

SIMONE BROWNE

DARK MATTERS

ON THE SURVEILLANCE OF BLACKNESS

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Revised After Spring Break or 1st week in April

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Designed by Natalie F. Smith
Typeset in Arno Pro by Graphic Composition, Inc., Athens, GA

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Browne, Simone, [date] author.
Dark matters : on the surveillance of blackness / Simone Browne.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8223-5919-7 (hardcover : alk. paper)

ISBN 978-2-8223-5938-8 (pbk. : alk. paper)

ISBN 978-0-8223-7530-2 (e-book)

1. African Americans—Social conditions. 2. Blacks—Canada—Social conditions. 3. United States—Race relations. 4. Canada—Race relations. 5. Electronic surveillance—United States. 6. Government information—United States. I. Title.

E185.86.B76 2015

305.896'073—dc23 2015012563

COVER ART: Robin Rhode (South African, born 1976), *Pan's Opticon*, 2008.
Photographs, fifteen C-prints face-mounted on four-ply museum board.
Photos courtesy of Lehmann Maupin.

Duke University Press gratefully acknowledges the support of the
Office of the President at the University of Texas at Austin, which provided
funds toward the publication of this book.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book began as notes that I scribbled in the margins while I was conducting dissertation research at the University of Toronto. Although it is not based on that work, many of the questions and concerns that shape this book emerged from that project. Thank you to my PhD committee members Kari Dehli, Roxana Ng, Alissa Trotz, and David Lyon for their guidance, support, and sharp readings of that work.

My appreciation goes out to colleagues, past and present, at the University of Texas at Austin who have made suggestions, pointed me in new directions, provided feedback, and read parts of the book along the way. I thank João Costa Vargas, Stephen Marshall, Naomi Paik, Nhi Lieu, Meta DuEwa Jones, Shirley Thompson, and Michael Ray Charles. Ben Carrington commented on many chapter drafts, iterations, and the entire manuscript. I am grateful for the insights that his readings have brought to this book. Ted Gordon's support for me and my work has been unwavering. I thank him for showing me the possibilities of maroon spaces. Special thanks to those who provided words of encouragement and support for this project: Josianna Arroyo, Ann Cvetkovich, Lyndon Gill, Sam Gosling, Frank Guridy, Charlie Hale, Susan Heinzelman, Neville Hoad, Juliet Hooker, Bob Jensen, Omi Jones, Xavier Livermon, Minkah Makalani, Leonard Moore, Lisa Moore, Deborah Paredez, Anna-Lisa Plant, Cherise Smith, Eric Tang, and Craig Watkins. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Sociology Department, especially Bob Hummer, Keith Robinson, Mary Rose, Marc Musick, Michael Young, and Maya Charrad. I consider myself truly lucky to have met the many students from my graduate seminars and undergraduate classes who have critically engaged with parts and pieces of what would become this book, with a special thanks to Courtney Williams Barron, Josh Bidwell, Jessica Dunning-Lozano, Amanda Gray, Lily Laux, and Elissa Underwood.

I appreciate the many colleagues and friends who have supported me and have made this book better through their questions, conversations, correspondence, enthusiasm, and advice, with many of those mentioned here having generously read parts, or all, of this book. I thank Cathy N. Davidson, David Theo Goldberg, Avery Gordon, Gary T. Marx, Torin Monahan, Lisa Nakamura, Mark Anthony Neal, Howard Winant, Fiona Barnett, Zach Blas, Marc Böhlen, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Micha Cárdenas, Danielle Dirks, Joe Feagin, Allen Feldman, Caitlin Fisher, Martin French, Ahmed Ghaipour, Ruthie Gilmore, Sarah Ihmoud, Richard Iton, Joy James, David Leonard, Steve Mann, Nicholas Mirzoeff, Alondra Nelson, Tamara K. Nopper, Mark Olson, Jenny Rhee, Mark B. Salter, Christina Sharpe, Maggie Tate, France Winddance Twine, David Murakami Wood, and Clyde Woods. I am especially grateful for Katherine McKittrick's friendship, her brilliance, and her many visits to Austin. Her fierce commentary on so many parts of this book has been invaluable. My sincerest appreciation goes to Rinaldo Walcott for his encouragement, his mentorship, his generous feedback, and for the semester that he sojourned in Austin.

I've had opportunities to present my research at various venues, which have greatly enriched this book. I am thankful for all that I've learned from the rigorous questions and comments, and in particular those from audiences at the Surveillance Studies Center at Queen's University, HASTAC conferences in Durham and Toronto, CUNY Graduate Center, University of California at Berkeley, University of California at Santa Barbara, University of Ottawa, and New York University.

Chapter 2 benefited from financial support from the John L. Warfield Center for African American Studies that allowed me to take research trips to the National Archives in London and to Fraunces Tavern in New York City. A workshop at the John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University organized by Cathy Davidson provided me with generous feedback and guidance on this chapter. I am so grateful to Cathy for her incredible kindness and for creating a timely and safe space for me at the Franklin Center.

Duke University Press has been a dream (come true) to publish with. Since our first meeting at Parker and Otis, Courtney Berger has been an amazing editor. I deeply thank her for her commitment to this book and for her insights and advice throughout. Thank you to Erin Hanas for her step-by-step guidance through the editorial process. I also want to thank the production team at Duke, and in particular Christopher Robinson,

Danielle Houtz, and Karen M. Fisher. A big thanks also to Ken Wissoker. I am especially indebted to the two anonymous reviewers for their fierce critique and for investing their time in order to make this book so much better.

I am eternally grateful for the friendship and support of Samia Rizek-Benisty and Samuel Benisty, Danielle Chow-Leong, Aliyah Hamirani, Almira Hamirani, Zahra Hamirani and family, Carrienne Leung, and Stella Meghie.

This book is dedicated with love to my family, especially James Bailey, Ena Bailey, and Elsa Constantine. To my mother, Carmel Browne, thank you for everything and for singing to me (or my answering machine) every day. To my father, Eardley Browne, thank you for all of your insights and encouragement and reading all of it. Again and again. To my brother, Kevin Browne, who has taught me so much about strength, love, survival, kindness, and humour.

AN EARLIER VERSION of chapter 2 appeared as "Everybody's Got a Little Light under the Sun: Black Luminosity and the Visual Culture of Surveillance," *Cultural Studies* 26, no. 4 (2012): 542–564. Parts of chapter 3 have been revised from "Digital Epidermalization: Race, Identity and Biometrics," *Critical Sociology* 36, no. 1 (2010): 131–150.

INTRODUCTION, AND OTHER DARK MATTERS

"The CIA can neither confirm nor deny the existence or nonexistence of records responsive to your request." Sometime in the spring of 2011, I wrote to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to request the release of any documents pertaining to Frantz Fanon under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). At the time, I was interested in Fanon's travels to the United States of America in 1961, possibly under the nom de guerre Ibrahim Fanon, to receive treatment for myeloid leukemia. He arrived in the United States on October 3, staying at a hotel in Washington, DC, where he was "left to rot," according to Simone de Beauvoir, "alone and without medical attention."¹ Fanon was a patient at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, from October 10, 1961, until he died of pneumonia on December 6, 1961. He was thirty-six. I didn't get any documents from the CIA except a letter citing Executive Order 13526 with the standard refrain that the agency "can neither confirm nor deny the existence or nonexistence of records," and further stating that "the fact of the existence or nonexistence of requested records is currently and properly classified and is intelligence sources and methods information that is protected from disclosure."

Fanon's FOIA files that were released to me by the FBI consist only of three declassified documents: Document #105-96959-A—a clipping of a 1971 *Washington Post-Times Herald* article on Fanon's "Black Power Message" and its continuing influence on the Caribbean island of Martinique, where he was born; Document #105-96959-1—a once "SECRET" memo on Fanon dated March 9, 1961; and Document #105-96959-2—a book review of David Caute's 1970 biography *Frantz Fanon*, filed under "extremist matters," which says of Caute that "his methodology bears the Marxist stamp" and that "he is no friend of the United States or of a free society." Document #105-96959-A, the news clipping, names *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963)

as Fanon's most important book, stating, "its sales have run unusually high lately, especially among young Negroes." Document #105-96959-2, the FBI's own review of Caute's biography, describes Fanon as a "black intellectual," a "radical revolutionary," and "a philosophical disciple of Karl Marx and Jean Paul Sartre, [who] preached global revolt of the blacks against white colonial rule," and says that Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is "often quoted and misquoted by Stokely Carmichael and other black power advocates, both foreign and domestic." This review also claims that "Fanon's importance has been inflated into exaggerated dimensions by the need of black revolutionaries for philosophical justification and leadership." Traces of Fanon's influence appear in other declassified FBI documents where either he or his published books are named, including some documents that detail the bureau's surveillance of the Black Panther Party.

Although much of the information on the once "SECRET" FBI memo on Fanon, Document #105-96959-1 (figure 1.1), has been redacted, meaning that some of its information is censored, concealed, or otherwise covered up, this memo names Fanon as "the Algerian representative in Ghana for the Algerian Front for National Liberation (FLN)" and notes that he was, at the time, in Tunisia preparing to travel to Washington, DC, for "extensive medical treatment." This memo is from Sam J. Papich, the bureau's liaison to the CIA. It is interesting to note here that the redaction of Document #105-96959-1 took the form of a whiteout, concealing a good portion of the original text with white blocks, in this way deviating from the method of censoring the redacted data with opaque black blocks, rendering any information in the dark. We can think of the redaction here as the willful absenting of the record and as the state's disavowal of the bureaucratic traces of Fanon, at least those which are made publicly available. Here Frantz Fanon is a nonnameable matter. Now dead, yet still a "currently and properly classified" security risk, apparently, as "the fact of the existence or nonexistence" of Fanon's records itself is "intelligence sources and methods information that is protected from disclosure." With this, the redaction and Executive Order 13526 could be understood as a form of security theater where certain "intelligence sources and methods," if in existence, could still be put into operation, and as such could not be declassified.

Fanon's FOIA files form a part of the long history of the collection of intelligence on the many black radicals, artists, activists, and intellectuals who were targeted for surveillance by the FBI. This list includes Assata Shakur,

James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, Stokely Carmichael, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, the Freedom Riders, Martin Luther King Jr., Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, Claudia Jones, Malcolm X, Fred Hampton, William Edward Burghart DuBois, Fannie Lou Hamer, Cyril Lionel Robert James, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Angela Yvonne Davis, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Josephine Baker, Billie Holiday, the Black Panther Party, Kathleen Cleaver, Cassius Clay, Jimi Hendrix, and Russell Jones aka Ol' Dirty Bastard of the Wu-Tang Clan, among many, many others. The declassified printed matter released to me by the FBI was not particularly revealing regarding any surveillance and monitoring of Frantz Fanon. I was disappointed. My own surveillance of the records of the FBI's surveillance of Fanon had apparently been stalled.

In the foreword to the 2005 edition of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Homi Bhabha describes Fanon's dying days as filled with delirium and with a love for liberation:

his body was stricken, but his fighting days were not quite over; he resisted his death "minute by minute," a friend reported from his bedside, as his political opinions and beliefs turned into the delirious fantasies of a mind raging against the dying of the light. His hatred of racist Americans now turned into a distrust of the nursing staff, and he awoke on his last morning, having probably had a blood transfusion through the night, obsessed with the idea that "they put me through the washing machine last night." His death was inevitable.²

Les damnés de la terre (1961) would be the last of his books that Fanon would live to see published. He was in the hospital in Maryland when he heard some initial reviews of the book and he reportedly stated, "That's not going to get me my marrow back."³ A letter to a friend penned from his hospital bed captures Fanon's rage "against the dying of the light" as both a battle of the body against disease and an anticolonial praxis:

During a night and day surveillance, they inject me with the components of blood for which I have a terrible need, and where they give me huge transfusions to keep me in shape—that's to say, alive. . . . What shocks me here in this bed, as I grow weaker, is not that I'm dying, but that I'm dying in Washington of leukemia considering that I could have died in battle with the enemy three months ago when I

categories of laborers when attempts are made by way of workforce supervision to reduce their labor to an automation: factory assembly line workers subjected to time management by punch clocks and time sheets, the eavesdropping done by telephone switchboard supervisors as they secretly listened in on calls in order to monitor the conversations of switchboard operators, and the effects of closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance on sales clerks in large department stores in the United States. This is control by quantification, as Fanon put it. The embodied psychic effects of surveillance that Fanon described include nervous tensions, insomnia, fatigue, accidents, lightheadedness, and less control over reflexes. Nightmares too: a train that departs and leaves one behind, or a gate closing, or a door that won't open. Although Fanon's remarks on CCTV surveillance are short, they are revealing as he suggests that these cameras are trained not only on the potential thief, but also on the employee working on the shop floor who is put on notice that the video surveillance is perpetual. He also noted that workers displayed microresistances to managerial control in the way of sick leave, expressing boredom on the job, arriving late, and sometimes not arriving at work at all. Rather than being thought of as unproductive, such acts must be understood as disalienating, as they are strategic means of contesting surveillance in the workplace.

Although only the notes from these lectures remain, Fanon's observations on the monitoring of audio communications and CCTV are nevertheless instructive for the social diagnosis of alienation and the effects of modernity, surveillance, and resistance that he offers. If one were to read these lectures "optimistically," as Nicholas Mirzoeff has suggested, "had he lived longer, Fanon might have moved away from his emphasis on masculinity to imagine new modes of postrevolutionary gender identity, as part of this analysis of the racialized disciplinary society, a connection made by many radical black feminists in the United States from Angela Davis to Toni Cade Bambara and bell hooks."⁹ I enter *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* with this sense of optimism in mind: that in Fanon's works and in the writings of black feminist scholars, another mode of reading surveillance can be had.

Dark Matters begins with a discussion of my failed attempt to get my hands on any information from the CIA pertaining to Fanon, his FBI FOIA file, the short notes that remain from his lectures on surveillance, and an excerpt from his letter to a friend recounting the "night and day surveillance" that he experienced as he was on the brink of death as a way to cue surveillance in and of black life as a fact of blackness. My gesture to "The Fact of

Blackness," one of the English translations of the title of the fifth chapter of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, is a deliberate signal to the facticity of surveillance in black life. First published in 1952 as *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*, the book's fifth chapter in the French original is "L'expérience vécue du Noir." As Sylvia Wynter and others have noted, the translation of that chapter's title into English as "The Lived Experience of the Black" in later editions offers a more accurate understanding. It is this slight difference between the two titles—"The Fact of Blackness" and "The Lived Experience of the Black"—that I want to signal here. The "Blackness" in the former could be taken to mean, as Wynter has put it, "Blackness as an objective fact" while "The Lived Experience of the Black" speaks to a focus on the imposition of race in black life, where one's being is experienced through others.¹⁰ Wynter continues her discussion of Fanon and sociogeny to say that "The Lived Experience of the Black" makes clear that Fanon is dealing "with the 'subjective character' of the experience of the black, of, therefore, what it is *like* to be black, within the terms of the mode of being human specific to our contemporary culture."¹¹

Sociogeny, or what Wynter calls "the sociogenic principle," is understood as the organizational framework of our present human condition that names what is and what is not bounded within the category of the human, and that fixes and frames blackness as an object of surveillance. Take, for example, Fanon's often-cited "Look, a Negro!" passage in *Black Skin, White Masks* on the experience of epidermalization, where the white gaze fixes him as an object among objects and, he says, "the white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me."¹² Epidermalization here is the imposition of race on the body. For Fanon, there is no "ontological resistance" in spaces, like that train he rode in France, that are shaped for and by whiteness, where "instead of one seat, they left me two or three," he writes.¹³ *Dark Matters* takes up blackness, as metaphor and as lived materiality, and applies it to an understanding of surveillance. I work across multiple spaces (the airport, the plan of the *Brooks* slave ship, the plan for Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, Internet art) and different segments of time (the period of transatlantic chattel slavery, the British occupation of New York City during the American Revolution, post-9/11) to think through the multiplicities of blackness. This method of analyzing surveillance and the conditions of racial blackness brings historical documents, art, photography, contemporary popular film and television, and various other forms of cultural production into dialogue with critical race scholarship, sociological theory,

and feminist theorizing. For this study, I look to Pamela Z's multimedia project on travel and security, *Baggage Allowance*; Adrian Piper's *What It's Like, What It Is* #3; Caryl Phillips's epistolary story "The Cargo Rap" on prisons, politics, and slavery; and Hank Willis Thomas's commentary on branding and the afterlife of slavery in his *B@anded* series. Part of the argument presented here is that with certain acts of cultural production we can find performances of freedom and suggestions of alternatives to ways of living under a routinized surveillance. In this fashion, I am indebted to Stuart Hall's unsettling of understandings of "cultural identity" that does not see the black diaspora and black experiences as static or singular, but instead as "a result of a long and discontinuous series of transformations."¹⁴ Following Rinaldo Walcott here, my use of the term "blackness" is to "signal blackness as a sign, one that carries with it particular histories of resistance and domination" that is "never closed and always under contestation."¹⁵ Blackness is identity and culture, history and present, signifier and signified, but never fixed. As Ralph Ellison names it in *Invisible Man*, "Black is . . . an' black ain't."¹⁶

Fanon's "Look, a Negro!" his articulations of epidermalization, and his anticolonial thought have influenced the formation of this book. *Dark Matters* suggests that an understanding of the ontological conditions of blackness is integral to developing a general theory of surveillance and, in particular, racializing surveillance—when enactments of surveillance reify boundaries along racial lines, thereby reifying race, and where the outcome of this is often discriminatory and violent treatment. Of course, this is not the entire story of surveillance, but it is a part that often escapes notice. Although "race" might be a term found in the index of many of the recent edited collections and special journal issues dedicated to the study of surveillance, within the field of surveillance studies race remains undertheorized, and serious consideration has yet to be given to the racial subject in general, and to the role of surveillance in the archive of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in particular. It is through this archive and that of black life after the Middle Passage that I want to further complicate understandings of surveillance by questioning how a realization of the conditions of blackness—the historical, the present, and the historical present—can help social theorists understand our contemporary conditions of surveillance. Put another way, rather than seeing surveillance as something inaugurated by new technologies, such as automated facial recognition or unmanned autonomous vehicles (or drones), to see it as ongoing is to in-

sist that we factor in how racism and antiblackness undergird and sustain the intersecting surveillances of our present order. Patricia Hill Collins uses the term "intersectional paradigms" to signal that "oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice."¹⁷ Indebted to black feminist scholarship, by "intersecting surveillances" I am referring to the interdependent and interlocking ways that practices, performances, and policies regarding surveillance operate.

The concept of dark matter might bring to mind opacity, the color black, limitlessness and the limitations imposed on blackness, the dark, antimatter, that which is not optically available, black holes, the Big Bang theory, and other concerns of cosmology where dark matter is that nonluminous component of the universe that is said to exist but cannot be observed, cannot be re-created in laboratory conditions. Its distribution cannot be measured; its properties cannot be determined; and so it remains undetectable. The gravitational pull of this unseen matter is said to move galaxies. Invisible and unknowable, yet somehow still there, dark matter, in this planetary sense, is theoretical. If the term "dark matter" is a way to think about race, where race, as Howard Winant puts it, "remains the *dark matter*, the often invisible substance that in many ways structures the universe of modernity," then one must ask here, invisible to whom?¹⁸ If it is often invisible, then how is it sensed, experienced, and lived? Is it really invisible, or is it rather unseen and unperceived by many? In her essay "Black (W)holes and the Geometry of Black Female Sexuality," Evelyn Hammonds takes up the astrophysics of black holes found in Michele Wallace's discussion of the negation of black creative genius to say that if "we can detect the presence of a black hole by its effects on the region of space where it is located," where, unseen, its energy distorts and disrupts that around it, from that understanding we can then use this theorizing as a way to "develop reading strategies that allow us to make visible the distorting and productive effects" of black female sexualities in particular, and blackness in general.¹⁹ Taking up blackness in surveillance studies in this way, as rather unperceived yet producing a productive disruption of that around it, *Dark Matters* names the surveillance of blackness as often unperceivable within the study of surveillance, all the while blackness being that nonnameable matter that matters the racialized disciplinary society. It is from this insight that I situate *Dark Matters* as a black diasporic, archival, historical, and contemporary study that locates blackness as a key site through which surveillance is practiced, narrated, and enacted.

Surveillance is nothing new to black folks. It is the fact of antiblackness. This book is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of the ways that black people and blackness have come under, or up against, surveillance. Of the scholars that have written about surveillance as it concerns black people, many have taken as their focus the FBI Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) that ran from 1956 until 1971 and that saw individuals and domestic political organizations deemed subversive, or potentially so, come under investigation by the bureau with the aim of disrupting their activities, discrediting their efforts, and neutralizing their effects, often through infiltration, disinformation, and the work of informants. Sociologist Mike Forrest Keen's study of the FBI's surveillance of sociologists such as W. E. B. DuBois and E. Franklin Frazier, David Garrow's *The FBI and Martin Luther King Jr.*, Theodore Kornweibel on the FBI's surveillance of the activities of Marcus Garvey and the United Negro Improvement Association through the use of informants and disinformation, or Carole Boyce Davies's writings on the intense FBI scrutiny of Trinidadian activist, Marxist, and journalist Claudia Jones, for example, form part of this scholarly work. Other research examines policing with a focus on racism, state power, and incarceration, such as the works of Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Angela Davis, Joy James, Dylan Rodriguez, and more. James Baldwin, Toni Cade Bambara, bell hooks, and Ralph Ellison have all, in different ways, written on being looked at and on seeing black life. For instance, in *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, James Baldwin describes black suffering under the conditions of antiblackness where, as he puts it, "it is a very grave matter to be forced to imitate a people for whom you know—which is the price of your performance and survival—you do not exist. It is hard to imitate a people whose existence appears, mainly, to be made tolerable by their bottomless gratitude that they are not, thank heaven, you."²⁰ Toni Cade Bambara's call for emancipatory texts to "heal our imperialized eyes" as well as bell hooks's naming of the interrogating, "oppositional gaze" as "one that 'looks' to document" form part of this critical take on black looks.²¹ Ralph Ellison's critiques and quarrels with what is taken as canonical sociology and the ways in which much of its early racial knowledge production was achieved by distorting blackness has been detailed by Roderick Ferguson. In *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*, Ferguson offers an analysis of an unpublished chapter of Ellison's *Invisible Man* where he examines the ways that canonical sociology made itself out to be a discipline through the "sociologization" of black sexuality by way of surveillance. On

sociologization, Ferguson writes, "canonical sociology would help transform observation into an epistemological and 'objective' technique for the good of modern state power. This was a way of defining surveillance as a scientifically acceptable and socially necessary practice. It established the sociological onlooker as safely removed and insulated from the prurient practices of African American men, women and children."²²

As ethnography, tallying, and "statistics helped to produce surveillance as one mode, alongside confession, for producing the truth of sexuality in Western society," when this mode concerned the measurement of black human life in the post-Emancipation United States, such racial logics often made for sociology as a population management technology of the state.²³ One example of how such sociologization functioned in relation to blackness is "The Conflict and Fusion of Cultures with Special Reference to the Negro," Robert Park's 1918 address to the meeting of the American Sociological Society in which he stated, "The Negro is, by natural disposition, neither an intellectual nor an idealist like the Jew, nor a brooding introspective like the East Indian, nor a pioneer and frontiersman, like the Anglo-Saxon. He is primarily an artist, loving life for its own sake."²⁴ Park, who in 1925 would become president of the American Sociological Society, continued his address by saying, "The Negro is, so to speak, the lady among the races."²⁵ Park's address is instructive regarding the tenets of gendered antiblack racism that shaped the discipline of sociology in the early twentieth century. It is accounts of blackness like these that influenced Ellison's quarrels with sociological discourse, or what he called in his introduction to *Invisible Man* "the bland assertions of sociologists," where in observing, tallying, quantifying, indexing, and surveilling, black life was made "invisible."²⁶

Dark Matters stems from a questioning of what would happen if some of the ideas occurring in the emerging field of surveillance studies were put into conversation with the enduring archive of transatlantic slavery and its afterlife, in this way making visible the many ways that race continues to structure surveillance practices. This study's objects of investigation include the plan of the *Brooks* slave ship, the Panopticon, the *Book of Negroes* as a record of black escape from New York in the late 1700s, branding of enslaved people in transatlantic slavery, slave passes and runaway notices, lantern laws in eighteenth-century New York City that mandated enslaved people carry lit candles as they moved about the city after dark, a set of rules from the 1800s specifying the management of slaves on an East Texas

plantation, and the life of a young woman named Coobah who was enslaved in eighteenth-century Jamaica. If we are to take transatlantic slavery as antecedent to contemporary surveillance technologies and practices as they concern inventories of ships' cargo and the cheek-by-jowl arrangement laid out in the stowage plan of the *Brooks* slave ship, biometric identification by branding the slave's body with hot irons, slave markets and auction blocks as exercises of synoptic power where the many watched the few, slave passes and patrols, manumission papers and free badges, black codes and fugitive slave notices, it is to the archives, slave narratives, and often to black expressive practices, creative texts, and other efforts that we can look for moments of refusal and critique. Slave narratives, as Avery Gordon demonstrates, offer us "a sociology of slavery and freedom."²⁷ To paraphrase Gordon here, through their rendering of the autobiographical, the ethnographic, the historical, the literary, and the political, slave narratives are sociological in that they reveal the social life of the slave condition, speak of freedom practices, and detail the workings of power in the making of what is exceptional—the slave life—into the everyday through acts of violence.²⁸

Surveillance Studies

In this section, I provide a brief overview of key terms and concepts, some of them overlapping, as they relate to the concerns of this book. This is not meant to be a comprehensive review of the field of surveillance studies, but rather it is done to put this book into conversation with that body of research and writing and to also introduce the two main, interrelated conceptual schemes of this book: racializing surveillance and dark sousveillance. Research and writing that falls under the rubric of surveillance studies has come from a range of disciplines including sociology, geography, cultural studies, organization studies, science and technology studies, criminology, and critical theory. As an interdisciplinary field of study, the questions that shape surveillance studies center on the management of everyday and exceptional life—personal data, privacy, security, and terrorism, for example. In their introduction to *The Surveillance Studies Reader*, Sean Hier and Joshua Greenberg note that although "a qualitative shift in surveillance took place after 9/11," there still remains a certain absence in the literature "on the pre-9/11 forms of surveillance that made post-9/11 surveillance

possible."²⁹ *Dark Matters* seeks to make an intervention in the literature by naming the "absented presence" of blackness as part of that absence in the literature that Hier and Greenberg point to. In the sense that blackness is often absented from what is theorized and who is cited, it is ever present in the subjection of black motorists to a disproportionate number of traffic stops (driving while black), stop-and-frisk policing practices that subject black and Latino pedestrians in New York City and other urban spaces to just that, CCTV and urban renewal projects that displace those living in black city spaces, and mass incarceration in the United States where, for example, black men between the ages of twenty and twenty-four are imprisoned at a rate seven times higher than white men of that age group, and the various exclusions and other matters where blackness meets surveillance and then reveals the ongoing racisms of unfinished emancipation.³⁰ Unfinished emancipation suggests that slavery matters and the archive of transatlantic slavery must be engaged if we are to create a surveillance studies that grapples with its constitutive genealogies, where the archive of slavery is taken up in a way that does not replicate the racial schema that spawned it and that it reproduced, but at the same time does not erase its violence.

Since its emergence, surveillance studies has been primarily concerned with how and why populations are tracked, profiled, policed, and governed at state borders, in cities, at airports, in public and private spaces, through biometrics, telecommunications technology, CCTV, identification documents, and more recently by way of Internet-based social network sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Also of focus are the ways that those who are often subject to surveillance subvert, adopt, endorse, resist, innovate, limit, comply with, and monitor that very surveillance.³¹ Most surveillance, as David Lyon suggests, is "practiced with a view to enhancing efficiency, productivity, participation, welfare, health or safety," leaving social control "seldom a motivation for installing surveillance systems even though that may be an unintended or secondary consequence of their deployment."³² Lyon has argued that the "surveillance society" as a concept might be misleading, for it suggests "a total, homogeneous situation of being under surveillance" rather than a more nuanced understanding of the sometimes discreet and varying ways that surveillance operates.³³ He suggests that we should look more closely at "sites of surveillance," such as the military, the state, the workplace, policing, and the marketplace in order to come to an understanding of the commonalities that exist at these various sites. For Lyon, looking at contemporary sites of surveillance requires us to examine

some “common threads” including rationalization (where reason “rather than tradition, emotion or common-sense knowledge” is the justification given for standardization), technology (the use of high-technology applications), sorting (the social sorting of people into categories as a means of management and ascribing differential treatment), knowledgeability (the notion that how surveillance operates depends on “the different levels of knowledgeability and willing participation on the part of those whose life-details are under scrutiny”), and urgency (where panic prevails in risk and threat assessments, and in the adoption of security measures, especially post-9/11).³⁴

In *Private Lives and Public Surveillance* (1973), James Rule set out to explore commonalities within sites of surveillance as well by asking whether the “sociological qualities” of the totalizing system of surveillance as depicted in George Orwell’s 1984 could be seen in computer-mediated modern systems of mass surveillance in the United States and Britain, such as policing, banking, and national health care schemes.³⁵ Rule found that although the bureaucratic systems he studied did not function as malevolently as in 1984, Orwell’s novel served as a “theoretical extreme” from which to analyze a given system’s capacity for surveillance, in other words, how near it comes to replicating an Orwellian system of total control.³⁶ Using this rubric, Rule concludes that a large-scale and long-enduring surveillance system could be limited in its surveillance capacity in four ways: due to size, the centralization of its files, the speed of information flow, and restrictions to its points of contact with its clientele. Although much has changed with regard to innovations in information technologies, machine intelligence, telecommunications, and networked cloud computing since the time of Rule’s study in the late 1960s and early 1970s, *Private Lives* is instructive in its understanding of the workings of centralized and diffused power by state and private actors and institutions, and for identifying earlier developments in what Gary T. Marx has called “the new surveillance.”³⁷

What makes “the new surveillance” quite different from older and more traditional forms of social control is laid out by Marx in a set of ten characteristics that these new technologies, practices, and forms of surveillance share to varying degrees: (1) it is no longer impeded by distance or physical barriers; (2) data can be shared, permanently stored, compressed, and aggregated more easily due to advances in computing and telecommunications; (3) it is often undetected, meaning that “surveillance devices can either be made to appear as something else (one-way mirrors, cameras

hidden in a fire extinguisher, undercover agents) or can be virtually invisible (electronic snooping into microwave transmission or computer files); (4) data collection is often done without the consent of the target, for example with noncooperative biometric tagging and matching at a casino or a sporting event, or Facebook’s prompt to “tag your friends” using the photo tag suggest feature; (5) surveillance is about the prevention and management of risk through predictive or anticipatory means; (6) it is less labor intensive than before, opening up the possibility for monitoring that which was previously left unobserved, like the detection of illegal marijuana grow-ops by thermal cameras set to sense unusually high temperatures or the detection of illicit bomb making by collecting and testing chemical air samples; (7) it involves more self-surveillance by way of wearable computing or “electronic leashes” such as fitness trackers or other means by which people come to monitor themselves; (8) the presumption of guilt is assigned to some based on their membership within a particular category or grouping; (9) technological innovations have made for a more intensive and interiorizing surveillance where the body is concerned, for example, with voice analysis that is said to measure stress as a way to differentiate between lies and truths; and (10) it is now so intense and with reduced opportunities to evade it that “the uncertainty over whether or not surveillance is present is an important strategic element.”³⁸ With these developments regarding the scope and scale of surveillance, Marx has suggested that perhaps we have become a “maximum-security society.”

For Marx, the maximum-security society is a way to conceptualize how the surveillance that was once figured as contained inside the military base or the maximum-security prison (“perimeter security, thick walls with guard towers, spotlights, and a high degree of electronic surveillance”) now extends out to the whole society.³⁹ According to Marx, the maximum-security society is predictive, porous, monitored and self-monitored, and made up of computerized records and dossiers, where increasingly choices are engineered and limited by social location. In it, everyone is rendered suspicious at some time or another, while some individuals might be more often subject to what Marx terms “categorical suspicion” given their ascribed membership in certain groups. Notably, for Marx, the maximum-security society is also “a transparent society, in which the boundaries of time, distance, darkness, and physical barriers that traditionally protected information are weakened.”⁴⁰ Marx’s concept of “electronic leashes” and also what William Staples calls “participatory monitoring” are ways of understanding

how people, objects, and things come to be monitored in remote, routinized, and continuous ways—think of electronic ankle bracelets as a requirement of house arrest or car ignitions fitted with breathalyzers that measure a driver's breath alcohol content before the engine can be started.⁴¹ People who are subject to such monitoring are also tasked with actively participating in their own confinement by partnering, in a way, with the overseeing body or agency in the check for violations and infractions.

Oscar Gandy's "panoptic sort" names the processes by which the collection of data on and about individuals and groups as "citizens, employees and consumers" is used to identify, classify, assess, sort, or otherwise "control their access to the goods and services that define life in the modern capitalist society," for example, with the application of credit scores by lenders to rate the creditworthiness of consumers or put to use for targeted marketing of predatory lending with high-interest loans.⁴² The panoptic sort privileges some, while disadvantaging others. These concepts—categorical suspicion, social sorting, maximum-security society, electronic leashes, participatory monitoring, panoptic sorting—along with Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericson's concept of the "surveillant assemblage," are some of the ways that the field has come to conceptualize surveillance. As a model for understanding surveillance, the surveillant assemblage sees the observed human body "broken down by being abstracted from its territorial setting" and then reassembled elsewhere (a credit reporting database, for example) to then serve as virtual "data doubles," and also as sites of comparison by way of, for example, credit scores or urinalysis drug testing, where one's biological sample is collected and tested for drug use, or when "lie detectors align and compare assorted flows of respiration, pulse and electricity."⁴³

I want to add to these understandings of surveillance the concept of racializing surveillance. Racializing surveillance is a technology of social control where surveillance practices, policies, and performances concern the production of norms pertaining to race and exercise a "power to define what is in or out of place."⁴⁴ Being mindful here of David Theo Goldberg's caution that the term "racialization," if applied, should be done with a certain precision and not merely called upon to uncritically signal "race-inflected social situations," my use of the term "racializing surveillance" signals those moments when enactments of surveillance reify boundaries, borders, and bodies along racial lines, and where the outcome is often discriminatory treatment of those who are negatively racialized by such surveillance.⁴⁵ To say that racializing surveillance is a technology of social control is not to

take this form of surveillance as involving a fixed set of practices that maintain a racial order of things. Instead, it suggests that how things get ordered racially by way of surveillance depends on space and time and is subject to change, but most often upholds negating strategies that first accompanied European colonial expansion and transatlantic slavery that sought to structure social relations and institutions in ways that privilege whiteness. Racializing surveillance is not static or only applied to particular human groupings, but it does rely on certain techniques in order to reify boundaries along racial lines, and, in so doing, it reifies race. Race here is understood as operating in an interlocking manner with class, gender, sexuality, and other markers of identity and their various intersections.

John Fiske shows the operation of racializing surveillance in his discussion of video surveillance and the hypermediation of blackness where he argues that "although surveillance is penetrating deeply throughout our society, its penetration is differential."⁴⁶ Fiske argues that although Michel Foucault and George Orwell both conceptualized surveillance as integral to modernity, surveillance "has been racialized in a manner that they did not foresee: today's seeing eye is white."⁴⁷ Fiske gives the example that "street behaviors of white men (standing still and talking, using a cellular phone, passing an unseen object from one to another) may be coded as normal and thus granted no attention, whereas the same activity performed by Black men will be coded as lying on or beyond the boundary of the normal, and thus subject to disciplinary action."⁴⁸ Where public spaces are shaped for and by whiteness, some acts in public are abnormalized by way of racializing surveillance and then coded for disciplinary measures that are punitive in their effects. Racializing surveillance is also a part of the digital sphere with material consequences within and outside of it. For example, what Lyon calls "digital discrimination" signals this differential application of surveillance technologies, where "flows of personal data—abstracted information—are sifted and channeled in the process of risk assessment, to privilege some and disadvantage others, to accept some as legitimately present and to reject others."⁴⁹ In this way, data that is abstracted from, or produced about, individuals and groups is then profiled, circulated, and traded within and between databases. Such data is often marked by gender, nation, region, race, socioeconomic status, and other categories where the life chances of many, as Lyon notes, are "more circumscribed by the categories into which they fall. For some, those categories are particularly prejudicial. They already restrict them from consumer choices because of credit

ratings, or, more insidiously, relegate them to second-class status because of their color or ethnic background. Now, there is an added category to fear: the terrorist. It's an old story in high-tech guise."⁵⁰

To conceptualize racializing surveillance requires that I also unpack the term "surveillance." Surveillance is understood here as meaning "oversight," with the French prefix *sur-* meaning "from above" and the root word *-veillance* deriving from the French verb *veiller* and taken to mean observing or watching. The root word *-veillance* is differently applied and invoked, for example, with the terms "überveillance" (often defined as electronic surveillance by way of radio-frequency identification or other devices embedded in the living body), "redditveillance" (the crowdsourcing of surveillance through publicly accessible CCTV feeds, photographs uploaded to online image sharing platforms such as Flickr, and online discussion forums, such as Reddit and 4chan), and "dataveillance," to name a few.⁵¹ Lyon has outlined the "potency of dataveillance" in a surveillance society, which, he writes, is marked by "a range of personal data systems, connected by telecommunications networks, with a consistent identification scheme."⁵² The prefix *data-* signals that such observing is done through data collection as a way of managing or governing a certain population, for example, through the use of bar-coded customer loyalty cards at point of sale for discounted purchases while also collecting aggregate data on loyalty cardholders, or vehicles equipped with transponders that signal their entry and exit on pay-per-use highways and roads, often replacing toll booths.

The *Guardian* newspaper named "surveillance" and "sousveillance" as the words that mattered in 2013 alongside "Bitcoin," "Obamacare," and "binge-watching."⁵³ For Steve Mann, who coined the term "sousveillance," both terms—sousveillance and surveillance—fall under the broad concept of *veillance*, a form of watching that is neutral. Mann situates surveillance as the "more studied, applied and well-known *veillance*" of the two, defining surveillance as "organizations observing people" where this observing and recording is done by an entity in a position of power relative to the person or persons being observed and recorded.⁵⁴ Such oversight could take the form of red-light cameras that photograph vehicles when drivers violate traffic laws, or the monitoring of sales clerks on shop floors with CCTV, as well as, for example, punch clocks that track factory workers' time on the floor to more ubiquitous forms of observation, productivity monitoring, and data collection, such as remote desktop viewing or electronic monitoring software that tracks employees' non-work-related Internet use. Mann

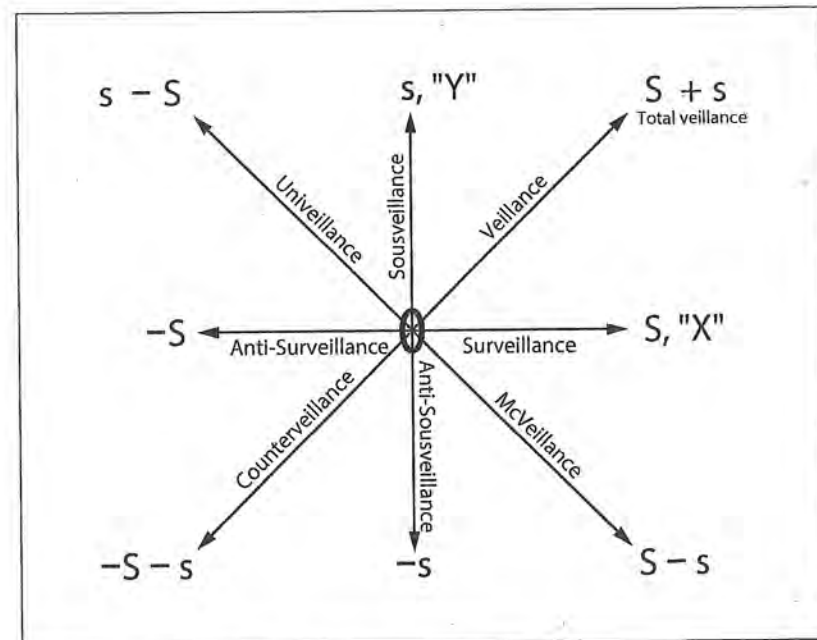


FIGURE 1.2. Steve Mann's Veillance Plane and the "8-point compass" model of its directionalities. From Steve Mann, "Veillance and Reciprocal Transparency." Reproduced with permission.

developed the term "sousveillance" as a way of naming an active inversion of the power relations that surveillance entails. Sousveillance, for Mann, is acts of "observing and recording by an entity not in a position of power or authority over the subject of the *veillance*," often done through the use of handheld or wearable cameras.⁵⁵ George Holliday's video recording of the beating of Rodney King by police officers of the Los Angeles Police Department on March 3, 1991, is an example of sousveillance, where Holliday's watching and recording of the police that night functioned as a form of citizen undersight.

Mann's Veillance Plane (figure 1.2) places surveillance on the x-axis (uppercase S) and sousveillance on the y-axis (lowercase s). An "8-point compass" model, the Veillance Plane sees sousveillance and surveillance as "orthogonal vectors" or perpendicular, where "the amount of sousveillance can be increased without necessarily decreasing the amount of surveillance."⁵⁶ Other directionalities on this plane include univeillance (e.g.,

when one party to a telephone conversation records said conversation, making this action more aligned with *sousveillance*, rather than an approach closer to surveillance where a “nonparticipant party” to a conversation does the recording) and McVeillance. McVeillance would include an establishment that sets up a policy that forbids patrons from using cameras and recording devices on its premises, while at the same time recording those very patrons through CCTV surveillance, for example. McVeillance is surveillance minus *sousveillance* (S – s). Mann describes the “*sousveillance* era” as occurring prior to the increase and normalization of surveillance cameras recording in public and private spaces. He argues that although “the king or emperor or sheriff had more power” in the *sousveillance* era, during this era “the observational component of that power was more approximately equal than it is today,” where people are often prevented from recording entities in positions of power, for example, when signs are posted in government offices and business establishments warning visitors and patrons that the use of recording devices on the premises is prohibited.⁵⁷ On the *sousveillance* era, Mann further explains, “Before approximately 50 years ago—and going back millions of years—we have what we call the ‘*sousveillance* era’ because the only *veillance* was *sousveillance* which was given by the body-borne camera formed by the eye, and the body-borne recording device comprised of the mind and brain.”⁵⁸

I want to make a link here between Mann’s naming of the human eye as a “body-borne camera” and what Judith Butler terms the “racially saturated field of visibility” and what Maurice O. Wallace has called the “picture-taking racial gaze” that fixes and frames the black subject within a “rigid and limited grid of representational possibilities.”⁵⁹ In other words, these are ways of seeing and conceptualizing blackness through stereotypes, abnormalization, and other means that impose limitations, particularly so in spaces that are shaped for whiteness, as discussed above with reference to Fanon’s epidermalization and to Fiske on how some acts and even the mere presence of blackness gets coded as criminal. We can read a rigid framing in how Rodney King’s acts of self-defense during a traffic stop in Los Angeles as recorded by Holliday on March 3, 1991, were coded as aggressive and violent. When King raised his hand to protect himself from police baton blows, his actions were met with more police force. Within what Butler has called a “racially saturated field of visibility,” such police violence is not read as violence; rather, the racially saturated field of visibility fixed and framed

Rodney King and read his actions, as recorded by Holliday, as that danger from which whiteness must be protected.⁶⁰

Although the observational component of the power of the sheriff might have been equal to that of the citizen in the *sousveillance* era, in the time of slavery that citizenry (the watchers) was deputized through white supremacy to apprehend any fugitive who escaped from bondage (the watched), making for a cumulative white gaze that functioned as a totalizing surveillance. Under these conditions of terror and the violent regulation of blackness by way of surveillance, the inequities between those who were watched over and those who did the watching are revealed. The violence of this cumulative gaze continues in the postslavery era.

Extending Steve Mann’s concept of *sousveillance*, which he describes as a way of “enhancing the ability of people to access and collect data about their surveillance and to neutralize surveillance,”⁶¹ I use the term “dark *sousveillance*” as a way to situate the tactics employed to render one’s self out of sight, and strategies used in the flight to freedom from slavery as necessarily ones of undersight. Using this model, but imagining Mann’s *Veillance Plane* as operating in three dimensions, I plot dark *sousveillance* as an imaginative place from which to mobilize a critique of racializing surveillance, a critique that takes form in antisurveillance, countersurveillance, and other freedom practices. Dark *sousveillance*, then, plots imaginaries that are oppositional and that are hopeful for another way of being. Dark *sousveillance* is a site of critique, as it speaks to black epistemologies of contending with antiblack surveillance, where the tools of social control in plantation surveillance or lantern laws in city spaces and beyond were appropriated, co-opted, repurposed, and challenged in order to facilitate survival and escape. This might sound like Negro spirituals that would sing of freedom and escape routes, or look like an 1851 handbill distributed by Theodore Parker, a white abolitionist from Massachusetts, that advised “colored people of Boston” to “keep a sharp lookout for kidnappers” who would act as slave catchers under fugitive slave laws that federalized antiblack surveillance (figure 1.3). In this way, acts that might fall under the rubric of dark *sousveillance* are not strictly enacted by those who fall under the category of blackness.

Dark *sousveillance* charts possibilities and coordinates modes of responding to, challenging, and confronting a surveillance that was almost all-encompassing. In the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Fred-

erick Douglass carefully describes how surveillance functioned as a comprehensive and regulating practice on slave life: "at every gate through which we were to pass, we saw a watchman—at every ferry a guard—on every bridge a sentinel—and in every wood a patrol. We were hemmed in upon every side."⁶² This sweeping ordering did not, of course, preclude escapes and other forms of resistance, such as antisurveillance "pranks" at the expense of slave patrollers by stretching vines across roads and bridges to trip the patrollers riding on their horses, or counterveillance songs, for example, the folk tune "Run, Nigger, Run," which warned of approaching slave patrols.⁶³ Recalling acts of antisurveillance and counterveillance, ex-slave Berry Smith of Forest, Mississippi, tells of "the pranks we used to play on them paterollers! Sometimes we tied ropes across the bridge and the paterollers'd hit it and go in the creek. Maybe we'd be fiddling and dancing on the bridge and they'd say, 'Here come the paterollers!' Then we'd put out."⁶⁴ Such playful tricks were a means of self-defense. These oral histories of ex-slaves, slave narratives, and runaway notices, in revealing a sociology of slavery, escape, and freedom, recall the brutalities of slavery (instruments of punishment, plantation regulation, slave patrols) and detail how black performative practices and creative acts (fiddling, songs, and dancing) also functioned as sousveillance acts and were employed by people as a way to escape and resist enslavement, and in so being were freedom acts.

As a way of knowing, dark sousveillance speaks not only to observing those in authority (the slave patroller or the plantation overseer, for instance) but also to the use of a keen and experiential insight of plantation surveillance in order to resist it. Forging slave passes and freedom papers or passing as free are examples of this. Others include fugitive slave Ellen Craft escaping to Philadelphia in 1848 with her husband, William, by posing as a white man and as William's owner; Henry "Box" Brown's escape from slavery in 1849 by mailing himself to freedom in a crate "3 feet long and 2 wide"; Harriet Jacobs's escape from slavery to a cramped garret above her grandmother's home that she named as both her prison and her emancipatory "loophole of retreat"; slave spirituals as coded messages to coordinate escape along the Underground Railroad; Harriet "Moses" Tubman and her role in the 1863 Combahee River Raid that saw over seven hundred people escape enslavement in South Carolina; Sojourner Truth's escape to freedom in 1826 when she "walked off, believing that to be alright."⁶⁵ Dark sousveillance is also a reading praxis for examining surveillance that allows for a questioning of how certain surveillance technologies installed

CAUTION!!
COLORED PEOPLE
OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,
 You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and
 advised, to avoid conversing with the
Watchmen and Police Officers
of Boston,
 For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR &
 ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as
KIDNAPPERS
 AND
Slave Catchers,
 And they have already been actually employed in
KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING
SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your **LIBERTY,**
 and the *Welfare of the Fugitives* among you, *Shun*
 them in every possible manner, as so many **HOUNDS**
 on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.
Keep a Sharp Look Out for
KIDNAPPERS, and have
TOP EYE open.
APRIL 24, 1851.

FIGURE 1.3. "Caution! Colored People of Boston," handbill (1851). Library of Congress, Printed Ephemera Collection; Portfolio 60, Folder 22. 30.5 x 25 cm.

during slavery to monitor and track blackness as property (for example, branding, the one-drop rule, quantitative plantation records that listed enslaved people alongside livestock and crops, slave passes, slave patrols, and runaway notices) anticipate the contemporary surveillance of racialized subjects, and it also provides a way to frame how the contemporary surveillance of the racial body might be contended with.

The Chapters

If, for Foucault, “the disciplinary gaze of the Panopticon is the archetypical power of modernity,” as Lyon has suggested in the introduction to *Surveillance Studies: An Overview*,⁶⁶ then it is my contention that the slave ship too must be understood as an operation of the power of modernity, and as part of the violent regulation of blackness. Chapter 1, “Notes on Surveillance Studies: Through the Door of No Return,” considers the Panopticon (1786) and the plan of the slave ship *Brooks* (1789) for what these two schematic plans disclose about surveillance, race, and the production of knowledge. My intent in this chapter is not to reify the Panopticon as the definitive model of modern surveillance, but rather I want to complicate it through a reading of the slave ship. Both of these diagrams were published in and around the same time period, and they continue to provoke, in different ways, questions for both surveillance studies and for theorizing the black diaspora. Taking up David Murakami Wood’s call for a “critical reinterpretation” of panopticism, what I am suggesting here is that one of the ways that this reinterpretation can be done is through a reading of the slave ship.⁶⁷ Panopticism, for Murakami Wood, is understood as “the social trajectory represented by the figure of the Panopticon.”⁶⁸ Panopticism, then, is the Panopticon as a social practice. I interrogate the Panopticon and the plan of the slave ship *Brooks* to ask: What kinds of subjects were these two spaces meant to produce? How is social control exercised? What acts of subversion and resistance do these structures allow for? Also in this chapter, I explore the operation of disciplinary and sovereign forms of power over black life under slavery by looking at plantation management and running away.

In Jeremy Bentham’s plan for the Panopticon, small lamps worked to “extend to the night the security of the day.”⁶⁹ I examine this idea of the security of the day and surveillance by lamps at night in Chapter 2, “Ev-

erybody’s Got a Little Light under the Sun: The Making of the *Book of Negroes*.” In this chapter I discuss what I call “lantern laws,” which were ordinances “For Regulating Negroes and Slaves in the Night Time” in New York City that compelled black, mixed-race, and indigenous slaves to carry small lamps, if in the streets after dark and unescorted by a white person. With this citywide mandate, “No Negro, Mulatto or Indian slave could” be in the streets unaccompanied “an hour after sunset” without “a lanthorn and lighted candle in it, so as the light thereof may be plainly seen” without penalty.⁷⁰ Here technologies of seeing that are racializing in their application and effects, from a candle flame to the white gaze, were employed in an attempt to identify who was in place with permission and who was out of place with censure. The title of this chapter is taken, or sampled, from the lyrics of funk band Parliament’s song “Flash Light” (1977). I do this to hint at and imagine what it might mean in our present moment to be mandated to carry a handheld flashlight in the streets after dark, illuminating blackness. This chapter also looks to prior histories of surveillance, identification documents, and black mobilities through a reading of the archive of the *Book of Negroes*. Working with treaties, letters and other government documents, maps, memoirs, and fugitive slave advertisements as primary source data, I use this archive to examine the arbitration that took place at Fraunces Tavern in New York City between fugitive slaves who sought to be included in the *Book of Negroes* and those who claimed them as escaped property. The *Book of Negroes* is an eighteenth-century ledger that lists three thousand self-emancipating former slaves who embarked mainly on British ships, like *Danger* and *Generous Friends*, during the British evacuation of New York in 1783 after the American Revolution. The *Book of Negroes*, I argue, is the first government-issued document for state-regulated migration between the United States and Canada that explicitly linked corporeal markers to the right to travel. This linking of gender (often recorded in the ledger as “fine wench,” “ordinary fellow,” “snug little wench”), race (“healthy Negress,” “worn out, half Indian,” “fine girl, $\frac{3}{4}$ white”), labor (“brickmaker,” “carpenter by trade,” “formerly slave to”), disabilities (“lame of the left arm,” “stone blind,” “blind & lame”), and other identifying marks, adjectives, and characterizations (“3 scars in her face,” “cut in his right eye, Guinea born,” “remarkably stout and lusty,” “an idiot”) points to the ways that biometric information, understood simply as “bio” (of the body) and “metric” (pertaining to measurement), has long been deployed as a technology in the surveillance of black mobilities and of black stabi-

ties and containment. This chapter argues that biometric information technology—as a measure of the black body—has a long history in the technologies of slavery that sought to govern black people on the move, notably those technologies concerned with escape.

Chapter 3, “B@nding Blackness: Biometric Technology and the Surveillance of Blackness,” asks broader questions about early applications of biometric surveillance and its role in African American racial formation in particular, and in the black diaspora in general. I begin with a discussion of an 1863 *carte de visite* featuring “Wilson Chinn, a Branded Slave from Louisiana” as a way to locate my analysis of branding within plantation surveillance and punishment practices. To more clearly draw the links between contemporary biometric information technology and transatlantic slavery, I trace its archive, namely the diary of Thomas Thistlewood (an English planter and slave owner) that tells of plantation conditions in eighteenth-century Jamaica and the life of an enslaved woman named Coobah, other written accounts, runaway notices, and cartes de visite. I begin with a discussion of branding during transatlantic slavery as a marking, making, and marketing of blackness as commodity. Branding was a measure of slavery, an act of making the body legible as property that was put to work in the production of the slave as object that could be bought, sold, and traded. I argue here that the history of branding in transatlantic slavery anticipates the “social sorting” outcomes that Lyon’s work alerts us to regarding some contemporary surveillance practices, including passports, identification documents, or credit bureau databases.⁷¹ Through Frantz Fanon’s concept of epidermalization—that being the imposition of race on the body—I trace and provide a genealogy of modern, digital epidermalization by focusing on branding and the role of prototypical whiteness in the development of contemporary biometric information technology. I consider the way that what Paul Gilroy terms “epidermal thinking” operates in the discourses surrounding research and development (R&D) of contemporary biometric information technologies and their applications: the fingerprint data template technology and retina scans where the human body, or parts and pieces of it, are digitized for automation, identification, and verification purposes or, in keeping with what Haggerty and Ericson argue as the markings of the surveillant assemblages, “reduce flesh to pure information.”⁷² Epidermal thinking marks the epistemologies concerning sight at the site of the racial body.⁷³ I look at some R&D reports concerning race and gender within the biometrics industry, including one particular report that

uses images of actor Will Smith as the prototypical black male and actor Tom Cruise as the prototypical white male. This chapter also examines the branding of blackness in contemporary capitalism by looking at National Football League quarterback Michael Vick’s postincarceration rebranding, artist Hank Willis Thomas’s *B@nded* series, and blockbuster films starring actor Will Smith that feature biometric information technology. I argue in this chapter that the filmic representation of biometrics is one of the ways that the viewing public gains a popular biometric consciousness and comes to understand these surveillance technologies. I also explore the contemporary circulation of branding artifacts for sale online and take up visual artists Mendi + Keith Obadike’s *Blackness for Sale*, where Keith Obadike put his blackness up for sale on eBay.com as a way to question the current trade in slave memorabilia and branding blackness.

Chapter 4, “What Did TSA Find in Solange’s Fro?: Security Theater at the Airport,” asks, broadly, what the experiences of black women in airports can tell us about the airport as a social formation. This chapter also examines art and artworks at and about the airport and popular culture representations of post-9/11 security practices at the airport to form a general theory of security theater. This is far from saying that security measures and security theater at the airport are a strictly post-9/11 formation. Between 1970 and 2000 there were 184 hijackings of U.S. commercial airline flights, while for foreign carriers during that period hijackings totaled 586.⁷⁴ Garrett Brock Trapnell hijacked one of those planes, Trans World Airlines Flight 2 from Los Angeles to New York on January 28, 1972, and during this hijacking he reportedly said: “I’m going to tell you exactly what I want. I want \$306,800 in cash waiting at Kennedy. I want the San Jose jail notified I want Angela Davis released.”⁷⁵ Trapnell later claimed that his demand that Angela Davis be released was actually a ploy to garner the attention and support of the black nationalist movement. Trapnell’s was one of twenty-six hijackings of U.S. air carriers in 1972, a peak in domestic aerial piracy that led to the introduction of new security measures by way of a Federal Aviation Administration Emergency Order on December 5, 1972.⁷⁶ This Emergency Order included preflight screenings of passengers and their carry-on baggage by way of magnetometers, or walk-through metal detectors, and the use of handheld metal detectors at many U.S. airports. This was not the first federal intervention into antihijacking efforts. On September 11, 1970, President Richard Nixon announced countermeasures to combat what he called “the menace of air piracy,” including dispatching plainclothes armed

personnel, or sky marshals, onboard U.S. commercial flights and the expansion of the use of magnetometers at airports.⁷⁷ The rash of airplane hijackings in the early 1970s eventually led to the Anti-hijacking or Air Transportation Security Act of 1974, signed into law by Nixon on August 5, 1974, four days before his resignation from the office of the president. On February 22 of that same year, Samuel J. Byck attempted to hijack Delta Airlines Flight 523 out of Baltimore-Washington International Airport with the expressed intent to assassinate President Nixon by weaponizing the plane and crashing it into the White House. Byck killed two people during his failed attempt, including the plane's copilot. Byck died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound during a standoff with police. Delta Flight 523 never left the runway that day.

I recount this short history of hijackings and various countermeasures as a way to situate contemporary security measures in U.S. air travel as having a much earlier history than those measures taken and performances undergone after the tragic attacks by weaponized aircraft in New York City and Washington, DC, on September 11, 2001. This history offers a counterframing to then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice's comment during a press briefing in 2002 when, in reference to the 9/11 hijackings, she stated, "I don't think anybody could have predicted . . . that they would try to use an airplane as a missile, a hijacked airplane as a missile."⁷⁸ At post-9/11 U.S. airports, passenger screening by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) fulfills the usual scripts of confession ("What is the purpose of your travel?" or "What do you do for a living?" and "Are you bringing any goods in with you?"). With increasing procedural delays due to antiliquid policies, pat downs, chat downs, opt outs, the application of trace detection technologies to check for residue of explosive making materials, and with Secondary Security Screening Selection for some, many travelers undergo a certain amount of ontological insecurity at the border, particularly at airports. While the airport is an institutional site where almost everybody is treated with suspicion at one time or another—by TSA agents, by airline workers, and by other travelers—some travelers may be marked as more suspicious than others. In Chapter 4, I introduce the concept of racial baggage in order to name the ways that race and racism weigh some people down at the airport. I also examine the discretionary power wielded by TSA agents and by airline workers by looking at cases of, mainly, black women who were subjected to invasive pat downs, hair searches, and other security theater measures. I do this as a way to question how black women are de-

ployed in narratives about airport security, for example, through representations in popular culture as uninterested, sassy, and ineffective TSA agents. This chapter suggests that we pay attention to the ways that black women's bodies come to represent, and also resist, security theater at the airport.

The epilogue brings together this book's key concerns around the question of what happens when blackness enters the frame, whether that be cameras that "can't see black people" or centering blackness when it comes to questioning the logics of surveillance.

NOTES ON SURVEILLANCE STUDIES

THROUGH THE DOOR OF NO RETURN

The door is a place, real, imaginary and imagined. As islands and dark continents are. It is a place which exists or existed. The door out of which Africans were captured, loaded onto ships heading for the New World. It was the door of a million exits multiplied. It is a door many of us wish never existed.

—DIONNE BRAND, *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*

In early August 1785, English social reformer Jeremy Bentham set out from Brighton, England, destined for Krichëv, Russia. It was in Russia where Bentham would first conceive of the Panopticon in a series of letters “from Crecheff in White Russia, to a friend in England.” At one point during his journey, in an attempt to reach Constantinople, he embarked from Smyrna on a cramped Turkish caïque with “24 passengers on the deck, all Turks; besides 18 young Negresses (slaves) under the hatches.”¹ Much of Bentham’s writings that addressed slavery were written before this voyage. In those texts he touches on such topics as sugar production, punishment, and abolition. Writing during the 1770s on “afflictive capital punishment,” that being when the degree of pain imposed upon the body surpasses that necessary to produce death, Bentham details the severe methods of torture and punishment reserved for “negro slaves” of the European colonies in the West Indies for the crime of rebellion, a crime so named, he writes,

"because they are the weakest, but which, if they were the strongest would be called an act of self-defense."² While acknowledging Europe's desire for "sugar and coffee" and other crops produced through enslaved labor in the colonies, he suggests that when these goods are obtained by keeping people enslaved "in a state in which they cannot be kept but by the terror of such execution: are there any considerations of luxury or enjoyment that can counterbalance such evils?"³ On the terror of the codes that governed slave life in the West Indies, Bentham has this to say: "let the colonist reflect upon this: if such a code be necessary the colonies are a disgrace and an outrage on humanity; if not necessary, these laws are a disgrace to the colonists themselves."⁴ Bentham arrived in Krichëv in February 1786. One can only wonder if he thought of the terror of "capital punishment" and of the slave's "self-defense" when he came across those eighteen "young Negresses" held captive in the hatches of that cramped Turkish caïque.

That somewhere along a journey that ends in *The Panopticon; or, The Inspection House* Jeremy Bentham traveled with "18 young Negresses (slaves)" guides me to question the ways that the captive black female body asks us to conceptualize the links between race, gender, slavery, and surveillance. In other words, how must we grapple with the Panopticon, with the knowledge that somewhere within the history of its formation are eighteen "young Negresses" held "under the hatches"? If Bentham's Panopticon depended on an exercise of power where the inspector sees everything while remaining unseen, how might the view from "under the hatches" be another site from which to conceptualize the operation of power? This chapter asks that we rethink the Panopticon (1786) through the plan of the slave ship *Brooks* (1789), as a way to link surveillance studies to black feminist scholarship.

The first section of this chapter offers an overview of the Panopticon, disciplinary power, and sovereign power. In the second section I discuss some of the ways that the Panopticon and panopticism have been put to use in theorizing surveillance, and in particular three analytical concepts derived from this model of social control: synopticon, banopticon, and postpanopticism. In the third section I discuss the plan of the slave ship. Following this, I examine surveillance technologies of slavery, such as advertisements for runaway slaves and the census, as well as a set of rules from the 1800s for the management of slaves on an East Texas plantation. I do this in order to understand how racializing surveillance functioned through these technologies. I end this chapter by looking to black feminist theorizing of sur-

veillance, including bell hooks on "talking back" (1989) and "black looks" (1992) and Patricia Hill Collins's concept of "controlling images" (2000) as a way to situate surveillance as both a discursive and a material practice. I also look to artist Robin Rhode's *Pan's Opticon* (2008) and artist Adrian Piper's video installation *What It's Like, What It Is #3* (1991), as these creative texts offer ways to understand black looks and talking back as oppositional practices that challenge the stereotyped representations of controlling images and their material effects. My use of Rhode's *Pan's Opticon* and Piper's *What It's Like, What It Is #3* is a way of drawing on black creative practices in order to articulate a critique of the surveillance of blackness. In this fashion, these works open up a way to think creatively about what happens if we center the conditions of blackness when we theorize surveillance.

Seeing without Being Seen: The Plan of the Panopticon

The Panopticon was conceived by Jeremy Bentham in 1786 and then amended and produced diagrammatically in 1791 with the assistance of English architect Willey Reveley. Bentham first came upon the idea through his brother Samuel, an engineer and naval architect who had envisioned the Panopticon as a model for workforce supervision. Pan, in Greek mythology, is the god of shepherds and flocks, the name derived from *paien*, meaning "pasture" and hinting at the root word of "pastoral," and in this way the prefix *pan-* gestures to pastoral power. Pastoral power is a power that is individualizing, beneficent, and "essentially exercised over a multiplicity in movement."⁵ Bentham imagined the Panopticon to be, as the name suggests, all-seeing and also polyvalent, meaning it could be put to use in any establishment where persons were to be kept under watch: prisons, schools, poorhouses, factories, hospitals, lazarettos, or quarantine stations. Or, as he wrote, "No matter how different, or even opposite the purpose: whether it be that of *punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick, instructing the willing* in any branch of industry, or *training the rising race* in the path of education."⁶ Of course, "the willing," "the idle," and the so-called rising race might be more able to leave this enclosure at will or by choice than "the suspected" or "the incorrigible." With this "seeing machine," the unverified few could watch the many and "the more constantly the persons to be inspected are under the eyes of the persons who should

inspect them, the more perfectly will the purpose of the establishment have been attained.⁷ This is control by design, where population management and the transmission of knowledge about the subject could, as Bentham explains, be achieved, “all by a simple idea of Architecture!”⁸

The Panopticon’s floor plan is this: a circular building where the prisoners would occupy cells situated along its circumference (figure 1.1). With the inspector’s lodge, or tower, at the center, his field of view is unobstructed: at the back of each cell, a window, and in its front a type of iron grating thin enough that it would enable the inspector to observe the goings-on in the prisoner cells. The cells in the Panopticon make use of “protracted partitions”—where the partitions extend beyond the iron grating that covers the front of the cell—so that communication between inmates is minimized, and making for “lateral invisibility.”⁹ In this enclosed institution the watched are separated from the watchers; the inspector’s presence is unverifiable; and there is said to be no privacy for those that are subject to this architecture of control. Security in the Panopticon, as Bentham asserts, is achieved by way of small lamps, lit after dark and located outside each window of the inspection tower, that worked to “extend to the night the security of the day” through the use of reflectors.¹⁰ By employing mirrors in this fashion, a blinding light was used as a means of preventing the prisoner from knowing whether or not the inspection tower was occupied. Power, in the Panopticon, is exercised by a “play of light,” as Michel Foucault put it, and by “glance from center to periphery.”¹¹ The inspection tower is

divided into quarters, by partitions formed by two diameters to the circle, crossing each other at right angles. For these partitions the thinnest materials might serve; and they might be made removeable at pleasure; the height, sufficient to prevent the prisoners seeing over them from cells. Doors to these partitions, if left open at any time, might produce the thorough light, to prevent this, divide each partition into two, at any part required, setting down the one-half at such distance from the other as shall be equal to the aperture of a door.¹²

With Bentham’s plan for prison architecture, we can see how light, shadows, mirrors, and walls are all employed in ways that are meant to engender in many a prisoner a certain self-discipline under the threat of external observation, as was its intended function. The Panopticon would allow for a disciplinary exercise of power. Such exercises of power are not ones of pomp and pageantry, like a queen’s coronation, a state funeral, or a royal

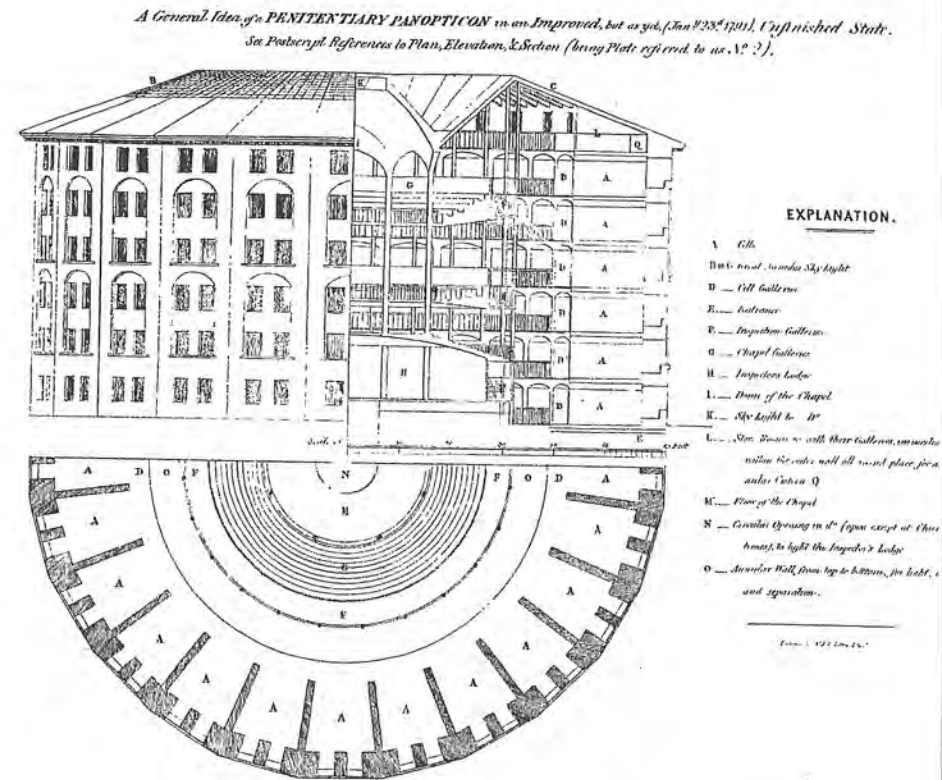


FIGURE 1.1. The plan of the Panopticon (1791). Published in 1843 (originally 1791) in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. IV, pp. 172–173.

wedding, or of the overt kind of spectacular violence that often accompanies sovereign power. Instead, in this instance, power is covert and achieved by a play of light.

If an act that is deemed criminal is an assault on the sovereign’s power, an exercise of sovereign power is that which seeks to make the sovereign’s surplus power plainly understood by all. It is spectacular and episodic, and functions “to make everyone aware,” often through ceremonial terror, “of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign.”¹³ This is a power exercised through excessive means and force, like the public execution of Damiens the regicide, the gruesome scene that opens Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975). In 1757, Robert-François Damiens was made to make the *amende honorable*, a symbolic apology for his crime

against the sovereign. He was carted through the streets of Paris, France, holding a burning torch in one hand and his weapon of choice, a knife, in the other. Boiling resin, sulfur, wax, and oil were combined and poured into his open wounds, and he was drawn by horses, quartered, and eventually hacked apart for his attempt on the life of Louis xv, king of France. With onlookers surrounding, Damiens's body was burned and his ashes were "thrown to the winds."¹⁴

Another, but less well-known, public execution took place twenty-three years before that of Damiens the regicide in Paris. This time it was in the French colony of Nouvelle-France, and it was a black woman who was subjected to this gruesome exercise of sovereign power. Marie-Joseph Angélique, a Portuguese-born enslaved black woman, was tried and convicted of setting a fire that left much of the town of Montréal in ruins in 1734, the arson itself ruled to be an affront to that same sovereign that Damiens the regicide attempted to assassinate, King Louis xv.¹⁵ Angélique arrived in Montréal from New England after being sold to François Poulin de Francheville in 1725. After Francheville's death in 1733, his wife, Thérèse de Couagne, became Angélique's sole mistress, but through escape, insolence, unruliness, and talking back, Angélique was never quite fully under Madame Francheville's complete control. Madame Francheville would later make arrangements to sell Angélique for six hundred pounds of gunpowder. That sale was never fulfilled as, on the evening of April 10, 1734, a fire broke out on the roof of the Francheville home and Angélique was named the arsonist and arrested the morning after. Claude Thibault, a white indentured servant from France who was under contract to Madame Francheville, was named as Angélique's accomplice. Thibault was Angélique's lover. Angélique and Thibault had escaped from Montréal that previous winter, but were captured and returned. Days after the fire, Thibault disappeared and was never arrested. Angélique's trial lasted two months. Under interrogation she reportedly stated, "No one told me to set the fire. No one helped me, because I did not do it."¹⁶ Later, under repeated torture, she recanted that assertion of her innocence—"C'est moi. It's me and no one else. I want to die. C'est moi."¹⁷ Condemned to death, she was carted through the streets of Montréal, made to make the amende honorable with a burning torch held in her hand at the door of the town's parish, and hanged. Angélique's body hung in the street for all to observe for hours after her execution, was later burned and her ashes thrown to the winds, as was the ceremony prescribed for the capital punishment of an arsonist according to French law.¹⁸

The ceremony of Angélique's execution, according to Katherine McKittrick, achieved at least two things: "spectacular punishment of someone and something that is said not to exist," that something being blackness in and of Canada as absented presence; and "the destroying of bodily evidence."¹⁹ The trial and hanging of Angélique points to the criminalization of black women's resistance to captivity. The will of the sovereign was violently inscribed in Angélique's excruciating and spectacular death (both a public spectacle and spectacularly elaborate in its excessive violence) and made known for all who observed it—both free and enslaved—the expendability of slave life.

Foucault chose to begin "The Body of the Condemned," the first chapter of *Discipline and Punish*, with the brutal public execution of Robert-Françoise Damiens in order to set up, in stark contrast, his discussion of the discrete and also distributed way that exercises of disciplinary power operate in the form of rules "for the House of young prisoners in Paris," where regulation of the subject happened through observation and also through routines, repetition, self-discipline, and by following instructions and timetables. For example, the delinquent's day would be structured like this: "Art. 18 *Rising*. At the first drum roll, the prisoners must rise and dress in silence, as the supervisor opens the cell doors"; "Art. 20. *Work*. . . They form into work teams and go off to work, which must begin at six in the summer and seven in the winter"; and "Art. 22. *School*. At twenty minutes to eleven, at the drum-roll, the prisoners form into ranks, and proceed in divisions to the school. The class lasts two hours and consists alternately of reading, writing, drawing and arithmetic."²⁰ The rules for the management of delinquents came eighty years after the execution of Damiens. Foucault cites both the execution and the rules to say that "they each define a certain penal style" and mark the decline of punishment as a public spectacle.²¹ Disciplinary power did not do away with or supplant the majestic and often gruesome instantiations of sovereign power, however. Instead, at times, both formulations of power—sovereign and disciplinary—worked together. In reading punishment as public spectacle in the Old France and the New, I chose to recount the hanging of Marie-Joseph Angélique here because her torture and killing evidences blackness and slavery in Canada pre-*Book of Negroes* (1783), pre-Underground Railroad escape of black people from the United States to Canada (early nineteenth century), and pre-Confederation (1867). Putting the life of Marie-Joseph Angélique in conversation with the death of the regicide Robert-Françoise Damiens is

my way of interrupting Foucault's reading of discipline and the birth of the prison, as doing so points to an alternative archive from which to understand the hold of both disciplinary and sovereign power on black life under slavery. While Foucault argued that the decline of the spectacle of public torture as punishment might have marked "a slackening of the hold on the body," this chapter contends that when that body is black, the grip hardly loosened during slavery and continued post-Emancipation with, for example, the mob violence of lynching and other acts of racial terrorism.²²

Panopticon, Panoptical, Panopticism: A Critical Reinterpretation

Various surveillance studies theorists have employed the Panopticon as an analytical tool in order to question how social control operates on certain bodies and in certain spaces, as well as a way to conceptualize disciplinary power and the ways that it comes to be internalized by some. Some theorists of surveillance have used the metaphor of the Panopticon to generate other ways of conceptualizing surveillance. For example, Thomas Mathiesen's synopticon (1997) is a reversal of the panoptic schema where the many watch the few in a mass-mediated fashion (think here of the reality television show *Big Brother*, where a television audience, as well as an Internet-based one, observe "houseguests" as they compete for prizes by way of twenty-four-hour continuous camera feeds), or Didier Bigo's banopticon, where those whom the state abandons are often banned based on a racialization of risk. Bigo takes the view that the practice of profiling and categorizing some into risk categories and then "projecting them by generalization upon the potential behaviour of each individual pertaining to the risk category" is the disposition of U.S.-led security measures and practices, and increasingly so post-9/11.²³ With the banopticon, certain groups and individuals are labeled as potentially dangerous. This labeling as dangerous is then massively applied to certain nations and their citizens and to those outside the bounds of citizenship, where anxieties and the anticipation of risk stemming from those deemed "dangerous minorities" then shape security measures at borders, on city streets, and other spaces that come to be associated with risk, or with being at risk of becoming risky. According to Bigo, the banopticon is "characterized by the exceptionalism of power (rules of emergency and their tendency to become permanent), by the

way it excludes certain groups in the name of their future potential behaviour (profiling) and by the way it normalizes the non-excluded through its production of normative imperatives, the most important of which is free movement."²⁴ The banopticon might look like trusted traveler programs that speed up border crossings for preapproved travelers who provide some form of biometric-based verification, or free trade zones where goods can be manufactured, transported, imported, and exported without duties or other barriers to trade. The banopticon could also take the form of stop-and-frisk policing practices where categories of suspicion could include "furtive movements," or "fits a relative description," or "change direction at the sight of an officer," or "inappropriate attire for season."²⁵

Some scholars have pointed to what they see as an apparent overreliance on the Panopticon in the field of surveillance studies that leaves the role of visibility overstated. Others have suggested that the Panopticon is no longer useful, or that at least as a way of theorizing disciplinary power in the contemporary moment it cannot offer a complete account of, for example, surveillance and exercises of power within social media and cell phone usage, or by way of digital information databases and data aggregators. On this point, Roy Boyne offers a critique of panopticism in which he contends that "post-Panoptical subjects reliably watch over themselves" without need of the physical structure of the Panopticon.²⁶ He suggests that panopticism has been "transcended by the emergent practice of pre-visualization" where simulation, profiling, and prevention occur, rather than merely observation.²⁷ Also, Boyne names the "reversal of the Panoptical polarity," where the many watch the few, as operating in conjunction with the Panopticon, where the few watch the activities of the many, in this way echoing Thomas Mathiesen on the synopticon.²⁸ John Gilliom and Torin Monahan, in their analysis of social media sites such as Facebook, argue that "rather than being a prisonlike panopticon where trapped people follow the rules because they're afraid someone is watching, with Facebook and similar sites people are probably more afraid that no one is watching, that no one cares what they're up to."²⁹ With this apparent fear of not being noticed, Gilliom and Monahan say that social media users "discipline themselves in a different way by divulging as much as possible about their lives and thoughts."³⁰ Other theories, like the "social sorting" of people and populations into categories of risk, are offered as a means of qualifying and understanding forms of surveillance that are sometimes overlooked. On the overrepresentation of the panopticon and accounts that take power as

unilaterally exercised, Lyon writes that “not only does this kind of account distract attention from the subtle interplay between surveillance power and the attitudes and activities of those subject to surveillance, it also places all the emphasis on forms of rational control.”³¹ Likewise, Kevin Haggerty names the Panopticon as “oppressive,” not only because of an overreliance placed upon it as an explanatory metaphor in works that analyze surveillance, but also for the way “the panoptic model has become reified, directing scholarly attention to a select subset of attributes of surveillance,” which has resulted in the panoptic schema being applied in areas where it is, as he argues, “ill-suited, and important attributes of surveillance that cannot be neatly subsumed under the ‘panoptic’ rubric have been neglected.”³² One area of contention that Haggerty points to is the claim that in the panoptic schema, who, or what, does the watching is irrespective, or, as Foucault wrote, “Stones can make people docile and knowable.”³³ For Haggerty, it is a mistake not to take into account the “attitudes, predispositions, biases, prejudices and personal idiosyncrasies” of those who do the surveillance for how these factors inform the “form, intensity and regularity” of their responses.³⁴

The very failure of panopticism to produce docile subjects is an important point of criticism, where, as Boyne puts it, “that failure is announced in many places: prison riots, asylum sub-cultures, ego survival in Gulag or concentration camp.”³⁵ In her observation and interviews at intensive management units housed within prisons run by the Washington State Department of Corrections, Lorna Rhodes names aggressive behavior (throwing feces, urine, and other bodily fluids), passive behavior (such as refusals to eat), and self-harm as instances in which the body is used as a means of resistance, and she argues that these acts are expressions of inmates’ struggles with the panopticon.³⁶ Intensive management units, or special housing units, are solitary confinement units where certain inmates are segregated from the general prison population, spending up to twenty-three hours a day in their individual cells. Prolonged isolation in solitary confinement for many leads to depression, hallucinations, and acts of self-mutilation.

While the prisoner’s body is “the very ground of the panoptical relation,” under such conditions, as Rhodes contends, “it is also its potential undoing; he has within himself the makings of a perverse opacity.”³⁷ Rhodes cites Lyon here in her naming of this “perverse opacity,” a term that, as Lyon explains, points to the idea that such “resistance may not be liberatory—

indeed, it invites further control—but it calls in question both the panopticon and our representations of it.”³⁸ Like Rhodes and Lyon, Boyne also calls the Panopticon into question, but he advises us not to do away with it completely as a way to understand our contemporary condition. Instead, he suggests that we “draw a line through the terms Panopticon, Panoptical, Panopticism. To place these terms under erasure, drawing a black line through them, allowing the idea to be seen at the same time as denying its validity as description, could be the most honest resolution.”³⁹

Unarguably the most cited work in surveillance studies on the Panopticon as a metaphor for disciplinary exercises of power is Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, first published in 1974 as *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la Prison*, with the book’s French title alluding more closely to its focus on surveillance. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that “discipline makes individuals” and achieves its success by employing “simple instruments”: hierarchical observation (the greater over lesser authority, whether through physical structures or choreographed gazes), normalizing judgment (quantitative measurements, comparisons, establishment and adherence to set rules and norms, exclusions), and the examination.⁴⁰ Broadly, Foucault explains that hierarchical observation and normalizing judgment combine in the examination. Hierarchical observation works “as a piece of machinery” designed for “the uninterrupted play of calculated gazes.”⁴¹ With this play of gazes in the disciplinary institution, such as the penitentiary or the school campus, surveillance “functioned like a microscope of conduct” and sought to objectify, transform, and improve individuals through architectural arrangements, registration, examination, and documentation.⁴² Foucault describes normalizing judgment as that which normalizes by singling out and correcting “that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it” with a glance, a gaze that classifies, ranks, and measures.⁴³ So although disciplinary power is individualizing, by way of normalizing judgment, individual actions are referred “to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed.”⁴⁴ The examination places the individual in a “network of writing” as it is “accompanied at the same time by a system of intense registration and of documentary accumulation.”⁴⁵ The examination in the disciplinary institution seeks to objectify and transform individuals through architectural arrangements, registration, and documentation.

Prefiguring Bentham's design of the Panopticon and the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century disciplinary institutions that Foucault lays out in *Discipline and Punish*, the architectural design, registration, documentation, and examination at slave trafficking forts and ports, through the Door of No Return, and on slave ships during the Middle Passage voyage from Africa to the auction blocks and plantations of the New World were subject defining, but always violent. The violent regulation of blackness as spectacle and as disciplinary combined in the racializing surveillance of the slave system. On this point, Robyn Wiegman states that "the disciplinary power of race, in short, must be read as implicated in both specular and panoptic regimes."⁴⁶ Here, black children, women, and men were subject to these "simple" but violent instruments—branding irons fashioned out of silver wire, ships' registers in which African lives were recorded as units of cargo, or listed alongside livestock on slave auction notices, and census categories, estate records, and plantation inventories that catalogued enslaved people as merchandise. The branding of enslaved people as a means of accounting for a particular ship's cargo, for example, was not only individualizing but also a "massifying" practice that constituted a new category of subject, blackness as saleable commodity in the Western Hemisphere. Plantation rules laid out for overseers the prescribed measures for regulating plantation life and "social death."⁴⁷ In using Foucault's schemas of sovereign power, discipline, and normalization, as well as the concept of panopticism, I am mindful of their limitations for theorizing the role of trauma, vulnerability, and violence in the making and marking of blackness as property. However, for the concept of racializing surveillance, Foucault's contributions to understanding sovereign power and its "policy of terror" and to conceptualizing discipline and the imposition of norms, for example, offer us a way to understand how acts of making the black body legible as property were put to work in the production of the slave as vendable object to be bought, sold, and traded.⁴⁸

Complicating Foucault's panopticism through the archive of slavery and black feminist scholarship on surveillance is a way of offering a critical reinterpretation of the concept—by "drawing a black line" through it. To do this I now turn to the plan of the slave ship. Drawing a line through panopticism by way of the slave ship is another means of interrupting Foucault's reading of discipline, punishment, and the birth of the prison, because, as Marcus Rediker put it, the slave ship was "a mobile, seagoing prison at a time when the modern prison had not yet been established on land."⁴⁹

"2 feet 7 inches": The Plan of the Slave Ship

The prison didn't come to exist where it does just by happenstance. Those who inhabit it and feed off its existence are historical products.

—GEORGE L. JACKSON, *Soledad Brother*

Through its creative remembering of the brutalities of slavery and its afterlife, Caryl Phillips's short story "The Cargo Rap" (1989) makes links between the Panopticon, captivity, the slave ship, plantation slavery, racism, and the contemporary carceral practices of the U.S. prison system. Racism is, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore explains, "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death."⁵⁰ Rudi (or sometimes "Rudy") Leroy Williams, the protagonist of "The Cargo Rap," was sentenced to prison at nineteen years of age for the attempted theft of forty dollars. Rudi narrates this slow, state-sanctioned death that is the "negative inheritance" of the slave's progeny that Stephen Best and Saidiya Hartman alert us to: "the ongoing production of lives lived in intimate relation to premature death (whether civil, social or literal)."⁵¹

Phillips writes "The Cargo Rap" in epistolary form—as a series of letters penned by Rudi, namely to family members and to his defense committee, over the course of eighteen months. In this way, "The Cargo Rap" follows George L. Jackson's *Blood in My Eye* letters, written right before his death on August 21, 1971, in San Quentin State Prison in California. Like Rudi, Jackson was convicted and incarcerated for armed robbery, accused of stealing seventy dollars from a gas station while still a teenager in 1961. On Jackson's sentence, Foucault had this to say: "ten years in prison for 70 dollars is a political experience—an experience of hostage, of a concentration camp, of class warfare, an experience of the colonized."⁵² In one of his letters written in Soledad Prison on June 10, 1970, Jackson states that for the black man "being born a slave in a captive society and never experiencing any objective basis for expectation had the effect of preparing me for the progressively traumatic misfortunes that led so many black men to the prison gate. I was prepared for prison. It required only minor psychic adjustments."⁵³ Both Foucault and Jackson speak of incarceration as a condition of colonization and of captivity.

In "The Cargo Rap" letters, we witness Rudi make sense of the traumatic misfortunes of the world outside of his solitary confinement, where such prolonged isolation makes his life one of constant exposure to fluorescent

light and permanent illumination, living in “neither daytime nor nighttime. It is no time,” as he put it.⁵⁴ To understand this constant and tortuous play of light on the body, Rudi asks his reader to “take a desk lamp and shine it into your face. Try to relax, think, act, concentrate, do everything in this position for twenty-four hours.”⁵⁵ In an attempt to cope with the deliberate disorientation of “no time,” Rudi cultivates an ability to tell time by way of certain noises and silences, as some silences are “closer to dawn than others.”⁵⁶ Rudi tells of isolation, routinization, inspections, premature death, and the harmful toll of prison life: deteriorating eyesight, *The Wretched of the Earth*, a ten-by-four-foot cell, a body atrophied, and the suffering of brutalities at the hands of the prison guards. This is a type of corporeal violence that was reported to Loïc Wacquant in his study of the Los Angeles County Jail system as “getting the flashlight treatment,” where after violent beatings at the hands of prison guards one would be able to “read the brand of their flashlight” on the prisoner’s body.⁵⁷ During Rudi’s brief sojourn in the general prison population, he writes: “I can have darkness. My eyes can rest easy at night.”⁵⁸ He writes of his desperation to escape the “high-security barracoon” that holds him and of the travels and works of the black activists, writers, athletes, and artists that sustain him while living a slow-motion death in prison: Muhammad Ali, W. E. B. DuBois, Frantz Fanon, Marcus Garvey, Toussaint L’Ouverture, Paul Robeson, Harriet Tubman, Phillis Wheatley.

Readers of Phillips’s “The Cargo Rap” are not privy to the responses, if any, to Rudi’s letters by his family members or his other correspondents. Instead, we are left only with Rudi’s thoughts. His letters are, he writes, “a little cargo rap about the children of Africa who arrived in this country by crossing the water.”⁵⁹ Rudi’s first letter is to his mother, Alice, a domestic worker. In it he writes on Darwinism and self-preservation and he relates how unthinkable it is for her to even imagine trading places with the wealthy white women who employ her to work in their homes. With each of his letters, the plantation metaphor becomes even more direct as Rudi’s physical and mental conditions deteriorate further. Incarceration is a slow-motion death. Rudi’s last letter is dated August 1968, in a year that saw the assassinations of both Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, the passing of the Fair Housing Act meant to end discrimination in housing in the United States, riots in over one hundred U.S. cities, student coalitions occupying buildings on university and college campuses demanding education reform, and the black-gloved fists raised in protest by Af-

rican American track and field medalists John Carlos and Tommie Smith during their medal ceremony at the Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City. Rudi’s last letter is addressed to his by-then-deceased mother. In it he writes, “the plantation is wide and stretches beyond the horizon. . . . We toil from ‘can’t see’ in the morning to ‘can’t see’ at night. The master is cruel, but nobody ‘knows’ him better than his slaves. There is strength in this.”⁶⁰ By now disoriented from doing time under the deliberately disorienting conditions of “no time,” in this letter Rudi inquires about the crops and tells of his capture by slavers and his hopes for return to Africa. In this plantation cum prison, he says, “Thirty feet above me a man sits on a watchtower with a rifle.”⁶¹ This final letter speaks of loss, prison time management, plantation rules, the Panopticon’s inspection tower, and survival of the Middle Passage’s cargo hold.

I chose an excerpt from Dionne Brand’s *A Map to the Door of No Return* as this chapter’s epigraph to point to a symbolic moment and space of diaspora and belonging. This door, while located at La Maison des Esclaves (House of Slaves) museum on Gorée Island, off the coast of Senegal, stands as a symbolic memorial of forced migrations that led to the mass vending of black people across the Atlantic Ocean. On it, Brand writes, “I think that Blacks in the Diaspora feel captive despite the patent freedom we experience, despite the fact that we are several hundred years away from the Door of No Return, despite the fact that the door does not exist.”⁶² This captive feeling that Brand describes is one of the vestiges of unfinished emancipations. A key aim of this chapter is to question how what Bob Marley names “the Babylon system,” and what Howard Winant situates as “the legacy and lessons of the Atlantic slave system,”⁶³ can help us to think about how blackness is often absented from surveillance studies. “Babylon System” is the fourth track from the album *Survival* by Bob Marley and the Wailers, which was released in 1979. In it, Marley sings of refusal, freedom, and rebellion, with lyrics like, “from the very day we left the shores” and “we’ve been taken for granted much too long.” On the cover of the album is a schematic diagram of a slave ship with tiny figures meant to represent its human cargo. Superimposed on this diagram is the album’s title, *Survival*. In 1789, the London Committee of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade produced and distributed *Description of a Slave Ship* (figure 1.2). Unlike Bentham’s blueprint of the Panopticon, this schematic diagram of a maritime prison is populated with tiny figures dressed in loincloths to represent the legally allotted amount of enslaved human cargo that the slave

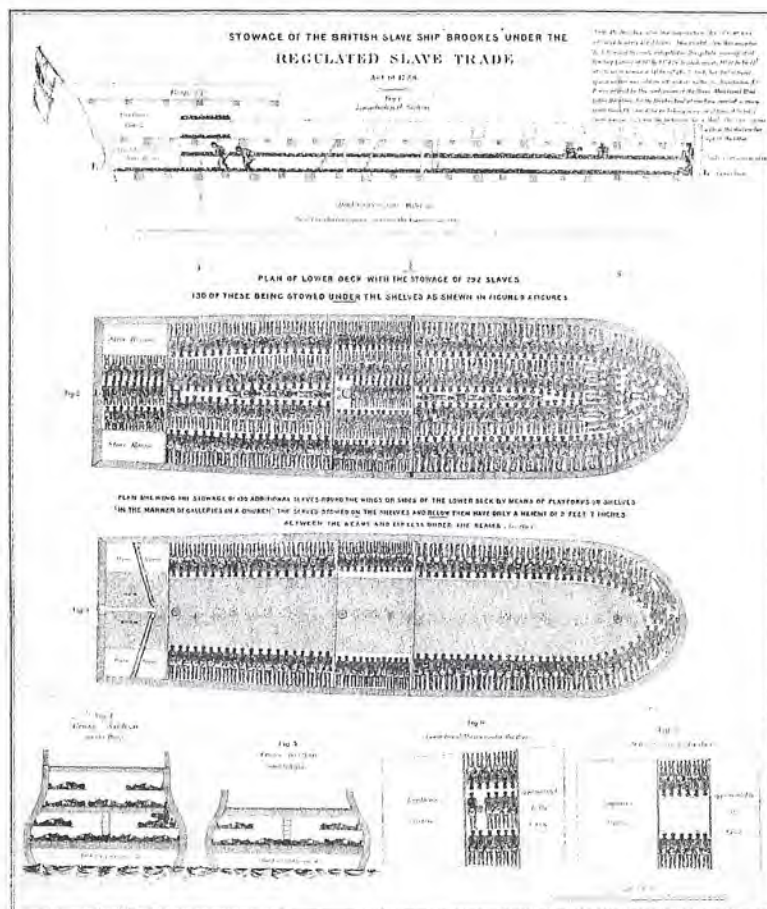


FIGURE 1.2. The plan of the slave ship *Brooks* (1789). Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Washington, DC.

vessel *Brooks* (often referred to as *Brookes*) could transport under the Dolben Act of 1788, an act that regulated slave carrying and overcrowding.

Some background regarding this plan is necessary here.⁶⁴ The ship *Brooks* was built in 1781, commissioned by Liverpool-based slave merchant Joseph Brooks Jr. It was large as slave vessels go, weighing in at around 320 tons and at one point carrying 609 enslaved captives during a 1787 voyage from the Gold Coast of Africa to Kingston, Jamaica.⁶⁵ It took its final voyage in 1804 to Montevideo, Uruguay, under Captain William Murdock, where over three hundred people disembarked as slaves after a sixty-two-

day voyage from West Africa. *Description of a Slave Ship* was fashioned by the London Committee in the hope of making “an instantaneous impression of horror upon all who saw it.”⁶⁶ A similar rendering of a slave ship was produced in December 1788 by the Plymouth Committee of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Named the *Plan of an African Ship's lower Deck with Negroes stowed in the Proportion of only One to a Ton*, this earlier version featured an overview of an African ship's cargo hold along with text that laid out the Plymouth Committee's agenda, including the demand that the “cruelty and inhumanity of this trade must be universally admitted and lamented,” and advocated for “an end to a practice, which may, without exaggeration be stiled one of the greatest evils at this day existing upon the earth.”⁶⁷ Copies were circulated in and around Plymouth, with some copies sent to the London Committee. By April 1789 the London Committee had produced their version, which featured seven different views of the *Brooks*: a cutaway longitudinal view of the ship, cross sections of the stern deck and midship, and an overview of the plan of the lower deck with figures of the enslaved lying in a plank position, crammed into all available space. In a later version, *Stowage of the British Slave Ship “Brookes” under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788*, the note for “Figure 3” detailed this cramped configuration: “the stowage of 130 additional slaves round the wings or sides of the lower deck by means of platforms or shelves (in the manner of galleries in a church) the slaves stowed on the shelves or below them have only a height of 2 feet 7 inches between the beams and far less under the beams.”⁶⁸ Two feet and seven inches. The violence of slavery crudely reduced to geometric units, with room allotted for forty women, twenty-four boys, and sixty men, arranged in a “perfect barbarism,” as abolitionist Thomas Clarkson described this formation.⁶⁹ This arrangement was, as W. E. B. Du Bois put it, “a foretaste of hell.”⁷⁰ Slave trader Theodore Canot outlined the stowing process:

The second mate and boatswain descend into the hold, whip in hand, and range the slaves in their regular places: those on the right side of the vessel facing forward, and lying in each other's lap, while those on the left are similarly stowed with their faces towards the stern. In this way each negro lies on his right side, which is considered preferable for the action of the heart.⁷¹

Without such “strict discipline,” Canot wrote, “every negro would accommodate himself as if he were a passenger.”⁷² This spatial arrangement made

for a crushing asphyxia: "The men therefore, instead of lying on their backs, were placed, as is usual, in full ships, on their sides, or on each other. In which last situation they are not unfrequently found dead in the morning."⁷³ The cargo hold is a slow-motion death.⁷⁴ Some cheek-by-jowl, this crude arrangement made known that those crossing the Atlantic Ocean in this manner were not "passengers," as they were allotted "half the room afforded soldiers, emigrants or convicts on ships of the same period," but were instead to disembark, if alive, as slaves and as unfree.⁷⁵ Rediker names the slave ship as "containing a war within," in which sailors and other crew would function as prison guards who "battled slaves (prisoners)" when attempts at insurrection and other types of resistance were made.⁷⁶ Other forms of resistance to this shipping arrangement came by way of refusals to eat, suicides, with some accounts telling of captives rushing all at once to the leeward end of the vessel "in a gale of wind, on purpose to upset the ship, choosing rather to drown themselves" than be subject to a life in slavery.⁷⁷ They died from "grief, rage and despair," C. L. R. James remarks in *The Black Jacobins* as he describes how some jumped overboard "uttering cries of triumph as they cleared the vessel and disappeared below the surface."⁷⁸

Noted on one popular version of the *Brooks* diagram is this text:

The "Brookes" after the Regulation Act of 1788, was allowed to carry 454 Slaves, She could stow this number by following the rule adopted in this plate. Namely of allowing a space of 6 ft. by 1 ft. 4 in. to each man; 5 ft. 10 in. by 1 ft. 4 in. to each woman, & 5 ft. by 1 ft. 2 in. to each boy, but so much space as this was seldom allowed even after the Regulation Act. It was proved by the confession of the Slave Merchant that before the above Act the Brookes had at one time carried as many as 609 Slaves. This was done by taking some out of Irons & locking them spoonwise (to use the technical term) that is by stowing one within the distended legs of the other.⁷⁹

With women, men, girls, and boys locked spoonwise and segregated by age and sex, the production and containment of gendered difference is apparent. This stowage plan is what Hortense Spillers calls the making of "scaled inequalities."⁸⁰ Such accounting and architectural practices highlight the scale of the violence and trauma of the Middle Passage, a passage so named as it formed the middle leg of a triangular journey (the Middle Passage was bracketed between the journey from Europe to Africa and that from the New World to Europe). The London Committee version, *Description of a*

Slave Ship, states that the male cargo would be shackled at the ankles, "two by two; the right leg of one to the left leg of the other, and their hands are secured in the same manor,"⁸¹ while the figures representing women and children were, in that rendering, unshackled, but in closer proximity to the captain's cabin. The London Committee noted, "The principal difference is in the men. It must be observed, that the men, from whom only insurrections are to be feared, are kept continually in irons, and must be stowed in the room allotted for them, which is of a more secure construction of the rest."⁸² The plan then, in its various versions, highlights the gendering of sexual violence, while diagrammatically and textually absenting the possibilities of women's leadership and resistance in insurrections, as "only insurrections are to be feared" from men.⁸³

The *Brooks* diagram, "in serving the cause of the injured African,"⁸⁴ offers an overview of the stowage plan of the slave merchant's ship and forces me to reflect on my own surveillance practices in reading the archive of transatlantic slavery. The slave ship schematic is clinical in its architectural logic and provides an almost aerial viewpoint, overlooking the tiny black figures set to represent the enslaved drawn "like so many cartoon figures," as Spillers describes.⁸⁵ What does it mean that I now look to this plan, but not from the elevated and seemingly detached manner as it was first intended to be looked upon? When the plan was first fashioned, this vantage point was meant to be that of the predominantly white and male abolitionists and lawmakers. I am reminded here of what Donna Haraway calls the "conquering gaze from nowhere," a gaze that is always unmarked, and therefore already markedly white and male, and one that claims a power to "represent while escaping representation."⁸⁶ I am also reminded here of Frantz Fanon's moment of awareness of a "racial epidermal schema" on that train in France and "battered by tom-toms" and "slave-ships" and "dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes," when he says, "I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed and made myself an object."⁸⁷ What this visual representation of the slave ship points to is the primacy given in these abolitionist texts to white gazes and vantage points to the trauma of slavery, where the tiny black figures are made to seem androgynous, interchangeable, and replicable. This is the "god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere," and, as Haraway warns, "this eye fucks the world."⁸⁸ So it gets a little tricky when I do this looking, seemingly an aerial reconnaissance mission of the archive of surveillance and of slavery. In the versions of the *Brooks* diagram that were produced in the United States, the slave

ship plan as abolitionist text was made clear. A version published in the periodical *American Museum* in May 1789 noted that it was “published by order of the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the ABOLITION of slavery.”⁸⁹ Capitalization of all letters in “abolition” served an express purpose here, from the call for an end to the transatlantic slave trade to one for the abolition of slavery itself. Further, in this version the making of premature death through the stowage arrangements was described in this manner: “and reduced nearly to the state of being buried alive, with just air enough to preserve a degree of life sufficient to make them sensible of all the horror of their situation.”⁹⁰ These conditions of premature death left many who traveled the Middle Passage as captives just on the cusp of survival. “Buried alive, with just air enough.” According to Rediker, the mortality rate onboard the *Brooks* was 11.7 percent, which was “high for its own day (average for British ships between 1775 and 1800 was 7.95 percent).”⁹¹ With a closer look at the *Description of a Slave Ship*, one can see that each of the tiny black figures are not replicas of each other; rather, some have variously crossed arms, different gestures, or seem to turn to face one another, while some stare and look back at the gaze from nowhere, and in so being the *Description of a Slave Ship* can also be understood as depicting black looks and the trauma of Middle Passage as multiply experienced and survived, and as hinting at the possible imaginings of what Omise’eke Natasha Tinsley terms “erotic resistance,” that being the same-sex relationships forged because of and in spite of this shipping arrangement, where the formation of such relationships—like the intimate bond of shipmates—itself was an act of resistance to “imperial desires for Africans’ living death.”⁹² Such resistance was a refusal of the Babylon system, or, as Bob Marley sings in “Babylon System”: “we refuse to be what you want us to be / we are what we are.”

Racializing Surveillance

The historical formation of surveillance is not outside of the historical formation of slavery. Using narratives of ex-slaves, runaway slave advertisements, the census, and a set of plantation rules as primary source data, what follows is a historicizing of some of the concepts and concerns that now shape the field of surveillance studies, approached by examining slave surveillance practices. The continuities that this archive reveals offer social

theorists, I argue, new ways of understanding surveillance in contemporary life.

PLANTATIONS, PASSES, AND RUNAWAYS

In the ten “General” and nineteen “Particular” rules for overseers recorded in the mid-nineteenth century by Charles William Tait for the governing of enslaved laborers on *Sylvania*, his 6,000-acre plantation in Columbus, Texas, Tait listed the prescribed methods for crop cultivation and clearing land, specified food rations, noted the daily schedule around meals and rest (“they must be ready to go to work by sunrise”), and detailed his punishment regime (“always attempt to govern by reason in the first instance and resort to force only when reason fails”), as well as postnatal procedures and back-to-work legislation for new mothers (“never require field-work of a woman, until the expiration of four weeks after confinement”).⁹³ With the eighth general rule, Tait noted that “a regular and systematic plan of operation is greatly promotive of easy government. Have all matters therefore, as far as possible reduced to a system.”⁹⁴ Tait’s directives on the managerial control of slaves demonstrate how disciplinary power operated by way of set rules, instructions, routines, inspection, hierarchical observation, the timetable, and the examination. The timetable, then, was a means of regimenting enslaved labor through repetition where there was an attempt to account for every moment of enslaved life: “always require the negroes to eat their breakfast before they go to work” and “every negro-cabin to be inspected every sunday morning to see that it is kept clean. Every negro to appear in the field on Monday morning in clean clothes.” Tait’s fifteenth particular rule prescribed that “no profane or obscene language to be allowed among the negroes.” The seventh general rule on punishment was an explicit directive regarding the overseer’s performance that accompanied the punishment, as Tait wrote, “Never act in such a way as to leave the impression on the mind of the negro that you take pleasure in his punishment, your manner should indicate that his punishment is painful.” So the prescribed punishment must be performed as a pain experienced by the overseer, who is not to express the possibility of pleasure taken in performing acts of violence. That a rule needed to be put in place in order to prevent such displays of violent delight should leave us to question the rates at which such pleasure was really expressed when, as Saidiya Hartman tells us, plantation practices sought to “make discipline a pleasure, and vice versa.”⁹⁵ Importantly, this rule shows that for Tait, this pained perfor-

mance by the overseer was a suffering that was meant to be remembered in the mind of the punished. Overseers were instructed by Tait's ninth general rule that "Negroes lack the motive of self-interest to make them careful and diligent," so in order to incentivize enslaved workers, "do not therefore notice too many small omissions of duty." What Tait's rules for overseers also make known is that plantation surveillance was an exercise of both sovereign power and racialized disciplinary power, working simultaneously, discretionarily, and in a prescribed fashion, as both were put to use in plantation societies to render slave life expendable.

In Tait's rules for what he called the "easy government" of his East Texas plantation, the specific rules on bureaucratic management and surveillance of slave mobilities, notably escape, were also made plain with particular rule "17th the negroes are never to be allowed to leave the plantation unless by special permission, and a written pass" and particular rule "18th no strange negro to be allowed to visit the plantation, unless by permission of the overseer, & a written pass from his master." The slave pass system relied on the notion that the slave could be known through a written identification document. Christian Parenti's writings on the kinds of surveillance practices employed during chattel slavery in the southern United States name the "information technologies" of the written slave pass, wanted posters and advertisements for runaway slaves and servants, and organized slave patrols as key features of this system.⁹⁶ Parenti situates plantation surveillance as the earliest form of surveillance practiced in the Americas. This was a system of surveillance that was regulated through violence and the written word.

The following accounts from *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938* detailing the slave pass system further this point:

By 1845 there were many laws on the Statute books of Georgia concerning the duties of patrols. . . . Every member of the patrol was required to carry a pistol while on duty. They were required to arrest all slaves found outside their master's domain without a pass, or who was not in company with some white person. He was empowered to whip such slave with twenty lashes.⁹⁷

The pattie-rollers was something else. I heard folks say they would beat the daylight almost out of you if they caught you without no pass.⁹⁸

In the plantation system, the restriction of the mobility and literacy of the enslaved served as an exercise of power. The racializing surveillance of the slave pass system was a violent regulation of black mobilities. On and off the plantation, black mobility needed to be tightly regulated in order for slave owners to maintain control, so, as ex-slave Anderson Furr put it, one had to "git a pass for dis and a pass for dat."⁹⁹ This was a system that also relied on the publication and circulation of newspaper advertisements for runaway slaves and truant servants that announced not only those who escaped or went missing from plantations, but also those people who left enslavement in private homes and establishments, like shops, inns, and taverns in cities and urban spaces.

Runaway slave advertisements reveal a lot about black flight to freedom, as these notices of escape would not only name those who left enslavement and made their own way, but also provide a physical description and list the monetary rewards, if any, that awaited those who aided in their capture and return. These ads would list their talents, occupations and skills, vices, languages spoken and whether or not they could read or write, strategies they might have used to escape, and what they were wearing and took with them when they made their way. Also listed would be clothing, musical instruments, and other items that could be sold, traded, bartered, or used to support the appearance of being free. An advertisement for a runaway slave might read like so: "RUN away, a Negro Man named Tom, born in Jamaica, but last from Havannah," "blubber Lips, yellow Complexion, his Hair is neither right Negro nor Indian, but between both," "His eyes very full, as if they were starting out of his head," "had on when he went away a felt Hat, a Cotton Cap, a Homespun Coat with brass Buttons, a West-coat without sleeves, an Oznabrigs shirt, Leather Breeches with Brass Buttons, a pair of worsted Stockings and a pair of yarn ones, two pair of peak'd toe'd Shoes," "his great Toes have been froze, and have only little pieces of nails on them," "plays well on the Fiddle, and can read and write; perhaps he may have a false pass," "is plausible and smooth in speaking, and may pass himself for a Sailor, having been used to a boat," whoever secures said Negro shall have a reward of five pounds.¹⁰⁰

An unusually long 1762 advertisement for "a Mulatto Servant man named Charles Roberts" states not only his age and height, but the condition of the clothes he carried, "several other Waistcoats, Breeches, and Pair of Stocking; a blue Great Coat, and a Fiddle." John Holt placed this ad, and in it he states that Roberts spoke "smoothly and plausibly, and generally

with a cringe and a smile,” and was good at arithmetic and accounting, leading Holt to charge that Roberts had probably forged documents to pass as a free man although he had “no legal claim to freedom.” Holt laments that he placed confidence in Roberts, “which he has villainously abused; having embezzled Money sent him to pay for Goods, borrowed money and taken up goods” in Holt’s name, unbeknownst to him. The reward for Roberts’s capture in New York City was five pounds, and if found elsewhere the award would be greater. Anyone who captured him, the ad instructed, was to leave any money found on Roberts’s person with the magistrate and was warned to be careful and “very watchful against an Escape, or being deceived by him, for he is one of the most artful of Villains.”¹⁰¹ Through their detailing of physical descriptions, the surveillance technology of the runaway slave advertisement was put to use to make the already hypervisible racial subject legible, borrowing again from John Fiske here, as “out of place.”¹⁰²

Runaway slave advertisements were not only about ascribing physical details to the runaway, but also offered the slave owner’s assessment of the fugitive’s character. One example of the role of runaway slave advertisements, and similarly wanted posters, in upholding racial categorization is a March 15, 1783, advertisement in the *Royal Gazette* offering a “Two Dollars reward” for “a Mulatto, or Quadroon Girl, about 14 years of age, named Seth, but calls herself Sall.” This runaway advertisement states that Seth “sometimes says she is white and often paints her face to cover that deception.” Seth’s duplicity is not limited to her use of the alias “Sall,” as this notice informs its readers, but also to her racial ambiguity, in her apparent choosing to self-identify or pass as white, rather than as “a Mulatto” (one black parent and one white parent) or a “Quadroon Girl” (one black grandparent), which was the racial nomenclature of the one-drop rule arising out of slavery and continuing beyond that institution. This advertisement also remarks that Sall has been “seen dancing” and “is well known in town, and particularly at the Fly-Market, for many wicked tricks.” The Fly-Market in Lower Manhattan served as the city’s market for provisions and other goods up until the early nineteenth century. Sall’s ability to evade surveillance through makeup, wicked tricks, and hiding in plain sight exposes the one-drop rule as a social construction that, for some, could be subverted by performing whiteness. Seth’s, or sometimes Sall’s, hiding in plain sight—by identifying as white and using an alias—was a freedom practice to evade surveillance, and in so being a form of dark sousveillance. An 1836 runaway

advertisement describes Edmund Kenney, who escaped enslavement by passing as white, thus: “he has straight hair, and complexion so nearly white, that it is believed a stranger would suppose there was no African blood in him.”¹⁰³ An 1845 advertisement boasting a five hundred dollar reward for “a negro woman named Fanny” described her as a Bible-carrying, literate, “intelligent woman” who was “as white as most white women, with straight light hair, and blue eyes, and can pass herself for a white woman.”¹⁰⁴

THE CENSUS

In 1848 when Ellen and William Craft made their way out of Georgia and escaped chattel slavery by trains and by ships, they were able to do so through the ways in which Ellen’s body was able to trouble the one-drop rule. Born to a black mixed-raced mother and fathered by the white man who owned her mother, Ellen was, at the time, labeled a quadroon but able to pass as white, as sometimes deaf and an “invalid gentleman” named “Mr. William Johnson.” She passed as her husband’s owner in order to secure his freedom as well as her own.¹⁰⁵ She used a poultice and put it in a white handkerchief “worn under the chin, up the cheeks, and to tie over the head,” hoping that this disguise would hide “the expression of the countenance, as well as the beardless chin.”¹⁰⁶ Because she could not read or write at the time of her escape, she feigned inflammatory rheumatism and placed her right arm in a sling in order to evade detection if, for example, she were asked to sign her name in a hotel’s guest register. With Craft, her passing in terms of race, passing in terms of gender, passing in terms of class, and passing in terms of disability all played a role in her and William’s passing into freedom.¹⁰⁷ The Crafts eventually left Boston to later arrive in England, where they lived for nineteen years before returning to the United States, where they opened a school for children and a cooperative farm in Georgia. In the 1850 census, Ellen was listed as residing in Boston and her race is recorded as Black (or rather “for “ditto,” as it was recorded in the column under William’s). The 1850 census marked the first time that the federal census included slave schedules for some states in order to enumerate each enslaved person held in a household or dwelling. By the 1890 census, Ellen Craft was recorded as “M” for Mulatto and her occupation as “keeping house” in Bryan County, Georgia.

In the United States, racial nomenclature as a form of population management was made official with the taking of the first federal census in 1790,

which asked questions regarding the number of free white males, free white females, other free people, and slaves in a household. Census enumeration is a means through which a state manages its residents by way of formalized categories that fix individuals within a certain time and a particular space, making the census a technology that renders a population legible in racializing as well as gendering ways. The census is a form of “state stocktaking,” as David Theo Goldberg puts it, which discloses “population size, shape, distribution, quality and flow of labor supply, taxation and conscription pools, political representation, voter predictability, and the necessities of population reproduction.”¹⁰⁸ While such “state stocktaking” sees the census informant respond to a series of questions, including date of birth, how many people live in a single dwelling, and whether or not the dwelling is rented or owned, it takes the form of racializing surveillance through its very reinscription of racial categories. As an example, in terms of racial categories and the U.S. census form, there has remained a constant, unspecified whiteness as a racial category. Rather than employing an alphabetical order, “White” is always listed first among the boxes from which to choose in order to answer the question of the census informant’s race. The proliferation of racial categories from which to choose, or have one’s answer assigned, was first reserved for the management of blackness, with other groupings later added to reflect changing immigration patterns. In the 1890 census, Mulatto, Quadroon, and Octoroon appeared as subcategories of “Black,” but by the 1900 census these subcategories were “collapsed into the singularity of an unqualified blackness,” reflecting the one-drop rule.¹⁰⁹ “Mu” for Mulatto was reintroduced in 1910 and in the 1930 census it was replaced with “Neg” for Negro, a racial category that would fall in and out of favor, depending on each subsequent decennial enumeration. For the 2010 census, “Black, African-Am or Negro” were subsumed under one box and in 2013 the Census Bureau announced that “Negro” would be dropped from its surveys. As Goldberg writes, when the category “Mexican” was first introduced, it was understood as meaning not white unless the census informant “explicitly and accurately claimed white descent.”¹¹⁰ In this way, it was left to the census taker to judge whether the census informant’s claim to the category of whiteness was valid, rather than accepting at face value the informant’s self-identification as white. The 2010 questionnaire asks if the census informant is “of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin,” and, if “yes,” the informant can choose “Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano,” Puerto Rican, or Cuban or fill in the blank to specify “another Hispanic, Latino,

or Spanish origin.” From its inception, the census has been a technology of disciplinary power that classifies, examines, and quantifies populations.

What It’s Like, What It Is: Controlling Images and Black Looks

In *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*, while referring not specifically to prison surveillance or plantation slavery but to the post-slavery, segregated southern United States, Patricia Hill Collins writes that while racial segregation was aimed at black people as a group or class and sought to erase individuality by making black people seemingly interchangeable, surveillance “highlights individuality by making the individual hypervisible and on display.”¹¹¹ As part of the practice of “racial etiquette” in the segregated South, surveillance, Collins tells us, was a way of ensuring that “Blacks would stay in their designated, subordinate places in white-controlled public and private spheres.”¹¹² Collins situates the bodies and lives of black women who labored as domestic workers and the white-controlled private homes in which they were employed as the “testing ground for surveillance as a form of control” that was enacted by way of “techniques of surveillance,” including close scrutiny, sexual harassment, assault, violence, or the threat thereof. For the white women who employed them, Collins argues, this arrangement was predicated on the illusion that “the Black women workers whom they invited into their private homes felt like ‘one of the family,’ even though they actually had second-class citizenship in the family.”¹¹³ Yet within these labor conditions of hypervisibility, black domestic workers needed to assume a certain invisibility where, as bell hooks observes, “reduced to the machinery of bodily physical labor, black people learned to appear before whites as though they were zombies, cultivating the habit of casting the gaze downward so as not to appear uppity.”¹¹⁴ Seemingly “invisible to most white people, except as a pair of hands offering a drink on a silver tray,” this signifying act was performed by many domestic laborers so that they would be assumed to be readily manageable and nonthreatening.¹¹⁵ Coupled with this system of scrutinizing black women’s domestic labor in private white homes was the controlling image of “the mammy,” one of “several interrelated, socially constructed controlling images of Black women, each reflecting the dominant group’s interest in maintaining Black women’s subordination.”¹¹⁶ The mammy as a

representational practice relies on the circulation of stereotyped images and ideologies of black womanhood that seek to position black women as “the faithful, obedient domestic servant.”¹¹⁷ The mammy is depicted as caring for the family in which she is employed, often to the sacrifice of her own. This social control mechanism was “created to justify the economic exploitation of house slaves and sustained to explain Black women’s longstanding restriction to domestic service,” representing, as Collins puts it, “the normative yardstick used to evaluate all Black women’s behavior.”¹¹⁸ In so being, the mammy served as a symbol of “the dominant group’s perceptions of the ideal Black female relationship to elite White male power.”¹¹⁹ She is content, deferential, forgiving, nurturing, and loyal to the family that she cares for, operating with some authority, however marginal, while still knowing “her ‘place’ as obedient servant.”¹²⁰ Such exaggerated representational strategies work to rationalize the economic exploitation and sexual subjugation of black domestic workers and of those who labor in low-paying conditions in the service sector. This mammy image circulates throughout dominant culture, from films such as *Gone with the Wind* (1939) to *The Help* (2011), to what Patricia A. Turner calls “contemptible collectibles,” those distorted depictions of blackness that often take the shape of figurines, postcards, kitchen utensils, and lawn ornaments. Simply put, “Mammy is the public face that Whites expect Black women to assume for them.”¹²¹ Of course, many black women who labored in white households forged loving and nurturing relations with their own families, despite the harsh working conditions of white supremacy.¹²²

In her discussion of the black gaze and looking relations during slavery and during the racial apartheid of Jim Crow in the southern United States, hooks notes that although black people “could be brutally punished for looking, for appearing to observe the whites they were serving, as only a subject can observe or see,” the violent ways in which blacks were denied the right to look back “had produced in us an overwhelming longing to look, a rebellious desire, an oppositional gaze.”¹²³ “Black looks” were politicized and transformative when, as hooks states, “by courageously looking, we defiantly declared: ‘Not only will I stare. I want my look to change reality.’”¹²⁴ This stare is the type of “eyeballing disposition” that disrupts racializing surveillance where, as Maurice O. Wallace discusses, such looks challenge the “fetishizing machinations of the racial gaze.”¹²⁵

Disruptive staring is the focus of *Pan’s Opticon*, a fifteen-panel photograph by South African artist Robin Rhode (figure 1.3). In it, Rhode’s sub-

ject, a black man and Rhode’s doppelgänger, is smartly dressed in a fashion similar to that of the subjects that South African photographer Ernest Cole documented in his 1967 book *House of Bondage* as they toiled, were relocated or banished, defied, and survived under passbook laws and the racist repression of apartheid South Africa. It can also be said that Rhode’s subject gestures to the *tsotsi* aesthetic popularized by Soweto youth and those in other townships of Johannesburg in the 1940s, a style and fashioning of masculinity that reflected working-class township life: a dark pinstriped jacket, white-collared shirt, and a straw boater hat.¹²⁶ His back is to the camera as he faces a concrete wall. His stare is accessorized with inside calipers—like compasses, but with the needles at each end curving outward—that appear to jut out from each of his eyes. The inside caliper first appeared around the sixteenth century as a measuring device often used to determine the dimensions of an aperture, that being the space through which light rays pass and come into focus on an image surface. In photography, the aperture’s diameter regulates the amount of light that reaches the image surface. The smaller the aperture size, the darker the surface will appear. For the astronomical telescope, the aperture is the optical element that gathers light and brings the atmosphere into focus. No telescope, so far, can make dark matter visible.

Rhode’s subject in the *Pan’s Opticon* series is suited up with a prosthetic look. His ocular interrogation confronts the Panopticon and the architecture of surveillance—corners, shadows, reflections, and light—covering the wall with dark matter. On the subject of walls and architecture, Rhode writes that “when one speaks of walls, one speaks of security, privacy, and demarcation.”¹²⁷ Rhode’s *Pan’s Opticon* is a play on Bentham’s Panopticon. Rhode’s naming of his series of photographs with the possessive noun *Pan’s* is a claiming of Bentham’s eighteenth-century plan for “obtaining power of mind over mind.”¹²⁸ Rhode’s black subject is not backed into a corner, but facing it, confronting and returning unverified gazes. That Rhode is a South African artist based in Germany points to the ways that disruptive staring can be transnational, as transnational as the structures that it disrupts. The stenciled circumferences of incomplete circles of black spray paint seemingly emanate from his eyes onto the wall’s surface. With each frame of the storyboard, the circles refracted by the subject’s eyes multiply, overlapping each other like disorganized Venn diagrams until the corner is completely covered in dark matter. In one frame, no neat stenciled circles appear, just two solid but smaller black circles of spray paint dripping down from the calipers onto the concrete wall, suggesting, perhaps, a peephole for a cu-

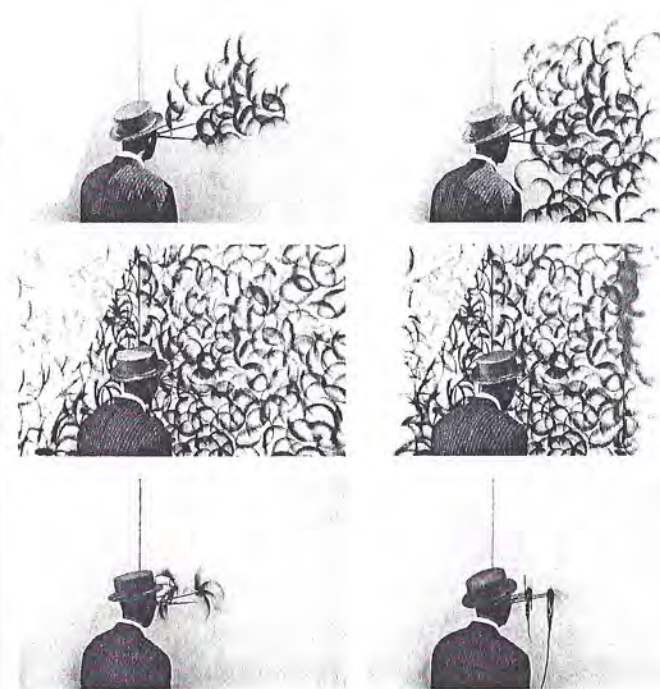
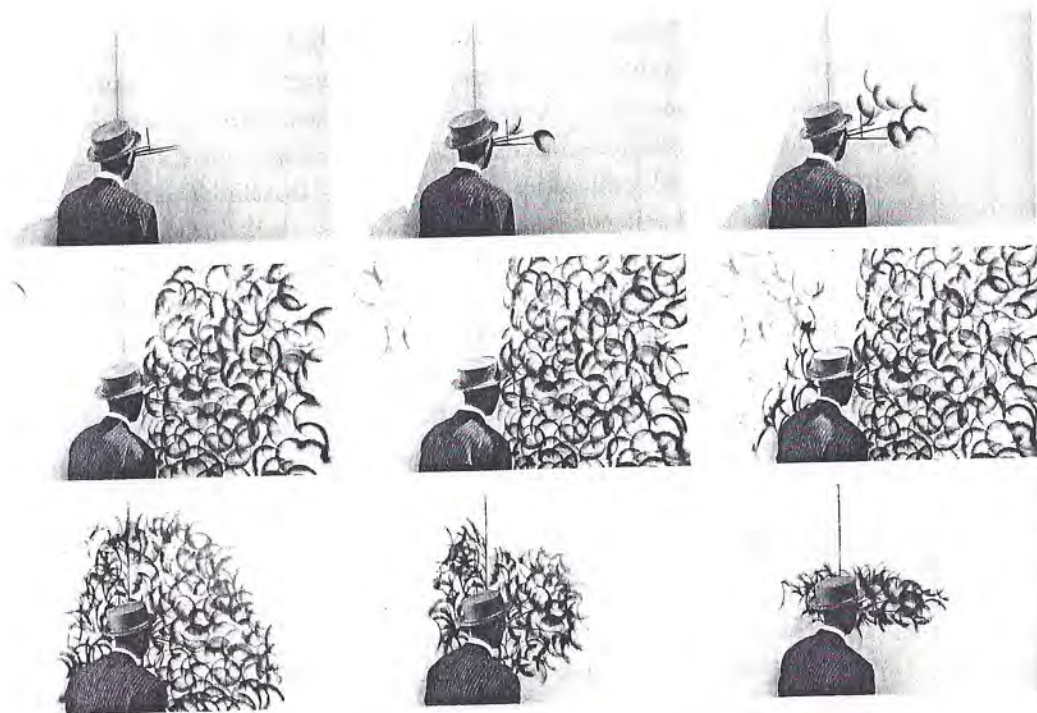


FIGURE 1.3.
Robin Rhode, *Pan's Ol
con* (2008). Fifteen dig
pigment prints mount
on four-ply museum bo
each 20 $\frac{7}{8}$ $\times$ 31 $\frac{1}{8}$ $\times$ 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
inches. © Robin Rhoc
Courtesy of the artist a
Lehmann Maupin, Ne
York and Hong Kong

rious spectator's stolen vision, or the excesses of black looks that bleed outside stenciled borders, color outside the lines, and are out of place.

The disruptive stare of the subject in Adrian Piper's video installation *What It's Like, What It Is #3* (figure 1.4) is one such act of courageous looking. At the center of this installation is a four-sided column, like the Panopticon's inspection tower, but with each side of the column fitted with a television screen. Each screen plays prerecorded video of the front, back, and profile views of a black man (actor John L. Moore) who stares at those watching Piper's installation as he states his refusals of the stereotypes placed upon blackness: "I'm not pushy. I'm not sneaky. I'm not lazy. I'm not noisy." After listing four such refusals, he turns to face another direction and then lists four more: "I'm not vulgar. I'm not rowdy. I'm not horny. I'm not scary." He looks directly at the viewers of this installation, who can be either standing or seated on the bleacher-like seating that surrounds the center column. The installation is all-white and through its use of mirrors, the video is reflected throughout. In this setting like a lecture hall, viewers

of this installation are then instructed by the lists of refusals of the critique coming from the bodiless head in the column. In this way, *What It's Like, What It Is #3* can be read as confronting the surveillance imposed upon black life. The soundtrack to the nearly five-minute video of the installation is the Commodores' song "Zoom" (1977), playing in the background while the subject tells what it's like to live with antiblack racism, racial stereotyping, and the scrutiny of white supremacy coming from all sides: "I'm not shiftless. I'm not crazy. I'm not servile. I'm not stupid." His list of what black people are not is looped in repetition, leaving a space for alternative imaginings of what blackness really is and could be, while the voice of Commodores lead singer Lionel Richie croons in the background track, singing, "Zoom. I'd like to fly far away from here . . . where everybody can be what they want to be" and "I wish the word they call freedom someday would come." The song's lyrics express hope for escape, freedom, and a new way of being. In this way, Piper's piece offers us a look at oppositional gazing and talking back to the normalizing judgment and hierarchical observa-

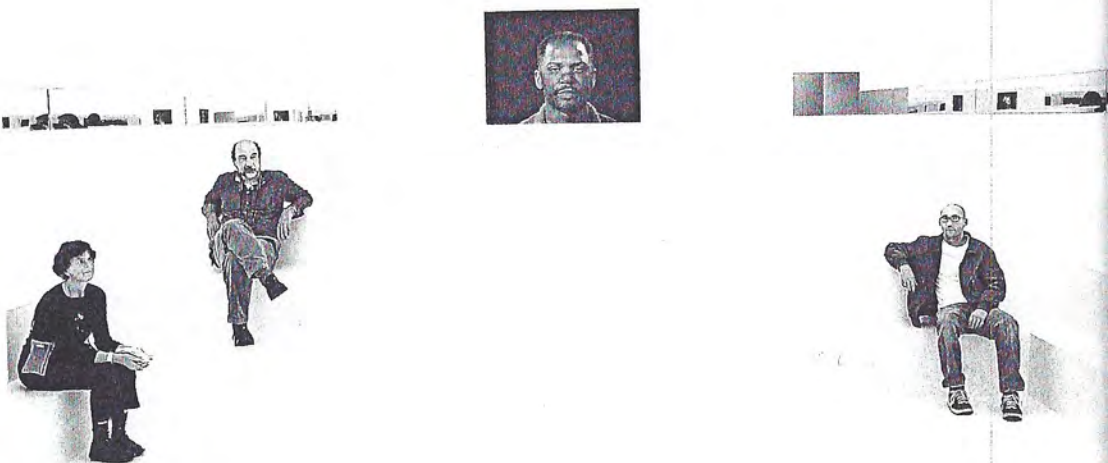


FIGURE 1.4. Adrian Piper, *What It's Like, What It Is #3* (1991). Video installation: wood constructions, mirrors, lighting, videodiscs, videotape, music soundtrack, dimensions variable. Photo credit: David Campos. Collection of the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin. © APRA Foundation Berlin.

tion of disciplinary, controlling images. Talking back is, as hooks puts it, “the expression of our movement from object to subject” and a “gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible.”¹²⁹ Talking back, then, is one way of challenging surveillance and its imposition of norms.