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Crise climatique. L'impossible prise de conscience

(Climate Crisis. The Impossible Realization)

Colloque **Puissance de l'Ombre. Entre individuel et collectif**

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<https://psyjungmp.jimdofree.com/actualité-de-l-ajpo/2023/>

SUMMARY

Industrial over-activity soiled the entire ecosystem beginning in the 18th century. Today, our soil, subsoil, rivers, oceans, and atmosphere are increasingly polluted. And even circum-terrestrial space is now saturated! The consequence is that climate is disturbed to the degree that it is causing destructive cataclysms of all kinds. Although expert reports have foretold it a thousand times in the past, since the *Meadows report* in 1972, the catastrophe is here. And no one has been able to prevent it, even though no one can say "I didn't know".

But so, what? If we *know* that we are inexorably destroying our environment, and thus exposing ourselves to making our existence and that of our children more and more unbearable, why don't we change our lifestyles? Why do we behave like *unconscious*, irresponsible people? We do so because we are unaware of the meaning of our actions. And because we believe that taking cognizance (in French, *prendre connaissance*) means becoming aware (*prendre conscience*). Victims of this illusion, we find ourselves literally overwhelmed by our behavior, and unable to do anything about it.

We take note of the damage we're causing, but it does us no good to know it, because we are proceeding like an incompetent police detective at a crime scene. Like the bad detective, we are not only unable to pick up clues or draw conclusions, we also have the nerve to call such incompetence "progress". This has been the case ever since we turned Science (knowledge) into a veritable myth, replacing all ancient myths. Alas, "science is not conscience" and above all "science without conscience is only the ruin of the soul" (*Science sans conscience n'est que ruine de l'âme* - François Rabelais, *Gargantua*, 1535).

As impossible as it is to give an exact definition of consciousness, it is certain that "becoming conscient" means wresting one or more contents from the unconscious and identifying them as phantasms. Otherwise, our perception of reality is erroneous, and we are left without any control over it. The result is a paroxysmal situation in which we are aware of everything, but conscious of nothing.

We can only truly "become conscient" of what we're doing by giving the concept of the unconscious a modicum of consideration, and then meticulously identifying the contents we unconsciously project onto reality - in this case, our phantasms of power over the natural world by artificial means. This is the work that C. G. Jung and Jacques Ellul carried out in depth in the last century, each with different but above all surprisingly complementary approaches.

EXTRACT

I believe that we can only become truly aware of the current ecological catastrophe once we've grasped what technological ideology is about. Otherwise, we will not get beyond the stage of commonplace and good feelings.

What I am saying here is what Jacques Ellul has repeated for six decades. To support this claim, I would like to quote two brief passages from an article published in January 1972 (just before the Meadows report!), whose provocative title was precisely intended to raise this awareness: "Plea *against* the defense of the environment" ("Plaidoyer contre la défense de l'environnement". *France Catholique* n°1309, 1310, 1311, January, 14, 21 and 28, 1972.

- Thirty years ago, when a handful of originals denounced the destruction of the natural environment and twenty years ago, when, with greater precision, we tried to alert public opinion to "nuisances" (the term was not yet fashionable) by taking very specific cases, the reactions provoked were one of commiseration: « pessimistic », « anti-technical », « retrograde », « medieval », « romantic »... such were the usual epithets. Unfortunately, all the facts since then have proved us right. And it is sometimes the very same people who used to attack us so fiercely who now fervently take up the cause of "defending the environment". It was useless to warn, to announce, to make intellectual and scientific analyses, (...) all this remained either ignored or misjudged.

- To take an interest in environmental protection and ecology without questioning technical progress, the technocratic society and the passion for efficiency is to engage in an operation that is not only useless, but fundamentally harmful. For in the end, it will achieve nothing, but it will give the impression of having done something, and falsely calm concerns by casting a new.

However, as Ellul points out, it would be wrong to incriminate only the experts and decision-makers because responsibility for the catastrophe is collective:

Those at fault are not only bad rulers and dreadful capitalists, they are also] the interested parties themselves, the ordinary man, « public opinion », the user. Nobody wants to give up any convenience, not detergents, not the supersonic airplane... The demand for the preservation of nature is purely gratuitous and abstract. Technicians, public authorities and users agree only to pretend to do something. veil of propaganda over the threatening reality.

Never translated in english ; full text in French :
https://technologos.fr/doc/Plaidoyer_elleul.pdf