

Technique and the Opening Chapters of Genesis

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It is always unsettling to discover the influence exercised by sociological trends or "the world" on that theological thought which is supposed to be the expression of the faith of the Church. Today we are overwhelmed by the Myth of Work and overcome by the grandeur of technological accomplishments; and the Church, like everyone else, grants work a place of distinction in her thought. She begins to justify it, and to justify technique. Because technique is a great human achievement, we have to legitimize it. Because work absorbs almost the whole of human life and becomes our *raison d'être*, we must prove its sanctity. Of course, the question is never consciously raised in this manner. Yet we should note that only recently have theologians begun striving to legitimize technique and work, thus in their own domain and with their own methods doing what everyone else is doing—so that the contemporary situation has indeed modified their thinking. This tendency is all the more serious because it is unconscious.

In the past we were commonly taught that work was a consequence of the fall, was part of the world of sin and was nothing but affliction. Now people are insisting strongly on the fact that work already existed in Eden, and that it only became painful after the fall (which is accurate). The relevant biblical texts are rather few in number. Within Genesis 1 and 2, there is: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (1:28); and "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and guard it" (2:15); and also from the Psalms, "Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy

hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:6). It is concluded that work is not the result of sin, but rather

Work is the normal destiny prescribed for man by the Creator. By means of work God brings man into partnership with his creative activity (1 Cor. 3:9). It is the sign by which God testifies that man is his collaborator.¹

These words from Mehl-Koehnlein are nuanced. If absolutely necessary, it is possible to accept the notion of collaborator (on the condition that it is not on the basis of 1 Corinthians 3:9, which would be a completely improper application to material work of a text which refers to witnessing), but less easily can I accept the idea of an association in creative (?) activity. But the descent is adumbrated, and we come, for example, to this statement:

Man has been put into the world to complete the work of creation, to gradually take possession of all its goods and to make them useful to himself and his neighbors. Out of this co-creation, thus understood, shines forth the high praise of God in the same way as it does through contemplation and prayer.²

Then there is one further step with Moussiégt:

To cultivate is to give birth to new creations . . . man has the ability to create. This is why he is truly in the image of God.³

In Protestant theology we thus find the idea, often set forth in Catholicism, that man has a demiurgic function, that he completes creation, that in some way he creates along with God.

If man frees certain created potentialities, if he enriches his stay with marvellous instruments, it is what God wants . . . He rejoices in the progress of his work . . ., in the progressive realization of the possibilities that He mysteriously hid in the heart of the creation . . . In other words, God is the Creator of Techniques . . . The technical operation is sacred; by putting his hand to what has been created in order to transform it, man puts his hand into the hand of God.⁴

This idea was just as strongly expressed by Mounier in *Be Not Afraid*.⁵ All of these conclusions come from two verses in Genesis!

And, of course, as the preceding text shows, whoever says "work" means "technique." The assumption that there was work in the garden of Eden leads to an assumption that there was technique. Adam was an inventor and a technician in Eden. As people have complained to me: "If Adam was commanded to cultivate, what did he do it with—except with tools?"

It seems to me that this whole collection of ideas seriously misjudges what the Bible tells us about creation before the fall—the little we can glimpse without ever succeeding in truly knowing, for in our state of sin we cannot understand what Adam was before the break. We can only try to catch a glimpse, humbly respecting the biblical text without forcing it.

We do have one certainty: creation as God made it, as it left his hands, was *perfect and finished*. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). "God finished his work . . ." (Genesis 2:2). Provided that we take these texts as they stand, we have to recognize that God's work was accomplished, that it was complete, that there was nothing to add. This does not mean that a static situation was created in which nothing changed. There was certainly change, according to the internal rhythm of creation, as is in fact indicated. There was, however, no imaginable progress; there was no change deriving from a third party. What would progress mean, since everything was perfect? Is it possible to go to another stage of perfection? That would mean that God's work was not perfect. Is it possible to add to it, to exploit the hidden possibilities? That would mean that God's work was not finished—that God rested before he reached the end. What does it mean to co-operate in the creation? That man as creature is co-creator? To say that is to have a curious idea of the image of God! It is a simple absurdity that is not considered anywhere in the Bible. What does it mean to say that man completes creation? With what? What complement is necessary to bring about that which God himself declared perfect and finished? What does it mean for man to make the goods of creation "useful" to himself? A creation in which there were a number of things that were useless to the one whom God appointed as lord over it would be singularly incomplete and absurd. When God gave man the grass and the fruits to eat, it does not seem that he had to invent something in order to make them useful. The term used is very clear: God *gave*—and man had nothing to do with it; man received and nothing else.

Perhaps God did call man to a certain collaboration, but it was by no means creative. It was only a matter of accomplishing the will of God, of fitting into the order of creation, of being *vis-a-vis* God, the image of God. This collaboration was such that it had nothing in

common with any work we are able to imagine. Man worked in creation without completing it, without expanding it, without making something new, but only living within this perfection. Perfect himself, there was nothing to invent, for his invention could be nothing but a diminution of this finished work; there was nothing to start, nothing to earn, nothing to unfold; he simply *was*. There was no progress in the sense of improvement, but certainly there was progress in the sense of a journey in the most modest sense of the word. Any other understanding is to give man a glory due only to God. The theory of man's demiurgic function reasserts the ever-recurring temptation to attribute to man that which is not recognized as God's, to make man more than a creature, to grant him an initiative and grandeur beyond that which God gave him. To restore honor to man! Alas, in this good intention there is always an honor stolen from God.

Yet man was surely called to work in Eden. It is a matter of cultivating the garden. But the moment we examine this work, it is from the vantage point of what we know about work, and that is from the vantage point of the fall. Of necessity, we see a work that is meant to produce—a work that brings forth forms and values, a work without which there would be nothing. Based on this understanding of work, we are led necessarily to the notion of a work which creates, which adds to creation, a productive work, and thus a technical work. ("Before I worked there was nothing; after, there is my work"). These notions, however, only transpose back into Eden the work which we know after the fall.

Can we say anything else? There is at least one clear indication in Genesis. The trees and plants produced in abundance according to their kind, each having its seed within itself (Genesis 1:11-12). No cultivation was necessary, no care to add, no grafting, no labor, no anxiety. Creation spontaneously gave man what he needed, according to the order of God who had said, "I give you . . ." (Genesis 1:29). We find the verification of this view in the condemnation of the fall. Creation will refuse to yield its fruit to man; it will bring forth thorns and thistles, and he will have to perform work that is not only painful but also *productive*. This is the big difference (Genesis 3:18-19). Within creation there was work without necessity (Adam would not die of hunger if he stopped working), work without finality, without production. It was not work to gather a surplus, to make a living, to produce: it was work for *nothing*. The fruits and the produce, that which was necessary for Adam's life, all were freely given by God—not in exchange for work, a duty, an obligation, but truly gratuitously—without a connection between necessity and work. There was no causal link between work and the

produce which was solely within the order of creation. Work was not useful, but free.

Why then did Adam work? There is only one reason that should appear compelling and sufficient—because God told him to do so. Adam obeyed God in freedom, and with no ulterior motive. Included in this obedience was work, a free action that was hardly different from play and that included no possibility for personal glorification, no product that Adam could ascribe to himself. We should also note that besides "to till," the Bible also says "to guard," and that this raises the same problem. Adam did not have to guard against someone or something. There were no dangers; there was no bear which was going to come slaughter the herd, no wild boar to lay waste the harvest. Adam was charged with guarding the garden against nothing. (We do not have to speak of the serpent, for here it was not the garden that Adam had to protect. It was himself, and more than himself, Eve! This is not at all the same issue.) Still, Adam was charged with guarding . . ., here again gratuitously, because God gave him this function, and because Adam did not have to ask for a reason or justification. He acted as vicar-general because the Eternal One put him at the head of his creation and, as vicar-general, he cultivated and guarded even if there was no necessity, even if there was no threat. Such was the order that God established and this order, including cultivation and protection, was perfect. There was nothing to add and nothing could go astray. God could rest in dialogue with his creation, presented to him by the commander of this creation, as an offering and as a royal image of freely given love.

If man worked, they say, then he needed means. In order to cultivate, a technique was needed, thereby linking technical invention to the very situation of Adam in Eden—to the order of work, to the demiurgic function. In fact, it is impossible to step outside our present situation in which technique really is productive and does put the world in a new situation and does alter all relationships. From our present viewpoint (from the world of the fall) it is possible, in effect, to speak of the demiurge. Yet, there is a big gap between this position and its justification by an alleged Edenic situation. To say that technique could have existed in creation before the fall seems to me to commit another serious error concerning what Scripture, once more, allows us to see through a glass darkly.

God's creation was a *universum*, a whole, a unity. We no longer know anything but the fragments of this shattered mirror, but when it left God's hands, the glass or mirror was intact. It was one. We always imagine a system of relationships similar to those we know

today, perhaps only more perfect, absolutized. What we know, however, is a system made up of bits and pieces. These are fragmentary relationships, mended pieces, awkward combinations of dispersed units seeking autonomy. We take the individuality of each fragment and from there we expect to restore a whole. In creation, however, it was not like that at all: creation was itself, in its entirety, a unity. It was not a synthesis, because synthesis implies separated elements which have been reunited. Rather, creation was unique as a whole. The relationship within creation, as within the Trinity, was an immediate relationship of love and knowledge. There could not have been any mediated relationships between Adam and creation, since Adam belonged at the center of the Universum (in the etymological sense of "that which is turned towards unity"), or between Adam and God since Adam was in the image of God, i.e., the relationship of love between them was perfect. In a world without any divisions, without any mystery, there was no need to build bridges and establish links. In a world where relationships were direct, there was no need to practice more or less perfect means of operating. In a world where the harmony and communion of all things prevailed, there could not have been any place for mediated constraints or subjugations. There was no possible distinction between ends and means. The living Adam was in communion with his only possible end and he did not have to practice any means. In *The Presence of the Kingdom*⁶ I have tried to show how, in Jesus Christ, all means are re-integrated in the end; in creation, the distinction was not yet established.

Everything was truly a whole and the plenitude of God filled everything while wisdom danced before him (Proverbs 8:30). What end was there to pursue in these conditions, and by what means? What possible meaning could there be to the notion of means, when everything was given within the unity of being? Afterwards, if we can even glimpse an account of that unity of the creation with its creator, then we can understand that there could not have been, for example, property in Eden. The whole was entrusted to Adam to manage, but there were no particulars that Adam could appropriate to himself. Only when the unity of creation was shattered did things separate, with each element taking on a particular destiny, so that there is a relationship of man to individual things. Only then, when a particular relationship had been established, could anything be called property. If we understand this miraculous universality, then to the same extent can we understand that there could not have been technique—no genus or species of technique—because technique is never anything but a collection of means and the search for the most efficient means. These two elements were radically excluded.

There could be no means in a world where all relationships were immediate. Just as Adam did not have to institute religion or magic in order to establish or regulate his relationship with God, because he spoke with God face to face; and just as there was no protocol or sacrifices; so Adam did not have to use any method to contact nature, to make use of plants, to lead the animals. While ruling over it, he was in communion with the entire whole to which he belonged. He needed to follow no method, to apply no technique, because there was no force to exert, no need to fulfill, no necessity to overcome. The entire world of techniques in all their applications was completely foreign to Eden. It is even more foreign if we think of technique as having only one end—which is efficiency. What could a search for efficiency mean in a world of communion and free offering? In particular, we have already seen that in the case of work, there could not have been any technique, since the goal was not to produce nor to force the earth to give man fruits which she had denied him. To the extent that work was free, gratuitous, and facile play there was no technique to apply. Such would be a direct contradiction in terms. At that moment there could have been no question of making the earth produce more than it was producing spontaneously, for in this Universum the idea of a "more" would have been quite foreign. We get an idea of this situation in the story of the manna, where each person received what was necessary each day, but where methods and techniques of conservation in order to have more manna were absolutely useless (Exodus 16:4 ff.). Efficiency, more, property, reserves—these are notions linked to technique, but without meaning in relationship to Eden.

Furthermore, let us note that those who hold to the idea of technique in Eden and say that, for cultivation, it was necessary to have a tool, should not stop when they are doing so well. For alas, our text does not say only "to cultivate" but it says to cultivate and to guard. Therefore, we have to conclude that if Adam needed tools for cultivation, then he also needed weapons for guarding. The two things are identical. If Adam's work was the point of departure, the beginning and the justification of technique, then his mission to guard was the point of departure, the beginning and the justification for police and armies. Is this not unlikely? It could not be more so. And if we reject weapons then we have to reject tools as well. Nevertheless, those who argue for technique in Eden still maintain that Adam was charged with ruling over creation and, in the present world, it is precisely technique that is the route to this dominion. Thanks to his inventions and since he has a thoroughly technical apparatus in his grasp, man can truly rule over this creation and, as a result, he can obey the order of God. Since he received the

same order in Eden, the path to achieve it must have been the same. (It is always the same error of trying to imagine Eden from our situation.)

Let us leave aside the problem of means and think only of what was or could have been Adam's dominion before the fall. We have a perfectly clear example when God brings all the animals "to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all . . ." (Genesis 2:19-20). It is hard to imagine what aberration could lead to eliciting the origins of science and technique from such a text! "This passage implies recognition of the species, and hence observation, which is the source of science. To know is one of man's first vocations, and he gives it all the resources of his spirit . . ." We can only marvel at the ambiguity in terms: "to know," doubtless, but in the biblical sense, which has nothing in common with scientific knowledge. Spirit? Certainly, but in the biblical sense, which has nothing in common with scientific intelligence. It is this kind of slipperiness that radically falsifies the meaning of a text of revelation. As for saying that the act of naming is the origin of science, this is a dramatic misunderstanding of what Adam did. The sentence just quoted speaks of "recognition of the species," that is to say, the distinguishing of species. Indeed, this is the first mechanism of scientific and technical intelligence—to divide, to separate, to analyze. The language used by science is a language of division. Yet biblically, to give a name is exactly the inverse phenomenon: it is a re-capitulating fact. To assign a name is to discern a spiritual reality; it is to assign a spiritual value; it is to set forth a role, a destiny; it is to establish a relationship for God. To give a name to something is to reveal it in its entire being and to put it at the disposal of the speaker. It is to accord it truth (and not reality). Biblically, we have a spiritual act which has nothing in common or no point of contact with the intellectual operation of science. It is a decisive misunderstanding of the text that allows the comparison. When Adam named a plant, for example, he would not call it "crucifer" because it exhibited such and such characteristics, and plants exhibiting all these characteristics were of such and such a family, etc. He conferred on it a destiny to fulfill before God. Master of creation by and for God, in naming the animals, Adam thus presented them to God. He was free to do so. God indeed granted him the initiative and freedom in this global relationship with the totality of this world ("to see what he would call them"!). Still it was not a matter of an activity where man was on the *outside*, a *deus ex machina*, a scientist who observes. He was himself involved in the

interplay of creation where he attributed to each animal both its position and its role.

Let us reflect further. This naming was also an act of dominion by which he affirmed himself as Master. It was not in using or constraining creation that he was the Master, but it was in naming, that is, in speaking. He used the word—like God. Adam, in the image of God, spoke as God has spoken. His word, far from being scientific language, was the continuation of the word of God. Just as God created by his word ("God said" and things were so), so Adam demonstrated his mastery or his dominion through the intermediary of speech. He needed nothing other than this sovereign word which expressed the love and power of God. It was not by a technique that he cultivated, that he guarded, that he ruled, etc.; it was by the word alone—exactly as God did not create by technical means, but by his word. There was no relationship of exploitation, utilization, or subordination. The word is the expression of spiritual superiority, of a directing which nevertheless leaves the other *intact* (which technique never does) and free in his decision. Before the fall, there was no other form of dominion over the world for Adam, and his language was not the intellectual operation of analysis, but the knowledge of communion, participation, and love.

To grasp thoroughly the extraordinary difference in this kind of dominion before and after the fall, it is enough to compare what God said to Adam and what he said to Noah. To Adam, he said, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over all the animals" (Genesis 1:28). To Noah, he said (after the flood and while they were trying to rediscover a just humanity before God), "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth . . . ; into your hands they are delivered" (Genesis 9:1-2). The distance is enormous. I would say that it is the entire distance between the word of Adam and technique after the fall. Instead of ruling within communion and without means, now there is fear, the terror the animals have for the man who rules them by his technical means. The animals no longer come, but flee instead. They are no longer loved in thanksgiving for creation; they are no longer presented by Adam with praise to God; they are delivered *into the hands* of man. In the one instance, there is the word; in the other, the hands. Here we truly see the insertion of technique. Even though it is not false to think that technique started in an order from God who assigned dominion to man, still it is not the order of creation given to Adam. It is from the order of the fall. Both Adam and Noah ruled, but not in the same way, nor under the same conditions, nor with the same meaning.

Actually, the first time the Bible speaks very clearly about technique, it is concerning Cain, although nothing prevented the Bible from speaking about it concerning Adam as well. The three descendants of Cain were: the one who raised flocks, the one who made music, and the one who forged iron and bronze tools—three techniques (Genesis 4:17-22). The Bible tells us precisely that techniques started here. "He was the father of those who . . ." I do not think that this is entirely by accident (and, of course, we must take into account that this might have been an etiological myth such as the Kenite tribe came up with, etc., although that would change nothing about its truth). We do not have to stay with this text for a long time, but we can try to understand why the Bible speaks to us about technique only after the fall and in the situation of Cain.

We have seen why technique was impossible in Eden, but the fall brings about a radical break—the universum which had been created has been shattered. Adam is no longer in direct communion with God: he hides. The break between them is complete. Starting from this break between God and man, all other breaks follow—Adam and Eve separate. (Adam accuses his wife—what greater break?) They are no longer one, but two. Man and the animals separate. (Eve accuses the serpent.) They learn fear and shame. "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Genesis 3:7). That is to say, precisely, that the relationship among the elements of creation is completely upset. Instead of unity and communion, there is now an "I" and a "You." There is the gaze of the Other, which is the gaze of a stranger imposed on me. Now I am under the scrutiny of the gaze of the Other, which is a look without love and without understanding and welcome, but only coldly perspicacious. (Here it is—science, which discerns the objective reality of things and which sees that I am "other." This observation now transforms everything into an object, and the other has become an object for me.) The mirror of creation is shattered. The universum is broken, and therefore it is necessary to have means—means for holding the pieces together, means for establishing new relations in a world without relations.

Now it is necessary to have mediators and intermediaries because of the distance that has been established between God and man, between people, and between man and matter. There is no more immediate contact. Everything has become mediated. In particular, in his relationship with God, man is going to institute religion, which is both a screen between the two and, at the same time, a way of approach. Thus we have the sacrifices of Abel and Cain. Then, in his relationship with nature, man creates technique. At this point, we

are thrown into the world of means and into their multiplication without end, without any checks. Indeed, we have to grasp that the proliferation of means characterizing our age is not a sort of progress whose roots reach back into the situation of Adam and Eden. Technical proliferation is necessary precisely because that situation no longer exists!

It is also necessary because, in this shattered universe, the word no longer has any special quality. Our language is no longer the same as Adam's, and it's is no longer the extension of the Word incarnate. It no longer has a spiritual power or an initiating force. "Words, words!"⁷ There is no longer anything in words but a distant reflection of God's language (and for sure there is this reflection, so that fortunately speech can again be a sign, and can send us back again to the Word). On the one side, because language is degraded and is the speech of sinful man, the word of man separated from God, the Living One who gives power to the Word; on the other side, because it is embedded in a shattered world and a universe of disruption, disobedience, and denial—for both reasons language can no longer be a useful instrument for the lost Adam. Language is no longer enough to build bridges between the fragments of the world. It is not enough to lead everything that is imbued with a spirit of revolt back to obedience. Even when it expresses truth, it is not enough to determine the destiny of things. Armed only with his speech Adam is completely stripped of ammunition in this world.

He must have other weapons and other means for himself. Again, he has to insure his dominion, but he must have other means to do so. He must invent, and these means will no longer be those of communion, but means of force, laceration, utilization, and exploitation. This is where Technique stands. And it cannot be otherwise in the situation in which Adam is placed by the order of God. "Cursed is the ground because of you; . . . thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you . . . In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread . . ." (Genesis 3:17-19). Also there is the work of the serpent: "I will put enmity between you and the woman" (Genesis 3:15). Thus the world becomes hostile to man. Doubly hostile—nature which produced everything in abundance for Adam's nourishment and joy now becomes an unfruitful nature which resists and rebels. In Eden, it was not useful to have a tool, because everything was a whole. But now Adam is in a world which does not give him anything freely, a world which is closed to his contact, a world which spontaneously gives things that are not useful. As a result, Adam has to conquer and control this nature which gives him thorns and thistles. Adam will have to wrest his wheat and his fruit from it. But

to do this, he will have to wound the earth, to plough it, to dig it, to unveil it. He will have to wound the trees and prune them and graft them. Thus Adam finds himself in a relationship of struggle, and rules by this means, that is, his technique, which cannot be an instrument of love but of domination.

Similarly, the world has become hostile with its powers of aggression which it hides from man—wild animals, beginning with the serpent. Man now has to protect himself from everything that attacks him, and thus other means become necessary—weapons, for example. (Why should one limit techniques to tools? Weapons are the sign of a technique at least as early as tools!) More importantly, once again, man has to resort to the whole of technique. A qualified expert in these matters has been able to write that technique is a "protective envelope which man wraps around himself" (Leroi-Gourhan⁸). And it is true that technique is a collection of means for protection at least as much as it is the means of domination. In both cases, however, what characterizes the instrument is its efficiency. The only thing that denotes technique is its efficiency. That is to say, it is an absolutely new preoccupation which comes about in a world which denies and attacks, but a preoccupation which would have been incomprehensible in the garden of Eden.

Now Adam has to succeed in . . . But what would success mean in a world of thanksgiving, of gift? Thus it is that Adam has now been placed in a *truly* new situation. He knows necessity, a few aspects of which have just been recalled. Previously, Adam had lived in freedom, and his work was freedom, play, child-like. He was free to be himself in front of his Creator who was his Father. He was free from all constraint, all obligation. He knew only this freedom, with its complement of respect for the will of God, respect within a free love and a free dialogue. There was no law, but an order—the very order of the freedom of God. From the moment when Adam separated himself from God, when his freedom was no longer love but the choice between two possibilities, from that moment Adam moved from the realm of freedom into the realm of necessity. (As for us, we no longer know anything but the freedom which is always the choice between two possibilities, and we characterize freedom by the possibility of choice; but let us not forget that this is nothing but freedom in the world of the fall and gravity and death.) When he no longer lives in the communion of love with God, then he lives in the order of law. Now he knows only duty. Now he knows that an implacable order governs his destiny, and that his universe is one where everything falls—that his universe is truly one of gravity, of care, of the fall.

Everything is now governed necessarily. Fatality becomes a sign of his life and he is subject to an interplay of laws on every level—physical and moral, biological and sociological—each of which is only a facet of the same necessity. In this universe of necessity, to which he must yield, man learns to use necessity, to be crafty with it or turn it against itself. He learns to know and calculate the laws of nature for the modification of his own condition. By submitting to these laws, he is able to rule them. It is in discerning them as necessity that he is able to live in the middle of them and to subsist as a man who, in the depth of his heart, still keeps alive the memory of and aspiration for freedom.

When we write this, however, we have done no more than describe the process of technique, itself guided by science—the means of submitting to necessity by yielding to it. But in a world where there was no necessity, what would this mean? Thus, no matter what attitude one takes toward technique, it can only be perceived as a phenomenon of the fall; it has nothing to do with the order of creation; it by no means results from the vocation of Adam desired by God. It is necessarily of the situation of the fallen Adam.

And now it remains for me to beg the reader not to have me say what I did not say! I did not say that technique is a fruit of sin. I did not say that technique is contrary to the will of God. I did not say that technique in itself is evil. I said only that technique is not a prolongation of the Edenic creation, that it is not a compliance of man to a vocation which was given to him by God, that it is not the fruit of the first nature of Adam. It is the product of the situation in which sin has put man; it is inscribed exclusively in the fallen world; it is uniquely part of this fallen world; it is a product of necessity and not of human freedom.

—translated by Greta Lindstrom and Katharine Temple

Notes

Jacques Ellul's "Technology and the Opening Chapters of Genesis" is translated from "La Technique et les premiers chapitres de la Genèse," *Foi et Vie* 59, no. 2 (1960): 97-113.

A few general notes on the translation: Ellul's capitalization does not always seem consistent; we have simply tried to reflect his own conventions. The verb tenses also are not as uniform as they might

be in English. But here we tried to put everything before the fall in the past tense (as well as any specific past event, such as the flood), with generalization after the fall in the historical present.

Biblical quotations follow the Revised Standard Version, except where Ellul's interpretation depends on a slightly different reading—in which case the text has been altered to fit Ellul's emphasis. An example is Genesis 2:15: the RSV reads "till the earth and keep it," but Ellul interprets "keep" as "guard," which is quite warranted by the Hebrew. Also, on occasion Ellul uses a paraphrase instead of a literal quotation to condense a long passage. In some of these cases the paraphrase appears in quotation marks.

The French *domination*, which can be translated either as "domination" or "dominion," presents special problems. Since the RSV has "dominion" in the Genesis passage, this has been adopted in the translation when referring to the situation before the fall. After the fall, for reasons which the text should make clear, "domination" seemed more appropriate. Yet the corresponding verb, *dominir*, has been regularly rendered as "to rule."

The French *ordre*, like the English "order," can refer both to an objective structure or to a command. Thus it has always been rendered by its English cognate, even when this sounded a little odd.

French *parole* and *verbe* have both sometimes been rendered by the English "word" because of the theological context.

"Adam" in Hebrew means simply "man," and Ellul plays on this fact—although it is not always obvious in English.

The following notes are not part of Ellul's text:

1. See H. Mehl-Koehnlein, "Travail," in Jean-Jacques von Allmen, ed., *Vocabulaire biblique* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1954), pp. 294-295. Ellul's original quotation abbreviates slightly.

2. See Henri Rondet, "Arbeit II, Theologish," sections 1) and 2), in Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner, eds., *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1957), columns 803-805. Ellul appears to have taken some liberties in translating this text. The French quotation reads: "According to God's plan, there is a co-operation between man and creation. Man is in the world in order to accomplish, to complete, and to finish the work of creation and make it useful for himself."

3. In correspondence, Ellul credits this quotation to an article by Henri Moussiegt from *Réforme* (1959). However, it has not proved possible to locate the article in question.

4. Jean Laloup and Jean Nelis, *Hommes et Machines: Initiation ou l'humanisme technique* (Tournai: Castermann, 1953).

5. Emmanuel Mounier, *Be Not Afraid; A Denunciation of Despair* (London: Rockliff, 1951). This is a translation by C. Rowland of *La Petite peur du XXe siècle* (Neuchâtel: Baconnaire, 1948) and *Qu'est ce que la personnalisme?* (Paris: Seuil, 1946). Reprinted, New York: Harper, 1954; and New York: Sheed & Ward, 1962. Ellul is referring only to the first half of this book, *La Petite peur du XXe siècle*, and especially to the essay "The Case Against the Machine."

6. Jacques Ellul, *Presence of the Kingdom* (New York: Seabury, 1967). Trans. by Olive Wyan from *Présence au monde moderne*. (Paris: Roulet, 1948).

7. English in original.

8. Andre Leroi-Gourhan's major work, from which this quotation probably comes, is *Evolution et techniques*, 2 vols. (Paris: Albin Michel, 1943-1945); 2nd editions, vol. 1: *L'homme et la matiere* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1971), and vol. 2: *Milieu et techniques* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1973). See also Leroi-Gourhan's *Le geste et la parole*, vol. 1: *Technique et langage* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1964).