

How can you apply  
panopticism to your  
daily existence



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The idea of isolating a group from another certain group is not new one and it has been since the beginning of time. It has been and will always be the intention of selfish reasons of security. It does not deal about the questions whether certain people should be isolated but rather the ways of isolation. English philosopher shaped a simple institution that is known as the panopticon that is based on the subconscious desire to conform the society. This term is very ideal for criminal today as they are broken down mentally instead of physically. The prisoners are given the chance to stabilize themselves and again become the part of the society; so powers are not centralized in the hands of the prison guards or warden.

Panopticism is a process of power and observation by Michel Foucault. There are two folds of functions of this type of design to make the subject visible and the observer's presence unverifiable. What is theory of Panopticism by the Michel Foucault? The present work relates the critical application of the Michel Foucault and prison design of the Jeremy Bentham and also a metaphor for the power relation and social control. The concepts of the Panopticism are covered in the areas of the discipline and punish.

Study of surveillance starts with Foucauldian's reading of the ways in which surveillance plays an important role to enable the social control and ways of power inscription into both social body and individual. In Discipline and Punish Foucault has described historical shift of highly visible public methods of corporeal punishment such as torture, public execution and chain gangs in a society where punishment becomes inherent part of the legal process.

Social control and power are less dependent upon the practice of the body through pain and torture and more subjected upon the discipline through the <https://assignbuster.com/how-can-you-apply-panopticism-to-your-daily-existence/>

subjection to mechanism of the correction, observation and training. As the Foucault has said that

In physical torture, the example was based on terror: physical fear, collective horror...The example is now based on the lesson, the discourse, the decipherable sign, and the representation of public morality (Foucault. 110).

Foucault has followed the Bentham's Panopticism designs of prison to describe the ways of distribution of new system of discipline throughout society. The original design of the Bentham said Panopticism prison is one in which all the cells are arranged in a circular pattern around the central watch tower. Residents in cells are watched over by the guards in tower and prisoners can neither see each other and nor the guards in the watch tower, thus making a state of being seen but not seeing. The idea of being watched is internalized in Panopticism and subjects become self regulating and automatically functioning of power.

An application of the surveillance is extended based on the control of various social institutions like school, hospitals, barracks and factories. The Panopticism solely cannot reform prisoners and also it is not a design and building for a physical location. Panoptic power is a process of social regulation and organizations.

Additionally David Lyon's book " The Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society" has provided the balanced and comprehensive sociological background of surveillance. Lyon's study has presented a point of view which is understandably skeptical of the rise in surveillance technologies.

In this paper the primary objective is to focus on the role of Panopticism in our daily life. Panopticism plays an important role in our daily life and society in which we are living; as it becomes functionless without Panopticism. We have known that society cannot function without control. The people take the order of the discipline and our society that controls us for granted. We are protected by those imaginary eyes which keep us checking from the dangers. The U. S government accepts the Panopticism as it takes away our rights and privacy. The American people are not only aware of the countless ways that U. S government takes to watch their lives but they have a great deal of their freedom in comparison to complete and totalitarian control. People have found the best ways to perform in Panopticism is a try to control as much as possible. We control our lives by letting others to watch our lives. We can recognize ourselves as objects of watchers and gaze.

The Panopticism is existed undisputedly in our society today and it is not a bad thing. Life's control and order create feeling of safety. It works for us making the interest to see us fit for the survival of lives. We ignore the panopticism when we see the negative aspects of it.

We have discussed the use of the panopticism in our daily life. We can see other aspects of the panopticism as Foucault suggested that

The leper gave rise to rituals of exclusion... the plague gave rise to disciplinary diagrams (Foucault. 1975, p. 231).

The disciplinary diagrams in Foucault work required the strict spatial partitioning, detailed inspection, order and careful surveillance. This way of dealing with disease is not

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A massive, binary division between one set of people and another (Elden, S. (2001)).

But it is as

Multiple separations, individualizing distributions, an organization in depth of surveillance and control, an intensification and a ramification of power

(Elden, S. (2001)).

Why Foucault has used the plague example in his writing? He has used it to illustrate the ideas of visibility, space, power and vision. Later Foucault used the Panopticism as social model to control the power functions in his book named Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. Due to the concept of watch and being watched it has similar effects on the citizens and people; think that they are watched at any juncture, so they show their behavior to avoid the style of standing out from the crowd in an objectionable way.

In these days the technology is being changed and it is basic need of people to keep up their selves with demands of new changing society. The idea of the panopticism is very closer to people of this world as they feel that they are under the surveillance and want fit into society. The self-regulation is phenomenon that checks and encourages the people to alter and adjust themselves with the changes occurring in their surrounding. Hence the panopticism also forces the people for the self regulation and panopticism acts as metaphor for this kind of power. The structure of the panopticism is based on the individual windows and locates the prisoner in space. Miller has argued that punishment is not a function of the panopticism rather

categorization, classifications and organization of collectives into individuals.

As the Muller has stated that

The utilitarian is as repelled by crowds as he is by beggars (Miller, 1987: 17).

This nexus between collective and individual is a spatial instrumental to understand the politics in 18th century. The work of the Michel Foucault has maintained a profound faith in architecture and authority of isolation.

Bentham was against the idea of punishment and argued that it is rather a mischief to punish a criminal person. But for the goodness of the society it was necessary to punish the criminal persons to prevent them from committing the harmful and dangerous crimes. A visual diagram is created by minimizing the harm done and maximizing the perceived harm done in the eyes of community. This is the architectural organization of the panopticon.

Now we come to pure usage of panopticism towards our daily lives. Prenatal genetic technology and ultrasound are not simply the amazing progress of technology and machinery but these are the part of such technology which is too part of the complex social and institutional matrix. These institutions are well organized with trained and expert professionals. Hospitals, clinic and other institutions are units of such technology where expert and well known doctors are available. As the Ann Maclean declares the doctors as agents of political and social control and his appearance as a scientist adds legitimacy to control.

In terms of relationships based on the personal power it is only possible when asymmetrical relationships are present. A man with more power has chance to overreach whether medical professionals, watchers or inspector are involved. The work of the Foucault appeals the clinical settings to take the society from minute level to capillary level. The historical process by Foucault means the thrust of the people of eighteenth century. If we look this process at capillary level then we should be able to view the power at the lowest cost. From the above discussion it has become clear that we have a chain of discipline that starts with mildness and leads to production and finally gives the profit. So isolation needs not to be physical but a real fact and also painful. These techniques of panopticism are also applicable in situations like hospitals and clinics.

I started this paper with the historical Bentham's development of panopticon and then turned it to Foucault. The work of the Foucault has presented the figure of panopticon at the expense of some of his other analysis. The chapter Discipline and punish in which panopticon appears has given much knowledge about the panopticism. The plague town example seems to be best for the surveillance of society.

Being a model of enlightening thinking and a symbol of mechanization the panopticon is a marker in the transition towards the society and in scripts the social changes accompanied this upheaval. Work of Foucault and Miller shows the panopticon as a building of modernity. Flow of power is shown via perception rather than vision. Vision like prisoner who inhabit the building shows very well isolated, categorized and organized.

This paper also presents the possible measures to reduce the negative impacts of the criminal records. It is very important to keep the record of those who were convicted for criminal offences. Foucault also believed that this idea of panopticism can also be applied anywhere from the medical treatment to punishment, or even education. It is believed that this constant watch system can create the state of obedience that is adequate to apply in any disciplinary situation. This paper makes a sense for us to know the importance of panopticism in present world.