

apocalyptic or millenarian, synonymous with some end of History but, more simply, an end of geography, as though the overthyped consumer society had finally consumed planetary space-time and been duly taken over in turn by the new communications society.

While ancient societies were almost all agoraphobic, shut in on themselves in their closed cities, within their outsize enclosures, postmodern societies suddenly seem claustrophobic, as though the open city of our day only leads, in the end, to exclusion.

'Completion is a limit,' Aristotle announced in his second axiom. The foreclosed world of economic and political globalization is effectively the ultimate limit of the geopolitics of nations, and the feeling of panicky insecurity felt by whole populations, along with the gigantic migration flows of the imminent repopulation of continents, are proof of this. The warning costs nothing and our democracies would do well to heed it before future tyrants use it to their own advantage.

And so, what is emerging, alongside the pollution of substances (of air, water, fauna and flora) at the very start of the twenty-first century, is the sudden pollution of distances and of the intervals that make up the very density of our daily reality; of this real space of our activities that the interactivity of the real time of instantaneous exchanges eradicates: the 'grey ecology' of the pollution of the life-size that rounds off the 'green ecology' of the pollution of nature by our chemicals and other products.

Here, we might mention the emergence of two currents of thought that are in no way antagonistic but complementary: *substantialism* (or, if you prefer, materialism) and *accidentalism* (or, if you prefer, spiritualism).

How can we fail to see that the primary political movement of the widespread accident is, of course, the one commonly referred to as 'the Greens'? A movement that is naturally more concerned with the pollution of material substances

6 The Expectation Horizon

Poetic creation is the creation of expectation.

Paul Valéry

The feeling of insecurity that has crept up over the last dozen years or so in the city is not only linked to the discourteous acts of so-called 'incivility' currently plaguing city-dwellers. It is, it would seem, a symptom of a new expectation horizon, a third kind of horizon after 'revolution' and 'war', the Great War, the 'war to end wars'. I am talking about the expectation of the integral accident, this Great Accident that is not merely *ecological*. The latter has been part of our general mindset for the last thirty years or so. The integral accident is also, and above all, *eschatological*. It is the accident of a world now foreclosed in what is touted as 'globalization', this internationalization at once desired and dreaded, now the subject of endless debate, as though the anthropological horizon of ideas and ideals suddenly felt blocked off, both by the foreclosure represented by a geographical lockdown and by the suddenness of worldwide interactivity of exchange.

There is immense expectation now, in fact, of an integral accident. Horror films are not just the formatted products of the Hollywood dream machine and of the bid to systematically scare viewers or cinemagoers, as though hell lay at the heart of the world. No. What this is about is the recent emergence of an end-of-the-world feeling — an end in no way

than with the pollution of time distances that reduces to nothing, or almost nothing, the extent and duration of our habitat; this human environment that, besides matter, yet possesses geophysical dimensions and proportions that are unextendable.

Proportions every bit as vital as water or the air we breathe for those who already fear that the great Locking Up of the seventeenth century (at the origins of the Revolution of the Enlightenment, according to Michel Foucault) might be reproduced – only, this time, not on the scale of the asylums or prisons of the Ancien Régime, but on a scale encompassing the entire world.

This is why we urgently need a second political movement focused on the integral accident that would complement the first – an eschatological party, this one, parallel to the ecological party officially recognized today.

Like the highs and lows of stereophony, this twin ecological movement would create the effect of a field, a raised profile now indispensable to the right as well as the left in our democratic assemblies, since, as we all sense, this classic political representation will not be able to survive in the absence of a genuinely geopolitical definition of ecology. In other words, unless it takes account not only of the famous 'imperative of responsibility' of elected representatives, but also the 'precautionary principle' and the principle of vigilance of scientists and other decision-makers running the show.

In this sense the crisis or, rather, the accident in 'representative democracy' has nothing short-lived about it, since the televue-citizen can't be governed like an unregistered student or a nineteenth-century reader, his vision of the world being literally completely different. This is something that certain ecologists have just cottoned on to, such as the *Grünen* in Germany, who are now bent on coming up with a better interpretation of the notion of globalization itself – an ecological as much as an economic variety.¹

'The civilized world should take seriously the growing threat of Terror on a catastrophic scale,' declared George W. Bush, on 15 March 2002. Seriously, certainly, but not tragically; otherwise we would end up lapsing into nihilism and leaping, without any transition, from the euphoria of the consumer society to the neurasthenia of a society of dereliction about which Karl Kraus was clearly apprehensive when he wrote, in 1914: 'Shrouded in the neurasthenia of hate, all is truth.'²

How can we fail to realize the extent to which, today, the game of politics has been defused and debased by this 'new idea' of so-called happiness carried by the looming shadow of the Revolution of the Enlightenment – but also by that of the Terror? How can we fail to see how powerless we are to tackle the major hazards and great disruptions looming large, in the face of which our hedonistic culture is basically defenceless?

Geopolitical ecology would also mean this: facing up to the unpredictable, to this Medusa of technical progress that literally exterminates the whole world.

Certain of the powers that be already reckon that the great gut-wrenching and divisive revisions of 'geopolitical economics' can't happen without some terrible worldwide crisis that, by terrifying each and every one of us, would shock nations and peoples into a sudden global stocktaking. But this is to forget a little too fast, it would seem, that fear is a bad counsellor, as all dictatorships have proved, since antiquity.

Since the last century each of us has learned from experience that dictatorships are not 'natural disasters'. They are created with the help of numerous unavowed collusions, in particular the collaboration of collective emotion. Who can forget the mass alarm about *Lebensraum* whipped up by the nationalist ideology of the Nazi movement?

Now let's turn to an event that is fairly minor but that says a lot about the ambient anxiety. In France, some little time ago, a National Union of Disaster Victims was set up, bringing together some sixty aid associations for the victims

of accidents, ranging from the Abbeville floods to the Toulouse explosion via road accidents.

This national union now passes itself off as the sole negotiating partner confronting the authorities. A forerunner of some future eschatology party, this union of associations gives us a foretaste of the possible emergence not only of the coordination of 'victims' unions', but especially of the coordination of a party of 'casualties of life' that would replace the party, in the throes of extinction, of the exploited; those workers for whom socialism represented, once upon a time, the demand for justice.

But, here, the rampant ideology is not so much about a legitimate duty to protect populations; it is about a 'precautionary principle' taken to the absurd extreme of the myth of comprehensive insurance.³

'The idea of protection haunts and takes up the whole of life,' claimed one of the great exterminators of the twentieth century. But this paradoxical claim of Adolf Hitler forces us to go back over the origins of the various 'expectation horizons' that have preceded the one of the Great Accident of which ecology today presents as a symptom.

Since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, three types of expectation have, in fact, succeeded and overlapped each other, without a soul seemingly taking umbrage at the constantly escalating extremism they represent.

In the eighteenth century, it was firstly the revolution or, more precisely, revolutions, American and French, that were to lead to the suite of political upheavals we all know about, right up to the implosion of the Soviet Union at the end of the twentieth century, not forgetting the nihilist revolution of Nazism.

Buoyed by technoscientific progress, those political revolutions ushered in a whole host of industrial and energy revolutions, revolutions in transport and telecommunications, which we don't need to list here.

As Lenin explained, and he should know: 'Revolution is communism plus electricity.'

Parallel to this very first 'expectation horizon', the nineteenth century was to have a hand in generating the second, that of war, a Great War, whose geopolitical absurdity was flagged by the first worldwide conflict of 1914, following on from the Napoleonic epic. The other great conflict, the Second World War, was a total war, in which what was attacked at one and the same time was the human race as such, at Auschwitz, and its environment, at Hiroshima. This is to say nothing of the quarantine years of the balance of terror between East and West, that Third World War that remained undeclared under the pretext of 'nuclear deterrence' between the two antagonistic blocs. But the militarization of science and the arms race involving weapons of mass destruction that it gave rise to were soon to reveal just how atrocious this undeclared war was.

There is no need to spell out the strict correlation between these horizons of expectation, 'war' and 'revolution' mutually reinforcing each other in the name of a technical and political Progress that remains uncontested, except by a handful of heretical thinkers.

On this subject, let's hear it from one such heretic: 'In the nineteenth century, the notion of revolution—rebellion quickly ceased to represent the idea of violent reform, due to how bad things were, and instead became an expression for the overthrow of what exists as such, whatever it might be. The past having become the enemy, change for the sake of it has become what matters,' wrote Paul Valéry in the 1930s,⁴ before rounding off this statement of the bleeding obvious with this: 'We are the greatest creatures of habit of all peoples, we French, who have turned revolution itself into a routine.'⁵

That is probably one of the unacknowledged causes of the defeat of France in 1940, even if the war of extermination had

already long trumped the Revolution of the Enlightenment with the night and fog of the totalitarianisms.

Yet, over the course of those years that were so fatal for humanity, a few women glimpsed the truth of things more lucidly than many a statesman. Coming after Simone Weil and Hannah Arendt, Brigitte Friang tells us about the period between the wars:

All through my childhood, I heard talk of war [...]. Films, Verdun, 'a glimpse of history' whose cannonfire haunted my little girl's nightmares, Henri de Bournael and Commandant Raynal were as familiar to me as Bibi Fricotin or Zig and Puce! This kind of intimate company is rarely inconsequential. War, war! That was the key word, the definitive word, the leitmotiv. It was so infallible, it didn't fail.⁶

And that about wraps it up, you'd think, but no, there is more, a wisecrack from Pierre Mendès-France, delivered in 1968: 'It's 1788, only without the revolution of the following year.' And that, indeed, was the case. The events of that spring remained 'events', a sort of literary Commune, and nothing more. The concept of 'revolution' had exhausted its ideological fecundity and after that remained only a mute anxiety, the expectation of some nameless catastrophe in which fledgling ecology was shortly to take over from the Big Night that was to end, what's more, in the implosion of the USSR soon after Chernobyl, a premonitory cataclysm of a future not so much radiant as radioactive.

And that is how the twentieth century came to a close, after more than two hundred nasty wars yielding hundreds of millions of victims: the First World War, 15 million dead; the Spanish Civil War, 500,000; the Second World War, 50 million; the Korean War, 4 million; the Iran-Iraq war, 500,000. As for the second Gulf War, there is talk of 200,000 victims. And it is not over yet, it seems . . .

But to stick to revolution and war for a moment, let's turn our gaze towards what is happening, giving discernment a chance. Beyond ethics, it seems that bioethics is troubled these days about the major risks that the 'revolutionary' discoveries of the biotechnologies are making the human race run, and which will in the near future lead to the threat of a sort of cellular Hiroshima in which the genetic bomb will, this time, ravage man's very form, just as the atomic bomb, in its day, shattered the horizon of man's environment.

As far as that goes, there is no lack of threats to life, between medically assisted procreation, human cloning and, now, the right to assisted death and euthanasia, not to mention biological weapons. Everything is in place for the Great Accident in the Book of Life.

At the start of the year 2002, for example, as though to symbolically mark the dawn of the third millennium, Dr Severino Antinori, whose gynaecology clinic is in Rome, in the Eternal City, announced, like the archangel Gabriel, the imminent birth of the first human clone. Certain anonymous and carefully concealed female gene donors were, apparently, getting ready to give birth thanks to the procedure known as 'reproductive cloning'.

And so, the hope of an eternity of the soul and the sun of the resurrected are having to compete with the shadows of the retorts and stills of an evil genetic genie. The resurrection of the dead has been swapped for the duplication of the living. And, suddenly, the good 'Miracle Doctor' was proclaiming that there was no doubt that between December 2002 and January 2003 a cloned child would be born, the first 'replacant' of the human race. Why not at Christmas?

By way of conclusion, let's go back now to this 'feeling of insecurity' that has come over the masses today and that already largely conditions the political life of Western nations.

Despite the threat of an unemployment that is structural and definitive for certain categories of people hard hit by

the boom in automation of postindustrial production, the anguish now clearly palpable does not seem to be linked to such exclusion from employment, nor to the 'incivility' plague or domestic violence either, but, more profoundly still, to anguish over the failure, also definitive, of the Progress in knowledge that until this moment so strongly marked the age of industrialization.

In fact, the very first expectation of 'revolution' went hand in glove with the expectation of a progress at once philosophical and scientific that was itself to be swept aside by the hurricane of war; of a total war of which the militarization of national economies, over the course of the twentieth century, already flagged the devastating magnitude. The only thing it allowed to survive in people's consciousness was this feeling of fear – and often of hate – that today marks societies of abundance.

On this score, over to Karl Kraus once more: 'Ever since humanity bowed to the economy, all it has left is the freedom of hostility.'⁷

In 1914, the date of this precautionary phrase, it was still only a matter of a deadly rough draft of a new 'war economy' that was to bring down the nations of Europe alone. But in these early days of the twenty-first century, which is our century, it is a matter of the conclusion of this political economy of disaster.

From now on, as every one of us senses, fears and dreads, the world is closed, foreclosed, and ecology has suddenly become the third dimension of politics, if not its very profile.

After the city-state and the nation-state, the outside federation of the European Community and other groups like it is merely the pathetic mask of a geopolitical bankruptcy that goes by the assumed name of globalization – an integral accident in a political economy that has just reached the geographical limit of its field of action.

7 Unknown Quantity

'Luck is like us,' George Bernanos once wrote. Indeed, if once upon a time life was still a theatre, a stage with its transforming sets, daily life has now become sheer luck, a never-ending accident, with its many new developments, the spectacle of which is inflicted on us at every moment via our screens.

Actually, the accident has suddenly become habitable to the detriment of the substance of the shared world. This is what the 'integral accident' is, this accident that integrates us globally and sometimes even disintegrates us physically.

And so in a world from now on foreclosed, where everything is explained by mathematics or psychoanalysis, the accident is what remains unexpected, truly surprising, the unknown quantity of a planetary habitat totally uncovered, overexposed to the eyes of all, from which the 'exotic' has suddenly disappeared to the advantage of the 'endotic' championed by Victor Hugo when he explained to us that 'it is inside yourself that you should look at the outside'¹ – a terrible admission of asphyxiation, if ever there was one.

'The ego is originally all-inclusive, but later it separates off an external world from itself. Our present sense of self is thus only a shrunk residue of a far more comprehensive, indeed all-embracing feeling, which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world around it.'²

Originally Freud was perhaps right, but, in the end – and that's where we are ecologically – when our feeling embraces all once more due to the fact of the temporal compression of sensations, we'd better watch out, for this will then be the