

# World Time as a Global Event

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There are moments in history when human societies have a collective sense of renegotiating, in terms of speeding up, their relationship with time and space. This is what we call world time. What it brings out above all is the idea that there is a *new dynamic of the world* made up of chains of events and new situations which encourage a collective belief that nothing will ever be the same again.

Of course, the choice of an event's fundamental moment is somewhat arbitrary, since the breaks and turning points when the fundamental moments of a new era occur, like all social events, bear the stamp of relativity. But it is precisely this that makes them interesting.

## What is World Time?

In *Faire l'Histoire*, Pierre Nora alludes to the reappearance of events in historical problematics by recalling that all modern historiography had expunged 'events' so that the importance of 'long time' might gain acceptance.<sup>1</sup> Yet, more than 20 years later, this judgement not only retains all of its pertinence but proves to be a genuine methodological imperative for all disciplines, not only history. In fact, the profound changes taking place in geopolitics, economics, technology and culture force us to rethink events in their global dimension. 'The colossal event', which Nora talked about, is occurring on a global scale. Of course the problem of the global event could be interpreted as a resurgence of the opposition between the problem of the event and that of long time. But this dichotomy does not have much meaning. The problem of long time freed itself from 'factual events' in order to defend and promote the problem of history. The problem of world time is similar to what might be called 'the event-problem', as opposed to 'factual events'. What does this mean? Quite simply that world time is a matrix of problems, questions and reproblematisations based on events located in time. This 'reproblematisation' does not do away with long time. It simply seeks to release the macro-social interpretation from the straitjacket of linear historicity, which, by ignoring turning points or accelerations, is reduced to standardising time, and thus to denying it.

Having stated this, let us turn to the main point, which is the actual definition of the concept. World time can be defined as the point when all the geopolitical and cultural consequences of the post-Cold War period *link up* with the acceleration of the process of economic, social and cultural globalisation. It is therefore neither the post-Cold War period - since it is in Europe that its geopolitical consequences are greatest - nor the period of globalisation - since the process started a very long time ago - but the *linking up* of these two major processes. This is not to say that the acceleration of economic and financial globalisation observed from the middle of the 1980s onwards has a cause and effect relationship with, for the example, the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is simply to understand how major processes will converge in time to produce, with the help of certain pivotal events, related meanings the most fundamental of which is perhaps to lend weight to the idea that human societies are entering a new era with new rules of the game in relation to which all the social and political actors have to locate themselves, react and adapt. Conceptualising world time therefore also means understanding how contents which are different and complementary but occupy one and the same place in the linking up of time 'give meaning to the characteristics of past, present and future'.<sup>2</sup> It also means giving greater importance to the rich logic of linkage than the mind-numbing problems of causality. The imagination of the end of the Cold War is that of the loss of shared references, alignments, dogmas and strategic diplomatic conflicts ringed by states. The imagination of globalisation develops around a 'loosening of what was hitherto fixed' or perceived as such.<sup>3</sup> The imagination of global time is basically one that crosses and connects these two dimensions, thus producing a link between a *world without borders* (globalisation) and a *world without references*

(*the end of the Cold War*). In this respect it can be said that the first consequence of global time is to decompartmentalise our spaces of reference and reflection by making the interplay of geopolitics and trade merge as if the logic of blocs, by regarding military force as sacred, had in some way set back the globalisation progress.<sup>4</sup> Thinking about global time means thinking about the linkages that shape new global problems.

The fact that these linkages are questionable or incomplete is another matter. What concerns us here is that they act as an imagination, as a representation which gives meaning to changes underway by giving coherence to what Jaspers called 'parallelisms', 'coincidences', 'synchronisms' and 'simultaneities'.<sup>5</sup> Deleuze, for his part, speaks of 'noncausal correspondences between events forming a system of echoes, repetitions and resonances, a system of signs'<sup>6</sup>. Nora metaphorically emphasises the fact that the virtue of an event is 'to tie scattered meanings into bundles'.<sup>7</sup>

Through construction, global time seeks to include and add up events around strong, stable and coherent meanings. Implicitly or explicitly, it is presented as 'big time, which envelops all reality' (Aristotle). It is based on what Louis Dumont calls 'idea-values', which claim to offer a certain regulation of the world.<sup>8</sup> These idea-values are apparently constructed around the 'market democracy' matrix. Democracy is seen as the natural consequence of the collapse of communism while the market sanctions both the failure of the command economy and the impossibility of curbing 'market forces'. But the dynamics of world time do not stop there, on the one hand because 'market democracy' will give rise to every possible combination ('market democracy' contributes for example to 'transforming democracy into a market') and on the other hand because numerous disjunctions will take place between democracy and market. From this point of view, global time is a matrix constantly being actualised. We can for example see in the development of the Internet phenomenon a way of actualising global time that disrupts among other things the relationship between the law and time. In fact, legislation has always linked distance to postponed time. There was the time of the offence followed by the time of suppression. With the Internet, temporal sequencing is smashed to pieces because violations of the law are committed in real time.<sup>9</sup> This example, among others, simply illustrates the extent to which time and globalisation constantly intersect to create new forms of coherence.

In its turn, this coherence will be subjected to disjunctions, since it is clear that the unity of global time is based on a multiplicity of flows. Deleuze has been able to present events as a disjunctive synthesis.<sup>10</sup> Before him, Bergson said that if there was only one time, then there were an infinite number of flows.<sup>11</sup> Some sociologists speak of disjunction between global flows.<sup>12</sup>

This is why disjunctions develop where linkages are created. And wherever these linkages and disjunctions arise, mediations of a cultural, regional or social nature will emerge to arbitrate these linkages and disjunctions. Arbitrate is perhaps not the best word, for it is not a question of deciding between the global which is trying to impose itself and the local which is shying away, but of reconciling these different temporalities, of disseminating the global in the local in terms which, as we shall see, are more a matter for topology than geometry.

## **Meaning and Time**

Globalisation can be defined in many ways. Yet whatever definition is used, it almost invariably refers to two factors: the compression of the space in which people live, move and exchange values and products, and the implications of this trade intensification on their consciousness of belonging to the same world, whether this 'same world' is the global market for traders, the universal for philosophers or the 'world order' for strategists.<sup>13</sup> Thus there is in globalisation a dual logic of (spatial) stretching and intensification of worldwide social relations, to use Giddens' terms.<sup>14</sup> In other words, globalisation is only partially quantifiable and the complex web of interactions that it weaves makes it impossible to separate the qualitative from the quantitative. In fact, when it comes to

emphasising that 'people travel more', that they receive more and more images of the world thanks to television or that multinationals 'globalise' their activities, it is always in relation to precise concerns or issues that these problems are posed. The increasing interpenetration of societies has to be looked at alongside the vital question of intermarriage or multiculturalism. The broadcasting of television programmes raises the question of preserving the cultural autonomy of societies faced with standardisation from America. Finally, a parallel has to be drawn between the globalisation of the activities of multinational firms and the question of whether one product can be sold on a global scale without its contents or packaging being substantially modified.<sup>15</sup> In other words, the many facets of globalisation only exist in relation to certain values or questions of a particular period (identity, economic protectionism, commercial, ethnic or religious particularisms, and so on) in relation to issues of meaning raised at a given time. This is what Prigogine is saying when he writes that 'all history, all narrative involves events ... but it is only of interest if these events carry meaning. A succession of throws of the dice means nothing unless some of the throws have significant consequences: the die is only the instrument of a game of chance if something is at stake'<sup>16</sup> Long before Prigogine, Aristotle was saying that time only existed relative to events taking place.

If therefore it is necessary to contextualise globalisation, it is even more necessary to temporise it. In fact, any approach to the subject raises this basic question: why is globalisation spoken of more today than ten years ago? Is there a connection between the increasing power of analyses of 'globalisation' and the collapse of the major historical narratives, and in particular Marxism? Merleau-Ponty reminds us very pertinently that it is impossible to think about time without a 'view' on the world.<sup>17</sup> In other words, it is impossible to think about time without questioning meaning. Meaning and time are hand in glove. Global time then is nothing other than a questioning of this link, starting with the problem of 'global events'.

Let us begin by empirically supporting this idea of a 'turning point' or a 'moment' by referring to the field which lends itself most easily to verification, that of economics and finance. From this point of view, the idea of accelerated globalisation undoubtedly makes sense because the interdependence of economies has grown since the middle of the 1980s. In fact, trade between industrialised countries is increasing twice as fast as their gross domestic product whereas, in the previous decade, the growth in trade was only 1.5 times higher than the growth in production. This phenomenon assumes a global magnitude since, in Latin America for example, the proportion has gone from 0.5 between 1975 and 1984 to 2.5 between 1985 and 1994.<sup>18</sup>

Economic globalisation thus results above all in the dynamics of trade prevailing over the dynamics of production. The dynamics of trade concerns goods and services, but it also affects capital. Here too, the figures confirm an acceleration that can be clearly dated back to the middle of the 1980s. Direct investment in the world is estimated at US\$43.2 billion a year for the period 1981-85. Since 1985, the pace has significantly accelerated, quadrupled even, with the annual average for global investment for the period 1986-90 suddenly rising to US\$167.7 billion.<sup>19</sup>

This 'explosion' of trade is then borne out at the financial level where once again the mid-1980s can be regarded as a turning point under the triple effect of technological advances, the emergence of new financial instruments and the liberalisation of markets.<sup>20</sup> Technological innovation operates in two ways: it facilitates the increase in financial transactions but at the same time promotes the integration of markets which are thus connected and linked in what is called a systemic dynamic. In other words, markets will be led to react in relation to each other *independently* of the level of transactions between them. The Sati Paolo stock market can then react to the Kolic earthquake independently of the level of transactions between Japan and Brazil. Thus the development of a financial sphere whose daily volume of transactions was 60 times greater in 1992 than the annual volume of world trade will have an important consequence in terms of sovereignty. The capacity of

states - through the operation of their reserves - to control speculative movements on the markets has diminished since the mid-1980s, because it is since this date that the daily volume of transactions on the foreign exchange markets has exceeded central bank reserves.

To sum up, there is a time of economic and financial globalisation, which can be said to have intensified since the mid-1980s<sup>21</sup> These changes are essential for they will quite obviously give rise to the creation of 'new legitimacies', political, social and cultural, constructed around the market. Regulation by the market is more efficient than regulation by the state and national markets cannot be protected from the global market. The market is the regulator.

Adapting to international constraints finally involves economic, social and cultural consideration of the *acceleration of time*. It is here that the first linkage of world time operates inasmuch as the whole of the new order of globalisation (in its spatial dimension) is strongly correlated with the acceleration of time. It would have been virtually impossible to envisage financial globalisation without the information revolution that, from the beginning of the 1980s onwards, made possible the development of *real time*. This revolution is based on the fusion of computing and telecommunications which had until then seen themselves as competitors. At a technical level, the major consequence of the information revolution was to allow a significant increase in the amount of information circulating from one space to another. The first generation of transatlantic telephone cables made it possible to convey 2400 simultaneous telephone calls. With the twelfth generation of the same cables (TAT-12), 600,000 can be conveyed. In the next few years, a transatlantic cable will be able to handle ten million simultaneous telephone calls.<sup>22</sup> This revolution has two consequences: it makes possible an intensification of 'communication', which in its turn leads to a collapse in the cost of transmitting information that the Internet phenomenon can only accentuate. The diffusion of information has now become commonplace; it is the speed at which it circulates which is crucial.

Economic globalisation for its part is unthinkable without taking account of the *just in time* revolution - a technological and cultural revolution promoting flexible production systems at the expense of rigid Fordist systems. This revolution, which is seen spectacularly in the automotive sector, thus makes time not only the determining factor in a company's performance but also the new axis of global competition.<sup>23</sup>

The introduction of *just in time* systems thus becomes the decisive instrument for surviving in the face of global competition. The new competitive advantage very clearly rests on time, an advantage which appears to be at the heart of the Japanese economic offensive of the 1980s.<sup>24</sup> Globalised power is now identified with the compression of time.

It is not part of our intention to explain in detail the logic of this system, especially since, behind the notions of time compression and flexibility, other social and cultural issues emerge, for example within firms. The important thing at this stage of the argument is simply to confirm the undeniable accumulation of a body of material or immaterial - economic and technological evidence whose distinguishing characteristic is that it rests on a strong interaction between the acceleration of globalisation and a perceptible redefinition of the relationship with time. Everything goes more quickly and this is felt all the more strongly because it is connected to the perception of a global dissemination. Globalisation is experienced as a 'tyranny of real time over real space' (Virilio) as if in some way the levelling of the conditions of access to space by the different actors (globalisation of financial markets affects developing countries just as much as developed countries, for example) pushed competition into the field of time.<sup>25</sup> It is no longer a question of gaining new spaces but of gaining time. Or, to be even more precise, it is by gaining time (the *just in time* revolution) that it is possible to regain new spaces (markets for companies). World space is thus fully temporised. To be in 'world time' is to be directly involved in a new worldwide dynamic and not to belong to a fixed space. Yet, what gives meaning to world time is the fact that these technological and scientific accelerations

have been synchronised with major geopolitical upheavals taking place at a very fast pace, as with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and in conditions which were determined more by external factors than by any internal movement, as can be seen in the case of Czechoslovakia.<sup>26</sup>

This feeling of living in 'new times' based on important qualitative changes is of course nothing new. Jaspers spoke of the first century BC as an 'axial period' which saw the emergence in the West of a new intellectual, moral and religious civilisation based on the idea of transcendence and inherited from the Greeks, and coinciding with comparable cultural processes among the Zoroastrians, Buddhists and Confucians.<sup>27</sup> There are thus pivotal moments in history when qualitative changes seem all the greater because they are shared by several civilisations. With regard to this period analysed by Jaspers, Eric Weil speaks of the 'global breakthrough', the moment when a new message appears which renders old ways of doing or thinking obsolete<sup>28</sup> This idea that there are moments after which certain actions or arguments cease to be legitimate on the global scale was developed by the father of world time, Wolfram Eberhard. Eberhard notes, for example, that if Japan was able to achieve its economic take-off at the end of the nineteenth century, it was because 'in those days' sudden changes could be imposed on a population without in return guaranteeing it an improvement in its lot. Yet, he says, it is no longer possible to reproduce this model precisely because of world time, which develops at an international level a number of ideas and values claiming to be universal.<sup>29</sup> World time thus makes it possible to compare and be compared.

Stephen Kern and David Harvey turn to the idea of a favoured historical moment, a global turning point, to evoke the advent of modernity between the end of the nineteenth century and the First World War. Kern stresses the fact that between 1880 and 1914 a series of scientific, technological and artistic changes converged on the dual basis of globalisation and the acceleration of time. He cites as the beginning of this turning point the introduction of the first electric train in 1879, which was followed by the electrification of the London Underground (1890), the sending of the first newspaper dispatch by telephone (1887), the birth of Taylorism (1883), the theory of relativity (1905) and above all the 'creation' of universal time that made it possible to standardise time from one region to another.<sup>29</sup> As Giddens and Zerubavel note, we had to wait until the end of the nineteenth century to witness the emergence of a world measure of time at the expense of local time.<sup>31</sup> Local time did not disappear but it ceased to be independent at a technical and social level (with the consciousness of belonging to a much bigger world).<sup>32</sup> Of course, the experience of accelerated world time is not interpreted in the same way everywhere. Yet, it generates debate everywhere on the meaning and value of speed.<sup>33</sup>

Georges Poulet, who analysed in depth the relationship between literature and time, confirms the pivotal nature of this period. He estimates that between 1890 and 1914 a very significant renegotiation of the relationship with time is expressed in the work of Gide, Claudel and Valéry. There is a desire to seize the moment, understand the new, and liberate the way in which one sees the past or continuity, or eternity.<sup>34</sup> 'The four major writers of the first third of the twentieth century ... have all chosen as their point of departure a time which is detached from all others.'<sup>35</sup>

It is the cultural consequences of this moment which interested David Harvey, even though for him the modernity of the twentieth century is expressed more in the ascendancy of Taylorism and thus of the machine than in speed.<sup>36</sup> In his eyes, the creations of Proust, Joyce or Pound (in the literary field), Matisse, Picasso, Klee, Braque or Kandinsky (in painting), Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Bartok (in music) and de Saussure (in linguistics) are cultural responses to this new order. Marcel Gauchet confirms the reality and scale of this turning point at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century by speaking of a general ideological shift, characterised by the rejection of scientism and positivism and the symmetrical development of the idea of the unconscious.<sup>37</sup> In methodological terms, Harvey's thinking seems to be essential to the definition of world time. It makes

it possible not only to understand the idea of the particular 'moment' when societies have a sense of entering a new era, but equally to grasp the strong correlation which exists or can exist at a given moment between significant technological or economic changes and cultural transformations. In a well-argued way, Harvey links the end of Fordism to the emergence of flexible production systems and to postmodern values. Similarly, Helga Nowotny compares the technological and social developments resulting from the acceleration of time:

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the hierarchical structures of the nobility were tottering, just like those of the middle class. New technical means, which had the ability to impertinently transgress the barriers of protocol, were a sort of pointer to the potentiality of change, the fragility of existing power structures faced with 'levelling' technology. It is not by chance that telephones were not allowed into the Hofburg at Vienna, that typewriters were viewed there with suspicion, and that the electric light was reserved for the street and the middle class, since their combined power threatened a social hierarchy based on subtle distinctions involving both space and time.<sup>38</sup>

Let us be clear: the revelation of these coincidences and temporal shifts must not lead us to think that they are all working in the same direction. The important thing, in grasping a moment or an event, lies less in the coherence of facts than in the fact that they emerge simultaneously. When Gauchet sees in the work of Husserl and Bergson (philosophy), Durkheim (sociology), Driesch (ethology) or Marie (neurology) a reorientation of the life sciences, in contrast to the claims of scientific knowledge, he is 'in conflict' with Kern and Harvey who stress on the contrary the direct resonance of modernity on its cultural or scientific expression.<sup>39</sup> But this is an artificial distinction, since the two processes are operating simultaneously. As Starobinski put it so well, these processes 'are a valuable index in relation to each other, even when instead of confirming they contradict each other'.<sup>40</sup> Their divergence indicates a mutual involvement in the same event. It could be said, furthermore, that events link up when they succeed in involving each other. An extension of this thinking to world time should logically make it possible to take an interest in the cultural forms of these 'new times'.

### **The Decisive Linkage of World Time**

So far we have tried to empirically establish the existence, since the mid-1980s, of economic and technological changes linking the acceleration of globalisation and the acceleration of time. This accelerated and globalised time is in its turn naturally connected to the appearance of new spatiotemporal legitimacies ('what counts from now on is the global market and not the national market') or political legitimacies ('it is regulation by the market which is now decisive, not state regulation').

But however important and profound it may be, this macro-social change is hardly sufficient to 'give birth to' world time. For, if it succeeds in making sense on a global scale, it remains totally devoid of strong symbolic or emotive power. It is a break, certainly, but it neither lends itself to the play of chronology nor of a metaphor. Of course, there was the 'Big Bang' in London in 1986, which signalled to the world how important the financial markets had become.<sup>41</sup> But to say that this event was fundamental in the sense that Stemer used this word would probably be an exaggeration.<sup>42</sup> Basically, this great movement towards the market cannot be made resonant or coherent with other social or political processes. Of course, the political, social and cultural consequences of the market revolution and the liberal turning point are and will, in the long term, be considerable. But none of them can directly or immediately be interpreted or identified. That is why the acceleration of globalisation is separate from world time.

Yet, it is here that the end of the Cold War has a bearing, not only as a major geopolitical event, but as a symbolic break, as the key moment which makes it possible to bring together the three *minimum requirements* set by Prigogine for any major change: *event*, *irreversibility* and *coherence*.<sup>43</sup> The end of the Cold War will thus play a dual role and have a dual function: that of linking a geopolitical break broadly based on the political failure of totalitarianism to the dominance of the market over state regulation. Thus, what was observed in the economic and social field is ideologically and politically replaced by a major geopolitical transition. Thus, the collapse of the Soviet Union can be interpreted simultaneously and jointly as the result of 'inexorable market pressures' and the power of the democratic message. The two coordinates then link up because they can be involved with, respond to and thus be compared with each other.

### **How do Global Events come about?**

This idea of the mutual involvement of events, prior to their linking up, is absolutely essential because it makes it possible to understand conversely why until then linking up could not occur despite the existence of many early indications.

In fact, by examining the chronology preceding the birth of world time, seven 'pre-events' can be identified which heralded the event. Let us list these before examining them in order to understand their respective significance:

- the oil crisis (1973-74)
- the signing of the Helsinki Accords (1975)
- the Iranian Revolution (1979)
- the neo-liberal revolution (1979)
- 'Solidarity' (1980)
- the invasion of Afghanistan (1980)
- Gorbachev's coming to power (1985)

Yet, what is striking about this catalogue of major events is both their intrinsic importance and the difficulty in linking them up.

If we take the oil crisis of 1973-74, we note that it had considerable geopolitical, social and cultural consequences. It showed that economic growth came at a price and that an indefinite and linear pursuit of it was henceforward unlikely. In the same way, it began to reveal the ineffectiveness of policies of economic regulation by states (the failure of the 'boost' given to the economy). Finally, it highlighted the existence of uneven global relations that the countries of the South, who now had the power of retaliation, were not disposed to see endlessly perpetuated.

However, once the shock had been 'digested', the hidden power of the 1973-74 crisis was quickly buried by the 'reversal' of the situation. What had been thought to be an event was quickly nullified by a new situation. This new situation was essentially the oil counter-shock which had two consequences: firstly a loosening of external constraints and then a relaxation of pressure with a view to questioning the mode of production of the 'Thirty Glorious Years'. The event superficially came to nothing even though deep down the break seemed irreversible.

In 1975 the signing of the Helsinki Accords took place. Compared to the oil crisis of 1973-74, the relationship between the visible and the hidden was reversed. On the surface, the Accords seemed to be an enormous fool's bargain between East and West. The East was to secure what was essential (recognition of Soviet domination over Eastern Europe) while the West was to snatch what was non-essential (the legitimacy of the principle of respect for human rights). Here again, the event came to nothing because 'surface effects' did not succeed in linking up with more hidden effects.

In 1979-80, we witnessed an extreme diversification of events which would play a decisive role in the 'creation of world time', yet without succeeding in linking up and converging towards a significant common meaning.

It was Margaret Thatcher's coming to power in 1979 which first gave a face to the 'neo-liberal revolution' which had been slowly gestating since the beginning of the 1960s and accelerated after the oil crisis of 1973-74. In the same year, the fall of the Shah of Iran and the advent of Islamic power gave rise to what might be called the Islamic moment.

The following year, the election of Pope John-Paul II, the creation of the Solidarity trade union in Poland and the invasion of Afghanistan confirmed this diversification of the world chronology. Yet what is striking is the difficulty which these events had in linking up to establish a worldwide event. Why? It was basically because of the end of the Cold War, which came at the wrong time. The Soviet Union appeared to be a power in economic decline but still politically aggressive, which led the West to rethink the East-West problem in almost Manichean terms. Whereas between 1972 and 1973 people had talked about detente and multipolarity, from 1980 onwards we witnessed a re-framing of the East-West relationship. The 'surface effect' then comes fully into play (in terms of over-estimating the Soviet Union) while paradoxically the hidden effects accelerate (the internal disintegration of Sovietism). The geopolitical infrastructure of the world has only a very slight influence on the power of hidden effects, but on the surface it continues to prevent them from emerging.

It was only from 1985 onwards that a linkage was made as a result of the emergence on the surface of hidden events whose tectonic force could no longer be contained. Liberalism exploded with the revolution in financial markets, making any state 'resistance' obsolete. Sovietism was ready to implode with the arrival of Gorbachev. Behind the scenes, events were preparing to come back on stage. Events thus take place when the means of interpreting and expressing them are available. The linguist, Benveniste, recalls that in order for a present to manifest itself, there has to be a coincidence between an event and a discourse that formulates it.<sup>44</sup> The end of the Cold War gave globalisation not only a discourse which it would otherwise not have had but also, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, a scenario for the new course the world was taking. Thus 'coagulated', these two moments (the acceleration of globalisation and the end of the Cold War) established world time, which simultaneously made it possible to lend weight on a global scale to the fact that:

- the world order was changing (the notion of event);
- the change brought about by this event made it possible to distinguish before from after ('after the fall of the wall', 'after the Gulf War', in the same way that people used to say 'after the storming of the Bastille' or 'after the war') by giving the change the meaning of a break with no possibility of going back (the notion of irreversibility);
- finally, if so many events accelerate and multiply, this is not 'purely by chance' but because market forces and democratic aspirations inevitably combine (the notion of coherence). This coherence has, in terms of representation, a further consequence: it makes it possible to locate oneself in a new set of problems where everyone, as Benveniste would say, 'is persuaded from now on that the event is so important that it is supposed to "give things a new course"'.<sup>45</sup> It gives substance to the sense of living

in new times, where the linking-up of events is now much more important than their causality. In other words, the question of knowing whether globalisation, technological change or the end of the Cold War is the cause of these new times becomes totally secondary to the sense of living in a new era with which strategists, jurists, philosophers or traders are confronted and in the face of which they feel they have to express an opinion or take action. World time is thus created as an imagination when there is an interweaving of space, time and causality. The change is experienced so intensely everywhere that the question 'Why is the world changing?' becomes secondary to 'How do we live in these new times?' This is an example of what Schopenhauer noticed when, having recognised after Kant that space and time were the a priori forms of our sensitivity, he said in essence that representations arise when space, time and causality can no longer be distinguished.<sup>46</sup> World time thus plays a role as a global calendar bringing together its three common features, which Paul Ricoeur cites in his work<sup>47</sup>

- an event which opens a new era; ('the world has changed');
- a reference point from which a 'before' and 'after' are clearly identifiable ('before the internet');
- an index of units of measure (real time, immediacy, urgency).

### **The Actualisation of World Time**

So far we have formulated a hypothesis. We must now devote ourselves to an even more essential process, that of testing it without moving away from three hypotheses: those of the event, irreversibility and giving coherence.

It will be noticed, furthermore, that this categorisation borrowed from Prigogine is roughly equivalent to that of Ricoeur, who referred to the event, identification of a before and after (irreversibility), and an index of units of measure, which corresponds well to the idea of giving coherence to new political, social or cultural values.

### **World Time and Events**

An event can be defined as the moment separating before from after. The ability to grasp this moment is, according to Pierre Manent, a conclusive sign of modernity.<sup>48</sup>

World time, in relation to the problem of events, raises a major question: if it indicates a major break in the order of time (which makes it possible to separate before and after), it does not, however, help to identify any significant meaning in this break. Yet, this is the whole question: does an event deserve the status of event if from the outset it presents multiple and contradictory meanings? The answer to this essential question is given, I believe, by those who, like Stengers, in the field of science, have thought about the actual definition of an event:

The measure [of an event] has been the object of numerous interpretations, but it can just as well be given by the very multiplicity of these interpretations: *all those who in one way or another refer to it invent a way of using it to construct their own position.* In other words, any interpretation which exposes and denounces pretence still defines the person proposing it as an heir, as belonging to the future which the event has helped to create, and none can claim in itself 'to prove' that nothing particular has in fact happened ... Inasmuch as the event did not itself have the power to dictate the way in which it should be related, or the consequences which it might allow, it does not have the power to choose its narrators. Among them are those who will try to increase its impact and the rights which it grants as well as those who aim to minimise these.<sup>49</sup>

Long before Stengers, and in a more philosophical register, Bergson was able to say that the rule for actualising time is no longer similarity but difference or divergence. Closer to our time, Deleuze expressed the event as a disjunctive synthesis since time is not a line on which various present times align themselves, but a movement which gains in intensity through an increase in the number of its dimensions.<sup>50</sup>

These definitions are methodologically essential since they help to formalise the fact that unity and multiplicity, unification and fragmentation must be thought of not as the aberrant product of a disconcerting era but as the common point of departure for new dispersions.

Translated into macro-social or geopolitical terms, this definition can be interpreted in this way: the fact that Western liberals or Islamists, for example, develop two radically different measures of the world does not in any way preclude these two movements from adhering to the idea that a new world order favourable to their interests or projects might exist. In the case of Western liberals, this is because economic globalisation and the fall of communism offer new opportunities for market democracy to triumph. Whereas in the case of Islamists, it is because the failure of state control and political nationalism has the merit of greatly clarifying the meaning of their struggle inasmuch as the regimes which they are fighting are deprived of two strategic resources: the changing alliances between East and West and the justification for economic protectionism in the name of some kind of nationalism. World time relieves Islam of the conflicts it judges to be secondary (the market and state control) while supplying it with three trump cards it considers vital to its dissemination. These include the ideological unification of the West, the delegitimising of the state through the legitimising of the market, and the globalisation of communications as media for the rapid transmission of its messages (the cassettes of Khomeini, the faxes of Groupes islamiques armés [Armed Islamic Groups]). To the extent that, except in Iran, Islam is not identified with state power, it integrates well into a global dynamic of the 'relocation of authority' towards societies. Gilles Kepel and Olivier Roy were among the first to highlight in their respective works the Islamists' integration of vectors of 'modernity-globalisation'.

Analysed in terms of causality, it would be false or simplistic to say that there is a relationship between the end of the Cold War and the rise of Islam or between globalisation and Islam. Approached in terms of linkages, it becomes central to the perception of world time.

A writer such as Rosenau does not talk about global time in order to evoke all the economic, technological, social, political and psychological dynamics that have been accelerating since the end of the 1980s. He is referring rather to globalisation with all the risks inherent in the use of such a generic term to denote processes which are qualitatively different and basically very poorly equipped to 'take care of' questions of meaning or value. Despite everything, it will be noted that Rosenau accepts the problem of world time in one essential definition: the acceleration of events which link up at a global level starting from a chronological transition which is relatively easy to identify.<sup>51</sup>

## **World Time and Irreversibility**

The question of irreversibility is closely connected to that of events. In fact, if the value of an event lies in its capacity to distinguish before from after, this distinction is only necessary if it succeeds in placing itself in time and duration. Yet very often the most spectacular changes end up, as time goes by, being relativised ('When all's said and done, nothing has changed'), whether because the change has been fully internalised or because the social or political actors who are supposed to suffer as a result of the new order prove capable of adapting to it (the Lampedusa syndrome). With regard to this, Louis Dumont has developed an interesting analysis of the global circulation of new idea-values, which can clearly be transposed to the context being studied here. At first, Dumont says in essence, the attraction of novelty and change is such that its power seems irrepressible. Thus there was a feeling

that the fall of the Berlin Wall followed by that of Ceaucescu would generalise opposition to authoritarian regimes around the world and particularly in Africa.<sup>52</sup> But once the novelty has worn off, a sort of 'local recovery' takes place which, depending on the situation, will contain the 'wave of change' or divert or indeed empty it of meaning. It might be added that globalisation makes a decisive contribution to this process by developing an imagination of the rapid obsolescence of new products. In this imagination, democracy would be a product, a loss leader, which would fire people with enthusiasm, yet by moving more and more quickly would perhaps 'forget' to take root locally. In other words, the democratic idea might develop and progress independently of the parallel progression of democratic practices. Democracy would thus be, in the well-known phrase of physicists, a sort of 'pure mobility with no precise location'.<sup>53</sup> Hence there is the introduction of pluralist elections by those in power whose promptness in responding to 'new pressures' is equalled only by their capacity to control and supervise these new democratic demands.

Having said that, the debate on the irreversibility of events is closely linked to the meaning that is conferred on them. If we apply the irreversibility test to the hypothesis of global time, two complementary and congruent observations can be made. The first is that there has been a remarkable worldwide consensus on the causes of the failure of communism. The end of the Cold War did not reveal a new truth. It revealed a universal negative truth, based on the ineffectiveness of the authoritarian regulation of societies or markets. The fact that communism has become a 'dead star', that is, an ideology with no heirs, to use Furet's expression, is, in terms of irreversibility, a fundamental factor.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the failure of communism is the only uncontested meaning of the end of the Cold War.

Nevertheless, if the uncontested nature of communism's failure is likely to lend substance to the idea of an irreversible break, it does not allow us to go further than that, since the value of a *negative truth* (the command economy and the single party state have failed) does not *ipso facto* transform it into a *positive truth* (democracy and the market constitute the fixed horizon of human societies). In other words, the irreversibility of the end of communism does not tell us much about the meaning of the new fundamental moment. In the immediate post-Cold War period, Western thought as a whole tried to interpret this irreversibility in teleological terms. The end of the Cold War could be interpreted as a consecration (after the communist interlude) of the spirit of the Enlightenment since it was identified with the three topoi of the Enlightenment as presented by Koselleck:

- the fall of the Wall introduced a radically new order (this is the idea of new times);
- the era opening up can be thought of as qualitatively superior to the previous one (History has a meaning');
- the fall of communism has underscored the ability of societies to bring down the most solid or repressive political systems ('It is the people who make History')<sup>55</sup>

What has been noted since then is that in terms of values, the irreversibility of change was much more ambiguous, first of all philosophically, inasmuch as the most noticeable change which has taken place in the last few years stems precisely from the exhaustion of any teleological-political process. It is also politically ambiguous, because although the end of the Cold War and globalisation established the irreversibility of earlier situations (in the form of a return to bipolarity within the framework of nation-states), they did not preclude 'political regression'. It is here, moreover, that we see the impossibility of dissociating the irreversibility of a process or a phenomenon from the interpretation put on it for the future. If the changes which have taken place in Europe seem less irreversible to us today than three or four years ago, it is also because many political developments now appear much less favourable than was anticipated.

## World Time and Coherence

So far we have tested our hypothesis in relation to the notions of events and irreversibility. Now we have to confront a third notion, that of coherence. Of the three constituent notions, this one is probably the most crucial. In fact, from the moment a new order is established, the different actors involved will seek to capture the event, to convert the *description* of facts into *prescription* and to make world time a true paradigm, that is, an event capable not only of interpreting the world but of suggesting new ways of doing and acting.<sup>56</sup> For the paradigm, Stengers tells us, 'is not simply a way of seeing things, of posing questions or interpreting results. A paradigm is first and foremost of a practical nature. What is conveyed is not a vision of a world, but a way of doing, a way not only of judging phenomena ... but also of intervening, of subjecting them to new scenarios.'<sup>57</sup>

Yet, in order to do this, it is necessary to give the constituent elements of the event coherence to show that their emergence is not haphazard, that their temporal coherence is not accidental, and that everything that occurs really does have a meaning. On the basis of a new balance of power, we will attempt to convert the negative truth (communism has failed) into a positive truth (only democracy and the market hold out the prospect of meaning). In defining this new paradigm, we have spoken of the balance of power. It is essential to take this into account, because the view taken of world time is above all the 'victors' view of the world.

### Ideological Coherence: 'Market Democracy'

Of course, the dynamics of world time signifies that it will avoid having its meaning inspected by the West. But we cannot ignore the fact that it initially took it upon itself to give world time its principal coherence, even if, as we will see, there have been significant bifurcations. One of the main attempts at giving coherence to world time lay in the desire to link the failure of communism to the *necessity* of promoting democracy, which in turn could not develop without the advent of the market. World time would thus be the time of 'market democracy' which would also be the bedrock of a new universal world order.

In her definition of the paradigm, Isabelle Stengers uses the metaphor of geography to show how via 'construction', a new paradigm - be it scientific or ideological - will attempt to subject diversity to unity, 'locality' to globality:

To use a geographical image, the paradigm asserts the homogeneity of landscape, but it says nothing about the existence of passes and crevices on the paths which connect the different regions and it says nothing in the account of the official journey about the local help without which the person who arrives would have been unable to improvise a way through.<sup>58</sup>

Yet this is precisely how the ideology of 'market democracy' will implicitly develop. Its main strength naturally lies in the fact that, for the first time since the 1970s, the assertion that there is no available or credible alternative is empirically validated. Market democracy would thus not be an ideology, one body of doctrine among others, but a state of the world held to be necessary (Herinet). This would be a sort of political optimum, which would, as Dunn says, have the advantage of being both 'viable' and 'attractive'.<sup>59</sup> This would not only be an ideal towards which societies would strive, but also the only socio-political combination able to make 'things work'. Thus, market democracy would bridge the gap between the aspiration to a sort of collective elevation, which socialism has been able to meet in ideological terms, and the constraints of day-to-day organisation. 'Market democracy' would be a teleology of this, which would be practised every day in real time. 'Market democracy' is from this point of view an ideology particularly well adapted to world time, in that it integrates the acceleration of time in a very relevant way. The rapid collapse of 'people's democracies' would prove that the emergence of 'market democracy' does not require the coming together of preconditions. It might dawn and spread in a rapid and universal way because the global context allows it to. From this

situation has followed, particularly in Eastern Europe, a fairly high level of intolerance to any idea of transition.

In line with the logic of immediacy, there also seems to be a correlation between 'market democracy' and the acceleration of globalisation. The development of the media was perceived in 1990-91 as a particularly important way of transmitting new ideas around the world and of devaluing the national space as a unique space.<sup>60</sup> Thus it was possible or believed to be possible to couple globalisation and universality with ease. In such conditions, 'market democracy' would be the product of globalisation and not the West's new weapon, the term 'product' having to be understood here in two ways, both as the result (it is the product of ... ) and also as a make (a product) offered on the global political market.

## **Cultural Coherence**

So far we have considered world time as a political event. Yet, there is little doubt that this dimension, as important as it is, is not sufficient for an understanding of world time, which can only be fully appreciated if its cultural forms, one might say its aesthetics, are revealed. Of course it is not possible in this introductory text to give a complete answer to a question of such magnitude. One can, however, suggest certain lines of thought.

What shall simply be said is that world time is probably marked by a symbolic deconstruction of time. After several centuries during which the development of perspective - for example, in terms of the discovery of perspective in painting in the fifteenth century - was replaced by the development of the idea of social perspective,<sup>61</sup> today the opposite situation is true. This being the abandonment of any idea of plan or perspective and the end of linear conceptual systems to the increasing power of social and cultural values that destroy long time as the increasing power of urgency as a category of representation reveals. One is therefore clearly faced here with a new index for measuring social time.

## **Disjunctions and Mediations**

In *La Cohérence du réel*, Ervin Lazlo writes: 'The laws of evolution are not *determinist* but *possibilist*. They do not select precise evolutionary paths but define the context within which systems choose their own evolution.'<sup>62</sup> World time fits this definition perfectly. It is a matrix but not a system in the sense that its different flows do not 'make up a system'. Furthermore, all attempts at coherence, which it may be the object of, bring out 'bifurcations' and disjunctions and integrate into different mediations.<sup>63</sup>

The first disjunction, which is empirically identifiable in practices of world time, is that which very frequently operates between democracy and market. The terms which backers will try to link in their aid programme through what is called 'conditionality' are in fact most often unconnected. For if there are no pluralist societies challenging the market, there are an appreciable number of geopolitical spaces where the injection of a dose of the market through price liberalisation, privatisations or the opening up to foreign capital is only accompanied by a meagre increase in political pluralism. The most striking case is of course China, which is one of the very last strictly 'communist' regimes and is the principal beneficiary of foreign private investment.

Of course, it could justifiably be maintained that opening up economically creates social pluralism which will 'lead' to political pluralism, even if the latter's establishment goes through a phase of social deregulation. But, besides its teleological nature, the major drawback of such an assertion is precisely that of leaving 'open' the question of the meaning of this transition and of the type of

regulation it calls for. This kind of comment does not only apply to China but to the majority of societies in the South. Mexico is a revealing example of this disjunction between democracy and market, even if, apparently, Mexican society is in every respect more pluralist today than it was ten or 15 years ago.

In sub-Saharan African or in the Muslim space, disjunction is just as perceptible. It appears all the stronger given that injunction used to seem very powerful because in relation to foreign backers it is 'logically' the most deprived who have the least room for manoeuvre.<sup>64</sup> It could be said that *disjunction* is a match for *injunction*, even if the work of disjunction is in fact performed more by societies than states. After the La Baule speech, as after the Gulf War, it was thought that these spaces on the fringe of world time would be ordered to normalise under the dual effect of the drying up of their symbolic resources (the disappearance of sovietism as an internal political resource) and their economic resources (oil for the Arabs, raw materials for the Africans). This relationship between injunction ('the duty to make something new' to take up J.N. Ferrie's problematic) and disjunction must not, however, be thought of in a rigid or head-on way. For, between injunction and disjunction a whole series of processes and complex realities take place which are due to the ambivalent relationship between 'saying it and doing it', to use Austin's famous phrase.

When a 'non-democratic' government tells its backers that it will "hold elections" or privatise public companies, it has in some way re-entered world time, for as Austin says, saying is doing. Often, in order to free credit, backers are content with this commitment which, in their eyes, represents a 'first step', and, in the eyes of their negotiating partner, the 'final concession'. Thus, the backer who considers that 'saying is doing' is met by the beneficiary who will implicitly set 'saying' (I commit myself to privatise my economy) against 'doing' (I will actually resist this transaction by delaying it). Yet this now familiar method of world time management through the disjunction between saying and doing (a disjunction which Fariba Abdelkhah analyses very well in relation to Iran) is only one of a number of methods of world time disjunction.

As many countries in Central and Eastern Europe will testify, this reappropriation of world time does not only experience resistance or rearguard action in relation to constraints imposed by the outside world. On the contrary, there may be an organised and deliberate strategy of accelerating change - and thus of formal integration into world time - through rapid economic or political liberalisation, which is all the more rapid for being necessarily superficial. We are involved here in a dynamic of propensity where the important thing is not to thwart a global tendency but to go along with it in order to have more control of it.<sup>65</sup> Economic privatisation takes place rapidly in such a way that the working of the market (transparency of supply and demand) is not really respected, thereby benefiting those in power and their accomplices.

Another common form of disjunction consists in choosing those elements of 'doing' which are most favourable to maintaining the status quo. If we consider for example that the introduction of market rules is based on the triangle of price liberalisation, economic privatisation and the establishment of legal procedures governing competition between economic agents, it will generally be observed that it is the ~ condition which is the most imperfectly established. This inadequate legal codification cannot, however, be interpreted as a sign of 'a lack of maturity' or institutional underdevelopment. Thanks to recent work on the Chinese diaspora, we now know that relationships of 'trust' based on clans, dialects or regions largely explain the dynamics of investments by the Chinese diaspora.<sup>66</sup> If, symmetrically, democracy is defined in relation to Hassner's magic triangle (pluralism, legitimate state, respect for human rights), it will be noted that the holding of 'more or less free' elections is the most common method of moving towards democracy. The reason being it is paradoxically a method of maintaining the established power, in the absence of a legitimate state or respect for human rights.<sup>67</sup> The last presidential elections in Algeria illustrate this hypothesis in an almost grotesque way. With reference to South-East Asia, Bruce Koppel stresses the disjunction between political liberalisation, which

proceeds through certain reforms (elections, civil service, press, and so on), and the population's ability to influence the political system which has not itself fundamentally changed.<sup>68</sup> There are, moreover, only a very few geopolitical spaces that have avoided the formal prescription of 'market democracy' since 1989, but at the same time there are only a very few cases where these two processes have proceeded in a decisive way.

In analysing these disjunctions, we have so far placed ourselves in a hierarchical relationship between the producers (the North) and consumers (the South and, East). Limiting world time to this process, however, is untenable because the West is far from being the exclusive owner of world time. Of course, the direction in which world time flows circulate is not indifferent to economic, financial or cultural forces. However much Brazilian or Mexican soap operas are appreciated in Russia or Africa, their power naturally remains infinitely weaker than that wielded by Cable News Network or Rupert Murdoch of BSKyB. Nonetheless, the West is increasingly driven to carry out disjunctions, the most significant of which is perhaps the one which takes place between the globalisation of its values and the territorialisation of its wealth. In fact, the strength of world time lies in creating an imagination of the global circulation and diffusion of images and flows. Through the development of satellite images, the proliferation of faxes and the development of microcomputing, a global closeness has developed resulting in the societies of the South gaining an intimate knowledge of the wealth of the North.

At the same time, societies, like the political actors in the South, participate more and more in the construction of this worldwide information space to the point where recently some French municipalities have banned the use of satellite dishes over the area of their communes for fear that communities of Arab origin who have access to satellite television will be 'sensitised' by Islamic messages. Satellite dishes are thus seen as an instrument of communication, which is liable to hinder the integration of populations of foreign origin into French society. Television would thus give rise to a delocalisation of identity.

This example alone illustrates not only the importance of these media of globalisation in the public debate but also the impossibility of thinking of globalisation simply in terms of the cultural domination of the North over the South. Thus, by dint of an unexpected turnaround, satellite dishes, which are more a symbol of integration in global communication, could become the outward sign of belonging to the 'world of immigration': a home with a satellite dish equals an immigrant home. Hamid Naficy stresses the role played by video in the constitution of an Iranian-American community, which is 'virtual' in that it is united by images.

### **World Time as Topology**

As world time is an imagination, for it to develop and be converted into social practice (*Appadurai*) it needs to be fixed and territorialised so that it takes on a concrete form or meaning. World time exists then only through cultural, political and territorial mediations.

These mediations are important. But their significance still has to be measured. Too often, mediation is seen as an intermediate situation between the global and the local. But this representation is far too geometrical. Let us here follow Michel Serres who contrasts geometry - the science of distances - with topology - the science of folds, proximities and rifts. Whereas geometry measures distances ('at the heart of world time'), topology measures the invariant properties in geometrical definitions of objects. It is the 'parable of the handkerchief' which Serres defines in these terms: 'If you take a handkerchief and spread it out to iron it, you can define fixed distances and proximities on it ... Then take the same handkerchief, crumple it up and put it in your pocket: two very distant points are suddenly very close. [Conversely] two very close points can become very distant.'<sup>69</sup>

In other words, world time is a powerful revealer of locality. However, the forms and consequences of this 'revelation' of the local have no predictable or linear character. In addition, it is in this way that world time is topological. That is why world time allows societies to get to know themselves, to understand themselves and to be not only subjected to strong and 'irresistible' external pressure. The French debate on the social consequences of globalisation is, from this point of view, illustrative of this hypothesis. It highlights how, with each new acceleration of globalisation, the fragility and distinctiveness of the French model (republican versus multicultural identity, public services versus deregulation, social protection versus competitiveness) are revealed. Paradoxically, world time is a way of rediscovering oneself, even if this rediscovery is experienced as anxiety.

Having outlined this topological interpretation of world time, let us turn to an examination of certain mediations and in particular the regional mediation of world time. In a global society where nation-states still exist, world time generally passes through a regional space with whose meaning societies identify more or less explicitly: Europe for the French, the Maghreb or the Muslim world for Morocco, Japan or China for Asia, and so on. It is therefore very often in relation to 'close foreign countries' that a view of world time is first of all focused, then adjusted. Arjun Appadurai notes in this regard that 'for the populations of Iran, Indoneisation poses more problems than Americanisation, in the same way that Nipponisation does for the Koreans, Indianisation for the Sri Lankans, Viemarnisation for the Cambodians and Russianisation for the Armenians or the Baltic countries'.<sup>70</sup> This argument could of course be extended to other spaces by saying that the European project is interpreted in France through the 'German prism'. Equally it can be said that one of the issues of 'European construction' in relation to citizens lies in the ability of Europeans to make Europe a mediator between them and globalisation, whereas, at the present time, the mistrust of Europe is explained by the fact that Europe is seen rather as the accelerator of globalisation.<sup>71</sup>

First published in French: Zaki Laïdi (ed.), *Le temps mondial* (Brussels: Complexe, 1997), pp.11-52.

## NOTES

1. Pierre Nora, 'Le retour de l'événement', in Jacques Le Golf and Pierre Nora (eds.), *Faire l'Histoire. Nouveaux problèmes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 307. See also the authoritative work by Krzysztof Pomian, *L'ordre du temps* (Paris, Gallimard, 1984).
2. Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit. Le temps raconté*, Vol.3 (Paris: Seuil, 1985), p.69.
3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sens et non-sens* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p.86.
4. Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture, Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1990), p. 17.
5. Cf. Karl Jaspers, *Origines et sens de l'histoire* (Paris: Plon, 1954).
6. Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris, Minuit, 1969), p. 199.
7. Pierre Nora, 'Le retour de l'événement', op. cit. p.305.
8. Louis Dumont, *L'idéologie allemande. France-Allemagne et retour* (Paris, Gallimard), pp.44-5.
9. *Libération*, 18 April 1996.
10. François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze. Une philosophie de l'événement* (Paris: PUP, 1994), p. 108. 11.
11. Gilles Deleuze, *Le Bergsonisme* (Paris: PUF, 1966), p.83.
12. Arjun Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', in Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1991).
13. Ronald Robertson, 'Globalization as a Problem', in Ronald Robertson, *Globalization* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 1.
14. Anthony Giddens, *Les conséquences de la modernité* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), p.70.
15. This is the whole issue of what is called 'glocalization'. On the excesses of the 'end of geography' or territoriality, cf. Paul Knigian, 'Integration, specialisation and adjustment' (London, CEPR, Discussion paper no. 886,1993), and David Levy, 'International Production and Sourcing: Trends and Issues', *Science, Technology and Industry Review*, 13 (1993), pp.13-59. This exercise in quantification seems to me to be essential since its aim is to respond to certain highly legitimate criticisms. George Modelski, for example, recognises the crucial role played by the concept of world time in France, but deplores the limited recourse to quarried data. Cf. 'French Thoughts on World Time', *Merson International Studies Review*, 38 (1994), pp.247-252. On temporality's 'comeback' in international relations, it is well worth wading Pierre Grosser's *Les temps de la guerre froide* (Paris: Complexe, 1995).
16. Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, *Entre le temps et l'éternité* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992), p.47.
17. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard), p.470
18. Bank for International Settlements, *Annual Report (Basel, 1990)*, p.68. On the link between global and local foreign investments, see *World Investment Report 1994, Transnational Corporations, Employment and the Workplace* (New York: UNCTAD, 1994), p. 146 fr. Finally, on the resistance of geographical proximity in international trading relations, see Helen Milner, 'Commerce mondial: une nouvelle logique des blocs', in

- Zaki LAIDI, *L'ordre mondial relâché: sens et puissance après la guerre froide* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP 1993), pp.131-53.
19. *Ibid.* pp. 902
  20. Richard O'Brien, *The End of Geography: Global Financial Integration* (London: Pinter, 1992), p.7
  21. Group of Ten, *International Capital Movements and Foreign Exchange Markets*, 91 (April 1993), p.15. See also the indispensable study of financial markets in *The Economist* supplement of 7 Oct. 1995.
  22. Cf. United Nations, *The Telecommunications Industry: Growth and Structural Change* (New York, 1987) and *the Financial Times*, 17 Aug. 1993.
  23. George, Stalk and Thomas HOUT, *Vaincre le temps* (Paris: Dunod, 1992).
  24. *Ibid.*, Chapter 1V.
  25. See Paul Virilio's very pertinent comments on world time in *L'Empire des techniques* (Paris: Point-Seuil), 1994, p.207 ff., as well as in his last work *La vitesse de libération* (Paris: Galilée, 1995).
  26. Pierre Hassner, 'Les révolutions ne sont plus ce qu'elles étaient', in Jacques Semelin, *Quand les dictatures se fissurent* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer), 1995, p.245.
  27. Benjamin Schwartz, 'The Age of Transcendence', *Daedalus* (Spring 1975), p. 1.
  28. *Ibid.*, p.3.
  29. Wolfram Eberhard, *Conquerors and Rulers: Social Forces in Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).
  30. CL Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).
  31. Anthony Giddens, *Les conséquences de la modernité*, op. cit., p.27.
  32. Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*, op. cit. p.23
  33. *Ibid.*, p.24.
  34. Georges Poulet, *Études sur le temps humain, Vol. 3* (Paris: Plon, 1964), p.23.
  35. *Idem.*
  36. David Harvey, *The Condition of Post-Modernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (London: Blackwell, 1989), p.294
  37. Marcel Gauchet, *L'inconscient cérébral* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1992), p. 14
  38. *Ibid.*, p-31 and Helga Novotny, *Le Temps a soi* (Paris: Ed. de l'In M.S.H, 1992), p. 22. See also on the social consequences of speed, Christophe Studeny, *L'invention de la vitesse. France XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).
  39. Marcel Gauchet, *L'inconscient cérébral*, op. cit., p.1 72.
  40. Jean Starobinski, 1789. *Les emblèmes de la raison* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), p.7.

41. Richard O'Brien, *The End of Geography*, op. cit., P. 19.
42. Georges Steiner, *Le chateau tie Barbe-Bleue. Notes pour une redefinition de la culture* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973). He shows that the French Revolution contributed not only to speeding up the pace of history but also to disturbing the relationship between individuals and time, history and politics.
43. Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, *Entre temps et Éternité*, op. cit., p.47.
44. Eugene Benveniste, 'Le langage et L'expérience humaine', in *Problèmes du langage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966); quoted in Paul Ricœur, *Temps et récit. Le temps raconté, Vol. 3* (Paris: Le Scuil, 1985), p. 197.
45. Idem.
46. Marie-Josée Perrin, *Schopenhauer Le déchiffrement de L'énigme du monde* (Bordas, 1992), fr20.
47. Paul Ricoeur, *Temps er récit*, op. cit., p. 194.
48. Pierre Manent, 'Être modeme aujourd'hui', *Paysans*, Sept-Oct. 1994, p.6
49. Isabelle Stengers, *L'invention des sciences modernes* (Paris: Flammarion, Champs, 1995), p.81 (emphasis added).
50. François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze, une philosophiie de l'événement, opcit.*, p.78
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52. Louis Dumont, op. cit.
53. Étienne Klein, *Le Temps* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), p.84 (Dominos).
54. Cf. Frangois Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion* (Paris: Calmmn-Lévy/Robert Laffond, 1995).
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56. Isabelle Stengers, *L'invention des sciences modernes, op. cit.*, p.60.
57. Idem.
58. Ibid. p. 136.
59. John Dunn, 'Democratie: L'état des lieux', *La Pensé politique, op. cit.*, p.82
60. On the reality and the limits of this process, see Jacques Semelin (ed.), *Quand les dictatures se fissurent. Résistances civiles a l'Est et ay , Sud* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1995).
61. Cf. *La vision projective (1435-1740)*, presented by Philippe Hamou (Paris: Payot, 1995) (PBP/Classique).
62. Ervin Lazlo, *La coherence du reel. Evolution coeur du savoir* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1989), p.70.

63. The concept of disjuncture is used by Arjun Appadurai in 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', in Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1991), p.295 ff. Appadurai distinguishes five 'flows' which he calls 'scapes' (ethnic groups, technology, finance, media and ideologies) and which in his eyes do not make up a system, p.301. Although they are not interested in international society, Boitanksi and Thdvenot speak of 'cities' - understood in the sense of a pattern of action giving sufficient coherence to an order of human transactions - to analyse the social system. Six types of city are referred to: merchant cities, domestic cities, civic cities, industrial cities, inspired cities and cities of public opinion. See *De la justification . Les économies de la grandeur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991).
64. On a demythologisation of conditionality and its effects on the beneficiaries of aid, see Zaki Laïdi, *Enquête sur la Banque mondiale* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), p. 175 ff.; Jean Coussy, 'Les ruses de l'État minimum', in Jean-François Bayart (ed.), *La reinvention du capitalisme* (Paris: Karthala, 1994), pp.227-49.
65. This problematic of propensity opposed to that of causality was developed by Karl Popper in *Un univers de propension* (Paris: ULLat, 1992). See also the use made of this concept by François Julien in the Chinese case, *La propension des chasses. Pour une histoire de l'efficacité en Chine* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).
66. On this point, see the remarkable Australian report *Overseas Chinese Business Networks in Asia* by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 51, 1995. On the role of 'trust' in economic success, see Francis Fukuyama, *Trust. The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (Harnish Harnilton, 1995).
67. Pierre Grémion and Pierre Hassner (eds.), *Vents XEst. Vers l'Europe des États de droit?* (Paris: PUF, 1990), p.130. On the disjunctures of 'democratic construction' in posttotalitarian societies, see Jon Elster's reflections in the remarkable work of Stephen Shute and Susan Harley (eds.), *On Human Rights. The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1993* (Basic Books, 1993).
68. Bruce Koppel, 'Les perspectives de démocratisation en Asie du Sud-Ouest', *Les Études du CERI*, no. 7 (Paris, 1995), p.13.
69. Michel Serres, *Éclaircissements. Entretien avec Bruno Latour*, Flammarion (1994), pp.92-3.
70. Arjun Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and difference...' in *Global Culture*, op. cit., p.295.
71. Zaki Laïdi, *Un monde privé de sens* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), p. 134.