MATRIZes

From body surveillance to the eclipse of subjectivity

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ABSTRACT
We argue here that the book in focus presents an advance in the field of surveillance studies dealing with the mass media, because, however its fixation upon the concept, it relates research and conduct its reasoning in a way that reveals the eventual surmount of it by informational processes in which the body but also subjectivity are tending to lose its relevance in the maintenance of the social order required systemically from the digital media.
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Máquinas de ver, modos de ser is one of these books that, under the trivial appearance, the beaten track, deliver us important points for reflection on the phenomena of communication now underway and on the contours that take on the historical and social arrangements that governs our time. In the contemporary experience there is no longer a novelty in the fact that we are all subject to constant and diffuse exposure to cameras and mechanisms of various equipment and surveillance systems. *Smile, you're being filmed*, is a maxim that one can read everywhere and to which we become alert since about three decades at least. People and organizations have found reasons to securing, monitoring and eventually controlling over the visual environment and ultimately this lead to the relative legitimization of that practice, acclimatizing their presence in the most diverse spheres of socialization.

Fernanda Bruno advances the exposition of this subject transcending the level determined by the question of the violation of individual rights. Even more revealing to

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us, she argues, are the scenarios where these rights and the categories on which they are grounded, as individual consciousness, are projected with the development of new media communication. The author shows that in the current democratic social order, would be a mistake to think the surveillance based on Bentham's panopticon or Orwell's Big Brother schemes. The phenomenon now refers "to a reticular, sprawling and diversified process full of ambiguities, not to be confused with the idea of a homogeneous surveillance without edges or conflicts" (p. 25).

The principle of linear and, ultimately, totalitarian surveillance gave way, where the concept still applies, to a diffuse and collaborative surveillance. The devices that convert it in agency became popular, and in line with this grow a social knowledge about of it. Through it arises a situation where appears much more than collaboration with the power system some people defend or resistance to the presence of these devices in everyday life that others, right or not, use to put in question. The phenomenon now also entails the subversion of its dominant use, if not the kickback of the systemic functions, as is clear, for example, in recording and broadcast, with the help of amateur media, of the discrimination and illegalities committed by public and private authorities.

The presence of cameras for monitoring and surveillance through internet sites encourages users to act as volunteer employees of companies that hold them but at the same time makes room for the revelation of facts and situations that may harm corporations. This to not speak about of independent countersurveillance actions that, through interventions at the same time political and aesthetic, play with fiction, staging and performance to get people to question about their place and role in a world both vigilant as much as surveilled (p. 134-144).

The book is presented to us with curious and attractive layout. The main text focuses mainly on display and analysis of the argument. The literature with the help of which it undertakes its construction, besides well-selected, is handled with the freedom that research requires. We face here with a mature work, that run its ideas without simplifications, but you must read carefully and suspending the stereotypes that even academics succumb when dealing with its subject. The documentation in that it relies appears in tight frames, usually illustrated and with a link to the blog in which, often collaboratively, the author was gathering the materials for the book since 2007. The anecdotal nature that can not fail to miss, when we launch hand with this

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procedure, must be seen, we believe, as a sign of the seriousness, interest and care with which she throws in research.

See and be seen, exposing themselves and be exposed, monitoring and be monitored became conscious and specialized activities between the aristocratic layers and then with the modern bourgeois during the civilizing process of the West, showed us, among others, Norbert Elias. Following that Foucault examined the institutions and techniques: manufacturing, educational, scientific, law enforcement and others that linked them into a system of power, the disciplinary power, from the late eighteenth century. Bruno shows us how, in our time, these activities overlap with political and technological development, becoming an object of everyday and increasingly democratic practice, through a variety of devices and communication networks.

The result is a concussion or growing, practical and ordinary problematization of the figures of intimacy and privacy that helped to form the bourgeois era and among whose debris now we try to build new civilizatory perspectives. The increasing democratization of the social system and the popularization of the communication apparatuses relativize them and, under the impact of a ubiquitous market economy that the author minimizes in its scope and effects, promote the advertising or, as the author prefers , visibility of the self and its circumstances. "See and be seen now not only imply more in control circuits , but also of pleasure, sociability, entertainment , and care with yourself and with others" (p. 67).

Because this, the concept of surveillance should need to be handled more carefully, the book suggests without taking full advantage of the discovery (by, for example, speaking of *scopic regimes and attentional of surveillance*). The practice of spying, controlling and monitoring that technical means allow articulates dialectically with others, in which the main feature is the aesthetic experience, if not the own cult of self, pleasure and entertainment. The surveillance cameras and mechanisms of exploitation of information that serve public and private companies , but also to families and individuals to control others , are also those which, in another moment, offer shared gratifications or even perverse pleasures.

> In the first case, the vigilance is linked to a specific function, in which the exercise of surveillance is relatively restricted to certain contexts of control, security, commercial or professional voyeurism. In the second case, it shall be present in the everyday life of the social, urban, domestic relations, mixed with

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environments, practices and processes which are not, in turn, primarily focused on monitoring (p. 87).

Who knows Foucault work, notice throughout the book the presence of many of his ideas, but only to a point. Bruno, following the author, rejects the understanding that monitoring serves linearly to a system of power, originated from the dichotomous views of most elementary political thought. Research shows that there is not a binary structure separating the observed from the watchers. The resistance and setbacks to the practice of surveillance do not come from a supposedly innocent and external domain. The concern of the author is not to situate each force in an abstract place to assess its purity and integrity, but analyzing its manifestations, to describe its connections and point out its immanent contradictions and paradoxes.

The analytical commitment to cling to this reality and follow its progress, however, is not enough, as advertised, to the point to think, at least, that, notwithstanding the resistances and deviations, all this process helps to promote or subscribe to a progressive, coherent and unitary movement which signals a embracing historical trend. The author's account succeeds well in realizing and shows us that the phenomena of surveillance and countersurveillance, as much as plebeian, shared and hedonistic spectacle of exposition of the self are settling mechanism through which, however, intervene in them in a way that what is political and theoretically important in the case no longer have the do with these concepts, relating to a "new social formation or model of the world" (p. 177-178).

The problem is that, holding to the concepts beyond the historical threshold that authorizes them, the text blocks of the new conceptualization and thus the proper understanding of what is now transcending the figures of spectacle and surveillance (linear or shared): the text is clear , at least to us , showing that the data mining and the resultant practice of profiling for use in commercial, political and other internet do not light up more from these concepts. Ways of seeing and therefore surveillance regimes recede in favor of inducing machines modes of being to which the culture of the spectacle is mere façade and inside which what is established , rather than requiring a critical theory of action and the subject , it gets better understand as the process which was , for example, called enframing (Ge-Stell) by Heidegger.

Through the intelligent agents that roam the networks and their epistemic , taxonomical and individualizing devices, reveals well the author, what emerges now , hidden from our everyday consciousness, is a *surveillance* (we use the quotation marks because, cybernetically - that is: anonymous and self-regulated , the process is no more to be understand in terms derived from the theory of social action) "that operates less with the look than with informational systems; less about bodies than on data and traces; least for the purpose of correcting and reform than to anticipate trends, preferences, interests" (p. 148).

Unlike suggests the *media self show* registered by the everyday consciousness and the immediate reference marked in subtitle of the book under review, the outcome of all this is the eclipse of subjectivity. Given the new context, the goal is no longer to produce knowledge about an identifiable individual, but make up packages of personal data to influence or act anonymously and punctually on similar types of conduct random handled at the network. The aims of controlling and monitoring withdraw from the plan of the individual to focus on single and isolated conducts , via the projection of scenarios and supply of goods and services " that should encourage or inhibit determined behaviors" (p. 174).

Those procedures create a kind of abstract, transitory and spectral individuality, formed by point and mutant informational traits, according to the strategic purpose for which some software was set to run in cyberspace. Statistical profiles that can develop through these procedures "are neither a measure nor a value , but a pattern of occurrence of certain factor (behavior, interests , pathology) in a given set of variables", sums up Bruno (p. 160).

For all this, whoever cares to think what differs from and transcends surveillance practices and self worship participation in the field of interactive digital media would do well to read this book: in its conclusion, the point which it makes problematic is the claim of "putting in the collective level the necessary questioning the destinies, still open [?], of our participation [...] in cyberspace" (p. 144).

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