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## ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE: UNRAVELLING THE STRUCTURE OF THE APOSTOLIC PANOPTICON<sup>1</sup>

"Walk while you have the light, so that darkness may not overtake you.

If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going.  
While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become  
children of light.' After Jesus had said this, *he departed and hid from  
them.*"

John 12.36<sup>2</sup>

### *Introduction*

One of Foucault's primary research themes was investigating how power arises. Following his genealogical analyses, he argued that classical forms of power originated with a sovereign – i.e., an individual who is the focal point of power asymmetry, and from whom subsequent asymmetries derive. Foucault argued that classical power asymmetry is easily understood through considering simple analogies, for example, the relationship between a king and his subject. In this relationship, the origin of authority is the king. And the subject is similarly unambiguous – it is the individual toward whom sovereign power is directed. The sovereign has absolute authority, often by virtue of a divine mandate which makes him deserving of the full allegiance of his subjects, who do *not* have a similar mandate. This unambiguous asymmetry between the king and his subject is the mechanism for maintaining subjection and enforcing power, on and on down the chain of command.

In contrast, power within modern democratic discourses, which are saturated with notions of self-autonomy and freedom, fascinated Foucault precisely

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<sup>1</sup> Comments from Graham Ward on a master's dissertation in what was formerly the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of Manchester provided the spark for some of the ideas developed in this paper. Thanks also to Robert Ollet for careful reading and comments on the first draft.

<sup>2</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, all biblical quotations in this paper are taken from The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocryphal and Deuterocanonical Books, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

because the origins of power asymmetry are difficult to identify. Nevertheless, power *does* operate in modern democratic society, and has been investigated by a number of authors. Among others, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Althusser, Žižek, Horkheimer and Adorno have all discussed the tension that characterizes subjects in modern democratic society.<sup>3</sup> That is, while modern subjects perceive themselves as free and autonomous authors of their own initiative, they are simultaneously restrained within societal structures and norms. As Žižek is fond of repeating: modern subjects are free to choose, on the condition that they make the right choice.<sup>4</sup> This tension results in a number of intriguing questions relating to modern power, for example, what are the mechanisms that guarantee its enforcement? How is it sustained? How is it that the modern subject is simultaneously characterized by such contrary forces?

In his efforts to present a tangible model for understanding mechanisms of modern power, Foucault frequently returned to his description of the Panopticon, which relies on a sort of bottom-up power dynamic. The sovereign-subject relationship is replaced by a subject-subject relationship – i.e., *the subjects* initiate and maintain other subjects. Compared to classical power, the efficacy and stability of Panoptic power largely derives from the fact that subjects are simultaneously their own overseers, so that the locus of power is diffuse. This, in turn, complicates resistance. Whereas modes of resistance are well-defined in classical power, (resist power by resisting the sovereign), the targets of resistance within the Panopticon are so diffuse as to be ill-defined.

Because it depends less on spatial proximity and established command chains than classical power, modern power is capable of action at much greater distances. With individuals operating simultaneously as overseers and subjects, the nucleus of power extends as far as its subjects. The contrast between early forms of power and modern power may be usefully illustrated with analogy to differences between classical and quantum physics. Classical Newtonian mechanics follows an entirely deterministic logic, well encapsulated by Newton's third law: for each action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. In classical physics, as in sovereign-subject models of power, the behavior of a physical system is completely defined through a description of the originating forces and positions of the constituent elements, as well as the form of physical coupling between each element. This model stands distinct from more subtle aspects of quantum mechanical systems, wherein the collective behavior of individual elements are coupled with one another without any physical medium necessarily enacting the coupling. This feature of quantum mechanics accounts for Einstein's now famous description of quantum theory as implying 'spooky action at a distance.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of how these thinkers have described the tension of subjection, see: D. R. Glowacki, "To the reader: the structure of power in biblical translation, from Tyndall to the NRSV," *Literature and Theology*, 2(22), 2008, p.195.

<sup>4</sup> S. Žižek, *Violence* (London: Profile Books, 2008), p.134.

<sup>5</sup> An excellent non-specialist description of Einstein's nuanced relationship with quantum entanglement is provided in: J. Baggott, *Beyond Measure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.132.

Comparing the transition from classical to modern power with developments in physics is useful because it emphasizes how linear, localized, and deterministic models of interaction in both fields have given way to non-local, relational models of interaction. The analogy between quantum mechanics and Panoptic power is not entirely accurate because the Panoptic model *does include* an identifiable medium through which each subject is coupled to every other subject – i.e., the Panoptic gaze. Nevertheless, the analogy is useful insofar as it emphasizes the mechanisms that enable modern power to enact subjection over much larger distances and over much larger systems than was previously possible. The extension of classical power occurred via relatively slow, localized, and linear modes of propagation – for example threats and disciplinary spectacles. Panoptic power, on the other hand, relying as it does only on transparency and the act of seeing-through, may effectively travel at the speed of light, meaning that it has a potentially far greater range and coverage than classical power.

The far greater range of Panoptic power with respect to classical power – i.e., its “spooky action at a distance” – is well suited to the context of Paul’s letters, which were written to churches that he had established and since departed from as he journeyed through first century Asia Minor. A number of readings of Paul have addressed the extent to which he was concerned with power and authority, and the tone of these readings may be broadly situated on a continuum that varies between two extremes. At one end of the continuum, authors such as Schütz, Castelli, and Polaski tend to interpret Paul at the focal point of a top-down sort of power structure, wherein his discourse is aimed at amplifying his own privileged power position at the expense of those to whom he is writing.<sup>6</sup> In Paul’s claims of apostolic authority, his instructions that his readers “Imitate me, even as I imitate Christ,”<sup>7</sup> or his accounts of his relationship with the Jerusalem church, these authors see Paul attempting to convince his readers of his own power position and thereby legitimize his own authority. On the other hand, authors such as Ehrenspurger, Elliot, and Lopez have interpreted Paul more

<sup>6</sup> Studies which have specifically examined power and Paul, and tend to emphasize Paul’s privileged position of power include: (a) E. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: a Discourse of Power* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991); (b) S. H. Polaski, *Paul and the Discourse of Power* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); (c) J. H. Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Power* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); (d) B Holmberg, *Paul and Power: the Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978, rev. edn, 1980); and (e) C. B. Kittredge, *Authority: The Rhetoric of Obedience in the Pauline Tradition* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998). Recent studies that have examined Paul within the larger context of power within Christian ideology include: (a) S. D. Moore, *Postructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross*; (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994) p.8, and (b) Graham Shaw, *The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1982; Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> E. Castelli emphasizes the Pauline power discourse of mimesis in her work *Imitating Paul*. She argues that mimesis creates a privileged power position because the status of the one being imitated is unattainable for those doing the imitation.

sympathetically, as a figure whose letters are intended to empower and liberate his addressees following on from the liberation Paul feels that he has himself received.<sup>8</sup>

Whatever Paul's motives – to establish his own authority, or to liberate others – power asymmetry is involved according to the simple fact that *Paul* is the one that has received the revelation from God. And the fact that Paul's words were written in letters meant that his power and authority needed to operate over long distances, despite his physical absence. He seems to acknowledge as much when he writes, "I myself, Paul... who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away." (2 Cor 10.1) The point of this article is to reveal structural features within Paul's letters to the Romans, Corinthians and Galatians that bear a great deal of resemblance to Panoptic discourse, wherein the origins of power are diffuse and non-local. The Panoptic model of power is characterized by simultaneous relational tensions: transparency, the founding idea within the Panoptic model of power, operates to simultaneously unify and divide, and provides the mechanism by which subjects are simultaneously comrades and enforcers. As I show in this article, similar tensions occur repeatedly throughout Paul's letters. Because the Panopticon provides a structure wherein Paul may simultaneously occupy seemingly contrary roles, this article offers a constructive interface and simple conceptual toolset for unifying the apparently divergent perspectives on Paul described above. Another interesting observation raised by this article is the fact that it locates a number of Panoptic threads within a much earlier discourse than those to which Panoptic models are typically applied. Hopefully, this will open up the possibility for fresh readings of Paul's letters,<sup>9</sup> and perhaps for other ancient discourses as well.

This paper is organized as follows: first, I describe the Panoptic model of power, with an emphasis on the fundamental role of transparency. Then, in what follows, I present an analysis of the body of Christ within the Pauline discourse in order to reveal those structural features that bear significant resemblance to Foucault's description of the Panopticon. Specifically, I show how Paul

<sup>8</sup> Studies which have been more sympathetic in their readings of Paul, finding in him a figure who is not merely seeking to amplify his own power position, but also empowering his addressees include, for example, works by: (a) N. Elliot, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994); (b) D. C. Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul's Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008); (c) K. Ehrensparger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement* (London: T&T Clark, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> I do not intend within this study to indicate a larger post-modern narrative within Paul's writings. Nor is it an attempt to show that the Apostolic Panopticon is the exclusive mechanism by which Paul constructs power. There are a number of debates regarding the authenticity of Pauline texts; however, I have limited the scope of the Pauline corpus examined in this work to those texts that yield the most significant results to the present study. While this approach may be disputed, the identification of strands of a modern Panoptic power discourse within ancient Pauline letters opens up the possibility for fresh readings of these texts, and provides the logic for this approach.

distinguishes power within the body of Christ from that of the old Mosaic covenant. Whereas the illuminating medium in Foucault's Panopticon is light, within the apostolic Panopticon, it is Spirit. Within the body of Christ, each subject's exterior – i.e., flesh – operates as a portal to the subject's interior, where Spirit resides. The distinction between interior and exterior provides exactly the sort of structure required to satisfy the demands of transparency. However, a corollary of this structure – relying as it does upon appearance, surface, and reflection – is that it creates the conditions for disguise and deception, and the requisite for surveillance. Within this matrix of surface, appearance, interior, exterior, and surveillance, bound together through the illuminating medium of Spirit, members of the body may appear as "all things to all people." The body emerges as a tightly coupled, entangled apparatus of surveillance where each comrade is simultaneously an overseer, and power may operate over much larger distances than was possible in the old covenant.

### I. PANOPTIC STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

Foucault frequently returned to his description of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon in his attempts to articulate a model by which to understand the operation of modern power. He describes the Panopticon as follows:

A perimeter building in the form of a ring. At the center of this, a tower, [with] huge windows [that are tinted, or which feature Venetian Blinds] opens onto the inner face of the ring. The outer building is divided into cells each of which traverses the whole thickness of the [ring-shaped] building. These cells have two windows, one [window] opening on to the inside, facing the windows of the central tower, [and] the other, outer [window] allowing daylight to pass through the whole cell. All that is then needed is to put an overseer in the tower and place in each of the cells a lunatic, a patient, a convict...The back lighting enables one to pick out from the central tower the little captive silhouettes in the ring of cells.<sup>10</sup>

The Panopticon offers an efficient means for observing and ensuring the appropriate conduct of many subjects. It reverses the principle of the dungeon because "Full lighting and the eye of supervisor capture better than darkness...."<sup>11</sup> thereby ensuring that each subject is maximally transparent, utilizing "the formula of 'power through transparency', subjection by 'illumination.'"<sup>12</sup> Despite shortcomings in Foucault's description of the

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<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), p.147.

<sup>11</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Penguin: London, 1979), p.200.

<sup>12</sup> Foucault, "The Eye of Power," p.154.

Panopticon model,<sup>13</sup> it nevertheless remains a useful model. In particular, the efficacy of the Panopticon derives from a number of its features:

- (1) It offers each subject an individual space within which he or she is permitted to operate, reinforcing notions of personal identity, responsibility, and accountability that frequently occur in the modern discourse of subjection: "The crowd... is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities."<sup>14</sup>
- (2) The illuminating light pouring in the back window of the cell allows perfect observation, and makes the subject continually aware that all domains of his or her operation are subject to the gaze of the tower – i.e., transparency is made possible by the infusion of light;
- (3) It relies on *ambiguity*. This is why the windows of the observation tower are tinted, "The inmate must never know whether he is being looked at, at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so."<sup>15</sup> The *possibility* that the gaze emanating from the observation tower is focused on a particular subject results in the subject becoming his or her own supervisor.<sup>16</sup> In its perfected form, the Panopticon does not require an overseer within the observation tower; any silhouette would suffice.
- (4) Besides seeing the observation tower from the cell, each subject also sees the community of the other confined subjects. The gaze thus becomes a sort of normalizing force, emanating from both the observation tower and the cells of the other subjects. Each comrade is an observer,<sup>17</sup> power is decentralized, and the accountability of each subject is not only to the tower, but also to every other subject.

The Panoptic structure is oriented toward cultivating transparency, which is locked in a peculiar tension. It necessarily requires two distinct domains (otherwise the gaze has nothing to penetrate), and it simultaneously demands that the gaze reveals the two domains to be identical. From the exterior of the subject's cell, the interior must be shown to be identical to what it would look like were it viewed from the inside, revealing the subject as he/she would be if there were no interface separating the interior and exterior. For example, in the recent financial crisis, corporate transparency is typically invoked by identifying two distinct domains of information. One domain is that which is publicly accessible, while the other is only available to corporate executives. The demands of transparency are satisfied *when these two domains are shown to be identical*. This simple example helps to illuminate transparency's perpetual tension: it is a proof of unity (a demonstration that no distinction between

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<sup>13</sup> For critiques of Foucault's description of Panoptic power, see, for example: (a) N. Crossley, "The Politics of the Gaze: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty," *Human Studies*, 16, 1993; or (b) G. Deleuze, *Foucault* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p.201.

<sup>15</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p.201.

<sup>16</sup> Foucault, "The Eye of Power," p.155.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.157.

domains is necessary since they are identical), but *this proof of unity* requires a *distinction between domains* if the proof is to be maintained.

Transparency's requirement of two distinct domains separated by a surface is fulfilled in the Panopticon quite literally by the glass surface that encloses each subject within his or her cell. Within the cell, freedom is constrained because each subject's actions are inseparable from an awareness of the perpetual possibility of *being watched*. Interior ceases to be an interior, and instead becomes the territory of the exterior. The observer on the exterior confronts the subject on the interior, and the implicit question emerges: "what have you got to hide?" Freedom is available, but it is inseparable from the gaze.

Unlike classical power, Panoptic power is decentralized insofar as its maintenance becomes a collective activity sustained by all the subjects. The refusal of any subject to participate in the panoptic structure is met with *suspicion* hinting at the intent to *deceive*:

If the machine were such that someone could stand outside it and assume sole responsibility for managing it, power would be identified with that one man and we would be back with a monarchical type of power. In the Panopticon each person, depending on his place, is watched by all or certain of the others. You have an apparatus of total and circulating mistrust, because there is no absolute point. The perfected form of surveillance consists in a summation of *malveillance*.<sup>18</sup>

The boundary between interiority and exteriority, which transparency seeks to annihilate, simultaneously enables disguise and deception. The tension implicit in the idea of transparency is distilled within the surface because it is the physical object that simultaneously binds and separates the domains of interior and exterior. These contrary roles are very similar to those that Žižek identifies in what he calls the 'Abyss of the Neighbor' – a neighbor being one from whom we are separated enough to feel unified with. Transparency exploits just this tension: the more dramatic the distinctions between domains of interiority and exteriority, the more dramatic the unification that transparency enacts. Thus, transparency anchors its value through the possibility of *opacity*, but a corollary of this structural requisite is that a surface which may be "seen through" may also conceal.

## II. THE APOSTOLIC PANOPTICON

### *Classical Power and Mosaic Law*

In this following portion of this paper, I will now investigate Panoptic structures within the Pauline discourse. Within his letters, Paul repeatedly distinguishes between the condemnation of the Mosaic covenant versus the freedom available

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<sup>18</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," p.158.

in Christ. The story of the transmission of the divine law to Moses as recorded in Exodus<sup>19</sup> is one with which Paul would have been familiar, and provides a textbook model for discussing the mechanisms by which classical power operates. Thus, it is worth briefly reviewing: On Moses' first trip to the top of Mount Sinai, the children of Israel grew restless with his absence and demanded that Aaron fashion for them another god. Aaron went along with their request, ordered them to bring their gold, and he used it to make a calf. The people revelled and praised the calf for bringing them out of Egypt. From the mountaintop, God saw everything, and told Moses that the children of Israel were down there worshipping a calf. Moses descended after pleading that God not consume the people in his wrath. Arriving to find things just as God had described, Moses was so enraged that he shattered the stone tablets on which God's law was written. Then he disciplined the people: he ground the calf into a powder that he forced them to drink, and ordered the sons of Levi to slaughter 3,000 of the Israelite men. Moses then went to atone for the people, who were now repentant, and eventually Israelites were once again in God's favor. He ordered Moses back up to the mountain in order to make a covenant with the children of Israel, and gave to him the Ten Commandments, inscribed on two new tablets of stone. When Moses returned, his face was shining because he had been in the presence of God, and he had to cover himself with a veil in order that the people were not afraid.

A number of elements in this story provide insight into the mechanisms by which classical power operates. First, the chain of enforcement is typically linear. One force perturbs some element, whose subsequent movement exerts a force on another body, and so on down the causal chain of command. The originating force of power is God, Moses is his sheriff, and the sons of Levi are the foot soldiers. Second, the chain of enforcement is local, and relies upon a strong physical coupling between the agents of power. Moses, mortal as he is, has no idea what the children of Israel are doing until God informs him. Moses then acts as enforcer, gathering the sons of Levi around him before he instructs them to commence their slaughter. The sons of Levi then go about enforcing Moses' command upon the people. Third, the chain of enforcement relies on poignant and violent spectacle – drinking the grinds of the golden calf, and slaughter. Because the modes for enforcement are very local, spectacle operates to burn a memorable image of the operative power structure, as well as the consequences for disobeying, into the memories of the subjects.

Finally, the example of Moses on the mountain emphasizes the fragility of classical power. Because the chain of enforcement is localized and linear, the space for resistance is also well defined. Thus, Moses' departure marks the point at which the Israelites get restless and their debauchery ensues. The very name *children of Israel* hints at a sort of classical power structure, and true to form, they start misbehaving as soon as Moses is out of sight. If he is not there in person, he is no longer a disciplinary threat. Within the classical model of power, every stage of enforcement requires tangible physical coupling. Transparency is not the

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<sup>19</sup> Specifically, Exodus 31 – 34

rule - God might be able to see everything from the mountaintop, but enforcement of the divine will is carried out via Moses' physical presence. Because of the necessity of this physical link in the chain of enforcement, there is no 'spooky action at a distance' of the sort that arises in modern power.

### *The Body of Christ*

The discussion of the Mosaic covenant provides a good transition for investigating Panoptic structural features in Paul's discourse. In Galatians 3.23-28, Paul provides a particularly explicit and insightful contrast between the structure of Mosaic power and that of the new covenant:

We were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian... But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. There is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

The top-down structure of Mosaic law involves a chain of command oriented toward enforcing the law written by God upon tablets of stone (referred to by Paul as the "ministry of death" in 2 Cor 3.6). Within the new covenant, however, the old paradigms are turned on their head, and the top down power structure is replaced by the body of Christ, the structure of which Paul describes at length in 1 Cor 12.

Within the body of Christ, the inmates are equals, and the old chains of command are no longer operative, "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one spirit." (1 Cor 12.13) However, even though the old chains of command are broken, and freedom is the new operative concept, subjection does not wholly disappear. Paul still refers to the members of the body as children, suggesting their subjection to some form of authority, "you are no longer a slave but a child" (Gal 4.7). The members of the body have been liberated from one form of subjection into another. The interesting thing about this passage is that the discourse of liberation and freedom within the body remains saturated with the language of subjection, similar to modern democratic discourse, where freedom remains conditional on behaving correctly. Paul says as much when he states, "You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another." (Gal 5.13) This imperative is driven home all the more in his question, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Cor 6.19)

The imagery Paul uses in describing the body of Christ begins to conjure up strong resonances with the Panopticon. Within the body of Christ, the classical Mosaic form of top-down, linear discipline is superseded by a new paradigm which emphasizes freedom instead of bondage. Similar to the manner in which

the Panopticon's inmates are unified by the gaze, the body of Christ is unified by the Spirit. Each individual body functions as a sort of cell which is infused with the Spirit. Power's operation within the body is simultaneous and non-linear, having its effect from the bottom-up, and a discourse of freedom operates alongside a specification of the form of subjection.

### *Spirit and Subjection at Light Speed*

As discussed in the introduction to this article, the Panoptic gaze's poignancy derives from the fact that it not only originates from the central watchtower, but also from the cells of each individual subject, and this is the simultaneous entangled coupling force that enacts subjection. A very similar dynamic is at work within the Body of Christ. Paul calls on each participant in the body to both judge and be accountable to every other member (1 Cor 5.12). In Foucault's description of the Panopticon, light is the mechanism through which surveillance and transparency emerge to enforce subjection – the limits of power are the limits of the gaze, which may effectively travel at light speed. In Paul's Panopticon, *spirit* is the primary medium through which each member of the body participates in the subjection of every other member, "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized... and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." Power within the body of Christ simultaneously couples all the members, operating over a much larger range than in the classical Mosaic regime; in Paul's Panopticon, the limits of power are the limits of the spirit, which bind together the body of Christ. In this context, Paul may participate in the Panoptic structure regardless of location. Thus, he may write in his letter to the Corinthians, regarding the matter of a man sleeping with his mother, "For though absent in body, I am present in Spirit; and as if present I have already pronounced judgement... When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (1 Cor 5.3; cf. Col 2.5).

Transparency requires illumination, and Paul's description of the role of spirit in the Body of Christ is accompanied by typically Panoptic light imagery. Some of the most interesting Pauline fragments in this respect are in 2 Cor 3-4, an abridged extract of which follows:

...We act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside... Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there... when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit... by the open statement of truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

Exodus 34.30 records that the Israelites were afraid of Moses' shining face when he returned from the presence of God, and so he hid it behind a veil. However, within the body of Christ, the veil is removed. Moses' shining face, which is like a mirror that reflects the glory of the Lord and serves as a sign of his proximity to the divine focal point of power, need no longer be feared. The classical modes for enforcement of power under the Mosaic covenant, which were dominated by fear, opacity, and spectacle, have given way to light, spirit, and illumination. The radiance of the Spirit of the Lord saturates the body of Christ, illuminating each member in the sight of all the other members, and the reflected glory of God need no longer be a source of fear. Paul assigns the veil a new function: previously it was a means of concealing the reflected radiance of God in Moses' face, but it now characterizes those who are not members of the body of Christ – i.e., those who do not participate in the illuminating Spirit that simultaneously couples together all the members of the body. Within the body of Christ, the old covenant's linear chain of command is replaced by Spirit and light, which are far more efficient coupling forces that may be transmitted over much larger distances than were possible in the Mosaic covenant.

### *Illumination, Interior, and Exterior*

The imagery discussed in the previous section emphasizes the role of surface and illumination. Both of these are key components for the operation of transparency. Without surface, the Panoptic gaze has nothing to penetrate. And without illumination, the gaze is incapable of observing the inmate's actions behind the glass of the cell. The mirror analogy used by Paul in the passage discussed in the previous section is particularly interesting in this respect. Just like Moses, each member within the body reflects the glory of the Lord, and Paul refers to the members of the body of Christ "...with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror..."

Paul says that each subject sees the reflected radiance of God; however the origin of the reflected radiance is ambiguous: does each subject see his or her own radiant reflection, or does each see the radiance reflected in other subjects? This ambiguity is one that is entirely consistent with the Panoptic model because the window glass behind which each subject is confined is never entirely transparent; windows always throw back a residual reflection. Thus, seeing a subject through the glass of his/her cell always involves a glimpse of one's own reflection. Transparency's simultaneously divisive and unifying function relies on a surface that binds domains and maintains them as distinct. Otherwise, it has nothing to penetrate, in order to demonstrate that the domains are identical. Insofar as transparency relies on surfaces, it always entails a latent ambiguity: "am I seeing through that surface or am I seeing a reflection in that surface?" This is because any surface has the potential both to reveal and to conceal.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul distinguishes between the interior domain of spirit and the exterior domain of the flesh, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8.11).

While the outer, mortal domain of the flesh is prone to decay and imperfection, it provides glimpses into the eternal inner domain of spirit. Thus Paul writes, "But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear this extraordinary power belongs to God... For while we live... the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor 4.7 – 11). Paul describes the flesh as an earthly tent that houses the eternal Spirit, (2 Cor 5.1) and elsewhere instructs his readers to "Live by the Spirit... do not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal 5.16). In a previously discussed passage, he refers to believers' bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6.19). All of these analogies – clay jars, temples, and tents – are compatible with the two-domain structure required by transparency. The exterior domain of the flesh ceases to be merely an exterior; it is simultaneously a container and a portal, offering a glimpse into the interior domain of Spirit. Similarly, Spirit is not merely an interior; its radiance may radiate out through the fleshly exterior.

### *Surveillance and the Undercover Apostle*

The domains of interior and exterior – Spirit and flesh – are compatible with the vocabulary of transparency. This structure entails the potential for opacity – i.e., some feature of the interior may be hidden by a surface which binds it with the exterior. In a sort of acknowledgement of the relational tension that is tied up in the very idea of transparency, Paul may be read in 1 Cor 11.13-18 to suggest that "genuine" members of the body of Christ are only identifiable against the relational contrast of their opposite: "When you come together as a church, I heard that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine."

Transparency operates within the body of Christ to reveal those members that are genuine – i.e., to root out those that may be *masquerading* as something other than what they actually are. Paul writes explicitly about the threat of such appearance and disguise in 2 Cor 11. 13 – 15, "... Such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness." Similarly, he writes in Gal 2. 4 of "false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus..." Within both the Panopticon and the body of Christ, the surface that binds interior and exterior provides a mechanism for both revealing and concealing – i.e., truth and deception. It is this latter threat, deception, which creates the grounds for suspicion in the Panopticon, and provides the logic for surveillance, through which we may understand Paul's demands that the body judge its own members (1 Cor 5.12 – 6.3), and that members of the body judge themselves. (1 Cor 11.31)

Within the superficial world of appearance, interior, and exterior, Paul may operate as a sort of undercover agent who effectively exploits appearance as a strategy for expanding the body of Christ. In this context we may understand Paul's statement in 1 Cor 9.22-23 that "I have become all things to all people, that

I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings." Paul even lists the disguises that he has assumed in order to accomplish his goals:

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. (1 Cor 10.20-22)

Within the body of Christ, Paul operates as a sort of undercover shape-shifter. Unbeknownst to his targets, he takes on a multitude of forms. Through the medium of Spirit, which operates as the illuminating intra-body coupling force, Paul is perfectly equipped for surveillance. Like the shadow visible behind the window of the Panoptic watchtower, he can see the transparent subjects without being seen himself. Because power within the apostolic Panopticon is decentralized and simultaneously enforced by *all* the inmates, it is not only Paul who emerges with this privileged shape-shifting power position. His discourse similarly empowers his addressees – i.e., the others members of the body. Thus, when Paul instructs his readers, "just as I try to please everyone in everything that I do... so that they may be saved... Be imitators of me..." (1Cor 10.33-11.1) he creates the conditions for a network of surveillance – a matrix of suspicion, appearance, misrecognition, and shape-shifters, bound together through the illuminating medium of Spirit.

### *Conclusions*

Within this paper, I have shown a number of structural similarities between Foucault's description of the Panopticon and the body of Christ, which may be interpreted as a sort of apostolic Panopticon. The body of Christ represents a point of departure from the classical Mosaic form of power. Within the old covenant, the origin of authority was God, and his disciplinary wrath was transmitted in localized, linear chains of command driven by fear. Within the body of Christ, the Mosaic veil is removed, and the emphasis is on illumination and freedom. The members of the body are individual fleshly vessels whose interiors are infused with Spirit, which emerges as a simultaneous, non-local, and decentralized force that couples together the members of the body of Christ over much larger distances than were possible in the Mosaic covenant.

In the body of Christ, the exterior domain of the flesh ceases to be merely an exterior; it is simultaneously a container and a portal, offering a glimpse into the interior domain of Spirit. Similarly, interior ceases to be merely interior; the radiant Spirit with which it is infused may illuminate the fleshly exterior. And the members of the body of Christ are identifiable according to the extent of their transparency, which operates within the body of Christ to root out those that may be *masquerading* or *disguised* as something other than what they actually are.

This threat creates the grounds for suspicion and provides the logic for surveillance, in which Paul calls upon members of the body to judge both one another and themselves.

The discourse of the apostolic Panopticon is saturated with reference to surfaces, appearances, reflection, and simulacra. Within this superficial and uncertain realm of appearance and reflection, Paul simultaneously emerges as a perfect comrade and overseer, capable of appearing as "all things to all people." By encouraging all the members of the body to imitate him in this respect, he creates the conditions for a tightly coupled, entangled apparatus of surveillance where each member of the body is equally a comrade and an overseer. The shadowy structure of the Panopticon not only facilitates efficient surveillance; it may also be exploited as a strategy for recruiting other members into the body. The medium of Spirit enables a sort of "spooky action at a distance," whereby participation in the body of Christ is not limited by location.

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