Chapter 4
How Is Watching Done?

ABSTRACT

The process of surveillance has changed over time, as the object of surveillance—the narratives—have evolved. The primary mechanism of surveillance involved studying the analog body by watching the activities that the body performed. As such, the visual process, using cameras of different capabilities, has been a key way for watching. With the increasing digitization, the watching has relied on methods that capture the data about institutions and people.

INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter I pointed towards the different categories of watchers that make up the people and institution who are engaged in the process of watching. The initial categorization offers a point of departure, but more details would be added as I look at the different ways in which the watching is cone. To be sure the methods of watching have developed with time. The early days of the Panopticon and watching from the watch tower has certainly been improved upon. Similarly, eavesdropping on people talking in a café in the old East Germany, or intercepting personal correspondence in many totalitarian governments has now been improved upon. The technologies have certainly become more sophisticated than ever before, and the developments are unstoppable.

In this chapter I begin by examining the object of surveillance focusing on the body and its representation. I propose that there is simultaneously an analog object that is being watched along with the digital representation of the analog object. As such, the act of watching involves a tool that can watch the body – the camera and there is a tool that can watch the representation – systems to track data. This chapter elaborates on the camera and data watching to eventually set the stage for exploring the primary motivation for surveillance.

The Body and Its Representation

When a person arrived at Ellis Island on a boat from Europe when America was still true to its founding principle of accepting the weary from all over the World the focus was on the body that arrived on the ship. In a famous moment in the film *Godfather 2,* when the young Michael arrives into America, his body is inspected for disease first and then he is given a name based on the village he could name. At that moment, the body of the boy was represented in a name. This repeats itself in many different ways for individuals. The most fundamental representation of a human body in society is the name. Even before the body is seen there might be a representation of the body that becomes central to judging the body. My name, "Ananda" which means "joy" in the Bengali language is dangerously close to a common Western name, "Amanda." My representation in the West is one letter away from changing my gender. In my 35 years of living in the West, I have frequently been referred to as a woman because the name was "corrected" by an editor.

We all are made up of two parts. On one hand is the flesh and bones self that lives the "real" life from birth to death. This is the object that changes over time. This is the self that moves through space. As people live their lives the body might move from place to place over time. It is said that the millennial generation will move once every two years as they change careers and relationships. The body also changes with time by the sheer unalterable force of biology and aging. There might be many things that the body can do to slow the changes with time but

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