Liquid Surveillance

A Conversation

Zygmunt Bauman and David Lyon

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Liquid surveillance as post-panoptic

David Lyon Among those who are new to the serious study of surveillance, the idea of the panopticon seems like a brilliant idea. It is on one level a theory of how surveillance works and on another a means of situating surveillance within the story of modernity. For Foucault, who famously lighted on Bentham's panopticon design as offering a key to understanding the rise of modern, self-disciplining societies, the panopticon is pivotal.

However, for some who have studied surveillance for some time, mere mention of the panopticon elicits exasperated groans. For them, too much has been expected by too many of the panopticon with the result that the diagram is wheeled out at every conceivable opportunity to, well, explain surveillance. So we come across electronic panopticons and superpanopticons as well as variations such as the synopticon or the polyopticon. Enough! advises Kevin Haggerty, let's 'tear down the walls'![35] There are historical as well as logical limits to the usefulness of panoptic imagery today.

Yet, without doubt, Foucault made some fascinating and important observations about the panopticon, showing how it truly is a mirror of modernity in some significant respects. He saw discipline as key; controlling the 'soul' to change behaviour and motivation. There is something searching, and compelling, about his statement: '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.'[36] This is how, as Foucault also says, visibility becomes a trap, but it is a trap that we ourselves help to construct. If one were to apply the

panoptic diagram to thinking about surveillance today, that insight alone would be worth exploring. How do we inscribe surveillance power in ourselves when we go online, use a credit card, show our passports or apply for government assistance?

It is also true that Foucault helped us see how power relations characterize all manner of social situations, not merely one in which attempts to control or to manage a population – as with the police or border officials – are more overt and obvious. Thus one might not be surprised to find, for example, consumer surveillance through database marketing described as 'panoptic', as Oscar Gandy did, classically, in his work on *The Panoptic Sort: A Political Economy of Personal Information*.[37] Here, of course, the relation to the original panoptic principle may become a little strained (we'll come back to this).

But the attempt to use the panopticon today can also produce apparently paradoxical outcomes. Lorna Rhodes's exploration of the 'supermax' – maximum security – prison, for example, leads her to conclude that the panopticon may 'diagnose us all'.[38] She shows how the supermax experience prompts some inmates to self-mutilate; the panoptic 'calculated manipulation' of the body calls forth its opposite. Experiencing their bodies as abandoned, these inmates use their bodies to assert themselves. They react against the negative visibility intended to produce compliance with acts aimed at heightened visibility.[39]

On the other hand, in the work of Oscar Gandy, and more recently in that of Mark Andrejevic,[40] the panoptic triage is seen operating in a consumer context. This is the soft end of the surveillance continuum. In database marketing the idea is to lull intended targets into thinking that they count when all it wants is to count them and, of course, to suck them into further purchases. Here, the individuation is clearly commodified; if it is panoptic power, it is in the service of marketers, intent on lulling and luring the unwary. But the findings of Gandy and Andrejevic suggest that such techniques work, routinely. They feature within a thriving and lucrative marketing industry.

So here is the paradox: the sharp end of the panoptic spectrum may generate moments of refusal and resistance that militate against the production of Foucault's 'docile bodies', whereas the soft end seems to seduce participants into a stunning conformity of which some seem scarcely conscious.[41] Paradoxes like this do raise vital questions of the body and of technologies, of productive power and active resistance, and of the hiddenness or mutuality of vision, to name but three. But they also insert nagging doubts about how fruitful panoptic analysis can be today.

Which is why I want to ask you about the panopticon, Zygmunt. After all, you were writing cogently about this theme long before I was and you have used the critique of the panopticon many times as a means of indicating how contemporary modernities have gone beyond some of their earlier features. Indeed, you use the panopticon as part of the 'before' story of which the 'after' is now liquid modernity. The world of fixity dissolved into flows; the dispersal of disciplines into new spaces, new situations.

I shall start with this direct and general question before we try to tease out some of the particulars: Does the advent of liquid surveillance mean forgetting the panopticon?

Zygmunt Bauman Myself, I would not share Kevin Haggerty's concerns … Already quite a few decades ago I was inoculated against this and similar alarms, having been forewarned by the great psychologist Gordon Allport that we in the humanities never solve any issues – we only get bored with them. And calls to forget have since turned into the most common as well as the most treacherous siren songs pouring from the loudspeakers or earpieces of the liquid modern era …

As I see it, the panopticon is alive and well, armed in fact with (electronically enhanced, 'cyborgized') muscles so mighty that Bentham or even Foucault could not and would not have imagined them – but it has clearly stopped being the universal pattern or strategy of domination that both those authors believed it was in their times; it is no longer even the principal or most commonly

practised pattern or strategy. The panopticon has been shifted and confined to the 'unmanageable' parts of society, such as prisons, camps, psychiatric clinics and other 'total institutions', in Erving Goffman's sense. How they work nowadays has been superbly recorded and in my view definitively described by Loïc Wacquant. In other words, panopticon-like practices are limited to sites for humans booked to the debit side, declared useless and fully and truly 'excluded' – and where the incapacitation of bodies, rather than their harnessing to useful work, is the sole purpose behind the setting's logic.

In view of that, Lorna Rhodes's finding does not appear that 'paradoxical' after all. The cooperation of the ruled was always welcomed by rulers and an integral part of their calculation. Self-immolation and self-inflicted damage to bodies, all the way to self-destruction, is all but the explicit or implicit objective of panoptical techniques when they are applied to the useless and altogether unprofitable elements. Most certainly, such cooperation on the part of victims would not be seriously frowned upon, deprecated and regretted, whatever noises might be made to the contrary! The genius of ruling wants the ruled to do the rulers' job – and the inmates of supermax prisons hasten to oblige. The 'totality' of that kind of total institution manifests itself precisely in that the only way of 'self-asserting' open to the ruled is to do with their own hands what the rulers dearly wish to attain. The precedents, if you need any, were the prisoners who threw themselves on the high-voltage barbed wire in Auschwitz. Though no one suggested then or afterwards that thereby the 'calculated manipulation' resulted in its opposite!

I do not know for sure whether Étienne de la Boétie did exist, or whether Michel de Montaigne invented him to offload the threat of being penalized for composing a highly risky, debunking and rebellious text (the jury in this case is still out) – but whoever its author was, the *Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* is still worth rereading, particularly by those who are dazzled by novelties and fail to spot continuity behind discontinuities.

Whoever the author was, he or she presaged the stratagem developed several centuries later to near perfection in the liquid modern society of consumers. Everything – pattern of domination, philosophy and pragmatic precepts of management, vehicles of social control, the very concept of power (that is, of the way to manipulate probabilities to increase the likelihood of desirable conduct and reduce to a minimum the chances of the opposite) – seems to be moving in the same direction. Everything moves from enforcement to temptation and seduction, from normative regulation to PR, from policing to the arousal of desire; and everything shifts the principal role in achieving the intended and welcome results from the bosses to the subordinates, from supervisors to the supervised, from surveyors to the surveyed; in short, from the managers to the managed.

And there is another trend closely intertwined with the first, one that is sometimes summed up in an unduly impoverishing dilemma of stick and carrot. But it manifests itself in many and different seminal shifts, and above all in the translocation of the wager in every and any struggle for success from discipline, obedience, conformity, order-following, routine, uniformity and a reduction of options – all in all from the predetermination of subordinates' choices by means addressed to their rational faculty of reward seeking and penalty avoidance – to essentially 'irrational' faculties of initiative, adventurousness, experimentation, self-assertion, emotionality and pleasure and entertainment seeking. If Bentham saw the key to managerial success in reducing the choices of the panopticon's inmates to the bare-bone alternatives of a dull job or an even deadlier boredom, a daily bowl of gruel or the torments of hunger, contemporary managers worth their salt would see in the recommended regime an abominable as well as unforgivably inane waste of the capital resources hidden in personal idiosyncrasies and growing in line with their variety and variegation. It is now the counting on human rationality alone, coupled with the suppression of wayward emotions, that leading managers, attuned as they are to the spirit of the time, would dismiss as inexcusably irrational …

Having considered bureaucracy as the fullest incarnation of modern rationality, Max Weber proceeded to enumerate the features which any purposeful arrangement of human activities needs to acquire and strive to perfect, in addition to strict hierarchies of command and reporting, in order to come close to bureaucracy's ideal type and so climb to the peak of rationality. At the top of Weber's list was the exclusion of all personal loyalties, commitments, beliefs and preferences other than those declared relevant to serving the purpose of the organization; everything 'personal', that is not determined by the statute books of the company, needed to be left in the cloakroom at the entry to the building, so to speak, and collected back after the completion of 'office time'. Today, when the centre of gravity, burden of proof and responsibility for the result has been dropped by managers, as team leaders and unit commanders, on to the shoulders of individual performers, or 'contracted out', 'outsourced' or 'hived off' laterally and judged according to a seller–buyer pattern rather than a boss–subordinate relationship, the aim is to harness the totality of the subaltern personality and their whole waking time to the company's purposes. This is an expedient viewed, not without reason, as infinitely more convenient and profitable than the notoriously costly, unwieldy, restrictive and unduly laborious pan-optical measures. Servitude, along with surveillance of performance twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, is becoming fully and truly a DIY job for the subordinates. The construction, running and servicing of panopticons have been turned from a liability into an asset for the bosses, written into the small print of every contract of employment.

In a nutshell, just as snails carry their homes, so the employees of the brave new liquid modern world must grow and carry their personal panopticons on their own bodies. Employees and every other variety of the subordinated have been charged with full and unconditional responsibility for keeping them in good repair and assuring their uninterrupted operation (leaving your mobile or iPhone at home when you go for a stroll, and thereby suspending

the state of being constantly at a superior's beck and call, is a case of serious misdemeanour). Tempted by the allure of consumer markets and frightened by the new freedom of the bosses to vanish, together with the jobs on offer, subordinates are so groomed to the role of self-watchers as to render redundant the watchtowers in the Bentham/ Foucault scheme.

DL I hear you saying, Zygmunt, that the classic panopticon is a thing of the past for the vast majority in the global north, except in so far as this majority have to carry their 'personal panopticons' with them. The classic panopticon is really only visible at the margins, particularly in urban areas where the poor, as Wacquant says, are 'outcasts'. And I agree wholeheartedly with you that acute forms of something suspiciously like the panopticon still lurk in such places. Wacquant's 'social panopticism' is found in the guise of programmes to promote the well-being of deprived households but which actually submit them to 'an ever more precise and penetrating form of punitive surveillance'.[42] This kind of motif is also very visible in John Gilliom's book *Overseers of the Poor*, in which he examines how women on welfare are subjected to the use of highly invasive computer-assisted casework (but who, intriguingly but unsurprisingly, find many ways to subvert the system for the sake of their children).[43]

So let's follow this thread through a little more before I ask you to reflect on one or two of the other contemporary variations on panopticon analysis that nudge us to allow a broader analysis some room. You suggest that the panopticon may still be found at the margins, in total institutions and the like. Wacquant's work focuses on a social panopticism in run-down and deprived areas of cities, in the global south as well as the global north. But do you think that the same kind of analysis might be applied to marginal groups as such, would-be immigrants, suspected 'terrorists' and others subject to more recent 'security' regimes? Didier Bigo's variation on the panoptic theme speaks of the 'ban-opticon' and applies to just such global marginals.

Simply put, Bigo proposes 'ban-opticon' to indicate how profiling technologies are used to determine who is placed under specific surveillance. But it emerges from a full theoretical analysis of how a new 'globalized (in)security' emerges from the increasingly concerted activities of international 'managers of unease' such as police, border officials and airline companies. Transnational bureaucracies of surveillance and control, both businesses and politicians, now work at a distance to monitor and control population movement, through surveillance. Taken together, these discourses, practices, physical architectures and rules form a complete, connected apparatus, or what Foucault called *dispositif*. The outcome is not a global panopticon but a 'ban-opticon' – combining Jean-Luc Nancy's idea of the 'ban' as developed by Agamben, with Foucault's 'opticon'. Its *dispositif* shows who is welcome or not, creating categories of people excluded not just from a given nation-state but from a rather amorphous and not unified cluster of global powers. And it operates virtually, using networked databases to channel flows of data, especially data about what is yet to happen, as in the film and book of *Minority Report*.

Rather like you, Bigo insists that there is no centralized manifestation of the panopticon today, and if the *dispositif* exists at all it is fragmented and heterogeneous. It operates through state and corporate entities, which along with other agencies 'converge towards the strengthening of the informatic and biometrics as modes of surveillance that focus on the trans-border movements of individuals'.[44] This is, says Bigo, a form of insecurity at the transnational level (and not a panopticon at all). Within it, Bigo analyses discourses (risk and threat levels, enemies within and so on), institutions, architectural structures (from detention centres to airport passenger flow lanes), laws and administrative measures – each of which singles out certain groups for special treatment. The strategic function of the ban-opticon diagram is to profile a minority as 'unwelcome'. Its three features are exceptional power within liberal societies (states of emergency that become routine),

profiling (excluding some groups, categories of proactively excluded people, because of their potential future behaviour) and the normalizing of non-excluded groups (to a belief in the free movement of goods, capital, information and persons). The ban-opticon operates in globalized spaces beyond the nation-state, so the effects of power and resistance are no longer felt merely between state and society.

Bigo sees that at this point – the division into what you call 'globals and locals' – his work and yours converge. Yet he also wonders if you underestimate the ways in which 'globals' are normalized into the 'imperative of mobility' through some of the mutually dependent strategies of the same *dispositif*. The discourses on free movement normalize the majority. It's still not a full-blown or even a shadow panopticon, of course, but it helps to explain why your 'globals' practise their peripatetic lifestyles as they do *and* (I would add) why they come to believe that the ban-opticon is necessary for others. (Perhaps these are the 'personal panopticons' that you say the majority carry as their snail shells?) Bigo speaks of all this hinging on the activities of those he calls the 'managers of unease' – security professionals and others – who are closest to the *dispositif* that controls and surveils certain groups beyond the majority.

So my question is this: How far do you think these kinds of variations on the panopticon theme, which still recognize the significance of the Foucauldian *dispositif* but go beyond it to address present-day political economies and technologies in globalizing contexts, help us grasp what's happening in liquid modern times? In this case, the analysis seems close to what you want to pursue (and that you discussed, for instance, in *Globalization*) – or not?

ZB Bigo focuses on unwanted migrants, but surveillance technology installed at state borderposts is just one case of a 'ban-opticon' (by the way, I find 'ban-opticon' a felicitous term, even if it is more redolent of a word-play than of semantic logic). It is just

one case, that is, of a more general phenomenon of surveillance philosophy and surveilling equipment wrapped around the task of 'keeping away' instead of 'keeping in', as the panopticon did, and drawing its life juices and developmental energy from the currently unstoppable rise of *securitarian* preoccupations, not from the *disciplining* urge as in the case of the panopticon. I suggest that CCTV cameras surrounding gated communities and dotting shopping malls and the forecourts of supermarkets are the principal – the most common and pattern-setting – specimens of ban-optical devices. The ban-opticon guards the entrances to the parts of the world inside which DIY surveillance suffices to maintain and reproduce 'order'; primarily, it bars entry to all those who possess none of the tools of DIY surveillance (of the credit card or Blackberry kind) and who therefore cannot be relied on to practise such surveillance on their own. These individuals (more to the point, *categories* of individuals) must be 'power assisted', so to speak, in falling into line with the behavioural patterns of 'defensible spaces'. Another task of ban-optical appliances, a task of no less gravity, is to promptly spot individuals who show signs of an unwillingness to fall into line or who plot to breach those binding patterns.

In other words, surveillance technology today develops on two fronts, serving two opposite strategic objectives: confinement (or 'fencing in') on one front line, exclusion (or 'fencing out') on the other. The surge in the global mass of exiles, refugees, asylum-seekers – or seekers of bread and drinking water – may indeed boost *both* kinds of surveillance technology (I suppose that Bigo would agree). In his latest book, Michel Agier sums up his ten-year field study in the refugee camps scattered across Africa and South America, as well as in European 'detention centres' for immigrants defined as 'illegal' or suspended in the 'no laws, no rights' status of 'asylum-seekers'.[45] He concludes that seventy years later Benjamin's 'bad luck' (as Hannah Arendt dubbed his stopping at the French-Spanish border that led to his suicide) has all but lost its 'extraordinary' status, not to mention its apparent singularity.

Already in 1950, 1 million refugees (mainly people 'displaced' by the war) had been counted in official global statistics. Today, the conservative estimate of the numbers of 'people in transition' is 12 million – but as many as 1 *billion* refugees-turned-exiles and ensconced in the nowhere-land of camps are predicted for 2050.

'Being in transition' is, of course, an ironic expression when it is applied to the lot of Walter Benjamin and the fast expanding mass of its mimeographed replicas. By definition, the idea of 'transition' stands for a finite process, a time-span with clearly drawn starting and finishing lines – a *passage* from a spatial, temporal, or spatial *and* temporal, 'here' to a 'there'; but these are precisely the attributes denied to the condition of 'being a refugee', which is defined and set apart from and in opposition to the 'norms' by their absence. A 'camp' is not a mid-station, or a road inn, or a motel on a voyage from here to there. It is the terminal station, where all mapped roads peter out and all movement grinds to a halt – with little prospect of parole or of the sentence being completed: more and more people are born in camps and die there, visiting no other places in their lifetime. Camps ooze finality; not the finality of destination, though, but of the state of transition petrified into a state of permanence.

The name 'transition camp', commonly selected by power-holders for the places where refugees are ordered to stay, is an oxymoron: 'transition' is the very quality whose denial and absence defines the status of a refugee. The sole defined meaning of being assigned to a place called a 'refugee camp' is that all other conceivable places are cast as off-limits. The sole meaning of being an insider in a refugee camp is to be an outsider, a stranger, an alien body, an intruder in the rest of the world – challenging that rest of the world to surround itself with ban-optical devices; in a nutshell, becoming an inmate of a refugee camp means eviction from the world shared by the rest of humanity. 'Having been evicted', being fixed in the *exile* condition, is all there is and needs to be in the identity of the refugee. And as Agier repeatedly points out, it is not the issue of *where from* one has come into the

encampment, but the absence of a *where to* – the declared prohibition or practical impossibility of arriving anywhere else – that sets an exile apart from the rest of humanity. Being set apart is what counts.

Exiles don't need to cross state borders, to arrive from another country. They may be, and all too often are, born and bred inside the country where their life of exile is lived. They might not even have moved an inch from the place where they were born. Agier has every right to collapse refugee camps, encampments of the homeless and urban ghettoes into the same category – of the 'corridors of exile'. Legal or illegal residents of all such places share one decisive trait: they are all redundant. The rejects or refuse of society. To sum up, waste. 'Waste', by definition, is the antonym of 'utility'; it denotes objects without possible use. Indeed, the sole accomplishment of waste is soiling and cluttering up the space that could otherwise be usefully employed. The principal purpose of the ban-opticon is to make sure that the waste is separated from decent product and earmarked for transportation to a refuse tip. Once it is on it, the panopticon will see to it that the waste stays there – preferably until biodegradation completes its course.

DL Thank you, Zygmunt. It's both instructive and stimulating to see how our work on surveillance dovetails with – and sometimes differs from – yours. But before leaving this, can we take just one more crack at the panopticon theme? We've agreed, I think, that the ban-opticon is where the panopticon urge may now be seen most blatantly, and that this kind of analysis speaks to some depressingly common experiences in a globalizing world. But surveillance scholars have also wrestled with these ideas in at least two contexts that refer to majority populations rather than to contexts of minority 'waste'.

I'm thinking on the one hand of the compelling studies of consumer surveillance carried out by Oscar Gandy, originally under the title *The Panoptic Sort*. I referred to this earlier but now I'd like

us to tease out this strand a bit more. Gandy's argument in that early book is that a general sorting machine is evident in the world of database marketing and so-called geodemo-graphics. People get clustered into crude population segments so that marketers can treat them differently depending on their consumer behaviour. Although some Foucault scholars might dispute this, Gandy's use of the panopticon is both to examine how the panopticon 'works' today in consumer settings, *and*, crucially, to show how the logic of the panopticon affects those who find themselves within its gaze.

As I see it, Gandy combines the analysis of the sorting and classifying aspects of the panopticon with the process whereby consumers are processed.[46] However, while he obtains his ideas on the classifying aspect of the panopticon from Foucault, he is more explicit about his analysis also being a 'political economy of personal information'. Marketers are always seeking new ways to rationalize the market by singling out for special attention consumers whose attributes make them attractive 'targets of opportunity'.[47] Other potential consumers can be allowed to slip out of sight while the truly worthy ones are skimmed off. The sorting process here focuses on those who, so far from being marginalized, already benefit from the system. This is the 'bourgeois form of monitored mobility', according to Mark Andrejevic,[48] suited to the smartphone, SUV and cruise-line crowd. Whatever panoptic residues remain here – and Andrejevic does see such targets as being encouraged to self-discipline to become consistently conspicuous consumers – are to efficiently provide this elite with goods and services.

That said, the point of Gandy's (and Andrejevic's for that matter) work is to indicate that this is merely the mirror image of the negatively discriminatory activity implied by the 'panoptic sort'. Indeed Gandy's ongoing work pays less attention to the panoptic per se and focuses more on the statistical and software processes dedicated to 'rational discrimination'.[49] He notes that Geoff Bowker and Susan Leigh Star's work on *Sorting Things Out*[50] persuasively argues that organizational classification of users,

clients, patients, consumers and so on is an increasingly significant part of modern life but fails to show how such classification not only describes but *also defines the possibilities for action* of affected groups. He goes on to insist that the 'rational discrimination' in economies of information is frequently based on racial profiling and eventuates in cumulative disadvantage to those thus negatively marked.

That is one example of ongoing theoretical panopticism. On the other hand, I refer you to work you have discussed in more than one place, on the 'synopticon', Thomas Mathiesen's neat neologism that contrasts the panopticon's 'few watching the many' with today's mass media, where as he puts it, 'the many watch the few'.[51] This hints at how the panoptic may actually find an ally in the mass media today. Mathiesen's key point, perhaps, is that whatever panoptic effects may still be present in today's societies, they cannot be understood in isolation from the synoptic, not least because they help to shape the effects of the latter. (This was seen vividly after 9/11, I think, when the constant TV replay of the blazing Twin Towers helped convey a sense of an ongoing imminent threat which, the authorities informed us *ad nauseam*, could be allayed by new security and surveillance measures.)[52]

Now, you use Mathiesen to support your case for the liquid modernity thesis and I agree; understanding the role of mass media is vital to our grasp of current cultural conditions. But surely Mathiesen tried to tell us that the panoptic works *with* the synoptic, not that the latter supersedes the former? So once again, I'd like you to respond to this – has the panoptic really shuffled off its mortal coil or is it still alive and well, albeit, perhaps, in its dotage? And there's a footnote to this as well. Aaron Doyle has pointed out recently (and rightly) that the model of 'media' used by Mathiesen is somewhat instrumental and top-down, and says little or nothing about resistance or about the ways that audiences decode media messages.[53] Also (though Mathiesen cannot fully be blamed for this, writing as he was before 'social media'), the synopticon seems unaware of the fragmentation of mass (TV) audiences or of the

extensive influence of digital media today. Surely the media, including 'new media', may also be sites for questioning or for criticizing surveillance?

ZB Mathiesen's 'synopticon', in my reading, is a sort of 'DIY panopticon' which I already briefly discussed before – a panopticon significantly modified: surveillance without surveillors. As I see it, that neologism was coined by Mathiesen with an intention to grasp the impact exerted on surveillance by the much more general transformation taking place in managerial philosophy (myself, I dubbed that transformation, in my recent book on the collateral damage of inequality, 'the managerial revolution mark two'). What was previously viewed as the duty of the managers, to be attained at their expense and through their effort, has been ceded to the *objects* of management (or has been 'subsidiarized' to them, in the insinuation of another neologism, now commonly used to disguise or camouflage the zeal of managers to dump the control tasks they find cumbersome, inconvenient, unwieldy and vexingly constraining onto the shoulders of the controlled – and so to represent the burden-shifting as an endowment, an act of granting rights of autonomy and self-assertion, or even as the 'enablement' or 'resubjectivization' of formerly passive objects of managerial action). Allow me to restate here, in broad outlines, what in my view 'the managerial revolution mark two' is about.[54]

In its original sense bequeathed by the times when the ideal of the industrial process was conceived on the pattern of a homeostatic machine going through pre-designed and strictly repetitive motions and kept on a steady, immutable course, managing people was indeed a chore. It required meticulous regimentation and close and continuous panopticon-style surveillance. It needed the imposition of a monotonous routine, bound to stultify the creative impulses of *both* the managed and their managers. It generated boredom and a constantly seething resentment threatening to self-combust into an open conflict. It was also a costly way of 'getting things done': instead of enlisting the non-regimented potentials of hired labour in

the service of the job, it used precious resources to stifle them, excise them and keep them out of mischief. All in all, day-to-day management was not the kind of task that resourceful people, people in power, were likely to relish and cherish: they were not going to perform it a moment longer than they had to, and given the power resources at their disposal they could not be expected to put off that moment for long. And they did not.

The current 'great transformation mark two' (to borrow Karl Polanyi's memorable phrase), the emergence of the widely lauded and welcome 'experience economy' drawing on the totality of personality resources, warts and all, signals that this moment of 'emancipation of the managers from the burden of managing' has arrived. Using James Burnham's terms, one could describe it as the 'managerial revolution mark two'; though, as revolutions go, there was little or no change in the incumbents of power and office. What has happened – what is happening – is more a coup d'état than a revolution: a proclamation from the top that the old game has been abandoned and that new rules of the game are in force. The people who initiated and saw through the revolution remained at the helm – and, if anything, settled into their offices even more securely than before. This revolution was started and conducted in the name of adding to their power, further strengthening their grip, and immunizing their domination against the resentment and rebellion that the form of their domination, before the revolution, used to generate. Since the second managerial revolution, the power of the managers has been reinforced and made well-nigh invulnerable by cutting off most of the restraining and otherwise inconvenient strings previously attached to it.

During that second revolution, the managers banished the pursuit of routine and invited the forces of spontaneity to occupy the now vacant supervisors' rooms. They refused to manage; instead, they demanded self-management from the residents, on the threat of eviction. The right to extend the residential lease was subjected to recurrent competition: after each round, the most playful and the best performing win the next term's lease, though without a

guarantee, or even an increased likelihood, of emerging unscathed from the next test. On the walls of the banqueting suite of the 'experience economy' the reminder that 'you are as good as your *last* success' (but not as your last but one) has replaced the inscription of 'mene, tekel, upharsin' ('counted, weighed, allocated'). Favouring subjectivity, playfulness and performativity, the organizations of the era of the 'experience economy' have to, want to and do prohibit long-term planning and the accumulation of merits. This indeed will keep the residents constantly on the move and busy – in the feverish search for ever new evidence that they are still welcome …

'Synopticon' serves that new demand very well, thank you. With the synopticon replacing the panopticon, there is no need to build heavy walls and erect watchtowers to keep the inmates inside, while hiring countless throngs of supervisors to make sure they stick to the prescribed routine (at an additional cost of placating the simmering wrath and unwillingness to cooperate that monotonous routine usually breeds, as well as the cost of having to make a continuous effort to nip in the bud the menace of a rebellion against the indignity of servitude). It is the objects of the managerial disciplinary concerns who are now expected to self-discipline and bear the material and psychical costs of discipline production. They are expected to erect the walls themselves and stay in them of their own volition. With the carrot (or its promise) replacing the stick, temptation and seduction taking over the functions once performed by normative regulation, and the grooming and honing of desires substituting for costly and dissent-generating policing, the watchtowers (like the rest of the strategy aimed at eliciting desirable and eliminating undesirable conduct) have been privatized, while the procedure of issuing permissions for wall-building has been deregulated. Instead of necessity chasing its victims, it is now the task of the volunteers to chase the opportunities of servitude (the concept of 'voluntary servitude' coined by Étienne de la Boétie had to wait four centuries before it turned into the objective of common managerial practice). Have

you noticed, by the way, that in every round of corporate 'expenditure cutting', it is 'middle management' (that is, the former supervisors of the rank and file) who are first for the chop?

The gear for the assembly of DIY, mobile and portable, single-person mini-panopticons is of course commercially supplied. It is the would-be inmates who bear responsibility for choosing and purchasing the gear, assembling it and putting it into operation. Though the monitoring, collating and processing of the volatile distribution of individual synoptical initiatives once again requires professionals; but it is the 'users' of the services of Google or Facebook who produce the 'database' – the raw material which professionals remould into Gandy's 'targeted categories' of prospective buyers – through their scattered, apparently autonomous yet synoptically pre-coordinated actions. To avoid confusion, therefore, I would rather abstain from using the term 'panopticon' in this context. The professionals in question are anything but the old-fashioned surveillors watching over the monotony of the binding routine; they are rather trackers or stalkers of the exquisitely changeable patterns of desires and of the conduct inspired by those volatile desires. They are, so to speak, the 'finishing branch' of the synopticon already in operation and not of their design and build. Or perhaps those engineers employed in 'database processing' are located somewhere between synopticon and ban-opticon, in as far as the products of their labour form a necessary condition of the profitable deployment of ban-optical techniques in marketing. It is so and it must be so, considering that any effective marketing requires knowledge of constituencies unfit for targeting as much as it needs reconnaissance of the most promising 'targets' of commercial efforts. Effective marketing needs *both* synopticon *and* ban-opticon. The 'data processing engineers' provide the communication channel linking the two.

A good, indeed an archetypal example of the interface between those two types of institutionalized surveilling techniques is the software developed for the use of corporations needing to process incoming calls. That software allows callers to be sorted out and set

apart for differentiated treatment – according to the promise they show (or for that matter don't show) for enhancing the company's profits. The promising ones are not kept on hold but immediately connected to senior operators entitled to take decisions on the spot. The hopeless ones are, on the other hand, kept waiting endlessly, fed with boringly repetitive messages interspersed with tunes replayed *ad nauseam* as well as recorded promises to be connected to the first available operator. If the intruder survives the treatment and the derision it implies, and refuses to hang up, she or he is connected in the end to a lower rank operator not empowered to settle the problem (normally a grievance) that was the reason for the call.

populations. It is not an average of study averages but a repeated finding. Nevertheless, the Bernard-Killworth number has not been popularized as widely as Dunbar's.' Unlike the researchers named above, who focus on groupings in various contemporary human populations, the prime objects of Dunbar's field and archive studies and the suppliers of the raw data from which Dunbar's number was calculated were primates and pleistocene populations; therefore, Dunbar's proposition – that given the structure of the neo-cortex shared by primates and their younger human relatives, the size of the primeval horde sets the limits to the number of 'meaningful relationships' for humans – needs to be taken as an assumption rather than a corroborated finding.

32 See 'McDonald's #McDStories Twitter campaign backfires', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 June 2012, at www. telegraph.co.uk (accessed Apr. 2012).

33 On this, see the thoughtful article by Malcolm Gladwell, 'Small change: why the revolution will not be tweeted', *New Yorker*, 24 Oct. 2010.

34 See Jean-Claude Kaufmann, *Sex@mour* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), here quoted from David Macey's translation, *Love Online* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).

Chapter 2

35 Kevin Haggerty, 'Tear down the walls', in Lyon, *Theorizing Surveillance*.

36 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1977), pp. 202–3.

37 Oscar Gandy, *The Panoptic Sort: A Political Economy of Personal Information* (Boulder: Westview, 1993).

38 Lorna Rhodes, 'Panoptical intimacies', *Public Culture* 10: 2 (1998): 308.

39 Lorna Rhodes, *Total Confinement: Madness and Reason in the Maximum Security Prison* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

40 Mark Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

41 This is a near quote from David Lyon, 'The search for surveillance theories', in Lyon, *Theorizing Surveillance*, p. 8.

42 Loïc Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 25.

43 John Gilliom, *Overseers of the Poor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

44 Didier Bigo, 'Globalized (in)security: the field and the ban-opticon', in Naoki Sakai and Jon Solomon, eds, *Traces 4: Translation, Biopolitics, Colonial Difference* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006).

45 Michel Agier, *Le Couloir des exiles. Être étranger dans un monde commun* (Marseille: Éditions du Croquant, 2011).

46 Lyon, *Surveillance Studies*, p. 42.

47 Oscar Gandy, 'Coming to terms with the pan-optic sort', in David Lyon and Elia Zureik, eds, *Computers, Surveillance and Privacy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 152.

48 Mark Andrejevic, *iSpy: Surveillance and Power in the Interactive Era* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2007), p. 125.

49 Gandy, *Coming to Terms with Chance*.

50 Geoff Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

51 Thomas Mathiesen, 'The viewer society: Michel Foucault's panopticon revisited', *Theoretical Criminology* 1: 2 (1997): 215–34.

52 See David Lyon, '9/11, synopticon, and scopophilia: watching and being watched', in Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson, eds, *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 35–54.

53 Aaron Doyle, 'Revisiting the synopticon: reconsidering Mathiesen's "viewer society" in the age of web 2.0',

Theoretical Criminology 15: 3 (2011): 283–99.

54 Zygmunt Bauman, *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), pp. 46–7.

Chapter 3

55 Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für die neue europäische Ordnung* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1991), pp. 14, 482. 'What was initially a small office established on 6th October 1939 with the brief to coordinate "resettlement of European nations" [Reichskommisariat für die Festigung Deutschen Volkstums] swiftly turned into a powerful institution with numerous branches, employing in addition to its officers thousands of ethnographers, architects, agronomists, accountants and specialists of all imaginable scientific disciplines' (pp. 125–6). (The book was translated as Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001.) See also Götz Aly's reply to Dan Diner, *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 4 (1993).

56 Cf. Klaus Dörner, *Tödliches Mitleid. Zur Frage der Unerträglichkeit des Lebens* (Gütersloh: Paranus, 1988), pp. 13, 65.

57 Thom Shanker and Matt Richtel, 'In new military, data overload can be deadly', *New York Times*, 16 Jan. 2011.

58 See Günther Anders, *Le temps de la fin* (1960; Paris: L'Herne, 2007), pp. 52–3.

59 Lyon, 'The border is everywhere'.

60 Ibid.

61 See, e.g., Elisabeth Bumiller, 'Air force drone operators report high levels of stress', *New York Times*, 18 Dec. 2011. At http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/19/ world/asia/air-force-drone-operators-show-high-levels-of-stress.html?_r=3 (accessed Mar. 2012).

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