

16. Existentialist philosophers like Sartre, Camus or Jaspers regarded this failure as the central avenue for the individual's reflection on himself or herself. Glimpses of this perspective can already be found in Weber; cp. Henrich (1987).

17. In the last few years Charles Taylor has most convincingly elaborated on this specific source of the self (Taylor 1992). While Taylor took his inspiration from Hegel, Jürgen Habermas has in recent years put much more emphasis on the American pragmatist tradition, especially on George Herbert Mead; see especially Habermas (1992). The more recent reception of Mead in Germany started with Hans Joas (1985). Butler (1997) charts the entangled trajectory of desire and the struggle for recognition from the Hegelian and post-Hegelian traditions of dominating French philosophy from Kojève (1947) onwards. Detailed analysis of the post-Kantian idealist concept of intersubjectivity closely sticking to the primary texts of Hegel and Fichte can be found in Williams (1992, 1997). For those who prefer a less philosophically headed, not explicitly post-conventional or post-metaphysical account, see Julian Pitt-Rivers' entry on "honor" in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Pitt-Rivers 1968). For a sympathetic and stimulating discussion of the "struggle for recognition," ranging from Hegel via Marx and Sorel, Mead and Sartre to Habermas and Taylor, see Honneth (1995).

18. Kant refers to this connection in his "Anthropologie" as well as Heidegger does in "*Sein und Zeit*" (1986, pp. 237 ff.). Christian L. Hart-Nibbrig charted this terrain as far as philosophy and literature dealt with the issue (Hart-Nibbrig 1995b).

19. The career of the concept of "trauma" in the social sciences started with Freud's and Breuer's analysis of Hysteria. Before, it was used mainly in medical contexts for the neurological responses to bodily injury. In psychology, it became prominent in the debate about posttraumatic disorders. Today it is decoupled from its original reference to bodily experiences and transferred into the domain of cultural history and collective memory; see Neil Smeiser (2003); Bronfen et al. (1999); Caruth (1995, 1996); Felman and Laub (1992); Antze (1996); Robben (2000); Farrell (1998); Neal (1998); and Alexander et al. (2004).

20. We will address this Heideggerian turn again at the beginning of the last chapter.

21. See Berger and Luckmann (1967); Garfinkel (1967); Schütz (1962, 1964).

22. While deconstructivists, e.g., Derrida (1982), get entirely absorbed by this seemingly paradoxical endeavor, mundane reasoning usually finds an easy, though sometimes brutal way out, by institutionalizing one specific account; see Melvin Pollner (1974), John Heritage (1984, pp. 212ff.).

23. See Kosselleck's essays on the semantics of historical time (1985).

24. There is a vast literature on collective memory ranging from classics like Maurice Halbwachs (1967) to more recent publications like Connerton (1989) or the useful overview of literature in LeGoff (1986); see also Nora (1992), Jan Assmann (1988, 1999b) and Aleida Assmann (1999).

25. See Turner (1969), Giesen (1998) and Soeffner (1997, 2000).

26. See Giesen (1999a), Taylor (1992), Pizzorno (1986, 1991), Williams (1997) and Honneth (1995).

27. The focus on thirdness as a constitutive perspective for social order ranges from Kant's categorical imperative via Peirce's pragmatism (1991) and Simmel's sociology (1922) to Jürgen Habermas's ethics of discourse (1983). For the third perspective in the settlement of feuds, see Gluckmann (1955) and Eekhoff (1966).

28. See Van Gennep (1960), Turner (1967, 1969) and Goffman (1967).

29. See Merton (1968), Blau (1977) and Blau and Merton (1981).

30. See Zukin and DiMaggio (1990), North (1988), March and Olsen (1989) and Drobak and Nye (1997).

31. See Mannheim (1970), Eisenstadt (1956) and Platt and Dabag (1995).

32. See Kosselleck (2000) and Davis (1984).

CHAPTER I

Triumphant Heroes

Between Gods and Humans

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF HEROES

"No More Heroes" was the title of a famous song of the seventies.¹ Indeed, after the war in Indochina the ideal of the hero was widely questioned because of its association with military bravery and virtue. As is not uncommon in the aftermath of war and defeat, those who had been praised as heroes before, were afterwards considered as victims whose self-sacrifice was devoid of any meaning, or they were regarded as perpetrators, as icons of evil, as embodiments of demonic madness. In death and defeat, heroism exhibits its ambivalences, the fragility of its foundations, the tension between trauma and triumph.

The idea of the "hero" as it originated in ancient Greek or Oriental literature,² was, indeed, associated with the extraordinary deed of the warrior who followed the call of adventure, ventured out into the unknown, withstood tests and temptations and returned full of glory to his people (Campbell 1991, p. 151).³ War represented the fringe of the social order; the challenge of crisis, the frontier against the uncommon and superhuman that could not be dealt with by ordinary means. The heroes Achilles, Hercules and Theseus in ancient Greek mythology were, therefore, imagined as warriors of superhuman force, liminal figures who could cross the boundary between everyday life and the realm of Gods and demons. They were depicted as half-divine, as descendants of a minor Goddess, as tempted by a Goddess in disguise or even as married to a half Goddess.

The idea of the hero, although originally couched in the myth of the warrior, extends, of course, far beyond the battlefields. It is at the core of many charismatic constructions of collective identities. Among the various transformations of the hero described by Joseph Campbell (1971, 1974, 1988), at least one other stands out: the hero as the founder of religion, who retreats from everyday life to meet God in solitude and to bring the new message of salvation back to his people. The Buddha and Moses, Christ and Mohammed are exemplars of these redeeming heroes.

But the idea of the hero has not been confined to warriors or to the founders of religions—the hero has, indeed, “a thousand faces” (Campbell 1974), and the face reflects and expresses a particular cultural foundation of a community. Intellectual heroes like Confucius (Kung fu tse), Plato, Newton and Hegel coined a classical tradition for a community of scholars. Since the eighteenth century, aesthetic heroes like Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Mozart and Goethe have been revered as geniuses whose pathbreaking exceptionalism transcends the level that can be achieved by regular education and common effort—and this cult of the genius responded to the spread of education and enlightenment in the civil society of the eighteenth century. In communities that value compassion and charity, exceptionally altruistic persons like the medieval noblewoman Elizabeth of Thuringia and the contemporary Mother Theresa are considered as saints or angels. Political communities focus on popular leaders or on heroes of resistance like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, who were explicitly opposed against military violence, whereas others like the French maiden Jeanne d'Arc, George Washington and Che Guevara, have led military movements against the reigning authorities. Youth movements that oppose mainstream culture heroify stars like James Dean or John Lennon, sport fans remember legendary performers like DiMaggio, Muhammad Ali and Jesse Owens—indeed, to repeat again Campbell's felicitous phrasing, the hero has a thousand faces.⁴

Heroes embody charisma, they fuse the sacred into the profane world, they establish a mediating level between the humans and the Gods. The myth of the hero ended the original myth in which Gods and humans could meet each other without mediation. In this way, it is a transitory stage located halfway between the direct communication between Gods and humans as represented in magical thinking on the one hand, and the fully developed axial age civilizations on the other. In between the realm of Gods and the realm of humans, affected by the earthly problems and overcoming them with supernatural powers, heroes are double-faced subjects. This position between Gods and humans is reflected in the mythical account of the birth of the hero (Rank 1910). The mythical hero is of divine or royal descent but, as a child, is cast off by his parents into swamps or forests and raised by fishermen, herdsmen or even animals, i.e., by people or creatures of low descent. Moses and Christ, Romulus and Perseus, Cyrus and even Sargon of Akkad, the first Sumerian king, are only the most famous examples of this mythical move of the hero from high to low, from Gods to humans (Rank 1910, p. 12). Here heroes represent still the personal embodiment of the sacred, but the gap between both poles is already widening, the tension between the evanescence of the sacred and its local embodiment is already unfolding. It requires constant mediation and remembering. This mode of mediation is deeply affected by the transition to axial age civilizations: axial age civilizations are based on the tension between an impermanent principled transcendental order and a mundane sphere of acting persons and contingent worldly reasoning, of power and money (Schwartz 1975; Eisenstadt 1982, 1986). In axial age civilizations, the sacred center of society is disembodied and finally even depersonalized and conceived of by abstract principles. Hence

the post-axial age hero can no longer be related by kinship and direct encounter to personal Gods; instead, he or she is considered to be the pure embodiment of transcendental principles, of virtue and reason, morality and valor. Societies that emphasize impersonal principles and virtues are, therefore, less fertile grounds for the creation of heroes than societies that put a high premium on a distinctive personal aura of public appearance. Heroes are public figures; they represent the collective identity of a community. In the nineteenth century, when the separation between the public and the private realm was increasingly marked, heroism withdrew from the private virtues and was limited to the public realm or to exceptional situations in which the boundary between the private and the public sphere was blurred (Todorov 1996, p. 52). We will return to this issue at the end of this chapter.

The classical hero (before the axial age tension) has a face, a voice and a place in the center of a social community that reveres him, commemorates him and imagines him. His or her presence marks the charismatic center of society. As Max Weber's famous definition notes, charisma is constituted by the *belief* of followers in the extraordinary qualities of an individual.⁵ The extent and the mode of this embeddedness in a community of followers may vary and change, but no charismatic hero can exist without it. Therefore, many sociological studies on charisma focused more on the charismatic movement than on the figure of the hero himself.⁶ In the following chapter, we will outline this relationship between the hero and his or her community, but we will center less on the internal structure of the charismatic community than on the different modes and rituals of representing and remembering the charisma of the hero. We will not, however, regard charisma as a simple reflection of institutional practices of memory, but instead treat the cultural core of charisma as an independent reference.⁷ Neither can the symbolic structure of the myth be reduced to a mere reflection of rituals, nor can the ritual be reduced to the simple performance of the cultural script of a myth.

Relics and rituals, monuments and memorials construe not only close links, but also distance⁸ between the community and the hero. Heroism dissolves if looked at from a close range. Hence the reconstruction of this blending of distance and proximity is at the core of many shifts in the cult of the charismatic hero. If it fails and the hero is continuously entangled in ordinary life he will end up in tragic failure—as will be shown in chapter four.

HEROES AS TRIUMPHANT SUBJECTIVITY

Heroes are the triumphant embodiments of collective identity. As individual figures, they symbolize the community's ties to the sacred, the possibility of human beings to rise above ordinary and mundane affairs and to partake in divine perfection and immortality (Otto 1917; Durkheim 1991). In between the realm of Gods and the realm of humans, affected by earthly problems and overcoming

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them by supernatural powers, heroes are double-faced subjects.⁹ Beyond the narrow rules of ordinary life, disdaining routines and breaking conventions, heroes represent the extraordinary and charismatic; they do not perform according to the rules, instead they constitute them. Like the rule that needs the exception to become visible as a rule (Witgenstein 1980), the social order of mundane life also cannot be constituted without referring to its opposite—the sacred (Durkheim 1991)—and the society cannot construct its collective identity without any form of imagining subjectivity. The charismatic hero embodies this subjectivity in a triumphant way. He stands above the law, he “breaks the crust of a mechanism grown rigid through repetition” (Agamben 1995), he represents the ultimate sovereign who decides about the state of exception. In this respect, the hero lives, indeed, in a constant state of war, in a preconstitutional situation before the regular norms apply, before the social standards of comparison become valid, before the political game among humans begins. The hero is incomparable; his uniqueness as a subject corresponds to the exceptionalism of his situation.

Although they are of divine descent, heroes have a place within a mundane community: they embody the sacred in this world.¹⁰ Yet, because they act in a realm where neither personal advice from others nor self-interested strategies can pattern and support their decisions, heroes are rightly depicted as lonely. Beyond or before the bonds of humaneness, he is crazy, cruel (Nietzsche 1977b) and commands a “divine violence” (Benjamin 1978, p. 59). Heroes can and must disregard strategic advantages and scarcity of resources, and because of this ignorance for mundane contingencies, they can—like the medieval knight Perceval—even appear as the sacred fool or as fallen into temporal madness, like Achilles and Hercules in ancient Greek myths. In contrast to them, ordinary humans are moved by the fear for a mortal body (Arendt 1978, p. 134). This madness of the hero becomes fully visible only from an outside perspective. Crossing the boundary between the inside and outside shows the deep ambivalence of heroism. What insiders revere as the embodiment of the sacred is considered by outsiders as ridiculous, crazy, mad or even horrible and demonic. Viewed from outside, the heroic revolutionary, the martyr, the suicide bomber is a terrorist, a madman, a criminal.

As the Weberian conceptualization of charisma already noted, real persons are not heroes by themselves. Heroes are, in fact, social constructions of particular communities, cultural imaginations of supreme individuality, collective projections of sovereign subjectivity, of the sacred on particular persons and their lives. In constructing the hero, a community overcomes not only profane constraints and mundane contingencies, but also, most importantly, the threat of death. Thus the construction of heroes creates a social bond that transcends the confines of individual life and the limits of strategic reasoning. For the community of followers, the hero who defies pain and disregards death achieves immortality that was the mark of Gods before. Like Gods, heroes do the unprecedented and create a new perspective on the world. By this unique and creative act they constitute themselves as supreme subjects (Fichte 1961) and provoke awe and admiration

among ordinary men and women. Many attempt to follow their example, but nobody will ever be able to reach it; many travel the path they have broken, but nobody will be able to be the pathbreaker again. The very novelty and uniqueness of the heroic act impedes its repetition.

However, heroes are fragile constructions. If there is or has been a real person whose life is heroified, it is often easy to erode—if not to shatter—the monumentality of the hero by presenting the profane and humane details of his or her life. This total dependence on the admiration of the community makes also for the hero's partial independence from nonfollowers, from outsiders, from the public perspective. The community can, and frequently does, just ignore the evidence presented in order to deconstruct the hero. In contrast to the victim, the hero can be constructed by the community of followers alone.

But this independence from the approval of outsiders engenders also volatility and ambivalence; if the charismatic appeal to followers cannot stand the test of time, if it collapses suddenly or fades away in the routines of ordinary life (Weber's famous notion of *Verfallfähigkeit*), the hero is dethroned and sometimes turned into a perpetrator not just by outsiders but also by what was his own community before. What was considered as a charismatic exceptionalism and divine violence before is discovered afterward as demonic cruelty, as madness and ruthlessness.

One way of preventing the routinization of charisma consists of killing the mortal hero in order to keep the sacred charisma alive. The semidivine kings of ancient African kingdoms had to undergo ritual death or self-sacrifice if they became old or if their charisma was evidently wearing out (Eliade 1959). Dying young is even today regarded as a prime path for being remembered as a hero.

The most important way to save the charisma of the living hero is based on social distance. Successful heroification of living persons is fostered if the members of the community that revere them are not intimately familiar with the personal life of the heroified person. Whoever knows about the human weaknesses, the petty interests and the miserable moments of a person can no longer consider him or her to be a hero. The hero is turned into a common, everyday human being, into one of us.

But there is also another reason to keep the hero at a distance. It results from the risks of disturbing routines and institutions if a living hero actually enters the arenas of everyday life. The hero's charismatic presence does not fit into the regular pattern; heroes will by their sovereign subjectivity not observe the rules, they will divert followers from their obligations, they will call for radical changes and even destroy institutions. Therefore, the heroic leaders of a revolutionary uprising are rarely converted into successful administrators of the new established regime—even the peaceful revolutionary Gandhi seemed not to fit into the new government of India after striving and fighting for its independence for decades. Viewed from the perspective of a rule-governed community, the hero has to be regarded as a deviant individual.¹¹ If the sacred as embodied in the hero comes too close, it becomes frightening and dangerous, it will burn the mundane rules to ashes. There-

fore, it has to be socially encapsulated in particular positions, encountered only in special rituals and kept at a distance.

Although the passing of time does not preserve the charisma of the living hero, it does construct distance and prevents a close look at the mundane weaknesses of the hero.¹² Hence, many heroes exist only as icons of the past, imagined in myth, art and literature, removed to times immemorial. We do not know whether the English King Arthur and Romulus, the mythical founder of ancient Rome, Buddha and Moses, the Spartan king Leonidas and the Gothic chief Teja ever existed as real persons and—if they did—what their lives were like. Others, like the Oriental hero Gilgamesh and the ancient Greeks Achilles, Prometheus, Odysseus and Aeneas, or the medieval heroes Siegfried, Lancelot and Perceval, are purely mythical figures, crucial for collective identity, but unquestionably cultural fictions. Sometimes newly constructed nations deliberately—and even desperately—look for a mythical individual that can be presented as a founding hero.

The debate among German writers in the eighteenth century about Arminius, the Germanic chief, as the founding hero of the Germanic nation pitted against Roman domination (Wiedemann 1988), and the staging of Charles Le Temeraire, the famous Duke of Burgundy ruling in the fifteenth century, as the founder of Belgium (Lope 1991), are cases in point, but so also are the current attempts to present legendary Cossack leaders as the founding heroes of the Ukrainian nation (Sevchenko 1996); to imagine the defenders of Masada, the Jewish uprising against Roman domination, as the founding heroes of Israel; to celebrate the ancient Persian ruler Cyrus as the founder of modern Iran; or to stage Shaka Zulu, the leader of the black African armies against colonial rule, as the father of South Africa. In all these cases, founding heroes are construed who had been forgotten for a long time and could not be connected to the present day by an uninterrupted tradition. And it is exactly the shortlivedness of the present state and the distance of a mythical past that fosters the social construction of heroes.

Historical persons like Washington and Napoleon, de Gaulle and Gandhi, Bismarck and Lenin, fare less well after their death and the collapse of their rule than the mythical heroes. Although their genius as leaders is beyond doubt and their charismatic appeal to their followers is unquestionable, they are discovered as ordinary men or despotic rulers after their death or after the end of their regime; when the archives are opened and documents are read with critical scrutiny, the icon of the superhuman hero, who had fascinated his followers yesterday, is soon dismantled and destroyed. Only from a distance that blurs all traces of humanness and disregards all entanglement in mundane affairs, does the hero appear as a hero. In the case of Napoleon, this distance was reconstructed after his defeat and exile. The charismatic hero ended his political career as a despotic oppressor, but became again a living legend in his exile on Saint Helena.

This distance is, however, not only a matter of time and space. For those, who do not know the details and are captivated by the legend, even living persons can appear as heroes. Hitler and Stalin, Mao and Mussolini had certainly an extraordinary charismatic appeal to their followers; they were celebrated as redeem-

ers and triumphant leaders of their nations (Bach 1990). After the collapse of their power, when the monstrous results of their rule were presented to their followers, they became icons of evil. This rupture and—mostly enforced—axial shift prevented remembering and counteracted a charisma that was still hauntingly close to the present time (Mitscherlich 1994). The cases of Hitler and Stalin show not only the hero's dependence on his followers but also the fundamental ambivalence of heroism. Deprived of his community of followers and banned from the public realm, the formerly charismatic hero is turned into a demonic perpetrator. What before has been his exemption from the rules is afterward seen as a criminal act of violating them. If this turn occurs suddenly and unexpectedly, the exceptionalism of the hero, his despise for rules and his ruthless cruelty becomes the trauma of those who had been his followers before. Hitler and his German followers are a paradigm case for this ambivalence of triumph and trauma. We will return to this case in the last chapter of this book.

But even an abundance of knowledge about details does not in every case prevent the construction of heroes: historians who describe the life and times of historical leaders rarely escape their hidden inclination to heroify their main figures. They do so not only because the heroification emphasizes the importance of their subject and justifies the amount of research work devoted to it, but also because it is the very structure of historical narration which leads to the identification of heroes. Narrating a story requires main actors who are endowed with the power to determine the events and to propel the action. This empowerment of the main actor can result from divine intervention or—in modern contexts—from the representation of an encompassing collectivity. The hero stands for the community in an exemplary way, he or she is imagined as the formative force of the historical environment, he or she founded a new collective identity or transformed an existing one in a fundamental way.¹³

But the collective identity that is founded or symbolized by the hero reaches out beyond the actors presented in the story; it includes also the storyteller who identifies with the hero's perspective, and, most importantly, it includes the audience—the readers, listeners and spectators who feel sympathetic with the hero. Thus the narrative construction of the hero's triumph merges three positions: the hero, the storyteller and the audience. The bond of identification that embraces the three positions is based on the triumph of the hero over mundane regards and earthly matters. It appeals to a particular imagination of the sacred.

The sacred as embodied by the hero's triumph has a transempirical validity and is not affected by contingent experiences and opportunities. It claims an unconditional certainty. This ultimate certainty is the certainty of being born—an existential certainty that is at the core of the collective identity of all human beings (Heidegger 1986, p. 235; Hart-Nibbrig 1995a). No single human being can remember his or her individual birth. Being born is ultimately certain for any human being, but this certainty cannot be derived from personal experience. It is only by observing the birth of others, and by assuming that these others are alike, that the certainty of being born can be connected to personal experience. The

triumph of the hero translates this common certainty of being born into a collective representation. Similar to the birth of an individual person, it stands for a fundamental passage, a moment of crisis and blood, and a new beginning; it opens up rejoicingly a new horizon of possibilities and experiences; it symbolizes the rise of a community above the toils of everyday life.¹⁴ Thus the triumph of the hero represents a double reference—it hints at the self-constitution of the subject mastering his fate, but it also marks the birth of a community.

Rituals that reenact the birth of individuals as purification and conversion are well known; they range from rituals of passage like marriage, examination and inauguration to religious rituals like baptism and confession (Van Gennep 1960). Frequently, the person undergoing the ritual also changes his or her name, or receives a special title or an addition to his or her regular name. In the celebration of a hero's triumph, this is reflected in renaming the hero according to his triumph ("the conqueror," "the victor of . . .") or by adding a simple "the Great" instead of marking his or her position in a dynastic sequence. The supreme individuality of the hero is emphasized by disconnecting him or her from the common kinship ties in which ordinary human beings are embedded. In Native American societies this renaming practice extends also to many warriors who are called by mentioning their heroic deeds: Sitting Bull, Seven Bears, Crazy Horse and even Dances with Wolves.

But more important than the ritual reenactment of birth as a practice of individualization is its function for the construction of collective identity (Giesen 1999a). There is no reason for commemorating the triumph of the hero if no collective identity embraces the hero and those who celebrate and remember him or her. No strategic reasoning justifies the expenses for those who gladly spend money, time and emotions to celebrate the past triumphs of a dead hero. It is not only just the joyful reenactment of the community's birth, but also the affirmation of an open space for future collective actions.

Certainly the commemoration of the hero's triumph is not the only way to construct collective identity by rituals. Scapegoating or missionary inclusion and assimilation of outsiders, legal citizenship and local knowledge, kinship and education are other important institutional practices to construct a boundary between inside and outside. In this range of different modes of boundary construction, triumphant heroism occupies a special position: it connects the community to its sacred center by a person who is distant and close at the same time—distant because the hero is superhuman in his triumphant creativity and far out of reach for ordinary human beings, close because the hero results from the projection of the ideal self that is in the mind of the individual persons who admire the hero.

THE SACRIFICIAL CORE OF HEROISM

The triumph of the hero is an ambivalent one.¹⁵ Just as existential reflections on birth can never ignore its opposite, death, the triumph of the hero can never

escape the risk of its pale and traumatic counterpart. But the hero is a hero because he or she defies the risk of death.¹⁶ His or her triumph is based on this very risk and often even requires the sacrifice of the hero's life for the birth of the community. In order to understand the social meaning of heroism and its ambivalent nature, we have to turn to its sacrificial core.

Since prehistoric times, the construction of collective identity has been closely associated with rituals of sacrifice.¹⁷ Offering something precious to the deity strengthened and tightened the ties between the mundane community and the realm of the sacred. Such sacrifices get their sacril and identity-inspiring power from their very violence and their lack of intrinsic meaning—if the sacrificed item were cheap and the sacrifice useful and even profitable for those who offer it, it would not touch the otherworldly realm. Transcending the boundaries of the ordinary and common suspends the ban on violence and bloodshed and even asks for it; it is by the very violence of the sacrifice that the crossing of boundaries is marked (Burkert 1983). In the violent act of sacrifice, the traumatic and triumphant elements of collective identity are not yet separated. The trauma of killing a member of the community merges with the triumphant construction of a bond between community and deity.

The fundamental innocence of the victims is not an issue that could challenge and undermine this practice in archaic cultures—there is no conception of justice beyond the idea of revenge, reciprocity and retaliation between groups. Ancient myth had no problem ignoring or disguising the innocence of the victim.¹⁸

Yet there is already a feeling for the ambivalence of the sacred character of the victim. In ancient Roman texts, the sacred represents totem as well as taboo: the sacred victim is regarded as polluted and located outside of the community; killing such a victim is not regarded as homicide (Agamben 1995).

It is only in the Judaeo-Christian heritage that this concealment of the barbaric violence is reversed (Girard 1977).¹⁹ Here, the sacrifice can no longer be regarded as just punishment. Instead, the innocence of the victim is fully revealed and the violence is sacrificially reversed by the intervention of God.

Revealing the innocence of the victim not only shifts the location of the victim from the periphery to the center and sacralizes the victim up to the point of defication. In discovering his or her sacril character, the victim is lifted to a superhuman position. Beyond the bonds of reciprocity and retaliation, he or she becomes a hero. The hero appears as the ultimate subject, merging individuality and collectivity when he voluntarily offers himself as a sacrifice for the community.

The myth of Christ as the divinely innocent victim, who by his self-sacrifice saves not only his own followers but humankind, completes this deconstruction of the ancient conception of victims.²⁰ In the resurrection of Christ from the dead the trauma of self-sacrifice is turned into the ultimate triumph: after three days, the crucified and humiliated victim reemerges as the triumphant hero and savior of the world.

The oriental myth of Christ's resurrection can be traced back to the Mesopotamian cult of Tammuz, the God of fertility whose death was lamented and whose resurrection was celebrated in springtime, as well as to Egyptian and Assyrian myths of the king sacrificing himself (J. Assmann 1999a). From late antiquity onward, it has set the path for the Occidental model of heroism that converts death into life, trauma into triumph. According to Roman ethics, the hero had to sacrifice his own life to save the community, and in doing so he or she achieved unsurpassed individuality and immortality.

Later on, the Christian cult of martyrdom reconstructed the model of the heroic self-sacrifice to save the community: the martyrs were seen as deifying themselves through their voluntary decision for death.²¹

The Judeo-Christian mythology of heroic self-sacrifice not only shows a path to increasing individualization, but it is also based on a strong sense of representation of the sacred. In Christ, God is represented as a human being; the faithful Christian partakes in the glory of God; the priest and, later on, the king is the representative of God, etc. (Frazer 1947, p. 96).

In early modernity, this merging of the sacred and the mundane on the one hand, and of the individual and the community on the other was secularized in the cult of the founding hero who gives birth to a nation or defends it against a threat from outside. It repeats the pattern of Christomimesis with respect to a newly emerging territorial states.²² The hero is not only seen as the *pater patriae*, as the demiurgical creator of the kingdom or as the ultimate sovereign who constitutes the law, but also as the sacred individual risking his or her life for the defense of the nation. The heroic self-sacrifice became the central mode of ascending to fame and acquiring a monumental individuality.

Its core icon was, of course, the warrior who is ignoring the challenge of death. Originally imagined as the prince or the general leading his troops, the myth of warriors' heroism was democratized in the cult of the unknown soldier as celebrated in the twentieth century (Koselleck 1988). The heroic individual who sacrifices his life by voluntary decision and whose name has ascended to immortality is replaced by the many nameless men who lost their lives by order or by evil incident. In sacrificing their lives, they hope to step forward from the ranks of the ordinary and boring and acquire an individuality denied to them in everyday life. Rising to fight an oppressor, to liberate one's nation or to rebel against an unjust authority was the nineteenth century's call for the heroism of commoners who, by responding to this call, believed they were giving birth or rebirth to their nation. The myth of the people on the barricades as it emerged in the revolutions of 1830 and in particular of 1848 condensed this collective heroism to an icon of emancipation and self-empowerment. Indeed, the revolution established a new state of exception, a state of nature where the old rules were suspended forever and where violence was sacralized (Sorel 1981).

But the voices of common German soldiers heralding the outbreak of the war in 1914 also show this seductive attraction of heroism in a striking way. The admiration of war as the arena of the extraordinary, the enthusiasm of young

British and German students running into their almost certain death at the battle of Langemarck, the postwar cult of the heroism in the trenches are not only the results of fatal ideological blindness—they were also responses to a widespread thrust to experience the extraordinary, to live through moments of utmost intensity, to encounter the sacred in the danger of death and thereby to achieve immortality.²³ Stauffenberg, the leader of the failed rebellion against Hitler in 1944, facing the execution squad, shouted in the moment of death: "*Es lebe das heilige Deutschland!*"²⁴ Even modern societies, as secularized as they pretend to be, cannot entirely dispense with the heroic sacrifices of individuals in order to construct a sacred bond of collective identity.²⁵ Self-sacrificial heroism is, of course, not an exclusive tradition of Western culture. The Muslim tradition of martyrdom is today invoked by Islamist suicide bombers who appear as heroes in their respective communities, whereas to the West they are demonic and criminal terrorists.

From an outside point of view, heroes become perpetrators, martyrs are turned into criminals. The sacrificial core of heroism shows also a deep ambivalence with respect to the other counterpart of the hero, the victim (Smelser 1993, 1998a, p. 111). The hero as well as the victim emerges from the liminal horizons of human society, and the perspective on this horizon can barely hide its fundamental instability. It could also be looked at in another way: as perpetrators can be converted into heroes, victims can be turned into heroes and heroes into victims, the trauma of death can be revealed as the path to triumphant immortality; the sacrifice of the individual hero can be celebrated as the birth of a new community (Smith 1894). This ambivalent shifting between heroes and victims, between the abyss of meaninglessness and the glory of sacredness is increased by the anonymity of modern warfare. In contrast to the military heroes before, the innumerable dead of modern warfare have no names; they are buried under the masses of other unknown soldiers, their immortality is a blunder. This anonymity results in a symbolic barrier against heroism—the heroes become victims again.²⁶

TRIBUTES OF REMEMBRANCE

There are no private heroes. As lonely as they might be in the moment of heroism, they are carried by a community that defines them, tries to follow their example and commemorates their lives. Even if not all heroes are dead, their heroism lives only in the community's acts to represent and remember them. The immortality of the hero as construed by collective rituals is brought out even more clearly if there is no living person anymore whose entanglements in mundane affairs could call into question the purity of the hero. Not only because of the sacrificial core of heroism—only dead heroes are immortal and their immortality is assured even if they die young; indeed, nothing jeopardizes the fame of the hero so much as aging—the hero represents the promise of immortality and the triumphant feeling of birth. Dying young combines this promise with the tragic intrusion of mortality and hints at the hero's position between Gods and humans.²⁷

Rituals of remembering the hero can emphasize three elements: they can mark his *place* in the community, they can recall his *voice* and his story, and they can represent his *face* to insiders and outsiders.²⁸

The hero's *place* in the community is marked by the veneration of his or her remains, his or her burial site, his or her relics. Every community that is centered on a hero attempts to mourn the dead hero in places where he or she lived and where he or she performed the extraordinary deed, where he or she was born and where he or she died. If still existing, the remains of his or her dead body will attract followers and his or her grave will become the local center of a particular cult. It stands for the mortal and human part of the hero and links it to his or her sacred and immortal existence.²⁹

The hero's *voice* in the community is, in its basic form, recalled by narrating his or her story to the community. Of course, the community knows about the importance of the hero as part of the community's mythology. Therefore, the narration does not simply transport information about the hero's life; most of the basic elements are well known to all but the novices in the community. Instead, it brings the myth again to the attention of the public; it modifies and reinterprets it according to the situation of the day, it adds color and refinements to the basic story, it embodies new elements representing the contemporary challenges to the community, it invents new stories linked to the surroundings of the hero. Although the members of the community vary in their ability to present the story colorfully and convincingly, the myth itself, in its most elementary form, is common and public knowledge available for every member of the community.³⁰

The *face* of the hero is represented in its most elementary form by heraldic signs. These heraldic signs range from the totems of the clan to the colors of the nation, from the coat of arms—the eagle, the lion, the lily or the cross—on the shields of knights to the banners and emblems shown on national celebrations, from the heraldic pattern of the seal to the symbols of religious fraternities, from the caps of famous sports clubs to the faces of pop heroes on the shirts of their fans. All these heraldic signs symbolize the collective identity of followers who partake in the charisma of a hero—of warriors and princes, saints and sports heroes.

In distinction to the narration of myth that remembers the hero for the members of the community (Campbell 1971, p. 382), the presentation of heraldic signs indicates membership mainly outside of the community, in the public space or in direct confrontation with outsiders when the boundary between insiders and outsiders, between friend and foe has to be demarcated quickly. Here the pride of followers and the awareness of identity has to be signaled by clearly visible symbols that are even to deter hostile outsiders—like the horrible head of the medusa on the shield of the ancient hero. Thus, heraldic signs represent the face of the hero in its most simple form.³¹

In its most elementary forms—as narration of the myth, as veneration of the mortal remainders and as presentation of the icon—the memory of the hero is accessible for every member of the community. Elaborated rituals that reenact

triumphant heroism, however, have to be limited to special occasions; they must not overwhelm and suffocate the mundane affairs of everyday life.³² Therefore, differentiation takes over. The ritual remembrance of the heroes is concentrated on special places and times, when the myth is reenacted on stage in dances and plays, when the traditional masks and costumes are put on, when the community celebrates by taking special food and beverages, when the community rallies and presents its statues, heraldic signs, banners and colors—in short, the totems of its heroes—to the outside world (Nora 1992).

But it is not only the effort to open up spaces that are discharged from the burden of memory that fosters the separation between places and times of remembrance on the one hand and everyday life on the other.³³

A common date of remembrance also allows for the construction of a supralocal community: all members—wherever they are—are united in a simultaneous celebration of memory, but return to their everyday businesses when the day of remembrance has passed. It even gives way to a complex integration of different locally separated communities of remembrance by one embracing principle.³⁴ Thus the calendar of saints that emerged in the late Middle Ages connected different parishes and fraternities, monasteries and religious orders; each of them was devoted to a particular saint and celebrated his or her day in a special way, but all of them knew about the all-embracing calendar, the times of memory for the others (Cronin 1963). This spread of a common calendar of saints and heroes indicates a new pattern of societal integration: the unconnected diversity of local saints is replaced by an encompassing temporal order that travelers can account for if they move from one local community to the other. Indeed, the rise of the calendar of saints in the eleventh century coincides with an increasing activity of traveling in medieval Europe—pilgrimages and crusades, trade and the exchange between monasteries grew considerably.

Of course, these constructions of collective identity by common days of remembrance are not limited to premodern societies. They are part of the ritual backbone of many contemporary communities. Christmas and Easter customs in Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic communities, the annual celebration of the respective saints in Catholic fraternities and parishes, the celebration of Chanukah and Yom Kippur in Jewish communities and of Ramadan in Muslim societies are central for the construction of the respective religious identities, as are the establishment and observance of national holidays for the national identities (Bell 1997, p. 102). Here, not only are the independence day or the birthday of the ruler or founder celebrated but also the heroes of minorities and movements: Martin Luther King day is a case in point.

In modern democratic communities, these rituals of remembering frequently shift the focus from individual heroes to the heroification of entire groups that, by rising against repressive rulers, give birth to the national demos. It is the heroism of collective action that is remembered in the U.S. Fourth of July, in the *Quatorze Juillet* of the French Republic, in the celebration of the German unity after 1990, in the celebration of the Polish uprising against the Nazi occupation in 1944, etc.

Here, too, in the myth of the revolutionary uprising that broke the continuity of an authoritarian rule, it is a heroic action that opened up a new space of collective action, where the unprecedented could happen and the demos could constitute itself in violent action devoid of the chains and shields of law (Eisenstadt 1978; Koselleck 1984; Sorel 1981).

At least it is remembered that way, as banal as the revolutionary action might have been to the eyes of its contemporaries. When it happened, the Boston Tea Party was not reported as the birth of a new powerful nation, but as a minor act of insubordination in the colonies—not uncommon at the wild margin of large empires. Similarly, the seizure of the Bastille on 14th July 1789 was hardly noticed as the heroic rise of a new republican nation. It was a part of the usual urban riots of the eighteenth century: an agitated mass of people liberated a dozen nonpolitical prisoners and killed their guards, in case they did not join the ranks of the mob (Tilly 1986). Later on, the seizure of the Bastille was remembered as the core event of the French Revolution and as the democratic constitution of the French nation. The storming of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in 1917, too, did not attract much attention in the contemporary situation of war and unrest. Only later on, mediated by Eisenstein's famous movie, was it regarded as the start of the Russian Revolution, as the rise of the people against the brutal monarchic rule.

If the ritual of remembering constructs the heroes, they can also be deconstructed by a ban on their remembrance. A change in political regime usually also affects the calendar. The founding heroes of the old order vanish and new days of remembrance are institutionalized, sometimes turning the victims of the *ancien régime* into the heroes of the new one. The collapses of the German Nazi regime in 1945 and of the Communist rule in East Germany show these axial reversals of heroes and victims in an exemplary way. The "Führer's" birthday and the celebration of the October Revolution were replaced by memorial days for the victims of Nazism and the uprising of the people against the Communist regime.

RELICS: THE PLACES OF HEROES

In contrast to calendars, the local specification of collective memory allows for a quite different mode of integration by collective memory; it replaces the idea of a simultaneous and superlocal moment of remembrance with the temporal continuity of memory concentrated on special places where the relics of the dead hero are preserved. In the veneration of relics and remains the community marks its sacred center as the place of the hero (Nora 1992; François 1996).

The presence of relics commands piety. Whoever enters the tomb or approaches the relics is expected to abstain from mundane affairs; outsiders are requested to be silent and to respect the rituals of remembrance performed by the members of the community. This obligation to piety results, not merely from the awe inspiring presence of the hero's remainders, but also from the awareness that the hero is presented as mortal, as a dead corpse, as decaying bones. His mortal

body is still with us, the mortals. But this obvious mortality of the human part of the hero renders his or her spiritual presence ever more palpable; the true hero is invisible, but powerful. Miracles are attributed to his influence, the members of the community experience a strong sense of collective identity, the pilgrims speak about the encounter with the extraordinary when they return to their homes.³⁵

The extension of this community of memory varies. Clans worshipping their ancestors place their relics in a special shrine and take it with them if they change places. For nomadic tribes in particular, the relics of their ancestors mark the sacred center that represents the kinship bond and its continuity wherever they are. The material presence of the dead ancestors cannot be replaced by just the knowledge that they are buried somewhere else. In local communities the sacred has to be locally represented; there is still no strong pattern of social order connecting these different communities whether sedentary or nomadic, and there is no need to represent an embodiment of the sacred on a supralocal level.

Life in the early Middle Ages came close to this situation. Before the turn of the millennium, Western Europe consisted mainly of local communities gathered around a monastery or the castle of the local ruler. Cities were very small and an embracing social order, as represented by the Holy Roman Empire, was extremely weak. Therefore the remembrance of the heroic past focused on the local presence of relics. The diversity of the local saints reflected the scattered map of early medieval society, the wide empty spaces between the local communities and the lack of central powers, whether cultural or political.

In the Carolingian reign of the ninth century, the rapidly spreading cult of the saints' relics was debated as the issue of *translatio*, that is, the transfer of the relics from their original place—mostly in the Mediterranean areas—to new Christian communities in the north of the empire.³⁶ This transfer of the sacred relics reflected, in turn, the famous *translatio imperii*, the takeover of the ancient Roman Empire by the Frankish chiefs after the crowning of Charlemagne (Karolus Magnus) by the Roman patriarch in 800.

It was not before the central Middle Ages that a hierarchy of universal saints and their relics, most important among them the eucharist himself, emerged, reflecting the increasing power of the pope in Rome. With the rise of superlocal saints and the spread of relics brought by the crusaders to northern Europe, the movement of pilgrimage to the places of famous relics gained additional salience. Crusades that conquered relics, and pilgrimages that revered them, set the Christian community of the central Middle Ages in motion.³⁷ Collecting relics became a passion for kings like the collection of art five centuries later on, but it reflected also the increasing power of princes over more and more local communities. By collecting the relics of saints, the prince could expand and extend his power, deprive the local communities of their spiritual center and justify his position as a representative of the sacred.³⁸ But also the new monastic movements needed material centers of devotion to attract pilgrims and to justify their spiritual claims.

After the twelfth century, the cult of the saints' relics lost importance as the structural backbone of Christian society; it was increasingly regarded as a laic

mode of religious devotion, but it never faded away (Reader 1993). Even today, Christian pilgrims travel to Assisi, Torino, Rome, Lourdes or Tschenschou as they did in medieval times to Santiago de Compostella, Cologne or Canterbury.

And, of course, the pilgrims' movement is not a special Occidental phenomenon, but is central for most translocal religious communities that believe in the embodiment of the sacred: Muslim pilgrims follow their religious duty in the Hadj to Mecca, Buddhists make pilgrimages to the places where the Buddha was born, had his enlightenment, gave his first teaching or died.

Furthermore, the veneration of relics is not limited to religious communities, but can be found in the early modern princely state as well as in the construction of modern nations. The monumental tombs of the rulers in the crypta of churches they sponsored connect the two bodies of the king—his hidden dead corpse and the artful image of the immortal hero (Kantorowicz 1957). Later on, with the rise of the modern nation-state, the rulers and their dynasties are succeeded by the great men of a nation, by the founding fathers, political leaders and cultural heroes. Their relics, too, are sacred places frequently located in churches, temples or mosques like Westminster Cathedral in London or Santa Croce in Florence or the Dome des Invalides in Paris. After adolescents learn at school about the heroism of their founding fathers, they are, as part of their education as citizens, officially escorted and supported to visit the memorial sites of the nation in the capital city, in Paris, London, Washington, Moscow, Beijing, or Tokyo. Global communication networks provide no substitute for the local presence of the sacred as embodied in the remainders of the hero. The visit to the Dome des Invalides in Paris, to the temple wall in Jerusalem and to the Kaaba in Mecca cannot be replaced by their representations on the Internet.

The concentration of memory on particular places and its embodiment in particular objects is, of course, a social construction of the present. As such, it not only represents the social order and collective identity of its carriers, but it is also open to debate and doubts, to contested claims and bloody conflict.

This tendency toward conflict and controversy increases if heroism is represented in material relics or places. It is easier to claim the property of an object and a place than to do this with respect to time, and ownership claims are prone to be challenged, objects can be stolen, land can be occupied. Whoever owns the places of memory has the key to collective identity and, if it is not his own, but rather the collective identity of others, he can humiliate them by preventing access to the sacred places or even by abusing the sacred places for mundane purposes. Destroying the temple of the enemies, erasing their cemeteries, stealing and mocking the relics of the other community are the ultimate ways to defy their collective identity. Debates and feuds between medieval monasteries or cities about the possession of the bones of saints were, therefore, not insane aberrations, but desperate cultural wars about collective identity and the access to the sacred core. The Venetian theft of the relics of Saint Marc from Alexandria in 827 (Geary 1978, p. 107), or the transfer of the relics of Saint Nicholas from Myra to Bari in 1087 are stories of armed robbery and paid treason, of faked documents and distorted justifications (Geary 1978, p. 88).

Of course, there were economic interests at stake. Traders of relics (the most famous one was Deusdona in the ninth century) could make a fortune, organizations of relic merchants emerged, and the theft of relics became a major problem; scholarly expertise could be called upon, soldiers and sailors could offer their services, and, above all, the guardians of the relics, the local traders and innkeepers could profit from the many pilgrims attracted by the sensation and hoping for salvation. More than monuments and public rituals of remembrance, the embodiment of the sacred in relics fosters its commercial and professional exploitation. Profit margins in the business of rarities exceed those in the trade of replica—like, later on, the aura of the original piece of art justified its price in distinction to the reproduction. But all these commercial and professional interests depended on the fact that the relics of the heroes and their local presence were imputed with spiritual power. It was the emanation of the sacred that justified the expenses, toils and inconveniences of the pilgrimage.

In a similar way, we cannot regard the crusaders invading and conquering Palestine just as greedy adventurers in search of new colonies. Certainly, many of them were crude warriors attracted by the lure of conquest, but in venturing out into the unknown, they also tried the path of heroism, driven by the mission to bring the sacred center of their community under their control.

This reference to the spiritual power of relics and remainders is not the mark of an exotic past; it is very much alive. The Jewish claim to Jerusalem and the remains of the Temple Wall on the one side, and the Muslim claim to the same city and the Dome of Rocks on the other are not carried by strategic reasoning, by the calculation of monetary profit and military advantage. They cannot be compensated or negotiated—it is the sacred core of collective identity, it is the place of David and Muhammad, that is at stake. Reconquering the land of the ancestors and bringing the heroes' bones back to their homeland is, therefore, the ultimate ritual of remembering the heroes—regardless if it were Napoleon to Paris, the Prussian kings to Berlin after the unification of Germany or the Russian czar to the Kremlin after the collapse of the Soviet empire. Even the relics of former heroes who have been turned to icons of evil do not cease to fascinate contemporary societies. After Hitler's suicide at the end of the Second World War, his corpse was burned by his bodyguards, but the search for his bones and remainders kept the attention of a global audience for decades. The same holds true for the debate about the skull of Bormann, one of the highest Nazi leaders, who was said to have escaped Berlin in 1945 and to have lived in South America for many years. Once cheered as charismatic heroes, the Nazi leaders were publicly turned into the opposite after 1945. As monstrous demons, they continued to haunt the collective memory of Germany. We will return to this issue in chapter five.

MONUMENTS: THE FACE OF THE HERO

Even if they have been frequently faked, relics are, by their very nature, rare. Their power is local and fades away if distance increases. The members of the community

have to travel to approach the sacred. With the rise of larger territorial orders and sedentary citizenship, new forms of collective representations of the sacred are required (Hardtwig 1990, p. 13, p. 224). The representation of the dead hero has to be decoupled from material relics that are considered to be a part of him or her and brought to the centers of public life. This is achieved by monuments erected by the living in memory of the dead.³⁹ Monuments represent the *face* of the dead hero. In contrast to relics, they are less demanding on piety and not particularly sensitive to the presence of outsiders. Like their predecessor, the heraldic sign, they are constructed by the members of the community, but presented also to outsiders; they can penetrate everyday life, but they can also represent the sacred core of the hero if no mortal remainders are available.

Some of the monuments that have been constructed by the rulers themselves during their lifetimes, like the pyramids of ancient Egypt, Hadrian's mausoleum in Rome or Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe in Paris, mark the transition between remainders and true monuments.⁴⁰ They hint at remainders and relics, but these are hidden or entirely vanished behind the monumental architecture.

Pure monuments cannot claim anymore a special connection between the symbolic content and the particular place where they were erected. These monuments dispense with the mortal relics of the hero and represent the absent hero by sculptures and images, by architecture and space. By cutting the ties to the mortal remainders, these pure monuments hint directly at the sacred core of collective identity. Yet, the turn toward pure representation engenders new risks: The ties of the sacred to the mortal community are weakened, the hero tends to be entirely out of this world, he can vanish into abstraction. In order to counteract this evanescence of the sacred, the hero has to be presented as a human being; he has to get a face again. The representation of the hero's face is, therefore, at the core of the monument. Most important in the Western transition from relics to monuments is certainly the spread of the image of the crucified Christ. In early medieval art, Christ was presented commonly as the supreme ruler of the world, and even if he was shown on the cross, he was the triumphant hero and king of kings (Kantorowicz 1957). In contrast, late medieval art depicted God as a tortured being, thus emphasizing mortality as symbolized in the relic, but dispensing with the relic itself. This transition was repeated by statues of the universal saints—above all, Mary—which could be found in many churches although they did not dispose of the respective relics (Carroll 1986; Beissel 1972, 1976). These saints linked local patronage and religious fraternities to the universal church.

In a similar way, sculptures showing the prince on a horse in the central place of a city represented the princely power integrating the early modern territorial state even if the prince and his court were far away. The relics of the rulers were still special places, but usually removed from the large cathedrals and located in private chapels. Monuments representing the victorious liberator of the nation—Washington, Bolivar, Napoleon, Garibaldi, Lenin, Marcus Garvey, Kim Il Sung—imagine the nation rising against the ancient regime, even if the everyday business of the citizen is well established in legal routines and commercial prac-

ices. Monuments of cultural heroes like Goethe and Dante, Shakespeare and Rembrandt, Myczewicz and Pushkin, represent the rising bourgeoisie that defined itself by reference to culture instead of capital and acquired education instead of inherited titles. In all these cases, an embracing invisible social order, the territorial state or the nation, has to be visualized and represented. Because of the very invisibility of the order, it has to be imagined as a face and a name—as the hero who mediates between the invisible sacred order and the visible mundane locality and creates thus the supralocal community.

This representation of the sacred core is challenged to a certain degree by the impersonal identity of the modern democratic nation. The democratic nation has by its very constitution no personal center anymore. The nation is in all its citizens and the commonality of all its citizens is the nation. Hence the hero has, in a literal sense, thousands of faces. This crisis of representation, beginning at the end of the nineteenth century and fully developed after the First World War, led to the monuments for the anonymous fallen soldiers (Koselleck and Jeismann 1994; Koselleck 1997). Here, the representation of the heroic core of the community still has a face, but it has lost its individual name. The nameless heroes are surrounded by a tragic aura, their death is less triumphant than traumatic; finally, the heroes are victims again.

A different, even opposite reaction to this crisis of representation can be found in monuments that have given up any symbolic connection to historical persons—monuments of Germania and Britannia, for example, symbolize the triumphant and victorious nation as an ahistorical Goddess. Here, the ideal and immortal hero still has a name and a face, but is entirely decoupled, not only from the remainders, but also from the memory of a mortal historical person. Only when the impersonal identity of the nation gets a face can it be imagined as heroic.

But because every citizen knows that this face is fiction, it is no longer considered truly sacred. Therefore, the awe, inspired by the presence of the sacred relics or the vivid memory of the hero's life, has to be replaced by the awe provoked by the sheer size of the monument—the figures of the heroes are blown up to gigantic proportions.

Finally, in the attempt to recreate the awe of the sacred, even the human face of the hero is lost (Mosse 1993). Because of its otherworldly nature the sacred itself is regarded as impossible to represent, and this crisis of representation extends also to the image of the hero who was, originally, a mediator between the Gods and the humans. Repeating inadvertently the Protestant critique of figurative art in the churches, the image of the hero is banned from his temple, the monument. What is left are empty spaces, towering columns and huge scales. The national monuments of Vittorio Emanuele in Rome still have figurative decoration, the *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* in Leipzig is already devoid of it, and the planned Nazi monument of *Großdeutschland* in Berlin was sheer megalomania of empty space, scales and columns. In the attempt to represent and visualize the sacredness of the hero, the face of the hero is lost—the empty space of the monument is ready to be converted into a monument of the victims.

Monuments can be erected at any place where the community of memory wants to mark its center. Because this is usually also the center of urban everyday life, the awe and piety with respect to the sacred is difficult to sustain. Even if they are of gigantic size, monuments are easier to blend into ordinary life than dead corpses. Below the monument the mundane life can continue to flourish. This blending of the hero's monument into the everyday life of citizens is put one step further if the city streets and places are named after the heroes of the community. Here, the hero's name has entirely replaced his face and the citizens' everyday lives can continue without remembering the sacred core of heroism. Thus the monumentalization of the hero also discharges the individuals from the obligation to remember the hero constantly. Monuments are the depositories of collective memory.

Monuments may be difficult to construct, but they are easy to destroy. Changes of political regimes and religious authorities not only affect the calendar but also result in the destruction of monuments (Koselleck and Jeismann 1994). The Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten ordered the statues of the old Gods to be destroyed, Christian missionaries engaged in a destructive war against the pagan statues of devotion, radical Protestantism banned the statues of saints from the churches, the French revolutionaries converted churches into stores for grains and guns, the monuments of Hitler were crushed and blown up in the German cities after 1945, as were the Lenin monuments after 1990. Because these monuments represented the triumphant and sacred core of the past community, the new community could not just reduce them to mere aesthetic objects or pieces of historical interest. If the triumphant hero is turned into a haunting demon, his symbolic representation is destroyed in a collective act of purification. Even the history of street names tells about the destruction of old heroes and the construction of new ones. Monuments are, obviously, not just decorative architecture; they reflect and construct collective identity and their destruction hints at the ambivalence of heroes between triumph and trauma.

CLASSICS: THE VOICE OF THE HERO

But the imagination of the hero in the monument is not the only way to decouple the remembrance from the material remainders of the hero. A refined and less obvious, but not less powerful, ritual of remembering the heroic core of communities can be found in the citation of the classics.⁴¹ It recalls the name and the voice of the hero—his message, his words, his works—and decouples them from his face and his material remains.

If we consider an author as a classic, if we quote his or her work in order to achieve the consent of others, if we repeat or reinterpret a classical pattern because we regard the aesthetics to be unsurpassed, if we regard a poet, a composer, a painter, a sculptor to be a supremely creative individual, that is, a genius, we are constructing a hero. The Greek sculptors Pheidias and Praxiteles, the Renaissance

painters Michelangelo and Raphael, the Chinese poets Li Tai-po and Lao-tse, the writers Shakespeare, Dante and Ariosto, Corneille and Racine, Goethe and Schiller, the musicians Bach and Handel, Mozart and Beethoven, the thinkers Confucius and Ibn Kaldun, Plato and Augustine, Newton and Voltaire, Kant and Hegel are classical classics. All of these cultural heroes were not only influential for their contemporaries, but, later on, were seen as original lonely geniuses who, beyond the confines of tradition, created a new cultural universe in a Godlike manner. Instead of continuing a tradition, they are seen as the founders of a new one. This demingical act creates a new tradition that is, later on, called classic. Even those who deliberately rebelled against any classicism—as did the German romantic poet Novalis or the French Baudelaire, the painters Monet and Picasso, and the philosophers Marx and Nietzsche, Freud and Benjamin—can, later on, be lifted up to the ranks of the immortal genius who blazed the path for a new tradition.

To declare a period to be classic culture and to relate it to a towering genius means not only to exempt it from criticism and any attempt to surpass it, but also to ignore its predecessors. In declaring a period to be classic, we establish a boundary against the infinite track into the past. We do not have to think about what was before the classic, what influenced it and what it depended upon. The classic is not contingent, but sacred. And it is exactly this sacredness of the classic that justifies its being taught to the current generations, its entering textbooks and school curricula, and its being quoted by people who want to emphasize their closeness to the sacred core of cultural communities.

What is true for the political hero holds also for the cultural one. There are neither natural geniuses nor timeless classics. Both are social constructions of the present time, carried by cultural communities that create their collective identity by declaring an artist and his or her period to be classic, unsurpassed, paradigmatic. In the construction of a classic, the sacred core of a cultural community, of a scholarly field or an aesthetic style—as abstract as its symbolic products might be—gets a name and is imagined as an individual person, as inimitable and unique. Thus the classic as a sovereign subject mediates between the transcendental realm of eternal beauty and truth on the one hand and the profane business of normal science and decorative craftsmanship on the other.

Of course, the works that are regarded as classic vary and change. The heroes of today may only rarely be mentioned tomorrow. Apart from the devaluation of the classics of the past, the number of classics in a particular field also varies. Narrowing the range of those authors or works that are listed as classics may hint at a consolidation of an intellectual discipline, an increasing consensus within a community and a normalization of a field, whereas a large variety of contested claims to enthrone a classic indicates a lack of consensus and coherence of the genre.

The construction of a classic continues the line of appeasement of conflicts about heroes. Bloody conflicts about holy lands and sacred relics are quite common, monuments may cause public debates, but rarely bloody feuds, reverence for a classic may not be shared by everyone, but it is rarely contested or put to

revenge.⁴² Outsiders can just ignore the devotion to a genius or the quotation of a classic by his or her followers, whereas it is difficult to disregard the obligation to silence and piety in sacred places or in the presence of the hero's relics—the community will take offense. Tourists visiting sacred places without showing the obligatory respect are frequently seen committing such an offense, but readers who question the author's enthusiasm for a classic will only in exceptional cases be publicly noticed. In the construction of a classic, the community of memory is even more decoupled from the mortal existence of the hero than it is in the building of a monument. It is not the entanglement in mundane affairs and mistakes, but his or her works, words and ideas that count and will be remembered and their reinterpretation and adaptation to the present day situation can dispense with the contemporary context. That Aristotle was the ideologue of slavery, Marx an anti-Semite and misogynist, Kant a neurotic pedant, Baudelaire a drug addict, Voltaire a corrupt spy for the French King—all this is easily disregarded and has to be, if we consider them as cultural heroes. Bringing the cultural hero back into his original context risks deconstructing him as a classic.

But if the refinements of historical research may erode the pedestal of the classics, the heroes will survive in popular culture, in novels and schoolbooks. From the nineteenth century, the teaching of the community's past was focused on the great men and, later on, even the great women, the heroes of the mythical tales of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, of the *Nibelungenlied* and of Perceval, the legends of martyrs and saints, the stories about Luther and Washington, Napoleon and Barbarossa, Frederic the Great, Alexander and Caesar. Teaching the collective identity was mainly a presentation of founding heroes, mostly triumphant, sometimes tragic, always programmatic (Giesen 1998a).

If the reference to the classics is shifted down to the level of basic education, some advanced intellectual fields have largely left the reference to the classics behind their vanguard of discourse. They have passed the threshold to normal science and present themselves no longer as a tradition founded in a classical heritage, but as timeless objective knowledge—like the natural sciences that confine the reference to the classic to a small chapter at the beginning of their textbooks; others thrust boldly to crush the tradition in order to create the unprecedented and new on the shambles of yesterday's classics. But even the boldest modernism has its secret heroes whose revolutionary achievement is remembered—modern art and its celebration of Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol or Josef Beuys is just one example, the current veneration for Jacques Derrida as the master of deconstructivism is another one. If it is just intertextuality that matters, why are the audiences paying to experience the bodily presence of their intellectual hero?

THE HERO'S DRESS FOR EVERYBODY: HISTORICISM

All cultural production—literature, sculpture, paintings, music, philosophy, science—is influenced by the already existing patterns, forms and examples, whether

inadvertently or deliberately, whether as repetition or as revolution. But classicism or historicism differs from simple lines of influence. It turns the repetition of the past patterns into an aesthetic program. In contrast to modernism, here the past is sacralized and raised to a level that the present efforts always have to strive for, but will never be able to achieve (Giesen 1999a). The incarnation of this sacralized past is the aesthetic hero, the genius who coined the period he lived in. But the historicist's reference to the past ceases to present the face of the hero. The hero is represented only by his or her traces in history, by imitating his creations, by citing symbols, forms, images and icons. The genius himself is sacralized to a degree that forbids any depiction and representation. Historicism continues the line of increasing depersonalization that started with the cult of monuments in the nineteenth century. The sacredness of the hero is turned into a disposable decoration, into a dress that everybody can put on and exchange for another in the next moment.

Attempts to revive the aesthetics of the past and to teach the classical heritage are frequently associated with the nineteenth century. Indeed, the aesthetics of the nineteenth century showed the marks of historicism and classicism in a striking way: there were neo-Gothic, neo-Romanesque, neobaroque, even neo-classical styles in architecture; the program of the Pre-Raphaelites proclaimed a return to Renaissance art even before Raphael; painters like Makart copied the style of Rubens and Titian (Fillitz 1996); Brahms defended the classical heritage of music against the innovations by Richard Wagner; princes like Ludwig von Bayern constructed new castles in an exaggerated Gothic or neobaroque style; churches and stock exchanges (Kreisel 1954), train stations (Krings 1985) and even public lavatories were built in the style of the past centuries; cathedrals that never had towers before were completed with perfect towers in the style of the past (Cologne); the home of the educated bourgeois boasted furniture in Gothic or Renaissance style (Brönnner 1982, 1987); telephones were disguised as little Gothic cathedrals; historical associations tried to restore ruins and to reconstruct the buildings of the past better than they ever had existed before; history ascended to a core position among the scholarly disciplines—in short, the nineteenth century was at least as fascinated with the past as it was attracted by progress into the future (Giesen 1999a).

Of course, the historicism of the nineteenth century was trapped by its fascination with the classics of the past. It widely ignored that the classics themselves, behind their seemingly autonomous creativity, referred to remote predecessors, that they reinterpreted their own classics. The architecture of classicism in the second half of the eighteenth century revived the model of the Renaissance and Roman patterns; Renaissance art, in turn, was deeply influenced by the rediscovery of Roman antiquity and changed its aesthetics of the male nude profoundly after the discovery of the monumental statue of the Hercules Farnese; and—most importantly perhaps—Roman art itself copied the great masters of Greek sculpture and proclaimed the so-called Hadrianic renaissance.

In periods of historicism and classicism, copies and reinterpretations were not seen as a sin against the requirement of authenticity—to the contrary, they allowed the spiritual core, the "Gestalt," the ideal form of classical beauty, to be

brought out in an even purer way than in the original. Thus the classicists of the early nineteenth century, following Winckelmann's aesthetics, could consider the plaster copy of an antique statue to be the purer and more valuable representation of beauty than the antique original that was hidden under a layer of patina—dirty, truncated and broken.

In historicism, the present community is linked to the past, not by the material continuity of relics and remainders, but by style and form. This insistence on the construction of the past by symbolic patterns and ideas, instead of material embodiments, reflects the shift from the nobility to the bourgeoisie as the main carriers of collective memory (Möckl 1996). Nobility refers to bodily lineage that cannot be copied and imitated—you have it or you do not have it, and any attempt to acquire it by education is doomed to failure. In contrast, the bourgeoisie is based on property and profession, on education and office—in short, on attributes that can be achieved and exchanged. The very mode of constructing the past reflects this shift in the recruitment and constitution of class.

But the nobility with all its pretensions against the rising bourgeoisie has not always been able to look back to an impressive descent. This is not only because many lines of noble descent had been faked and invented, bought and re-written afterwards, but also because they, too, had their own beginnings. The Medici of Florence started as a family of wealthy merchants who rose to be the city's rulers by impressing their co-citizens with princely splendor; they organized spectacular public ceremonies, commissioned art and public buildings and thus turned down their rivals like the Pazzi and Strozzi families (Burekhardt 1988).

But historicism does not only hide the novelty of a group in the center of power, it can also disguise the decay of power. Ludwig II von Bayern, the fabled and crazy king, dressed—according to the occasion—in different historical styles; he appeared as a Germanic warrior or a Baroque prince, he staged parties and theatrical rituals that revived a glorious past in contrast to his actual political powerlessness. In putting on the princely clothes, the ruler can conceal his simple and nude humanity and rise up to the pedestal of the hero. Historicism is, indeed, based on the attempt to hide the newness, insecurity and symbolic nudity of individuals and groups entering the center of society behind the traditional dress of greatness—commoners dressing up as heroes.

Historicism is an aesthetics of the theatre, separating between the mask and the face, between facade and interior, between public appearance and private existence. In this separation, the private is concealed from the public eye, the traditional facade has to conceal the questionable, mundane and even weird mechanisms behind it—like the Gothic facade of the train station covers the modern technology that is considered ugly and intimidating for the public eye. The aesthetics of the theatre succeeds, however, only if the public forgets, for a moment at least, that it is just a play, a facade, a mask. It has to be taken for real, it has to ignore the split between the mortal nudity of the individual and the splendid dress of the immortal hero, it has to hail and applaud the hero and to approve his enthronement in public rituals.

Occasionally, the tension between both sides is supremely overridden by special gestures of the hero. When Napoleon was crowned as *l'empereur*, he used the traditional dress of the French kings, but changed the embroidered heraldic signs from the Bourbon lily to the bee; instead of being crowned by the representative of the church, as all French kings were before, he, in a sudden and unexpected gesture, took the crown from the archbishop and crowned himself. The hero could not dispense with the traditional dress, but he insisted on his self-constitution in the ritual.

But it would be misleading to see the historicism of the nineteenth century as a special dress for the ruler whose legitimacy was questionable. To the contrary: historicism fluidified the splendor of the past and made it accessible for every citizen (Pieske 1988; Plumpe 1997). The style of the past could be copied and transferred, even exaggerated and improved—the number of columns, pedestals, ornaments and towers decorating the facade increased, regardless of the function hidden behind the facade. In the end, the reference to the classical form of the past loses all its distinctive value—it runs into a crisis of inflation. Beyond the barriers of privilege and scarcity, everyone could adapt the heraldic signs of the glorious past to his or her own leisure and pleasures. What was once the awe-inspiring embodiment of the sacred was now watered down to an omnipresent and banal commodity. The hero did not have a thousand faces anymore; instead, his dress was copied a million times and sold as a souvenir.

Against this historicist banalization of the past and the neoclassicist trivialization of the hero, Nietzsche pointed his thunderous criticism. Disgusted with the pious repetition of the classical heritage and mocking the naive optimism of those who still believed in progress and utopias, he praised the intensity of life, the triumphant awareness of the present moment, its vitality and ineffability (Nietzsche 1977d). Only in discharging the burden of the past as well as in tearing down the illusions of the future happiness, in destroying the conventions of the present society and in rejecting the guilt of the past, could a triumphant subjectivity be set free and give way to the creative act (Nietzsche 1977c). Only beyond guilt and punishment, after an acid deconstruction of fake morality and hypocrisy, on the shambles of the old statues of heroes who had enslaved humanity, could the pure will and the pure creativity of the triumphant subject emerge—a titanic hero constituting himself and for himself, dependent on nobody's appreciation, without followers and admirers.⁴³ The Nietzschean attempt to reconstruct the hero as the *Übermensch* (Nietzsche 1977a), who does not represent the sacred, but *is* the sacred himself, is, in itself, an exemplar of groundbreaking intellectual heroism that—finally—required the sacrifice of his own mundane existence as an intellectual. It reestablishes the distance between the hero and the ordinary human being; it overcomes its banalization by radical and frightening determination; it shows that—even if banalization can kill the mundane face of the hero—the idea of heroism itself is immortal. It is a categorical presupposition of culture, a mediation between the sacred center and mundane society—as technology is an indispensable mediation between society and its other frontier, nature.

But the Nietzschean attempt to deconstruct the chains of conventions that had turned humans into intellectual slaves does not pursue its endeavor to the very end and look from the summit of triumphant subjectivity into the abyss without which the summit would not exist. In its powerful attempt to break the chains that tied not only Hegel's servant to his master (Hegel 1980, p. 113), but also the master to the servant in the act of recognition, it replaced Hegel's fundamental insight about distinction and dialectics as the essence of serfdom and domination by the free-floating, bottomless creative moment. Blowing up this elusive moment to the focus of triumphant subjectivity, it disregards that every society has not only a center but also a fringe, that it not only cannot dispense with heroes, but that it also produces victims. Both are the extremes between which collective identity unfolds—as birth and death, triumph and trauma, demarcate the categorical reference points for individual identity and life.

PLACES WITHOUT HEROES: THE EVANESCENCE OF THE SACRED

As important as the hero might be for the triumphant construction of collective identity, there are, of course, places and times which are, by their very structure, devoid of heroism and the personal embodiment of the sacred.

First of all, social relations can fail to provide the fundamental distance that is indispensable for the construction of heroism. Close friends and relatives rarely regard the respective other as heroes—even if they admire special qualities of the other or love each other. A wife calling her husband "my hero" can hardly mean it. The complex picture of the other which results from intimate personal knowledge impedes the imagination of the sacred as embodied in heroes. Charisma fades away in the attempt to turn it into an everyday practice. Close and continuous interaction cannot avoid establishing informal rules and routines that are inconsistent with the sovereignty and exceptionalism of the hero—he is beyond routines as he is above the law.

At the opposite end of this dimension of intimacy and personal knowledge ranges the object, the embodiment of the profane. Objects are seen as elements of the outside world that are impossible to communicate with, to argue with and to agree with. In contrast to the sacred and its immediate, irrefutable and even frightening calling, in distinction also to the contingencies of personal relationships with other humans, the objects are silent and do not challenge us.⁴⁴ They are devoid of any sovereignty. In demarcating ourselves against objects, we can increase our own awareness of being sovereign and autonomous subjects. Cultures which emphasize the subjectivity of individuals tend, therefore, also to objectify the world and to treat even human relationships as if they were objects.

Max Weber's account of rationalization as disenchantment, objectification (*Versachlichung*) and routinization (*Veralltäglichen*) provides a paradigm for this symbolic transformation from the personal into the impersonal, from subjectivity into objectivity, from the sacred to the profane.⁴⁵ Reformatory Protestantism con-

sidered—according to Weber—the objects of the world as devoid of any sacred meaning. The profane realm of worldly action was sharply contrasted with the transcendental realm of salvation that alone was the resort of the sacred. Representation of the sacred in objects was considered pagan idolatry. This expulsion of the sacred turned the mundane world into a realm of pure objects. If thus mundane activities become the "objects" of trade and bureaucracy, mediated by money and the impersonal law, there is no place for the personal charisma of heroes anymore. The pioneers who opened up a new market may be invested with a touch of heroism, but, once established, the market has no heroes anymore. Revolutionaries who fought for citizenship rights may be considered as heroes, but the citizen enjoying these rights is no hero anymore. The same holds true for other arenas of routinized objectification—if the charisma of the ruler is turned into bureaucratic administration, if the genius of the classics gives way to normal science, if the wisdom of the judge or shaman is replaced by professional services, if war is turned into work.⁴⁶

Mediation in modern institutional systems has a voice, but no face and no place anymore. The faces of professionals disappear behind their products and services. Law, money, science, and values claim validity beyond the confines of localities, they abstract from the individuality of subjects and allow us to measure and to compare in an "objective" way (Simmel 1987). Heroes are not from this world of objectivity—they are incomparable and extraordinary; they have faces and voices to be remembered; they embody collective identity as triumphant subjects.

But the objectification of the world (Weber's *Versachlichung*), the turn toward impersonal representations of the sacred, and the routinization of charisma (Weber's *Veralltäglichen*) also engender a strong thrust to stress one's subjectivity and personality. The constant pressure toward individualization (Elias 1991), to show a sovereign distance to the rules and to present oneself as unique and inimitable became a key feature of the modern way of life. Sovereign subjectivity ceases to be the exclusive attribute of a few representative individuals in contrast to the many who remain normal and exchangeable. Instead, it is turned into a permanent challenge for everybody. We know the most obvious results of this modern cult of the individual: In the desperate competition for uniqueness, the style and fashion of yesterday are constantly devaluated, distinction is cherished, and the culture of the "masses" is despised. But the thrust for individualization can also lead to the sacralization of deviance and trespassing; the artist who violates the conventional norms of good taste or the criminal who defies the norms of the law, the perpetrator, the eccentric and even crazy person who acts beyond the rules of reason and commonsense, are turned into icons of sovereign subjectivity. In doing the unexpected, in creating ugliness and committing crimes, the Nietzschean defiance of the normal and regular is translated into a modern cult of individualization. Again, the perspective toward the boundaries reveals just flickering instability and ambivalence. The attempt to go beyond the horizon risks shifting perspectives.

In addition, the construction of distance that is constitutive for heroism engenders a special dialectics of evanescence. Heroes are located beyond the realm of the ordinary profane order, but they also attract followers who try to come close to them and to study their lives in detail, and who thereby inevitably bridge the gap that separates the embodiment of the sacred from the social community. The sacred burns down the mundane world if it enters it without mediation, but it, in turn, will disappear if the mundane followers come too close, if imitation takes over, if cheap copies are sold, if the exceptional becomes teachable (Callois 1939), or if the hero's dress is taken over by everybody. In order to reconstruct the constitutive distance to the sacred, it has to be rephrased in ever more inaccessible ways—located in times immemorial, in a transcendental world, finally embodied only in abstract principles and devoid of any subjectivity (Weber 1921; Eisenstadt 1986; Schluchter 1989). Thus, the faces and voices of heroes are widely replaced by impersonal values; the personal calling of past heroism recedes from the obligation to respect the timeless values of a universal community.

Although—as we have stressed above—heroism itself is immortal, the places for heroes are fading away with the expansion of money, law and science. If rationalization drives the modern world, the sacred becomes, indeed, an impersonal order which is less embodied in persons than in principles that have no special place anymore but are everywhere. And the modern conception of individuality embodies the sacred only in a faceless and anonymous way; at the end we all become heroes, but only for ourselves. Thus the triumphant awareness of birth projected to the hero is returning to each single member of the community—as the unalienable rights of human beings by birth, as the citizenship rights by being born in a territory, as the sacredness of the human body.

But in this transformation of the sacred that once had a face, a voice and a place into an anonymous and impersonal, invisible and omnipresent principle, the order of modernity also engenders a hidden elective affinity to the symbolic opposite of the hero: the anonymous victim who has no face, no voice, no place anymore. Thus, it is not blunt euphemism that the victims of September 11 were, later on, referred to as heroes although they did not opt sovereignly for their fate, although they can hardly be regarded as extraordinary personalities, although they pursued their regular professional activities.

NOTES

1. "No More Heroes" was recorded in 1979 by an English punk group called "The Strangers."
2. The classical and most influential text here is Carlyle (1967). From a sociological point of view, see Goode (1978), Burkert (1983) and Vernant (1983).
3. Interestingly Weber's original account on charisma refers strongly to the warrior figure. See Weber (1978: vol. 2, chapter 5, 1).
4. However, only the political and the religious hero caught the attention of sociologists under the heading of charismatic leadership. The main inspiration of this literature is of course Max Weber. See Eisenstadt (1992).

5. Although among sociologists Max Weber is commonly regarded as the main reference of the concept he, in fact, never claimed to be its original author. When introducing the concept in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* ("Economy and Society"), Weber referred to Rudolph Sohm (1892) and Karl Holl (1898). The renaissance of the Weberian concept in sociology was mainly mediated by Shils (1965, 1975), Eisenstadt (1968), Bendix and Roth (1971) and Schluchter (1989), whose systematic reconstructions and elaborations of the concept prepared the ground for contemporary debates. See also the different contributions in Gebhardt et al. (1993).

6. See, among others, Camic (1980), Wallis (1982), Lindholm (1990) and Tiryakian (1995).

7. The autonomy of this cultural perspective is powerfully advanced by Philip Smith (2000).

8. J. Assmann (1988, p. 12) uses the words *Alltagsferne* or *Alltagstranszendenz* in order to refer to this character of cultural memory.

9. Weber mentions the institutionalized madness of berserkers in Byzantium. See Weber (1978, vol. 2, chapter 5, 1).

10. For the territorial and local arrangements and the opposition of the sacred and the profane, see Eliade (1959). Comments on the tensions and affinities of order and placement (*Ordnung und Ortung*) can be found in Carl Schmitt (1988).

11. Within Robert Merton's classical categorization of types of deviance, the hero can be conceptualized as an innovator. For an interesting analysis taking some of its arguments from labeling theory, see Lipp (1977).

12. The connections between tradition, myth and the construction of heroes have been introduced by Lord Raglan (1975).

13. This phenomenon is even recognized by rational-choice theorists. See, for instance, Coleman (1990, p. 278). However, it is obvious that it doesn't fit their theoretical framework.

14. Otto Rank (1910) has focused the structural similarity between the birth and heroism in a strong and convincing way: Every individual is a hero in the moment of his or her birth.

15. For ambivalence as a sociological category, see: Smelser (1993, 1998a, 1998b), Merton (1976), Callois (1939), Durkheim (1991), Mauss and Hubert (1968), Smith (1894) and Wundt (1913). The classical reference here is Freud (1991).

16. Here, one can object an obvious parallel to Hegel's famous analysis of the dialectic relationship between master and slave (1980).

17. From an anthropological point of view on this aspect, see, among others, Douglas (1978), Eliade (1991) and Van Baal and Van Beek (1985).

18. This theory of scapegoating as the transfer of evil dates back to Frazer (1947); see also Girard (1986) and Weiss (1998).

19. The anthropological presuppositions to Girard's theory of sacrifice have been illuminated by Greisch (1995). For an interdisciplinary outlook on this matter, see Schenk (1995) and Neuhaus (1998).

20. For a comparison of the ancient and Christian notion of sacrifice, see Auffahrth (1998) and Rendtorff (1998).

21. This sacrificial conversion of death into life, of trauma into triumph, of victims into heroes, is not only repeated in the Catholic and Orthodox liturgy, but also in the ritual of confession and repentance. In the ritual of confession, the repenting individuals sacrifice their old lives, their old pride and self-esteem in face of the community. But it is by this very self-humiliation that they are reborn and accepted as purified and redeemed members of the sacred community. Thus, by rituals of repenting, individuals are not degraded and do not lose the respect of others; instead they achieve a superior individuality as they get rid of their old human egos—they turn their trauma into a triumph.

22. For the idea of Christomimesis in late antiquity, see Feichtinger (1999).

23. For a very sensitive analysis of the pre-World War I atmosphere, see Zweig (1947).

24. "Long live the sacred Germany!"

25. For a recent psychoanalytic explanation of this thesis, see Weatherill (1994, p. 83).

26. As Paul Fussell (1975) has brilliantly shown, this transformative warfare has left a decisive mark on modern memory of warriors and the heroic.

27. Could Evita Perón or James Dean be imagined as old persons? Weber knew that continuity was the Achilles' heel of charisma (Weber 1980, p. 122, p. 541).
28. The relationship between rituals and myth are discussed by Raglan (1975, p. 141), Connerton (1989, p. 53) and Bell (1997, pp. 3–23).
29. We will deal with this cult of the dead hero in greater detail in the chapter on relics.
30. More advanced patterns of recalling the voice of the hero will be examined in the chapter on classics.
31. We will consider more elaborate forms of representing the face of the hero in the chapter on monuments.
32. In Connerton's (1989, p. 64) phrasing: "Under the conditions of modernity the celebration of recurrence can never be anything more than a compensatory strategy, because the very principle of modernity itself denies the idea of life as a structure of celebrated recurrence."
33. See especially the introduction of Pierre Nora (1992).
34. See the too-long-neglected study by Halbwachs (1941).
35. The existence of miracles is still one of the basic presuppositions for sanctification in the Catholic Church. According to the *London Times* (July 26th, 1998, pp. 42–50) the Pope considered seriously the sanctification of Princess Diana in order to provide Great Britain with a contemporary saint who surely would attract masses of devotees. But, unfortunately, there are up until now no miracles—because the British Catholics do not pray powerfully enough, the Pope said.
36. On this topic, there have been explorations by, among others, Herrmann-Mascaud (1975), Fichtenau (1952), Geary (1978, p. 31), Le Blant (1887), Horzelt (1935) and Körtting (1965, 1966).
37. See Webb (1999), Davidson/Dunn-Wood (1993), Geary (1978) and Töpfer (1956).
38. The history of the idea of the king or prince figuring as a "typus Christi" has been traced by Kantorowicz (1957).
39. The significance of monuments for the construction of collective memory is explored by von Beyme (forthcoming).
40. For a general perspective on the religious and social role of sacred places, see McLuhan (1996).
41. For the history and development of what is and has been called *classical*, see Scholtz (1987) and Pieper (1987).
42. If, however, the classic was regarded as a dogma in a political community, it may be banned after its collapse. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is a case in point. Its publication is outlawed in Germany.
43. Nietzsche himself soon became the center of a cult (Tönnies 1897). See also Nicholls (1958/59).
44. Objectivation of the social world was a major theme in Marx (1990). See also Lukács (1968).
45. For the Weberian concept of objectification of charisma, see Schluchter (1989).
46. Here, the handling of the issues requires an impersonal attitude, a comparison between different objects or efforts, a mundane perspective that treats everything as ordinary and regular.

CHAPTER 2

Victims

Neither Subjects nor Objects

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF VICTIMS

Living heroes, in their attempt to rise above the ordinary, disregard mundane reasoning and disclaim the voices of caution. Cruel and merciless, their deeds demand sacrifices also from their followers and can even entail the death of those who are not members of the charismatic community. The concentration of the sacred in the person of the triumphant hero comes at the price of desacralizing others. Thus heroes, in the moment of triumph, can, and frequently do, produce victims.

To regard somebody as a victim seems to be a spontaneous self-evident classification that does not need further justification. Indeed, the suffering and the death of victims are obvious facts beyond doubt and question—ultimate certainties about our cohumans, if there are any at all. Death is, like birth, a categorical presupposition of our human existence—ultimately certain and exempted from the contingencies of individual experience (Heidegger 1986, pp. 231–267). In reflecting on our mortality, we are constructing our collective identity as humans. Because mortality is a common certainty linking all members of the human species, it also brings the question of boundaries to the fore and acquires a particular salience if entire groups are concerned. Therefore, the Nazi genocide of the European Jews, Stalin's ethnic cleansing and waves of purge, the killing fields of Cambodia, the death marches of the Armenian people in 1915, the extinction of large numbers of Native Americans under the Spanish and North American conquest, the enslavement of the African black population, as well as the massacres of 800,000 in Rwanda in 1994, the ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia, and the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers are commonly acknowledged as paradigms of collective victimization, as icons of innocent suffering. Yet, even this seemingly obvious reaction to the suffering and death of others is based on symbolic codings, presup-

posing the social construction of boundaries and resting on cultural foundations.¹ I will try to outline these tacitly assumed cultural foundations of victimhood in the following chapter.

Although not entirely limited to the above mentioned cases of genocide and collective suffering, my perspective is mainly focused on them.

VICTIMS, PERPETRATORS AND THE PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

There are no natural victims. The very notion of victims presupposes agencies that intervene and change human lives, that define and recognize victimization. To define someone as a victim is to assume that his or her condition is the result of human action and that it could have been avoided if human decisions would have been different (Shklar 1990). If somebody dies at the age of eighty, nobody calls him or her a victim of old age. Even if an unforeseeable earthquake kills people, the dead are not immediate victims of the earthquake in the strict sense of the term. Only if at least vague information about the risk of catastrophe were available, if precautions could have been taken, if the presence in the area of risk and danger could have been avoided, is the term "victim" justified. Victimhood presupposes—at least partly—voluntary action, intervention in natural processes, uncertainty and risk, even accountability and responsibility—although in many cases the responsible perpetrators are not easy to spot.

Victims are produced by human action that could have been expected to have taken a different direction. If the result of a human action is in accordance with the usual expectations, we do not consider the person concerned to be a victim—even if his or her suffering is caused by the action of others. The loser in a fair competition is not a victim of the winner, the convicted criminal is not a victim of the judge, latecomers who get no parking spot are not victims of those who came earlier.

To call somebody a victim does not only assume that his or her condition is caused by voluntary action under uncertainty. It also implies that the result of this action is considered wrong, even that the decision to act in this way is considered as an avoidable error on the part of the acting individual.

Evaluating an action as wrong or mistaken is, of course, first and foremost done from the perspective of outside observers who assume certain rules to be unquestionably valid and certain information to be available for the actor in question. In most cases, these assumptions result in a moral judgment which holds that the observers' perspective should also be the perspective of the actor and even be the perspective of the victim. Thus the discourse about victimization becomes a social construction and is carried by a moral community defining an evil. Of course, the notion of evil varies according to the core principles of the respective culture (Ricoeur 1967). The evil can, for example, refer to demons invading and polluting the community from the outside, it can be seen as an upheaval against a divine and transcendental order, it can be defined as a violation of the law and its

constitutional principles, it can be phrased as a scandal with respect to a public moral, it can be constructed as a scapegoat by the yellow press, etc.

These cultural narratives of evil are embedded in institutional arenas that impinge on them, support them or obstruct them—in law courts, in religious ceremonies, in literary discourses, in parliamentary debates, in informal encounters among neighbors, in news-media, in professional services. We will try to outline why particular institutional arenas impede the cultural coding of evil as "victims," whereas others give way to the cultural construction of victimhood (Neal 1998, pp. 21–37).

Before we turn to these institutional arenas, we should, however, analytically separate three structural positions or agencies presupposed in the construction of victimhood: The agent who, by voluntary decision, risks producing the condition of the victim has to be distinguished from the victim, and both have to be distinguished from the position of the outside observer or the third party who evaluates the action and recognizes the condition of the victims, even if the victims should not be aware of it. This analytical separation between three positions might—like all structural idealtypes—be blurred in historical cases of victimization, but it cannot entirely be dispensed with (Giesen 1999a, p. 69). If, for example, an individual is held entirely responsible for his or her deplorable condition, outside observers will not consider him or her to be a victim. Whoever dies in a car accident while driving 120 miles an hour on a narrow winding road, drinking a bottle of whiskey, will not be acknowledged as a victim of the road authority; whoever invests in high risk stock and loses money will not be recognized as a victim of the stock exchange; whoever refuses to take medical advice seriously and continues a risky lifestyle will not be regarded as a victim.

The social construction of victimhood presupposes an outside actor who is at least partly responsible for the misfortune of the victim—the driver must be seen as involuntarily intoxicated by others and warning signs about the winding road must be missing; the investor must be trapped by an investment consultant, the terminally ill man must be forced to continue a risky lifestyle by his boss, etc. Victimization presupposes the—at least partial—attribution of responsibility to outside agencies—it assumes the innocence of the victim and can increase the awareness of victimhood by focusing on members of the community whose innocence is beyond doubt, e.g., children.

Of course, societies differ vastly in this attribution of responsibility. What is attributed in the United States to the individual's success and failure in a market is, in Sweden or East Germany, charged to the responsibility of big corporations or the state; what is seen in India as the inescapable karma of each individual is attributed by Westerners to the reckless management of the chemical industry, etc.

But we do not recognize individuals as victims merely because their suffering can be attributed to an actor or agency. If a group or an individual accuses another group or agent of being responsible for its miserable condition and if it is not supported in this claim by a third impartial perspective, there can be a conflict

between the accused agent and the accusing party, but no assessment of victimhood.² The very idea of victimhood presupposes a kind of universalist moral discourse that aims at impartiality and justice (Barry 1995), it is embedded in special institutional arenas where this impartial perspective is routinized, and it is carried by special groups or actors who are at a certain distance from the victims, as well as from the perpetrators. Clans can engage in bloody feuds and revenges, but they cannot claim the status of victims because they do not conceive their conflict in terms of impartial justice (W. I. Miller 1990). Their conflict is purely reciprocal, it goes back and forth, each threat asking for a counterthreat, each attack requiring retaliation (Nisbett and Cohen 1996). In contrast, the model of victimhood presupposes the intervention of a seemingly impartial third party who is able to assess the damage and to transform the retaliation into a public definition of evil, thus ending the feud.

Like the attribution of responsibility (Gluckman 1972), the institutional arenas—where the victimization is recognized—and the social carriers of the public perspective also vary vastly.³ The public perspective can be based on the authority of priests, kings, intellectuals, or judges, or it can just refer to the majority of impartial spectators. It can be constructed in the discourse of civil society, articulated in literature and art, or brought forward by the response of the common people on the streets. Before we consider several institutional arenas that foster or impede the construction of victimhood, we will outline the general structural position of the victim at the fringe of moral communities.

AT THE FRINGE OF MORAL COMMUNITIES

Victims take a special position in a community. If they are still alive, their subjectivity is damaged; they have been, temporarily at least, excluded from the usual rights attributed to every member of the community; they are displaced and uprooted persons, assembled in camps, submitted to violence, torture, rape. Similar to heroes, but at the opposite end of the social order, they have been put into a state of exception in a space beyond laws, rules and rights. In recognizing this damaged subjectivity, a society tries to include them again in the community of human beings who are not only endowed with rights, but also tied to each other by some bond of solidarity in distinction to outsiders.

Yet the obligations that are derived from this bond of solidarity vary: respect for basic human rights, limited economic support, far-reaching use of personal resources, obligation to listen extensively to the presentation of psychic problems—all these ties extend to different circles of solidarity and the claims to this solidarity differ vastly between societies or groups.⁴ The bond of collective identity may even be extended beyond the boundaries of humankind, and this, too, may be debated and defined in culturally varying ways. We—at least, non-vegetarians—do not regard the cattle, the meat of which we eat, as victims of our dietary habits, but ethical vegetarians do. Most people in Western societies would

refuse to eat the meat of apes and dogs, because they are considered to be related to humans or even regarded as members of the family, but Chinese gourmets do not share this reluctance.⁵ Chaining dogs or torturing apes for medical research purposes is seen as unethical by many members of Western societies even if there might be good technical reasons to do this. Although to a lesser degree than human beings, dogs and apes are included in a moral community that invests them with certain basic rights and excludes any possibility to sacrifice their lives for instrumental reasons (Singer 1986). Human beings are, on the other hand, under certain conditions deprived of their sovereign subjectivity, declared to be insane, unconscious and bound to death, treated as dead corpses exploitable for medical research and the survival of others, or considered as animals that could be traded like cattle. The construction of boundaries between those who are endowed with subjectivity similar to us and those who are not, and who are therefore excluded from common solidarity, is far from being clear and unquestionable. After the conquest of the Americas, intellectuals like Las Casas and Sepulveda engaged in serious debates about whether the natives in the New World had to be treated as tradable goods or as savable souls, and the conclusion of the debate was not easy to arrive at for the contemporaries.⁶ To regard somebody as a subject endowed with consciousness and a sovereign self does not result from simple empirical observation; instead, it is categorically assumed and presupposed,⁷ socially attributed and intentionally imputed to others if we communicate with them. Even if this imputation of consciousness and subjectivity is shared in a community, it can never escape completely from its shifting foundations in collective decisions.

This fragility of boundaries and shifts in solidarity affect the social construction of victimhood directly. Although unquestionably included into the community, the position of victims is at a certain distance from the persons who recognize their suffering. The victim is, of course, closer to us than the objects that we can eat, use and trade. There is no normative obligation with respect to the fish or the salad we have for dinner; the car we drive has—at least under regular conditions—no moral claims that we have to respect; the property we buy and sell is not a subject we can communicate with. These are commonly seen as objects and treated by technological action, instead of being included in a common collective identity, however weak it might be. In particular historical settings, human beings, too, have been considered objects of trade and consumption beyond any moral obligation and claims of solidarity. The raids of the Assyrian kings in ancient Mesopotamia, the slavery in the Roman Empire or certain forms of cannibalism are examples of this “objectification” of human beings.⁸ If a culture does not classify outsiders as subjects who are included in a common identity, but sees them as mere objects, there is no way to claim the status of a victim on moral grounds. What we consider genocide or exploitation is seen as normal or natural behavior on the part of the “perpetrators” and as a kind of natural catastrophe on the part of the “victims.”

At the other end of the scale of distance is the close proximity of kinship and sympathy. If a close friend or a member of the family gets into a miserable

situation, we offer our more or less unrestricted personal support without calling him or her a victim. Here, the ties of communality and solidarity are so strong that we feel personally harmed by the calamity affecting our parents, children, or friends. There is only one distinction which matters in these situations: us and them—those who are held responsible for the harm that affects one of us. These strong ties of solidarity do not need a moral justification—right or wrong, it is my family, my friend, my people who need support and have to be defended against the evil from outside. Here, the collective identity of insiders is unquestionably given—they have to see each other exclusively as subjects, as carriers of an identity, as the Alter who will undoubtedly understand because he or she is alike in a primordial way. If we assume the other to be a subject in the full sense of the term, we assume him or her to be like us, to be endowed with competence to act like us, but we also assume him or her to be a unique and individual person. He or she has a face we know and a voice that talks to us, objects don't.

In between the ultimate distance of objects and the ultimate proximity of primordial collective identity, the construction of victimhood unfolds. As clear as the categorical reference to proximity and distance is for the endpoint, so is the construction of boundaries in between ambiguous and questionable. Many cultures try to cope with this ambiguity by imagining a realm in between subjects and objects, populated by strange creatures like demons who are half humans and half animals, or crazy and insane persons who are human by bodily nature, but animals by the lack of reason and morality.⁹ Primitive art, as well as the sculptures of medieval cathedrals and fictitious reports about demons living on the wild margin of the world, show these blendings of humans and animals; they are half-human and half-horse or fish, they have hairy bodies and wings, a human body, but the head of a lion or a bird, etc.

In every society there is a fringe, a place for those who do not fit into the dominant classificatory grid. In early modern territorial states that wanted their populations to be sedentary, accountable and productive, these "misfits" were people without a home and a master, migrants and beggars, vagabonds and other "useless" individuals who could not be turned into sedentary citizens with a clear position in the newly emerging society of production and labor. The Age of Reason responded to this awareness of uncertain boundaries and shifting foundations by separating those who are human by nature, but deprived of reason, from the reasonable citizens, by enclosing them in mental asylums (Goffman 1961; Foucault 1965). But the clear-cut social separation between the reasonable and the insane members of the community could not remove the suspicion that we all are both, that reason may be only the superficial cover for our mad desires, which occasionally erupt in every human being. The assumedly insane persons, in turn, may be discovered as truly humane and reasonable beings in their own world.

Today, it is the debate about the ethics of vegetarianism and the rights of animals that hints at a moving frontier between human beings and other mammals. When humans and other primates share 99 percent of their genes, there is, indeed, a haunting suspicion that the frontier between them and us is arbitrary,

questionable and gradual. What were once considered objects of consumption that are controlled by taboos of purity, but exempted from any ethical rules, are now discovered to have hidden subjectivity and are reinvested with rights. Instead of excluding an animal from the range of eatable food because it is regarded as alien and impure, ethical vegetarianism excludes animals from human diet because they are seen as too similar to us.

One of the most important responses of modern cultures to the uncertainty of boundaries consists of including the outside in the inside. This move is at the core of any construction of victimhood. To refer to a person or a group as "victim" not only presupposes a certain detachment from direct involvement and identification, but also an inclusion of the suffering persons into a community of subjects. The subjectivity of victims, however, is restricted, damaged and anonymous: Victims have no faces, no voices, no places of their own—at least in the moments when they are victimized. They cannot raise their voices in the public discourse of civil society; they are dead, mutilated, traumatized, or overwhelmed with grief. Frequently, the surviving victims are enclosed in special camps, in an outland exempted from property claims to the land and citizenship rights, separated from normal life within the state (Agamben 1995, p. 166).

It is in the universalistic moral communication between members of the noninvolved third party that persons or groups are seen and labeled as "victims." In this construction of victimhood, the noninvolved third party, the public perspective of citizens, merges communality and distance. On the one hand, the victims are reincluded in the community and hence supported in their claim for solidarity; on the other hand, the victims' misery is kept at some distance from the social carriers who represent the public center of society. Their place is the camp of refugees, the nonlocal locality of special spaces in airports and harbors, the realm in between the outlands of violence and the civil life of the community. The transitory nature of these camps is a permanent one—most of the surviving victims remain here for a longer time of their life, and the authorities of the surrounding state seem to make much more of an effort to keep the victims within the fences of the camps than to integrate them into the citizenry. Only later on, when the passing of time has provided the inevitable distance, are the voices of survivors heard; their reports collected and their faces become well known public icons.

In order to find an answer to the question of why modern societies construct victims, we have to turn to the moral basis of modern communities. In the definition of victimhood, the center of a moral community not only distinguishes itself from the periphery, it also reveals the tension between the moral ideal and the imperfect realization of this ideal. The moral community evidently needs the difference between the normative ideal and the factual behavior in order to construct its basic motive of integration; the moral community needs deviance (H. Becker 1973) and perpetrators in order to construct the boundary between the good and the evil because the community of reason and enlightenment requires the tension between truth and reason on the one hand and error and insanity on

the other. In moral communities, there is an unavoidable tendency to define and to detect transgression, to identify and to condemn perpetrators, and even to scapegoat others if the evil cannot be located in a different way. The intimate ties between collective identity and scapegoating, between the construction of a normative order and the sanctioning of deviance, between virtue and sin, have been outlined before.¹⁰

But the construction of a moral community does not only require reference to actors who are held guilty for deviance, crime and evil, and whose position as outsiders can be attributed to their own decisions and responsibilities. It also needs reference to actors who do not correspond to the moral ideal of membership, without being guilty. These individuals are outsiders not because of their deliberate decision to violate the common norms, but because of their basic dispositions, or because they simply fail to dispose of the necessary means to correspond to the ideal of membership. In this way, homosexuals and handicapped persons, people who are mentally deprived or extraordinarily poor, gypsies and vagabonds are frequently labeled as despised outsiders who have to be kept at a distance without being directly the target of criminal persecution. Moral communities regard these outsiders as persons with restricted sovereignty and treat them—depending on the institutional arena—with contempt and disgust, with compassion and paternalistic care, or with educational efforts and medical therapy. They are kept at a distance, removed from regular interaction and encapsulated in special institutions.

Even more exempted from the charge of guilt, however, are those individuals who are considered as victims. Victims are neither guilty nor despised—they are innocent individuals who could have enjoyed a normal human life within the moral community, but have been treated as non-humans. They clearly represent the fringe of moral communities, but on the opposite end to the position of the perpetrators. This reference to victims becomes increasingly salient when societies emphasize the distinction between morality within the community and means outside of the community, between solidarity on the one hand and power on the other hand, between the range of personal responsibility and the determination of action by biological or social conditions. If these realms are not clearly separated by institutional patterns—and they rarely are—the boundaries between perpetrators, deviant outsiders and victims tend to be blurred; hence perpetrators can be considered as deviant outsiders, and deviant outsiders can be treated as victims. In the process of scapegoating, all three positions are merged. Viewed from the center, the fringe of moral communities appears as an area of twilight and ambivalence where the opposites are sometimes in close vicinity.

If the moral community succeeds in establishing a clear definition of victimhood, it relates the imperfection of society to differences in power on the one hand and to differences in moral justification on the other; victims are recognized as possible subjects and invested with moral dignity, but they lack the power to act as responsible members of the community or simply to survive; perpetrators, in contrast, have the power to act as responsible members of the community,

but fail to act in accordance with the moral principles and thus pollute the sacred core of the community. Hence, their membership status is a morally degraded one and the society can violently restrict their sovereignty as subjects. In between victims and perpetrators is the position of the despised outsiders who, due to their origin, their personal predisposition and their social condition, cannot live up to the expectation of normal and regular citizens and sometimes do not want to do so. But because of their unclear position between voluntarily accepting the outside and being doomed to stay outside by external conditions, they do not fit well into a moral construction of society. Therefore, the moral community constitutes its basic tension and its fringe of restricted membership mainly by pointing to victims and perpetrators—and considers the despised outsiders frequently either as victims or as perpetrators.

Full membership is ascribed to those who not only satisfy the moral expectations but also dispose of the necessary means and power to act accordingly. Excluded are those who are seen as devoid of any moral standards shared with the community. If these excluded ones are considered as powerful agents, they are demonized; if they are seen as nonpowerful and lacking agency, they appear as objects of technical manipulation. In distinction to this, victims and perpetrators are located at the margin of moral communities, in between full membership and the outside—the victims because they are unable to act as full members of the community or restricted in their means to do so, the perpetrators because they violated the moral principles of the community.

Victims are impersonal subjects, they have no face, no voice and no place. Even if they are still alive, they are numbed and muted, displaced and uprooted. They embody the dark fringe of human societies, where doubts about the seemingly clear boundaries arise, where subjects are suddenly turned into objects and objects are endowed with a voice—a realm of haunting ghosts, monsters and nightmares in between common subjectivity and plain objectivity, a realm ruled by demons and deprived of humanity. In the construction of victimhood, a culture encapsulates the latent suspicion that boundaries between inside and outside could also be constructed otherwise, that the exclusion of an outside can never be perfectly justified, that there is a latent subjectivity even in the excluded outside of objects, that the recognition of subjects as alike and the definition of objects as different rests on fragile foundations, that culture is based on the latency and even on the repression of claims of subjectivity.

But when the moral community unfolds the tension between moral and factual behavior and recognizes the damaged subjectivity of victims, it also emphasizes its own sovereign subjectivity. The construction of subjectivity and the construction of objectivity are mutually dependent classificatory operations, separated by a fragile boundary and always susceptible to ambivalence and sudden changes of places.

Finally, there is a deeply rooted elective affinity between the impersonal order of modern society and the construction of victims. If the basic principles that pattern law and public discourse, exchange of commodities and science

disregard personal background and privilege in favor of an objective, standardized and accountable treatment of an issue, then the public embodiment of power and charisma in the figure of the hero risks being considered immoral, scandalous, or unjust. Heightened agency and sovereign trespassing of rules is under strong suspicion of being evil if it cannot be encapsulated in special arenas like art. Therefore, what was regarded as a hero before is converted into a perpetrator.

In contrast, the figure of the victim who has no voice, no face, no place anymore is much more compatible with the impersonal and anonymous order of modern society. The victim is a case of a general category, an object devoid of a personal story, and as such the victim can be treated by the objectifying and impersonal institutions of modern society (Bauman 1989). In a compensatory move, however, modern society keeps a haunting awareness of the loss of personal subjectivity that is engendered by its impersonal institutions—therefore, perceiving others as victims is not only an attempt to remember their forgotten sovereign subjectivity but hints also at one's own personal subjectivity that is disregarded and excluded by impersonal modern institutions (Bauman 1989).

REMEMBERING VICTIMS

The tension between the center of collective identity and the voiceless and faceless victims at the fringe of society does not have to be based on spatial distance. It does not need camps. It can also be, and most frequently is, based on the passing of time.

Most human beings do not consider themselves to be victims in the moment when they are victimized. Slaves and servants in ancient societies saw their condition as a misfortune if they had been living free before, or as a fate that was very hard to change but had to be accepted, like age, gender and body height. Of course, if there were chances to escape serfdom and slavery without taking deadly risks, they chose liberty—they fled, rioted or killed their masters. But this reversal of their fate was not encouraged by a third party or justified by appealing to an impartial justice, a universal morality or public definition of the evil. Instead, they just took advantage of an unexpected chance to improve their situation, and they rarely would have hesitated to turn their former masters into slaves if possible.

In a similar way, the genocidal practices of the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses, the Assyrian king Assurnibal II, or the Mongolian rulers Ghengis Khan and Timur who occasionally killed the entire population of a city, including children, even if it surrendered unconditionally, were hardly seen as victimization. It was immense terror and horror, but no common moral ties connected the conqueror and the defeated people, no third party monitored the horror and condemned it as evil. Like carnage in the relation between predator and prey, the killing of others was beyond moral grounds. It was not an issue of justice and innocence, but of subject and object. The others were not human beings endowed with rights to be respected, they were treated as objects that can be damaged but cannot suffer.

Only later on, when those who have been treated as objects of carnage, repression and rape are recognized as subjects again, were the dead of the raids and conquests retrospectively defined as innocent victims. Remembering the victims bridges the temporal as well as the social distance; it crosses the twilight zone between inside and outside and turns what was previously treated merely as an object into a subject again. Remembering includes the dead in the moral community of humanity.¹¹ In remembering the victims of the past, we construct their postmortal life—hoping for a future when no subject will ever be treated as an object. The end of victimization would provide a warrant for the divine subjectivity of all humans and thus replace the hope for the resurrection of the dead—a modern version of apotheosis.

The time lag between the moment when human beings are killed, mutilated, tortured or enslaved by others, and the moment when these actions are considered as avoidable and evil by a third party establishes the distance and detachment that are inevitable for the adoption of an impartial, disengaged and public perspective. Furthermore, it supports the sharp axiological break between past and present that is at the core of the paradigm of progress: the past is evil and should not be repeated.¹²

If there is some cultural continuity between the occurrence of evil and its recognition, the time lag also can be considered as the time of latency that is constitutive for a cultural trauma (Felman and Laub 1991). Like in the case of an individual trauma, most victims are not aware of the traumatizing event in the moment when it occurs. And just as the individual mind is incapable of perceiving the threat to its life immediately or of grasping its full importance, cultures tend to normalize the present situation of its carriers and to ignore the possible breakdown of meaning and self-respect in moments of crisis. Only later on, after the time of latency, can the culture of a community perceive the victimization in the past, talk it out and work it through. This is exactly what happened in some great historical paradigm cases of victimization—the slavery of African Americans, the colonization of African and Oriental societies, the early modern genocide of Native Americans, the Great Irish Famine and the Holocaust of the European Jews. With a few exceptions that rise to fame and public recognition, the victims have no voice to be heard. The victims are dead. Unlike the relics of dead heroes who are venerated by the community of remembrance, the bones and remains of the dead victims are turned to ashes, dispersed in unknown soils, left to decay in the desert, or blown in the wind like the smoke of the gas chambers. In most cases, the perpetrators try to destroy the remains of the victims and the traces of their own deeds when leaving the place. No future generation should be reminded of the victims. They should remain dehumanized objects, without a face, a voice, a place.

Like the traumatized individual, who sometimes needs therapeutic assistance and special modes of recalling the trauma, social communities need special institutions for remembering the victims, rituals to mourn their suffering and to represent the forgotten subjectivity of the dead (Felman and Laub 1991). They

try to find the place where the victims have suffered, they search for their remains and rebury them solemnly, they construct memorials and, above all, collect and narrate their stories—the victims are remembered as subjects with a place, a face and a voice within the community (Neal 1998, pp. 201–215). Before we turn to different institutional arenas of representation, let us consider—on a general level—the relationship between the victims and the agents who remember and represent them.

The victims of the past might be mourned by others who feel compassion for their past sufferings, but who cannot claim a particular common collective identity with the victims beyond the general bond of humankind. Britons can thus remember the victims of the Khmer Rouge terror or of the Rwanda genocide, Americans can remember the victims of Stalinism in Russia, Spaniards can remember the victims of the Shoah, etc.

The temporal and social distance between the mourning community and the dead victims is unquestionable and strong, but it is bridged by the abstract and impersonal empathy of humanism. Here, the encompassing construction of a universal community of humankind embraces the remembering agent and the victims and includes both in the categorical construction of moral responsibility. This universal community is mainly constructed on the level of discourse itself—by citing the examples of victimization, repeating the story of the victims, warning of repetitions, etc. Only in rare cases will this act of universal inclusion lead to monuments representing the victims in images and sculptures, architecture and memorial sites. There is no special link between the mourning community and the remembered victims. The remembering does not mark a boundary within humanity and it does not justify particular claims presented by the mourning group to outsiders.

In a second case, the mourning community does indeed claim a particular collective identity with the victims of the past—as their offspring, as their compatriots, as their coethnics, or as their brothers and sisters in a common religious faith. In the most obvious case, the trauma of victimization is transferred to the next generation who—although not directly concerned—sometimes suffers from a secondary trauma resulting from the loss of parents or from their parents' psychic disorders (Kogan 1998).¹³ But even if there are no close kinship ties anymore, the descendants might remember the suffering of their ancestors, renarrate their story and adopt the trauma of genocide and slavery, of occupation and repression as a part of their collective identity in distinction to other human beings. This thrust to identify with the victims of the past can be so strong that some individuals even claim to have suffered the fate of the victims in a forgotten and repressed period of their own life—although there is little evidence for this beyond a recovered memory that may well be an artifact of therapeutic discourse. Occasionally this claim may be put forward for strategic reasons—to demand compensation and privileges. But in many cases the identification with the victims' fate is a genuine one—the person is truly convinced that he or she is a victim who has repressed his or her memories. Here, the figure of the victim seems to replace the

figure of the hero as the paradigm of heightened subjectivity. In the most private dreams, the dark outlands of victimization take, in a perverted turn, the position of sovereign subjectivity that once was associated with the victorious hero.

In public life, this core position of the victim in collective identity leads frequently to monuments, museums and memorial sites that keep the memory of the dead victims alive, even if their faces are forgotten and their relics are dispersed. In particular, when the last survivors of the horror and their personal memories fade away, there must be material embodiments and special places that reinvest the dead victims with a face and a voice and thus keep the collective memory alive.¹⁴ Sometimes the descendants of the victims suffer from a transgenerational trauma, a rupture in a genealogical sequence, an "archaic heritage" (Freud 1982, p. 546) that marks and masks their collective history (Bronfen et al. 1999, pp. 64ff). Sometimes the descendants of the victims have even forgotten the fate of their ancestors and rediscover it because they are taught so by outsiders. The black child in an American school has no primordial knowledge about the slavery of his or her ancestors, the Jewish adolescent in New York has no personal memories of the Shoah, the native Australian does not remember the genocide committed on the Aborigines, the Armenian girl in Paris was born decades after some of her relatives were killed by Turkish soldiers in the death marches, etc. They all have to be taught about the historical trauma that is at the core of their group's identity; they have to adopt the heritage of the victims and to claim public recognition for this collective identity.

This taking over the archaic heritage of the victims can result in an obsessive imagination of the ancestors' trauma that is converted into a feeling of primordial purity and even moral superiority on the part of the descendants.

If their parents or other members of their primordial group tell children a story about their roots, nobody will question the parents' right to do so. If, however, the teaching of a victim's identity is not carried by the group itself, but performed by total outsiders, if the ancestors' fate becomes a phantom for the descendants that is not supported by family experiences, questions of imposition and seduction, of legitimate representation and paternalism may be raised.

Occasionally, the dead victims' suffering can be turned into a claim for reparation for the living generation, even if they did not suffer from the original trauma as individuals. This claim presupposes an undeniable bond of collective identity between the dead victims and their living heirs that has to be recognized by the general public, that is, by the impartial third party. Recognition of this claim by the general public is fostered if the heirs of the victims can convincingly argue that their present life chances are severely hampered because of their ancestors' fate and if the heirs of the perpetrators are still enjoying benefits that can be traced back to their ancestors' deeds. If, for example, the descendants of the black slaves in America would be clearly better off than the descendants of the white slave-owners, their claims for reparation would be largely pointless—although the bond of collective identity linking the present to the past might be strong in both groups. This bond of collective identity can be ritually reconstructed and transferred from

generation to generation—as a collective memory of a traumatic history. Here, too, the dead victims have to be remembered by representatives or advocates, whose mandate is unquestionable. We will return to the question of representation at the end of this chapter.

The difference between the past victims and those who remember them is, however, not the only way to construct a temporal distance between the center of a community and the fringe of repressed subjectivity. We cannot only mourn the victims of the past, but also warn of the victims of the future.¹⁵ Present action has undeniable risks and can lead to future catastrophes, to devastating pollution and illnesses, to famines and violence, war and carnage. Our unborn descendants can—in principle—become possible victims of our own actions. They, too, have no voice or face, and they, too, need representation. And, of course, they are represented in the public discourse of modern society. Referring to the fate of our children is even becoming a strategic resource in the debate of civil society. But there is a fundamental difference between mourning the victims of the past and warning of the possible victims of the future: The death of past victims is certain, the suffering of the future is hypothetical. And certainty matters in the twilight zone between subjects and objects.

BEFORE GUILT AND INNOCENCE: VICTIMS AS SACRED OBJECTS

The modes of constructing the realm in between subjects and objects vary. I will outline different paradigms of coping with the twilight zone of restricted membership at the fringe of human societies.

Let us consider, at first, the original meaning of the term "victim." It is usually traced back to the Sanskrit *vinaḥki* meaning "to set apart." Here, the special position of the victim between the inside and the outside of the community is already hinted at. In the Roman and in other ancient empires the *victima* were the human beings and animals who were destined to be sacrificed to the deity (Henninger 1987). In the sacrifice, the *victima* were not considered as subjects endowed with full membership rights and moral claims. They were precious objects offered to the deity in order to construct and confirm a strong bond between the community and the gods.¹⁶ But they were also animals or humans whose bloodshed and death were essential for the sacrificial act. It is the very abstention from mundane use that sets the *victima* apart from mere objects. Because the *victima* ensured the bond to the sacred, they were considered as partaking in the sacred core of the community (Loisy 1920, p. 16; Spaemann 1995, p. 14). Even in its original meaning, the *victima* were double-faced creatures in between subjects and objects—ambivalence has been at the core of the construction of victims from the very beginning. The community itself is the victimizing agency; it consecrates the *victima*, and by doing so, it creates its own superior subjectivity as the one who decides about life and death—not for reasons of necessity and survival, but for partaking in the sacred.

We have mentioned Girard's (1986) deconstruction of ancient myths of sacrifice before. In the attempt to structure their desires and drives, human beings tend to imitate each other and to construct a basic homogeneity of the community. Yet the mimetic construction of similarity and homogeneity within the community engenders also the exclusion of others as fundamentally different. Excluding others does not inevitably require submitting them into violence. Archaic societies are—according to Girard—threatened by a universal tendency toward violence and violent revenge. Kinship is the only barrier against violence and bloody retaliation in simple societies. The threat of violence inside the community is overcome by directing it toward a scapegoat, an innocent victim. The scapegoating of innocent victims combines the inevitable exclusion of outsiders with the transfiguration of lingering violence between different clans inside the community.

This victim is usually found at the periphery of the society or among persons who do not fit easily into the classificatory grid of the society—in strangers who pass by, in vagabonds, in homosexuals, in unmarried older women, in handicapped or "insane" persons, etc. Because the presence of these persons challenges society's basic boundaries, removing them reinforces the basic mode of social integration. Killing them does not engender bloody revenge and retaliation. Ancient myth had no difficulties in ignoring or disguising the innocence of the victim. The victim is presented as evil, as pollution, as *scandalon*.

Sometimes the *victima* were also *victi*, defeated enemies who were shown in the triumph, the parade of the victorious war hero after his return from war and conquest. The honor of the triumph was based on the degradation of enemies who were once free, and even leaders of their people, but were now turned into slaves and doomed to be sacrificed to the Gods. Even in the more advanced discourse of the ancient empires, this conversion of status was not seen as morally questionable. The bond of collective identity did not transcend the boundaries of political units or common cultures. Enslaving the *barbaroi* was not a moral issue for philosophers like Aristotle.

It was not until the Stoic philosophy of late antiquity focused on the suffering in the world that knowing about the high rank of the defeated *victus* conveyed a tragic feeling about the volatility of fame and fate (Geyer 1983).

Yet, because the *victima* were seen as sacralized beings at the periphery of society, in between subjects and objects, they were not considered as guilty or innocent. Although unquestionably related to the distinction between the sacred and the evil, the evil was not yet tied to human agency. If the innocence of the *victima* was not yet recognized in the original sacrifice, there could also be no search for perpetrators who had caused the harm. Furthermore, lacking a focus on guilt and innocence, the original sacrifice did not separate the position of the perpetrator from the position of the general public. It was all about the self-constitution of community by constructing boundaries.

The Judeo-Christian heritage, in contrast, revealed the innocence of the victim, and the violence of the sacrifice is reversed by the intervention of God. Abel, as well as Jacob; Isaac, as well as Job; and, of course, Christ, are innocent and

their suffering shows the way to redemption by God; both Judaism and Christianity even raised a ban on the sacrifice of human victims or turned it into a paradox by the self-sacrifice of Christ who turned his death into the ultimate triumph (Ebertz 1987; Girard 1987; Amato 1990, pp. 44–48). A new symbolism for the ambivalence of triumph and trauma, of life and death, of heroes and victims, was set.

PERSONAL COMPASSION: THE VICTIM AS THE INFERIOR SUBJECT

The compassion for the beggar or the obligation to support the poor and defenseless is radically different from this situation of the human victima. The Christian *agape* or *misericordia*, the Buddhist *dana* or the Moslem obligation to give something to the poor assume a communal bond between full members and those who by coincidence, fate and the will of God are in a miserable situation. This bond transcends the boundaries of kinship and personal relationship and includes, in principle, all other members of the community of faithful.

It is, however, enacted and performed only in a local context. In contrast to the public construction of victims, charity is a local act. It occurs originally only in the local confrontation of rich and poor, of powerful and defenseless. Here, it reduces the tension when local proximity overcomes social distance, when those commonly located at a far distance suddenly step forward from their anonymity and appear as persons with a face and a voice. Compassion copes with the proximity of the distant; it bridges the gap for a moment just to open it up again in the next. Beggars can make use of this inconsistency of local proximity and social distance when, in public places, they approach closely the well-off who then have to give alms in order to get rid of this embarrassing proximity that seems, for a moment, to blur the inequality between social ranks.¹⁷ Actually, however, the obligation to give does not at all blur the distinction between those who do the charitable act and those who receive it. It is always limited to an inexpensive transfer, and it never aims at overcoming the differences in status and lifting the poor up to the level of the rich. Instead, it reinforces the internal boundary between social ranks and reconstructs social distance even in a literal sense. The donors reconstruct and stress their sovereign subjectivity because they decide voluntarily to do the charitable act.¹⁸ After receiving alms, the beggar has to withdraw and stay at a distance. The obligation to support the needy is complemented by their obligation to respect the distance and to take their place at the periphery of the good society, excluded from power and wealth. Rituals of charity to the victims—although they may be motivated by compassion—actually reaffirm the structural backbone of inequality (Derrida 1992).

At the same time, however, the poor can claim moral dignity if they accept their fate and position in this world—they can even aspire to reverse their fate after death and, because of their sufferings, to ascend to heaven, whereas the rich and powerful face the risk of being punished for their sins, their ambition and

their lack of humility. Here again, the relationship between the sovereign subject and the needy and miserable is a highly ambivalent one. Both can change places—if not in this life, then in the eternal life to come. Because of the risk of reversing the situation in the transcendental world, the religious *virtuosi* tend to accept voluntarily the misery and the poverty in this world—the obligation to renounce personal property and to live in personal poverty marks most monastic orders not only in the Christian tradition.

Although the position of the poor and needy in the rituals of charity combines lack of power and moral dignity, it does not constitute victimhood in its complete sense. Charity does not care about possible agencies who are held responsible for the miserable position of the victim. Although the innocence of the poor is acknowledged in the act of charity, here, too, the distinction between perpetrators and victims is still disregarded and still has to be disregarded. Because the misery of the poor is seen as a part of a great chain of beings, of a grand order of the world that is based on the contrast between high and low and founded in the will of God, any questioning of fate—as rose in the issue of theodicy (Weber 1925, p. 314)—has to be turned down before it can affect the divine source of order itself. Personal compassion with the inferior subject is thus the perfect response of stratified societies to the challenge of boundaries—the sacredness of the center as embodied in the nobility or its substitutes is never questioned, but the fragility and uncertainties of boundary construction is taken into account. The subjectivity of those at the margin of society is recognized, but it can never challenge the embodiment of the center itself. Both the nobleman and the beggar constitute themselves in their mutual act of recognition—to rephrase Hegel's famous distinction.

In modern societies that have replaced the divine chain of beings by the equality of citizens, the voice and face of misery triggers off strong pressures on public charity. The illusion of a fairly equal condition of all citizens breaks down if the suffering of humans comes to the fore of public attention. Public, as well as private compassion copes with this breakdown by considering it as an exceptional and individual case that can be repaired by the personal sympathetic encounter with the suffering individual. Therefore, every construction of public compassion requires the misery to be presented as an individual story, requires the misery to have a face and a voice. The anonymous suffering of the many has to be transformed and condensed into a face and fate, which, in contrast to mere numbers, can evoke empathic identification. Thus the public advocates of victims have to stage an icon of misery, even to invent a story of individual suffering, if they want to raise compassion and charity—the emotional shortcut in the discourse about victimhood.

IMPARTIAL JUSTICE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF PERPETRATORS

If, in distinction to charity, the attention turns to the human agents who have caused the misery, we can, in principle, distinguish between perpetrators and

victims. The actor who has intentionally and knowingly caused harm to members of the community is held responsible for this. If these actors have a face and a name, if they can be depicted and identified, then they can be presented as perpetrators, accused of wrongdoing, convicted and perhaps forced to restore the original situation, to repair the damage, to compensate for the harm, misery and evil inflicted on the victims.¹⁹

Originally, the assessment of damage and its reparation did not require and involve a third party. If, in simple stateless societies, a member of one family is killed or harmed by a member of another family, this can engender a bloody chain of revenge and retaliation and lead even to the breakdown of society; but it can also lead to negotiations between the two groups in order to find ways to repair the damage by paying material compensations (Gluckman 1972). Here, on the level of purely reciprocal relationships between groups, the question of guilt and punishment is not yet raised. It is just a matter of harm, damage and retaliation, of us and them, of friends and foes.²⁰

The question of guilt and the concept of the criminal perpetrator do not come to the fore until the third impartial party is engaged and involved to mediate between groups in conflict. This third party assesses the damage and tries to find a solution on the basis of personal authority or by reference to a set of common norms to be respected by the conflicting groups. The agent who has caused harm is now seen not only as an inimical outsider but also as a member of an encompassing group defined by common norms (Braithwaite 1989). The conflict between groups and the rituals of revenge are replaced by the violation of the law and the ritual of constructing justice—the enemy is turned into a perpetrator. In this fundamental change from intergroup hostility to the punishment of crimes, the institutionalization of the third party is absolutely crucial. In the institutional arena of jurisdiction, the three parties—the victim, the perpetrator and the enforcement of justice—are clearly separated. All of them are present, but their communication is highly ritualized in an almost liturgical manner—thus ensuring the indispensable distance between the perspective of the impartial public and the victim or the perpetrator. Any suspicion of secret ties between the representation of the public and one of the opponents in court would question and disrupt the entire procedure. If the moral order is reconstructed mainly by rituals of jurisdiction, the third party has to disregard personal interests and involvement. Once established, the rule of the law turns the sacred center of society into an impersonal sphere.

This impersonality and objectivity of modern law does not go well with personal embodiments of the sacred: the rule of the law expels heroes from the sacred center of society. Heroes are extraordinary; they do not respect the common rules; they are sovereign and stand above the law.

Yet expelling the heroes from the center of society does not dispense with the question of agency as the moving force of society. Looking for agency, the perspective turns, therefore, from the center to the periphery, from the sacred to the demonic, from heroes to villains. The ritual of jurisdiction allows, not only the reconstruction of the moral order, but also the combination of an impersonal

conception of the sacred center with a personal conception of the periphery. It purges the center from Gods and heroes, but still believes in devils and demons at the periphery. The rule of the law does not provide positive sanctions; it does not reward those who respect the rules. Instead, it relies on negative sanctions—it expels the perpetrators to enclosures of violence within the boundaries of the community. The prison becomes the symbol of suspended citizenship and legitimate violence (Foucault 1981). This violence indicates not only the sovereignty of the law but also the marginal situation of the imprisoned. In most cases, the perpetrator is not immediately discovered or identified; he is amidst us, but we do not know his face and his whereabouts—he does not raise his voice and admit publicly to his deeds. In the search for the embodiment of evil, the moral community has to discover the perpetrator. Thus the perpetrator becomes a public construction of the moral community. Once discovered and convicted, the perpetrator has a face, but he has no voice and no place in the community anymore.

He or she is expelled from the community, moved beyond the margin of full citizenship—at least for a certain time. The expulsion of perpetrators will, however, restore the social order only if the number of perpetrators is relatively small. Sentencing the majority of the population to prison risks turning the perpetrators into defeated victims of an unjust order.

But even if this is not the case, the ritual of jurisdiction presupposes also the awareness that the fringe of the community is uncertain and that boundaries are unclear. Thrusting for an embodiment of the evil, a moral community can accuse innocent persons and the actual culprit can escape punishment. The ritual of jurisdiction centers the detached perspective of the impartial observer, but the reference to a common set of impersonal norms does, of course, not warrant unanimity with respect to their interpretation. The question of guilt and innocence is subject to debates and arguments because the accused party has, in principle at least, a voice in the judiciary discourse—accusations can be questioned and turned down, the claim of guilt and responsibility can be countered by the assertion and proof of innocence, etc. (Scott and Lyman 1990; Luhmann 1993). Such debates become salient if the alleged perpetrator is, indeed, present and his or her punishment is at stake. If the perpetrators are dead or far away, and thus not participating in the discourse about victimization, the public usually arrives quickly at a consensus about guilt and responsibility. Today, there will be hardly a serious voice in defense of the witch hunters of the fifteenth century, the slave traders of the eighteenth century or the Holocaust perpetrators of the twentieth century. The moral verdict is unanimous and clear, but their punishment is out of reach.

In spite of this apparently obvious condemnation, the position of the perpetrator too is a highly ambivalent one. The boundary between just and unjust, good and evil, good citizens and perpetrators, is fragile and shifting. Similar to the rich and the poor in the charitable act, the perpetrator and the good citizen can change places—this time, however, not mediated by the separation between the mundane life and the transcendental world. Instead, those who claim to be good citizens in their public life can imagine themselves to be violent and ruthless

criminals, rapists and bad boys in their most private moments, that is, in their dreams (H. Becker 1973). The boundary that separates both realms and prevents the excluded side of the ambivalence from being exposed is the divide between public and private life, between consciousness and unconsciousness, dream and everyday life. Like the police inspector tries to discover the hidden and unknown criminal, the therapist and the poet try to cross the thin line between the moral citizen and the hidden amoral individual in all of us. Even the figure of the perpetrator cannot escape the ambivalence that is at the core of any boundary construction.

THE DISCOURSE OF CIVIL SOCIETY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF VICTIMHOOD

In spite of debates about proofs and refutations, accusations and defenses, confessions and denials, the discourse of justice is based on the assumption that individual human agents can be identified and held responsible for the suffering of others. Although recognizing the status of victims, the ritual of judiciary trials focuses clearly on the person of the perpetrator and tries to repair the imperfect society by punishing the guilty perpetrator—even if the victims are dead and the harm afflicted to them cannot be repaired anymore.

Sometimes, however, moral imperfection and evil cannot be traced back to a clearly identifiable perpetrator who can be held responsible for it (Shklar 1990). There is no doubt that human suffering, misery and evil exist even in complex and so-called advanced societies, but it is increasingly difficult to attribute responsibilities to a clearly demarcated individual or group. Instead, the misery is attributed to complex concatenations or side effects of human agency, involving a multitude of actors, acting under uncertainty and risk, shifting possible side effects to the periphery of their attention, some of them known, most of them unknown, none of them entirely innocent, but most of them responsible only to a limited degree. As our knowledge about the complex ramifications of action effects increases, as our awareness about contextual embeddedness of action is heightened, the verdict about guilt or innocence, crucial to the discourse of justice, amounts sometimes to an arbitrary decision and disregard of knowledge, to an abstraction from the complexity of entanglement, to a reduction of a field of grayish nuances to a clear cut line between black and white. Even if the misery of the victim can be clearly related to a perpetrator, these perpetrators can sometimes not be held accountable for their deeds because they may be unable to compensate for the immense harm they caused or because they may be dead or simply out of reach. Sometimes in the aftermath of a bloody civil war, the punishment of the perpetrators would risk severing the fragile bonds between the two parties and refueling the hatred and hostility between them. If the perpetrators include large parts of the population and cannot be limited to a small group—as in the case of the genocides of Rwanda or Cambodia—jurisdiction fails to restore the moral order of society. Here, muteness and the taboo of talking about personal involvement in atrocities ensure a fragile and endangered peace.²¹

This situation of complex entanglement and difficult accountability fosters a shifting of attention from the responsibility of perpetrators to the innocence of the victims. Even if the question of guilt is difficult to answer, we can arrive at a consensus about the innocence of the victims because no participant in the debate is targeted as the one who has to face the risk of punishment. If the victims are considered innocent, they are seen as devoid of control about their own fate, entangled in a web of outside powers and influences.

Furthermore, the shift from perpetrators to victims is supported by the impersonal order of modern societies. Heroes, as well as perpetrators, have faces and voices; they are personal embodiments of good and evil, the sacred and the demonic, triumph and trauma. The impersonal order of markets and bureaucracies, sciences and technologies, cannot dispense with agency, but these agencies are conceived as objects that can be compared, evaluated and measured. In a strange way, the systems of modern society show an elective affinity to the faceless deindividualized victim who is treated as an object, but could claim to be a subject again.

The institutional arena of this construction of victimhood is the public discourse of civil society. Here, the victims are remembered and represented by the citizens who by their very self-understanding have to take responsibility for those who have no voice in politics—for their children and servants, for passing visitors and guests, as well as for the victims of the past. The core of civil society is based on a discourse of representation and responsibility—every citizen participating in it has to take the perspective of others, assume their subjectivity and construct tentatively a general will based on a common moral order. Even in the pursuit of particular interests, participants in the public discourse have to couch these interests in terms of commonly acceptable arguments. This drift toward universalism fosters also the representation of excluded others. Because every civil society actually has to exclude some outsiders from having a voice, it also cannot dispense with representing their reasonable interests and assuming subjectivity beyond the narrow confines of citizenship rights and presence. It can merge the unavoidable particularity and restrictions of citizenship with the idea of a universal justification only if excluded subjectivity is represented by citizens. Therefore, recognizing the innocence of victims in the discourse of civil society has a similar function for the reconstruction of moral order as has the assertion of responsibility and guilt in the judiciary discourse.

If, instead of the guilt of the perpetrators, the focus is on the innocence of the victims, civil society strengthens its consensus and integration, not only because it is the public that decides about the imperfection of social reality and suggests its repair. It is also assumed that, not individual perpetrators, but the civil society and the state itself have to compensate for the sufferings of the victims. Suffering requires soothing, compensation and healing, and suffering that is caused by human agency asks for social repairs. If individual persons cannot be held responsible, because they are dead or unknown or because, like in most cases, the harm and suffering of the victims outweighs by far the perpetrators' means to

compensate for it, then the community has to take over the task of healing (Kaufmann 1992). Thus, the discourse about victims changes its core focus: It is no longer about individuals and their responsibilities, crime and punishment, but, instead, it is about public responsibility and public solidarity, about risks of life and collective support. The public not only defines the imperfection of the social order but takes responsibility also for its repair; it not only assesses the harm inflicted to the victims but also carries the burden of its healing; it not only commands solidarity among the citizens but also practices this solidarity itself.

It would be too simple to explain this shift toward public responsibility by the distribution of costs among a multitude of citizens who, as individual persons, can disregard the resulting setback because it is so small. Instead, the turn toward public responsibility for the victims may rather result from a feeling of collective guilt on the part of those who did not intervene to prevent the suffering or ignored it when it occurred. In a global public sphere, everybody can be seen as a bystander. The turn toward public responsibility may, however, also reflect a latent identification with victims, as well as with perpetrators—it is only by chance that some escaped the fate of victims, it is only by coincidence and not by moral merit that most did not end up in a situation where they might have become perpetrators.

Thus the public construction of victims not only transcends the single actor model (as it underlies rational choice explanations), which holds individuals accountable and responsible for their own actions, and assumes a second actor who, because of his power, harms the situation of the victim. In addition to the power relationship between perpetrator and victim that underlies the judiciary discourse, the public construction of victimhood is based on a strong collective identity of humankind united by moral principles, the power to define its violations and the obligation to repair it by solidarity. The rise of this collective identity of humankind engenders this turn from retaliatory justice to public responses to suffering. Decoupling the solidarity with the victims from the individual responsibility for their sufferings becomes a crucial feature of this strong conception of the public sphere and marks its difference to the judiciary discourse.

CLAIMS AND RECOGNITIONS IN A STRONG PUBLIC SPHERE

A strong public sphere that not only carries and embodies moral principles but also replaces the punishment of perpetrators with the solidarity with the victims cannot, however, entirely prevent debates and conflicts. It is the very generosity and solidarity of the strong public sphere that can invite exploitation and attract misuse. In the strong public sphere, the surviving victim is entitled to receive financial assistance, legal privileges and social empathy. Claims to be the victims of unforeseeable risks or traumatizing events are, therefore, put forward in the name of many groups. To present the claim as one of a group adds superindividual weight to it and removes any suspicion of individual responsibility. Ac-

cording to the model of victimhood outlined above, however, the victims themselves have no voices and no faces. They are dead, muted in their misery, numbed in their trauma. Certainly, after some time, the voices of the very few survivors who are able to talk about their trauma move a wide audience, their testimonies and memories are globally read and broadcasted. Survivors like Primo Levi or Elie Wiesel are regarded as embodiments of authenticity, as paradigms of the restitution of damaged subjectivity. The moral authority and the fame of the surviving victim can even inspire dubious testimonies like the memories of Bruno Doesseker who pretended to have escaped the camp of Majdanek as a child, but who, in fact was neither Jewish, nor a surviving victim. His autobiography was celebrated as one of the most touching and authentic reports of Holocaust survivors, translated into thirteen languages (Wilkomirski 1995; Mächler 2000). Here, the public audience's readiness to believe and its longing for authenticity had constructed the victim. The authority of the surviving victim is so overwhelming that under normal circumstances nobody dares to challenge it. Even if the memories of Wilkomirski, alias Doesseker, are not an intended fake, but an artifact of therapeutically induced imagination, they provide a vivid illustration of the secular shift from juvenile dreams imagining the self as a hero, via dreams that envision the subject as a bad boy, as a transgressor of norms, to imagining the victim as the icon of damaged subjectivity. Equally important are the changes in public resonance. Like the figures of the hero and the perpetrator, the figure of the victim, too, is not a natural result of an individual's actions but is constructed by the public audience, i.e., the citizens who take generalized responses and superior status. Modern Europe, it was noble descent that conveyed privileges and superior status. Many presented faked documents in order to prove their pretended nobility. The issues and claims raised required legal regulation; special princely courts investigated them and licensed titles and entitlements. Later, the figure of the marriage impostor and swindler who pretended to be wealthy and of respected origin fascinated and frightened bourgeois society. Today, the focus of superior identity has shifted from the center to the periphery—it is the claim of being a victim that has to be publicly debated and approved in order to prevent fraud and abuse.

The public representation and recognition of the victims is not only carried by the general moral responsibility of every citizen. It can also be put forward by individuals who claim a special mandate as their advocates, their representatives, or their heirs. This special claim of representation opens up a new field of selection and exclusion. Because some victims are impressively represented by professionals, others inevitably remain in the shadow. There has always been, there is and there always will be, suffering without representation and recognition, misery that fails to receive public attention; there will always be the silence of unnoticed "victims" (Lyotard 1988).

Those victims who are represented in the public discourse are not invariably and unanimously granted public support.²² Various advocates can advance claims and compete for representing the group that has suffered most and deserves support first. Does the history of black slavery justify stronger claims than the extermination

wars against Native Americans, does the suffering of the Jewish community in the Shoah outweigh the victimization of Poland and Russia by Nazi Germany, does the colonial repression of African people justify more compensation than the suffering of women through male chauvinism? Of course suffering is as incompensable as identity is, but scarce resources are at stake. On the level of welfare budgets, the incomparable has to be compared and assessed; compensations have to be paid if claims have been accepted in court and in the public sphere. Thus the strong public sphere can be turned into an arena for public fights for recognition. Like other presentations of collective identity, the claim to be a victim also has to be recognized by others—it is a public construction, a collective classification that has to be consented to and recognized by outsiders as well as insiders. Identity can never dispense with this precarious balance between inside and outside, between self-presentation and social recognition (Trilling 1972). This social recognition can, of course, be granted or refused.

Some claims are recognized, others are not. Most representatives of the victims can present their stories as cases of innocent suffering, risk and misfortune; they can appeal to solidarity and refer to common moral principles. But it is not the obvious difference in moral gravity or the sheer amount of suffering that makes some claims successful and causes others to be dropped. Defining innocence and guilt, demarcating the boundaries of the social order and declaring its imperfection, labeling actions as deviant and situations as miserable are not self-evident deductive operations; they result instead from debates and conflicts, routines and traditions, professional interests and political power. Indeed, there are no natural victims. It is not only the situation of the victims that is produced by human action, but also their recognition as being miserable and in need of solidarity.

Obviously, the conditions for this recognition vary. At first there are the long-term changes of the moral order, of sensitivities and empathy. What we today unanimously regard as brutal violence against children and women was, a century ago, seen as appropriate education and an adequate display of manly authority. But, although public fights for recognition frequently refer to traumas of the past, it is not history itself that decides success or failure. Certainly, the passing of time does matter—nobody would today consider the claim of the descendants of South American victims of the Spanish colonial rule, or support Indonesian claims with respect to Dutch colonialism. But why should American slavery substantiate claims for restitution, whereas the Arabic slave trade in the eighteenth century hardly engenders similar claims?²³ Some historical traumas are forgotten, others are very much alive, appealed to and reconstructed in public fights.

What decides the social construction of victims is their successful representation in the public sphere. In its most elementary form, representation is achieved by visible presence in public places. But visible presence also has its special risks for the indispensable distance between the third party and the victims. First of all, the distinction between the minority of miserable victims and the majority of regular passersby must be clearly marked. Mutilated soldiers in rags can eventu-

ally claim to be victims, jobless ex-managers in impeccable suits cannot. But even if the misery and suffering is undeniable and distinctive, the individual beggar asking for alms will not be treated as a victim in the strict sense. He himself is advancing the claim for support, he has a face and a voice, he addresses individual persons, he is in close proximity—the reaction will be compassion and individual charity or civil inattention. Victims cannot advance their claim directly, individually and personally. Instead, as outlined above, the social construction of victimhood presupposes distance and a certain noncommunication between the public center and the victims.²⁴

For similar reasons, victims cannot be represented by formal organization with voluntary membership. The classical model of organizational representation and lobbying works for workers, farmers, Catholics, storekeepers, gun collectors, etc., but it runs counter to the basic structure of victimhood: by their very definition, victims are seen as powerless and unable to fight for their own rights. When unions become powerful collective actors, workers cannot claim the position of victims anymore. Victims are subjects devoid of faces and voices; they cannot be imagined as powerful actors pitted in conflicts with other collective actors on the same footing. Because of their damaged subjectivity, their muteness and anonymity, they need mediating third parties who articulate their suffering and advocate their claims—they need civic or professional representation. Even the few who have survived the horror and raise their voice to present their memories rarely do so without assistance from publishing houses and broadcasting agencies, therapists and humanitarian associations. Like other forms of authenticity, the authenticity of the victims' testimony is also mediated and constructed—even if the survivors are intellectuals who are able to speak on their own. The preciousness of the victim's authentic voice results from its very rarity.

Victims need advocates and representatives. If laic people advocate the cause of victims in a strong public sphere, they are mostly moved by compassion and conviction, they identify strongly with the cause of the victims—hence their impartiality might sometimes be questioned by outsiders. In contrast, professional specialists like lawyers, social workers, medical doctors, and even journalists, can claim to be impartial experts and thus to represent the public interest, but they can also claim to represent the justified interests of the victims and bringing them to the fore of public attention. They act as mediators between the victims and the public sphere. But in this mediation they also construct the distance that is constitutive for victimhood. Without this distance to the center, the victim would be considered either as a challenge to immediate personal compassion or as an actor struggling for resources.

Professional advocacy not only constructs the indispensable distance between the public center and the victims, but also affects the struggle for recognition: efficiency is increased, conflicts become less passionate, compromises more likely.

The professional representation may end up in a new field of politics, where the claims of victims are recognized or rejected; legal institutions define the rights

and entitlements of victims, norms of political correctness demarcate the range of prudence in public expression and the occasions for publicly recognized offenses. This public regulation of recognition and offense certainly restricts the original freedom of speech and also occasionally engenders ridiculous exaggeration, but this holds true also for other patterns of civilization, for the control of eating behavior by dietary norms, for the control of driving by traffic regulations, etc.

Of course, the advocacy of professional experts is not without risks. Experts not only offer their services to an eagerly demanding clientele of suffering victims, they can also convince a possible clientele of their victimization and thus create the demand that their professional services are ready to satisfy. In this respect, the professional advocacy for victims does not differ from other professional services, however.²⁵ Medical doctors define health and disease, provide the cure and control the efficiency of their services by themselves; lawyers convince possible clients to sue some other party and then represent their clients in court; professional politicians try to mobilize the voters; etc. In principle, professional groups aim at a monopoly of defining the need, providing the therapy and supervising its success by themselves. Society and victims cannot completely avoid the risk of being misused by these quasi monopolies—even when therapists and advocates are tempered by the obligation to serve the common good (H. Becker 1973; Giesen 1983). Obviously, suffering and misery at the fringe of society can fail to get public attention, because the professionals have strategic reasons not to represent it—because strategic interests of their old clientele are at risk, because of costs, or simply because of ignorance.

But the opposite might also be true. People who have no connection to each other and live their lives in quite diverse ways might be declared victims and represented by professional advocates without a mandate. A market for the representation of victims can emerge; identity entrepreneurs compete in the public sphere; misery is staged in the media; and finally those who considered themselves to be happy citizens before come to see themselves as humiliated victims. The descendants of Tasmanian aborigines, who previously tried to hide their origin and lived well-integrated among their cocitizens, now proudly claim their once despised descent, regard themselves as the heirs of victims and demand compensation. Thus professional representation not only may leave authentic suffering unnoticed but also may construct victims where there is no suffering (Rutschky 1992).

More than other professional services, the professional representation of victims has to defend itself against the charge of paternalism.²⁶ In contrast to a therapeutic discourse that leaves the task of defining problems and needs to the patient, the professional representatives of the victims can rarely refer to an explicit mandate—the victims are dead, muted and overwhelmed by their suffering. The fact that the suffering has muted the victims can, however, be turned into a strong justification of the victims' cause: Every member of the community will agree on the severity of the trauma and its need to be represented. The death and the suffering of the victims serve as a foundation for a general impersonal man-

date, which doesn't need further justification. It is not strategic reasoning of a particular group, but the moral foundation of community itself that requires representation and advocacy. This universal mandate can be strengthened by an explicit mandate of the victims' heirs and relatives who—even if they should not be victims themselves—could claim a strong primordial identity with the victims and turn their mourning about the loss into a public cause. The professional advocates can, furthermore, reinforce this mandate by pointing to the fact that they themselves, although certainly not suffering and miserable, belong also to the group to which the victims belonged. Thus the trauma of the victims is transferred and dispersed to those who share a primordial collective identity with them.

Because the victims have no voice, the professional advocate has to construct his or her mandate in a counterfactual way. The victims would have trusted him or her because he or she has the same primordial identity which suffered from victimization and which is now to be represented: Thus women are represented by women, African Americans by African Americans, Latin Americans by Latin Americans. Trust is the basic bond that connects the muted victims to the professional representatives—as expertise is the key that opens the doors to the public arena for the professional advocates. Both are indispensable in the process of mediation and representation that constructs the constitutive distance between the voiceless and faceless victims on the one hand and the public center of society on the other. If the advocates can claim a primordial connection to the community of victims, they are better protected against the suspicion of seducing or imposing identity from outside—similar to the case of the parents telling their offspring a story about their roots. In both cases, the primordial collective identity between parents and children or between the surviving victims and their professional advocates—provides the basis of trust and justifies the advocacy. Certainly, this primordial collective identity is also socially constructed and needs continuous reaffirmation. But it is constructed in a way that allows for little objections: by his or her "nature," the other has the same competence as a subject partaking in a community of remembrance.²⁷

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The social construction of victims has, indeed, a core function for the distinction between center and periphery, between inside and outside, between subjects and objects. Victims—whether dead or surviving—demarcate the fringe of human societies, the frontier where the neat cultural classification gets stuck into semantic swamps and moral twilight, where the fragility and imperfection of social order becomes obvious. This perspective on the fringe presupposes a strong public sphere as the center of society and institutional arenas where the outlands of damaged subjectivity can be ritually embraced and coped with. Although religious sacrifices and charity are institutions that define and deal with victims, they do so in a truncated way. The sacrifice treats victims as sacrificial objects that are turned

from life to death in order to reinforce the precarious ties to the sacred. The rituals of charity cope with the misery of the living and present cohumans, but address it within the frame of direct encounters between individual persons. Here, the victims have a face and a voice, but their suffering is not recognized as a problem of the social order. In contrast, the arenas of jurisdiction and the public discourse of civil society focus on perpetrators and victims and regard both of them as embodiments of an imperfect social order. Jurisdiction, as well as the discourse of civil society, give way to a strong public perspective and connect this to the punishment of perpetrators and the construction of guilt—as far as jurisdiction is concerned—and to the representation of voiceless and faceless victims and their innocence—as far as the strong public sphere is concerned. Because they are at the fringes of the social community, victims need advocates to represent them whether they are dead or survivors. Although not without risks—like other forms of representation, too—these modes of advocacy by insiders and outsiders, by professional services and laic movements, are as indispensable for the construction of victims as are memorials, museums and monuments for the construction of collective memory. In the public debate about victimhood, society not only tries to construct and to reconstruct its boundaries, but it also accounts for the imperfection of social order and tries to repair it by cultural redefinition and social recognition. The public discourse about victimhood responds to the haunting awareness that there is a land in between inside and outside of the boundaries, a ghostly land of demons and victims, a land where Ockham's Razor fails.

NOTES

1. When J. F. Lyotard (1983) published *Le Différend*, he was heavily attacked for taking such a seemingly relativistic perspective. However, from a sociological point of view, this seems to be inevitable. For the cultural and public character of social problems in general, see, for instance, Gusfield (1981).
2. E.g., Japan's reluctance to acknowledge war guilt vis-à-vis China during Jiang Zemin's state visit to Japan in 1998.
3. Especially within the more strictly codified context of law, comparative rational studies have pointed this out again and again. For an illuminating comparative analysis of the political—culture-specific—power of apologies in this context, see Tavuchis (1991).
4. The unconditional support that African people often owe to even distant relatives contrasts strikingly with the Occidental modern tendency to shift medical care and support for the elderly to centralized public institutions. On the public level, modern Western societies allow for the inclusion of outsiders and people at the fringe of the community, but they also tend to minimize the range of personal obligations to solidarity.
5. For the cultural interpretation of food habits, see Eder (1988, pp. 103–219).
6. For a closer examination of these debates, see Giesen (1998a, pp. 53–55). The almost classical account of the cultural clash in the conquest of the Americas is Todorov (1992).
7. On the self as a locus of linguistic causality, see the important book of E. Becker (1972) on the birth and death of meaning.
8. The term "objectification" means here that human beings are treated as objects in the literal sense. Lukács (1968) and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer/Adorno 1997) use

this term (*Verdinglichung*) in a different way, referring to the transformation of social relations and not to persons as such.

9. See, for instance, Turner's (1967) analysis of liminality.
10. See Girard (1986), Lipp (1990) and Burkert (1983).
11. More generally, see Connerton (1989, pp. 41–45).
12. See also Eder (1991), Giesen (1999a, p. 60), Koselleck (1980) and M. Miller (1986).
13. A similar phenomenon has been observed in the *second generation* of the collectivity of the perpetrators (Eckstaedt 1989).
14. On memorial sites, see Nipperdey (1976), Nora (1992) and Speitkamp (1996); for a special focus on war memorials, see Koselleck (1977), Koselleck and Jeismann (1994) and Koselleck (1997).
15. For Alfred Schütz's analytical distinction between predecessors, contemporaries, consociates, and successors, see Natanson (1962, pp. XXXIII–XXXIV).
16. On the varying schemes according to the functions of the sacrifice, see Mauss and Hubert (1968).
17. For an unusual perspective on this phenomenon, see Saint-Exupéry (1956).
18. On the moral implications of charity, presents and gifts, see Mauss (1967).
19. An interesting study on this point is presented by Scully and Marolla (1990).
20. For a more general view on law and reciprocity in savage societies, see Malinowski (1985).
21. For case studies on this matter, see Henke (1991) and Avishai and Smith (1997).
22. On victim language, official victims and interest groups, see Amato (1990).
23. Recently a group of Herero chiefs has presented an official quest asking half a billion German marks in compensation for the genocide of the Hereros during the German colonial rule a century ago. The German president, when visiting Namibia, expressed his concern but declined the claim.
24. The public arenas of the government, the court and the discourse of civil society are superlocal institutions—they do not notice local events without mediating mechanisms; instead, the claim to be recognized as victims has to be presented to them in ways they can respond to.
25. Polemical, but still worth reading, is Illich (1977). For a less polemical account—taking Illich's accusations seriously—see Collins (1979) and Abbott (1988).
26. Debates in cultural anthropology about the ethnographic representation of "victims of colonialism" are an example of this; see for instance Clifford and Marcus (1986).
27. For primordial codings of collective identity, see Giesen (1998a, pp. 25–29).