

A Familiar Villain

Surveillance, Ideology and Popular Cinema

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BOSOLA: It seems you would create me
One of your familiars.

FERDINAND: Familiar? What's that?

BOSOLA: Why, a very quaint invisible devil in flesh;
An intelligencer.

FERDINAND: Such a kind of thriving thing
I would wish thee; and ere long, thou may'st arrive
At a higher place by't.

The Duchess of Malfi
By John Webster
Act I, scene ii

“What I apprehend immediately when I hear the branches cracking behind me is not that there is someone there; it is that I am vulnerable; that I have a body which can be hurt; that I occupy a place and I cannot in any case escape from this space in which I am without defence – in short, I am seen.”

Jean Paul Sartre 1960.

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Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.”

Signed:

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For my grandparents

Abstract

This thesis examines the representations of surveillance in mainstream cinema. Using ideology critique it will show how filmic illustrations of monitoring depoliticize the relationship between surveillance and structural relations of power

In order to provide a foundation for this inquiry, a political economy critique of surveillance will be undertaken in four areas. Focusing on the workplace, consumer surveillance, urban policing and intelligence gathering, this thesis will contextualise surveillance as historically relevant and intimately connected with modern constructs such as the nation-state, military power and capitalist economic organisation. In recent years, the role of surveillance has been intensified in response to the challenges posed by globalization, the restructuring of capitalism in the 1980's and 90's and the declining legitimacy of nation-state governments. These developments are both aided by, and in turn promote, pervasive networks of surveillance. Driven by risk management and other forms of economic reasoning as organisational logic, developments in information communication technologies accelerate surveillance capabilities rendering them more invasive and intense. In this way, surveillance can be conceived of as complicit with prevailing relations of power on a macro, sociological level.

In order to show how mainstream cinematic representations of surveillance ideologically obscure this relationship, this thesis begins with an overview of 30 popular films. It then moves to a comparison of four recent Hollywood portrayals of surveillance with the four areas of political economy critique identified above. This analysis will reveal that these films have a tendency to focus on sentimental themes such as individual heroism, antagonist versus protagonist struggles and romantic subplots, in a way which deflects attention from collective experience with surveillance webs. More pertinently, the narrative structures of these films feature dichotomies between malevolent and benevolent monitoring, aligning legitimate and benign surveillance with the state. At the same time, the accompanying imagery of surveillance devices fetishizes monitoring, deterministically glorifying technology as a powerful and omniscient force. The overall effect is to depoliticize monitoring as a natural part of the fabric of everyday life.

Chapter One

Conceptualising Surveillance

Beginning with Foucault, this chapter discusses the nature of modern surveillance-based discipline and touches on aspects of contemporary surveillance which have been termed “post-modern” by theorists. In so doing, I will assess the extent to which Foucauldian panopticism is a viable framework for understanding surveillance. Next, I will discuss three theoretical perspectives that will inform my primary research focus; ideological representations of surveillance in popular cinema. These perspectives are critical political economy, ideology critique and popular culture analysis. The purpose of this discussion is to build a particular concept of surveillance which will inform my research in later chapters. Based on this platform, I will outline my own critical theoretical perspective and provide a chapter-by-chapter overview of the thesis.

As a fully constituted word, “surveillance” first came into use in France circa 1802. Etymologically the word derives from the Latin terms “videre” (to see) and “vigilare” or “vigil” meaning “watchful” or to keep watch. The suffix “-ance” comes from the Latin “antia” meaning the state or quality of something or an action or process (Barnhart, 1988). In its most general form, “surveillance” means “oversight” or “supervision”, the watch kept over a person or thing (Hoad, 1996: xix). Originally “vigil” (meaning awake) was associated with religious devotions on the eve of a festival, but when “surveillance” came into French usage, it was associated with “guards” or the police apparatus.¹ From 1800 – 1900, “surveillance” was used in a number of contexts with varying connotations. It could involve care through education, such as the supervision of a tutor, or to “keep an eye” on a sick child.

¹ At this time, the noun “surveillant” was also employed to describe a person who exercises surveillance. Later, the verb “surveil” (alternative spelling “surveille”) was employed in American English (Simpson & Weiner, 1989: 308). “Surveiller” and “surveilled”, are also employed by contemporary surveillance critics.

More commonly it designated state surveillance. This could be the supervision of a suspected person or prisoner before trial, during incarceration itself, or surveillance of parolees after release. Less commonly, state “surveillance” entailed the supervision of one nation over another. In 1884, for example it was used to describe England’s role in ensuring Portugal maintained its treaty obligations (Atkins et al., 1980: 645; Simpson & Weiner, 1989: 309). During this time, “surveillance” took on a connotation of control, with a late nineteenth century writer employing the phrase “puritanic surveillance” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989: 309). Historically speaking, the changing uses of “surveillance” betray the complexities of modernity, which unfolded during the nineteenth century. The new French Republic established a formal police apparatus to deal with the effects of urban clustering of populations. Governments needed to record and respond to various health epidemics. Tax gathering needed to be administered, centralised and quantified through statistics (Mattison, 2002; Rabinow, 1989). In Europe and North America, the consolidation of fixed addresses and the birth of the modern census allowed for taxation and town planning. Census-type documents in France date back to 1769 when they were often conducted by the church, but were fully conducted by the state by the early nineteenth century (Mattison, 2002). For these reasons, “surveillance” came to be connected with authority, power and the modern nation-state (Foucault 1977: 22).

During the early to mid twentieth century, “surveillance” took on a technological meaning in the service of military or police operations. Beginning with aviation, technological surveillance came to encompass everything from pin-hole cameras to satellites and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) (Simpson & Weiner, 1989; Wikipedia, 2004). Contemporary understandings of “surveillance” retain the association with police, the military and technology. The word often designates supervision by state authority, such as the identification of illegal activity within national borders or potential threats from outside (Wikipedia, 2004). The word is also used in health (monitoring of disease), espionage (intelligence and counter surveillance), marketing (statistical consumer sampling), financial discourses (risk evaluation) and in the context of employer-employee relationships. The term “inverse surveillance” refers to surveillance which has been reversed and is conducted on authority from below. For example, citizens may photograph police, as George Haliday did in the Rodney King beating (Wikipedia, 2004).

As we can see from the diversity of situations in which “surveillance” is used, words gather meaning from intention, reception and context. Raymond Williams has noted that words which have been in use for a substantial period of time with continuous general meanings can assume radically different connotations under different applications (Williams, 1983: 17). To be conscious of this potential is an element of the problem itself. As structuralist and post-structuralist linguistic analysis has pointed out, subjective access to “reality” is always through language, which in turn contributes to the construction of reality itself (Fairclough, 1989: 9).² Recently, dictionary definitions of surveillance include the associated words “supervision” or “superintendence”, for the purpose of *direction* and *control* (Simpson & Weiner, 1989: 309). Although this meaning is less common than the technical notions of supervision, it is of crucial importance in understanding the relationship between surveillance and power in contemporary society. The notions of direction and control suggest that surveillance itself plays a role in producing and constraining human subjectivity. At the same time, understanding surveillance in both the abstract conceptual sense (what is surveillance) and the concrete material sense (how are we monitored), is partially determined by the meanings of the word “surveillance”. Both these conclusions suggest that popular culture plays an important role in the way that surveillance is experienced and understood.

1.1 Modern and Post-Modern Surveillance

The etymology of the word “surveillance” leads into the work of French sociologist Michel Foucault in several ways. Firstly, Foucault contributed to critical understandings of the relation between knowledge and power, which occurs partially through language.³ Foucault developed an “archaeology of knowledge” in which he conceived of systems of thought as “discursive formations” located beyond individual

² For the researcher-subject, this creates a prickly problem for the “truth” which critical analysis attempts to produce. I will address this issue in the critical theory and methods section.

³ I am leaving to one side here the debate as to whether Foucault is a structuralist, post-structuralist or post-modernist as it is not pivotal in applying his insights. Later in this chapter, however, I will address the tension between a Foucauldian understanding of power (diffuse and decentred) and both a critical theory and a political economy understanding of power as structural, systematic and asymmetrical.

thinkers (Audi, 1995: 276). Power is enacted through language by privileging certain discourses as true and others as false (Hassard & Holliday, 1998: 3). Subjects define themselves according to the operations of knowledge, and are preoccupied with “knowing” themselves *solely* in relation to “truth”. In this way, power operates both as an oppressive raw physical force and in a productive capacity (Fairclough, 1989: 13; Hassard & Holliday, 1998: 85). As the parameters of discourse are set by the production of power, and as subjects bind themselves to a process of trying to find out “who” they “are”, language is both productive and constraining. Power, language and the process of subjectification all construct the social world by ruling out alternative ways of being and talking. Citizens cannot see themselves as capable of experimenting with ways of being other than those that are understood to be “true” (Fairclough, 1989: 14; Hassard & Holliday, 1998: 85). In this way, power through surveillance (or the knowledge-power project) is intricately linked to the capacity of popular representations to shape conceptions of surveillance in society.

Foucault’s writings also provide a critical conception of how the knowledge-power project operates in surveillance-based discipline. Foucault’s 1977 book *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* argues that surveillance as a manifestation of modernity was a disciplinary process which actively constructed human subjectivity. Foucault based his account of modern discipline on Jeremy Bentham’s eighteenth century design of a utopian prison called the Panopticon. Although the prison was never actually built, Foucault saw it as an architectural realisation of an emergent penology in early modernity. In the *Ancien Regime* the power of a monarch to punish a crime through the spectacle of torture was of symbolic importance. With the reformism of the eighteenth century, punishment became synonymous with supervising practices of surveillance and internalised standards of discipline. Punishment became applicable to all, proportionate to the crime, and aimed to convert the condemned into a subject useful to society (De Certeau, 1984: 45 - 46).

If constructed, the Panopticon prison would be a tall, circular structure containing a central observation tower and surrounded by multiple small compartments housing the inmates. Each cell would feature one window facing the central tower and another throwing light on the occupant from behind. This design would allow the observer (or “intendant”) “unimpeded visual access” to surveil the prisoner, who, in turn, would

only see the face of the tower. As the cells are isolated from each other, the possibility of collective resistance is precluded by the segregation of individuals (Foucault, 1977: 200; Gandy, 1993: 22). Inmates are the object of information rather than the subject of communication. They experience a place where “visibility is a trap”, since each inmate is isolated under the gaze of the “intendant” (Foucault, 1977: 200). Subjects experience a state of confusion induced by the feeling of constantly being watched. However, the watching is eternally unverifiable and asymmetrical; it is the possibility that someone is looking that disciplines the subject. As William Bogard remarks: “The face of the guard tower is like an absent eye, but whose absence is masked, or just the opposite: it is a perfect uninterrupted gaze, always present, unblinking. Presence, absence, what’s the difference? The effect, the docility of the prisoner is the same” (Bogard, 1996: 80).

Commentators have noted that Foucault regarded the Panopticon as a concrete illustration of how panoptic tendencies operate throughout modern society (Bogard, 1996: 19; Gandy, 1993: 22). For Foucault the Panopticon is “the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form”, a “fixture of political technology”, that can be used in any context to activate the modern modality of power (Foucault, 1977: 205). Surveillance both impacts on society and constructs modernity itself by penetrating the basic levels of social organisation. Although discipline was originally conducted by state institutions, during modernity it comes to be deployed in various contexts. The factory, the hospital, the military and the school all conform to the panoptic modality of controlling and directing individuals (Foucault, 1977: 210). Foucault outlines three steps in the formation of a society founded on surveillance-based discipline.

Firstly, the “functional inversion of the disciplines” relates to the change in the intent of discipline in the modern era.⁴ Prior to eighteenth century reformism, punishment was used to neutralize danger or fix disturbed populations, thereby protecting

⁴ In this section I will outline “discipline” both in the context of punishment by penal institutions, and as “practices” which permeate modernity through work, education and health. A further variation of “discipline” outlined by Foucault is the organisation of disciplinary knowledge itself. The judicial system for example (as well as universities and other education institutions) benefits from the ability to classify and categorise. As I have already mentioned, power is partially enacted through knowledge. In this context individuals can be disciplined by the creation of hierarchical systems of norms in which knowledge-based values form a framework to disqualify and exclude (Foucault, 1977: 223).

mainstream society from criminal harm (Foucault, 1977: 210). In modernity, it continues to play this role, but also takes on a positive, productive capacity as panoptic tendencies extend through all societal institutions (schools, hospitals, charities). In preventing deviance, discipline increases the maximum output of each individual. In the workplace, for example, discipline is both a way of preventing theft, and a way to increase speed, productivity and therefore profits. It does this by exerting a “moral influence over behaviour” which causes employees to internalise management’s standards. At the same time, it converts the bodies and forces of the workers into productive machinery for a profitable economy (Foucault, 1977: 210). In the modern era, panopticism is more closely aligned with coercion than with the civil liberty it purports to protect.⁵ Foucault writes that within modernity, citizens see surveillance-based discipline as a foundation for social equilibrium. Disciplinary institutions appear to protect individuals by supervising and punishing deviants, which appear, in turn, to safeguard civil liberties. However, when viewed as productive mechanisms of power, panoptic disciplines work to coercively unbalance societal relations and align power with a particular group or ruling elite (Foucault, 1977: 223).

Secondly, the surveillance tendencies associated with centralised institutions (the state, factory, school) “swarm” out into free society and become methods of social control (Foucault, 1977: 211). When he refers to the “swarming of the disciplinary mechanisms”, Foucault discusses the inherent “moral ideology” of panoptic tendencies, rather than the act of punishment itself. In this way, technological, social and educational mechanisms form miniscule “procedures” which pervade all of society and teach a moral standard of behaviour (De Certeau, 1984: 46). The inherent ethical codes and rationales of surveillance “practices” (rather than institutions) is internalized by its subjects, who then enact its strategies on those around them (Foucault, 1981: 5). For example, a Christian school may supervise and train parents as well as their children. If a pupil is absent or behaves badly, the school may question the family’s neighbours about the morality of that child’s parents (Foucault, 1977: 211). Just as Bentham’s Panopticon prison enables experiments in behaviour

⁵ These aspects will be covered in more detail in the political economy of intelligence section, in which I will show how the modern nation-state is bound up with the growth of surveillance as a mechanism of administrative control (Whitaker, 1999).

alteration, so too can factory management train and correct individuals. Workers might alter their behaviour because they know they are being surveilled. Conversely, factory management can surveil worker productivity in order to distinguish laziness or stubbornness from incompetence (Foucault, 1977: 203).

The third step in Foucault's analysis concerns the state control of disciplinary mechanisms. Discipline wielded by the police, judiciary and penal system become functions of the state apparatus. Panoptic tendencies are founded on the state, and encompass the state apparatus itself. For police power to be effective, it must bear over everything, not just the extremes of human behaviour. Similarly, the power to punish, Foucault argues, is not the function of an independent legal system, but rather the extension of a web of minute panoptic tendencies (Foucault, 1977: 277).

Foucault's three steps outlined above point to the formation of modern power, but this process does not end with the state. For Foucault, modern discipline "surreptitiously reorganises" the functioning of power so that it is diffuse, fluid and pervasive (Ward, 2000: 99).

The essential characteristics of panopticism, as theorised by Foucault, have been developed by contemporary critics of surveillance. Writers in this area have observed that panoptic surveillance has a preventative character; a power of mind over mind. Obedience occurs as subjects internalise standards of discipline based on the *threat* of punishment, more than the punishment itself. Discipline is not simply imposed on subjects from the outside, but is subtly present in them already, rendering disciplinary practices more effective. In this regard, human subjectivity is influenced from the outset by assumed understandings of discipline itself. As Oscar Gandy writes, "individuals acting in pursuit of their interests are guided by their understandings of the environment, the rules of the game, and their own capacities and resources". Much of this operates below the level of conscious awareness as individuals take on board discipline in their daily lives (Gandy, 1993: 28). When exercised continually through social life, disciplinary power is perpetually self-reproducing, inventing new

mechanisms to separate and immobilize subjects while at the same time, supervising itself (Foucault, 1977: 205-206).⁶

Disciplinary power expands “bi-directionally”, flowing from top to bottom and *vice versa*, seducing society with the image of protected peaceful order. In this critical conception, surveillance transforms human diversity into a rigid system of management, differentiation and classification, fixing every deviancy into a hierarchy (Staples, 2000; Ward, 2000: 105). As William Staples argues, social control is sustained on an everyday basis, directly or indirectly by all of us; “we all advance disciplinary power when we go about naively – and with blind faith and sometimes arrogance – trying to ‘make things better’ and always assuming that in fact we can” (Staples, 2000: 154). When viewed from a neo-Habermasian perspective which values open and democratic participation among citizens, disciplinary surveillance functions to undermine participation in civic life and produces docile citizens rather than democratic ones. Citizens are being pushed out of the public sphere by fear and uncertainty, and are increasingly “awed to silence, systematically manipulated and progressively unable to question private authority” under the panoptic gaze (Gandy, 1993: 157).

Recently, critical writers in surveillance studies have argued that the proliferation of diverse types of monitoring throughout everyday life has brought about a “surveillance society” (Lyon, 1994; Lyon, 2001). David Lyon points out that surveillance has become routine and mundane, to the point that it is embedded in every aspect of life. Although this argument draws on aspects of Foucault’s work, one recent development in surveillance which has received a lot of critical attention is electronic data profiling or “dataveillance”⁷ (Clarke, 1988). Operating in what Oscar

⁶ In the Panopticon prison, the fate of the guardian is inextricably bound up in the machine. As Bentham noted “by every tie I could devise, my own fate had been bound up by me with theirs” (Foucault, 1977: 204). For example, the prison intendant would be the first victim of a revolt caused by incompetence or by the failing of the machine. In this way the Panopticon is a self-perpetuating “apparatus to supervise its own mechanism” (Foucault, 1977: 204).

⁷ A practice facilitated by new technologies that allows large data-dependent organisations, not the least of which is the state, to gather information about individuals from a variety of sources and order it into databases. This then allows organisations to document the activities and transactions of identifiable individuals (Clarke, 1994: 120). As Roger Clarke argues, this practice creates an unbalanced power relationship between large data-dependent organisations and members of the public, as vast amounts of private information become available to thousands of public servants (Clarke, 1994: 118).

Gandy (1993) terms the “panoptic sort” or the raw data of human experience, “electronic panopticons” manage and control mass populations.⁸ In the private sector, information matching is used to identify and classify employees or consumers and reference them against particular norms. In the public sector the state may profile potential criminals and other threats to social order. Dataveillance is facilitated by data-matching and data-mining technologies based on micro-electronics and digitalization. Individuals can be identified by social security or IRD numbers, their movements mapped according to credit card transactions, bill payments and credit ratings (Lyon, 1994: 71). Digitalization not only allows for efficient mass storage, the retrieval of data and the identification of specific individuals, but also allows panoptic data to be searched in non-linear ways. In the “database nation”, citizens can be classified and organised in infinite combinations in ways which may be directly associated with their material circumstances, but can be arbitrarily constructed as well (Garfinkel, 2000). Often implemented in the name of information efficiency, electronic panopticons operate primarily to reference individuals against particular norms for the purpose of rehabilitation and normalization, seeking to transform behaviour through a process of continuous disciplinary surveillance (Gandy, 1993: 24).

The gaze of electronic surveillance is unwavering, automatic and invisible. The uncertainty of inspection produces “anticipatory conformity” in subjects who may seek modes of resistance to surveillance, but who are more likely to comply to its standards of discipline (Zuboff, 1988). Even though it is relatively easy to do, citizens and workers do not falsify their documents, for fear they might be checked. Just as in the Panopticon, it is the uncertainty about surveillance which ensures the proper functioning of discipline (Gandy, 1993: 81). As in the factory, school or prison, electronic panopticism works as a system of rewards and punishments. For example, the data about a job applicant’s credit history or criminal record affects their employability and citizens are rewarded by qualifying for life insurance or punished by being denied credit (Lyon & Zureik, 1996: 96). Dataveillance is increasingly pervasive as systems are networked and data is traded across the private and public sectors (IACA, 1992 as cited in Clarke, 1994: 117-118). As Lyon notes, in the so-

⁸ Gandy’s arguments will be outlined in greater detail in Chapter Two: Surveillance and Capitalism.

called wired city consumers are visible to un-verifiable observers, incarcerated in their bodies rather than in a prison; they are “atomized in – designer? – cells at the periphery” of inspecting eyes (Lyon, 1994: 71).⁹

The electronic panopticon entails the acceleration and flexibilizing of traditional panoptic principles. Electronic information is more diffuse, signalling the breakdown of bureaucratic disciplinary mechanisms formerly derived from the state (Staples, 1997). For some writers, this kind of panopticism is distinctively new and “post-modern”. Electronic surveillance is decentred, networked and often transparent in ways that supersede Bentham’s architectural model. It is best conceived of as a “multiplicity of focuses” that quantify and qualify the behaviour of consumers as well as the efficiency of the panoptic process itself (Elmer, 2003: 233).

Electronic surveillance operates virtually, beyond geographic space through networks to disperse data (Gandy, 1993: 23). Where the modern Panopticon tower could view only a number of limited cells, post-modern panopticism feeds upon the inexhaustible supply of disciplinary (electronic) space (Staples, 1997: 44). Official surveillance no longer requires a fixed geographical location. Consequently, supervisors can monitor subjects remotely and in real-time, beyond their material bodies. While modernity placed individuals centre stage in history, post-modern panopticism is concerned with our “virtual selves” which “circulate within the networked databases, independent of their Cartesian counterparts” (Lyon & Zureik, 1996: 8). The seamlessness of electronic surveillance means subjects never hear the intendant. Surveillers watch data of everyday life which circulates beyond the corporeal world, but affects it directly (Whitaker, 1999: 136-137). Marc Poster has referred to this construct as the “Superpanopticon”, a surveillance web that constitutes citizens as decentred from their “ideologically determined unity”. For example, as Roger Clarke (1988) has argued, large data dependant organisations tend to deal with an individual’s data shadow, rather than their physical self. Data-based surveillance lends itself more readily to “anticipating” behavioural patterns through risk assessment, allowing for

⁹ A further similarity with Bentham’s Panopticon is that the guardians of electronic surveillance are co-implicated in its machinery. At times, the most surveyed individuals are also panoptic supervisors. For example, a video camera installed in a police car disciplines the officer as he treats a suspect. As one police officer neatly put it: “when you are on TV you don’t do bad things” (Staples, 1997: 52).

profiles of individuals to overtake their material selves (Clarke, 1994: 121-122). Subjects are constructed as a series of transactions, credit activities and criminal transgressions, rather than essential “human” elements such as emotion or moral fibre. For Poster, the modern ideal of rational autonomy is no longer applicable in a world where a digital self, shorn of its human ambiguities to fit perfectly into the machine, takes precedence over its corporeal counterpart (as cited in Lyon, 1994: 71; Lyon & Zureik, 1996: 184).

According to William Bogard (1996) the technological processes involved in anticipating future surveillance needs signify a new type of control, passing from “the logistics of inspection or perception” to a logistics of “*prospection*” (Bogard, 1996: 55 [emphasis Bogard's]). The logic of risk-assessment involves identifying particular traits (and targeting particular subjects) before a given problem has begun to manifest itself. For example, genetic profiles tell physicians which diseases to expect and preempt (Bogard, 1996: 54). This argument resonates with Gandy’s concept of “prediction”, but Bogard focuses on the virtualistic way in which the observer sacrifices their own supervision to technologies of simulation. Rather than acting on the body of the surveilled, virtual programmes simulate scenarios. For Bogard, this is a new (post-modern) type of surveillance in which the gaze is no longer human or machine centred, but “cyborgian” (Bogard, 1996: 57).

Taken together, these arguments seem to point to the view that panopticism is *the* all-encompassing organisational construct in modernity. There are, however, some difficulties with this approach, a number of which are articulated by Michel de Certeau (1984). He argues that Foucault has over-emphasised panoptic organisation by tracing it back through history retrogressively, isolating the one construct and “explaining its current functioning by its genesis over the two preceding centuries” (De Certeau, 1984: 47). In doing this, Foucault has left out other “silent itineraries” which, although not powerful enough to give rise to a “discursive configuration” or to “technological systematisation”, still operate in infinite and minor, though important ways. De Certeau uses the example of Pierre Legendre’s (1994) conception of the apparatus of medieval law as another type of disciplinary organisation which has existed in the modern era. De Certeau himself is particularly interested in consumer practices, arguing that they also organise the use of space, ways of thinking, and ways

of being (De Certeau, 1984: 30, 47).¹⁰ For the critic, Foucault has pinpointed an important area of study; the relation between “apparatuses” and “ideology”, or, the concept that technological procedures impact on power, while obeying their own particular logics and producing order and knowledge. But de Certeau argues that Foucault over-emphasised the template of panopticism instead of simply identifying a new, distinctive and dominant functioning of power (De Certeau, 1984: 48 - 49). De Certeau rightfully points out that “it is impossible to reduce the functioning of a society to a dominant type of procedures” (De Certeau, 1984: 48).

Another difficulty concerns Foucault’s understanding of power as diffuse, pervasive and productive. From his perspective it is possible to conceive of resistance to surveillance-based discipline, but not of escape or evasion.¹¹ For de Certeau, Foucault has successfully argued that discipline has pervaded every facet of modern life, but has not allowed for “the fact that everyday life has not been reduced to a rigid set of regimes, such as the notion of discipline implies” (as cited in Ward, 2000: 100). Some daily practices resist or evade discipline through resilience, cunning or straight-forward stubbornness (Ward, 2000: 105). As de Certeau argues, everyday people may subject disciplinary practices to “oblique forms of reading”, which subtly change the meaning and intent of disciplinary power. There are “styles” of operating which exist within disciplined space; “uses”, “actions” or “re-uses” which may discreetly re-organise surveillance-based discipline from within its own logic and which are commonly known as the art of “making-do” (De Certeau, 1984: 30). Graham Ward observes that although urban spaces may be spatially disciplined by surveillance, pedestrians create “journeys” in which they cross, wander and improvise. They evade the trajectories of “Stop” and “No Entry” designed to make the city “legible” and in so doing, they articulate “otherness” to discipline.

¹⁰ One problem with de Certeau’s insights is that the two discourses are not mutually exclusive. In Chapter Two I will show how surveillance logic and consumer logic overlap.

¹¹ Whether or not Foucault implied the possibility of resistance to surveillance is a point of contention among theorists. Leonard (1990) notes that the theorist “indicts, sometimes explicitly, more often implicitly, the idea that modernity contains within itself the potential for human emancipation” (as cited in Morrow & Brown, 1994: 29). Graham Ward argues that Foucault implicitly allowed for resistance because he believed that unveiling operations of power allows subjects to take up “a more active and engaged process of self-fashioning” (Foucault 1985, 1986, 1988, 1990 as cited in Ward, 2000: 85).

De Certeau's argument that panopticism is a central (but not all-encompassing) paradigm for modern power complements David Lyon's conception of surveillance as "Janus-faced". Lyon (1994) has argued that surveillance operates through "care and control" and may have material benefits for citizens on a day-to-day level. As I have suggested, the word "surveillance" itself has a nuanced definition involving both positive and negative connotations. Monitoring does operate in a protective way for those who lack the capacity to undertake the routines of everyday life. Moreover, surveillance also facilitates certain political practices which are aligned with the normative ideals of democracy. The electoral roll facilitates full-franchise elections, while surveillance of tax regimes and codified wage and salary remuneration may facilitate the provision of social welfare. Moreover, when pervasive surveillance *is* controlling and constrictive, it can, potentially, be resisted, evaded and even reconstructed in ways which contravene the intention of its deployment. However, the modes of resistance pointed out by De Certeau pertain to everyday actors in small-scale situations. Panopticism is *not* a totalising construct, and does involve aspects of resistance in micro situations, some of which may be enacted in popular culture. However, as I will argue in the next section, the recent restructuring of capitalism, technological advancements and the predominance of "informationalisation" have rendered surveillance tendencies more pervasive, intensive and "complicit" with macro relations of power. These are the aspects of surveillance-based power which are most likely to be absent in popular representations of monitoring.

1.2 Surveillance and Political Economy

The theoretical discussion so far reveals the essential characteristics of surveillance within contemporary society. In order to analyse the material functioning of surveillance technologies in more detail I will turn to critical political economy. This will enable me to determine the extent to which surveillance is complicit with contemporary structures of power. As a research perspective, critical political economy is generally concerned with capitalist relations of power, and the activity between economic organisation and the political, social and cultural realms (Golding

& Murdock, 1996: 14). It is “critical” in the sense that it seeks to unveil aspects of society which may be publicly obscured, and in the sense that empirical research should address issues of pragmatic and policy concern. At the same time, critical political economy is informed by theoretical insights concerning the social order and its impact on cultural phenomena (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 12). In this context political economy analysis considers the material frameworks within which “real actors” confront the “real world” and the structurally unequal resources experienced by such actors. Together, these factors impact on the construction of the symbolic environment (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 13).¹² In order to analyse capitalist relations of power properly, critical political economy needs to be historically informed and responsive to the changes brought about by “late capitalism”. Such an approach must also contain an underlying project of social justice and political self government (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 13; McChesney, 2000: 115).¹³ For critical political economy, methodology is often implicitly connected to a theoretical approach. When this connection is made explicit, research sources and data should be evaluated according to four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Scott 1992, as cited in Meehan et al., 1993: 113). In this way, political economy considers history, the social totality, moral philosophy and praxis as it critically analyses social phenomena (Meehan et al., 1993: 107). From this perspective my research considers three things: firstly, the theoretical concerns which underpin the type of surveillance at hand; second, the relations of power associated discrete surveillance practices; and finally, the normative standpoint which underpins this thesis.

In terms of popular culture, political economy studies the impact that the organisation and financing of cultural production has on viewpoints available to audiences through mass communication (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 11). In the so-called “Information Age” media systems may work to reinforce, influence, and (less commonly)

¹² Structures of power do exist, but should not be conceived of in the functionalist tradition as “building-like edifices, solid, permanent and immovable”. Rather, structural power is a dynamic formation which is constantly reproduced and responds to surrounding pressures (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 15).

¹³ “A moral philosophical outlook” is one of the defining features of a political economy approach. Moral philosophy is present in Marx’s work, but in fact finds its roots in Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which called for society to take up values and goals for social action (Meehan, Mosco, & Wasko, 1993: 108). The particular normative position I will ascribe to during this thesis will be outlined later in this chapter.

challenge existing class and social relations (McChesney, 2000: 110). The political economy of communication is concerned with the capacity of “structured asymmetries in social relations” to make and shape the meaning of texts (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 14). The growth of the media, the extension of corporate reach, commodification and the changing role of state intervention each contribute to the defining of cultural production. Economic factors therefore define the environment in which communicative activity takes place. However, such imperatives are not the complete explanation of the activity, as meaning is partially constructed in reception (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 14). In this way critical political economy does not think of economic determination in the last instance (as Marx did), but rather as the beginning of the field of inquiry (Hall, 1976). What might be called “the political economy of texts” seeks to illustrate the relationship between media products and their production and consumption (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 19). In order to do this, political economy studies the range of discourses allowed into the public sphere by a particular form of media organisation, explores whether or not these discourses are exclusively official or involve space for counter discourses and investigates how these discourses are arranged within the text (whether there is a preferred reading) (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 24-25).

The political economy theorist I have mainly drawn upon is Manuel Castells. Of particular relevance for this thesis is Castells’ book *The Informational City* (1989) in which he explicates the “restructuring”¹⁴ of US capitalism during the 1970’s and 80’s. In the post-World War II era, the prevailing macro economic framework (often referred to as Keynesianism) became unsustainable (Castells, 1989: 21). Pressured by rampant inflation, labour struggles and the oil shocks of the late 1970s, Keynesianism collapsed under “the stress of its contradictions”. The pressure applied by these events and processes rendered the organisational mechanisms established in the 1930’s and 40’s untenable, prompting governments to introduce austerity policies.

¹⁴ Castells’ use of the word “restructuring” indicates his position in relation to post-industrial information society theorists. Writers such as Daniel Bell (1973) and Alain Touraine (1969) argued that capitalism was being *replaced* by the informational mode of development. Castells (1989) points to an interaction between the two, with information being the new driving force behind capitalism and productivity. It should be noted, however, that a number of authors have argued that Castells’ thesis is not as separate from other information society theorists as he maintains. For Halcli and Webster (2000), Castells’ argument that information technologies have transformative social capacity (particularly in the area of labour) is both “familiar” and “consonant” with other writings on post-Fordism, post-industrialism and even post-modernity (Webster & Halcli, 2000: 68).

Pressured by the demands of middle class citizens, finite tax revenues and the growing mobility of capital, western governments were forced towards deregulation and fiscal restraint. This subsequently undermined the traditional economic basis for state intervention (Castells, 1989: 22).¹⁵ In turn, the state attempted to finance its interventions through debt, rendering its position ultimately untenable. In terms of production, western economies experienced a “crisis of Fordism”. As David Harvey (1989) has outlined, the Fordist system’s inherent “rigidity” made it unable to respond to the challenges of the 1970s (declining corporate profits, accelerated inflation, the cracking of the Bretton Woods agreement, devaluation of the US dollar and the resulting 1973 recession) (Harvey, 1989: 141). In order to maintain private profit, new markets needed to be found, demand increased and inflation controlled (Castells, 1989: 23). In order for both private and public organisations to work through their respective crises, they undertook a restructuring process and established a new model of socio-economic organisation to achieve the basic aims of the capitalist system (Castells, 1989: 23). In turn, these crises converged with the emergence of new information and communication technologies, producing a new model which hinged primarily around information generation, or “informational capitalism” (Castells, 1989).

As David Harvey (1989) has argued, recent changes to capitalist organisation have hinged around flexibility in production and consumption. Harvey refers to a “transition” in the regime of accumulation,¹⁶ and subsequently, a transition in the associated mode of social and political reproduction (Harvey, 1989: 121). For Harvey, this transition entailed increased flexibility in markets and labour processes

¹⁵ Castells refers here to the justification of state control during the era of “Keynesianism”. As the economic powerhouse of society, the state regulated capital and labour relationships and administered welfare (as well as justice, health, education etc). At the same time, the state stimulated the economy directly through intervention. This required the regulation of economic activities (state assets), initiatives in accumulation (public expenditure to stimulate demand) and public employment by the state itself (Castells, 1989: 22).

¹⁶ I have used the phrase “regime of accumulation” in a cursory manner here to designate a stable relationship between consumption and accumulation, based on particular conditions in production and reproduction (Aglietta, 1979). The question of whether contemporary society can be characterised under the term, or under the modified “flexible regime of accumulation” is a matter of some contention among theorists. As there is not adequate space to engage with this discussion here, I am using the work of Castells, Harvey and Aglietta to point to macro changes in economic processes which hinge on the circulation of information flows and processes. In turn, much of this information is panoptic data.

in order to respond more directly to consumer behaviour (Harvey, 1989: 124). Under the informational mode of development, knowledge drives capitalist development. Knowledge organises and facilitates production, but is also a result of the process; the raw product itself (Castells, 1989). According to Castells, the “informational mode” arose out of a particular evolution in three intersecting spheres: production, consumption and state intervention (Castells, 1989: 18). The intersection between these three spheres was co-ordinated by core new technologies based on microelectronics and for the purpose of information processing. In the sphere of production, the rise of the large corporation to organisational predominance brought with it “an economy based on large-scale production and centralised management”, requiring efficient information flows (Castells, 1989: 18). In the area of consumption, information gathering systems were created to meet the marketing requirements arising from the increased distance between buyers and sellers in the mass market (Castells, 1989: 18). Finally, in the state sector, information processing enabled the expansion of government intervention into new areas of economic and social life in more subtle ways. Under the informational mode of development, the state and associated organisations define “strategic goals” which infiltrate social activities in non-institutional ways. Objectives such as military superiority help bring various facets of society into the same system of incentives and disincentives. In turn, the state steers society by manipulating the network of information flows which surround this goal (Castells, 1989: 18) .

Castells’ work usefully describes the impact of “informationalisation” in the restructuring of capitalist production. His analysis has precisely articulated a development whereby information is both the raw material in production and the result of the process itself (Castells, 1989: 13). In future chapters, Castells’ work (and that of political economy theorists in general) provides important insights into the macro frameworks of power that shape surveillance in capitalist societies. That is not to say that this thesis wholeheartedly ascribes to Castells’ vision of contemporary capitalism. He has been substantially criticised for his stance on “the demise of the working class” and for his declaration that “informational labour displaces generic labour” (Webster, 1995; Webster & Halcli, 2000: 67). My own research argues that contemporary workplace surveillance practices may challenge, but more often strengthen, existing capitalistic hierarchies within informational labour itself. This

leads into a more general criticism of Castells, that his writing is technologically determinist (Webster, 1995). As surveillance technologies are themselves information and communication technologies, Castells' line of argument regards them as central to macro changes in the structure of capitalism. As I argue in following chapters, the organisation of surveillance practices from the outset, is designed to reinforce structural relations of power. This implies a direct, coercive process whereby changes in surveillance practices are driven by political and economic factors, not the technologies themselves.

In this thesis I will use Castells selectively. There is not the space to engage with his assertion that the network society is governed by a "faceless collective capitalist" for example, or with his writings on "the post-modern city" (Webster & Halcli, 2000: 67). At the same time, I will synthesise the writings of different critics who complement Castells, but who also differ in their insights. Globalization, risk management as economic reasoning, marketing-ordered consumption and international terrorist events have all impacted on contemporary surveillance networks. Proper explication of the way in which these factors have consolidated or challenged the role of surveillance requires various theorists be considered.

1.3 Surveillance and Ideology

The next relevant area of literature concerns "ideology" and "ideology critique". This section will background my analysis of the representations of surveillance in popular cinema. The analysis in this section builds on my discussion of Foucault but involves a different conception of power. In general the theories of ideology I will outline contribute to understanding how popular representations of surveillance may complement or help sustain the political and economic structures of power.

The nature of social control and the perpetuation of structural relations of power in capitalist societies has generated much critical debate. According to one line of argument, the dominant classes rule through asymmetrical control of resources (in the

Marxist sense) as well as through moral and intellectual guidance. By privileging values which bind subordinate groups to dominant agendas, ruling classes are able to sustain vested interests (Gramsci, 1994). A critical understanding of “ideology” was first conceived by Marx, but was more systematically developed by Antonio Gramsci through the notion of “ideological hegemony”.¹⁷ Gramsci posited that all people are “philosophers”, and that ideology was innate in all language and intellectual activity as well as in words, images and other textual artefacts. Assumed notions such as “common sense” and “good sense” effectively produce a “false consciousness” and encourage dominant ways of thinking (Gramsci, 1994: 47).

The main theorist I will be relying on in my own ideology critique is John Thompson. Thompson proposes a concept of ideology which focuses on the ways in which symbolic forms intersect with relations of power. This relation is conceptualised as:

“...the ways in which the meaning mobilised by symbolic forms serves to establish and sustain relations of domination: to establish in the sense that meaning may actively create and institute relations of domination: to sustain in the sense that meaning may serve to maintain and reproduce relations of domination through the ongoing process of producing and receiving symbolic forms” (Thompson, 1990: 58).

By “domination” Thompson refers to manifestations of power relations which are “systematically asymmetrical and relatively durable”, particularly in the areas of class, gender, ethnicity and the nation-state (Thompson, 1990: 292). By “symbolic forms” Thompson refers to public actions, images, texts and linguistic expression (spoken and inscribed). What is important here is that these forms are recognisable to audiences, who understand them to be constructs with meaning and significance. In broad terms, Norman Fairclough has argued that power operates through “various modalities”. Some of these involve coercion and violence, others are generated through the “manufacture of consent”, or “acquiescence” towards relations of power. In modern society, particularly in western capitalist democracies, power operates

¹⁷ I am leaving to one side Gramsci’s conception of “hegemony” as it is too historically specific for these purposes, choosing instead to concentrate on his insights into the role of ideology in capitalist societies. I have also chosen to avoid the complex debate between Gramscian and Althusserian theorists about the relationship between ideology and state apparatuses. Briefly however, Althusser (1978) is useful here for his conception of the tendency for individuals to form identities congruent with established social practices.

primarily through this mode and through the ability of ideological language to enact social control (Fairclough, 1989: 4).¹⁸

It is important to note here that in his analysis of ideology, Thompson does not regard symbolic forms as necessarily erroneous. Thompson's work extends Gramsci's insights about ideology by describing the way in which symbolic forms, be they false or true, come to establish and sustain power relations within particular societal circumstances. The contexts that Thompson is particularly concerned with are those involved in, and pertaining to, mass communication. This is not the only site of ideology but it is crucially important because of the centrality of mass media in contemporary society and because of the capacity for mass mediated symbolic forms to reach vast audiences dispersed in time and place, particularly through television (Thompson, 1990: 266).

These observations challenge the ideology theorist to adequately consider the diverse nature of audiences. Some writers have over-emphasised the power of media to inject audiences with ideological matter, without questioning the "limitations of semantic domination" (Gillespie, 2000: 37). As John Fiske has argued, popular culture is a conflict-laden area containing elements of resistance to the dissemination of dominant ideology. Hegemonic power is only necessary (and therefore possible) in society because of resistance, meaning that popular culture contains "contradictory lines of force" which may be activated by audience members in diverse ways (Fiske, 1989: 2). This does not however, mean that all discourses are equally privileged. As Stuart Hall (1990) has pointed out, polysemy must not be confused with pluralism, in that certain "connotative codes" or "meanings" arising from images or words dominate others (Hall, 1990: 134). In this conception, texts have a "dominant" or preferred ideological message, but this is only taken on board by certain audience members. In

¹⁸ There is a problem here in positioning Foucault. The French theorist has rejected the notion of ideology both explicitly and implicitly by conceiving of power as diffuse and not located in structures which might manufacture consent (see Morrow & Brown, 1994: 192). At the same time however, Graham Ward has noted that Foucault "believed that unveiling operations of power" could have an emancipating effect on subjects, a stance which implies ideological critique (Ward, 2000: 85). Leaving this debate to studies dealing with the intricacies of Foucauldian theory, I will follow the lead of many in the social sciences who have "selectively appropriated certain concepts [of Foucault's], which is common given the idiosyncratic nature of his stances and formulations" (Grumley, 1989 Dews, 1987 as cited in Morrow & Brown, 1994: 135).

“decoding” the text along “dominant”, “negotiated” or “oppositional” lines, audiences consume the text and create meaning itself (Hall, 1990: 128).¹⁹

These observations must be taken into consideration when formulating a methodology of “ideology critique”. Hall has argued that “frameworks of knowledge” such as professional codes, the “relations of production” inherent in media organisation and the “technical infrastructure” itself (such as the limitations of time and space in television), all help produce a privileged meaning hierarchy within the text (Hall, 1990: 130). Thompson proposes a “technically mediated quasi-interaction” formulation which considers the specific contexts in which messages are produced by media institutions and appropriated by individuals. He concludes that messages are ideological in particular social-historical circumstances (Thompson, 1990: 268). For Thompson, the possible ideological content of media messages has to be analysed on various levels, all working within broader social relations. These relations are: the production of a text within an “interactive framework”; audience reception; the quasi-interaction which occurs between communicators and recipients; and finally the ways by which texts are incorporated and elaborated on in wider society (Thompson, 1990: 268). Together, these constraining structures produce texts containing certain ideological “modes” of operation. Thompson tabulates these as: “legitimation”; “dissimulation”; “unification”; “fragmentation” and “reification” (Thompson, 1990: 60). Each mode is accompanied by typical “strategies of symbolic construction”, which can be investigated within a text. For example, “legitimation” may manifest itself through the “rationalization”, “universalization” or “narrativization” of socially constructed phenomena as a “natural” part of everyday life (Thompson, 1990: 61).

Ideology critique forms part of the larger research discipline of “hermeneutics” or the theory and method of studying human action and artefacts (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 93). Instead of conceiving of social science research as a means to study society as scientific matter, hermeneutics acknowledges that cultural products are historically

¹⁹ As I have begun to argue, ideological images of surveillance serve a crucial role in establishing and sustaining unequal relations of domination; they are allowed to exist with public consent or even support. Investigating this means invoking the idea that ideological representation has the power to elicit changes in audience subjectivity. It is one thing to determine whether ideology actually exists, quite another to prove that this has a direct impact on viewer subjectivity. Because of the limitations of this research in terms of time and space, I have had to leave audience reception for another study: this is an important area and one that would complement the research I have undertaken.

conditioned by social context and relations of power. This type of research originated with Marx (who was influenced by Hegel's description of epochal consciousness) and was re-examined following contributions by George Lukacs (1923). Sometimes termed the "hermeneutic-dialectical tradition", research of this kind considered how capital was "reified" as natural, such that individuals falsely identified with a social reality which was manufactured for them (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 95). More recently, the approach was reconstructed by Habermas (1971) who referred to ideology as "systematically distorted communication" rather than "false consciousness" *per se* (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 150).²⁰ In this vein, Thompson's conception of "depth-hermeneutics" incorporates linguistic theory's insights about the nature of discursively produced "reality" in order to supersede the assumption that individuals are mere "dupes" of ideology (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 263). The interpretation of ideology must be undertaken within a socio-historical analysis. This in turn requires a conception of the relations between language and power, in order to discern the potential *distortions* of meaning and the results for potential *consciousnesses* (Thompson, 1990: 284, 293).

Interpreting ideology is a risky and conflict-laden field of study. Projecting the possible meaning of a symbolic form is subjective because meaning is not always determinate and interpretations often differ. Mimi White is particularly useful here as she argues (following Althusser) that as the dominant ideology is negotiated in terms of its place in the "social formation", culture becomes rife with contradictions and instabilities (Althusser as cited in White, 1992: 168). As Gramsci argued, "hegemony" itself contains conflict, but conflict that is channelled into "safe struggles" with fixed meanings. Culture is a site which contains concessions by ruling elites, resistance to dominant ideology as well as straight forward domination *per se* (Hassard & Holliday, 1998: 3). In this vein, White argues that dominant ideology invariably fails to create an absolute "homogenous set of representational practices or a unified social subject", leaving cracks in the system. Examining these areas is the primary purpose of ideological criticism. Ideological deconstruction attempts to "expose the fault lines within the system", and in doing so, exposes the workings of

²⁰ This was because "false consciousness" implied the ability of the researcher to unveil "the truth" about society. I will deal with some of the finer points of self-reflexivity in research and its significance for ideology critique when I discuss critical theory and surveillance.

the system as a whole (White, 1992: 179).²¹ The ideology critique I will undertake in this thesis draws on aspects of Thompson's methodology, but leaves to one side the issue of reception. My general purpose is to complement a critical political economy perspective of surveillance with an ideology critique of relevant popular cinematic representations, in order to "demythologize" the relations of power with which surveillance is complicit (Marx, 1996: 225).

The preceding discussion suggests three propositions about surveillance, which will be investigated in this thesis. Firstly, the way in which surveillance is invoked symbolically, portrayed within "the narrative"²² of a text, and constructed through language is not neutral. Representations of surveillance entail a particular way of thinking about monitoring and being monitored. This ideology may serve to obscure or depoliticize the relations of power which allow the surveillance mechanism in question to generate undemocratic, controlling and self-serving outcomes in particular contexts. Secondly, conducting an ideology critique of popular culture cannot avoid the contradictory features of representation. Ideology, like surveillance itself, is complex, multi-faceted and involves elements of resistance as well as domination. Certain portrayals of contemporary surveillance may illuminate the sinister aspects of monitoring and shards of critique may be evident in certain texts. Lastly, structural relations of power associated with both surveillance and popular culture overlap. Popular culture plays an important role in "manufacturing consent" for surveillance-based relations of power. Ideological representations of surveillance both extend and sustain the power structures mentioned in this thesis. For this reason, the ideology critique of symbolic forms necessarily accompanies a political economy analysis of the material circumstances in which surveillance is deployed and constructed. The project which remains is to undertake a detailed analysis of texts in order to determine

²¹ This does not mean that I am attempting to get behind what representations "really mean" about surveillance as this would imply a conspiracy to cover up the "reality" of surveillance. Rather, the "reality" of surveillance cannot be accessed without the use of language, and therefore discourse becomes the object of study itself (Fairclough, 1989: 21).

²² In his review of late 1970's ideological theory, Fredric Jameson noted that the narrative itself (the plot or construction of events within a text) can be considered a "form of reasoning" about society. Based on the insights of psychoanalysis, Jameson posits that ideology critique must take narrative as a "privileged object of investigation" which reveals the relationship between cultural objects and social phenomena. In this sense, the stories told about surveillance within popular culture can be seen as an interpretive schema of surveillance itself. Investigating the construction of a plot reveals dominant understanding of the nature of contemporary surveillance (Wright, 1975 as cited in Jameson, 1977: 543).

the precise nature of surveillance-related symbolic forms, be they ideological or critical. Before describing my own research outline, I will review existing literature on the ideological representations of surveillance and show how my thesis builds upon established critiques.

1.4 Surveillance and Popular Culture

Some academic literature concerning the representations of surveillance in popular culture exists, but it is by no means an exhausted field. The purpose of this literature review is to pull together the work of authors from diverse academic backgrounds to help conceptualise the numerous connections between surveillance and popular culture. Together this information points to a mutually productive relationship between the way in which surveillance is used materially, and the way in which it is represented and understood through popular culture. To this effect, I will outline the insights of writers from cultural studies, film studies and post-modern theorists, as well as touch on some findings from reception analysis. The literature surveyed here will also provide a catalogue of potential meanings, which may be embedded in the representations of surveillance I will analyse later.

There are many landmark critical representations of surveillance in popular culture. The obvious example is George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) and its probable pre-cursor *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin (1972). Orwell's universal dystopia portrays the human capacity for totalitarianism in which manipulation, control and surveillance prevail. Orwell's description of the "Two Minutes Hate" could be the Nuremberg Rally, and Winston's job posting his corrections in the unseen labyrinth of pneumatic tubes resonates with the infinite (invisible) capacity of electronic surveillance databases. Before Orwell, the bureaucratic threat to individual autonomy was vividly portrayed in Kafka's *The Trial* (1968) and the all-seeing malevolent eye reappears in critical dystopias such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986). Occasionally critical representations of surveillance emerge from mainstream

cinema. In *The Conversation*, Frances Ford Coppola develops Foucault's notion of the subjective internalisation of surveillance tendencies, while exploring the moral and ethical dimensions of wire-tapping (Lyon, 2001: 126). In *Brazil* (1985), Terry Gilliam portrays corporate and bureaucratic organisations as alienating and Kafkaesque, such that the only escape is madness (Hassard & Holliday, 1998: 9). Outside the mainstream, documentaries such as *Condor: Axis Of Evil* (Vazquez, 2003) detail the international activities of US intelligence agencies. In this way, critical representations of surveillance do readily appear in popular culture. These texts will form a useful point of comparison for the films I will examine later in the thesis.

One author who has provided multi-textual, cultural studies analyses of surveillance in popular culture is Gary Marx (1996). In the chapter *Electric eye in the sky*, Marx argues that popular music, jokes, cartoons, illustrations, advertisements and aesthetic art produce images of surveillance that are social “fabrications” (although not necessarily deceptions) capable of communicating meaning (Marx, 1996: 193). The images citizens hold of surveillance capabilities are not directly connected to the science of the technology itself as societal understanding tends to be generated second-hand through media and popular culture. In turn, cultural context (which is affected by audience understanding) shapes future technological developments (Marx, 1996: 195). Children of the contemporary generation are raised in an environment saturated by watching, and are surrounded by images of watching through sense-enhancing technologies. The likely consequences for social understandings of “privacy” can only be guessed at, but will inevitably change as technologies become increasingly normalised (Marx, 1996: 194).²³

Marx (1996) discusses the invocations of surveillance in popular culture, critiquing texts in terms of their gender, cultural or political implications. With regard to popular music, Marx has noted that lyrics about surveillance represent the various manifestations of monitoring. Religious songs may invoke protective, omnipresent

²³ On this topic, Whitaker also notes that the lyrics “he’s making a list, he’s checking it twice” in the popular Christmas song *Santa Claus is coming to town*, contain one of the defining lessons about capitalism: “punishment means the exclusion from the positive [materialistic] benefits of society” (Whitaker, 1999: 139).

forms of watching, romantic songs may involve yearning for a protector or lover such as in *Someone to Watch over Me*. At times, songs about surveillance betray a desire to possess and control that can be linked with the “male gaze” toward an unsuspecting female.²⁴ In other examples, surveillance is invoked critically with reference to McCarthyite suspicion and threats to liberty, (*Subterranean Homesick Blues* by Bob Dylan) (Marx, 1996: 197 - 201).

Marx also discusses the relationship between surveillance and humour, arguing that cartoons, comics and jokes routinize new devices as part of familiar and common activities. Marx uses the example of a cartoon in which a bank manager tells his client: “That’s right, sir, no collateral is necessary. However we will have to chain this little electronic device around your neck”. The combination of the familiar bank loan and the unfamiliar technology helps normalise high-tech surveillance devices (Marx, 1996: 205). Like comic representations of surveillance, advertisements and illustrations make use of known images to inform the viewer about new kinds of surveillance (Marx, 1996: 212). By illustrations, Marx refers to the pictures that accompany newspaper and magazine articles about surveillance, or those which appear in social movement pamphlets and other political communications. These illustrations are often critical of, or at least imply ambivalence about surveillance technologies. In order to make their point, they may merge human and non-human entities or employ visual metaphors and exaggerate for effect (Marx, 1996: 210). One example portrays workplace surveillance by depicting an eye coming out of a computer, fixed on the worker. The use of the eye (a common surveillance symbol) and the uncomfortable merging of human with machine vividly portray the invasiveness of workplace monitoring (Marx, 1996: 212). Illustrations are one of the rare instances in which popular culture warns citizens about surveillance; elsewhere, there are few images of individuals as direct victims (Marx, 1996: 213).

²⁴ In this example, Marx (1996: 200) shows how current technology fulfils the promise of omnipotent, omnipresent surveillance signalled in *Every Breath You Take* by Sting.

Every breath you take [breath analyzer]	Every night you stay [light amplifier]
Every move you make [motion detector]	Every vow you break [voice stress analyser]
Every bond you break [polygraph]	Every smile you fake [brain wave analysis]
Every step you take [electronic monitoring]	Every claim you stake [computer matching]
Every single day [continuous monitoring]	I’ll be watching you [video]
Every word you say [bugs, wiretaps, mikes]	

Advertisements treat surveillance devices in a taken-for-granted way, emphasising the positive and denying the negative aspects of monitoring. They contain no moral ambiguity about conducting surveillance while denying “the nasty and normative violations” it makes possible (Marx, 1996: 215). Aesthetic art may be more critical and can provide alternative readings of surveillance. Artists may construct reflexive surveillance installations in which the viewer becomes part of the artwork as the gallery itself is under surveillance (Julia Scher, *Surveillance*) (Marx, 1996: 223). Visual art may “recontextualise” surveillance technologies by using them to educate or entertain the viewer, or to critically highlight the voyeur and the exhibitionist as archetypes of contemporary society (Marx, 1996: 224).

With regard to reception analysis, Marx (1996) advocates research which will examine what makes certain images more memorable or emotive than others (Marx, 1996: 213).²⁵ In terms of conflict, power and value systems, representations of surveillance can create a variety of meanings and subsequent social impacts. Popular culture helps audiences to understand surveillance cognitively and emotionally. Depending on context, intention and interpretation, images can be alternative or depoliticising. They may also help the viewer grasp the “scale, totality, comprehensiveness, and simultaneity” of surveillance technologies. For these reasons the meanings of images are contested by dominant and oppositional groups (Marx, 1996: 227-228). In general, cultural representations suggest that western societies are undecided about surveillance. The desire for safety and protection is undercut by wariness over “the naked facts and brute force of power”, meaning citizens understand ambivalently that surveillance technology can both protect and violate (Marx, 1996: 230).²⁶ Moreover, as concerns about security, productivity and health have increased in recent years, new examinations of societal “ambivalence” might reveal that citizens are more willing to accept the caring aspects of surveillance and ignore the controlling ones (Marx, 1996: 230).

²⁵ In this regard Marx posits that images which combine “the sacred and the profane” will have a lasting affect on audiences, particularly when used in conjunction with historical context. For example, a German political cartoon depicting a wrist with a bar code is emotive because it resonates with viewer awareness of concentration camp victims with numbers on their wrists (Marx, 1996: 215).

²⁶ Translated textually, this “ambivalence” could be the representation of surveillance as an omnipotent force, which either protects (all-knowing God) or destroys (the evil eye).

Marx's work can be seen as an exploratory survey of how surveillance is represented in popular culture. As such, it provides opportunities for further study. One author who has conducted in-depth textual analysis from a cultural studies and discourse analysis perspective is John Turner (1996; 1998). In his PhD thesis, Turner outlines the "genealogy" of panoptic regimes and argues that the so-called "information society" has accelerated and intensified surveillance practices (Turner, 1996: 8). He investigates the relationships between surveillance and a series of contested 'key word' concepts; "space", "time", "vision" and "body". In a similar vein, later chapters of this thesis will develop a political economy critique of surveillance in four areas: the workplace, consumer culture, urban spaces and intelligence gathering. With regard to popular cinema, Turner makes two main points about portrayals of surveillance practices and technologies. Firstly, films address monitoring as "an opportunity to celebrate the spectacle elements invested in surveillance" (Turner, 1998: 96). In this way, they concentrate on the "distance, speed, ubiquity, and simultaneity" of the technology, qualities which are also found in the spectacle. Secondly, films "fetishize" surveillance technology by employing it as a "suspense mechanism" to promote anticipation and subsequently, violence (Turner, 1998: 94).

This thesis parallels Turner's study by developing a theoretical understanding of surveillance in order to critique representations of monitoring in popular cinema. There are however, two points of difference. Firstly, in Turner's (1998) article, he has drawn upon Guy de Bords' (1995) description of the "society of the spectacle". Although I will be touching on this construct throughout my case studies, my approach is best conceived of as "left" Foucauldian.²⁷ I will also focus on "ideological critique" and its connection with political economy, rather than the discourse analysis approach developed by Turner. He argues that films about surveillance collapse traditional distinctions between private and public, interior and

²⁷ This is more an issue of focus than a difference in critical conception. Although Foucault dismissed the theory of the spectacle when he wrote "our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance; under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth..." the two theses are not mutually exclusive (Foucault, 1977: 217). Following Jonathan Crary (1997), Turner (1998: 95) has noted that surveillance and the spectacle merge into one in popular cinema. Crary points out that television is one area in which surveillance and spectacle are "collapsed onto one another in a more effective disciplinary apparatus" (Crary, 1997: 423). Crary uses the example of high-tech television sets which contain advanced image recognition technology as a literal confirmation that the two theses are overlapping. The TV sets are capable of monitoring the behaviour and attentiveness of the viewer, as the viewer watches the spectacle of television (Crary, 1997: 423).

exterior. Although this is an important point, I have chosen to focus on how relations of power are played out, or obscured in the narrative.

Writers from film studies departments have sought to deconstruct the “gaze” (of cinema and of surveillance) but have mostly been concerned with a multi-layered understanding of the nature of representation itself. For the most part, film critique discusses power-through-surveillance conceptually, focusing on themes of memory, technology, space, virtuality and observation (often in an interpersonal sense) rather than in relation to material structures of domination (see for example: Berrettini, 2002; Blackmore, 2004; Cooper, 1995; McLauren & Leonardo, 1998). One informative example can be seen in Pamela Cooper’s comparative analysis of sexual surveillance and medical authority in the novel and cinematic versions of *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Cooper argues that through the very production of the film, the cinematic gaze reformulates the surveillance gaze and in so doing “forced the audience to become complicit with what the novel depicts as the oppressive politics of observation” (Cooper, 1995: 49). A further example is Mark Berrettini’s (2002) investigation of virtual reality and surveillance in the film *Strange Days*. Berrettini notes that this science fiction film presents the use of virtual technology in police surveillance as subversive of its original purpose - recreation. In this way, the film implies that surveillance and voyeurism operate independently from the technology itself (Berrettini, 2002: 161). A final example worthy of note is Tim Blackmore’s indictment of the way popular film attempts to dispel anxiety about “the entangling qualities of technology’s web” (Blackmore, 2004: 14). Films such as *The Matrix* or *Dark City* revolve around the efforts of individuals to overcome advanced “magical” technologies, which govern social worlds and imprison humans in futuristic societies. In so doing, however, these films also “fetishize” technology as an omnipotent force (Blackmore, 2004: 16).

In terms of reception, depoliticised representations of surveillance in popular culture help shape public perceptions of surveillance and influence the ease with which new monitoring technologies are installed. In his essay *Power of the Eye*, Foucault placed particular importance on the role public opinion plays in allowing surveillance of the “public body”. Since public opinion itself is defined and maintained through visibility, observation and surveillance, it encourages these tendencies to become

widespread in general (as cited in Berko, 1992: 62). As Gary Marx has noted, popular culture teaches society how to think about surveillance, presenting new technologies as a routine and natural part of contemporary life (Marx, 1996). In terms of audience reception, Oscar Gandy (1993) has analysed a Harris/Equifax marketing survey conducted for insurance companies which provides information on the relationship between media coverage and perception of the panoptic sort. The research concluded that the relationship between exposure to information about the use of consumer information, and individual concern about personal privacy was “highly significant, linear and direct” (Gandy, 1993: 163). In particular, the more people hear about the collection and use of computerized information, the less likely they are to trust organisations which deal in this information. Correspondingly, the reverse is also true. The less an individual has heard or read about the panoptic sort, the more likely they are to trust the organisations that use it (Gandy, 1993: 164). In this, Gandy’s analysis highlights the capacity for representations of any nature (critical or depoliticising) to shape public perception of surveillance. William Staples argues that mainstream media have a tendency to dwell on uncertainty, unpredictability and tragedy in a way that encourages the viewer to see themselves as the next potential victim. In so doing, the mass media convinces citizens that “keeping an eye on everyone” is the best way to combat danger in the public sphere (Staples, 2000: 156). These findings point to a significant relationship between popular culture and surveillance. By living in a media-saturated world, individuals increasingly know and understand the world in terms of how they “saw it in the movies” (Staples, 2000: 34). As Reg Whitaker notes, in the area of military intelligence, the line between reality and fantasy has always been blurred. For example, in the years prior to WWI, the UK experienced a “German spy panic” which, although it reflected a real (exaggerated) threat, was also connected to the proliferation of spy novels. Interestingly, the panic itself eventually led to the creation of MI5 and had a significant impact upon political policy about national security (Whitaker, 1999: 20).

David Lyon notes that contemporary popular culture actually celebrates privacy intrusion. Reality TV is the quintessential example of surveillance-based entertainment, but examples proliferate within social environments. Restaurants in London and New York that link every table by CCTV reveal how surveillance

technologies themselves are becoming popularised (Graham introduction in: Lyon, 2004: 300).²⁸ The use of personal web cameras to broadcast an individual's life on the Internet has received attention from theorists questioning the nature of "authenticity" in a media-saturated world (Staples, 2000: 144). Brook Knight has noted that web cameras create a new kind of social space which transcends traditional ways of viewing private and public life. At the same time, they "make manifest" some of the issues of surveillance (in relation to domesticity, intimacy, pornography, self-image and community) in a way that facilitates discussion of societal values about "privacy" (Knight, 2000: 21). The web camera example highlights how privacy-related technologies are socially constructed such that their effects are not pre-ordained (Diffie & Landau, 1998: 302). Popular reception of surveillance technologies, as well as popular representations of surveillance technologies determine to a large extent their social roles and functions.²⁹

Lili Berko has argued that popular culture's understanding of, and participation in surveillance is distinctively post-modern. The proliferation of personal video cameras means that individuals have the opportunity to become "the owners and operators of their own personal and professional seeing machines" (Berko, 1992: 63). This proliferation constructs post-modern "videoscapes" by radically restructuring power, social consciousness and social space itself (Berko, 1992: 61).³⁰ The saturation of portable video cameras for example, challenges the invisible eye of the panoptic gaze (Berko, 1992: 63). As events become recorded and witnesses more abundant, surveillance takes on a "multiplicity" of effects. Individuals become active participants in their own surveillance, as subject, performer and surveiller. At the same time, the very products and services that individuals are seduced into consuming become methods for surveillance. Mobile phones can be easily listened in on, and Internet behaviour monitored (Staples, 1997: 57). In contemporary "voyeur culture", citizens are watched and monitored, but also called to join surveillance in

²⁸ I will discuss the example of reality TV in more detail in Chapter Four, when I discuss reality TV and ideology.

²⁹ On the subject of enjoyment, John McGrath has argued that popular celebration of monitoring has created a "surveillance space" which exists between the private and public realms, but overlaps with both. In McGrath's understanding, "surveillance space" is an area in which individuals can both enjoy and learn from the experience of being watched.

³⁰ In her understanding of "videoscapes", Berko has drawn on Baudrillard's argument that the "mirror phase" has given way to the "video phase", an aspect which Baudrillard too, deemed to be post-modern.

programmes such as *America's Most Wanted*. Reality shows may ask viewers to ring in with information about particular criminals or crimes, often leading to arrests (1997: Staples, 58). Together these trends create a bi-directional relationship between surveillance and social space, creating a third (post-modern) space in which surveillance practices are no longer tied to geographic location (Berko, 1992: 62).

The insights of these commentaries point to a mutually productive relationship between surveillance and popular culture. I have already touched on several facets of this connection. Firstly, popular texts may have critical or depoliticising aspects to their representations of surveillance, depending on format or context. In general however, both critical and ideological depictions of surveillance will influence societal understandings of contemporary monitoring. Citizens hold incomplete images of surveillance capabilities, which are often independent of the technological devices themselves and are derived in part, from popular culture (Marx, 1996). In turn, this popular “knowledge” forms a cultural logic surrounding surveillance which impacts on the development and implementation of new devices (Gandy, 1993; Marx, 1996). Popular culture may encourage the saturation of surveillance in the fabric of daily life by readily celebrating privacy invasions, or offering individuals the opportunity to purchase monitoring tools as banal consumer goods (Lyon, 2004; Staples, 1997). At the same time, the participation of citizens in monitoring through their consumption of “seeing machines” creates new overlapping surveilled-based spaces (Berko, 1992).

There are two further ways in which the relationship between surveillance and popular culture can be conceived of as mutually constitutive. Firstly, popular culture conducts surveillance itself, thereby contributing to a social mosaic of surveillance. Journalists and media surveil individuals, groups and the state while fulfilling their fourth estate role. The world's media also gather information through the process of reporting that can be useful to national security agencies (Davies, 2002: 72). Conversely, as Thomas Mathieson has argued, the mass media can be thought of as a “synopticon” in which the many (citizens) watch the elite few (as cited in Lyon, 2001: 92). Secondly, with the possible exception of music and print journalism, popular culture is largely a visual culture, which extends a penchant for voyeurism and exhibitionism, as in the case in the reality TV format (Berko, 1992; Staples,

2000: 59). Deleuze (1989) has described cinema as a “cyborganizational experience”, in which the viewer desires to become *part of* the cinematic environment through body and brain (as cited in Hassard & Holliday, 1998: 220). In terms of surveillance, when audiences are entertained by viewing through the gaze of cinematically and televisually constructed surveillance technologies, they become surveillers themselves. Audiences perform the attributes of the gaze in a way that is familiar and apolitical. For John Turner, the medium of cinema (and the act of watching films) is itself “hyper surveillant”. The mechanics of film invite spectators to enjoy “the gaze”, but at the same time renders them subservient to its direction. The act of spectatorship collapses traditional private-public and interior-exterior distinctions as it enables the viewer to observe the lives and spaces of diegetic subjects in a way that would be impossible otherwise (1998: 94).

My own study draws upon these insights but also contributes new material. As this brief literature review indicates, theoretical discussion about surveillance is eclectic and reflects various strands of intellectual inquiry. With the exception of Gary Marx, surveillance theorists and critical sociologists have mostly referred briefly to popular culture in relation to concerns about surveillance saturation, without undertaking detailed textual investigations (Brin, 1998; Lyon, 1994, 2001; Staples, 2000; Whitaker, 1999). Other perspectives such as post-modernism (Berko, 1992), cultural studies, film studies and feminism (Mulvey, 1989) have all made direct or indirect contributions to understanding the relation between surveillance and popular culture. In this context, my own research seeks to deconstruct particular filmic representations of surveillance. My aim is to analyse the specific nature of the symbolic forms pertaining to surveillance which are in circulation throughout popular culture (and therefore contribute to contemporary understandings).

1.5 Research Overview

So far I have pulled together a number of critical approaches related to the study of surveillance-based power. In the following two chapters I will draw from Foucault, Adorno, Horkheimer, Habermas and Baudrillard, each of whom conceive of power, knowledge and human subjectivity in various ways. In this section, I will attempt to deal with some of these conflicts, as well as outlining the over-arching research focus of “critical theory”.

As a research programme, critical social theory originated in the Frankfurt School’s particular interpretation of Marx.³¹ To this end, Weber’s analysis of bureaucratic rationalization and Lukacs’ critique of commodification and reification provide important insights into state and capitalist power relations. More recently, Habermas’ conception of the “public sphere” has provided an (ideal) normative operating principle for democracy, while Giddens’ early writings contribute to understanding the mutually constitutive interactions between individuals and social systems (Morrow & Brown, 1994). Critical theory also benefits from some of the insights of structuralist and post-structuralist linguists who question the ways in which “reality” is accessed through language. In general, critical theory ascribes to Enlightenment-based notions of rational subjectivity,³² but at the same time reconstructs the dialectic of the Enlightenment by self-reflexively engaging with the nature of knowledge and theory itself (Morrow & Brown, 1994: xvi-xvii).

This type of research uses historical context to foreground a “critical imagination” that avoids the assumption that societal instructions are “cast in stone”. It adheres to the view that society can be measured against a normative structure in terms of values

³¹ Positioning Marx’s insights for contemporary theory is an area of considerable debate. Critical theory has obvious similarities with classical Marxism (for example in its concern over the contradictory and conflictual features of modernity, alienation, domination and prevailing structures of power). It maintains, however, that Marxism needs to be reconstructed following “the intellectual crisis of historical materialism” (the totalitarian nature of Soviet communism and the fact that “class war” never eventuated) (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 22). Critical theory acknowledges and benefits from some of the critiques of these realities. This allows it to construct a self-reflexive programme of critique drawn from knowledge gained from sociological insight.

³² The term “rational subjectivity” refers here to the assumption that, in particular critical contexts (involving self-reflexivity, deconstructing language and discourse), “common sense” can be reconstructed through “philosophical reflection” (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 28).

and “what ought to be” (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 11). Critical theoretical approaches utilise “interpretive structuralism” which consists of empirical research informed by theoretical insights. “Interpretive” or “hermeneutic” structuralism assumes that language and meaning (and subsequently discourse) both reveal and conceal the experiences of subjects as they access “reality”. In this way, structures of power and domination may appear to have an “objective facility” independent of immediate actors. However these structures are continually transformed to perpetuate themselves and constrain human action. Together with meaning and language, structures of power are “constantly reproduced across space and time” (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 24). With these theoretical presuppositions in mind, the project of critical theory is to unveil ideological mystifications of relations of power and to develop critical conceptions of society informed by normative democratic standards.

Critical theory is the appropriate label for my own research for three reasons. Firstly, just as critical theory can be thought of as “a research programme with many rooms” my approach is interdisciplinary and combines critical political economy with ideology critique and textual analysis (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 269). Secondly, I am concerned with the way surveillance impacts on the *lived experience* of subjects operating in the *material world*. In this context I conceive of surveillance historically, and in relation to capitalist power structures. Thirdly, the proposed method of ideology critique springs from the analysis of the texts themselves. Representations of surveillance will be set against particular normative standards (outlined in the political economy critique of surveillance systems).

There are several difficulties in defining my approach as “critical theory”. The first is in positioning Foucault. According to Raymond Morrow and David Brown, Foucault is not a critical theorist *per se*, but his work complements critical theory (1994: 17).³³ Foucault is most useful in his analysis of the power-knowledge project, specifically the use of expert knowledge for disciplinary control (panopticism) (Morrow &

³³ Foucault’s work defies categorisation. On the one hand his “ambivalence for totalising theories” resonates with post-modern critique. At the same time, both his approach to structuralism and his analysis of power relations are distinctive, and can be more closely aligned with sociological theory. Morrow and Brown have posited that his work can be conceived of as “critical anti-sociology” in that it is self-reflexive, a-historical and critiques empiricist and realist accounts of representation (1994: 135).

Brown, 1994: 135). Foucault's work cannot be applied in a critical theory context without engaging with his understanding of power. Drawing on Nietzsche, Foucault argues that the "will to power" defines all human relations, is diffuse in society and "inscribed in the very bodies of the dominated" (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 136). This obviously conflicts with a critical political economy perspective which regards power as located in fluid but material structures and sees power as a function of the vested interests of ruling groups.

As I will show in following chapters, although power through surveillance does operate at a micro level (among social actors), it is also located in asymmetrical capitalist structures operating on a macro level. Bearing in mind that surveillance can and does "care" for citizens in daily life, and that co-operative communicative action is manifest within society, surveillance is nonetheless complicit with relations of power on a macro level. In the gap between co-operative communicative action and relations of power sits ideology. Power relations "distort" knowledge, and particular ways of understanding the world help perpetuate inequalities. Consumers, audiences and citizens do make real choices and are capable of emancipative politics, but these choices are framed by particular structures and limitations.³⁴ Perhaps the thorniest aspect of Foucault's work is the fact that his critical intentions are not accompanied by any explicit normative standpoint (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 192).

The second problem with defining my approach as critical theory is posed by post-modernism. Enlightenment-based projects such as critical theory and political economy have generally centred on an analysis of the interplay between capital, labour and the state. While these aspects are still relevant, they must be viewed in the context of their reconfiguration thorough globalization and technological advances (Meehan et al., 1993: 108). Theoretical insights concerning the rise of "hyperrealism" (Baudrillard, 1988) the qualitatively new aspects of a "globalized" world, the coming

³⁴ It should be noted that, in the past, the coupling of political economy and ideology has made for an over-simplified conception of power. In turn, this has brought over-simplified conceptions of emancipation as the elimination of centres of power (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 136). Perhaps capitalistic power is best conceived as operating in both the structural and the diffuse sense. Power is both located in particular centres, inscribed in language and present in the bodies of the dominated. In this way, power itself is a site of conflict, as is popular culture.

of a “post-industrial society” (Bell, 1973) and the impact of NICT’s (Castells, 1996), have all posited the decline of modern social formations.³⁵ Post-modern theorists argue that approaches which critique capitalist relations of power are all but irrelevant. There are two responses to this. One can concede that recent changes may be termed “post-modern” (in that they are qualitatively new), but the argument that post-modernity has become a generalised condition is overdrawn. Post-modernist arguments tend to over-emphasise the severity of any breaks with the past and do not adequately reflect on the aspects of modern production and organisation which continue to be significant (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 282). In their struggle to supersede existing metanarratives, post-modern theorists often neglect the lived-experience of citizens in developed and developing nations. Exploitation along the lines of class, gender and race continues and can still be understood through the eyes of critical political economists, feminists and cultural theorists. Moreover, as Nick Dyer-Witherford has argued in his reworking of Marxist critique to fit with the age of “high-technology capitalism”, capital is still the “privileged” system of domination, subsuming other systems of exploitation (patriarchy, racism) within its overarching logic” (Dyer-Witthford, 1999: 10).³⁶

The second answer to this problem is that post-modernists have misplaced their attack. As several commentators note, post-modernism itself is “surprisingly economistic”, in that writers such as Baudrillard and Lyotard see the transformation from the modern as the result or radical economic and technological development (Meehan et al., 1993: 109). The problem is not so much that capitalism has been superseded, but that it has mutated into different, globalized, information-based logics. With this understanding in mind, post-modern arguments can be selectively

³⁵ A proper explication of the strands of post-modernism relevant to surveillance is too large a task to be undertaken here. Briefly however, my focus is similar to that of Fredric Jameson’s (1991) who positions post-modernism as part of the cultural logic of “late-capitalism”, and Anthony Giddens (1990) who argues that global structural changes (particularly in western capitalist societies) during the later part of the twentieth century have aspects which are qualitatively new, and not connected with “modernity” as it is traditionally understood. These factors do not however necessitate a break with modernist forms of knowledge production (such as political economy). In Chapters Two and Three I will argue that, as the capitalist system remodels itself through the production and circulation of information (rather than traditional industrialism), exploitation has in fact increased in some areas. These changes are, in turn, partially constructed through surveillance techniques as well as working to facilitate surveillance itself.

³⁶ This paragraph should also be read as the response to criticism that political economy is economically reductionist.

incorporated into critical theory while resisting the assertion that modernity is defunct (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 29).³⁷

In essence, these arguments hinge on various understandings of power and domination. In this thesis, power is understood in the following way. All human subjects have some form of power (and by that token control), but in liberal capitalist democracies, corporate or bureaucratic structures of power tend to override the power of individuals (Gandy, 1993: 18). Power is also founded on the state as it holds the institutionalized monopoly on violence. In capitalist structures, power is perpetuated through systematic and asymmetrical access to resources, and this entails the capacity to create hegemonic discourses through ideology (Castells, 1989: 8). Power will be analysed from a sociological perspective that is interested in structural, routine and large-scale processes of control. Domination is a more problematic notion. By this term, I refer to the interaction between social relations and power relations in which “alienation” occurs, as does straightforward coercion. However, within dominating processes there remains the capacity for individual and group enlightenment through reason (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 10).

Among the arguments outlined, I have yet to deal with the awkward problem for the researcher of “truth”. In accepting structuralist and post-structuralist insights that “reality” is socially created, that “truths” are discursively produced, and that power is partially enacted through language, the “truth” that a researcher-subject attempts to produce through critical enquiry becomes self-defeating (Fairclough, 1989: 21; Foucault, 1977). One answer, supplied by critical political economy, starts from the premise that research is both a form of labour and social intervention. Research is enmeshed in the social totality which it seeks to critique, meaning that it cannot avoid the value judgements that saturate discourse itself.³⁸ The goal then, is the self-reflexive process of “acting on the object of inquiry” instead of simply responding to

³⁷ By challenging critical theory, post-modern theorists have also strengthened it. Morrow and Brown (1994) have undertaken to reconstruct the social-scientific perspective of the Enlightenment in the face of questions posed by post-modernism. This has allowed them to develop a more thorough normative grounding for critique.

³⁸ For example, how can research begin to critique the nature of “male”- “female” or “man”- “woman” in which the latter appears a mutation of the former in the very words employed to describe them.

the social totality from the “outside” (Meehan et al., 1993: 109).³⁹ To answer the challenge of discursively produced truths, critical enquiry should be seen as the pursuit of *a* truth, (under particular conditions) not *the* truth as a fully constituted object (Polan, 1993: 40). This “truth” is best established in reference to the social context surrounding the production of truths. Analysis is best undertaken in reference to that context, as well as to a set of normative values (Hassard & Holliday, 1998: 2). In principle, research should be able to produce “non-ideological discourses”. The problem in a self-reflexive approach to texts is “*how* to distinguish between what is ideological and what is not, and the question of *who* is sufficiently liberated from the discursive construction of the world to make this distinction” (Fairclough, 1989: 21). In terms of my own modest attempt, this translates to: beginning from a normative standpoint (democracy)⁴⁰; undertaking a political economy critique of the relations between surveillance and power in contemporary society; and juxtaposing popular representations of surveillance against the substantive insights of political economy critique. In this way, I follow Habermas in that “my question is my method” (as cited in Marx, 1996: 196).

To reiterate, the research which follows will seek to answer the following questions:

- 1) How is surveillance related to power in contemporary capitalistic society?
- 2) How is this process ideologically concealed through its representation in popular cinema?

In terms of the first question, political economy theorists Meehan, Mosco and Wasko state:

“With these traditional and strong commitments to history, social totality, moral philosophy, and praxis, political economy is well prepared to rise to the challenges posed by economic crisis, national transformations and reorganisations of the global order. Political economists of communication are well positioned to research the deepening divisions between communication haves and have-nots, *the growth of the panopticon and the role played by entertainment in the creation of hegemony*” [emphasis added] (1993: 109).

³⁹ Self-reflexive in the sense of understanding the limitations of research in producing “truth”, and acknowledging the limitations of focusing on capitalism. One of the longest-standing criticisms levelled against political economy is that it is economically determinist. I have already dealt with this to a degree in detailing how capital mediates other forms of exploitation, but it should also be noted that my approach aims for an “historically contingent interpretative” analysis of structural relations of power which recognises that societies do have the capacity for transformation, particularly through open communication (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 281).

⁴⁰ By “democracy” I refer to a left conception in which all centres of power (private and public) are open to democratic scrutiny. These insights extend beyond the “liberal” critique of state institutions. For this reason, I refer to democracy as the examination of, and debate over, economic structures, relations of production and the political systems that protect economic structures (Meehan et al., 1993: 105).

In terms of the representations of surveillance in popular cinema, I will attempt to unveil the structural relations of power which benefit from, and are associated with surveillance.

In order to build a foundation for my enquiry, the thesis begins with a critical political economy analysis of surveillance. For the sake of clarity, the analysis is organised into two chapters, “surveillance and capitalism” and “surveillance and the state”. The initial chapter has two sections; the workplace and consumer surveillance. The second addresses urban spaces and military intelligence. These distinctions are helpful for organisational purposes but are also to some extent arbitrary. Surveillance operations are networked, overlapping and leak from one area to another. Information may be traded between the public and private sector, or gathered for one reason and deployed for another. For example, Closed Circuit Television cameras installed in supermarkets may identify criminals, but also gather information on shopper habits. In the political economy section, the general purpose is to identify prevailing relations of power which are systematic, asymmetrical and durable. Surveillance does operate, as David Lyon has noted, with a “Janus face” of care and control. Surveillance can protect citizens in a routine and concrete way, by helping to apprehend criminals or by facilitating welfare provision. But relations of power are formulated above and beyond benign instances of daily surveillance deployment and involve the ability of economic forces and state prerogatives to shape surveillance practices. In turn however, Macro relations are experienced in a micro context as relations of power determine the capacity of individuals to negotiate contemporary capitalist society (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 14).⁴¹ In the section on surveillance and the state, I will touch on the events of September 11th 2001. The terror attacks have both challenged and consolidated surveillance networks in ways that are qualitatively different from preceding practices. Nevertheless, interpretations the surveillance consequences can be situated on a continuum stretching from “radically new” to “extension of

⁴¹ For this reason I have included material examples to back up my sociological analysis. These pertain to micro situations but are designed to be illustrative, not inclusive. As Golding and Murdock have argued, critical political economy “goes beyond situated action to show how particular micro-contexts are shaped by general economic dynamics and the wider structures they sustain” (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 14).

prevailing practices”. I tend towards the latter viewpoint because the former has been substantially theorised and at times over-emphasised.⁴²

Chapter Four provides a link between the political economy critique of Chapters Two and Three with their focus on production, and the case studies of Chapters Four and Five, which focus on representation. In order to achieve this, the fourth chapter is divided into three sections. The first briefly outlines the arguments I will make during the textual analysis of representations of surveillance. The second looks at reality television as a complementary area of popular culture. The final section overviews 30 Hollywood feature films which involve surveillance in their plot-lines. This section identifies the common themes within films about surveillance, and explains why such films ought to be the subject of critique. It forms the preliminary textual analysis on which the later detailed critique will be based.

Chapters Five and Six focus on cinematic representations of surveillance because, as I have already outlined, there are similarities between the cinematic and surveillance gaze (Turner, 1998). Both invite the viewer to watch, spy and gain pleasure from voyeurism. Stories and visual depictions of surveillance depoliticise the invasiveness of voyeurism. CCTV screens, cameras and satellites become part of the emotional and social landscape of contemporary culture. My critiques of cinematic representations correspond with the substantive accounts of the political economy chapters. In chapter five, I have chosen to look at *Antitrust* (Howitt, 2001) for representations of workplace surveillance, and *The Truman Show* (Weir, 1998) for representations of consumer surveillance. In chapter six my reading of *Enemy of the State* (Scott, 1998) is linked to my earlier analysis of urban space surveillance. Similarly, *The Bourne Identity* (Liman, 2002) is examined in the context of actual operating global surveillance and intelligence networks.

Each case study begins with a short introduction justifying the choice of each film. Each text has been produced and distributed by a Hollywood organisation within the period 1990-2004. Thus, all films have a relationship with a major centre of cultural

⁴²As Stephen Graham has noted, although the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon were “cataclysmic”, they only accounted for one per cent of global deaths through political violence annually in the world (Graham, 2004: 418).

power. They all have a resonance within popular culture generally, and are discussed in media reviews and Internet forums. Each film must have a diegesis which incorporates a “realistic” depiction of surveillance. Consequently the themes and values associated with contemporary surveillance will be evident in the narrative, dialogue as well the imagery.⁴³

Next, each section contains a brief synopsis of the plot. I then provide a two-part analysis of the selected text. Firstly I describe the ways in which the film in question *does* illuminate that particular area of surveillance identified as well as surveillance in general. In the second, much longer part, I undertake an ideological critique of the text at hand. In order to distinguish between the explicatory and ideological aspects of each film I will contrast the filmic representations of the relationship between surveillance and power with the relevant political economy analyses from Chapters Two and Three. In combining the explication of surveillance practices with an ideology critique I will consider both the relations of power that are left out, “dissimulated” or “glossed over” during the film and the ways in which the relations of power that *do* appear in the text are presented. In the latter context, I assess the extent to which power through surveillance is critiqued, “naturalised” or “legitimated” (Thompson, 1990: 60). This involves an account of how power is represented within the narrative structure, dialogue and imagery of each film. Visually, reference is made to technical elements such as shots and camera work where they are deemed relevant to the general analysis.⁴⁴ Before beginning this critique however, I provide a critical political economic foundation for my inquiry.

⁴³ The analysis of these texts is an ideology critique, but one that is informed by a political economy perspective of texts, rather than a cultural studies-type analysis. Political economy does benefit from some cultural studies insights (particularly in analysing the construction of discourses, cultural commodities as artefacts and audiences as cultural collectivities), but cultural studies perspectives do not adequately analyse how cultural production centres operate as industries themselves, or how their economic organisation impacts on meaning itself. Political economy examines how the consumption choices of audience members are “structured by their position in the wider economic formation” (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 13; Meehan et al., 1993: 106). This does not imply that audiences do not make choices, simply that they do so within wider structures.

⁴⁴ In response to the possible criticism that I am trying to produce a “conspiracy theory” about surveillance, it should be noted that the word “conspiracy” implies too much intent, illegality and secrecy. Perhaps the word “collusion” is closer to the mark, in that it implies that individuals and groups who hold a disproportionate share of material resources (and have similar ideals) tend to try to justify their power in order to reproduce it. Part of this involves the privileging of particular ways of understanding surveillance and its role in the social totality (Morrow & Brown, 1994: 52). This in turn reduces the ability of citizens to critically understand the relations between surveillance and power, or as C. Wright Mills put it, to hold a “sociological imagination”.

Chapter Two

Surveillance and Capitalism

The following chapter is a critical political economy discussion of the relationship between surveillance and capitalism. I show how surveillance is complicit with macro structures of contemporary capitalist power by focusing on the workplace and consumer surveillance. My general purpose is to provide a research platform on which I can later discuss corresponding representations of surveillance practices in popular cinema. Drawing on Castells' conception of the "informational mode of development" this chapter will focus on macro patterns of surveillance organisation which have been influenced by "informational capitalism".¹ Correspondingly I discuss the relevant micro experiences that workers and consumers have with surveillance on an everyday basis.

2.1 The Workplace

Considering surveillance in the context of the organisation of work is a thorny task. Surveillance both dominates the workplace from above (through workplace

¹ My emphasis in this section concerns the relationship between the capitalist restructuring since the 1980's and surveillance technologies. It should be noted however, that the relationship between surveillance and capitalism has a historical resonance. David Lyon (1994: 34) for example, has used the writings of both Marx and Weber to show how surveillance has played a role in the development of capitalism itself, through its ability to co-ordinate and direct workers.

monitoring²) as well as being one of the core foundations of the institution of work from below (socialisation of the workforce). On a global scale, macro tendencies such as the rise of transnational corporations, (TNC's) shape surveillance mechanisms around the world. Equally, surveillance is at the centre of capitalist restructuring processes themselves, playing a crucial role in the reconstitution of labour contracts within regions of the developing world. After an outline of these developments, this section moves to a discussion of some of the changes to traditional "Fordist"³ organisation of production in an attempt to explain the recent macro processes that have shaped the nature and role of surveillance technologies. Next I turn to workplace discipline to show how the influential ideas of Frederick Winslow Taylor have been redeployed to fit with changes in production patterns and employment relationships (Parenti, 2003: 131). In the "after Fordist" workplace, workers are watched and recorded more intensely while their productivity is calculated and quantified in a heightened number of ways (Dicken, 2003: 107). In this context, I will consider how Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) exacerbate the intensity and pervasiveness of workplace surveillance.

2.1.1 (After) Fordism and Worker Surveillance

In his book *The Informational City* (1989) Manuel Castells outlines the consequences of the restructuring of capitalism under the "informational mode of development" (1989: 7). Two aspects of this restructuring impact directly on the institution of work; the global reach of transnational corporations and technical innovations in

² Surveillance is understood here to be the various methods by which employers monitor the behaviour and output of their staff, with electronic surveillance of particular importance. This is defined as "the computerised collection, storage, analysis, and reporting about employees' productive activities" (OTA in Levy, 1994: 1). Certainly, any social actor could potentially use surveillance technology to control another; for example, a subordinate might video-tape a superior behaving illegally and turn the tape over to the police. However, it is the systematic and routine use of surveillance technology as a tool of management that deserves attention, as I will show that it is both the most common and the most controlling area of workplace monitoring.

³ A number of writers have critiqued the use of the term "Fordism". Castells, for one, calls it "misleading" (1989: 17). For reasons of clarity, it will be used here to indicate the organisation of production associated with the industrial era, particularly post-World War II. Although it designates the ideas of Henry Ford, it is used here in the broader sense of the industrial form of mass production and mass consumption associated with the "regime of accumulation" and its "mode of social and political regulation" (Castells, 1989: 17; Harvey, 1989: 121).

communications (and surveillance) technologies. Together, these developments enable the “increased flexibility of organisations in production, consumption and management” (Castells, 1989: 16). Within the sphere of production, the rise of the large corporation to organisational predominance brought with it “an economy based on large-scale production and centralised management”, subsequently creating the need for efficient information flows (Castells, 1989: 18). From the 1980’s flexibility in organisational structure and in capital-labour relationships have become pivotal in the formation of a new world economy in which corporations adapt constantly to world market trends. For example, technological innovations in microelectronics (computers) have transformed the production process by allowing for “Flexible Integrated Manufacturing”, “advanced office automation” and most importantly “the general application of flexible integrated production and management systems” (Castells, 1989: 12).⁴

The macro tendencies of the new informational capitalism required the restructuring of work in order to combine “increases in productivity with increases in exploitation”, the net result of which was a reversal of the capital/labour power relationship (Castells, 1989: 23).⁵ With reference to the United States economy, Castells documents the consequences of this reversal including: “lower wages, reduced social benefits and less protective working conditions”, “the expansion of an informal economy”, “restructuring of the labour markets to take in growing proportions of women, ethnic minorities and immigrants...” as well as a “weakening of trade unions” (Castells, 1989: 24). In basic terms, employment that was once permanent and protected was transformed into “a flexible arrangement generally adapted to the momentary convenience of management” (Castells, 1989: 31).

The growing power of transnational corporations has allowed the “decentralisation of production” to regions with lower wages and more favourable government regulation

⁴ Dyer-Witherford points to the example of the production of Ford’s “world car” which relies on telecommunications to control decentralised production flows, fast transportation and “computerised automation carried to a point where elementary units and simple routines can be performed by unskilled workers” (1999: 136).

⁵ By “reversal” Castells refers to the “negation” of the social pact between labour and capital of the 1930’s and 1940’s. This is achieved through a number of developments, the most prominent of which is the fact that technological innovation allows for higher productivity beyond human labour power, allowing capital to appropriate a higher relative share of profit from the production process (Castells, 1989: 23).

of business (Castells, 1989: 23). Globally oriented TNC's are risk adverse and rely, to a great extent, on the capacity of Information Communication Technologies (ICT's) like computers, fax, video-conferencing and surveillance devices to deliver increasingly efficient processes, greater automation and successful decentralisation (Reich, 1991 as cited in Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 142). In general, technological innovation is a defining feature of both the global competitiveness of TNC's and the restructuring of capitalism under the "informational mode of development" (Castells, 1989: 19).

Transnational, corporate capitalism is also characterized by a concentration of knowledge and decision making processes at the top of organisational hierarchies, widening the division between intellectual and manual labour. This means that the only "truly indispensable" parts of any corporate organisation are its core management executives, with most other work (and workers) replaceable by automation (Castells, 1989: 30). The developments identified by Castells over 15 years ago continue to unfold. As Peter Dicken (2003) points out, the changing nature of work in contemporary capitalism is contingent upon the economic and political power of transnational global conglomerates, who have the ability to "co-ordinate and control various processes and transactions within production networks, both within and between different countries" (Dicken, 2003: 198). Being globally organised, TNC's shape the global economy through their decisions to invest or disinvest. Workers in particular locations experience these decisions in a flow of consequences, originating remotely but penetrating deeply. Overall, TNC's have created a dualisation in production which allows them to sub-contract low-paid, unskilled labour in the developing world with skilled management and research and development staff in developed nations. The cheap mass production of the "Third World" enables low costs, while flexible automated technology facilitates efficient decision making process in the "First World". In this context, surveillance plays the crucial role of allowing global conglomerates to control their factories remotely and in real time, extracting maximum productivity through knowledge of the labour

process (Donaghu & Barff as cited in Harrison, 1994: 206).⁶

The nature of contemporary work under capitalist restructuring and in relation to information and communication technologies has drawn a lot of attention from theorists. For some writers there has been a shift in the economic organisation of many advanced capitalist economies that is qualitatively new, signalling the era of “post-Fordism” (Harvey, 1989). More evolutionist approaches see new aspects to work organisation, without a qualitative break from the past (Aglietta, 1979; Dicken, 2003; Tomaney, 1995). One common theme, however, is the notion of flexibility in production systems, work practices and consumer marketing (Harvey, 1989).⁷ In Castells’ view, new modes of development work in “historical interaction” with existing structures of production, both enhancing and transforming the systems’ organisational capacity. Thus an “informational mode of development” centred around ICT’s effectively preserves “economies of scale and the depth of organisational power [of Fordism], while overcoming the rigidity and facilitating constant adaptation to a rapidly changing context” (Castells, 1989: 17).

To this effect, Peter Dicken’s (2003: 107) use of the “neutral” term “after Fordism” and Michel Aglietta’s (1979) notion of “neo-Fordism” show how the principles of

⁶ A useful case study here is Naomi Klein’s work on the sporting apparel industry. In her book *No Logo* (2000) Klein points to the way brands have become the primary producers in the “knowledge economy”, causing companies to concentrate on the “virtual bricks and mortar” of brands; advertising, sponsorship and packaging (Klein, 2000: 199). Production, of secondary importance, is moved to tax-free zones of developing countries, enclaves sealed off from the rest of the nation by local governments in an attempt to attract wealthy investors. This puts some workers in the precarious position of belonging to yesterday’s, devalued production process in the corporation’s home country. In 1997 for example, despite the profitability of the sporting apparel industry, 45,000 clothing factory workers lost their jobs in North America and Europe (Kernaghan 1998, as cited in Klein, 2000: 199). Surveillance plays a two-pronged role in this situation. Firstly, as mentioned above, it allows for real-time remote control. Secondly, as will be shown in the next section, the brands that Klein discusses are themselves built on the specialist consumer knowledge derived from the “panoptic sort” (Gandy, 1993).

⁷ In the case of the American car industry, big manufactures like Ford are slimming down their factories in the face of surplus production and an ongoing decline in the demand for standard cars when compared to Sports Utility Vehicles (“Incredible shrinking plants,” *Economist*, 2002: 72). The necessary push is for car manufactures to quit the old system (which consisted of making cars, pushing them to a captive dealer market and finally discounting them to sell) and to move to a system where manufacture is responsive to consumer demand in much the same way as luxury cars like Porsche are made. In the opinion of industry seer J Ferron of PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the car companies of tomorrow will be simply “vehicle brand owners”, designing and marketing cars, while suppliers will do the actual assembly. For their part, suppliers are becoming increasingly reliant upon robots, the software of which is able to flexibly switch between models over night and therefore to cater to niche markets (“Incredible shrinking plants,” 2002: 74).

work have been partially accelerated and partially superseded, rather than fundamentally altered. Aglietta (1979) has argued that the reorganisation of work was driven by an attempt to overcome the “rigidities” of the Fordist system, rather than the need to create a radically new system. Aglietta privileges class struggle and the saturation of information technologies as the primary drivers of change, but also notes that these have occurred as part of rising working class incomes and mass consumerism in the post-war era. As John Tomaney (1995) has noted in his negotiation of these arguments, there has been a shift in the balance of power in the workforce and in the labour market, both of which have moved in favour of employers. He argues that this is one area that has been neglected by the “new optimists” when they point to the liberation of labour under the rise of the flexible and multi-skilled worker (Tomaney, 1995: 158-159).⁸

Placing this debate to one side, the aspects of workplace organisation that *are* qualitatively new will be mentioned, and analysed in relation to workplace surveillance. In general terms, the relevant changes in workplace organisation are: a trend towards specialization in production processes, allowing tasks to be fragmented into smaller operations; the standardization and routinization of those operations, enabling semi-skilled and unskilled labour; and generalized flexibility in processes, allowing for smaller, specialised production runs, the tailoring of goods to demand and increased variety in products (Dicken, 2003: 109-110). Under Fordism, the assembly line was used to produce standardised products at great speed; the shift to “post”, “neo” or simply “after” Fordism involves a flexible production process in

⁸ Piore and Sabel (1982), for example, have argued that the shift from mass consumption (a defining characteristic of Fordism) to niche markets and specialised consumption has brought about a change such that work becomes more skilled, more humane, more flexible and more efficient (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 56; Tomaney, 1995: 159). This approach is technologically determinist in that it draws the process of change out of the wider social context and makes technologies like microelectronics appear almost solely responsible for the changing nature of work. It is also easily critiqued from a political economy perspective for ignoring the continuation of worker exploitation that was prevalent in Fordist organisation. Tomaney reminds us that “trajectories of workplace change... cannot be understood simply as a product of new technological and organisational developments, but are conditioned by deeply embedded traditions of industrial practice, which are themselves the product of specific histories and geographies” (Tomaney, 1995: 158).

which workers perform a number of different tasks but are semi-skilled or unskilled (Dicken, 2003: 110).⁹

Under flexible production, workers are watched more intensely and worker activity is calculated and quantified in new ways. In order to slim down production costs, employers favour job rotation; task flexibility and “just-in-time” strategies. This is coupled with an “obsessive preoccupation” with quality control through “Total Quality Management”¹⁰ which is directly reliant on workplace surveillance and Taylorist principles of scientific management (Dicken, 2003: 111). These practices are then laced with heavy doses of industrial psychology in order to produce greater worker loyalty and sacrifice to what is presented as a “higher goal”.¹¹ The results for workers are pressure for constant improvement and less job security. The multi-skilled, team-based workforce is subject to tight control and monitoring by management, often under the guise of the seemingly benign team leader, or apparent “fairness” in procedure.¹² But as Dicken has shown, as work becomes “flexible” and increasingly automated, long-term contracts apply only to ‘core’ workers in larger companies as the remaining workforce becomes “peripherised”, lacking in skills and job security (Dicken, 2003: 115). The resulting “hourglass economy” reveals a polarisation between high-tech employment where workers have “a better work-life

⁹ Some authors have argued that contemporary capitalist methods of worker organisation have brought a re-skilling of work, such as in craft production or “reengineered shop floors” (Parenti, 2003: 137; Tomaney, 1995: 159). For the most part, however, authors critical of the subject have shown that the overall trend is of deskilling (Dicken, 2003: 110; Dyer-Witheford, 1999; Harrison, 1994).

¹⁰ “Total Quality Management” (TQM) revolves around the concept of ensuring quality throughout the production process, rather than checking for problems at the end. Dicken notes TQM is characterised by “‘zero tolerance’ of faults” and the development of particular (pressurised) attitudes to workers (Dicken, 2003: 111).

¹¹ At Fisher and Paykel, one of New Zealand’s largest companies, workers are urged to “share the dream”. But as Peter Lusk dryly points out, when the workers themselves can see the extreme productivity of the “smart drive” assembly-line, they may prefer to “share the money” (Lusk, 1996: 20).

¹² For their part, employers themselves have found that when they unilaterally introduce electronic monitoring with no participation from the work force, “there is resentment, increased levels of stress and perhaps not even any increases in levels of productivity” (Westin, 1992; OTA, 1987 as cited in Levy, 1994). The response has been to consult with workers on how they will be monitored, ostensibly moving towards promoting “fairness” in procedure. However, this kind of technique does little but obscure both the noxious effects of surveillance and the unequal power relationships within the workforce under a thin veneer of consultation. As Foucault has argued, the efficiency of surveillance derives from the fact that the workers themselves become intimately involved in a process that ensures their own subjugation. Levy has argued that asking for worker participation in this area is simply creating a working consensus around monitoring by confining the debate to what is the most effective means of implementation, rather than the fundamental question of how much (if at all) a worker should be controlled (Levy, 1994).

balance and bigger salaries” and the “unpromising world of menial jobs, temporary contracts and low job satisfaction” (“The Hourglass Economy,” 2004). In this way, capital takes on a more powerful position as “productive labour can be reduced to its essential component, thus downgrading the objective bargaining power of the large mass of functionally dispensable labour” (Castells, 1989: 31). Taken together, the macro impact of capitalist restructuring combined with the development of ICT’s means that surveillance mechanisms play an important role in extracting maximum productivity and in extending management control over workers.

2.1.2 Taylorism and Exploitation

So far I have suggested that workplace surveillance is both affected by capitalist restructuring, and is an integral part of restructuring itself. As Harvey (1989: 122) has noted, a capitalist economic system needs to “exert sufficient control over the way labour power is deployed to guarantee the addition of value in production and, hence, positive profits for as many capitalists as possible”, in order to remain self sustaining. In this context, the growing centrality of TNC’s has brought a need for ever-changing, slimmer production processes in order to sustain profit margins (Dicken, 2003). The imperative for companies to respond to the changing conditions of production is defined by Harvey (1989) as the “flexible regime of accumulation”, the operation of which partially depends on the capabilities of surveillance mechanisms. Here certain writers have pointed to “new-Taylorism” (Parenti, 2003: 131) or “computerised Taylorism” (Rule & Brantley as cited in Lyon, 1994: 131) when conceptualising the role of ICT’s in contemporary workplace discipline.

The advent of “scientific management” according to the principles set by Fredrick Winslow Taylor in the early 1900’s shows that worker surveillance is by no means a new phenomenon, having arguably existed as long as the institution of work itself (even if only in the form of basic supervision) (Parenti, 2003: 133). However, many features of the (after) Fordist workplace are technologically mediated extensions of Taylor’s ideas, which bring the superintendence of labour to a new intensity (Dicken, 2003; Harvey, 1989; Parenti, 2003: 132). Taylorist management theories aim to

achieve greater worker productivity through knowledge extracted from the labour force. The primary objective is to ascertain the maximum possible labour-power of individual workers through surveillance and to therefore make transparent the “hidden transcripts of worker resistance” (Taylor, 1911 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 136). In doing so, Taylor exposed the “secret, slow-motion withholding of labour-power at the point of production”, through methodological observation and organised record-keeping (Parenti, 2003: 136). Harry Braverman (1974) has argued that although disguised, the fundamental teachings of Taylorism were “the bedrock of all work design”, in the late twentieth century (Braverman, 1974: 87).

These teachings of Taylorism entailed the surveillance and the seizure of knowledge, the separation of mental and physical labour and the control of labour through knowledge (Parenti, 2003: 137). For Braverman, scientific management is embedded in the management techniques and machines of the modern workplace, working to organise labour to fit the needs of capital and management (Braverman, 1974: 86). In direct response to the sanguine approach of post-industrial information society theorists such as Daniel Bell (1973), Braverman shows how the rise of the “white collar” worker (an example given by Bell of a more enlightened workforce,) is simply the extension of the managerial supervision and control to new “middle layers” of the labour force (Braverman, 1974: 403). Braverman’s account has been controversial and a number of his theories on de-skilling have been successfully disproved (see Wood, 1983 as cited in Lyon, 1994: 125). But, as David Lyon notes in his consideration of Braverman and his critics, the presence of a degree of Taylorism (successfully shown Braverman) means that contemporary workers are typically, more watched than before: electronically, by managers, by workmates and also by themselves. In these terms, the true lesson of Braverman’s work is that “new styles of management are progressively bound up with the use of new technology and that employees are subjected to intensified forms of surveillance” (Lyon, 1994: 125).

Dyer-Witherford (1999) has revisited Braverman’s arguments to discuss how the attributes of scientific management are recalibrated through computers and ICT’s. For example, the ability of surveillance technologies to intimately monitor the keystrokes of office workers shows that “the power of new technologies to record, store, and reproduce activities previously dependent on embodied consciousness yields only

another extension of Taylorist authority” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 49). In this way, traditional Taylorism has been re-intensified in order to meet the demands of informationalisation, working to tighten control for management through the use of new surveillance technologies (Dyer-Witheford, 1999; Lyon, 1994). In terms of Taylorism’s relevance for the (after) Fordist workplace, Harvey (1989) has outlined the way that “flexible accumulation” as a production regime is characterised by the emergence of new areas of production, new markets, and intensified rates of innovation (commercial, technological and organisational). In the ways I have already outlined, “flexibility” translates into the de-skilling of work and of workers. The increasing use of automation and the fragmentation of tasks ensures that workers have become “interchangeable, docile and cheaper”, and subsequently powerless in the face of exploitation (Parenti, 2003: 137).¹³

For Parenti, “digital Taylorism” means that a worker’s every motion can be watched, timed and controlled by employers. This is facilitated by strategies like the “benchmarking” of “best practice”, obsessively logging hours and producing “minute by minute productivity scores”(Parenti, 2003: 131-132). Each of these practices is designed to bring greater transparency to worker activity and to push productivity to its limit in speed and quantity. An accompanying effect of this increase in exploitation is the growing capacity of employers to hire and fire or harass deviant workers (Parenti, 2003: 132). One area where Taylorist ideas have been combined with ICT’s is clerical work (Levy, 1994; Lyon, 1994). Currently, the most surveilled workers are clerical employees in insurance, telecommunications, financial services and government occupations which involve customer service through the telephone. This is the most easily exploited class as the work is of a “routinized nature, divided into discrete and measurable units; workers generally require little training and consequently there is little difference between experienced and inexperienced workers; there is generally an ample labour supply and finally, data collection is straight forward” (Levy, 1994). As a general feature of contemporary surveillance and as a marked tendency within US capitalism, Levy argues that monitoring operates

¹³ For example if an employee is dissatisfied with their job (such as with the level of surveillance) and are unskilled, they have fewer options in the job market should they choose to leave.

to leave the actual work in the hands of the worker while locating decisions about work performance with management.

In the context of capitalist restructuring and the enforcement of hi-tech Taylorism, the workplace is an area that is not only subject to monitoring but is in fact “thoroughly shaped by surveillance and the attendant politics of “knowledge”, at its core (Parenti, 2003: 133). I will now discuss in more detail how existing practices of scientific management, coupled with microprocessor and digital technologies are allowing employers to exert increasing control over labour (Parenti, 2003: 132). The capacity of such technologies to probe into workers lives, coupled with management’s obsession with doing so, signals an era of worker surveillance that is unsurpassed in its saturation, its unobtrusiveness and its ability to extract maximum productivity.

2.1.3 New Technologies of Workplace Monitoring

In the United Kingdom, recent legislative changes have made it easier for employers to surveil workers’ e-mail, telephone and Internet use during work hours, with current estimates putting half the total British workforce under surveillance (Lyon, 2003d: 202; Parker, 2000: 78). The American Management Association estimates that over two-thirds of US corporations keep their employees under regular surveillance and that the percentage is growing all the time (AMA 2001, as cited in Parenti, 2003: 132). In New Zealand, about a third of all employers use hi-tech software to monitor the Internet sites their staff visit while at work (Thorley, 2002: 3). The monitoring tools and techniques most commonly used by employers have extensive capabilities. On a rudimentary level, telephone calls can be recorded, deleted files retrieved, keystrokes and Internet use logged and read, or coffee breaks timed to the second. In 2001 there were 30 systems on the U.S. market that could be used to snoop inside emails (Perrott, 2001). Furthermore, “Cookies”¹⁴ employ the use of an Internet

¹⁴ A “cookie” is a small text-file that automatically downloads from a website to be placed on a net user’s personal computer. Information is saved by a PC’s web browser and sent back to the server whenever requested. Its main function, therefore, is to track users’ Internet habits for analysis by the cookie producer (“Internet glossary of terms,” 2001).

browser mechanism to store knowledge about a person's online habits, web sites they have visited and information about the computer being used, all of which can be done without the person's knowledge or consent. In the office, visibility is ensured by the implementation of CCTV or, more subtly, "active" or "magic" badges that keep track of an employee's movements and location. Outside the office, sales reps are subject to random bag searches and the productivity of hospitality staff can be monitored through the computerisation of menu orders on palm pilots. Other workers may be subject to surveillance by customers or clientele by way of feedback and comment forms,¹⁵ and others are followed through GPS trackers on company cars (Gifford, 2003; Levy, 1994; Parenti, 2003; Perrott, 2001).¹⁶

The greater transparency of employees allows employers greater power to hire, fire and harass their staff or workforce (Parenti, 2003: 132). It may also make instances of abuse or obstruction of whistle-blowers more likely. Some commentators have ruminated on the role of surveillance in the battle between unions and management, pointing to the substantial impact surveillance has had on the right of workers to communicate freely. Many programmes outwardly designed for other purposes, such as to prevent insider trading, have implicit features that serve to limit the ability of workers to organise and resist, particularly those in manual or clerical work. The AFL – CIO, an organisation of American unions, has estimated that every year, 50,000 people are fired *illegally* because of their involvement with unions. The relationship between electronic surveillance and the firings is impossible to map, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it is a strong one (see for examples: Parenti, 2003: 140). In February 2001, the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) set up a helpline for call centre employees to discuss working conditions. In the first six days the organisation

¹⁵ For example, China Southern Airlines informs passengers that their "supervision" of airline staff is important.

¹⁶ The willingness of employers to intensify monitoring techniques throughout the workforce can also be understood as an attempt to reduce the risk involved in entering into long-term contracts with labour. The problem however, is that monitoring, auditing and quantifying prospective employees, only ostensibly reduces this risk. Gandy points out that the quality of this information is always suspect, as it is "susceptible to errors of measurement, misinterpretation, and strategic modification by workers who are aware of the monitoring...". By relying heavily on an attempt to "quantify" employees in order to match them against existing norms, and extending the reach of the "informational net", employers actually compound the errors, rather than improve the analysis. What's more, management is liable to sow seeds of resentment among staff who feel that they are being distrusted and that the autonomy of their work is being compromised (Gandy, 1993: 61).

received 397 calls complaining about bullying, pressure to reach impossible sales targets and hostility to unions (Lyon, 2003d: 202).

Compared to previous eras of workplace monitoring, contemporary technologies have the unique capacity to surveil workers remotely and in real-time. Michael Levy, for example, describes the computer monitoring programme “Spy” that allows supervisors to monitor data entry and actual telephone conversations remotely and without employees’ knowledge (Bylinsky, 1991 as cited in Levy, 1994). Inter-computer networking brings technologies together to create profiles of employee productivity and movement inside the workplace. At the Charles Schwab brokerage firm, a “customer relationship management system” named Aspect has the ability to rank employees’ productivity in real-time as well as allowing management to “listen in on calls, search for keywords, and archive all e-mail and voice traffic for later analysis” (Parenti, 2003: 137). The data can then be combined to provide virtual profiles of employees as well as create “an invasive corporate culture of measuring, ranking and intimidation” (Parenti, 2003: 137).

Remote technology allows employers to keep a record of keystrokes and the time at which an employee logged on or off their computer. Employers can even peek at the screens of any computer on the network in real time (Parker, 2000: 79).¹⁷ The remote surveillance technologies facilitate, in turn, the ability of TNC’s to organise globally as they ensure that labour is physically separate from central management, yet controlled and quantified directly and in real-time. Dyer-Witherford points to the example of Benetton, which decentralises and controls production via computer networks, allowing them “to tie suppliers to sellers, match production with inventories, monitor dispersed workers...”. Most importantly, the transparency of the computerised system allows the company to “check quality and speed of supply through every rung of the hierarchy” (Dyer-Witthford, 1999: 136).

So far, it has been argued that surveillance technologies operate to construct a subservient employee identity in relation to the institution of work. However

¹⁷ For example, software packages such as Norton-Lambert’s “Close-Up/LAN” allow employers to watch a workers screen remotely, as well as scan data files and emails, analyse emails and even overwrite passwords (Parker, 2000: 83).

manipulation of worker identity extends outside work hours with drug screening, DNA tests and checks on Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) databases. A report by the Canadian Information and Privacy Commission (Ontario) found that the absence of safeguards had allowed employers to refuse individuals employment on the basis of their genetic information or predisposition to certain illnesses (IPC, 2001 as cited in Lyon, 2003d: 43). Drug testing has been much criticised by commentators, with some arguing that testing employees for drugs is an inefficient process. The testing is not able to determine the effects of drugs or alcohol on the workers performance, only that drugs or alcohol have been consumed at some time before the test was applied (Crown Research Institute, as cited in McBride, 1994: 13). The drug testing argument hinges on the assumed relationship between drug use and productivity. Apart from the fact that this relationship is not well established, there are questions about the ideological element to testing. Gandy writes "... some critics argue that the selective emphasis on 'illegal drugs' is primarily ideological because most testing ignores the more serious productivity losses associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs, all of which are legal at the present time" (Gandy, 1993: 61).

Similarly, employers of some companies can access employee medical files. In some cases this is simply used to curb future costs by helping workers into wellness programs and exercise facilities, but in more sinister cases it can be used to discriminate based on health, or to force high-risk employees to pay higher insurance premiums (Brin, 1998; "Insurers eye gene tests," 2000). McCahill (2002) cites an *Observer* article which reported that some "companies deliberately preyed upon older workers, with random drug tests in the hope that a positive result would release them from pension payments". Apart from reinforcing existing prejudices in terms of age, gender and race, this kind of testing is open to abuse (McCahill, 2002: xii). For example, the Washington D.C. police department has admitted that it screened female urine tests (taken as a drug test) for pregnancy on a routine basis and without their consent (Holtorf, 1998 as cited in McCahill, 2002: xii). More refined measurement techniques include the use of software to assess psychological states. The subject's I.Q., interests and honesty-level can give an employer a "peek" into employees' heads that is reminiscent of Orwell's thought police (Perrott, 2001).

One type of employee whose work conditions have received a lot of attention from surveillance critics are telephonists at call centres.¹⁸ Computer based performance monitoring (CBPM) in call centres, uses productivity statistics and voice recordings to evaluate individuals against set performance targets (Lyon, 2003d: 203). A survey by the Australian organisation, Call Centre Research, found that 30% of call centre workers in the country were suffering from stress, with difficult customers and monitoring being the leading stress factors (Rotherham, 1999: 18). Apart from the problems for mental and physical well-being that surveillance can bring, the accompanying emphasis on speed and other purely quantitative measures fails to allow for differences in individual work style and increases worker dissatisfaction (Levy, 1994).

At the Charles Schwab brokerage firm in the U.S., screens posted in the technical support centre show names of employees as well as minute-by-minute productivity statistics in real-time. One staff member describes the effect it has on the work environment: “It brings out the worst. You want to win, you want to beat your colleagues, and everyone just works constantly”(Parenti, 2003: 131). In terms of power, the Schwab system dissolves social ties and pits one worker against another, thus undermining group resistance to management. As Shoshana Zuboff (1988) has argued the visibility of the worker created by panoptic systems often induces conformity to norms aligned with management’s needs. As Zuboff points out, workers may conform because of the “involuntary display” of their daily activities to omniscient eyes (Zuboff, 1988: 324). In other cases management may use data on worker behaviour to “coach” subordinates to acceptable norms and values. For example, in her study of surveillance systems at the Cedar Bluff pulp mill, Zuboff found that the “foreknowledge of visibility” threatened workers into submission, both through potential reprimand by management and through the shame of under-performing when comparisons are made with other workers. For Zuboff, “mutual

¹⁸ Call centres feature prominently in surveillance critique, but should be viewed as representative of a range of clerical work which lends itself particularly well to monitoring. Other such jobs include word processing, data entry clerks, telephone operators, customer service workers, telemarketers, insurance claim clerks, mail clerks, and bank proof clerks (OTA, 1987 as cited in Lyon, 2003d: 45).

visibility” becomes a further, interdependent mechanism to induce conformity (Zuboff, 1988: 347).

In terms of the lived experience of workers, surveillance can be invasive and even negatively affect employees. As New Zealand Employers Federation deputy head Ann Knowles notes, “there is little difference between a supervisor physically standing behind an employee and electronic monitoring” (Rotherham, 1999: 18). When viewed as a basic human right connected with feelings of dignity and trust, workplace surveillance can affect an employee’s pride in, and autonomy over their work. In his seminal work on the impact of surveillance on social understandings of privacy, James Rule (1973) has noted that the desire for privacy is commonly understood as the ability to withhold personal information from authority. This kind of protection is important, but privacy is best conceived of as something individuals desire for its own sake; for the simple “inherent satisfaction” of protecting one’s life from the “idle curiosity of others” (Rule, 1973: 331). When viewed in these terms, workplace surveillance is invasive and can affect worker morale and the overall quality of working life (McBride, 1994: 12).

One of the most frequently discussed negative effects of workplace surveillance is the correlation between intense supervision and “techno-stress” which leads to health problems such as musculoskeletal, psychological and psychosomatic issues (Levy, 1994; Parenti, 2003: 132). As early as the 1980’s critics and health professionals believed that the stress caused by computer surveillance was responsible for hypertension, heart disease, migraines, headaches and stomach disorders. The term “techno-stress” came to mean the negative effects of having “a computer constantly watching and from being evaluated by a sometimes unseen supervisor” (Parenti, 2003: 132).

Workplace surveillance is intensified as the private sector adopts technologies developed by the military. Microelectronics, computer-mediated video recording, artificial intelligence and robotics play an increasing role in workplaces and offers employers the scope of overview and precision of intervention previously confined to

armed conflicts (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 78). At the same time the aftermath of September 11th has intensified the use of workplace surveillance and made the monitoring of employees more popular (Ball & Webster, 2003; Lyon, 2002a). Traditional technologies like e-mail and clickstream monitoring have become more common and are accompanied by increasing use of security screening and background checks as a pre-employment tool. The US company “Backgrounds Online”, for example, saw a 33 per cent rise in requests for its technology during November 2001 (Guernsey, 2001 as cited in Lyon, 2002a).

Taken collectively, these aspects of workplace surveillance present material problems in the day-to-day life of workers in the capitalist system. But as I have argued, workplace surveillance, although experienced in micro situations, is intimately tied to power in macro situations. Workplace surveillance is often justified on the grounds of increased productivity and improved customer services, but the sub-text of this rhetoric is the power relationship between labour and capital. Surveillance presents capital with the opportunity to reassert its traditional prerogatives in the workplace, meaning the issue is bigger than isolated cases of abuse or health complaints (Levy, 1994). When viewed from a sociological perspective, workplace surveillance is complicit with capitalist relations of power, both at work and outside. Recently, surveillance theorists have begun to focus on the relationship between consumer surveillance and power, noting that aspects of workplace monitoring have seeped into wider society. The practices of surveillance which construct and perpetuate consumerism have not been researched in depth, but are worthy of consideration.

2.2 Surveillance and Consumption

Another dimension of surveillance within capitalism has to do with consumption. Beginning with the notion that consumerism is a constructed way of life, I draw on the insights of the Frankfurt school before turning to the early writings of Jean Baudrillard. I then discuss marketing and market research with reference to Oscar Gandy’s description of the “panoptic sort”. Finally I look at how information and

communication technologies construct physical and virtual areas of consumption (in shopping complexes and cyberspace). The general purpose of this section is to show how macro-micro practices of consumer surveillance complement the surveillance of workers and workplaces.

2.2.1 Consumerism and the Administered Society

Most theoretical discussions of consumption build upon Marx's theory of "commodity fetishism".¹⁹ As Marx understood it, in a capitalist society, exchange value comes to dominate use value, such that economic cycles of production, marketing and consumption come to drive need (Strinati, 1995). In turn, individuals subjectively view themselves in relation to a system of commodities, rather than relating to other people in a societal context (Foley, 1986). The Frankfurt School theorists drew on Marx's analysis and extended it to explain how culture and ideology worked to subjugate the masses.²⁰ In their essay *Enlightenment as Mass Deception* (1979) Adorno and Horkheimer argued that modern capitalism had overcome its contradictions and crises (through the usurping of use value by exchange value) and had achieved unprecedented stability. This stability rested on the capacity of capitalist productive forces to produce excess wealth and create "false needs". Rather than desiring the "true needs" of creativity, autonomy and democratic participation, individuals sought the "false needs" of consumer goods and desires. In turn, false needs obfuscated and suppressed true needs while bolstering capitalist economic imperatives generally (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979). Naming this system "the culture industry" Adorno and Horkheimer posited a number of socio-psychological results. Firstly, individuals were simultaneously distracted by false needs and

¹⁹ Marx's analysis predates the rise of mass communication and is therefore difficult to apply to consumption based on advertising, marketing or, for that matter, electronic surveillance. It is used briefly here to indicate an early theory of the role of commodities in modern society.

²⁰ The relationship between Marxism and the culture industry argument is a complex one. At the same time that Adorno and Horkheimer drew on aspects of Marx's analysis (particularly the role of exchange value and commodity fetishism), they also spent some time critiquing orthodox Marxism. But as Strinati (1995: 55) points out, the Frankfurt School's work is most usefully understood as defining an area of inquiry that was only beginning to become apparent in Marx's time, the relationship between culture, ideology and the mass media.

reconciled to capitalistic values (often embedded in the commodities themselves), thereby rendering radical theoretical reflections and political opposition unlikely. Secondly, consumer lifestyles are shaped by the culture industry rather than by the individual consumer themselves. As Adorno later put it: because the system intentionally integrates consumers from above, “the customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject but its object” (Adorno 1991, as cited in Strinati, 1995: 62).

Arguing from a similar, but post-modern²¹ perspective, aspects of Jean Baudrillard’s writings help illuminate the role of consumerism in contemporary society. In his early work, particularly *The System of Objects* (1968) and *Consumer Society* (1970) Baudrillard argued that consumerism had become the primary means of generating capital. For Baudrillard, the problem for contemporary capitalism was no longer the contradiction between “maximisation of profit” and “rationalisation of production” (from the point of view of the producer), but rather a contradiction between virtually unlimited productivity and the need to dispose of the product (Baudrillard, 1988: 38). Put simply, in the second half of the twentieth century developed nations were capable of making (or sourcing) almost anything at reasonably little cost, so the manipulation of individuals to consume became pivotal in sustaining a capitalist economy. In order for this to remain effective, needs and desires were created that bore no relation to use value and objects came to respond to a pervasive social logic – the logic of desire and competition. These objects are fluid in the unconscious field of signification. In this way “need” in contemporary society comes to mean a need for difference as well as the desire for social meaning – rather than need for the use of a particular object (Baudrillard, 1988: 45).

²¹ Some writers have argued that Baudrillard is not a post-modernist theorist. Mike Gane (1991) for one has made the case that Baudrillard can be separated out from the discourse of the modern as a type of third option (as cited in Kellner, 1994: 10). However, Baudrillard himself argues in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1976) that there has been a fundamental rupture in history between modernity and post-modernity, a rupture that is every bit as radical as the earlier break between pre-modern societies and modernity (Kellner, 1994b: 11). To this effect, I will treat Baudrillard as a post-modern writer, while bearing in mind that the label is more fittingly applied to his writing after *The Mirror of Production* (1972). Before this work he argued that Marxism needed to be supplemented rather than abolished entirely (Baudrillard, 1968, 1970). Later in his career, he concluded that Marxism was defunct and needed to be replaced by radical theories of simulation (Baudrillard, 1972, 1973).

Baudrillard's conception of "hyperreality" originates in his early work, but is fully theorised during his attack on Marxism in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1972) and *Mirror of Production* (1973). For Baudrillard, the inseparability of the circulation of images from material goods has given rise to a "hyperreal state", entirely void of depth. Hyperreality occurs when simulacra (defined as copies without originals) replace both representation and reality, creating a general social condition dominated by simulations, objects and discourses that have no firm origin (Perry, 1998: 68; Poster, 1988: 1). In *Simulations* (1983) Baudrillard fully elaborates his theory of the hyperreal. Building on an understanding of the "real" – which he defines as that from which it is possible to give a reproduction, and an image, he posits that the "hyperreal", by contrast, is that which is always already produced. For Baudrillard, when the constitutive role of the real is invisible and cannot be ascertained, then a hyperreal state has arrived. In this state, all the consumer sees are the ever-pervading instantiations of models (while simultaneously reproducing models of thought and behaviour) (Kellner, 1989: 83).

In this way, consumption is no longer about use value, exchange value or even need as it is traditionally understood, but wholly about sign value and desire: reproduction has replaced production. In one of his more succinct moments, Baudrillard wrote: "if we consume the product as product, we consume meaning through advertising" (Baudrillard, 1988: 10). Hyperreality is the era of simulation in which individuals construct their identities by the appropriation of images and "the code": in this way economics, politics, social life and culture all come to be governed by the logic of simulation (Kellner, 1994b: 8). Need is no longer related to value, but rather to symbolic wealth, which, in turn, is not related directly to production, but rather to the aura of "coded" values. The creation and fulfillment of these symbolic needs sustains the economy through consumption, rather than production. Governing this pattern is marketing as "an organised moral institution whose function is to promote social integration and control through the production of a system of coded values that are employed in the construction of these identities" (Baudrillard, 1988 as cited in Goss,

1995: 17). At the heart of this situation is a power-knowledge project enacted through technological surveillance and the panoptic sort.²²

Although Baudrillard's early work (and aspects of his later writings) effectively illuminates the predominance of consumerism and its relationship to identity, Baudrillard has been widely criticised. Kellner (1989; 1994b) has noted that Baudrillard indulges in a specific (middle-class) view of the world that is divorced from the complex realities of diverse groups in their daily struggles (Kellner, 1994a: 61). As Guy Debord (1970) has argued, "the reality of commodification" is just as pertinent as the "commodification of reality" that Baudrillard posits. In this way Debord conceptualises both "privation" (for example, exploitation, hunger, homelessness) and "enriched privation" (impoverished everyday life in the commodification of political and social life) (as cited in Kellner, 1994a: 58). Moreover, Baudrillard's argument that consumption has become the sole force behind production is problematic. As David Harvey (1989) has argued, aspects of contemporary capitalism which have been termed "post-modern" by theorists, can actually be historically situated as a "transition" in the regime of accumulation rather than a fundamental rupture (Harvey, 1989: 121). For Harvey, production, reproduction and consumerism all play a role in the shift to the "flexible regime of accumulation" (Harvey, 1989: 124). Taken together, these arguments point to a desire by marketing and advertising to usurp consumer freedom, such that relations of power are placed more firmly in the hands of producers. Playing a crucial role in this process is data generated by surveillance and pertaining to individual consumers.

2.2.2 Consumers and the Panoptic Sort

A number of writers have pointed to recent changes in capitalist organisation that have generated a growing relationship between consumption and

²² I have outlined the "hyperreality" thesis, as it would be misleading to discuss Baudrillard without doing so. It should be noted, however, that "hyperreality" sits problematically in a political economy thesis because of its total rejection of Marxism. For these reasons I am using Baudrillard for his insights concerning the impact of the rise of consumption as the force that drives production, while rejecting "hyperreality" as a generalised condition.

informationalisation. Castells (1989: 18) argues that the creation of mass markets has brought the need for “specific marketing and effective distribution by firms”, based primarily on information-gathering systems. Harvey (1989) has stressed that persuading citizens to embrace new kinds of needs (through advertising and marketing) plays an important role in encouraging consumption, and in turn sustains a capitalist economy. Together, these arguments point to the role of information (particularly surveillance-based information) in channelling consumption and consumer behaviour. In this, Oscar Gandy (1993) has argued that contemporary global capitalism is guided by, and operates through, “sorting” surveillance-generated raw data of personal information.

Individuals living within the bureaucratic-administrative systems of capitalism generate massive amounts of information simply through their everyday activities.²³ The “panoptic sort” encapsulates a process whereby governments and corporations coordinate and control access to “the goods and services that define life in the modern capitalist economy” (Gandy, 1993: 15). Although the use of the panoptic sort by governments is important and overlaps to an extent with the private sector, this section will concentrate on the surveillance activities of risk adverse global corporations as they attempt to manipulate consumption and construct consumers. As James Rule (1974) notes, in this sense, risk is primarily “a problem of social control” (as cited in Gandy, 1993: 86).

According to Gandy (1993), the panoptic sort operates in three steps, “identification”, “classification” and “prediction”. Drawing on Roger Clarke’s (1988) conception of “dataveillance”, Gandy argues that electronic panopticons work by sorting and monitoring the actions and communications of mass populations. The intention is to reveal individuals whose actions show they are in need of panoptic attention and

²³ Inherent in the understanding of “information” in this section and in others, is a critique of the idealistic claims of futurists. One such writer, Alvin Toffler, posited that the “information revolution” or the “Third Wave” of development would bring greater equality throughout the world. Toffler foresaw a situation in which all human memory would come to create a bank of knowledge accessible to all people; corporations would de-emphasise profits and concentrate on social issues; and poverty would be eliminated (Toffler, 1980). As will be shown in this section, however, the information generated by surveillance has in fact become a fundamental resource in power and control, over and through consumption. In turn, this creates information inequality and constructs citizens as consumers. See Salvaggio (1987), for a systematic critique of the linguistic techniques used by the information industry to hasten the arrival of the “information society”.

normalization to particular value systems or behaviours (Gandy, 1993: 71).²⁴

Corporate enterprises gather data in a number of ways. Information can be purchased on the open market, generated internally or gained through linkages between businesses and the public sector (Lyon, 2003b: 168). The crossover between government and big business can be seen in the way the American Inland Revenue Service uses census data and mailing lists to profile citizens (Hoffman, 1984 as cited in Gandy, 1993: 106). Similarly, the FBI is reported to be a steady customer of consumer database developer, Metromail, using its MetroNet service to identify individuals by phone number (Schultz, 1992 as cited in Gandy, 1993: 105).²⁵

Digitalization allows for identified populations to be aggregated into large databases, and for classification to sort them into manageable groups for efficient analysis. Outwardly, classification's main function is an administrative one, but ultimately it is a technology of control through "knowledge engineering" (Gandy, 1993: 73). Automatic engineering allows for non-invasive high speed matching and therefore, the successful administrative processing of information. For example, during the 1990's Amex was understood to have amassed detailed information on over 34 million clients, including "where they travel, what they buy, where they eat" (Friday Report, 1990 as cited in Gandy, 1993: 66). The company reportedly examined each of its card members on as many as 450 categories on a daily basis. This facilitated both the authorization of charges and the marketing of auxiliary and affiliate services to card members. In essence Amex was taking advantage of its surveillance-generated knowledge about the similarities and differences between people to extend the reach of its control and discipline behaviour (Gandy, 1993: 24).

In the political economy of personal information, gathering knowledge as a scarce good confers power on its possessors and has the ability to create unequal patterns of consumption (Gandy, 1993: 17). David Lyon (2003d) has referred to this power

²⁴ The values to which individuals are "normalized" depend on the intention of surveiller or organisation. The state may try to "normalize" deviants to acceptable standards of legal compliance, more pertinently individuals could be understood in "normalized" to consumer values.

²⁵ Kalukin (2005: 8) has also noted that the lack of privacy which accompanies the trade of personal information also makes it easier for government agencies to bypass the laws which restrain their powers. For example, in order to collect information on an individual who is not a suspect of a particular investigation, the FBI or police may simply purchase the information from commercial enterprises.

relation as “social sorting” or the capacity of surveillance technologies to reinforce existing social differences and inequalities, as well as to create new ones. The surveillance of consumers and aggregation of personal information into massive corporate databases is now a multibillion-dollar industry, growing “rhizomically” and beyond the direct control of its owners and operators (Lyon, 2003b: 162). Power through classification entails the ability to assign differing economic behaviours within a given population. This is highly profitable in terms of advertising but also facilitates the management of consumption itself. For example, organisations that gather transactional information like credit card exchanges or itemised telephone bills can use such information to influence consumer behaviour by targeting particular groups with particular products (Gandy, 1993: 35).

Another power relation enacted through panoptic sorting is prediction. This does not entail power through the “coercion of those who misbehave” but more in the “prevention of default” (Rule 1974, as cited in Gandy, 1993: 86). Prediction is the function whereby the first two processes of the panoptic sort (identification and classification) take on a prospective organisational capacity, determining risk, excluding undesirables and assigning values to particular individuals and groups. Originally prediction was about simply deselecting rather than including individuals, but as surveillance practices became deployed by corporate enterprises as well as the nation-state, prediction became primarily concerned with the assessment and avoidance of risk (Gandy, 1993: 85). In the area of “dataveillance”, data matching and data mining are practices used for either risk evaluation and exclusion, or consumer identification and inclusion (Whitaker, 1999: 124-126). In the finance, insurance and consumer credit industries, risk management is used to control the problem of collateral for credit (Gandy, 1993: 86). At the same time however, the sorting of high risk customers and the elimination of undesirables allows companies to appeal to groups for whom the probability of success is high. For example, some call centres have inbuilt “algorithmic surveillance systems” which use customer records to automatically queue calls according to how profitable a client is on the line (Graham, 2004: 325). In this way the science of credit management lies in “determining, in advance, who will pay and who will not, and in screening applicants accordingly” (Rule, 1974 as cited in Gandy, 1993: 86). Pressured by the forces of globalization and capitalist restructuring, corporations use risk-evaluation-through-

prediction to find and manipulate niche-markets, control employee behaviour and influence consumer decisions (Lyon, 2003b: 172).

Working along the same principles as “prediction” but implying a more direct method to control and construct consumer behaviour through surveillance-based information is the practice of “social management”. In this context Robins and Webster (1999) have argued that ICT’s have facilitated the extension of Taylor’s “scientific management” from workplace management to the market place. Viewing Taylorism as more than a doctrine of factory management, they conceptualise it as a “social philosophy” or imaginary societal institution. As both consumer surveillance and workplace surveillance operate according to capitalist imperatives, the creation of “efficient” workplaces is complemented by the creation of “efficient” markets through electronic market research surveillance. In this way consumption is subject to the “scientific management of need, desire and fantasy and their reconstruction in terms of the commodity form” (Robins & Webster, 1999: 98). When Robins and Webster discuss the ability of global, targetted advertising and direct marketing to discipline the consumer they suggest a direct, coercive connection between capital and consumer (Lyon, 1994: 140).

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are one example of a spatially-based marketing technique which imposes a knowledge-power construct over everyday life (Goss, 1995: 1). In basic terms, geodemographics is an information technology that uses statistical models of identity type, based on residential areas, to predict individual consumer behaviour (Goss, 1995: 1).²⁶ The general objectives are to find and manage markets, locate potential customers and directly target them with promotional material. Ostensibly, GIS is designed to streamline customer service but as John Goss has pointed out, there are a number of negative effects that arise from this project of control-through-knowledge (Goss, 1995: 2).

²⁶ GIS corporations profile customers according to large electronic databases of panoptic information. This may include facts on the region a person lives in – climate, population density, ZIP code; their demographics – age, sex, income, religion, race; their psychographics, social class, values, lifestyle, personality; and finally, their consumer behaviour, loyalty, benefits sought, attitude to specific products (Michman, 1991 as cited in Goss, 1995: 4). Profiles are constructed and labelled according to predictions of a consumer’s predisposition towards a product. For example, the PRIZM consumer database sorting system (owned by marketing firm Claritas Inc.) includes groups such as “Furs and Station Wagons”, “Pools and Patios” and “Shotguns and Pickups” (Goss, 1995: 12).

Firstly, when GIS shaves a consumer of their irrationalities in order to reduce their social identity “to an aggregation of measurable demographic and psychographic characteristics”, there is the potential to create self-fulfilling prophecies of consumer behaviour (Goss, 1995: 2). When consumers take on a relatively stable life project revolving around particular goods and desires, subjectivity itself comes to be constructed in accordance with the “false needs” of the culture industry. For example, a car-buyer may see themselves as a “BMW person” rather than a “Mercedes person” (Goss, 1995: 14). By pre-empting the decision of a particular consumer to upgrade their car as well as encouraging a range of particular options desirable to the marketer, geodemographics becomes part of a wider project of social control through consumption. Goss expresses this aspect neatly when he writes:

“My concern over this technology is not whether geodemographics can accurately predict profitable marketing technologies, but rather that geodemographics displays a strategic intent to control social life and that the ideological conception of identity and social space within the model may become real – in other words that the assumptions will be validated as the strategies take effect” (Goss, 1995: 2).

Through this process the system of geodemographics usurps the traditional value associated with consumption: that the buyer controls the market. When the marketer is successful in guiding individuals to certain choices, it is the seller who begins to take control of the act of consumption, by “setting the agenda, controlling demand as well as supply”, and ensuring that consumers are no longer confronted with their own will (Goss, 1995; Kruger, 2004: 322).²⁷

The second, more straightforward concern is that information held in corporate databases for the purpose of commercial exchange is also supplemented with information from public records such as the census or postal department.²⁸ When the personal information industries function in this way, private enterprises are able to profit from information held by public authority and funded by the taxpayer. It also

²⁷ In response to the possible objection that his argument is overdrawn, Goss points out that although the power of marketers extends only as far as they can convince the consumer to purchase a particular product, that consumers still only respond to a discrete number of choices. Consumers only make choices about which they are adequately informed (Goss, 1995: 17).

²⁸ A friend in Auckland moved from an apartment in the city to live with her parents in the suburbs and was surprised to receive discount pamphlets for new curtains and furniture, all addressed specifically to her. The only possible source of the information was New Zealand Post, for whom she had filled out a change of address card.

means that data is transferred from the area where it was collected with a person's consent, to an unrelated area without express permission (Goss, 1995: 6).²⁹

Most worryingly, geodemographic techniques can be extended into other areas such as election campaigning and insurance analysis. Kramer and Schneider discuss the example of the "Custom Targeting" telemarketing approach as one way political campaigners try to control choice through pre-emption. The technology allows for electorates to be prioritised, direct-targeted with particular policy messages and analysed in terms of "*who to target and who to avoid* [emphasis Gandy's]" (as cited in Gandy, 1993: 89). These decisions affect media buying, advertising and even candidate scheduling in a way that manipulates the flow of information about elected democratic representatives.³⁰ In the insurance industry "selective discrimination" or, the classification and exclusion of particular individuals from risk pools, forms "the backbone" of policy (Reichman 1986 as cited in Gandy, 1993: 86). On one level, this appears to be an acceptable way of managing risk, but when the practice of redlining (refusing home loans or mortgage because of high risk) is taken into account, the ominous possibility that citizens will be segregated and life-chances adversely affected begins to emerge (Gandy, 1993: 88). A 1999 Reuters article outlines how banks and other large financial institutions such as Fleet Financial Group (Boston) have been buying and using consumer mailing lists for years. Again, the potential for the abuse of the customer databases is increased through globalization and the expansion of banking organisations into non-banking activities. Consumer groups worry that the worst-case scenario might entail "a customer being denied a mortgage because a bank's affiliate knows he or she has cancer; or a customer denied insurance when an underwriter who has access to credit records sees purchases that reveal an unhealthy life style" (Reuters, 1999).³¹

²⁹ Goss also points to the possibility that there will be an error in the data, which is then disseminated through the system affecting the consumer's welfare in a range of contexts (Goss, 1995: 6).

³⁰ At election time, the five members of my household, only one of whom is an actual member of a political party, receive pamphlets from three different parties addressed to them specifically. The targeting appears to be based on personal information obtained about us, as the students receive pamphlets from the centre and liberal left and the homeowners, from the centre and conservative right (see: Progressive Party brochure, 2005).

³¹ Oscar Gandy has pointed out that these types of judgements are arbitrary and discriminatory. He describes panoptic technology as identifying, breeding and reproducing failure, by increasing the sharpness of distinctions between deviance and compliance (Gandy, 1993: 228).

Geodemographics and other consumer surveillance techniques are ultimately about the power to survey and direct the “Other” in this case, the consumer. As John Goss notes: “the genius of geodemographics is that it systematically produces such life-styles both from us and for us: it presents descriptions of our consuming selves that are actually normative models, or mean characteristics of our consumption (stereo)type to which we are exhorted to conform” (Goss, 1995: 17). The aim is to administer and control the uncertainties of everyday life by assigning people to their proper place in the spatial order. When applied in a direct and routine manner, these categorisations become concrete and manifest a power-through-knowledge project of consumption management (de Certeau, 1984; Foucault, 1984; Lefebvre, 1976 as cited in Goss, 1995: 11-12).

2.2.3 Shopping and Ordered Consumption

Shopping is an everyday activity which automatically generates panoptic data. Digital cash facilities like EFTPOS and credit card machines make purchases transparent, while supermarket loyalty cards create profiles of consumer habits. This information can be connected with barcodes which generate specific information about purchased items (i.e. their number, range, location and time of sale). All this information is subjected to scrutiny by marketing firms, and compiled into consumer databases. Following Foucault (1980), Parenti has argued that digital cash facilitates the “unplanned, unexamined extension of state power and social discipline”, into the realm of everyday consumption (2003: 99). At the same time consumerism and consumers themselves are constructed and guided by institutions of political and economic power which process panoptic information.

As Mike Davis (1992: 244) noted in his analysis of the “mall-as-panopticon-prison”, surveillance plays an important part in city and suburban shopping. Designed with security as the paramount priority, shopping centres are brightly lit and equipped with CCTV networks and motion detectors. Davis points out that these centres “brazenly

plagiarise” from Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon, creating a shopping “fortress” for secure consumption under the omniscient surveillance eye (Davis, 1992: 241 - 243).³²

Driven by the forces of globalization, the philosophy of the “panopticon mall” seeps into urban spaces as city councils attempt to create sanitised spaces for consumption in central city districts (Davis, 1992: 240; McCahill, 2002). Critical theorists of urban space have argued that the restructuring of capitalism in the late twentieth century has seen the traditional industrial basis of many western cities “torn away” by deindustrialisation and globalization. “Global cities” are now under increasing competition to produce more attractive tourist destinations, as well as encouraging their own citizens into central city areas instead of suburban malls.³³ A desire to produce growth in depressed areas has driven local governments to shift from traditional managerialism to entrepreneurialism in order to construct cities as sanitised “consumer-paradises”. Focusing on leisure as a vehicle for growth, city councils and local businesses pour resources into branding, marketing and advertising, creating commodified spaces to lure tourists, shoppers and investment generally (Graham and Marvin, 1996 as cited in McCahill, 2002: 12; Norris & Armstrong, 1999: 38-39).

Occurring concurrently, but particularly pronounced since the 1990’s is a widening gap between rich and poor in urban settings. Capitalistic economic restructuring under the informational mode of development has generated levels of unemployment and homelessness not seen since the 1930’s depression (McCahill, 2002: 13). Coupled with an entrepreneurial drive to present cities as consumer goods, dualism in city centres is met with “moral regulation” on the part of police and community groups. In order to create sanitized city centres, non-consumers are segregated from the public realm (McCahill, 2002: 15). Fyfe and Bannister argue that public space

³² Davis’ main argument here is that panopticon malls “recapture the poor as consumers”. Such malls are situated in suburban slum areas and work in tandem with other totally surveilled housing projects (Davis, 1992: 244). This conflicts to a degree with the next argument that I will outline: that inner-city shopping areas come to resemble malls and use surveillance to keep out the non-consuming poor (Fyfe & Bannister, 1998; McCahill, 2002). Perhaps a distinction can be made according to the degree of poverty. Housing-district malls recapture underprivileged groups, binding them to consumption while making political opposition less likely (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979). Inner city districts may do this as well, but are also active in removing vagrants and people with no ability to consume at all.

³³ These aspects will be discussed in more detail in the “cyber cities” section of Chapter Three: Surveillance, Democracy and the State.

becomes increasingly “privatised” in order to promote commerce and “ordered consumption”. As councils and local businesses fund cameras to create a “mall-like atmosphere” in the central downtown areas, surveillance and policing is used to control “nuisance” groups – beggars, the homeless and youth – all of whom are aesthetically undesirable, unable to consume, and detract from the consumption experience generally (Fyfe & Bannister, 1998: 263).³⁴ As Norris and Armstrong (1999) note, the stated reason for CCTV installation in urban areas is to reduce crime. Although this is partially true, the other face of the installation is to target populations who deviate from consumer culture, moving them on to other spaces and institutions. Consequently these groups are excluded from participating in the democratic construction of public space. As Nelken (1994) has noted, the “underclass” is increasingly seen as “a *risk* to be policed” rather than a “social group to be integrated” (as cited in McCahill, 2002: 16, [emphasis McCahill's]). Within the creation of artificial, totally-surveilled spaces for consumption in central city areas, two processes occur: firstly, urban spaces become consumer spaces, in which individuals are increasingly bound to the status quo of consumption while moving about in the public sphere; and secondly, a dualisation of urban space occurs through a surveillance-facilitated bifurcation of consuming and non-consuming classes of people.

2.2.4 Surveilling Consumers in Cyberspace

Internet-based consumer surveillance resonates with existing practices, while accelerating them virtually and in real-time. Personal consumer information is collected from transactional data generated by supermarkets, credit cards, logging onto the Internet, the use of a telephone or cell phone, EFTPOS, loyalty cards, warranty forms and frequent flyer schemes as well as self-divulgence (Ball &

³⁴ Nelken (1994) has worried that when youth are displaced by downtown improvement schemes they often move to unsafe environments like alleyways and subways (as cited in McCahill 2002: 16).

Webster, 2003: 1-2).³⁵ More covertly, “web merchants” may monitor Internet chat-rooms or news groups, collecting email addresses, I.D.’s and demographic information based on users’ online behaviour and postings. This information can then be sold to other interested parties and direct marketers (Kelly & Rowland, 2000). One particular consumer surveillance technology which recent studies have focused on is “Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)”, a high-tech version of a bar code. A RFID tag is a “body-bug” which is permanently attached to a consumer good in order to electronically monitor levels of stock, or locations of objects (such as luggage at airports). Privacy advocates warn that RFID tags will offer store owners, governments, hackers and direct-marketers unsurpassed insight into a consumers’ mobility, tracking them as they move through daily-life wearing tagged clothes and accessories (Lyon, 2003c). In some cases RFID tags are even planted directly under the human skin. Select patrons of the Baja Beach Club in Barcelona, for example, have the rice-sized grains of silicon implanted in their shoulder. The tags allow the VIPs to skip the queue and order drinks directly on their e-accounts (Foroohar, Adams, & Itoi, 2004).

Critical commentators have argued that the structure of the net, originally designed to support decentralized and open communication, is being reconfigured through private ownership. Transnational corporations control and exploit the Internet to maximise profit and surveil consumers (Graham, 2004: 287; Lessig, 2001). There is more at stake here than the simple monitoring of netizens, or even the pervasiveness of advertising; the very browsers used to view the World Wide Web have a role in creating and funnelling consumerism. Robert Luke (2004) for example, has argued that when net users construct their own cyberspace “home” portals using Microsoft software, they are essentially creating a “commodified space of safe consumption” which is subject to intensive surveillance and biased towards Microsoft products. In order to access their home portals, users move back and forth across Microsoft’s firewalls, each time feeding the corporation personal data in exchange for access. At the same time, users are continually pushed towards the sites of firms with

³⁵ As (Kelly & Rowland, 2000) explain, consumer information is often collected through “self-divulgence” in return for discounted purchases, or in order to access a website or free merchandise. Indeed, studies show that many consumers are happy to have their personal data collected and stored, as long as they receive a benefit or service in return. In Britain, the number is as high as 70 per cent (Dennis, 1999 as cited in Ball & Webster, 2003: 9).

commercial relations with Microsoft, each page offering a range of online commerce opportunities (Luke, 2004: 149). In this way, the net itself is carefully tailored to maximise surveillance opportunities and potential profits for major Internet owners (Luke, 2004: 245).³⁶

The capacity to channel consumption is reinforced by further conditioning individuals to see their identity in relation to a coded system of products (Baudrillard, 1988). When using a Microsoft Passport TM, net users accept the commercial basis for constructing online identity by signalling that they are “Microsoft’s territory”. Imbued with the rhetoric of consumer empowerment, net users browse the web happily knowing that Microsoft Network will take them “where they want to go today” (Luke, 2004: 250). At the same time cyberspace is increasingly dominated by advertising, consumer services and target marketing, all pushing consumer values, while monitoring the users themselves. As Parenti explains, the net can either be thought of as a “Panopticon full of individual cells”, or more usefully “a massive laboratory for market research, a ‘two way mirror into consumer behaviour’” (Paul, 1999 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 102).

Internet service providers contribute the creation of a personal information industry in cyberspace by selling customers’ information to marketing firms. One such service provider, NetZero, allows marketing companies NFO Worldwide and InsightExpress (market research companies) to access demographic files on NetZero 5.7 million customers, as well as data on how often individuals use the net (Kruger, 1996 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 102). Cookies³⁷ add to this information by monitoring the activities of specific Internet users. The “DoubleClick” Internet company has 11,000 affiliated member sites using Cookies, allowing it to build detailed profiles of Internet users

³⁶ At the same time that consumers are surveilled in cyberspace and through their purchases, individuals are also able to consume surveillance technologies themselves. For example, “nanny-cams” allow parents to monitor baby-sitters and home help, while the “techno-bra” detects sexual assault and sets off an alarm (Lyon, 2003c). Although this decentred panopticon appears to have positive democratising effects (surveillance spreads horizontally rather than deployed top-down by authority), it is rooted in insecurity. As David Lyon (2003c) argues, the equipment is sold “as a means of allaying fears and quieting the anxieties of those who ignore statistical realities about assault and abuse and read only the lurid headlines”.

³⁷ Most “cookies” simply report back to home base the sites its host computer has visited, but some are intelligent enough to count key strokes and copy entire files. This information can then be connected to the user’s identification, home and business addresses, credit card details and even passwords (Parenti, 2003: 101).

and to directly send them “demographically tailored advertisements” (Buchwald, 2001 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 102). DoubleClick has also acquired the offline catalogue shopping firm “Abacus” in order to increase the types of consumer data it holds (Lyon, 2003c). A further notorious case is that of GeoCities, which settled with the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in 1998, after it was accused of “unfair and deceptive practices” of information gathering on children under 13. Not only was GeoCities gathering information on over two million customers, it was also acting in violation of its own posted privacy notice (Lyon, 2003c). A FTC report conducted in the same year found that out of 212 children’s websites surveyed, 89 per cent collected detailed information which could personally identify the child. In return for prizes and free home pages as well as using requests from imaginary characters, the websites collected data including names, emails, addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers and dates of birth. Fewer than one per cent of the sites required parental consent to use, collect or sell the information (Kelly & Rowland, 2000: 5).³⁸

The Internet is configured to help the “well-off” extend their capabilities in time and space, while simultaneously constructing secure, totally-surveilled private spaces (Graham, 2004: 287). Transnational corporations utilise advanced technology to monitor cyberspace activities. It is now possible to create consumer profiles on particular individuals from electronic information stored in diverse (private and public) databases. Random pieces of information are mined, collated and cross-referenced to build an individual profile which is then used to match direct marketing to specific consumers. As John Goss shows in his article on geodemographic systems, “infopreneurs” purchase records from private institutions and pillage public records to accumulate enormous quantities of information. Focus groups and surveys are used to get inside the consumer’s head and supermarket loyalty cards track shopping habits. Combined, the data creates massive “marketing consumer information files”, which are used to direct-target individuals or traded with other similar companies (Weitzen, 1998 as cited in Goss, 1995: 5). More worryingly, a profile can be used to privilege or exclude individuals. On the net, software packages are emerging which use a users “package” of information (stored on their PC,) to automatically distinguish between

³⁸ At the end of 1998 the “Child Online Protection Act” was signed in the US, imposing fines and prison sentences on websites operators who deal in information about minors (Kelly & Rowland, 2000: 9).

elite consumers and general netizen riffraff. The software allows companies to guarantee that highly desirable customers will be able to view certain products or services regardless of the density of Internet traffic. Meanwhile less desirable users are directed to a “website unavailable” page (Graham, 2004: 325).

With the digitalization of each transaction and the utilisation of ICT's by corporate marketing and the proliferation of surveillance-based organisations (such as direct-marketing firms), consumption activities everywhere are subject to constant monitoring. Indeed, entire systems of consumption related to the mass media, urban space and cyberspace are inherently constructed through surveillance-related activities. At the same time that consumers are subject to surveillance, sorted by the panoptic sort and wooed by agendas created by panoptic information, so too do they consume surveillance devices themselves. Monitoring in this area seeks to reverse the perceived benefit of the “free-market” – consumer choice. In telling consumers “what to think about” direct marketers create “shopping agendas” for individuals, seeking to programme particular choices by privileging certain options, and then smoothing the path to the (virtual) door of the outlet (Lyon, 2003c).

2.3 Conclusion

Under contemporary informational capitalism, knowledge is the key to systematic structural power. In that context, surveillance technologies play a central role in the perpetuation of asymmetrical power relations in the workplace and the marketplace. In the “informational mode of development”, knowledge organises and facilitates production, but is also an outcome of the process; the raw product itself (Castells, 1989). During the restructuring of capitalism from the 1980's onwards, developments in information and communication technologies converged with the spheres of production and consumption. Evolving to ensure the sustainability of the capitalist system, a process of “informationalisation” occurred in production, consumption and state intervention. Core new technologies in micro-electronics, information processing and digitalization have allowed for a greater capacity to store and process

(panoptic) data. As information and communication technologies, surveillance devices are at the centre of capital restructuring processes. In terms of production, surveillance technologies facilitate the global character of TNC's, allowing for capital to remotely control labour in real time. Panoptic data plays a crucial role in the capacity to manage risk, uncover new markets, control productivity and direct consumers through marketing.

In turn, the macro dimensions of "informational capitalism" have shaped the development of surveillance technologies and practices in everyday contexts. Surveillance is embedded in the fabric of quotidian life. Built into the foundation of the institutions of work and consumerism, monitoring shapes the way those institutions function. At the same time, it is part of the material experience of individuals moving in those spheres. Workers are surveilled more pervasively and intensively, their productivity quantified in infinitesimal and detailed ways. Consumers are identified, classified and managed, occasionally excluded from services as their behaviour is prospectively estimated. Panoptic information is amassed to regulate employee productivity, direct consumers or identify and manage risk, each time seeking to exert control over behaviour.

Together, workplace surveillance and consumer surveillance present two faces of the relationship between monitoring and capitalism. Workplace and consumer monitoring overlap and intersect as they are central to capitalist restructuring. Macro changes in workplaces are partially predicated on surveillance systems, which allow for regimes of flexible accumulation. In turn, flexible accumulation involves the perpetuation of consumption, which is facilitated through consumer surveillance and the market-researching of society. Consumers are increasingly subject to surveillance as the techniques of workplace surveillance spill into the market. As scientific management becomes social management, individuals are monitored, sorted and directed across multiple domains of social life.

Occasionally developments in surveillance challenge power relations. Monitoring extends multi-directionally and can involve inverse relationships such as the surveillance of an employer by a subordinate. But these relationships most often occur on a micro, interpersonal level. Taken collectively, recent developments in

surveillance technologies represent the sharpening of existing capitalist inequalities and an attempt to reinforce traditional capital prerogatives in the workforce and market place. Having discussed private organisations, I will now turn to state institutions.

Chapter Three

Surveillance, Democracy and the State

The next area of contemporary surveillance worthy of consideration pertains to the state. So far, I have argued that the recent restructuring of capitalism, technological advancements and the rise of “informationalisation” have rendered surveillance more pervasive and intensive. Surveillance is central to the functioning of informational capitalism and in that context enables the detailed monitoring of workers and consumers. Surveillance by the state extends these operations, and also makes a distinctive contribution to the fabric of the “surveillance society”. In this chapter, I will focus on the monitoring of urban spaces and the activities of intelligence networks as two faces of state-led surveillance. While the former is domestically oriented and the latter involves international affairs, both pertain to “national security”. Military surveillance, domestic policing and the executive state have reinforcing powers which overlap and complement each other. I will argue that while state surveillance is historically relevant, recent global events, technological developments and governmental policy shifts associated with national security have strengthened the relationship between surveillance and state power. Monitoring in this area is increasingly tending towards controlling, undemocratic and self serving outcomes which require careful consideration.

In order to detail the various facets of state surveillance I begin with an overview of urban space surveillance and will argue that the monitoring and bugging of public spaces is now a routine aspect of contemporary urban life. In discussing the surveillance of urban spaces, I explain how routine monitoring practices construct and perpetuate “dual” cities of geographic segregation and bifurcate life-chances. I will then show how information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructures create globally interconnected “cybercities”. Next follows an account of institutionalized surveillance in urban spaces, with a special focus on policing and

criminality. Finally, I consider the implications of urban spatial surveillance for democracy and the cosmopolitan city.¹

In the context of intelligence, security and democracy, I begin by discussing surveillance as a manifestation of modernity and the rise of the nation-state. Next I argue that “national security” is systematically used as a control mechanism for elite groups. After discussing global networks of intelligence information sharing, I finish with a brief discussion of the impact of the September 11th attacks on surveillance practices. In that context, specific monitoring devices and intelligence organisations will be mentioned. As with the previous chapter, my general purpose is to show how patterns of surveillance organisation reflect contemporary relations of power. In so doing, I also provide a research platform from which to later discuss corresponding representations of state surveillance in popular cinema.

3.1 Surveillance of Urban Spaces

There are two macro processes outlined by Castells in his conception of the informational mode of development which impact on surveillance in urban spaces.² The first is the expansion of, and qualitative changes in, government regulation. During the 1980’s, traditional bureaucratic imperatives were increasingly recalibrated as government-directed information flows (mediated by surveillance-based information technologies). In this way, state power was extended through control and manipulation of the information flows which govern urban social life. While also

¹ I am not attempting to argue that urban surveillance is ubiquitous, inescapable and all-penetrating, which would be disingenuous in light of the evidence of what architecture critic John Kaliski (1994) has called the “curiosity” that the “ever new and evolving cultural expressions and mutations born of unexpected gatherings”, do not seem to be limited by surveillance (as cited in Graham, 2004: 245). My aim here is to highlight some areas of concern in the relationship between surveillance and power in urban spaces and the way in which this impacts on democracy.

² The work of Manuel Castells refers to the United States and should not be read as a totalising theory for all capitalist democracies. Nations adopt informational capitalism to varying degrees dependant on their economic, political and historical situation. Castells work is most useful in pinpointing changes to the structure of capitalistic modes of operation in the US of the 1980’s. It should be noted however, that these changes have continued through the 1990’s, and have had important implications for other societies.

historically significant under the informational mode of development, the state “exercises more intervention than ever” (Castells, 1989: 19).³ Paradoxically, increased government intervention is partially a response to the declining legitimacy of state institutions themselves. As transnational organisations become global in character and therefore increasingly free from the control of national governments, the state attempts to retain power by reconstituting itself as a crucial nodal point in the network of information flows that penetrate society. The state therefore experiences a simultaneous “weakening-reinforcing” (decreasing legitimacy but increasing role), a tension which it attempts to override by diffusing its power through information flows. Under the informational mode of development, the state both produces and governs an explosion of information-processing activities (Castells, 1989: 19). As Oscar Gandy (1993) has argued, much of this information is panoptic, generated by surveillance technologies monitoring citizens and social groups.

The second process relevant to the surveillance of urban spaces is the shrinking of the welfare state. Under the informational mode of development, the welfare state declines in relevance⁴ as the emphasis of state intervention switches from “political legitimisation and social redistribution” to “political domination and capital accumulation” (Castells, 1989: 25). During the 1980’s and 1990’s western governments favoured deregulation, privatisation and tax-cuts for corporations and upper-income groups (Castells, 1989: 25). These measures, in association with changes in capital-labour relationships (and mediated through the interplay of high technology and capitalist restructuring), stratified, polarized and segregated mass populations (Castells, 1989: 172).

³ There have of course, been trends in regulation and deregulation which represent varying degrees of government intervention. What Castells is referring to here are the subtle macro process of infiltration, rather than control in the restrictive sense. Castells is drawing on Alain Touraine’s (1978) discussion of “la société programmée”, in which Touraine argued that large-scale (private and public) organisations set up strategic goals which permeate all of social life. Relying on incentive/disincentive systems based on information about mass publics, organisations are able to strategically guide social activities without suffocating them (as cited in Castells, 1989: 19).

⁴ This does not occur because the welfare state is too expensive to run (which is a question of political ideology), but rather because the institution is re-worked to bring its traditional redistributive goals in line with its new role as “the source of productivity by means of the investment in human capital” (Castells, 1989: 20).

3.1.1 The Dual City

In the context of urban space, citizens move through a new “socio-spatial form”, the “dual city” (Castells, 1989: 172).⁵ Metropolitan areas, or economic/geographic “nodal points” like Los Angeles, New York and London experience a complex pattern of economic dualism in labour markets. The growth of new highly paid jobs involving information technology and specialized services coincided with the decline of middle-level manufacturing jobs and the proliferation of low-paid jobs with limited security. This development in turn converges with three interrelated phenomena concerning urban space:

“...the explosion of the informal economy, unregulated income-generating activities in a context where similar activities are government-regulated; the reduction of the rate of participation in the labour force, as officially defined, indicative of a growing surplus population in the formal economy; and the proliferation of the criminal economy, particularly in activities related to the drug trade, which becomes the shop floor for a growing proportion of ethnic-minority youth in the largest inner cities” (Castells, 1989: 203).

The general result is an organisationally and socially segmented society, with sharp boundaries and little communication between segments. Dualism manifests itself in residential areas, where real estate prices work as exclusionary devices and gated-dwellings employ private security agencies to insulate small communities.

Additionally, dualism also occurs in lifestyle, leisure, educational experience and informal networks (Castells, 1989: 226).⁶ Following Castells, Mike Davis (1992b)⁷ and Stephen Graham (2004) have discussed the relationship between technology and power in urban spaces. They reiterate the view that surveillance technologies play a pivotal role in creating a “dual city” which bifurcates life chances and impacts

⁵ As Castells notes, the dual city has received a lot of sociological attention throughout modernity. What is new however, is the relationship between this existing logic and the expansion of the information economy (1989: 224).

⁶ Of course “dualism” is not as simple as only two discrete segments. Castells himself implies a number of segments when he writes “structural dualism... does not result in two social worlds, but in a variety of social universes”. In this way, “duality” points to the complex multifaceted reality, but one which manifests itself in “dual dichotomies”.

⁷ For the most part Davis is discussing Los Angeles in his account and this should therefore not be read as the template for all city spaces around the world. His work is most useful in explaining how the police apparatus, surveillance technologies and architectural expression can converge. *City of Quartz* outlines the significance of this tendency while providing a benchmark for possible future trends outside L.A.

negatively on the democratic public sphere.⁸ As Steven Graham observes, public places have become “saturated by electronic means of surveillance which are used by regulators and power holders to try to monitor and shape who has access and who does not” (Graham, 2004: 285).⁹ In the case of gated communities, anxious middle-class households use “gun-toting private police with state-of-the-art electronic surveillance” to insulate themselves from the “underclass ‘Other’” (Davis, 1992b: 223). At the same time, police seal off poor neighbourhoods such as San Fernando Valley (L.A.) as part of their “war on drugs”, working to “South-Africanize” spatial relations in the city (Davis, 1992b: 223). Combined with these changes is the destruction of accessible public space. In Los Angeles, once known for its leisure-based atmosphere and endless free beaches, parks are becoming derelict and beaches increasingly segregated, while libraries, playgrounds and other public amenities are closed down (Davis, 1992b: 227).¹⁰ At the same time the police apparatus manifests itself more clearly in the “pseudo-public spaces” that are left behind. Led again by a predominately middle class desire for security, a “de-facto disinvestment in traditional public space” and corporate redevelopment programmes, shopping centres and office block areas increasingly resemble panoptic architecture, designed out of fear of the ‘Other’ (Davis, 1992b: 226). Just outside the city, luxury developments restrict entry through perimeter walls, guard posts and an overlap of private and public policing. Built like “fortress cities”, they are impossible for ordinary citizens to access (Davis, 1992b: 244). Taken together, these trends represent a desire to

⁸ Implicit in this understanding is the work of German Sociologist Jurgen Habermas (trans. 1989) on the importance of the “public sphere” in a democratic society. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) Habermas argued that democracy needed a “public sphere”. This should be characterized as a domain of social life in which to form public opinion. In principle the arena is open to all citizens, is free of coercion, is transparent and is protected by a guarantee that members of a society can assemble and unite freely to express and publicize their opinions. Taking this ideal into account, this section will show how dual city configurations and the proliferation of surveillance technologies in urban spaces undermines a Habermasian understanding of public space, impacting negatively on the way in which democracy occurs organically in urban settings.

⁹ For example, in 1998 a group of New York Civil Liberties Union Surveillance Camera Project volunteers walked every block in Manhattan and found 2,397 cameras trained on public space. Of the cameras 2,100 were installed by private parties, and only 300 installed by police. The most concentrated prevalence was in midtown, the financial district, in lower Manhattan parks, and around housing projects, reflecting both a desire to sanitise the spaces of consumer/financial importance and an attempt to police the areas which contain “deviant” social groups (NYCLU Report as cited in Staples, 2000: 60).

¹⁰ Davis documents an endless number of examples to support his point here. Of special interest is the case of San Marino, possibly the richest city in the US and 85 per cent Republican. On the weekends, San Marino closes its parks in order to “exclude Latin and Asian families from adjacent communities” (Davis, 1992b: 246).

geographically divide citizens on the basis of social concerns about who is a “legitimate” user of public space. Predicated on the professed ability of surveillance to bring “security” and born out fear of the “Other,” urban planning converges with police and panoptic mechanisms.

In his work on the role of networks in dividing life chances between wealth and poverty, Danny Kruger (2004) has argued that geographic exclusion prohibits certain citizens from forming “weak ties” or informal network contacts, thereby compromising their social mobility. Social exclusion means the underprivileged are cut off from access to the ladders of social improvement and paths of upward mobility in general (Kruger, 2004: 321). At the same time, citizens are cut off from a sense of civic participation, or of being able to exert some form of control over their environment. Specifically, “network poverty” occurs when a person is excluded from communication with people who are in advantaged positions. For example the “weak ties” formed at local school evenings might connect a person with job opportunities or privileged information. To the extent that these social networks are untouchable, surveillance “petrifies social inequality, inhibits upward mobility and consolidates existing patterns of exclusion” (Kruger, 2004: 321).

3.1.2 Cybercities and Surveillance¹¹

The restructuring of cities on the ground is paralleled by the restructuring of cities in electronic space and the creation of “cybercities” (Davis, 1992b: 226; Graham, 2004).¹² The connections between urban spaces and information technologies are such that technology and cities have become mutually constitutive; the very shape of urban spaces relies on the nature of the technology that orders them and allows them to function (Graham, 2004: 22). At the same time ICT’s mediate urban spaces by translating them into various cyber contexts. As Mike Davis has argued “the

¹¹ Cybercities are part consumer surveillance, part urban surveillance. Although they are not necessarily predicated on urban space, cybercities form the electronic simulation of material cities in a way that resonates with existing surveillance tendencies as the hardware of surveillance devices overlaps with the use of electronic technologies and software.

contemporary city simulates or hallucinates itself” through its representation on the Internet. Following Baudrillard, Davis notes that the city “redoubles” itself on the net through the creation of an “e-culture” in “urban cyberspace” (Davis, 1992a: 6). High-technology devices like Geographic Information Systems (GIS’s) and Virtual Reality as well as the Internet, mobile phones, web cameras and electronic bulletin boards all attest to the widening nexus of experience linking urban living and cyber culture (Graham, 2004: 3). In part, these technologies bring new ways of engaging with national and global public spheres,¹³ but for the most part, cybercities are virtual translations of urban dualism. As Stephen Graham (2004) has argued, ICT domains and urban spaces are being constructed along parallel lines, both shaped by broader political and economic factors such as the globalization of capitalism (Graham, 2004: 245).

Against this backdrop, surveillance plays a central role. Most simply, as has been shown in the consumer surveillance section, electronic space itself is heavily monitored and harvested for personal information. Furthermore, as Graham points out, the ICT’s saturating the cybercity are designed to capture data at a distance to be recorded, processed and classified using computer hardware, software and human interpretation (Graham, 2004: 299). Thus, cybercities can be understood as “intricate and multidimensional sites of comprehensive and intensifying digital surveillance”(Editor's introduction in Lyon, 2004: 299).¹⁴ The privatisation of the Internet (along with urban space) generates particular surveillance opportunities. Pay-access information orders are heavily policed while other private components of cybercities, elite data-bases and subscription orders, are subject to the panoptic gaze. Both processes of privatization “mirror the deregulation of the economy and the

¹² This term was originally coined by Christine Boyer (1992, 1995, 1996), but has been more fully analysed by Stephen Graham (2004) and the writers of *The cybercities reader*.

¹³ See for example Howard Reingold’s (1995) sanguine description of the topic in *The virtual community: Finding connection in a computerised world*.

¹⁴ This does not mean that the Internet cannot be used for resistance and political opposition. As feminist groups, anti-globalization protestors and other social movements have shown, the Internet itself holds scope for oblique readings of prevailing relations of power.

recession of non-market entitlements” (Davis, 1992b: 226).¹⁵ As Graham has argued, cities are being constructed on the ground and in cyberspace through “uneven investment patterns by states and firms that are facilitated by intensive ICT-based geographical surveillance and targeting” (2004: 285). This translates the city into cyberspace in an uneven way and creates dualisation of access. Simple participation in the cybercity is designed for those who own a personal computer and have access to the Internet. Consequently, those who are able to use ICT’s to “access services, exercise rights to political expression, and gain employment and income” are separated from those who cannot. This is especially the case in developed cities that are pervasively saturated with ICT and software systems (Graham, 2004: 285).¹⁶

More specifically, ICT’s sharpen the distinctions between the connected and disconnected, by facilitating the cashless society (Kruger, 2004). While some consumers effortlessly enter a cybercity to purchase its private and public services with credit cards and good credit ratings, others are relegated to traditional hard currency. Danny Kruger argues that citizens living in the cash-based society can only partake in a limited number of every day activities, even though they effectively pay for the global shift to cash-free transactions itself. As governments use revenue from taxes to subsidise cash-free options in e-commerce, Kruger posits that digital have-nots will be “charged more for the same service as the infrastructure for processing physical cash is gradually withdrawn, and they would be severely stigmatised as electronic financial transactions become normalised as the way in which urban residents engage with the economy” (Editor's note in Kruger, 2004: 320).

On a global scale, cybercities and cyber commerce bifurcate social experiences; the

¹⁵ An important aspect of cybercities that I have chosen to leave to one side because it is less directly relevant to surveillance is the commodification of cities in cyberspace. Vincent Mosco (2004) has shown that as web cameras proliferate across urban spaces, they re-create cities in cyberspace as sites of consumption for global audiences. In this way, a tourist in Rome can be linked with a (carefully selected) image of New York, encouraging that tourist to visit the city. See for example www.hotcity.co.nz.

¹⁶ I am not attempting to argue that it is now impossible to get a job, organise a protest or book a plane ticket without access to the Internet, merely that it becomes more difficult and more expensive. In the case of political expression, citizens may of course, still demonstrate with little more than a placard and a felt-tip pen. Arguably, however, email, Internet forums and websites accelerate the organisational capacity and scale of political protests. In the case of services, getting discounted airline fares is often contingent upon being able to reserve tickets on the Internet. For this, travellers need both access to the net and a credit card.

wealthy and privileged become increasingly connected in cyber “space” while the poor are consigned to the “place” they live in (Graham, 2004: 287). The combination of web cameras and the Internet, for example, allows the specialised and elite areas of various cities to be visually and globally connected in real time. Webcams and the Internet connect “technopoles” like Silicon Valley with similar sites around the world, allowing capital to circulate freely in cyberspace, and to select its relationship to geographic place (Mosco, 2004). In this context, surveillance allows the globally connected elite to form secure local enclaves, using surveillance to insulate themselves from the surrounding social reality. As Graham notes, they “extend their actions in time and space” across cybercities and national boundaries, while maintaining “safe and secure local places”, through surveillance in the material city (Graham, 2004: 287). For example, the global elite join “frequent flyer” clubs, crossing nation-state borders without the standard immigration and ticketing arrangements, needing only hand geometry scans and smart cards. At the same time, those considered to warrant less mobility are subject to stricter controls and increasingly rigid border systems. Steven Graham argues that the global “kinetic elite”¹⁷ and “those deemed to warrant less (or no) mobility” experience different immigration services, and notes that “ever-increasing militarised control and surveillance efforts make international boundaries *more* rigid through new border control systems”. This means that the “kinetic elite” are able to speedily transgress borders while refugees and illegal migrants “find that such borders become more fortress-like because of other configurations of the same ICT and surveillance technologies” (Graham, 2004: 329).

Within urban spaces, the effects of globalization are felt keenly by lower socio-economic groups. Cybercities contribute to “unsynchronised time-space cycles” between global elite and urban poor. Wolch and DeVerteuil (2001) have argued that “urban poverty landscapes” are shaped by “unsynchronised” time-space cycles on four scales. At a global level, long-wave economic cycles affect capitalist organisation. National governments are embedded in larger economic forces, but also follow politically autonomous policy cycles unsynchronised with macro changes. In turn, welfare and justice institutions are affected by the “unsynchronicity” between

¹⁷ This term comes from the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk.

global waves and national policy cycles but retain their own agendas in relation to marginalized groups. Into this condition come the increasingly fragmented individual time-space paths of the poor themselves (Wolch & Deverteuil, 2001: 150). As part of “urban poverty management”, surveillance maintains social order by monitoring the place-bound poor. The “benevolent gaze” of charitable and welfare-state institutions use chronological case histories, information sharing, computer matching, surveillance of public urban space, income verification programmes, even fingerprinting access to homeless shelters, in order to administer the poor (Parenti, 2003: 151). For these writers, “poverty management” employs particular strategies to control poor people and uphold the status quo (Wolch & Deverteuil, 2001: 150). While cybercities help the “kinetic elite” extend their actions in virtual time and space, poverty management affects the poor in the urban “place” they inhabit.¹⁸

3.1.3 Urban Policing and Criminality

In the context of the preceding macro analyses of urban and cyber space configurations, the following is a specific discussion of surveillance technologies in the city with particular emphasis on the police apparatus.

As citizens navigate public space their actions are captured on a network of screens, recorded and analysed. Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV) are the most prominent means of surveillance in urban spaces, but as technologies proliferate, they form a “web” of monitoring that is pervasive and intensive (Foucault, 1977: 224; Lyon, 1994; McCahill, 2002; Parenti, 2003; Staples, 1997). Citizens use credit cards and driver's licences to legitimise identity, while mobile phones, speed cameras and surveillance satellites keep tabs on movement and microphones listen in (Brin, 1998; Garfinkel, 2000; Parenti, 2003). In totally surveilled cities like London, it is

¹⁸ The main aspect of Parenti's argument is that in an individualistic society that denies the true causes of poverty (low wages and structural unemployment) while simultaneously defining people according to their genetics, habits and behaviours, the poor are systematically examined and measured with the ultimate goal of blaming them. For Parenti, all of this is part of a wider project of stigmatising welfare recipients and demonising the poor. Monitoring projects, launched in the name of “efficiency” and “savings”, usually save very little money and in some cases cost more to implement than the older programmes (Fried, 1993 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 168).

increasingly difficult to hide from watchful cameras, meaning anonymity is arguably impossible (Clarke, 1994; McCahill, 2002). Monitoring technologies may be owned and funded by the state (including police and councils) or by private organisations such as retail businesses. The private and public sector often work in tandem to surveil city streets. Local curfews implemented by police combine CCTV with the use of private security guards to restrict the movement of certain social groups (Davis, 1992b). At times, surveillance of urban space intersects with workplace monitoring,¹⁹ and with military technology such as nightscopes and infrared technology. All the while, surveillance technologies are becoming smaller, less obvious, more powerful, intensely networked and increasingly combined with information processing for analysis, comparison and profile building (Davis, 1992b: 253).²⁰

The social impact of saturated surveillance in urban spaces depends on the way it is funded, implemented, used and understood. In this respect high-tech surveillance changes the nature of policing and extends the police apparatus further over social life. Mike Davis (1992) has noted that the dual city requires technologically enabled police forces to take on “paramilitary roles”. As private security forces increasingly conduct traditional domestic policing (guard duty, residential patrol, retail crime), law enforcement agencies concentrate on major crime databases, jail systems and threats of terrorism and street insurgency. Using “spin-offs” from military technology, policing takes on a new “epistemology”, and the traditional “folk” knowledge of specific communities is overruled by “dispersed, mechanized policing” (Davis, 1992b: 251). In the largest American cities, police helicopters are equipped with infra-red cameras that can see heat from a single cigarette, and powerful spotlights which intensify aerial surveillance. Davis argues that when these technologies are

¹⁹ On the road, the ISA or Intelligent Speed Adaptation system developed and tested in Europe is capable of matching messages from a satellite positioning system with a digital map of an area in order to “compare the specific speed limit for the stretch of road the car is on and the actual velocity at which it is being driven”. Potentially used by either police or the employers of trucking firms, the ISA keeps constant tabs on a motorist’s activities. If a driver exceeds the speed limit “the accelerator pedal is designed to resist and vibrate, while an electronic warning sound is emitted and a light flashes on the car’s dashboard” (Moore, 2004). Drivers involved in testing the mechanism complained it interfered with their enjoyment of motoring or added to their daily work stress.

²⁰ For example, Californian police in Redwood City have bugged the entire town for the sound of gunshots. They have eight microphones in a 2.4 km area, each feeding back to police headquarters. Their technology is such that in 45 seconds, they can display the location of the gunshot on a map, within 30 to 60 feet, and they have a 60 to 70 per cent detection rate (Garfinkel, 2000: 120).

coupled with the practice of painting thousands of house roof-tops with identifying street numbers, the aerial view of the city is transformed into a huge police grid (Davis, 1992b: 252).²¹

Back in the early 90's, Davis noted that the 'war on drugs' had expanded the prison sector, and linked police systems with the military aerospace industry through the centralisation of communications. Together, these trends remodelled Los Angeles as a "carceral city" (Davis, 1992b: 253). Now the 'war on drugs' has become 'the war on terror' and the events of September 11th have extended surveillance practices to include prospective monitoring and greater social control over mutual care (Lyon, 2003a: 17). After the terror attacks, the U.S. government rushed to implement technological advancements in biometrics and "smart" (I.D.) cards (Lyon, 2003a: 68). Converging technologies enable identity surveillance to be integrated with behavioural monitoring. For example, airport systems such as Visionic's "FaceIt" combine CCTV with biometrics, comparing the facial characteristics of travellers and airport and airline staff with suspected terrorists (P.R. Newswire, as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 77). In the wake of September 11th police and security organisations have been given greater power to surveil and create massive databases on citizens. Consequently "unobtrusive controls" become more pervasive and are backgrounded with criminology schemes that "re-dramatize" crime as an evil scourge (Garland, 2002 as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 102). At the same time, policing operates virtually and in real time as mobile wireless systems connect law enforcement agencies, police and fire departments (Lyon, 2003a: 69).

As policing changes in nature, so does criminality. In their study of CCTV targeting in the United Kingdom, Norris and Armstrong (1999) have argued that a lack of strict guidelines on whom to monitor causes security firm and police CCTV operators to

²¹ I have discussed Mike Davis' work from a global perspective although it refers specifically to Los Angeles. Although L.A. is certainly at the extreme end of contemporary cities in terms of crime, it also represents the (dystopian) future of Western cities in general. Davis' arguments on law enforcement have proven salient when viewed in light of recent developments in aerial police surveillance. For example, in Ohio during 2003 transportation officials began testing the use of unpiloted aerial vehicles (UAV's) to monitor traffic. Previously the domain of the military battlefield activities, in their current form UAV's are equipped with video and infrared cameras and are intended to help police reach crime or accident scenes more quickly (Kalukin, 2005: 7).

selectively target groups perceived to be deviant.²² Asking individual law enforcement officials to make value judgements about a person's morality highlighted the most over-represented characteristics of those being scrutinised; male, youth and blackness (Norris & Armstrong, 1999: 109). Other likely targets included: anyone running or loitering (even though this rarely led to finding criminal conduct); anyone who appeared to be spatially or temporally out of place (drunks, beggars, the homeless and street vendors); people whose clothing style signalled they were trouble-makers; people who challenged the authority of the camera to watch them; and people who seemed to be trying to conceal their identity. Norris and Armstrong (1999: 111) also found that 36 per cent of people were monitored for "no obvious reason", and that 10 per cent of women were monitored for entirely voyeuristic reasons (as cited in Garfinkel, 2000: 116). Placing this power in the hands of civilian operators is putting enormous faith in their capacity to be fair and without preconceived prejudices. However, as Norris and Armstrong have convincingly shown, this kind of faith leads to a discriminatory gaze based on subjective value judgements. A further example of prejudiced operation of the surveillance gaze is L.A.'s Gang Reporting Evaluation and Tracking database of suspected gang members (GREAT). In April 1992, District Attorney Ira Reiner announced that GREAT contained fully 47 per cent of the country's young black men. Many of these "gang members" had never been arrested and were identified simply on the basis of appearance, specifically "baggy pants, red or blue clothes" (Berger, 1992 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 176). This example highlights the shift from simple monitoring to prospective surveillance in the attempt to predict who will break the law in the future.

Apart from concerns about the role of police and the changing nature of criminality, there are some practical issues to consider, namely abuse of surveillance guidelines and "function creep". Often monitoring technologies are installed for legitimate reasons but are badly policed and therefore lend themselves to illegitimate use. The American Civil Liberties Union reports that police in Detroit and Florida have used

²² Between May 1995 and April 1996, Norris and Armstrong studied the behaviour of CCTV operators in three major metropolitan areas. They observed 592 hours of monitoring by 25 different police, private security guard and civilian operators. Based on the time a monitor lingered on a subject, incidents involved and the appearance of the surveilled, Norris and Armstrong identified 888 instances of "targeted surveillances". These instances contained data on 711 directly targetted individuals (as well as their race, approximate age, sex, appearance) and 966 subjects who were the second, third or fourth person in a group being surveilled (Norris & Armstrong, 1999: 96-97).

CCTV to stalk personal foes, political opponents and young women (ACLU, 2002 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 112). Norris and Armstrong revealed that British police developed strategies to avoid being caught on CCTV themselves and would routinely signal camera operators with a hand gesture to avoid being caught on camera while dealing with a suspect (as cited in Smithsimon, 2003: 43). Many of the functions of the FBI, CIA and other government intelligence agencies are legitimate, but history is littered with cases of abuse and corruption. Watergate, congressional hearings and information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act have revealed an “indefensible pattern of abuse, that if allowed to continue, threatens the existence of democratic institutions themselves” (Curry, 1988: 8).²³

Similarly, “function creep” occurs when surveillance is implemented to fight serious crime but expands to encompass petty crimes. For example, the ComTrak system deployed by New Jersey police monitors “low to no risk juveniles” in a manner that allows them to select and programme zones where young people can and can’t go at given times (Rimbach, 1998 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 174). As police experiment with high-tech surveillance systems – such as the GPS-enabled wristbands and periodic polygraph tests (trialled in Orange County California) – controlling and pervasive surveillance moves from the “worst of the worse” to include a raft of crimes (“Satellites may shed light on parolees”, 2001 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 174). As advocates for GPS tagging have trumpeted, the technology could “eventually monitor millions of offenders, even small-time burglars and juvenile vandals” (“Satellite monitoring”, 2002 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 174). The effect is to “define down deviance” and to blur the lines between the prison and the increasingly surveilled urban street (Parenti, 2003: 174). As Nelken & Andrews (2003) argue in their discussion of genetic surveillance (the collection and storage of human tissue for DNA analysis), biometric surveillance has “crept” from the justice sector, policing

²³ Markoff (1998) cites the example of research by the University of California at Berkeley, where they cracked the world’s most popular encryption method for digital cellular telephones in order to prove that the GSM standard had been deliberately weakened to allow government surveillance. The research showed that government agencies could potentially use the flaw to decode voice conversations at impressive speeds.

and prison to areas like immigration screening, workplaces, the commercial sector and insurance risk analysis (Lyon, 2002b: 105).²⁴

A number of authors, most notably Fyfe and Bannister (1998) and Norris and Armstrong (1999) have shown that the evidence for CCTV initiated crime reduction ability is largely inconclusive. Street camera surveillance is presented by officials as a kind of “silver bullet” which can “provide utopian solutions to complex social problems surrounding crime and disorder” (Marx, 1992 as cited in McCahill, 2002: xiv).²⁵ In London, which has the highest density of CCTV in the world, camera installation did originally coincide with declining crime rates, but this trend subsequently reversed (Parenti, 2003: 116). Funded for the most part by local councils and community groups, surveillance is often implemented without reflection upon the socio-cultural circumstances of criminal offending. Instead, surveillance initiatives form part of a feel good-solution that makes councils look decisive and proactive. These examples suggest the continuing push for surveillance by city authorities has “more to do with a political and economic agenda than with carefully considered crime fighting strategies” (Fyfe & Bannister, 1998: 257).

Urban surveillance practices also have implications for the justice sector.²⁶ Monitoring brings with it the reversal of the “innocent until proven guilty”, principle, as citizens are surveilled before there is even any evidence against them. Similarly, the basic use of a CCTV camera (panning and zooming) along with the practice of scrutinising people in public areas with facial recognition software would require probable cause justification in other police activities. If computer-matching does

²⁴ Another example of function creep occurs in New York, San Diego and Washington, D.C. where cameras at bus stops and intersections are used to ticket illegally parked vehicles as well as to catch people speeding or running red lights. But after the San Diego court reviewed data from the cameras, it threw out hundreds of traffic tickets: the information showed that accidents at monitored intersections actually increased as the city’s vendor company (Lockheed Martin IMS) had shortened the yellow-light time to capture more offenders (Smithsimon, 2003: 45).

²⁵ Of course, as the recent events in London have shown, CCTV can be very helpful in *identifying* criminals, particularly when their crimes are rare but extreme (such as terrorism, murder or rape). This does not detract, however, from the fact that CCTV has dubious results in decreasing routine crime, even though it is sold on the basis of prevention and increased safety (Norris & Armstrong, 1999: 205-206).

²⁶ Although this is certainly a larger issue than urban surveillance, it comports with the argument built in this section that urban public space is important to nourish democracy. As Parenti (2003) has pointed out, politics and political liberty happen in everyday spaces, at schools, universities and in the street, born out of what Habermas calls “face to face interaction” (as cited in Herman, 1997: 1).

select an identity, it is up to the subject to prove their innocence, rather than the state to prove their guilt (Smithsimon, 2003: 43-45). From a sociological perspective, the relationship between surveillance and justice is multi-faceted and at times mutually-constitutive. In 2001, the total prison population of California numbered 290,000. Of this number, 40 per cent were serving their time in the community, rather than under the direct supervision of the department. Parenti remarks that in the eyes of the prison bureaucrat, the parolees, those under house arrest and actual inmates all formed part of “the system” which continued beyond the gates of the prison and into the community (Parenti, 2003: 170).²⁷ Viewed in this light, house-arrest incarceration is an extension of, rather than an alternative to, the prison system (Coleman, 1990 as cited in Parenti, 2003: 173). Inmates of this kind wear electronic ankle monitors connected to satellite-based GPS tracking systems and are watched by CCTV remotely, in real time (Parenti, 2003: 170). William Staples argues that “community care” is actually a metaphor for a bureaucratic desire to insert the power to judge and punish further into society at large: “deinstitutionalising is not so much about the offender, but the disciplinary procedures and mechanisms of the prison” (Staples, 1997: 36). Drug testing, electronic monitoring, total-CCTV housing, curfews and “surprise” visits seek to produce conformity by capturing individuals in organisational webs so that their “bodies, behaviours, movements and actions can be monitored and controlled through a structure of bureaucratic accountability and disciplinary ritual”. This is what Foucault might have called instance of the “swarming of disciplinary mechanisms” (Foucault, 1977: 211).

3.1.4 Public Spheres and the Cosmopolitan City

So far I have argued that surveillance in urban spaces is unequally deployed, dubious in its efficiency and reflects prevailing relations of power (though funding and implementation). These developments filter down to the lived experiences of citizens in monitored public spaces. Pertinent issues here include: the emotional landscape of the city (Ellin, 1997; Flusty, 1997; Fyfe & Bannister, 1998; Smithsimon, 2003); civic

²⁷ This information was obtained during an interview conducted by Christian Parenti with Russ Heimrich of the Californian Department of Corrections.

understanding of what it means to be “in public” (Garfinkel, 2000); and the nature of civil disobedience (Parenti, 2003: 211). On a collective scale, practices of surveillance work to alter subjectivity as citizens internalise the discipline of its unwavering gaze. This re-shapes the culture of public spaces, to the detriment of democracy (Parenti, 2003: 120).²⁸

The saturation of surveillance within urban spaces has fundamentally altered what it means to be “in public”. In the past, being in public was “effectively private”, unknowable and unrecorded, now being in public is truly “public”, in the visible sense (Garfinkel, 2000: 93). Sociologist Steven Flusty has called monitored space “jittery space”, arguing that the presence of a video camera puts citizens in a state of apprehension and self-consciousness whenever they are out in public (Flusty, 1997: 49). Totally surveilled space creates an atmosphere of eligibility, based on status or standards of behaviour.²⁹ As “undesirables” pick up on the message that they are unwelcome, social groups are divided and the potential for interaction and “synthesis” in public space is curtailed (Flusty, 1997 as cited in Smithsimon, 2003: 44).³⁰

Fyfe and Bannister (1998) argue that saturated surveillance damages the “cultural dimension” of the city. A cosmopolitan city has an emotional landscape of “vibrant heterogeneity”; confusion and colourful anarchy is a “disorderly and painful event” but one which enriches city inhabitants by forcing them to engage with “otherness” beyond their own self-imposed boundaries (Fyfe & Bannister, 1998: 264).³¹

Surveillance, particularly its capacity for prospective monitoring, restrains the natural commotion and humanness of urban space. For Nan Ellin (1997) surveillance-saturated spaces are part of a modern tendency to build an “architecture of fear”.

²⁸ Davis calls this process the destruction of an “Olmstedian vision of public space”. After the Draft Riot of 1863, Frederick Law Olmsted designed Manhattan’s Central Park as a social safety-valve, which mixed classes and ethnicities in common activities (Davis, 1992b: 227).

²⁹ For example, in *Lockdown America*, Parenti (1999: 149) argues that: “Immigrants will fear the law more intensely knowing that INS/police systems are automatic, infallible and instantaneous. The electronic dragnet will force internalization of the INS gaze, causing them to keep to themselves, stay out of sight, and steer clear of politics”.

³⁰ In response to the objection that CCTV remains in the background and can be easily ignored, New York Community Service Society lawyer Molly Smithsimon has pointed out that citizens cannot choose to avoid a surveilled area if they are unaware of its location. Unlike simply observing something in plain sight, a CCTV subject cannot stare back at the electronic eye to discourage the privacy intrusion. For camera operators, CCTV makes it is easier to single someone out, and to do so unnoticed (Smithsimon, 2003: 44).

Historically, modern urban architects have sought to control the disorder of industrialisation, mass immigration and multiculturalism by turning inward to produce fortress-like buildings, rather than confront the social challenges themselves. More recently, fear of the “Other” has manifested itself in the fantasy-world architecture of an idealized past. For Ellin, gated-communities, privatism and group cohesion all represent a “theme-parking” of cities and the creation of “defensive spaces” rather than living places (Ellin, 1997: 45). For David Lyon, surveillance may not actually create inequality of access, but certainly works to reinforce it. As areas are constituted through the politics of suspicion, certain areas become no-go for non-consuming classes, or particular ethnic groups. But in controlling the vibrant chaos which makes the city potentially frightening, urban areas also lose their capacity for “cross-fertilization” of diverse customs and practices (Lyon, 2004: 304).³² More worryingly, surveillance undermines the ability of different social groups to interact and form new cultures and alternative ways of thinking. From a neo-Habermasian perspective, this means surveillance also diminishes the capacity of popular forces “occasionally strong enough to upset entrenched status quos” (Flusty, 1997; Smithsimon, 2003: 47).

These two issues flow into Christian Parenti’s concern that surveillance restricts civil disobedience. Increasingly ubiquitous surveillance technologies are the manifestation of a desire on the part of authority to create obedient citizens who trust in the infallibility of state power. But as Parenti (2003) points out, not all laws are rational, benevolent and just. Anti-segregation and universal suffrage movements have shown us that at times when the law reproduces racism, exploitation, environmental devastation or general brutality it should be resisted fervently, not obeyed trustingly. The right to “illegality” has played an important part in some of the (now) most revered rebellions in history. The obvious examples are the peaceful protests of Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr, but even the simple act of defiance by

³¹ In order to make this point, Fyfe & Bannister are drawing on Richard Sennett’s work *The Uses of Disorder* (1970).

³² In this section I have outlined the arguments of authors who believe surveillance practices are part of the flows that divide the local and global in cities. But as David Lyon quite rightly points out, surveillance flows also connect dispersed groups in the local environment. For example, the monitoring of public space may protect ethnic groups from racial attack. The London Borough of Newham, for example, has installed a Mandrake facial recognition system to curb racial attacks by known offenders (Lyon, 2004: 303). But as Norris and Armstrong (1999) have shown, CCTV systems in the UK can also be used to unfairly target certain racial groups.

Rosa Parks³³ spawned a protest movement. The impact of ubiquitous surveillance practices on the potential for political civil disobedience and upon the likely fulfilment of its objectives can only be a matter for speculation. But, often the only way to get a constitutional test of a law is to break it (Parenti, 2003: 211). This endeavour is arguably more difficult under total surveillance, particularly in the post-September 11th climate of fear, suspicion and military secrecy.

3.2 Intelligence, Security and Democracy

Having discussed the role of the state surveillance domestically, I will now turn to the international context. The relationship between monitoring and national security is played out both internally and abroad. The stakes are much higher than in the workplace or in business, since intelligence gathering concerns the power of nations on a global scale.

The word “intelligence”, like “surveillance”, has no fixed meaning. Rather the conception of intelligence depends on who spies on whom, for what reasons and to what ends (Hager, 1996: 14).³⁴ This section begins with an historical account of the relationship between surveillance, intelligence and power as a means for perpetuating prevailing relations of power. I then examine how intelligence has been systematically used by elite groups to safeguard their exclusive power internally and overseas. This situation has been, paradoxically, both challenged and consolidated by globalization and recent proliferations of international terrorism. National governments have lost power to transnational global conglomerates and supra-

³³ On December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus to a white man, triggering the 381-day Montgomery bus boycott, and finally, the Supreme Court's ruling in November 1956 that segregation on transportation is unconstitutional (Albin, 1996).

³⁴ “Intelligence” is the “acquisition, sorting, retrieval, analysis, interpretation, and protection” of information deemed “sensitive” by the state (Whitaker, 1999: 5). By “intelligence gathering” I refer to the surveillance conducted by the state, primarily in the interests of maintaining national security. This includes national militaries, which conduct technical intelligence (technit) gathering such as espionage, counter-espionage and anti-terrorist covert operations. The goal of all military surveillance is intelligence, however this is not always achieved as information does not necessarily produce knowledge (Davies, 2002: 70). I refer also to governmental organisations which are related to the military but which conduct communications (comint) intelligence on a global scale, such as the Central Intelligence Agency (U.S.) or M15 (U.K.).

national regulatory institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation. At the same time, the September 11th tragedies, which were in their own way a symbol of a globalized world, have enabled governments in the United States and elsewhere to exploit popular concerns and fears about national security. My focus here is on the United States, where intelligence gathering is technologically and financially concentrated. More importantly, studying the surveillance tendencies of the U.S. reflects a change in political climate that has been sweeping the world (particularly in the West) since September 11th. The U.S. is both leading and producing a rise in surveillance saturation across all areas of society, but particularly in intelligence surveillance (global and domestic) as part of the hunt for terrorists in the “war on terror” (Lyon, 2003a).

3.2.1 Nation-states, Surveillance and the Citizen

Surveillance is a manifestation of modernity and the rise of the nation-state. As Whitaker outlines, the nation-state monopolises the use of violence over a particular territory, administers large populations, enforces law and order, and allocates resources through taxation (1999: 40). The state also forms commercial, diplomatic and military relationships with other states as well as facilitating the private accumulation of capital within and between national borders. In order to perform these various functions, a nation state surveils itself and its citizenry. Together with the ability to control individual and group behaviour which challenges the status quo, the successful administration of these tasks legitimates state power (McMahon, 2002: 3).³⁵ In this context, the state privileges particular relationships over others. In Weberian terms, the “rational administrative apparatus”, and the bureaucratic “iron cage” enable the construction of the surveillance-based state.

³⁵ From a liberal democratic perspective a pact between citizens and the state is entered into, whereby subjects allow their rights to be circumscribed by the state which may use controlled violence in given circumstances for the common good (policing, punishment). In the interests of sustaining its power, however, the state continually attempts to over ride this pact by separating administration from politics, thereby rendering fewer of its activities directly accountable to democratic voters (Whitaker, 1999: 42).

The hierarchical structure of a Weberian bureaucracy accompanies the tendencies of state surveillance as its specialised departments facilitate “the collective rational marshalling of information” (Whitaker, 1999: 44). However, bureaucracy may reach beyond pure administration towards control for its own sake. Literary antecedents like Orwell’s *1984* and Kafka’s *The Trial* encapsulate the tendency for totalitarianism at the expense of individual autonomy. For Whitaker, these books represent the “architectural skeleton of modern power” (1999: 28). Their dystopian portrayals no longer reflect contemporary society, but reveal the all-encompassing potential of surveillance and the social training and discipline that is integral to, but invisible within modern life (Whitaker, 1999: 28). Although constrained to an extent by constitutions, appeal processes and notions of civil liberties, liberal democracies seek to mobilise knowledge in the service of power by strategic management of (panoptic) information (Whitaker, 1999: 29).

The power of the state is both legitimated and facilitated through surveillance. At the same time the state institutes surveillance technologies and mechanisms which flow into wider society. Following Foucault (1974), Whitaker argues that panoptic tendencies swarm from their centralized origin outward into the rest of society (1999: 44). Schools, workplaces, welfare and social security all function like dispersed panopticons, which can be overlapping and competitive. Surveillance and bureaucratic reasoning spread “rhizomically”, at times operating beyond the direct control of its owners (Lyon, 2003b: 162). This new decentered-panopticon functions through the provision of material incentives and disincentives. Whitaker notes “people tend to participate voluntarily because they see positive benefits from participation, and are less likely to perceive disadvantages or threats” (Whitaker, 1999: 140). As well as being control mechanisms in their own right, the panoptic tendencies of policing and rule enforcement institutions generate information which can be utilised by the state (Whitaker, 1999: 41). As this process unfolds, acquiescence to surveillance becomes normalized as well as being enforced through underlying sanctions which encourage compliance with the state (Whitaker, 1999: 43).

Predicated on hostility among nations, intelligence is an integral panoptic arm of state surveillance (Whitaker, 1999: 10). All states have an “insecurity” about their own

citizens, which is invariably manifested in the need to search, monitor and quantify real, perceived or potential enemies. Military intelligence is the primary means for ensuring national security and is used to repress dissenters and control “turbulent” populations in states of every ideology (Whitaker 1999: 20). Because intelligence generates control, while also operating as an industry, it is central to the formation of the nation state.³⁶ From the early eighteenth century, and the accelerating technology and innovations in military weapons since that time, intelligence has facilitated the “jealous hoarding” by nation states of geography, autonomy, and security through military power (Whitaker, 1999: 5-6).³⁷ In the twentieth century intelligence become increasingly systematic and bureaucratic in nature. The intelligence industry is now a mature one; organised around advanced technologies and based on accumulated scientific knowledge, it is subject to the degree of concentration and privatisation that accompanies a fully-fledged industry (McMahon, 2002: 125). This development has become more pronounced in the United States as the country has moved from the economic and social reasoning of the “welfare state” to the “warfare state” as the justification and rampart of national security (Castells, 1989: 233).³⁸

Most routine national-security centred intelligence operates through risk assessment (Whitaker, 1999). Based on the assumption that “perfect information” (Winseck, 2002) exists and has the power to reduce uncertainty, democratic liberal states develop extensive webs of surveillance in order to isolate the enemy. Ostensibly, risk-based screening is an objective rational technology, similar to criminal identification. But unlike other types of assessment, intelligence gathering involves a high degree of prospection as to whether a person has the *intention* as well as the capability to do

³⁶ This role is particularly pronounced in the state of Israel. As Katz (1992: 1) has argued, the “tumultuous” history of the region has meant military intelligence is one of the veritable building blocks of country.

³⁷ Implicit in this critique are the insights of Benedict Anderson (1991), that nations are essentially ideologically “imagined communities”, based on an interior-exterior distinction which brings power to its controllers.

³⁸ Castells argued that this change in focus occurred during the last quarter of the twentieth century and involved several factors. Firstly, the U.S. experienced a political crisis both domestically (Watergate) and internationally: Vietnam, Iran, loss of political control in Africa and South America, the economic competition from Japan and the (short-term) technological parity achieved by the Soviet Union. For Castells, these factors were met with a display of might by the U.S. military in which “the greatest power on earth flexed its muscles to show, in a responsible yet determined manner, that it was ready and willing to engage in sharp confrontations to preserve its status and power” (Castells, 1989: 233). Secondly, the growing budget deficit caused by pro-business tax cuts has been countered by defence spending to substitute for the demand and jobs previously created by social welfare spending (Castells, 1989: 236).

something (Davies, 2002: 72). In this way, risk screening is innately ideological, subjective and arbitrary as well as being framed by a particular view of whose security deserves to be protected (Lyon, 2003a: 25-26; Whitaker, 1999).³⁹ Security risk assessment is a moral judgement on a citizen's way of life – their opinions, associations and expressions. Most importantly, such a judgement includes identifiable “weaknesses” that might make an individual vulnerable to hostile elements. Whitaker argues that working beneath the ether is “a game in which innocence is beside the point”; what is important are the neat and serviceable dossiers which, as Weber argued, serve primarily to bring power to their possessors (Whitaker, 1999: 25-26).⁴⁰ A preoccupation with the logic of risk assessment dates from the U.S.-Russian conflict of the second half of the twentieth century. Because the Cold War was conducted primarily through espionage and intelligence gained from high-tech monitoring, it “prompted the massive expansion of international surveillance systems” as well as a new way of looking at security threats. Since the Cold War, security agencies have sought to manage risk through intensified surveillance on the basis that maximum security is both desirable and obtainable by high-tech, total surveillance (Lyon, 2003a: 44).

Risk assessment is accelerated through digitalization, new technological innovations and information sharing systems. One example can be seen in the CAPAS and CAPAS II software implemented in airports after the September 11th attacks. CAPAS profiles likely terror suspects by combining data from the FBI, the National Crime Information Centre (NCIC), state department databases, the IRS, Social Security Administration, State Motor Vehicle and Corrections Department, credit bureaux and bank records. The software has the ability to create a “threat index” which in turn allows the authorities to single out individuals and further check and scan their bags thoroughly (Borin, 2002 as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 133). Anticipatory and pre-emptive, this type of surveillance constructs identity rather than simply establishing it, and

³⁹ While risk evaluation must operate within the legal system, it needs to be covert and (preferably) not subject to judicial review. This means military intelligence is one of the types of surveillance that is most Orwellian, as “the security apparatus takes on more or less the attributes of a secret state within the state” (Whitaker, 1999: 22).

⁴⁰ This is evident in the case of Owen Lattimore, a leading China scholar at John Hopkins University, who was wrongly named by Senator Joe McCarthy as the top Soviet spy in America. Upon clearing his name, Lattimore noted that the FBI and other agencies had built the supposed-him from a dossier of a “man who might have existed”, highlighting that for the security state, the data shadow can become the most important element of an individual (Lattimore, 1950 as cited in Whitaker, 1999: 26).

works prophetically to determine future events. Furthermore, the binary classifications of safe-dangerous effectively penetrate the corporeal world of the “untrustworthy” (Irma van der Ploeg, 1999 as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 99).

3.2.2 National (In)security and Surveillance

Whitaker has argued that intelligence, contrary to its ostensible function of increasing security, actually makes governments (and therefore citizens) more insecure (Whitaker, 1999). Since the mid-twentieth century high-tech intelligence has offered increasingly invasive probing into the most closely guarded enemy secrets, while “seductively but deceitfully” promising to protect its own (Whitaker, 1999: 7). A self-perpetuating exponential growth of military technology occurred in various states, driven by the fear of a “first-strike”⁴¹ and requiring sophisticated technology to intercept and counteract external “threats” (Kennedy, Baker, Friedman, & Miller, 1983).⁴²

Fear of the enemy “Other” overseas is reflected in insecurity about internal terror threats at home (Whitaker, 1999). Arguing from the premise adopted by critical theorists in the Foucauldian tradition, Anthony Burke describes nationalism as a repressive project, predicated on the “prolonged act of forgetting” historical context. Desire for security becomes a political condition built out of fear of the “Other” (Burke, 2001: 266). War and terrorism are “re-dramatised” as fundamentally moralistic issues where “evil Others” are excluded and have no calls on our care or understanding (Garland, 2001 as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 103). Such rhetoric seduces citizens into the “dubious deal” of trading civil liberties for security; an arrangement

⁴¹ Kennedy et al, (1983: 15) argues that since the 1950’s and originating in Hiroshima-Nagasaki, the concept of a “first strike” or surprise nuclear attack has dominated international security debate.

⁴² Surveillance critics point to the Cold War as the quintessential example of the ability of intelligence to perpetuate conflict, rather than resolve it. Mary Kaldor (1990) has called the Cold War “the imaginary war” referring to the way in which it was conducted through the “lies, counter lies and counter counter lies” of the intelligence agencies of the two sides, creating a “veritable wilderness of mirrors” (as cited in Whitaker 1999: 11).

which places more trust and power with authority (Lyon, 2003a: 1).⁴³ Libicki (2003: 115) has argued that border control is rooted in the self versus non-self distinction; a “psychologically compelling” construct which comforts citizens, but fails to protect them as it serves only to put distance between the “us” and the “them” rather than confronting the root causes of security threats. In this respect Prins argues that few labels are as “value-laden” as “terrorism”.⁴⁴ As “terror” has been used to describe such a wide range of acts, it no longer has any coherent meaning, yet the word has proven itself to be an immensely powerful label when employed by the “richest and safest” people in the world (Prins, 2002: 63). On this level, power both includes and excludes physical force. As citizens lend their support to a definition of “terrorism” it becomes concrete and allows for accompanying legislative policy. Consequently, those who are perceived as threats to the status quo, whether it be by speaking out, acting in a way deemed suspect, or simply having the wrong ethnicity, become effectively criminalised through surveillance (Lyon, 2003a: 54).

The inculcation of fear associated with value-laden definitions of the “Other” leads to saturated surveillance in urban spaces and airports as well as greater capacity for electronic information sharing among official agencies (Lyon, 2003a). At the same time governments preoccupied with risk assessment adopt a managerial focus, which denies the political origins of terror and seduces citizens into seeing safety and security as commodities which need to be paid for (Garland 2001, as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 103). This in turn allows military technology and militaristic prerogatives to filter into civilian institutions and civil society (Block & Fields, 2004). In fact, the massive databases of the corporate sector and police originated in military intelligence systems (Haggerty & Ericsson, 1999 as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 119). Military intelligence agencies, corporations and the police all engage in the purposeful accumulation of information for the sake of control through strategy and targeting. Their databases are self-perpetuating; as more leads emerge from more

⁴³ In order to show how fear can be harnessed for control, Anthony Burke cites the example of the Australian government’s mobilisation of the public perception of the “Other” in order to build support for the Vietnam War. Officials drew on residual fear of a Japanese invasion (left over from World War II) in order to create a generalised sense of panic about (Asian) communism. This was designed to legitimate Australia’s involvement in Vietnam (Burke, 2001: 307).

⁴⁴ See for example the case of Mordechai Vanunu who went public on Israel’s nuclear program and is referred to as a “traitor” by Katz, but is named a “whistle-blower” by U.S. and British news organisations (Katz 1992: 2).

sources databases and dossiers grow exponentially (Whitaker, 1999: 123). As police and military databases resemble each other, their functions overlap, such as in the use by U.S. police departments of the National Security Association's (NSA) Carnivore system in order to prepare for political protests (Lyon, 2003a: 120). Since September 11th national security policy in liberal democracies has become increasingly militarised. Official rhetoric after the attacks drew suspect links between increased CCTV in urban spaces and guarding against terror (Wood, 2001).⁴⁵ Governments encouraged citizens to report on each other's "suspicious" behaviour, while intelligence organisations shrouded their policies in secrecy and watched people covertly. More worryingly, practices associated with military tribunals, such as detaining citizens without trial, knowledge of charges or access to a lawyer, have penetrated non-military situations (Lyon, 2003a: 10).

However, the relationship between intelligence organisations and governments is sometimes an uneasy one. Ex-Special-Forces-Colonel John Hughes-Wilson describes intelligence agencies as "medieval barons", feuding among themselves and jostling for "power and influence at the Presidential court". Because of this, he posits, it is impossible for intelligence agencies to be properly co-ordinated, no matter how much information they collect (Hughes-Wilson, 2004: 401). Sharing information in order to target specific suspects goes against the inherently bureaucratic nature of most intelligence organisations.⁴⁶ The *raison d'être* of the big agencies "rests upon keeping their secret pearls safely locked up and only sharing them discreetly to well known, regular customers behind closed doors" (Hughes-Wilson, 2004: 403). As such, agencies have become more interested in their own survival through the clever collection of information and the extension of surveillance powers. This may lead to

⁴⁵ Critics have noted that in the wake of September 11, public perception that the proliferation of CCTV in public spaces can prevent terror attacks has increased (Lyon, 2003a). However, as Canadian federal privacy commissioner George Radwanski said in his 2001 report, "even if New York City had been endowed with so many cameras as to turn the whole city into a giant TV studio, this would have done nothing to prevent the terrorists from crashing aircraft into the World Trade Centre" (Wood, 2001). The case of the London bombers (2005) has further proven that although CCTV in public places may be able to identify terrorists, it is not able to prevent their attacks.

⁴⁶ Some writers have even argued that the intelligence estimates have been made by individuals who work outside the bureaucratic system. Kennedy et al. (1983: 17) note the examples of Major General J.F.C. Fuller of Britain and Colonel Charles de Gaulle of France who were both trouble makers, but gathered crucial intelligence from their countries.

incorrect interpretations of risk or the avoidance of the real needs of national security⁴⁷ (Hughes-Wilson, 2004: 416).

For their part governments have tried to force intelligence agencies to “spin” information for political purposes,⁴⁸ or have ignored intelligence that clashes with ideological convictions or given policy priorities. A recent example of the politicisation of intelligence can be found in the collision of interests between the British Government’s public relations office (led by Alistair Campbell) and official U.K. intelligence agencies. Intelligence, ideally, is supposed to be impartial and objective, so that governments can make decisions in the public interest. News management on the other hand wants facts that can be spun to create the best public image possible. This manipulation of the available intelligence information led to the public misrepresentation of the threat posed by Iraq (Hughes-Wilson 1999: 409-411). Joined by U.S. president George Bush’s willingness to embrace inconclusive intelligence on Iraq’s nuclear capabilities, the net result was a controversial war with uncertain results (Barstow, Broad, & Gerth, 2004; Hughes-Wilson, 2004).

As with all areas of surveillance, military intelligence can be a resource for individuals who may be driven by incompetence, greed and other forms of self interest.⁴⁹ A more pressing issue however, is the possibility of systemic abuse of gathered information by intelligence agencies themselves. Richard Curry has pointed out that although the CIA, FBI and other intelligence agencies throughout the world have legitimate functions, they are accompanied by an “indefensible pattern of abuse”. Such abuse has been revealed in the United States by Watergate, various congressional hearings and information obtained by journalists under the Freedom of Information Act (Curry, 1988: 8). Abuse also emerges out of the definition and

⁴⁷ Former US President Eisenhower instigated an “open skies” policy with Russia during the Cold War so that the two superpowers might photograph each other’s military and industrial facilities. The move originated in Eisenhower’s experience that intelligence agencies “routinely exaggerate any foreign menace, partly through institutional self-interest or habitual paranoia...” He was therefore able to curb cycles of threat escalation (Brin 1998: 310).

⁴⁸ Hughes-Wilson (1999) argues that the tragedies of Pearl Harbour, Tet, Yom Kippur and the Falklands all involved moments in which intelligence was ignored, misunderstood or “spun” by generals and politicians alike. The author also cites J. Edgar Hoover’s “hands off the mafia” policies and Kissinger’s “duplicitous assessments” of Cambodia, China and Vietnam, as other intelligence assessments that were primarily political in nature (Hughes-Wilson 1999: 412).

exercise of law. From a human rights perspective, Guantanamo Bay is a pertinent example,⁵⁰ but in the prevailing post-September 11th climate of suspicion, the altruistic acts of Muslims have also come under scrutiny and dissenting academics have lost their jobs (Lyon, 2003a: 54). “National Security” is also a traditional excuse for monitoring the political left. For example, CCTV may be used to monitor political demonstrations, not just crime. During the April 2000 protests against the World Bank and the IMF in Washington DC, a live feed was sent from cameras to the Metropolitan Police Department. This was then pooled with information from the FBI and District of Columbia school system (Kalukin, 2005: 7).⁵¹

As I have argued in this section, “national security”, itself a contested construct has systematically been used in service of elite and powerful interests. In particular, value-laden definitions of “terrorist” and fear of the enemy “Other”, although partially legitimate, also provide a handle for state agencies to perpetuate asymmetrical control of information and resources. These tendencies are furthered on an international scale through the extension of global information sharing networks.

3.2.3 Global Networks and Policing

Technological developments in surveillance networking enable a disturbing global extension of uncontrollable, intelligence-driven surveillance practices. The relationship between intelligence and technology is symbiotic. Intelligence imperatives drive ICT advancements, which in turn, transform intelligence gathering capability itself (Whitaker, 1999: 17). In this way, satellites and Global Positioning Systems construct supra-territorial surveillance networks, but are also a product of the

⁴⁹ The motives behind the actions of a double-crossing agent can only be guessed at, but arguably include greed. For example, the infamous double agent Aldrich Ames was paid \$1.8 million by the Russians during the Cold War and promised a country apartment when he retired (Whitaker 1999: 14).

⁵⁰ See Schneider (2004) for a good discussion of legal issues arising from detention at Guantanamo Bay.

⁵¹ An infamous New Zealand example is the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) break-in and theft of Australia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) activist Aziz Choudry’s computer (Hubbard, 1997). The case of Ahmed Zaoui, an Algerian asylum seeker and former member of the democratically elected FIS (Front Islamique du Salut) is also a case of using national security to justify unnecessary secrecy. Beginning in December 2002, Zaoui was detained in Auckland without trial after the SIS issued a “security risk certificate” against him (Barton, 2004).

globalizing tendencies of surveillance itself. In 2002 there were 24 satellites in orbit each using long distance, microwave radio relays to intercept up to 20,000 simultaneous phone calls from across the globe. Satellites are not yet able to see through concrete structures, but can use radar to see through cloud cover and construct high-resolution pictures deciphering detail down to one foot long. Together with GPS, satellites pinpoint exact locations of objects based on latitude, longitude and grid references. This represents an unprecedented capacity to digitally transmit and analyse vast amounts of information global information (Davies, 2002; Landau, 2003: 119; Ridelson, 1985 as cited in Whitaker, 1999: 15).⁵² Satellites both replace and build on existing intelligence technology. Air reconnaissance was originally done by V-2 utility aircraft but has been partially replaced by the ability of satellites to recover images digitally and in real time. Stealth helicopters and fixed-wing support aircraft use reconnaissance cameras, infrared photography and heat sensors to trace the movement and capabilities of particular aircraft (Kennedy et al., 1983: 10).⁵³

On the ground, intelligence surveillance includes wiretapping, code breaking, sophisticated camera lenses and remote tracking devices.⁵⁴ Other instruments include pinhead-sized covert cameras, whisper microphones, the “electronic stethoscope” which listens through walls, and the “Laser Infrometer” which can pick up speech patterns from object vibrations near targeted individuals. Night-vision goggles use infrared image intensifiers, thermal vision and electromagnetic energy to electronically increase the amount of light available (Bennett, 2003: 138; Davies, 2002: 84-86). At sea the U.S. Coast Guard is able to transmit sensor imagery captured remotely by the Hu-25B Air Eye aircraft and sent directly to ground control stations in near real-time. Meanwhile submarines and sub-sea cables monitor enemy actions

⁵² In terms of technology, governments still dominate the space race, but the first commercial satellite was launched in 1989. Today commercial satellites like EOSAT have shutters that can be closed by the U.S. government for national security reasons (Garfinkel, 2000: 101). Although there is certainly a general degree of technological dominance in intelligence equipment by the governments of nation states, the situation is becoming increasingly democratised. For example, for around U.S. \$500 it is now possible to buy a GPS/GSM system which can track individuals to the extent that government technology is capable of (Global Positioning System and Global System for Mobile Telephone networks) (Davies, 2002: 83).

⁵³ At the time of writing, the most advanced warplane in existence is the US’s F/A-22 fighter jet (or “Raptor”) which is able to gather intelligence while it drops “smart bombs” (Weiner, 2004).

⁵⁴ Currently remote tracking devices are fitted to the cars of suspect terrorists and often accompanied by whisper microphones and live video feed. Under development is technology that allows for the car’s speed to be tampered with, and even for its doors to be locked remotely by military personnel using a laptop anywhere in the world (Davies 2002: 85).

below the surface (BRIEFS, 1995).⁵⁵ Collecting intelligence by covert means, or “espionage”, is the job of the elite soldiers of Special Forces units. Examples of these include: the U.S. Special Forces; Britain’s MI5 and MI6 (Military Intelligence 5 and 6), the SAS (Special Air Service) which deal mostly in VIP protection, surveillance and countering terrorist attacks; the German anti-terrorist unit GSG 9; the Israeli A’min (the intelligence branch of the Israeli defence forces), Mossad and Shin Bet (counter intelligence) and the forces set up under the French Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE) (Cavendish, 1997; Davies, 2002; Garfinkel, 2000; Whitaker, 1999).⁵⁶

The technical surveillance capacities of these organisations generate large amounts of data, but this does not necessarily produce workable intelligence. For this reason, surveillance hardware is matched by a plethora of Artificial Intelligence software which sifts information to attempt to distinguish “signals” from “noise”, and produce “intelligence” from “surveillance” (Kennedy et al., 1983: 8; Whitaker, 1999: 15). Security-related agencies compile large databases to profile individuals and manage potential security risks. In the U.S., the FBI use a “Carnivore” system to scan the Internet using dictionaries of suspect words while the NSA’s (National Security Association) petaplex system holds 20 million gigabytes of information. In Europe, the Schengen Information System (SIS) is a police-based data network covering the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean (Lyon, 2003a: 118).

One of the largest surveillance networks is that facilitated by the UKUSA security agreement in communications intelligence. Set up in 1948, the agreement oversees a U.K., U.S.A., Canada, Australia and New Zealand network of ECHELON dictionaries. Using microwave radio relay, sub-sea cables and communication satellites, the network automatically intercepts most of the communications on the planet, using targeted words to compile lists of people who are of “reportable intelligence interest” (Hager, 1996; Campbell, 2000 as cited in Landau, 2003: 123;

⁵⁵ Other areas of military surveillance include using seismic monitors to detect the exact force of underground nuclear weapons tests as well as attempting to monitor bio-terrorism and disease (Whitaker, 1999: 15).

⁵⁶ These groups are supplemented with forces from smaller countries. For example, New Zealand’s Special Air Service Regiment (NZSAS) has particular skills in tracking, and instructs the 22nd SAS, SASR and US Special Forces in this area (Bennett, 2003: vii; Davies, 2002; Katz, 1992; Perry, 1998).⁵⁶

Lyon, 2001: 96).⁵⁷ Apart from legitimate security-related information, the UKUSA partners abused their power for political purposes and conducted commercial espionage. As a former British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) official anonymously told Granada TV's *World in Action* in 1991, the system illegally intercepted every telex that passed through London (Davies, 1991 as cited in Hager, 1996: 51). The GCHQ have also used the ECHELON system to spy on Amnesty International and Christian Aid as well as misused information to facilitate international arms trading (Hager 1996: 53).

New Zealand's ongoing subsidiary status serves to illustrate how the UKUSA agreement "systematically favoured the rich and powerful" (Lyon, 2001: 95). During the late 1980's New Zealanders were led to believe that the country's national security would never be determined by a foreign government, when in fact, this was a period of increasing UKUSA partner integration. Driving this process the NSA had the "supreme" position in the organisation, subsidising the allies, providing the necessary software and even appointing the director of the NZGCSB (Hager, 1996: 41). The NSA then used its power to systematically mislead both the New Zealand government and public about the true nature of the intelligence network, at times involving the country in wars it had publicly denounced (Hager, 1996: 15). While the government was advertising its willingness to instigate friendly relations in the Asia Pacific region, the UKUSA system was providing detailed intelligence information about New Zealand's Pacific neighbours to overseas powers, allowing them to pursue

⁵⁷ Much of this information comes from the work of New Zealand investigative journalist Nicky Hager whose book *Secret Power* (1996) documents the role of New Zealand's Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) in the ECHELON system. Hager used public records and the secret testimonies of GCSB insiders to detail the workings of the international intelligence agency and the role played by a junior partner. He shows how New Zealand's role in the scheme was systematically used in the interests of the US National Security Association and other powerful members of the group, without the knowledge of New Zealand's government. Astonishingly, former Prime Minister David Lange's prologue to *Secret Power* tells how Hager had uncovered things that Lange himself was never told of, despite the fact that he held the Security and Intelligence Portfolio. The former leader noted that this raised "the question of to whom those concerned saw themselves ultimately answerable" (Hager, 1996: 8).

their own interests in the region (Hager, 1996: 202).⁵⁸ Moreover, the fact that ECHELON did not forewarn the New Zealand government about the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior or the 1987 Fiji coup shows that the intelligence information was designed for powerful group members only (Hager, 1996: 237-240).

Supra-territorial surveillance networks such as the UKUSA Comint agreement result from globalization processes as surveillance itself becomes “globalized” (Lyon, 2003a).⁵⁹ At the same time, global intelligence sharing helps construct globalization itself. As nation state governments concede power to transnational corporations, traditional ways of looking at national security are superseded. Nation states network in their own way, forming security alliances which consolidate or break Cold War alliances (Castells, 1989; Lyon, 2001: 89; 2003a: 117).⁶⁰ Meanwhile international networks like Interpol and Europol are strengthened as a result of the creation of a formal global economy which increases the porosity of territorial borders. International policing is also a response to the increasingly global nature of crime itself. Across the planet, police networks not only monitor remotely and in real time, surveilling mass populations, but also to capture known criminal targets (Bigo, 1996 as cited in Lyon, 2001: 100). But as David Lyon argues, this practice also reflects diminished direct relationships between law enforcement agencies and citizens, and a greater reliance on risk aversion. Large databases create a social distance between individuals and institutions, as organisations tend to deal with a person’s data shadow, rather than with them directly (Clarke, 1994: 120). For Lyon, the globalization of police is another way in which contemporary surveillance data is held in “leaky containers”. Backgrounded by the rubric of deregulation and the accompanying outsourcing of activities previously conducted by the state, police data flows operate

⁵⁸ The most disturbing example of this is the case of the intelligence obtained on the small island nation of Kiribati. The island country’s leaders were negotiating a fishing agreement with the Soviet Union – one of the few ways it could become economically independent and stop the abuse of “US fishing boats who had been refusing to recognise its five million square kilometre exclusive economic zone and had been fishing illegally”. Australia and New Zealand UKUSA agencies became alarmed at the idea of a “Russian base” in the South Pacific, despite the large numbers of soviet fishing boats using NZ ports. The agreement between Kiribati and the Russians was dropped after “diplomatic efforts” reliant on the covert information were employed (Hager 1996: 202).

⁵⁹ David Lyon emphasises that surveillance is becoming “globalized” in the sense that there is increased networking of surveillance. He is not suggesting that there is centralized “global surveillance” *per se* in the sense of a “unified panoply of surveillance technologies” that is all-encompassing (Lyon, 2003a: 139).

⁶⁰ Such as the one between the CIA and the Israeli Mossad (Katz, 1992).

transnationally, mixing with intelligence data flows and information from private security companies (Lyon, 2001: 103). As networked policing crosses new boundaries it becomes more like traditional intelligence-gathering webs. At the same time, the two come to resemble each other as their functions overlap, forming increasingly pervasive surveillance webs (Lyon, 2001: 39).

Globalization also expands the meaning of “security”, to incorporate environmental trends, financial activity, ideology and ethnicity. In turn, new ways of thinking about security allows military-type surveillance to become socially embedded and interconnected with other surveillance practices (Jayasuriya, 2002 as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 116). Cold War-type-systems of military surveillance are increasingly used in non-military and commercial contexts.⁶¹ For example, David Lyon (2001: 96) documents how some US government ministries use communications intelligence to spy on other governments during trade negotiations, monitor arms trading and even estimate future commodity price movements. At times, U.S. intelligence agencies have conducted covert commercial espionage on European countries, and monitored the United Nations (Landau, 2003: 123).⁶²

As I have suggested, supra-territorial networks of surveillance entail multilateral commitment but are also underpinned by the imperial interests of the United States.⁶³ During the second half of the twentieth century the U.S.A. has made strategic interventions into other countries, particularly in the developing world. These interventions reflected a growing commitment to “global political policing” often

⁶¹ Large quantities of intelligence data and hardware are now available commercially. For example, aerial photography can be purchased for personal use at www.satellites.com. In turn, ties between the commercial sector and the military are increasing. During the Gulf War for example, the U.S. military was heavily dependent on commercial satellites because of their greater capacity to intercept communications, rather than the nuclear-oriented versions the military used (Kane & Geretz, 1993 as cited in McMahon 2002: 124). Similarly, the NSA has even successfully persuaded Internet service providers Netscape and Microsoft to reduce the security of email software in the United States so they could break codes more easily (Lyon, 2001: 97).

⁶² For example the CIA was recently accused of wiretapping the phone of Dr. Mohammad ElBaradei, chief of the UN nuclear watchdog: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Iran. The UN bureaucrat made enemies of the Bush administration when he cited lack of evidence for the claim that Saddam Hussein had a nuclear arsenal. The Washington Post accused the CIA of attempting to uncover evidence of wrongdoing in order to discredit ElBaradei (Goldenberg, 2004).

⁶³ There is much debate among U.S. and international scholars as to whether the current foreign policy constitutes imperialism or not. For a review of three different perspectives: (Harrison, 2004) or (“Manifest Destiny Warmed Up,” 2003). The aim of this study is to show that US foreign policy is driven by imperialistic tendencies which include a trend toward global policing. Such developments are predicated on the proliferation of extensive surveillance networks.

with disastrous results.⁶⁴ On most occasions the U.S. has undertaken political policing with its own interests firmly at heart. Notoriously, such techniques have included assassinations, organised destabilisations and coups, propaganda, military assistance to rebels and political manipulation (Whitaker, 1999: 17-18).⁶⁵ Successful global political policing depends on surveillance networking capabilities. Although developing nations such as India, Pakistan and China begun to build surveillance capabilities, even together these do not rival the ECHELON system (Landau, 2003: 124). In terms of general military strength, the U.S. has the capacity to dominate any other state or even alliance of states. In 2000, the Pentagon's budget was equal to the total defence spending of the next nine largest military powers. On these figures U.S. military power in relation to likely rivals is the largest in world history (Talbot & Chandra, 2001: 59).⁶⁶

Global policing is enhanced in response to threats generated by globalization and digital technology. In the early twenty-first century ICT's enable a scenario in which "a man with a suitcase of dollars can hire a militia in West Africa or Afghanistan, take over a diamond mine or an opium field, then whip out a satellite phone and sell his wares on the global market" (Mallaby, 2004). Fear of such developments has driven the United States to construct a land-sea-air-space surveillance grid which is designed to "alert the world community to the activities of 'rogue states.'" This converges technological capability with the power to determine which countries are part of the "world community" and which are not (Whitaker, 1999: 18).⁶⁷

⁶⁴ For example the case of Guatemala in 1954 when the CIA orchestrated a "kind of military coup by deception, a staged media event that frightened the president into flight and ushered in decades of repressive military rule" (Whitaker 1999: 17).

⁶⁵ In the area of technological development, the case of the international-joint-venture Intelsat (1965) reveals the capacity of the U.S. to protect its vested interests. Following the setup of the new satellite, the U.S. was accused by the international community of holding a monopoly over the venture and of using their 61 per cent ownership stake to "establish standards that worked in their own exclusive interests". (McMahon, 2002: 123)

⁶⁶ At the heart of U.S. military strength (and social organisation generally) is the "industrial-military complex". This includes the U.S.'s unrivalled scientific and technological base, with 70 per cent of recent Nobel Prize winners working in American universities and benefiting from a crossover between the military and the "private" academic sector (Talbot & Chandra, 2001: 59).

⁶⁷ Palestinian citizens may feel that Israel falls in the later category, while western governments generally accept it is part of the first. This is reflected by an IAEA announcement that it is in the dark about Israel's nuclear weapons programme, while neighbouring states are aggressively investigated ("IAEA-Israel," 2004).

3.2.4 Post September 11⁶⁸

The terror attacks on the World Trade Centre (WTC) and Pentagon exemplify the complex relationship between surveillance and globalization. Although the event can be partially conceptualised as a conflict between “east” and “west”, it was also both a product of, and a stimulus for globalization (Baudrillard, 2002; Lyon, 2003a). The fact that Al Qaeda itself is a globalized network or “state-less entity”, brought new challenges for military intelligence agencies and changed governmental understandings of national security (Landau, 2003: 117; Lyon, 2003a: 110). Reaction around the world has globalized surveillance practices creating new patterns of power and new social arrangements, for “foreign nationals”, and for citizens in general (Lyon, 2003a: 109). Anti-terrorist legislation has given national governments a justification to regain power that was partially eroded by globalization itself (Lyon, 2003a: 5). When one considers the global nature of terrorist networks themselves (to the point that talking about “national” security is almost counterproductive) the drive for saturated surveillance in the pursuit of “border control” appears to be a rationalization for state power.

The events of September 11th have strengthened existing international surveillance networks and well as created new ones as less powerful nations have sought to counter future possible threats to their national security (and further their political interests) by joining a UK/USA-led union (Burke, 2001; Lyon, 2003a: 9).⁶⁹ This reflects not so much a qualitatively new way of understanding terrorism, as a consolidation of existing trends in technological convergence, globalized surveillance and risk management (Lyon, 2003a: 8). These developments have boosted the surveillance “industry” and swung the surveillance “pendulum of tension from care to control”, as formerly distinct agencies co-operate to form webs of surveillance in order to police border more tightly (Lyon, 2003a: 11). Even before September 11th,

⁶⁸ The accelerated saturation of surveillance post-September 11th is a factor which deserves attention across other sections of this study, particularly in the areas of urban spaces and police surveillance. However, the analysis has been included in the military intelligence section because of the changing perceptions of national security, an increased role for intelligence type strategies in society generally, as well as increased networking between military intelligence staff, police, immigration and other officials (Lyon 2003a: 109)

⁶⁹ See Burke (2001) for a discussion of how Australia joined the “Coalition of the Willing” in order to secure a free-trade deal with the US.

globalization processes were bringing customs, immigration, visa departments, consulates, private transport companies and national police forces together to share data (reliant in turn on international data networks) and profile potential terrorists or criminals (Lyon, 2001: 97). Shortly after September 11th, the Bush Administration used the rhetoric of freedom and the “American way of life”, to push through legislative changes that critics argue have had the opposite effect. Without opposition from the Democratic Party or the mainstream media the Bush administration enacted policies which allowed data on transactions and communications to be stored for scrutiny (Lyon, 2003a: 122).

Important initiatives included the establishment of the “American Department of Homeland Security” and the introduction of the US PATRIOT Act.⁷⁰ This act allowed federal governments greater power to use wiretaps, search warrants, subpoenas and stroke loggers on a person’s computer without a warrant. Security authorities could garner information off a greater number of public record files, infiltrate lawful organisations (such as civil rights groups) and routinely surveil Internet activity (Hentoff, 2003; Parenti, 2003: 14)

Critics argue that the rushed nature of the new legislation generates legal faults and provides an open channel for power and control. Hentoff (2003) notes that legislation such as the “Total Information Awareness”⁷¹ program which enabled the development of data-mining technologies had little support before September 11. In the subsequent political climate however, law enforcement officials were permitted to “access, use and disseminate highly personal information in student records about US and foreign students alike”(Talbot & Chandra, 2001: 164). Similarly, the Office of Homeland Security, which was created virtually overnight blurs the gap that has

⁷⁰ The PATRIOT Act was passed by the house on 26/10/01 by a vote of 356 to 66, although few members had had the time to read it (Hentoff 2003: 11). Recently it was voted unconstitutional by US District Judge Victor Marreo, who cited that it constituted unreasonable search powers (“Rights-Patriot,” 2004).

⁷¹ At the cost of \$200 million, the Total Awareness Information System included systems of “voice pattern recognition” and other biometric surveillance which could “recognize humans from a distance based on face and gait along with other biometric tools” (Kalukin, 2005: 8). Although the initiative was suspended in 2003 (following public outcry) some of the programs associated with it continued under other names, such as the Novel Intelligence from Massive Data (NIMD) program (Kalukin, 2005: 8).

existed for 50 years between federal law enforcement agencies and international intelligence agencies (Talbot & Chandra, 2001: 166).

The new legislation has been accompanied by technological research which emphasizes biometric identifiers. At the same time courts in the US have shown a “new deference to claims of national security” (Rotenberg, Kshirsagar, Laurant, & Rears, 2003: 132). These factors combined show a distinct movement away from privacy concerns towards the creation of a surveillance-saturated society. Rotenberg is one author who has lamented these changes. He observes that at a time when core values⁷² need to be examined in order to reaffirm crucial political goals, diminishing privacy is being matched only by an increase in secrecy about national security matters, an increase in the power of intelligence agencies⁷³ and declining accountability for governments (Rotenberg et al., 2003: 136-137).

Critics have warned that liberal democracies must not sacrifice their essentially free nature in the pursuit of a “safer” society (Libicki, 2003; Lyon, 2003a; Prins, 2002; Rotenberg et al., 2003). Similarly, the “war on terror” discourse is particularly open to elite manipulation. Because the location, timing and objective of this war are unclear, it is easy to justify the targeting of civilians. It is also likely to be a “war without end”, because terrorism is an “ongoing threat”, making it harder to criticise security policy (Lyon, 2003a: 41). Loose definitions as to what constitutes a threat to national security allows for widespread police powers and intelligence operations, convergence in surveillance methods and the mobilization of citizens as spies (Lyon, 2003a: 41-42). The rhetoric of the US-as-sorrowing-victim and the binary construction of the world (with us or against us) worked to obscure the political context of the attacks (Brzezinski, 2002).⁷⁴ Coupled with the enduring discourse of a state of “emergency”, a climate of passivity is created in which citizens are more likely to accept the curtailing of liberties (Lyon, 2003a: 121). David Lyon argues that

⁷² For example, the US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand were all built on the principle of relatively free entry, but now have strict border control, partially based on ethnic distinctions of which countries produce “benign” travellers and which countries produce “troublesome” ones (Lyon, 2003a: 100).

⁷³ For example there are new laws that protect FBI agents from being prosecuted for illegal surveillance if they are following the orders of High Executive Branch Officials (Hentoff, 2003).

⁷⁴ The Canadian Prime Minister was widely criticised, for suggesting the “wealthy world helped create the conditions for terrorism through its relationship with poorer countries” (Lyon 2003a: 43). See also Gray (2004) for an unorthodox but occasionally insightful discussion of how the west has allowed fundamental Islamic radicalism to become “the new communism”.

increased data-matching will not always catch terrorists, but invariably complicates life for citizens in precarious situations (Lyon, 2003a: 8, 122). Western democracies have experienced a tilt towards algorithmic surveillance which is racist in design⁷⁵ and predicated on an self-perpetuating⁷⁶ climate of fear and suspicion whereby citizens spy⁷⁷ on each other (Lyon, 2003a: 10). At the same time positive social values like trust, mutual care, recognition, due process⁷⁸ and wariness of unchecked power are eroded (Lyon, 2003a: 11).

Underpinning the preceding discussion has been the view that “intelligence gathering” as currently understood, is inherently incapable of keeping nations safe. Apart from the recent example of the WTC terror attacks,⁷⁹ critical writers have noted a long history of intelligence failures.⁸⁰ Some have pointed to “blow-back” whereby or times in which the foreign policies of powerful governments have caused terrorist

⁷⁵ A Newsweek survey conducted soon after September 11 discovered that 32 percent of Americans favoured putting Arabs under special surveillance (Levitas 2002 as cited in Parenti 2003: 204). Brin points out that it is difficult to demonize an enemy population “enough to justify slaughter” if they appear in your streets as tourists, participate in cultural interaction and are treated fairly in the media, this shows the extent to which perception of the enemy is important (1998: 311).

⁷⁶ Up to October 2002, the FBI was still monitoring young Muslim men on a 24-hour basis, recording all their communications (Shenon & Johnston, 2002 as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 99).

⁷⁷ For the first time since the American Civil War, a general has been appointed operational authority exclusively over military forces within the U.S. Gen. Ralph Eberhart, commander of Northern Command tried to reassure the fears of civil libertarians by saying “we are not going to be out there spying on people”, but ended up increasing them when he said “we get information from people who do” (Block 2004).

⁷⁸ Even in places where due process does still exist, there has been a tendency for judges and lawmakers overlook democratic rights in favour of catering to the climate of fear, or out of concern for their political careers (Hentoff 2003: 19).

⁷⁹ In June 2002, members of the US Congress heard a report from the nation’s top intelligence agencies, including the CIA, FBI, the Directors of the NSA and the Senate Intelligence Committee. They learnt that while there was no “smoking gun” that could have pinpointed the exact date, time or method of the attacks, there had been “literally dozens of clear indicators of an impending Al Qa’ida terrorist attack by an aircraft against prestige buildings inside continental U.S.A” (Hughes-Wilson 1999: 379-380). Similarly, Lyon documents how the September 11th attackers used the Internet openly and only encrypted their messages using simple codes (Campbell, 2001 as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 120).

⁸⁰ For example, Mobley (2003) documents the North Korean crisis of the 1968, during which the USS Pueblo was captured and the crew was held hostage and tortured for over a year. A second incident occurred four months after the crew were returned in which an EC-121 reconnaissance plane was shot down, killing 31 soldiers and marines. Mobley argues that due to arrogance and underestimating the enemy, leaders in Washington failed to learn anything from the first incident and were seemingly unprepared for the second (Mobley, 2003). Similarly, Libicki (2003: 111) points out that very few of the suicide bombers who have entered Israeli territory had histories that would have caused suspicion, despite Israel’s iron border control. In terms of espionage, Bennett (2003: 292) has written that “many Special Operations are limited failures”.

organisations to spring up organically (Davies, 2002: 9; Harrison, 2004).⁸¹ In terms of intelligence efficiency, critics have noted that since September 11th, governments and intelligence agencies have de-emphasised targeted, covert collection of information, in favour of more on “drag-net” total surveillance capacity. This has brought with it a new problem of finding useful knowledge amidst the mass of generated information. Many advocate a return to human intelligence (espionage by foreign agents) which, although expensive and time-consuming, is able to predict terror movements with greater accuracy (Davies, 2002; Hughes-Wilson, 2004; Lyon, 2003a; Prins, 2002; Talbott & Chandra, 2001).⁸²

From a sociological perspective, liberal commentary has warned that, once lost, democratic liberties are difficult to regain, and for this reason, public safety should be sought “in tandem with enhanced modes of public scrutiny over automated systems” (Lyon, 2003a: 136). Governments must guard against feel-good, quick fixes that magnify power-through-surveillance and feed the assumption that high technology necessarily brings security. At best these approaches “create an illusion of change” and at worst involve liberal democracies in regrettable interventions (Talbott & Chandra, 2001: 178). From various perspectives, therefore security for ‘ourselves’ should not be thought of in isolation from the security of others. In other words, security should be defined in contradistinction to “the Other whom we exclude and oppress” (Baudrillard, 2002; Burke, 2001: 331).

Prospective developments in surveillance technologies signal increasing precision and control. On the battlefield, the latest is the Head Up Device (HUD), a fighter-pilot-type helmet for ground soldiers (or potentially, domestic police) that is equipped with

⁸¹ On this topic, Chalmers Johnson’s chilling book *Blowback: The costs and consequences of the American empire* all but forecasts the events of September 11th. Published in 2000, Johnson names Osama bin Laden as a blow-back terrorist to watch and notes “the United States will be a prime recipient for the foreseeable future of all the more expectable forms of blowback, particularly terrorist attacks against Americans in and outside of the armed forces anywhere on earth, including within the United States”, (Harrison, 2004: 264).

⁸² Ex-special forces-come-writers like Barry Davies lament the loss of human-intelligence or “mark-1-eyeball”, arguing that the heavy reliance on technology occurs at the detriment of the superior human ability to interpret situations at the scene, as well as using their experience and a “gut-feeling” to help them. (Davies 2002: 82) Similarly, Prins (2002) calls for greater emphasis on analysis and using counter-terrorist tactics to provide early warning. Deibert and Stein (2002) point out that pitting “centralised state powers of surveillance against a network is not merely inappropriate, it may be counter productive”, and also suggest targeted security (as cited in Lyon, 2003a: 121).

secure communications to control centre, and “satellite sections with high value imaging sources”. The technology presents the soldier with a “threat display” enabled by infrared heat sources and movement detectors. One day it may be equipped with sound surveillance devices (currently being developed) which monitor for noise as limited as the sound of breathing, and the ability to blanket war zones with so many wireless sensors that movement without detection will be all but impossible (Bennett, 2003: 292; Piore, 2004).

3.3 Conclusion

Surveillance has been a central foundation of both modernity and the nation state. Under contemporary informational capitalism the state continues these surveillance functions, and intensifies them. This does not imply an Orwellian vision of a bureaucratic, restrictive control. Rather, under the informational mode of development, the state recalibrates itself as a central nodal point in the flow of information networks. Both creating and directing panoptic data, the state permeates and directs social life (Castells, 1989).

Intelligence and urban space focused surveillance are two faces of state-led surveillance. In recent years, the two areas have come to increasingly overlap and influence each other. As national security fears are played out domestically and abroad, police become more militaristic and counter-terrorist oriented. In the name of “security” military surveillance, domestic policing and the executive state have reinforcing powers. Relying on the logic of risk assessment, prospective monitoring makes moral judgements on whether an individual has the intention to commit a crime. This development impacts significantly upon democratic institutions.

In the context of urban spaces, surveillance petrifies social inequalities and restricts the mobility of certain groups. Public spaces have natural commotion which allows city inhabitants to mix and engage with “otherness” beyond their own boundaries.

From a neo-Habermasian perspective, the re-shaping of public spaces through the saturation of surveillance undermines the democratic interaction of discrete cultures and groups. Face-to-face interaction in the public sphere allows for the exercise of civil rights, a vital tenet of democracy.

In pursuing a “safer” nation, liberal democracies turn inward through fear of the enemy “Other” and sacrifice privacy for perceived security. In assuming that surveillance technologies gift knowledge rather information, liberal democratic states develop extensive monitoring webs in an effort to reduce national insecurity. Deployed domestically and abroad, surveillance networks rely on risk management, and prospective monitoring. Loose definitions of threats allow for widespread police powers against citizens and restrictive social arrangements for “foreign nationals”. Recent developments in ICT’s combined with the events of September 11th 2001 have given domestic governments both a method and a reason to accelerate the surveillance of citizens. State-led surveillance can deliver the promise of security but it is also counter productive. When surveillance is controlling and pervasive, it impacts on all citizens and foreigners, not just those who pose a threat. At the same time international terrorism has also reinforced US imperialistic tendencies which underpin surveillance networks.⁸³ Viewed in this light, surveillance is complicit with the extension of structural power, not just for the “Other”, but built into the quotidian normalcy of society.

Surveillance technologies themselves are neutral, and monitoring can and does protect citizens on a daily basis. The outcome of surveillance will always depend on the ways in which monitoring practices are organised and implemented. As I have argued in this section, surveillance devices are embedded within wider systems of power. Structural configurations such as dualism in cities, or elite nation imperialism are reflected in the organisation of surveillance webs. In studying the surveillance

⁸³ My intention here is not to demonise the US per se, but rather to form a normative critique of imperialism wherever it originates. As I have shown in the preceding section, imperialistic tendencies involved with surveillance come primarily from the United States and have been accelerated under the influence of the Bush Administration and Neo Conservatives in general. In this context “imperialism” does not refer to the geographic model of colonial “empires” such as Great Britain. Instead contemporary imperialism manifests itself in economic and political interventionism.

networks impacting on the worker, consumer and citizen, the contemporary relations of power in society are revealed. Correspondingly, those same relations of power can be discerned and critiqued through an analysis of popular cinema.

Chapter Four

Ideology and Surveillance

This chapter discusses the symbolic forms associated with representations of surveillance-based relations of power. After reviewing John Thompson's (1990) framework of ideological modes, I apply his insights to the cases of reality television and popular cinema. Next is a critical overview of 30 Hollywood feature films which have surveillance in their plot-lines. The purpose of this preliminary analysis of 30 texts is to provide a thematic overview of typical symbolic constructions in films about surveillance. This serves as a link between the political economy of surveillance and later detailed textual analysis. It also provides an opportunity to identify four relevant case studies for close analysis.

The ideological modes outlined by Thompson include "legitimation", "dissimulation", "unification", "fragmentation" and "reification" (Thompson, 1990). Each of these modes involves particular strategies of symbolic construction which ideologically distort meaning. The most frequent modes employed in the texts discussed in this thesis are legitimation and dissimulation. The former denotes the representation of relations of domination as "worthy of support", or justified based on rational, practical or traditional grounds (Thompson, 1990: 61). Dissimulation works to sustain relations of domination, by concealing or denying them within a text. Dissimulation can also describe symbolic forms which gloss over, or deflect attention from, asymmetrical power (Thompson, 1990: 62). Unification describes ideological constructs which draw together individuals in a group, irrespective of divisions within them. For example, unification may promote a collective identity based on a concealed system of domination (such as nationalism). The singular nature of the identity denies and invalidates other identities or experiences; such as unequal access to resources (Thompson, 1990: 64). Fragmentation involves differentiating or discrediting those who challenge the dominant group, or positioning deviants as

harmful or evil (Thompson, 1990: 65). Finally, reification (typically through naturalization of the present) is the representation of historically constructed, temporary symbolic forms as somehow “natural”, “permanent” or “outside of time” (Thompson, 1990: 65).

4.1 Surveillance Ideology in Reality Television

This following section is a review of critical discussion concerning reality TV. An analysis of this facet of popular culture is central to this thesis because reality TV, like film, is a visual format. Moreover, reality TV has received much critical attention, the findings of which will background my study of popular cinema.¹ Finally, reality TV is important because it is surveillance-based at its core and highly successful commercially.²

Much critical writing on reality TV regards these shows as lewd, dehumanising and voyeuristic (see discussions in: Corner, 2002; Couldry, 2002; Hill, 2002; Mathijs, 2002; Palmer, 2002; Scannell, 2002). Of greater relevance here has been the assertion that the likes of *Cops*, *America's Most Wanted* and MTV's *The Real World* used surveillance mechanisms as a central plot device, such that surveillance is euphemised or naturalised. This encourages audiences to accept monitoring in their daily lives.³ Academics continually argue over the extent to which audiences take on

¹ The insights of this reality TV section will be particularly useful in my later discussion of *The Truman Show* (which is a parody of reality TV programming).

² The significance of the *Big Brother* phenomenon cannot be underestimated. Since 1999 Endemol has sold the *Big Brother* Format to over 20 countries, creating a television programme that is globally popular, with more than 40 successful series around the world (Johnson-Woods, 2002: xi). There have been, of course cultural differences in structure and audience reception (see for example: Cozens, 2003; Johnson-Woods, 2002: xi).

³ Programme makers have responded to these claims by talking down the significance of reality TV, arguing that the programme in question is formulated for the ironic viewer and is not taken seriously by audiences (see Hill, 2002: 328; Jones, 2003). This discussion has an ideological element in itself, in that euphemising the importance of reality TV means giving in to the premise inherent in programmes like *Big Brother* that there is a separation between the worlds inside and outside the house. When viewed in the light of total-surveillance-society arguments like dataveillance, this is not necessarily the case. Some programme makers have tried to justify the *Big Brother* format by presenting it as a kind of “experiment in governance”. In this experiment however, the psychological stress suffered by contestants is treated by Big Brother himself, a factor which can be looked on as a type of “counselling with a disembodied voice or sharing one’s innermost fears with a technological system that may be responsible for manufacturing them” (Palmer, 2002: 300).

board the messages of reality TV although their conclusions are generally limited. The project here, however, is to acknowledge and explain the fact that reality TV⁴ has an important role in diffusing ideology about surveillance. In order to do this I will apply Thompson's modes to existing literature on the topic, in order to show how reality TV generally and the *Big Brother* format in particular, depoliticize surveillance. In particular I will show how Thompson's ideological mode of "dissimulation" helps to explain the ideological themes of reality TV with regard to surveillance. More specifically, "euphemization", or the re-describing of symbolic forms to "elicit a positive valuation", is the mode of dissimulation that is most often used by reality TV to obscure the structural configurations of surveillance (Thompson, 1990: 62).

The most basic form of euphemization is the packaging of surveillance as entertainment. Programmes like MTV's *The Real World*, the *Survivor* series and the *Big Brother* format (invented by the Dutch Endemol company) feature contestants who enter into a Faustian pact; they trade privacy for the prospect of fame and money. According to Neil Postman, when mass audiences view serious subject matter from an entertainment perspective society is "amusing itself to death" (Postman, 1985: 161).⁵ Through trivia-saturated television, cultural life has been redefined as a realm of entertainment which undermines rather than encourages critical thought.

Palmer articulates this concern clearly when he writes that:

⁴ It is not my contention here that the dissemination of ideology is the only reason reality TV has become so widespread, or even the main one. Arguably, the format has become popular with programme makers because of its ease of production and cost effectiveness when compared with soaps, sit-coms or dramas. Gareth Palmer (2002), for one, posits that reality TV is an answer to the challenges posed by deregulation, the greater role of the market and the proliferation of satellite and cable TV. Similarly, as Gillespie (2000: 51) quite rightly points out: "Polysemy is a financial asset for television, even when it does not benefit the hegemonic discourses that attempt to employ television as a mechanism of social control". Here, in showing that there are multiple and often conflicting reasons for a programme to be made, Gillespie has pinpointed one of the main issues in critiquing ideological representations. However, in terms of Thompson's theory of "quasi-interaction" (Thompson 1990: 268) it is possible to view commercial success and ideological control as having interlocking importance.

⁵ This relates to the argument put forward by Palmer (2002) who worries that reality TV's position as a type of documentary is damaging the public sphere, because it is increasingly replacing the old social issues documentaries that investigated the social and political implications of new developments (like surveillance technologies) in a context of an informed citizenry. Perhaps the most pertinent proof that this process is occurring is in the fact that more people voted in the final eviction of the first *Big Brother UK*, than in Britain's general election (Johnson-Woods, 2002: xi).

“The threat of surveillance, the reduction of personhood to commodity-status, and the separation of the psychological from its political base once constituted threats to citizens. In the new paradigm, they form the background to amusing experiments in identity” (Palmer, 2002: 307).

The social significance of the presentation of surveillance as entertainment depends on the understanding that audiences take up subject positions within a text, and that indulging in this position affects subjectivity outside the text. Gillespie (2000), Palmer (2002), van Zoonen (2001) and Jones (2003) have all argued that this process exists and that ideological representations of surveillance can shape a viewer’s overall perception of surveillance.⁶ Australian *Big Brother* shows, the viewer is offered two possible subject positions: Surveiller – omniscient eye – Big Brother, or vicarious surveilled (potential) contestant.⁷

The claim made by reality TV to be connected with the “real”⁸ implicates and positions the viewer as a vicarious or potential contestant (Dean, 2003). As Johnson-Woods documents, both viewers and contestants reported learning “valuable life lessons” from the *Big Brother* experience (Johnson-Woods, 2002: x). From the delight expressed by the contestants when first incarcerated in a house precisely designed for surveillance⁹ to the intimate relationship they developed with their controller,¹⁰ the housemates of the first *Big Brother Australia* learnt obedience, transparency, manageability and emotional dependency on surveillance (Palmer, 2002: 304). Whether or not the contestants actually developed an Orwellian love for

⁶ Gillespie, for example, showed that by casting the viewer in the subject position of the victim, and by presenting crime fighting as a war between the strong and the weak (with the alliance of “technology and law enforcement” as the optimal solution), Fox Television aligned viewers with conservative views of crime control (Gillespie, 2000: 39).

⁷ These categories are drawn from Gillespie’s understanding of the main subject positions offered in *Cops* and *America’s Most Wanted*: “(1) vicarious victim, (2) vicarious police, (3) potentially surveilled, and (4) potential surveiller” (Gillespie, 2000: 39).

⁸ This claim is dubious for a number of reasons. Firstly, because the events of the house are edited to fit a narrative, they become fictionalised and are only truly “real” for the Internet audience. Secondly, the relationship between television and reality is not a dichotomous one. As on *Observer* reviewer insightfully pointed out: “It’s ‘reality TV’ – but what is reality in a society warped by television?” Similarly, the one-dimensional soap-operaesque self-constructions of the contestants highlight the view that “we are all performing a received version of ourselves” (Anthony, 2000). Thus reality TV further breaks down the distinction between television and “reality”. These points reveal that reality TV is a forum for ideological constructions of surveillance and highlights how ideology about surveillance spills from media texts into lived experience.

⁹ Johnson-Woods recounts “When the housemates were sealed in the house, spirits were high. Todd jumped around like a maniac...” (2002: 87).

¹⁰ While Ben idolised Big Brother, saying he was the person he most wanted to meet when he left the house, Sara-Marie referred to him as her “boyfriend” and ruminated that she was “nearing the end of ‘three months of being told what to do’” (2002: 84), her tone implying that she was going to miss it.

Big Brother is a matter of contention (the ironic viewer would not take this relationship overly seriously, nor would the ironic contestant). More importantly, all the events in the show were presented as entertainment, whether they were fundamentally amusing or disturbing. In fact, some contestants found the experience so traumatising they began hoarding batteries, burying spoons or having strange dreams. Ironically, *Big Brother Australia* contestant Todd dreamt that he was living in a prison (Johnson-Woods, 2002: 142). Typically, such psychological stress was treated by Big Brother, edited, packaged and broadcast to a nationwide audience. Each of these events was presented in an atmosphere of frivolity which served to reconstruct the sinister elements of surveillance within a protective and euphemising capsule of pleasure (Palmer, 2002).

Marc Andrejevic has argued that reality TV naturalises the surveillance mechanism by “democratising celebrity”. Contestants are drawn from the viewing public and the audience is encouraged to identify with them. Consequently the programme reinforces “the notion that a surveillance-based society can overcome the hierarchies of mass society” (Andrejevic, 2002: 253). Furthermore, the surveilled place within a particular programme (be it a house, island or the Australian outback) offers contestants a chance to be “authentic” (Andrejevic, 2002: 265; Van Zoonen, 2001: 672). Andrejevic’s research reveals that for the contestants, submission to total surveillance comes from a fear that is typically associated with modernity, the fear of not counting, or as one contestant described it, the fear of being “the smallest cog in the wheel” (Andrejevic, 2002: 266).¹¹ In reality TV, the surveillance mechanism resolves this problem, offering, simultaneously, a guarantee of individuality, authenticity, meaningfulness and monetary reward. By presenting itself as a process of “self-expression, self-realization and self-validation”, surveillance becomes the mechanism by which people become fulfilled, rewarded and significant (Andrejevic, 2002: 265).¹²

¹¹ This phrase was employed by Jon Murray, the co-producer of MTV’s *The Real World* during a personal interview with Andrejevic.

¹² Inherent in Andrejevic’s argument, but not explicitly stated, is an understanding of the technological determinism that is promoted by reality TV. The idea that surveillance technology is actually capable of providing authenticity is deterministic since it treats the power of technology in a taken-for-granted manner. Related to this is the assumption and that the “real” that is seen through the omniscient eye of surveillance is interesting, entertaining and ultimately pleasurable.

For Andrejevic, these interrelated objectives serve a global economy which is increasingly reliant on panoptic data and consumer submission to surveillance. A world in which people enjoy pervasive surveillance is in fact one “imagined by the architects of mass customisation” (Andrejevic, 2002: 269). In this regard, reality TV works to combat existing social fears about surveillance by “acclimatising” people to a surveillance regime that is inherently unequal in access and control. At the same time surveillance is naturalized as part of quotidian life. From a corporate perspective, giving Big Brother a make-over and putting a positive spin on surveillance aims to dilute public scepticism so that “consumers see the provision of information [generated through surveillance] as a potential benefit” (Andrejevic, 2002: 263).¹³

Finally, surveillance-based reality TV programmes like *Big Brother* not only euphemise the experiences of contestants; they also euphemise George Orwell’s critique of surveillance in modern society.¹⁴ Orwell’s dystopian portrayal of a surveillance saturated society, encapsulated in the name “Big Brother” questioned the viability of enlightenment-based ideas about “autonomous individuality” in the twentieth century (Connelly, 1984). The semantic shift associated with the far-reaching success of *Big Brother* has aligned the name with a legitimate and “unproblematic social interaction”, that is trivial and pleasurable. As Gillespie (2000) points out, because reality TV invites the viewer to experience the surveillance mechanism in a banal way, it accustoms the populace to “Big Brother” influences in their everyday lives. Reality TV is not just masking the surveillance web; it is also feeding off it, as well as being “an integral part of a modern panoptic project” (Gillespie, 2000: 45).

¹³ The point about consumption is two-fold. The act of watching the *Big Brother* programme means the consumption of advertising (some of the ads are manufactured specifically to be viewed during a weekly segment and reflect the events of the house). Consumption is also effected through the product placement that occurs on the show. As Johnson-Woods points out, the shot of Sarah Marie with an empty Heineken Carton on her head collapsed “television, advertising and drunkenness in an exquisitely post-modern moment” (2002: 171). In this way we can see the three projects of: constructing audiences as consumers; constructing surveillance as a product to consume like any other good; and the deflection of attention from consumer surveillance generally.

4.2 Surveillance Ideology in Popular Cinema

While reality TV has provided the focus of much of the current research into representations of surveillance, my primary area of ideological critique is film. In this section, I justify the research focus on film and outline why certain films have been selected for critique. More specifically, I explain my emphasis on Hollywood feature-films. Next, I draw out the principal modes of ideological operation in Hollywood feature films about surveillance. In the context of popular culture I decided to concentrate on film because it relates most directly to the political economy of surveillance, in that feature films tend to cover all the major themes of surveillance penetration. Moreover, films usually involve some discussion of the relationship between power and surveillance, making them an ideal subject for critique.

The choice of Hollywood material relates to the way in which Hollywood films are produced, distributed and exported worldwide. In the words of Brazilian 1960's director Glauber Rocha; "when one talks of cinema, one talks of American cinema... Every discussion of cinema made outside Hollywood must begin with Hollywood" (Moretti, 2001: 92). He was referring to Hollywood's saturation of the global market during the twentieth century and its capacity to swallow-up competitors. Furthermore the standardised narratives of Hollywood block-busters have impacted on independent film. For example, in the period 1986-1995, only four non-American films enjoyed major international success, and none of these differed substantially from "the usual Hollywood fare" (Moretti, 2001: 92). Similarly, Janet Wasko (2003) argues that there is currently little distinction between independent production and distribution and the Hollywood system. Particularly since the 1990's, the number of successful independent companies has dropped dramatically while those that are left are incorporating Hollywood characteristics in production and content. Independents, now with bigger budgets, core audiences, and occasionally, Hollywood stars, have become an industry that "runs parallel" to Hollywood rather than challenging it (Levy in Wasko, 2003: 78). Moreover, Hollywood studios have become part of larger media

¹⁴ A possible criticism here is that comparing the Big Brothers created by Orwell and Endemol is unfair because the two works have different formats, different projects and serve different ends. The point however is that the new text is crowding out the older, creating a shift in meaning.

and communications conglomerates that are able to create and distribute content simultaneously. Some of these conglomerates are linked to industries as diverse as electronics, real estate and even aircraft (Forsyth, 2005: 108). Recently Hollywood players have begun to capitalise on digital technology, such that the Hollywood machine remains powerfully globally hegemonic ("Technology and the economy," 1998).¹⁵

The films I have selected were all produced and distributed in the period between 1990 and 2004 by Hollywood's majors, namely: Disney (Buena Vista Distribution), Columbia/Tristar, Universal, Paramount, Warner Brothers, Twentieth Century Fox, MGM/UA or associated companies. Universal, for example, has feature film-making interests in Focus Features, USA Films and Studio Canal + (Wasko, 2003). With the exception of *The End of Violence*, which has been included because of the centrality of surveillance themes, all the films selected grossed well over \$10m in the U.S. The biggest earners worldwide were *The Fugitive*, *Minority Report*, *The Firm*, *The Truman Show* and *Enemy of the State*. They earned \$369m, \$358m, \$262m, \$249m, and \$245m respectively.¹⁶ As well as the production features of these films, the following criteria were taken into account while selecting them for preliminary analysis. Firstly, at the time of release, the films all had some resonance within popular culture generally. They were reviewed and discussed in the mass media and they continue to be available in mainstream video rental stores. Secondly, as has already been mentioned, the films have some relevance to the various political and economic structures of surveillance. Thirdly, the relationship between the production of the selected films and adjacent centres of power, make the films a probable ground for ideological dissemination. For example, Scott Forsyth (2005) has documented the "intimate" relationship between the American military and the production of war films. In the past, the military used Hollywood productions to "showcase hardware, sanitize scripts and utilize films, television and video games for recruitment and

¹⁵ The institutions which produce representations of surveillance are worthy of their own political economy critique. Internal hierarchies, the impacts of globalization, commercialisation and deregulation have affected the print and radio media, the film industry and commercial television in ways that shape textual content (Forsyth, 2005). All of these institutions are connected at some point to a panoptic sort in which information generated by surveillance encourages the consumption of images and related products. This aspect of the relationship between surveillance and communication industries has been placed to one side as I do not have the space to analyze it properly here.

¹⁶ These figures were taken from the Internet movie database www.imdb.com on 7, March 2005.

propaganda, even military training” (Forsyth, 2005: 109). This mutually beneficial relationship implies that action films are likely ideological texts.¹⁷

As Thompson notes, the characteristics which construct symbolic forms are “intentional, conventional, structural, referential and contextual” (Thompson, 1990: 59). Of these characteristics it is the last that is most pertinent for my own analysis. In order to reach the conclusions which follow, I have critiqued cinematic representations of monitoring in three contexts. Firstly, the theoretical considerations pertaining to ideology critique and critical theory (Chapter One), have provided the research perspective. Secondly, in the same chapter, insights from the literature on surveillance and popular culture (together with the preceding discussion of reality TV) formed typical examples of ideological constructions that might be found. Thirdly, in the context of the political economy chapters, I compared textual representations with material organisations of surveillance practices and the associated relations of power. Finally, Thompson’s framework was used to describe the particular modes in which ideological features occurred. Without forgetting that popular culture is a site of conflict and negotiation, my purpose was to investigate how the ideological themes of textual constructions might obscure the political economy of surveillance practices.

For the sake of clarity I divided the films into three broad groups: action-thrillers, voyeuristic surveillance films and futuristic portrayals of surveillance societies. I have not systematically analysed each category of film; rather, I have looked for ideological patterns across films. Within each category I have focused on the basic elements of the film as opposed to the discrete properties of text, language and imagery. This approach comports with my analysis so far, which has discussed the relationship between surveillance and power. Within the films, these issues are primarily played out through the narrative, characterisation and plot structure. I will

¹⁷ A pertinent example here includes the post-September-11 meetings between Hollywood producers and George Bush’s top adviser Karl Rove with the aim to “discuss the patriotic themes needed for the new day” (Forsyth, 2005: 111). It should be noted that films produced directly after September 11th were in fact quite critical of surveillance. *The Recruit* (Donaldson, 2003) for example, discusses the way in which U.S. intelligence agencies “failed” to do their job. More recently however, films such as *Kingdom of Heaven* (R. Scott, 2005) and *War of the Worlds* (Spielberg, 2005) have made use of a moralistic self-other, us/them distinction to legitimate the use of state-sanctioned force against the enemy “Other”.

address these elements and use analyses of text and imagery to support my arguments.

As indicated, the films I have watched and analysed fall more-or-less into three categories. The first group can be loosely thought of as action-thriller films (although some overlap with other genres such as mystery, drama, crime, adventure). They are set in the contemporary era, and cover intelligence, state and urban surveillance. The workplace is also dealt with here, but to a smaller extent. These films are: *The Net* (Winkler, 1995), *The Pelican Brief* (Pakula, 1993), *Enemy of the State* (T. Scott, 1998), *Conspiracy Theory* (Donner, 1997), *The End of Violence* (Wenders, 1997), *The Spanish Prisoner* (Mamet, 1997), *The Firm* (Pollack, 1991), *Patriot Games* (Noyce, 1992), *Sneakers* (Robinson, 1992), *The Bourne Identity* (Liman, 2002), *The Jackal* (Caton-Jones, 1997) and *The Manchurian Candidate* (Demme, 2004). Related less directly to surveillance, but still relevant are *Absolute Power* (Eastwood, 1997), *Spy Game* (T. Scott, 2001), *Snake Eyes* (Brian, 1998), *The Fugitive* (Davis, 1993), *Runaway Jury* (Fleder, 2003) and *8MM* (Schumacher, 1999). These films form a higher percentage of my research because many of the films fall into the action/thriller category. Similarly, as Forsyth (2005) has shown, “action films” reflect the imperialistic tendencies of Hollywood and America in general. Forsyth argues that the action film reflects “the might of American capital, corporate organisation and technology”, coupled with the ideology surrounding “America itself”. The ideology celebrates American heroes and crushes national enemies in a way that seeks to socialise the viewer (Forsyth, 2005: 109). In that regard, action-thriller films about surveillance are suitable texts to explore for ideological features.

The second group of films are those which deal with the voyeuristic element of surveillance and have plots which revolve around one individual surveilling another for their own pleasure or benefit. These are: *Sliver* (Noyce, 1993), *One Hour Photo* (Romanek, 2002), *Panic Room* (Fincher, 2002) and *Tempted* (Bennett, 2001).¹⁸ The

¹⁸ Although technically an independent film, *Tempted* has been included because its production company, Gold Circle films, works in tandem with big Hollywood studios. Moreover, the film was distributed through HBO video, a major pay-TV channel, which has “output deals” with Hollywood studios (Wasko, 2003: 86). Including *Tempted* comports with the previous discussion of the redundancy of “independent” film. Similarly, it can be argued that *Tempted* is the exception that proves the rule in terms of the types of surveillance covered in Hollywood films. This is the only

third group of films are futuristic portrayals of potential surveillance societies that are often dystopian and which overlap with the sci-fi, thriller and action categories. They generally involve powerful technologies which are yet to be invented, but have some resonance with contemporary capabilities. They are: *Minority Report* (Spielberg, 2002), *Johnny Mnemonic* (Longo, 1995), *Dark City* (Proyas, 1998), *Paycheck* (Woo, 2003), *Antitrust* (Howitt, 2001), *Gattaca* (Niccol, 1997) *The Truman Show* (Weir, 1998) and *The Siege* (Zwick, 1998).¹⁹

The findings from my preliminary analysis of 30 films can be understood in terms of Thompson's modes, the most frequent of which is "reification" through the strategy of "naturalisation". Thompson (1990: 65) notes that relations of domination may be sustained by being stripped of their socio-historical context as if they were "natural" or "outside of time". Although many cinematic representations of surveillance may contain critical elements, the presentation of surveillance as entertainment works to naturalise its position in contemporary society. By casting surveillance technologies as pleasurable, films help depoliticise the oppressive aspects of pervasive monitoring. On a more specific level, these films may also naturalise surveillance gathering by depicting enemy characters without giving any understanding of their socio-historical context. For example, the film *Spy Game* follows the training of CIA agent Tom Bishop (Brad Pitt) as he fights Chinese, Arab, Russian and Vietnamese enemies. By conflating these enemies into a common group of "them", *Spy Game* takes the viewer on a fast-paced, entertaining tour of U.S. foreign interventions. The political context and historical period of each conflict is barely mentioned. The role that U.S. foreign policy may have played in exacerbating or creating the conflicts themselves is never

movie which engaged with the question of social surveillance and the extent to which it corrodes social relations.

¹⁹ In total 48 films involving some form of surveillance were watched during the research for this thesis to find the target of 30 texts fitting the selection criteria. The others were: *Brazil* (Gilliam, 1985); *Skulls* (Cohen, 2000); *Edtv* (Howard, 1999); *RoboCop* (Verhoeven, 1987); *The Terminator* (Cameron, 1984); *Condor Axis of Evil* (Vazquez, 2003); *The Recruit* (Donaldson, 2003); *Eye of the beholder* (Elliott, 1999); *My little eye* (Evans, 2002); *Hidden* (Haneke, 2005); *Series 7: The Contenders* (Minahan, 2001); *The Game* (Fincher, 1997); *The Bourne Supremacy* (Greengrass, 2004); *Meet the Parents* (Roach, 2000); *Meet the Fockers* (Roach, 2004); *War of the Worlds* (Spielberg, 2005); *Klepto* (Trail, 2003) and *Kingdom of Heaven* (R. Scott, 2005). The 30 I selected are by no means an exhaustive survey as there are potentially vast numbers of action films that involve surveillance technologies. However, I selected the ones that had the greatest box-office success, were still available in mainstream video rental stores, had the most far-reaching resonance throughout popular culture (in terms of reviews and Internet forums) and in which, surveillance was the primary subject matter. Beyond those films, the sample is arguably representative of the types of film that involve surveillance as part of the plot on a secondary level.

addressed. Thus the film effectively reifies the idea that the US is (benignly) involved in foreign conflicts.

Naturalisation may also occur through the reduction of critique to simple themes. For example, although the film *The Siege* critically represents the dystopian future of a New York which chooses martial law to fight terrorism, it reduces this threat to the actions of one malevolent individual. Major General William Devereaux (Bruce Willis) uses his power to turn New York into a virtual prison, incarcerating Muslims and those believed to be sympathisers. He is thwarted at the end of the film by the heroic FBI official Anthony Hubbard (Denzel Washington). Throughout the film, the struggle is portrayed through an antagonist-protagonist narrative construct, reducing the critique of power to individual corruption. Far from presenting power in the structural, faceless sense that Kafka articulated, the resolution of *The Siege* implies that the demotion of Devereaux will solve the violation of human rights depicted in the film.

Another frequently occurring ideological mode is “legitimation” (Thompson, 1990: 61). Legitimation works to de-politicise the surveillance mechanism by distinguishing between malevolent and benevolent surveillance. Following Max Weber, Thompson argues that relations of domination are sustained by being represented as “worthy of support” (1990: 61). In the films analysed, state-sanctioned surveillance is habitually represented as a benevolent force that monitors citizens so as to protect them from harm. This harm is often perpetrated by deviants who use their own non-legitimate forms of surveillance for malevolent purposes, but are invariably defeated by official mechanisms. In films such as *The Pelican Brief*, *Conspiracy Theory*, *The Net*, *The Spanish Prisoner* and many others, in which the main characters are on the run from “evil-doers”, there is often a sequence where it is revealed that a legitimate arm of the state such as the FBI, CIA, police or NSA has been watching the main characters as a buffer against harm. In *The Pelican Brief* for example, this message is encapsulated in the words spoken by the FBI chief as he reveals that the role of his agents was “in part to watch, in part to protect” (2:19:35),²⁰ as the FBI had been tracking the progress of Derby Shaw (Julia Roberts), intervening periodically whenever an

²⁰ This is the time (hours, minutes, seconds) at which these words were begun to be spoken.

assassin attempted to kill her. These films investigate the relationship between power and surveillance to an extent, and they acknowledge the potential for surveillance to be used for controlling ends. Nevertheless they represent the state as a safety mechanism which “watches the watchers”, thereby obscuring the possibility that the state itself uses surveillance for malevolent purposes.

When films *do* involve either state corruption or the malevolent use of state-surveillance, the primary actors are framed as rogue elements which are reined in by higher state authority. *The End of Violence*, *Conspiracy Theory*, *Enemy of the State* and *The Bourne Identity* all involve malevolent surveillance by elements that appear to be state-sanctioned, but are later revealed to be rogue and unauthorized. Both *The Bourne Identity* and *Conspiracy Theory* detail governmental experiments in training assassins which are discontinued by a higher-authority who recognise the flaws in the training schemes. The plot of *Conspiracy Theory*, for example, follows the efforts of Jerry Fletcher (Mel Gibson) to discover “what he knows” by uncovering his latent memories of government science experiments on him. Adding tension to this struggle is the fact that Fletcher is watched from various quarters by individuals whose affiliations and motives remain vague. At the climax of the film, the intentions of each “surveiller” are revealed, dichotomising the groups into legitimate and illegitimate authority. The local police, FBI and their informants have been watching Fletcher in order to protect him and help his investigation. One agent tells Fletcher “if the intelligence world were a family, think of us as an uncle that no-one ever talks about”, (2:19:35) implying a benevolent, omniscient force. The other group watching Fletcher consists of Dr. Janus (Patrick Stewart) and his henchmen. Janus was the head of a now discontinued government experiment in training assassins. In an attempt to conceal the fact that the assassins have been killing U.S. officials for money, Janus attempts to kidnap and murder Fletcher. At the crucial moment, legitimate authority arrives and rescues Fletcher from his death. In this narrative construct, Janus represents the sins of the past, which have since been ironed out by judicial inquiry and benevolent state surveillance.

Similarly, when state-corruption, or the misuse of state surveillance, *does* occur as part of the narrative, it is qualified by the assertion that the most powerful are unaware of the acts of those beneath them. In *The Pelican Brief*, as in many films, the

U.S. President is removed from corruption and although he takes a political fall for the sins of his administration, he is ultimately innocent.²¹ The films mentioned above all ultimately justify the use of surveillance by the state, while reconciling the viewing public to the idea that state surveillance in general is both necessary and beneficial. When one considers that state surveillance can in fact be undemocratic, controlling and discriminatory, one observes a mismatch between the prevailing structural configurations of surveillance and its filmic representation.

The second process of depoliticization in films about surveillance can occur through “dissimulation” whereby the surveillance mechanism is reframed in a way that “deflects attention from or glosses over existing relations or processes” (Thompson, 1990: 62). One of the ways in which this occurs is through the emphasis on some surveillance practices rather than others. Aspects of monitoring by the military and the monitoring of urban spaces are represented with the greatest frequency, particularly in action-thrillers. Workplace surveillance appears occasionally as part of the plot but is rarely of central importance, and consumer surveillance²² is rarely represented.²³

Another way in which the films “dissimulate” the surveillance mechanism is through plots which concentrate on one aspect of surveillance instead of portraying the surveillance web as pervasive and intensive. For example, many action / thrillers concentrated on *one* individual who is being watched by a small group of individuals (who may or may not be state-sanctioned, but are generally represented as a rogue element.) This leaves out representations of the surveillance systems that make interpersonal surveillance possible. Even when surveillance is critically represented as an intricate web in which the individual becomes enmeshed (highlighting the pervasive nature of contemporary surveillance), this still only affects the film’s protagonist and those associated with the victim of surveillance. This leaves out representations of enmeshment which are part in parcel of everyday life for ordinary

²¹ The possible exception to this rule is *Absolute Power* (Eastwood, 1997), in which the President is complicit in murder and bribery. However, all of those involved in the corruption get their due and are shot, fired, reigned in by authority or kill themselves in remorse. The message here is that where corruption does occur, it will be dealt with internally and does not warrant the attention of the public.

²² The exception here is *The Truman Show* (Weir, 1998), which I discuss as one of my case studies.

²³ The reasons for this may only be guessed at, but are arguably related to the fact that the surveillance-capitalism relationship plays a central role in sustaining film corporations themselves.

people. The portrayal of the enmeshed protagonist can be seen in many of the action /thrillers, but is particularly evident in *The Net*, *The Pelican Brief*, *Enemy of the State*, *Conspiracy Theory* and *The End of Violence*. In order to further discredit their struggle, some films also construct the victims of surveillance as having some form of character flaw. This serves to bring into question the validity of his or her struggle against the surveillance mechanism, while simultaneously disestablishing the audience's connection with the character as a worthy person. Despite the fact that the character of Jerry Fletcher in *Conspiracy Theory*, is actually correct in his paranoia about "spooks", the emphasis on his eccentricities and his being portrayed as a borderline schizophrenic distance him from viewer sympathy. This type of dissimulation helps encourage the perception that only social pariahs, or individuals who have something to hide need to fear surveillance.

A further example of dissimulation in the films studied, particularly (but not exclusively) in the action-thriller genre, is the insistence that individual strength can triumph over controlling surveillance. Aided by a fair and just legal system, democratic transparency through public documents and their own internal fortitude, heroic individuals unrelentingly seek the improvement of the human condition and emancipate themselves from malevolent uses of surveillance.²⁴ In *the Pelican Brief* for example, promising law student Derby Shaw (Julia Roberts) and crusading investigative journalist Gray Grantham (Denzel Washington), successfully bring the character of powerful oil tycoon Victor Mattice to justice, while uncovering the murder of two Supreme Court justices, all the while managing to usurp the surveillance mechanism that is tracking them. Although on one level this appears to encourage active resistance by individuals, it also serves to discourage collective resistance. From the perspective of an institutionalized power structure, organised, collective rebellion is much more noxious and is therefore obscured as a potential form of resistance.

In terms of films that deal with voyeuristic surveillance directly (namely: *Sliver*, *One*

²⁴ These individuals are often aided by a brilliant and morally upright cop, who works above and beyond the call of duty, while critically examining the motives of (his) bosses and answering to the higher calling of respect for human life. Such figures appear in *The Jackal*, *Paycheck*, *Absolute Power*, *The End of Violence* and, most pertinently, *The Fugitive*.

Hour Photo, *Panic Room* and *Tempted*), dissimulation is also the most frequently employed ideological mode. In these films voyeuristic surveillance is carried out by men²⁵ with no sanctioned authority, who are invariably apprehended and punished by the legitimate arm of the state. *Panic Room*, for example, critically discusses the use of private security firms as methods of protection. Upon breaking into his clients' house to rob them, head security expert Burnham (Forest Whitaker) uses his privileged knowledge and position of trust to manipulate the surveillance mechanism and control his victims. This portrayal certainly acknowledges that those who control surveillance should be scrutinised, but assumes that legalized state surveillance can be relied on to perform this task: in this way, the film concludes as the police apprehend the intruders through superior investigative skill and proximity to the community. Similarly, some films acknowledge that there is a culture of voyeurism linked to surveillance technologies. Although this can be seen as a critical interpretation, the focus on voyeurism by non-sanctioned "peeping-toms" obscures the routine and pervasive way in which this occurs within official agencies.²⁶

The elements of dissimulation which are built into characterisation and plot construction form part of what Gillespie has referred to as the practice of *managing* social contradictions and fears, rather than denying them. Outright denial of issues that arise in public discourse is too overtly ideological and may draw attention to the presence of ideology generally. In this way, with reference to the writings of Gramsci, Althusser and Williams, Gillespie shows how ideological processes work to embed problematic images in "soothing discourses of pleasurable entertainment and benevolent authority" (Gillespie, 2000: 36). Here, popular culture can be viewed as a safety-valve which neutralises social fears by restructuring the possible subject positions available, naturalising commonplace notions of social dynamics, and

²⁵ I am leaving to one side a feminist reading of these films due to lack of space, but there are certainly elements of the critique of the male gaze to be derived from the fact that the majority of voyeuristic surveillance based films have feminine victims and absent male perpetrators. Similarly, while the lead roles in voyeuristic films are held by women (roles that are mostly passive); male characters are more often the victims of surveillance in action-thriller films, roles that allow them to fight back in active resistance to surveillance. This is not to say that women do not have complex or important roles in these films; the character Lilly LeBlanc (Saffron Burrows) in *Tempted*, for example, switches from a two-dimensional subject of the male-gaze to a femme fatale figure with a more active role. However, many of these films combine the male gaze and the surveillance gaze in a way that is worthy of feminist analysis.

²⁶ As has been uncovered by Norris and Armstrong (1999).

“fixing” the meanings of troubling events in line with the dominant perspective. Thus, television (and mainstream film) manage thorny cultural practices in the service of powerful interests (Gillespie, 2000: 36).²⁷

The films that belong to the “futuristic surveillance” category have elements which invoke Thompson’s modes of “reification” and “unification”, but in a prospective sense. Films such as *Gattaca*, *Minority Report*, *Johnny Mnemonic* and to a lesser extent *Paycheck* and *Antitrust* all construct future societies that are saturated with surveillance and have a dystopian character. Although the films play with the sinister aspects of a future with little or no privacy and no capacity for anonymity, their conclusions serve to unify audiences and align them with a collective fate. For example, the resolution of these plots frequently hinges on the efforts of ordinary people who overcome the challenges of their era through aspects of their character which are essentially “human”. They rebel against their oppressors through sentimental beliefs in “destiny” and love, as well as stoic pursuit of justice and “the good of mankind”. Their ultimate goal is invariably the continuation of the contemporary regime of western capitalist democracy.²⁸ In *Minority Report*, detective John Anderton (Tom Cruise) struggles to prove his innocence after the pre-cogs (beings with prophetic powers) predict he will commit a murder. By succeeding in this endeavour Anderton proves that “if you know your own future you can change it if you want to”, and no matter how ubiquitous surveillance may become in the future, people (and indeed the police themselves) will recognise the flaws and free society from them. This type of portrayal works to obscure the ways in which contemporary society is also shaped by ubiquitous surveillance. It also works to reify contemporary relations of power by presenting them as timeless. Constructing the future as western and capitalist (as well as containing basic power structures like state, the police and citizenry) legitimates contemporary social structures by presenting them as enduring. Futuristic surveillance films are another important way in which popular culture

²⁷ Gillespie primarily analyses television, but I am using her work in the context of mainstream film because it is equally relevant and the two formats have inherent similarities.

²⁸ The obvious comparison here is with the way in which Orwell’s *1984* resolutely destroys any capacity for “humanity” to win over totalitarian oppression. Winston Smith, himself “the last man”, eventually gives in to the mindset of the party and comes to “love Big Brother” (Orwell, 1949: 256).

“fixes” anxieties about the future and about surveillance by acknowledging them to a degree, while simultaneously resolving them in line with dominant perspectives.²⁹

Thompson’s work is exemplary in creating a paradigmatic account of ideological dissemination; however it falls short by not proposing a mode which allows an adequate discussion of the technologically deterministic and fetishizing way in which surveillance devices are presented.³⁰ Technological determinism is understood here to be a “doctrine of historical or causal primacy” which seeks to explain social and historical phenomena in terms of technology as the “principal or determining factor” (Chandler, 1995). Similarly, fetishism is the fixation on technology as if it had a magical power inherent in its make-up.³¹ These two ideological tendencies work to obscure the social relations that accompany technology and the power relations with which it is complicit. I first discuss the way surveillance films are both technologically deterministic and fetishizing within the narrative, before turning to the way in which this resonates textually and intertextually.³²

One of the ways in which surveillance films fetishize technology is by presenting it as the primary means by which characters gain control over both their own destiny, and the direction of the plot. The central premise of *Tempted*, for example, concerns the efforts of each character to catch their opponents on camera, thereby gaining the upper hand through covert knowledge. Charlie LeBlanc (Burt Reynolds) installs a CCTV system in his house to determine whether his wife Lilly LeBlanc (Saffron Burrows) is faithful, an act which Lilly turns back on him when she uses the cameras

²⁹ In my analysis I have left to one side an analysis of comedy, or the use of humour to euphemise surveillance practices. Examples of films which humorously euphemise surveillance are *Meet the Parents* (Roach, 2000) and *Meet the Fockers* (Roach, 2004).

³⁰ It could be argued that technological determinism forms part of Thompson’s mode: “reification”, specifically “naturalisation” or representing something that has a socio-historical character as if it were “natural, permanent or outside of time” (Thompson, 1990: 65). However, I wish to discuss here the fetishizing aspect of technological determinism, specifically, the way in which the power of surveillance technologies is treated in an overly reverent manner.

³¹ This understanding is derived from Marx’s analysis of commodity fetishism, in which the “social character of men’s labours appears to [the consumer] as an objective characteristic, a social natural quality of the labour product itself...”, a portrayal which allows for the continuing domination of capital, economically, politically and ideologically (Marx as cited in Strinati, 1995: 56). I am also borrowing from John Turner (1998) for these insights.

³² I have separated out the ideological aspects of the films for the sake of critical analysis, however it should be noted that these areas overlap and are mutually constructive, much the same way as the various aspect of surveillance are often interdependent. In this way, critical identification of ideology in terms of textual symbols may strengthen ideological narratives.

to hurt him, by purposefully having sex under their gaze with the man Charlie had hired to seduce her, Jimmy Mulate (Peter Facinelli). As the plot thickens with the murder of Charlie LeBlanc (who is symbolically repaid for his original moral failing), a drama ensues in which the actors fight for control of the surveillance tape of Lilly attempting to coax Jimmy to murder Charlie. In the end, success goes to the innocent Jimmy who is predictably aided by the legitimate surveillance systems of the police and the initially-suspect-but-ultimately-honourable private investigator Byron Blades (George DiCenzo). Throughout the plot, control of surveillance technologies and possession of the information they yield is presented as synonymous with escape and victory over the other opponents (thereby constructing technology as all powerful and devoid of social character).

Similarly, when action-thriller films contain a character who is rebelling against control through surveillance, this character often succeeds through inside knowledge of technical expertise. As I will discuss in more detail in the final chapter, the treatment of the character Edward 'Brill' Lyle (Gene Hackman) in *Enemy of the State* fetishizes the power of both intelligence agencies and surveillance equipment. Brill uses his training as a former intelligence expert to help the naïve Robert Clayton Dean (Will Smith) hide from the malevolent surveillance of a rogue governmental group. From Brill's ability to "de-bug" Dean of the tracking devices planted on him to the surveillance-free cage that Brill lives in, it is the expert knowledge and ability to usurp surveillance personified in Brill that saves Dean from a violent death. This treatment of surveillance technology fetishizes it as possessing the magical ability to bestow success on its controllers. Another way in which surveillance films can be seen as technologically deterministic has to do with the role of surveillance technologies in building plot tension. As John Turner has pointed out, films which involve surveillance technologies as part of the diegesis, do so in a way that builds suspense and leads to violence or the potential for violence. Framing technology as a "suspense mechanism" with all-powerful characteristics is ideological in that it amounts to a highly uncritical portrayal of surveillance which invites us to enjoy, and take pride in, (American) technical superiority (Turner, 1998). Unless it is part of the plot, computers never fail, devices never break and surveillance cameras never fail to yield detailed images. Far from querying the premise for creating such powerful

technologies in the first place, we are invited on a tour of state-of-the-art-surveillance technologies that is celebratory and fetishizing.³³

From the review of the 30 films chosen for study, I would like to posit a technologically deterministic, archetypal sequence that frequently occurs in action-thriller films. This sequence hinges around surveillance and often forms the climatic point of the film.³⁴ Many of the action-thriller films which I have looked at begin with a plot set-up where the protagonist is caught in a nightmarish situation over which he or she has little control. Examples include the pending execution of an innocent man for murder (*The Fugitive*), becoming caught in a web of governmental surveillance without knowing why (*Enemy of the State*) or a trained assassin with amnesia trying to re-discover his identity (*Bourne Identity*). This set-up is often followed by an extended period in which the protagonist is hunted by various groups using surveillance methods ranging from paper records to satellite imaging. During this time, the protagonist attempts to usurp the power relation behind the surveillance mechanism by either hiding from it, or turning it back on its original controllers. In this regard, action-thrillers about surveillance are generally fast-paced and bombard the viewer with surveillance imagery, violence and explosive music. However, there is often a scene in which the action slows to allow for an extended, mesmerising sequence that celebrates the capability of high-tech surveillance. In *Patriot Games*, for example, there is a sequence which lasts a full two minutes in which a satellite camera zooms in on a terrorist camp in North Africa. Complete with intermittent beeping, fast typing and an ominous blue square which slowly magnifies the desert again and again, the effect is meditative. The dialogue “can you enhance that...sharpen it up” (1:11:30), spoken by CIA expert Jack Ryan (Harrison Ford) and

³³ The treatment of technology in this manner also appears in the “futuristic surveillance” category, in which the potential capabilities of future surveillance technologies, as well as the social issues that arise from them, invariably form the central subject of the plots, directing the action. Treating the significance of new technologies in such a taken-for-granted manner obscures the way in which the importance of technology arises not from any inherent quality that it might possess, but rather from its use in specific contexts and by specific agents. This forms part of the “reification” mode as the future is represented as being tightly bound up with technology and surveillance, reifying the present practices of surveillance as “permanent” and “natural” (Thompson, 1990: 65).

³⁴ This analysis draws on Peter Wuss’ (1996) tabulation of the way tension is built up in a plot. He argues that steps include: 1. The probable occurrence of a relevant (often menacing) event in the undefined course of events; 2. The possibility of the protagonists being able to be active in bringing the course of events under control by certain forms of conduct (i.e. preventing the negative outcome of the events); 3. A difference between the information viewers have about the uncertain situation and the kind of information to which the protagonists are privy (Wuss 1996, as cited in Turner, 1998: 96).

the eerie music with low drum beat, serve both to build tension and help the audience appreciate the ability of satellite cameras to see increasingly detailed images. This sequence is technologically deterministic as it forms a crucial turning point within the plot and progresses the narrative. The combination of the satellite photos and CIA file pictures gives Ryan with the information he needs to determine the location of the terrorists that have been threatening his family. Although this information does not lead directly to the capture of the terrorists, the combined satellite photos and CIA file still gives Ryan the “perfect knowledge” of their location. Within the narrative, this kind of sequence often forms the moment in which the character or group with the greatest control over surveillance technology (often representing the state) gains the upper hand in the struggle, neutralising the malevolent forces and extricating the trapped protagonist.³⁵ One of the defining features of the Hollywood block-buster has always been the happy-ending or at least the general resolution of the plot and sub-plots. To discuss Hollywood and happy-endings together is a tautological exercise; the interesting point here is that in films about surveillance, happy-endings are invariably made possible by a legitimate authority with superior technological prowess and greater control of the surveillance mechanism.

The significance of technological determinism and fetishism in surveillance films is two-fold. Firstly, these ideological themes comport with traditional values about the importance of technological progress by indulging in an uncritical representation of surveillance as omnipotent and state-of-the-art. More importantly for my purposes, technological determinism and fetishism diverts the focus of power away from organisations to machines. In making technology the source of power, films involving surveillance obscure the potential for powerful groups in society to use surveillance in a way that is undemocratic and controlling.

³⁵ The archetypal mesmerising portrayal of surveillance technology is not necessarily only used to confer power on legitimate state actors. It is also used to build tension through creating a powerful villain who uses technology against peaceful society. For example, in *The Jackal* there is a four-minute sequence during which the Jackal (Bruce Willis) tests his new high powered sniper, murdering Jack Black (Ian Lamont) after chasing him for some time with a target icon on the screen of the weapon. The effect, however, is the same as in *Patriot Games* in that it helps bestow technology with magical powers of omnipotent strength.

4.3 Conclusion

The way in which ideological representations of surveillance operate in popular culture is multi-faceted and complex. However, from the literature review of reality TV and the primary analysis of Hollywood feature films, a few preliminary conclusions can be drawn. First, representations tend to naturalise and legitimate the use of surveillance by authority, encouraging citizens to consent to state-sanctioned surveillance. This occurs most frequently through the mode of “legitimation”, but also draws on aspects of “dissimulation” (Thompson, 1990: 60). Second, representations may divert the viewer away from ruling systems of surveillance by framing monitoring practices in ways which comport with the dominant ideology. This mainly involves processes of “dissimulation” (Thompson, 1990: 60). Third, where there are shards of critique that highlight the sinister or malevolent aspects to the surveillance mechanism, these are invariably accompanied by ideological dissemination in another area. Indeed, these shards of critique often covertly divert attention from the presence of ideology in general. When there is the potential for misgivings about surveillance to be politicized, the issues in question are “fixed”, that is, they are resolved in line with a dominant ideology which is prepared to accommodate rather than examine liberal disquiet about surveillance practices (Gillespie, 2000: 36). Finally, representations exploit emotional responses to surveillance in a way that inhibits critical understanding of surveillance practices. Popular representations of surveillance thrill audiences with all-powerful technology and exploit fears about the surrounding world. At the same time viewers/readers are invited to fetishize surveillance technologies themselves. This technique displays an element of technological determinism, in that representations of surveillance devices are presented as omnipotent forces. Overall, these modes of representation obscure the ways in which surveillance is complicit with relations of power. This ignores or de-politicises the *structural configurations* of surveillance that ought to be the subject of public discussion and critique. This theme is further analysed in the following four case studies.

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