



1. There's a lot of different varying factors when you talk about best because it's very subjective.

Seeing yourself in a surveillance image can distract you from the fact of it. The cameras reproduce you with complete indifference to how you want to be seen. It is exciting, and disconcerting, to recognize yourself as being watched, as packaged for consumption, maybe even for enjoyment. It may be that the cameras, democratic in their indifference, are only incidentally seeing you, that they don't even care about you, that they are there to guard against someone else. It may be that they only want to see the space undisturbed.

The position of the cameras dictates the location of the social stage, but the cameras are only there to identify everyone passing through that space as an intruder. Surveillance sustains particular illusions about general safety while revealing what specifically a society believes is worth seeing and protecting.

Security cameras sweep across areas in their lifeless, mechanical rhythms in an effort to guarantee stasis. Nothing holds their attention, yet they are omnivorously curious, totally indiscriminate. They record everything, ever hopeful of some future investigation that will redeem the process. There can be a useful surplus in surveillance, in what isn't targeted but is nonetheless captured; there's productivity in the periphery. Surveillance is an archive of potentiality.

That sense of hope is part of what redeems the cameras' presence. They convey the sense that the disruptive event, the eruption of possibility into a hermetic world, will not be lost. Casinos are instructive in this regard, a total surveillance environment that nonetheless enables feelings of escape. Casinos are designed to be utterly predictable from the perspective of the house, and maximally beguiling from the perspective of the patron. Time is negated, the sun is banished, all distances are multiplied and scrambled with mirrors and obstacles, all paths are windy and

frustrated. This allows you to feel lost while under such concentrated supervision.

Casinos are designed to make compliance obligatory: workers can't conceive of cheating; patrons can't conceive of leaving. Everything is preordained, down to the percentage that customers will lose and the rate at which they will lose it. But all this systematicity is in place to assure the seductiveness of that one free moment when one decides to wager. Once you choose to play, everything else is assured, but that merely highlights the momentousness, the significance of that one free choice, which one gets to repeat again and again.

If casinos are a microcosm for a surveillance society, they show how the certainty of being watched can become the precondition for enjoying moments of abstracted freedom—not the freedom to do or say anything in particular or the freedom from certain forms of encroachment but the freedom to repeatedly feel momentous satisfaction in assenting to what already will be. You can do what is fully expected, yet experience it as an expression of personal will.



2. All in one day. I mean, that—that's lifestyle.

Every utopia is a fantasy of benevolent surveillance, in which each subject is perfectly recognized, seen as they are and are meant to be. No moments are lost, no moments unredeemed; all are recorded and taken into account and integrated into an intelligent design for living.

Dystopias are just utopias misunderstood—a matter of mistaking mirrors for windows, or insisting too much on a distinction between the two. Transparency is revealed as synonymous to uniformity.

Perfect control is also the cancellation of control. Tracking becomes implicit rather than intrusive, only because everyone is always where they ought to be,

where they want to be. Surveillance merely confirms what is already wished for, that everything is going as planned. It becomes superfluous, gratuitous, a gift of attention. You are not being watched; you are being displayed.

The ubiquity of surveillance guarantees inclusion. The impossibility of hiding translates into a feeling a relief that no one has to hide, no one has to be ashamed, no one has to feel ostracized in their difference. No one can be misrecognized. There aren't Others. As William Bogard states in *The Simulation of Surveillance*, "Everyone is instantly famous, instantly forgotten" simultaneously. That is, we are consumable and consumed, over and over again, without ever being used up once and for all. We seem to experience the rewards of fame without the consequences.

This helps compensate for the lack of autonomy in such a society, where surveillance sees who you are before you do. Your inevitable destiny is represented to you as commodified notoriety, as a sign of your significance. You get proof of being a desirable consumer good in a society that, as sociologist Zygmunt Bauman argues, is made entirely of consumers.

And since nothing is required of you to bring about your fate, you can consume it as spectacle. The ever more attenuated singularity of your place in the world (a function of the automatic collection of data about you) can be unveiled as an ongoing novelty, a bespoke tourist destination to be explored on a journey of self-discovery. Once you let go of control over your data, you can be made to seem endlessly surprising to yourself.

You can enjoy yourself, directly, without having to route the pleasure through some other activity; surveillance connects all activities directly to us, makes them all about what they say about us.

In a society where everything is seen, we can see ourselves everywhere.



3. You just choose your color and your size and just put them on.

Since surveillance is now primarily conducted through data collection, a matter of tracking phones and archiving online behavior and parsing metadata, the surveillance camera has become more of a metaphor for surveillance than a primary tool for implementing it.

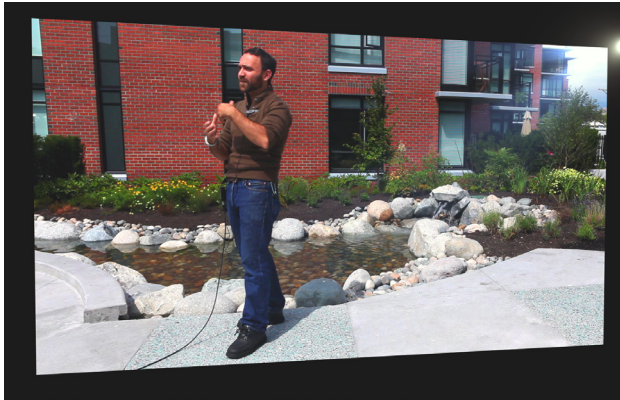
A camera's sweeping, mechanical pans evoke nostalgia for a time when one could conceivably dart in and out of the camera's view, outsmarting it. Specific places were being watched, but people could slip through. When the camera strained to see us, it seemed to promise that we genuinely existed outside its view, that who we are exceeds the ways in which we are visible. But now surveillance cameras merely symbolize the era in which it was possible to believe one could hide.

Surveillance once seemed improvisational, provisional, conditioned by specific circumstances, particular targets and vulnerabilities. But as it has become more total, it has become impersonal in its execution.

In the era of massive data collection and retention, places are not watched but constituted as pre-governed, areas in which inhabitants' behavior is preordained. These environments, in which the online and offline interpenetrate, filter, and augment each other, anticipate us without needing to see us. Drawing on the data collected on us, they are tailored to the individual consumer, shaping the contours of an individuated future, guaranteeing our uniqueness by virtue of the unique identifiers assigned to us in tracking systems.

Such spaces administrate the self in advance, so that social control can be experienced as a menu of well-curated options, as an expansion of possibilities rather than a set of limits. Individuals can't act autonomously in these curated zones, but they can exuberantly consume the situations prepared for them. The more well-suited we are to these situations, the more we feel chosen for them, recognized as elites who deserve to be handled with care.

As surveillance theorist David Lyon frequently insists, focusing on surveillance as a form of control should not blind us to how observation is also necessary to care. It may be that as surveillance becomes more thorough, it becomes less oppressive; the more completely we are watched, the more we experience the resulting control as care, as an all-enveloping, nurturing womb.



benign servility typified by robotic assistants like Siri.

Though we are tracked and exposed by our connectivity to networks, we are also indulged by them. They provide a customized, self-directed experience tailored specifically to our interests as derived from our data. What could be more personal, more private, than that?



4. What's amazing is that it's transparent.

Even if surveillance is inescapable, that doesn't mean privacy disappears. It makes little sense to think of privacy as something absolute and measurable, an empirical matter of institutional blind spots, of gaps in the tape or blanks in a database.

Privacy instead has become subjective; it is a feeling, an experience of control in a particular moment, a sensation of sublime transcendence. Moments when we disappear into what is happening are also moments in which we don't worry about being exposed.

Phones and screens afford a feeling of control over space that we might readily recognize as privacy, if we let go of the association of privacy with permanent control over our data. We may experience more autonomy through devices in the moment than we surrender long-term, which means if we shorten our time horizon, we will feel freer than ever.

Though phones extend and expand surveillance, they also allow us to experience a feeling of privacy on demand. They let us withdraw from public space into the screen, where reality is instrumentalized and responsive to our touch. On the screen we see the world as if it were made for us, with all the information it contains reprocessed to dignify our point of view.

This viewpoint is analogous to the god's-eye viewpoint of total surveillance. Phones allow for a kind of vicarious divinity, distributing evenly a sense of omnipotence among all users. Each can feel as though they are directing the entirety of the surveillance apparatus, which takes on an air of

5. one big whole city full of people living the same experience

Under conditions of presumed total visibility, becoming invisible is naturally more threatening than any unwanted exposure, which is difficult to even conceptualize. The stakes of being visible are not limited to certain moments and certain places of publicity and privacy. Instead, constant social connection brings along with it constant fear of total ostracism.

Sociologist Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann theorized in 1973 that individuals "experience fear of social isolation continuously," which leads them to "try to assess the climate of opinion at all times" in order to ensure that they fit in. Individuals use these assessments to suppress any of their unorthodox behaviors or opinions, triggering what Noelle-Neumann terms a "spiral of silence," in which the failure to express nonconformist opinions makes it harder for anyone to express them subsequently.

One of the main affordances of social media is that they expedite our assessments of public opinion, allowing us to watch over one another carefully and constantly to see what behavior is considered correct. We can meet our relentless fear of social isolation with an equally relentless scrutiny of our networks, which both reassures us that we are still connected and reminds us what we must do to remain so.

But our monitoring never allays our anxiety; the assurance that we are still connected is inseparable from an obedience to social norms we must perform. One must continually ping the network in various predictable, normative ways, through various

platforms, to see whether they are still connected, or whether the social lifeline has been severed. We must speak but constantly express nothing but a willingness to be heard; instead of the spiral of silence, a spiral of platitudes.

Were the watchers absent, it would signal not a moment of autonomy and rare liberty but a moment of acute social risk. Social-media posts that go unliked cause more consternation and embarrassment than ones that might go unintentionally viral.

As the opportunities for social validation become perpetual, drawing on an ever-expanding audience of validating peers, the nature of intimacy changes. Disclosure is no longer the terms of intimacy, and intimacy is no longer the balm for alienation. When everyone else can always see you and know all about you, you can't communicate your way into a deeper connection. Connection is omnipresent and uniform.

Intimate partners allow you instead to feel a moment of reprieve in which you feel fully and safely unknown, anonymous, capable of being no one in particular. Intimacy disappears into the vortex of the spiral of silence.



6. because the people like spending time with each other

The logic of conformity makes visibility a proof of inclusion: to be seen and not redacted is to be accepted at a glance, with no further need to petition for recognition.

“We seem to experience no joy in having secrets,” Zygmunt Bauman writes in *Liquid Surveillance*. While secrets may once have afforded one a sense of personal uniqueness in a homogenizing world, under conditions of ubiquitous surveillance they suggest instead the world's collective indifference.

With full surveillance, all potential secrets are in theory always already known. Everyone is a person of interest; everyone is being watched. There is no question of whether someone could or could not find something out about you; the evidence always waits in the archive, ready to be unearthed by the proper set

of queries. The more significant question is whether anyone in particular wants to ask about you. Having your information accessed is more affirming than having it ignored.

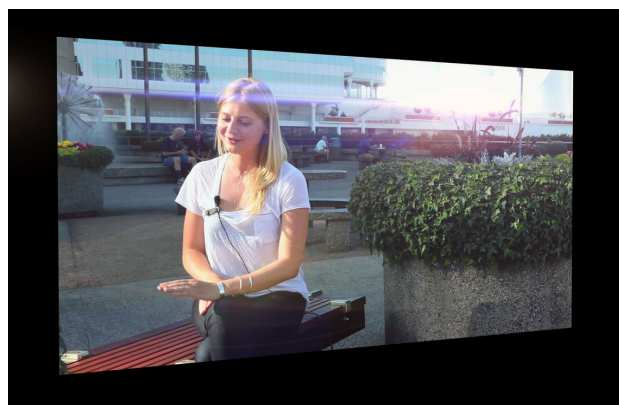
People acclimated to total exposure understand secrecy as insecurity, as an unnamable manifestation of disorder, a vague entropic threat imperiling the seamless convenience of their lives.

If one believes they have secrets, that doesn't mean they have eluded power. Rather it indicates that power is being exerted on them, rendering them obscure. Having a secret is a clue that you yourself have become the secret being kept by society as a whole, an inconvenient fact, an impurity it would prefer not to acknowledge.

Secrecy is imposed on one as a form of exclusion, a step toward expulsion. You are made to have secrets; your very existence becomes the dirty secret.

Constantly reporting on oneself whenever possible is among the best defenses against this. It is a plea to become trackable, to figure in to the security system. One doesn't admit secrets; one provides testimonials and endorsements of a life well-lived, on trend. Confession is superseded by salesmanship. But the sales talk is not merely a description of a beautiful life. It is itself the expression of beauty. Paradise is a world where the optimism and enthusiasm of sales talk is the only possible conversation.

Affirming the pleasures of visibility, of conspicuousness, of gossip and celebrity and mutual monitoring, all works to sustain the general sense of security, of a lifestyle that works. Finding pleasure in obscurity, ordinariness, inconspicuousness suggests a general lack of faith in society, and marks one as a source of disorder.



7. The weird thing is this wine. It's like magic. When you drink it, you never get too drunk.

Knowing yourself well may be the worst way to enjoy yourself. The best kind of self-knowledge may be ephemeral, so you are never trapped by a knowledge of your limits. That's why it is better for a surveillance

apparatus to know more about you than you know yourself. It can retain the information necessary for sustaining your identity while you can disregard it in any given moment, experiencing a kind of free identity play.

The work required to consume is also made to disappear. Algorithms help us choose what to consume, and surveillance assures that our consumption is conspicuous. Only the effort to enjoy what we consume remains, but even this is optional. If the data already points to our enjoying something, the actual experience of enjoyment is superfluous. You can enjoy it as much or as little as you want; it makes no difference to how the consumption is accounted for.

As surveillance theorist Mark Andrejevic has pointed out, the intensive customization of consumer products rationalizes “increasingly comprehensive forms of consumer monitoring” until the monitoring itself becomes the product, a reified piece of care administered by the surveillance apparatus. The products themselves are superfluous to the customization, just as we are superfluous to the pleasure these goods are presumed to activate. Our participation in this is so passive, it may as well be transcendence.

Environmentally structured camaraderie doesn't depend on real interpersonal connection. Well-orchestrated visibility can imply the camaraderie, make it implicit in a space, and implicate all who are present while demanding no effort from anyone. Camaraderie becomes a spectacle, a private experience.

But the point of consumption is not personal, private enjoyment. Rather, it is to convey to anyone who is watching that enjoyment was possible and pacifying. Watching each other consume is a way of reassuring each other that our consumption is still working—still guaranteeing our inclusion, while making the nature of what we are included in superfluous. The feeling of inclusion without an actual in-group. Camaraderie without comrades.

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