



# Justification of panopticon in superhero movies: The Batman Movie

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## Abstract

The French philosopher Michel Foucault argues that power extends to all areas at the micro level in Bentham's Panopticon theory, which was inspired by the architectural design of the Panopticon. He extends this metaphor to speak of Panopticism as a social phenomenon used to discipline workforces through implicit strategies. Like Bentham, he does not limit his panoptic rhetoric to a mere prison setting, but instead applies it to schools, mental hospitals, hospitals and factories. The panopticon basically ensures the ubiquity of power by seeing it unseen. This article aims to reveal how panopticism, a particular mode of disciplinary power used by Foucault, is normalized in superhero films. When surveillance and gaze practices are approached from the point of view of cinema; the question of how the gaze is positioned through the camera, where and through whose eyes the audience is looking, arises. The narrator of The Batman (2022) is Batman, and the narrative begins with the superhero reading his diary. In the film, it is determined that Gotham city has been transformed into a panoptic universe and Batman, who watches over this universe, is in the position of a guard.

*Keywords: panopticon, power, surveillance, space, cinema*

## 1. Introduction

The original idea of the panopticon or panoptical prison was designed at the end of the 18th century by English social theoretician Jeremy Bentham, as a prison where the guardian could see all the prisoners, but prisoners could not see themselves. The panoptical structure of Bentham's prison was designed as a circle of inward-looking cells and one observation tower for the guardian to watch the prisoners without being watched. In this layout, prisoners could always be watched, but they could not understand if someone was watching them. When they were exposed to this kind of observation, they would change their behavior, and their possibility of creating issues would be lower (Bozovic, 1995). Panopticon provides the benefit of saving time and having fewer employees for its observers while enabling a continuous and automatically functioning style (Foucault M., 1992, p. 256). Even though the panopticon had been nothing but a conceptual model throughout Bentham's life, Foucault claims that the panoptical model has penetrated society. Foucault shows that the panopticon had secretly entered the cultural consciousness, was accepted as a norm, and used as a process for protecting the citizens and working for our gain.

Obviously, the most popular superhero stories revolve around these exact kinds of panoptical control methods, widening into the society of observation claimed by Foucault. Superhero movies are drawn as a coherent space where modernist and post-modernist architecture can easily exist together, also both social and architectural oppositions are embraced by the superhero's panoptical and controlling viewpoint. Cinema provides an ideal environment for considering the ways of

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showing what is unseen about a society of observance, which is more and more characterized by hidden technologies embedded in the texture of urban architecture (Hassler-Forest, 2011). It is highly possible that cinema can become a partner in crime with the observation system it described and criticized before. For that reason, this article will focus on *The Batman* (2022) movie, a superhero movie that has normalized observation and control issues for public safety. Are today's superhero figures embodied examples of hegemonic and ideological control? If they are truly representing ideological discipline forms, which kinds of ideological values are they representing? This article targets showing observation techniques of modern power, and the effect of public control and normalizing, based on the example of *The Batman* (2002) movie.

## **2. Panopticon and The Power of Eye in Foucauldian Paradigm**

The French post-structuralist philosopher M. Foucault, who analyzed the structure and functioning of modern power, aimed to extract the genealogy of power. Foucault stated that modern power, by normalizing control with the refined methods it uses, aims to keep not only the bodies but also the souls of individuals under control; The relationship between power and knowledge focused on the biopolitics of power and the mechanisms of disciplining/normalizing control. According to Foucault, power and information have a direct relationship. The power does not process information by providing naturalized information and making it silent, it makes the information speak (Akay, 2000, p. 30). Thus, it becomes natural and common. At the beginning of his book "Discipline & Punish: The Birth of Prison", Foucault tells a graphic execution story from the 18th century. A man named Damians, who was found guilty of murder "was forced to confess his crime to the public in front of the Paris Church's main door (...) his arms, hips, thighs would be pulled with hot pincers; he would hold the knife he used for his father's murder; melted lead, boiled oil, boiled resin, mixed and melted beeswax, and sulfur would be poured to the areas pulled with pincers; then his body would be dragged by four horses, burned with fire and his ashes would be thrown to the wind" (Foucault M., 1992, p. 3). This cruel scene prepares the basis of Foucault's discourse for the evolution of disciplinary power. The execution itself was made for the benefit of the audience, as an embodied example of the fast and cruel justice of the power. These public executions are removed later because prisons were built for keeping the misfits away from society, and the death penalty was transformed into an action made by the government behind closed doors, although it was a public show before (Sheridan, 2016, p. 11).

Foucault focuses on power, how it controls and normalizes people (whom Foucault named as "bodies", after being exposed to the disciplinary mechanism), workforce, and populations for making them more agreeable, and also panopticism which is a certain modality of power. The panoptical prison or the original idea of the panopticon was designed by English social theoretician Jeremy Bentham at the end of the 18th century, as a prison where one guardian could observe all the prisoners, but prisoners could not see themselves. Basically, the panopticon is simply a prison model. But specifically, it is an architectural form. Lyon explains the meaning of panopticon as the word "panopticon" means "all seen", and it is derived from Greek "pan" and "optikon" words (Bauman & Lyon, 2013, p. 19). Thus, the word itself provides the necessary expression by its meaning. When everything can be seen, the power can amplify its domination, extend its existence area, and become a result of the worry it holds. Panopticon has existed as a result of a search held inside by the power but had never been built in the historical process (Mirzoeff, 2009, p. 16).

According to the conditions of this era, the panopticon talks about a new practice of existence and observation (Foucault, Maniglier & Zabunyan, 2018, p. 71). Basically, panopticon is a system of seeing without being seen, and the observer is located in the center. As an architectural form, the panopticon is not only a prison, it is also a circular building that can be used for many different foundations. The main purpose of this form, which can be used for every type of foundation, is to hold everyone under observation every time. The panopticon is a social system based on the possibility that everything can be seen and visualized, and nobody can stay out of the view area of the power. Bentham designed the panopticon as a prison model, but its purpose has too far gone

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from being just that. He envisioned that the panoptical model would be settled into the public schools, hospitals, mental hospitals, and the army, and it also would be penetrated all layers of society. Even though the panopticon had been anything but a conceptual model. Foucault claims that the panoptical form has penetrated society. But it has not been the way Bentham has expected. Panopticon "should not be perceived as an imagined structure, it is a diagram of a perfectly shaped power mechanism, which can represent the functioning cleaned from every kind of barrier, resistance, and opposition, as a clear architectural and an optical system. In actual state, it is a political form of technology, which can be, and should be removed from every specific usage. Even though the panopticon should not necessarily be used the way that Bentham suggested before, Foucault shows that it has penetrated the cultural consciousness secretly, was accepted as a norm and a process we use for public safety and working for our gain. Foucault continues describing the purpose of panopticon as an architectural device that "creates and maintains a power dynamic regardless of who is operating". Imprisoned bodies are the related organs carrying the modality of power and projecting the referred modality to themselves at the same time. "Every human body which can be tied up, used and developed, is a docile body". In the physical panoptical prison Bentham imagined, a prisoner would never run away from the consistent gaze of the central observation system, but also could not take his eyes from that. Even though he may never know that if he is being watched, due to the smartly designed shutters, divisions, and curvy passages of the observation tower, he will hold the fear of a potential observation and any action of abuse will be noticed by the observers. Since he was physically and psychologically isolated from other prisoners, his individuality will be bruised and his tendencies against the norms will be removed. Thus, his actions against the system will be prevented. Foucault's theory of docile bodies mainly targets being a method of evaluating and controlling the workforce. It clearly shows that the domination of bodies is not the same thing as slavery, under the construction of disciplinary power. His theory is not based on hiring or owning docile bodies without their consent. "Bodies" join a system in that they have to exchange some of their rights and the right of working, and they accept this idea. Throughout the centuries, these forms and processes of power are developed in public schools and mental hospitals. They also are accepted as a solution for a certain necessity, regardless if it is a method of dealing with a deadly disease or speeding the growth of an army force. In the historical panoptical model, society has been divided into pieces, and since groups had existed because of this, a deterrent factor has been created by architectural and psychological control methods. The purpose of this division is "determining what is existed and what is not, knowing where individuals should stand, building beneficial communications, and supervising individuals' behavior every moment". The perfect disciplinary device based on Bentham's "God's all-seeing eyes", will be able to see everything with one glance.

### **3. The Power of Eye and Normalization of the Panopticon**

Basically, the panoptical power modality can be perceived as a pyramid. The small and repressed cell of power holders stand above the wider mass of the workforce and supervise the duties they gave to the masses, from their higher positions. People's "bodies" is divided into a machine or limited to a political "force". And this force is maximized with minimum cost for the most beneficial result. Fundamentally, panoptical power is a hierarchical power structure, and in this system, everyone is tied up to a person who is above them hierarchically. But the point that the pyramid metaphor is not entirely mentioned is that nobody stands at the top of the hierarchy in the panoptical model. Even though the observer stands on the top of the prison system, he will be tied up to his supervisors within the same hierarchical system, while he also has the exact power in the prison environment. According to Foucault, the idea of panoptical power is based on self-observation and imposed on the individual. The idea of glance is the key to the panopticon for both who stand inside and outside of the observation tower. The gaze of the observer gains superhuman features, because "the gaze and sound which are not fixed to a certain carrier have the tendency of gaining exceptional power and creating divine features on their own". The fiction of the all-seeing eye makes prisoners believe that they may be seen every moment and carries this fiction further

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away by amplifying it. What makes panoptical and disciplining power so effective is, normalizing people's judgment. Everything under this structure will be standardized, and after the related organs took office, they will accept the disciplinary punishments as norms. Being monotype will cause more obedience and they will become more compatible with the worrying nature of the disciplinary model. It has created by both divisions on living and working spaces with obvious physical methods and occupying people's minds with tough and specified duties causing brain fog. While the first models of disciplinary power were using vengeance and death threats for making people obedient, later models adopted more improving and correcting ideals. Foucault highlights that purpose of prison is not to be a disincentive for committing crimes. According to him, prison does not provide a considerable amount of lessening in crime rates. The threat of imprisonment and physical punishment means very little things if people have no choice other than to commit crimes. For this reason, both Bentham and Foucault presented prison models as social reform strategies.

People who feel "the violence of the eye", control themselves automatically. Thus, no laws or illegal actions come to the surface. Oppositely, people correct themselves before anything -can be considered "dangerous"- happens. In a place that has no laws, being illegal becomes meaningless. Foucault describes this society of norms as "Fundamentally, we are becoming a society based on norms. This society requires a very different supervision and control system. Never-ending visibility, continuous classification of individuals, becoming hierarchical, qualification, creating boundaries, and diagnosing. Norm becomes a measurement for dividing and separating people" (Foucault M., 2012, p. 77-78). In one form, a norm is an internalized or accepted law. An individual does not break the rules created by law, or the entity of power by behaving according to the norm. Naturally, the internalization of the panoptical viewpoint creates the norm. The feeling of being seen every moment, causes people to give in and surrender to the power of the gaze. Thus, a society of norms comes into existence, in which law is fully internalized and the norm itself becomes a device of "normalizing". Everyone stayed outside of the norm or internalized viewpoint is becoming abnormal and entering the area of punishment. Punishment is a result of the period belonging to the law. Norm, on the other hand, is a space where the punishment becomes meaningless and everyone is "normalized". The power of gaze caught by the eye, makes itself exist in an almost exact manner with panopticon. The essence of the panopticon, reforms the potential of people, not by the laws but by the norms.

According to Foucault, the panopticon has a triangular structure: Observation, supervision, and reformation. Observed and supervised masses are tried to be reformed or actually reformed as a result. These phenomena show that people are living in a society ruled by panopticism. If every individual becomes both an observer and an object for observation, everyone suspects each other. This situation causes societal opposition and provides help for the power to maintain itself. The transformation of society into an object of desire highlights the beginning of a sadomasochist relationship. Society gets pleasure from suffering, and also pleasures the power.

Under the observation of power, society internalizes being watched in the common consciousness, becomes more and more exhibitionist, and gets pleasure from being watched. Observation is an activity that contains sexuality, so it is a form of voyeurism. Even though observers have no sexual desire for their counterparts, they experience the pleasure of voyeurism. The object of observation becomes eroticized and even gets pornographic. "In observation, especially in the viewpoint of observers, there is something that cannot be alienated from the pleasure of voyeurism". (Foucault M., 2012, p. 109). On the other hand, when society gets pleasure from being observed, and even desires this without the request of power (exhibitionism), it shows how society surrendered to the power. "Panopticon forcefully puts people in a position they can be watched. Synopticon does not need pressure, it seduces people to watch" (Bauman, 1999. p. 62). Society becomes negatively feminized and transforms into a submissive object operating accordingly to the direction of the master. The tendency of exhibitionism and its erotical pleasure "shows the need for the counterpart's phantasmic view guaranteeing the existence of the subject: 'I only exist if I'm

being watched... Here stands the tragicomic reversal of a Bentham-like and Orwellian panoptical society notion, which we all are being watched and have nowhere to run" (Zizek, 2006, p. 288).

The increase of technological developments, especially after 1980 -like computers and the internet being more common- changed the soul, structure, and methods of observation. This situation shows that a new form of observation -fluid observation- has come into existence (Bauman & Lyon, 2013). With this new invention of capitalism, micro-physics, and normalizing practices of power left their places to super-panopticons. GPS devices, mobile phones, surveillance cameras placed everywhere, listening devices, online shopping, and social media sites we use in modern society, became inseparable technologies of the super panopticon model (Öztürk 2013, p. 138). Further from observation, data banks are created for every single individual. These data banks are bought by corporations, and people are encouraged to consume more as potential consumers in modern society. Although the threat of being observed still exists, the modern panopticon is not based on an observation tower or a similar power structure.

In many situations, the purpose is to let individuals who live in the panoptic system forget that they are being under observation. Surveillance cameras became found in every population center, but these cameras were mostly mistaken for other cameras and became unseen. CCTV cameras are designed for being unseen purposely, and the general population is conditioned not to notice them. Every individual is aware of being watched at a certain level, but due to this unnoticeable camera design, it is easy to forget about cameras and release the idea of observation. Since the subjects don't feel the panoptical gaze on them anymore, they will most likely not respond the same way as the subjects of the traditional panopticon. Because their price for not committing to the norm is lower. The gaze of the all-seeing eye can prevent criminal behavior and encourage public safety but does this despite the price of personal freedom. The spread of CCTV and society's increasing addiction to computer data caused a system that anyone who has the searching tools can access a certain amount of personal data.

Modern technology takes the power away (which is a key to the panoptical controlling model), and requires its scope to be redefined and extended. In his "Postscript of Control Societies", Gilles Deleuze discusses the timely specification of "disciplinary societies". Deleuze describes this new era as "a crisis of foundations", from public schools to barracks, barracks to factories. In disciplinary societies, individuals always start something new, but nobody has the mindset of finishing anything. Everything like a corporation, educational system, and army service are like metastasis points together within the same unique modulation, similar to a universal deformation system. Disciplinary societies have two poles: "signature" indicates the individual, and numbers indicate the individual's position in the population. It means that, as an operator of power, it builds a body-like structure and categorizes every member's individuality. But in supervision societies, a code is more important than a signature and number. Code is a "password". The mathematical language of the supervision is based on codes that can confirm or deny access to the information. While individuals become separated, masses become examples, data, markets, or "banks" (Deleuze, 1990). According to Foucault's pre-digital model, "individuals never give up on passing one to other closed environments each have their own rules", and that makes the behavior conditioned. Just like physical locations, foundations -family, school, prison, and factories- are different from each other too. This changes Deleuze's computer-supported societies of control, old, and temporary "closed areas" with the new "web" that can make the supervision "continuous and limitless". Thus, a meta-panopticon continuously describes itself as a waving side web of panopticons, taking the place of Foucault's separate panopticons.

#### **4. Justification of Panoptical Universe in Superhero Movies**

The relationship between camera and eyes is a topic many philosophers mentioned about. Sort of seduction of eye and observation and how they have gained importance as a fantasy item in the modern era, caused the cinema/media to take the function of collective voyeurism. Modern society crossed the boundaries of human privacy and created mediatic realities like a kind of Truman Show.

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This tendency has increased with social media, and people started to exhibit their whole lives on the public scene. Social media became a societal satisfaction mechanism for the people who try to catch the moment and gain visibility via the comments below. Observation causes being included, being included causes identification, by repressing a sort of insufficiency. Observation has been the subject of many movies. Mainly 1984, an adaptation of George Orwell's 1984 novel, made by Michael Radford, and Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times are the movies indicating the state of the individual from the viewpoint of power and power operators. Truman Show (1998) includes valuable criticism about media and how it ruined human life based on a collective voyeurism case. On the other hand, Eagle Eye (2008) shows a hypothetical world of technological voyeurism and how computers or machines try to take over the world. In Enemy of the State, people and cars are being watched via satellites. In Silver (1993), the concept of voyeurism passes through sexual pleasure. In Minority Report (2002) Steven Spielberg highlights the fluid observation and how the power of gaze becomes fluid and takes over everywhere. We can say that, as long as technology develops, the count of these movies will increase, and with the future development of artificial intelligence, it will not only be a potential danger but a real threat.

In cinema, the panopticon is closely related to the director's ideology and his message. While the panoptical universe is open to discussion in modern cinema, the panopticon is hidden in mainstream movies. The superhero movies which include the identification and catharsis most commonly in classical cinema, have an abundance of normalizing items of the panoptical universe and observation of power. In the context of their imagined world and storytelling tradition, Superhero movies are embodied versions of discipline and control values with their examples of power operators (Superman) fighting against crime with costumes (Spiderman, Batman). The superhero represents a certain form of power focused on his observation skills. Superman uses his super-hearing and X-ray vision. Batman sits on skyscrapers like a technologically sophisticated ugly creature, and Spiderman warns about the crime nearby, relying on his "spider instinct" (Stanley, 2019, p. 92). This "panoramic and panoptical gaze" for reducing criminal behavior, includes the facts of Bentham's panopticon accepted as a simultaneous image of Foucault's hidden societal supervision towards individuals. As long as the political rhetoric and public discussions focus on the issues related to observation after September 11th, panopticon Foucault's "society of prison" had resurfaced as a dominant theoretical paradigm in contemporary discourse (Hassler – Forest, 2011, p. 156 – 57).

The function of popular culture in justification of panoptical observation as a natural and necessary part of contemporary public life relies on both panopticon and synopticon. Watching the majority on public communication narratives that the majority watches minority, takes a dramatic form. Hollywood superheroes have a similar function. Most of them can easily be perceived as considering the public worries about patriarchy and criminalization in a non-centered postmodern world including its new enemies, the logic of late capitalism, and the state of market. In the 1930s, with the development of the 20th-century style of geometrical glass and concrete buildings, and the evolution of architectural design removing all the remains of the 19th-century bourgeoisie, the superhero figure existed as a vital item of American popular culture.

The modernist passion for transforming the chaos of 19th-century urbanization into a multi-functioning transparent environment gave an architectural shape to the desire of controlling the urban space. Glamorous skyscrapers built between the 1920s and '30s in Manhattan and Chicago have embodied a heroic modernist search for power with order, transparency, and visibility. As a permanent symbol of this modernist urban view and its utopic desires, superhero figures became the easiest pop-culture figures that could be related to the power and control forms referred by the international school of architecture (Hassler-Forest, 2011, p. 179). Two superhero archetypes of the golden age of comic books, Batman and Superman pound a beat for the safety of citizens but are never mentioned as citizens of the city they protected. Both Batman's place in Wayne Mansion and Superman's tower of solitude, makes us think about a strong relation to the

traditional old aristocracy and its pre-modern patriarchal power forms. These superhero archetypes and their followers, do not only represent the fantasy of overcoming the obvious limitations of the human body in the physically and mentally dominant vertical view of the modern metropolis, but also can be perceived as actual organizations of modernist yearnings in the context of popular culture.

While *Batman Starting* clearly showed off the desire of rebuilding venture capitalism against the global terror threat, *The Dark Knight* talks about how this force should be used and maintained, and how these kinds of applications can be operated strongly, in a more detailed manner. Christopher Nolan's second *Batman* movie highlights the topics of observation and amplifies the gaze mentioned at a few levels. This can be seen in the helicopter shooting of the beautiful panoramic view of Gotham City center. In one of the most discussed scenes, Bruce Wayne explains to Lucius Fox that he changed the technology of the "sonar mobile phone", for creating a device for listening to all mobile phones in Gotham City. Batman explains that he did this for finding Joker. But Lucius Fox expresses his inconvenience as "observing 30 million people is not included in my job description". This observation technology passes through listening to phone conversations: screens of observation devices make it possible to view all of the city. This sequence of screens looks like the CCTV surveillance camera walls of shopping centers, office buildings, and other public or private areas of the metropolis. The inclusion of this viewing technology in the characterized costume transforms Batman into some kind of cyborg. He even claims that if necessary, the technologically developed superhero is actually free to break laws. But Nolan takes an important action here and removes the thread between the character and the viewer, when Batman's costume became united with higher technology of observation, as an effective device of panoptic amplification. Batman closes his eyes shortly after operating the observation technology. Nolan prevents effective eye contact by revealing the actor's mouth and chin only. For the viewer, that makes it harder to identify with the actor, compared to classical cinema.

Another superhero movie in which the main character wears a face veiling costume is *Iron Man*. *Iron Man* visualizes how similar technology can be included without sacrificing the relatability of the character. Billionaire playboy Tony Stark wears the costume transforming him into a super-powered cyborg *Iron Man*. The movie locates the close-ups revealing the character's face and operates a complex graphic user interface before. When Tony Stark's voice and eye control operate the costume's interface, we can understand how advanced technology and its perfectly natural operation can represent a popular post-modern fantasy. The movie revolves around Stark's close-ups with dynamic GUI items, *Iron Man* costume's moving exterior shootings, and the viewpoint of the character. These POV shootings apply from data visualizations made by his team's computer system, to photographic views supported with computer information. In a great action scene, *Iron Man* goes to an Afghan village. When he saw the terrorists taking hostage of innocent villagers, the computer system of his costume separates the guilty and innocent and helps him to target the ones who deserved to be killed. Both *Iron Man* and *Batman* are the archetypes of the fantasy figure in the real world. Both of them have the high technology of monitoring for supporting their bodies.

As fantasy archetypes and even role models, their usage of the monitoring technology on their bodies is a symbol of the panoptical/synoptical double reasoning after September 11th (Stanley, 2019, p. 16). Superhero figures defend their usage of panoptical and controlling observation techniques, knowing that everything they did will be justified at the end of the story. Regardless of their natural or artificial panoptic skills like the X-ray visions of Superman, the "spider instinct" of Spiderman, and Daredevil's extreme hearing, or *Batman* and *Iron Man*'s cyborg-like body transformation, the narrative of the patriarchal power figures use their skills for the benefit of society, helps people to accept them.

The issue of visibility stands at the center of the superhero story. Traditional superhero characters separate themselves from norms by wearing costumes and cause people to notice them and show them to each other. By that means, the metaphor of superhero is a method for dramatizing a desire of having a more performative identity and spreading oneself from the crowd,

in a culture of post-modernity describing itself by the subject's death. Despite this, most mainstream superheroes fluctuate between the flamboyant performatives of their costumed personality and the anonymity of the normative contemporary identity. Regardless of their transformation of voluntarily costume change (Batman, Superman, Spiderman) or unpreventable body change (like The Incredible Hulk and The Human Torch), the character identity stays on the basis.

## 5. Panoptical Universe of The Batman Movie

As a superhero, Batman is a "fluid indicator" of different art branches and media environments. Today Batman can't be evaluated as its current description. At that point, too many different Batman typologies can be mentioned: 1940s cruel Batman of comic books, 1940s amateur and overly nationalist Batman of movie series, 1960s wacky Batman on television, 1980s postmodern Batman of mini TV series based on comic books. But Christopher Nolan and Tim Burton are the ones who gave Batman cinematographic excellence. After these director's movies, Batman became a DC Comics brand. Another meaning also came to the surface about the Batman movies shot by multiple directors. This situation happened as a result of applying different scientific approaches to popular culture and mass communication due to the flexibility of the character. Popular superhero movies can be fun mainstream movies and can be transformed into political devices at the same time. Batman movies should be evaluated in this context. *The Batman* (2022) movie -the subject of this article that will be analyzed with a Foucauldian approach- is directed by Matt Reeves, and the main character Bruce Wayne/Batman is played by Robert Pattinson. The Batman is about Batman's confrontation with Riddler, a serial killer, while he was researching the corruption of Gotham City in his second year.

In the movie, we see Gotham City as a wide panoptical space where the mafia is in power, and too many crimes are committed. Gotham City is also the secret main character of the movie observed from different personalities and feelings. What makes Batman a hero is a fact that Gotham City is a dark and hopeless abyss of crime. But Gotham also has a different soul fighting for justice, which seems too far away. The biggest theme of the movie is Bruce Wayne's transformation into Batman, the hero we know, by this soul. Some characters' stories revolve around their interaction with the city they live in. Batman cannot exist without Gotham. Gotham City is represented like a living character with its brilliant and also horrifying architecture, mystery, and tension due to the possibility of everything would happen. In *The Batman's* Gotham, a metropolis corrupted by illegal actions and desperation is indicated. Giant metropolis skyscrapers embody the modernist search by order, transparency, and visibility. As a permanent symbol of this modernist urban view and its utopic desires, Batman is the easiest pop-culture figure that could be related to the power and control forms referred by the international school of architecture. Batman does not only represent the fantasy of overcoming the obvious limitations of the human body in the physically and mentally dominant vertical view of the modern metropolis but can also be perceived as an actual organization of modernist yearnings in the context of popular culture. Gotham City is highlighted as a visible therefore controllable area, by not only countless panoramic shootings but also shootings that can frame the city as a visible area from citizens' viewpoint. The first scene Riddler observes the mayor Don Mitchell through a wide window, and the scenes that Batman observes the catwoman exhibits visibility and transparency. When Don Mitchell is in power, he is also collaborating with the mafia, and Gotham is a very unsafe place. People have no trust in anyone. At that point, the bat man who came from the skies decides to serve justice. At the end of the movie, the mayor/presidential candidate says "Not only the city, we will reconstruct people's faith to our foundations, also each other. We will make people trust Gotham City again. Cinema, as a part of mass communication devices, is related to the indicators pointing to the scaffold of the modern world and complex power dynamics. It is possible to rely on Foucault's analysis for explaining how the movie entered power dynamics with the viewer and general society. Power dynamics are the methods for applying power between individuals and groups of people. Throughout history, power dynamics are built vertically, from the top to the bottom.

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Figure 1 Gotham City

The power is possessed by the king, towards the people. Today, the power dynamics are applied from top to the bottom, but by a cruel big brother-like dictator who uses his power against passive people. But the power is not a monopolized, own name, it's a reciprocal active verb. Foucault takes the theory further away from monopolization and expresses power dynamics as complicated notions spread everywhere and intertwined together with the depths of society. But that doesn't mean that the relationships are equal. The ones who hold the highest fund are in power, and this gives them the delusion of only they can apply power.

The scene Riddler watches the presidential candidate, highlights the active power of the viewer, and calls them for questioning their position. This active participation is parallel with Discipline & Punishment's spectacle of the scaffold. The main point of the ritual is, "a ceremony of justice expressed full force". The requirement of the audience in the spectacle of the scaffold is highlighted more by Ferman and how he encouraged the audience to throw dirt and stuff in 1374, and this simply extends the functionality of the audience. Therefore, if the audience only participates in the activity of viewing, it is an indicator of the audience has accepted the king's right of domination. The submissive audience stands without moving. Being a viewer means being released from the ability to know and the power of action. In the movie, the installation locates the viewer and also makes the subject dependent on its object. According to this, the viewers should play the traditional role given to them, from a point determined for them. In the first scene of The Batman movie, we see that the shocked criminals (theft, fire-raising, attack) are exposed to the spotlight by the police helicopter. At that moment they see the bat signal and become possessed by a pathetic fear. A superhero is needed for preventing criminals from committing crimes. The momentary seedling of justice, the sense of justice, or the fear of a criminal, builds an unconscious narrative of everything being fine in the world. While the criminals are running away from the superhero, service of justice becomes possible. The story can also justify societal suffering. Structural failures like the police being more and more criticized can be justified by a movie or give a wrong sense of justification.

In the first monologue of Batman, while thinking about the nature of criminals, between the crowd dirty masks are shown. "The real danger is in the chaos. Like a snake, I'm waiting for attacking. But I'm there watching too... If I'm needed we have a sign now". The movie draws the criminals as deadly threats not only to Batman but also to society itself. As a superhero, it is mostly his responsibility to prevent criminals from ruining societal justice. Batman expresses the "vengeance" of justice but doesn't kill the criminals. The superficial reason is, that Batman is righteous. Batman's exhibition of power and killing criminals is postponed. "Here's a big city. I can't be everywhere". He perceives the non-effectiveness of visible violence as an indicator of power, and the bat cannot punch every criminal. Thus, he should find more effective ways for dealing with the crime.



Figure 2 Thieves see the Batman sign

After the police helicopter flew and showed the Batman signal in the sky, Batman describes his symbol: "But when this light reflects on the sky, it's not just a calling, it's a warning! For them. Fear is a tool. They think I'm hiding in the shadows, but I am the shadow". The bat signal is the guardian tower of the panopticon. Therefore, the panopticon is an intangible method of perfect power dynamics that isolated, systemized, and supervised individuals, and created an internalized thought pattern for making people docile and "normal". In the panopticon, the bodies are not the "things" that should be punished, oppositely they are the "things" that should be controlled and made more productive by the government and employer. In this process, the hidden state of the observer is very important for maintaining control. The basic factor that builds the power is the seer, the observer is not being seen. It already built its power by this hidden state. People inside the panopticon "...are masses, but not a community from the viewpoint of the observer. But from their viewpoint, they are lonely and isolated individuals" (Bentham & vd., 2012 p. 16). Their isolation makes them lonely and helpless. But at the same time, they can't be alone due to being exposed to the other's observation. In time, the gaze itself should be internalized by individuals. No matter if people prefer this or not, the power of the gaze, creates change for them.

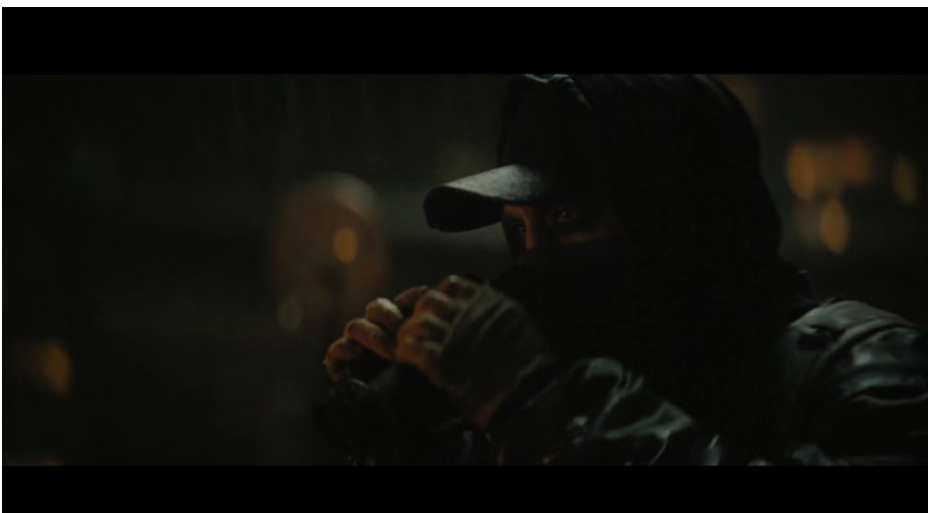
The feeling of being watched all the time affects people. Foucault describes this as "An observing gaze, and people who feel the burden of this, internalize the gaze too much that they finally come to the point of observing themselves. Thus, everyone will operate this observation on themselves. Perfect formula: Continuous power and a ridiculous price!" (Foucault M., 2012, p. 95). People who have to live with the feeling of being watched, get used to living with the gaze of the power. This situation is described as "prevention effort". Thus, the issues described as wrong by the power are trying to be solved before the problem.

In the opening scene of Batman, a police officer sitting in front of an urban mansion's closed garage is shown, via a binocular lens. While the voyeurist heavily breathing and focusing on a child inside the mansion playing with his father, sirens are ringing. After focusing on a terrace window that later will be used, he observes the lonely father while he is watching the news about the mayorship and the competition between himself and hopeful Bella Real. The disappointed father asks his partner why surveys are showing equal results with him and Real on the phone, and mildly refers to the political manipulation. Then the voyeurist appears behind the father with a dark leather mask with only eyeholes. After the father turns off the TV, the voyeurist angrily attacks him with a metal carpet tool, and while shaking his motionless body to both sides, hits his head. The camera focuses on the voyeurist's black leather boots, while he is heavily breathing and walking to take his murder weapon. In close-up, he relocates the body and pleasures himself by robbing a duct tape roll to reverse direction.



**Figure 3** Riddler watching the Presidential candidate's house

This scene pictures the man with a mask as a villain irreversibly. Long scenes of killing seemingly innocent people, sexualized breathing, sadist hints, being violent, and generally horrifying to innocent people, prevent viewers to relate Riddler. But even though he is less aggressive, Batman exhibits the same behavior. He watches Selina (catwoman) while she is taking her clothes off. Only his eyes are being seen. These continuous close-ups make him human. In the last scenes, while Batman was laying motionless, someone from Riddler's team tries to kill him. Selina deactivates him for saving Batman. In these scenes, Batman is increasingly portrayed as a human instead of a superpower. On the other hand, the close-ups of Riddler's shoes while walking to the murder weapon, are for causing tension for the viewer. A non-diegetic sound accompanies Riddler's walk. While Batman is approaching the attackers who painted their faces, he slowly walks to the penguin's ruined car. The heroic sense viewer is experiencing has different formal features. Vengeance for a loser mafia boss creates a victorious feeling for the viewer. The viewer who can identify with Batman's orders, experiences repulsion by the sadism of Riddler. Nietzsche says that civilization and depth of the human soul are based on instinct: "hostility, cruelty, gaining pleasure from torturing attacking, changing and destructing". Repression of the "instincts" is the creation of natural instincts, shame, bad conscience, and the moral itself. Nietzsche pictures both sides of the punishment: "resistant" and "fluid". The permanent direction is the practice itself, the act of punishment. The fluid direction is the narrative built around it (Nietzsche, 2013, p. 95-97). The societal contract of enlightenment, Kant's vengeance, Beccari's distinctiveness, Bentham's pragmatism, etc. change accordingly to the structure of power/knowledge. That's why they can't be based on the fluid direction of punishment practice. It's an abstraction.



**Figure 4** Batman watching Catwoman

Nietzsche says that the permanent direction and the action itself are the free expressions of our repressed instincts. In other words, our dominant nature is repressed by morals. But with dominance applied to the guilty, our consciences do not repress our nature. That's why Riddler's sadism on dominance is really repulsive. Because it is a morally repressed part of our nature. On the other hand, Batman's sadistic justice is very euphoric, because it shows the repressed nature as morally acceptable. But Batman can't be killed, because it is not seen as morally acceptable and makes pleasure unacceptable. Thus, about the character on the screen, the viewer's will is satisfied, so they can reach the katharsis. The viewer actively participates in the sadism of the movie and spreads their desires to two poles. The negative pole happens to be Riddler, and the positive one is Batman. Therefore, with Batman as an active extension of the system, in our subconscious, a narrative is created that the system is full and doesn't need a real change. The system of punishment is extended by more effective methods for a more clear division of collecting information, mass observation, and population. At the center of the punishment system, a change occurs from the body to the mind and subconscious. The punishment system impacts the minds of all citizens and tries to dissuade future crimes.

This is more effective than mixing the emperor's vertical threat and the lower class's violence in the spectacle of scaffolding as viewers. That's why the approval of more "humanly" punishment is caused by changes in information. This also means a change in power and ascension of the bourgeoisie not to the "humanity", and "compassion", but a higher level of productivity further away from the spectacle. Carmine Falcone, while playing billiard, talks about his 1.183 dollars fancy sweater and says "Do you know why communism has failed?" and then responds to his own question: "belt-tightening". This shows the real villain of the movie, the corruption of Gotham City. He makes his victory known against the system he flamboyantly sticks to, and never had any regrets. Falcone centralized the power and fund. This made Gotham City a more corrupt place: "Falcone is the mayor for twenty years". The problem with this, it stops the growth and change of the system. Therefore, Batman's biggest enemy is not the villain, but unproductivity. Batman is generally a super extension for the system. He comes from the bourgeoisie, beats small criminals, fights with villains, and more unproductivity. Batman works with the police to both be the violent hand of justice and create the world's biggest reality. At the end of the movie, Batman may seem like he is trying to leave the spectacle as the vengeance mechanism of power. He tries to be a symbol of hope, by leaving the call of "vengeance". "But crime never stops". Marauding and illegality will continue in the less reachable areas of the city. Even now, I can see clearly that things become worse before getting better. Some people will use this opportunity for getting what they want. Now I understand, and I created a difference, but nothing happened the way I wanted to. Vengeance won't change anything. I should be more. People need hope and someone to hold their back..." In the last scenes of the movie, he makes desperate people pass into the water with lanterns. That doesn't mean that Batman can't be violent. He is the symbol of hope, but he also makes justice to be served and spreads the desire for power. Bella Real will be the mayor of change. Bella Real is also an exceptional black character in this movie. "Cosmetic diversity focuses on giving chances individuals from ineffectively represented groups. It lowers the possibility of challenging the rules, and justifies the system". This can be considered as taking back the charges American politicians made to black people by exaggerating drug issues between the 1970s and 1900s. The maintenance of Real and Bruce Wayne partnership is also a "history of charity", which has been seen as a saving factor for the city. Because of Renewal's failure and Bruce's obvious nonchalance, Gotham has become the way it is. In other words, the only salvation of the system is provided by rich people who can give small pieces for solving problems. The media highlights the cocaine and charity-free issues instead of economical inequality, racism, foundational power and collective imprisoning by financing this movie. The biggest project of the movie is sedation. The desire for justice will be fed by Batman's punches. The desire for repressed power is pictured by Riddler and fed morally by Batman. The desire for change is sedated by Bella Real's black exceptionalism and the false hope of Batman's help for civil.

## 6. Results

Sociological evaluations of cinema are important data sources of both societal reality and the notion of power built in the context of philosophy and ideology. It highlights too many contexts from political expansions to international relations, and also power dynamics. While doing this, it mostly serves the power, even though it has the potential of doing the opposite. The camera shows a preferred sequence. The camera focuses on some concepts and people and blurs the background. It shows what we are supposed to see. That's why the cinema has too many effects further from entertaining people, like gorming pleasures and desires ideologically. Even though a movie is not intended to be a representation of real events, it can take place of the reality. In this article, we clearly see that The Batman movie sedated viewers' political desires and honoured more primitive desires possessively. By classical story techniques, the movie has created a society of fear and increased the need of being observed for safety. The justification form which can be seen in the movie is a result of the synopticon mechanism operating with the panopticon. A part of this effect lies in the existence of Barman's extremely visible existence. Thus, while Batman relates transparency and visibility with notions like order, justice, and heroism, the non-existence of visibility is related to chaos, crime, and terror.

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## Resume

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