Jacques Ellul’s use of the term *la technique* is related to but not synonymous with his use of the term *la technologie*. The two terms represent a mutually reinforcing movement of a rational process, designating the former, and a constant discourse, designating the latter. As far as English studies of Ellul’s work on technology are concerned—the one word *technology* typically is used in English for the two words used in the French—most scholars focus on the rational process of *la technique* and accordingly spend less time analysing the constant discourse of *la technologie*. While studies of *la technique* are important in their own regard, and I am engaged in such studies of my own in a doctoral thesis, in this paper, I examine in detail *la technologie* and consider its integral connection to Ellul’s work on *la propagande*. To demonstrate how important *la technologie* and *la propagande* are to Ellul’s project in general, and his work on *la technique* in particular, I investigate his account of the origins of both. I show how Ellul’s understanding of *la technologie*’s origins are located in his reading of the Biblical account of the Fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, and in turn, show how Ellul’s understanding of *la propagande*’s origins are located in Greco-Roman antiquity, and in particular, inaugurated in approximately 600 BC by the first “great” tyrant-propagandist Pisistratus.

Through a detailed description of the origins of *la technologie* and *la propagande* as provisionally described here I will develop a prologue of sorts to Ellul’s similar two-registered descriptions of *la technique*’s origins. This prologue will help clarify key points in the ongoing debates in Ellul scholarship regarding the relative continuity or discontinuity of Ellul’s descriptions of *la technique* in its modern form. Namely, the question: is *technique* qualitatively similar to or different from the *technical* operations and phenomena which precede the Industrial Revolution? By the end of this paper, I will have taken one definitive step toward answering this question by showing that whether Ellul is writing in sociological or theological terms about *la technique*, *la technologie*, or *la propagande*, the “spiritual nucleus of the problem” radiates from his reading of the Fall. This in turn serves to show with compelling textual evidence that Ellul really means what he says when he suggests at the beginning of *Technological Society* “In fact, the East was the cradle of all action, of all past and primitive technique in the present sense of the word, and later of spiritual and magical technique as well.”

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1. See Jacques Ellul, *The Technological System*, Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Continuum, 1977), 32-33 in which Ellul outlines the basic definitions of these terms.


3. Andrew Goddard, *Living the Word, Resisting the World* (Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 2002), 136 provides a good summary of the various positions on this question and correctly points out discrepancies in Ellul’s use of terms to describe modern *technique* throughout his writing.
