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Abstract

Area: Writing & Publication, Analysis

Title of Study: The Odds of Outliers are Ever In My Favor/ The Limitations of Foucault's Panopticon as Seen in *The Hunger Games*

The purpose of our presentation is to illustrate the limitations of Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. The book, published in 1975, is a culmination of his observations of a social experiment at Mettray Penal Colony that was in operation from 1840 until 1937. This colony allowed for an unprecedented social experiment and revealed facets of human behavior that were unstudied. The prison's architectural structure, called the Panopticon, provided for constant observation. Guards could observe the inmates without being seen. Foucault posits that the fear of the consequences of misbehavior caused the prisoners to begin self-regulation, whether or not they were being watched by guards. However, we aim to demonstrate how this system does not anticipate the possibility of outliers that could find ways to manipulate the system, thus creating more clever and less detectable miscreants.

In order to elucidate our analysis, we have used the popular film and book series *The Hunger Games* as a case study. We will show that the only way to truly grasp Foucault's views is through the lens of a dystopian series like *The Hunger Games*.

We also incorporated references to several real life examples such as the Patriot Act of 2001 and statistics concerning surveillance in the modern world. We believe that in a world where cameras are in nearly every building and satellites can read a newspaper headline from space, it is important to understand the concept of the Panopticon and its theoretical applications.