

Climate crisis

The impossible realization.

A Jungian and Ellulian Analysis

(7th dec. 2025)

A note

In 2025, the *International Association of Jungian Studies* (IAJS) invited me to give a presentation to its members based on the arguments I had developed in Toulouse in 2023, during a conference organized by the AJPO.

On December 7, I had the opportunity to speak to a group of English-speaking Jungian psychotherapists who were not familiar with Jacques Ellul's thinking.

Two difficulties immediately presented themselves to me.

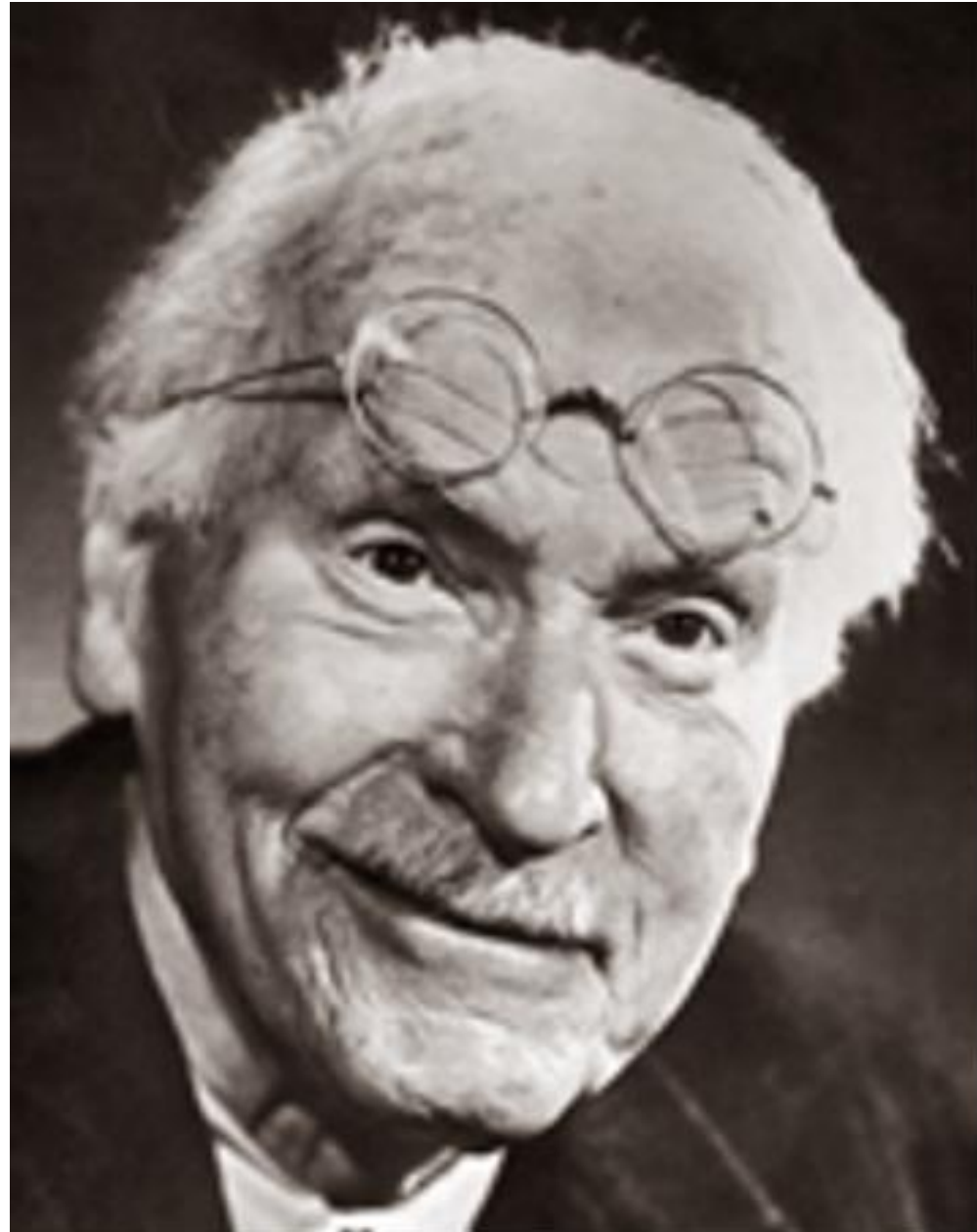
First, I have limited English speaking skills, and I was not given the opportunity to have an interpreter. Second, I was given only fifteen minutes to address a subject as complex as the climate crisis.

I therefore decided to present my thoughts using a PowerPoint document, richly illustrated with images but also containing plenty of text.

My presentation went well overall, and afterwards I was asked various questions, one of which struck me as extremely relevant: why does Jacques Ellul and, after him, the “Ellulians,” always use the word ‘technique’ and not, like everyone else, the word “technology”?

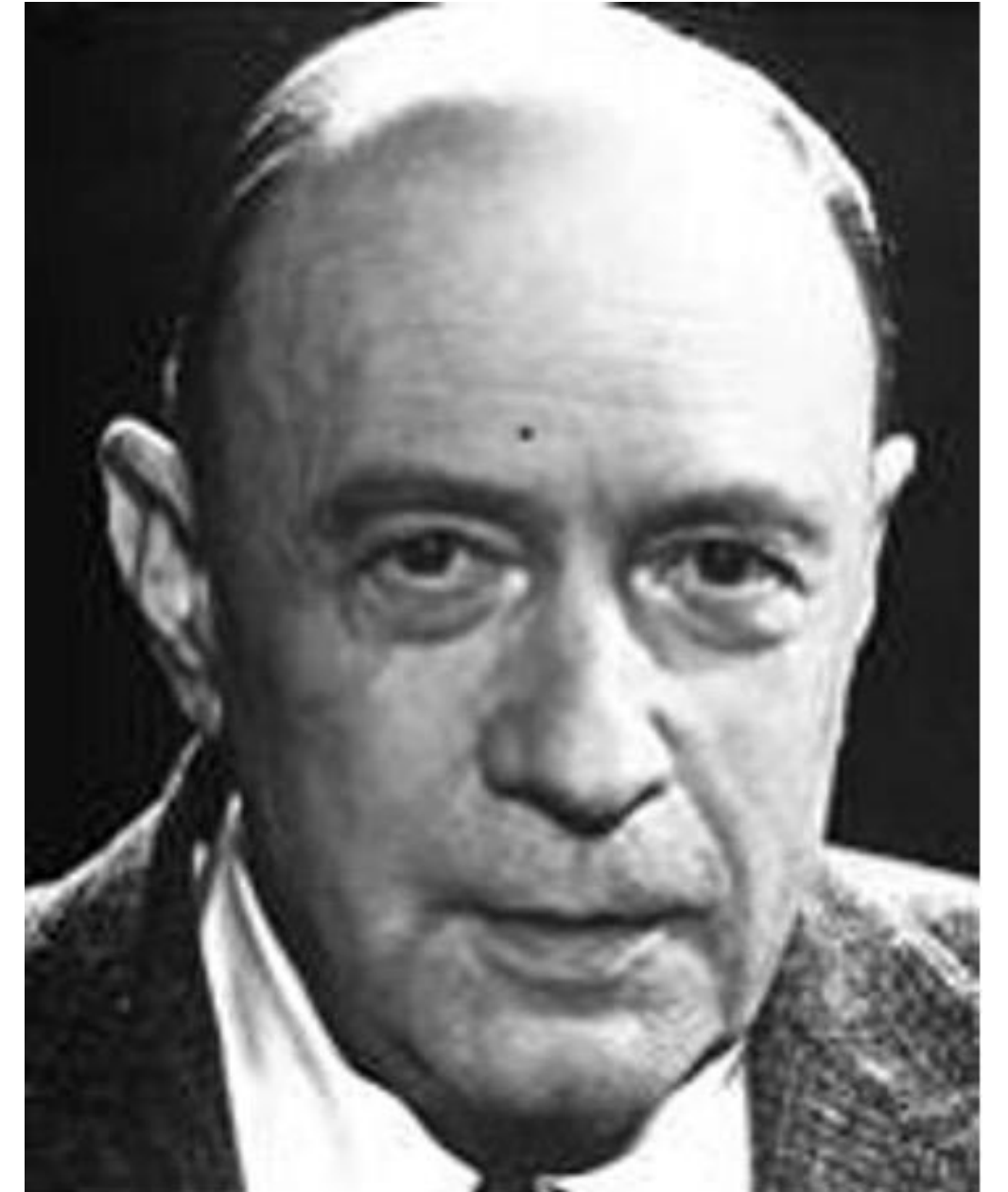
I answered this question, but two days after my presentation, I regretted not having anticipated it and included it in my PowerPoint document.

I have since corrected my mistake: the following pages are revised version of the document I used on December 7.



Carl Gustav
JUNG
(1875-1961)

My purpose today is to explain why two men who died long ago, who did not speak the same language and who did not know each other, are now able to help us understand together... the reasons why we are able to know the facts that constitute “the climate crisis” but, at the same time, are unable to understand the exact reasons why we have entered into this crisis and (even more so) why we are unable to put an end to it.



Jacques
ELLUL
(1912-1994)

To do this, I plan to proceed in four stages:

- I At first, I will tell you why these two men are important to me:
not only because they help me understand the meaning of the climate crisis, but also all kinds of situations in my life and in world history.
- II Next, I will point out that we cannot understand the issue of the climate crisis without knowing what Jacques Ellul says about “technique” and the importance he attaches to it in the contemporary world.
- III Next, I will explain why, thanks to Ellul, we can understand that the climate crisis is only one aspect of a much broader problem that, unfortunately, is never studied: the sacralization of technique.
Then, this time using Jungian analysis, we will see why Ellul's analysis (as relevant as it may be) can unfortunately only remain unheard.
- IV Finally, I explain why I believe it is of the utmost importance that Jungians and Ellulians meet around a table one day, and on several occasions, to compare their analyses.



PSYCHOLOGICAL
approach

(e.g. *Psychology
of the Unconscious*)

+

MYSTICAL
approach

(e.g. *Red Book*)

=

DIALECTIC

C. G. Jung and Jacques Ellul developed
extremely different approaches to life.

What they do have in common, however,
is their way of thinking: both are ***dialecticians***.

Jung developed a scientific conception
of the psyche (particularly the unconscious),
forging all kinds of rigorously defined concepts:
Shadow, Anima and Animus, Persona, etc.

But, on the other hand, he developed
a mystical vision of existence, as evidenced,
for example, by his *Red Book*, which remained
unpublished for a long time after his death.

Similarly, Ellul developed two types of analysis:
a sociological analysis, which enabled him to forge
the concepts of “technical society” and “technical system”,
and a theological work focused on the exegesis of biblical
texts and the analysis of Christianity in modern times.



SOCIOLOGICAL
approach

(e.g. *The Technological
Society*)

+

THEOLOGICAL
approach

(e.g. *Reason for Being*)

=

DIALECTIC

THE MAJOR COMMONALITY BETWEEN JUNG AND ELLUL : DIALECTIC

DIALECTIC = PRINCIPLE OF CONTRADICTION

The principle of contradiction means that two seemingly contradictory things can be reconciled in the same individual in a harmonious, invigorating, and constructive way.

One can, for example, believe in God and *independently* believe in - and demonstrate - values of scientific rigor.

Ellul distinguishes between '**reality**' (cf. his sociological reflection) and '**the truth**' (cf. his theological reflection).

His sociological work reveals a capacity and eagerness to study social determinisms and meditate on biblical texts.

His theological work enabled him to develop a redefinition of the word "freedom," which, in many respects, is very similar to what Jung means by "the Self."

For convenience's sake,
I will try to visually symbolize the concept of dialectics.

In the 'technical society', things happen
as if the black and the white are always rigorously separated
and lines are always straight.

Unlike, for example, the symbol of Taoism,
where the white penetrates the dark, and the dark the white;
where the white is included in the dark and vice versa,
and where all the lines are curved.

The principle of non-contradiction is **deadly**
because it is static.

The principle of contradiction is **invigorating**
because it is fluid and dynamic.



PRINCIPLE OF NON CONTRADICTION
(STATIC)



PRINCIPLE OF CONTRADICTION
(DYNAMIC)

« The principle of non-contradiction is a principle of death. »

Jacques Ellul, *La Raison d'Être*, 1987

(translation: *Reason for Being*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1990)

According to Ellul, the world in which we live
is governed by the principle of non-contradiction
(... we can, therefore, say that it is «anti-dialectic»).

This results from the proliferation and incessant improvement
of techniques, which exclude any mysteries as soon as they are
given excessive value. That is *unconsciously*, they are sacralized.

The place taken by the technique is higher
than that which was once granted to nature:

**Technique replaces purely and simply
nature as an environment.**



**Tout est
politique!
~~politique!~~
technique?**

**All is
political
technical**

INTERIORITY / EXTERIORITY

The thoughts of Jung and Ellul are dialectical.
In my life, I strive to bring these thoughts into dialogue
as I believe they are closely complementary.

The first allows me to navigate in interiority,
the second in exteriority.

I use both in an alternative way, exactly similar
to how I use my left foot and my right foot to walk.



- For example, when I paint or draw, Jung's analyses are the best compass for me.

*Visitation of the Angel Jibril to the Dog
In the Presence of a Virgin*

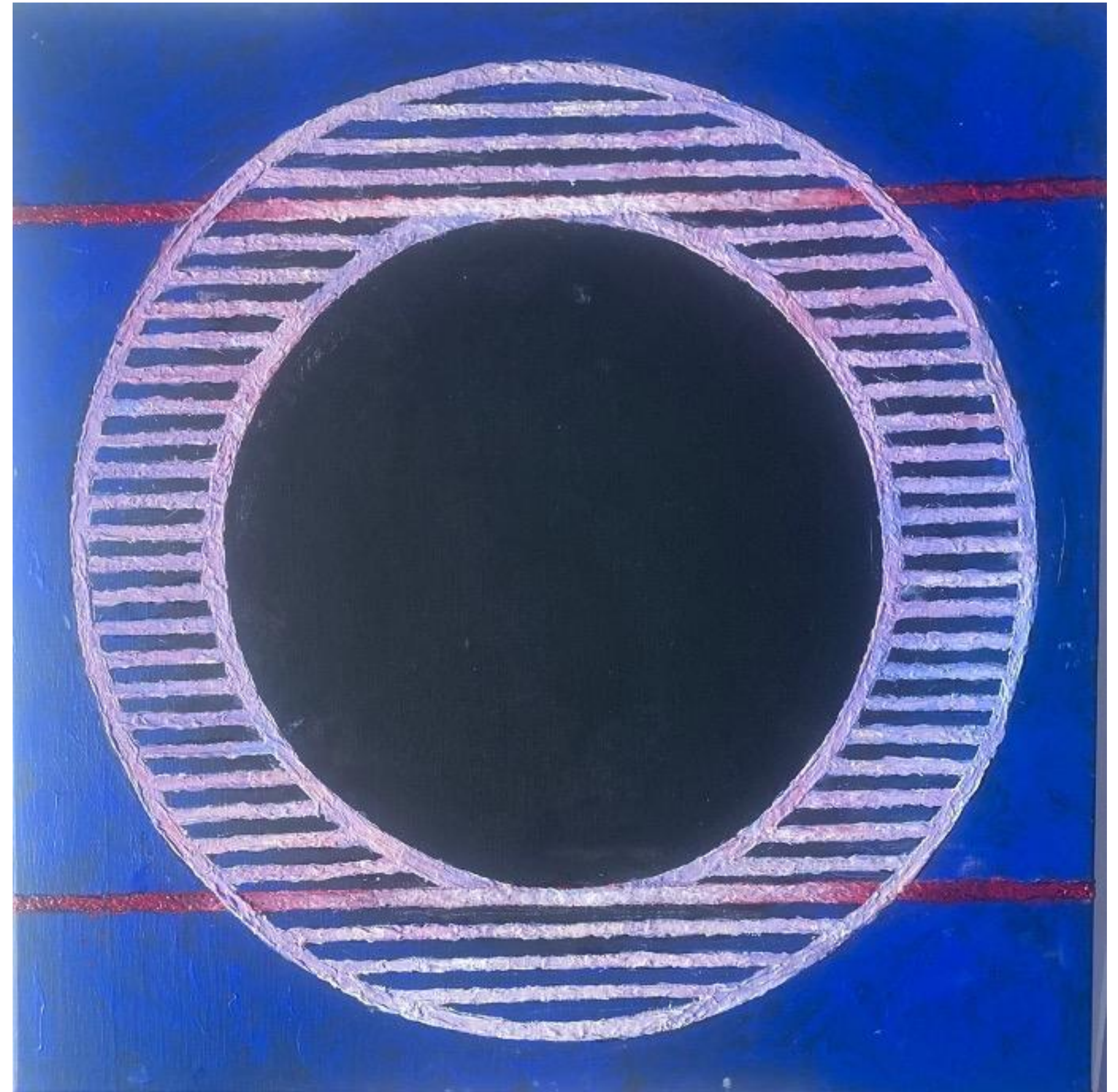
Graphite pencil on paper, 1980



- But only Jacques Ellul's analyses enable me to understand why and how we find ourselves forced to evolve in an increasingly absurd world.

The Emptiness of Thought

Acrylic, vinyl and oil on canvas - 50 x 50 cm - 2025



- In any case, I owe as much to Ellul as I do to Jung for finding the energy I need to hold on in a world that is completely falling apart.

Oasis

Oil on canvas – 45 x 54 cm – 1978





Ellul studied Marx's economic analysis in detail.

He then developed his own theory, in which he argues that it is no longer the circulation of capital that determines our societies (as it did in the 19th and early 20th centuries) but rather it is the evolution of technique that is the most important.

He develops his arguments in several books.

Let us focus on just five points.

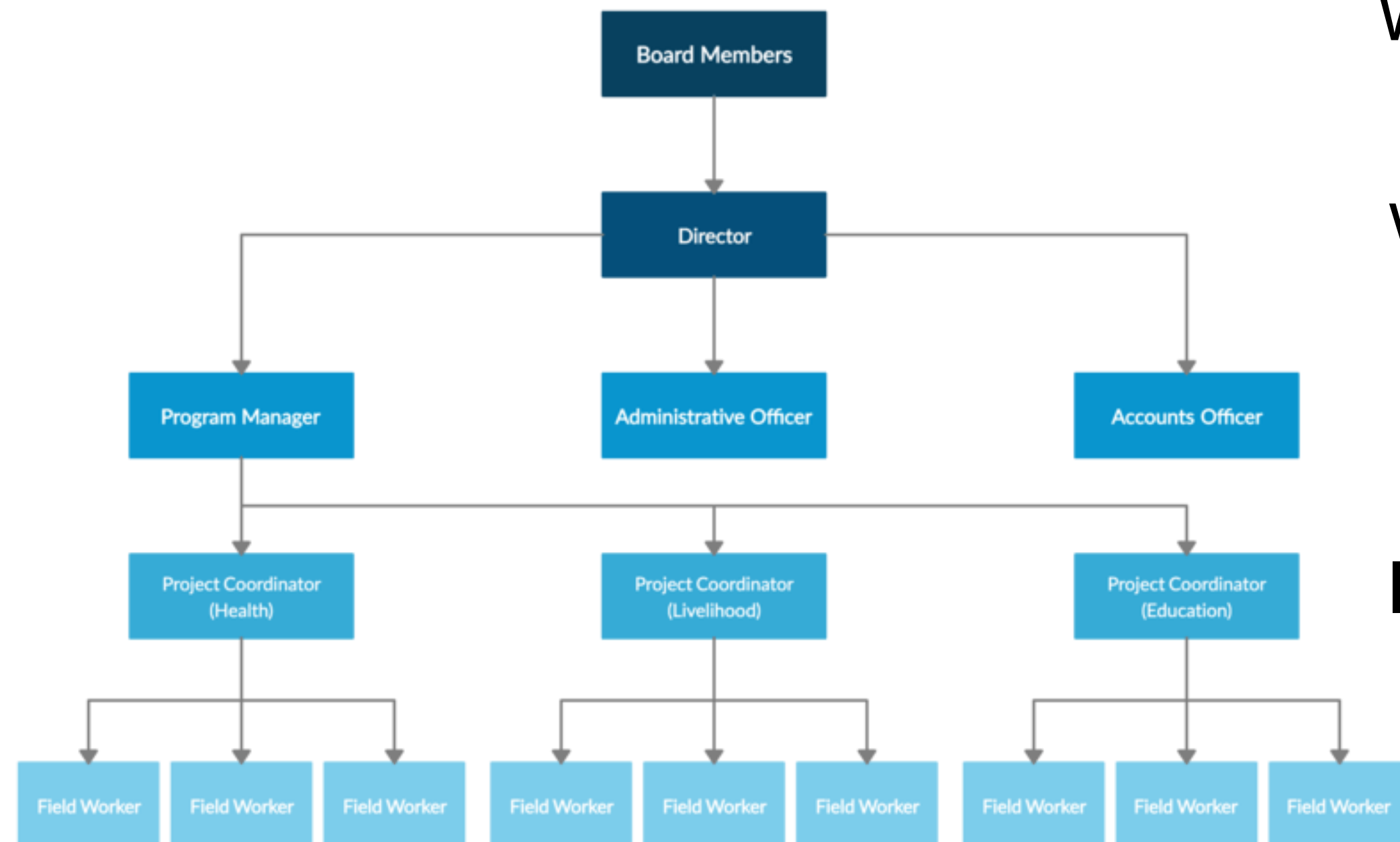
1

Our relationship with the world is becoming less and less direct. On the contrary, it is increasingly rare to approach it through trial and error and sensory experience.

This is because our relationship with the world is skewed by many technologies: screens and cameras, of course, but also all kinds of measuring and statistical instruments, the communications and entertainment industries (video games, simulators).



2



What we call “technologies” (and what used to be called “machines”) are only the visible part of technique, which also includes intangible techniques such as work organization, advertising and propaganda techniques, marketing or and urban planning.

In short, all the strategies that humans deploy rationally to achieve a goal in the most efficient way possible.

Jacques Ellul defines technique as
“the search for maximum efficiency in all things.”

*The word “technology”
means “discourse on technique.”
Studying a technique, philosophizing
about technique, or sociologically analyzing
technique, teaching technical subjects...
that is what technology is.*

*But it has nothing to do
with the use of a technique.*

*Talking about « computer technologies »
to refer to the use of computer
techniques or “space technologies”
to refer to the manufacture
and use of rockets is nonsense.*

Jacques Ellul
Le Bluff technologique, 1988

The third point is directly related to the previous one.

Today, everyone is talking about “technologies”
and many are concerned about advances in “AI.”

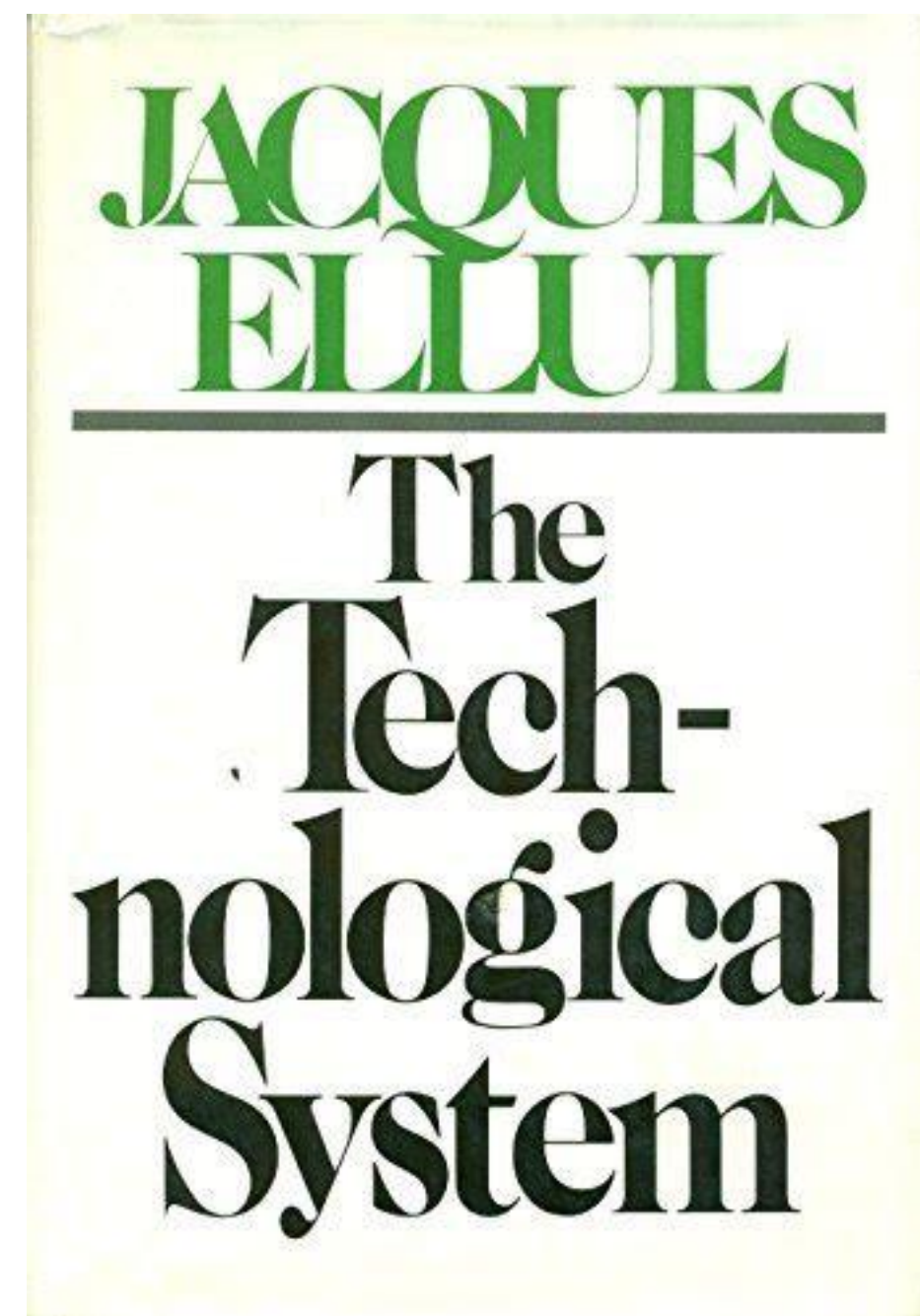
And just as Jacques Ellul, six years before his death, explained
that the word “technology” is misleading, so too, in my articles
and lectures, I emphasize that the expression “artificial
intelligence” is nothing more than an oxymoron.

While I think it is entirely appropriate and justified to use the term
“artificial logic” to refer to algorithms, talking about artificial
intelligence reveals, in my view, the extent to which our own
intelligence and critical faculties are completely polluted
by technological ideology, without us even being aware of it.

And that is why I call on Jungian thinkers
to come to the aid of Ellulian thinkers.

In 1977, Jacques Ellul published *Le Système technicien*.

Three years later, this book was translated into English with an incorrect title:



It is interesting that even the DeepL translator translates the word “technique” as “technology.”

Techniques have developed and perfected to such an extent that they now form a genuine system.

There is no point in criticizing this or that technique: all techniques form **an indivisible whole** that Ellul describes as the *Technical System*.

In 1972, for exemple, Ellul notes:

“Take an interest in environmental protection and ecology without questioning technical progress, The technician company, the passion for efficiency... it is to commit an operation not only useless but fundamentally harmful.”

(I will come back to this quote later).

5

The quest for maximum efficiency has gradually erased all traditional values, first and foremost the notion of truth (... hence the fact that we refer to the current period as the *post-truth era*).

However, this change has taken place slowly, gradually, and unconsciously... So much so that, even before the birth of “artificial intelligence,” Jacques Ellul concluded that technique was developing in an increasingly autonomous manner.

And as it became autonomous, its status was diametrically reversed: it was once a set of means intended to satisfy needs, but has now become an end in itself.

This is why Technique is now almost unanimously but **unconsciously sacralized**.



(advertising image)

Without exaggerating too much, Jacques Ellul's thinking can be summarized in this sentence:

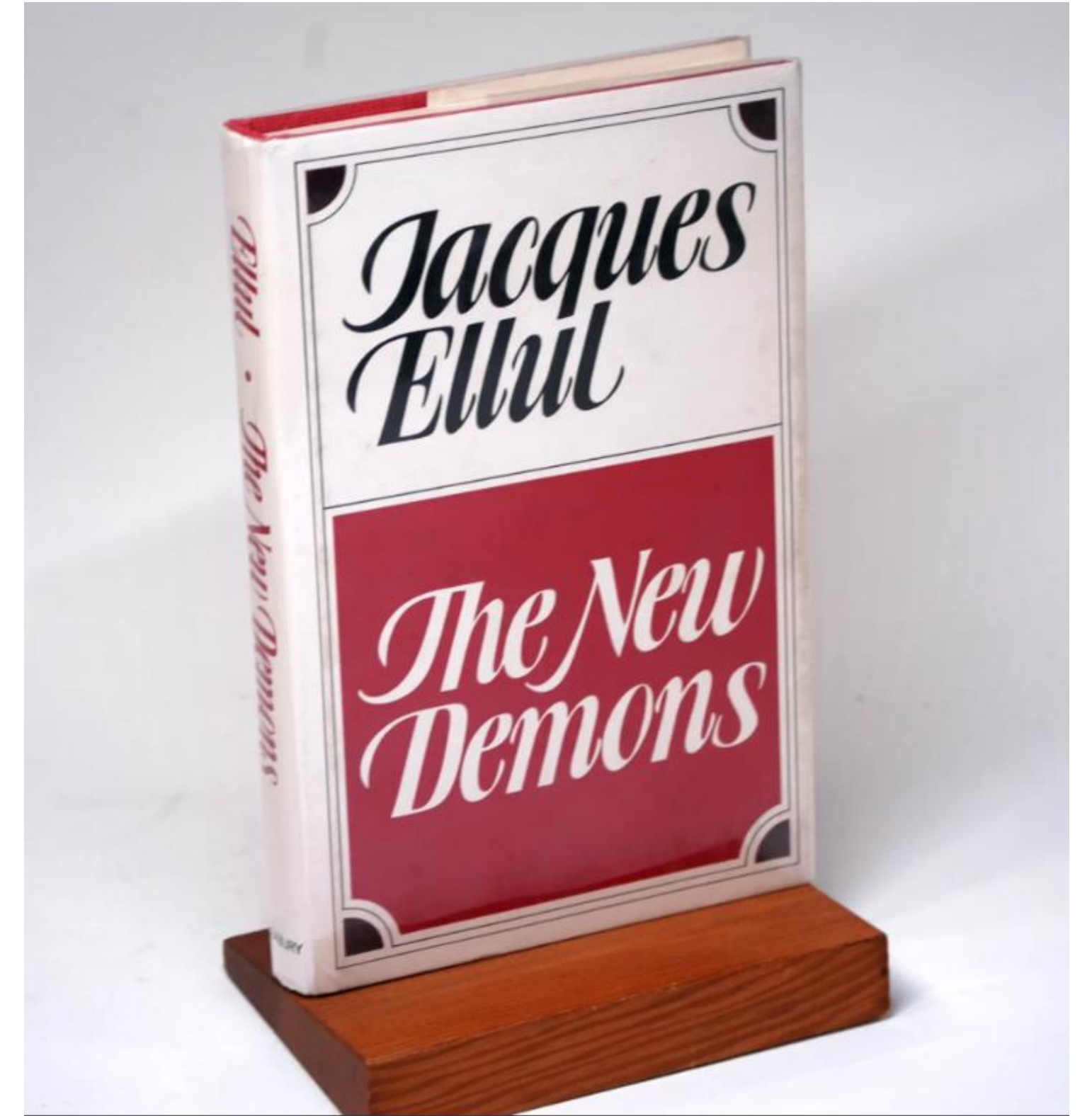
« It is not technique* itself which enslaves us but the transfer of the sacred into technique* .

That is what keeps us from exercising the critical faculty and from making technique* serve human development. »

Les Nouveaux Possédés, 1973. Reprint, Paris, Le Cherche midi, 2003 (p.316)

Translation : *The New Demons*, New York, Seabury, 1975 (p. 206)

* The translator had chosen the word “technology”.
I am taking here the liberty of replacing it with “technique”.



... « That is what keeps *us* from exercising the critical faculty »
« us » ?... The whole of Humanity.

Including the Chinese, who have long since relegated Taoism to the realm of folklore; and even them more than anyone else, ...since they want to become the world's leading power.

But let's first look at how things are going in our countries. Let us ask ourselves, for example, whether we are generally critical when we elect our leaders, and whether themselves are critical and even whether they retain a sense of truth.

This is a question I am asking psychotherapists explicitly, and I urge them to answer it just as explicitly.





I now come to the main question underlying my presentation:

How is that humans lack critical faculty
to the point of treating their natural environment as they do?



The time has come to share with you a long article that Jacques Ellul published in January 1972, exactly five months before the first Earth Summit held in Stockholm, under the auspices of the United Nations.



We here the members of the UN commission, riding bicycles through the streets of the city to do what I call «the propaganda of ecological ideology».

For educational purposes,
Ellul gave his article a provocative title:

Advocacy against Environmental Defense.

”Plaidoyer contre la défense de l'environnement”
France Catholique n°1309, 1310, 1311,
January, 14th, 21th and 28th, 1972
(not translated)

« When thirty years ago some rare originals denounced the destruction of the natural setting, and when twenty years ago, with more precision, we were trying to alert the public about the 'nuisances' (the term was not yet fashionable) by taking cases very precise, the reactions provoked were of commiseration: «pessimistic», «anti-technician», «retrograde», «medieval», «romantic»... such were the usual epithets.

Now, alas, all the facts since have proved us right. And it is sometimes the same ones who attacked us so keenly who, today, enter with fervor in the "defense of the environment ».

It was strictly useless to warn, announce, to make intellectual and scientific analyses: all this remained either ignored or misjudged. »

The first words
of the article...

... and the words
of the conclusion.

« Take an interest in environmental protection and ecology without questioning technical progress, the technician company, the passion for efficiency... it is to commit an operation not only useless but fundamentally harmful.

This will ultimately lead to nothing and we will have had the impression to have done something: this will only allow to calm worries by casting a new veil of propaganda about the real threatening.

Those who are involved are not only bad rulers and awful capitalists, they are also the concerned themselves: ordinary people, public opinion, the user.

No one wants to give up any comfort: neither detergents, nor the supersonic aircraft. The claim of nature preservation is purely free and abstract. Technicians, public authorities and users are unanimously and unconsciously agree to only pretend to act. »

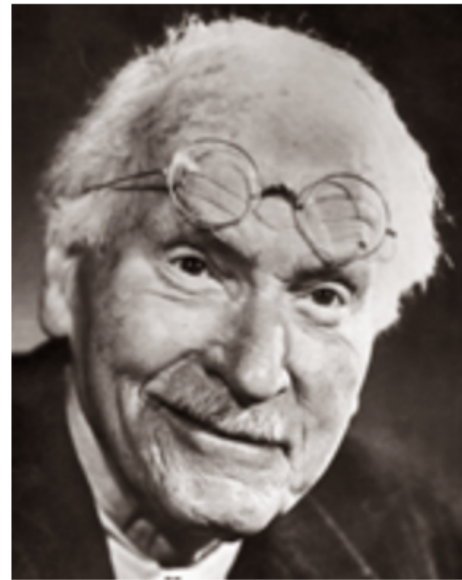

IV

And now here is my own theory:

**Technique develops autonomously (Ellul)
because it constitutes a collective fantasy
and no one seems to understand or want to understand
that the unconscious develops autonomously (Jung).**

« Complexes autonomes et autonomie de la technique :
Lectures croisées de Carl Gustav Jung et Jacques Ellul »
in *Technologies et inconscient*, Société Française de Psychologie Analytique,
Paris, Journée d'étude du 10 avril 2021. - (not translated)

To explain this, I created this website in May 2025: jung-ellul.org

	INDIVIDUAL and MASS	
	Stereoscopic Reading of Modern Soul	
<p>« Resistance to the organized mass can be affected only by the man who is as well organized in his individuality as the mass itself »</p> <p><i>Gegenwart und Zukunft</i>, 1957 (Tr. <i>The Undiscovered Self</i>, 1958)</p>	 <p>Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)</p>	 <p>Jacques Ellul (1912-1994)</p>
	PSYCHO + SOCIO = ANTHROPO	<p>« We live in both an individualistic and a mass society. These two characteristics are often contrasted. In reality, mass society is fundamentally negative towards the individual. »</p> <p><i>Propagandes</i>, 1962 (Tr. <i>Propaganda</i>, 1965)</p>
	jung-ellul.org	



... in conclusion ...

« Science without conscience
is only the ruin of the soul. »
(François Rabelais, *Gargantua*, 1535)

Take note of the facts which constitute the climate crisis is strictly useless
if one does not go beyond the stage of knowledge.

Take note (in french : « prendre connaissance »)
is not **become aware** (in french : « prendre conscience »).

Jungians know this perfectly well.

Unfortunately, in France and elsewhere, Ellulians are unaware of this
because they do not really know what is the unconscious
and especially since it constitutes an **autonomous** psychic entity.

It is essential to realize that the “fundamental” problem is not climate change !
Climate change is a “secondary” problem, “which comes second.” The first is « us ».

The vast majority of humans *believe* only in their own consciousness.

**They are unable of communicating with their unconscious
because they do not even know what the unconscious is.**

Here - and only here - is drama.

It is essential that Jungians explain this to Ellulians and that they explain to them what Ellul meant by “transfer of the sacred”... when he himself was unaware of the deeper meaning of the word “transfer.”

Conversely, it is important for Ellulians to help Jungians to rethink the process of individuation and the Self in the age of chatbots, deepfakes, and personal data breaches.

It is essential that both sides exchange their respective interpretative frameworks so that together, even if they cannot change the world, they can make as many of their fellow citizens as possible understand that their planet is polluted, because first and foremost their very souls are polluted.