



# Surveillance in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

The Dismantling of Privacy in Oceania

---

Övervakning i 1984  
Nedmonteringen av privatliv i Oceania

---

Amalia Berggren

Faculty of Art and Social Sciences, Department of Languages, English Department

---

English

---

15 hp

---

Supervisor: Andreas Nyström

---

Examiner: Maria Holmgren Troy

---

7 Jan 2016

---

Serial number

---

## Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to analyze how certain elements of panopticism manage to dismantle the notion of privacy in George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. By reading the text through a lens of panopticism, a theory introduced by Jeremy Bentham, I give examples on how the surveillance methods used by the Party share similarities with the system of surveillance within a Panoptic prison, but also in what ways that they differ. In the end, it is obvious that the society of Oceania cannot be considered to be a complete Panopticon, although several elements of panopticism are present within the text and that they dismantle the aspect of privacy in the novel.

Keywords: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell, Panopticism, Jeremy Bentham, Michel Foucault, surveillance

## Sammanfattning

Syftet med denna uppsats är att belysa hur vissa delar av panopticism nedmonterar begreppet integritet i George Orwells roman 1984. Genom att läsa texten med en panoptisk lins, en teori myntad av Jeremy Bentham, ger jag exempel på hur de övervakningsmetoder Partiet använder har vissa likheter med det system av övervakning som återfinns i ett panoptiskt fängelse, men också olikheter. I slutändan är det uppenbart att samhället i Oceanien inte kan anses vara ett komplett panoptiskt samhälle, även om flera delar av panopticism förekommer i texten och att de nedmonterar integriteten i novellen.

### Surveillance in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) George Orwell portrays a futuristic dystopian society which is set in modern day London and referred to as Oceania, a society in which the citizens are under constant control by the Party, the ruling force of the nation. The citizens of Oceania are under constant surveillance by the use of cameras, hidden microphones, a secret police, as well as by fellow citizens that will alert the government if they witness illegal behavior. Through the eyes of the novel's protagonist, Winston Smith, the reader is presented with what a totalitarian society based on constant surveillance can look like and how a governmental structure can use elements of panopticism<sup>1</sup> in order to keep citizens obedient by removing the sense of privacy and trust for each other. English philosopher Jeremy Bentham introduces the Panopticon, a prison model where the inmates are under constant surveillance by guards and unable to communicate with one another, in his seventeenth century work *Panopticon*. However, the guards of the Panopticon are not seen by the inmates and they are therefore unaware of by whom and when they are being watched. These ideas of a Panopticon model were expanded by philosopher Michel Foucault in 1975 in his book *Discipline and Punish*, in which he analyzes the mechanisms of discipline within a Panoptic prison.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the government permeates every aspect of daily life, going to such lengths as to turn children against their parents and friends against each other in a society where everyone is used as a means of control by the government. In this essay I will therefore argue that Bentham's theory and Foucault's expansion of the Panoptic model can be applied to the novel in regards to private space and surveillance methods. Furthermore, I will also argue that Certain elements of Panoptic control dismantle private space for the individual in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

---

<sup>1</sup> From Greek: *pan-* ('all) and *opticon-* ('seeing')

Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832) was an English philosopher of law and social reformer who is also regarded as one of the founders of English utilitarianism (Sweet). The moral theory of utilitarianism is the belief that “whether actions are morally right or wrong depends on their effects. More specifically, the only effects of actions that are relevant are the good and bad results that they produce” (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Bentham argued that the purpose of utilitarianism is to “aim for the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people” (O’Reilly), and that it is the nature of humans to avoid pain and achieve happiness at any cost (O’Reilly). He states that “nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we should do” (Bentham 1781). By the aid of his own interpretation of this particular theory Bentham eventually developed a prototype of a prison known as the Panopticon penitentiary, which Bentham believed to be the ultimate maximum security prison model.

Bentham’s Panopticon is structured as a circular building with a watchtower at its core. The prison cells would be built around the outer wall so that the prisoners and their actions are visible to the guards at all times, and “conversation tubes” connecting individual prison cells with the watchtower would carry sound and allow communication between inmates and guards (Bentham, *Panopticon* 5). These tubes would thereby make it possible for guards within the watchtower to directly contact prisoners without having to expose themselves to danger. In addition to this, according to Bentham's prison model, the prisoners could not know whether they are being watched or not. This would be accomplished by installing a bright light at the top of the watchtower that would effectively make it impossible for the inmates to view the guards inside the tower at any given time, thereby creating the constant perception of being observed in spite of not actually being able to see the observers. Bentham writes that:

The prisoners in their cells, occupying the circumference—The officers in the centre. By blinds and other contrivances, the Inspectors concealed . . . from the observation of the prisoners: hence the sentiment of a sort of omnipresence—  
The whole circuit reviewable with little, or . . . without any, change of place.  
One station in the inspection part affording the most perfect view of every cell.  
(*The Works of Jeremy Bentham* 280)

Because the inmates cannot see the guards at any time, the inmates would have to assume that they are constantly being watched and are thus unable to express unwanted behavior as it would be punished if caught. Here, the notion of privacy within a prison can be discussed. The prisoners are isolated by walls, but guards can observe them at any time and thereby revoke the prisoners' privacy. This creates a structured obedience among the inmates while enforcing minimum physical control upon them. According to Bentham the Panopticon prison model would generate various benefits: "Morals reformed—health preserved—industry invigorated—instruction diffused—public burthens lightened—Economy seated, as it were, upon a rock—the Gordian knot of the Poor-Laws not cut, but untied—all by a simple idea in Architecture!" (Bentham, *Panopticon* 67). Bentham wanted to eventually apply this specific model to schools, hospitals, and other governmental buildings as he believed it would result in social order and general happiness of the greater part of population. Although Bentham's theory of a "utopian" prison was widely discussed and sometimes praised, a prison fully in line with his Panopticon prison model would never be built. However, his ideas can be seen today in some circular structures although modified (The Panopticon).

Another important philosopher to take in to account when discussing the Panopticon is Michel Foucault (1926-1984), as he provides the reader with an in-depth analysis of the prison model and structure. It is worth noting that Foucault's ideas were written almost thirty years after *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published; however, Foucault

never refers to the novel itself when presenting his own ideas. Foucault was a French philosopher and historian who is primarily known for his post-structuralist work, but also for his expansion and analysis of Bentham's original idea of the Panopticon prison model. In his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) Foucault evaluates the power relationships which can be found in Bentham's model. In the chapter "Discipline" Foucault explicitly focuses on the Panopticon prison model, and he mentions that the reason as to why Bentham's idea would be successful is mainly because of the observed not being aware of when or by whom they are being watched. Foucault describes the Panopticon and its function as follows:

To induce a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual use unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who uses it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they themselves are the bearer. (201)

In this passage Foucault mentions that the observed indeed become means of their own suppression since the observed are being controlled by surveillance even though the act of observation might be discontinuous. He argues that the ones under surveillance will, even though they do not know if they are actually being watched, act as if though they are. Thereby is the effect of panopticism successful.

Scott O'Reilly writes in his article "Philosophy and the Panopticon" that "the omniscient surveillance created conditions whereby the observed themselves became instruments of their own suppression" as a reason as to why panopticism could be

prosperous. He also compares Foucault and Bentham by acknowledging that Bentham aimed to use the Panopticon in the reformation of convicts, whereas Foucault viewed panopticism as a way to create obedient people.

In addition to this, Foucault also argues that the Panopticon system “automatizes and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up” (202). Foucault suggests that the Panopticon model can serve as an idealistic system when the aim is to produce certain behavior by minimum effort (Foucault 148). Foucault writes that “the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault 201). Thereby, observers are able to keep the observed ones obedient at all times. Foucault writes that:

This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure (...) all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism. (Foucault 197)

Here Foucault explains and clarifies that prisoners within a Panoptic model are controlled by the guards, and the guards are in turn controlled by their intendants and so forth.

In Orwell’s Oceania, Bentham's theory of the Panopticon and Foucault's expansion regarding hierarchical control based on occupation influence several aspects of the living situations of its citizens. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published in 1949, in a time when the portrayal of a dystopian societies grew in popularity within literary works (*Dystopia Facts...*). The novel's protagonist, Winston Smith, lives in a dystopian society referred to as

Oceania where the government enforces totalitarian control upon its citizens. Winston is a young man who struggles with being oppressed and controlled, and he suffers from not having any privacy within his daily life as everything he does is most likely observed. The guards control the inmates, whereas the guards themselves are controlled by people with more power and so on.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the notion of privacy or individuality does not exist. Private space in the sense of being free from observation has successfully been terminated by the aid of two-way television screens, hidden microphones and a secret police force, known as the “Thought Police” (Orwell 4). All of these surveillance methods are enforced by an entity known as “the Party,” which serves as the leading elite of the structures that make up the government within *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell 14). The Party's aim with enforcing these surveillance techniques seems to be for it to be immediately aware if a citizen is showing behavior that would imply a rebellion against the government itself and its values and thereby be a threat to the Party. Furthermore, the Party also keep their citizens in control by the help of a set of ministries that serve different purposes. One of them is the Ministry of Truth, which is the ministry Winston works for and which main purpose is to spread propaganda and change what has already been published. In spite of his occupation, Winston eventually reads a book by an author named Emmanuel Goldstein. Goldstein is, according to the Party, a man that heavily betrayed the regime and was sentenced to death but somehow managed to escape and vanish. He states in his book that “the two aims of the Party are to conquer the whole surface of the earth and to extinguish once and for all the possibility of independent thought” (201), but also that “the aim of the Party was not merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control” (68). The latter passage reveals how afraid the Party is of citizens forming groups and connections with each other in which they can share individual thoughts. The aim of eliminating forbidden social interaction

presents itself in the many kinds of surveillance mechanisms that the Party enforces in order to have a full view of citizens in order to detect forbidden behavior or thoughts (Orwell 4). If such behavior is detected it most likely leads to severe punishment in the form of torture or even death (Orwell 8). Therefore, because of the Party's intentions to have absolute control, telescreens and microphones are installed in every home, every corner, and every street; a direct effect of these methods of control is an extreme dismantling of privacy. One can quite easily read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* through the lens of Bentham's idea of the Panopticon with such focus on mechanical surveillance methods.

Bentham's idea, as previously stated, is to have prison cells where every action of the prisoner is visible to the guards in the central tower of the structure. Foucault states that "full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which is ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap" (200). The Party enforces an idea close to what Foucault is describing, as citizens are monitored at all times – especially in their own homes in the novel. In the novel, the citizens are not only monitored by transmitted videos, but sound is transmitted as well to the Party's supervisors. In addition to this, the citizens of Oceania, like the prisoners of the Panopticon, do not know whether they are being watched or not, or whom they are being watched by. Winston states that "there was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork" (Orwell 8). This type of constant surveillance is in line with Bentham's vision of the Panopticon prison, where everything is observed at all times by an unknown entity.

Indeed, it does not take long until the reader is introduced to the unknown entity of the novel: the supposedly omnipotent leader "Big Brother" (Orwell 3). The citizens of Oceania are indoctrinated with the slogan "Big Brother is watching you" constantly as posters of the sentence are set up in public areas, but what or who Big Brother is has never

been revealed (Orwell 3). Since the citizens never see Big Brother apart from on posters and voices from telescreens, they do not know if he is an actual human being. Therefore, the citizens of London are unsure of whether he/it exists or if he is a mere method to make certain that the citizens think they are under constant surveillance. The idea of Big Brother could therefore be seen as representing the guards within the watchtower in Bentham's prison model. Furthermore, Big Brother is also found in the voice heard from the telescreens, which in a way gives the citizens the impression that Big Brother is always present in their homes (Orwell 18). Emmanuel Goldstein describes in his book how Big Brother permeates several aspects of daily life in Oceania:

At the apex of the pyramid comes Big Brother. Big Brother is infallible and all powerful. Every success, every achievement, every victory, every scientific discovery, all knowledge, all wisdom, all happiness, all virtue, are held to issue directly from his leadership and inspiration. Nobody has ever seen Big Brother. He is a face on the hoardings, a voice on the telescreen . . . . Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are most easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization. (216-217)

Precisely like the guards within the watchtower of a Panoptic prison, Big Brother in Oceania affects the behavior of the observed at all times as he is presented as an omnipresent observer. Since Big Brother's true identity and existence is unknown to the observed, the citizens of Oceania experience the very same kind of surveillance by an unknown entity as the prisoners of a Panoptic prison do.

However, the protagonist, Winston Smith, deeply values private space and personal opinions in spite of the danger he subjects himself to by having either of those things. His

values become obvious to the reader when Winston one day walks down a “slummy quarter of the town” and purchases a notebook (Orwell 8). The mere action of purchasing a notebook will likely lead to Winston being “punished by death,” but Winston cannot resist the purchase (Orwell 8). He feels guilty carrying the book home as he knows that the intentions he has regarding the notebook could be severely punished, despite the fact that he has yet to write anything on its blank pages. Winston is aware that his thoughts are criminal. In the Panopticon prison there is no need to invade on an individual's emotional private space by forbidding prisoners to write down thoughts as it will not harm the people in charge of the prison, in contrast to what the citizens of Oceania experience. Not only are the actions of citizens of Oceania judged but their emotions as well if deemed dangerous and threatening. The reason for Winston feeling guilty while walking home with a forbidden notebook in his hands is later on described: “it was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself — anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide” (Orwell 57). That is, the Party deems facial expressions reason enough to punish citizens if they show any sign of nervousness or radical emotion. Thereby, the private space of an individual is heavily invaded upon not only physically in terms of surveillance cameras and similar objects of control, but also emotionally. In contrast, Bentham's model does not enforce emotional control in order to limit the private space of inmates within the Panopticon. Still, it can be discussed how “private” a prison actually is. The guards in the watchtower only monitors physical actions, such as attempts to escape, as that would be considered the greatest threat. Since the inmates are not able to communicate with one another in order to plan an organized rebellion that could overthrow the structured power, the threat of plotting is removed. Nevertheless, Winston is of the belief that he has

found a spot in his apartment hidden from view, which is where he writes down his negative thoughts regarding the government. The spot is located in an alcove, where the range of any telescreen does not reach (Orwell 7). The reason for him hiding is that if he would be seen writing down opinions in a notebook he would be prosecuted. Writing down illegal thoughts is the worst crime anyone can commit in this kind of society – a “thoughtcrime,” they call it (Orwell 24). That is, Winston has managed to deviate from Bentham's idea of constant surveillance and hierarchical power by being able to express his own thoughts without having to fear (he thinks) prosecution. Foucault explains this kind of hierarchical power as “this surveillance is based on a system of permanent registration: reports from the syndics to the intendants, from the intendants to the magistrates or mayor as the ones in control do not possess constant observation of this particular individual” (Foucault 195). In some way, Winston has created a rare kind of privacy for himself in a society where privacy and certain opinions lead to severe punishment, and at times even death. Indeed, Winston can still be heard as the telescreen picks up sounds as well, but he could not be seen writing in his notebook by the Party and is therefore believes he is safe from prosecution of his thoughts and actions. These actions would most likely be considered to be a thoughtcrime by the Party. Yet, it does not matter how hidden this spot is from the telescreen. Winston is still a victim of a totalitarian structure which he cannot escape completely by simply avoiding telescreens and microphones. He is still a victim of a constant flow of propaganda that speaks in the Party’s favor.

The power structure Winston finds himself a part of stretches far beyond electronic mechanisms of control in the sense that citizens do not feel safe anywhere, not even when they are among friends and family, or hidden from view. Michael Yeo suggests in his article “Propaganda and Surveillance in George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four: Two Sides of the Same Coin” that “even free of the censor, writing in private, Winston is not free of

propaganda, even as he struggles against it and sometimes catches himself in reflection” (Yeo 58). As the Party enforces totalitarian control upon the citizens of Oceania it does not seem to exist a place where one can go to fully escape the controlling power present in their lives. Similar to how inmates of Bentham’s Panopticon are not able to escape from their individual cells, the citizens of Oceania are permanently trapped in a structure where fear of displaying unwanted behavior controls the actions of the observed. Even if a citizen such as Winston manages to avoid the view of the telescreen, there is no way of knowing whether the Party is watching you in some other way. Therefore, Winston is constantly governed by the structure enforced by the government, and not only in the presence of transmitting devices such as telescreens and microphones.

It is clear that certain elements in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be explained in terms of panopticism, but Oceania is in some key ways different from the Panopticon. Bentham states that in a Panoptic Prison the observed prisoners are separated from other prisoners at all times – thereby eliminating social interaction and the possibility of other inmates reporting suspect behavior of others within the prison itself. Foucault expands on how this elimination of interaction could possibly work when applied to several structures in a society, and not only to prisons (Foucault 200). If Oceania would be a complete Panopticon, the society portrayed in the novel would perhaps be somewhat similar as to what Foucault is describing:

If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape, the planning of new crimes for the future, bad reciprocal influences; if they are patients, there is no danger of contagion; if they are madmen there is no risk of their committing violence upon one another; if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time; if they are workers, there are no disorders, no theft, no coalitions, none of those

distractions that slow down the rate of work, make it less perfect or cause accident. (Foucault 200)

In contrast to Bentham's and Foucault's descriptions of the elimination of interaction within a Panopticon, the society in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* instead adds interaction between citizens as a controlling mechanism. The Party use their citizens' interactions as a form of control by training both adults and children to reveal thought- and facecrimes to the Thought Police. All of the inhabitants of Oceania are able, and encouraged, to let authorities know if they witness criminal behavior by other citizens, and will most likely do so as keeping such information from the Party is a crime itself (Orwell 27). In his article Yeo argues that "the panoptical principle is more total in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* than in Bentham" (Yeo 54). He states that since Bentham writes that he is content with leaving "thoughts and fancies" to "the court above," which is God (Yeo 54). However, according to Yeo, the existence of an almighty God that will judge one's thoughts and actions is unnecessary in order to achieve the ultimate panoptical effect. It is enough to simply believe in such a God. He also claims that although there is no God in the novel, Big Brother "has a similar job description" (Yeo 54). The citizens of Oceania believe that Big Brother is present everywhere, even in their thoughts and minds, which are matters that Bentham wants to leave to the almighty God, and the belief of Big Brother being present everywhere "makes for total panopticism" (Yeo 54).

Furthermore, even love and desire have become the business of the Party, as it is not something the Party condones (Orwell 68). Such strong feelings and connections among the citizens are seen as dangerous towards the regime, since people may feel comfortable with sharing beliefs, or thoughtcrimes, with each other which can eventually lead to citizens forming an alliance big enough to take down the Party itself. Similar as to how prisoners of a Panoptic prison are deprived of social connections by isolation, citizens of Oceania are deprived of forming social bonds in a more abstract sense in that they cannot trust one

another at all and thereby forming strong relationships based on trust. Winston describes the Party's views on desire and sexual connections by stating that "not love so much as eroticism was the enemy, inside marriage as well as outside it," and that "the only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party. Sexual intercourse was to be looked on as a slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema" (Orwell 68). The Party has thereby managed to turn the action of sex and the notion of romantic relationships into something negative and something that should be avoided, simply because the Party does not want citizens to form emotional bonds that could endanger the regime.

Moreover, it is made clear that the private matter of starting a family and raising children are controlled by the people in power. Unlike Bentham's hierarchical idea of power within a Panoptic structure, children in Oceania are used as a way to control citizens as well. They are taught at an early age to snitch on their parents or peers if they suspect any kind of rebellion against the Party or a thoughtcrime. Any sign of a thought or action that is not favorable towards the regime is therefore not only reported by the aid of visual mechanisms such as telecreens and members of the Thought Police, but also by one's friends and family. In fact, even the action to bear children is seen as a duty towards the Party; it is solely a matter of ensuring work force for the Party itself. During a visit to a neighbor in order to help out with a repair job, Winston says that "it was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children" (Orwell 26). He explains that the newspapers have a habit of publishing columns rewarding eavesdropping children for snitching on their parents to the Thought Police. On a later occasion, Winston's neighbor Parsons expresses, in regards to his child, that it's "a first-rate training they give them in the Spies nowadays – better than in my day, even. What d'you think's the latest thing they've served them out with? Ear trumpets for listening through keyholes!" (Orwell 67). There is not a single place in

Oceania where it is safe to express personal beliefs or experience private space as even family members turn against each other in order to let the Party know of abnormal behavior:

The family could not actually be abolished, and, indeed, people were encouraged to be fond of their children, in almost the old-fashioned way. The children, on the other hand, were systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations. The family had become in effect an extension of the Thought Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately. (Orwell 140)

Citizens keep control over each other, which differs from Bentham's Panopticon. The inmates are unable to communicate with each other or report suspicious behavior of fellow inmates to the guards observing them in the watchtower as they have no contact with other inmates. In a Panoptic prison there is therefore only hierarchical power present, which is not the case within *Nineteen Eight-Four*. In Oceania a type of hierarchical power surely exists in the form of the Party and the Thought Police, but in contrast to the Panoptic model peers have power over each other as well. However, both of these structures limit the private space of the individual by ensuring that there is not a safe, or possible, way to feel secure with one's actions or opinions at any given moment.

Winston Smith experiences even further loss of privacy as he befriends a middle-aged man named O'Brien. O'Brien is, to the public eye, an inner Party member who, precisely like Winston, works in the Ministry of Truth. As Winston and O'Brien get to know each other, Winston begins to suspect that O'Brien, like himself, is secretly opposed to the Party and its controlling power. Eventually Winston feels a close connection with O'Brien, and O'Brien reveals to him that he is a part of a resistance group known as the Brotherhood, a group opposed to the ruling of the Party. As O'Brien introduces Winston to this group,

Winston feels it is safe to reveal his own thoughtcrimes in hope of support and gains his full trust. However, Winston eventually gets arrested by the Thought Police and is taken to a cell where O'Brien reveals his true intentions. O'Brien is a spy sent out by the Party to prosecute Winston for his thoughtcrimes, and Winston's only possibility of expressing individual thoughts to anyone besides himself is revoked in an instant. Here, the character of O'Brien functions as both a visible and invisible means of power enforced by the Party. By having O'Brien form a bond with Winston, the Party manages to have an impact on Winston's actions without him ever realizing that his only source of trust and individuality is governed by the Party's Thought Police, who thereby control Winston emotionally without his knowledge. However, Winston is aware of the danger of revealing disloyal thoughts to other citizens, and O'Brien is therefore a constant threat to Winston's freedom, which Winston ultimately chooses to ignore. As citizens are in contact with each other, in contrast to the inmates of Bentham's Panopticon, the citizens themselves are aware that they are controlling one another. In the Panopticon model, the key point is that the inmates are unaware of by whom or when they are being observed – whereas in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the citizens of Oceania are aware of when they are being watched by peers, as they are completely visible. Winston is therefore aware of O'Brien as a visible threat, but as O'Brien gains Winston's trust while working as a spy for the Party, O'Brien ultimately represents both the visible and the invisible power which the Party enforce within their totalitarian structure.

Furthermore, Winston's ambition to achieve privacy and individual expression in a society that forbids both of these things ultimately leads to his breakdown. In the climax of the novel the Party becomes aware of his crimes through O'Brien. Winston is thereby taken to Room 101, the torture chamber in the Ministry of Love. The Ministry of Love serves as the ministry responsible for ensuring loyalty towards Big Brother. The reason for taking Winston to this torture chamber is to completely break Winston's spirit and hatred towards

Big Brother, as O'Brien says that "You must love Big Brother. It is not enough to obey him: you must love him" (Orwell 295). In Room 101, Winston is therefore told that he will be faced with his great fear of being attacked by rats, a torture scheme O'Brien is in charge of. Martha C. Carpentier writes in her article "The 'Dark Power of Destiny' in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" that "even though there are no actual rats and Winston has constructed his own punishment, his imagination is his terrifying reality" (page number!). The thought of being faced with his greatest fear leads to Winston breaking down in desperation and screams for them to subject a woman named Julia to torture instead. Julia is a woman whom he meets and has an illegal relationship with while working for the Ministry of Truth. Winston is willing to sacrifice someone he loves as long as he is not subjected to torture himself. This seems to show that Winston is subjected to psychological as well as physical pressure from the Party in order to control his beliefs. As O'Brien is satisfied with Winston's complete betrayal to the one he cares for the most, he lets Winston go free. Winston now truly and fully loves Big Brother, and accepts the constant monitoring and the totalitarian control enforced by the Party. As Julia and Winston meet each other in a park to talk about their time in Room 101, it is revealed that they betrayed each other, and now feel repulsed by each other's bodies (Orwell 304). Julia tells Winston how she told the torturers to subject Winston to torture instead of herself, in the same way Winston wanted them to subject Julia to torture:

And perhaps you might pretend, afterwards, that it was only a trick and that you just said it to make them stop and didn't really mean it. But that isn't true. At the time when it happens you do mean it. You think there's no other way of saving yourself and you're quite ready to save yourself that way. You want it to happen to the other person. You don't give a damn what they suffer. All you care about is yourself. (305)

From this final chapter it is clear that Winston has been successfully broken down by the Party, and now accepts that he does not, and never will have, any kind of privacy. Winston forfeits his need for individual thinking in order to love Big Brother and the structure he lives within. His mindset is invaded and controlled by the Party's beliefs, as well as his body, as he obviously fears physical pain and damage. It is the fear of rats gnawing through his body that eventually results in a change of mindset. At the very end of the novel it is clear how happy Winston is of his transformation and loss of individualism: "... everything was alright. The struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother" (311). As Winston looks at a picture of Big Brother, he is filled with joy. Unlike the inmates in the panoptic prison that Bentham describes, the society of Oceania could not function without this kind of brainwashing that Winston is subjected to. By brainwashing their citizens, the Party is able to use them in order to influence other citizens that show signs of thoughtcrimes, and this kind of control by interaction is, as previously mentioned, not present in Bentham's prison model. It seems as though this kind of control is the major force that manages to completely destroy Winston's ambition of privacy and individualism, as Winston would most likely not have been caught if it had not been for O'Brien gaining Winston's trust and was thereby given the opportunity to betray him.

The matter of privacy in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be seen as an example of how the panoptic model can be extended beyond the prison walls, which is ultimately what Bentham's idea is – to impose this model upon practically any modern day structure. Although Oceania does not completely fall in line with the Panoptic model in regards to hierarchical power, as previously stated, the citizens believe they are under constant surveillance. Foucault's criticism of the Panopticon model gives a clearer understanding of the society portrayed in the novel, and the Panopticon itself (Foucault 195). Foucault writes that "inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere: 'A considerable body of

militia, commanded by good officers and men of substance', guards at the gates, at the town hall and in every quarter to ensure the prompt obedience of the people and the most absolute authority of the magistrates, 'as also to observe all disorder, theft and extortion'" (Foucault 195). The gaze, according to O'Reilly, is the surveillance present in the original panoptic prison model, as well as the surveillance imposed by the Party in Oceania. The citizens of Oceania therefore experience the Panopticon's watchtower at all times, in spite of them not being inmates of any prison. They are not punished for a crime by the loss of privacy, but it is present in every aspect of their daily lives. It does not matter whether a citizen is innocent or not; either way all privacy is dismantled – in contrast to the panoptic prison where only inmates are observed and not free citizens.

In conclusion, the panoptic model introduced by Jeremy Bentham is in many senses applicable to the society within *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Various elements of Foucault's analysis of panopticism, in regards to private space of the individual, can also be seen when reading the novel through the lens of panopticism. Bentham envisioned a prison where the inmates can be seen by the guards in a watchtower all the time, but the guards are never visible to the inmates. As mentioned earlier, Foucault also supported the belief that in such a model "visibility is a trap" (Foucault 200). Similar to this, the citizens of Oceania do not know when, or if, they are being watched by the Party as they are unsure of how often the Party views certain telescreens. In a way, the Party are the guards viewing their citizens, or "inmates," within their own version of the central watchtower. An unknown entity is the observer in both the Panopticon and in Oceania, which Foucault argues to be why such a model can be successful. Thereby, the sense of privacy in Oceania is very much absent as the citizens can be arrested by simply projecting a suspect facial expression or thinking the wrong thoughts. In addition to this, the Party adds interaction between citizens as a controlling mechanism, thereby supplementing the hierarchical power that Bentham and

Foucault discuss. Children tell on their parents if they are displaying illegal behavior, and friends report friends to the Thought Police. In a Panopticon the inmates are free to say and think what they want within their cell, since the only forbidden action is escape attempts. As the inmates are separated from each other at all times they cannot report on each other. However, as Winston believes he has found a private spot in his apartment that is hidden from view, he is still a subject to the structure which reaches beyond telescreens and hidden microphones. He is still controlled by fear of his peers. Ultimately, it is interaction that in the end completely breaks Winston's spirit and ambition for privacy, as his closest friend is revealed to be a spy sent out to eventually brainwash him through torture. Winston learns to deeply love Big Brother and the structure it represents. It can therefore be argued that although the Panopticon model can be applied to certain aspects such as the unknown observer and constant monitoring, it is not applicable to the entire novel. Oceania is therefore not a complete Panopticon, as the citizens of Oceania do not experience neither physical nor psychological privacy. *Nineteen Eight-Four* does, however, portray a dark, potential version of what a society could look like if a panoptic model was applied on a greater scale with the aim of totalitarian control. Winston does not experience any moment where he feels as though he can completely express his own beliefs or actions without being arrested by the Thought Police, and his need for privacy leads to him making the mistake of trusting another individual with his thoughtcrimes. It is evident that the privacy of the individual is dismantled by such a model, which is indisputable when reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four* through the lens of panopticism.

## Works Cited

- Bentham, Jeremy. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Batoche Books, 1781. 2000. 28 Dec. 2015. PDF.
- . *Panopticon; Or The Inspection House*. N.p., 1787. 2012. Web. 19 Dec. 2015.
- . *The Works of Jeremy Bentham, vol 11*. Online Library of Liberty., 1843. 2011. Web. 2 March 2016.
- Carpentier, Martha C. "The "Dark Power of Destiny" In George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four". *Mosaic* 47.1 (2014): 174-194. Web. 21 Jan. 2016.
- Encyclopedia.com. *Dystopia Facts, Information, and Articles About Dystopia*. N.p., 2016. Web. 18 Dec. 2015.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin Books, 1975. 1995. PDF.
- Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. 1949. London: Penguin Books, 2008. Print.
- O'Reilly, Scott. *Philosophy and The Panopticon*. Issue 36. Philosophy Now. Philosophynow.org. N.p., 2002. Web. 3 Jan. 2016.
- Sweet, William. "Jeremy Bentham." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. IEP, N.d. Web. 18 Dec. 2015.
- The Panopticon*. London's Global University. London, England. 2015. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/Bentham-Project/who/panopticon>>
- Warriar, Louise, Andrew Roberts, and Jennifer Lewis. *Surveillance - An Analysis of Jeremy Bentham, Michel Foucault and Their Present Day Relevance*. Studymore.org.uk. N.p., 2016. Web. 3 Jan. 2016.
- Yeo, Michael. "Propaganda and Surveillance in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four: Two Sides of the Same Coin". *Global Media Journal* 3.2 (2010): 49-66. Web. 21 Jan. 2016.