Television & New Media

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Television New Media 2002; 3; 29

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Mapping the Culture of Control
Seeing through *The Truman Show*

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"Be seeing you!"

—"The Prisoner"

This article uses a discussion of the film *The Truman Show* to explore a theory of everyday life in what the late Gilles Deleuze (1995) has termed a "society of control." However, it is not simply an explication of Deleuze's ideas; my concerns are of the cultural implications of a society of control, therefore I set out in this article to map the *culture* of control and to do so by seeing through *The Truman Show*. I use examples from the film to highlight three themes[1]: the rise and dominance of a regime of surveillance and control (which is different from Foucault's [1979] description of a regime of surveillance and discipline, as I shall argue below), the explosion of product placement and the branding of everyday life, and the trust that plucky individualism will always triumph over the first two. The particular configuration of these three themes and their intersection in everyday life is formative of a particularly American version of the society of control. These themes—surveillance, branding, and individualism—are becoming truisms in our everyday lives in modern, Western, industrialized capitalist societies (or so we are told). These are, increasingly, the conditions of our

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existence (Marx once described the conditions of existence of capitalism as "what every child knows"). The article presents a theory of everyday life as territoriality and draws on Lawrence Grossberg's (1992) notion of structured mobility to describe individuality as an intersection of flows of forces (affect, ideology, capital, and so on).

Control Society

The notion of a society of control is only briefly sketched by Gilles Deleuze in a couple of his last essays and interviews: "Control and Becoming," a conversation with Toni Negri originally published in *Futur Anterieur* in the Spring of 1990, and "Postscript on Control Societies," originally published in *l'Autre Journal* in May of 1990 (both are translated and collected in Deleuze 1995). However, he does mention control societies in other settings (Deleuze 1998/1990). These essays are brief and fairly vague (Michael Hardt [1998b, 23] refers to the "Postscript" as "enigmatic"), but perhaps because of rather than in spite of these qualities, the essays have proved to be remarkably generative. Part of the reason for their popularity is that they can easily be read as commenting on cyberspace and the Internet, though they were not. One early translation of "Postscript" even took Deleuze's references to surfing on the ocean to mean surfing on the Internet.[2] But the notion of a society of control is in danger of being oversimplified and it is part of the purpose of this essay to present a somewhat nuanced version of it.

Disciplinary societies and technologies of surveillance are most often theorized through Michel Foucault's (1979) work, arguing that their primary function is for the subject to internalize societal discipline, to become docile subjects. However, Foucault was writing about the 18th and 19th centuries and a particular regime of disciplinarity (and was very specific about the geohistorical specificity of this regime). Foucault describes a shift in disciplinarity from punishment of the body to a conditioning of the soul. The central model in Foucault's work is the Panopticon, a prison designed by Jeremy Bentham. The key to this model of disciplinarity was not the constant gaze, but the potential or threat of constant gaze. The prisoner could never be sure when a guard was watching and therefore had to self-monitor and self-discipline. Not only this, one begins monitoring others. Most forget that the central observation tower in the Panopticon was not reserved for Big Brother only but was to be a public space. Consequently, not only do we self-discipline but we discipline each other. This regime is based on the premise of knowing (and caring) that we are being watched and the threat of violence accompanying that gaze (even if that threat is eternally postponed for most).

Deleuze (1998) argued that contemporary society is moving from a regime of surveillance and discipline (marked by enclosures) to one of surveillance and control, which he termed "societies of control," borrowing the phrase from William S. Burroughs (Deleuze 1998). Disciplinary societies

> operate by organizing major sites of confinement. Individuals are always going from one closed site to another, each with its own laws: first of all the family, then school ("you're not at home, you know"), then the barracks ("you're not at school, you know"), then the factory, hospital from time to time, maybe prison, the model site of confinement. (Deleuze 1995, 177)

Drawing on the work of Paul Virilio as well as Foucault and Burroughs, Deleuze writes that "We're moving toward control societies that no longer operate by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication" (Deleuze 1995, 174).[3] Deleuze's image is that of a highway: a highway does not confine one, but it does control one's movements, the options available to one.

The key feature of the control society is the crisis in societal institutions. The barriers between home, work, school, prison, and the hospital begin to break down and run together. Education now emphasizes continuing education, and assessment (of school, work, and so on) is now constant (as anyone in the academy who has been involved in their regional accreditation can attest). "[I]n control societies you never finish anything" (Deleuze 1995, 179). In a control society one could conceivably be at home, telecommuting into work, taking a telecourse, be on prison leave—attached to an ankle monitoring device—and be in the hospital—attached to monitoring devices that dial in to your doctor with your current vitals—all at the same time. Congratulations, you are now always at work (at least potentially so). Rather than being subject to specific rules of discipline in different institutional settings, in the society of control it is the case that, as Nikolas Rose (1999) has written,

> Conduct is continually monitored and reshaped by logics immanent within all networks of practice. Surveillance is "designed in" to the flows of everyday existence. The calculated modulation of conduct according to principles of optimization of benign impulses and minimization of malign impulses is dispersed across the time and space of ordinary life. (P. 234)

But rather than creating a society as a smooth space, with no differentiations, stratifications, or borders (as cyberutopians claim of cyberspace), the stratifications of civil society have hopped the boundaries and have been generalized across society (Hardt 1998b, 31). Michael Hardt (1998a) writes that whereas the modern, disciplinary state was premised on the delinea-

tion of "a (real or imagined) territory and the relation of that territory to its outside" (p. 140), in a control society the outside is internalized (for example, public space is privatized). But it is not that the lines of social stratification have gone away, they have proliferated instead. The smooth space of the society of control is not a free space. Hardt (1998b) argues, "as Deleuze and Guattari are careful to point out, within this process of smoothing, elements of social striation reappear 'in the most perfect and severe forms.' In other words, the crisis or decline of the enclosures or institutions gives rise in certain respects to a hypersegmentation of society" (pp. 32-3).[4] We could even say that in a society of control, one might wax nostalgic for a disciplinary society because in that society at least there were limits to control; one could leave school and go to work. How much worse is the society of control if it makes us nostalgic for disciplinary institutions?

But what is meant by "control" that differentiates it from "discipline"? Whereas disciplinary apparatuses start over at each site, control is continuous. Whereas discipline is analogical, control is digital, consisting of inseparable variations and the proliferation of difference. Whereas discipline works by molding the subject, control works through constant modulation, continually changing from one moment to the next. Control "undulates," in a control society we surf (Deleuze 1995, 180). Whereas a disciplinary society works via precepts (order words), the society of control works through passwords and controlling access to information. Whereas disciplinary society is characterized by production (the factory), the control society is characterized by metaproduction (assembly and marketing). Whereas discipline focuses on the long term, control focuses on the short term and is rapidly shifting. Deleuze (1995) writes that money provides a clear distinction between the two regimes: whereas disciplinary society used molded currency connected to a gold standard, control is based on floating exchange rates and modulations in currency. "A man is no longer a man confined but a man in debt" (Deleuze 1995, 181).

Control is modulation, a series of constant adjustments. It is not being trained and then let loose but being constantly tweaked (continuing education). Deleuze (1995) refers to it as social engineering. One of his examples is television, which he considers a direct form of social engineering ("the ultimate consensus"). Television to Deleuze does not exploit its aesthetic possibilities like film, but only a social function. He writes, "Television's professional eye, the famous socially engineered eye through which the viewer is himself invited to look, produces an immediate and complacent perfection that's instantly controllable and controlled" (p. 74). Deleuze is obviously no fan of television and his characterization of television and its effects is at times simplistic and problematic. Nonetheless, this description of television gives us a sense of the general workings of control.

Another example of social engineering is marketing. "Marketing is now the instrument of social control and produces the arrogant breed who are our masters" (Deleuze 1995, 181). Individuals are no longer treated as individuals, but as demographics. Echoing and paraphrasing Raymond Williams (1958/1989), who had a similar suspicion for the new advertising men in the 1950s, we could say that "there are in fact no markets, only ways of seeing people as markets." The surveillance of the control society, for example, gives rise to what Oscar Gandy (1993, 1995) has called "the panoptic sort," the hypersegmentation of the audience and market into desirable and undesirable sets according to increasingly complex algorithms and the discriminatory apparatus (a differentiating machine) of market surveys and consumer databases.[5] Unlike previous discriminatory apparatuses, the categories of differentiation are multiply cross referenced so that one cannot even point to the factor that, for example, led one to be denied credit, much less change one's desirability. Another example, one that Deleuze provides (1995, 182), is that of the new medicine that works by identifying potential cases and subject groups at risk for disease (e.g., genetic testing and so on) and proceeds from there, rather than doctors treating a particular patient with a particular ailment.[6]

Though it is not a term that Deleuze uses, one difference between the disciplinary and control regimes is that in the latter, surveillance is articulated with simulation. Computer models (of markets, populations, crime profiles, traffic patterns, and so on) are now sufficiently powerful enough to provide fairly complex, real-time simulations of "reality." Decisions are made by governments, corporations, and institutions based on these simulations and projections as if they were "reality" (Bogard 1996; Graham 1998). So one is denied credit or insurance based on one's profile in the simulation and computer-generated projections, not on actual behavior.

The surveillant eye of the disciplinary state is now accompanied, or even superseded, by the surveillant eye of control, which is exemplified in the eye of marketing; the docile subject becomes the consuming subject. It is not the state controlling its citizens, but the economic system monitoring audiences and markets to turn us into perfect consumers (tuning us to match the product as much as vice versa). As Hardt (1998a) writes, "the capitalist market is one machine that has always run counter to any division between inside and outside" (p. 143), in other words, counter to the modern disciplinary state and therefore is quite at home in a society of control. This is not to say that the disciplinary state has disappeared (cameras are everywhere, from banks to soccer matches to public squares ready to capture malfeasance and arrest the perpetrators), just that it is not the only regime out there (Graham 1998). We need to make sure to avoid the easy and common reduction of this analysis to binaries: discipline versus control. Likewise,

elements of this regime are hardly new, but have intensified with the aid of new communication and information technologies over the past thirty years or so.

As Nikolas Rose (1999) has argued, Deleuze's arguments are "more hypotheses than conclusions." He continues,

> And they are framed in terms that are far too epochal: Foucault's disciplinary societies were not "disciplined societies," but those where strategies and tactics of discipline were active; likewise, Deleuze's control societies should not be understood sociologically, but in terms of the emergence of new possibilities and the complexification of the old (pp. 234-235).

The remainder of this article will use the film *The Truman Show* to attempt to illuminate some of these possibilities for power and control.

The Truman Show

The Truman Show (1998, directed by Peter Weir) stars Jim Carrey as Truman Burbank, a man living, for all appearances, a fairly happy idyllic life in a small town called Seahaven. He seems happily married and has a good, though boring, job; he hangs out with his best friend Marlon (Noah Emmerich) and drinks beer. The neighbors are friendly, the streets are clean, the houses and picket fences all white and shining, and the weather is always beautiful. However, unbeknownst to Truman, his entire life is actually a television show ("The Truman Show"[7]). Ever since the day he was born, and throughout the thirty years since, his every moment has been broadcast live across the globe by an array of hidden cameras. The show prides itself on finding innovative places to hide miniature cameras, from brooches to dog collars, to jacket buttons and streetlights. Indeed, the town in which he lives is actually a giant stage set, built under a monumental dome that can reproduce weather, the movement of the stars, and so on. All the other people in his life, including his mother, father, wife, and best friend are paid actors; all the events in his life are scripted "episodes" directed (literally from on high) by Christof (Ed Harris). Truman is under constant surveillance both by the television audience (who watch in record numbers and speculate, "How will it end?") and the director's staff (who wish to control and manipulate—and prolong—Truman's life under glass). The film covers the final few weeks of the show as Truman increasingly becomes suspicious of those around him and begins to believe that the world he lives in is not real. He desires to escape the town and find his true love, Sylvia (Natascha McElhone), an "extra" with whom he fell in love in college, who he believes has moved to Fiji.

Theme One: Surveillance

> This is a modern panopticon, wherein the cell of privacy is open to an impersonal gaze, and the sense that someone is always watching, potentially at least, is part of the structure of feeling of modern life. (Carey 1998, 129)

The Truman Show takes Baudrillard seriously. Writing in the 1970s and citing the example of the Loud family on PBS, Baudrillard (1988) argues that "the most intimate operation of your life becomes the potential grazing ground of the media. . . . The entire universe also unfolds unnecessarily on your home screen" (p. 20-1), which he terms "obscenity." For Baudrillard this is not just an argument about privacy but about economics and consumerism. The "inexorable light of information and communication" (his phrase) feeds a capitalist consumerism in which everyday life becomes commodified, even our symbolic life (so that we are reduced to uttering commercial catch phrases to each other over our fast food).[8]

Both regimes—discipline and control—are in evidence in the film. Truman has been disciplined to stay in Seahaven (a town built on an island) by making him deathly afraid of the water. When Truman was young, he and his father went sailing, a storm blew up, and his father was supposedly drowned—a traumatic experience. Now he cannot bring himself to get on a ferry or even cross a bridge over water. Throughout his life, the actors that surround him present him with constant reminders that life is perfect in the town, and that life elsewhere is terrible, and that he is very lucky to be where he is and to have what he does. The purpose of all this is to have him internalize these notions and remain in the town (and on the show). At the heart of a disciplinary regime is violence, at least implied violence. Security on the set is tight, intruders are quickly manhandled out of the way. The violence underlying "The Truman Show" reveals itself during Truman's first escape attempt (he is surrounded, netted, and tackled) and in the search for Truman at the end of the film (the friendly neighborhood dog becomes a snarling tracker).

But the dominant regime in evidence in the film is that of control. Surveillance is, obviously, essential to the situation; television cameras are everywhere. But crucially, Truman is unaware that he is being watched or manipulated, which makes this the surveillance of the control society rather than discipline.[9] As the character of Marlon says early in the film, as if to confirm Deleuze's insight, "nothing on the show is fake, it's merely controlled."

Toward the end of his essay, "Postscript on Control Societies," Deleuze (1995) writes,

> Félix Guattari has imagined a town where anyone can leave their flat, their
> street, their neighborhood, using their (individual) electronic card that opens
> this or that barrier; but the card may also be rejected on a particular day, or be-
> tween certain times of day; it doesn't depend on the barrier but on the com-
> puter that is making sure everyone is in a permissible place, and effecting a
> universal modulation. (Pp. 181-182)

The idea of universal modulation is key to the functioning of "The Tru-
man Show." Truman is constantly tracked and his movements are guided
by being blocked by passersby or traffic or other means. As he moves
through his day, despite his seeming freedom of movement, he is guided,
nudged, modulated. He is "managed" (another important term for the so-
ciety of control), and the logics that manage him are immanent to every
structure or individual or situation that Truman encounters.

Though our lives are nothing like that of *The Truman Show*, as public
spaces are replaced by private ones (a dimension of the collapse of the
inside and the outside characteristic of the control society), for example the
town square becomes the mall, we open ourselves even more to being man-
aged in these ways. One extreme example is that of the theme park where
experience and movement are carefully (and almost invisibly) controlled
(Davis 1996). Public space and public architecture have been constructed
with a purpose of control since Paris was renovated in the nineteenth cen-
tury, or more recently the campus riots of 1968 (see Winner 1986). Private
spaces, such as restaurants and shops, more directly move customers
through the space (quickly, to increase turnover, or slowly, to increase the
numbers of purchases—e.g., Coffee shops in bookstores) (Ritzer 1998,
2000).

To contrast this with a disciplinary regime of surveillance, it is worth-
while briefly to compare the 1967-68 British television series "The Prisoner"
with which "The Truman Show" has some superficial similarities. "The
Prisoner" concerns an ex-secret agent, known only as Number Six (Patrick
McGoohan), who resigns his position only to find himself trapped in a twee
seaside town known only as The Village, from which there is no escape. Life
is idyllic in The Village and the weather is wonderful, but life is also firmly
controlled by an individual known only as Number Two (played by vari-
ous actors) and the inhabitants are kept under constant surveillance. The
contrasts with "The Truman Show" are significant: violence is much more
near the surface in "The Prisoner" (from the bizarre hovering menace of a
six-foot rubber ball referred to as Rover to direct attempts at brainwashing
and intimidation); the regime wants information from Number Six while
Christof merely wants entertainment from Truman; and Number Six is
always acutely aware of his confinement while Truman is kept innocent of
his.

One final general difference between the two regimes is the ostensible benevolence of the control society. Spying on Truman is a harmless endeavor. We do not want to hurt him, we just want to watch. The society is taking care of Truman, giving him what he needs (and even giving him his needs: for example, a new mower), making sure that he has no real problems. Likewise, ever finer points of consumer stratification are meant to make our life easier, we get just what we want, or so we are told. And it does not seem to matter that on everything hangs a price tag.

Theme Two: Product Placement

In the film *The Truman Show,* the television show "The Truman Show" has no commercial interruptions. It makes its profits through product placement. Everything seen on the show from food to clothes to buildings are for sale through the Truman Catalog. Also, companies will pay for the actors to handle their products and to mention their brand name. For example, Truman's spouse is continually smiling and showing off all the neat gadgets and new products that she just bought (or was given in a promotion at the store); Truman's buddy always drinks the same brand of beer (label clearly visible), and so on.[10] In this way, the film highlights a growing trend in motion pictures as well as television. Motion pictures cannot avoid showing specific products or brands if they are at all true to the real world (no one drinks beer out of cans that just say "Beer"). Graham Murdock (1992) has written that ever since the inception of cinema "filming the modern world meant filming a world saturated with branded goods and advertising displays" (p. 226). However, especially since the 1980s when the film *E.T.* made the sales of Reeses Pieces skyrocket, increasingly cash-strapped studios (owned by multinationals looking to increase the percentage of profits) facing rapidly rising costs of film production have turned to product placement as another form of revenue.[11]

Product placement represents the migration of advertisements from separated, regulated spaces into the spaces of programs, films, and eventually out of the media and into our lives. However, the subtle (and not so subtle) integration of placed ads into television and film narratives actually places "The Truman Show" in line with the television of the 1950s that it mimics. Early television, like radio before it, had many programs completely sponsored (and controlled) by a single company. Discussions of the product (e.g., Maxwell House coffee) occurred within the flow of the narrative, without commercial "breaks" (see Hay 1989).

The branding of everyday life, like product placement, is not new, but seems more intense in recent years as media corporations seek additional sources of funds and advertisers work on making brands and logos the personal habits of the consumer.[12] James Lull (1995) refers to this as the socio-

logical mediation of ideology. The branding of everyday life is especially significant because as Arjun Appadurai (1996) has argued, consumption practices are grounded in bodily habituation, of repeated action. The branding of everyday life is obviously an intended outcome of the surveillant practices of marketing. The subject is controlled not by the brute force of a disciplinary regime, but by the shaping of the social space in which he or she is embedded, by fostering habits of consumption.[13]

Theme Three: Individualism

The third theme that can be read from *The Truman Show* is the triumph of the individual against Big Brother, against a technological society of control. Despite all the manipulation and the surveillance, Truman is able to resist. "You didn't have a camera in my head," he states defiantly. There is, then, according to this, an essential (plucky) humanism, a true nature: Truman Burbank. He is the "True-Man," an authentic human. But at the same time his last name denotes the Hollywood studio city in which he lives, and connotes the brash commercialism of TV (Niccol 1998).

The true man, the rational individual struggling against a manipulative, commercialized society, is ultimately resistant (in this scenario), though of course, there is no need to resist if the society is benevolent. Surveillance, they say, is for our own protection; direct marketing is for our leisure and convenience; commodification only sees to our pleasure. The true consumers can hardly be dissatisfied and alienated because the world, after all—and like Truman's—revolves around them. What they want to watch is programmed. If something does not sell it will not be forced down the consumers' throats; consumers are sovereign, after all. Modern society presents lots of choice.

Despite the sarcasm, we do need to acknowledge that there is a great desire for material comfort, to be taken care of, to live in the happy, prepackaged world of TV. (Hakuna Matata, no worries, as the Disney song goes.) So we *could* conclude that consumers have the potential to reveal their true authentic selves and revolt against the control society but are duped by capital, dopey from spending, sedated by the opiate of consumption, sleepy after a trip to the mall. One argument as to why workers who were deskilled and exploited in whole new ways by Fordist and Taylorist modes of production at the turn of the century did not revolt was that the products of leisure and convenience were put in their grasp, life became easy (or easier), and more important, they were not starving, as were the Luddites earlier in the 19th century (see Webster and Robins 1986). As Christof says about Truman (which can be generalized to consumers generally) we believe what we want to believe; we cling to the world that we are presented with (and which appears comfortable) despite at times overwhelm-

ing evidence that this is not right. The debate about the assumed activity or passivity of consumers (are they resistant or duped?) is too extensive to get into here. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that consumption can be a site of struggle. But what *The Truman Show* reveals is that this is an *individual* struggle.

Crucially, though the individual in question seems to be struggling against a regime, the notion of individuality itself is enforced by the regime. Nikolas Rose (1999) draws the connections between the individual, neoliberalism, and control. He points out that individual autonomy and freedom are central in broader discourses of neoliberalism and consumer capitalism by making the individual seem empowered (active, not passive) by consuming and that they are free in making their choices. As Rose summarizes, consumption technologies allow consumers to "narrativize their lives [and provide] new ethics and techniques for living" (p. 86). We see a shift from the external imposition of discipline to an internal motivation: "Disciplinary techniques and moralizing injunctions as to health, hygiene and civility are no longer required; the project of responsible citizenship has been fused with individuals projects for themselves" (p. 88). Foucault's disciplinary societies involved, after all, the internalization of discipline.

Paradoxically, this internal discipline involves a discourse of freedom. "Modern individuals are not merely 'free to choose,' but *obliged to be free*, to understand and enact their lives in terms of choice" (Rose 1999, 87; emphasis in the original). This is "a regime of the self where competent personhood is thought to depend upon the continual exercise of freedom" (p. 87).

One of the crucial sites of the articulation of neoliberalism and freedom is television. James Hay (2000), drawing in part on Rose's discussion, has argued in the pages of this journal: "To understand how the domestic sphere came to constitute a site and a set of technologies for a neoliberal form of governing, it is necessary to recognize its implication in both a new regime of mobility and a new regime of privacy" (p. 56). Hay grounds his discussion of this new regime in Raymond Williams' (1975) idea that television presents an emblematic site for what he calls "mobile privatisation." Mobile privatization is an attempt to describe a new social complex characterized by mobility and also autonomy, especially the creation of a self-sufficient domestic space. This complex is contradictory in that the needs of mobility and the management of movement between, for example, work and home (and the flows within and through that home) are at odds with the increasing balkanization of the private home in gated communities. The surveillance necessary for both the control of mobility and the protection of the autonomous home is at odds with professed rights of privacy. With the notable exception of the patrons and staff of "The Truman Bar," and mass viewings for Truman's wedding, the audience in *The Truman Show* violates

Truman's privacy from the comfort of their own home (one man is even habitually in the bath).

Individualism, Identity, and Mobility

As Manuel Castells (1997) has argued, the focus on individualism (e.g., the rise in prominence of libertarianism) allows one to ignore (and deny responsibility for or complicity with) marginalized communities, those who are not targeted by the consumerist surveillance systems (though, perhaps, overly targeted by the disciplinary surveillance system) because they cannot afford the goods. The growth of "personalization," while desirable to a certain extent, may lead to social fragmentation if it means that societies do not share common experiences (Shapiro 1999). Likewise, one could argue that this focus allows the consumer to ignore the ways that he or she is not acting on his or her own, completely. Consumerism is habituated. Appadurai (1996, 74) writes that habituated consumerism is not only embedded in the microrythms of the everyday and the body but are also embedded in a long duree. Habits are not always our own (Wise 2000).

We could argue that the individual lies at the intersection of flows of power, matter, goods, symbols, money, and so on. "The diagram of control . . . is oriented not toward position and identity but rather toward mobility and anonymity" (Hardt 1998b, 32). The spaces and places that one occupies are mobile and fragmentary, but they are structured by longer (sometimes global) flows. The forces that structure spaces are called "territorializing machines" (following Deleuze and Guattari 1987). These machines (or machinic processes) produce what Lawrence Grossberg (1992) has called a "structured mobility." This structured mobility "defines the spaces and places, the stabilities and mobilities within which people live" (p. 107).

> The lines of this "structured mobility" offer both an organization of space and a model of mobility. They constantly enact and enable specific forms of movement (change) and stability (identity), and empower specific forms of action and agency. (P. 108)

I said earlier that the individual is at the intersection of these flows of forces and dwells within a structured mobility. Perhaps now we should say that the individual *is* the intersection of flows and is inseparable from (if not an effect of) a structured mobility. Hardt (1998a) argues that it is nothing new to write that subjectivities are constructed through one's interactions with the social. This is also true in the disciplinary regime. In that regime, the subject was defined and generated by institutions (one was spoken by the family, by school, by the factory) which at least provided the subject with a

means of protection (at home, you are not subject to the discipline of school). With the crisis of institutions that is characteristic of the society of control, subjectivity is still formed by institutions, but now these institutions follow you everywhere. It is not a different subjectivity, but an intensified subjectivity.

Individuals are aggregates of habits (cf. Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 1991) within flows of territory and affect.

> [Structured mobilities] become implicated in a project of regulation directed primarily at how affect is organized, mobilized, and deployed within or against already existing structures of mobilization. (Grossberg 1992, 108)

It is the point of affect that connects individualism, consumerism, and control. Affect is usually articulated to ideas of authenticity. Emotions, feelings, and intensities are viewed as very personal experiences. But to avoid the trap of individualism we need to consider affect as not only social but structured, distributed. Affect, then, becomes a prime means of control. One's desires do not have to be dictated, merely managed, tweaked, and we consider our choices our own. The deeply embedded value of convenience, for example, makes it a very effective point of articulation to structures of power (Tierney 1993). Affect is also mobile, moving faster and faster with each change of season and fashion. The need for rapid turnover of consumer goods leads to the construction of a fickle consumer, fickle in that the satisfaction/pleasure promised (and occasionally achieved) is fleeting at best, one's desires tugged toward other, newer, faster, products. Otherwise we are easily bored. This boredom is not the result of a postmodern waning of affect (cf. Jameson 1991) but an *excess* (Grossberg 1992; Massumi 1996). The society of control does not repress affect, but it generates an excess of affect (an affect of excessive speed), which overflows the disciplinary boundaries of civil society and at the same time proliferates the fault lines that cut across the surface of society.

Resisting the Society of Control

In the novel *1984*, Winston Smith, the protagonist subject to a harsh disciplinary regime in which surveillance plays a large role, ultimately fails against the will of Big Brother. Despite Winston's fervent insistence throughout the novel that the individual can triumph, that they cannot get into one's head, he is proved utterly, fatally wrong. Truman, taking up the same theme of the sovereignty of one's own mind, seems to succeed where Winston failed. But he, too, fails, and he does so in two ways: boredom and the mistaken notion that there is an exit.

After his survival and exit from the show, his triumph cheered by millions of TV viewers around the globe, the cheering audience becomes quickly bored. "So what else is on?" asks one, in the closing line of the film. Thus framed, the triumph of plucky individualism is entertaining yet inconsequential. None of the audience members depicted in the film seem much changed—no one escapes their daily life as Truman does. After all, when each of us has our Warholian 15 minutes, what difference does it make? Deleuze (1995) argues that the regime of information does not keep people silent but rather forces everyone to speak to the extent that everyone is talking but nothing ever matters.[14] "Maybe speech and communication have been corrupted," he argues, "They're thoroughly permeated by money—and not by accident but by their very nature. We've got to hijack speech. Creating has always been something different from communicating. The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control" (p. 175).

His second defeat is the thought of escape. Scott McQuire (2000) writes, "While *The Truman Show* provided a safety valve with the possibility that Truman can eventually escape his fishbowl exposure, 'real' television has never proved so easy to step outside" (p. 150). It appears at first that Truman has triumphed, defeating Christof and leaving the show. But he is not leaving the society of control, he merely exits from one institution. It is instructive to compare Truman with Number Six in "The Prisoner" who eventually escapes The Village and returns to London, only to have the door of his old flat swing open automatically as those in The Village did (Rakoff 1998). London has become The Village. Perhaps this is a bit of comfort that *The Truman Show* provides its audience: that there are limits to the culture of control, that it is only a television show after all and after the show is over everyone can go home. But in showing the world of Truman as an institution, albeit one that seems total, *The Truman Show* is ultimately a vision of a disciplinary apparatus (while "The Prisoner" ends up being a vision of the proliferation of control). The film provides us glimpses of the society of control to come, but comforts us with the notion that it will soon be over and we, and Truman, can leave. As I wrote earlier in the article, if we are feeling nostalgia for a disciplinary regime, if the idea that "it's only a disciplinary institution" gives us comfort, the society of control must be terrifying indeed.

One cannot assume that one can separate oneself from society, for we are social through and through. There is no outside from which to challenge the society of control, though the rise of conservative nationalist and religious movements globally evidence attempts to do so (see Castells 1997; Hardt 1998b). We cannot reject consumerism absolutely because we are consumers through and through. What we can hope to do is exercise "the right to say nothing, because only then is there a chance of framing the rare, and

even rarer, thing that might be worth saying" (Deleuze 1995, 129). The society of control is a smoothing machine that smooths things out, grinds things down, and then striates them again (cf. Bogard 2000). A vacuole of noncommunication is a hiccup in the smoothing process of our everyday lives (for example, events like Buy Nothing Day or Television Turn-Off Week, promoted by the Adbusters Media Foundation). In the society of control, in the branding of everyday life, we are always already complicit: watching and consuming.

In watching *The Truman Show*, we watch ourselves watching. The first half of the film involves us with the events of Truman's life as television viewers. We then pull back to view (from the point-of-view of the television set) the fictional audience watching Truman. We begin to question our own viewing practice, the fun that we, the audience sitting in the theater, have been having at Truman's expense. This double view (of program and audience) emphasizes our complicity with the society of control, not as victims but as part of its apparatus. This potential discomfiture of the theater audience is an important moment of effectivity for the film, but in the end it is a solitary one. The film presents no solution except for trying to make the society of control disciplinary again. Perhaps this is because we are familiar enough with the disciplinary society that we know what to do, we have our strategies and tactics well in hand, they are familiar. But the society of control is still quite unfamiliar; if anything, it seems to feed off of our old resistances.

How to resist the society of control? Brian Massumi (1998, 61) suggests productive interference patterns both inside and outside the media: excess, deficiency, and humor make one unassimiable; or tactical noncommunication that is joyful and invocative. Deleuze's (1995) final suggestion seems to reemphasize that in a society of control it is with the politics of everyday life (cf. de Certeau 1984), of banality (cf. Seigworth 2000), of the quotidian (cf. Lefebvre 1971) that we must concern ourselves:

> What we most lack is a belief in the world, we've quite lost the world, it's been taken from us. If you believe in the world you precipitate events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small their surface or volume. . . . Our ability to resist control, or our submission to it, has to be assessed at the level of our every move. (Deleuze 1995, 176)

Notes

1. This article is not intended to be a straightforward critique or analysis of the film. Rather, what I would like to do, as my title suggests, is *map* the culture of control. The examples I draw from the film are meant to be generative and illustrative,

not authoritative or to be taken as general metaphors or analogies. They are snap-shots of the sights and sites of the culture of control. I do not assume that the film is a realistic portrayal of contemporary society; it is a fiction and a fantasy. But it is a fiction resonant with themes found at large in contemporary U.S. society. The film is a cultural artifact produced in the midst of the coming of a society of control. I will compare it from time to time with the 1960s television show "The Prisoner," a cultural artifact produced in a more disciplinary society. I do not assume that either text is completely contiguous with either society, but I do assume that both are contradictory, resistant, and complicit in their own ways.

2. This observation about the translation of "surfing" was made by Andrew Barry in a review of my book (Barry 1998).

3. Virilio (1999) himself is a bit more bleak on the topic of the control society than Deleuze (1995). When asked in a recent interview about Deleuze's notion of the society of control, he replied (in part),

We are faced with a phenomenon of interactivity that is tendentiously depriving us of our free will so as to bind us to a system of questions/answers that cannot be evaded. . . . It is more than just a question of the society of control—it's the cybernetic society [which is] the very opposite of freedom and democracy. (Virilio 1999, 80)

4. Michael Hardt (1998a) writes,

The striated space of modernity constructs places that are continually engaged in and founded on a dialectical play with their outsides. The space of imperial sovereignty, in contrast, is smooth. It might appear that it is free of the binary divisions of modern boundaries, or striation, but really it is crisscrossed by so many fault lines that it only appears as a continuous, uniform space. (P. 143)

5. Gandy (1993, 1995) draws extensively on Foucault and his discourse is that of the disciplinary society, but I would argue that the panoptic sort works more clearly as part of a regime of control.

6. See also Nikolas Rose's (1999, 235) examples of the society of control and medicine.

7. When referring to the film, I will italicize the title and use quotation marks for the television show.

8. Paul Virilio (2000) has recently argued that the competitive pressures of a global market, especially the market in information, has led to "the revolution of generalized snooping" (p. 62).

9. The awareness and obviousness of the camera also marks *The Truman Show*'s difference from other life-on-camera films such as Ron Howard's 1999 film *Ed-TV*.

10. Though satirizing product placement, the film has some prominent product placements of its own; more obviously (and parodically) note the overwhelming presence of the magazine *Dog Fancy* at the newsstand, but more subtly also note the number of Ford cars driven.

11. For more extensive treatments of product placement see, for example, McAllister (1996), Miller (1990), Wasko, Philips, and Purdie (1993).

12. Being able to tolerate brands, logos, and commercials has become a more prevalent way of consumers gaining products and services. This is, of course, the model of commercial television, but has been taken up by "free" online services (Juno), long distance phone service (Freeway), web sites, and others.

13. See Rose's (1999, 85-89) discussion of consumption (cf. Leiss, Kline, and Jhally 1990).

14. As Christof says to Truman toward the end, "Say something, damn it! You're still on camera, live to the world!" (Niccol 1998, 106).

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