

A Painful Hope: Eschatology in Margaret Avison's *Concrete and Wild Carrot*

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The death of Margaret Avison in July 2007 was a tremendous loss for modern poetry and Canadian literature. The palpable lack of attention accompanying Avison's passing was unsurprising, however, given the sparseness and complexity of her work. Despite a publishing career spanning three quarters of a century, the bulk of Avison's poetry is found in only seven collections. Her predilection for unusual structure, wordplay, and archaic language, or what David Kent dubs "the ingredients in her difficult idiom," stymied many readers (Kent, *Avison* 19). Perhaps more than anything else, Avison's refusal to be any sort of public figure stunted her popular and critical reception. Upon winning the 2003 Griffin award, she averred that poetry is "not my life's work," and that "[p]rivate life is what I prefer" ("Avison Enright Interview"). As Kent remarks, few poets have "so assiduously avoided most of the means of systematic self-promotion," quipping that Avison is known "almost in spite of herself" ("Introduction" i).

One reason for Avison's reticence towards the spotlight was a concern to ensure her poetry remained in focus. Offering anything else might transform poetry into biography, endangering carefully cultivated paradoxes and ambiguities. In a radio interview with the CBC, for instance, Avison laconically describes herself as a critic of "saccharine" hope, explaining that "...darkness doesn't deny the hope, but...hope without acknowledging a darkness is phony" ("Avison Enright Interview"). This lifelong desire to acknowledge sunlight and shadow, faith and doubt, hope and darkness, extends to the heart of Avison's poetic oeuvre.

While much of her critical hope sprung from daily life in urban Toronto, an equally crucial source was Avison's biblical habitation. Avison's penultimate collection, *Concrete and Wild Carrot*, seamlessly blends urban and biblical realities. Amidst the exultation of a city new in blossom, for instance, the opening poem asks "how / painful hope can be?" (9). In this essay, I explore the biblical side of this *painful hope*, demonstrating how Avison brings Christian eschatology to bear on modern urban life.

Avison's attraction to eschatology is an aspect of a longstanding "fascination with thresholds," a gravitation "to moments and times of transition from one state, or season, or even cosmology, to another" (Kent *Avison* 20-21). Two recurring images, waters and structures, function as *biblical* thresholds in *Concrete and Wild Carrot*: waters recall the creation story and point toward a new creation, while structures signal both order and precariousness in creation. While touching on several poems, I follow the thematic progression culminating in the concluding stanza of "Other Oceans." Eschatological imagery, I argue, lets Avison move between urban and transcendent landscapes, to see the world in hope and darkness.

I. Eschatological Language

The decades since World War II have seen a resurgence in interest in eschatology, broadly defined as the "discourse about endings" (Rowland 161). From pop culture treatments of terrorism and environmental disaster to biblical or literary criticism, endings are indeed difficult to escape.¹ In theological studies, Jürgen Moltmann stands at the vanguard of a shift in the Christian appraisal of eschatology as "a loosely attached appendix that wandered off into obscure irrelevancies" to its most central concern (15). Moltmann's 1965 work, *Theology of Hope*, ties the marginalization of eschatology to complicity with the state. Rather than fringe speculation, Moltmann insists that "Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present" (16). Eschatology, adds Hans Schwartz, is cosmic language yielding both "a perspective of the future" and "a guiding light showing us how to pursue life meaningfully in the present" (Schwarz xiii). The imagery discussed in this essay is "eschatological" in this cosmic sense.

Eschatological themes are pervasive in *Concrete and Wild Carrot*, so much so that Ken Babstock refers to it as *resurrection* "re-envisioned at the end of each lived moment, and again after the next, and the next." And while resurrection may indeed be the "pivot" of all history, as "On a Maundy Thursday Walk" suggests in a final word (72), creation and the imminence of a new creation frame this declaration. The images of waters and structures, therefore, are illustrative but not exhaustive examples of biblical thresholds; irruptions of creation and apocalypse form bookends in *Concrete and Wild Carrot*. After the book's opening paragraph, Avison programmatically declares: "Everything is new" (7). She closes the book with terse symmetry, a dark warning that "Nightfall is near" (81). The pro-

gression of *Concrete and Wild Carrot*, therefore, is from contemplative wonder to ultimate decay, but these horizons are bound together tightly. As Avison muses, “The far off isn’t, and is all / that is” (39).

II. The Waters: Creation and Personal Mortality

The image of waters alludes to the watery creation narratives found throughout the Bible. These narratives picture creation “especially in terms of God’s defeat of the waters of the sea or God’s control over those waters” (Coote and Norde 19). Temporally and logically, creation language points back to the beginning, but is equally significant in the present, both in remembrance of a providential Creator and in picturing the world as sacred. For the interests of this discussion, creation language can also be freighted with idealized, communal, futuristic dimensions. The Genesis account of the beginning as “without form and void; and darkness... upon the face of the deep” (Gen 1:2), for example, is recapitulated in the final vision of Revelation. The divine declaration, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5), accompanies no chaotic sea but a river flowing with the water of life.

In *Concrete and Wild Carrot*, creation language often signals an ongoing tension between the horizons of creativity and destruction: new life hides decay, youth is battered down into old age, and the mundane is captive to the eternal. The significance of “day” in the biblical creation accounts, for instance, is recalled in the use of some form of the word “day” in each of the seven sections of “Other Oceans.” Throughout the volume, however, “day” evokes an array of future oriented themes, such as the fleetingness of life in the “already fading day” (30) or the expansiveness of time in a “day that’s a thousand years” (34). And while “that day” (46) points back to the terror of the first Good Friday, “that Day” (61) gazes towards eternity.

As a book written by an octogenarian, it is unsurprising that much of *Concrete and Wild Carrot* touches on death and deterioration accompanying old age. Avison’s candour leads to some of the most poignant moments in the book, as well as its most humorous: “The dead end that I dreaded / confronts me in this / true statement!” (51). The coupling of creation imagery and the prospect of chaos and death, moreover, compels Avison’s readers to resist the temptation to “rollerblade past / the question” (8) for themselves and for their wider world. As Avison herself once remarked, poetry is “a great boon in testing honesty” (“Muse of Danger” 146).

Furthermore, the interplay of creation and chaos extends to the form of Avison's poetry. Mid-sentence breaks and changes in rhythm often threaten to disrupt the entire tone of a poem, to derail a thought or to multiply interpretive possibilities. Even a simple question mark can reiterate the agony of measuring insights and beliefs against lived experience. Avison's reflections on the relationship between belief and form come with an insistence that no particular form is sacrosanct. While the "believer asserts that the Creator called form out of chaos, and draws orderliness out of the otherwise incoherent," this impulse towards order does not limit the poet to "some definite principles of order (rhyme, regular measure, logic)" ("Muse" 147).

The two poems examined in this section, "Rising Dust" and "Seriously?," not only exemplify Avison's creativity with poetic form, but also touch on the themes of creation and mortality, waters and chaos.

i. Rising Dust

The anthropological contemplation of water in "Rising Dust" moves from the apparently innocuous observation, "The physiologist says I am well over/half water," to an unfolding of different microcosms and levels of a living world: the earth is granted a "body," the sky and oceans "breathe," and each rises, falls and "finds its own level" (56-57). Despite stretching to the very firmament, the poetic persona returns to agitated interrogation of order in the fifth stanza:

Even in me?
Kin to waterfalls
and glacial lakes and sloughs
and all that flows and surges,
yet I go steadily,
or without distillation climb at will
(until a dissolution
nobody anticipates).

(57)

As rising dust, humans are portrayed as wondrously ascending from the waters in witness to an apparent "composer." However, Avison's insertion of a question mark and parentheses triggers a shift from cosmic wonder to an anthropological, existential query. The distinction of being 'composed' does little to quell the fall of water nor resolve the inexplicability of life; the multivalent "anticipates" points to postures of surprise *and* unwell-

comeness at the final dissolution. Death is neither underestimated nor subsumed, but envisaged in all of the impersonal terror of return to an existing, downward flow.

ii. Seriously?

While destruction threatens the anthropological creation language of “Rising Dust,” the short poem “Seriously?” inverts this theme and brings creation back into a dictionary gloss of *chaos*. In a telling shift, Avison concludes an otherwise free-verse conversational poem with a lyrical, metered quatrain:

Murky and ennui-ridden
is the malodorous midden
earth has become. But it soon will be gone
down – in a “yawn”!

(50)

Astonishingly, this stanza moves from the violence implied in the etymology of “chaos” to a pacified near-slumber (or awakening) of its apparent synonym, “yawn.” The absence of a poetic framework in the first part of the poem, moreover, shifts into an ordered climax. The phrase, “earth has become,” hangs tenuously without an object. One reading of “become” suggests a process or change that has occurred, although remaining elliptical as to its goal (i.e., become what?). The “midden” may be the answer, since the decay of the first couplet hints cryptically of more than refuse. Yet a second reading of “become” might be open-ended, a declaration of existence or divine fiat, indicating that the earth simply *is*. This second sense works particularly well as a contrast (i.e., “But”) to the claim that “it soon will be gone.” The ambiguity of these mid-sentence breaks exemplifies what Peter Champion calls Avison’s “extreme angles,” designed to “break her reader’s habits of perception” (60). The muted dissonance of ordered creation language in the midst of chaos suggests a fuller reaction than a simple yawn as the earth slides precipitously toward annihilation.

III. The Language of Structures

Along with the waters, structure appears in Genesis 1 as God’s method of bringing order to the void. The connection between “structures” and eschatology in *Concrete and Wild Carrot*, however, is far from simple. The greatest complicating factor is the expansiveness of the term *structure*,

which relates to the organization of disparate parts. In virtually every realm of human enquiry, including poetics and literary theory, structure functions as a guiding conceptual metaphor. A recent collection of scholarly essays, *Structure in Science and Art*, for example, surveys the “pervasiveness, complexity and diversity” of structure in subjects as diverse as architecture, landscape, dance, myth, war, and imagination (Pullan 2).

While found virtually everywhere, structure is especially relevant to social theory. The concept of “social structure” pertains to analyses of class, economics, and culture, although Charles Crothers characterizes this use as “scattered, piecemeal, and not particularly cumulative” (35). Definitions of structure in this realm range from small scale analysis to macroscopic theories of the world. Robert Wuthnow’s definition of social structures, for instance, relates to *normative behaviour*: “social structure consists largely of the regularity or patterned behavior that results from people conforming to the rules and expectations embedded in the social contexts in which their action takes place” (Wuthnow 146). In contrast, Crothers’s own “Four-Image” model of social structures encompasses social organization, background social characteristics, institutional relations, as well as the underlying or “deep” structures which exist “somewhat irrespective of the actions of those carrying them” (4). While very different from each other, these definitions both show structures to be a complex of social patterns and institutions affecting individual behaviour.

In recent years, numerous theologians and biblical scholars have turned their attention toward the New Testament language of “principalities,” “powers,” and “rulers,” as roughly analogous to social structures.² Especially in the writings of Paul, but throughout New Testament and parallel literature, a cluster of almost interchangeable words signify the “primary building blocks of the universe...which affect human existence through precepts, doctrines, and human traditions” (Grenz 231). Walter Wink describes power language as unsystematic and fluid, but nevertheless pointing to the “heavenly and earthly, divine and human, spiritual and political, invisible and structural” powers that govern human life (11). For Wink, the “spiritual powers” are the “inner and outer aspects of any given manifestation of power” (5) intimately connected to institutional injustice or idolatry: “ideology does not just float in the air; it is always the nexus of legitimations and rationales for some actual entity” (105).

For such writers, New Testament power language is useful for bringing spiritual, christological, and eschatological dimensions to theories of social structure. Christology and eschatology, in particular, form a critical vantage point to relativize “every idolatrous claim to ultimacy” and the

“legitimacy of every system” under the sway of the powers (Braaten 105). While the New Testament grants the powers a legitimate societal function (Rom 13:1), they are also seen as susceptible to demonic corruption, “demanding for themselves a loyalty due only to God” (Grenz 233). From the vantage point of christology, the powers are deemed ultimately subservient, as created *by* Christ, as upholding existence *for* Christ, and coming into restitution *through* Christ (Col 1:15-17; 2:13-15). According to the well known New Testament eschatological paradox of *already* and *not yet*, Jesus’ death and resurrection is a prolepsis of victory over the powers.

IV. The Structures: Resisting the Powers

At first glance, the title *Concrete and Wild Carrot* seems a testimony to the wonder of urban existence, which Avison herself suggests: “it’s the concrete of the city, and the wild carrot you can find by walking along mews and laneways or looking through the subway window along the open cuts.” (Avison “Interview” 74). The collection is marked by an exuberance truly belying her age, as Avison witnesses collisions of inner city denizens, marvels at the segmented dialect of ants, and remembers favourite companions and haunts.

Alongside pictures of urban exuberance, however, are ways in which mechanization, institutional control, and isolation imprisons individuals. Particularly in the latter half of *Concrete and Wild Carrot*, Avison turns to architectural imagery to illustrate the *external* forces impinging on modern existence, ranging from the constrictive “chutes,” “canopies,” “partitions,” and “fences” in “Lament for Byways” (54) to the prison imagery in “Other Oceans” (36-37, 41). Avison is equally concerned, however, with *internal*, self-imposed fetters and barriers, adopting the natural language of nests (73), warrens (67), and shelters (75) to illustrate human tendencies towards self-protection. More abstractly, Avison pictures individuals pulling away from others, such as the pensive apostle Thomas “walled...in with thought” (29), the lone, scholarly “self selecting self” (35), as well as many “other self-bound persons” (62).

Avison’s ruminations assume a posture similar to scholarly treatments of the powers.³ While portraying structures as deeply and often legitimately embedded in society, she frequently holds structures up to criticism and resistance, particularly through poetic portrayals of Jesus. These musings guide the biblical meditation “Uncircular” as well as the lengthy jeremiads, “Other Oceans” and “Alternative to Riots/but All Citizens Must Play.”

i. Uncircular

In her sublime meditation on the entombed Christ, “Uncircular,” Avison portrays the structures as something akin to Wink’s “nexus of legitimations,” albeit transformed in the hands of Jesus:

Among us, Jesus found
 encrusted words and structures;
 he washed and brushed them clean
 and out of the intractability
 of history learned by rote
 stepped, in simplicity the exemplar....
 (63)

This passage is replete with interplay between Jesus and the collective poetic “us:” Jesus finds and yet is found, heals an intractable history as a figure of intractability himself, and laboriously mends everything. The text paints Jesus’ ministry as a timeless restitution of people entombed in systemic or structural prisons. In the middle of the poem, however, the setting solidifies into “the besieged city” (64) of post-exilic Jerusalem. Jesus walks among “strangers far from home” (64), an exiled people returned to a ruinous homeland now caught between empire and tradition. Structural language of imprisonment is compounded with that of architectural ruin throughout “Uncircular,” creating a despairing contrast to the urban wonder of earlier selections. Moreover, this ominous language threatens to subvert the healing work of Jesus within the poem itself, to quell the “clear wellspring” of his words in an overwhelming, crucifying, “indifferent cruelty” (65).

The flow of “Uncircular” is ironically circular, beginning and concluding in death and entombment. The dissonance between title and structure is, as always, suggestive. “Uncircular” continuously vacillates between the eternal and the temporal, as well as the entrenched and the possible, in complex shifts in perspectives and times. The dominant perspective of the poem is that of the fulfillment of history, found at both the beginning and end of the poem; the “entombment of all that wrath” is “a lifeline” (62) and also “new in all history / What it is for” (65). The besieged cities and traditions of history, therefore, are relativized in light of *this* entombment, *this* moment of uncircularity. Yet these statements stand on either side of a circular narrative of Jesus’ life, as well as the hints of a circular reception of Jesus’ words in subsequent history. A gentle Protestant interpretation of

history resonates within the poem, as followers trail “about in molting plumage” (63), or leave Jesus’ words “a little tainted” (65). The circularity of the poem is equally reminiscent of liturgical use of time; calendars have long been used to retell the Jesus story even while proclaiming it as the fulfillment of history.

ii. *Other Oceans*

In the sprawling perspectival poem, “Other Oceans,” Avison concludes with a fascinating portrayal of an apocalyptic Christ as both creator (from surging waters) and upholder of the structures:

And whether some finally
together break out 'til
the stars fall, or
a sudden global change
freezes inhabitants' pulses

one artist who, in one
impulse once called out, from surging
waters and fires and molten
rock
our earth, our little lives,

maintains, Himself, the
no longer appearing
structures.

(45)

As before, the ambiguity of the construction, particularly with the stand-alone “maintains” and “rock” lending themselves to multiple meanings. The mysterious presence and absence of Christ (“no longer appearing”) is placed against the presence and absence of structures at the interstices of falling stars and the impulsive fiat of creation. “Maintain[ing]” and “no longer appearing” leave the poem in an unresolved tension.

The entirety of “Other Oceans” begins and ends in watery creation scenes, and is shaped, significantly, in seven movements or “days.” The concluding stanza featured above is part of a section entitled “Post-modern,” which revolves around ““the logocentric,”” punning on the closure of meaning targeted by postmodern critical theory *and* the Christian affirmation of Christ as *logos*. The close linking of the language of structures and Christ is evocative of texts such as Col 1:25-27, albeit set in the context of

critical theory (with its own structural and post-structural theories). Avison begins with a portrayal of certain “postmodern” revisers of “old symbols,” which she then exalts with ironic praise:

You know their thoughtful
responsible faces, their
capacity for goodness, their
willingness to show
good will.
They shoulder only their part of the
burden of living as a
matter of course.

(44)

Avison utilizes uneven punctuation and line breaks to undermine the straightforward sense of the text. Narrowed to a facile declaration of “good will,” this moral vision is exposed as vacuous and deficient. The repetition of abstract language, third person plural pronouns (their, they), as well as prepositions (for, to, of), serves to further obscure and undermine the forcefulness of the revision.

In contrast to such “good will,” Avison places the words of Jesus:

How different it would be, today, to
“take up your cross and follow Me”, to
“take My yoke upon you, learn....”
Take both? Take what’s to hand? Find
one follows the other? or find the same bewildering
burden?

(44)

Far from easy piety or the closure of meaning, the invitations of Christ are both questioning and questioned. The repetition of key words (to, take, follow, find) and personal pronouns (“Me,” “My”) suggest direction, yet pull in different trajectories. The stanza ends with a consideration that the words may be nothing more than the “burden of living” mentioned and rejected earlier. Yet the open-ended sentence structure suggests the possibility of discipleship through double entendre (“one follows the other”), hinting that there are many ways, not all negative, in which this burden may be “bewildering.” Christ’s upholding of the structures, in this

instance, extends to the meaning of words, prophetic imperatives, and the ongoing vocation of Christian discipleship.

iii. Alternative to Riots / But All Citizens Must Play

The concluding poem in *Concrete and Wild Carrot*, “Alternative to Riots / but All Citizens Must Play,” portrays the structures closer to a chaos more total than the one seen in “Other Oceans.” This climactic poem features numerous imperatives, the concatenation of certain words (money, skin), and plays with tenses and cognates, all of which bring the stanzas together with palpable urgency. The second line of the poem, in particular, sets the tone, introducing a three-fold imperative: “Cry out ‘Break!’ Break / all our securities, and break out!” (77) This language is reprised in the final stanza, where the imperative “Break” moves not only “out,” but “in” and “up:”

Nightfall is near.

Break in! Break up
all our so solid structures for the
glory of
nothing to hold onto
but untried air currents,
the crack and ricochet
of impact. Risk
survival! into
some indestructible
transmuted loss. There will begin,
perhaps, a slow
secret, gradual, germinating
in the darkness.

(81)

As a whole, the poem resonates with unease at a world of “so solid structures.” This stanza is the culmination of an apocalyptic description of the world, marked by globalization and digitalization: “faceless, imperial (world-wide) / governance and its shimmer / statistical sheen” (77), where “Money is no longer / visible” and “We turn into a monstrous / sameness” (78), where “conglomeration / begins to make categories / a fiction, although still / a soothing one” (79), and where “minority” (79) and “majority” (80) provide little safety or direction. Throughout the poem, Avison’s ambiguous descriptions and constructions open up numerous possibilities and applications, often precariously hinging on prepositions

and line breaks. In the face of despair, however, Avison shouts out for a creative and collective “Break!,” signaling that modern securities and structures are tenuous, calling for their upheaval in a “risk” which may itself mean “survival.” Although ultimately ending “in the darkness,” it is a place of germination, a hope seeded in a new creation.

V. Conclusion

[I]t is impossible either to be bored by or to reject Jesus Christ. “But I *am* bored and I *do* reject Christianity,” you may think. No. You are bored by or reject some notion of what it is, put off by somebody’s notion who presents a blurred picture or by a misunderstood idea from other people’s ideas. It is a Person with whom you will have to do, and He is not boring; seen clearly, He could not be rejected. (Avison, *A Kind of Perseverance* 43)

In an era of confusion, the words of Margaret Avison are striking in their clarity and singularity of faith. As the above quotation from the Pascal lectures at Waterloo University reflects, and as Kent has noted, “Avison’s devotional poetry is the work of a deeply committed Christian who, as a felt duty, enunciates that faith and her spiritual experiences as an evangelizing witness for her readers” (Avison 37). The prevalence of biblical language of waters and chaos, and structures and entombment, is evidence of this truth. As C. D. Mazoff notes, for Avison, “poetics and theology work together, rather than against each other, to provide a rich experience for the reader” (Mazoff 12).

As Avison’s poetic legacy begins to be considered, however, this singular devotion to Jesus will undoubtedly persist as a final substantial barrier for some readers. Even Avison’s most sympathetic critics frequently assume a considerable distance from the substance of her faith. Avison is praised in a general manner, for instance, as demonstrating “not only an articulate devotion, but the terms and conditions of any inspiration that seeks to find those sources in us of a creative power that we have failed to recognize” (Donaldson 54). Babstock, who sees resurrection on every page of *Concrete and Wild Carrot*, also stumbles at this point, qualifying his admiration with the demurral that resurrection will be for “some a pivotal hinge in history, to others an allegory.”

With its fecund language and precise ambiguities, Avison’s poetic project allows for a critical distance found in such voices. It even openly welcomes such readers. Yet to obscure the biblical habitation of her poetry, to reduce or demythologize it into a consoling allegory or archaic ruse, would be to miss Avison’s belief that every word matters, for “[w]ords are

a good training for realizing the unchangeableness of the Word” (“Interview” 66). To ignore these beliefs is likely to result in serious misreading of her work: “Salvation and the Incarnation are not merely aesthetic experiences—for example, metaphors for some higher type of “felt” experience—but ontological ones” (Mazoff 17). Perhaps Kent finds the best starting point for critical engagement when he argues that the “critic needs first to accept Avison’s chosen role as devotional poet and then to assess her achievement within the context and the tradition of that role” (Avison 14-15). In light of the difficulty of her subject matter or the uniqueness of her poetic posture, it is little wonder that Avison preferred to let her craft speak by itself. Her reticence to become a public figure might well be seen as a safeguard against a “monstrous sameness” of our time.

The articulation of a *painful hope* in *Concrete and Wild Carrot* exemplifies what Paul Fiddes describes as “an ‘end’ which is characterized by both openness and closure [which] can offer hope in the face of apocalypse” (228). It is a world ridden with tension, weariness, and systemic illness, where new beginnings are spoken and the possibilities of openness and closure are unbound.

Notes

- 1 Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence note “vast numbers of [eschatological] artifacts that attain significant levels of popularity” (659) in America, ranging from superheroic fictions to video games to premillennial fiction. Paul Fiddes’s study of eschatology and literature describes “a remarkable convergence...between theologians and literary critics in their focus upon eschatology” (5).
- 2 This renewed interest can partly be traced through the work of Hendrikus Berkhof (to his English translator, John Howard Yoder). A more direct connection between the powers and structures can be seen in many political and liberation theologies in the 1970s and 80s. From a rather different angle, Rene Girard’s work on mimetic rivalry and scapegoat mechanisms reappropriates the social and political dimensions of “the powers” (as well as “Satan”). Walter Wink, a New Testament scholar with liberationist sympathies, wrote perhaps the most thorough treatment of the powers. His work is marked by a vigorous refusal to identify the New Testament powers *as* social structures without remainder, as well as a concern to demonstrate the pervasiveness of power language throughout the New Testament instead of isolating the Pauline corpus. Examples of the biblical power language include Lk 12:11; Rom 8:38-9; 13:1-3; 1 Cor 15:24-27; Eph 1:20-3; Col 1:16; 2:10-15, 15; Ti 3:1.
- 3 In her notes on “Prairie Poem: For George Grant,” Avison cites lay theologian and social critic Jacques Ellul as a mutual influence (83). As Marva Dawn argues, Ellul’s writing on the deleterious effects of technology and power can be seen as an extended meditation on the pervasiveness of the powers (168-186).

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