

Jacques ELLUL and the renewal of metaphysical hope: a medoc against the alienation of man in the technical system

Joseph TEGUEZEM, Leila Gaëlle TCHOUANKAM TAGNE,

Associate Professor University of Dschang-Camerun

PhD Student, University of Dschang-Camerun

ABSTRACT: The ellulean approach of the technical system shows that automatism, self-increase, uniqueness, totalization, training / linking, universality and autonomy are the fundamental characteristics which give this system power and a productive performance whose teleology is to ensure the happiness of humanity. This happiness is understood exclusively in terms of well-being, of the technical comfort which bewitches man and ultimately sacrifices his ontological and sacred freedom. The sacred is no longer the original and sovereign man, nor God who thus created it, but the technical system which quickly displayed a usurped sacredness and divinity. The alienation that follows becomes, for man, a devastating disease whose extra-technical solution is found, according to Jacques Ellul, in the revival of metaphysical hope, wrongly judged by technophiles as superfetatory in the world. achievement of the happiness of mankind.

Keywords: *Alienation, happiness, disalienation, metaphysical hope, freedom, technical system.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the Technician System¹, Jacques Ellul shows how technology has evolved from the dawn of time to becoming a system that governs nature, man and society. In this systemic regency, the technique is presented by its lauders as the only "stake of the century"². Consequently, everything is implemented, in the technical world, so that human activity, individualized or socialized, is subject to the requirements of the system so that it preserves its technical superiority and effectively achieves the expected happiness. Endowed, in fact, with characteristics which guarantee its independence and ensure its prowess, the system is a hyperorganism which overdetermines and vertically orients the actions, lifestyles and desires of individuals. Societies, in their geographic diversity, are also not immune to technical conditioning; they are behind a system that has already taken their functioning hostage at the political, economic, cultural, ecological, moral, axiological, etc. levels. The system which is thus in the posture of a manufactured god, constantly crystallizes the hopes of individuals and societies, due to the very efficiency and seduction orchestrated by the slew of technical tools, which leads them to consider the system like an immaculate benefactress which will definitively liberate them from their multiple sufferings. In this perspective, the Word of God, until then considered by Christians as the compass par excellence of the liberating action of the human being, is abandoned and "humiliated"³ as being without positive effects on the progress of humanity. . It is in this order of ideas that the atheism of the technolaters sounded the death knell of metaphysical "hope"⁴, that is to say of faith in God, creator of heaven and earth, infallible guide. Which makes the excellence of the nature of man, of the morality of his acts, of his values, of his freedom and of his happiness. The paradox of the passionate glorification of the technical system and the consequent atheism is the unconsciousness of a liberticidal / alienating mutation that operates in man through the imperatives of unbridled productivity and consumer advertising, the ambivalence of this system being fundamentally established. From this perspective, the blissful and radical conception that some have a priori of the technical system is, according to Ellul, a "technological bluff"⁵ which masks its limits and the alienation of which it is the vehicle. The technical system frees man only by amputating him at the same time of his ontological and sacred freedom. Now, Ellul believes that man can recover his fundamental freedom only by rehabilitating, as a Medoc,

¹ Ellul, J., *Le système technicien*, Coll. Documents, Paris, Le cherche-Midi, 2004, 2012.

² Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, Coll. Sciences politiques, Paris, Armand Colin, 1954.

³ Ellul, J., *La parole humiliée*, Paris, La Table Ronde, 2008.

⁴ Ellul, J., *L'espérance oubliée*, Paris, La Table Ronde, 2004.

⁵ Ellul, J., *Le bluff technologique*, Coll. « La force des Idées », Paris, Hachette, 1988.

metaphysical hope, that is to say his faith in God, true vigilante of this freedom and source of a happiness that cannot be found in the technician system. However, for this rehabilitation to be decisive, it is first necessary to criticize the technical system for its hypertrophied characteristics, in order to rid it of its usurped divinization and sacredness. The disalienation of man, that is to say the resumption of his freedom by the detour of metaphysical hope, would it not then be the occasion to remind the technical system that it is not its God, but a gigantic technical organization responsible for providing man with the tools he needs to personally and sovereignly achieve his happiness? Decidedly, are human liberation and happiness possible in a world where technology has forgotten God?

To answer these questions, we will endeavor, while respecting the Ellulian approach of the technical system, to highlight the fundamental characteristics of this system (1), the consequent alienation of man (2) and the metaphysical hope as a solution to this alienation (3).

1. THE TECHNICAL SYSTEM AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

The ellulean expertise of the technical system highlights automatism, self-increase, uniqueness, totalization, training / linking, universality, and autonomy as being the fundamental characteristics underlying its existence and functioning.

Automatism implies that, in the technical system, everything has been mathematically regulated so that "the orientation and the technical choices are made by themselves [...] without forgiveness, without possible discussion, between the means to be used."⁶ In other words, automatism is an intrinsic and exclusive virtue of the system which allows it to choose rigorously and sovereignly from within the different techniques it needs to ensure itself, and efficiently, its life and his progress. As such, "this automatism cannot be judged or questioned"⁷ by human beings: "man is no longer absolutely the agent of choice [...] nor the agent of technical progress"⁸. It is reduced to a receptacle whose role is to passively receive the effects and results of the techniques of a system which has already deprived it of its freedom and of its capacity to question it. Any assessment of the technical choices of the automated system is prohibited and considered as a non-technical judgment which may negatively influence the expected result. In addition, the judgment of technical operations represents a risk for man and in particular that of "entering into competition with a power against which he has no effective defense: his means are not effective, they will be stifled or eliminated and he himself will be defeated"⁹. Therefore, his life will only be saved if he religiously accepts what Ellul calls "technical necessity [or] technical slavery."¹⁰

In its automatism, the system cannot, in fact, tolerate criticisms that stem from our psychology, our desires and our personal feelings which are not allowed in the technical field. These critiques constitute non-technical and unimportant challenges that are immediately dismissed by the system. Because, "the challenge brought to [...] a system is today only a technical challenge"¹¹ and not a psychological, sentimental challenge. By virtue of its automatism, the system invites us to ensure our survival by making ourselves as technical as possible, to respond powerfully against all the pressures that we are subjected to in both our social and natural environment. It is from this perspective that Ellul invites us to better understand the consequences of the automatism of this system when he writes: "Today every man can only have a place to live if he is a technician. Each community can only resist the pressures of the surrounding environment if it uses techniques. Having the technical response is currently a matter of life and death for all. For there is no equal power in the world"¹². The pressures exerted by society and nature on man are, as we can see, so great that anyone who refuses to become technically is purely and simply called upon to disappear from the map of the terrestrial globe. The automatism of the system is, moreover, correlated with its self-increase.

Self-increase means, first of all, that "technology has reached such a point of evolution that it is transformed and progresses almost without decisive human intervention"¹³. This amounts to saying that we must understand "by self-increase the fact that everything happens as if the technical system were growing by an internal force, intrinsic and without decisive intervention by man"¹⁴. From this perspective, the role of man is not decisive in technical progress, since "it is the principle of combining techniques that causes self-increase"¹⁵. Indeed, the self-generation of technique is explained by the fact that, "when a new technical form appears, it allows and conditions several others. To take a very large and elementary example, we will say that the internal

⁶ Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, op. cit., p. 75.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁴ Ellul, J., *Le système technicien*, op. cit., p. 217.

¹⁵ Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, op. cit., p. 83.

combustion engine allowed and conditioned the technique of the automobile, that the internal combustion engine conditioned the techniques of the submarine, etc."¹⁶. In other words, the technical factor takes precedence over the human factor in the growth of techniques.

Man should then become aware of the superiority of the technical factor and accompany him, in his improvement, through whatever profession he exercises. This support does not mean, let us be clear, that man submits technical progress to his will, but to contribute to its growth according to his own internal logic. If, by virtue of its automatism, the technical system rejects, in its operation, the judgment and orientation of man, it would no longer be astonishing if in its self-progression, this system only produces what it is capable of produce, and not what the men who consume its products want: "it is not, observes Ellul, the "desires" of the "producers" that rule, it is the technical necessity of production that is imposed on consumers. You produce what the machine can produce, and that is what the consumer receives. To believe that the consumer is still in control is to indulge in a dangerous illusion"¹⁷.

Self-growth follows in the footsteps of the automatism of the technical system, to the extent that it transforms man, the consumer, into a technical slave. In this situation of captivity in which man finds himself in spite of himself, all his actions and all his desires and dreams are channeled in such a way as to boost the growth of the system in which his freedom of consumption is held hostage. Clearly, "self-increase means that Technique represents a center of polarization for all man in the twentieth century, and that it feeds on everything that he can want, attempt, and dream. It transforms human acts into a technical factor; it is not a question of self-creation but of the insertion into the system and for its benefit of the most diverse and seemingly foreign factors"¹⁸. But, self-increase and automatism are only intelligible through a unitary conception of the technical system.

The system derives its unity from the fundamental interweaving of all its parts, because they "are ontologically linked"¹⁹ and form a monolithic block with a proven instability. In other words, this unity means that the technical system is "a whole whose parts are closely united to one another, are interdependent and obey a common regularity. This character of Oneness is [therefore] only the concrete expression of this system: the techniques are linked to each other in such a way that they only exist one by one and are completely dependent"²⁰. In *Histoire des techniques*, III, Dumas had already rightly established this interdependence of techniques by writing: "technical progress constitutes a whole whose different elements are linked to each other by tensions which make them dependent on one another"²¹.

As such, the unity of the system does not mean that all techniques play the same role. Each specific technique plays a specific role within the system. Unity means that these ontological and functional specificities are transcended within the system by the common objective sought, through a kind of active solidarity of all the techniques involved. This means that if, cyclically, a technique is set up to solve an isolated and contingent problem, it is ultimately in the unitary movement of the system that it will have to be understood. Each technique is presented as an essential link in the systemic chain without which the system would cease to be a unit and fall into a disintegration of atomic elements. It is by virtue of this unity that "everything holds together in the technical world as in that of machines, where one has to distinguish the expediency of the isolated means and the expediency of the" complex "mechanical"²². It is from this perspective that the unity of the technical system also implies its totalization.

Totalization is "a sort of concatenation of all the fragmentary Techniques, one to another, [which] entails a sort of [synthesis] of technical operations [which concern] all aspects of life and action [and] produces a whole which tends towards completeness"²³. Totalization is a unifying act which aims, so to speak, to bring out, beyond the singularity specific to each technique, a global view of the progress of techniques in the world. This supposes that any conclusive study of technical progress must be global and not specific. Because, as Ellul says so well about the technical phenomenon, it is a question of "a global whole, in which what counts is less each of the parts (which one can certainly study, as Technique specified but which never gives us a view of the Technique) except the system of relations and connections between them"²⁴. In other words, totalization is the opposite of specification, it is the concern to bring technical diversity back to technical unity, it is the synthetic march towards a single system which will convert the multiple into one. In the technical field, this totalization is not "a metaphysical construction"²⁵ which has no empirical anchoring; it concerns the concrete techniques

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁸ Ellul, J., *Le système technicien*, op. cit., p. 217.

¹⁹ Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, op. cit., p. 89.

²⁰ Ellul, J., *Le système technicien*, op. cit., p. 163.

²¹ Dumas, quoted by Ellul, J., *Ibid.*

²² Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, op. cit., p. 89.

²³ Ellul, J., *Le système technicien*, op. cit., p. 207.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

which are deployed in the world. The Unity that it aims is not only embodied by the technical system, but it is also symptomatic of a historical training / sequence of techniques.

The sequence of techniques appears to be one of the fundamental characteristics of the unified and self-increasing system. From this perspective, the development of techniques is like assembly-line work, so that each seemingly isolated action has repercussions on all the intertwined links of the working chain. In other words, the sequence of techniques in history is such that

"You can't take anything away from it, change nothing from it, without changing everything else. It was not out of fantasy or some personal desire for power that the system was built. The factors have generated each other [...] The technics have appeared successively because the previous ones made necessary the following ones, otherwise they would have been ineffective; they could not have provided their maximum output. It is useless to hope for a modification of this system which is too complex and too delicate for any of its parts to be modifiable on its own"²⁶.

Furthermore, there is a close correlation between the sequence of techniques and their universality. As techniques follow one another, they immediately tend to become universal. According to Ellul, "this universality (that is, the fact that we now meet technology everywhere and the technical system extends to all fields) must be seen from two points of view. First, there is universality concerning the environment and the fields of human activity. Then there is geographic universality: the technical system extends to all countries"²⁷.

As for the natural environment, we realize that it is irresistibly transforming into a technical domain where objects made by robotic machines have replaced natural objects. This substitution of the natural artifice at the environmental level is so pervasive that the areas which escape the universalizing logic of the technical system are only very negligible epiphenomena. It is in this sense that, according to Ellul, "universalism is therefore first and foremost the fact that" the entire Globe tends to become a vast megalopolis where the plots of nature which still resist this invincible push are not only a residual phenomenon: the logical and inexorable state is the artificial environment, made by automated machines " (A. Molès)"²⁸. When it comes to human activities, we have to be convinced that the situation is similar to that of the natural environment. Because almost all of them are technified, the aim of the system being to integrate and orient all human activities in such a way as to safeguard its superiority and universality. Ellul reminds us that in the United States, "all operations in life, from distractions to love and death, are operations viewed from a technical perspective. At the same time, the number of "technical slaves" is growing rapidly and the ideal of all governments is to push industrialization and technical enslavement as much as possible."²⁹

Geographically, the universality of the technical phenomenon results in the invasion of all countries, since the logic of this universality is to subject all countries to the sole technical conception of development. This submission is thus made in violation of the particular principles from which each country can sovereignly choose its paths of progress. It is for this reason that despite the existence of "different paths of civilization, all peoples today are on the same path"³⁰ as if they were all at the same level, while they are located "at points different from the same trajectory"³¹. According to Ellul, the United States and the U.S.S.R. are considered "two great technical powers" whose "technical superiority" obliges each country to "follow one or the other"³².

The automatism, self-increase, totalization, training / sequencing, the uniqueness and universality of the technical system are crowned by its autonomy. This implies that this system is not only "a whole in itself, a "closed organism", a goal by [itself]"³³, but also the refusal of any external intervention in its functional efficiency. Because, to be effective, the system must be independent as a closed organization to avoid the influence of non-technical considerations. In its autonomy, the system is "a reality in itself which is sufficient in itself, which has its particular laws and its own determinations"³⁴. In more explicit terms, "autonomous technique, this means that it ultimately depends only on itself, it traces its own path, it is a first and not a second factor, it must be considered as an organism which tends to close, to self-determine: it is a goal by itself"³⁵.

For this reason, the technical system is not dependent on economics or politics. It does not depend on morality either. It is the unconditioned who conditions everything. He does not accept any limitation whatsoever. He does not tolerate judgment. Economics must judge economic problems, politics political problems, and morals moral problems. As for the technical problems, these disciplines have nothing to do with it: "only the technical criteria must be brought into play. The technique judging itself is obviously freed from

²⁶ Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, op. cit., p. 106.

²⁷ Ellul, J., *Le système technicien*, op. cit., p. 177.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, op. cit., p. 107.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, p. 109.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³⁵ Ellul, J., *Le système technicien*, op. cit., p. 133.

what made the main obstacle [...] to human action. It thus ensures in a theoretical and systematic way the freedom which it had in fact been able to conquer. She no longer has to fear any limitation whatsoever since she is outside of good and evil"³⁶. In its operation, the autonomous system reduces man "to the rank of a catalyst or even a token which is placed in the slot of the automatic device and which triggers the movement without participating in it"³⁷, "it is not necessary that the "man has anything decisive to do in the course of operations, because it is from him that the error comes"³⁸. The autonomy of the system therefore gives it a perfection and accuracy in technical operations that are unobtainable in humans who, "considered under the angle of modern techniques, [is only] a failure"³⁹.

In short, the rapid phenomenology of the technical system that we have just made shows that this system is a mega-organization of which automatism, self-increase, self-sufficiency, uniqueness, totalization, efficiency, accuracy. Operations, training, universality, autonomy, sovereignty and perfection give it a breathtaking seduction which obliges all countries to integrate it in an irresistible way. Human societies are now engaged in it, hand and foot, to satisfy the desires of a system which has already quarantined their own desires and judgments, for they must exist in view of this system which surpasses them in value and dignity. This is easily understood, all the more so as in the relationship between man and the technical system, the latter is considered by technologists as an independent and matrix entity which defines the being of man and determines his thinking. Ontologically and epistemologically, it overdetermines man. The system which decides everything upstream is like a super-individual who commands those who are subordinate to him and responsible for carrying out his will to the letter. It is not surprising that the reference to technical dynamics leads technicians to treat the system as a super-being endowed with characteristics that equate it to a living human subject. This assimilation reaches its apotheosis in an organicist interpretation of the technical system. The system is then considered as a living organism of which all the parts are linked to each other in a fundamental, necessary way: "all the parts of the technical system are closely linked"⁴⁰. Thus, the slightest movement of the system is reflected in all its parts, and precisely in all the men and societies who are part of its empire and contribute in different ways to its progress. The technical system would then be a super dynamic system in which the individual performs only one predefined function⁴¹. In the meantime, would the technical system not be the vehicle of human alienation? How to establish this alienation without putting under wraps the ambivalence which essentially characterizes the technical phenomenon?

II. THE TECHNICAL SYSTEM AND HUMAN ALIENATION

In view of the characteristics of the technical system, it should be noted that this system is the herald of human alienation. Alienation is a process which consists in stripping the individual of his capacity for self-determination that is to say of his freedom and independence in his decision-making and the choice of the ideals that he would personally like defend. At the level of society, alienation manifests itself in the overdetermination of the various policies for the development and consumption of goods resulting from technical engineering, so that the sovereignty of the appointed administrative authorities is encapsulated in the steamroller of the technical system. However, in order to highlight this alienation, we must not lose sight of the ambivalence of the technical system.

This ambivalence means that "'good and bad', good and bad effects are intrinsically linked in the very constitution of the technical universe and in any technique"⁴². Duverger described it, Ellul reminds us, "like Aesop's tongue: the best and the worst thing!"⁴³. As such, ambivalence is an ontological attribute of systematized technique: it is born with its ambivalence, which is to say before any use that can be made of it. According to Ellul, it is absurd to subordinate the ambivalence of the technique to the way of using it, since "the technique carries its effects in itself, independently of the uses"⁴⁴. Admittedly, the effects related to uses are legion, but secondary. The opposite would be possible if the technique were neutral. However, "all the authors

³⁶ Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, op. cit., p. 122.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

³⁹ M. Jungk, quoted by Ellul, *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ellul, J., *Bluff technologique*, op. cit., p. 55.

⁴¹ As described by Ellul, the technical system has a strong kinship with the Hegelian System, the unity of which is a dialectical interweaving of philosophical subsystems. As such, these subsystems are instrumentalised by a meta-reason which ensures the existence and sustainability of the grand system in its ontological absoluteness. Considered as parts of the super system, these subsystems in themselves have no ontological substrate of their own, nor a trace of truth that is naturally theirs. Their being and their truth are borrowed from the absolute system which envelops them, so that, outside the system, the parts are only appearances laden with lies. They must remain welded together within the system and obey it mechanically, if they are to exist and have any meaning. Likewise, in the technical system, man and society are exactly what the parts are in the Hegelian system.

⁴² Ellul, J., *Bluff technologique*, op. cit., p. 57.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

are indeed convinced that the technique is not neutral. That is to say that it carries by itself, and whatever use one wants to make of it, a certain number of positive or negative consequences⁴⁵. In itself, the technique is not entirely positive, nor completely negative; it is potentially positive and negative. Therefore, no moderate optimism can defend the entire positivity of the technique. Likewise, no balanced pessimism can establish the complete negativity of the technique. We just have to be convinced that the ambivalence of the technique means that "the development of the technique is neither good, nor bad, nor neutral, but that it is made of a complex mixture of elements, positive and negative "good" and "bad" if we want to adopt a moral vocabulary"⁴⁶.

Moreover, ambivalence should not be confused with ambiguity: "whereas the idea of ambivalence implies that in the object considered there are two very precise orientations and of opposite value, the idea of ambiguity is much more vague: what characterizes ambiguity is the confused, the indeterminate, the vague, the ambiguous... but the technique is neither vague nor confused: it is perfectly certain and does not seem in any way equivocal"⁴⁷. This difference between ambivalence and ambiguity shows that the negative effects as well as the positive effects of the technical phenomenon are clear, indisputable, because they do not suffer from any confusion or ambiguity. In this respect, human alienation unquestionably appears in the register of negative elements of the technical system. To question this alienation is in no way to fall into a radical pessimism with regard to technology, as if the latter were totally negative, dehumanizing, and absurd. On the contrary, it is to wonder what, under the deep and complex upheavals of technology, man, society and humanity in its entire links lose beyond what they gain. Is what they gain worth what they lose? In truth, it is a question of knowing whether we should let ourselves be carried away by the immeasurable feats of the technical system by sacrificing our ontological freedom and all that we have hitherto considered to be values to be triumphed.

In fact, everything happens as if the technician were the first victim of the alienation secreted by his own system. Because he thinks he can technically solve any problem, solving one problem now paradoxically creates a future problem to be solved by new techniques. He then realizes that the system is an incomplete, imperfect and perfectible being. He engages in the uninterrupted creation of always incomplete techniques like barrels of the Danaids. He finds himself in the position of a Sisyphus condemned to roll his stone to death. There is no respite, if not the evanescent moment that allows him to see the disuse of today's techniques before resuming the search for suitable future techniques. Instead of freeing the technician, the system he himself created absorbs him from within like a boa constrictor.

Moreover, when the technician considers the system as an automatic and self-increasing whole which integrates all human activities and conditions them, this implies the alienation of the actors concerned, since they lose their autonomy and is overdetermined by the system which transcends them and acts through them. They are then the victims of a systemic alienation which consists in subjecting them vertically to the injunctions of a self-sustaining whole. From this perspective, the existence of individuals is conditioned by a technical totality on which its own existence does not depend on them, this totality being described by the technician as existing in and for it who rejects any judgment. Thus, personal initiative which is the hallmark of individual autonomy is sacrificed on the altar of technical instructions. The logic of the system requires that we explain individual thoughts and actions by the system, since it is logic of enveloping / unifying and controlling everything. Apart from its own autonomy, the system sacrifices all other forms of autonomy that may hinder its sovereignty and the implementation of its expertise. Under these conditions, man has the illusion that he is the engine of human progress while it is the system that is the real cause. It is on the strength of this all-out alienation of man that Ellul asserts:

"In the whole of the technical phenomenon, we do not remain intact, we are not only guided indirectly by this apparatus itself, but also adapted for a better use of the technique thanks to the psychological means of adaptation. Thus we cease to be independent: we are not a subject in the midst of objects on which we could freely decide our behavior: we are closely involved by this technical universe, conditioned by it. We can no longer put the man on one side and the tools on the other. We are forced to think of "man in the technical universe" as a whole. In other words, the use made of this apparatus is not decided by a spiritual, ethical and autonomous man, but by this man, and therefore, this use is just as much the result of a human option. than a technical determination: this technical universe also includes determinations which do not depend on us and which dictate a certain use"⁴⁸.

The technical system remains fundamentally focused on the paradigm of a totalizing logic that influences the actions of man and the functioning of all the compartments of the society in which he lives. Only the system can explain social, political, economic, moral, cultural life. Over time, man has assimilated a set of

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Likewise, "[technique] can do anything, but not in the one direction of positive greatness and success for the human species. It can do everything for good as well as for evil" Cf. Bourg, D., *Nature et technique. Essai sur l'idée du progrès*, Paris, Hatier, 1997, p. 216.

⁴⁷ Ellul, J., *Bluff technologique, op.cit.*, p. 57.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

techniques which have become the principles on which he acts, thinks and perceives the world. Individual action then becomes the product of technical objects. The unacknowledged objective of the system is to transform man, his thought and his action into technical objects, since basically everything has to be technical and replaced natural beings by technical beings. Beyond the alienation that the achievement of this cynical goal entails, it is the dehumanization of humanity that is targeted. For, one of the great ambitions of the technical system is to remake human nature in such a way as to radically purge it of its natural and intellectual deficiencies, on the basis of a planned improvement project. It is in this perspective that Gérard de Nerval reports the technical exploits of an enlightened person on human organs:

“After many nights of waking and working I have arrived at a discovery that will change the face of humanity in a few years. I made rubber caps which, applied early on the child's head, compress the vicious and evil organs, and on the contrary, develop the intelligent organs. To this day, the man's head has sprouted haphazardly like a mushroom. I will run it properly so that in twenty-five years, there will be no thieves, morons, loan sharks, lazy people, criminals, etc. the world will only be populated by good people and genius”⁴⁹.

The repair of human nature does not only entail the creation of a new man with new skills, but also the systematic abandonment of the old man whose essence has not yet been passed to the mold of revolutionary technique, because we “do not pour new material into a form that remains. We don't put new wine in old wineskins”⁵⁰; the imperfect old man must disappear so that the perfect man is born under the exclusive control of technology. However, this substitution of the technical man for the natural man as a sacred creature of God seriously offends the minds of moralists who unfortunately have no say in a technical system whose autonomy makes it refractory to any moral judgment. , to any non-technical evaluation. This situation pushes man's alienation to the extreme, as it doubly strips him of his ontological nature and of his freedom to appreciate the system that dehumanizes him. Ellul has, in fact, made a relevant report of the disdain of the technical system against morality:

"This is precisely one of the major characteristics of the technique," he said, "[...] of not supporting moral judgment, of being resolutely independent of it and of eliminating all moral judgment from its domain. It never obeys this discrimination and, on the contrary, tends to create a completely independent technical morality [...] The technique is rigorously autonomous in relation to morality and it is not the infusion of a plus or minus. Vague feeling of the good of humanity which would change anything, not even the conversion of the men who act on the technique. At the most, they would cease to be good technicians.”⁵¹

Deep down, the technical system claims to add depth to human freedom. But, it is not a question of a freedom modeled on our intrinsic autonomy, since this autonomy has already been destroyed by the system to ensure its automatism and self-increase. The freedom offered to man is a caricature of freedom, because it is only the possibility that he has to make several choices in the range of services or ready-to-consume objects that have been produced without sound. Notice: "the zone of [his] choices is delimited by the technician system: all the choices are made within the technician system, and nothing exceeds it"⁵². Its sovereignty, as the personal power to judge or guide the productions of the system according to its own wishes, is deconstructed. In this paradoxical context of human freedom, “Toffler states that [when] technical society opens the way to greater freedom, he speaks exclusively of the possibilities of change, of choosing between 'different styles' [...] of get out of their way and consume a wide variety of products”⁵³. “There will come a time when,” he adds, “the choice, instead of freeing the individual, will become complex, so difficult and costly that it will often have the opposite effect. The time is near when, in short, choice will become hyper-chaos and freedom anti-freedom.”⁵⁴ This counter-freedom will be materialized not only by the individual's inability to control the system that alienates him, but also by his inability to criticize his government, what he eats, drinks and uses on a daily basis. As the locus of "the suppression of individual liberty"⁵⁵, of "the monitoring of privacy, of births, of regulation of all social behavior and ultimately of all human conduct"⁵⁶, the system becomes "an absolute regime, with 'burrs' that this presents, that is to say the police state, the imprisonments, the tortures”⁵⁷.

⁴⁹ Nerval, G., « Contes et facéties », in *œuvres complètes*, t.1, Éditions la Pléiade, 1952, p. 535.

⁵⁰ Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, op. cit., p. 110.

⁵¹ In his rejection of morality, the technician is reinforced by the denial of the ambivalence recognized above in technique as its fundamental characteristic. For the latter, the technique is in essence entirely good; it is the use that men decide to make of it that is bad, an idea that Ellul energetically rejects for whom, the ambivalence of the technique is congenital and not a fact. relating to its use. The negative effects resulting from its use are secondary and contingent.

⁵² *Le système technicien*, op. cit., p. 329.

⁵³ Toffler quoted by Ellul, *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

⁵⁵ Ellul, J., *Bluff technologique*, op. cit., p. 65.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

The technical system is not content to endanger individual freedom. Its operation is accompanied by the creation of "a more exploited, unhappy, uprooted [proletarian] class plunged into an inhuman situation"⁵⁸. Many proletarians have almost no respite, since they are condemned to work like robots to the rhythm of machines that work day and night, to earn their low wages. In this situation of robotic employees, proletarians regularly experience bodily and nervous erosions, insomnia and early deaths. In general, they are victims of "a set of physiological, psychological and even sociological drawbacks."⁵⁹ And it is with great disappointment that they finally realize the illusion of happiness promised to them, from the start, by a system which paradoxically uses their labor forces to achieve enormous prebends, because everything is there. Been tuned to satisfy the system itself and not the workers.

Man's alienation is still perceptible in his behavior vis-à-vis the technical objects produced and made available to him by the system. We realize that he has become the slave of a number of technical tools that he regularly uses such as the computer, the Smartphone, the television, etc., so that his personality is now conditioned by their use. Her personality is structured by objects that guide her way of life and shape her destiny from the outside. More and more sophisticated and glamorous, these objects also create social distancing which negatively affects human relations, since the physical co-presence which facilitates a perfect and reciprocal knowledge of the men concerned is replaced by the technical object which now serves them as an intermediary. In the narcissistic and sonorous enclosure of their ego, each person can communicate with a virtual interlocutor, at the risk of forming unfortunate friendships with the latter. In this regard, it is with sorrow that Ellul observes:

"There is no isolation instrument like this. Radio, and even more so television, enclose man in a sound universe, where he is alone; he already didn't know much about a, neighbor ", now the separation between men is deepening. People get into the habit of listening to the machine and talking to the machine (telephone, Dictaphone). There is no longer a person opposite, there is no longer an interlocutor, and there is no longer a dialogue. Listening and formulating a perpetual monologue, escaping both the anguish of silence and the embarrassment of the neighbor, man takes refuge in the bosom of techniques, which locks him radically in solitude, and reassures him at the same time by all the mystifications".⁶⁰

Replaced by technical communications, assistance from others, compassion, friendship, love for example, are experienced much more from a distance. However, this distance disunites men more than it unites them. Therefore, if machines remain tools in the hands of man, it would be a lonely man. Indeed, the technical system is fundamentally alienating. All of its characteristics have been cleverly defined by its creators so that it totally sacrifices human autonomy in order to safeguard exclusively its own, in a world where technology ostentatiously asserts itself as what conditions and guides the entire life of man without being herself conditioned by anything else. Thus alienated in his actions and thoughts, man lives behind a technique that invades him and stifles him in his heart, under the pretext of bringing him a well-being whose concreteness rivals the an abstraction of the happiness that Christians once promised him. In truth, the technical system is atheism, since it has replaced the God of Christians and has established itself as an absolute value from which everything must be judged, appreciated, ordered, and applied. Through its instrumental rationality, the technical system explores and transforms the world into objects haloed by technical values, thus desecrating objects with a spiritual value in the Christian tradition based on respect for divine commandments. Stuck in this system, man is therefore doubly alienated: objectively and spiritually. In this perspective,

"Nothing is the domain of the gods anymore, of unnatural powers. The man who lives in the technical world knows very well that there is no more spiritual anywhere. And yet we are witnessing a strange reversal; man cannot live without the sacred; he transfers his sense of the sacred to that very thing that destroyed everything that was the object of it: on technique.- In the world we are in, it is technique that has become the essential mystery. And this in various forms according to the backgrounds and races. [...] This is indeed a belief in the sacred. Technology is the god who saves; it is essentially good [...] Technology is the hope of the proletariat, it can have faith in it because at least its miracles are visible and in progress ".⁶¹

The technical system is establishing itself as a new source of happiness and urges man to firmly believe in himself, to put all his hopes in him and to make him his new religion. Demonstrating itself against traditional morals and spiritual values, the technical system eliminates religions that are different from its own. Ellul is an eyewitness to one of those religions that have vanished under the devastating effect of technology:

"We have seen," he said, "before our eyes a religion disappears as a result of a technical fact: it is the religion of the Mikado after the bomb in Hiroshima. [...] Buddhism does not vanish under the ideological

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁶⁰ Ellul, J., *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, op. cit., p., p. 344.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

influence of communism, but for technical reasons. It is, on the one hand, the brutal and massive infusion of industrial techniques, on the other hand, the use of propaganda techniques which lead to the abandonment of religion by the growing masses. In fact, we do not leave this religious people without religion, but to the transcendent one is opposed today the religion "social" which is only an expression of technical progress".⁶²

Indeed, how the technical system, this "machine goddess"⁶³, was able to ensure that "the sacred, the non-technical religious [is] eliminated [and that] man, [...] if he thinks religiously, he seeks above all to make the new form of religion coincide with this universe"⁶⁴? It must be remembered that in this system, technique is considered as the only weapon which allows humanity to master the forces of nature, to better understand the world and man, to make possible the happiness of the man. From this perspective, all the mysteries and all the religions that are out of step with the ideology of technology pass away in the presence of a system that always wants to be more efficient in solving the problems of humanity. These mysteries and religions are considered to be absurd. In compliance with the laws of nature established by science and not by God, the technical system nurtures more operational practical ambitions in the world, so that the world is no longer considered a divine order to be contemplated in its naturalness, but rather as the field of implementation of a technical rationality which radically challenges all the divine connotations of nature.

In the technical system, it is a question of making the technician, this Cartesian scientist whose efforts consist in becoming as master and possessor of nature. Hence the relegation to oblivion, of faith in a transcendent God on whom the medieval people, for example, founded the progress of humanity. The technical system has thus replaced the divine system which it considers to be a system forged by the imagination to delay its blossoming prepared by modern science. We can therefore understand why the technical system is always united with a science whose expertise it constantly seeks to achieve its prowess in all fields. The science-technology verse, recognized synthetically under the name of technoscience, is symptomatic of this solidarity between science and the technical system. This disciplinary solidarity aims to boost all areas of human life, to the point of achieving what science, left to it, can never do.

The technical system therefore intends to bring added value to the progress of humanity by providing it with high-performance tools and devices that further facilitate its activities, its movements and its communications around the world. The technical system is now seen as the only path to progress that will have a direct impact on the happiness of humanity, this happiness to be experienced much more in technical comfort than in the delight of a pure soul and materially devoid of crutches existential. Well-being replaces happiness in its spiritual, idealistic form. Because, from a technical perspective, happiness consists in satisfying one's material needs and achieving opulence: "current sociologists and economists prefer [...] to have to do with well-being (standard of living, lifestyle, etc.)"⁶⁵, affirmed Serge Latouche. Happiness is not, so to speak, a psychological or spiritual state experienced in the depths of one's being, but the enjoyment experienced by man in the consumption of technical, material goods.

In short, the technical system wants to make technology a decisive and vital element in the improvement of human beings. The increased technicization of the human being contributes; it is estimated, to his highest improvement. The role Christians once gave to God has paradoxically devolved on the technical system which has progressively challenged this God until it has replaced him definitively. In its self-increase, it is therefore not only the refusal of the teachings of God that interests the technician, but it is also its killing. The deification of the system therefore leads its lauders to make it an idol and a subject with immeasurable powers over nature, over man and the various areas of society. The system is self-expanding by following its own logic and not that of the God of Christians in its traditional function of guarding fundamental values. The measure of everything is neither the God of Christians, nor the man who is faithful to him, but technology "has become a religion which cannot bear to be judged, [but] strengthens the State which strengthens it to in turn [...], depletes natural resources [...], standardizes civilizations [...], kills culture"⁶⁶. And this is called "the rationalization of Barbary, [...] the spirit of our civilization".⁶⁷

But the fundamental question that still torments our minds is whether the alienation of man from the technical system is inevitable. Can man not desalinate himself, that is to say regain his freedom and autonomy, by rationally demystifying the technical system in its essential characteristics, on the one hand, and by creating hope, that is? That is to say, faith in God and respect for his Word, the foundation on which he will have to build his freedom and his happiness, on the other hand? In other words, if the fate of man is not yet sealed because

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

⁶³ Ellul, J., *Le système technicien*, op. cit., p. 322.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁶⁵ Latouche, S., *Jacques Ellul contre le totalitarisme technicien*, Paris, La Découverte, 1995, p. 25.

⁶⁶ Ellul, J., *Le système technicien*, op.cit., p. 8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

"the game is not over"⁶⁸, could he not free himself from the technical system by the detour of the rational criticism of his characteristics and expectation?

III. THE DESALINATION OF MAN IN THE TECHNICAL SYSTEM BY THE DETOUR OF METAPHYSICAL HOPE

The revival of metaphysical hope appears in the Ellulian universe as the trail of man's desalination. And criticism of the essential characteristics of the technical system is a prerequisite for the intelligibility of this revival.

The characteristics of the technical system all tend to make it an entirely autumnal organization with regard to man, as if it were a question of a creature *ex-nihilo*, since it asserts itself not only as its own creator, but also as his own God. Its automatism, its self-increase, its sequence, its totalization, its universality, its uniqueness and its autonomy are sufficient proof of this. But basically, it is a "bluff" that deserves to be denounced because no technique in the world can generate itself: man is the undisputed creator of all techniques, even if an adage well known says that "the man created the machine and this one betrayed him". This betrayal does not call into question man as the creator of the machine, but the mastery of this machine in certain circumstances relating to its use. The absoluteness of the characteristics of the technique is problematic because it is ideological and not objective. It is maintained and praised by technologists whose goal is to make humanity believe that its happiness is exclusively in the adoption and application of the technological spirit to which it must transfer all the power and all the values recognized to God as seen by Christians. In other words, contrary to what the founders of the technical system say, it is not a *sui generis* reality, nor a supra-being which would reign above humanity as something that originally exceeds it and for which it can only adapt to survive.

We see that the alienation of man is not inevitable, it is wanted and implemented by a minority of individuals who, to satisfy their hegemonic and financial desires over the rest of the world; deify the technique of which they are the creators themselves. The technical system is not self-generated; it remains the work of the technologists who, after having created it, then behaved as if it was this system that had created them instead. Therefore, they are in their role in inviting humanity to constantly appropriate and bow down to this so-called Immaculate Conception, to benefit to the maximum from the material comforts which it provides. The technical system is a conceptual, hallucinatory and ideological construction of the technician mind thirsty for all-out domination of man and society. His ambivalence, as we have established above, shows that the radical optimists of the technical circle are wrong to present him as being totally good in his being.

We must therefore note that the technical system is not necessarily even a set of cohesive and compact techniques constituting an indissoluble and isolable unit of individuals. Each technique plays a specific role and is only of value in relation to the particular man who uses it. Thus, the unity of the technical system is not absolute, but relative. All techniques cannot fit into a system as if they had the same characteristics and the same functions. Each technique is designed to solve a specific problem. Its *de facto* peculiarity is an obstacle to its collapse into a system that claims to perfectly unite all the existing techniques in space and time. This is an arbitrary conception of the system maintained by the champions of technology and their capitalist allies. In other words, applied to technique, the notion of system is only the reflection of the technical ideology aimed at imposing a technical order on actors who are, at bottom, irreducible to simple puppets.

The technics are not organized in an original and *sui generis* system which would determine the decisions and the behaviors of the men in a mechanical way. Man has the capacity to determine himself, to reverse the relationship of dependence that exists between him and the technical order. By his rational nature, man can understand the deception and alienation produced by a system that entertains the illusion of being his savior, even as he exploits him for the mercantilist interests of the capitalists lurking in the shadows. Man is not obliged to subscribe, without any reflexive hindsight, to the technical order. From this perspective, the assimilation of the technical system to a living, autonomous and constraining super organism is indeed questionable. The systemic approach to technology seems to ignore the autonomy of decision and action that human individuals have thanks to their quality as subjects endowed with reason and freedom.

The systemic paradigm of technology is wrong in conveying a technical ideology of the rigorous autonomy of techniques from man. For the less radical who are aware of its limitations, it is wrong to equate technology with a system endowed with original qualities which allow it to self-increase, to universalize, etc., independently of individual actions. The technical system must be considered as a totalizing, even regulatory concept that should be used cautiously, having regard to the free perception of each individual consciousness that judges it. It is, in our opinion, only a centralized and hierarchical organization of techniques developed by technicians and imposed on society, through corrupt leaders who care less for collective happiness than for their personal interests, thus violating the freedom of potential consumers. The use of a technique depends on the

⁶⁸ Ellul, J., *Le Bluff technologique*, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

value and importance that each individual gives it, failing which any imposition is legally and morally reprehensible, because it empties man of his freedom and his natural rights, for the benefit of an artificial freedom and a positive law which only satisfy the interests of their promoters. The application of the technical system should not jeopardize the intrinsic freedom and natural rights of man, although the survival of the system in its organicist interpretation depends on the way in which its organs (man and society) are 'perform functions which have been distinctly entrusted to them. Thus, the determination of the system by man is preferable to the determination of man by system. Because, it is always more human not to confuse the subject with the object, nor the means with the end.

Moreover, if we have to prioritize the different systems (political, economic, cultural, technical, etc.) that exist in the world, the technical system cannot, according to Ellul, occupy the top of the systems. There is the divine system which escapes the apprehension of our senses, but which transcends all others and is the highest end point of these. Far from being the System of Systems, the technical system is only a secondary system which gives man, on condition of being used wisely, the well-being / material comfort necessary to rise. Spiritually to the divine system, source of eternal bliss. But, for having ignored the divine system, the technicians ignored God and lapsed in an atheism which put metaphysical hope⁶⁹, the faith in God, in oblivion. Hence the urgent need for a resurrection of this hope, if we want to moralize the technical system and protect man from the alienation he secretes.

From the Christian perspective, there is no happiness in forgetting God, for he is the embodiment of the spiritual values which the man he created in his image needs to live in dignity. The technical system certainly offers man the maximum material comfort he needs to live and easily perform certain tasks. But, this material ease only gives it happiness that disappears immediately with its obsolescence or with the lack of the financial means necessary to acquire new technologies. This creates a gap between the desire to own something and the impossibility of having it. The permanent tension between being and having plunges man into an agonizing tear that destabilizes him and dispossesses him of his being. He thus finds himself in a kind of alienation which consists in transforming him into a slave to a well-being that always needs to be renewed. However, true happiness is experienced from within and expresses perfect harmony between us and our consciousness. This harmony has divine value because it is not ordered by the amount of material goods we have. It is a source of liberation which makes man the true master of his life and his destiny.

The forgetting of God and the humiliation of his word, install the technician in materialist ambitions which sometimes dehumanize human beings. However, the divine word is a teaching which reminds us that man is a sacred creature who deserves more attention and respect in his treatment. Faith in man must be essential because it allows safeguarding his original consideration vis-à-vis technical objects. The paradox is that the technician has replaced this faith in man with the faith of honoring technical objects. And it is thanks to this replacement that the technician system has consolidated its autonomy by denying that of man reduced to a simple instrument at the service of the machine. And yet, faith in God and respect for his word are united with faith in man and respect for the sacredness of the freedom of his creature that is to say of man. The desalination of man goes through his socialization and the desacralization of the technical system which perpetually deconstructs his freedom. From this perspective, the source of the liberating truth of man is God and his word and not the technical system and its productions; this system is deceptive and liberticidal from the moment it sanctifies the technique to the chagrin of man. To desalinate man, it is necessary either to subtract him from the technical system or to enroll this system in the school of the divine system. But the first hypothesis does not seem plausible, because man needs a minimum of technical comfort to live. Consequently, it is the second hypothesis which is verifiable because it allows the technical system to be imbued with the divine word which obliges it to correct its errors and to submit "definitively to the directional will of man."⁷⁰ In doing so, the disagreements which constantly oppose him to man will be minimized and will establish a relative harmony between them.

According to Ellul, the desalination of man should not be limited to intellectual criticism of the technical system, this criticism must be supplemented by the teachings of the Gospel, a liberating and unifying power of the holy spirit. It should also be understood that "the fight for faith is not the fight against man [...] but a fight for his freedom"⁷¹. The desalination of man must be done on a technical and spiritual level. Man is not only a technical animal, he is also a spiritual animal. In humans, the rational and the irrational come together.

⁶⁹ At this level, Ellul is inspired it seems to us, by Soeren Kierkegaard for whom hope is the breeding ground for faith in God. And as such, it is a requirement of our conscience that can only truly flourish by turning to God and unconditionally submitting to his Word. In other words, this faith is not, for the Kierkegaardian believer, an outgrowth of our inner being, it is consubstantial with our existential consciousness; it is enough to be attentive to the calls of our interiority to realize it. Happiness would therefore consist in delivering oneself from technical alienation by this faith. Cf. Kierkegaard, S., *Traité du désespoir*, coll. Idées nrf, Paris, Gallimard, 1949.

⁷⁰ Ellul, J., *Le Bluff technologique*, op.cit., p. 203.

⁷¹ Ellul, J., *Les nouveaux possédés*, Paris, Les Milles et Une Nuit, 2003, p. 348.

The technique praises the rational while the Gospel praises the irrational. The principles of modern humanism centered on the exercise of reason alone, must be reviewed and supplemented by the principles of metaphysical humanism based on hope, faith in God. We cannot free man from technical rationality without subjecting this rationality to a divine discipline which will strip him of its usurped sacredness. It is this discipline that will lead him to sympathize with the man who consumes his products. The technical system needs the divine system to humanize its progress and solve the problems that it is likely to create without being able to solve them technically.

"If the technique is totalizing, that is to say if the technical system is capable of integrating all the new phenomena as they arise, if the technique is recovering, that is to say, to say if all the revolutionary movements are finally taken over by it, what can escape it? From a human point of view, nothing. We therefore need a form of transcendence".⁷²

Ellul sees the divine system as the transcendent source of man's disalienation. This system prompts us to think rationally and irrationally about the world, beyond technical prowess. Locking the world into the shackles of technical rationality is a narrow view of the world. The metaphysical world deserves as much attention as the physical world, even if it does not lend itself to rational, technical treatment. From this point of view, a constant dialectic is required between the rational and the irrational, if we want to liberate man metaphysically and physically. In other words, this dialectic will embrace both the real and the unreal in an exclusive inclusion. Indeed, Ellul thinks that if man turns to God and learns to know him, he will discover the freedom squared by his laws and which alone will be able to allow him to truly and humanly revolutionize the world. This reconciliation with God is not a call for the definitive abandonment of the technique, but rather a call for a less ambitious and more moralized technique. Freedom is not exercised in excess, in the technicalization of all life, nor in the instrumentalization of man by man, but in love of the latter. In the meantime, the technical system must respect the word of God instead of humiliating it, if it wants to get rid of its alienating tinsel and put on its liberating costume. In doing so, he will help man not to resign "in front of his own life"⁷³, to make him "anxious to defend his freedom"⁷⁴, because "freedom is not slackening in ease, well-being and the consumption"⁷⁵.

Hope consists in believing in the existence of a God whose Word can liberate us spiritually and persuade us of the precariousness of our technical liberation. If he is sometimes silent in the face of our setbacks, it is because technology turns us away from him, and prevents us from breaking him out of his silence by faith, by prayer or by any other means whose effectiveness has been proven:

"When God is silent," writes Ellul, "he must be forced to speak. When God turns away, he must be forced to come back. When God seems dead he must be forced to be. And it can take shape in the anguished call, the complaint, the lamentation, the prayer of repentance. And it can take shape in daring, in prostration, in violence against God, in accusation. All means are good for hope, in its refusal that God is absent. [...] Hope is [not a] sterile hope, it is indeed the total, full, rigorous response of a total and firm man, in the presence of God's rejection, of his silence and of his diversion"⁷⁶.

Metaphysical hope will thus be able to help man to attain true freedom, that is to say "the capacity to master his daily life, to orient himself [personally] according to his experience of the world which is of sensitive and carnal approach"⁷⁷. Such freedom is the expression of "the fullness of personal life for a man standing on his feet in the midst of the world."⁷⁸ It is a freedom that he experiences directly from within and not a freedom conditioned externally by the consumption of technical goods. The liberation of man will be the result of his own efforts and not of the hopes founded on a system which does not intend to let go, because he lives only on the enslavement of man. Until a man understands that "the sacralization of technique"⁷⁹ is the dying out of his spiritual freedom, he will not come out of the alienation which accompanies this worship. The ambivalence of the technique is congenital, and the speeches which praise the technique must not mask its alienating side, nor "obscure the meaning of the ultimate problems posed by the man who philosophizes, nor veil it under solutions which do not are"⁸⁰. There are metaphysical, existential problems that arise and whose solutions are extra-technical. However, the philosophical and spiritual solutions that philosophers and theologians respectively provide are no less liberating than technical ways. Of course, "technical progress has been gigantic, but

⁷² Ellul, J., *Ellul par lui-même. Entretiens avec Willem H. Vanderburg*, 2008, Paris, La Table Ronde, p. 148.

⁷³ Ellul, J., *L'illusion politique*, Paris, La Table Ronde, p. 253.

⁷⁴ Latouche, S., *Jacques Ellul contre le totalitarisme technicien*, op.cit., p. 48.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁷⁶ Ellul, J., *L'espérance oubliée*, Paris, La Table Ronde, pp. 172-174.

⁷⁷ Cérézuelle, D., *La technique et la chair. Essai de philosophie de la technique*, Lyon-Parangon / Vs, 2011, p. 200.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

⁸⁰ Hersch, J., *L'étonnement philosophique, une histoire de la philosophie*, Paris, Gallimard, 1993, p. 459.

fundamental human questions remain"⁸¹, and their treatment requires different expertise than technical ones. "We must admit, says Jean Miguel, that science is not the only mode of knowledge and that therefore the construction it proposes is not at all the truth"⁸². This assertion is also valid for the technique and makes us think that the theological solution that Ellul envisages to desalinate man is to be taken into account in the search for the Truth of man in the face of the technical system. To attain this Truth in its greatness and liberating purity, man must rise, by the force of metaphysical hope, above technical objects as they exist⁸³. Hence the need for an "exegesis of the new commonplaces"⁸⁴ between technique and metaphysical hope, between the City of technology and the "City of God"⁸⁵.

IV. CONCLUSION

The characteristics of the technical system are breathtaking because they give to this technological and secular juggernaut the image of a divinity whose mission is to universalize, control and guide man and human societies in their respective activities. This results in the all-out alienation of Man, notwithstanding the maximum technical tools that this system places at his disposal to facilitate the achievement of his current needs. Stuck in this system, man finally realizes with desolation that he no longer loses and never wins, basing all his hopes on the acquisition and use of technical products, because he owes his technical freedom only to the sacrifice of his ontological and sacred freedom. So he notes that to emancipate himself from the yoke of a system which never ceases to hold out to him a well-being devoid of any divine guarantee and any spiritual tranquility, he must necessarily reconnect with the metaphysical hope dear to the Christian. . Imbued with its autonomy and self-increase, the technical system has abusively extorted the place of God, Incarnation of perfection, freedom and salvation, as if it were oblivious to the ambivalence which is its own and which forbids it such extortion. We are then in phase with Ellul, when he sounds the alarm bell so that humanity stops considering the technical system as God, and knows once and for all that his true liberation / desalination and his true happiness are not possible. Only in a universe where one appropriates and constantly respects the Word of God.

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⁸² Miguel, J., *Abrégé de philosophie*, Paris, Rouvil, 1963, p. 159.

⁸³ Simondon, G., *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*, Paris, Aubier, 1958.

⁸⁴ Ellul, J., *Exégèse des nouveaux lieux communs*, Paris, La Table Ronde, 2004.

⁸⁵ Augustin, S., *Cité de Dieu*, Œuvre, Vol. 2, S/D de Lucien Jerphagnon, Paris, Gallimard, 2002.