short Response to Sylvain Dujancount

Andrew Goddard

"Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention? "
"To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time. "
"The dog did nothing in the night-time. "
"That was the curious incident, " remarked Sherlock Holmes.
—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Sylvain Dujancourt's article powerfully draws attention to the curious incident of Ellul writing almost nothing on human rights. The strangeness of this is increased given Ellul's regular engagement with his socio-political context, his own legal expertise, and the brief outline of a theology of human rights in his first published volume. By focusing on this curious incident Dujancourt offers an illuminating account of the various reasons — sociological, theological, legal and political — for this relative silence.

There is little I would dispute in Dujancourt's account of this although I would, I think, add one furthermajor reason for Ellul's refusal to follow those of his contemporaries such as Moltmann and the World Council of Churches who were developing a theology of human rights. That is Ellul's consistent and fundamental opposition to all forms of justification. This stance, rooted in his Protestant objection to man's self-justification by his woiks, is perhaps most memorably expressed in his unpublished 1975 lectures on authority:

"Although it is our permanent temptation we do not have to add a small spiritual hat to whatever exists. This is always the risk. The power of the state exists. How are we going to explain that doctrinally, theologically? The power of the head of the family exists (well, it no longer exists, it used to exist). How are we going to justify that.. Understand that from the moment where you engage in this system of justification, you set yourself to justifying everything."

To my mind there can be little doubt that as he looked at the political and juridical world around him with the prevelance of human rights Ellul felt exactly the same — the sudden rush of certain Christians to baptise this language and ideology was simply anotherfonn of the temptation into which the church regularly fell and which he constantly resisted.

Berlin, and the Einstein Forum (cf. Le Monde, 25 Feb 1998, plO).

[64] Jacques Ellul, "Notes sur le proces de Nuremberg," *Verbum Caro,* Vol 1 (Aug 1947), pl 12.

Dujancourt's article does not, however, only shed light on Ellul's refusal to address human rights in more detail. He also signals some ways in which Ellul's wider theology of law and his largely unexplored critique of modem technical law may be constructively elaborated into a more positive response to the dominance of human rights theories.

In particular, Dujancourt's sympathetic account of Ellul's rejection of the individualistic emphasis of modem rights theories and the need to develop a more personalist understanding in which obligations play a role is one which merits further development. It is one which has been much aired in recent liberal-communitarian debate in political philosophy and on which some biblical work has already been done by the Old Testament scholar Christopher Wright In sketching a biblical account of human rights Wright argues that "to say that B has certain rights is simply the entailment of saying that God holds A responsible to do certain things in respect of B...Rights do not exist apart from the demand of God upon someone."[65] Dujancourt's work, in dialogue with Ellul, offers further important contributions to this task of developing a fuller conception of "human rights" in which humans are viewed not as abstract individuals but as persons in a wider community under God.

However, as Wright's work shows, any Christian attempt to reshape contemporary rights theories must also pay close attention to God's purposes in creation and here the spectre of "natural law" looms. Dujancourt emphasises that human rights theories grow out of natural law, highlights Ellul's criticism of all traditional natural law theories, and claims that "Ellul never changed in his opposition to natural law." He helpfully sketches the diverse arguments Ellul advanced to "deconstruct" natural law. While all this is certainly true it fails to recognise that elements in Ellul's legal thought share some important common features with certain natural law theories and that these may in fact prove necessary for the task of developing an alternative Christian account of human rights.

In the 1939 article, which Dujancourt cites to show Ellul's early explicit opposition to natural law (nl2), Ellul gave the Decalogue and human conscience a role in relation to human law which in his later book he rejected as too similar to natural law theories. However, even in that book (on which Dujancourt relies for most of his account of Ellul's theology of law), Ellul's theory of institutions given in creation again presents ideas which, in his own earlier writings, he had accepted were a "sort of natural law." This important strand of Ellul's juridical thinking was partially developed in a number of later articles but as with his early writing on human rights it unfortunately remained an aspect which failed to get the further attention it deserves.

By failing to recognise this part of Ellul's juridical thought and by giving insufficient attention to some significant changes within his developing theology of law, Duj ancourt has perhaps missed an important point of tension in Ellul's own work. One focus of that tension is found in Dujancourt's own account where he begins by stressing Ellul's rejection of a common ground between Christian and non-Christians in the creation

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[65] C. Wright, "Walking in the Ways of the Lord," Apollos, Leicester, 1995, p253.

of a juridical system (n5 and nl5) but later writes, "it is possible to extend Ellul's thought through the development of a juridical ethic valid for and shared by all men whether Christian or not" It may well prove that any such shared juridical ethic and any substantial account of "a minimum of rights for all people" (for which Ellul calls in the final quote by Duj ancourt) must ultimately be related to a more substantial theological account of the calling and function of human beings as created beings within a wider created order such as that originally sketched in his account of human institutions.

Ellul, perhaps because of his voluntaristic emphasis on freedom and his antipathy to both natural law and teleological ethics, failed to provide such a theological account. As a result, despite the great insights shown in his critique of much modem human rights theory, his attempt to refound rights on God's covenant remains rather insubstantial. We are left with only the rather general statement that these rights are "essentially contingent and variable" (n30) as they are founded on "the mission conferred on man by God and the demand of personal rights judged necessary if man is to be able to live" (n31). In a century which has witnessed not just the growth Of human rights language but, as Ellul himself pointed out, the ineffectiveness of that language to prevent a terrifying increase in man's inhumanity to his fellow humans, that statement is not sufficiently specific to be of any real practical use. If, however, it is to be made more concrete and given subtance, then a deeper study of the covenant of creation, an explanation of some form of created order and institutions, and the calling of human beings within that is — despite its overtones of natural law — probably required.

Issue #24 Jan 2000 — Academics on a Journey of Faith

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From the Editor

My thanks to our guest editor, Dan Clendenin. And my heartfelt thanks to Daryl Fasching for faithfully editing *The Ellul Forum* for more than a decade. Daryl had a vision for going beyond a newsletter on Ellul activities to a roundtable on our technological civilization. And he has made it happen splendidly, actively involving a broad membership from Europe, North America, and elsewhere in dialogue on Ellul and technology. Daryl has been a superb leader, and I'm pleased he'll be vitally involved henceforth as a member of our editorial board. Now that we've made the transition to the University of Illinois, we'll be on our regular publication cycle of two issues per year appearing in January and July. Send your possible articles and book reviews to me. Topics for guest editing an issue are welcome too.

Clifford G. Christians, Editor

About This Issue

Whatever else Jacques Ellul was or sought to be, he was first and foremost a Christian, and that not merely by chance or coincidence but by choice. About half of his written work explores themes of the Biblical revelation and much of his time was spent in direct Christian ministry such as pastoring the blue-collar French Reformed church that met in his home, or serving on his denomination's committee for pastoral education and training. Ellul was typically unapologetic about his Christian journey; but on the other hand, he was consistently cryptic about his conversion experience. To my knowledge his two-volume autobiography that he wrote some time ago remains unpublished (in an interview he told me it would be left to his family to decide whether to publish it after his death).

Ellul was a man of formidable intellect and ideas, but he always wrote about his experiences. That is, he wrote out of his personal story. I suspect that many of the people like myself who have been so deeply influenced by Ellul were attracted by elements of his personal narrative.

A common but mistaken cultural assumption is that the modem university, to quote a physician friend from Yale, is "a Christless hellhole," This generalization has at least some merit, but people like Ellul belie its ultimate accuracy. A spate of recent books have chronicled the personal stories of believers who, like Ellul, work at the highest

levels of the academy and likewise locate themselves squarely in the Christian community.[66]

In the fall of 1997 a group of Christian professors at Stanford formed what has become known as the Christian Faculty Fellowship. A year later a second group of physicians at the Stanford Medical Center did likewise. In the last three years about 70 people have attended one of these groups (not all from Stanford and not all professors). Both groups meet on a weekly basis. In this issue of *The Ellul Studies Forum* three of these professors explore their specifically Christian journeys as university intellectuals—a truly Ellulian theme.

Daniel B. Clendenin, Guest Editor InterVarsity staff member at Stanford University dan2@leland.stanford.edu

In This Issue

Science and Faith - A Personal View

by William T. Newsome

It is a privilege to contribute to this volume of the *Ellul Studies Forum.* Preparing this paper has "pushed" me more than any of the 80 or so papers I have published in my professional life, precisely because I have never before written for a public, academic readership on any aspect of religious faith. I do not, however, come to the topic completely unprepared. Across twenty-five or so years of adult life, I have tried to discern for myself whether there is anything in the universe worth having faith in, what it means for me personally to live in faith, and how my faith is related to all other facets of my life-including the science that I do. In a sense, then, my search for

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[66] See, for example, Kelly Monroe, *Finding God at Harvard* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997) or Paul Anderson, *Professors Who Believe* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

an authentic faith is as much a part of me as eating, sleeping and breathing, and it is certainly a more essential part of who I am than is the science I do.

I wish to begin with a disclaimer. I consider myself to be an expert-in the academic sense-only on the neurophysiology of visual perception, and I will have *nothing at all* to say about visual perception in this paper. However, my topic demands that I consider the nature of reality, the nature of meaning, ways of knowing, and the foundations of ethics—and I state openly that I am an expert in *none* of these subjects. While I have little formal training in philosophical analysis, I am a philosopher in the sense that every one of us is a philosopher in the sense that we all must get out of the bed every morning and *act* in numerous situations throughout each day. I believe that every action we take, and every decision we make, form a living philosophy in the sense that our actions imply certain beliefs about what is real and about our ultimate sources of meaning and value. This is the spirit in which I write, and this spirit is reflected in the title I chose for this paper, "Science and Faith: A Personal View". I readily acknowledge that many readers have pondered these matters longer and more searchingly than I have. I am not writing to *instruct* anyone. Rather, I want only to share my own experience and reflections concerning the life of faith in a secular academic setting.

Many readers of this volume are probably Christians or perhaps theists of other stripes. Others are likely to be agnostic, perhaps tending toward atheism, simply because they have not been able to see a way to any form of faith that is both reasonable and nurturing in a deeply personal sense. A few readers may be strongly convinced atheists. My remarks are aimed predominantly toward that middle group—most of whom are authentic seekers—because this is the group that I seem to encounter most often in private conversations within the academic community.

I want to relate one such conversation because it captures the essence of many others I have had over the past couple of decades. When I was a junior faculty member at SUNY Stony Brook, my wife and I invited a young couple over for dinner at our house. Karen and Dan were both postdoctoral fellows in other neurobiology labs, but they loved children and did some baby-sitting for us on occasion. Karen and Dan were aware that Zondra and ! were members of a local Presbyterian Church. Vaguely religious topics had cropped up in conversation among us on previous occasions, mostly concerning childhood religious backgrounds, as I recall. As fate would have it, religious matters came up during after-dinner conversation on this particular evening, and Karen finally blurted out, rather indelicately, "I don't understand how a smart guy like you can believe in all that stuff!" Perhaps this unusually candid declaration was facilitated by the wine we had consumed during dinner, I don't know. But I relate this story because Karen's reaction is fairly common even though it is rarely expressed so straight forwardly. More often it is conveyed merely by a raised eyebrow or by a vaguely embarrassed or surprised facial expression when a friend discovers that I—a respected scientist (in some circles, at least)—am a Christian. What I would like to

do in this paper is to answer Karen's question as straightforwardly as I know how, because it is fair, it is authentic; and, it arises so often.

Karen's question can be answered on a number of levels. At one obvious level, I am a Christian today because I was bom in the United States of America rather than in a Moslem or Hindu country. Yet many native bom Americans are not Christians, so this cannot be the entire explanation. At another level, one might say that I am a Christian because I was raised in a deeply religious family. I am the son and grandson of Southern Baptist ministers, and thus am a conspicuous outlier in the community of academic scientists. Obviously, my family milieu played an important role in my spiritual development, but neither was this a completely determinative factor. The stereotype of the rebellious 'preacher's kid,' in feet, might lead one to expect the opposite outcome. People raised in deeply religious families go on to a wide variety of lifestyles and belief systems as adults.

Historical factors—biological, cultural, and familial— influence all of us profoundly, but any of us with two wits to nib together will (or should, at least) examine and question these influences critically at some point in our lives. To some extent then, I am a Christian today because I consciously *choose* to be. For me, the simplest answer to Karen's question is that I am a Christian because my life makes more sense to me with my faith than without it Now I would be the first to admit that there are times when my life doesn't seem to make much sense from any point of view. But on the whole, I have not found any other system of belief—or disbelief—that accounts as well or as consistently for the world as I experience it, from deeply personal matters of ethics and hunger for meaning to my sense of awe at the physical universe.

Before getting to the heart of my remarks, I would like to clear away a bit of underbrush. When I speak with academic friends about religious faith, I often find that they have certain mental blocks that prevent them from taking the Christian faith seriously, and many of these obstacles appear to me unnecessary because they can be dealt with fairly straightforwardly. I want to mention four of them briefly, simply because I encounter them so frequently. I will not deal with any one in depth, but I hope merely to point toward ways of thinking that can perhaps defuse these issues a bit

1) One obstacle is the perception that Christians, and evangelical Christians in particular, are intolerant Claims for possession of ultimate truth are generally viewed with suspicion in academia, and attempts to make converts on this basis are viewed even more harshly. Let me state plainly that ! believe in evangelism, but my model of evangelism differs importantly from other commonly encountered models. As anyone who knows me realizes, I am not out to beat anyone over the head concerning matters of faith. On the contrary, I am actually fairly private about my faith. To use a metaphor (not original with me), evangelism, properly understood, is simply "one bum telling another bum where he can find some food." For me, the achingly good news of God's love is most effectively offered out of a very deep sense of humility, within a relationship, and to a demonstrated need. From this perspective, faith is *communicate*d in

dialogue, arising from a sense of common humanity, not from a sense of arrogance or triumphalism I have no problem with this sort of evangelism, either as a human being or as an academic. But, let me say something further about intolerance. To some extent intolerance is a virtue. If we are *tolerant* of everything, then we *stand* for nothing For example, Stanford University—where I am employed—has values that it espouses, including academic freedom, dialogue by reasoned discourse, and mutual respect for the diverse members of the university community. Stanford is properly intolerant of gross violations of those values. If nothing else, the modem university is intolerant simply of intolerance! So it should not be surprising that Christians, or feminists, or scientists, or environmentalists, to name just a few, have certain bedrock values that they refuse to compromise. All such groups are entitled to a voice in our academic communities as long as they abide by the basic rules of reasoned discourse and respect for others.[67]

2) A second obstacle is the perception that in terms of moral conduct, people inside the Christian community are no better, and may be worse in some respects, than people outside the community. For a community whose basic *raison d 'etre* is to be the hands, the feet, and the voice of Christ in the world, this perception can be particularly damaging I think about this issue on two levels. First, realize that Christians make no claim to be different at a fundamental human level than anyone else. We are all needy. We have all experienced the brokenness of this world in the pain that we inevitably inflict on others and the pain that is inflicted on us. Most of us have experienced despair at the way small people are damaged by the frenetic thrashings of our political and economic culture. Christians are simply a subset of ordinary people who have found a beacon of hope and light in a world that is all too often bleak. At a second level, however, the expectation of moral growth and leadership in the Christian community is entirely justified; most Christians I know would certainly affirm a desire to become more Christ-like as their journey of faith progresses, and that something is wrong if this is not happening at least in some feeble way. Contrarily, as C.S. Lewis[68] has pointed out, however, the key issue is not whether some large collection of Christians is morally superior to a similar collection of non-believers. The central problem is whether each individual believer is growing in moral stature *more* than if he or she were a non-believer, and whether each individual non-believer *could grow more surely* if he or she were a believer. I am certain that the positive moral influence of my faith is real for myself, for my wife, and for most of my close friends who are believers; one can only make that judgment for oneself by trying I think. In statistics, of course, the concept I am driving at is *partial correlation.* For those of you who speak statistical lingo, I am convinced that this effect is highly significant

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[67] This point is argued at length in GM Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship.* New York: Oxford University Press. 1997.

[68] C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity.* New York: Macmillan Publishing. 1952.

3) A third obstacle that I want to mention is the perception that the things that go on in churches are simply irrelevant to modem life, even if one is sympathetic in principle to some form of religious faith. Church gatherings are frequently perceived as little more than events for forming social and business contacts, and the forms of worship are sometimes perceived as outmoded relics of another age. While these criticisms have some truth to them, I can say emphatically that my primary experience of church is positive and directly relevant to the cutting edge of life. The best times are usually in small group gatherings or in retreat settings. At these times I see people struggling with grievous or impending loss, searching with each other for strength to continue the journey, in optimism and faith. I experience in these settings, and in corporate worship as well, clarion calls to remember who I really am, to constantly refresh my moral priorities, to be attentive to my highest intuitions, to be a servant as well as I can to my family and to those I work with each day. This is indeed food for the soul. Where do you go to get yours? I don't know how I could live without it.

4) A fourth obstacle is the perception that Christians are anti-science, and I must admit that there is some justification for this view. Every Christian should study the history of the Church's interaction with Copernicus and Galileo in the 16th and 17th centuries. As most of us know, Galileo provided the first compelling evidence that the celestial bodies in our solar system revolve around the sun rather than around the earth. While some of Galileo's difficulties arose more from palace intrigue than from theological considerations, he was nevertheless brought before the Church's Inquisition and forced to recant his beliefs, and remained essentially under house arrest for the rest of his life. It is the textbook example of how one of the greatest intellectual achievements in history was suppressed, the scientist himself persecuted, and the entire process rationalized religiously by narrow, very literal interpretations of specific passages of scripture. In our own age, a vocal segment of Christianity flirts dangerously with the same mistake by engaging in knee-jerk denunciations of biological evolution without open-minded consideration of the scientific evidence. Most Christians, however, value science deeply. One of the foremost achievements of liberal Protestantism in the United States was the establishment of our great research universities, including Stanford, and the nurture of the spirit of free inquiry that drives science today.[69] The founders of our great universities realized that Christians should have no fear of truth from any source. We believe that there is only one author of truth, and that is God. All truth is a gift from God. Unlike some segments of academia, however, Christians realize that the truth offered by science is limited and cannot speak to our deepest questions and hungers concerning value, purpose and meaning. We believe in science, yes, but we believe in much more than science. Which brings me to the issues at the core of this paper what are the proper roles of science and faith in my life or in anyone else's life? And, where does the power of one end and the power of the other begin?

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[69] G.M Marsden, *The Soulof die American University.* New York: Oxford University Press. 1994.

It seems to me that we should make at least two major distinctions in thinking about the proper roles of science and religious faith. First, we should realize that science aims primarily to answer questions about *mechanism,* whereas religious frith seeks answers to questions about *purpose, meaning* and *value.*[70] Much confusion arises when we look to science for ultimate answers to our quest for meaning and value, and I will have more to say about this shortly. Similarly, painful confusion arises if we look to religion for answers about mechanism. We need only look at the example of Galileo to see this. I believe that there is no necessary conflict between the two; I view mechanism and purpose as complementing each other, not as exclusive of each other. A balanced view of the world will realize the importance of both mechanism and purpose in almost every realm of endeavor. Many readers of this paper are deeply interested in mechanistic issues. For example, we wonder how physiological events within the brain give rise to perception, memory, and learning. We are curious about the fundamental forces that bind all matter together. We ask what molecular events turn a normal cell into a cancerous one. We seek to understand how macroeconomic phenomena arise from countless microeconomic decisions made by individuals. But all of us care deeply about issues of purpose and value as well. For example, is there any *absolute* difference between Hitler and Ghandi, or were their differences simply a matter of taste, or perhaps a matter of different gene pools competing for survival? Should our country's relationship with any other country be governed more by economic and military considerations, or by issues of human rights and social justice? What *is* justice anyway? Do the countless ethical decisions that I make during a given year have any ultimate significance, or are they essentially hollow and transient?

I can illustrate this difference between mechanism and purpose with a simple, almost trivial, example. Someone who has never before seen a computer might rightly be amazed that the letter 'a' appears on the video monitor when the matching letter 'a* is pressed on the keyboard. If our observer is the curious type, she would want to know all about this spectacular phenomenon. Now I could offer her two types of explanation. A mechanistic explanation would talk about the key press closing a switch, which sends a particular voltage into the CPU over a particular input line, which exerts multiple effects on myriad transistors, flip-flops, etc. and eventually causes the monitor's electron beam to excite R, B & G phosphors at specific pixel locations to create a replica of the letter 'a.' A purposefill account, on the other hand, would simply

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[70] realize that the distinction between mechanism and purpose is not a black-and-white cleavage. Upon scrutiny, neither mechanism nor purpose is likely to remain tidily contained in its separate box. The evolutionary idea of a "niche", for example, reaches outside the confines of "mechanism" into some aspects of "purpose". Nevertheless, the distinction that I am making is fundamental, and it captures substantial truth about the relationship between science and religion. For present purposes, it is most important to get the primary distinctions clear; extended analysis of exceptions is beyond the scope of this paper. The view of complementarity between science and religion along the lines of mechanism and purpose is, of course, not remotely original with me. I follow in file footsteps of a host of others, including recently, SJ. Gould, Rocks *of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fulness of Life.* New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 1999.

note that the computer is a powerfill machine that can perform remarkable services for the user, but only if the user has a way to communicate effectively with the computer. The keyboard/monitor system was designed to accomplish that communication. Now these are very different accounts, but both are obviously true. One concentrates on mechanism; the other on purpose. The levels of explanation do not compete with each other, they are complementary. The *key* question in any given situation is exactly what kind of truth are we looking for?

My point, of course, is that all of us have a stake in both kinds of questions—-those of mechanism and those of purpose. We should not parse ourselves into scientific and religious communities who believe that truth lies substantially in one or the other camp. Rather, we should be clear about what kind of truth we are searching for when we ask a particular question, and then search for it in the proper place.

An important corollary to this distinction between mechanism and purpose or value is that science cannot provide adequate grounds for ethics. Science can tell us how to build nuclear weapons, but there is no experiment I can do in a laboratory that will tell us unequivocally whether it is ever right to use them. Science can tell us how to clone an organism from one of its cells, but cannot define for us when it is right to do so. Science can show us how to create pregnancies for infertile ; couples, and it can show us how to terminate pregnancies. But, it cannot tell us when we should or should not do either. Anyone who seeks to act ethically in the world or influence our political and economic culture in an ethical manner must obviously look beyond science for guidance.

The second major distinction we should make is that science is primarily concerned with public, repeatable events whereas religious faith is often most concerned with unique events. The phenomena that science likes best are those that occur reliably given a specific set of initial conditions, and can therefore be repeated again and again with various subtle but enlightening twists. Religious communities, on the other hand, are frequently concerned with *unique,* life-c*hanging* events that occur in the lives of individual believers, whose initial conditions can never again be replicated. Christianity, in particular, is concerned with unique events that happened 2000 years ago in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. I would argue once a*gain that* these realms of experience are not in competition, but that all of us have a stake in both. If we want to know precisely what *make*s a normal cell cancerous—and what we might *ultimately* do about it—then we have a stake in the public, repeatable world of scientific investigation. We want as many bright young people as possible manipulating cells in all conceivable ways to discern the complex chains of molecular events that lead to uncontrolled cell division. But, all of us have an overwhelming interest in unique events as well. Anyone who has been a parent, especially of teenagers, knows all too well the excruciating decisions that must be made on the basis of very limited data. And once the moment of decision is past, we can never return to it We can never start again at the same place, *make* a different decision, and see how it comes put In sci*entifi*c parlance, we can never do the control experiment Although I used parenting as a specific example, anyone in

an intimate relationship will find her or himself in the same boat Decisions must be made and actions taken on the basis of woefully incomplete knowledge: incomplete knowledge of our partner, of ourselves, and of the deepest sources of behavior of either party. We are all afloat on a sea of unique events, and we must all try to discern deep patterns and truths that lie beneath the ever-chan*ging* surface. All of us have a stake in any source of wisdom, religious or otherwise, that will help us discern those truths and steer a stable course.

From these remarks, it should be quickly perceived that I perceive no necessary conflict between science and faith. Science, rightly understood, has no quarrel with religious faith unless religious authorities attempt to establish by fiat "facts" concerning mechanism that are properly in the domain of scientific investigation. Similarly, religion, rightly understood, has no quarrel with science itself. However, religion does have a major quarrel with the many attempts in our century to establish—in our universities in particular—a specific materialistic "faith" under the guise of science. Various forms of this faith have dominated the intellectual ethos of our major research universities for half a century at least The core tenets of this faith, or world-view, are several-fold:

1) The universe and all that is in it works entirely by blind, cause-and-effect mechanism.

2) Mechanistic explanations, based on reductionist analysis, are the surest and perhaps only road to truth.

3) Phenomena which cannot be studied and verified by scientific means are either not real, or not meaningful, or simply not worth worrying about (As Frederick Buechner has pointed out this seems a bit like a blind man who believes that anything that cannot be heard, touched, tasted or smelled is a figment of the imagination.[71])

4) Attempts to fashion a personal life in this world must be based, in the eloquent words of Bertrand Russell, on the foundation of unyielding despair.

5) Advances in scientific understanding are the best hope for addressing the world's many ills. (This one is going out of vogue fester than the rest)

As should be easily observed by now, I have many misgivings about this particular world-view, but I will try to restrict myself to a few key observations. First, we should acknowledge that this world-view is not science or a necessary result of science. It is indeed a specific faith and interpretation of reality, arrived at by a segment of people. There is no experiment that one can do in a laboratory, and no unequivocal chain of reasoning, that can demonstrate arty of these tenets to be true. Adherents to this world-view cling to it, I suppose, because it accounts for their experience of the world better than any alternative they have found. Or perhaps many cling to it simply because it represents a modem intellectual consensus, just as many academics in previous centuries adhered uncritically to theistic points of view that formed the intellectual consensus then.

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[71] F. Buechner, *Wishful Thinking. New* York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1973.

My problem is that this materialistic faith does NOT account well for my experience of the world. The most deeply meaningful issues of my existence cannot be addressed on mechanistic grounds or by reductionist analysis. To give one outstanding example, how does one design a reductionist approach to the question: "Is it better to live or to die?" This is likely to be a live issue for some readers of this journal, or for some among their loved ones. I would argue that it is one of the most important questions a person can ask Or how do we address a question that is surely a live one for many readers: "Should I many this person? Do we have what it takes to form a life-long bond that can endure through severe difficulties?" Or how about the question asked by many bright but disaffected high school students: "Do I want to buy in to this society and its educational, political and economic values? Is there another way?" Such questions can certainly be reasoned about, but they cannot in the end be answered by scientific method. In contrast to the materialist ethos, I would argue that the importance of any question is in general inversely proportional to the certainty with which it can be answered.

Let us make no mistake about it: the central crisis of our culture is a crisis of meaning,[72] and the dominant intellectual ethos of our academic communities does a paltry job of addressing the crisis. The world hungers for meaning, and our intellectual communities offer the spiritual equivalent of a stone. We need only consult many of our best scientists for confirmation of this critique. The astronomer, Stephen Weinberg, closed his widely read book, *The First Three Minutes,* with the observation that "The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless."[73] In his highly acclaimed book, *The Selfish Gene,* the Oxford biologist Richard Dawkins concludes that all of the living, striving, loving and valuing of arty human being serves only to abet one set of DNA molecules in its competition with other sets of DNA molecules.[74] That's the whole ball of wax! This is the faith that is frequently presented under the guise of science; it is a faith that does not sustain, uplift or ennoble; it is a faith that I resist, both within the academy and without[75]

So what does Christianity offer as an alternative? A retreat to a discredited if more cozy past? An opiate to ameliorate our pain? An altar upon which to abandon our minds in favor of dogma? A lifetime of boring church services and stifling piety? I don't think so. These certainly are traps that can be fallen into, but they can be avoided with reasonable judgment

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[72] See, for example, V. Frankel, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984.

[73] S. Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes.* New York, Basic Books Inc., 1977.

[74] R. Davkins, *The Selfish Gene.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.

[75] argue vehemently here against a particular materialistic philosophy, substantially devoid of meaning, that is peddled on our campuses and in popular culture as a "scientific" world view. In so arguing, I do not mean to neglect or denigrate the many reflective academics who are sensitive to the transcendent dimension of life but are seeking patterns of meaning outside the usual religious traditions. A recent example is Ursula Goodenough's book, *The Sacred Depths of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Ursula, in fact, has gently chided me for the "caricature" of a scientific world view

At its best Christianity offers a balanced, holistic view of the universe in general, and each of our individual existences in particular. It offers a sense of awe at the majesty and intricacy of God's creation in the physical universe. It provides a deep appreciation of scientific inquiry. (Tn one of Einstein's most memorable phrases, the process of scientific discovery is learning to think God's thoughts after him.) Christianity points the way toward an ecologically sound ethic: this is not our world, it is God's—we are only stewards. Christianity provides perhaps the best, most saving personal news that we can ever hear, that we are known and loved deeply and fully, that our highest values and intuitions are not a farce, but rather point more or less faithfully toward the essential core of reality. It frankly acknowledges the brokenness of our self-centered psyches, but offers us forgiveness and healing. It does not shrink from the pain of our existence, but points toward a man on a cross and says that no horror, however dark, cannot yield some good. It offers as much challenge for the future as any human being can embrace—to become as fully Christ-like in the time we are allotted on earth as God gives us the grace to be. It is a coherent view of existence that tolls the depths of our being, that calls out from us the very best that we have to offer. It reveals to us a world that is permeated with holiness at every turn, if only we have eyes to see it

Charles Birch, an Australian biologist, has captured much of this vision in a memorable reflection on the book of Job.[76] Jeb, as most readers will recall, was a righteous man who lost all that he had—wealth, family, health—but sought to remain faithful to God. In the end, broken and embittered, he lashed out at God with great anger and frustration. In a dramatic passage, the Almighty finally responds to Job's ranting, confronting him with his own finitude:

> Who is this obscuring my designs with his empty headed words? Brace yourself like a fighter; now it is my turn to ask questions and you to inform me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, since you are so well-informed! Who decided the dimensions of it, do you know? Have you Journeyed all the way to the sources of the sea, or walked where the Abyss is deepest? Have you been shown the gates of Death or met the janitors of Shadowland? Have you an inkling of the extent of the earth? Tell me all about it if you have! Who carves a channel for the downpour, and hacks a way for the rolling thunder, so that rain may fall on lands

presented in this paragraph. In response, I can only say that this "caricature" is very much alive and well in the comer of academia that I inhabit I recently spoke with a faculty colleague at Stanford who declared his (hyperbolic) desire to "bomb" Memorial Church (a campus landmark established by the Stanford family) because it is a "monument to irrationality." More importantly, I frequently speak with Stanford students who are grappling with this materialistic world view as the received wisdom of our academic culture, they are usually amazed and gratified to find a Stanford faculty member who will argue strongly what they already suspect—that this particular emperor is short on clothing.

[76] Quoted from L. Charles Birch, 'Nature, Humanity and God in Ecological Perspective". Address delivered at the Conference on Faith, Science and the Future, sponsored by the World Council of Churches. Boston, MA, July, 1979.

where no one lives, and the deserts void of human dwelling giving drink to lonely wastes, and making grass spring where everything was dry? Who gave the; this wisdom and endowed the cock with foreknowledge? Does the hawk take flight on your advice when he spreads his wings to travel south? Does die eagle soar at your command to make the eyrie in the heights?

Job 38 & 39, Jerusalem Bible

In reflecting on this passage, Birch says:

Some of these questions are still questions to us, though not all. . For we have more than an inkling of the extent of the earth, even of the universe. Someone has calculated the number of electrons in the universe and has come up with the round figure of 10^{80}! We have journeyed all the way to the sources of the sea and beyond to the moon. We have walked where the abyss of the sea is deepest and now we plan to dig it up. We know something , of how the This got its wisdom and the cock foreknowledge. We think we know something about die beginnings of die universe and the beginnings of life. But our dominant scientific-technological world view provides no framework within which we can find comprehensible answers to questions of point and purpose.

Birch then tries to imagine what God would say to the modem questioner:

Who is this obscuring my designs with his mechanistic models of the universe so that there is room neither for purpose, mind nor consciousness?

Brace yourself like a fighter, for now it is my turn to ask questions and yours to inform me.

Where were you at the big bang?

How is it that out of a universe of pure hydrogen you have come into existence?

Did life begin when the first cell came into existence or do elements of life exist in the foundations of the universe?

How can you be so sure that all is contrivance? How can mind grow from no-mind? How can life grow from the non-living?

Do people grow from blind mechanism? Is not a universe which grows human beings as much a human [or humanizing universe as a tree which grows apples is anappletree?

Or do you think that figs grow on thistles and grapes on thorns?

Does not the life of Jesus tell you something about the life of the universe? Was he not there in some sense from the foundations of it all?

You who live in rich countries, can you not see how every increase in your standard of living reduces that of someone in a poor country now, as well as threatening the survival of future generations?

Who is madly Christian enough among you to cut his standard of living by a third for the sake of the poor?

Do you think the world and all that is in it is

simply for your use? Has it no other value?

Because there are accidents and chance in the world, why do you think there is therefore no room for purpose? Can you not have both?

And when you have analyzed life down to its molecular building blocks in DNA, why do you think you have discovered the secret of life when you have not yet discovered the source of love and all feeling?

And why do you want to make of me either an all-powerful engineer or an impotent non-entity when I am neither?

To all of which we can only reply as Job replied:

I have been holding forth on matters I cannot understand, on matters beyond me and my knowledge. I knew you then only by hearsay; but now, having seen you with my own eyes, I retract all that 1 have said, and in dust and ashes I repent.

Job 42 (Jerusalem Bible)

I hope that by now everyone is beginning to see the shape of my answer to Karen's question-"How can a smart guy like you believe in all that stuff?" I write in one sense as a successfol, middle-aged neuroscientist But in a more profound sense, I figure out, in a semi-bewildered way, what sort of mess I have landed in. I am convinced—most of foe time—that it is a holy mess. I struggle for coherence and consistency, and this holy view of existence is foe one that accounts best for life as I experience it, both with my mind and with my heart

One of foe saints in my personal pantheon is foe Christian writer and minister, Frederick Buechner. Buechner gets to foe essence of this holy world-view in a memorable reflection on foe creation story in foe first chapter of Genesis:[77]

"Who knows what I have in me of foe [woman and foe man] who in their heyday begot me? Who knows what all of us have in us not just of our parents but of their parents before them and so on back beyond any names we know or any faces we would recognize... Who knows what we cany in us, either, from those unspeaking, unthinking creatures that slithered and crept their way through foe millennia until they turned

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[77] F. Buechner, *Telling Secrets.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

into foe likes of you and me and who have never stopped speaking and thinking since? And you 'can cany it back farther even than that to whatever unimaginable event took place, in one instant of time to bring time itself into being, and space itself and that basic matter of which you and I and foe star of Aldebaran and foe tooth of the great white shark and foe petal of foe rose are all composed. As individuals, as a species, as a world, our origins are lost in mystery.

"The passage from Genesis points to a mystery greater still. It says that we come from farther away than space and longer ago than time. It says that evolution and genetics and environment explain a lot about us but they don't explain all about us or even foe most important thing about us. It says that though we live in foe world, we can never be entirely at home in foe world. It says in short not only that we were created by God but also that we were created in God's image and likeness. We have something of God within us foe way we have something of foe stars.

"...I believe that what Genesis suggests is that this original self, with foe print of God's thumb still upon it, is the most essential part of who we are and is buried deep in all of us as a source of wisdom and strength and healing which we can draw upon, or with our terrible freedom, not draw upon as we choose. I think among other things that all real art comes from that deepest self.. I think that our truest prayers come from there too, the often unspoken, unbidden prayers that can rise out of the lives of unbelievers as well as believers whether they recognize them as prayers or not And I think that from there also come our best dreams and our times of gladdest playing and taking it easy and all those moments when we find ourselves being better or stronger or braver or wiser than we are."

I share Buechner's belief here, and I say this acknowledging fully foe peculiar nature of religious belief For me at least this is always composed of roughly equal parts of cognitive assent intuition and unspeakable yearning, leavened with a dash or three of doubt We are all probing at the edges of a very great mystery, or perhaps the best way to say it is that we *are being probedby* the greatest of mysteries. To paraphrase the Apostle Paul, now we see through foe glass darkly, but we hope for a day when we see face to face.

I would like to conclude by saying to those who are trying to walk in Christian faith, I think you are on foe right track, that the path you are following is the path that leads *home* in foe truest sense of foe word. For those who are interested skeptics—and believe me, that is all of us most of the time—I would encourage you simply to try this path and see where it leads. It can be a tough road to go alone, and finding (or forming!) a small group of like-minded travelers to share foe journey is a tremendous gift For those who disagree with everything I have said and are searching for answers to ultimate questions elsewhere, I can only say in foe parlance of my teenage sons: "Hey, that's cool, dude!" I certainly admit that in the end, you may be right and I may be wrong. I would urge you, however, to attend closely to your "best dreams, times of gladdest playing, and those moments when you find yourself being better, stronger, braver or wiser than you are." The voice that rises up within us in those moments, I

think, is an eternal voice that beckons us to our truest being, our most joyous selves, our ultimate destiny. And I would also ask, if you reach a point in life where the way is dark and foe spiritual hunger overwhelming, remember that there is a place where you can find some food. The path of Christ *is* a living option.

Acknowledgments. This paper originated in a talk I delivered to foe Veritas Forum at Stanford University on November 6, 1997. I thank Daniel Clendenin for helpfull comments on the manuscript, and I thank foe members of the Faculty Christian Fellowship at Stanford University for foe resources of Christian "*community*" they provided during preparation of the original talk and the written version as well. Please address all correspondence to William T. Newsome, Department of Neurobiology, Stanford University School of Medicine, Fairchild Buildings Room D209, Stanford, CA 94305. Email: bill@monkevbiz.stanford.edu.

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Experiences of God's Guidance

By Richard H. Bube

In a number of wonderful ways my life's journey, by the grace of God, has involved personal commitment to Jesus Christ, as well as to authentic scientific descriptions. It is not surprising that exploring the interaction between science and Christian faith has been a major activity of my life.

My first book was published in 1955, *To Every Mem An Answer: A Textbook of Christian Doctrine.*[78] It Was written to explore the Biblical revelation following the birth of our first child. My first paper on science and Christianity was published the following year, "The Relevance of the Quantum Principle of Complementarity to Apparent Basic paradoxes in Christian Theology."[79] I started work on my second book in

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[78] *To Every Man an Answer: a Textbock ofChristian Doctrine.* Moody Press, Chicago (1955).

[79] "The Relevance of the Quantum Principle of Complementarity to Apparent Basic Paradoxes in Christian Theology, "*Journal ASA* 8, No. 4,4(1956).

1955, *Photoconductivity of Solids*,[80] the first of seven scientific books related to photo-electronic and photovoltaic properties of semiconductors. In the following forty years I gave talks on science at many scientific meetings and conferences around the world, and I also spoke on science and Christian faith at over sixty colleges and universities. I almost continuously participated in Adult Education programs in at least seven local churches. A particular focus of my efforts has been to clarify what a whole vocabulary of words involving science and C*hristianit*y really mean, as opposed to the ways they are often popularly used to argue for various special agendas. The central theme of these reflections is the many ways in which critical rieci sinns and opportunities in my life can be traced with *thanks*giving to the providential guidance of God.

Early Years

I grew up in Providence, Rhode Island, with parents who were loving and supportive, but were not believing C*hristians* in my first year at Classical High School I became good friends with another student in my class. One day he told me that his church, the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, was building a new church building not far from my home, and he invited me to attend the dedication service. I always remembered that the first hymn in the service was *Holy, Holy, Holy.* The church, the people, and the service spoke to me, and I started to attend Sunday School shortly thereafter. I do not know how long it was—but probably not very long-before my kindly Sunday School teacher clearly presented the Christian Gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ to us teenagers in the class as part of the regular lesson. My heart said "Yes" to God almost immediately, I was a member of the 1941 Confirmation Class, and I began my walk with Christ as one for whom He had died and risen again.

Brown University

After Classical High School, where I started my writing and editing experience by editing the school newspaper for two years, I went on to Brown University during the nontypical war years. My fundamental concern in choosing a career program at Brown was to find some kind of activity for which I had some talent, and which promised to provide gainful employment. I was, after all, a child of the Great Depression, and the ability to find a job that would enable one to support a family, live a reasonably constructive life, and be a helping member of society dominated the list of job requirements. I think I subconsciously assumed that any honorable job could (and should!) be done to the glory of God.

These were very nontypical days for life on a universify campus. There was only a handfill of civilians on campus. My own list of courses was almost totally limited to those related to science: physics, chemistry, mathematics, and a single course in astronomy. The few non-science courses consisted of required Freshman English, two

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[80] Photoconductiviy of Solids, Wiley, N.Y. (I960); Russian translation (1962); reprinted by Krieger, Huntington, N.Y. (1978).

semesters of French (I knew that ultimately, to fulfill the requirement for a PED., I would need to be able to read in two languages other than English, and I already had some education in German.), and my major excursion away from the standard science curriculum: two courses in Political Science.

The two Political Science classes were a radical departure from my technical curriculum and reflected a growing interest I had in some of the ideas involved. The two courses I took were "From Luther to Hitler", and "The United Nations". I took the latter around the birth of the United Nations, when there were high hopes for major changes because of its existence. I even wrote a major paper entitled, *Religion and Internationalism,* which had a section titled, "Religion and Science"; I was overjoyed when this paper was awarded the Samuel Lamport Prize. It is interesting to note that I was later strongly criticized by a physics faculty member for having done an inappropriate thing for a physics major to seriously spend time thinking about political science! "You'll never succeed in physics that way!" I was warned. You can imagine the response that my Christian faith stimulated.

There are a few other papers, written while I was at Brown, related to the interaction between science and Christian faith. One of these is not specifically dated and is tided simply, *Science and the Christian.* Its major concern is the development of a positive treatment of the meaning of science for a Christian, and it sets forth the capabilities and the limitations of science in a way that foreshadows my more complete treatment of these issues in later years.

Other Examples of Divine Guidance

Several times in my life I made crucial, life-shaping decisions that in many ways were not really mine at all. Some of these can be seen in the early years described above. In the following I have called these 'special occasions of divine guidance' and have singled them out for particular attention.

Princeton University

My eight consecutive semesters at Brown during the war came to an end in February 1946. Considerably before this, however, came the consideration of how to continue my education after receiving my Bachelor of Science degree in Physics from Brown. Again, I had very little experience to draw on, but for a variety of reasons I decided that good choices would be Cornell, Yale and Princeton. I felt it important to get my graduate education in a different environment from my undergraduate education. I applied to each, with the obvious proviso that I couldn't come without financial aid in some form, and waited to hear what would happen.

Cornell admitted me, but regretted that they had no financial aid available in the middle of the academic year. Yale responded in the same way. Finally Princeton admitted me, with the happy news that they did have a Teaching Assistantship for me if I chose to accept I had no trouble in making a decision between them.

I have always regarded this particular set of circumstances as a focal point for God's providential activity in my life, and as an example of how God often does choose to act in a person's life. I did not make the independent decision to attend Princeton rather than Cornell or Yale; God made the choice through the circumstances in which the events happened. Left to myself, and with my limited knowledge, Princeton might well have been my last choice among these three Universities. But the opening of the door to Princeton-and particularly the delay of the offer of financial aid from Cornell until too late—set the entire framework for the rest of my life. The wonderful relationship with the woman who became my wife, my growth as a Christian, and my fulfilling scientific career all grew out of the Princeton experience in unique ways.

While I was a graduate student in physics, I was on the founding committee for a new Lutheran Church in Princeton; however, I was too young to serve on the first governing board of the church. I received notice that I had been hired to work on the cyclotron project at Palmer Physics Laboratory during my first summer at Princeton. The cyclotron in question was a 12-ft diameter model, which was quickly replaced over the next few years in the field by machines orders of magnitude larger and more complicated. I came away from the experience with the reinforced conviction that I did not want to do *big machine' physics.

In 1947 I did some of my most careful reflection on what kind of a future career I felt called to pursue. Should I continue my path toward a career in science, or should I consider instead a calling to some specific theological ministry? It was obviously a critical point in my life; a number of crucial events occurred in the next couple of years. First, I became convinced by the end of my PhD. degree work that I had better gifts for scientific research than I did for pastoral ministry. Second, there was bom within me the conviction that God was calling me to serve Him through my science, especially through my witness as a respected Christian scientist, a member of both the scientific and Christian communities. Third, a whole new field of physics, solid-state physics—or as it has become known in recent years, condensed matter physics—was just opening up. This was exactly the kind of challenging, 'small machine' science that appealed to me at that time.

While I was a grad student in physics at Princeton, I attended a talk given by a distinguished and respected Old Testament scholar, who had written a book stressing the literal interpretation of Genesis One. At the end of his talk in the question period, one of the students asked him, "How can one reconcile the scientific theory of evolution with a literal Genesis account of creation?" He replied, "Until evolution is proven to be true, I do not really need to consider its possible interactions with the Genesis account" This answer struck me as being so inappropriate that it triggered my lifelong concern for dealing with the interactions between science and Christian theology in a way that preserves the integrity of each.

The love of my life.

While I was a 20-year old grad student at Princeton, I met Betty, a wonderful Christian woman with whom I quickly fell deeply in love. We had a brief period of turmoil when we tried to come to grips with the fact that she was 10 years older than L which neither of us had earlier suspected. After a brief straggle with some of the socially defined issues in such a relationship, we both came to the conclusion that God had called us together. We shared life together for the next 48 years passionately in love, with our four children, until God called her home to him in 1997. Certainly no single experience in my life could express so powerfully the loving guidance of God in my life.

Choice of scientific field of research.

My first two summers at Princeton I worked on projects at the university, but there did not seem to be a suitable opportunity for the third summer. Since Betty was working at the nearby RCA Laboratories, I applied to them to see if a summer appointment might be available. Providentially there was.

When I began this work, my supervisor said to me, "Which would you rather do: grow crystals or measure luminescence?" Because of my background in physics, I said, "measure luminescence," and this simple choice set in motion the main focus of much of my scientific research in following years. ;

Opportunity for Ph.D. research

Betty and I wanted to get married in the Fall of 1948, and I had heard that it might be possible to do my PhD. research while employed at the RCA Laboratories. So I was led to the situation where I was able to do my complete Ph.D. thesis research to fillfill my requirements at Princeton University, while being employed full time for the next two years at the RCA Laboratories, supported by a Navy Contract

My first summer's research at RCA resulted in my first scientific publication, "A Correlation between Cathodoluminescence Efficiency and Decay as a Function of Temperature".[81] My interactions with my group director provided me with valuable instruction in a variety of activities essential to a successfill scientific career in addition to the actual experimental and theoretical scientific work itself. Every member of our little research group was required to speak at each weekly meeting, even if it was to confess that no progress had been made in the previous period. Week after week of this activity through the years provided essential training in public speaking.

We also had a monthly written Progress Report to which each member of the staff was required to contribute. In addition to the experience gained by several years of this activity, in subsequent years I was assigned the job of putting together and integrating all of the individual progress reports into one total Progress Report for the whole group. This gave i me valuable experience in scientific writing that was very important to me in the future, as well as helping me to develop my general editorial and writing skills.

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[81] "A Correlation between Cathodoluminescence Efficiency and Decay as a Function of Temperature," J. *Optical Soc. Am.* 329,681 (1949).

An extension of my thesis work, *summarizing* the principle thrust of my research in luminescence, was published in 1953 as "Electronic Transitions in the Luminescence of Zinc Sulfide Phosphors".[82] This work began to involve explicitly the phenomenon of photoconductivity—a change in the electrical conductivity of a material upon absorption of light—which was soon to become the principal focus of my research in the future. Again I was providentially at an exciting place at the right time. The September 1951 issue of the *RCA Review* was devoted to the subject of "Photoconductivity in Insulators," and included a *fundamental* paper, "An Outline of Some Photoconductive Processes".[83] Throughout my years at RCA, the author of this paper served as a continuing example and mentor for me in my research. In this paper he had laid the foundation for a thorough investigation of photoconductivity phenomena; almost the only thing that was needed was someone to cany out the experiments, test the models, and contribute to the theoretical descriptions. What a wonderful spot to be in!

While my own research in photoconductivity was developing, I started to write *Photoconductivity of Solids* in 1955.[1] This bode proved to be one of my best-received contributions. It sought to describe-all of the developments in photoconductivity and its applications since it was first discovered in 1873. It included 1009 references, was published by John Wiley & Sons in 1960, and stayed in print for 26 years. It is interesting that an invited article on "Photoconductivity" by me was published in 1999 in the *Wiley Encyclopedia of Electrical and Electronics Engineering.*[84]

I also started the practice of including a Bible passage on the dedication page of each technical book that I wrote. In *Photoconductivity of Solids,* the reference was to Romans 1:20: "Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made." The book had the good fortune to become a worldwide classic in its field, and for years afterward I met researchers from many countries who instantly knew me because they had read the work when they were students. It was even republished in a Russian language edition. I probably partially owe my appointment to the Stanford faculty to the general reputation associated with this book.

In the early 1950's I joined an organization named the American Scientific Affiliation, an association of men and women with commitments to both Christianity and science. The ASA had been formed in 1941 by a small group to be of service to college and university students as they encountered questions relating science and their Christian faith. For the years of my association with the group, I have repeatedly testified that it is one of the few such groups in the world (like the Research Scientists Christian Fellowship in England—today known as Christians in Science, and the Cana-

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[82] "Electronic Transitions in the Luminescence of Zinc Sulfide Phosphors," *Phys. Rev.* 90,70 (1953).

[83] A Rose, "An Outline of Some Photoconductive Processes," *RCA Review* 12, No. 3,362 (1951).

[84] "Photoconductivity," *Wiley Encyclopedia of Electrical and Electronics Engineering,* Vol. 16, John G. Webster, Editor, Wiley, N.Y., 257-269 (1999).

[1] Repeat of footnote 3.

dian Scientific and Christian Affiliation) that seeks to maintain both the integrity of authentic science and the integrity of authentic Christian theology. It has certainly played an important role in the development of my own thinking. As part of its work the ASA publishes a quarterly journal, originally known simply as the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* for which I served as Editor from 1969 to 1984 (now known as *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith),* holds an annual meeting, and is supported by local groups around the country that also hold occasional meetings.

Moving to Stanford

For several years I had been taking a look at other opportunities to use my research skills in other organizations. Things were changing. When I first came to RCA, it was almost unthinkable that anyone on the staff would actually leave. The '50's were a Golden Age for research at RCA, as well as a number of other industrial research laboratories. The principal emphasis was on the quality of the research and the possibility of its results leading to new patents, which could be licensed to anyone in the entire electronics industry. Now with each passing year, the emphasis shifted more and more to guiding research efforts at the Laboratories by the immediate manufacturing needs of other parts of the company, or obtaining Government Contracts to support desired research

And so it was at such a time that I had attended my first scientific meeting ever in California, the Spring American Physical Society meeting at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, after my first cross-country flight I had attended these Spring APS meetings around the country every year because of their concentration of interest in solid-state physics. It was March, things were cold and dead in New Jersey, and things were warm, blossoming, and beautiful in Monterey. I have said often my feelings were like those of Moses viewing the Promised Land. I was impressed and began to reflect that perhaps there might be an opportunity for employment in California.

In another of those marvelous providential events in our lives, I realized that a former member of the RCA staff whom I knew was currently Director of Research of an electronics company in Palo Alto, California. My friend went out of his way for us, set up interviews at several local companies, and even made contacts for us with the School of Engineering at Stanford University, who were looking for someone with my qualifications. The Department of Materials Science at Stanford appeared to be very interested in someone who could bring inputs on electronic materials into their program. We visited the campus, had dinner with a group of the faculty, and I gave a basic talk on photoconductivity.

On the next-to-last morning in California, Betty and I were discussing events at breakfast at our motel I had about decided not to accept an offer from Stanford, since it was such a major move away from my 14-year research program at RCA and all the way across the country, disrupting our lives and the lives of our four children. That morning I was scheduled to have a meeting with the Stanford Provost In the course of our conversation, he said to me, "Dr. Bube, we really want you to come." It was all I needed! What a difference to the rest of my life it would have made if I had not had that last-day

appointment I returned to tell Betty that I thought that we should come to Stanford. At any rate I received an offer to be appointed Associate Professor of Materials Science and Electrical Engineering at Stanford, starting in Summer Quarter 1962, and accepted. A new research program in Materials Science was just being started, supported by a major grant from the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA).

And so, we brought to an end 14 years of married life in Princeton, and began to make plans to move across the country and start a new life. Immediately upon arriving at Stanford, I became involved as one of two faculty sponsors for the undergraduate InterVarsity Christian Fellowship group, an association that has continued since then. In the last few years the ministry at Stanford has broadened to include an active *Graduate* Student Christian ministry, and a Christian Faculty *minis*try.

I was editor and author of *The Encounter Between Christianity and Science* (1968),[85] which was the first of my five books on science and Christianity; it included a set of personal memoirs, *One Whole Life.*[86] My most recent book was *Putting It All Together: Seven Patterns for Relating Science and Christian Faith,*[87] which summarized a theme I had been developing for a number of years, dating back to before the 1985 joint ASA-RSCF conference at Oxford.

At Stanford I started another tradition in 1968: an Undergraduate Seminar in "Science and Religion", which I taught for academic credit relatively continuously one quarter each year for 25 years. I prepared a reading list and a syllabus for this seminar, which focused in the first half of the 10-week series on the history of the interaction between science and Christianity and the importance of different worldviews, the definition of science and its potential and limitations, the interaction between science and theology, determinism and chance, and the significance of being human. In the last half it considered test areas of practical, interaction such as creation and evolution, abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, and the environment Since the seminar was an elective, it was taken primarily by students who already had a Christian commitment Indeed, one of its contributions was to help students who had been taught that as Christians they could have nothing to do with science, to not forsake their faith when they realized that there were inputs from science that they could not in good conscience ignore.

In 1971 my book *The Human Quest: A New Look at Science and Christian Faith*[88] was published with a Foreword by a Fuller Theological Seminary Professor. Written within the context of the issues raised by my Undergraduate Seminar, and with topics for discussion at the end of each of the ten chapters, it represented my most complete attempt to date to deal with a broad range of questions. In spite of the fact that the time it remained in print was rather brief, it received a good reception by those

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[85] **The Encounter Between Christianity and Science.* Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI (1968).

[86] One Whole Life: Personal Memoirs (privately published) 1994,3rd ed. (1998).

[87] Putting It All Together Seven Patterns for Relating Science and Christian Faith, University Press of America, Lanham, MD (1995).

[88] *"The Human Quest A New Look at Science and Christian Faith.* Word Books, Waco, Texas (1971).

interested in these issues, and references to it continue even after more than twenty years have passed.

Beginning research in photovoltaics.

My research during my first decade at Stanford was concerned primarily with a variety of issues related to photoconductivity and photoelectronic properties of semiconductors. My first PhD. student completed his work in 1965, and over the next 30 years I mentored a total of 56 PhD.'s at Stanford.

A significant new ingredient entered our research pattern with the beginning of our 25-year research program dedicated to the photovoltaic conversion of sunlight into electricity (solar cells). Our entrance into the field came about in a very providential way. One day I received a phone call from an Electrical Engineering Professor (one of the inventors of the first silicon solar cell when he was at the Bell Laboratories), who said, "I have in my office a man from NASA, who would like to get some work started at Stanford on cuprous sulfide/cadmium sulfide (Cu2S/CdS) thin-film solar cells. I haven't worked with cadmium sulfide, but you have. Would you be interested in getting involved?" The opportunity afforded by this offer from NASA, particularly with the broad non-military applications for solar cells as one considered the environmental and energy needs of the future, was particularly appealing to me. It was close to my areas of previous interest and experience, and it seemed to afford a special opportunity to live out a Christian sense of stewardship for God's world.

Many years later when I wrote *Photoelectronic Properties of Semiconductors,*[89] I included a special section that I called, "Cu2S/CdS: Theater for Photoelectronic Effects." A colleague, Alan Fahrenbruch, who had done his PhD. work with me, and I wrote a book on *Fundamentals of Solar Cells* (1983),[90] and more recently I wrote a book on *Photovoltaic Materials* (1998).[91]

Opportunities to see the world

One of the great blessings given to my wife and me was the opportunity to establish contacts around the world. In one way the world came to us, as more than 40 international scholars came to Stanford to spend time with my research group over the past 35 years. And in another way I was encouraged to travel to many places in the world, making many friends along the way—some under quite providential circumstances. This started with my teaching a NATO Summer School in Ghent, Belgium two weeks after we moved to California, and included later participation in scientific conferences in Berlin, Hamburg, and Montreux, with sidetrips to other research centers. We were also able to participate in two conferences on science and Christian faith in 1965 and

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[89] *Photoelectronic Properties of Semiconductors.* Cambridge University Press (1992).

[90] A. L. Fahrenbruch and R. H. Bube, *Fundamentals of Solar Cells: Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conversion.* Academic Press, N.Y. (1983); Russian translation (1988).

[91] *Photovoltaic Materials.* Imperial College Press, England (1998).

1985 at Oxford, between the ASA and the Research Scientists Christian Fellowship of Great Britain.

Certainly one of the most wonderful experiences for us personally was making eight trips in eleven years to Switzerland, with sidetrips into Germany. My elderly parents had moved to California in 1967 and care for them made long absences impossible in the last 15 years of their life. In 1984 our first opportunity for a traditional Sabbatical came up. I had had a Visiting Scholar from Neuchatel, Switzerland, working with me on photovoltaics during 1982, and so I was providentially led to spend our first Sabbatical at the University of Neuchatel, while also giving a class on photovoltaics at the Ecole Polytechnic Federate Lausanne. We made friends with a number of families in Neuchatel, and were active both in the Egjise Evangelique Libre of Neuchatel, and the state Eglise Reformee in nearby Cortaillod. I was even enabled to give a sermon in French with the help of one of the good friends whom we had met in Neuchatel earlier. The sum of those eight trips enabled us to live a little over a year in Switzerland and we were thankful for every minute.

Summary

As I look back over my life, I am filled with gratitude to God for His providential leading and guidance on so *many* occasions.

The central emphasis of my perspective is that authentic science and authentic Christian theology-both of which must be carefully defined-give us valid insights into what reality is like. Each gives us descriptions from a different perspective, and yet they tell us about aspects of the same reality. They should be regarded as complementary and then be appropriately integrated, while preserving the authenticity of each approach.

Richard H. Bube is Emeritus Professor of Materials Science and Electrical Engineering at Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305, where he served as Chair of the Department of Materials Science and Engineering from 1975 to 1986. He has been engaged in scientific research on the photoelectronic and photovoltaic properties of m*aterial*s for 45 years, and has written seven books on these subjects. He has also been involved with the interaction between science and Christian faith, has written four books on this subject, and served as Editor of die *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* from 1968 to 1983. He has been blessed with 48 wonderful years of love with his wife Betty, who went to be with the Lord in 1997, and their four children.

Now a Convinced Theist

by Robert G. Olsen

I was in bom in Brooklyn, New York, and grew up in New Jersey. My family was Christian, and almost all of my social life was within this group. I was expected to go

to Sunday School, Morning Church, Youth Group, and Evening Church every Sunday as well as all other organized youth activities. Although I attended public schools and participated in sports, questionable activities such as dancing were discouraged. As a result, I was on the periphery of the high school social scene and did not experience much of the world.

As far as I can remember, I believed in God since I was a small child. But as I grew older I had serious difficulties with fundamentalist culture. Looking back on it, I find things for which I am grateful (such as a family-including uncles, aunts, etc.- cleariy committed to the "best" for me, the importance of the fact that you believe something to be true, and the importance of an individual decision to believe in God). Other things I still have a great deal of difficulty with (such as family devotions, the tendency to believe in salvation by perfectly correct theology, and an unnecessarily judgmental spirit).

Most people in my subculture were expected to go to Christian Colleges. Since I found open rebellion unpalatable, my quiet rebellion was that I did not consider it and broke the mold. To my parents' credit, they did not choose to enforce the unwritten rule. With simultaneous fear and relief, I enrolled at Rutgers University. My interests were to prepare for a good job and to find out what the world was like since I had been separated from it in my high school years.

I found out quickly that without God, the world (from which I had been isolated to a great degree) was not bright I remember my neighbor, he always wanted sex with his girlfriend, but when asked if he would marry her said no— because she had no principles. Somehow he foiled to see the inconsistency that was so obvious to me. I also remember seeing people plastered after weekend drinking binges and wondering if they had anything to live for.

I came to realize that something about life without God didn't add up, but couldn't fully articulate it until later. I quickly found and became associated with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (TVCF); that group became a source of great stability for me. For the first time, I became publicly committed to the faith. In my undergraduate years I learned about my responsibilities as a Christian, but I did not grow much in the foith intellectually.

The first inkling of the way I was to develop intellectually came in response to a challenge to read through the Bible. Most of my reading was perfunctory. However, when I came to Ecclesiastes I couldn't put it down. For example, I read

2:10,1 denied myself nothing My heart took delight in my work...Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done... .everything was meaningless.

12:13, Here is the conclusion... .Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man.

This hit home but I didn't really know what to do with it

After graduating from Rutgers with a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1968,1 enrolled in graduate school at the University of Colorado-Boulder. During my studies there, the Anti-War, counterculture, and Jesus movements all peaked. Exposure to

these produced many challenges to my faith, including: 1) the counterculture claim as pursued in the United States that middle class life is meaningless; 2) the Jesus movement assertion that preaching (especially about salvation and the end times) is the only meaningful thing to do since the end of the world was near. This was a challenge to my brand of C*hristianity*, which fit in well with middle class life; 3) the antiwar movement statement that the government was corrupt to its core and war was always wrong. This was a special challenge to me since I had been commissioned an Army Lieutenant through ROTC.

I matured as a Christian in Boulder in many ways. I had several outstanding Christian teachers and began a program of serious reading about Christian issues. However, I have never had any formal training, such as seminary classes. During the time of growth I faced numerous intellectual challenges. I was developing as a scientist, and for the first time learned that doing research is fundamentally different from doing homework problems. I spent two years trying to solve a problem, and learned that that process of science is one of proposing a theory and trying to disprove it by comparison to consistency, plausibility argument, and experiment If you can't disprove the theory, then you can accept it as tentative. In retrospect, I learned a great deal about becoming a researcher from this frustration.

By having to struggle with what I could believe scientifically, I came to believe that there was never proof of any belief only corroborating evidence which makes the belief plausible. In fact, scientific models were not necessarily a representation of the real world (or "truth"), but only successful at predicting the results of experiments. This would haunt me later.

During this time, I became interested in a career in academics. In feet, I came to believe that God had called me to this. If you ask me today *how* I knew, I'm not sure that I could give you a satisfying answer. This led me to another defining period in my life.

I had backed into a ministry to street people from the counterculture by living at a house with fourteen Christians in the Hill district of Boulder, and by being asked to be part time manager of the local Logos bookstore. During that time, I remember that within (I think) a few days I had two distinct conversations about God. One was with a street person to whom I said that feeling something is right is not sufficient I stated ; that you must also have a reasonable basis for your belief. Another was with my Ph.D. advisor, to whom I said that reasons alone are insufficient but that you must also just "know" some things.

The apparent incongruity of my statements—plus my scientific belief about proof and truth—started me on a spiral downward to as close to agnosticism/atheism as I could go. I felt that I could not come up with good enough reasons for many of ; the things I claimed to believe. I was moved by those who said that then you should simply leave those questions unanswered and live your life as an agnostic. Somehow I never could go all ; the way because I believed (and still do) that agnosticism i necessarily leads to despair, and I could not embrace that I p continued reading but my reading

list (at least of Christian L books) got narrower and narrower. One writer I could read was ; Pascal, and I was impressed with the *preface* to his wager. In the wager, Pascal concedes that you cannot prove or disprove God. He then suggests that it is more rational to wager your life on God than on atheism because you have more to gain by belief than unbelief. The wager didn't mean much to me, but the preface to it did. In the preface, Pascal was confronted by a skeptic who said that he would not condemn Pascal for either wagering on God or atheism but for taking any stand at all He said that without "proof you should take no position at all (i.e. agnosticism). Pascal's response was to say that *you must wager.* You have no choice. Since you are in this life, you wager by default Your only choice is which way to wager. This hit me; I recognized that everyone makes a decision about belief in God and that not deciding was not an option. Despite this insight, the transition out of my black period was neither easy nor quick

I remember praying a number of times in desperation for God to unequivocally show himself to me. Among other things, I prayed for the more public gifts of the Spirit-which I never received. I also never received any *unequivocal* demonstration of God's presence. Once I prayed the following: I said that I believed that I was called into an academic career and that (despite the feet that there were no jobs at that time in p academia) I would not accept employment in industry. I l remember getting up and feeling rather silly, since it would be at least a year before I finished my Ph.D., and no answer to this prayer was possible before then. Nevertheless within a few days Westinghouse Georesearch Lab in Boulder called and wanted me to consider coming to work for them. I knew that they were looking for a permanent replacement for an employee who had left I went for an interview, which was quite humorous (at least to me) since I had decided to be true to my promise. I told them all the reasons not to hire me and why some of the other graduate students were more well suited for the job; I didn't tell them the real reason. They called back and still wanted me. I struggled, and finally told them that I was committed to a career in academics and would consider the job only if it was part time, and if I left after my Ph.D. They offered me the job anyway.

The feet that I was able to cany through was one small step back to God. Further, it played a part in a bigger picture later.

When I finished my Ph.D. in 1973, there were still *almo*st no advertisements for faculty positions in Electrical *Engine*ering. In feet, I was advised to not bother looking. Then one appeared from Washington State University (WSU) in P*ullman* that seemed to be written for me. I was quite skeptical that I could get it, but said I would apply because "I owed it to God" to try. I knew I had no chance. Later, when I got the job as an Assistant Professor, I found out that I surfaced to the top in part because I had some industrial experience. Was this God? Is it true that when you pray, coincidences happen more often?

Shortly after I arrived in Pullman, I met Marsha (a student, though not mine). We were married the next year. We now have 3 children: Erik (who is a senior in

Management of Information Science at WSU), Kari (who is a junior in Mechanical Engineering at WSU) and Kari (who is beginning the seventh grade).

I have had a wonderful career. This is in part because the expectations of WSU when I first arrived were not as great as my own expectations of myself. Because I was not under as much pressure to produce, as is now the case, I was able to study many different issues within electromagnetics, from fiber optics to underground wave propagation, antenna theory, radar scattering, and applications to power systems (which is what brought me to Electric Power Research Institute). I have also enjoyed teaching at all levels, from freshman to Ph.D. students.

During the last 20 years, I have not been very vocal about my faith. I have only shared my faith in small ways with individual students. I do, however, hope that part of my witness is that I have been more moral as a Christian than I would otherwise have been. I also hope that I have been salt and light in a number of other ways. I have concentrated on career and family matters and am now reaping the fruits of this. My family is a great source of joy (not always of course!). Now perhaps it is time to give back

Often, I wonder why I have been as silent as I have been. I think it is partly (at least) because I fear being put in a "fundamentalist" box without a chance to defend myself and partly that I don't have confidence in some of the responses I give to questions. I also worry about living consistently with my stated faith when there are so many temptations around. And, I also honestly continue to struggle with doubt

I am a convinced theist, and am very strong in this because I cannot live with the thought of the consequences of being an atheist I am sure that it leads to despair. Going beyond that to exactly how God interacts with us has always been difficult for me. I sometimes feel that Mark 9:22-24 describes my Christian life rather well. Here a father requests help from Jesus for his son.

"..Jfyou can do anything, take pity on us and help us." "Ifyou can?" said Jesus. Everything is possible for he who believes. " Immediately, the boy's father said, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief}"

I have found the book *Disappointment with God,* by Phil Yancey, to be a favorite of mine. I identify with those in the book who have desired but not experienced unambiguous evidence of God's presence and yet continue to believe and serve. Despite these doubts, I identify with Peter in John 6: 66-68.

No one can come to me unless the father has enabled him. From this time, many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to who shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. "

Let me add just a few further comments on my beliefs. I have no interest in atheism or rationalism. They appear to me to lead nowhere. For example, morality cannot be based on science. What *is.* is not the same as what ought to be. Without God, there is no morality. This is one theme of Dostoevesky. For example, in *The Brothers Karamazov,* one of his characters said, "If there is no God, all things are permissible."

Humanism (while on the surface appealing) appears to be solidly grounded in mid-air. I don't understand how I can simultaneously say that we are the product of nothing but time and chance and yet infinitely valuable. I also have no interest in many of the more modem religious ideas. It seems to me that the basic idea is to find a concept of God with which you are comfortable and to adopt it This circumvents the issue of truth. If there is a God, then the feet that I believe something has very little, if anything, to do with whether it is tree. God is to be discovered-not invented.

Robert G. Olsen received a BS degree in electrical engineering from Rutgers University in 1968, and the MS and Ph.D. degrees in the same from the University of Colorado, Boulder in 1970 and 1974. He presently serves as Boeing Distinguished Professor of Electrical Engineering at Washington State University (WSU) in Pullman, WA. During his service at WSU he has been a visiting scientist at GTE Laboratories in Waltham, MA and at AEB Corporate Research in Vasteras, Sweden, a Visiting Professor at the Technical University of Denmark During the 1997-98 academic year, he was a visiting scientist at the Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, CA Prof. Olsen has published more than 65 refereed journal articles on many topics, including electromagnetic interference from power lines, the electromagnetic environment of power lines, electromagnetic compatibility and electromagnetic scattering. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and presently serves as chair of the IEEE Power Engineering Society Corona Effects Fields Working Group, as Associate Editor of the *IEEE Transactions on Electromagnetic Compatibility* and as US National Committee representative to the Conference Internationale des Grands Rdseaux Electriques & Haute Tension (CIGRE) Study Committee 36.

Issue #25 Jul 2000 — Ellul in the Public Arena

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In This Issue

About this Issue

Jacques Ellul lived in the public arena. He was an academic who mentored doctoral students, lectured, fulfilled university assignments and wrote scholarly treatises. But his defining orientation was public life as a whole. His thinking was geared to citizens, church members and consumers. Intellectuals were especially vulnerable, in his view, because they prized their independence and magnified their critical powers. His prophetic voice engaged the community.

Those influenced by Ellul's work continue to make public space their home. Some are scholars in the traditional sense, but most have a special heart for everyday life and the non-specialist. They write in magazines, work in social services, participate in public organizations, build activity centers, or preach. *The Ellul Forum* this time gives us some illustrations of the way our technological civilization can be discussed and critiqued among general audiences.

Andrew Goddard is a Tutor in Christian Ethics at Wycliffe Hall and a member of the Oxford University Theology Faculty. He presented this address at Wycliffe Hall's Open Day festivities on June 9, 2000. Each year the Hall invites former members (most of them ordained Anglican clergy), council members who govern the college, local clergy, the staff and others who help the college, to an open house. As the newest staff member, Mr. Goddard was asked to address them and he chose to introduce them to Ellul.

Rev. Dr. Randall Otto is the pastor of the Deerfield Presbyterian Church in New Jersey. He is also an adjunct instructor in philosophy and religion at Cumberland College and an instructor at the Eastern School of Christian Ministries. His tongue-in-cheek essay identifies trends in contemporary culture that seem to lead ineluctably to the

virtual Christianity of the Internet. His incisive critique and calls for reconsideration make *The Ellul Forum* an obvious home.

Phillip M. Thompson sets Ellul in the context of Thomas Merton, kindred spirits nourishing each other for everyday life outside the academy and monastery. Mr. Thompson has two degrees in law and a PhD.in the History of Culture from the University of Chicago. He is currently the Director of the Center for Ethics and Leadership at St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas. In that capacity he works at the interface of the university and public life. A different version of this article appeared earlier as "Full of Firecrackers: Jacques Ellul and the Technological Critique of Thomas Merton," in the *Merton Seasonal* (Spring 2000), pp. 9-16. -

Clifford Christians Editor

Jacques Ellul: 20th century prophet for the 21st century?

by Andrew Goddard

I want to begin with a pattern I will return to at the end - to give you a sense of Ellul by letting him speak for himself. We open with two passages from the book *The Presence of the Kingdom* which we will focus on in this lecture. These passages make clear why both Ellul's style and content have led many to classify him as a prophet. They also sketch out the task he set for himself in all his writing.

> The will of the world is always a will to death, a will to suicide. We must not accept this suicide, and we must so act that it cannot take place. So we must know what is the actual form of the world's win to suicide in order that we may oppose it, in order that we may know how, and in what direction, we ought to direct our efforts. The world is neither capable of preserving itself nor is it capable of finding remedies for its spiritual situation (which controls the rest). It carries the weight of sin, it is the realm of Satan which leads it toward separation from God, and consequently toward death. That is all that it is able to do...Our concern should be to place ourselves at the very point where this suicidal desire is most active.. .and to see how God's will of preservation can act in this given situation...We are obliged to understand the depth and the spiritual reality of the mortal tendency of this world...

Then, picking up the language of God's will which the Christian must seek, Ellul also writes,

> The will of the Lord, which confronts us both as judgment and as pardon, as law and as grace, as commandment and as promise, is revealed to us in

the Scriptures, illuminated by the Spirit of God. It has to be explained in contemporary terms, but in itself it does not vary.

Those two passages demonstrate the two-fold structure of Ellul's work and its prophetic style. On the one hand, there is a challenge to the world and its false religions. On the other, there is a challenge to us as the people of God to be faithful and fulfil our calling in the world. For the majority of our time I want to fill out those twin challenges and explain why Ellul can be viewed as a 20th century prophet who still speaks to us today at the start of the 21st century. First, however, I would guess that for many here, Jacques Ellul himself is rather a mysterious figure, and so before exploring that theme a brief introduction to his life and work may be helpful.

Perhaps the first sign that Ellul may be classed as a 20th century prophet is found in his own life story. Bom in Bordeaux in 1912 and dying in the same city in 1994 he lived through most ofthe main events and developments of the 20th century. And yet, he was someone who was ill at ease with and constantly critiqued the path that the world (and to a large extent the church) was taking throughout this period. It was the crucial decade of the 1930s which in many ways made Ellul the person he was. Historically, of course, this was the period of the rise of Fascism and Nazism, the firm establishing of communism in Stalinist Russia, the growth of liberal democracy in Europe and North America, and the crisis in international capitalism. These ideologies and the reaction against all of them by small groups of personalist thinkers in France shaped Ellul's life and thought decisively. Personally, this was also when Ellul came to living Christian faith and made his spiritual home in the minority Protestant French Reformed Church. There he was to be shaped theologically not just by the broader Reformation heritage but by Kierkegaard's thought and the work of Kari Barth. While his analysis of the world was developing through his involvement in personalist groups and his discovery of Kari Marx, Ellul was also completing his legal studies at Bordeaux University. His first teaching post - at Strasbourg-was interrupted by the Nari invasion of France and after returning briefly to Bordeaux he and his young family then fled to the countryside where he was involved in the Resistance.

During the war years Ellul drew on his reflections in the previous decade to plan out what would become his life-work. By his death this amounted to 50 published books and hundreds of articles. While obviously his writing responded to events, his work was undoubtedly conceived as a whole from the start. He himself said in 1981, "It is true to say that I haven't written books but rather 'one' book of which each is a chapter."

In particular the structure of this work was carefully thought through from the beginning. There were to be two strands of writing in a dialectical relationship with each other. These two strands are reflected in the quotations with which we began and the structure we will follow shortly - the will of the world and the will of the Lord. On the one hand there are books which study the structure and development ofthe social, political and cultural world - the will of the world. These often show no sign

of any explicit Christian commitment on his part. On the other hand there are books which seek to discern and explain the will of the Lord. They do so through biblical studies, theological reflections on important themes (the city, money, faith, hope), and the developing of a Christian ethic. These tracks in broad terms can be classed as sociology and theology. Though they often seem to run in parallel, these two tracks are actually in dialogue with each other throughout.

During the five decades which followed the planning of his work Ellul was not just thinking and writing. He was also living out his thinking. Employed as Professor of the Histoiy and Sociology of Institutions in the Law Faculty at Bordeaux University and Professor in the Institute of Political Studies he was also active in many other spheres. As a lay Christian he was active in the World Council of Churches and French Reformed Church, leading a local congregation, editing a major theological journal, and contributing in the highest levels of church government, including reform of theological education. After a brief period as Bordeaux's Deputy Mayor at the end of the war, he continued political involvement but more from the margins than within the established structures. Locally he supported groups defending his Aquitaine region from development plans and initiated major work with young delinquents.

In *The Presence of the Kingdom* Ellul defines a prophet as "not one who confines himself to foretelling with more or less precision and even more or less distance; he is one who already lives it, and already makes it actual and present in his own environment" (p. 38). Although time prevents further details of his life, they would I think provide further confirmation that he was indeed, on his own definition, a 20th century prophet.

It would be impossible in the time we have to do justice to Ellul's massive corpus of writing and the intricacies of his thought. I will therefore introduce him and what he may still have to say to us today through the book which he later confessed he realised "could be the introduction to the complete work" (x). Indeed on re-reading it at the end of working on my thesis I was astonished at how often I found a sentence or paragraph which gave the heart of one of his later books.

Known in English as *The Presence of the Kingdom* it was first translated in 1951, and its reissue in 1967 and again in 1989 demonstrates its continuing significance and relevance. As Daniel Clendenin writes in the new introduction to the 1989 edition,

The book deserves a wide readership not only because it is the necessary primer for all Ellul study (it is the first book one should read by him), but because it examines issues that remain . perennial problems in church and society...Ellul demonstrates in this book a timeless quality in his ability to examine issues far ahead of his time in a creative way. Despite its having been written a generation ago, *The Presence of the Kingdom* will provoke new dialogue today (xxxviii).

In getting a sense of this importance and the purpose ofthe book, the French title is perhaps more informative - *Presence au monde modeme.* While we may today think our task is to be present in Ie monde post-modeme, Ellul's subtitle was not only radical at the time of its publication in 1948 but highlights the deeper truth about our world

than whether it is modem or post-modem. The work was subtitled, "Problemes de la civilisation post-chretienne". It was this sense as early as the 1940s that our civilization must now be understood as post-Christian which was truly decisive for Ellul. It shaped both his analysis of the world and his vision for the church.

The book originated in 4 talks he gave in 1946 to the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute in Bossey on the theme of the "Christian in modem society". Ellul took as his guide a biblical passage which remained a favourite throughout his life - "Do not be conformed to this present age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern the will of God, what is good, what is pleasing to him, and what is well done". What, he asked himseff if we are to take this seriously, might the stand and attitude of the Christian be in the world?

Rather than trying to offer a detailed chapter-by-chapter account or critique of this short work, I want simply to highlight some themes to give you a flavour of its contents and what I believe is its prophetic character and continued relevance today. I will take the two subjects outlined in the opening quotations, likewise the two strands of Iris later writing - the will of the world and the will of the Lord. I want to pinpoint in each of these four challenges we still need to hear today over 50 years later.

As our opening quotation said, "The will of the world is always a will to death, a will to suicide". What, then, can we say about the world in its contemporary post-Christian situation?

First, Ellul stresses that we need to face the reality of the world. Here is, of course, a standard prophetic challenge that we are dangerously deluded about the state we are really in. That we think things are not as bad as they are. That we think and even proclaim that there is peace when there is no peace. Ellul sees this as areal problem in our world: "In the sphere of the intellectual life, the major fact of our day is a sort of refusal, unconscious but widespread, to become aware of reality" (82). This is - and here we find a common theme in Ellul's sociological analysis - a totally new situation. We free it because of a combination of the world's complexity and the forms of communication within it. We are left, he says, oscillating between the surface phenomenon - the presentations of the world given by the media - and the explanatory myth which seeks to give people coherence in the face of confusion. Personally I find it amazing that in the 1940s - half a century before CNN and 24 hour news - Ellul could write of how "every day modem man learns a thousand things from his newspaper and radio". He speaks of how the average person is "submerged by this flood of images which he cannot verify" and "news succeeds news without ceasing". As a result we are unable to master all we are given by the media. So we must either drown in confusion or grasp for some explanatory myth or failsafe ideology - the Islamic threat, the conspiracy of multinationals, the attack on traditional values - which gives us some handle to make sense of the world. The first challenge Ellul then gives us is the challenge to reflect on our own experience of reality, to face up to it in all its complexity and its negativity, and to seek to understand it. This is a challenge we particularly need to hear today in

our churches - do we really encourage and equip God's people to think critically and deeply about God's world?

Secondly, Ellul highlights one particular cause of our blindness in relation to our world. We refiise, he says, to question the way our world is because of our respect for facts. We will not judge a fact. We just accept it. And this, he argues, is nothing short of a new form of religion in our day and age. We feel bound to adapt ourselves to the fact which becomes in effect divinised. So Ellul writes that "Anyone who questions the value of the fact draws down on himself the most severe reproaches of our day: he is a reactionary, he wants to go back to 'the good old days'...".

In his time, the great example of this was the atom bomb. We did not, would not stop and refuse to develop or use it, or question this fact and the demands it made on us. We became instead dominated by it. It became, in biblical terms, an idol, one of the principalities and powers which rule our lives.

Today, in the 21 * century, the atom bomb is perhaps less of an obvious and pressing issue. But does our world not show the same subservient attitude to facts? What about the fact of globalisation or the supposed power of the market? It is claimed to be simply impossible to question certain economic policies no matter how destructive they are. What about the fact of reproductive technologies? Can anyone seriously question this established project to produce human life? What, more recently still, about the feet of cloning? Again and again we can see the accuracy of Ellul's analysis today. We seem to have developed a refusal to consistently and persistently challenge what is presented to us as a fact. We have shown a constant unwillingness to ask of such alleged facts whether they are themselves good or bad. We refrain as a society from rejecting or even questioning what claims to be unchallengable feet.

The third area to which Ellul draws attention is illustrated by some of these examples of facts. It is the area for which he became most famous but is also one where he is often misunderstood. Perhaps Ellul's most famous book is *The Technological Society* which appeared in English in 1964. It originally appeared in French in 1954 as *"La Technique"* but received little attention. This French title is significantly different, for technique of course goes much wider than what we usually think of when we speak of technology.

In *Presence of the Kingdom* Ellul discusses what he later analysed as Technique in terms of "means". Chapter 3 is called "The End and the Means" and argues that our world has been overtaken by "means" and we have lost any sense of concrete "ends". Tied to this, he argues, is our fixation with efficiency and usefulness in all spheres of life.

On re-reading the book for this lecture I found the following passage which I must confess I had totally forgotten, but again perhaps illustrates the prophetic insight Ellul has here. He wrote,

Anything that does not serve some purpose must be eliminated or rejected, and in matters that concern men and women the same view prevails. This is what explains the practice of euthanasia (for old people and incurables) in the National Sodalist State.

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Anyone who is not useful to the community must be put to death. To us this seems a barbarous practice, but it is simply the application of the universal predominance of means, and to the extent in which this feet is developed we may expect to see the introduction of this practice into the whole of dvilization (53).

One can imagine the outrage such an extreme claim must have caused in 1946! Yet we have already seen changes in the law in the Netherlands and parts of the USA and Australia and doubtless these will soon be picked up and support for legalised euthanasia grow in this country. When they do, Christians will rightly challenge them but perhaps what we also need to do is learn from Ellul to look deeper. We should see and question the more fundamental driving spiritual forces such as the exaltation of usefulness and effidency which make such views so acceptable to our culture.

Perhaps doser to home we need to ask whether the church has not also bought into this great concern of the world with means, effidency and usefulness. One may think of the effort put into marketing the gospel effectively or restructuring church institutions. More controversially there is the highly technical mindset driving various contemporary evangelistic programmes such as Alpha and parts of the church growth movement. That is a challenge to which we will return later when we look at Ellul's counter-proposal.

Finally, in relation to the world, Ellul argues that what the world needs is nothing short of a revolution. This theme runs through his work from the 1930s onwards and, although influenced by Marx, is not simply Marxist analysis. There is rather a sense that the world being formed, the world we today have inherited, is destructive of human beings and genuine dvilization. In typically purple prose he writes,

If this revolution does not take place, we are done for, and human dvilization as a whole is impossible. At the present moment we are confronted by a choice: dther a mass dvilization, technological, "conformist" - the "Brave New World" of Huxley, hell organised upon earth for the bodily comfort of everybody - or a different dvilization, which we cannot yet describe because we do not know what it will be; it still has to be created, consciously, by men. If we do not know what to choose, or, in other words, how to "make a revolution", if we let ourselves drift along the stream of history, without knowing it, we shall have chosen the power of suidde, which is at the heart of the world (31).

As we look around Britain and Western Europe as a whole today with the quest for economic growth, greater material goods, more and more technological gizmos, do we not, in that striking phrase, "hell organised upon earth for the bodily comfort of everybody" hear something which still speaks to us? Are we not challenged as Christians to face up to the need for a real deep-seated revolution in our world?

Here then, I suggest, are four prophetic words which Ellul spoke back in 1946 concerning the world, words we still need to hear and heed today:

- Face up to reality and seek to understand it

- Don't be afraid to challenge what are asserted to be simple facts of life

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- Don't get obsessed with means and technical efficiency

- Recognise a major revolution is needed in our world

Alongside this fourfold challenge in relation to the world and its false religions there is also a prophetic fourfold challenge to us as God's people to be faithful and to fulfil our calling. This begins where we ended a moment ago with Ellul's emphasis on revolution. In the title of his second chapter Ellul calls for "Revolutionary Christianity". The revolution that we have seen Ellul believes the world needs is one which Christian faith offers. This is not, of course, a political revolution but something much deeper. And it depends not ultimately on us but on Christ at work in us and through us. We are called to be His ambassadors and representatives in this alien world and as. such we will be revolutionaries in the world.

Ellul vividly draws out the implications of various biblical images here.

In the world, the Christian belongs to another, like a man of one nation who resides in another nation... .A Chinese residing in France thinks in his own terms, in his Own tradition. He has his own criterion of judgment and of action... .He is also a citizen of another State, and his loyalty is given to this State, and not to the country in which he is living...The Christian stands up for the interests of his Master, as an ambassador champions the interests of his country...From another point of view he may also be sent out as a spy...to work in secret, at the heart of the world, for his Lord; to prepare for his Lord's victory from within (33-4).

If that is how we as the church understand ourselves, if that is how we live, then the faithful Christian must be revolutionary. I wonder how many faithful, committed Anglicans have really come to terms with the fact that, in Ellul's words, "in consequence of the claims which God is always making on the world the Christian finds himself, by that very fact, involved in a state of permanent revolution" (36-7).

The second insight is intimately connected with this revolutionary Christianity. It is the need to focus on and understand rightly the place of the Christian in the world. This is the title of Ellul's first chapter and in one sense the theme of his whole book. We are called to be in the world but not of the world. It's a phrase we all know well but one we perhaps too often fail to take seriously.

Ellul fills out its meaning by reference to three New Testament images. We are to be the salt of the world which, interestingly, he reads as an allusion to Leviticus 2:13 pointing to our calling to be a sign of God's covenant with the world in Jesus Christ. We are to be the light of the world, removing its darkness and giving meaning and direction to its history. We are - in an image we perhaps less often think about - to be sheep in the midst of wolves. Not a nice situation to be in. An image which speaks of sacrifice and refusal to dominate. An image which reminds us that, to use Ellul's terms, we are called as Christians to an "agonistic" way of life, a life of tension and suffering.

One of the aspects of that tension and agony is that in the world the Christian is tom between two truths - "on the one hand it is impossible for us to make this world

less sinful; on the other hand it is impossible for us to accept it as it is" (9). That insight itself speaks volumes about Ellul's own prophetic position, reflecting as it does the anguish and pain of the situation in which the biblical prophets found themselves. And yet surely he is right when he warns us, "If we refuse either the one or the other, we are actually not accepting the situation in which God has placed us... .We are involved in the tension between these two contradictory demands. It is a very painful, and a very uncomfortable situation, but it is the only position which can be fruitful for the action of the Christian in the world, and for his life in the world" (10).

We may and do try all sorts of escape from this calling. Sometimes we separate the spiritual from the material and focus simply on the interior life. Sometimes we work away to moralise and supposedly Christanise our world. Both Ellul warns us are serious errors. We need instead to engage fully in the world of death as witnesses to the God of life.

And this focus on the Christian in the world means, thirdly, that Ellul emphasizes the centrality of the lay Christian in the Church's mission. This is a biblical truth which we probably fed tire church has rediscovered in the decades since Ellul wrote. "Every member ministry" is now in theory and often in practice something the church acknowledges and encourages. And yet even the phrase itself points to the danger. Have we simply been clericalising the laity, getting them to do things on Sunday and in and for the church which traditionally the clergy did? Ellul - himself not ordained - bitingly comments, "there are no 'laymen' in our churches; because on the one hand, there is the minister, who does not know the situation in the world, and on the other hand, there are "laymen", who are very careful to keep their faith and their life in different compartments. .."(11).

A cruel caricature perhaps. Aren't many prophets guilty of that too? But how often in our churches do those at the cutting edge of life in the world get the opportunity to share and reflect in depth on what it means to be a Christian in business, in a union, in education, or wherever they are called to live the agonistic life of being in but not of the world? Where do lay Christians find guidance and practical support in their calling to be salt, light and sheep among wolves? If we undertake it seriously this task will not be an easy one. Elhd himself discovered that. Following these talks he set up various Protestant Professional Associations to try and meet these needs. After initial success all the groups gradually died because the task was too hard and people lost interest or lacked the time to make the groups work. Yet, in our 21st century postChristian world surely Ellul is still right, that we need to be equipping and encouraging lay people to be the presence of God's Kingdom in the world.

Fourth, Ellul warns us against thinking that all this simply requires us to develop techniques which enable us to do certain things effectively and in Christian ways. He insists that all this is more a matter of being than of doing - not something easy in our activist culture, including our activist evangelical culture.

Ellul roots this call to be in a theological challenge to our society's fixation with means and efficiency. Christ he says is our end and He is also our means by making

that end present to us now. Means and end are therefore united in Him. We do not therefore as Christians have to find means which will secure our end for us because both means and end are God's gift to us in Christ. Ellul therefore urges the Christian to have a different attitude from the world.

It is not his primary task to think out plans, programs, methods of action and of achievement. When Christians do this.. .it is simply an imitation of the world, which is doomed to defeat... .It is not our instruments and our institutions which count, but ourselves, for it is ourselves who are God's instruments... .We, within ourselves, have to carry the objective for which the world has been created by God... .Christians have received this end in themselves by the grace of God (65).

So then four more specific challenges to us as God's people at the start of the 21st century:

- We are to be revolutionaries in a world requiring revolution

- We are to be truly in the world and yet quite different from it • Lay Christians are therefore central in the mission of the church

- It is who we are rather than what we do which is crucial.

In conclusion, I want to draw these various challenges together and again let Ellul speak for himself through three somewhat longer quotations taken from the book's final chapter. They can be summed up in three words - calling, lifestyle and community.

FIRST, Ellul challenges us to realise our Christian callingour difficult calling, our prophetic calling as God's people in His world.

We cannot give everything into the hands of God (believing that God will open the eyes, ears, and hearts of men), until we have wrestled with God till the break of the day, like Jacob; that is, until we have struggled to the utmost limits of our strength, and have known the despair of defeat. If we do not do this, our so-called confidence in God and our "orthodoxy"are nothing less than hypocrisy, cowardice and laziness. All that I have already written will be useless unless it is understood as a call to arms, showing what enemy we have to confront, what warfare we have to wage, what weapons we have to use. Then, in the heart of this conflict, the Word can be proclaimed, but nowhere else. When we have really understood the plight of our contemporaries, when we have heard their cry of anguish, and when we have understood why they won't have anything to do with our disembodied gospel, when we have shared their sufferings, both physical and spiritual, in their despair and desolation, when we have become one with the people of our own nation and of the universal church, as Moses and Jeremiah were one with their own people, as Jesus identified himself with the wandering crowds, "sheep without as shepherd", *then* we will be able to proclaim the Word of God - but not till then! (116).

SECOND, to fulfil this calling Ellul insists we need to develop a certain way of being in the world, a Christian lifestyle.

In order that Christianity today may have a point of contact with the world [it is necessary] to create a new style of life. It is evident that the first thing to do is to be frithful to revelation, but this fidelity can only become a reality in daily life through the creation of tins new way of life: this is the "misring link"...There is no longer a Christian style of life. To speak quite frankly, without beating about the bush, a doctrine only has power (apart from that which God gives it) to the extent in which it is adopted, believed, and accepted by men who have a style of life which is in harmony with it...The whole of life is concerned in this search. It includes the way we think about presentpolitical questions, as well as our way of practicing hospitality. It also affects the way we dress and the food we eat.. .as well as the way in which we manage our financial affairs.

It includes being frithful to one's wife as well as being accessible to one's neighbour... Absolutely everything, the smallest details we regard as indifferent, ought to be questioned, placed in the light of frith, examined from the point of view of the glory of God. It is on this condition that, in the church, we might possibly discover a new style of Christian life, voluntary and true (119-20,122-3).

THIRD, we can do all this only in Christian community. And here is perhaps a particular challenge for us who lead parish churches or who will be leading them in the near future.

It is impossible for an isolated Christian to follow this path...It will be necessary to engage in a work that aims at rebuilding parish life, at discovering Christian community, so that people may leant afresh what the fruit of the Spirit is...We shall need to rediscover the concrete application of self-control, liberty, unity, and so on. All this is essential for the life of the church, and the function of Christianity in the world. And all this ought to be directed toward the preaching and the proclamation of the gospel (124).

We stand, today, over fifty years later, feeing the real challenges of living as God's people in a post-Christian, postmodern world. Surely we can discern in Ellul's challenge to make God's Word known, the words of a 20th century prophet to us in the 21st century, being faithful to our calling, creating a Christian lifestyle, and building Christian communities.

Like all prophets, Ellul's words confront and challenge us. They may disturb, perhaps even run the risk of disheartening us. He knows that. He was often enough accused of being a hopeless pessimist in his writing! And so it is only proper to end as he ends his book - with words of hope and encouragement:

The enemies of the church seek to turn jt aside from its own way, in order to make it follow their way; the moment it yields it becomes the plaything of the forces of the world. It is given up to its adversaries. It can only have recourse to God in prayer, that he may teach it his way, which no one else can teach it. This means not only the way of eternal salvation, but the way which one follows in the land of the living, the way which is truly impossible to find unless God reveals it, truly impossible to follow with our human power alone. The problem is the same in the social and the individual

sphere. From the human point of view this way of the church in the world is foolish, utopian, and ineffective, and we are seized with discouragement when we see what we really have to do in this real world. We might throw the whole thing up, were we not sure of seeing the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living: but we have seen this goodness, it has been manifested, and on this foundation we can go forward and confront the powers of this world, in spite of our impotence, for "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8.37-39) (126-7).

The Trend Toward Virtued Christianity

by Randall E. Otto

In his article "Welcome to The Next Church" *(The Atlantic Monthly,* August, 1996), Charles Trueheart summed up the megachurch phenomenon: "Seamless multimedia worship, round-the-clock niches of work and service, spiritual guidance, and a place to belong; in communities around the country the old order gives way to the new." Regardless of whether they are megachurches, many congregations today are incorporating mass marketing methodology such as an entertainment orientation, slick packaging, multi-media imaging, a variety of options, along with a minimization of history and an accent on anonymity. The question remains, however, whether this methodology will ultimately be self-defeating. Is it possible that contemporary American pragmatism will find all of these elements more fully realized in the electronic Christianity of the Internet? Perhaps the virtual Christianity of electronic churches such as The First Church of Cyberspace and the Virtual Church of the Blind Chihuahua is "The Next Church."

The Entertainment Orientation

Walt Kallestad, pastor of the Community of Joy church in Arizona, says, "If Jesus Christ were alive today, I'm certain he'd be using every form of entertainment that's out there to make God relevant and practical in people's lives." Most young people today want an entertainment orientation. Because many churches are targeting Baby Boomers and Generation Xers who have grown up on the visual stimulation and slick packaging of televirion and special effects movies, their worship has a fast pace and lots of entertainment allure. While often architecturally non-descript, contemporary "worship centers" are loaded inside with the technology for maximum visual stimulation, with screens for the projection of chorus lines as well as the faces of those on the stage, whom one can otherwise hardly see. Recently, as I worshiped from the balcony of a large church in Arkansas, I found myself looking steadily at the screen for the images of those little people down on stage who were giving testimonies, singing, or preaching. It

was almost like watching them on TV! In feet, I wonder if my worship experience would have been much different had I stayed home and watched a service on my televirion screen. True, watching anything on a screen can make the experience seem distant and objectified, as preaching and prayer on television sometimes appear theatrical and almost silly, but that's the price of good entertainment!

The transmission of images via the screen is fundamental to modem religion. When Billy Graham's evangelistic sermons are broadcast throughout the world, he is visible to all but a relative few only on a screen, even if they are in the same venue—yet thousands respond to his preaching. God speaks to people through the screen! When the thousands of men at a Promise Keepers convention in Washington are linked via an audio-video hookup to another convention meeting simultaneously in a stadium in Atlanta to sing a chorus together, it is a virtual taste of heaven. A couple decides to get married and arranges a legally valid wedding in which the participants are at remote locations and the vows are typed in via computer keyboards. Having observed in some non-traditional religious groups' computerized rites of passage "something close to an actual neopagan congregation, a community of people who gathered regularly to worship even though they had never seen each other face to face," Stephen D. O'Leary says that there is little difference between the Christianized form of computerized screen relationrilips and the neopagan form, save for institutional approval. In "Cyberspace as Sacred Space: Communicating Religion on Computer Networks" *(Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* Winter, 1996), he says that Christianized forms "are not fanciful predictions of what is to come; they have already taken place. They are no more or less 'unreal' than than [szc] the neopagan gatherings on CompuServe, insofar as the criterion is considered to be physical presence."

The entertainment orientation of many contemporary churches advances to a new level in the cyberchurch. What can happen on its screen is virtually limitless. The First Church of Cyberspace (http://www.godweb.org/indexl .html) offers a number of options, all instantly available at the click of a mouse. One can listen to inspirational music and hymns, pick from a variety of sermons by different religious leaders, look at art from the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel in Gallery One and Rembrandt and Byzantine art in Gallery Two, with options to link to other religious sites, discussion forums, and reviews of religious books, movies and more; there is even Java Theology! Now this is *really* a church with options and high quality entertainment! One can choose from the music of J. S. Bach to a Congolese mass and read "sermons for every season" while enjoying femous art from around the world, all at any time in the convenience and comfort of one's own home.

The cyberchurch not only has greater entertainment appeal than any contemporary church; it also has a greater consumer value to the church shopper. Shoppers can stay as long as they wish and leave whenever they want. Virtual Christianity might possibly satisfy the interest level - as well as efficiency of time and resources - of the technology icon himself, Bill Gates, who has said *(Time,* January 13, 1997), "just in terms of allocation of time resources, religion is not very efficient... There's a lot more I could

be doing on a Sunday morning." Were he a virtual parishioner in the First Church of Cyberspace, Gates could do whatever he wanted on Sunday morning and surf in for a virtual religious "hit" whenever it seemed convenient. He could come -*whenever* and *however* he'd like. The "come as you are" approach of the contemporary church still requires casual apparel generally suitable for public display. In the virtual church, Gates, well-known for "dressing down," could come in literally anything (or nothing) at all!

More of today's young people want to be like Bill. In actuality, they are increasingly being created in Bill's image. As Wendy Murray Zoba notes in "The Class of '00" *(Christianity Today,* February 3,1997), studies show that teens today are:

- bombarded by frequent images, so that they need continual "hits"

- sufficiently aloof that the remote control symbolizes their reality

- so engrained in consumerism that they take it for granted

- a cyber-suckled community

If so, the consumer-driven and entertainment-oriented contemporary church must eventually make a transition toward the virtual Christianity of the cyberchurch or risk losing its market share of today's youth.

In 1996 the Roman Catholic Church in Germany failed to take advantage of these new technologies and so improve market share. A new software program entitled "Confession by Computer" marketed by the Cologne-based Lazarus Society, offered sinners the chance to confess to their computers from a list of200 foilings, a list which, as the Reuters report noted, could be "customized for especially original sinners." "As soon as the sin is selected on the baas of the Ten Commandments, the computer searches out an appropriate penance," the program's promotional literature stated. The program would then display or read out audibly the words to the prayers "Our Father" and "Hail Mary," with suggestions on to how to get in touch with a priest or minister on the Internet.

To these technological innovations, which could have electrified repentance and streamlined priestly duties, the Church issued a stalwart and predictably passe rejection. A spokeswoman for thp German Conference of Bishops said, "You cannot have sins forgiven by the push of a button." Surely the Church has not recognized that Jesus himself urged *ease* in the pronouncing of absolution! When chastened by the scribes for telling a paralytic he had just healed that his sins were forgiven, Jesus responded, "Which is *easier,* to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'?" (Matt. 9:5).

The non-sacramental character of many contemporary churches may further impel them toward virtual Christendom. Their general perception of the sacraments as mere memorials means no Real Presence is involved in Holy Communion; and, since baptism

is typically administered in private gatherings at someone's pool, little real presence is involved there either. In fact, computerized simulations can create images so real as to make the technological community "come to life." As Erik Davis *(Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* Winter, 1996) observes of neopagan communities meeting on the Internet:

The technopagan community comes to life with the creation of performative rituals that create their virtual reality through text, their participants interacting with keyboards, screens, and modems. This is certainly odd for those who conceive of ritual strictly in terms of situated *actions,* as a drama involving chant, gesture, and props such as chalices, bread, wine, incense, etc.; yet in the entire experience as revealed in archive files at least, such elements are replaced by textual simulations.

Moreover, with advances in CD ROM, video morphing, and virtual reality technology, simulations may appear almost indistinguishable from real-time events. Besides, in the postmodern world, signs no longer imitate or duplicate the real, but simply substitute for it. The sacraments are merely signs pointing to something unseen anyway.

Ease of *approach,* well-packaged *entertainment,* and multiple *options*—these *keywords* of many contemporary churches are taken to an enhanced level in the virtual church.

Transcending Denominations

Another emphasis of many contemporary churches is the transcending of denominations. Although many contemporary churches are in theology and polity simply independent Baptist churches, they avoid sectarian bias by dropping any denominational affiliation from their name. For some, the hope of gaining greater market share means not just dropping a denominational identification, but also dropping any reference to Jesus Christ himself. A church in California decided it might have broader appeal by changing its name from Church *of the Master* to Church *in the Foothills.* Location, location, location! The important thing is that the consumer can find the church's *physical* location, not that the church have any *theological* location.

People don't care much about theology anyway. They just want to attend someplace where they can feel good and where everybody gets along. For this reason some contemporary church pastors demur from preaching on divisive social issues. As Trueheart observes, "Like the mainline denominations, though perhaps with more success, new, large, independent churches attempt to live with intense divisions among their flock over abortion and homosexuality."

The cyberchurch, however, is equally savvy in being nondescript and broad in appeal. The Virtual Church of the Blind Chihuahua (http://www.dogchurch.org/narthex.shtml) combines in its name the appeal of the non-descript with comic relief. How many would dare name their church *after a dog>|* Yet its outrageousness almost guarantees youth appeal! As "a sacred place in cyberspace named in honor of a little old dog with cataracts who barked sideways at strangers because he couldn't see where they were," the Virtual Church of the Blind Chihuahua has maintained that humans relate to God in the same way, "by making a more or less joyfiil noise in God's

general direction with the expectation of a reward for doing so." The church's creed is extremely simple and ostensibly Christian: "We can't be right about everything we believe — thank God, we don't have to be." This creed certainly transcends all denominations and includes virtually everyone. It has great market appeal! It is simple, much easier to remember than the Apostles' Creed and truly a basis on which people can get along.

The Virtual Church of the Blind Chihuahua grapples with divisive social issues, though inconclusively. The pastor of the church posts an *irenic* position on a bulletin board in which he encourages all sides to come together in moral discourse taken from the realm of politics. The value of the cyberchurch approach is that everyone has access to the pastor and can post his or her thoughts without fear of acrimony, since the writer need not leave an actual name. The anonymity in much of contemporary church life is in the cyberchurch turned into a positive good.

The cyberchurch not only transcends the parochial, the doctrinal, and the denominational; it transcends both time and history. While some lament the a-historical nature of computer technology, the cyberchurch is utilizing an approach already at work in postmodern society. While undoubtedly driven by an interest in having the broadest appeal possible, the present concern among some churches to transcend denominational affiliations is also a tacit acknowledgment of their a-historical nature. Denominational affiliations typically describe the doctrine and history of a particular church body. Lutherans, for example, have their origin in the historical context and doctrinal formulations of Martin Luther and his successors. Presbyterian and Reformed churches have theirs in the context and formulations of John Calvin and his theological heirs. Such churches tell the prospective worshiper what their historical and doctrinal moorings are.

Many contemporary churches intentionally avoid any reference to church history, the theologians, and doctrinal formulations of any branch Of Christendom. Their intention is to be broad in scope, but the effect is clearly a-historical. The average contemporary church consumer probably has no more notion of who Martin Luther and John Calvin are than the most avowed atheist, despite the fact that Luther and Calvin have provided the theological groundwork for what many of these churches believe, such as justification by faith. These churches thus build on borrowed capital, and state as their theology (and of course, the theology of the Bible) what is actually derived from someone in time and history who shall likely forever remain nameless. After all, namelessness is part of the appeal in many churches.

The cyberchurch again takes this impetus to a new level. A-historicality is an admitted part of the on-line environment, an extension of what contemporary society desires, the here and now, not the then and there. Howard Besser has observed, "the on-line environment of the fixture is the logical extension of postmodernism. Everything is ahistorical and has no context" *(Resisting the Virtual Life: The Culture and Politics of Information* [San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995]). The cyberchurch recognizes the a-historicality of postmodern humanity and gives opportunity for every voice to

be heard and every idea to be shared, provided, of course, that the voice is electrified in the form of an on-line message.

Who We Are

Numerous assumptions of the contemporary church are enhanced in the cyberchurch, suggesting its transitional nature to electronic Christianity. The *residual* element hindering this transition remains the insistence on bodily meeting as the form which its community will take, be it in the relative anonymity of the megachurch auditorium or in the genuine personal interaction of the small group. This insistence on physical togetherness is a holdover from those primitive days when human beings were considered a combination of body and spirit, a psychosomatic union. Along with this lingering belief remains the occasional interest in personal touch, hearing voices, and feeling the. warmth of another close by. However, these are fading memories of a bygone era, the silly sentiment of "the good ol' days" when people met together on the front porch just to chat. If, as Douglas Groothuis says in *The Soul in Cyberspace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), "much of the technological imperative finds its restless energy in the desire to lessen or eliminate the agonies of embodied existence," then decrying the decentered self and the fluidity of personal identity concomitant with this technological imperative as "Gnostic" will mean little, particularly to an a-historical mindset. The future, virtually deified by the German theologian Jurgen Moltmann as "the mode of God's being," is calling us. The communications and information age of the future bid us live in a different, disembodied world.

Computer scientists inform us that the future will be virtual. Professor Nicholas Negroponte at MIT says *in Being Digital* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1995), "computing is not about computers anymore. It is about living." In the future, he writes, "you will be able to purchase personality modules that include the behavior and style of living of fictitious characters." In other words, we will be able to be someone else, live a virtual life. David Gelemter, computer science professor at Yale, says in his *bookMirror Worlds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) that reality will be replaced, piece by piece, by a software imitation, and that human beings will live inside that imitation. This is the virtual world that lies ahead. In order to adapt to this new world and maximize its role in it, the contemporary church will have to make the transition to the virtual Christianity of the cyberchurch.

Making this transition, therefore, requires that humans recognize they are really thinking machines. MIT sociologist and psychologist Sherry Turkle says in *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), "We cede to the computer the power of reason, but at the same time, in defense, our own sense of identity becomes increasingly focused on the soul and the spirit in the human machine." In other words, the more we enter into the virtual world the more we will realize our true selves. As an MCI advertising campaign not long ago said, there are no bodies and there are no ages, genders, or infirmities—only minds. Each one of us is a mind and the closer we coalesce our minds to that of the computer, the more we will realize who we really are: minds that can be united with one another through the

online community of virtual Christianity in an artificial world. The Virtual Church of the Blind Chihuahua says it "is all in your mind. If your mind is real, that's good enough for us." If artificial reality is the authentic postmodern condition, the market-driven church must meet its seekers on those terms, in the authenticity of artificiality.

Once the mind-body problem is overcome in the Greek recognition and Idealist sublation that we are mere minds, the transition may continue to the *virtual community* of which Howard Rheingold has spoken *(The Virtual Community* [New York: Harper & Row, 1993]). Some may resist the virtues of the virtual, such as James Brook and Iain A. Boal, who say in the Introduction to *Resisting the Virtual Life: The Culture and Politics of Information,* "virtual technologies are pernicious when their simulacra of relationships are deployed society-wide as substitutes for face-to-face interactions, which are inherently richer than mediated interactions." To these curmudgeons we may reply: If these personal encounters are so much richer, then why are they so much less pursued? The postmodernist impulse has been set by developments in science and technology: the world is understood to be relative, indeterminate, and participatory; it is not composed of stuff but ratherof dynamic relations. The twentieth-century process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead described the world not in terms of substances, i.e., things, but in terms of events, i.e., temporal units of relatedness. This is the vision of the world in which dynamic temporality rather than static substantiality is the central factor for life and relationships. Our critics are much more to the point when they admit that the cyberspatial way of life "seems to represent a crypto-religious ideal of our society." And if it is the religious ideal of our society, then the entertainment-oriented and consumer-driven church of tomorrow must adapt or lose market share. The transition must be made to the virtual church.

Of course, forthose churches that refuse the entertainment-oriented, market-driven approach there can be little hope. Thor failure to adapt has already cost them a significant segment of the religious market. Those that remain resolute against the impetus to change and adapt to cultural pressures will become increasingly insignificant. As Neil Postman says in *Technopofy: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage, 1992), technopoly is totalitarian technocracy which eliminates alternatives to itself by making them invisible and therefore irrelevant: "It does so by redefining what we mean by religion, by art, by family, by politics, by history, by truth, by privacy, by intelligence, so that our definitions fit its new requirements." Irrelevant and laughable will be the one who refuses to see the new metaphysical status of information and the virtual deification of the virtual. Postman notes that the phrase "The computer shows ..." is technopoly's equivalent to "It is God's will." Silly and simple will be those who continue to believe in a historical creed of an historic church and meet with other such obscurantists to interact personally on a Sunday morning in resistance to culture, to sing old hymns and hear lengthy sermons declaring objective truth. The world will be busy surfing the Net.

Why bother with Sunday? A culture that demands convenience and ease of accessibility requires that it be viewed as a day like any other. Those few who remain from the

historic and traditional church, who continue to meet together personally for Sunday worship, must then serve to remind us that *Sunday morning is who* w *as human beings really are.* It is the day of Christ's resurrection, the central tenet of the Christian faith, the firstfruits of the resurrection of all to eternal life or condemnation, body and soul To gather together on Sunday morning means we humans *are indeed a psychosomatic union',* our souls will live in eternal joy or torment after death *and* the bodies integral to who we are will rise. To fail to meet together to worship on Sunday morning means that we do not consider our bodies essential to our experience, that we have already imbibed the disembodied disdain of physical relationships involving personal touch, love and care. As George Lakoff says in *Resisting the Virtual Life,* "The more you interact not with something natural and alive, but with something electronic, it takes the sense of the earth away from you, takes your embodiment away from you, robs you of more and more of embodied experiences. That's a deep impoverishment of the human soul." To lose the "sense of the earth" is to lose sense of who we are, for *humans* came from the earth *{humus)* and to the earth will return, though only till the resurrection.

Who are we? If mere minds or machines, we may continue toward the virtual illusion of actual Christianity. If we are made in God's image, however, we are soul and body rooted in time and history to know, worship, and serve God and one another together.

Jacques Ellul's Influence on the Cultural Critique of Thomas Merton

by Phillip M. Thompson

The Context of the Ellul and Merton Connection

Simone Weil described the West as a "motorcar" that is "launched at full speed and driverless across broken country."[92] The reckless and dangerous trajectory of Western culture also troubled the Trappist monk and writer, Thomas Merton (19 16-1968). Merton's cultural critique of technology, and most importantly the mentality developed and affirmed in technology, lacked a certain depth and coherence until it was annealed by his close reading of contemporary social critics, particularly Jacques Ellul.

Ellul might seem a curious choice for inspiration. Generally, the ellipses of the man Martin Marty labeled the "quintessential Protestant" and other Catholic intellectuals crossed infrequently.[93] Those Catholics expressing an opinion have offered mixed reviews. There is a general consensus that Ellul adroitly adumbrated the reach and

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[92] Simone Weil, *Oppression and Liberty,* trans. Arthur Wills and John Petrie (Amherst University of Massachusetts Press, *1955),* 111.

[93] Martin E. Marty, "Creative Misuses of Jacques Ellul" in Clifford G. Christians and *Jay* M. Van Hook, eds., *Jacques Ellul: Interpretive Essays* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 4.

impact of technology on contemporary culture.[94] Some Catholics have viewed Ellul not only as an accurate prophet of doom, but as offering a Christian "hope" that offers a breach, a "heteronomy in a closed age."[95]

For-other Catholics,'Ellul's Augustinian dualism in the political realm is suspect. It appears to reflect a profound pessimism about human influence in the realm of social and political action. This perspective can initiate a self-fulfilling prophecy.[96] In addition, while Ellul correctly discovers a comprehensive techno-scientific system in the West, he fails to concede that it has positive and negative values. Catholics have not discounted elements of truth, verification, and rationality in technology and science.[97]

From Ellul's side of the table, he is — not surprisingly –leery of certain elements of Catholic teaching. In *Le Fondement Theologique du Droit* (1946), he denounced the lack of Biblical grounding in the revival of the natural law tradition. The natural law tradition was then at the height of its revived influence in Catholic theological and legal circles.[98] There were also institutional problems in the structure of the Catholic Church. They had mistakenly adopted the pagan forms of the Romans.[99]

Despite his firm beliefs and polemical style, Ellul is too subtle to be trapped indiscriminately into any mold, including that of a Protestant crusader. For example, he expressed appreciation for the creativity and spontaneity of John Paul n. He also graciously recognized the value and insight of some Catholics whose position was relatively sympathetic to his own. An entire issue of his journal *Foi et Vie* was devoted to Charles Peguy.[100]

The mild interest in the French sociologist among Catholics primarily occurred after the fall of 1964 when a copy of *The Technological Society* was sent to a hermitage in the woods of Northern Kentucky. Merton was thrilled to discover in its first pages someone who shared his deep distrust of a technical mentality exemplified by the machine. A personal journal records the impact of the new find.

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[94] John Eudes Bamburger, O.C.S.O., "Defining the Center A Monastic Point of View" 20 *Criterion* (Spring, 1981), 4-8. Bamburger was a Trappist monk at Gethsemani with Merton; David W. Gill, "Jacques Ellul: Prophet in the Technological Wilderness" *Catholic Agitator* (October, 1976), 3,4.

[95] Vincent A Punzo, "Jacques Ellul on the Technical System and the Challenge of Christian Hope" 70 *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* (Supp., 1996), 17-31.

[96] Douglass D. McFerran, "The Cult of Jacques Ellul" 124 *America* (Feb. 6, 1971), 122-124; The comments of McFerran are relatively mild compared to some Protestant writers. See Jean Bethke Elshtain, "The World of Narke Christ, Christianity and Politics" *Katallagete* (Spring, 1989), 16-21.

[97] Jean-Michel Maldame, O.P., "Science et technique: Les Impacts de la science et de la technique sur la culture" 78 *Revue Thonriste* (October-December, 1978), 634-656; See also Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* in David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 168,169.

[98] Jacques Ellul, *The Theological Foundations of Law* (New York: Doubleday, 1960).

[99] Jacques Ellul, *The Subversion of Christianity,* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdemans Publishing Co., 1986), 37-40.

[100] Jacques Ellul, "Celui qui est toujours ailleurs..." *Sud-Ouest Dimanche* (August 14,1983), 2; Jacques Ellul, "Rehabiliter Peguy" *Foi et Vie* (1982), 9-27.

Reading Jacques Ellul's book, *The Technological Society.* Great, full of firecrackers. A fine provocative book and one that really makes sense. Good to read while the council is busy with Schema 13 (as it is). One cannot see what is involved in the question of "The Church in the Modem World" without reading a book like this.

I wonder if the Fathers are aware of all the implications of the technological society? Those who resist it may be wrong, but those who go along with all its intemperances are hardly right.[101]

The tuning ofMerton's reading was fortuitous. In the midst of the Catholic Church's aggiomamento (opening) to the world, the book was a prudent warning. Why the monk was so smitten by this book, however, goes beyond the immediate timing of the reading and requires at least a cursory understanding of his perspective in relationship to his more general cultural criticism.

Merton devoted a couple of articles, a lecture to his novices, and a fair portion of *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* to the issue of technology. The main body of his thinking regarding technology is derived, however, from fragmentary and episodic explorations in journals, letters and other writings. All ofhis writings reflect his search for a spiritual orientation that seeks reality and meaning amidst a disorienting century. This yearning for meaning could be exceedingly naive or excessively enthusiastic about a momentary concern. Nonetheless, Merton's insights provide valuable "clues as to how we might live and how we might view the world even when we find ourselves in circumstances quite different from his own."[102]

On the perimeter ofhis society and imbued with the values of a monastic regime, there is a peculiar freedom to assess the impact of scientific and technological advances. As a Christian, he "takes up a critical attitude to the world and its structures" and declares that the claims of the world are often fraudulent. In this prophetic resistance, each "witness" must shoulder "the 'burden' of vision that God lays upon him."[103]

Contrarily, the prophet in the contemporary context can not impose a spiritual 'pattern of thought' To participate in the dominant secular discourse, he or she must address religious concerns within the language and understandings of a post-Christian culture. This approach is acceptable, since a Christian assumes that this world, for better or worse, is the scene of our redemption and our creative response to God's love.[104]

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[101] Thomas Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life* (October 30, 1964) in Robert E. Daggy. ed., *The Journals of Thomas Merton* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), vol. *5,* 159,160; Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society,* trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1964).

[102] "Thomas Merton, *Learning to Love Exploring Solitude and Freedom.* Christine M. Boehen, ed., *The Journals of Thomas Merton 1966-1967*(San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997), vol. 6,125; Thomas Merton, *Thomas Merton in Alaska* (New York: New Directions, 1988), 150; Lawrence Cunningham, "The Mork as Critic of Culture" 3 *The Merton Annual* (1990), 189.

[103] Merton, *The Asian Journals of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1968), 329; Thomas Merton, *Disputed Questions* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1960), 222,223.

[104] Merton, "The Christian and the World Preliminaries" (May, 1966) in *Merton Collected Essays* (Louisville: The Thomas Moton Center, Bellarmine College), vol.6,48-50.

The Journey from the Monastery to the World

An extended engagement with the scientific and technological culture of the external world would be advanced in Merton's social critique of his later years. The seeds of tins engagement were first sown in an internal dissent against the intrusion of technology into monastic life in the 1940's and 1950's.

The assumptions that were brought to the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1941 are not easily ascertained since the evidence is slight. A few random comments suggest some awareness of the corruptive possibilities in technology. There was admiration for Aldous Huxley's *EndsandMeans,* in which the Englishman asserted that evil means such as violence and war, even in a just cause, corrupts the user by asserting the primacy of material and animal urges. Each individual must reassert their mind and will through prayer and asceticism.[105]

Following his entry into the strict asceticism of a Trappist monastery, it is not surprising that his early pronouncements advocated a *fuga mundi,* a "total rejection of the business, ambitions, honors, activities of the world." Years later, he described himself in this period as having "Thoreau in one pocket, John of the Cross in another, and holding the Bible open at the apocalypse."[106]

Tins apocalyptic and isolationist perspective was reinforced when the monastery was besieged by a "small mechanized army of builders" in the 1940's and 1950's in order to meet the physical needs of a flood of new postulants. The intrusions of the machines often shattered the solitude of the contemplative life.[107]

While Merton vented personal frustrations about such intrusions, he was more concerned about the technological mentality abetted by the machines. In order to make the abbey secure and prosperous, the brothers departed for their work assignments "like a college football team taking the field." Many monks were "restless and avid for change and new projects" and after operating machinery had difficulty adjusting to silence.[108]

Where many machines are used in monastic work ... there can be a deadening of spirit and sensibility, a blunting of perception, a loss of awareness, a lowering of tone,

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[105] Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937); Judith Anderholm, "Thomas Merton & Aldous Huxley" 16 *The Merton Seasonal* (Spring, 1991), 8,9.

[106] Thomas Merton, *Entering the Silence* (March 11, 1947), Jonathan Montaldo, ed., *Die Journals of Thomas Merton* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), vol. 2, 44. Thomas Merton, "Is the World a Problem?" (April, 1966) Aferton *Collected Essays* (Louisville: Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine College), vol 6,91.

[107] Thomas Merton, *Die Sign of Jonas* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1953), 5; Thanas Merton, *A Search for Solitude* (March 3,1953), Lawrence S. Cunningham, ed., *The Journals of Diomas Merton* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), vol. 3,37.

[108] Merton, *A Search for Solitude* (December 6,1959), 352,353; Thomas Merton, "Letta-to Dorn Gregorio Lemercier" (October 23,1953), Brother Patrick Hart, ed., *The School of Charily* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 69; Moton, *The Sign of Jonas,* 41.

a general fatigue and lassitude, a proneness to unrest and guilt which we might be less likely to suffer if we simply went out and worked with our hands in the fields.[109]

The mentality fostered by continuously adopting novel and faster methods at the monastery was hostile to a consciousness of spiritual conversion where rapidity and efficiency are not possible. The contemplative life cannot be mass produced, sold or quantified. Moreover, the technical mentality advanced the false belief that proper techniques in the form of rules, regulations, etc. could achieve salvation. The success of this mentality of progress reflects a failure in the monastic ideal and a failure to build a proper understanding of the ascetic life. In its place there was a false individualism, an accommodation to the American myth of progress.

By the early 1960's Merton's. heightened interest in social concerns could not ignore issues of science and technology. Increasingly, there was a distressing capitulation to the primacy of man's desire to better himself and his world by science." He feared that the "...lack of balance between technology and the spiritual life is so enormous that there is every chance of failure and accident."[110][111]

The Mertonian cultural critique thus assumes that technology is an inevitable — but potentially dangerous — aspect of human life that can wound or even destroys its maker. The objective, therefore, must be "to save modem man from his Faustian tendencies, and not become a sorcerer's apprentice while doing so.[112]

In searching for sources of insight on technology, he was frustrated within his own tradition. With a few exceptions, Merton believed the Catholic Church was inattentive to the dangers of the technological revolution in the West. The relatively few Catholics who addressed the issue of technology either completely embraced or rejected it. Finding the cupboard of tradition relatively barren, he turned to scripture. In Genesis, there appeared to be an anthropological explanation of the source of the problem. Adam's Fall, in part, is an attempt to improve the "wisdom and science" of the Garden of Eden. Humanity, through Adam, exchanged a "perfectly ordered nature elevated by the highest gifts of mystical grace for the compulsions, anxieties and weaknesses of a will left to itself..."[113]

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[109] "Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (New York: Image Bodes, 1966), 25.

[110] "Thomas Merton, "Technology" *inMerton Collected Essays* (Louisville: Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine College), vol. 6,*53-55.* These are notes for an oral lecture to the novices on technology. Merton, *A Search for Solitude* (August 22,1956), 72; This idea is also partly drawn from Hannah Arendt, *Die Human Condition,* Thomas Merton, *Turning Toward The World* (June 12,1960), Victor A. Kramer, ed., *Die Journals of Thomas Merton* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), vol. 4, 11; (August 13, 1961), 150,151.

[111] "Merton, "The Christian and the World" (May, 1966) *Merton Collected Essays* (Louisville: Thomas Merton Collection, Bellarmine College), vol 6, 49; Thomas Merton, "Letter to Elbert R. Sisson" (February-March, 1962) in Thanas Merton, *Witness to Freedom,* William H. Shannon, ed. (Harcourt Brace & Co., 1994), 38.

[112] Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life* (April 15,1965), 228.

[113] Merton, *The New Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1961), 110,111.

It is worth considering Ellul's similar view of Genesis. He objected to any exegesis that justified a regime of constant technological fine tuning of the divine creation. Nature, in its preFallen state was "perfect and finished." God had finished his work and it "was good." Human beings were and should be the passive receptors of this beneficence. Human beings work within, but should not complete or expand creation. As was true in Merton's analysis, Adam participated in the fullness of the wisdom of God. This wisdom did not need to subordinate, exploit or utilize nature.[114]

For Merton, the consequence of the Edenic Fall and a search for a more complete "wisdom" was a devotion to a false humanism, i.e. for some ideal other than the love of God. This disobedience to God results in an "orgy of idolatry" which has polluted much of contemporary life. An idolatrous devotion to the works of humanity produced a fractured and consuming devotion to activity which never integrates the spiritual and the physical. Technology abets a relentless quest for money and status as an anodyne for the human predicament. This Pascalian "divertissement" attempts to hide the reality that such actions are idolatrous diversions and not true ends.[115]

Merton's Biblical and other occasional speculations on technology were complimented and extended by the insights of contemporary social critics in the early 1960's. The works of Lewis Mumford, Rachel Carson and Jacques Ellul provided some depth and breadth to an instinctive distrust of a technological mentality.[116]

The Impact of Jacques Ellul

Merton was introduced to Jacques Ellul in 1964 at the recommendation of his friend, Wilbur Feny, at The Center for Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California. Ferry had arranged a translation of *The Technological Society.* Merton may also have heard of Ellul from another contact, Will Campbell, the editor in chief of *Kattalagete.* who was a fervent supporter of the French writer.[117]

Whatever the source, Merton delighted in finding akindred spirit on technology who clarified many of his positions. Ellul's analysis of technology was "entirely convincing" with a "stamp of prophecy which so much writing on that subject seemed to lade." He immediately recommended *The Technological Societytofneoiis* and even theologians at the Second Vatican Council.[118]

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[114] Jacques Ellul, "Technology and the Opening Chapters of Genesis" in Cari Mitcham and Jim Grote, eds., *Theology and Technology* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1984), 120-126.

[115] Thomas Merton, "Letter to Henry Miller" (August 7,1962) in Thomas Merton, *The Courage for Truth,* Christine M. Boehen, ed., (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1993), 277; Morton, *The New Man.* 118; Merton, *Disputed Questions,* 178,179.

[116] Thomas Merton, "The Christian in a Technological World" (Louisville: Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine College). This is a tape recording of a lecture given to the novices at Gethsemani in the early 1960's.

[117] Thomas Shannon, "Can One be a Contemplative in a Technological Society" 22 *The Merton Seasonal* (Spring, 1997), 13; Victor Kramer and Dewey W. Kramer, "A Conversation With Walker Percy About Thomas Merton" in Lewis Lawson and Victor Kramer, eds. *Conversations With Walker Percy* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1985), 313.

[118] Thomas Merton, "Letter to Pere Herve Chaigne" (December 28,1964); (April 21, 1965), in Merton,

From his reading of *The Technological Society,* Merton posited the source of the contemporary cultural errors to a mentality of progress and change, a "technique" that has trumped all other ideological or institutional principles. Technique had become both an instrument and an ethic. With efficiency as the regnant ethical principle, technique imprisons humanity "in a gigantic inhumane machine."[119]

The "Calvinism" of Ellul may be "too pessimistic" for Merton, but it correctly illuminated the fundamental reality that the West was being dominated by a technological mentality that has corrupted any alternative humane vision.[120] For example, the primacy of technique abets the contemporary delusion that each person is an autonomous creature capable of constant personal improvement. Paradoxically, the result of this quest for personal freedom through "technique" is often bondage, not liberation. Indeed, the truth is

...technology alienates those who depend on it and live by it. It deadens their human qualities and their moral perceptiveness. Gradually, everything becomes centered on the most efficient use of machines and techniques of production, and the style of life, the culture, the tempo and the manner of existence responds more and more to the needs of the technological process itself.[121]

The totalizing discourse of "technique" must "serve the universal effort' (of continual technological development and expansion)." Ellul warned that "Technique has no place for the individual; the personal means nothing to it." Assuming this mandate, the hermit will soon be an anachronism since no person can be disengaged from the manifold obligations of efficiency and progress.[122]

If religion and ultimate principles are circumscribed, however, then what are the ethical foundations for this brave new world? Morality becomes allegiance to progress. If more effective means of production are possible, they are deemed necessary. There is minimal reflection on the consequences or humanity of the system and "there seems to be at work a vast uncontrolled power which is leading man where he does not want to go in spite of himself... ."[123]

Technique coarsens human relations by a movement from religious to market values. The market orientation of contemporary society presumes that human, beings are "biological machines endowed with certain urges that require fulfillment." Love becomes

Wituess to Freedom, 109; Thomas Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life* (October 30, 1964), 159,160; (November 21,1964), 161.

[119] Thomas Merton, "Letter of Thomas Merton to Bernard Haring" (December 26, 1964) in Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love.* William Shannon, ed. (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 383,384. In this letter, Merton recommends to the Council Fathers of Vatican H Jacques Ellul's "monumental wok" *La Technique;* Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life* (November 2,1964), 161.

[120] Merton, "Letter to Hernan Lavin Cerda" (October 5, 1965) in Merton, *The Courage for Truth* 205,206; Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life* (November 6,1964), 163.

[121] Merton "Letter to Hernan Lavin Cerda" in Merton, *The Courage for Truth,* 205-207.

[122] Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life* (November 6,1964), 163; Ellul, *Die Technological Society,* 286.

[123] Thomas Merton, "Una Sociedad que Esta Peligrosamente Enferma" 11 *Punto Fina* (September 75,

a deal and emotional needs are fulfilled through a negotiated exchange, a *contract.* The primary desire of each consumer is to constantly upgrade the product and no transaction is final. There are always more deals and new customers. The terms of the deal are determined by shifting market values.[124]

We unconsciously think of ourselves as objects for sale on the market. We want to be wanted. We want to attract customers. We want to look like the kind of product that makes money. Hence, we waste a great deal of time modeling ourselves on the images presented to us by an

affluent marketing society.[125]

This consumer version of love is problematic in other ways. The deal is often based on momentary considerations of the potential packages without any consideration of the lasting effects. It is emotional strip mining. The object is not love, but the effectiveness of the deal.[126]

The problem with this consumer approach is that "love is not a matter of getting what you want." Loving is about giving; it is about sacrifice, not exchange. It is thus a form of worship which responds to "the full richness, the variety, the fecundity of living experience itself: it 'knows' the inner mystery of life." The individuals participating in this mystery are transformed into a new entity through the conversion of love. This conversion confirms our deepest spiritual identity.[127]

The corrupting mandates of technique, exhibited in the contemporary example of marriage, have the potential for massively altering the psyche of the human species. There is the very real possibility of a serious "depersonalization of man in a mass-technological society". Technique has increased and improved the range of options, but it has also ceded individual creativity, authentic experience, and choice to technocrats and processes. There are profound symptoms of alienation such as "boredom, emptiness, neurosis, psychoanalytic illnesses, etc." To avoid these symptoms, humanity occupies itself with endless forms of diversion.[128]

The rudderless system of "technique" absorbs the individual into a mass society. The individuals drawn to this system can not accept the challenge of discovering within themselves the "spiritual power and integrity which can be called forth only by love." They are instead molded and shaped for the ends of a greater social, economic or

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1967), 14-16; Moton, "Letter to Bernard Haring" (December 26, 1964) in Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love.* 383,384.

[124] Merton, "Love and Need" (September, 1966), *Merton Collected Essays* (Louisville:
Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine College), vol. 6,264-266. It is worth noting that this essay was completed as Merton's own ill fated love affair with a nurse was ending.

[125] Thomas Merton, "Love and Need", 264,265.

[126] Merton, "Love and Need", 266-268.

[127] Merton, "Love and Need", 267-272.

[128] Merton, "The Other Side of Despair" (July, *1965) TheMerton Collected Essays* (Louisville: Thanas Merton Collection, Bellarmine College), vol 5, 205; Merton, "Technology", *55;* Merton, *Learning to Love* (January 27, 1967), 188; Merton, *A Search for Solitude* (November *25, 1958),* 232; Ellul sees diversion in media, particularly film and spots; Ellul, *The Technological Society,* 375-384.

political entity. In these mass movements, they are easy targets for those with wealth and power who wish to "crush and humiliate and destroy humanity "[129]

The computer is a perfect instrument for this manipulation. Merton's cybernetic ideas were influenced by a paper entitled, "The Triple Revolution", from The Center for Democratic Study. This pamphlet received in the same year as *The Technological Society* explored the social consequences of cybernation. "The Triple Revolution" contended that the cybernetic revolution would unleash immense capacities by combining thinking and action in a single machine, the computer. The result would be an almost unlimited potential for productivity.[130]

The computer is dangerous, because it has no independent capacity for thought or judgment and yet it can engage in very sophisticated and rapid calculation. If it is not balanced by any humanistic or religious principles, it can be employed on behalf of "technique." Human complexity is reduced by IBM cards to labels such as "priest", "Negro" or "Jew." To demonstrate the danger of cybernation, Merton sketched in one of his journals a story line about the mindless efficiencies of a computer. The story is centered on the diary of a machine still operational after a nuclear apocalypse. The computer comments on the nothingness around it, but does so "brightly, busily, efficiently, in joyous and mechanical despair.

There are many other examples ofbroader social problems in the mass society developed by a technological hegemony. The more technique attempts to control all processes, the more nature rejects its control. The result is an unprecedented ecological disaster. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* illustrates the capacity of nature to resist human exterminators through the survival of insecticide resistant insects. Tins situation is rendered even more destructive because preexisting ecological controls have been eliminated by insecticides.[131][132]

The destruction of nature is more than matched by the rising violence of the technological war. The productivity of military machinery is measured by predrion and effectiveness and not by a cost/benefit analysis. Ellul asserts in *The Technological Society that*

Nothing equals the perfection of our war machines. Warships and warplanes are vastly more perfect than their counterparts in dvilian life. The organization of the army-its transport, supplies, administration-is much more predse than any dvilian

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[129] Merton, *Disputed Questions,* 127-134; Merton, "Letter to Rosemary Radford Ruether" (March 19, 1967) in Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Lave* 505-508; Cf Moton with Ellul, *The Technological Society,* 278,284-291.

[130] Shannon, "Can One Be a Contemplative in a Technological Society", 14. Ellul's interest in cybernation was largely focused on its immense capacity for calculation. Ellul, *Die Technological Society,* 16,89,163,356.

[131] Merton, *Die Courage for Truth* (January, 1964), 282; Merton, *Turning Toward the World* (March 2,1962), 207; Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life* (January 31,1965), 200,201.

[132] Merton, "Technology", *54;* Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Crest Books, 1962), 217-231.

organization. The smallest error in the realm of war would cost countless lives and would be measured in terms of victory or defeat.[133]

The consequences of applying technique to the military is not lost on the monk listening to tire distant volleys of tanks at Fort Knox. On the very first day that he was reading *The Technological Society,* Merton records that a SAC (Strategic Air Command) bomber swooped near his hermitage. In frustration he heralds the plane as another dangerous example of "the technological sotiety!"[134]

The Vietnam War, however, was the greatest example of the technological sodety engaged in a process of asserting power without clear or coherent ends.

His book *[The Technological Society]* was not liked in America (naturally) but for that very reason I think there is a definite importance in his rather dark views. They are not to be neglected, for he sees an aspect of technology that others cannot or will not recognize: it does, in spite of its good elements, become the focus of grave spiritual sicknesses... To begin with, the folly of the United States in Vietnam-certainJy criminal-comes from the blind obsession with mechanical effidency to the exdusion of all else: the determination to make the war machine work, whether the results are useful or not.[135]

Cliches about liberty, frith and an adherence to material prosperity are advanced to disguise the "essential emptiness" ofwar aims. The embracing of this emptiness allows for the creation and spread of a "motiveless violence." The weapons and strategies in Vietnam, such as napalm, burring villages, etc., are not the responsibility of evil sdentists, but the result of a "moral ignorance and callousness" in the very "fabric" of the technological sodety which places a priority on effidency.[136]

This "motiveless violence" and "moral ignorance" was personified in Lyndon Johnson's Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, who was trained at Ford and was brought to Washington to effidently direct the machineries of death. He is typical of the modem bureaucrat who has "incredible technical skill and no sense of human realities." Such men are lost in "abstractions, sentimentalities, myths, delusions." The war is thus the product of "good ordinary people" whose "surface idealism" and "celebration of warm human values" mask an unreflective technological paradigm of capacities and progress.[137]

Why would a society accept the violence and dehumanization of "technique" which can end in a military or environmental catastrophe? It is a Faustian bargain which cedes

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[133] Ellul, *Die Technological Society,* 16.

[134] Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life* (October 30,1964), 160.

[135] Merton, "Letta: to Pere Herve Chaigne" (April 21, 1965) in Merton, *Witness to Freedom* 109.

[136] Merton, "Letter to James Douglass" (May 26, 1965) in Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love* 161,162; Merton, "Letter to Bernard Haring" (December 26,1964) in Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love,* 383; Merton, "The Church and the'Godless World"' (December, 1965, January, 1966); *Merton Collected Essays* (Louisville: Thomas Merton Collection, Bellarmine College), vol. 5,294-298.

[137] Merton, "Answers for Hernan Lavin Cerda", *5-9* in Merton, *The Courage for Truth,* 205,206; Merton, *Learning to Love* (April 16,1966), 41.

moral authority and principle for the lure of unprecedented powers. This bargain is reminiscent of Prometheus' pride. Prometheus is to be pitied, because, like Adam, he did not have to steal the knowledge. It was always there as a gift.[138]

The Faustian bargain is also the consequence of the modem penchant for a "systematic" application of what had formerly been an occasional capacity to create objects. This capacity becomes a new religion, the "sect" of the product. As a result of the preaching of advertisers, there results a fevered "acceleration" of this process which results in a "technological revolution." The problem with these breakthroughs is that they result "in a climate of practicality for its own sake and a contempt for value and principle." Pragmatism vitiates any moral standard, preferring intellect instead of reason. The intellect distinguishes between the posable and the impossible, while reason distinguishes between the sensible and the senseless. The only remaining questions for the triumphing intellect are "will this work" and "will it pay off?"[139]

If a society is guided by intellect, then it will not have the mental resources to constrain technology. Merton affirms with Ellul that "technique" will then subordinate the individual to its ends. The machinery of this system becomes autonomous while man, the "biomechanical link", is gradually eliminated. There is no compromise with this agenda and the citizenry must "take it or leave it" Most Americans do not opt out of the system because the prosperity resulting from the productivity are "signs of election," a divine blessing.[140]

Conclusion

It was only in 1964 and 1965 that Merton specifically references Jacques Ellul in his letters and journals. As with many of his enthusiasms, Ellul faded before new readings and issues. Still, the impact of the contact continued as many of the insights in *The Technological Society* were fully assimilated into the Mertonian perspective on technology and culture. The Frenchman provided invaluable ballast for an honest and constructive assessment of technology.

Indeed, this leavening impact can be observed in Merton's subsequent analyses of war, ecology, personal relations, computers and many other areas. The potential fecundity of the Frenchman's ideas was recognized during the initial reading of *The Technological Society.*

I am going on with Ellul's prophetic and I think very sound diagnosis of the Technological Society. How few people really face the problem! It is the most portentious and

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[138] Merton, *The New Man,* 23-29.

[139] Merton, "Technology", 53,54; Merton, *Turning Toward the World (July* 9,1962), 230; Merton, "Answers for Hernan Lavin Cerda" in Merton, *The Courage for Truth,* 205,206; Ellul, *Die Technological Society.* 133-149 (the system of technique); 406-408 (advertising).

[140] Merton, "Technology", 54; Merton, *A Search for Solitude* (December 7, 1958), 234; Merton even before reading Ellul had recognized the ponidous effect of the regnant ideal of process in Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition.* Merton, *Turning Toward the World* (June 12,1960), 11; Ellul, *Die Technological Society,* 79-94.

apocalyptical thing of all, that we are caught in an automatic selfdetermining system in which man's choices have largely ceased to count.[141]

This enthusiasm was only slightly diluted by a recurring note of hesitation about Ellul's excessive pessimism. This hesitation was only tentatively held. In one journal entry, Merton notes that Ellul is "excessively pessimistic", but then countered in the following sentence that he was "not unreasonably" pessimistic. Merton, unlike some other readers, intuitively hesitated to label the Frenchman as only an inveterate pessimist.[142]

This intuition was merited. The corpus of Ellul's writings clarifies that he never wished "to maintain that technology was to be deplored." Technique provides an opportunity for either progress or destruction. Humanity can "steer", "alter" or "frustrate" this mentality. In the best scenario, technique is demythologized and new avenues of communication reopened. Each person must reassert his or her essential freedom. This objective is assisted by separating technique from ideology and decentralizing state power.[143]

While there are some reservations about *The Technological Society.* Merton clearly sides with Ellul against those espousing a "new holiness" of a technological cosmos. A dash of Calvinist pessimism is preferable to the excesses of an evolutionary optimism as exhibited in his fellow Catholic, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. There is "impiety" in Teilhard's "hypostatizing of mechanical power as something to do with the Incarnation, as its fulfillment, its epiphany."[144]

intimately, Merton holds that the positive achievements and capacities of technology must be balanced by spiritual values. In this balanced judgment, each person should gratefully accept the positive impact of the techno-scientific world and they must also demand an accounting of the ethos of progress. This was the ultimate lesson of *The Technological Society.* The reflective individual must carefully, but firmly, reject the "universal myth that technology infallibly makes everything in every way better for everybody. It does not."[145]

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[141] Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life (Oa^oer* 31,1964), 161.

[142] Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life (fksveaioexf>,* 1964), 163.

[143] Jacques Ellul "Technique et Civilization" 7 *Free University Quarterly* (August, 1960), 166-177; Jacques Ellul, "The Technological Revolution and Its Moral and Political Consequences" in Johannes Metz, ed., *The Evolving World and Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1967), 100,107; Jacques Ellul, "Between Chaos and Paralysis", trans. Cecelia Kings *85 Christian Century* (June *5,* 1968), 747-750; Jacques Ellul, "Technique et developpement" in CA.O. Van Nieuwenhuijze, ed., *La perpsecdve occidentals du developement* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), 258-295; Jacques Ellul, "Search for an Image" 33 *Humanist* (November-December, 1973), 22-25.

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About the Ellul Forum

History

The Ellul Forum was first published in August of 1988. Two issues are produced each year (in January and July). The goal of the *Forum* is to hona the wok of Jacques Ellul by analyzing and applying his thought to aspects of our technological civilization and by carrying forward the analysis and critique of technological civilization in new directions.

The *Forum* is not intended to be a vehicle fa true disciples. The whole thrust of Ellul's wok has been to encourage others to think for themselves and invent their own responses to the challenges of a technological civilization. Although we do review and discuss Ellul's work, it is not our intention to turn his writings into a body of sacred literature to be endlessly dissected. The appropriate tribute to his wok will be to cany forward its spirit and its agenda for the critical analysis of our technical civilization. Ellul invites us to think new thoughts and enact new ideas. To that end we invite you to submit essays on appropriate topics.

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Original manuscripts a manuscripts responding to essays in previous issues should be sent to Clifford Christians, Editor, *The Ellul Forum,* c/o Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 228 Gregory HaU, Urbana, Illinois 61801. Hard *copy* and a computer diskette should be sent together, indicating software used, including version number. End notes should be types as text and aid note numbers in the text itself should also be types as text Length may vary from five to twenty double spaced pages. Suggestions of themes fa future issues are also welcome.

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