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**CHOSEN CHAPTERS FROM
«EVERYDAY SURVEILLANCE:
VIGILANCE AND VISIBILITY IN POSTMODERN LIFE»¹**

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The chosen chapters of W. J. Staples «Everyday surveillance...» are dedicated to the analysis of the processes that were founded during Enlightenment and resulted in the formation of the specific system of social control based on extensive application of audio-visual and informational surveillance. Author underlines the possible problems and dangers caused by the technologies that were created to optimize the social policy. Rejecting the idea of a highly coordinated, state-driven, Big Brother monopoly over the practice of watching people, author analyzes the microtechniques of surveillance and social control that target and treat the body as an object to be watched, assessed, and manipulated. These are local knowledge-gathering activities often enhanced by the use of new information, visual, communication, and medical technologies that are increasingly present in the workplace, the school, the home, and the community. In this book I argue that, while our inherited, modern ideas about the nature of human beings, deviance, and social control continue to shape the ways in which we keep a close watch on people, a new set of meanings, attitudes, and practices is taking hold that is constituted by and indicative of conditions of postmodernity.

Key words: social control, surveillance, postmodern society.

Castles of Our Conscience. [Modern] mentality and the emergence of the modern disciplinary institution are nowhere more evident than in the United States. In addition to their sudden revulsion to violence, what became clear to reformers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was that the whipping post and the rack were a messy business and, increasingly, a political liability in postrevolutionary America. These inherited English criminal statutes were a constant reminder of monarchical political oppression, while those involving «cruel» sanctions were not applied consistently, making criminal justice arbitrary and ineffectual. In these early years, «a jury, squeezed between two distasteful choices, death or acquittal, often acquitted the guilty,» according to Lawrence Friedman [1]. This kind of «jury lawlessness» sometimes provoked vigilante justice, endangering the establishment of rational-legal authority and, therefore, the political power of the new government. A more predictable, orderly, and democratic set of punishments was needed to support the new political regime. We see, then, the emergence of a new discourse of crime and new forms of punishment.

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Inspired by the writings of, among others, the influential Italian criminologist Cesare Beccaria and his new «science of man», *Homo criminalis*, people such as Dr. Benjamin Rush (1745–1813), who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, set out to reinvent criminal justice practices. This new discourse on crime and punishment was celebrated in a now well-known set of principles:

1. Punishment must be consistent and not arbitrary.
2. Punishment should be a deterrent to future criminality.
3. There should be temporal modulation, since punishment can function only if it comes to an end.
4. Each crime and each penalty would be clearly laid out in a classification scheme.
5. The guilty should be only one of the targets of punishment, for punishment is directed above all at the potentially guilty.

The bodies of condemned offenders were now the property of society rather than of the king. Such ideas were infused with the notion of the social contract: that crime was an attack on society itself and that punishment should right the wrong done to the community and restore offenders to their proper places in it. Criminal justice would be rational, not emotional, according to the reformers. It would approach the mind and soul of the criminal and not just the body.

For a while, it was deemed that performing public works was the best treatment for the offender. In Philadelphia, for example, the application of the city's «wheelbarrow» law of 1786 put ragged, shaven-headed, chain-gang prisoners to work cleaning the streets under the watchful eye of armed guards. But the sight of these men became increasingly distasteful to the good citizens of the city as the convicts went about «begging and insulting the inhabitants, [and] collecting crowds of idle boys,» and they became the sport of others who tormented the prisoners incessantly. The law of March 27, 1789, soon sequestered prisoners to conditions of more private punishment at the Walnut Street jail [2]. Here the prisoners were subjected to a «moral» regime of solitary confinement, hard labor, diet control, and bodily hygiene. Yet not long after it was built, conditions at the jail deteriorated; jail inspectors began pardoning prisoners to alleviate overcrowding, abuses and neglect were exposed, and serious riots took place. The result was unanimous condemnation of the Walnut Street jail. But rather than scrap the experiment with incarceration, authorities pressed on and called for the building of new, larger state penitentiaries. Undertaking the most ambitious public works program in Pennsylvania's history to date, the western and eastern facilities were erected by the laws of 1817 and 1821, marking the beginnings of Pennsylvania's prison «system.» The situation was similar elsewhere, as other states increased their commitment to institutional punishment.

This turn to rationally organized reformatory institutions and the new «science of man» influenced society's response to other behaviors as well. Before about 1825, the majority of poor and dependent people had been customarily cared for in noninstitutional ways. Those close to the center of town life might stay in their own homes with the help of the community, or they were placed with relatives, friends, or fellow church members. Those on the margins were «boarded» with townfolk, with a widow perhaps, at a negotiated price. Later, communities made direct payments to people in their homes, while some able-bodied poor might be «auctioned off» to farmers and others and were put to work for their keep. Yet,

after the 1820s, these apparently flexible and informal arrangements began to break down under the weight of expanded commercial development, the erosion of social cohesion in small towns, the attraction of wealth, and the increasing stratification of towns and villages. Townsfolk, particularly those of the middle and upper classes, became less willing to take in and board the increasing number of strangers and outsiders appearing in their area.

In New York, for example, an influential report by the secretary of state in 1824 estimated the total number of poor in New York to be 22,111 and the cost of providing for them to be close to \$500,000. The report advocated the establishment of a system of county poorhouses modeled after the «House of Industry,» which had been erected in Rensselaer County in 1820. The idea was that each inmate would work to his own ability as a means of stimulating industry and sharing the expense of his maintenance. These houses of employment would ideally be connected to a workhouse or penitentiary «for the reception and discipline of sturdy beggars and vagrants.» Street beggary would be entirely prohibited. By 1835, almshouses appeared in fifty-one out of fifty-four state counties.

The principal advantages of the poorhouse seem clear. It isolated the dependent from the growing middle-class community that increasingly considered the pauper an idler and troublemaker. Rather than have the indigent scattered around town in private dwellings or, worse yet, begging on street corners, the almshouse centralized relief administration and provided for more effective surveillance of their activities by one overseer. However, before long, the «new» system of county indoor relief was itself in crisis. For what was hailed as the final solution to dependency revealed itself as yet another administrative, jurisdictional, and financial mess. In New York, annual reports from throughout the state to the legislature uncovered shocking abuse of inmates. Idleness was pervasive, especially in the larger houses. Economic depressions between 1837 and 1843, and later between 1857 and 1858, combined with the dramatic increase in immigration, placed an incredible burden on relief agencies. State governments, grappling to gain some rational control over the system and expenditures, began to create central administrative agencies to coordinate the activities of public charities. Massachusetts was the first to create a state board of charities in 1863. Later that year, New York established its board. By 1873 boards had been set up in Illinois, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Connecticut.

One important development that followed the establishment of these state boards was the process of classifying and segregating the population of the almshouses and moving inmates into facilities designated for their particular «defect». Reformers contended that the care and control function of the poorhouse could be enhanced if each class of dependent had its own particular needs addressed, since the mixing of such classes had created conditions which were detrimental to all. This «classification» movement attempted to extend administrative rationality and planning by isolating each particular class of deviants and dependents, not only to physically separate them from each other but also to gain more effective surveillance, observation, and control. Gender, age, and mental and physical capacities were the basis of boundaries among the new facilities, which prevented, through the restriction of both social and sexual contact, the procreation of the «defective classes.» Once so isolated, each facility could engage in a more exacting process of distinguishing the degree of each class's «rehabilitative» potential. Whereas custodial care was all that could be expected for the very

old, the very young, the infirm, or the completely helpless, others, including recalcitrant children, the healthy deviant, and the slightly feeble, could be educated and trained to labor both inside and, eventually, outside the institution.

The first group of dependents affected by the movement for separation was the insane. By 1881, there were six state hospitals for the acutely and chronically insane in New York, for example. Between 1850 and 1869, thirty-five new hospitals were opened in other states, and, by 1890, fifty-nine others came into existence, with the post-1870 hospitals increasingly larger in size. Children were similarly drawn away from the mixed almshouse where they were, for the most part, «badly fed, badly clothed, badly taken care of, and exposed to the degrading influence of those in immediate charge of them,» according to reformer Louisa Lee Schuyler. Specialized juvenile correction facilities—houses of refuge, reformatories, and training schools—expanded both the classification scheme and the system of care and control of dependent and troublesome children. Not only were children increasingly institutionalized in segregated facilities, but the legal mechanisms by which they got there changed as well. The juvenile court represented one more manifestation of the increasingly bureaucratic system of social control and the trend toward administrative reform and rationality. Within twenty-five years of the adoption of the first juvenile court legislation in Illinois in 1899, juvenile courts were established in every state but two. While perhaps more ceremonial than substantive at first, the juvenile court evolved to possess broad-sweeping jurisdiction over the lives of children under the age of sixteen. The court's ideological foundation rested on the notion of *parens patriae*, or parental care, and thus the legal institution was charged with protecting and providing for the needs of delinquent, dependent, and neglected youth.

The darker side of the reform story, however, was the regulation of family life by the state along with few alternatives to an institutional response to youthful misconduct. By 1940, juvenile courts in the United States handled 200,000 delinquency cases alone, not including the dependent and neglected—a rate of 10.5 per 1,000 of those between the ages of 10 and 17. By 1955, the corresponding figures were 431,000 cases with a rate of 21.4 per 1,000. In comparing figures from the U.S. Bureau of the Census for juvenile correctional facilities between 1923 and 1950, we see that these populations rose from 27,238 in 1923; to 30,496 in 1933; and to 40,880 by 1950. The corresponding rates per 100,000 of those in the population under age 18 were 65.7, 72.3, and 88.8, respectively.

Specialized facilities were also developed for the «feeble-minded» and the epileptic. «Mental defectives» were further classified as «teachable» or «unteachable.» Concerned with the «hereditary factor» in the proliferation of crime, pauperism, and mental deficiency, reformers and state welfare administrators sought to isolate its source, which, according to one reformer, was «the unrestrained liberty allowed to vagrant and degraded women.» They urged the creation of an institution for «vagrant and degraded» women, which, if not for reformation, could at least cut off the line of pauper descendants. In New York, the campaign resulted in 1887 in the House of Refuge for Women at Hudson, where «all females between the ages of fifteen and thirty years who had been convicted of petty larceny, habitual drunkenness, of being common prostitutes, frequenters of disorderly houses or houses of prostitution» were to be placed. Suitable employment was to be provided, which would encourage «habits of self supporting industry» and «mental and moral improvement.» This

facility was soon filled to capacity, and three other women's reformatories were erected in the state by the late 1890s.

So, according to the view I want to take here, the inventions of the penitentiary, the poorhouse, and the mental asylum were not *simply* chapters in a long humanitarian crusade. Driven by ideas having their origins in Enlightenment reason and progressive faith, a constellation of influential philosophers, jurists, reformers, and state authorities aided in the creation and *expansion* of a system of social control for modern society not possible in the pre-modern, classical age. Ironically then, it might be argued that, in the name of «humanity» and «emancipation,» reformers created *more* formal social control, not less. Reformers, interested in punishing more effectively and more certainly, went beyond the surface of the skin, into the very heart and soul of the deviant. In doing so, they approached the criminal, the deviant, and the poor as objects to be manipulated, whereas just a short time before, the community had confronted the «impenitent sinner» as deserving of corporal punishment or, in the case of the poor, simply as a person who had been «reduced to want.»

Under the authority of the state and «in the name of the people,» these reformers—increasingly from middle and professional classes—asserted a new system of universal «moral» principles and a new discourse on crime and punishment, placing themselves as «experts» at the center of justice practice. Reflecting the central themes of modernity, disorderly and ill-defined forms of public torture and stigmatization ceremonies were replaced by rationally organized legal codes as well as reformatory institutions such as prisons, poorhouses, and asylums that this new social class would run and supervise. As part of their new program, rather than seek retribution, they removed punishment from public view and placed it behind the walls of the institution. The «dangerous rogue,» sent away to places like Auburn, was subjected to a secular, military-like apparatus that would transform him (or a woman sent to a «House of Refuge») into a newly refined democratic subject: «A diligent, literate laborer. A moderate, self-interested citizen» [6]. And, as I have shown, it was soon asserted that the poor could be made «industrious,» the deviant turned from deviant ways, and the insane brought back to reason. Listen to these notions in the words of some of these early reformers:

«You take a child; you must not expect to make her, without care, and instruction and patience, a useful domestic. Encourage what you may find good in her, and in punishing her faults, consider how you should endeavor to correct those of your own children» [7].

«To make a vagrant efficient is more praiseworthy than to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before» [8].

«Outside the walls a man must choose between work and idleness—between honesty and crime. Why not teach him these lessons before he comes out?» [9]

Discipline as a Technique. The modern era gave birth to a range of discourses, techniques, and practices that were designed to mold and shape the body as well as the mind. These practices involve a distinctly modern form of social and political constraint that Michel Foucault called «disciplinary power,» a kind of power that is exercised as a technique rather than held as a commodity. This is a radical alternative to traditional sociological

conceptions of power. Most theories assert that power lies in the hands of the «powerful» who control social resources, for example, the owners of capital or political elites. «Power» is often assumed to emanate—somewhat mysteriously—from these resources. Additionally, these theories often neglect to consider the relationship between power and knowledge, taking for granted that knowledge is either politically neutral or necessarily liberating. Such «resource» theories of power may be important in understanding, say, the perpetuation of social classes or other forms of material inequality. Unfortunately, they are often «reductionistic» in that they reduce all forms of social power to class domination or to the more «macrostructures» of the economy, political authority, or the state. In doing so, they may tell us very little about the «microlevel»—the concrete ways in which individuals, their bodies and behaviors, are controlled and shaped in everyday life. The exercise of discipline may augment, and may even be intimately bound up with, other forms of political, social, and economic power, but cannot be subsumed by them.

Disciplinary power is «bi-directional,» not simply operating from the «top down,» but circulating throughout the social body. That is, it does not necessarily flow directly from the highest levels of the government, or from ruling elites, and imposed on the masses, but may be developed and practiced by a wide range of people in a host of institutional sites. So rather than being concentrated in the hands of a few, disciplinary power appears nearly everywhere, dispersed and fragmented. In this view, *we are all involved and enmeshed within a matrix of power relations that are highly intentional and purposeful; arrangements that can be more or less unequal but are never simply one-directional.* Some examples: consider the proliferation of drug-testing programs in the workplace and the cases of Samuel Allen and Daryl Kenyon. Allen is a highly paid president of the international division of a large corporate sporting-goods store with more than ten thousand employees. Kenyon, on the other hand, works on the production line at a large office-furniture manufacturer. Despite their obvious differences in resources, status, and authority, both men were required to offer hair samples to be tested for drugs when they were hired. Both men even consent to this form of surveillance by endorsing the programs in their companies [10]. Or think of the police. While they can exercise considerable authority over the citizenry, they must, in order to function legitimately, discipline themselves with bureaucratic rules and regulations, a rigid hierarchy of command, and the close monitoring and evaluation of each other's actions.

The exercise of disciplinary power is often continuous, automatic, and anonymous (think of the surveillance video camera, for example). It is extensive and thorough, and it is capillary as well, meaning that it extends out to the remotest corners of society. It disciplines individuals efficiently and effectively, with the least amount of physical force, labor power, and expense. Knowledge, in Foucault's scheme, is intrinsic to the spread and proliferation of disciplinary power. Knowledge is not equal to power, nor is power the same as knowledge; each presupposes the other. Again, consider drug testing. Such tests are a disciplinary ritual that uses scientific knowledge *of* the body to derive knowledge *from* the body. This information is then used as the basis to judge and/or to take action against an individual. Without knowledge, power cannot be exercised without force; without the authority to punish, the knowledge is meaningless.

Finally, disciplinary power is often productive and not simply repressive. This is an important point. If disciplinary power operated in a despotic fashion, it would meet with

far more resistance. Instead of dominating with force and oppression, proponents stress the obvious productive benefits from various disciplinary techniques, thus appeasing opposition. The techniques of disciplinary power are «corrective,» and agents may employ rewards or privileges to accomplish the goal of modifying behavior. For example, supervision in a workshop may have been set up to avoid theft, but the knowledge gathered from the monitoring may also be used to enhance employees' skills and productivity. In such a case, workers are encouraged to use the company's surveillance system to their own advantage by becoming «better» workers. Suspected substance users are taught to use the company's random drug tests to keep themselves «clean,» while «motivated» students are persuaded to utilize a teacher's tracking system to meet goals and complete their work.

It is during the modern era that, according to Foucault, a variety of these relatively modest disciplinary procedures were perfected by the doctors, wardens, and schoolmasters of the new institutions. It was these individuals who were the first to confront problems of managing large numbers of people in confined spaces. With the help of the knowledge of the emerging human sciences, these institutional administrators devised detailed, micromethods for the efficient supervision and surveillance of inmates, patients, and students in order to produce obedience and conformity. These methods include strict posture and machinelike movements such as in the «lockstep-and-silence» system; monotonous uniforms; the separation and classification of people by their crimes, diseases, and abilities; orderly lines of desks so one teacher can observe the entire room; and even the smallest architectural details, such as large dividers between bathroom stalls to prevent sexual misconduct.

The control of time and space was crucial in these institutions; every minute of every day and every activity of the inmates were monitored and scheduled. Enclosure permitted the division of internal space into an orderly grid where, as Foucault put it, «each individual has his own place; and each place its individual.» It was in these closed, disciplinary organizations where, for the first time, people were treated as «cases» about which authorities attempted to build extensive dossiers including life histories, family backgrounds, and rehabilitative progress. There were also series of micropenalties established to scan conduct and ensure social control. Offenses such as lateness, absences, inattention, impoliteness, disobedience, poor attitude, and lack of cleanliness were subjected to light physical punishments, minor deprivations, and petty humiliations. By specifying the most minute details of every day, disciplinary power makes almost any behavior punishable and thus the object of attention, surveillance, and control.

Disciplinary power is further enhanced by the use of more general procedures such as «the examination.» This is a ritualized knowledge-gathering activity in which case files are built out of the often-mundane details of people's lives and activities. Two key elements are used to build these files. One is «hierarchical observation» that involves surveillance, information collection, and analysis as a central organizing principal of the institution. Disciplining individuals through observation requires the delegation of supervision. Here individuals carry out the act of watching others while they themselves are being watched. The other is «normalizing judgments» that entail the assessment of an individual's activity set against some standard or ideal where all behavior lies between two poles, «good» and «bad,» and can be judged—with small, graduated distinctions—along the continuum. Foucault argued that

the goal of these procedures was to forge what he called «docile» bodies: mute, obedient individuals who have been subjected, transformed, and improved.

This notion of docility is very important to the ideas presented in this book, for it is the ultimate aim of most forms of social control. The opposite of docility is rebellious, wild, and disagreeable behavior. Robert Emerson and Sheldon Messinger refer to the «politics of trouble» when they point out that most behavior that comes to be labeled «deviant,» problematic, or disagreeable originates with people causing «trouble» for others or by feeling troubled themselves [11]. No matter what its stated purpose—to «help,» «cure,» «punish,» or «rehabilitate»—social control that is aimed at the juvenile delinquent, the unemployed, the mentally ill, the nursing-home resident, or the recalcitrant worker is intended to render that individual manageable, submissive, teachable, tractable, and pliable. The «politics of trouble» are echoed in the commands «Keep in line,» «Don't talk back,» «Eat your dinner,» «Don't make noise,» «Don't cause problems,» «Work harder.»

The «Swarming of Disciplinary Mechanisms». Let me summarize Foucault's contribution to our understanding of modern social control. Influenced by a radical critique of Enlightenment reason, Foucault chose to study the relationships among experiences such as madness and criminality, the knowledge produced by the new «sciences of man,» and the manner in which power was exercised on bodies and «souls» through meticulous rituals in institutions like asylums and penitentiaries. It was in those institutions that he saw the fullest realization of the military model of society emerging in the modern era. In other words, life in the penitentiary, reformatory, and poorhouses was conceived as an idealized version of a utopian, bourgeois society; a machinelike, disciplined culture, set on obedience, order, and uniformity. The shaping, molding, and construction of «docile bodies» would be accomplished through the use of various «disciplinary technologies.» These techniques ranged from the «lockstep» to ritualistic examinations with their «hierarchical observations» designed to instill the gaze of authorities and produce self-control, and «normalizing judgments» that set the behavioral standards to be upheld.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault set out the early modern origins of disciplinary power within the confines of closed, disciplinary institutions. Yet this is only the beginning, as he quite clearly anticipated postmodern developments. «While on the one hand,» he states, «the disciplinary establishments increase, their mechanisms have a certain tendency to become 'de-institutionalized,' to emerge from the closed fortresses in which they once functioned and to circulate in the 'free' state; the massive, compact disciplines are broken down into flexible methods of control, which may be transferred and adapted» [12]. He calls this the «swarming of disciplinary mechanisms». Here he means that disciplinary microtechniques that were developed in the institutions began to reach out from those organizations, linking up with other institutions and practices, creating a macroweb of social control. For example, schools begin to supervise the conduct of the parents as well as of the children, the hospital monitors not only the patients but the other inhabitants of the district, too, and relief officials «oversee» not just the poor but their entire extended families, as well. Remember, disciplinary power is capillary; it expands out, colonizes, and moves to the tiniest reaches of social life. Once this happens, we have a society where everyday life is increasingly filled with meticulous rituals of power involving surveillance, examinations, and knowledge-gathering activities. This creates,

according to Foucault, «[a] subtle, graduated, carceral net, with compact institutions, but also separate and diffused methods,» which he sees as far more effective than the «arbitrary, widespread, badly integrated» practices of the classical age. We see, then, «an increasing ordering in all realms under the guise of improving the welfare of the individual and the population . . . this order reveals itself as a strategy, with no one directing it and everyone increasingly enmeshed in it, whose only end is the increase of power and order itself» [13].

In Foucault's account, the foundation of this kind of disciplinary society was in place in Europe as early as the seventeenth century. I believe that it has only been in the last half of the twentieth century, at least in the United States, that we are witnessing the historical movement from exceptional punishment—that is, the disciplining of a particular individual for committing a particular offense—to the generalized surveillance of us all. I want to argue here that the conditions that constituted modern social control practices are changing and that new disciplinary technologies and discourses are taking hold. In short, I believe we are witnessing the emergence of a new regime of social control—a regime that retains many of the modern themes and practices of the past, while, at the same time, is both a product and a reflection of contemporary postmodern culture. Therefore I believe there exists today an increasing tension between two practices of social control. As Foucault put it:

At one extreme, the . . . enclosed institution, established on the edges of society . . . arresting evil, breaking communications, suspending time. At the other extreme . . . the discipline-mechanism: a functional mechanism that *must improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, a design of subtle coercion for a society yet to come* [12, p. 209]. (Emphasis mine)

The Postmodern Moment. It seems clear that we have witnessed, in the post-World War II period (and more intensely since the early 1970s), significant changes in the organization of Western society and culture. Some social theorists think that these changes reflect an «exhaustion» of modernity and signal the beginning of a new, «postmodern» period of history. Most scholars would acknowledge that this transition is happening while many «modern» institutions and practices remain in place. Accordingly, I tend to agree with Fredric Jameson and others who argue that postmodernism is the «cultural face» of a more developed stage of capitalism [14]. Just what are these conditions that make up postmodernity? We best see the characteristics by comparing them with the dimensions of modernity I offered earlier.

As I indicated, ours is a culture deeply penetrated by commodities and consumer «lifestyles.» Generated by corporate marketing strategies, from Eddie Bauer to J. Crew, from Infiniti automobiles to the latest «concept» in chain restaurants (the simulated «neighborhood grill and bar» set in a suburban strip mall with no neighborhood), companies sell us images of how we want to see ourselves as much as they market products. As Donald Lowe puts it, most of us «no longer consume commodities to satisfy relatively stable and specific needs, but to reconstruct ourselves in terms of the lifestyles associated with the consumption of certain commodities» (the T-shirt inscribed with «I shop, therefore I am» says it all) [15, p. 20]. The economic viability of America is now in the hands of our willingness to purchase these prized lifestyle insignias, where, for most of us, time spent in work has become little

more than a means to fulfill what is now defined as our near-patriotic duty to consume. And when we do go to work, it may be to a «virtual» company that «flexibly» hires consultants and «temp» workers for its labor force, «outsources» its manufacturing needs, and changes its organizational structure like a chameleon.

Increasingly, time and social and geographical space are highly compressed by rapidly changing communication, computer technologies, and information storage and retrieval. We have, at the click of a mouse button, access to vast amounts of information, but may not have a clue about how to make sense of it. We can «surf» the virtual globe of the Internet but not know or seemingly care who sits on our own city council. And we may have a cable television network that can bring us unlimited entertainment, but we may find that, as the title of one Bruce Springsteen song suggests, there are «57 channels (and nothin' on).» Each day brings us startling scientific and medical knowledge that seems to do little to help us cope with life. As Vaclav Havel, the playwright and president of the Czech Republic, has stated:

[W]e find ourselves in a paradoxical situation. We enjoy all the achievements of modern civilization that have made our physical existence on this earth easier in so many important ways. Yet we do not know exactly what to do with ourselves, where to turn. The world of our experiences seems chaotic, disconnected, confusing. There appear to be no integrating forces, no unified meaning, and no true inner understanding of phenomena in our experience of the world. Experts can explain anything in the objective world to us, yet we understand our own lives less and less. In short, we live in the postmodern world, where everything is possible, and almost nothing is certain [16, p. 29].

This uncertainty is exacerbated by the blurring of boundaries between the once taken-for-granted meanings, symbols, and institutions of modern life such as work, marriage, family, health, sexuality, intimacy, gender, and privacy¹. An underlying anxiety may be created from our increasing inability to distinguish «fact» from fiction and the «real» from the «simulation of the real.» Some argue that the «language of the visual,» or «videocy,» is rapidly replacing modern forms of literacy based on oral and written traditions. Within the flood of images presented in the mass media—this «ecstasy of communication»—how do we separate «investigative journalism» from «docudramas,» *Real Cops* from the latest «breaking news» story, or «live» CNN coverage of an international skirmish from a cable show about advanced weaponry? [17] In this context, authenticity begins to lose its anchoring points. Importantly, since such chaotic media have become our primary source of cultural knowledge, we often believe that we know and understand the world simply because we «saw it in the movies.» This society, according to one theorist, only knows itself through its own reflection in the camera's eye and through experience that may be replaced by its visual representation. In this culture, we learn to identify with the simulated world of television more readily than we do with the «real» world around us. As Sherry Turkle puts it:

The bar featured in the television series *Cheers* no doubt figures so prominently in the American imagination at least partly because most of us don't have a neighborhood place where 'everybody knows your name.' Instead, we identify with the place on the screen, and

¹ In the world of art, architecture, and the cinema, «postmodern» generally refers to the mixing, blending, and bending of traditional styles and media(s), the creation of pastiche, «re-mixing» older songs in music, and the like.

most recently have given it some life off the screen as well. Bars designed to look like the one on *Cheers* have sprung up all over the country, most poignantly in airports, our most anonymous of locales. Here, no one will know your name, but you can always buy a drink or a souvenir sweatshirt [18, p. 235].

Another theorist suggests that television/video has a unique ability to break down the distinction between «here and there, live and mediated, personal and public» and has thus severed the links between social and physical space. This leads to a sense of «placelessness» [19]. I am not surprised, for example, when a white, suburban, middle-class, midwestern college student told me that he liked the film *Boyz N the Hood*. «Why?» I asked. He stated confidently, «Because it was like real life in South Central L.A.» Yet he has never even been to South Central—never mind having lived there—and, in fact, has no frame of reference to compare the «real» to this fictional portrayal.

The media(ted) culture of postmodern society has a tremendous effect on our ability to make informed political and policy decisions. Video journalists, sensational talk-show hosts, and those behind slick marketing campaigns have become, according to Norman Denzin, the new «intellectuals» and «historians» who hold a near monopoly on the presentation and interpretation of politics, social issues, and problems. «They have turned news into entertainment and their commentary into instant analysis», says Denzin [20, p. 9]. Every night, hours and hours of TV «news magazines» turn everyday life into a theatrical drama where the most compelling stories are those that recount lives filled with uncertainty and unpredictability. They point to the next burgeoning «crisis» that threatens to make you or me its latest victim: your daughter may be a drug user, your ex-husband a child molester, or your study partner a rapist. Meanwhile, as industry representatives readily admit, local TV «news» stations typically follow the adage, «if it bleeds, it leads,» where seemingly every segment begins with the most gruesome murder and mayhem stories. Here broadcasts are often littered with the word «you,» attempting to personalize the events and tragedies: «Imagine if it were *you* dropping *your* baby off at the sitter, only to have him killed.» «If *you* were accidentally exposed to the HIV virus, would *you* want to be able to take a potent medicine to prevent getting AIDS?»¹ As one author of a book about fear in our society put it:

Worry is the fear we manufacture, and those who choose to do it certainly have a wide range of dangers to dwell upon. Television in most major cities devotes up to forty hours a day to telling us about those who have fallen prey to some disaster and to exploring what calamities may be coming next. The local news anchor should begin each evening's broadcast by saying, «Welcome to the news; we're surprised you made it through another day. Here's what happened to those who didn't» [21].

My point is not to suggest that life's tragedies are simply illusions. Rather my argument is that what may actually be a relatively rare occurrence is easily sensationalized into a widespread «social problem,» creating a level of fear, anxiety, and mistrust that distorts our ability to make informed political decisions [22]. For example, despite the fact that the nation's violent crime rate fell for the seventh consecutive year in 1999, 56 percent of those polled in a national opinion survey thought that there was more crime in the United States

¹ Actual text from local TV news, Channel 9, Kansas City, 10 P.M., 10 June 1997.

than there was five years ago. When asked, «Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?» the proportion of Americans saying that «most people can be trusted» has fallen precipitously, from 46 percent in 1972 to only 33 percent in 1994 [23]. As a parent, I have found myself hesitating to leave my child at a city park, as I have had nightmares of his picture ending up on a milk carton. Yet, despite the reported thousands of missing children each year publicized by a Washington-based lobbying group, the number of kids taken by strangers is actually extremely small. While even one kidnapping is obviously a tragedy, most missing children either are teenage runaways or are snatched by a parent in a messy divorce. Look closely at the fear campaigns of organizations such as the *Partnership for a Drug-Free America* that ask you to pick out the «drug dealer» from a full-page newspaper ad of laughing, squeaky-clean, white, middle-class, pre-adolescents. As the «director of creative development» (I love that title!) for the group has stated about the ads, «They are not pretty. They are not nice. They are not polite. They are designed to disturb and upset people» [24]. Or think of the sensational case of accusations of child molestation at a preschool that results in teachers throughout the country not even daring—or even being allowed—to give a child a hug. Do we challenge the politician who claims that homicidal teenage «superpredators» are stalking the streets of America, when, at the same time, 80 percent of the counties in the country did not register a single homicide by a juvenile?

As the new purveyors of «truth» have gone about constructing the «reality» of epidemic crime and drug use, the disintegration of the nuclear family, or the laziness of homeless men and «cheating» welfare mothers, they have helped create a nostalgia for the «good ol' days» (that likely never existed). This lamenting for an ideal past became the platform of the New Right as it captured political power in the 1980s and continues to be espoused well into the late 1990s. A coalition of right-wing politicians and religious fundamentalists began to (re)construct their version of the ideal citizen who personified the sacred values of religion, hard work, health, and self-reliance. This agenda was aided by both «New Democrats» claiming to be tough on crime, drugs, and welfare «dependency,» as well as «liberals» who were willing to use the power of the state to enforce programmatic solutions to these «new» social problems. We therefore began a far-reaching campaign to regulate not only the traditional crimes of person and property but also the behaviors, conditions, and «lifestyles» of substance (ab)use, alcohol consumption, «eating disorders,» tobacco consumption, sexuality, sexual promiscuity and «deviance,» teenage pregnancy, out-of-marriage births, domestic violence, child abuse, «dysfunctional» families, various psychological or psychiatric disorders, and other medical conditions such as «attention deficit disorder,» and such diseases as AIDS.

And yet, we see, at the same time, a rejection of the practicality and effectiveness of modern institutions where «nothing works» and where «rehabilitation» is a waste of time and money. In our day, the prison has lost the capacity to summon images of moral redemption and discipline. Not only does the ideology of reformation no longer conceal the reality of daily life on the inside, but the gaze of television and the cinema has taken us inside the asylum, offering us a drama of hopelessness and chaos. As a result of this attempt to regulate and control more and more of social life—as well as our increasing pessimism about institutional reform—we have turned to new meticulous rituals of social control that are being integrated into

preexisting modern institutions and practices. Rather than isolating the body from everyday life for surveillance and control, these new techniques impose a structure and accountability on an individual's behavior and «lifestyle» in the everyday. And these new methods are often premised on regulating, probing, or measuring the body's functions, processes, characteristics, or movements. In other words, more and more surveillance ceremonies are taking place in our daily lives, and these are often based on assessing evidence and gaining knowledge from our bodies.

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«ЩОДЕННЕ СПОСТЕРЕЖЕННЯ...» РОЗДІЛИ З КНИГИ

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У розділах праці «Щоденне спостереження» розглянуто важливі соціальні процеси, започатковані у добу Просвітництва, які привели до формування у сучасних західних суспільствах особливої системи соціального контролю, заснованої на широкому використанні аудіо-візуального та інформаційного спостереження. Наголошено на соціальних проблемах та небезпеках, породжених технологіями, що були покликані вдосконалити процеси соціального управління.

Ключові слова: соціальний контроль, спостереження, паноптикум Бентама.

«ЕЖЕДНЕВНОЕ НАБЛЮДЕНИЕ...» ГЛАВЫ КНИГИ

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В главах книги «Ежедневное наблюдение» рассматриваются важные социальные процессы, начавшиеся в эпоху Просвещения, которые привели к формированию в современных западных обществах особенной системы социального контроля, основанной на широком использовании аудио-визуального и информационного наблюдения. Особое внимание уделяется социальным проблемам и опасностям, призванным усовершенствовать процессы социального управления.

Ключевые слова: социальный контроль, наблюдение, паноптикум Бентама.