An End to Violence

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1 The Subject and Violence

There can be no discussion of violence today without involving the notions of Subject or subjectivity, in various ways.

1.1 Objectivity and Subjectivity

The first thing that has to be stated is that the threat remains of the disarticulation between objective approaches to violence, which may be quantified and which can claim to be universal as they are theoretically acceptable to all, and subjective or relative approaches, which look at what an individual, a group, or a society considers as such at any given time. A legal definition of violence, centered on the state and, in the words of Max Weber, on a legitimate monopoly of force, appears to enable this problem to be set aside and violence simply to be objectivized. In this context, André Lalande's *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie* (1968), backed up by Montesquieu, mentions the "illegitimate or at least illegal use of force."[1] But when the state entrusts private agents with a substantial part of war-making, as is overwhelmingly evident with the US intervention in Iraq (Makki 2004), and when internal security is likewise handed over to the private sector, a trend currently at work worldwide, the state monopoly of legitimate force is called into question and, thus, the possibility of discussing violence objectively, as in Lalande's definition quoted above.

The advent of the age of victims that began in the 1960s considerably strengthens this process of calling into question, and the upsurge of individual identities has considerable "memory" and "victim" dimensions. Many players nowadays are demanding acknowledgment of and, in some cases, reparation for the crimes

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[1] "When we, who live under civil laws, are compelled to make some contract not required by law, we can, thanks to the law, set aside violence" (Montesquieu 1758).

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perpetrated upon their forefathers and, at the same time, appearing in the public arena in connection with the harsh injustices they have suffered or, indeed, may still be suffering to this day. Such movements can be cultural, religious, or ethnic, perhaps national, black, or Indian; they may involve the survivors of a genocide or their descendants, or the parents or children of victims of a dictatorship or totalitarian power. Likewise, in several countries, increasingly diverse and effective mobilization is drawing attention to the violence suffered by women, children, the handicapped, or old people. Such players portray past and present violence not so much from the point of view of the threat to order or calling the state into question, but rather as an experience undergone and its consequences on those undergoing it; they speak of the trauma suffered and its effects over time, for example. Here, violence equals negation of or an attack on an individual's physical and moral integrity, with implications that may affect succeeding generations. This makes it difficult to develop as a Subject; it invades subjectivity and takes the place of a subjectivization process. From this viewpoint, violence affects individual, personal, and collective existences.

The tension between the objectivity and subjectivity of violence is not a purely theoretical problem; it can lead to fierce political debate. In France during the 1980s and 1990s, for example, people wondered whether delinquency and crime were increasing objectively, or whether it was in fact the feeling of insecurity that had increased, without any automatic link with an actual increase in crime, as the left claimed (before gradually moving away from this view of the problem). The harder it is to establish a direct link between acts of violence and their representations, the more the understanding of the one and the other falls into two separate registers which ultimately are almost completely dissociated.

1.2 Classical Approaches

When thinking about an end to violence, it is not sufficient just to consider the victims and their subjectivity, however important their point of view may be and however considerable may be their ability to mobilize opinion and the media and to appeal to the state and political leaders. One must also look at the players involved in violence. Now, conventional methods of analysis are scarcely ever concerned with their subjectivity.

Some people see violence as crisis behavior, a response to changes in their situation causing one or more players to react, often out of frustration. This approach gains respectability with Alexis de Tocqueville, who explains à propos of the French Revolution that violence was especially marked when the population found its situation improving: "One would say," he wrote, "that the French found their situation the more unbearable as it improved" (Tocqueville [1856] 1998). Above all, though, it was British and American functionalist or neo-functionalist researchers who were responsible for the rise of this thesis, in the form of the theory of relative frustration, in the 1960s and 1970s. The idea put forward by James Davies, for example, and taken up to a considerable degree by Ted Robert Gurr (e.g., 1980), is in fact

that violence develops when the gap between a group's expectations and the scope for fulfilling them widens to the point of being intolerable. This type of approach has sometimes produced interesting results. However, in the 1970s various studies revealed its shortcomings and very limited explanatory power.

Very differently, a second type of analysis stresses the rational, instrumental nature of violence, including in its collective dimensions—riots and revolution, for example. This may be said to have gained respectability with Thomas Hobbes but really took off in the 1960s, notably through the work of historian, Charles Tilly. For supporters of the thesis of "mobilization of resources," violence is a resource, a means, which is mobilized by players in order to achieve their ends. Most of the time this idea serves to explain how players excluded from the political field use violence as a way of gaining admission and staying there. Such an idea has the advantage of no longer reducing violence to the notion of reactive crisis behavior; instead, it makes the perpetrator of violence someone who is aware of the issues surrounding the act of violence which, in turn, consequently makes sense. This approach argues that violence should not be separated from the wider conflict in the context of which it may arise, such as industrial action or a farmers' demonstration. It has considerable explanatory power.

Finally, a third type of approach, in fact very wide and diversified, postulates a link between culture and violence. Some writers regard the progress of culture, or rather of civilization, as the opposite of violence, in the tradition of the well-known study by Norbert Elias of the process of civilization, which explains how the modern individual has learned, in court, for example, to control his aggression and check his violent impulses (Elias [1939] 1974, 1975). Other writers stress how some cultures favor violence more than others, possibly through socialization and education—with reference, for example, to the work of Theodor Adorno on anti-semitism (1960). One problem associated with this set of perspectives is that the analysis generally omits political and social mediation and also disregards the historical layer that may separate the time when a personality is shaped and the moment of acting.

Conventional approaches to violence should not be forgotten or rejected; they provide a perspective, which may be useful in order to understand a concrete experience of violence. However, they fail to deal with certain dimensions that are nevertheless essential and which the concept of Subject offers a way of comprehending.

1.3 The Subject of Violence

Violence may present aspects suggesting a process of loss of meaning: when the player comes to express a meaning that has become lost or impossible and resorts to violence because he is unable to construct the confrontational action that would enable him to assert his social demands or cultural or political expectations, because no political process is available for dealing with them.

A lack or loss of meaning does not necessarily lead to a vacuum, a complete lack of meaning and, ultimately, nihilism; such deficiencies often give rise to processes

of manufacturing a new meaning of a more or less artificial nature, in other words, detached from reality, resulting in excesses and immoderation. In some experiences, for example, violence is based on an ideology from which it originates and which gives it a substitute meaning, as will be seen below with reference to Italian far-left terrorism. Other cases involve a myth, a discursive construction suggesting the possible integration of elements of meaning, which, in fact, become increasingly contradictory. Here, violence develops when the myth disintegrates and ceases to be viable, whereas the player nevertheless endeavors to keep it alive. In the modern world, though, religion often lends a metapolitical meaning to a violent act which then transcends politics, even if it soon becomes established again at that level.

Violence has other aspects, which continue to elude conventional approaches. This is the case when cruelty, gratuitous violence, and violence for violence's sake are involved; when the player not only destroys another but destroys himself, wipes out his existence by murderous, martyr-style acts. Or when the perpetrator appears to attach no personal meaning to his act, presenting himself as not responsible and claiming simply to have obeyed a lawful authority. This was the line of defense put forward by Eichmann in Jerusalem, as described by Hannah Arendt (1966).

The concept of Subject may prove particularly useful for taking account of these different aspects, provided that the definition adopted is not too unimaginative or rudimentary. I, therefore, propose to establish five cases, each corresponding to a type of subjectivity that can be linked to violence (Wieviorka 2005).

- The *Floating Subject* is one who, not managing to become a player, resorts to violence: for instance, the young immigrant from a run-down neighborhood setting fire to cars during the October/November 2005 riots as his only way of expressing, if not specific social demands, then at least his desire to build a life for himself.
- The *Hyper-Subject* compensates for the loss of meaning by excess, to which he gives a new, ideological, mythical, or religious meaning. Here, violence is firmly linked to beliefs; it is the serious commitment of a meaning extending far beyond the bounds of the situation in which it is expressed, and aiming even further still. Islamic martyrism can serve as an illustration of this: the player kills, and in so doing extinguishes his own life, combining tremendous despair with a metapolitical vision that reaches beyond life itself.
- The *Non-Subject* acts violently without in any way involving his subjectivity, at least apparently merely obeying orders, as in Stanley Milgram's famous experiments (1974). His violence has no meaning from his point of view; it is nothing more than a form of submission to a lawful authority.
- The *Anti-Subject* is that side of the Subject that fails to acknowledge the other person's right to be a Subject and which can develop only by negating the other person's humanity. This case corresponds to the dimensions of cruelty or enjoyment of violence for its own sake, as an end in itself. Here, the victim is dehumanized, reified, or animalized and is in every respect the opposite of the Subject. The perpetrator of cruel acts who finds pleasure in violence assumes that position and acts contrary to the humanist dimensions on which the concept of

Subject is normally based—hence the use of the term *Anti-Subject*. Masochism is a perverted form of this scenario, in which the victim also derives pleasure from his own dehumanization.
– The *Survivor Subject* corresponds to a situation where, before any aggression has actually taken place, an individual may (rightly or wrongly—it matters not) feel that his very existence is threatened, and act violently to ensure his own survival.

This typology, briefly outlined here, would certainly deserve to be developed and the proposed terminology is not perhaps the most suitable, but it should be pointed out that until now we have lacked any sociological categories to permit a fuller description of these different cases. It has the advantage of helping us to tackle the most mysterious aspect of violence, which is also the core one: not the frustrations it may reveal, nor the more or less rational calculations made by the person resorting to violence, nor even the culture from which it stems, but the processes of loss of meaning and excess of meaning through which violence may develop, the share of surplus and lack involved, the twisted, corrupted, or sometimes also perverted subjectivity that makes violence possible.

2 Violence and Globalization

We can no longer approach the issue of violence today as we would have done only 20 or 30 years ago. The world has changed, considerably, and the processes of globalization are at the heart of these changes. By thinking "globally," we can approach violence with a fresh or altered perspective.

2.1 The End of the Cold War

Let us look at the world as it was in the 1950s or 1960s. Essentially, it was structured by the central conflict between the two superpowers of the day, the United States, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other hand. The Yalta agreement, signed before World War II was even over, carved the world up into two zones of influence. The Cold War was, thus, a major ideological, economic, and geopolitical confrontation, but it never led either to head-on war or significant unmediated local conflicts. Neither the Korean War nor the Vietnam War pitted the two superpowers directly against each other, nor did they escalate into a much wider world war; they remained localized. Nuclear weapons ensured a degree of prudence between the two blocs and had a deterrent effect; the prospect of their use restrained extremes of action, even in times of high tension, notably the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Warlike violence was, thus, limited throughout the world, as many countries were more or less firmly within the sphere of influence of one or other superpower and everyone knew that a localized war was likely to lead to global conflict.

A report by the Human Security Centre in Vancouver, published in October 2005, admittedly forces us to qualify the idea of a world where military violence was

lessened by the Cold War. Backed up by figures, this report states that many wars were fought by proxy in the Third World in those days and there was also local violence, in some cases very bloody. One should not, therefore, paint too idyllic a picture of that period. But the Cold War did prevent the escalation, spread, or extension of war, at least in its conventional form. It also had the effect of curbing international terrorism, which was carried on mainly by players claiming to support the Palestinian cause who, as will be seen, never went as far as they do nowadays.

The end of the Cold War deprived the world of a way of structuring conflict, which avoided military violence far more than it authorized or facilitated it. After that, new splits appeared, civil wars took on quite a different aspect, and mass outbreaks of new or renewed violence began to occur. Organized crime prospered along with globalization.

Whereas the number of conventional armed conflicts between states has decreased by 40% since 1992, according to the Human Security Centre report, and the bloodiest conflicts (those causing more than 1,000 battlefield deaths per year) have declined in number by 80%; and coups d'état or attempted coups have declined to 10 in 2004 compared to 25 in 1963, other forms of violence have increased. "Global" terrorism has struck a number of times, frequently killing and injuring dozens of victims in a single attack. Generally speaking, the percentage of civilian victims compared with military victims has increased considerably. Barbarity has become established in all sorts of parts of the world, including in Europe, where one might think that after Nazism, there would be no more mass crimes of a genocidal nature; the break-up of the former Yugoslavia involved violent "ethnic cleansing," whereas in the Cold War era that country was in fact considered a factor for international stability. The Great Lakes genocide in Africa left more than one million people dead. And in Iraq today, the war in that country continues with extremely bloody daily acts of violence which could presage a civil war.

Armed conflicts now take new forms: asymmetrical wars, for example, or crisis management in a supranational or multilateral context. Military interventions, sometimes by UN-appointed multinational forces, are increasing with the aim, in theory, not of winning in order to impose power, but, rather, of bringing situations of extreme localized violence to an end. The break-up of the former Yugoslavia with violence that lasted almost throughout the 1990s, the horrors of Africa's Great Lakes, with the 1994 genocide, the violence perpetrated by pro-Indonesian militias following the creation of the independent state of Timor (1999 referendum), the disastrous experience of Somalia (1992–1993), the recent war in Lebanon (summer 2006), and the Darfur crisis are all new configurations of war, in which local confrontations and violence, in some cases charged with nationalist, religious, or ethnic significance, end in joint intervention by armies endeavoring, from outside the theatre of operations, to bring peace and re-energize civilian processes of restoring calm and development. Throughout the Cold War, moreover, nuclear weapons acted as a restraint and even promoted peace. Nuclear weapons have since become a factor, or at least a symbol, of major risks, associated with images of destabilization or regional crisis, notably in the Middle East and Asia, and with considerable problems of proliferation.

Of course, the end of the Cold War does not explain everything, and a more detailed analysis ought, in geopolitical terms, also to cover, notably, the end of colonialism, the decolonization processes, and the ending of dependence for many Latin American societies. But the fall of the Berlin Wall was a turning point. At the time, the Cold War carried the stamp of violence, notably in what were termed the "proxy" wars; its end also meant an ending of these instances of violence. Often it had prevented the intervention of the United Nations (and also of other players, notably NGOs) in a preventive or peacekeeping role. The dawn of a new era brought with it fresh mediations, negotiations, and intervention and, thus, initiated a learning process in negotiated, democratic conflict management. On the other hand, the Cold War kept organized crime at a certain level and held international terrorism in check, because the main players in such violence needed the "sponsorship" of states often themselves within the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union; following its demise, the door was opened to a growth in organized crime and more intense forms of terrorism.

The end of the Cold War did not in itself give rise to a fresh period of acts of violence (some of the most spectacular instances of which have been mentioned above), but it did play a large part in some major changes. In the words of the historian Charles Tilly it meant the invention of a new repertoire of violence.[2]

2.2 The End of the Industrial Age

Globalization also meant big changes in the nature of capitalism and its associated forms of domination. The old industrial age, when economic power corresponded more or less directly to social relations located primarily in the factory or workshop, has given way to a phase when production problems seem to be dissociated from problems of economic power. No longer do the bosses hold the central role of dominant players, nor as was once thought do the managers; nowadays that role falls to "global" financial capitalism. Companies' profits are, therefore, measured by a different yardstick to production, and it is not uncommon for a big group's share price to rise even as it is announcing mass layoffs and the closure of factories that are still profitable—only not profitable enough. For modern capitalism, the short term prevails over the long term. As Richard Sennett (2007) points out, for example, "In 1960, a company was assessed in terms of predicted profits in three years' time, whereas in 2000 that timescale has been shortened to three months on average" (437).

All the same, conventional forms of work organization have not disappeared. Take the example of the "maquiladora" factories in Mexico, not far from the US border, most of which are dependent on big multinational groups and are part of the

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[2]Charles Tilly proposes this concept in The Contentious French (1986), explaining that any population, in a given society, at a given period, has a limited set of collective actions, that is to say, means of acting in concert on the basis of shared interest. That repertoire changes as one moves from one type of society to another.

global economy. The forms of worker exploitation that still prevail there often seem to date from another age, so harsh are they and so impenetrable by union action or the most basic protection offered by employment law (Lopez 2007). But there, as everywhere else in the world, globalization means the decline of the workers' ability to take action, a loss of impact and, even more so, of centrality for the labor movement. Economic power and, thus, the "other side" in the conflict for a would-be labor movement player, is now too far removed from the site of production to allow the existence of a relationship comparable to the one that used to pit the working masses and the employers against one another while at the same time binding them, in the days when Taylorism was at its height. Capital can move at lightning speed, and the identifications that formerly inspired workers to want to become their own bosses and, thus, formed the foundation of counter-offensive protest have waned: how can anyone identify with a job, a type of work, a company if there is no job security, if they know they will have to change their line of work several times in the course of their life, and if the company regards them as eminently "expendable?" How is it possible to devise any long-term action involving a high degree of planning and structure if the work organization is constantly moving around and relocating and if the prevailing individualism and flexibility are depicted as the triumphant opposite of the traditional concept of worker solidarity?

The end of the old industrial age did not make the world of work more violent; rather, it led to a loss of fighting spirit, an inability to carry on mass struggles and to link them with counter-projects for society or visions of utopia. Nevertheless, it altered the arena of violence. On the one hand, during the 1970s and 1980s violence took the form of far-left terrorism in several countries just emerging from that old order, notably Italy: students, intellectuals, and also, in some cases, workers, became more radical in order to carry on, by means of armed conflict, a fight which no longer had any meaning or reality in the factories. On the other hand, the decline of the core principle of conflict provided by the labor movement left a vacuum which no other player of similar stature stepped forward to fill, either socially or politically. Throughout the world communism did not collapse solely due to the break-up of the Soviet Union, or the exhaustion of its ideology: its disappearance also owes a lot to the decline of the labor movement which it represented, of which it was sometimes the main representative. And if the social democratic model seems to be on its last legs, or irrelevant, in the old industrial societies, the reason is partly that it continues to postulate strong ties between the party and the unions, in historical contexts where the unions have lost most of their power.

Now, the lack of a framework for confrontation between the two sides is always a factor in a decline in social or moral standards and violence. When people's expectations are not channeled into debate and conflicts between players, they degenerate into cynicism or fatalism, on the one hand, and crisis behavior and violence, on the other hand. One of the reasons for the urban riots in France in October and November 2005 was the lack of any forum, in the poorer districts, for putting the demands of young people—mostly from an immigrant background—into a confrontational setting and dealing with them at the political level. Thirty or 40 years previously, those same districts were "red suburbs" where the Communist Party, as

well as an active, living fabric of associations, effectively channeled social conflict with feedback at political level. Nowadays, the Communist Party has abandoned the field and the old fabric of associations has vanished. The violent rioting, with several hundred vehicles set on fire every night for nearly 3 weeks, was the expression of a keen sense of dereliction and abandonment and also anger, and there was no institutionalized framework for conflict there to give it media coverage.

Apart from the experience of the end of the industrial society and the decline of the labor movement, the foregoing remarks lead us to a general hypothesis that can serve as a basis for the analysis: the arena for violence is widening, while the scope for organizing debate and a framework for conflict to deal with social problems is shrinking, lacking, or vanishing. Conversely that arena becomes smaller when the conditions of institutionalized conflict permit a negotiated solution, even in circumstances of great tension between players. Violence is not conflict; rather, it is the opposite. Violence is more likely to flash when a player can find no-one to deal with in his attempts to exert social or political pressure, when no channels of institutional negotiation are available.

This proposition should be considered as an analytical tool, not as a hard-and-fast rule—there are situations, experiences, or circumstances where conflict and violence go hand-in-hand. We have linked it to globalization because the more the latter is uncontrolled, purely neoliberal, and knows no borders, the more it undermines the institutions and representative bodies set up to deal with social demands within a framework of conflict. So why not wait for first attempts at establishing courts of law and supranational means of regulating economic life, or perhaps the advent of the alter-globalization movement in the hope that they will, in time, help to redefine the image of globalization and its consequences?

3 An End to Violence: The Victims' Perspective

The analytical bases described above correspond only to certain forms of violence and certain problems and, moreover, in no way permit an approach that could claim to be exhaustive. Our aim here, as throughout this contribution, is more to introduce a type of sociological approach rather than to supply systematic, heavily documented information about a particular topic. Not only does this approach indicate how one may tackle so important an issue as violence, or at least some aspects of it; but also it can extend the analysis of violence by looking at the conditions that may enable us to deal with it. Let us, therefore, return to the first of the points just made, the growing importance of the victims' point of view.

3.1 Three Registers

Democracies are increasingly sensitive to the victims' viewpoint, and the themes of suffering, trauma, forgiveness, and reconciliation hold a considerable place in the public arena of democratic debate. What does an end to violence mean in a

democracy when one is a victim, a descendant of victims, or a survivor? For such individuals and groups, the life-marking experiences of mass killings, genocides, slavery, the slave trade, and other crimes against humanity obviously did not come to a sudden halt on the day when barbarity was ended; they left their marks. An end to violence in fact means dealing with the present-day repercussions of past sufferings.

That which is destroyed or altered, in that family of experiences, is not one-dimensional; it in fact refers, according to eminently variable conditions, to three separate registers. The first of these is collective identity. Mass destructions not only liquidate human beings, but also, to a greater or lesser degree, a culture, a way of life, a language, a religion—hence the use sometimes of the neologism, "ethnocide." The destruction of Europe's Jews by the Nazis and their accomplices, for example, eradicated the Yiddish culture from central Europe and almost wiped out the language. Admittedly the language still exists, but it no longer has the slightest link to living communities, as in the days of the shtetl, the Jewish settlement in central and eastern Europe. It is true, as the work of the historian Jacob Katz showed, that such communities had already been eroded by the modern world and abandoned by many of the people who lived in them even before World War II. But Nazism acted with unprecedented force, practically annihilating that identity, with the result that it would never again contribute anything new, alive, or dynamic to humanity. All that remains is something that has been repressed, with only survivors left to try to keep traces of it alive, at the risk of lapsing into a "lachrymal" past, as it has been termed by the Jewish historian, Salo Baron. That identity fills museums and memories, it has its own memory, but that which gave it meaning has been lost, it no longer corresponds to a constantly evolving history. Here, reparation is impossible; that which has been destroyed cannot be brought back, and irremediably belongs to the past alone.

The second register concerns individual participation in modern life. Crimes against humanity do not only affect groups external to modernity; on the contrary, those affected may be directly involved in modernity, or at least in contact with it and likely to be to some extent a party. What is concerned, therefore, is also a person's ability to exist as an individual and to have access to money, consumer goods, work, housing, health, etc. Being a victim or the descendant of a victim, thus, means not only having been attacked in one's cultural being and physical integrity; it also means having been treated as a slave whereas, within the same society, other people were free; it means having been deprived of one's property, one's rights, the sense of belonging at civil or national level to a larger collective entity than one's group alone. To carry on the example of Nazism: the German Jews were highly integrated with German society and the German nation, almost assimilated, and when the Nazis told them they had been rejected by society and the nation, many of them failed to understand what they were being told. The great historian and sociologist, Norbert Elias (1991), who fled to the UK in 1935, relates in an autobiographical work how his parents refused to listen when he advised them to flee Germany: "nothing can happen to us, we've done nothing wrong, was the gist of what they said to him". When individual participation in modernity is denied in this way by extreme violence, what is at stake is not only a collective identity, membership of a group, but

an identification, more or less assumed with universal values to which one has been a party, or which have been held up as something for everyone to aspire to, and from which one has been shut out and forcefully expelled.

Lastly, there is a third register, which has to do with personal subjectivity, that ability of any human being to be a Subject. Extreme violence annihilates or at any rate severely affects the Subject. It dehumanizes the person, treating him like a thing or an animal, or it may demonize him, attributing evil powers to that individual—in the way that women, in the past, were often called witches. This is why the survivors of a barbarous tragedy sometimes feel they cannot go on living; they have ceased to believe in the humanity of the personal Subject, they have experienced its negation within themselves and they have seen it vanish from their persecutors. How can anyone live after Auschwitz, it has often been asked?

3.2 Dealing with Threefold Destruction

If we consider the three registers just described, putting an end to extreme violence means being able to deal with the threefold destruction that has affected first of all a collective identity; second, individuals inasmuch as they participate in modernity; and third, Subjects whose humanity is denied.

What can the survivors or descendants of a collective identity defined by destruction do? If all they can put forward is that destruction, and the loss of any way of bringing back to life the collective being that has vanished, then any action they may take, insofar as they are able to express demands, will go no further than calling for acknowledgment of the barbarity that their group has suffered, with material compensation according to the case. If, on the contrary, they are able to advance a positive principle, whatever that may be, the strands of a culture that still has a hope of revival, a view of justice for the society in which they live, a demand for democracy, then the community or group concerned can move forward. Here, an end to violence means creating a "positive" identity, a principle that does not trap people in an identity which is "negative" because it has been destroyed and belongs only to the past.

How can one rebuild in the case of the register of individual participation in modernity? Only a full and complete acknowledgment of that which has been prohibited or denied and the resulting wound can provide a satisfactory answer to the victims and those who claim to represent or embody them. The answer here is in the hands of those who hold the power to decide on such an acknowledgment, but who may have ideological or political reasons for not granting it. It may be a matter of protecting persecutors, avoiding re-opening very recent wounds, establishing or maintaining a precarious peace, going along with a consensus that has effected the transition from dictatorship to democracy relatively smoothly. Silence and obliviousness are generally justified by the overriding interests of the community; but they also obviously work in the interests of the persecutors and the guilty parties, to the detriment of the victims. The West German experience for instance, especially from the 1960s on, suggests that a country which decides to undertake the work on

itself required by a recent past of extreme acts of violence and mass crimes comes out better than a country which refuses to do so. Debating the past and developing a policy of truth and forgiveness, as South Africa tried to do after apartheid, is the best way of helping the former victims to come back into the fold of the national community.

Lastly, can negation be reversed when the victims have been devastated as personal Subjects and deeply dehumanized? If their predominant feeling is that it is no longer possible for them to take back control of their lives and continue living, then the only outcome is a descent into madness or suicide. Among the worst of cases is that where the victim feels, after the event, that his or her own behavior contributed to the negation, their own humanity, and that of others, that they played a part in their own debasement, which may spill over into a kind of inversion, being trapped inside a repugnant image of self which turns into a disgusting character that becomes their public image. Symmetrically it has been found, for example, from knowledge gathered about the Nazi concentration camp experience that in conditions of extreme violence the resources provided by faith or by a previous political commitment increase the likelihood of remaining a Subject despite the dehumanizing environment, as well as making it more likely for the person to rebuild their Subject afterwards.

For the three registers of this analysis, the core of the end to violence is the same: it lies in the ability of the group, the individual, or the Subject to move forward. Irrespective of the register, three main attitudes are possible. The first of these involves shutting oneself up in the past, either in the barbarity experienced or in the time that preceded it, which will ultimately then be recalled as a golden age—before the disaster. In Sigmund Freud's terminology, this attitude is one of "melancholy." It may lead to demands for reparations, but is much less likely to evolve toward acknowledgment and forgiveness.

The second attitude, on the contrary, tries to forget the past, to distance oneself as much as possible from past history, either the period of extreme violence or before that, in an attempt to merge completely into the society or nation in which one lives. In this case, there can be no debate about the past.

Finally, the third attitude is to go through a period of "mourning," again a Freudian concept, and to show that one is able to move forward and live fully in the society and in the nation, while still keeping alive the memory of the earlier experience and its destruction. This third attitude links the past, the present, and the future and is eminently favorable to opening up debate and processes of the "truth and reconciliation" type that have developed throughout the world, in particular in Latin America, following the South African example initiated in 1993. This requires great moral and political strength on the part its promoters. Nelson Mandela talked about this on a number of occasions, for example, with Bill Clinton, who relates their conversation, thus (Clinton 2004: 3):

> I said, 'Madiba [Mandela's colloquial tribal name, which he asked me to use], I know you did a great thing in inviting your jailers to your inauguration, but didn't you really hate those who imprisoned you?' He replied, 'Of course I did, for many years. They took the best years of my life. They abused me physically and mentally. I didn't get to see my children grow

> up. I hated them. Then one day when I was working in the quarry, hammering the rocks, I realized that they had already taken everything from me except my mind and my heart. Those they could not take without my permission. I decided not to give them away.' Then he looked at me, smiled, and said, 'And neither should you.'... I asked him another question. 'When you were walking out of prison for the last time, didn't you feel the hatred rise up in you again?' 'Yes,' he said, 'for a moment I did. Then I thought to myself, They have had me for twenty-seven years. If I keep hating them, they will still have me. I wanted to be free, and so I let it go.

3.3 Acknowledgment in a "Global" World

Crimes against humanity, to confine ourselves to this particular form of violence, have taken place and still take place in arenas that do not necessarily coincide with the framework of modern-day states and nations. One immediate consequence is that the debates they may give rise to, and likewise their legal, political, and institutional processing, cannot, therefore, be restricted to that framework. In a "Westphalian" world, the state provides continuity between the past and the future, and it is within the state that decisions on the granting of rights are made, the processes of political debate take place, steps toward reconciliation or forgiveness are taken, reparations are approved, and so on. This in no way excludes international processes or the institution of courts like the one at Nuremberg to try Nazi criminals after World War II—but such courts exist by virtue of an agreement between states.

However, acts of extreme violence, including those that took place in another age, often need to be analyzed and dealt with at "global" level. Looking at the contemporary consequences of the slave trade from the victims' point of view, for example, means taking into account the historical dimension of the problem—nearly 15 centuries—and considering the role of all sorts of players in different parts of the world, in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas (Pétré-Grenouilleau 2004). Thinking about the major "humanitarian" crises, the ethnic cleansing of the Great Lakes and the Balkans or the killings in Darfur, means bringing into focus processes inherent in Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, or Sudan and also, necessarily, regional and international, geopolitical, and economic dimensions. And if the survivors and descendants of the victims, some of whom have become refugees or exiles, are to emerge from such tragedies and rebuild their lives, that requires the involvement of many players, several of whom are external to the strictly local scene—humanitarian NGOs, international justice, international organizations like the UN or the EU, etc.

What these survivors or descendants, the bearers, as Dipesh Chakrabarty (2007) says, of "historical wounds" may demand or hope for may involve the responsibility of several states, for acts for which not all of them are necessarily accountable, states moreover which may no longer exist or whose frontiers have greatly changed since the time of the acts of violence.

Today's players are not those of yesterday, yet accountability for the past is nevertheless likely to be unduly or wrongly laid at the door of one or other of them, so much so that many politicians now feel vexed by the demands for repentance that are made of them. The concept of descendant itself raises problems: how far can

one postulate continuity down through the centuries in order to legitimately present oneself as a victim on the grounds of being a descendant of victims? The notion of survivor likewise deserves to be examined: in situations of extreme violence, why should they be representative of all the victims, as if they formed a homogenous group?

Such questions make one's head spin, as Jacques Derrida (1999) indeed showed with reference to forgiveness; how should one respond to the moral demand to forgive the unforgivable? It is neither straightforward nor easy to arrange forgiveness and make it meaningful in a situation whether both victims and persecutors belong to the same nation state and where perpetrators and direct survivors of extreme violence still live. And what should one do if those who can ask forgiveness are not the guilty ones, but simply people in positions of power who personally are guilty of no wrongdoing in connection with the violence? Or if, those who can grant forgiveness is merely more or less distant descendants of the victims? Or if, moreover, the state is not the sole or even the main framework within which these questions should be asked? Was the state that was the Federal Republic of Germany in Cold War days more answerable for Nazism than the German Democratic Republic? Is the state of Israel entitled to represent the victims of Shoah and if so, to what extent? Is it right for heads of state to forgive or to ask forgiveness in place of and on behalf of the victims, of all victims, including those not seeking forgiveness?

4 Dealing with the Violent Player: Subject Policies?

Countering violence conventionally means linked policies of repression and prevention, either within the state framework (by mobilizing the police, the courts, schools, etc.), externally (diplomacy, war), or perhaps by combining the two dimensions. The latter is all the more necessary as globalization is blurring the points of reference, and the fight against organized crime and terrorism today, for example, calls for "global" strategies. We believe that our typology of the Subject of violence can make a useful contribution to developing these considerations.

– If violence, at least in the dimensions that can be established, corresponds to the *Floating Subject,* that is to say, the difficulty or the impossibility of converting expectations or demands into action, then the most important thing is to establish or re-establish the conditions that allow conversion to take place. Such a proposition carries on very directly from the remarks made above about the opposition between violence and institutionalized conflict. It in fact means that the best strategy for reducing or preventing violence is to promote the training and development of social or political players responsible for the management—no matter how confrontational—of relations between them: the exact opposite of a breakdown in relations. At the global level, this means more and more players and institutions filling the supranational space all the time. At state level, it means forms of democracy that can resolve the contemporary crisis of political representation and allow the development and recognition of social and cultural players (see the analyses in Wieviorka 2007b).

The same idea applies on smaller scales. Within a company, for instance, the presence of powerful, well-organized unions, while often regarded as a source of problems by management, is in fact also and above all the management's best bulwark against the risks of a loss and breakdown of social or moral standards; union representatives are in fact a channel for bringing internal problems to light, avoiding the unspoken resentments that fuel a crisis, and negotiating; they also provide some predictability.

Refusing even to allow a framework for conflict to exist does not lead to order and peaceful industrial relations; it is more likely to promote crisis behavior, starting with violence.

– If violence concerns the *Hyper-Subject*, with its overabundance of meanings, it calls for symmetrical efforts. Here the problem is not one of a lack of meaning or of a framework for conflict; it has much more to do with the overload that turns a virtual conflict into war and violent breakdowns in relations. What those who can bring any influence to bear on the situation then have to do is to stop the dimensions corresponding to this meaning overload, be they ideological or religious, from over-determining action and preventing any debate or discussion, political or social process, or negotiation. Any intervention on their part is more likely to have some effect if it takes place at a very early stage, before the player has become so wrapped up in their own logic as to permit no concessions and to grant unqualified primacy to the absolute and radicalism.

The *Floating Subject* requires bottom-up strategies, from the absence of conflict and mediation toward the building or strengthening of confrontational relations. The *Hyper-Subject* requires the opposite, top-down strategies, back down from the metapolitical to the political, from complete breakdown—notably religious—to debate and institutionalized conflict. A significant kind of intervention here may involve efforts to lend weight to those who, within the same ideology, or the same religion, can accept moderation, debate, and conciliation of their sense of identity with universal values of right and reason. This is the case, notably, in western democracies, whenever moderate Islam is respected and recognized there and is also encouraged not to allow Islamism to blight and weaken it.

Once they have embraced a mindset of radical purity, violent players are not generally likely to relinquish their beliefs and give up the "all or nothing" that has become their way of thinking. The only way of ending violence in this case is, therefore, by force, repression, and calling in the army and the police.

– It is hard to accept the hypothesis of the *Non-Subject*, for whom violence is meaningless, merely the expression of submission to a lawful authority. Such a hypothesis in fact takes away the violent player's sense of responsibility, turning him into an automaton, a bureaucrat untroubled by conscience in the service of a machine, someone acting without convictions or passions, who unquestioningly accepts the order or instruction to act. Let us give this hypothesis the benefit of the doubt, though, let us admit that there are some people or situations, which it can explain. The only way to end violence here is to delegitimize the authority involved or, at least, the practices concerned. The admittedly light-hearted

ordeals of "ragging" new students, for example, were tolerated in France for a long time, being anchored in a "tradition" itself rooted in certain educational establishments. It took energetic political intervention to delegitimize and ban ragging, and, thus, to make any continuing perpetrators aware of their responsibilities. Much more generally, anything in education, which can raise the sense of individual and collective responsibility, conscience the idea that the individual is accountable for his acts, can only serve to limit the space available for *Non-Subject* violence.
- Cruelty and the violence of the *Anti-Subject* occur only in very specific conditions. They may, for example, accompany conventional warfare whenever a strong sense of impunity goes hand-in-hand with fear of the enemy, as was the case with the American forces facing the Japanese during the War in the Pacific (notably Dower 1986) or during the Vietnam War (notably in the My Lai massacre where 500 unarmed civilians were brutally killed by an American unit on March 16, 1968), or, to cite a recent example, at Abu Ghraib, in Iraq. Preventing cruelty means putting in place safeguards to prevent players from resorting to pure violence as an end in itself. This applies to the military authorities, in time of war, who must not, in theory and according to the law of war, permit any meanings other than instrumental to occur outside their control and responsibility. It applies to those in charge of armed conflict organizations, who must avoid the dilution of meaning in relation to political ends that the recourse to pure violence implies for their members—unless pure violence is to be used as a means of terrorizing the enemy. And in the case of common cruelty, on the part of criminals, for example, this seems so remote from the problems that can be solved by conventional political responses that it requires different resources to combat it: repression, admittedly, and education, but perhaps also religious, moral, or humanist values, of the kind referred to, for example, by Nelson Mandela at his meeting with Bill Clinton.
- The violence of the *Survivor Subject*, as Jean Bergeret explains, is "dominating and archaic;" it is based on "a primitive fantasy that simply asks the question essential to the individual's survival: 'The other person or me?' 'Him or me?' 'Survive or die?' 'Survive at the risk of killing the other person?'" (Bergeret 1995, 46). The problem here is not an end to violence or, as Bergeret says, "controlling violence." It is a matter of knowing that those who resort to violence do not have the personal resources or the mental models to deal with the situations in which they find themselves. To Bergeret, juvenile violence, the anger, and the hatred felt by France's "suburban youth," which come into this category, owe a lot to the shortcomings of adults, who are unable to provide them with suitable identity models.

Today, violence is a taboo. Perhaps the last one. This has not always been so, and not that long ago it even had a certain legitimacy, be it extolling revolution, supporting national liberation movements, showing understanding of terrorist groups, or identifying with guerrilla warfare. Rather than analyzing it, intellectuals either supported it or opposed it, according to their political sympathies. The more it is held to be evil personified, the more violence appears meaningless to the point

where, in its most decisive manifestations, it seems to be a product of barbarism or frenzy. The social sciences must not allow themselves to be swayed into accepting the half-baked ideas that reject violence without analyzing it from the point of view of the inhuman, the incomprehensible, and the absurd. Yet, they must also resist the idea of giving meaning to destructive and sometimes self-destructive modes of behavior. They must, therefore, tread carefully and acknowledge that any manifestation of violence, however insignificant, is linked to a meaning, but that link is twisted, perverted, is lost, or artificial. It is all the more difficult to follow that path given that the world in which we operate is no longer "Westphalian." Violence is a particularly stimulating challenge for the social sciences, as it forces the researcher to do a balancing act and to produce findings ranging from the most personal, private, and subjective to the most general, international, and "global."

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