**GILLES DELEUZE – “POSTSCRIPT on the SOCIETIES of CONTROL” (1991 – Excerpt)**  
  
“Foucault located the disciplinary societies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; they reach their height at the outset of the twentieth. They initiate the organization of vast spaces of enclosure. The individual never ceases passing from one closed environment to another, each having its own laws: first the family; then the school; then the factory; possibly the prison (the preeminent instance of the enclosed environment). Foucault has brilliantly analyzed their ideal project: to distribute in space; to order in time; to compose a productive force whose effect will be greater than the sum of its component forces. But Foucault also recognized the transience of this model: it succeeded that of the societies of sovereignty, the goal and functions of which were something quite different.   
  
[Since] World War II, [we have been] in a generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of enclosure - prison, hospital, factory, school, family….The administrations in charge never cease announcing supposedly necessary reforms: to reform schools, to reform prisons, etc. [But] it's only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door. These are the **societies of control,** which are **in the process of replacing disciplinary societies: ultra-rapid forms of free-floating control replace the old disciplines operating in the time frame of a closed system**. In the societies of control, **a numerical language is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it. Individuals have become "dividuals," and masses, samples, data, markets, or "banks."** Perhaps it is money that expresses the distinction between the two societies best, since discipline always referred back to minted money that locks gold as numerical standard, while control relates to floating rates of exchange, modulated according to a rate established by a set of standard currencies. The old monetary mole is the animal of the space of enclosure, but the serpent is that of the societies of control. The disciplinary man was a discontinuous producer of energy, but **the man of control is, in orbit, in a continuous network. Everywhere “surfing” has already replaced the older sports**.  
  
The old societies of sovereignty made use of simple machines--levers, pulleys, clocks; the recent disciplinary societies equipped themselves with machines involving energy, with the active danger of sabotage; the societies of control operate with machines of a third type, computers, whose danger is piracy or the introduction of viruses. This technological evolution must be, even more profoundly, a mutation of capitalism. Capitalism is no longer involved in production, which it often relegates to the Third World, even for the complex forms of textiles, metallurgy, or oil production. What it wants to sell is services but what it wants to buy is stocks. This is no longer a capitalism for production but for the product, which is to say, for being sold or marketed. Thus is essentially dispersive, and the factory has given way to the corporation. Marketing has become the center or the "soul" of the corporation (we are taught that corporations have a soul, which is the most terrifying news in the world). The operation of markets is now the instrument of social control and forms the impudent breed of our masters. Man is no longer man enclosed, but man in debt.   
  
The conception of a control mechanism, giving the position of any element within an open environment at any given instant (whether animal in a reserve or human in a corporation, as with an electronic collar), is not necessarily one of science fiction. Félix Guattari has imagined a city where one would be able to leave one's apartment, one's street, one's neighborhood, thanks to one's (dividual) electronic card that raises a given barrier; but the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person's position--licit or illicit--and effects a universal order.   
  
What counts is that we are at the beginning of something. In the prison system: the attempt to find penalties of "substitution," at least for petty crimes, and the use of electronic collars that force the convicted person to stay at home during certain hours. For the school system: continuous forms of control, and the effect on the school of perpetual training, the corresponding abandonment of all university research, the introduction of the "corporation" at all levels of schooling. In the corporate system: new ways of handling money, profits, and humans that no longer pass through the old factory form. These are very small examples, but ones that will allow for better understanding of what is meant by the crisis of the   
  
Many young people strangely boast of being "motivated"; they re-request apprenticeships and permanent training. It's up to them to discover what they're being made to serve, just as their elders discovered, not without difficulty, the nature of the disciplines. The coils of a serpent are even more complex that the burrows of a molehill. [But] there is no need to fear or hope, only to look for new weapons.”

**COMMENTARY by Cæmeron Crain, Philosopher @ New School for Social Research, NYC:**   
In his “[Postscript on the Societies of Control](http://pages.akbild.ac.at/kdm/_media/_pdf/Gilles%20Deleuze%20-%20Postscript%20on%20the%20Societies%20of%20Control.pdf),” Gilles Deleuze articulates the way in which we are/were moving from what Michel Foucault described as a **Disciplinary Society** and toward a **Society of Control**.. If nothing else, our friend Gilles seems to be terribly prescient; writing in the early 90s, prior to the hegemony of the internet, he already tells us that “everywhere surfing has already replaced the older sports.” But, what does it mean to live in a society of control?   
  
An important aspect of the society of control is that we are allowed to do “whatever we want.” It presents itself as a kind of freedom. No longer restrained by enclosure structures, like those of the school or the factory, we can pursue an online education in our time, or work from home. This seems like freedom, but we should notice how it diffuses “responsibility” throughout life. Perhaps it is nice to work from home, but now we are expected to be responsive to the demands of work even away from the office; to respond to emails in a timely manner. While “freed” from the enclosed workspace, the demands of work come to pervade all of our time. I, for one, have been chastised for not responding to a phone call, then text message, then email, for more than 12 hours. I would be surprised if others have not felt a similar kind of demand, though maybe they responded quickly and avoided the disapprobation of their superiors.

What seems to be lost here is true “free time”—something I was scolded for holding onto an idea of—that would be time fully outside of the structures of power. While it had its own oppressive power relations, a disciplinary society seems to have had space for this: when I punch out at the factory, my time is my own, until I go back tomorrow, for another shift. In a society of control, this increasingly disappears. While freedom seems to be increased on the one hand, the control of our activities expands on the other. Rather than a **Panopticon**, with a centralized focal point from which activity is surveilled, we have a diffuse matrix of information gathering algorithms. Everything is tracked and encoded, interpreted into patterns that are either acceptable or unacceptable. Touch off enough markers in your internet activity, by going to certain sites, or using certain words, and you’ll be placed on some sort of “watchlist.”

The effect is the same as with the panopticon: it does not matter if you are actually being watched, but to create the feeling that you might be under surveillance at any given moment. Yet, in a society of control, even that feeling is discouraged. We know that we are being tracked, but are encouraged not to worry about it. This normalization of surveillance is behind the governmental outrage—such as it was—over the affair with Edward Snowden. Of course they are paying attention to everything we do, so much as they can, but they don’t really want us to think about it. They rather want us to accept it as an unconscious reality, and not to worry. This is evident in some of the reactions to Snowden, which questioned why anyone would be surprised and encouraged us to just go about our business.

Unfortunately, bringing this all to conscious awareness would not seem to have much of an effect. The best case scenario is that we are reminded that Big Brother is watching us—and of course we might then rail that he should cut that out. But, one might wonder what use Big Brother is if we don’t know he’s watching. After all, if we recall Orwell’s *1984*, this fear of being watched would seem to be integral. We have not only telescreens, but posters with Big Brother’s face, informing us that he is watching. One cannot know whether anyone is actually paying attention, but the power of the Party is secured by the paranoia that any and all actions *might* be surveilled. So, within such a frame, the knowledge that we are being watched would only seem to bolster the power of those in charge. If the revelations we owe to Snowden have any kind of effect, this can only be because the power apparatus in place differs meaningfully from that which Orwell envisioned. Rather than being spurred to paranoia, we are encouraged not to worry because we aren’t doing anything wrong, while at the same time asked for confidence and endorsement of the idea that those who are breaking the rules *will* be caught. It is perhaps the latter idea—that “wrongdoers” should always be caught—that would have to be called into question to pose a real challenge to the structures of control.

It is important for the society of control to maintain the illusion of freedom, but we should note the ways in which freedom here is not merely an illusion. One can say or do whatever one wants, at least within the circumscribed parameters. Most of us fall within those parameters without even thinking about it—since the only forms of discourse truly proscribed are radical indictments of our political system, calls to “terrorist” action, and the like—and so experience ourselves as fully free to express our views, live our lives, and so on. The important thing to grasp is the way in which an apparatus of power can exert control over us precisely by letting us “do whatever we want.” Proscribed behavior is largely unrecognized as even existing, or thrown under the category of the “criminal,” which we do not take the time to examine in general. A negative is created—a class that falls outside the “we” who have freedom—and deep thought about the shared humanity of these individuals is strongly discouraged. We are under control precisely to the extent that we think of those subjugated to the effects of power as other than “us.”