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Real Punishment: Televised Discipline on Reality TV.

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I declare that this **Critical Cultures Research Project** is all my own work
and that all sources have been fully acknowledged.

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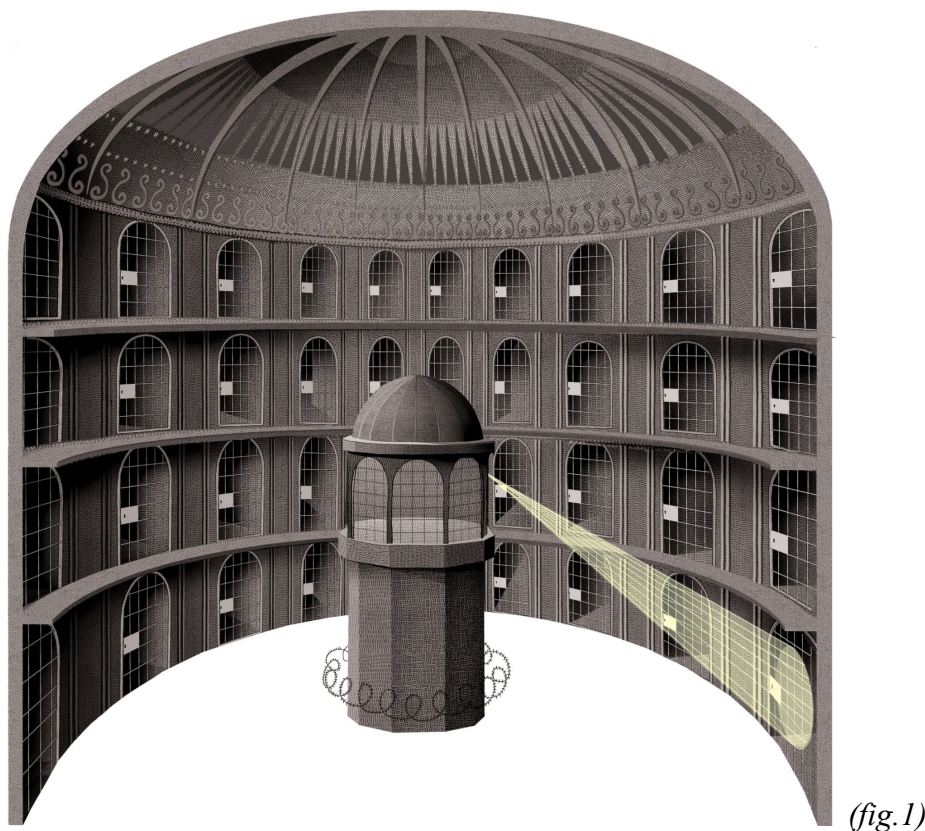
Introduction

In his 1975 book *Discipline and Punish* Foucault discusses the historical transition from punishment as a public spectacle of torture and execution to the modern prison, a more economically and politically discreet system of surveillance and control. (Cohen, 2019, p. 29). He describes a Panopticon, a structure which achieves surveillance through it's circular design and central guard tower *(fig.1)*. It ensures an invariable and universal calculation of the surveyor's gaze and the exclusion of the surveilled from the central tower (Vaz, 1995, p.34), Foucault agued that this process shifted discipline from the criminal's body and the spectacle of torture to their mind through panoptic self-discipline. This theory was added to by Gile Deleuze who suggested that because of the advancement of technology and corporate power, these panoptic systems were multiple and participatory in nature - theorising that subjects are encouraged to travel between systems of surveillance and control (Deleuze, 1992, p.5).

Since the 1980's TV networks have monetised the surveillance of 'ordinary citizens' as entertainment by creating Reality TV, and taking liberties to control these people's behaviour for entertainment purposes. In their book *Reality TV: Realism and Revelation* Anita Biressi Heather Nunn describe the role of audience and production in the reality show *Survivor* as: "a 'panoptic' figure able to monitor, judge and punish the participants by banishing them from the television screen" (2005, p.5). With production companies either relying entirely on found CCTV footage or creating highly controlled environments (Kavka, p.3), questions arise over how and why power is exercised over subjects and audiences. This research essay will ask how and why Reality TV shows televise punishment? What happens when these sacrificial punishments exist

within the context of a show or as an extension of the criminal justice system? It will also interrogate these formats according to Foucault's theories of Spectacle, Panopticism, and Deleuze's control society.

Using the Reality TV show *To Catch A Predator* as an example, the first chapter will discuss the psychological mechanisms behind the use of punishment as entertainment, as well as the power structures and ideologies this entertainment upholds. The second chapter will analyse how the show *Love Island* uses covert punishment and self regulation as a way of maintaining its integrity, marketability, and authenticity. The third chapter will contrast these two shows according to Foucault's theories of discipline and punishment and Deleuze's *Control Society*. It will also ask whether these genres are emblematic Foucauldian spectacle, panopticism, or a mixture of both.

(fig.1)

Chapter 1 -

Predator : the epitome of Humilitainment

Public humiliation is a popular entertainment factor on Reality TV, Professor Nico Carpentier argues that it is an effective way Reality TV productions exert power over their participants. He discusses how the format of many shows involves putting participants in difficult and often emotionally challenging situations for the purpose of entertainment. To Carpentier, this format is so popular that it can be classified as a sub-genre which he labels 'Humiliation TV' (Carpentier, 2010, pp.99).

Humiliation TV or *Humiliatainment*, a term coined by media scholars Sara Booker and Brad Waite, is one of the most popular sub-genres of Reality TV (Smith, 2013, p. 95). According to social psychologist Richard H. Smith. The rise of the *Humiliatainment* genre was a result of the psychological phenomenon known as 'Schadenfreude' or pleasure in other people's misery. Smith argues that the reason this emotion relates so closely with Reality TV is because the format is deliberately feeds of it's audience's social desires,

> Steven Reiss and James Wiltz, media researchers who examine why people watch TV, have findings suggesting that two motives stand out in the case of Reality TV especially: a desire for prestige and self-importance and a desire to get even or a sense of vindication (Smith, 2014, np).

In his aptly named book *Schadenfreude: The dark side of human nature,* Smith analyses the genre of *Humilitainment* in *To Catch A Predator,* an iconic TV show of the early 2000's. Smith argues that *To Catch A Predator* (or *Predator* for short) is a prime example of how far a television show can use humiliation as it's key attraction (Smith, 2013, p. 96).

The premise is simple, the producers of the show pose as an underage girl or boy online and initiate conversations with suspected sex offenders (Wegman, 2007, np). They refrain from initiating sexually explicit conversation with their targets but encourage it once lines have been crossed and arrange a meeting place which, unbeknownst to the target, is filled with television crew members and CCTV cameras (Smith, 2013, p.119). Once these men enter the house the television crew ambush them with the show's presenter appearing and saying the now-famous line: " I am Chris Hansen with Dateline NBC and we are doing a story about computer predators who try to meet teens online for sex" (Smith, 2013, p.120). Hansen reads the most damning portions of the texts back to the target, who either stands in shock and disbelief

or tries to run (Wegman, 2007, n.p). If the target tries to leave he will be immediately surrounded by law enforcement and arrested *(fig.2)*. Wegman describes the perpetrators arrest as the show's climactic moment or, in his words, its: "money shot", "the thrilling, morally uncomplicated climax of justice served, with a heaping side of humiliation" (Wegman, 2007).

(fig.2)

<u>*Schadenfreude: a dark(er) feature of punitive justice*</u>

To Catch A Predator focuses on criminal apprehension rather than on the criminal justice system itself, and thus could be characterised as a 'crime appeal show': a sub-genre of punitive Reality TV or PRTV (Pinsler, 2010, p.112). Although it doesn't take place within an institutional setting like a prison or courthouse, it is still punitive, operating as a vigilante form of entertainment that provides a kind of extra-judiciary karmic justice.

Karmic justice is an almost essential factor in the psychological mechanism of Schadenfreude. The philosopher John Portmann describes the feeling of Schadenfreude as: "an emotional corollary of justice" (Portmann, 2000, cited in Smith, 2013, p. 93). Portmann claims that it is difficult to endorse punishment while condemning pleasure in other people's misfortune, as punishment involves the infliction of suffering. He argues that a sense of 'deservingness' is inseparable from the feeling of schadenfreude itself,

> the belief that the other deserves her misfortune is central to the moral vindication of pleasure-in-others'-misfortune. Pleasure whose object is undeserved misfortune must be considered morally unacceptable. It is ethically wrong to take pleasure in the undeserved misfortunes of others. However, when the misfortune is deserved, being pleased about this is not necessarily a vice (Portmann, cited in Ben Zeʾev, 2001, p.375).

Schadenfreude is clearly a dynamic factor in the televising and enjoyment of suffering. A satisfying aspect needs to be present as an emotional justification for the punishment itself, thus maintaining a moral high ground for the punisher and audience. Smith argues that this pleasure is

in some ways aesthetic and provides a kind of moral symmetry or poetic justice (2013, p.89), providing a circular, easily digestible, and entertaining narrative. When moral ambiguity or sympathy prevents the viewer from being easily entertained, 'deservingness' is a key factor and affects punishment as entertainment value.

Smith discusses how child sexual abuse is considered one of the most - if not the most - immoral behaviours in our society leaving little room for moral ambiguity, sympathy, or even criticism of the show. He describes it as an "unalterable defect" or "moral leprosy" which places the perpetrator outside the circle of humanity (2013, pp. 122). The exposing and punishing of such damning behaviour simultaneously elevates the viewer. Even among other criminals the molestation of a child is a singularly heinous offence and this judgement likely boosts the self-esteem of the average inmate: "Yes, I killed a man, but I'm no paedophile." (Smith, 2013, pp. 122). Schadenfreude is entertaining as it provides not only a sense of moral symmetry but also of moral superiority,

> We're constantly evaluating our own self-worth by comparing ourselves to others and we get a reassuring self-esteem boost, a pleasant feeling of superiority comparing ourselves to people beneath us" (Wynn, 2020)(on Schadenfreude).

A self-esteem boost and the sense of 'justice served' is most enjoyable if it is, in Smiths' words: "free of moral clutter" (2013, p.123). A clear and deserving villain is difficult to openly sympathise for fear of condemnation, providing the show with a licence to punish and humiliate (2013, p.124).

The moral superiority of the viewer in contrast to the moral 'leprosy' of the subject is a key function and motif of punitive Reality TV; *To Catch A Predator* has become one of the more extreme examples. Criminologist Richard Sparks has observed that the creation and expansion of shows about crime have often coincided with it's long-term anxieties. It becomes impossible to disentangle the role of television as an instigator of fearfulness around crime and the public's preoccupation with criminality (Biressi and Nunn, 2005, p.121-122). This is evident in PRTV's inception as it coincided with conservative US and UK governments of the1980's. Professor of sociology and anthropology Aaron Doyle discusses how the Thatcher/Reagan government's law-and-order approach to crime was sustained and exacerbated by media portrayals of criminal justice (Kavka, 2012, p.65-66). Much of the narratives these shows produced reflected a retributive and highly conservative attitude towards crime and were accompanied with supposedly factual programming as a way of upholding this ideology (Biressi and Nunn, 2005, p.121).

Anita Biressi and Heather Nunn discuss this in an analysis of the 1997 show *Video Justice: crime caught on tape* where in one episode a driver is pulled over by an American highway patrol. The driver loses his temper after being given a speeding ticket while the police officer remains calm,

> The exchange is between the driver – the 'unknown citizen' who is utterly humiliated - and the cop who is an emblematic implacable figure of the law. The scopic technology seems to confirm the law's status as paramount, irrefutable, and adamant (Biressi and Nunn, 2005, p.129) *(fig.3)*.

The 'us-and-them' visual motif which contrasts the humiliation of the criminal with the incontestable power of law enforcement can also be applied to that of *To Catch A Predator*, where the righteous role of law enforcement is extended to the viewer: "these programmes invite the viewer to collude in the entrapment of 'the criminal' and the closing down of the violently chaotic world the show has depicted" (Biressi and Nunn, 2005, p.132). Arguably, many of PRTV's circular narratives of punishment also contain a political and ideological dimension to them: the show overemphasises a societal problem's prevalence and danger while simultaneously offering a cathartic and satisfying solution. Jan Pinseler and Nico Carpentier argue that by depicting a crime in it's actuality but applying subjective narrative to it, the show creates a hegemonic discourse and perception of criminality (Pinseler, 2010, p.112),

PRTV builds on everyday conceptions of crime, links them to a hegemonic concept and lets them appear natural and unquestionable. In addition, this genre transgresses the usual boundaries between state institutions and mass media by not only taking part in producing hegemony but also by enforcing power…This is supported by representational strategies, especially the production of authenticity, the dichotomy of good and evil and the constant references to the police or pedagogic authorities (Pinseler, 2010, p.122).

Evidently, power not only affects the subjects of these TV shows but also their audiences by presenting highly narrativized situations as actuality. exposing deviance through a hegemonic 'hero and villain' lens is consistent with a conservative law and order ideology, which culminates in the spectacle of criminal arrest. Although PRTV shows condemn the behaviours of their subject's they still instigate and profit off situations of social harm. They are more interested in control and exposure than deterrence and reform. On PRTV and *Predator* punishment functions as a direct form of entertainment, the more immoral the subject's actions, the less likely we are to

feel sympathy for them or cognitive dissonance about their fate, thus legitimising their public humiliation.

(fig.3)

Chapter 2

Love island in the Surveillance and Competition Era

The PRTV genre was in part a result of rising production costs and competition between TV networks. Producers seized on the newly widespread availability of camcorders and CCTV footage as a way to produce shows with few to no actors or writers (Kavka, 2012, p.45). Evidently, this made documenting law enforcement and criminality an ideal topic for producers, but as the Reality TV genre gained popularity in the late 90s and 00s it redefined itself and expanded it's audience and market (Kavka, 2012, p.75). Misha Kavka discusses how the label 'Reality TV' changed from a generic tag for real crime programming to being associated with shows like Big *Brother* (UK) and *Survivor* (US). Kavka calls this second generation of Reality TV 'The Surveillance and Competition Era' ,

> Whereas first-generation programs are satisfied to observe ordinary people in the environments in which they are found, second-generation programmes fabricate competitive environments and subject participants' behaviour to full-scale scrutiny by a panoply of mounted and mobile cameras (Kavka, 2012, p.76).

Shows structured around constant surveillance, fabricated environments, and competition are more familiar to today's audiences and generate massive amounts of viewership and public discussion. In 2019 the Reality show Love Island was the UK's highest-rated show, with the opening of the fifth season garnering 3.3 million viewers on ITV2 alone (White, 2019, np). The UK version takes place in a luxury villa in Majorca, where a group of men and women have to pair up or risk being eliminated until there is only one couple left. Contestants are eliminated either by audience vote or by the producers manipulating the show's gender balance which journalist Sarah Jeong describes: "forces the contestants into a game of musical chairs, but for

heterosexuality" (2019, np). It should be noted that heterosexuality is essentially compulsory on

the show as producers consider queer coupling 'a logistical nightmare' (Harvey et. Al, 2021, np).

The problems with having sex on national television

The contestants are recorded practically everywhere in the villa, with at least 73 cameras, countless hidden microphones, and a common sleeping area, privacy is almost nonexistent (Jeong, 2019). Similarly to *Predator,* methods of *s*urveillance and exposure are used to punish subjects but with more sophisticated premises and more unpredictable outcomes. Video Essayist and media studies grad student who uses the pseudonym Broey Deschanel discusses the way deviant behaviour is punished. On earlier seasons airing footage of contestants having sex was commonplace due to the fact that they had virtually no privacy (Harvey et Al, 2021). On season one contestants Zoey and Jordan had sex in a bathroom, one of the few places on set no cameras. They expected that production wouldn't be able to air the encounter, however they did, with a painstakingly long shot of the closed bathroom door accompanied by Zoey and Jordan's mics turned up to full volume *(fig.4)*. Due to the fact they had no access to the outside world, the couple was seemingly unaware of this until their exit interviews, leaving Zoey, in particular, completely off guard and mortified (Harvey et. Al, 2021).

Deschanel describes how events like this shifted contestant's behaviour and display of sexuality. In earlier seasons, intimacy was much more prominent, with female contestants often bearing the brunt of the punishment and backlash. She uses the example of another contestant, Zara Holland, who in 2016 was stripped of her *Miss Great Britain* title (Welsh, 2016) and shamed by other contestants after having sex on the show (Harvey et. Al, 2021). In later seasons overt sexuality is less frequent, more performative, and more acceptable for British national TV. This serves

several purposes, as a method of self-preservation for contestants to protect themselves from the

worst of public shaming but also as a way of making themselves better employees,

> the move towards a more sanitised portrayal of sex protects the contestants from public
> shaming, but it also demonstrates the necessity to regulate themselves under a sexuality that is
> safe and acceptable for TV. A more marketable sexuality (Harvey et. Al, 2021, np).

In this way discipline is controlled by broadcasting deviance which leads to future participants

self-censorship. Although sex is arguably a good way to boost ratings it's depiction and the

emotional fallout it creates sets a precident for female contestants. A more performative sexuality

may not be as interesting but it protects contestants and maintains the show's integrity.

(fig.4)

Love Island's authenticity paradox

Contestant's self-censorship is an example of Deschanel's central argument that *Love Island* is a true realisation of Foucault's Panopticon (Harvey et. Al, 2021). The fact that contestants are being surveilled constantly means they have to edit and change their behaviour as a defence mechanism to avoid public scrutiny and become better employees of the show,

> He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects (Foucault, 1995, p.202-203).

Self-discipline is not uncommon to the Reality TV genre and can manifest itself in a number of ways, from contestants only displaying a certain kind of behaviour out of a fear that their unacceptable behaviour will be shown to a national audience, to the editing and masking of their personalities and emotions:

> While the celebrity talk show host purposefully creates a persona, a Reality TV contestant may do so without realising it, as more of a self-defence mechanism. One's perceived 'authenticity' (or lack thereof) is often a contentious topic on Reality TV shows that audiences and contestants alike feel apt to judge (Montemurro, 2008, cited in Beaty, 2021, p.7).

Deschanel argues that contestants will often be punished for their perceived lack of authenticity or if their actions seem too calculated (Harvey et. Al, 2021). Authenticity is considered an important selling point of Reality TV, In the book *Spectacle of the Real: From Hollywood to Reality TV and Beyond* Misha Kavka quotes Bill Nichols saying that media globalisation has raised a demand for an 'ethics of actuality' (Kavka, 2005, p.94). This highlights one of the main

paradoxes of Reality TV and of *Love Island* - contestants are subjected to constant surveillance and must regulate themselves accordingly, however, any obvious examples of a lack of authenticity is looked upon unfavourably, by other contestants and audiences alike: "Although the goal of signing up for a Reality TV show is ostensibly to win, outwardly 'playing the game' and acknowledging the panopticon breaks Reality TV's 'fourth wall'" (Beaty, 2021, p.7).

This aspect of lifestyle Reality TV is mentioned in *Reality Tv: Realism and Revelation* where contestants and actors often have to balance the appearance of authenticity while also cultivating a celebrity persona to attract a fanbase and as a form of self-preservation,

> One of the pleasures of Reality TV for the audience then is trying to spot the gap, to see through the contestants' inauthenticity. Yet inauthenticity, the ability to put on a show, is at the same time part of the skill of the celebrity persona (Biressi and Nunn, 2005, p.152).

On August 6th 2021, *Love Island*'s broadcasting regulator *Ofcom* received a record 25,000 complaints after an incident that occurred between contestants Faye Winter and Teddy Soares. As the show airs in real-time five nights a week and contestants are completely cut off from the outside world, the producers often have to instigate interesting storylines in whatever way they can. That night's episode featured an event producers had planned where islanders were shown footage of fellow contestants' secret indiscretions or betrayals in an attempt to generate confrontation. One of the most memorable clip's showed Faye's partner Teddy admitting he was attracted to another woman, a particularly inflammatory piece of information as Faye had disclosed on multiple occasions that she had been hurt in previous relationships and had difficulty trusting romantic partners. The event quickly devolved into: "a discomfiting and

one-sided screaming match, where Faye yelled at Teddy in front of the entire villa for an uncomfortably long amount of time" (Harvey et. Al, 2021) *(fig.5)*.

Deschanel argues that, although emotional outbursts are not uncommon on the show, Faye's reaction was particularly extreme and she didn't budge in her anger. However, in later episodes, she seemed apologetic and reflective. Based on the fact that the episode generated an unexpected amount of backlash aimed at producers and that the show has on-set psychologists, Deschanel suggests that it's highly likely that Faye was taken aside after the incident. In recent years the show has come under increased scrutiny in it's role of providing a duty of care to contestants during and after the show airs (Harvey et. Al, 2021). From the British parliament launching a committee in 2019 to investigate production companies' treatment of participants (Stoppard, 2019, np), to the backlash the show received after two former contestants and one of the show's presenters took their own lives in the space of a year (Harvey et. Al, 2021). As a result the show now features on-set psychologists that regularly consult with contestants who seem particularly distressed or unable to cope (Harvey et. Al, 2021).

While this example may not be considered punitive it shows the producer's ability to exercise power over the contestant's behaviour, both in eliciting authentic cathartic emotion and regulating behaviour which is considered too extreme. Contestants are encouraged to be as authentic as possible in deliberately contrived and provocative situations, but are punished or forced to regulate themselves when they behave in a way which jeopardises the show's integrity. In Faye Winter's case, the producers created a situation that they thought would generate an authentic response but intervened when the response was deemed unacceptable for television. In

the case of Zoey Bozzio Brown and Zara Holland, they are required to cultivate authentic romantic and sexual relationships but are criticised and punished for a sexual expression that isn't marketable for national television,

Ultimately contestants regulate themselves in accordance with a code of conduct that is accepted in the hyper public sphere, one that's marketable enough to stay on TV, but not so entertaining as to elicit public abuse, to be outed as a game player, or to be perceived as socially deviant (Harvey et. Al, 2021, np).

Although deviant behaviour creates entertaining television, it's portrayal becomes a detriment to the contestant's mental health, leading to participants self-censorship. Contestants don't know what footage of them is shown to the public and have to assume the 'guard' is always watching. The televising of deviance on *Love Island* is more ambiguous and complex than *To Catch A Predator* but it is still present and has the ability to alter contestants' lives. When contestants are being surveilled constantly through panoptic discipline their authenticity becomes questionable, but a lack of authenticity can function as a self defence mechanism or a covert strategy, just as long as it isn't obvious.

(fig.5)

Chapter 3

Real power structures

Audience participation as decentralised power

It is tempting to imagine that the power exerted over love island contestants is absolute and comes from a singular source, but arguably that the reason *Love Island* is a manifestation of Foucault's Panopticon is because power is decentralised and invisible (Harvey et Al, 2021). Foucault described this apparatus of de-individualised 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…Consequently, it does not matter who exercises power. Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine (1975, p.201).

For Foucault, the Panopticon's power did not lie solely in the operator but in their perceived presence, creating psychological and networked representation of power. In effect, constant visibility from anyone at any time internalises and decentralises power. An example of decentralised power is the involvement of audience and social media participation. Social media plays an important role on the show - contestants can be eliminated via online audience vote and as islanders have no social media access so producers will create challenges where they read selected tweets about their relationships (Harvey, et. Al, 2021). Sociologist Xavier L'Hoiry discusses how the show tries to involve audience participation as much as possible as a marketing strategy. Audiences engage via social media or on the show's app where they can purchase their favourite contestant's outfit and take part in polls or quizzes. The ability for

viewers to "shop the look" on contestants outfits was created in partnership with the clothing

brand *Missguided* and has been described as: "the future of shopping" (L'Hoiry, 2019, p.5).

Love Island's producers have made little secret that generating audience engagement via social media has been a central aspect of their strategy. This approach seeks to elicit a feedback loop whereby television and social media content feed back onto each other in a cycle, driving audiences to engage with the show across multiple platforms (L'Hoiry, 2019, p.4).

Agency to generate outcomes and narratives on the show is divided between Producers,

contestants, and the public and, even if this division is unequal, its existence is intentional. As

discussed earlier Faye Winter's outburst on season 7 generated so much backlash against the

producers that in later episodes her demeanour was completely sanitised, suggesting either heavy

editing or a consultation with the show's psychologist. She also notes that public opinion on

platforms like Twitter and Reddit can alter the show in real time, especially during controversial

episodes (Harvey et Al, 2021,np). This L'Hoiry argues that the metaphor of the panopticon in

relation to Reality TV, although it bears many similarities, is mistaken:

While Orwellian notions of top-down surveillance carried out by powerful all-seeing actors are not completely obsolete, Lyon (2018) argues that these visions are dated. Instead, surveillance subjects are far less powerless and passive than Orwellian visions suggest and in fact, individuals and groups actively participate in so-called surveillance societies (L'Hoiry, 2019, p.6).

The researcher James Wong corroborates this statement arguing that it is common for theorists

to draw parallels between the Panopticon and Reality TV, however: "For Foucault, surveillance

is only half of the story in the metaphor. The other half is that we are the ones who are exercising

power over ourselves" (Wong, 2001, p.33).

Interactivity and participation in surveillance is integral for the show's apparatus of power marketability; As power is democratised it becomes more complex, unpredictable, and harder to spot. Deschanel argues that the show's hosts are deliberately distant and that in order to maintain the appearance of authenticity that audiences love, mechanisms of control have to appear invisible and subtle (Harvey et. Al, 2021). The invisibility of power contrasted by the hypervisibility of it's subjects is emblematic of many Reality TV shows. Carpentier likens the invisibility of power on Reality TV to Foucault: "To put this into a Foucauldian perspective: the objects of power have become more visible, while the exercise of power has become less visible" (2010, p.97). Democratisation and invisible power are key strategies that potentially draw criticism away from production's own methods of discipline and control.

The Panopticon upgraded

While Foucault's theory of the Panopticon was pivotal it became an incomplete theory as surveillance and algorithmic technology became more advanced. Just as the PRTV genre was born out of the availability of CCTV footage (Kavka, 2012, p.47), many current Reality TV shows utilise current surveillance technologies and contribute to data economies. Honours student at Western Washington University Laura Sarie Beaty notes that this trend,

> some have argued that modern surveillance is an "electronic panopticon"….As information technology became increasingly sophisticated, so too did the panoptic realm of Reality TV (Lyon,1993, cited in Beaty, 2021, p.6).

Gile Deleuze's theory of a Control Society builds upon Foucault's theory of Panopticism adding to it by arguing that multiple systems of free floating control operate in place of a closed system like a prison or school. (Deleuze, 1992, p.5).

> In the disciplinary societies one was always starting a the barracks, from the barracks to the factory), while in one is never finished with anything, the corporation, the armed services being metastable states coexisting in one and the same modulation, like a universal system of deformation (Deleuze, 1992, p.5).

Deleuze hypothesised that instead of being surveilled in a physical enclosure, there is no need for one because all the necessary information to discipline us exists in databases (Harvey et. al, 2021). Deschanel argues that *Love Island* could be more akin to Deleuze's control society due to the fact that it exists within multiple systems of participation, spectatorship, and marketing,

Many of the contestants are recruited through social media, and even if their primary job isn't to be an influencer, the everyday person is already used to refining themselves for the public eye via their personal Instagram or Facebook accounts ….more contestants than ever are entering the villa with their faces and bodies already modified….They've already altered themselves for a perceived public (Harvey et. Al, 2021, np).

While the set of the show is enclosed and could be seen as a kind of Panopticon contestants don't clock out once they leave, they are constantly self-regulating, performing, and working alongside the show as a result of their overnight fame.

Systems of control and punishment on love island are networked and are maintained through participation, by audiences and contestants alike. While invisible decentralised power structures are emblematic of panoptic discipline, because they extend beyond the realm of the show itself they could be more akin to a control society.

Predator's spectacular punishment

The diffuse nature of power on *Love Island* makes the show more exciting and unpredictable. In contrast the format of *To Catch A Predator* is quite predictable as power exists in the collaboration of production and law enforcement: "In fact, the media and media technologies are co-extensive with the law and operate in dialogue with it as supportive non-juridical mechanisms" (Biressi and Nunn, 2005, p.132) (on PRTV).

This is not to say that power is concentrated In the hands of one actor but that law enforcement and production companies operate coextensively with a mutual interest. Where deviance or is deliberately subject to debate on *Love island* which influences the outcome of the show, *To Catch A Predator* produces hegemonic ideas of criminal justice and a predictable format,

> They beg Chris not to broadcast this moment of shame... and then they get arrested too. Dateline has done this show in cities and towns across America, and everywhere they go, they catch dozens of men (Wegman, 2011).

As discussed the dramatic climax of the show is the moment when these men realise they've been caught on television, meaning the dramatic reveal of power is integral to it's narrative arc and entertainment factor. Power structures, particularly law enforcement, need also to be visible as a symbol of karmic justice. In Chapter 1, it was mentioned that PRTV programmes serve to

prop up images of law enforcement as implacable and irrefutable. For this law enforcement must be visible and are simultaneously the operator and subject of the show's production.

Reality TV can be understood as panoptic, but the medium still utilises spectacle as it seeks to televise deviance and punishment as a form of entertainment. If *Love Island's* system of discipline can be likened to the Panopticon or a control society it could be argued that earlier forms of PRTV like *To Catch A Predator* can be likened to Foucauldian spectacle. In *The Spectacle of the Scaffold* Foucault describes the spectacular nature of 17th and 18th century punishment, saying,

> public torture and execution must be spectacular, it must be seen by all almost as its triumph. The very excess of the violence employed is one of the elements of its glory: the fact that the guilty man should moan and cry out under the blows is not a shameful side-effect, it is the very ceremonial of justice being expressed in all its force."(Foucault, 1975, p. 38)

This ceremonial glorious aspect is potentially similar to Schadenfreude in its aesthetic and enjoyable aspect, an aspect that reinforces the punisher's authority. On *To Catch A Predator* the 'triumph' Foucault discussed is the satisfaction the viewer gets when they feel justice has been served in a cathartic moment of arrest.

Jan Pinseler also compares PRTV to Foucauldian spectacle stating that rather than seeing the spectacle of punishment and torture the viewer witnesses the spectacle of criminal activity and apprehension,

> These shows allow us to "enjoy" the spectacle of punishment. But while this is not the gruesome, public, torturing to death described by Foucault at the beginning of Discipline and Punish, it nevertheless is public. (Pinseler, 2010, p.125).

The use of technology negates whether PRTV employs spectacular and panoptic methods of discipline. It allows punishment to be public but also gives a reason or need for contestants to self regulate. One could argue that *To Catch A Predator* is a technologically enhanced spectacle because it doesn't utilise self-discipline. It's disciplinary structure relies on the dramatic reveal of power prompting authentic cathartic reactions from it's subjects. Pinseler defines the two categories PRTV shows: crime appeal and re-education programmes. The first focuses on criminal apprehension and entrapment while the later is concerned with correcting deviant behaviour (Pinseler, 2010, p.112). While *To Catch A Predator* could be classified as a crime appeal programme *Love Island* on the other hand shares similarities with re-education programmes even if it is a competition reality show. Pinseler describes crime reeducation programmes as: "both public and put on for the TV camera" (Pinseler, 2010, p.125) effectively making the punishment they feature as "simultaneously a public spectacle and a Panopticon" (p.125). *Love Island's* hyper-public nature makes it panoptic and a spectacle, however it's participatory nature of power negates this likening it to a control society.

Participation on Love Island extends to the contestants as well as the audience but *Predator* removes all agency from subjects entirely. This is made acceptable due to the nature and severity of the crime itself. Similarly to how a crime's severity permits an audience to enjoy it's perpetrators punishment, Biressi and Nunn argue that the antisocial or criminal nature of a PRTV subject's behaviour legitimises their broadcast, and that by acting antisocially or criminally they forfeit their right to privacy. (2005, p.133).

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Consequently, The spectacle of punishment and concept of punishment as entertainment value are inexorably linked as spectacle demands and elicits emotional response. This punishment is authoritative and hegemonic creating a spectacle of power in turn. For Foucault the spectacular punishment should be seen as a triumph of justice. A triumph which bears many similarities to the ideological hallmarks of PRTV: karmic justice, good and evil dichotomies and a satisfying moral outcome at the expense of the punished.

Conclusion: Real implications, redefined authenticity

Reality TV formats utilise Panoptic methods of generating content and yet still rely on spectacle through the dissemination of this content into the public sphere. They hybridise methods of power and create paradoxes in which participation and hegemony exist simultaneously. For Foucault, spectacle functioned as a method of crime deterrence which relied on the depiction of deviance in order to establish hegemonic power. The point was not an eradication of crime but an establishment of order. In a similar way, Reality TV productions rely on televising deviance for entertainment purposes, while justifying the negative fallout their contestants receive through a narrative of deservingness or a seemingly nebulous power apparatus.

Punishment on Reality TV serves as entertainment but this entertainment is constantly being defined and redefined by the punishment itself. Punitive systems, whether historical or modern, are concerned with uncovering truth and rectifying error, be it criminal activity or a character's revealed behaviour. The question of whether or not a character is acting truthfully is irrelevant when their environments are contrived and their situations semi fictional. Authenticity becomes distorted through the actions of producers but also by the lens itself, which becomes a reminder for the subject of their own vulnerability. The audience acts as a panoptic viewer or a participant but also as a recipient of hegemonic ideology that alters their perception of deviant behaviour. In this way the viewer is both the subject and object of power.

Perhaps 'reality' in these programmes is actually their depictions of the politics and technologies of their times, acting as a microcosm for the societies they portray and seeking to establish these

portrayals as normal. *Predator* reflected an American society that was fearful of crime and sought vindictive retaliation, culminating in a system of mass incarceration. *Love Island* on the other hand reflects the ubiquitous nature of modern surveillance and data economies. Both these systems - incarceration and mass surveillance - become a disciplinary, financial and entertainment source for audiences to the extent that they are, ultimately, one and the same.

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