

## **The accosted and the aggressor**

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I'm going to keep it simple. What we are facing in this racial pandemic is an ontological problem only solvable by the quantum phenomenon of choice. The human subject has a strong capacity for erecting large phallic structures called media, institutions, and technologies. The emphasis on choice sounds like a contrast to the famous statement made by Lacan in *Seminar XI*: "The unconscious is structured like a language" (Lacan 20). It also contrasts in reference to a statement made by Theodor Reik in *Listening with the Third Ear*, where he says about the analyst: "He must learn to listen 'with the third ear'. It is not true that you have to shout to make yourself understood. When you wish to be heard, you whisper" (Reik 144).

How does choice fit in between these two statements? For those non-black subjects, and subjects of non-vulnerable populations, figuring out how to tend to the demands and desires of said subjects does not require an elaborate system of sophisticated theoretical apparatuses. The meta-discourse is not in itself the solution to what the subject disavows as the implicit ethical decision. The meta-discourse simply reveals the choice given to vice instead of virtue. Consequently, the aggressor's level of violence makes it impossible for them to perceive nuance from the accosted. Lacan's constant refinement of exactly how the unconscious works over the course of his seminars relays a perpetual lack in the subject. The subject acts and does things they do not realize they are doing through misrecognition, skidding signifiers,

and slips from within their autonomy and agency. The aggressor behaves in such ways because even they lack the epistemological knowledge to know themselves completely. The accosted unfortunately do not have the luxury of parsing out which of the aggressor's portents are more significant than the other in assessing potential dangers. They have been forcefully thrown into a matrix of negative significations, dehumanizing stigmas that make them into a mark to be killed.

There is more to this phenomenon with respect to the aggressor, however. It is not that they are simply caught within unconscious dialectical trappings. Aesthetics play a strong role in utilizing perception/reception/projection within the closed tunnel of experience where knowledge is delayed in catching up to lived experience.. This delay is significant because it signals that the act of choice is always intentional in being directed from an artificially constructed epistemology. I may "think, therefore I am," but what I know is always cognitively late to the frame since over time I am required to acculturate. Acculturation guaranteed by the gradual sedimentation of concrete knowledge must be intentionally constructed and formed after experiential acknowledgement. Key to the aggressor's white supremacist fantasy is that they believe they are making a choice in their anti-black violence: even as that aggressivity is borne out of a frustration with their very lack of choice, due to that acculturation.

Moreover, the subject finds themselves alienated by inner experience, and all media used to communicate with their environment, which includes language and the accosted. McLuhan intercepts Lacan's emphasis on codependency on the other for identification through

signifiers. McLuhan notes the following in *The Medium is the Message*: “That our senses, of which all media are extensions, are also fixed charges on our personal energies, and that they also configure the awareness and experience of each one of us” (McLuhan 34-35). Critical here is to note that inner experience is a passive action, divorced from being, only accessible by memory. Aesthetic expressions through media are congenitally, imperfectly communicable. Identity becomes thrown into question. Additional implications exist here, but focus remains on the following question: If the subject possesses indirect access to their own experiences, but also cannot perfectly communicate their phenomenal being beyond themselves, what costs does the subject pay for these raucous processes?

The unconscious may be structured like a language, but its linguistic qualities as a medium attempt to compensate for the contingencies and complexities of two subjects barred from each other’s internalities. Whispering is also unnecessary for listening, because in speaking through any medium, there are always unanticipated impedances affecting the hearing process. The listening process by definition includes a built-in level of distortion.

It is not just the unconscious, language, listening, or media that bear consequences, but the entire domain of aesthetics. Aesthetics in this context encompasses all subjective expression, of which the arts are only one type. This broadened definition re-emphasizes choice within the tunnel of experience as the prime directive for intentional *and* unintentional action.

Whether in the analytic session, out in the world, or as aggressor/accosted, choice structures

epistemological decisions definitively as the unconscious and discourse mediate subjective intentionality.

The most extreme epistemological formations like those of culture, politics, religion, and society, these coefficients of subjectivity, also known as the anomalous factor within autonomy-agency, exponentially magnify subjective distortions the larger the corporate group grows. Identity becomes cataclysmic. Aesthetics also means all immanent expressions are unstable, reversible, and contingent as unpredictable effects that return unpredictably through time. Paradoxical reverberations between subject and environment are one.

If both accosted and aggressor are at minimum a continuous series of mediated, intentional choices, intentional actions, and not the media communicating them, then they link the subject to ethical consequences. The aggressor can no longer export blame for their actions onto anything outside of themselves. The effects of their relations to the world are solely self-caused. They *choose* violence against the accosted. While the actions of the aggressor speak to individual culpability, their epistemological formations and aesthetic expressions reveal unconscious contingencies which choose *for them* not to listen to the accosted. Hence what the accosted see as unnecessary democratic processes to fight for what was already self-legitimized. Hence the wariness – and weariness – with which the accosted approach once again explaining the racist unconscious: debating subjective emancipation is the disavowed violence of the aggressor. Their actions give them away in advance. Choice reveals the immediately barred as the familiar future disguised.

References.

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