"Full of Firecrackers": Jacques Ellul and the Technological Critique of Thomas Merton

By **Phillip M. Thompson**

I. The Context of the Ellul and Merton Connection

When a book arrived at his hermitage in 1964, Thomas Merton recorded his impressions:
> Reading Jacques Ellul's book, *The Technological Society*. Great, full of firecrack-
> ers. 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 Modern 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.[1]

Jacques Ellul might initially appear as an odd choice for inspiration. Generally, the ellipses of
the "quintessential Protestant" and other Catholic intellectuals crossed infrequently.[2] Those Catho-
lics expressing an opinion on the French Protestant offered mixed reviews. The general consensus
was that Ellul adroitly adumbrated the impact of technology on contemporary culture.[3] Some Catho-
lics viewed the Frenchman not only as an accurate prophet of doom, but as offering a Christian
"hope" that offered a breach, a "heteronomy in a closed age."[4] Other Catholics feared that Ellul's
profound pessimism might initiate a self-fulfilling prophecy.[5] In addition, while Ellul correctly dis-
covered a comprehensive techno-scientific system in the West, he did not discern elements of truth,
verification, and rationality in technology and science.[6]

For his part, Ellul was correspondingly critical of certain elements of Catholic teaching. In *Le
Fondement théologique du droit* (1946), he denounced the lack of Biblical grounding in the revival
of the natural law tradition. Moreover, in his view, the institutional forms of the Catholic Church
mistakenly adopted pagan forms from the Romans.[7] Despite his
firm beliefs and polemical style, Ellul did not seek to reignite the
bitter battles of previous centuries. He could appreciate the creativ-
ity and spontaneity of John Paul II and also graciously recognized
the value and insight of some Catholics whose positions were rela-
tively sympathetic to his own. For example, an entire issue of his
journal, *Foi et Vie*, was devoted to Charles Peguy.[8]

The timing of Merton's reading of Ellul was fortuitous. In the
midst of the Catholic Church's *aggiornamento* (opening) to the world

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in the Second Vatican Council, the book was a prudent warning. The full reasons for Merton's fascination, however, are not readily discernible, because technology had not been at the center of his social concerns. To be sure, he had 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 must be distilled from fragmentary and episodic explorations in journals, letters and other writings. These writings suggested the diverse intellectual influences in his spiritual quest for guidance. The response to such influences was often exceedingly naive or excessively enthusiastic about a momentary concern. Nonetheless, Lawrence Cunningham notes that 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."[9]

On the perimeter of his society and imbued with the values of a strict religious regimen, a monk possessed a peculiar freedom to assess the impact of contemporary scientific and technological advances. In a posture of prophetic resistance, he "takes up a critical attitude to the world and its structures"[10] and shoulders "the 'burden' of vision that God lays upon him."[11] The prophet in the contemporary context, however, cannot impose a spiritual solution, but must address religious concerns within the language and understandings of a post-Christian culture. In this search, Christians assumed that the world, with all of its flaws, was the scene of their redemption and worthy of a creative response to God's love.[12]

II. The Journey from the Monastery to the World

In the last decade of his life, Merton's social critique examined the scientific and technological culture of the external world. The seeds of this position were first sown in an internal dissent against the intrusion of technology into monastic life in the 1940s and 1950s. There are just a few clues to Merton's attitude toward technology prior to entering the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1941. He was amazed by the power of radio, but indifferent to photography. Following his entry into the strict asceticism of a Trappist monastery, Merton advocated a *fuga mundi*, a "total renunciation of the business, ambitions, honors, activities of the world."[13] The apocalyptic and isolationist perspective was reinforced when the monastery was besieged by a "small mechanized army of builders"[14] in the late 1940s and most of the 1950s in order to meet the physical needs of a flood of new postulants. The noise of construction machinery often shattered the solitude of the contemplative life.

While Merton was frustrated by such intrusions, he was more concerned by an associated mentality of enervating and pointless activity. The brothers departed for their work assignments "like a college football team taking the field" (*SJ* 41). Many monks were "restless and avid for change and new projects"[15] and after operating machinery had difficulty adjusting to silence. He observed that "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, 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" (*CGB* 25). The encroaching technical mentality advanced the false belief that rules and regulations could achieve salvation. The success of the mentality of progress represented a failure of the monastic ideal. The ascetic life was not to be mass-produced, sold or quantified.[16]

By the early 1960s, Merton's initial concern with the impingement of the modern world into the

monastery was turning outward through a heightened interest in social concerns in the larger society. He observed 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."[17] Technology was an inevitable, but potentially dangerous, aspect of human life that could wound or even destroy its maker. The objective, therefore, was "to save modern man from his Faustian tendencies, and not become a sorcerer's apprentice while doing so" (*DWL* 228).

In searching for sources of insight on technology, Merton was frustrated by the inattention of the Catholic Church to the dangers of the technological revolution. In addition, the relatively few Catholics who addressed the issue of technology either completely embraced or rejected it. Finding the cupboard of the tradition relatively barren, he turned to scripture. In Genesis, Adam's Fall, in part, was an attempt to improve the "wisdom and science" extant in 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."[18]

Ellul's ethical analysis also drew on Genesis to claim that no human regime could fine-tune the divine creation. Nature in its pre-Fallen state was "perfect and finished." God finished his work and it "was good." Human beings were and should be the passive receptors of this beneficence, who could neither complete nor extend creation. As was true in Merton's analysis, Adam participated in the fullness of God's wisdom and did not need to subordinate or exploit nature.[19]

For Merton, the Fall and a search for a more complete "wisdom" spawned a false humanism, i.e. for some ideal other than the love of God. Such disobedience to God resulted in an "orgy of idolatry" that polluted much of contemporary life. Such idolatry worshipped a consuming devotion to ceaseless activity that never integrated the spiritual and the physical. Instead, technology favored money, status and other diversions as anodynes for a separation from God.[20]

III. The Impact of Jacques Ellul

Merton's Biblical and other occasional speculations on technology were complemented and extended by the insights of contemporary social critics in the early 1960s. The works of Lewis Mumford, Rachel Carson and Jacques Ellul provided some depth and breadth to an instinctive distrust of the technological mentality.[21] Merton was introduced to Jacques Ellul in 1964 at the recommendation of his friend, Wilbur Ferry, at The Center for Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California, who had arranged a translation of *The Technological Society*.[22] Ellul's analysis of technology was "entirely convincing" to Merton, with a "stamp of prophecy which so much writing on that subject seems to lack." He immediately recommended *The Technological Society* to friends and even theologians at the Second Vatican Council.[23]

After reading *The Technological Society*, Merton accepted that the source of many contemporary cultural pathologies was a mentality of progress and change, a "technique" that trumped all other ideological or institutional principles.[24] The triumph of technique was dangerous, because it advanced the delusion that each person was an autonomous creature capable of constant personal improvement. Paradoxically, the result of this quest for personal freedom through "technique" was often bondage, not liberation.[25] Indeed, the truth was that "technology alienates those who depend on it and live by it. It deadens their human qualities and their moral perceptiveness. Gradually, every-

thing 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" (*CT* 205-207). The totalizing discourse of "technique" had "no place for the individual; the personal means nothing to it" (*DWL* 163). Assuming this mandate, a monk was an anachronism since no person could be disengaged from the new trinity of efficiency, productivity and progress.[26]

If religion and ultimate principles were marginalized or eliminated, then what were the ethical foundations for this brave new world? Morality became merely allegiance to progress and technique supported "a climate of practicality for its own sake and a contempt for value and principle."[27] More specifically, morality was now centered in the intellect, not reason. The intellect illustrated the possible and the impossible, while reason distinguished between the sensible and the senseless. The only remaining questions for the triumphing intellect were "will this work?" and "will it pay off?" Because of such pragmatic assumptions, humanity was drawn into a system where "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" (*HGL* 384).

Technique coarsened human relations as the market orientation of contemporary society presumed that human beings were "biological machines endowed with certain urges that require fulfillment."[28] Love became a "deal" where physical and emotional needs were fulfilled through a negotiated exchange, a contract. The primary desire of each consumer was to constantly upgrade the product and no contract was final. There were always more deals and new customers. The terms of the deal were determined by shifting market values. "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" (*L&L* 27). This consumer version of love was problematic in other ways. The deal was often based on momentary considerations of the potential packages without any consideration of the lasting effects. Many parties in relationships engaged in emotional strip-mining. The object was not love, but the effectiveness of the deal.

The problem with this consumer approach was that "love is not a matter of getting what you want" (*L&L* 34). Loving was about giving; love commanded sacrifice, not an effective exchange. Love in the marital state was a form of worship which responded to "the full richness, the variety, the fecundity of living experience itself: it 'knows' the inner mystery of life" (*L&L* 34). Individuals were transformed into new persons through the conversion of love. This conversion confirmed our deepest spiritual identity. The corrupting mandates of technique, exhibited in the contemporary example of marriage, had the potential for causing a profound depersonalization in "the vast, formless void of the anonymous mass."[29] Technique increased and improved the range of options, but it had also ceded individual creativity, authentic experience and choice to technocrats and processes. Human beings in such a system experienced "boredom, emptiness, neurosis, psychoanalytic illnesses, etc."[30]

The symptoms of anomie were the consequence of individuals who failed to accept the challenge of discovering within themselves the "spiritual power and integrity which was called forth only by love" (*DQ* 133-34). Instead, they were unwittingly molded and shaped for the social, economic and political ends of a mass society. In these mass movements, ordinary citizens were manipulated by those with wealth and power who wanted to "crush and humiliate and destroy humanity" (*HGL*

506).[31]

Technological instruments, like the computer, assisted the mass manipulation of human beings. Merton's cybernetic ideas were influenced by a paper entitled "The Triple Revolution," from The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. The pamphlet, received in the same year as *The Technological Society*, recognized that the cybernetic revolution would soon unleash immense capacities by combining thinking and action in a single machine, the computer. The result would be an almost unlimited potential for productivity.[32] The speed and efficiency of the economic operations of the computer would simultaneously propel a corresponding decrease in ethical reflection. The mandates of speed and efficiency of the new machine would contribute to the bypassing or eliminating of the inefficient processes of moral inquiry. Merton's concern for the dilemma faced by an American society from the computer paralleled his earlier concerns about machinery at the monastery interrupting the contemplative life. Human dignity and complexity might suffer from cybernation as the human being *qua* human being was reduced by IBM cards to labels such as "priest," "Negro" or "Jew" (*DWL* 201). A journal sketched a story that centered on the diary of a machine still operational after a nuclear apocalypse. The computer commented on the nothingness around it, but did so "brightly, busily, efficiently, in joyous and mechanical despair" (*TTW* 207).[33]

The technological mentality, operating by and through machines such as the computer, bore much poisonous fruit. For example, the more technique attempted to control all environmental processes, the more nature rejected its control. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* illustrated the inability of humanity to control nature through pesticides. DDT was eliminating many mammals and predators of insects while the targeted insects survived through mutation.[34]

The ecological crisis was more than matched by the senseless violence of the technological war. Military strategies employed countless new technologies. *The Technological Society* warned that

> Nothing equals the perfection of our war machines. Warships and warplanes are
> vastly more perfect than their counterparts in civilian life. The organization of the
> army – its transport, supplies, administration – is much more precise than any
> civilian organization. The smallest error in the realm of war would cost countless
> lives and would be measured in terms of victory or defeat (16).

The disastrous consequences of applying technique to military operations was not lost on the monk who listened to the distant volleys of artillery at Fort Knox. On the first day that he read *The Technological Society*, Merton recorded that a SAC (Strategic Air Command) bomber swooped near his hermitage. He heralded the plane as another dangerous example of "The technological society!" (*DWL* 160).

The Vietnam War, however, was the greatest example of Ellul's technological society 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 – certainly criminal – comes from the blind obsession with mechanical
> efficiency to the exclusion of all else: the determination to make the war machine
> work, whether the results are useful or not (*WF* 109).

Cliches about liberty, faith and an adherence to material prosperity disguised the "essential emptiness" of the stated objectives (*HGL* 162). The embracing of this emptiness allowed for the creation and spread of a "motiveless violence." The weapons and strategies in Vietnam, such as napalm, burning villages, etc., did not originate from evil scientists, but were the result of a "moral ignorance and callousness" in the very "fabric" of the technological society that idolized efficiency.[35]

The "motiveless violence" and "moral ignorance" of the technological society were personified in Lyndon Johnson's Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, who was trained at Ford Motor Company and then brought to Washington to efficiently direct the machineries of death. McNamara was typical of the modern bureaucrat who had "incredible technical skill and no sense of human realities." Such bureaucrats were lost in "abstractions, sentimentalities, myths, delusions." The war was thus the product of "good ordinary people" whose "surface idealism" and "celebration of warm human values" masked an unreflective technological paradigm of capacities and progress.[36]

Why would a society accept the violence and dehumanization of a "technique" that might end in a military or environmental catastrophe? The West exchanged true freedom for a bondage that offered the lure of unprecedented powers.[37] This "Faustian" bargain adopted a new religion, the "sect" of the product that transformed and systematized what was formerly an occasional capacity to create objects. This fevered "acceleration" of production was stoked by advertisers. The Faustian bargain ultimately would subordinate the individual to the needs of process. The machinery of the system would become autonomous while man, the "bio-mechanical link," was gradually eliminated. There was no compromising with this agenda and the citizenry must "take it or leave it."[38] Most Americans accepted the new system believing that a concomitant prosperity served as "signs of election," of a divine blessing (*SS* 234).

IV. Conclusion

It was only during 1964 and 1965 that Merton specifically referenced Jacques Ellul in his letters and journals. As with many of his enthusiasms, Ellul faded before new readings and issues. Nonetheless, the impact continued as many of the insights in *The Technological Society* were fully assimilated into Merton's cultural critique. Indeed, the leavening impact of Ellul can be observed in Merton's subsequent analyses of war, ecology, personal relations, computers and many other topics. 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 portentous and apocalyptical thing of all, that we are caught in an automatic self-determining system in which man's choices have largely ceased to count" (*DWL* 161).

The initial enthusiasm was only slightly diluted by some hesitation about Ellul's excessive pessimism. The hesitation was tentative and in a single journal entry, Merton noted that Ellul was "excessively pessimistic," but then countered that he was "Not *unreasonably* pessimistic." Merton, unlike some other readers, hesitated at labeling the Frenchman as only an inveterate and apocalyptic pessimist (*DWL* 163). The corpus of Ellul's writings clarified that he never wished "to maintain that technology was to be deplored." Technique provided an opportunity for either progress or destruction. Humanity could "steer," "alter" or "frustrate" this mentality. In the best scenario, technique was demythologized and new avenues of communication reopened. A first and essential step was to

separate technique from ideology and to then decentralize state power.[39]

Despite certain reservations about *The Technological Society*, Merton clearly shared its warnings against the advocates of a "new holiness" from a technological cosmos. A dash of Calvinist pessimism was preferable to the excesses of an evolutionary optimism as exhibited in his fellow Catholic, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. There was "impiety" in Teilhard's "hypostatizing of mechanical power as something to do with the Incarnation, as its fulfillment, its epiphany" (*DWL* 166).

Ultimately, Merton asserted that humanity should accept the positive impact of the techno-scientific world while simultaneously demanding an accounting of its progeny. Careful reasoning and nuanced judgment must not be abandoned amidst the allure of unprecedented technological advances. The world should carefully, but firmly, reject the "universal myth that technology infallibly makes everything in every way better for everybody. It does not."[40]

1. Thomas Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life: Journals, vol. 5: 1963-1965*, ed. Robert E. Daggy (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997) 159-60 [October 30, 1964]; subsequent references will be cited as "*DWL*" parenthetically in the text. Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Knopf, 1964).

2. 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.

3. See John Eudes Bamburger, OCSO, "Defining the Center: A Monastic Point of View," *Criterion* 20 (Spring 1981) 4-8, and David W. Gill, "Jacques Ellul: Prophet in the Technological Wilderness," *Catholic Agitator* (October 1976) 3-4.

4. Vincent A. Punzo, "Jacques Ellul on the Technical System and the Challenge of Christian Hope," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 70 (Supp. 1996) 17-31.

5. See Douglass D. McFerran, "The Cult of Jacques Ellul," *America* 124 (6 Feb. 1971) 122-24; the comments of McFerran are relatively mild compared to some Protestant writers: see Jean Bethke Elshtain, "The World of Narké: Christ, Christianity and Politics," *Katallagete* (Spring 1989) 16-21.

6. See Jean-Michel Maldame, OP, "Science et technique: Les Impacts de la science et de la technique sur la culture," *Revue Thomiste* 78 (October-December 1978) 634-56; see also Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, in David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992) 168-69.

7. See Jacques Ellul, *The Theological Foundations of Law* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), and Jacques Ellul, *The Subversion of Christianity*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986) 37-40.

8   See Jacques Ellul, "Celui qui est toujours ailleurs . . . ," *Sud-Ouest Dimanche* (14 August 1983) 2, and Jacques Ellul, "Réhabiliter Peguy," *Foi et Vie* (1982) 9-27.

9. Lawrence Cunningham, "The Monk as Critic of Culture," *The Merton Annual* 3 (1990) 189; see also Thomas Merton, *Learning to Love: Journals, vol. 6: 1966-1967*, ed. Christine M. Bochen (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997) 125 (subsequent references will be cited as "*LL*" parenthetically in the text); and Thomas Merton, *Thomas Merton in Alaska* (New York: New Directions, 1988) 150.

10. Thomas Merton, *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1973) 329.

11. Thomas Merton, *Disputed Questions* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1960) 222-23; subsequent references will be cited as "*DQ*" parenthetically in the text.

12. See Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1966; Garden City, NY: Doubleday Image, 1968) 50-51; subsequent references will be cited as "*CGB*" parenthetically in the text.

13 Thomas Merton, *Entering the Silence: Journals, vol. 2: 1941-1952*, ed. Jonathan Montaldo (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996) 44 [March 11, 1947]; see also Thomas Merton, "Is the World a Problem?" *Contemplation in a World of Action* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971) 157-61.

14. Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953) 5; subsequent references will be cited as "*SJ*" parenthetically in the text.

15. Letter to Dom Gregorio Lemercier [October 23, 1953], in Thomas Merton, *The School of Charity*, ed. Brother Patrick Hart (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1990) 69.

16. See Thomas Merton, "Technology," in "Collected Essays" (bound copies of materials at the Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine College, Louisville) 6:53-55. These are notes for an oral lecture to the novices on technology. See also Thomas Merton, *A Search for Solitude: Journals, vol. 3: 1952-1960*, ed. Lawrence S. Cunningham (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996) 72 [August 22, 1956]; subsequent references will be cited as "*SS*" parenthetically in the text. This idea is also partly drawn from Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*; see Thomas Merton, *Turning Toward The World: Journals, vol. 4: 1960-1963*, ed. Victor A. Kramer (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996) 11 [June 12, 1960], 150-51 [August 13, 1961]; subsequent references will be cited as "*TTW*" parenthetically in the text.

17. Letter to Elbert R. Sisson [February-March 1962], in Thomas Merton, *Witness to Freedom*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994) 38; subsequent references will be cited as "*WF*" parenthetically in the text.

18. Thomas Merton, *The New Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1961) 110-11; subsequent references will be cited as "*NM*" parenthetically in the text.

19. See Jacques Ellul, "Technology and the Opening Chapters of Genesis," in Carl Mitcham and Jim Grote, eds., *Theology and Technology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984) 120-26.

20. Letter to Henry Miller [August 7, 1962], in Thomas Merton, *The Courage for Truth*, ed. Christine M. Bochen (New York: Farrar Straus, Giroux, 1993) 277 (subsequent references will be cited as "*CT*" parenthetically in the text); see also *NM* 118; *DQ* 178-79.

21. Thomas Merton, "The Christian in a Technological World" (tape recording of a lecture given to the novices at Gethsemani in the early 1960s).

22. William H. Shannon, "Can One be a Contemplative in a Technological Society?" *The Merton Seasonal* 22 (Spring 1997) 13 (subsequent references will be cited as "Shannon" parenthetically in the text); Merton may also have heard of Ellul from another contact, Will Campbell, the editor-in-chief of *Katallagete*, who was a fervent supporter of the French writer: 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.

23. See letter to Père Herve Chaigne (*WF* 109); see also *DWL* 159-61.

24. See letter to Bernard Haring [December 28,1964] in Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love*, William Shannon, ed. (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1985) 383-84 (subsequent references will be cited as "*HGL*" parenthetically in the text); in this letter, Merton recommends to the Council Fathers of Vatican II Jacques Ellul's "monumental work" *La Technique*; see also *DWL* 161.

25. See letter to Hernan Lavin Cerda [October 5, 1965] (*CT* 205-6); see also *DWL* 163.

26 See Ellul, *The Technological Society* 286.

27. Merton, "Technology" 53-54; see also *TTW* 230; *CT* 205-206; Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 133-49 (the system of technique); 406-408 (advertising); Thomas Merton, "Una Sociedad que Esta Peligrosamente Enferma," *Punto Final* 11 (15 September 1967) 14-16.

28. Thomas Merton, "Love and Need," *Love and Living* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1985) 29; subsequent references will be cited as "*L&L*" parenthetically in the text.

29. Thomas Merton, "The Other Side of Despair" (July, 1965), *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967) 263-66.

30. Merton, "Technology," 55; see also *SS* 232; Ellul notes the search for diversions through popular contemporary activities such as film and sports: see *The Technological Society* 375-384.

31. Cf. Merton with Ellul, *The Technological Society* 278, 284-91.

32 See Shannon 14. Ellul's interest in cybernation was largely focused on its immense capacity for calculation: see Ellul, *The Technological Society* 16, 89, 163, 356.

33 . See also *CT* 282. For a recent confirmation of Merton's and Ellul's prophetic sense of the world moving toward a state of vertiginous efficiency and progress see James Gleick, *Faster: The Acceleration of Just about Everything* (New York: Pantheon, 1999).

34 . See Merton, "Technology" 54; Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Crest, 1962) 217-31.

35. See letter to Bernard Haring [December 26, 1964], *HGL* 383; Merton, "The Church and the 'Godless World'" (December, 1965-January, 1966) *Collected Essays* 5:294-98.

36. See *CT* 205-206; *LL* 41.

37. See *NM* 23-29.

38. Merton, "Technology" 54; Merton even before reading Ellul recognized the pernicious effect of the popular ideal of progress in Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*: see *TTW* 11; see also Ellul, *The Technological Society* 79-94.

39. See Jacques Ellul, "Technique et Civilization," *Free University Quarterly* 7 (August, 1960) 166-77; Jacques Ellul, "The Technological Revolution and Its Moral and Political Consequences," in Johannes Metz, ed., *The Evolving World and Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1967), 100-107; Jacques Ellul, "Between Chaos and Paralysis," trans. Cecelia Kings, *Christian Century* 85 (5 June 1968) 747-50; Jacques Ellul, "Technique et development," in C. A. O. Van Nieuwenhuijze, ed., *La perspective occidentale du development* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972) 258-95; Jacques Ellul, "Search for an Image," *Humanist* 33 (November-December, 1973) 22-25.

40. Circular Letter, Lent 1967, in Thomas Merton, *The Road To Joy*, ed. Robert E. Daggy (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989) 98.