Hostage Taking Terrorism: 2 Gazes

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Hostage taking terrorism. Kidnapping. Bank robbery turned hostage situation. Marital dispute turned hostage situation. Skyjacking. Very few of the localized, armed, human cases of hostage taking are similar, but, for all, performing a response "is the exercise of authoritatively violent interpretation designed to counter non-authoritative violence both of which are constituted through the application of" "law-conserving violence" (Philipose, 160, 183). In the cottage industry of theoretic re-imagining of these sites for security forces, authors make different divisions of what the phenomenon to study and prepare for minimally entails. While the hostage taker was once the dominant image of terrorism with which to threaten America, the diversity of situations retain an essence only in taking hostages and insulating that relationship with secrecy (as in kidnapping) or walls (as in siege), with the understanding that threatening the well being of hostages implies that the captor can make demands. The assemblage designed for siege situations with human hostages present at the site, and demands made against the state, can be engaged in five terrains of analysis. Terrains are not in a chronological order, and much moves between them, though they are different kinds of places and different approaches may be better suited for each.

First, both parties hail one another and government forces wager a pragmatics of subjectivization. Second, a zombie technology must be assembled for containing the incident and managing its functionality. Third, the surveillance-imagination

apparatus perceives and treats those perceptions to multi-modally construct threats and operationalize information for assault. Fourth, the performance of a sniper government that refreshes the pataphysics of panopticism with a violent arterial power. Finally, the post-production work of terror management, image reception, and mass media.

This short paper will travel the first and third terrains. Hostage takers hail a government who would listen to their claims, and commanders pragmatically plug interpellation into a surface subjectivity (the negotiator) hosted in the larger arrangement of the response team. Returning this gaze, a surveillance apparatus imagines its own subjectivization of captors (separate from its formal interpellation of them in negotiation), draws on multi-modal and intersubjective techniques of reconnaissance processed into an imagination of the hostage taking situation, where tactics of power/knowledge play out to manage the crisis.

The icon of these two channels of asymmetrical gaze relationships is the telephone. A common and preferred medium, "the dedicated telephone line freely available to both the negotiators and the terrorists, and free from any possibility of eavesdropping or interference from unauthorized sources" denies a negotiator valuable communication by body language, eye contact, and physical presence (MacWillson, 42). Despite (and because of) its narrowness as a channel of negotiation, it also furnishes "absolute control over the information passed between the two parties and [assistance for] the authorities to achieve an ascendancy over the terrorist through this position of control" (MacWillson, 46). It is less dangerous

than face-to-face negotiation, builds the captors dependency on the response team, and insulates the situation from the press or other parties. Intersubjectivity is the form of subjectivity for both parties, with their division, in the activity of their (hostage) situation. While it does not unite them politically, it is only through each other that two sides, and all those they represent, become meaningful.

▸ Hailing

"In the network of intersubjective relations, every one of us is identified with, pinned down to, a certain fantasy place in the other's symbolic structure" (Žižek, 5). In considering a suitable terminology in which to imagine hostage-taking situations, inevitably the formation of arguments passes through a nervous moment of naming the hostage taker. In a way, the hostage is a passive victim and the hostage-taker is the active victim, since an assault team threatens both (Crelinsten, 3). But given the sometimes active role taken by hostages in situations, maybe we should call them secondary victims, while remembering that captors are primary (Crelinsten, 6). For an anxiously relativist outlook, trying not to take sides when discussing abstract tactics for abstract hostage situations, it seems safest to stick with "captor," "hostage-taker" (Griffiths, 21), or "holder" (Maher, 9).

For U.S. government policy, hostage situations are "terrorist blackmail" (Hostage Negotiation, 1) and the hostage takers, who can be referred to quite efficiently as "them," are to be dealt with in almost entirely the same way whatever their motives. By taking hostages, "they" are breaking the law, and negotiation is

only worthwhile because it might be safer for hostages and it facilitates other options. Initiating other options (e.g. assault or ultimatum) makes negotiation more difficult (Hostage Negotiation, 2). At the same time, "they" must have a redeemable identity, if they become murderers they know that there is only a lifetime in prison to lose (Thomspon, 31).

In this sense, those caught in hostage situations as the hostage takers are criminals and terrorists. "Whosever finds himself at this place is the addressee since the addressee is not defined by his positive qualities but by the very contingent fact of finding himself at this place" (Žižek, 11) What their demands calls for is a government that can answer them. Demands locate a role (government) that must be played, must meet demands, and if it fails to do this, hostages die.

In this channel, subjectivization is symbolic. The agency of government has the body of all government employees, contractors, and facilities. Its intelligence is alien and deceptive, committed and politick. Its means of induction are dangerously omnipresent, capable of getting snitches in everywhere, and information out of most everyone. Its identity as a national, huge and hostile organization depends on its place in the symbolic network grounded by the big Other.

Žižek foregrounds Althusser's misrecognition of "the specific agency of the "ideal," "immaterial" big Other in the shape of the symbolic order guaranteeing meaning to the historical contingency" (Žižek, 59). Where Althusser insists on the materiality of the ideological state apparatus, we can see a compulsive theoretical denial of the a big Other that is not so much present in the real itself, but

guarantees meaning to social reality. "This "big Other" is retroactively posited, i.e., presupposed, by the subject in the very act by means of which he is caught in the cobweb of ideology" (59). Where for Althusser's vision of ideology, the big Other was revealed as ideological state apparatuses (primarily the school), terrorist demands usually imagine a world order in which the offending government is just one nasty part. But, also, they call upon the government to be one part.

The government that keeps Nancy Gilvonio in her unheated cell "six by ten feet with a narrow slit in the wall that lets in icy winds but no beams of sunlight … locked in there for twenty-three and a half hours a day ... allowed to receive a visitor for fifteen minutes once every two months … allowed no reading matter or exercise" for revealing nothing in interrogation (Lingis, 98). That government must answer to the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, and to the husband of Nancy Gilvonio, or Japanese officials die in Peru.

"The process of negotiation and its deliberate use of time, first of all, erodes the terrorists' confidence, then frustrates their ability to dictate events and finally – hopefully, exhausts their will or capability to continue. The danger is always that frustration may lead to aggression, which in turn may lead to harming the hostages" (MacWillson, 80). By keeping those located as criminals and terrorists on the phone, engaged, bargaining and talking, government usually improves its odds. By seeing them as hostage-takers and captors, "generally rational", understanding that "70 percent of the people are normal" (Hostage Negotiation, 12), government gains trust to allow an exchange of promises (18). This subject of the hostage-taker

on the phone line cannot be understood as irreconcilably different, but as someone who might come to see things our way. But to do all this requires a pragmatics of subjectivity.

Where terrorists call upon a government to exist, with a human body whose voice will represent and whose body might even be met with, it is a duty of the response team to construct such a thing. "Our beliefs are really rules for action;" "the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions, however subtle, is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice … what sensation we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare" (James, 23-24). British response teams tend to use middle ranking police officers as negotiators, whereas the Dutch use psychologists and Latin Americans often use the Papal Nuncio (MacWillson, 48). The negotiator will be an unbending, clear, witty, character with composed speech, courtesy, and a sense of humor. "Experience has shown that an offender who feels that he can achieve his objectives will remain calm. Therefore, one goal of the negotiator would be to facilitate the offender's maintaining such a belief" (Crelinsten, 48). Because this best serves the subject position of government representative in the crisis. "Meanings are applications; how meanings are constituted is the essence of politics. And no one can constitute meanings by wishing them into existence; they have a very material structure and genesis" (Haraway 1981, 271).

The meaning of a government official, consonant with the criminal's symbolic network, must be applied by government to construct a negotiator (which may also

include a team, not all of whom speak on the phone line) by a pragmatics that is deeper than practical appropriation. "Truth for us is simply a collective name for a verification process" (James, 96). This kind of meaning cannot be wished for, and is not arbitrary, because, in pragmatism, "consistency both with previous truth and with novel fact is always the most imperious claimant" (96). This kind of consistency, stemming from a consequentialist ethic, makes the pragmatist's technology of truth an institutionally heavy burden to bear with any accountability, calling for blue ribbon committees and depending on a chain of command to outsource the complexity of such thinking. Consider the difficulty of those inside the siege situation to match this fluid and presentist way of knowing. How would they calculate the impacts of destabilizing the truth they arrive with, how can they consult those they fight for (both in their movement and those their movement represents), how could they arrange for the right face to match those they negotiate with?

A pragmatic subjectivity is not a care of the self, but it also cannot just be a bluff. "Careful consideration of all communications is necessary as any bluff on the authorities part must be tested against the criteria of time expiry" (MacWillson, 43). If the government that must exist is revealed as absent, and the "claim that you must get approval for each minor step" loses plausibility (Hostage Negotiation, 10), the negotiator stops helping "us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience" (James, 28). Risks may have to be introduced that put lives at jeopardy. More than thirty shots in the head of each terrorist, for the Tupac Amaru

Revolutionary Movement captors. A dramatic performance of government whose audience exceeded those redeemable souls on the other end of the phone line. Don't let the hostage-taker pursue their doubts. "A good negotiator knows when these periods occur and can read behavioral cues indicating various emotional states" (Crelinsten, 47).

The government negotiator has to remain unbending, but also loyal to government objectives. The U.S. State Department suggests: "as the negotiator you tend to lose objectivity" (Hostage Negotiation, 10). The practical measure of negotiation, and the deformations of subjectivity necessary for establishing rapport and a trust that "is a break, a cut made in the extending map of certainties and probabilities" (Lingis, 65) can not forget "its practical cash value" (James, 26). The truth of the government's position in a game of face and line "must run the gauntlet of all [government's] other beliefs" (James, 36). If the negotiators position is compromised they would have to be swapped out and a whole new rapport developed to provide a generative break from probabilities into trust.

Negotiation is a trap. When it became a less successful strategy, historically, "it was relegated to the position of an initial tactic in an assault strategy" (Crelinsten, 44). Because negotiation always provides for the other gaze relationship at the incident site, through it command can "gather information and background on the incident and the personalities involved" (MacWillson, 26). Open ended questions and active listening allow the negotiator to provide information not otherwise available about the criminals and situation inside. How many are they,

how many hostages, what is their mindset, how do they relate, what is the atmosphere like inside the structure? If this information is timely, relevant, and accurate it can be communicated to intelligence specialists, refined by them, and communicated to those who might need it (e.g. higher ranking officials, tactical sharpshooters, the assault team) (Thompson, 19).

►► Surveillance

> For the 1889 Paris Exposition, Jules Bourdais, a prominent French architect, proposed to erect a tower 360 metres (1,200 feet) high in the centre of Paris, near the Pont-Neuf, with arc-lights strong enough to illuminate the whole city. By this means the *street* lighting of Paris, which at the time consisted of thousands of gas-lamps, was to be transformed into *city* lighting. (Schivelbusch, 3)

Enlightenment fantasies of light and visualization still elicit strong reactions in the hands of cultural theorists explaining contemporary modes of visuality. The tower which was ultimately rejected for Gustave Eiffel's iron design illustrates a hope for light to fill all the darkness of the city at once, without much concern that the brilliant shine of harsh arc-lights would also cast thick shadows. While arc-light towers (designed with exposed iron instead of masonry, as Bourdais had planned) went up in the U.S., their success was limited in ensuring full visibility to urban public space, salvaging it from the dark of night, but respectable at commanding tourist attention.

There is a more commonly referenced model of Enlightenment fantasies of visualization, where what can be seen is understood as coextensive with what can be controlled. Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, a building where those in a ring of rooms could be monitored from a central surveillant cell, which might be empty at any time, was also never built. The swamp land he finally secured did, in time, have a penitentiary, but this was a labyrinth and not a set of rooms that lent themselves equally to being watched and controlled. The model, for its universalizing ambition (Bentham imagined a panoptic hospital, workhouse, school, shelter, asylum, and reform house), (Boyne, 288-290) still offers a "diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use" (Foucault, 205).

Bentham's panopticon differs in its practical ambitions from closed circuit TV in contemporary institutions by its assumption that exposure and self-aware freedom are imbricated. Cameras in a retail operation offer evidence, which is very different from panopticism, and deterrence, which is essential to the enlightenment aspiration of coextensive vision and control. In business, panopticism is often a failure, as in Taylor & Bain's study of a call center where, despite its rigorous panoptic methods of surveillance, employees were still often absent and still unionizing. But the panoptic diagram is "of a mode of power that sought to induce a certain relation of human beings to themselves. Discipline … was not a means of

producing terrorized slaves without privacy, but self-managing citizens capable of conducting themselves in freedom, shaping their newly acquired ‘private lives’ according to norms of civility, and judging their conduct accordingly” (Rose, 242). The knowledge-power mixture is not just that to know enables those in power to act, but that power relations are themselves formed by the care of the self of those who know themselves to be surveilled.

Without refusing Foucault’s conception of power as relations and effects, there is a kind of power-as-capacity that, while also radically uncentered, has moments of grandeur as well. In this sense, “power comes from everywhere” means there are many things that have a capacity for an act of power, but this does not deny that the relations of power tend to guide those capacities. What this lets us imagine is an arterial form of power that is different from capillary power without being its dichotomous sublation (Sayer, 263).

In the arterial power relations of a hostage situation managed from a tactical operations center, perhaps with a forward control point and, at a distance, an incident control point, surveillance can only rely on the panoptic mode of power for a bit of its work. The strategic program in managing the situation depends on building intelligence either for a negotiated resolution to the incident (i.e. capitulation), or resolution by violence (chemical agents, assault, or tactical sharpshooters). The gamble being made by the surveillant apparatus resembles the scheme charted by surveillance studies: inevitable visibility and domination, bracketing the reality that some things will not be seen or controlled (Phillips, 235).

While the response team acts as if knowing more about a situation is always good, there is also a need for dissimulation of surveillance to prevent the gathering of information from affecting the hostage-takers inside. This covert way of knowing runs a risk if radio noise reveals personnel approaching the scene, or a clandestine route around the site's perimeter is not followed (Thompson, 15). Using a silent, hydraulically driven drill, with a 1mm bit to finally enter the stronghold, allows the insertion of an endoscope or microphone without detection (MacWillson, 135-136). Similarly, an accelerometer attached with epoxy stuck to a solid wall in the right conditions can provide audio from inside the structure (137). New technologies, such as Lobster Eye Lens x-ray imaging, Impulse Synthetic Aperture Radar, and multi-sensor image fusion night vision, promise to augment further the ability of well-funded specialized technical support teams to conduct surveillance those inside a structure would not notice.

The modalities of this surveillance must be relayed, aggregated, synthesized and distributed. The imagination (different from the Lacanian register of the imaginary) described so far, of terrorists and hostages, reasonable people or voices of dissent that must be powerfully silenced, enables the apperception of diverse modalities of surveillance. In Helen Kellers' *The World I Live In*, she responds to critics who "assume that blindness and deafness sever us completely from the things which the seeing and the hearing enjoy, and hence they assert we have no moral right to talk about beauty, the skies, mountains, the song of birds, and colors" (Keller, 29). Defending herself as an intellectual, as much as a deaf and blind

woman, she argues that "the bulk of the world's knowledge is an imaginary construction. History is but a mode of imagining, of making us see civilizations that no longer appear upon the earth. Some of the most significant discoveries in modern science owe their origin to the imagination of men who had neither accurate knowledge nor exact instruments to demonstrate their beliefs" (59).

For Keller, ideas depend on an imagination. The things of this world are all knowable for her, as one of God's children. Althusser describes this guarantee nicely, "the interpellation of individuals as subjects presupposes the 'existence' of a Unique and central Other Subject" who is God, "I am that am." And this is not just how things happen to be, but it is by the absolute subject's ability to assure itself that not only are all other subjects possible, but so too are their experiences: "it *has* to be so if things are to be what they must be, and let us let the words slip: if the reproduction of the relations of production is to be assured, even in the processes of production and circulation, every day, in the 'consciousness'" of individuals. What, Althusser concludes, should really be in question in this mechanism is "the reality which is necessarily *ignored* (*méconnue*) in the very forms of recognition (ideology = misrecognition/ignorance)… the reproduction of the relations of production and of the relations deriving from them" (Althusser, 184-186).

Keller's way of knowing, her partial position is also precisely where "the possibility of sustained, rational, objective enquiry rests" (Haraway, 680). Through her partial position, an objectivity, without a claim to relativism but with a possibility of solidarity and shared conversation, offers a space for synthesizing

"wonders of the universe … as we are capable of receiving them" (Keller, 63). This reception is neither automatic nor identical with a sense modality, but builds associations which take on meaning through activity (62). Rather the feeling of sensations, which strike us with a feeling (Collingwood, 162), are represented in most thinking such that even our most basic descriptions of what we sense are also "our thoughts about the relations between sensa, actual and possible" (166). As Keller puts it, "the silent worker is imagination which decrees reality out of chaos" (Keller, 14).

But Keller's supposition of an absolute subject as the guarantee of her experience "misrecognizes" the social relations through which the sky and sun become meaningful. Namely, her translators, reading materials, teachers, and all those with whom she communicates. And in this sense, acknowledged by Keller though apprehended fetishistically, "imagination is a process that occurs through intersubjective and multimodal experiences that cannot be reduced to the location of the individual or to a dominant sensory modality or paradigm as the primary one in the production of knowledge and meaning" (Cartwright & Alac). What is seen by one sniper/observer team through binoculars or a gun's scope must be communicated by radio to intelligence specialists who keep decision performers informed, selectively pass information to the negotiator, and enact a subjectivization by arterial surveillance very different from that proceeding in negotiation.

Media used in the surveillance of a hostage-situation are not extensions of man, but modules used by members of a response team who are media in a

centralized network (the "chain" of command) to collectively fuel an anti-terrorist imaginary for whom the terms of a hostage-situation have already been set in research, policy, training, and standard operating procedure, for the purpose of stabilizing the situation for negotiation, and preparing for assault. Modality takes many specific forms for all involved in surveillance. A member of the assault team might be sent to sketch the site (Thompson, 24), negotiators actively listen and review recordings of negotiation for clues about the hostage-takers and scene within the stronghold, intelligence specialists sift through institutional files on the hostages and captors, an early fire fight can suggest what weapons the terrorists have, witnesses collected from the scene or hostages released during the situation are interviewed for any useful information they can provide. But the objectives of information gathering are set by a colorful imagination of military, psychological, and law enforcement concerns that, for all their flexibility, also have regions they do not explore and topics they are uncomfortable considering.

■ Conclusion

The two terrains of investigation considered here each include a channel of communication which, in the one case, is very literally singular and isolated, and is, in the second, expansive and complex. In discussing moments of arterial power it is difficult to provide a nuanced account of the function of surveillance without examining the performance of naked force that accompanies it. However, in the asymmetrical gaze of negotiation, with a symbolic subjectivization performed pragmatically by government and in a more ideologically needy way by hostage-

takers, we can understand a gaze that may break through in moments of trust but always also feeds surveillance. While the historical status of hostage-taking has changed, as has terrorism, the imaginary formation has hybridized in contemporary cases, which are much smaller incidents with a completely different post-production procedure. This remains to be explored.

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