Analysis of Panopticon and Surveillance: In Dystopian novel
A Scanner Darkly

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Abstract

This paper explores Michel Foucault's concept of panopticon as monumental in the dystopian novel A Scanner Darkly by American writer Philip K. Dick. Further, this paper also throws light on the pros and cons of surveillance and totalitarian regimes, which are fundamental discourses in dystopian novels. The concepts of surveillance, control, and totalitarian regimes started to emerge from eighteenth century, which are still prevalent in today's society. In the first part of the paper, the terms dystopia and panopticon are explained with their historical context. Later part, deal with the role of hegemonic power or state in imposing surveillance and the impact of surveillance on individuals and society.

Keywords: Panopticon, Surveillance, Dystopia, Totalitarian

Introduction

The term panopticon was first introduced by social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century in the work Correspondence Volume 4. The term Panopticon derives from the Greek word panotes, which means all seeing. The concept of Panopticon allows constant surveillance over a prisoner by a single officer so that there will be an establishment of an ideal state. The structural design of panopticon, (inspection house)has been constructed by Jermy Bentham's brother Samuel Bentham. It was designed in a circular shape so that a single person would easily monitor all prisoners.

Though in the later phase the concept of panopticon lost or disintegrated its real meaning and reemerged as a new way into social discursive form. Over a time, many researchers, scholars, and academicians have focused on surveillance and totalitarianism, which emphasized the symbolic meaning and connotative meaning of panopticon, which is useful for monitoring and restraining power dynamics. According to Michael Foucault, the panopticon model is used as a crucial tool for enforcing discipline and control in society. According to Foucault, panopticon is a way of defining power relations in terms of every life of society.

Foucault says the ultimate goal of Panopticon is to impose discipline and control over the common people so that they would never get any chance to rebel against the ruling class. However, he never used a symbolic model. According to the symbolic model of Panopticon, both inspectors and prisoners would be imprisoned in the same monitoring system. According to John Storey:

The major effect of the Panopticon is to induce in the inmate state of consciousness and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. Even though surveillance is discontinuous in its action, its effects are permanent. The perfection of power

should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary...The inmates... are caught up in a power situation in which they are themselves the bearers… 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. (pg.136)

According to the above-mentioned quotation Prisoners never know whether they are under constant surveillance or not; this state brings up the Sigmund Freud ideas of the superego, where surveillance and discipline are internalized. This statement also draws a parallelism between panopticon and superego. These both concepts have the ability to influence the behaviour and intention of any individual.

According to Foucault, panopticon and superego keep people in continuous awareness of society's norms and standards, which gives a sense of discipline. Thus, the superego considered an internalized Panopticon. Foucault says Panopticon represents the disciplinary web of society, which is not centralized in one institution but also in every aspect of day-to-day life. Here, Panopticon works as a modality for facilitating social contract and power dynamics.

Gradually in later phase Panopticon has been transitioned from spectacle to surveillance; this transformation established a sustaining power relationship. Therefore, panopticon is considered an effective mechanism for monitoring and changing individuals' behaviour. This is how, without reinforcement and extreme punishment, norms and ideology were easily penetrated and scrutinized in society and individual behaviour. In addition, it is used as a tool of normalization, which moulds behaviour and conduct into accepted norms. Hence these norms are viewed as natural.

DYSTOPIA

The understanding of dystopia   arose from a post Christian genre, however it flourishes in contemporary period, though it shifted its focus from   salvation or damnation   to conflict between   powerful and powerless. According to   American critic Tom Maylan dystopian fiction   are product of terror of 20th century…such as exploitation, repression state,violence, war, genocide, disease… and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of everyday life (3)

A dystopia generally refers to a bad community or society that is opposite to the utopian society. In general, dystopian societies are characterized as isolated, fearful, and tyrannical power discourse. In dystopian society, people generally have the illusion that they are living in ideal society or utopian society. According to MH Abraham, the term dystopia is used to describe science fiction and other works of fiction that depict an unpleasant illusionary world as well as terrible future culmination.

The term dystopian was first used by John Stuart Mill in his political speech, according to Mill. Dystopian society is one in which tyranny and dictatorial rule prevail. Further Das has defined dystopia as:

"Dystopia is a world that involves domination and suppression, value superiority, and imposed inferiority. In a dystopian universe, the dominant parties set their power through oppressing, explaining, and abusing people; moreover, in dystopian societies, the dominant party creates laws and rules that fit and suit its interests, neglecting what may suit its citizens (das 55).

Totalitarianism, Panopticon, and Surveillance in Dystopian context

Totalitarianism and surveillance are two prevalent features of panopticon, which are combinedly used to control population in dystopian society. In dystopian societies, there is no individual desire for rights and freedom. These societies were divided into classes according to their intelligence, skill, and ability. In dystopia, just like totalitarian regimes, there is no individual faith practiced by individuals. In this society, authoritative regimes completely subjugate the individuality. As Jacques Ellul states:

Due to the domineering ideology and state's overpowering control, citizens of Dystopian societies, for any particular reason, deviate from their social duties and become more interested in their personal feelings, they feel that they are lacking discipline and betraying the state, as they no longer can fulfil their social functions and be of any use to society (42).

In totalitarian regimes, all the cultural expression and personal characteristics are only approved by representatives of power to manipulate individual religions used as a tool. This is how governments subjugate societies and keep people in fear so that they can be easily controlled.

People are therefore helpless against a totalitarian regime that rules over them. It is evident that dystopian societies are those in which the state is typically headed by an authoritarian government whose main objective is to maintain complete control over the populace. Privacy is easily breached by persistent penetration since it is simplest to manage people by obtaining every type of information about them—that is, everything, even the smallest bit that would not even be noteworthy. And political tactics like censorship, deceit, propaganda, monitoring, authoritarianism, and/or persecution are used to build this, in turn, dystopia. ("Utopia and Dystopia Information")

Literature review

The area of surveillance studies examines the interaction between people and surveillance technologies; this interaction benefited many disciplines, but it overpowered the humanities. Since the twentieth century, dominance has shifted toward literature and movies, especially in the dystopian genre. In dystopian fiction themes like politics, autonomy, identity, and struggles for power are dominant; to exercise dominance over people, the state or government keeps society under surveillance.

Bentham divided surveillance theory into three phases based on themes and dates. The first phase, which presents architectural conceptions of surveillance, In the first phase, surveillance is physical and spatial. The second phase is about infrastructural theories of surveillance, which emphasize uses of digital technology rather than physical technology. In contrast to panopticons, Deleuze, Haggerty, and Ericson create alternative theoretical frameworks that emphasize conceptualization of power dynamics. This concept is modelled as the third phase. Which prevalent in contemporary world? On the frame work of the third phase, many authors such as Aldous Huxley, Anthony Burgess, Margaret Atwood, George Orwell, and Kazuo Ishiguro Published their works Brave New World, A Clockwork Orange, Handmaids Tale, 1984, and Never Let Me Go, so on. These novels expressed universal fear of losing one's unique individuality or identity; the setting is also in the future world, and commercial cheeriness and sexual promiscuity were prevalent.

Textual Analysis

A novel, *A Scanner Darkly,* written by Philip K. Dick. It has a fusion of politics, drugs, and cultural paranoia. In the novel Dick portrayed his own personal paranoia by incorporating autobiographical components. He wrote this novel amid intense national and personal anxiety.

The novel is set in the future version of Anaheim, where Substance D, commonly known as "Death," or a psychoactive substance, is extremely addictive and lethal. It serves as a warning story about drug addiction, and illustrates major themes that will shape the story of hallucination and the ongoing sense of pain and suffering that addiction and drug cause. The novel from the beginning illustrates the negative effects of drugs through character Jerry Fabin, who is admitted to the Neural Aphasia Clinic for therapy due to his drug addiction.

In the novel the federal law enforcement agencies of the government have created intrusive, advanced surveillance systems to identify the source of drug or substance D. A network agency conducts large operations with the help of cops to expose drug users. This is how in Anaheim, surveillance is enforced by using cops as well as sophisticated technology, such as tapped phones and numerous surveillance cameras that consist of three-dimensional data.

To protect the identities of cops, the government has used the Orange County Drug Abuse Program, whose main goal is to protect the identities of the undercover police officers. Further, these undercover agents use a suit while reporting to their superiors. The suit is characterized as a thin "shroud-like membrane" that covers the entire body and shows noticeable blur of faces. These suits consist of a "multifaced quartz lens, which helps to recognize the wearer's voice or appearance from the suit. The suit eventually plays a significant role in both the protagonist's intersubjectivity and the cooperation between Substance D and the government monitoring body.

According to Foucault, in the contemporary period, modern organizations used surveillance to control society without imposing direct coercion. In the novel advanced state apparatus, is maintained by continuous public surveillance. The characters in Anaheim society are positioned within the framework of panopticons. Thus, it shows that characters' have to go through innumerable surveillance and scanners that trace and gather information about each individual of society. According to Foucault, the establishment of disciplinary processes, surveillance, and totalitarianism within society is inevitable. Here he says power extends across the social body and "runs through society without interruption in space and/or in time" (209).

Further concept of Panopticon has been used to analyse the basic characters of the novel. In the novel Arctor's family, conditions present the best expression of the panopticism. Because most family members involved in drug addiction, that are against the regime, hence the panoptic procedure in the novel used to prevent criminal behaviour of dopers as well as dopers were barred from all popular places (malls and public places). This is how Panopticism has been implemented upon each individual through disciplining and delegitimizing them. Further in Anaheim, the government reinforced surveillance by maintaining control over the dopers.

In the novel, surveillance creates a paranoic condition among characters that shows negative traits of surveillance. For example, once Arctor's car nearly crashes because the gas pedal isn't working, suddenly the Bob Arctor starts to think that there must have been someone who intentionally attempted to damage the car: "Someone did it on purpose," Luckman yelled. He whirled into a circle of rage and struck out with both fists. "Motherfucker!" We nearly purchased it! They came dangerously close to us! (62).

The above passage from the text shows that the action of state power is not justifiable and odd, phobias of common people in Anaheim should not entirely ignored, because authorities were spying or scanning residence of Anaheim through holographic scanners. Thus, here Bob Arctor's doubts regarding state and power forces are justifiable. His worries and anxieties depicted that the state or power forces can penetrate anything to anyone.

However, in Anaheim, the surveillance system depicted that the law is used to manage illegalities in society as well as the law serves as a means of enforcement, this shows positive traits of surveillance that work as regulating force for government.

In the novel, through surveillance, phones were hacked by police officers, which they used to listen to all private chats of each individual, which enabled them to identify callers who were left-wing. Nevertheless, all drug-related conversations over the phone are unlawful, so here the authorities only record those who found illegal or verdict of any wrong deed.

In the novel Dopers position at the state of "Panopticism is very attentive and alert. In this situation, they denied the chance to get free from their existing position. According to Foucault, this is the situation in which punitive processes convert into a penitentiary method "from the penal institution to the entire social body" (298).

Therefore, Foucault says the panopticon is the most ideal way for enforcing power, which acts directly against people. Therefore, it would be right to say that panoptic activities become an effective exercise for authorities in Anaheim because it enables authorities to classify dopers.

A Scanner Darkly also presents corporate capitalism and drug culture in American society, that prevalent during the decades between 1960 and 1970. The franchise chains of McDonald's and Coca-Cola were used as symbols of capitalist remnants. In the novel Capitalism split the society of Anaheim, as well as it makes consumption necessary.

Conclusion

A Scanner Darkly shows the effect of consumerism, hegemonic power, and surveillance, in the society, which come together to establish control over the submissive body. This study shows the positive and negative perspectives of surveillance and panopticon techniques that blur the lines between both the private and public domain.

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