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SECTION 2

SOCIETY AND SUBJECTIVITY

How are subjectivities produced by and governed through surveillance? If modern society and its institutions are organized around surveillance, as the previous section claimed, then surveillance encounters infuse all interactions individuals have with institutions, whether direct or indirect. One's individual identity, social relations, and life chances are shaped by such interactions, whether with government agencies, schools, healthcare systems, places of employment, or any of the other institutions that pervade society. More than that, to the extent that such surveillance operates in the background, as part of the largely invisible, rational functioning of society, its politics are insulated and obscured, making them difficult to detect or challenge. Some of the most influential work in the field of surveillance studies has explored and theorized these very dynamics.

The figure of the Panopticon—or “all-seeing” prison—is one of the most potent representations of such institutional power. As conceived of by philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century,¹ and then popularized by Michel Foucault's expansive analysis in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977), this prison design afforded the efficient control of people by delegating governance

functions to the architecture, to the very material and bureaucratic system of managing individuals in space. The excerpts in this section sketch the Panopticon in great detail, but, in brief, the prison design was that of a circular building with cells along the outer walls and a guard tower in the center. Inmates were housed individually in backlit cells, which facilitated their easy monitoring by guards or others. The vitally important design element of window blinds in the guard tower prevented inmates from knowing exactly when they were under observation, leading—it is argued—to prisoners' internalization of discipline such that they could be rehabilitated and introduced back into society as law-abiding citizens.

For both Bentham and Foucault, the Panopticon model was something that could be, or was in Foucault's reading, replicated in other institutions throughout society. The principles of comprehensive and individualizing surveillance could be found also in schools, hospitals, factories, military barracks, and so on. Across these settings, Foucault argued, control was achieved through complete visibility and legibility of subjects. In large part, the impetus for these transformations was the perceived instability caused by revolution, industrialization, and class mobility in Europe in the

eighteenth century. If older social hierarchies (guaranteed by monarchies or feudalism) could not be counted on to provide stability, this created a pressing need for new ways to regulate society and maintain order. At the same time, the Enlightenment provided a philosophical justification for such changes. Principles of reason, equality, and transparency were viewed as having the capacity to transform society positively. Thus, the Panopticon model was intended to reverse the logic of the dungeon by spreading light and reason to the dark space where evil might flourish; to eradicate physical and moral disease by intervening on the level of the soul, not the body; and to reform and rehabilitate prisoners for the larger social good.

The functioning of this panoptic design is predicated not necessarily on its efficiency, of many being watched by a few, but instead on its ability to instill in subjects the power of the gaze and of becoming self-disciplining "docile bodies" (Foucault 1977). As Foucault explains: "There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself" (Foucault 1980: 155). Over time, subjected to meticulous bureaucratic procedures and continuous inspection, one ostensibly loses the very desire to deviate from social norms.

Embedded in such articulations is a particular conception of power that differs radically from classic understandings of power as something possessed by people and used to exert influence over others. For Foucault, as his analysis of the Panopticon illustrates, power is a distributed social machine in which all are caught and shaped. It is not simply a *repressive* force, although it may have those elements, but is also *productive* of social relations, subjectivities, and materialities. While hierarchies may persist,

power does not originate from the topmost position but rather from the larger system of relations. As Gilles Deleuze explains: "Power has no essence; it is simply operational. It is not an attribute but a relation: the power-relation is the set of possible relations between forces, which passes through the dominated forces no less than through the dominating" (Deleuze 1988: 27).

Although surveillance studies scholars have drawn heavily on the idea of the Panopticon and on Foucault's notions of disciplinary power, the field reached something of a consensus in the early 2000s that the concept of the Panopticon—as an almost obligatory invocation in writings on surveillance—was impeding theoretical innovation. As a result, a number of spirited critiques emerged, particularly questioning the empirical accuracy and utility of the concept for describing contemporary surveillance regimes (Haggerty 2006; Murakami Wood 2007). Some scholars challenged the implied separation of control functions by institution, when in fact data flow among institutions and individuals are subjected to multiple, overlapping articulations of surveillance simultaneously (Haggerty and Ericson 2000). Others focused on the difficulty in ascribing panoptic functions to digital technologies (Lyon 1993), the mass media (Mathiesen 1997), or unenclosed spaces (Norris and Armstrong 1999). Others noted that contemporary surveillance most often does not engender uniformity, but instead creates differences and sorts populations unequally based upon assessments of risk or value (Gandy 1993; Lyon 2003; Simon 2005). Others questioned the applicability of the panoptic model for describing consumer surveillance, which can prioritize pleasurable rewards and incentives over interdictions (Elmer 2003). Still others observed that surveillance is not used exclusively to govern people but also to monitor abstract data, organizations,

and even the environment (Haggerty 2006). Finally, instead of accepting the passivity of so-called docile bodies, others emphasized the agency of individuals to resist or appropriate surveillance or use it for pleasurable or empowering ends (Gilliom 2001; Koskela 2004; Monahan, Phillips, and Murakami Wood 2010). Clearly, there were cracks in the foundations of the Panopticon metaphor, leading some to call for the field to “tear down the walls” (Haggerty 2006) and move on to more descriptively accurate concepts.

Notwithstanding these frustrations with the limitations of the Panopticon concept, Foucault’s writings on biopolitical power offer a much more inclusive and perhaps more relevant explanation of the broader molding of society through surveillance. If sovereign power represented a single, arbitrary system of punishment that acted on the body, and disciplinary power accounted for multiple closed systems of rational control that trained individuals’ “souls,” biopolitical power concerned itself with the creating and governing of populations through mechanisms of categorizing and controlling people in aggregate (Foucault 2003: 1978). Some of the most obvious instantiations of biopolitical power are public health programs, migration control, insurance schemes, or the census, but it can be witnessed with just about any efforts to classify, sort, and regulate populations or groups, whether by state or nonstate institutions. Obviously, scholars concerned with issues of surveillance and inequality can fruitfully draw upon these insights, even if the Panopticon, as such, is less helpful. It is important to note that Foucault was careful to say that even by Bentham’s time, disciplinary power was mutating into, or being transcended by, mechanisms of biopolitical power, so he clearly did not view disciplinary power, or the internalization of discipline by individuals, as the culminating form of social control in modern society (Foucault 1980).

Moreover, Foucault not only acknowledged that there were plenty of overlaps among these regimes, and no clear breaks, he also observed that disciplinary power could be put in the service of biopolitical efforts (see excerpt). Therefore, for a field interested in surveillance’s role in the shaping of modern society and subjectivity, Foucault’s influence will surely endure.

This section begins with excerpts of Jeremy Bentham’s original eighteenth-century letters explicating the Panopticon design and extolling its utilitarian efficiencies. An excerpt from Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* follows, wherein he describes the Panopticon schema as a generalizable model of disciplinary power that penetrates society, allowing for an “automatic functioning of power” without direct force. An excerpt from Gilles Deleuze’s “Postscript on the Societies of Control” builds upon Foucault’s analysis to argue that a new regime of power has taken hold—one characterized by corporate interests achieved through divisions, abstract codes, fluidity, and the production of insecurity. Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericson’s piece echoes some of Deleuze’s themes, while also arguing that much contemporary surveillance operates more like an assemblage, allowing for the ready exchange of data and the convergence of control functions that act upon partial representations, or “data doubles,” of individuals for instrumental aims.

Thomas Mathiesen’s excerpt focuses on what he views to be a shortcoming of panoptic explanatory frameworks: their inability to account for the persistent role of spectacle, and particularly the mass media, in maintaining ideological control over society in the late twentieth century. Rather than the few watching the many with the Panopticon, he claims that significant ideological control is achieved by the many watching the few, such as news reporters, which is a relationship he labels “synopticism.” Given

the discussion of Foucault's work above, it is worth questioning Mathiesen's emphasis on the panoptic efficiency of watching, when *Discipline and Punish* was certainly making a much broader argument about spread of disciplinary mechanisms throughout society and the internalization of discipline by people. That said, synopticism is undoubtedly a relevant area of investigation for surveillance studies today, especially in respect to celebrity culture and the dynamics of cultivated publicity on social media.

The excerpt by David Armstrong brings us back to a focus on population, with particular attention given to the construction of a modern medical imaginary that normalizes things like health screening and public health campaigns (see also French 2009). For Armstrong, "surveillance medicine" depends on the systematic measurement of entire populations, not just sick ones, which is a process that provides a comparative baseline for healthfulness while also changing the way people understand their bodies, risk, and care. The final excerpt, by Irus Braverman, demonstrates how social values and identities can be intentionally constructed—or disciplined—through experiences of observing nonhuman animals in painstakingly designed zoos. The presumed objects of surveillance in zoos may be nonhuman animals, but the audiences are zoogoers who are trained to embrace conservationist values through exposure to contrived scenes of "wildness."

NOTE

1. The Panopticon idea was initially conceived of by Jeremy Bentham's brother, Samuel, as an efficient means of overseeing workers (Semple 1993).

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JEREMY BENTHAM

THE PANOPTICON

The Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham's plans for Panopticon reformatories, derived from his brother Samuel's original conception, became a touchstone of surveillance theory largely through Michel Foucault's analysis. However, the original plan, created in numerous letters and papers written over many years, speaks for itself and goes much further than Foucault's description, covering aspects as diverse as food, clothing, segregation by sex and class, reflections on the economy of imprisonment and on the corruption of guards, and much more. In these excerpts from Bentham's early letters, we concentrate on the surveillant intent of panoptic institutions.

From Letter I

Dear * * * *,—I observed t'other day in one of your English papers, an advertisement relative to a HOUSE OF CORRECTION therein spoken of, as intended for * * * *. It occurred to me, that the plan of a building, lately contrived by my brother, for purposes in some respects similar, and which, under the name of the *Inspection House*, or the *Elaboratory*, he is about erecting here, might afford some hints for the above establishment. I have accordingly obtained some drawings relative to it, which I here inclose. Indeed I look upon it as capable of applications of the most extensive nature; and that for reasons which you will soon perceive.

To say all in one word, it will be found applicable, I think, without exception, to all establishments whatsoever, in which, within a space not too large to be covered or commanded by buildings, a number of persons are meant to be kept under inspection. 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*: in a word, whether it be applied to the purposes of *perpetual prisons* in the room of death, or *prisons for confinement* before trial, or *penitentiary-houses*, or *houses of correction*, or *work-houses*,

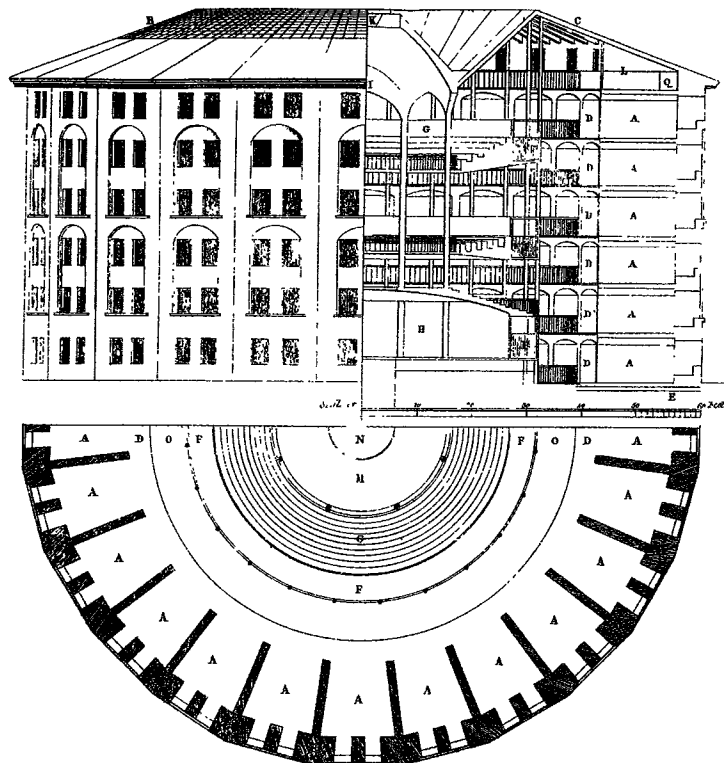
or *manufactories*, or *mad-houses*, or *hospitals*, or *schools*.

It is obvious that, in all these instances, 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. Ideal perfection, if that were the object, would require that each person should actually be in that predicament, during every instant of time. This being impossible, the next thing to be wished for is, that, at every instant, seeing reason to believe as much, and not being able to satisfy himself to the contrary, he should conceive himself to be so. This point, you will immediately see, is most completely secured by my brother's plan; and, I think, it will appear equally manifest, that it cannot be compassed by any other, or to speak more properly, that if it be compassed

by any other, it can only be in proportion as such other may approach to this.

From Letter V

The essence of it consists, then, in the centrality of the inspector's situation, combined with the well-known and most effectual contrivances for seeing without being seen. As to the general form of the building, the most commodious for most purposes seems to be the circular: but this is not an absolutely essential circumstance. Of all figures, however, this, you will observe, is the only one that affords a perfect view, and the same view, of an indefinite number of apartments of the same dimensions: that affords a spot from which, without any change of situation, a man may survey, in the same perfection, the whole



Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon prison design, 1791, Willey Reveley.

number, and without so much as a change of posture, the half of the whole number, at the same time: that, within a boundary of a given extent, contains the greatest quantity of room:—that places the centre at the least distance from the light:—that gives the cells most width, at the part where, on account of the light, most light may, for the purposes of work, be wanted:—and that reduces to the greatest possible shortness the path taken by the inspector, in passing from each part of the field of inspection to every other.

You will please to observe, that though perhaps it is the most important point, that the persons to be inspected should always feel themselves as if under inspection, at least as standing a great chance of being so, yet it is not by any means the only one. If it were, the same advantage might be given to buildings of almost any form. What is also of importance is, that for the greatest proportion of time possible, each man should actually be under inspection. This is material in all cases, that the inspector may have the satisfaction of knowing, that the discipline actually has the effect which it is designed to have: and it is more particularly material in such cases where the inspector, besides seeing that they conform to such standing rules as are prescribed, has more or less frequent occasion to give them such transient and incidental directions as will require to be given and enforced, at the commencement at least of every course of industry. And I think, it needs not much argument to prove, that the business of inspection, like every other, will be performed to a greater degree of perfection, the less trouble the performance of it requires.

Not only so, but the greater chance there is, of a given person's being at a given time actually under inspection, the more strong will be the persuasion—the more intense, if I may say so, the feeling, he has of his being so. How little turn soever the greater number of persons so circumstanced may be supposed to have for calculation, some

rough sort of calculation can scarcely, under such circumstances, avoid forcing itself upon the rudest mind. Experiment, venturing first upon slight transgressions, and so on, in proportion to success, upon more and more considerable ones, will not fail to teach him the difference between a loose inspection and a strict one.

It is for these reasons, that I cannot help looking upon every form as less and less eligible, in proportion as it deviates from the circular.

From Letter VI

I FLATTER myself there can now be little doubt of the plan's possessing the fundamental advantages I have been attributing to it: I mean, the *apparent omnipresence* of the inspector (if divines will allow me the expression,) combined with the extreme facility of his *real presence*.

A collateral advantage it possesses, and on the score of frugality a very material one, is that which respects the *number* of the inspectors requisite. If this plan required more than another, the additional number would form an objection, which, were the difference to a certain degree considerable, might rise so high as to be conclusive: so far from it, that a greater multitude than ever were yet lodged in one house might be inspected by a single person; for the trouble of inspection is diminished in no less proportion than the strictness of inspection is increased.

Another very important advantage, whatever purposes the plan may be applied to, particularly where it is applied to the severest and most coercive purposes, is, that the *under* keepers or inspectors, the servants and subordinates of every kind, will be under the same irresistible controul with respect to the *head* keeper or inspector, as the prisoners or other persons to be governed are with respect to *them*. On the common plans, what means, what

possibility, has the prisoner, of appealing to the humanity of the principal for redress against the neglect or oppression of subordinates in that rigid sphere, but the few opportunities which, in a crowded prison, the most conscientious keeper *can* afford—but the none at all which many a keeper *thinks* fit to give them? How different would their lot be upon this plan!

In no instance could his subordinates either perform or depart from their duty, but he must know the time and degree and manner of their doing so. It presents an answer, and that a satisfactory one, to one of the most puzzling of political questions—*quis custodiet ipsos custodes* [Who will guard the guards themselves]? And, as the fulfilling of his, as well as their, duty would be rendered so much easier, than it can ever have been hitherto, so might, and so should, any departure from it be punished with the more inflexible severity. It is this circumstance that renders the influence of this plan not less beneficial to what is called *liberty*, than to necessary coercion; not less powerful as a controul upon subordinate power, than as a curb to delinquency; as a shield to innocence, than as a scourge to guilt.

Another advantage, still operating to the same ends, is the great load of trouble and disgust which it takes off the shoulders of those occasional inspectors of a higher order, such as *judges* and other *magistrates*, who, called down to this irksome task from the superior ranks of life, cannot but feel a proportionable repugnance to the discharge of it. Think how it is with them upon the present plans, and how it still must be upon the best plans that have been hitherto devised! The cells or apartments, however constructed, must, if there be nine hundred of them (as there were to have been upon the penitentiary-house plan,) be opened to the visitors, one by one. To do their business to any purpose, they must approach near to, and come almost

in contact with each inhabitant; whose situation being watched over according to no other than the loose methods of inspection at present practicable, will on that account require the more minute and troublesome investigation on the part of these occasional superintendents. By this new plan, the disgust is entirely removed, and the trouble of going into such a room as the lodge, is no more than the trouble of going into any other. . . .

Among the other causes of that reluctance, none at present so forcible, none so unhappily well grounded, none which affords so natural an excuse, nor so strong a reason against accepting of any excuse, as the danger of *infection*—a circumstance which carries death, in one of its most tremendous forms, from the seat of guilt to the seat of justice, involving in one common catastrophe the violator and the upholder of the laws. But in a spot so constructed, and under a course of discipline so insured, how should infection ever arise? or how should it continue? Against every danger of this kind, what private house of the poor, one might almost say, or even of the most opulent, can be equally secure?

Nor is the disagreeableness of the task of superintendence diminished by this plan, in a much greater degree than the efficacy of it is increased. On all others, be the superintendent's visit ever so unexpected, and his motions ever so quick, time there must always be for preparations blinding the real state of things. Out of nine hundred cells, he can visit but one at a time, and, in the meanwhile, the worst of the others may be arranged, and the inhabitants threatened, and tutored how to receive him. On this plan, no sooner is the superintendent announced, than the whole scene opens instantaneously to his view. . . .

You see, I take for granted as a matter of course, that under the necessary regulations for preventing interruption

and disturbance, the doors of these establishments will be, as, without very special reasons to the contrary, the doors of all public establishments ought to be, thrown wide open to the body of the curious at

large—the great *open committee* of the tribunal of the world. And who ever objects to such publicity, where it is practicable, but those whose motives for objection afford the strongest reasons for it?

A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. So it is not necessary to use force to constrain the convict to good behaviour, the madman to calm, the worker to work, the schoolboy to application, the patient to the observation of the regulations. Bentham was surprised that panoptic institutions could be so light: there were no more bars, no more chains, no more heavy locks; all that was needed was that the separations should be clear and the openings well arranged. The heaviness of the old 'houses of security', with their fortress-like architecture, could be replaced by the simple, economic geometry of a 'house of certainty'. The efficiency of power, its constraining force have, in a sense, passed over to the other side—to the side of its surface of application. He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects: it is a perpetual victory that avoids any physical confrontation and which is always decided in advance. . . .

The Panopticon is a royal menagerie; the animal is replaced by man, individual distribution by specific grouping and the king by the machinery of a furtive power. With this exception, the Panopticon also does the work of a naturalist. It makes it possible to draw up differences: among patients, to observe the symptoms of each individual, without the proximity of beds, the circulation of miasmas, the effects of contagion confusing the clinical tables; among schoolchildren, it makes it possible to observe performances (without there being any imitation or copying), to map aptitudes, to assess characters, to draw up rigorous

classifications and, in relation to normal development, to distinguish 'laziness and stubbornness' from 'incurable imbecility'; among workers, it makes it possible to note the aptitudes of each worker, compare the time he takes to perform a task, and if they are paid by the day, to calculate their wages. . . .

The Panopticon is a privileged place for experiments on men, and for analysing with complete certainty the transformations that may be obtained from them. The Panopticon may even provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms. In this central tower, the director may spy on all the employees that he has under his orders: nurses, doctors, foremen, teachers, warders; he will be able to judge them continuously, alter their behaviour, impose upon them the methods he thinks best; and it will even be possible to observe the director himself. An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the centre of the Panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from him, how the entire establishment is functioning. And, in any case, enclosed as he is in the middle of this architectural mechanism, is not the director's own fate entirely bound up with it? The incompetent physician who has allowed contagion to spread, the incompetent prison governor or workshop manager will be the first victims of an epidemic or a revolt. "By every tie I could devise", said the master of the Panopticon, "my own fate had been bound up by me with theirs". The Panopticon functions as a kind of laboratory of power. Thanks to its mechanisms of observation, it gains in efficiency and in the ability to penetrate into men's behaviour; knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised. . . .

The Panopticon . . . must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men. No doubt Bentham

MICHEL FOUCAULT

DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

The Birth of the Prison

The figure of the Panopticon, as theorized by Michel Foucault, has had a profound influence on surveillance studies. By illustrating how architectures of surveillance have spread throughout societies, Foucault developed a new theory of power as pervasive, operating on a capillary level of social relations, and not dependent on individual actors asserting control over others. The Panopticon serves as an influential metaphor for the ways in which subjectivity can be transformed through exposure to surveillance, such that people voluntarily regulate their behaviour even in the absence of verifiable external observation.

Bentham's *Panopticon* is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out

precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. In short, it reverses the principle of the dungeon; or rather of its three functions—to enclose, to deprive of light and to hide—it preserves only the first and eliminates the other two. Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap.

To begin with, this made it possible—as a negative effect—to avoid those compact, swarming, howling masses that were to

be found in places of confinement, those painted by Goya or described by Howard. Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication. The arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, imposes on him an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is a guarantee of order. If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape, the planning of new crimes for the future, bad reciprocal influences; if they are patients, there is no danger of contagion; if they are madmen there is no risk of their committing violence upon one another; if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time; if they are workers, there are no disorders, no theft, no coalitions, none of those distractions that slow down the rate of work, make it less perfect or cause accidents. The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities. From the point of view of the guardian, it is replaced by a multiplicity that can be numbered and supervised; from the point of view of the inmates, by a sequestered and observed solitude.

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it;

in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. To achieve this, it is at once too much and too little that the prisoner should be constantly observed by an inspector: too little, for what matters is that he knows himself to be observed; too much, because he has no need in fact of being so. In view of this, Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so. In order to make the presence or absence of the inspector unverifiable, so that the prisoners, in their cells, cannot even see a shadow, Bentham envisaged not only venetian blinds on the windows of the central observation hall, but, on the inside, partitions that intersected the hall at right angles and, in order to pass from one quarter to the other, not doors but zig-zag openings; for the slightest noise, a gleam of light, a brightness in a half-opened door would betray the presence of the guardian. The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen.

It is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up. The ceremonies, the rituals, the marks by which the sovereign's surplus power was manifested are useless. There is a machinery that assures dissymmetry, disequilibrium, difference. . . . The Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power.

A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. So it is not necessary to use force to constrain the convict to good behaviour, the madman to calm, the worker to work, the schoolboy to application, the patient to the observation of the regulations. Bentham was surprised that panoptic institutions could be so light: there were no more bars, no more chains, no more heavy locks; all that was needed was that the separations should be clear and the openings well arranged. The heaviness of the old 'houses of security', with their fortress-like architecture, could be replaced by the simple, economic geometry of a 'house of certainty'. The efficiency of power, its constraining force have, in a sense, passed over to the other side—to the side of its surface of application. He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects: it is a perpetual victory that avoids any physical confrontation and which is always decided in advance. . . .

The Panopticon is a royal menagerie; the animal is replaced by man, individual distribution by specific grouping and the king by the machinery of a furtive power. With this exception, the Panopticon also does the work of a naturalist. It makes it possible to draw up differences: among patients, to observe the symptoms of each individual, without the proximity of beds, the circulation of miasmas, the effects of contagion confusing the clinical tables; among schoolchildren, it makes it possible to observe performances (without there being any imitation or copying), to map aptitudes, to assess characters, to draw up rigorous

classifications and, in relation to normal development, to distinguish 'laziness and stubbornness' from 'incurable imbecility'; among workers, it makes it possible to note the aptitudes of each worker, compare the time he takes to perform a task, and if they are paid by the day, to calculate their wages. . . .

The Panopticon is a privileged place for experiments on men, and for analysing with complete certainty the transformations that may be obtained from them. The Panopticon may even provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms. In this central tower, the director may spy on all the employees that he has under his orders: nurses, doctors, foremen, teachers, warders; he will be able to judge them continuously, alter their behaviour, impose upon them the methods he thinks best; and it will even be possible to observe the director himself. An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the centre of the Panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from him, how the entire establishment is functioning. And, in any case, enclosed as he is in the middle of this architectural mechanism, is not the director's own fate entirely bound up with it? The incompetent physician who has allowed contagion to spread, the incompetent prison governor or workshop manager will be the first victims of an epidemic or a revolt. "By every tie I could devise", said the master of the Panopticon, "my own fate had been bound up by me with theirs". The Panopticon functions as a kind of laboratory of power. Thanks to its mechanisms of observation, it gains in efficiency and in the ability to penetrate into men's behaviour; knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised. . . .

The Panopticon . . . must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men. No doubt Bentham

presents it as a particular institution, closed in upon itself. Utopias, perfectly closed in upon themselves, are common enough. As opposed to the ruined prisons, littered with mechanisms of torture, to be seen in Piranese's engravings, the Panopticon presents a cruel, ingenious cage. The fact that it should have given rise, even in our own time, to so many variations, projected or realized, is evidence of the imaginary intensity that it has possessed for almost two hundred years. But the Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use.

It is polyvalent in its applications; it serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work. It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used. . . .

In each of its applications, it makes it possible to perfect the exercise of power. It does this in several ways: because it can reduce the number of those who exercise it, while increasing the number of those on whom it is exercised. Because it is possible to intervene at any moment and because the constant pressure acts even before the offences, mistakes or crimes have been committed. Because, in these conditions, its strength is that it never intervenes, it is exercised spontaneously and without noise, it constitutes

a mechanism whose effects follow from one another. Because, without any physical instrument other than architecture and geometry, it acts directly on individuals; it gives 'power of mind over mind'. The panoptic schema makes any apparatus of power more intense: it assures its economy (in material, in personnel, in time); it assures its efficacy by its preventative character, its continuous functioning and its automatic mechanisms. . . .

In short, it arranges things in such a way that the exercise of power is not added on from the outside, like a rigid, heavy constraint, to the functions it invests, but is so subtly present in them as to increase their efficiency by itself increasing its own points of contact. The panoptic mechanism is not simply a hinge, a point of exchange between a mechanism of power and a function; it is a way of making power relations function in a function, and of making a function function through these power relations. Bentham's Preface to Panopticon opens with a list of the benefits to be obtained from his 'inspection-house': *'Morals reformed—health preserved—industry invigorated—instruction diffused—public burthens lightened—Economy seated, as it were, upon a rock—the gordian knot of the Poor-Laws not cut, but untied—all by a simple idea in architecture!'*

Furthermore, the arrangement of this machine is such that its enclosed nature does not preclude a permanent presence from the outside: we have seen that anyone may come and exercise in the central tower the functions of surveillance, and that, this being the case, he can gain a clear idea of the way in which the surveillance is practised. In fact, any panoptic institution, even if it is as rigorously closed as a penitentiary, may without difficulty be subjected to such irregular and constant inspections: and not only by the appointed inspectors, but also by the public; any member of society will have the right to come and see with his own eyes how the schools, hospitals, factories,

prisons function. There is no risk, therefore, that the increase of power created by the panoptic machine may degenerate into tyranny; the disciplinary mechanism will be democratically controlled, since it will be constantly accessible 'to the great tribunal committee of the world'. This Panopticon, subtly arranged so that an observer may observe, at a glance, so many different individuals, also enables everyone to come and observe any of the observers. The seeing machine was once a sort of dark room into which individuals spied; it has become a transparent building in which the exercise of power may be supervised by society as a whole.

The panoptic schema, without disappearing as such or losing any of its properties, was destined to spread throughout the social body; its vocation was to become a generalized function. The plague-stricken town provided an exceptional disciplinary model: perfect, but absolutely violent; to the disease that brought death, power opposed its perpetual threat of death; life inside it was reduced to its simplest expression; it was, against the power of death, the meticulous exercise of the right of the sword. The Panopticon, on the other hand, has a role of amplification; although it arranges power, although it is intended to make it more economic and more effective, it does so not for power itself, nor for the immediate salvation of a threatened society: its aim is to strengthen the social forces—to increase production, to develop the economy, spread education, raise the level of public morality; to increase and multiply.

How is power to be strengthened in such a way that, far from impeding progress, far from weighing upon it with its rules and regulations, it actually facilitates such progress? What intensifier of power will be able at the same time to be a multiplier of production? How will power, by increasing its forces, be able to increase those of society instead of confiscating them or impeding them? The Panopticon's solution to this

problem is that the productive increase of power can be assured only if, on the one hand, it can be exercised continuously in the very foundations of society, in the subtlest possible way, and if, on the other hand, it functions outside these sudden, violent, discontinuous forms that are bound up with the exercise of sovereignty. The body of the king, with its strange material and physical presence, with the force that he himself deploys or transmits to some few others, is at the opposite extreme of this new physics of power represented by panopticism; the domain of panopticism is, on the contrary, that whole lower region, that region of irregular bodies, with their details, their multiple movements, their heterogeneous forces, their spatial relations; what are required are mechanisms that analyse distributions, gaps, series, combinations, and which use instruments that render visible, record, differentiate and compare: a physics of a relational and multiple power, which has its maximum intensity not in the person of the king, but in the bodies that can be individualized by these relations. At the theoretical level, Bentham defines another way of analysing the social body and the power relations that traverse it; in terms of practice, he defines a procedure of subordination of bodies and forces that must increase the utility of power while practising the economy of the prince. Panopticism is the general principle of a new 'political anatomy' whose object and end are not the relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline.

The celebrated, transparent, circular cage, with its high tower, powerful and knowing, may have been for Bentham a project of a perfect disciplinary institution; but he also set out to show how one may 'unlock' the disciplines and get them to function in a multiple, polyvalent way throughout the whole social body. These disciplines, which the classical age had elaborated in specific, relatively enclosed places—barracks, schools,

workshops—and whose total implementation had been imagined only at the limited and temporary scale of a plague-stricken town, Bentham dreamt of transforming into a network of mechanisms that would be everywhere and always alert, running through society without interruption in

space or in time. The panoptic arrangement provides the formula for this generalization. It programmes, at the level of an elementary and easily transferable mechanism, the basic functioning of a society penetrated through and through with disciplinary mechanisms.