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Foucauldian Panopticism in Donald Barthelme's "Subpoena"

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Abstract

Some of Donald Barthelme's works have been undeniably influenced by Michel Foucault's socio-political philosophy, however, few scholars have explored such concepts in his works, especially the theme of "panopticism." The purpose of this article, which is library based, is to analyze and scrutinize the panoptic society of Barthelme's "Subpoena" in the light of Foucauldian "panopticism" which is a segment of his more general concept of power. Keeping the Benthamite "Panopticon" in the back of his mind, Foucault outlines the "new physics of power" represented by "panopticism" as a modern or disciplinary power; he, then, draws our attention to its most important feature, i.e., the penetration into the most trivial and personal affairs of social subjects. It is worth mentioning that the basic characteristics of disciplinary power such as omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence can be discovered in panoptic society of "Subpoena." In this society, there is always the possibility of resistance and rebellion because wherever power is found, resistance emerges as well, though, eventually, power prevails upon individuals. Barthelme creatively portrays a post-modern society in which disciplinary power, with its meticulous and permanent surveillance, on the one hand, has transformed the subjects into the men of modern humanism, and, on the other hand, has changed the traditional society into a panoptic one. Barthelme successfully finalizes the story with the message that modern society intends to make obedient and useful machines out of the subjects.

Keywords: panoptic society, disciplinary power, modern power, surveillance, resistance, new physics of power

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The panoptic mechanism is not simply a hinge, a point of exchange between a mechanism of power and a function; it is a way of making power relations function in a function, and of making a function function through these power relations.

“Michel Foucault”

Introduction

Foucault has excursively analyzed the concept of power in different sources. Through scholastic study of this concept in various sources, it is possible to reach a general classification of the theory of power in order to make the concept more simplified and expressive to make use of it in literary works. Foucault (1997) categorizes his theory of power into modern forms, including “disciplinary power” and “regulatory disciplinary power,” as well as, pre-modern form consisting of “sovereign power”. When we imply that the sovereign power had the right of life and death during sovereignty, that is to say, either the sovereign had left them to live or invited them to death by committing the criminals to death penalty, or he had evoked subjects to the war. In fact, the sovereign had the right to kill or allowed the subjects to be alive or dead (Foucault, 1997:240). To put it another way, the power had not established domination over the subjects’ lifestyle.

Foucault (1997) asserts, during the modern era, the theory of power has not changed, rather, the mechanisms and strategies of power have transformed; that is to say, the right of life and death for the State has not disappeared, but the mechanisms and strategies of the State for exerting power have changed. Continuing the previous argument, Foucault (1978) opens up the discussion on two poles of modern forms of power over life initiated in the seventeenth century. In fact, from the seventeenth century onwards, two forms of power over life began to grow, namely “an anatomicopolitics of the human body” and “a biopolitics of the population” or bipolar anatomic and biological technology both of which are two levels of “biopower”. In this article, the panoptic society of “Subpoena” is closely scrutinized with the help of conceptual application of Foucauldian “panopticism” which is a segment of the first level of “biopower.”

Barthelme is a prolific and creative writer who has put in writing many short stories with diverse themes. Despite many studies which have been done on his valuable works, many of his works have not been seriously reviewed yet or have examined from a series of limited aspects such as writing techniques and styles; in fact, few scholars have read her short stories from political and social perspectives. His different view about postmodernism comes to light when he defines it in an interview with Barbara Roe (1992):

The chief misconception is that this kind of writing [postmodern one] is metafiction, fiction about fiction. It’s not. It is a way of dealing with reality, an attempt

to think about aspects of reality that have not, perhaps, been treated of heretofore. I say it's realism, bearing in mind Harold Rosenberg's wicked remark that realism is one of the 57 varieties of decoration. (107-108)

Due to the fact that Donald Barthelme is considered to be a postmodern writer, most scholars assiduously seek postmodern techniques and styles in his works such as irony, collage, fragmentation, absurdity, etc., and few critics dare to explore his works in the hope of finding socio-political notions. Since Barthelme was considerably influenced by Michel Foucault's philosophical system, socio-political concepts of this philosopher may be readily evidenced in a number of this writer's oeuvre. Helen Moore (2001), Barthelme's wife, confidently asserts that Donald's style is a combination of modernist literary tradition and the new absurdism (106). She, furthermore, explains that Donald was also interested in postmodern literature and styles, specially, the style of minimalism; that's why he can be sometimes called a minimalist (2001:157). On the account of having few elements, characters, and events, "Subpoena" can be regarded as a minimalist story. It is reasonable, then, to attribute the features of modernism, those of post-modernism and, sometimes, a mixture of both, to his literary works.

Barthelme's opinion about a successful literary work is noteworthy for the reason that it highlights the interaction between form and meaning: "In a successful work of literature, Form is used to state or establish Meaning. . . . [the] task of the writer in general is to give form to the raw material of experience—to say what it means" (Moore Barthelme, 2001:100). Contrary to Barthelme's absurd and fragmented stories, every single sentence of "Subpoena" is proved to be meaningful, worthwhile, and substantial. Therefore, Barthelme purposefully utilizes form to make his meaning more impressive, and this is a convincing reason to show that he does not always seek absurdity. Furthermore, "Subpoena" does not seem to have the formal complexities of the remarkable modern literary works, it addresses one of the significant motifs of the modern era which is dissatisfaction with the world. This motif relating to content of the story appears in such a way that the protagonist, in spite of his will, has become the subject of a "panopticism" and is forced to comply; that is why Barthelme intends to dramatize his dissatisfaction by portraying these panoptic societies. Since Barthelme's stories are full of reminiscences, personal references, fantasies, and social observations, a reader or a scholar can discover his critical view of his society by scrutinizing some of his works.

Donald Barthelme ambiguously expounds on the salient feature of his writings as follows:

Social satire is of minor importance not only in the world, but also in what I do — I am of an ironic turn of mind. What I'm most interested in is language and making a kind of music. . . . You cannot say precisely what this piece of music [‘The Fountains of Rome’] means; on the other hand, you cannot say that this piece of music is meaningless. It has a meaning and a very strong meaning, but you cannot say precisely

what that meaning is and perhaps should not. It's this kind of thing I would like my writing to do. (Ziegler and Bigsby, 1982:45)

Although Barthelme has not considered a single style for all of his works, he often seems to have made attempt to create his own kind of music by using language plays and irony which is meaningful as well.

Foucauldian Concept of Panopticism

Foucault compares the old physics of power, embodied by the king, with the modern or “new physics of power,” incarnated by Benthamite “Panopticon,” That is to say, in the past, the physics of the king was the symbol of an individualized power, but now, the “new physics of power,” in particular “panopticism,” overcomes the slightest social affairs of subjects and conquers all bodies and details of life. Hence, multiplied but disindividualized, this type of power works in a manner that does not put the maximum power in the hands of the king; strictly speaking, power is distributed among a number of forces who exert power over individuals being separately analyzed and differentiated. Technically, Foucault (1977) defines “panopticism” as “the general principle of a new ‘political anatomy’ whose end is not the relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline” (208). Discipline, therefore, finds an especial significance in relation to “panopticism”; in line with this explanation, another question arises concerning the nature of discipline for which Foucault struggles to provide a convincing answer. Discipline, Foucault (1977) clarifies, “is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology” (215), or “they [disciplines] are a set of physico-political techniques” (223) which is modeled on Benthamite “inspection-house” or “Panopticon” from a historical perspective. According to Bentham, in addition to prison, the mechanism applied in “Panopticon” can be employed in enclosed places such as schools, hospitals, manufactories, and mad-houses (Bowring, 1843:60-66). In order to make the system more generalized, Foucault (1977) logically concludes that if discipline, exercised in those enclosed places, enlarges greatly upon the whole institutions and the State, eventually, we will have a disciplinary society (216).

Disciplinary power was omnipresent and omniscient, or in other words, it permeated into the slightest details of individuals’ live by practicing disciplinary techniques and follows four goals: to reduce the cost of exercising power, to extend the social power, to increase the efficiency of the forces, and to make them docile objects, and the application of these disciplinary techniques guarantees the order of human population (Foucault, 1977:218). In this sort of power, at first, individuals were analyzed and separated based on their differentiations, then, distributed in an organized manner. Permanent surveillance, control, observation, and writing were conducted within society. This utopia is “a disciplined society” governed by disciplinary power which its aim was to train correctly (Foucault, 1977:198). In this

panoptic society, power has been automatized and disindividualized, that is to say, the power is not merely in the hands of a determined person similar to sovereignty period, but rather, in the absence of the person exercising power, another person is replaced and undergo the responsibility (Foucault, 1977:202). Moreover, Foucault (1977) regards this system as a sort of laboratory in which power is exercised; in fact, he deems “Panopticon” to be a machine in which various experiments and trials are performed over individuals. With the help of this technology, individuals separately and exclusively are analyzed, tested, and supervised at the same time. By this way, powers are able to shape the minds, physics, and behaviors of individuals and to impose on them a specific task so as to train them (204-205). Thus, he offers the definition of “Panopticon” as “a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men” (205) which helps us with its better perception.

By illuminating these concepts, other ambiguities immediately appear; what are the scale and the object of control? Ultimately, what do the powers intend to modify by exercising discipline in society? How is the modality of exercising power? Powers impose on the social bodies several restrictions, prohibitions, and coercions by practicing a series of techniques which Foucault (1977) calls disciplines; they vigorously employ these techniques so as to “made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility” (136-137). In point of fact, the focus of disciplines is on the body of individuals, and their responsibility is to increase usefulness of the bodies and optimize their potential. To elaborate on the relationship between powers and subjects which finds a higher significance, powers intend to transfigure subjected forces into “docile bodies” by practising or imposing disciplinary techniques (Foucault, 1977:138); then, Foucault (1977) firmly discloses the characteristics of a docile body: “A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (136). As a matter of fact, Foucault’s emphasis is on the relationship between docility and utility that powers impose on subjects to make the bodies more efficient, useful, and obedient and struggle to surrender them to themselves.

Discussion

To sum up “Subpoena,” the subject or the narrator (unnamed) receives a subpoena from Citizen Bergman who apparently is a member of the Bureau of Compliance. By comprehending the content of the letter, especially the sentence “We command you” (Barthelme, 2007:249), the addressee feels obliged to be present in the department. He reviews his record of compliance and has no doubt that it is “Spotless.” Seemingly, the Bureau has realized that he has created a monster whose name is Charles Evans Hughes having some human characteristics. As he neither complied with form 244, which governs companionship for which wages are paid, nor paid the due tax, they have imposed a heavy fine on him. When he returns home, he immediately informs

Charles that the Bureau has been aware of their secrecy. Charles reciprocally admits that the amount of money imposed by the Bureau is a large amount and cannot be paid. The only solution for the subject is to “disassemble” the monster; that is why Charles immediately provides the means of his own dismantling.

From the middle of 1960s onwards, acquainted with Jacques Derrida’s deconstructionism, American writers, including Barthelme, began to experiment it in their works (Cognard Black, 2019:129). Delineating concepts and strategies of postmodern American fiction in *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, Hoffmann (2005) cites Barthelme as one of the most prominent postmodern American writers whose uniqueness lies in his ability to incorporate the combination of ordinariness and extraordinariness into one story simultaneously; in order to make an example out of it, Hoffmann refers to “The Death of Edward Lear” (342), however, Barthelme has taken advantage of this technique in most of his stories, including “Subpoena.” While the characters of the story seem ordinary, they are extraordinary as well and have a completely normal approach to extraordinary events. Bergman has discovered that the subject owns a monster and lives with it, but he is neither surprised nor frightened, and he only thinks about enforcing the law of tax. Even, living with a monster being forty-four percent metal and having some human characteristics is not only not strange but also ordinary for the subject himself. When he attempts to describe the actions of the monster, he uses the phrase “[n]othing fancy” (Barthelme, 2007:249). While having several human characteristics such as eating, sleeping, waking, smiling, sitting, etc., Charles also has the inhuman characteristic of a metal body; actually, the monster exactly meets what Hoffman (2005) expects from a postmodern character: “[A]lmost all the characters in post-modern fiction are double-poled: they are ordinary, and they are extraordinary” (342). Verily, these characters are imprisoned within a bizarre or fantasy world.

“Subpoena,” indeed, represents a slice of a larger modern society in which power relations overwhelmingly dominates the whole society. It seems that the power which is exercised in this society conforms to Foucauldian concept of power. The government has transfigured its chaotic population into “a collection of separated individualities” (Foucault, 1977:201) so as to monitor and control the social subjects accurately and permanently; probably, that’s why no crowd is seen in this story, rather, isolated individuals form the body of community. Seemingly, all subjects of society are trapped in a power machine, and they have no way to escape from it. To illustrate such a society, Foucault (1980) declares: “It’s a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise the power just as much as those over whom it is exercised. This seems to me to be the characteristic of the societies installed in the nineteenth century” (Foucault, 1980:156).

To start with, power relations have presumed social subjects to be the object of information or knowledge, then, they survey, supervise, control, and analyze them separately. As a matter of fact, from Foucault’s point of view, individuals of panoptic

society are deemed to be subject and object of knowledge at the same time (1980:234). In point of fact, when discipline is entirely applied in society, “it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected” (Foucault, 1977:184-185). To apply Foucault’s theory to “Subpoena,” the Bureau of Compliance is an ideal symbol for an institution or apparatus which strongly exerts “a micro-physics of power” over the subjected bodies for the reason that it aims to make the obedient subject out of the protagonist who is the object of its information.

In order to create a “normalizing society,” the Bureau has to impose discipline on each individual, and in the case of disobedience to coded laws, at first, it judges the offender, then, determines a punishment according to his crime. As Foucault (1977) highlights the process, the modern penal systems are not based on corporal punishments, and the classical tortures have been automatically excluded which leads to less cruelty, less pain, more kindness, more respect, and, therefore, more humanity (16). The Bureau could have inflicted unbearable tortures on the subject, but it prefers to impress his psyche by imposing a heavy fine in order to prevent possible transgressions and resistances in the future. The modern penal system, then, as Foucault (1977) puts it, prefers to treat the offender in a human way to make power more effective and influential, and it thoughtfully calls this economy “humanity” (92).

The “omnipresence” of modern disciplinary power or “panopticism” which is a highlighted characteristic by Foucault finds a clear manifestation in the work under study. For five years, the subject, despite his awareness of the constant surveillance and gaze of an observer, manages to hide the issue of creating and maintaining the monster which is finally dismantled for the omnipresence of disciplinary forces. The invisible executor of disciplinary technique, Bergman, audaciously discloses the new information gathered from his life: “It appears that you are the owner or proprietor perhaps of a monster going under the name of Charles Evans Hughes?” (Barthelme, 2007:249). In such a panoptic society, the commanders of the modern disciplinary power formulate the strategy in such a way that the forces must inevitably remain invisible and hidden, but, instead, all subjects must be under the direct gaze of supervising forces which makes the observers’ identity mysterious to the subjects of investigation. To highlight the role of omnipresence of modern disciplinary power, Foucault (1977) makes a contrast between the subject and the power with respect to the theme of visibility: “Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen” (187). Then, on the same page, Foucault concludes that the constancy or stability of power is guaranteed by the invisibility of the inspector that is incorporated to the omnipotence and omniscience of disciplinary power.

At this point of the discussion, we need to proceed towards the theme of “resistance” which Foucault (1978) introduces it as an indispensable part of power

(95). In fact, he does not see the position of resistance outside the power relations, rather, he considers it to be within these relations; that is to say, as much as the system carefully and meticulously exerts disciplinary power in society, the resistance of the subjects can never completely be brought to halt. When the protagonist of "Subpoena" receives the letter from the Bureau of Compliance and reads it, he immediately examines his record of compliance and makes sure that he had complied, "I thought I had complied. I comply every year, sometimes oftener than necessary" (Barthelme, 2007:249). As a result, in spite of being aware of omnipresence and constant surveillance of disciplinary forces, he hopefully hides the construction of the monster to refrain from paying tax. Now, a reasonable question may be raised: What is the position of freedom or free will of social subjects in such a society? The great contradiction in this concern is that while the technology of power severely hurts and limits free will of subjects, people subscribe to it, and Foucault (1978) explicates the modality of such a submission referring to the "mask" of power: "[P]ower is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (86). It goes without saying that this technology cannot completely eradicate the probability of the subjects' revolt.

The powers of modern society put effort into constituting "a society of normalisation" in which disciplines define a number of discourses embracing various norms (Foucault, 1980:107). It is essential to know that how the powers deal with the identity and individuality of subjects by subjugating them to themselves. From Foucault's perspective, the word subject has two meaning: "subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (2001:331). Then, he continues that modern powers impose on social subjects any "law of truth" which is socially and politically expedient so as to subjugate them. The system of power relations of "Subpoena" strictly imposes on the specified subject a law of truth which is the truth of compliance by preserving his identity and respecting for his individuality. As a matter of fact, in this story of Barthelme, it is possible to consider compliance both as a law of truth and an absolute norm incorporated in discourse.

The reason behind the furtive construction of the monster by the unnamed subject of "Subpoena" bears a close connection to the theme of this study. The subject lives in a society in which its government has formed a collection of separated individuals so as to accurately scrutinize their thoughts, acts, and behavior. The Bureau, even, imposes a heavy fine or tax on individuals for taking advantage of a companionship in order that people spend their time alone, and the risk of mass riots is reduced; even, there is no trace of his family, friends, or any comrade except for the monster. Accordingly, it can be implicitly extracted from the story that the subject secretly makes a monster, as a friend, in order to escape from loneliness, but the reason that the subject himself explicitly states is that he intends to be instructed in

complacency. The recurrent uses of words such as compliance, comply, and noncompliance aim at the portrayal of docility as well.

As it feels in modern era, new technologies of surveillance have lowered privacy of individuals, and social spectators are able to easily intervene in the most private affairs of them. Indeed, in such a society, privacy is sacrificed for the sake of publicity, as Stott (1978) emphasizes the point, “Barthelme’s essential theme is the human cost of a society that values publicity more than privacy” (382). Barthelme (2007) implicitly refers to his dissatisfaction with excessive interference of government in the private affairs of individuals: “Read him an essay I’d written about how the State should not muck about in the affairs of its vassals overmuch” (249).

The subject makes every endeavor to form himself into an ideal subject for the system, and he has set Charles as the ideal model for this purpose. Charles has a mechanistic life, that is to say, he is apathetic, indifferent, neutral, and dangerless; he does not resist, rather, he always obeys, and most importantly, he does not change the world: “Looking at him I said to myself, ‘See, it is possible to live in the world and not change the world’” (Barthelme, 2007:251). In fact, Barthelme accommodates the traits of a modern human being into Charles who is probably the ideal subject for the powers of a Foucauldian “Panopticism.” Indeed, by imposing disciplinary methods on Charles, the protagonist has made him an obedient and useful being, exactly, the goal that all powerful systems have aimed by exercising disciplinary techniques at bodies. In fact, a kind of inconsistency seems to rule over the character of the subject in the story. On the one side, by hiding a monster, he wants to show his resistance to the system, and on the opposite side, he sincerely wants to be a tame subject for it.

As Donald’s wife, Helen Moore (2001), earnestly comments, some of his short stories seem to be free from any sort of subjectivity or emotion, that is to say, insensitivity and objectivity are the noticeable features of his literary works (102). When Jameson (1991) elaborates on postmodern culture, he mentions that the postmodern products are liberated from every kind of feeling (15), however, it seems that this movement of works towards liberation from emotion began from the early modernism. Such a characteristic can be clearly detected in “Subpoena” because Bergman agrees that he has imposed a large sum on the subject, however, he does not feel any sympathy for him; the protagonist, in a similar vein, does not express any regret or anxiety that he has to dismantle his friend, Charles; it is peculiar enough that Charles is not distressed or agitated that he is going to be destroyed and dismantled, and he just carries out his personal responsibility. In fact, this panoptic system has made machines out of characters whose only concern is to fulfill compliance as their undisputable responsibility. On that account, panoptic society of “Subpoena” has been able to reach the goal of Foucauldian “anatomy-politics”:

[The first pole of biopower] seems--centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into

systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines: an anatomic-politics of the human body” (Foucault, 1978:140).

The emergence of modern man, thus, is the result of supervision of the slightest issues of his life by panoptic supervisors, and, according to Foucault (1977), this process has its origin in the ancient times: “A meticulous observation of detail . . . emerge through the classical age bearing with them a whole set of techniques, a whole corpus of methods and knowledge, descriptions, plans and data. And from such trifles, no doubt, the man of modern humanism was born” (141). For this reason, the protagonist of “Subpoena” whose privacy is threatened by the surveillance system is the victim of this modern context.

In spite of his serious critique of power and the emerging surveillance system, Foucault (1977) believes that power is positive and productive, and it should not be explicated in negative terms:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (194)

Bentham, the inspirator of Foucauldian idea of “panopticism,” believes that the injection of the “inspection-house” or “Panopticon” to the depth of society makes everything prosperous as well: “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” (Bowring, 1843:39). But Barthelme, pertinaciously, keeps his stand on the negative traits of modern power through portraying the oppressive, negative, and restrictive aspects of it in the panoptic society of “Subpoena.”

Since Foucault deems the structure of power networks to be vertical and hierarchical, Barthelme has purposefully and deeply embedded this feature in the story. The modern panoptic system has intelligently verticalized the structure of power networks in order to neutralize any possible horizontal conjunction or resistance to dominating power (Foucault, 1977:219-220). Barthelme divides individuals of the disciplinary machine of “Subpoena” into either the exerciser of power or the subject of a superior power. Bergman has been appointed in the Bureau of Compliance as an exerciser of power and has kept social subjects under constant surveillance and has a defined responsibility while he himself becomes the subject of supervision of a higher intendant, a superintendent. The protagonist is also under omnipresent surveillance of Bergman and the Bureau whereas he is an exerciser of power and an overseer for Charles, and, finally, he dictatorially decides to dismantle him and he does.

Consequently, the structure of modern power is in such a manner that neither the exercisers of power nor the subjected bodies are able to disobey or resist against it.

Conclusion

By drawing the sketch of the panoptic society of “Subpoena,” Barthelme has tried to show his critique of modern or disciplinary power. He keeps his stand on the negative traits of “panopticism” through portraying the oppressive society of “Subpoena.” The writer’s major concern is the isolated modern man that is the result of exerting discipline in society. Barthelme characterizes Charles as a mechanistic modern man who is indifferent, unfeeling, and apathetic about the urgent issues of the community and his mere concern is to comply with the law. This compliance is guaranteed by the hierarchical and vertical construction of the power relations. “Subpoena,” indeed, epitomizes a slice of a larger modern society in which disciplinary power or an “anatomy-politics” overwhelmingly dominates the whole society. The government have transfigured a disordered population into a collection of separated individuals and exerted “a micro-physics of power” over the subjected bodies so as to survey, analyze, control, and supervise them effortlessly. In fact, they aspire to make machines out of characters whose only concern is to fulfill compliance. In order to achieve these goals, they have internalized three basic features: omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience. Although subjects are aware of all these characteristics of their powerful rulers, they sometimes strive to resist and disobey because of the fact that resistance exists within power relations, and it is impossible to escape from them. In other words, resistance of subjects goes in parallel with power itself, but it is eventually suppressed and power wins because power can hide its own mechanism. Hence, the emergence of modern man is the result of superintendence of slightest issues of his life by powers of modern panoptic systems. Verily, the protagonist of “Subpoena” is the victim of this modern context whose privacy is threatened by the surveillance system.

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