



# Dialectical Theology and Jacques Ellul: An Introductory Exposition

By Jacob E. Van Vleet

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In *Dialectical Theology and Jacques Ellul*, Jacob E. Van Vleet argues that the work of Jacques Ellul is frequently—and deleteriously—misread on account of inattention to the theological underpinning that governs Ellul's thought. In a penetrating analysis, the first of its kind, Van Vleet provides a substantive account of the theological structure of Ellul's work and demonstrates the determinative role that theology, especially dialectical theology, plays in a proper understanding of Ellul.

Van Vleet offers a major introduction to Ellul's thought, his contribution to theology and philosophy, and how his philosophy of technology is both theologically informed and culturally relevant. As well, this work situates Ellul's theological and philosophical thought within an important genetic context, from Kierkegaard to the dialectical theologians of the twentieth century.

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## **Dialectical Theology and Jacques Ellul: An Introductory Exposition** By Jacob E. Van Vleet **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Solid scholarship of the entire major corpus, clarity and accuracy in presenting a synthesized overview of core insights and ideas, and a clear exposition of the key interpretive dynamics of Ellul's dialectical theology...a beautiful example of what a fine introductory exposition can achieve." -- Paul Tyson, University of Nottingham

"Jacques Ellul's work is incredibly important for contemporary Christians to wrestle with, but his corpus is sprawling and its coherence is not easily discerned. In this wonderfully clear introduction, Jacob Van Vleet clearly and concisely lays out how Ellul's works are united by a clear argumentative structure. A real intellectual achievement that is also a gift to all those who want entry into the riches of Ellul's works." -- Brian Brock, University of Aberdeen

"Jacob Van Vleet's synoptic study of Ellul's writings provides a vital counterbalance to the pessimistic interpretation so often encountered. Yes, Ellul warned against enslavement to human technique and technology. But, no, he did not condone a violent response. As Van Vleet's study makes clear, Ellul provided for hope, not based on politics and the state, but on a retreat from the quest for the illusory benefits of power, social standing, and material possessions, turning instead toward the real benefits of humility, love, and openness to the other. This book deserves the widest possible readership." --Randal Marlin, Carleton University

"Jacob Van Vleet is exactly right that a failure to understand French social critic Jacques Ellul's multilayered dialectic is responsible for the relative neglect of this powerful and insightful voice so needed in our technology-mad era. Anyone thinking in the typical linear or monistic ways of Anglo-American rationalism is lost in the presence of a dialectic like Ellul's and doesn't usually even know it. Van Vleet helps readers begin to understand and appreciate the dialectical interface and tension in Ellul's fifty-plus volume oeuvre between theology and sociology, the individual and collective, freedom and necessity, reality and truth, and indeed, the yes and no, sin and sainthood internal to every human being, every human phenomenon. The result of reading Van Vleet is like throwing open the shades in a dark room, like the moment a new language sinks in and one actually begins to communicate." --David W. Gill, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and President of International Jacques Ellul Society

"The significance and value of Ellul's work is greater today than ever, yet many continue to misunderstand him. Van Vleet not only introduces readers to the main themes from Ellul's writings but places firmly in their hands the keys that open the doors to understanding Ellul." --Mark D. Baker, Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary

#### About the Author

Jacob E. Van Vleet is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Diablo Valley College, in Pleasant Hill, California. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy and religion at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco and holds graduate degrees in philosophy and theology from the Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology and the Graduate Theological Union at UC Berkeley. He is also the author of *Informal Logical Fallacies: A Brief Guide* (2010).

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