

Panopticism: the authoritarian, digital, capitalist, and sociocultural barriers to the enlightened individual.

Jeremy Bentham introduced the term *panopticon* (from the Greek *panoptēs*, or *panoptos* [all-seeing; seen by all]) to the English language in the late 18th century, describing the architectural design of a prison wherein ‘there ought not any where be a single foot square, on which man or boy shall be able to plant himself..under any assurance of not being observed’, achieved by having a central watchtower capable of seeing into any given cell at any given time.¹ In 1813, Bentham was granted 23,000 pounds by parliament in order to bring this vision to life, in New Delhi; the resulting prison still functions today. Almost two centuries after Bentham’s initial introduction of the term, Michel Foucault constructed a less literal iteration of the panopticon, now speaking in terms of a pervasive, internalised system of automatic control that citizens exert unto themselves. This process occurs as an authority is able to internalise its omniscience within its subjects, by providing the perpetual threat of observation. As a result, subjects’ behaviour is influenced – toward obedience to an authority – due to the impact had by the threat of observation on their perception of privacy. This is to say that the threat, substantiated or not, is enough to incur self-discipline. Such invasive tactics are used not only by penal or governmental institutions, but also increasingly by capitalists and marketers who utilise the ubiquitous reach of digital technology – often with exploitative tailgating privacy policies – to optimise contact with their target audience. As well as a population being affected mentally by an increasing awareness of the panoptic capitalist eye, individuals are also targeted as a result of the actual data harvesting carried out by the companies, the informational product of which feeds back into the very technology used to garner behavioural data in the first place. As such, the use of an online product or service directly contributes to

¹ "panopticon, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press.

the betterment of the technology used to monitor a user's behaviour; terms and conditions render participation as an acceptance of being observed and correspondingly influenced. The threat of observation, the observation itself, and the information gathered therefrom, are all influencing factors for the observed population. Penal and governmental institutions use these factors to incur self-discipline according to a set of rules or laws; capitalist institutions use them to first track behaviour in order to create a set of business and marketing guidelines, and subsequently influence behaviour.

Whilst penal, governmental, and capitalist panopticons work due to an already established inequality in the power dynamic between observer and observed, the sociocultural panopticon *inspires* such a dynamic, by reconstructing the idea of the individual. Though Foucault acknowledges Panopticism in those areas of society where there is an already demarcated hierarchy (schools, factories, military institutions, and hospitals, which all resemble prisons)² the integration of automatically-functioning discipline into the public social sphere is what creates a sociocultural, peer-to-peer panopticon, whereby we watch, judge, influence, and socially punish *each other*. An individual's mere – unavoidable – existence within this sphere makes them liable to be subjected to judgement on the grounds of cultural taste, beliefs, appearance, behaviour, and correspondingly socially disciplined by their peers. Similar to the capitalist marketing feedback loop of observation and influence, an individual's observable characteristics are fed to the sociocultural system, which then treats the individual accordingly; much like different corporations having distinct marketing strategies, different areas of society will process an individual's information with differing levels of acceptance and rejection. This type of behaviour is reminiscent of witch-hunts and neighbour-spying, and has been seen recently in instances of Covid-19 control: two such exemplary headlines are *'Kent MP Tom Tugendhat likens hotline for reporting quarantine*

² (Michel Foucault, 1995, p. 228)

*breakers to 'communist East Germany', and 'Germans snitch on neighbours flouting virus rules, in echo of the Stasi past.'*³ Capitalists, too, have utilised such panoptic methods: Google faced a 2016 lawsuit on the basis of an internal spying program which expected employees to identify co-workers who violated the firm's confidentiality agreement.⁴ The processes of observation, judgment, and discipline are exacerbated in the *digital* sociosphere, namely social media, wherein an individual's participation may be more strongly aligned with an acceptance of the aforementioned processes: after all, these digital spaces exist solely to create person-to-person and person-to-business contact where it would otherwise not exist.

Let us address claims that participation in the social panopticon is optional. Firstly, we may consider the impact of social media use on employment prospects. Whilst the negative impact of an irresponsible digital footprint seen by an employment screening may be fairly common knowledge in today's culture, Patrick Ambron and Nathan Evans, CEO and COO of *BrandYourself*, have emphasised the complete opposite: that the absence of an online 'brand' is increasingly a detriment to employment prospects.^{5,6} No longer is it sufficient to disguise, control, or remove one's digital footprint in order to alleviate employment screening concerns: now, an individual *must* participate in the digital-social panopticon if they hope to succeed professionally. Secondly, an article entitled '*Instagram warns parents kids could be bullied for not being on social media*' responds to claims, included in a parental guide published by the social media giant, that denying children public social media accounts – even prior the age of 13 stipulated in the application's terms and conditions for users – could result in social marginalisation. A spokesperson of *Best Enemies*, a cyber-safety group, rebuts the guidance,

³ (Lydia Chantler-Hicks; Madeline Chambers)

⁴ (Shoshanna Zuboff)

⁵ BrandYourself is an online reputation management company, alleging to have 'led the industry for nearly a decade, pioneering the world's first Reputation Report and setting the bar for managed services.' (Via the company's official website, www.brandyourself.com.) The company, in late 2018, secured a £100,000 investment for 2% equity from businessman Peter Jones, which valued the company at £5 million. This is the highest valuation ever given by Jones to an investment on the entrepreneurial pitching show, *Dragons' Den*.

⁶ *Dragon's Den*, Series 16 Episode 8.

claiming that to suggest social ostracisation occurs in response to the abstinence from social media is a 'silly suggestion,' and adding that 'social marginalisation sounds like a term that has come out of a marketing manager's mouth.'⁷ Whilst those interested in the online safety of users may rebuke such scare-mongering claims of ostracisation, the strategy of Instagram, and its fellow digital giants, is clear: make the use of social media the norm, so much so that abstaining from it is a more difficult decision to make than indulging it; to make absence as (indirectly) observable and noticeable as presence; to make judgement and discipline possible toward individuals who abstain, as much as it is toward those who indulge. This is the 'power of the Norm' which 'functions within a system of formal equality', introducing a standard to a homogeneity which then itself begins to divide a population by way of their mis/alignment therewith.⁸ It does, though, remain fact that someone may – regardless of potential repercussion – disregard sociocultural expectation. This can be considered a failure on the part of the norm (and its proponents/enforcers) in question; the failure of a norm to prevent disobedience is comparable to the failure of a prison to eliminate crime. In response, Foucault says:

'For the observation that prison fails to eliminate crime, one should perhaps substitute the hypothesis that prison has succeeded extremely well in producing delinquency [...]; in producing the delinquent as a pathological subject.'⁹

The end goal then, in lieu of forcing an individual to conform, becomes to constitute the idea of a person who doesn't do so as a delinquent. Should one, despite the perceived and actual consequences thereof, decide to withhold their participation in a social norm, they are to be seen as abnormal: inoffensive differentiation is not viable. The purporting that deviation from a norm has a pathological stem reinforces the ideal that the abiding populace is *not* pathological,

⁷ Kidspot, *'Instagram warns parents kids could be bullied for not being on social media.'*

⁸ (Michel Foucault, 1995, p. 184)

⁹ (Michel Foucault, 1995, p. 277)

thus reinforcing the norm. Accordingly, the disobeyer or abstainer becomes an enemy of the people, who discipline the individual to preserve their own interest in the form of the strengthening of the social norm which confirms their normality and correctness. It is no longer the case that the power to discipline is held only by sovereigns and governments: such power has been suffused into society at large, and now functions automatically rather than in specific instances of discipline and punishment. The resulting reinforced monolith of shared thought and behaviour can be seen in microcosms across society, in areas with an officially established hierarchy of disciplinary power, i.e. elite-level sports, and in those without, i.e. playgrounds, online forums.

All of this impedes the emergence of enlightened individuals, in the Kantian sense of the term. Kant's goal was to replicate the *usefulness* of religious morality, that being the incentive to behave morally, whilst removing what he saw as the false aspects of religion, these being the narrative specifics of religious belief: Kant wanted to replace pious faith with faith in logic and reason. For this reason, the notion of a monolithic socio-political structure that moralises and correspondingly disciplines a population would appeal to Kant. Yet, it is imperative to acknowledge that Kant nonetheless advocates strongly for the removal of *oppressive* authority, acceding only to an enlightened sovereign who accordingly allows for an enlightening-permitting societal setup. Indeed, he analyses oppressive authority thusly:

'After they have first made their domesticated animals dumb and carefully prevented [them] from daring to take a step without the walker [...] they then show the danger that threatens them, should they attempt to walk alone.'¹⁰

Similarly, Franz Kafka (who will be further discussed later) speaks of a condemned man in the following terms:

¹⁰ (Immanuel Kant, p. 18)

‘However, the condemned man looked so submissive and dog-like that it seemed as if one could let him run free on the hillsides, and would only have to whistle at the start of the execution for him to come.’¹¹

Kant’s quote speaks of the power of the norm, whilst Kafka’s errs more towards the ultimate power of normalised institutions and societal structures. Applicable to threat of social ostracisation levied at non-conformists, and the resulting production of *delinquents*, these quotes illustrate that a Kantian incarnation of a moralising, disciplining structure is vastly different to the intolerant ones already discussed. Namely, within a permissible structure, Kantian autonomy must be ensured. This requires an individual’s choices to be free from the influence of external and inessential factors such as norms and conventions; secular and non-secular authority. Unaffected by such influencing factors, the individual is not only free to achieve enlightenment, but will naturally do so: ‘human beings will gradually work their way out of their condition of brutishness’, claims Kant, this being on the condition that ‘one does not intentionally meddle in order to keep them in this state.’¹² Further to avoiding heteronormativity at the beck of authoritarian or social command, Kantian autonomy requires that an individual overcome their own desires, too. Shedding one’s desires, which are inessential by way of their contingency to one’s situation, further allows an individual to operate with freedom. It is here that the Kantian notion of ‘immaturity’ becomes relevant; it is this notion that is bolstered by the discussed authoritarian, capitalist, and sociocultural factors, thus impeding enlightenment. When Kant lauded ‘*Sapere aude!* [*Have the courage to make use of your own intellect!*]', as the motto of enlightenment, he was referring to the process of ‘emancipation from [humanity’s] self-incurred immaturity’, with immaturity being ‘the inability to make use of one’s intellect without the direction of another.’¹³ Whilst Kant claims this attitude is self-incurred, we must acknowledge the barriers, erected by multifarious panopticons, between an individual and the

¹¹ (Franz Kafka, p. 75)

¹² (Immanuel Kant, p.22)

¹³ (Immanuel Kant, p.17)

ability to isolate their own intellect, let alone having the courage to use it in the face of influencing power structures.

The merging of the public and private spheres is an important facet in the types of societies that preclude enlightenment. With regards to the use of reason, these spheres are contemporarily far less distinguished than Kant suggested was necessary for a society to achieve certain, communal, ends. There are numerous routes this merging of spheres takes but let us first define the spheres themselves. Foucault helpfully and accurately restates Kant's distinction, suggesting that the public use of freedom is 'what circulates from scholar to scholar, appears in newspapers and publications, and appeals to everyone's conscience', whereas the private use of freedom is 'each individual's obedience, inasmuch as he is a part of the State, to his superior, to the Sovereign or his representative.'¹⁴ To clarify further, we may say that the use of reason in a public sphere refers to the passage of information across accessible means of publication and overtly-visible streams of communication, whereas the private use of reason occurs when an individual behaves according to the guidelines or orders of authority. The public sphere, then, allows for critique whilst the private sphere requires compliance. Accordingly, Kant asserts that 'the public use of one's reason must be free at all times', adding that 'this alone can bring about enlightenment amongst humans', but providing the caveat that 'the private use of one's reason may often [...] be highly restricted [...] so that they [citizens] can be led by the government in the pursuit of public ends by means of an artificial unanimity, or at least be kept from undermining these ends.'¹⁵ Ergo, we acknowledge both Kant's call for the freedom of thought, speech, and critique, claiming it to be a necessary facet for enlightenment, and also the fact that Kant did not advocate for libertarianism, but rather a state whereby widespread freedom and harmony (and the avoidance of impeding progress) is ensured via the counterintuitive partial constraining of each individual. This dichotomy necessitates the strict demarcation of the public and private spheres. If these spheres merge, a

¹⁴ (Michel Foucault, 2009, p. 78)

¹⁵ (Immanuel Kant, p.19)

confusion of the validity of authority and the possibility of individuality occurs. This is to say that, given a merging is occurring, the critique permitted by the public use of reason begins to invalidate authoritarian structures, and the omnipotence and omniscience of said structures begins to impinge on the freedom of the individual. Let us now consider an array of methods by which the public and private sphere may come to merge:

1. Conspiracy cultures and conversations attempt to infiltrate the private sphere and bring it into the public eye, pushing the narrative that the reason for the two spheres traditionally being kept distinct is due to the falsities and secrecy existent within the private sphere. The intended effect is that of distrust toward a specified authoritarian structure, and success therein can have devastating results, as was shown by the events that occurred at the United States Capitol building on January 6th 2021: ‘egged on’ by former (as of January 20th 2021) United States President Donald Trump’s public claims of voter fraud conspiracy – including his December 24th Tweet ‘VOTER FRAUD IS NOT A CONSPIRACY THEORY, IT IS A FACT!!!’ – a mob of those who subscribed to this theorised conspiracy stormed and vandalised the Capitol. Four people died during the events. CNN reported on the case with the headline ‘Insurrection fueled by conspiracy groups, extremists and fringe movements’.¹⁶ This scenario embodies Kant’s concerns that, should the private use of reason be called into question rather than obeyed, governmental authority is invalidated, and decision-making progress is impeded. It is important to note, though, that this is not merely an issue of critique going too far, but of it being directed incorrectly: Kant simply asserts that when a government directs the actions of citizens toward a certain communal pursuit, then the public use of reasoning must give way to the private use.

¹⁶ (Casey Tolan, et al.)

2. Conversely, the private sphere may bleed into the public sphere, ever-increasingly, as previously touched on, due to the use of social media in political endeavours. Matters of the private sphere are discussed in the public sphere, such as in instances of political one-upmanship occurring on public forums, the incessant back-and-forth of Tweets from presidential candidates during the 2020 election, and any political decisions/policies taken to the platform to incite a storm or garner public support. As much can be seen in London Mayor Sadiq Khan's Tweet from January 1st 2021, wherein he asks 'Anyone else think it was pretty good?' in response to a MailOnline article entitled '*Fury at Sadiq Khan for 'forcing politics' onto NYE: Locked-down Londoners rage over 'woke' fireworks demo that lit up night sky with EU flag, NHS logo and BLM fist after mayor worked with BBC and Met Police to keep event secret.*'¹⁷ Whilst the article is invoking its Kant-given right to critique, Khan's responding to the headline and asking the public for their opinion brings the private use of reason – used when dictating the New Years' Eve display – into public view. (It is interesting to note that the initial headline is an instance of the public and private sphere merging mentioned above, as the newspaper implies a secret, conspiratorial agenda, and levies doubt at numerous authoritarian structures: the Mayor of London, the BBC, and the Metropolitan Police.) The result of discussing matters of private reasoning in the public sphere is that it can cause the public to behave *above their paygrade*, so to speak. Even though the public is not privy to all matters of private reasoning, their increased awareness and exposure to such things can give them the false impression that they are, and incur corresponding behaviour. This can result in the confidence to critique as if one were in the private sphere, despite inhabiting the public sphere. Cyclically, this may result in further devaluation of the authority in question.

¹⁷ (Osborne, Samuel)

3. Finally, though disparate from the private/public sphere distinction made by Kant, it seems apt here to consider the sphere of *privacy*. Due to the digital panopticon that we live in, where surveillance and behavioural tracking is almost unavoidable, the sphere of privacy grows smaller with each technological and legislative development that allows capitalists and authorities to further infiltrate our environments, homes, and devices. What this digital panopticon does is to provide a counterpoint the damage done to in points 1 & 2: whilst we may critique the private use of reason, and in some instances devalue authority as a result, our behaviour is nonetheless influenced by the obscuring of privacy. Not only must the private and public spheres remain distinct in order to allow harmony between authority and citizen, but so too must the privacy of the individual be ensured in order to allow them to act freely. I posit that as individuals, we should have the possibility to exist not only within the private and public sphere, but also in legitimate privacy. This triplet of behavioural levels allows (a) the individual to act as part of the body politic, (b) the individual to critique said body politic, and (c) exist away from the body politic entirely. This third facet is of utmost importance, as it provides the platform for the individual to use their intellect away from the consideration of contingent factors present in society. For this reason, the preservation of privacy is just as important for the chances of the enlightened individual as is the maintained separation of the public and private spheres.

With Kant, then, we address the individual's responsibility and ability to achieve enlightenment, and sovereignty whereby individuals may act privately with equal freedom. Necessary circumstances for such to occur include the removal of oppressive authority, and the presence of an enlightened sovereign, giving rise to metered freedom which prioritises harmony above libertarian senses of liberty. Within this, individuals must take on the responsibility of freeing oneself from the pressure of institutions, peers, and one's own desires, therein permitting the use one's own, uninfluenced intellect. Just how to use such intellect, though, is subject to

confusion at the hands of a merging of the public and private spheres. A maintained distinction between the two is imperative to achieve certain ends and to progress as a civil society. Citizens must in certain instances obey; authorities must in certain instances permit and acknowledge critique; mutual respect, and acknowledgment of the power and knowledge-based relationship between those operating in either sphere at any given time is necessary. Furthermore, a third sphere – that of privacy – must be preserved, in order for the individual to be able to exist away from the contingent pressures of being part of the body politic, be able to use their intellect in this sphere away from nonessential factors, and finally achieve an enlightened, autonomous state of mind. This is currently impeded by the ever-increasing impingement that these spheres affect unto on each other: authority is subjected to increasing critique and distrust; the general public is subjected to the attempted garnering of their votes/support, and to the privacy-breaching digital panopticon. The public and private sphere merging leads to confusion and inner tension for the individual, whilst the impediment of privacy disallows for uninfluenced thought and behaviour. The result is muddled, unnatural, enlightenment-preventing thought.

The discussed enlightenment-inhibiting factors exist in response, or due to, an implementation of institutionalised power. For a merging of spheres or the impingement of the individual's privacy to occur, there must exist, in the first instance, a scenario of unequal power and/or a disparity in terms of the access to knowledge available to different groups in society. We will explore this power-knowledge relationship, later. Let us first look at the implementation of institutionalised power as a foundation upon which various tensions may act. Kafka's *In the Penal Colony* speaks of institutionalised authority and its power over the individual, as well as the process of these institutions and their chosen processes shifting paradigmatically. We may use the generalisable story of the penal system to contextualise systems of authority. Kafka initially presents an unwavering, institutionalised behemoth of

power, now immortalised in the word of the dead Commandant. Speaking of the Commandant, the Officer asserts that

‘we already knew by the time he died that the organization of the colony was so highly integrated that his successor, however many thousands of new plans he has in his head, will not be able to change anything the old one set up, at least not for many years.’¹⁸

This illustrates the overbearing power of innovation that refuses to bow to newer innovation, of inhabitants of one paradigm refusing to acknowledge the shift to the next, and of the creators of certain institutional processes pre-emptively reifying their chosen way of doing things. These hypocritical instances of self-preservation allegedly ‘violate human nature’ and ‘prevent for eternity all further enlightenment for the human race.’¹⁹ Kant asserts as much when considering a society of clergymen who

‘by means of oath among themselves to a certain unchangeable symbol [...] ensure themselves of constant guardianship over each of their members and thereby over the entire population, and even immortalize their guardianship.’²⁰

Kant purports such contracts to be ‘quite simply null and void’, regardless of whether it stems from ‘the most supreme authority, by means of parliaments or by the most ceremonious of peace treaties’, and further goes on to assert the entitlement of those citizens born into a pre-emptively ensured paradigm to reject such contracts, claiming that they put subsequent generations in a position whereby ‘it would be impossible [...] to proceed along the path of enlightenment.’²¹ Again, whilst the ‘criminal’ behaviour of certain authorities is acknowledged, the responsibility of the individual within these unjust systems to nonetheless use their intellect to reject enlightenment-

¹⁸ (Franz Kafka, p. 76)

¹⁹ (Immanuel Kant, p.20)

²⁰ (Immanuel Kant, p.20)

²¹ (Immanuel Kant, p.20-21)

impeding structures and processes is highlighted.²² Without the actioning of critique against these types of authoritarian institutions, we are left with an 'inertia of a power [...] maintaining itself indefinitely' and concurrently impeding enlightenment.²³ The very possibility of a population having the capacity to critique, though, is questioned by Kafka's presentation of authority as unseen and unknown. The condemned man is unaware of his sentence and furthermore of the very fact that he has been condemned in any case:²⁴ this unspoken discipline robs a society of the ability to critique, given there is no tangible object for criticism to fall upon. The notion of such powerful institutional processes being out of the view of its subjects provides a dangerous platform whereby a populace is controlled and disciplined in complete naivety as to its condition. An oblivious population alongside a literally unquestionable authority incurs submission by default. The controlled population effectively exists at a lower rung of society than controlling institutions, due to a disparity in terms of the access to knowledge.

Moreover, this disparity turns an observed population into 'objects of knowledge', according to Foucault, dehumanising individuals and treating them as objects to be observed and organised.²⁵ Again, the population is bisected along an observer-observed line, wherein the latter becomes a less than human subject should they attempt to individualise themselves: in this case, they become a *delinquent*. He also suggests that 'power and knowledge directly imply one another', thus institutions who hoard knowledge also, in doing so, obtain power.²⁶ Kafka illustrates an unequal access to knowledge once again when using the motif of the machine's blueprints: they are only allowed to be handled by the Officer, who carries them religiously on his person, is the only person who can properly decipher them, and doesn't even touch them with his finger when showing them to the Traveller. As well as being a physical incarnation of the hoarding of power, the emphasised

²² (Immanuel Kant, p.21)

²³ (Michel Foucault, 2009, p. 54)

²⁴ (Franz Kafka, p. 79)

²⁵ (Michel Foucault, 1995, p. 28)

²⁶ (Michel Foucault, 1995, p. 27)

complexity and apparently nonsensical ‘maze of criss-crossing lines’ makes two points: firstly, those outside of the guarded circle of knowledge may simply be incapable of deciphering it, i.e. those who are not an authority do not have the necessary understanding to be so, even in such case that they become privy to the inner-workings of an institution. Secondly, the institutions – perhaps by way of the aforementioned pre-emptive assurance of their power – may become archaic to the point of incoherence (for subsequent generations), to all but those who wholly subscribe to the system in question. The Officer is an illustration of the desire for those in power to maintain their position: as he ‘[surveyed] the apparatus with some admiration in his eyes, though it must have been long familiar to him’, we glean the false novelty given to the machine, in much the same way as advocates may herald outdated systems.²⁷ This is poignant given the distinct lack of fitness-for-purpose of the machine, which degrades and eventually malfunctions, *on the Officer* no less. Just as Kant suggested that humans naturally gravitate toward enlightenment if uninhibited by authoritarian structures, Kafka portrays the inescapability of paradigm shifts and innovation, even for those who hold power. Though Kafka humanises those in control of seemingly inhumane, outdated discipline, he emphasises the inescapability of the entropy of all systems. As Kant asserts the movement of the uninhibited individual toward enlightenment, Kafka clears the way by asserting the eventual decay of systems that become redundant, giving way to newly-relevant ones. The desire of capitalists especially to avoid this process is nonetheless worrying, with Jeff Bezos claiming that “‘It is always day one. [...] Day two is stasis, followed by irrelevance, followed by excruciating, painful decline, followed by death.’”²⁸

Foucault depicts this transmutation of disciplinary institutions, tracing Western penal systems from public torture to regimented incarceration, and the birth of the panopticon. We may observe the evolution of discipline, from being heavily tied to the bodily punishment to focusing more on mental and physical labour. Public punishment had several unintended consequences,

²⁷ (Franz Kafka, p. 75)

²⁸ (Dana Mattioli)

including redistributing blame/shame – toward an executioner and away from a convict – and converting the convict’s body into an object of sympathy and admiration, even allowing for martyrdom should the circumstance incur public support. As a result, chain-gangs began a movement toward *gentle* punishment, where, although the disciplinary action remains in public view, there is less spectacle: discipline becomes more integrated with daily life, and less reserved for specific instances of punishment. Just as Kafka displayed the growing obsolescence of bodily punishment, Foucault notes the movement from bodily punishment to public physical labour, and eventually to social observation. This is the birth of the social panopticon as a means of discipline. This process occurred alongside the power to discipline becoming less monopolised by the sovereign/state, and more integrated into the public sphere, eventually having the public be incentivised to discipline their peers in an automatic functioning of power. Again, this is possible due to the notion of the delinquent, whereby a social group is encouraged to discipline outliers, due to the fact that they are perceived as a threat to the group’s interests. We acknowledge, then, paradigmatic shifts of institutional power and methods of discipline, resulting in the movement of discipline and punishment from the individual body to the collective consciousness, culminating in the automatically-functioning social panopticon. Layered with online social networks, this results in an unavoidable digi-social panopticon; further layered with capitalist surveillance, individuals are pressured incessantly to behave and consume in normalised ways in order to avoid social punishment.

Despite movement away from bodily punishment the digi-social panopticon retains influence over our physicality. PokémonGO began charging businesses for sponsored ‘PokéStops’ to attract customers closer to their premises: and it worked.²⁹ Not only does the digi-social panopticon influence our thoughts and beliefs, but so too does it retain the bodily control of its punitive predecessors. Furthermore, it supports capitalism: in the above case, business

²⁹ (Abigail Gepner; Paul Tassi)

increased by 75%; elsewhere targeted advertisements increase the likelihood of sales, and trends are encouraged with promoted posts, all due to online surveillance. These trends can indirectly control physicality, whether that be via the recent 5k run challenges that swept through social media and moved bodies, or via any number of TikTok challenges that have led to swathes of imitations from individuals eager to solidify their role within the online panopticon. As previously mentioned, these panopticons exist in microcosms across society, including within sport: the introduction of VAR as a means of constant observation in elite-level football provides a perfect incarnation of Panopticism, and its results have been consistent with the notion of the threat of observation affecting behaviour to the extent of it becoming unnatural. Players now ‘bounce around with their arms behind their back’ and ‘Michael-Flatley’ away from opponents, playing with a less aggressive style to avoid ‘microfouls’ and ‘microcrimes’.³⁰ Observation and discipline has the power not only to control and denaturalise behaviour, but also to create a new normal which prioritises legislation and bureaucracy over common sense. Discipline applied bodily is retained in the now dematerialised digi-social panopticon, which replaces the threat of observation with its assurance, but now in a pre-emptive as opposed to reactive manner.

Though institutional, disciplinary power may transmute, its essential subjugating nature is retained. Power is accrued via observation and enacted via discipline and behavioural influence, a process which occurs in microcosms throughout society, as well as holistically. Authoritarian, capitalist, social, and digital panopticons exist, exerting the will of laws, business models, and norms, and, as they become increasingly omniscient, diminishing the sphere of privacy. This type of power functions automatically as peers socially discipline each other and consumers feed behavioural value reinvestment cycles which teach capitalist panoptic technology precisely how to further target the individual. Capitalist and authoritarian

³⁰ (Barney Ronay; Guillermo Martinez Arastey)

panopticons utilise a pre-existent power disparity, whilst sociocultural panopticons create such disparity by deeming outliers *delinquents* and concurrently strengthening norms. Though this approach to behavioural control and discipline is less viscerally bodily than preceding forms, the intended effect – to subjugate the free-thinking individual – is retained, as is some degree of physical control, though, now, indirect in manner. Kantian enlightenment is not only precluded by oppressive authority, correspondingly restrictive social norms, and a waning sense of privacy, but also by the confusion dealt to the individual due to a lack of distinction between public and private spheres. The resulting devaluation of authority and muddling of the public and private use of reason creates not only a barrier to communal ends, but also to the individual's ability to position themselves within the body politic at any given moment.

Unsuredness as to where to posit oneself in society, coupled with a lack of privacy, provides the individual with no place for their thoughts to exist without influence or discipline. The freely-thinking individual is under attack; enlightenment is dimmed; immaturity, obedience, and consumerism prevail.

“The touchstone of anything that can serve as a law over people lies in the question: whether a people could impose such a law on itself.”³¹

³¹ (Immanuel Kant, p.21)

Bibliography

Arastey, Guillermo Martinez, 'Application of Video Technology in Football Refereeing – VAR', <https://www.sportperformanceanalysis.com/article/tag/Video+Assistant+Referee+%28VAR%29>, (Online: Sport Performance Analysis, 6/11/19). Last accessed 11/1/21.

Chambers, Madeline, 'Germans snitch on neighbours flouting virus rules, in echo of the Stasi past', <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany-denunciati/germans-snitch-on-neighbours-flouting-virus-rules-in-echo-of-the-stasi-past-idUKKBN21K2RE?edition-redirect=uk>, (Online: Reuters, 2/4/20) Last accessed: 11/1/21.

Chantler-Hicks, Lydia, 'Kent MP Tom Tugendhat likens hotline for reporting quarantine breakers to 'communist East Germany'', <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/malling/news/covid-snooping-hotline-like-communist-east-germany-233676/>, (Online: KentOnline, 12/9/20) Last accessed: 11/1/21.

Dragon's Den, Series 16 Episode 8, (2018), BBC TWO, 11/11/18.

Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. By Alan Sheridan, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995)

Foucault, Michel, *The Politics of Truth*, ed. By Sylvère Lotringer, trans. By Lysa Hochroth & Catherine Porter, (California: Semiotext(e), 2007)

Gepner, Abigail, Jazmin Rosa & Sophia Rosenbaum, 'There's a Pokémon in my restaurant, and business is booming', <https://nypost.com/2016/07/12/pokemania-runs-wild-through-city-causing-crime-accidents/>, (Online: New York Post, 12/7/16). Last accessed 11/1/21.

Kafka, Franz, et al. "In the Penal Colony", in *The Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, (Online: Oxford University Press, 2009) ProQuest Ebook Central, last accessed 10/1/21.

Kant, Immanuel, *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, ed. Pauline Kleingeld, trans. David L. Colclasure, (London: Yale University Press, 2006)

Kidspot, 'Instagram warns parents kids could be bullied for not being on social media', <https://www.kidspot.com.au/news/instagram-warns-parents-kids-could-be-bullied-for-not-being-on-social-media/news-story/df990ed3b4eed06dc46041d3014081d9>, (Online: 10/14/18.) Last accessed: 11/1/21.

Mattioli, Dana, 'How Amazon Wins: By Steamrolling Rivals and Partners', <https://www.wsj.com/articles/amazon-competition-shopify-wayfair-allbirds-antitrust-11608235127>, (Online: The Wall Street Journal, 22/12/20). Last accessed 12/1/21.

Osborne, Samuel, 'Khan defends New Year light show tribute to NHS, Captain Tom and Black Lives Matter', <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/london-new-year-fireworks-blm-nhs-captain-tom-b1781216.html>, (Online: Independent, 1/1/21). Last accessed 11/1/21.

"panopticon, n." *OED Online*. (Online: Oxford University Press). Last accessed 11/1/21.

Ronay, Barney, 'Referees' strict rulings on unseen handball microcrimes are ruining football', <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2020/nov/07/referees-strict-rulings-on-unseen->

[handball-microcrimes-are-ruining-football](#), (Online: The Guardian, 7/11/20). Last accessed 11/1/21.

Tassi, Paul, 'Pokémon GO' Is Charging Sponsored PokéStops Up To 50 Cents Per 'Visit,' Which Seems Like A Bad Deal', <https://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/2017/06/02/pokemon-go-is-ripping-off-its-sponsored-pokestops-charging-up-to-50-cents-per-visit/?sh=3c9b6d672159>, (Online: Forbes, 2/6/17). Last accessed 11/1/21.

Tolan, Casey, Rob Kuznia & Bob Ortega, 'Insurrection fueled by conspiracy groups, extremists and fringe movements', <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/01/07/us/insurrection-capitol-extremist-groups-invs/index.html>, (Online: CNN, 7/1/21). Last accessed 11/1/21.

Zuboff, Shoshana, 'How Google Discovered the Value of Surveillance', from *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, (Online: Longreads, 2019). Last accessed: 12/1/21.