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Michel Foucault's panopticism
and dystopian discourses:
the asymmetry of the gaze in
philosophy and film

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Michelio Foucault panoptizmas ir distopiniai diskursai: žvilgsnio asimetrija filosofijoje ir kine

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SUMMARY

Research problem and relevance

Michel Foucault's concept of panopticism has received much attention. His book, attributed to his period of research on power *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* remains one of the most often cited and publicly discussed texts in the social sciences. This book introduces the concept of the disciplinary society by revealing the workings of power both on the macro and micro levels. It also further develops the concept of panopticism, which draws on Jeremy Bentham's panopticon project establishing the asymmetry of the gaze.

Panopticism as a theme became even more relevant after the attacks of September 11th and terrorist attacks of various scale in Europe. Tracking and surveillance in themselves possess the asymmetry of the gaze, and for this reason researchers and journalists often bring up Foucault's panopticism when discussions turn to surveillance. Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish* has become one of the foundational texts of surveillance studies. Unfortunately, surveillance studies usually present Foucault's concept of panopticism as an outmoded theory that does not match the spirit of this era. What contributes to the dismissal of Foucault's panopticism is the perspective of scholars such as Lyon, Haggerty and Ericson who believe that the concept of panopticism falls behind the technical progress of today (Manokha 2018:221). Such a perspective is undoubtedly bolstered by the fact that when reading Foucault surveillance studies scholars often ignore the philosophical potential of his texts.

The style, form, and content of Foucault's texts comprise an indivisible whole. By ignoring the intellectual "polyphonicity" of *Discipline and Punish*, the field of surveillance studies understands

the concept of panopticism as conducive only (or mostly) to the materially tangible machine of the asymmetry of the gaze. Thus the universality of Foucault's panopticism, its ability to unfold in several registers encompassing both exterior carceral schemes and internal power intensifications simultaneously, are diminished or even completely ignored. By not giving due attention to the universality already provided for in Foucault's concept of panopticism, critics, as well as representatives of the so-called post-panoptic perspective, while claiming to critique Foucault, in fact wind up engaging in a critique of Bentham's panopticon project rather than Foucault's panopticism.

When speaking of the panoptic problematic, Foucault himself did not address the operation of panoptic techniques in the context of computer technologies, television or film, thus today it is important to reconsider how much and on what scale Foucault's concept of panopticism is still applicable when speaking about the power mechanisms permeating contemporary society. Adherents of the post-panoptic camp often turn to the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his short, but very influential text for panopticism research "Postscript on Societies of Control" in order to claim that the concept of the disciplinary society developed by Foucault, as well as the characteristics of power that accompany it, no longer correspond with the power mechanisms of today. According to Deleuze, the society living in the era of computerization is no longer a disciplinary society, but rather lives in conditions of transitioning to a control society whose reference point of power and primary interest is no longer individuals and bodies but individuals and databases.

Noticeably, in the philosophical thought of both authors – Foucault and Deleuze – power is understood not as a static given, but as a constantly changing, interactive, and dynamic net of power relations and circulations. However, if Foucault's idea of power is exclusively negative, then for Deleuze power is positive. Thus, even though when comparing Foucault's and Deleuze's concepts of power

one must admit that there are more similarities than differences since they both speak about “networked” power, yet they do so from completely different positions. “Postscript on Societies of Control” reveals the fact that despite Deleuze’s proposition that Foucault’s concept of disciplinary society is no longer suitable to identify the conditions of the dispersal of power in contemporary society, he also devotes a great deal of attention to the asymmetry of the gaze when speaking about power.

According to Deleuze, the characteristics of power revealed by Foucault are outmoded because in the present era we encounter not so much traps of carceral enclosure, but traps of openness. This dissertation criticizes Deleuze’s position by arguing that Foucault’s concept of power and panopticism were already considered by the author himself as not limited to carceral institutions and processes contained therein.

Another author who engages with post-panoptic perspectives is sociologist Thom Mathiesen, who critiques Foucault for devoting attention only to panoptic processes while completely ignoring synopticism. According to Mathiesen, panoptic as well as synoptic techniques have gone hand-in-hand since antiquity. He understands contemporary societies as instances where synopticism (the surveillance of the few by the many) has long been entrenched (beginning with journalistic press). This dissertation reconsiders Foucault’s concept of panopticism and its possible relevance in order to grasp the spread of power mechanisms throughout contemporary societies, and also reviews Mathiesen’s concept of synopticism. It argues that the contemporary entrenchment of panoptic techniques is closely related to the fact that they were already able to circulate undetected for several decades, camouflaged and hidden by more visible synoptic processes. In this case, the monitoring (surveilling surveillance) that occurred with the popularization of television is considered to be the start of the current internet data surveillance and profiling style.

In his discussion of Foucault's panopticism the French thinker Michel de Certeau notices that one of the reasons for panopticism's establishment as the predominant power dispositif are the old power techniques that colonize Enlightenment utopias and possess the asymmetry of the gaze. Based on de Certeau's concept of panoptic colonization techniques, this work develops the idea that colonization processes of the panoptic power techniques shouldn't be understood as a singular, temporally bound phenomenon. The spread and colonization of panoptic power techniques is here understood as a continuously ongoing phenomenon. The techniques of panoptic power not only colonize, but they also establish heterotopic spaces that are suffused with the asymmetry of the gaze (such as film, television, internet, social media), and later continue to appropriate and colonize them anew. This process is what Foucault calls a "power game".

This "power game" is in many ways essential for cinema. The film mechanism is based on the asymmetry of the gaze; while film actively participates in the power network enacted by society as it is created by it and also creates and supports it. For this reason, several researchers of film have productively related the asymmetry of the gaze encoded in the film mechanism with the reflections of power diffused through society and revealed in the narratives of films. These include: Laura Mulvey's "Male Gaze" without which it is difficult to imagine film theory, Christian Metz's concept of the scopopic regime, as well as Jaques Lacan's theory of the mirror stage as applied to the context of film theory wherein the film screen is seen as a mirror, and Baudry's apparatus theory among many others). Especially important is Joana Copjec's idea that the immense impact that the mirror stage theory had on film theory could be considered as a reading of Lacan through a Foucauldian prism. According to this branch of research, Foucault (especially through his concept of panopticism) had an important influence (both visible and hidden) on film theory.

However, this dissertation does not seek to reveal the importance of Foucault's works for cinema research. Here, the themes uncovered by Foucault's panopticism are discussed through films about surveillance dystopias. Film as a mechanism based on the asymmetry of the gaze is here considered one of the heterotopias established and supported by the panoptic dispositif which actively partakes in contemporary power games. Works of the surveillance dystopia subgenre are understood to be a part of the colonization carried out by panoptic techniques of power, which occurs on the level of narrative, taking on a self-reflexive nature.

Shifts in surveillance and discipline characteristic of today not only contain the asymmetry of the gaze, but also are reminiscent of the future world visualized in old dystopian films. Especially interesting is the fact that despite rapid technological progress, the establishment of surveillance and other transformations, we can still see similar scenarios in contemporary surveillance dystopias warning of those same types of threats.

In his "Panopticon Writings" (2011) Bentham lays out the utopian panopticon project which aims to get the maximum benefit from minimal effort. In contrast to Bentham's project, the concept of panopticism that Foucault develops can be considered dystopian. In this research, the relationship between Foucault's concept of panopticism and the genre of surveillance dystopias is not taken as a given, and separate films of surveillance dystopias are here used as material through which to consider Foucault's panopticism as well as its dystopian aspects. Reflecting on panopticism's relationship with utopia and dystopia we can not only better understand the phenomenon of panopticism itself, but also discover the dystopian aspects that often go unnoticed by scholars.

Foucault is one of the most important thinkers on power. Panopticism, surveillance, discipline, dispositif – are all keys to Foucault's philosophy of power, at the crux of which is the problem of the asymmetry of the gaze. Through his concept of power, Foucault proves himself to be an original political thinker as well.

Political philosophers predating Foucault were all concerned with the figure of a stable individual, no matter how much their theories differed. In his power project, Foucault “historicizes” the individual and shows how he is altered, shaped, and supported by power. Foucault not only doubts the dominant belief of political philosophy from Aristotle to Hobbes that the individual is stable, but also criticizes this belief and even completely dismantles it (Ransom 1997: 26-27). Another important aspect of Foucault as a political philosopher is that in contrast to the most influential thinker of 20th century political philosophy - Karl Marx - Foucault does not consider power as property. It is diffuse and mediating, functioning as a self-structuring and altering net of negative power intensifications. This gives rise to another important problem accentuated by critics of Foucault (Deleuze, Badiou etc) – that Foucault’s power project based on the asymmetry of the gaze not only doesn’t consider, but doesn’t leave room for, the possibility of resistance and opposition that could occur outside of power.

When considering this important problem of Foucauldian power and panopticism research, the possibility of resistance can be related to the link between Foucault’s panopticism, religious asymmetry of the gaze, and secularization. This dissertation engages de Certeau’s concept of the colonizing power techniques to reconsider Jeremy Bentham’s “Panopticon Writings” (2011). Worthy of note is the fact that Bentham not only chose an excerpt from the psalm to the “all-seeing God” as an introduction to his writings, but also that he foresees practices that encourage piety and obedience (in his single-cell the kneeling inmate prays while facing the central tower). Foucault’s panopticism, save for a few cases (namely the surveillance studies works of David Lyon) were not considered in the context of the asymmetry of the gaze characteristic of Abrahamic religions. Meanwhile, the links between Bentham’s model of the panoptic machine that enable the asymmetry of the gaze, and the characteristic aspects of the religious asymmetry of the gaze have been discussed not only among thinkers of the psychoanalytic school

such as Jaques-Alain Miller and Miran Božovič, but also by Michel Foucault himself. The latter did so not in his well-known book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (the relationship between the asymmetry of the gaze and the field of religiosity is hardly mentioned in this book), but rather in the lectures given in Brazil when he was editing *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 2020).

This work distinguishes Enlightenment ideas as one of the main grounds in helping panopticism to establish itself in society as the predominant power dispositif because they created the conditions for old (pre-Enlightenment) power techniques to transform and gain traction. The latter can be related to the understandings of power marked by the asymmetry of the gaze foreseen in Abrahamic religions (Islam, Christianity, Judaism). It is argued that one of the main conditions for panopticism to establish itself as a dominant power dispositif and acquire its totalizing nature was secularization.

Today the viewer watching films about surveillance dystopias sees not only a hyperbolized threat, but also an unavoidably approaching possible reality. This possibility updates Michel Foucault's concept of panopticism anew and motivates a reconsideration of the power relations that the asymmetry of the gaze sustains and creates. Films based on the asymmetry of the gaze in philosophy help to better understand the themes of discipline, self-discipline and surveillance. When discussing panopticism and power, Foucault (1998) leaves no room for resistance. Film's examination of the power regimes produced by the asymmetry of the gaze can be a means of creation that in itself has the potential of resistance which, when drawn on even experimentally, can question the power relations forged by the asymmetry of the gaze and seek a way out of this impasse in research on power.

In this dissertation the themes opened by Foucault's panopticism are discussed through films considered part of the genre of surveillance dystopia. Plots of films about surveillance dystopias characteristically imagine dystopian societies, wherein surveillance, control and (self)discipline have become an integral part of society's

everyday life. It is precisely such surveillance dystopian films that the asymmetry of the gaze acquires a self-reflexive polemical tone.

Literature Review

The dissertation focuses on Michel Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1998a), wherein the most thorough consideration of the dispositif of panoptic power is presented. The aspects of Foucault's panopticism that are less developed in *Discipline and Punish*, such as openness, links with utopianism, and active participation and intermediation in subject formation, are foregrounded by drawing on his 1973 Rio de Janeiro lecture series "Truth and Juridical Forms" (2020), given while he was editing *Discipline and Punish*, in which Foucault presents a synthesis of his research at the time. In order to better understand the concepts that Foucault uses, the difference between the archeological and genealogical method, as well as the first germs of the "research of the modern soul" developed in *Discipline and Punish*, this research draws on *The Order of Discourse* (1998b). In this inauguration lecture given in 1970 at the College de France, M. Foucault not only discusses the methodological assumptions of his earlier works, but also sets the direction for future research. Foucault's concept of normalizing power techniques as well as the conditions of disciplinary discourse can be better understood not only by reading *Discipline and Punish*, but also his lectures given at the College de France from 1971 to 1975 based on his experiences and thoughts drawn from his involvement in the GIP activities, which discuss the themes of prison, punishment and power. These lectures were later published as several books: *Penal Theories and Institutions* (Foucault 2019), *The Punitive Society* (Foucault 2018d), *Psychiatric Power* (Foucault 2008), and *Abnormal* (Foucault 2003a). *The Archeology of Knowledge* (2014, first published in 1969) helps to better understand Foucault's archeological project. In this work Foucault presents his archeological method in depth, and reconsiders

it without shying away from critiquing his previously published books. In *The Archeology of Knowledge*, by considering alternative archeologies, Foucault introduces the idea of an archeology of paintings. The attention to the asymmetry of the gaze that can already be detected in Foucault's archeological period, as well as its position in the concept of the Truth regime is further developed in Foucault's book *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1994), especially in the introductory chapter which was separately published in Lithuanian as "Meninos" (2017b). Moreover, in that same volume of the journal "Athena: Philosophy Studies" (2017), another important text of Foucault "On Heterological Space" (2017a) appeared, and is used in this dissertation to consider the colonizing character of the panoptic mechanisms and their relationship with film.

Michel de Certeau's text "Micro-techniques and Panoptic Discourse: A Quid Pro Quo" (Certeau 2000a), which discusses Foucault's microtechnologies of power and their dispersion as panoptic power mechanisms colonize new Enlightenment utopias, helps to formulate the idea in this dissertation of how panoptic power mechanisms circulate by constantly establishing and colonizing new spaces.

In order to better understand the relationship of Foucault's philosophy with visibility, this dissertation draws on one of the first thorough studies of Foucauldian philosophy's relationship with the visual arts – Joseph. J. Tanke's book *Foucault's Philosophy of Art: A Genealogy of Modernity* (Tanke 2009), as well as Gary Shapiro's monograph *Archeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* (Shapiro 2003). Martin Jay's classic monograph *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (2013) explicates Foucault's philosophy of the gaze by contextualizing it among other French philosophers' works on seeing and the gaze.

The following texts were used to consider the interaction of panoptic mechanisms and film: Joan Copjec's book *Read my Desire:*

Lacan Against the Historicists (Copjec 1994), Christian Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and Film* (Metz 1982), Jay's article "The Scopic Regime of Modernity" (Jay 1988), and a recently published collection of texts "Foucault at the Movies" (Foucault, Maniglier, Zabunyan 2018) which includes not only interviews with Foucault, but also several informative articles about Foucault's relationship with film by Foucault scholars and book editors.

Jeremy Bentham's texts dedicated to the panopticon project are of central importance to this dissertation. Bentham's idea of the panopticon is developed in "The Panopticon Writings" (2011) composed of letters and two post scriptums written later on. The letters from 1787 were sent from Russia to "a friend in England," while the two later additions date to 1790 and 1791. All together there are 21 letters. Each examines a concrete aspect of the development of the idea of the panopticon and relates it to a specific theme. The writings examine how the panopticon is adapted to other institutions - hospitals, schools and factories. In the post scriptum texts Bentham considers the possibilities and limits of applying the panopticon idea and argues for its universality.

The French psychoanalytic theorist Jaques-Alain Miller's article "Jeremy Bentham's Panoptic Device" (1987) and the Slovenian psychoanalysis researcher Miran Božovič's introductory article to Bentham's writings (Božovič 2011), as well as his previously published book *An Utterly Dark Spot: Gaze and Body in Early Modern Philosophy* (2010) offer a new perspective on Bentham's panopticon project and further emphasize what Foucault failed to discuss – the "God's-eye view" which allows for a consideration of the relationship between panopticism and secularization in Pier Paolo Pasolini's film "Teorema".

For a consideration of the character of Foucault's concept of panopticism in conditions of technical progress and altered surveillance, the dissertation also draws on Thomas Mathiesen's article "The Viewer Society" (1997). In this article the author questions Foucault's conclusion that society has become panoptic

and describes the inverse of panopticism as a regime upheld by the asymmetry of the gaze - synopticism. Mathiesen criticizes Foucault for devoting so much attention to panopticism while ignoring synoptic processes. When reconsidering the relationship between Mathiesen's synopticism and Foucault's panopticism through the glimpse of contemporary power dispositifs, this dissertation proposes the idea of observing the act of observation, according to which synoptical mechanisms of contemporary society conceal the totality of panoptic mechanisms, and thus assist them in colonizing new spaces.

A consideration of the relevance of Foucault's concept of panopticism in times of computers and internet browsing draws on Gilles Deleuze's text "Postscript on Societies of Control" (2012) in which the author comments on Foucault's concept of disciplinary society and juxtaposes it with society of control. In this short, yet very important text for research on surveillance, Deleuze asserts that we are gradually transitioning to a new era which no longer fits the definitions of a disciplinary society. With this text, Deleuze enters into the field of surveillance and earns his place as the founder of post-panoptic literature.

In Lithuania, sociologists, philologists, art historians and various scholars engaged in interdisciplinary research are interested in Foucault's works. Of the Lithuanian philosophers who have devoted attention to Foucault's thoughts, Jūratė Baranova deserves mention for her discussion of the relationship between Foucault's and Nietzsche's philosophies in the chapter "Nietzsche's Genealogy's Footprints in Foucault's Historical Research" from her monograph *Nietzsche and Postmodernism* (2007). In her other book *Philosophy of Morality in the 20th Century: A Conversation with Kant* (2004) Jūratė Baranova also focuses on Foucault in the chapter "Foucault: the New Genealogy of Morality." In Lithuania, philosopher Audronė Žukauskaitė has devoted the most attention to Foucault's concept of biopolitics, and worthy of mention are her monographs

Anamorphoses: Non-Fundamental Problems of Philosophy (2005) and *From Biopolitics to Biophilosophy* (2016). Antanas Andrijauskas in his book *Metamorphoses of Non-classical and Postmodern Philosophy* (2010) also devotes a chapter to a discussion of Foucault's method in which he expands upon the relationship between Foucault's concept of power/knowledge. Philosopher Vytautas Rubavičius has devoted attention to Foucault in his two monographs; in the first part of *Postmodern Discourse: Philosophical Hermeneutics, Deconstruction, Art* (2003) he discusses the concepts of knowledge, discourse and power, and also devotes attention to Foucault's ideas in the monograph *Postmodern Capitalism* (2010).

More specifically, Philosopher Nerijus Milerius has engaged with the problem of Foucault's panopticism and the asymmetry of the gaze in the context of philosophy of film in his monographs *Apocalypse in Cinema: Philosophical Presumptions* (2013) and *Viewing the Viewer: Cinema and Violence* (2018). Philosopher Naglis Kardelis's article "The 'Panoramic' and 'Panoptic' Character of Ancient Greek Culture: On the Origins of the Concept of Panopticon in Classical Antiquity" (2017) published in the *Athena: Philosophy Studies* journal has proven important for discussing the antique origins of the panopticon idea in this dissertation. Vaiva Kubeckienė's article "Panopticism and the Court Society" was published in that same issue dedicated to Foucault.

Research aims and objectives

This dissertation aims to analyze Michel Foucault's concept of panopticism through a consideration of its relationship with contemporary power relations and cinema.

The following objectives are set in this work:

1. Clarify Michel Foucault's relationship with the field of visibility during his archaeological period.
2. Explore how Foucault's genealogical period, within his overall work on power, revealed the circumstances for the establishment of the panoptic mechanisms and the assumptions that underlay its effectiveness.
3. Based on Gilles Deleuze's concept of the society of control, to consider the status of Foucault's panopticism in the age of databases.
4. Through Thomas Mathieson's concept of the viewer society, reconsider synoptical mechanisms as a means of camouflage, which the panoptic mechanisms of contemporary society use in order to achieve totality.
5. Through the concept of the scopic regime, to highlight the power mechanism based on the assumption of an asymmetry of the gaze, which lies both within Foucault's concept of the panopticon, as well as in film.
6. Discuss the scheme of surveilling surveillance (monitoring) through dystopian films about surveillance, highlighting the symbiotic collaboration between synoptical and panoptical processes.
7. Consider the phenomenon of pleasure derived through controlled surveillance and the consequences of dismantling this control through the surveilling of computer cameras in films.
8. Reveal the asymmetry of the gaze that uncovers the "faceless" panoptical algorithms like the concept of a secular all-seeing God.
9. Consider the relationship between panopticism and secularism as well as the possibilities of resistance that lie therein.

Key Claims

1. Foucault devoted a lot of attention to visuality even before the appearance of *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, the book considered to be key to his genealogical phase; the importance of the asymmetry of the gaze is already evident in his thinking during his archeological research period, when discussing techniques of exclusion and shifts in truth regimes.
2. The rapid expansion of panoptic power techniques in the 17th-19th centuries and the later establishment of the privileged status of power mechanism (dispositif) can be explained by the transformation of previously existing techniques of the asymmetry of the gaze as they colonized new Enlightenment utopias.
3. Panoptic mechanisms can be linked to carceral institutions described in detail in Bentham's project such as correctional facilities, prisons, schools, hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, factories and others, however they are not limited to them. These carceral institutions can be considered one of the steps in the panoptic power mechanisms' expansion.
4. Panoptic power techniques do not become less pertinent in contemporary society: they continue to actively participate in the processes of establishing new spaces and later continue to appropriate them more and more. The widespread phenomenon of the television in the 20th century already carried within itself the panoptic technique of surveilling surveillance (monitoring), which, camouflaged by synoptic techniques, spread even wider with computer technologies' ascendance.
5. The mediation of panoptic power relations in establishing new spaces as well as the direct expansion processes implemented therein can be seen in internet technologies. People do not pay attention to the surveilling and profiling that is actively carried out by panoptic algorithms because in this schema the implicit

observer has no moral values, preconceived notions or self-consciousness.

6. One of the main conditions for the establishment of panoptical mechanisms concerned with the surveillance, formation, and subjugation of subjects, was secularization.
7. Research on panopticism's relationship with religious asymmetry of the gaze and secularization can be productive in considering the possibilities of resistance in a society permeated by panoptic power mechanisms.

Methods

A textual analysis method is used in the first part of the dissertation in order to reveal the relationship between Foucault and visibility. Seeking to expand the place of Foucault's concept of panoptical power dispositif in interpretations of the panopticon, texts of Foucault, Bentham, and other writings of the psychoanalytic school that interpret the panopticon are compared. Analyzing Foucault's concept of the panopticon, and drawing on de Certeau's concept of panoptic micro-techniques as colonizing powers, this dissertation uses an experimental method of interpreting texts and through their insights considering contemporary conditions for the arrangement of apparatuses of power possessing the asymmetry of the gaze (film, television, internet). The idea of the panoptical power mechanism is developed, according to which—as Foucault and de Certeau describe—the expansion of the panoptic power techniques doesn't end once it acquires the privileged status of a truth regime. The dissertation makes the argument that this expansion of panoptic power mechanisms continues to take place in contemporary times, by establishing new heterotopic spaces with mechanisms of the asymmetry of the gaze in their structure, and later continues to enact an ever greater colonization in size and intensity (film vs. plots that are amenable to the asymmetry of the gaze, television vs. monitoring, internet vs. algorithmic surveillance). Supposedly, it is

precisely in these power conflicts that one can detect the power effects and conditions characteristic of modernity.

In the second and third sections of the dissertation, the conditions and specificities of the asymmetry of the gaze in examples of dystopian films are analyzed by drawing on the literature. By interpreting films, the aim is not to illustrate Foucault's concept of panopticism, but rather to consider the operational aspects of the panoptic power mechanisms that have permeated society. Having chosen a strategy familiar to philosophy of film, the dissertation engages Foucault's concept of panopticism and films attributed to the genre of surveillance dystopia in order to offer a new consideration of relations of the asymmetry of the gaze and power.

Academic Contribution of the Dissertation

Foucault himself didn't specify the relationship between his panoptical power mechanism and technologies that constitute the social body today such as film, television or the internet. This dissertation draws on Foucault's texts, cinema and literature to consider the relevance of Foucault's concept of panopticism for understanding the conditions of power techniques today. This dissertation presents several contributions. First of all, by rethinking the circumstances of the establishment of panoptic power dispositifs in the context of Foucault's works, and drawing on Foucault's own texts as well as de Certeau's idea of the micro-technique's colonization of panoptic power, a new conceptualization of the conditions of panoptic power mechanisms' operation in contemporary society is developed. Accordingly the panoptic power mechanisms that have established themselves, and have received the privileged status of a power machine in the 19th century, continue to enact their expansion (according to Foucault, this actively occurred from the 17th - 19th centuries). What is discovered is that panoptic power mechanisms that have permeated society, continue their expansion even once they have become predominant, and to achieve

this goal, they constantly establish new spaces (film, television, internet and others), which they then later continue to colonize on an ever larger scale (plots with the asymmetry of the gaze, monitoring, surveilling algorithms).

The second contribution of the dissertation is rethinking Thomas Mathiesen's concept of synopticism and the entrenchment of the television in the 20th century by revealing synopticism to be a technique of power that masked and continues to mask the circulation of panoptic power mechanisms in new technologies, and thus creates the conditions for panoptic power effects (monitoring – surveilling surveillance).

The third contribution of the dissertation is that the main factor and driving force of the panopticon's effectiveness is shown to be the "God's-eye view" assembling the asymmetry of the gaze, the creation of which is encouraged by secularizing processes associated with the Enlightenment. This is accomplished by drawing on texts of authors of the psychoanalytic school that analyze J. Bentham's panopticon without the influence of Foucault's interpretation of Bentham's panopticon (Miran Božovič, Jaques-Alain Miller), as well as by drawing on Bentham's own "Panopticon Writings". In this context, and after later returning once more to Foucault's panoptic power dispositif, in rethinking the relationship between panopticism and secularization it is discovered that secularization can be considered as one of the novelties associated with the Enlightenment which helped the old, empty techniques of the asymmetry of the gaze that had been earlier linked to religious contexts to become established and reach unprecedented power effects. The idea is proposed that in what remains of the cultural religious asymmetry of the gaze which empowers the totality of the panoptic power mechanisms, there may reside the hope of resistance.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation comprises an introduction, three expository sections, and conclusions.

The first section of the dissertation “Foucault, Visuality, and the Gaze” presents Foucault’s philosophical relationship with registers of seeing and the asymmetry of the gaze. The first chapter, “Archaeology of Paintings”, discusses Foucault’s archeological method and surveys the works considered as part of Foucault’s archeological period through their relationship with visuality demonstrating that already at this moment Foucault can be found to pay attention to the asymmetry of the gaze. The second chapter “Panopticism and Surveillance” presents the problematic of panopticism. This chapter is divided into three subsections: “Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon as a Machine Enabling the Asymmetry of the Gaze”, “Foucault and Mechanisms of Panoptic Power”, and “Postpanoptic Perspectives”. The first section “Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon as a Machine Enabling the Asymmetry of the Gaze” presents Betham’s panopticon project. The section “Foucault and Mechanisms of Panoptic Power” discusses the place of the asymmetry of the gaze in Foucault’s thinking during his genealogical period, the concept of panopticism, and highlights the expansive potential of panoptic power mechanisms (dispositifs). The section “Postpanoptic Perspectives” presents two main post-panoptic ideas that are often understood as questioning the relevance of panopticism (Deleuze’s control society) and it’s predominant nature (Mathiesen’s synopticism). The third chapter “Foucault’s Panopticism and Scopic Regimes” reveals the relationship between Foucault’s panopticism and film through a discussion of the concept of the scopic regime.

The second part of the dissertation “Dystopian Film and New Panoptic Power Techniques” considers the power techniques that have spread through contemporary society and their relationship with the concept of panopticism through films about surveillance dystopias. The first section “Surveilling Surveillance in Dystopian

Film” discusses the scheme of surveilled surveillance through dystopian films. In the second section “Asymmetry of the Gaze as Bureaucracy” considers the potential of the panoptic dispositif to shape the individual subject. The third section “Dissolution of the Anonymity of Surveillance” discusses the decisive reason the neutral position of those surveilled concerning the question of algorithmic surveillance. The fourth section “God of Panoptic Algorithms” considers the nature of disembodied algorithmic surveillance as a panoptic power mechanism as they not only establish new spaces, but also colonize them.

The third part of the dissertation “Panopticism, Secularization and Film” considers the relationship between panopticism and secularization. In the first section “Panopticon - the All-seeing God’s-eye-view” returns to Bentham’s panopticon project wherein the main principle of operation is distinguished as the God’s-eye-view enabled by the architectural scheme. The second section “The Death of God in Film: from Demigods to Aliens” considers the attempts to return spiritual content to the asymmetry of the gaze. The third section “Secularized Asymmetry of the Gaze and Embodiment in Film” highlights the memory of the religious gaze in the composition of panoptic power dispositifs as a premise and possibility of resistance through Pier Paolo Pasolini’s film “Teorema.”

CONCLUSIONS

1. In the books attributed to Foucault's archeological period we already see much attention devoted to visibility. Foucault devotes a great deal of attention to seeing and directly or indirectly related phenomena not only in his works, but also his own style of writing and philosophising is "visual". Foucault writes a history of the changes of truth regimes – epistemes – in which visibility occupies a special place and helps to reveal the special type of knowledge characteristic of concrete time periods that is related with discourse conditions. Speaking about alternative archaeologies, Foucault identifies the archeology of paintings as a possible recourse. The paintings attributed to modernity, according to Foucault, free themselves from representation. Already in the books considered to be from his archeological phase, Foucault considers the importance of the asymmetry of the gaze.
2. Foucault recognizes in Bentham's panopticon the best defining architectural layout of the carceral and disciplining techniques of contemporary society. Panoptic power dispositifs can be analyzed as a part of carceral institutions that establish the asymmetry of the gaze, however, they themselves aren't limited therein. Through the concepts of panopticism and micropower Foucault develops an understanding of power that diverges from Marx's concept of power in that power is no longer, and no longer can be, understood as ownership. Foucault's panoptic mechanisms are not static power formations, but rather a net of power intensifications that is constantly shifting, renewing, interacting and upholding truth and knowledge regimes at the same time as it feeds off of them. Panopticism, as a privileged power dispositif, becomes prevalent in the techniques of the asymmetry of the gaze that spread from antiquity as they colonize the new utopias of the Enlightenment. Panoptical

power mechanisms intensively take part in and mediate subject formation as well as the functioning of academic disciplines that augment the corpus of knowledge about the individual, thereby ensuring ever new forms of subjugation and power effects.

3. Panoptical power mechanisms not only mediate in the processes of establishing new heterotopic spaces, they later continue to spread and enact processes of colonizing these new spaces. They not only reflect and uphold the regimes of power relations that permeate society but also constantly partake in their formation, correction, and recreation. Heterotopias that by nature possess a disembodied asymmetry of the gaze such as film or the internet do not avoid the surveillance mechanisms which incorporate, uphold and create the asymmetry of the gaze such as control enacted through algorithms or film plots that match and hierarchize predominant truth regimes. Panoptic mechanisms create heterotopic spaces, such as film and other media, and then later colonize them in a more totalizing way. This forges favorable conditions for panoptic power dispositifs not only to continue to circulate by privileged means in the social body, to spread, but also to create ever new panoptic spaces and techniques. An example of this can be seen in the net of television that spread in the 20th century which hid inside itself the panoptic technique of surveilled surveillance (monitoring), the hybrid nature of which (synoptic techniques camouflaged as panoptic mechanism) determined an even greater scale and strength of surveillance and panoptic power net in computer technologies.
4. The mediation of panoptic power relations when establishing new spaces and direct processes of expansion taking place therein, as well as the format of the circulation of panoptic power mechanisms in contemporary society, can be identified by analyzing the operating conditions of surveillance algorithms in computer technologies and film plots that reflect the asymmetry

of the gaze. People do not pay attention to the active surveilling and profiling performed by panoptic algorithms because in this scheme, the implicit observer has no moral values, preconceived notions or self-consciousness. Present society thirsts to be surveilled. However this desire isn't absolute, it is always a desire to be observed in a particular way controlled by the individual themselves. When obedient technologies intended to serve us start to work not according to our will, there begins a different area – of horror.

5. Ideas of the Enlightenment created favorable conditions for panopticism to establish itself as the predominant power dispositif. The old diagram of power, based on the asymmetry of the gaze, established itself on an unprecedented scale in the social body as society secularized from the 17th to the 21st centuries. Even in the context of contemporary secular societies the cultural contexts that have retained the religious asymmetry of the gaze can be considered one of the sources responsible for the totality of panoptic power mechanisms. Panopticism can be understood as a scheme of the asymmetry of the gaze characteristic of Abrahamic religions, and especially Christianity, which unfolds and releases its potential precisely in secular contexts. The connection between panopticism, secularism, and religious contexts requires further research which would prove especially productive for reconsidering the problem of the possibility of resistance in Foucault's power project.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Kaziliūnaitė, A., 2014. Panopticism in Dystopian Film: The Sights of Man and God in Pier Paolo Pasolini's Teorema. Athena: filosofijos studijos, (9), pp.104–116.
- Kaziliūnaitė, A., 2020. Foucault Panopticism and Self-Surveillance: from Individuals to Dividuals, in: Problemos, 2020, t. 97, p. 36–47. 2424–6158. ISSN 1392–1126.

Related Conference Activities

- Conference paper “Power and surveillance in 21th century: Algorithm in the tower of Panopticon?” presented at the international scientific conference “Visuality 2019: Creative Communication in the Emerging Constellations”.
- Conference paper “Surveillance in Contemporary Society: Social Media and an Eye of Power” presented at the international academic conference “Social Transformations in Contemporary Society 2019”.
- Conference paper „Foucault’s panopticism and ethics of modern surveillance: ‘plague stricken town’ reactualisation during corona crises“ presented over ZOOM on May 13, 2020 at the international conference „Ethics, Justice and Knowledge“ organized by The Centre for Research in Ethics (CRE), University of Montreal, Canada.
- Conference paper “Beyond the visible and invisible: power intensifications of internet cameras in dystopian film” presented at the Lithuanian academic conference “Sound and image in art: Aesthetic tendencies and social challenges” in 2018.

Academic Internships Abroad

- From August 1, 2016 to February 28, 2017, the first research internship was conducted at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), Amsterdam University, Netherlands through the ERASMUS + PHD internship program (internship supervisor was ASCA director Prof. Patricia Pisters).
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