

**A Genealogy of Consumer Surveillance:  
From the First Public Market to Eaton's Department Store to Amazon**

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## ABSTRACT

Consumer surveillance has intensified over time and across differing forms of consumption space and spatial arrangement, which in turn raises the question of what explains the historical changes in the modalities of consumer surveillance. Contemporary surveillance literatures focus primarily on the current phenomenon with little consideration of the historical processes upon which the changes in the scope and intensity of the modalities of consumer surveillance were made possible. My study employs Foucauldian genealogical methodology as a system of inquiry to map the historical transformation in the modalities of consumer surveillance, by utilizing archival records, across three different consumption spaces in key stages of retail development: the first regulatory public market in the Town of York during the pre-industrial period, Eaton's department store in the industrial economy, and Amazon that coincided with the rise of information economy. Conversely, contemporary theories of surveillance generally approach the intensification question by focusing on the surveillance-space axis or surveillance-consumption axis, and the spatiality of consumer surveillance is reduced to Foucauldian disciplinary panopticon. Utilizing Foucault's theories of power and governmentality and his intriguing account of the role of space in the exercise of power, my genealogical project examines the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption to understand the intensification of consumer surveillance over time across the three spaces under study. In my genealogical project, I identify five key moments pertaining to differing modalities of consumer surveillance: "marketization of space," "standardization of consuming bodies," "statistification of consumers," "virtualization of consumption," and "AI inhabitation in consumer spaces." My genealogical project demonstrates that spatiality and spatialization are a recurring issue in differing modalities of consumer surveillance over time. Yet, the spatial techniques have changed and become more complex to augment the scope and intensity of monitoring and gaining of new knowledge about consumers and consumption, as part of long-standing efforts to manage the unpredictable dynamics of consumer behaviour by attaining control over all aspects of consumers' life.

I dedicate this dissertation to all those who inspired me, my mentors and my parents—my mother, Maliheh, and my father, Reza. They taught me the significance of education in understanding one's relation to the Self and others, what Michel Foucault calls the care of the self. Their efforts have allowed me to continually pursue the skills to critically reflect on myself and question the social constructions of reality.

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## INTRODUCTION

Consumer surveillance has intensified over time across differing forms of consumption space and spatial arrangement. Retailers and brands have been continually seeking to tap into and monetize every opportunity to gain insights into their potential buyers and their consumption behaviour by closely monitoring, tracking, documenting, quantifying, datafying, defining, and rationalizing what is taking place in these spaces. With the proliferation of ubiquitous computing and distributed sensors, such surveillance practices have been further intensified, by becoming increasingly integrated into the very fabric of everyday social spaces. The recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) systems, combined with their natural language processing, computer vision, and knowledge-based reasoning, as well as their potentials to develop simple and smart interactions between human and machine (Accenture 2017; Stanford University 2016), are a characteristic manifestation of ever-expanding and more rigorous performance of surveillance in consumer spaces, so much so that nowadays surveillance is increasingly offered as a service to consumers (West 2018). The changing dynamics of consumer surveillance along with the transformative capabilities of technology prompted my interest to conduct a further investigation of the intensification of consumer surveillance across differing forms of architectural and spatial structure and arrangement in key historical stages of retail development. This raises the key question of how consumer surveillance has intensified over time.

Building upon surveillance scholarships, advances in the intensification of the modality of contemporary surveillance demonstrate the traits of a new mode of control and governance of people that is highly decentralized, deterritorialized, and dispersed. The new system of surveillance is regarded to be highly flexible, fluid (Bauman and Lyon 2013), ever-expanding, and participatory (Fiske 1993; Mathiesen 1997; Poster 1990), as the techniques of information

collection and processing are becoming less intrusive and embedded within everyday media practices and spaces (Andrejevic 2003; Grusin 2010). Surveillance practices are becoming increasingly normalized as they are entering domestic spaces (West 2018). Consumer surveillance serves as a rationalizing authority to restrict consumers' options for future transactions (Gandy 1993), on the basis of "data doubles" (Ericson and Haggerty 2000) that are previously generated from sorting and cross-referencing consumers' geographic and psychographic information (Elmer 2004). While the focus of these critical perspectives lies primarily on contemporary surveillance practices, it is important to mention that surveillance, in particular datafied form of surveillance, is not a recent phenomenon that emanated from computers and database technologies, as we can see in the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault on power. In the context of consumption, datafied form of surveillance goes back as far as the nineteenth century, at a time when credit institutions and credit surveillance emerged in order to rank and rate consumers according to their estimated creditworthiness (Lauer 2017). Additionally, while the above-noted contemporary surveillance studies offer critical perspectives, they generally respond to the intensification question based on two frames of reference that are surveillance-space axis and surveillance-consumption axis. As a result, based on my exploration, the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption is not sufficiently investigated. Accordingly, my dissertation project examines the intensification of consumer surveillance over time across differing forms of consumption space and spatial arrangement on the surveillance-space-consumption axis.

As part of this undertaking, through my dissertation project, I investigate the following questions: How does the historical examination of differing modes of consumer governance explain the intensification of consumer surveillance over time? How have the modalities of

consumer surveillance changed over time and across differing forms of space and spatial arrangement? What is the implication of these transformations? What are the key moments in the specific rationalities and technologies of power that characterize the differing modes of consumer governance? What particular forms of space and spatial arrangement are constructed by differing modes of governing and managing consumers and consumption? How do these spaces facilitate and mediate the intensification of consumer surveillance?

My dissertation project takes up Michel Foucault's trajectory on power and governmentality and his thinking around space and spatiality for the examination of the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption to reveal the intensification of consumer surveillance over time across differing forms of space and spatial arrangement. Foucault's gradual fascination with the question of the subject with respect to power throughout the 1970s, from his work on disciplinary power to his later accounts of governmentality and biopolitics, seeks to formulate a set of mechanisms of power from which a specific form of subject-object is constituted and managed and a certain form of space and spatial arrangement are established and planned to facilitate and mediate the functioning of power as a consequence. In Foucault's (1979, 2007) formulation, where sovereign power functions on the axis of sovereign and subjects, demanding the absolute cooperation with and obedience to the sovereign within his territory, the mode of disciplinary power takes interest in the bodies of individuals and their abilities from which the self-regulatory modern subjects, such as soldiers, workers, and students are constructed and produced through establishing a well-planned, artificial space. Foucault (2007) extends his rigorous analysis of power into what he refers to as mechanisms of security, where he shifts his attention to the new forms of biopolitical regulation and management of subjects at the level of population through planning a space, what Foucault terms as "milieu," in terms of a

series of events. I use Foucault's theories to examine the intensification of consumer surveillance over time on the surveillance-space-consumption axis across three consumption spaces in key stages of retail development. These selected spaces are: the first regulatory public market in the newly formed Town of York during the pre-industrial time; Eaton's department store and the development of a set of standardized procedures and practices in the industrial economy; and Amazon and the construction of interactive online spaces in the digital economy. In my examination of these three spaces, I move beyond the surveillance-related claims about the shift from sovereignty to discipline to security in sequential order, and instead search for the dominant rationalities and technologies of power that are distinctive to these three spaces. Foucauldian model helps illuminate the differing modes of governance of consumers and consumption, modalities of consumer surveillance, and various forms of architectural and spatial organization that are crucial to the exercise of power across these three spaces.

In my dissertation project, I use a Foucauldian genealogical methodology as a mode of inquiry to trace and reveal the key moments or the "ruptures" (to adopt Foucault) in the rationalities and technologies of power that characterize the differing modes of consumer governance and surveillance across three consumption spaces of public market, Eaton's department store, and Amazon. In his genealogy, Foucault's distinct approach to writing what he calls "a history of the present" moves away from the conventional historical analyses and instead toward tracking the past records of struggles, contestations, modifications, and consolidations out of which the present reality emerged. Heavily influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche's work, this philosophical and historical inquiry, as a method of problematization of the present, as described by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, traces "discontinuities" and "recurrences" and records "the past of mankind to unmask the solemn hymns of progress," by avoiding the search for deep

meaning.<sup>1</sup> It seeks to re-establish the historical developments of interrelated practices and discourses that provided conditions upon which the current phenomenon have become possible. In my archival examination of the intensification of consumer surveillance on the surveillance-space-consumption axis, I trace the discontinuities and recurrences of particular ways of knowing consumers and consumption, specific forms of programming and acting on consumers, certain forms of space and spatial arrangement, and spatial strategies within differing modalities of consumer surveillance among the three consumption spaces under study. The goal of this genealogical undertaking is to unveil the key moments in the differing modes of governing and managing consumers and consumption across different consumption spaces along multiple temporalities that ultimately help illuminate how rationalities and technologies of power change in response to the problematic of consumers and their inherent uncertainty.

The significance of my dissertation project is twofold, on the methodological and theoretical levels. First, the project seeks to approach the issue of intensification of consumer surveillance by utilizing Foucauldian genealogical method to uncover the possible conditions out of which the pervasive systems of consumer surveillance have come to being. Major literatures in contemporary surveillance studies broadly consider the critical turning point in the contemporary surveillance landscape being reached when the networked information and communication technologies came to change the intensity and scope of data collection and processing and ultimately knowledge production. While this is not to dismiss the changing effect of these technologies on surveillance practices, my genealogical inquiry seeks to analyze the prior modalities of consumer surveillance and map the historical transformation in the

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<sup>1</sup> Hubert L Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 106.

rationalities and technologies of power, which reveal the historical conditions upon which the changes in the scope and intensity of the modalities of surveillance were made possible. As such, my study moves beyond framing the intensification question as a recent phenomenon by tracing a more complicated process and evolution of consumer surveillance by utilizing archival records. Second, my study approaches the intensification question by examining the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption. While the majority of theories of surveillance respond to the issue on the surveillance-space axis (e.g. Amoore 2013; Andrejevic 2003; Bauman and Lyon 2012; Bigo 2008, Bogard 1996; Ericson and Haggerty 2000; Fiske 1993; Grusin 2010; Haggerty 2006; Mathiesen 1997; Poster 1990), and a few studies speaks to it on the surveillance-consumption axis (e.g. Gandy 1992), only a small handful of literatures embrace the surveillance-space-consumption axis in their investigations (e.g. Elmer 2004; Murakami Wood and Ball 2014; Ragnedda 2011). In addition, many of these studies reduce the spatiality question within consumer governance to the Foucauldian disciplinary panopticon. As a result, my dissertation applies Foucault's theories of power and governmentality and his thinking around space and spatiality to the surveillance-space-consumption axis to allow for understanding the intensification of consumer surveillance over time across differing forms of consumption space and spatial arrangement. Foucault's model facilitates the process of identifying the differing modes of consumer governance and their spatial strategies that are distinctive to the three consumption spaces under study.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, I provide the theoretical and philosophical considerations sustaining my dissertation project. The chapter begins with an overview of three conceptual approaches to the issue of intensification and extension of surveillance, roughly categorized based on their specific frames of reference: the relationship

between surveillance and space (surveillance-space axis), the relationship between surveillance and consumption (surveillance-consumption-axis), and the relationship between surveillance, space, and consumption (surveillance-space-consumption axis). My discussion of these three approaches also engages with the dominant interpretations and surveillance-related critiques of Foucault's work through the prism of his *Discipline and Punish* (1979), and the theories of surveillance that extend on and move beyond Foucault's formulation. I then employ Foucault's theory of power and his approach to governmentality, combined with his thoughts on the spatiality question to develop the theoretical framework for my study of the intensification of consumer surveillance. The second chapter considers Foucault's turn from archeology to genealogy, and outlines the methodology I use for my investigation of consumer surveillance and its intensification over time across three consumption spaces of the first public market, Eaton's department store, and Amazon. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 are the examination of the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption in the three consumption spaces under study. I reveal the differing modes of governing and managing consumers and consumption, specific modalities of consumer surveillance, differing forms of space and spatial arrangement, and particular spatial strategies within consumer governance that are distinctive to the public market, Eaton's department store, and Amazon. My analysis of these spaces unveils the key moments in the dominant rationalities and technologies of power that characterize particular modes of consumer governance across these three spaces.

Lastly, my dissertation project engages specific definition of "consumption spaces" that is borrowed from Rob Shields (1992). Shields refers to consumption spaces, including shopping malls and retail stores, as spaces that entail both economic and cultural significance and attract shoppers regardless of distances. I extend Shields' definition to both physical and virtual

consumption spaces that are designated, controlled spatial arrangements for the distribution of goods and services. The term “consumer space” is not equivalent to consumption space. I distinguish the former from the latter, by adopting Laura Oswald’s (2012) definition of consumer space, to extend the spatial brand experience beyond the controlled retail spatial arrangement to consumer’s home environment and other social spaces. Finally, the term “surveillance” is used through the Foucauldian lens. Yet, the definition is not limited to the panoptic model. Foucault’s formulation of various modes of governance maps differing modalities of surveillance and their specific spatial strategies in response to the problem of multiplicity.

## CHAPTER 1: Theoretical Framework

Influential literatures in surveillance studies have critically examined the intensification of contemporary surveillance practices and the emergence of a new modality of governance. These critical perspectives can be broadly categorized into three conceptual approaches according to their different specific frames of reference. Some theories of surveillance address the issue by examining the relationship between surveillance and space (surveillance-space axis), while other literatures respond to the datafied form of surveillance by focusing directly on consumption (surveillance-consumption axis). The final approach offers a creative attempt at integrating surveillance, space, consumption (surveillance-space-consumption axis) for the examination of the pervasive systems of contemporary surveillance. Aside from their specific frames of reference, these three approaches can be further divided according to their Foucauldian and post-Foucauldian emphasis, which has served as three distinct theoretical points of departure for the discussion of contemporary surveillance. In particular, the publication of *Discipline and Punish* (published in English in 1979) and its distinct interpretation of the eighteenth-century model of “Panopticon” designed by Jeremy Bentham have become conceptual and theoretical pathfinders in the growing field of surveillance studies. The increasing utilization of this concept has been prompted by the effect of computerization and database technologies starting in the final decade of the twentieth century, and has become more prominent with the integration of pervasive computing into the structure of our daily lives and environments in the new millennium. Simultaneously, some influential surveillance literatures have pointed to the limitations of Foucault’s formulation to adequately addressing the changing rationalities and properties of contemporary surveillance. These arguments indicate that there is a shift from Foucault’s “panopticism” to a “control society” or a “surveillance society” through

contemporary computerized and automated techniques of what David Lyon terms as “social sorting” (1994, 2003). Subsequently, these critical perspectives often find Deleuze’s conception of control as corrective to Foucauldian discipline in highlighting the ideas of liquidity and fluidity underpinning contemporary surveillance. The last theoretical point of departure speaks from a different inspired-Foucauldian trajectory which pushes past the ongoing debate over discipline and control and instead favours Foucault’s approach to biopolitical governmentality in examining the new datafied form of surveillance. This section offers an overview of the aforementioned conceptual approaches based on their specific frames of reference: surveillance-space axis, surveillance-consumption axis, and surveillance-space-consumption axis. I supplement my discussion of these three approaches to the issue of intensification of surveillance apparatus with a survey of two key opposing arguments surrounding the relevance of Foucault’s work to contemporary surveillance and the Foucauldian-inspired attempts to move beyond this ongoing debate.

In “Globalised (in)security: The Field and the Ban-opticon,” Didier Bigo (2008) locates the issue of pervasive systems of surveillance and spatiality question in the exclusionary and inclusionary practices as a result of the global (in)securities following the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent “war on terror.” For Bigo, the logic of inclusion and exclusion is marked by the new dispositif that is no longer the panopticon, but instead is what he terms the “ban-opticon.” This ban-optic dispositif, Bigo explains, “depends no longer on immobilizing bodies under the analytic gaze of the watcher but on profiles that signify differences, on exceptionalism with respect to norms and on the rapidity with which one ‘evacuates’.”<sup>2</sup> In combining the term “ban,”

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<sup>2</sup> Didier Bigo, “Globalised (in)security: The Field and the Ban-opticon,” in *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty: Illiberal Practices of Liberal Regimes after 9/11*, ed. Didier Bigo and Anastassia Tsoukala (London: Routledge, 2008), 37.

as developed by Agamben, and Foucault's use of the concept of "opticon," Bigo's ban-opticon suggests a way to situate the techniques and technologies of sorting employed within the decision-making of everyday space, in order to enact control and assertion of sovereignty over flux and movement of populations. The key purpose of the ban-opticon is to ensure that the majority (e.g. citizens) are separated from those who are deemed "unwelcome" to take part within the sovereign order (e.g. immigrants). This array of transnational bureaucratic links between businesses and politicians, private and public agencies, coupled with the developments of information and communication technologies, moves beyond the nation-state boundaries, and extends into new globalized spaces, both physical and virtual.<sup>3</sup> In Bigo's account, such risk profiling techniques coalesce to determine which individuals or groups of people must be placed under surveillance according to their profiles of presumed dangerous behaviours. In this sense, the issue is less about the surveillance of everyone, Bigo argues, and more about "[...] the surveillance of a small number of people, who are trapped into the imperative of mobility while the majority is normalized."<sup>4</sup> Bigo sees the discourses on free circulation (of goods, capital, people, and information) to be of vital importance to the normalizing process of the non-excluded and simultaneously allow for a high concentration of security practices over those perceived as risky groups. While Bigo's focus primarily lies on the management of mobile bodies across globalized spaces, the conception of ban-optic dispositif can be extended to the discussion of the spatial governance of other populations, such as consumers, that encourages the freedom of circulation, by establishing the conditions of possibility within which the freedom is made possible through database technologies and predictive analytics. The key point here is that the governing of everyday life in the late modernity is characterized by governance at-a-distance

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<sup>3</sup> Bigo, "Globalised (in)security," 20.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 32.

and security measures, which have been oriented toward anticipating a variety of potential outcomes, what Louise Amoore (2013) calls, “the politics of possibilities.”

Amoore picks up the spatial and temporal aspects of surveillance practices in her book *The Politics of Possibility*. In Amoore’s view, the security measures consequent on the 9/11 attacks have been oriented toward anticipating a variety of potential outcomes, what Amoore calls, “the politics of possibilities.” Amoore is essentially concerned with the growing significance of new anticipatory political rationalities involved in the governing of future possibilities through preemptive interventions in the present. Central to her analysis of these emerging dynamics, Amoore revives Foucault’s formulation of governmentality to conceptualize what she terms “anticipatory logic” of post 9/11 security decisions. This anticipatory logic reflects a change in the calculus of risk, promoted and intensified after the 9/11 events, which is a shift in emphasis from probability to possibility. Anticipatory logic, according to Amoore, “acts not strictly to prevent the playing out of a particular course of events on the basis of past data tracked forward into probable futures but to preempt an unfolding and emergent event in relation to an array of possible projected futures.”<sup>5</sup> This new approach to risk indicates a significant shift to scientific technologies and managerial expertise in decision making, so much so that the threshold separating “science” and “non-science” (affective, emotional, and speculative judgements) is no longer identifiable. Where traditional approach to risk worked to calculate individual probabilities based on the statistical knowledge drawn from the past data, for Amoore, the contemporary anticipatory approach to risk instead acts on profiles in databases, what Deleuze (1992) terms “dividuals” or what Haggerty and Ericson (2000) call “data double.”

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<sup>5</sup> Louis Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility: Risk and Security Beyond Probability* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 9.

Individuals are not distinct and individuated subjects, but rather broken down into their manageable risk parts.<sup>6</sup> The algorithmic modelling that drives the politics of possibilities, incorporates the predictive analytics from commercial life, what Amoore calls “association rule,” to look for patterns of activities and their associational relationships that work the basis to foresee possible futures. This new computerized form of surveillance finds useful patterns of associational relationships across databases to create new insights for different purposes, such as marketing, policing, and border control, that might otherwise remain obscure. As explained by Amoore, the association rule “supplies degrees of likelihood that [...] can incorporate the ‘outliers’ that would otherwise inhabit the forgotten tails of the bell curve.”<sup>7</sup> For Amoore, the anticipatory logic of post-9/11 security decisions replaces the traditional statistical probability with the “imagination of possibilities.”<sup>8</sup> Amoore’s anticipatory governance demonstrates the spatial and architectural dynamics of data searching and analytical capabilities as a means of imagining and pre-planning the future. Richard Grusin (2010) takes up the notion in his relatively brief but rather dense book *Premediation: Affect and Mediality After 9/11* to contextualize the contemporary power in relation to the interactive media space in the wake of 9/11 attacks. Grusin refers to the new sociotechnical dynamics of the post-9/11 media power as “the ontological aspect of premediation, the extension of media forms, practices, and technologies into the future so that the future will always already have been remediated.”<sup>9</sup>

The logic of premediation, which is closely correlated with Bush’s doctrine of preemption, attempts to account for the “liveness of futurity,” as a temporal form of securing the future. This is to say, the post-9/11 networked media continuously work to premeditate possible

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<sup>6</sup> Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Richard, Grusin, *Premediation: Affect and Mediality After 9/11* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 51.

futures, regardless of whether or not they are eventually actualized in the present. This, in turn, produces and maintains the affective state of anticipation about future events, both individually and collectively, in order to ensure that people would never experience the shock and trauma of another catastrophic event like the 9/11 attacks.<sup>10</sup> The brilliance of Grusin's text lies in the ways in which he filters Foucault's formulation of governmentality through the affective turn to show how the agential role of the networked media in security mechanisms extends beyond the Bush doctrine of preemption to the areas not directly related to the attack of 9/11 and to everyday space of media in general. For Grusin, "media everyday" after 9/11 is marked by projects like cloud computing and the Open Web movements, affording the potential of connective commercial, social, technical, and political networks of "always-on" culture with affective participations and exchange in these networks.<sup>11</sup> Grusin's nuance contribution is indebted to the "affective turn," which sees everyday interaction with mobile networked media is not just cognitive, but most importantly bodily and affective. In Grusin's view, our everyday consumptive media practices establish an affective relationship between the media and the body, so that the media themselves develop some kind of affective life, what Grusin terms "the affective life of media." As explained by Grusin, "contemporary media forms and practices [...] collapse into a single heterogeneous action a number of specific human and nonhuman, cognitive and affective, interactions, which create affective feedback loops in conjunction with our everyday media forms and practices."<sup>12</sup>

The advent of pervasive, intelligent, and more accurate information and communication technologies implies an environment in which, as explained by Thrift, affect "is so much easier

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<sup>10</sup> Grusin, *Premediation: Affect and Mediality After 9/11*, 46.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 103

to trigger and diffuse” across humans, nonhumans, and geopolitical spaces, “and is so much more likely to have grip at a distance.”<sup>13</sup> Insofar as affect is a pre-personal bodily intensity that is unbounded of any confinement,<sup>14</sup> the affective turn has been taken up for rethinking the significance of the production and consumption of affect in today’s capitalism and media-saturated cultures. Thrift coins the term “technological unconscious” to describe the idea of unconscious technological formation of “everyday,” as our everyday activities that are mostly habitual and repetitive are progressively contingent on pervasive computing, increasingly embedded within our environments. The contingent nature of mundane routines of everyday life reveals a whole new “world of performative infrastructures” and a new mode of ordering that operate mostly on a molecular level that is beyond and beneath human consciousness.<sup>15</sup> Thus, everyday activities and habits, as noted by Katherine Hayles, are “initiated, regulated, and disciplined by multiple strata of technological devices and inventions, ranging from an artifact as ordinary as a wristwatch to the extensive and pervasive effects of the World Wide Web.”<sup>16</sup> This implies the emergence of new forms of surveillance that are increasingly embedded within everyday habits. Emily West draws a connection between the intensification of surveillance and affect, in the ways in which platform corporations like Amazon offer digital forms of surveillance as service to their consumers to facilitate and mediate daily routines and activities. This in turn gives these corporations the ability to collect and process massive amounts of data in consumer interactions with these surveillance technologies.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 252.

<sup>14</sup> Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 35.

<sup>15</sup> Nigel Thrift, “Remembering the Technological Unconscious by Foregrounding Knowledges of Position,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 187.

<sup>16</sup> Katherine Hayles, “Traumas of Code,” *Critical Inquiry* 33, no. 1 (Autumn 2006): 138.

<sup>17</sup> Emily West, “Amazon: Surveillance as Service,” *Surveillance and Society* 17, no.1 (2019): 30.

Grusin extends this idea of everyday unconscious use of surveillance technologies into what he calls “mediality,” which operates as a governmental form of power, that assumes a complex and heterogenous everyday media environment through which the public’s affectivity of anticipation is modulated as part of the mechanism of security. It is the way in which media power after 9/11 functions to control and manage potential affective qualities distributed among individuals and groups of people towards particular future scenarios, regardless of their actualization. Considering his logic of “premediation,” Grusin writes, “This affective orientation links the future to the present in a way that tries to ensure that the future will continue to be connected to or grow out of the present, that the future will not, as it was on 9/11, be catastrophically disrupted.”<sup>18</sup> By turning to affect in everyday media spaces, Grusin presents an alarming picture of the probabilistic-based surveillance. The new systems of control operate seemingly and quietly within and through the habitual and mundane media practices to direct and manipulate futures into narrow options in the present, as the futures have always been premediated prior to the present. However, the role of media space and everyday interactions in intelligence gathering and dataveillance remains largely underdeveloped in Grusin’s work. In *The Panoptic Sort: A Political Economy of Personal Information*, Oscar Gandy’s (1993) conceptualization of computerized surveillance and database technologies extends Foucault’s work to the study of consumer market. Utilizing the panoptic model of surveillance, Gandy presents one of the earliest attempts to demonstrate the growing reliance on the systematic form of datafied surveillance that is concerned with organized collection and analysis of consumer data from everyday interactions and transactions.

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<sup>18</sup> Grusin, *Premediation: Affect and Mediality After 9/11*, 48.

Gandy coins the term “panoptic sort” to characterize the changing forms of surveillance in the production of social control in the wake of technological advancement in computers and telecommunications industries from the beginning of the 1980s. In particular, Gandy’s conception of panoptic sort hinges on the functioning of what has come to be known as consumer surveillance related to segmentation and target marketing, which engages in the classificatory activities that David Lyon (2003) refers to as “social sorting” to construct categories within the consumer populations across spaces based on the unlimited access to personal information. Extending Foucault’s writing on panopticism, Gandy’s panoptic sort refers to the processes whereby collected data on individuals or groups of people (e.g. consumers) are used to identify, classify, and sort according to their estimated economic and political value. He describes this panoptic sort as “a kind of high-tech, cybernetic triage” that operates through database marketing, “to coordinate and control [...] access to the goods and services that define life in the modern capitalist economy.”<sup>19</sup> Within the consumer profiling context, the panoptic sort technology works as a mode of control, of the processes of identification, classification, and assessment that creates cybernetic intelligence about the economic value of consumers according to their past behavioural data that are being incorporated into allocating a range of options and chances for future actions and transactions. In the new informational economy, these panoptic operations traverse all aspects of social life, such that panoptic sort has become a rationalized and digitized reality. Gandy is aware of dangers inherent in this rationalized marketing that can lead to an alarming form of discrimination: potential consumers are sorted as the category of high value economic targets, while certain others are excluded.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, these techno-

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<sup>19</sup> Oscar Gandy, *The Panoptic Sort: A Political Economy of Personal Information* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993), 15.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 17-18.

logical-defined categories of groups, based on what John Cheney-Lippold (2011) terms as online marketing and “algorithmic categorization” practices, are treated differently, which in turn can lead to a long-lasting discriminatory impact on certain groups within the population and their participation and access to options in the marketplace. Thus, the statistical logic and computerized judgements that drive contemporary surveillance carry out “rational discrimination,” or what Simone Browne (2015) terms “digital epidermalization” in thinking through race, so much so that they coordinate movements or access to information and allow for the production of particular modes of being. Thus, Zygmunt Bauman and David Lyon argue that today’s consumer surveillance promotes and reifies social sorting, which in turn creates “a world of cumulative disadvantage.”<sup>21</sup>

Following this discussion, it becomes apparent the very concept of surveillance, which lies at the core of Foucault’s influential theory of power and his thinking around governmentality, has offered valuable building blocks to rethink the datafied form of surveillance in the late modernity. The impact of Foucault’s approach has led to a significant number of empirical research and corresponding theoretical reflection, which in turn, has resulted in the development of a handful number of terms, including “synoptic panopticism” (Andrejevic 2003), “ban-opticon” (Bigo 2008), “inverted panopticon” (Elmer 2012; Fiske 1993), “panoptic sort” (Gandy 1993), “urban panopticon” (Koskela 2002), “electronic panopticon” (Lyon 1993), “synopticism” (Mathiesen 1997), “sousveillance” (Mann and Ferenbok 2013), and “cyber panopticon” (Ragnedda 2011). Building upon the logic of panopticon, Mark Poster (1990) coins the term “super-panopticon” to describe electronic surveillance and database

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<sup>21</sup> Zygmunt Bauman and David Lyon, *Liquid Surveillance: A Conversation* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2012), 18.

technologies that move beyond the spatial limitations of Bentham's panoptic model and toward a system that is "without walls, windows, towers or guards" and defined by the collapse of spatial barrier and direct supervisions.<sup>22</sup> In other words, the networked system of communication and information technologies create a particular form of space within which every interaction and transaction become the source of generating consumer data that continues to structure and restructure databases, and consumer subjects actively participate in their own surveillance by adding information about themselves to these databases. For Poster, these databases work to establish the idea of normal and what is considered to be anomaly.<sup>23</sup> Poster's super-panopticon demonstrates both qualitative and quantitative aspects of contemporary consumer surveillance that is also reflected in Greg Elmer's (2004) *Profiling Machines: Mapping the Personal Information Economy*, which offers Elmer's inspiring contribution on the three concepts of surveillance, space, and consumption.

Elmer (2004, 2012) is aware and critical of the dominant interpretations of Foucault's panoptic writings in surveillance scholarship, which in turn has led to the overwhelming call for "demolishing the panopticon" (Haggerty 2006), and hence an alternative approach. For Elmer, these interpretations are essentially formed based on "common flawed assumption about Foucault's central thesis" that simply renders Foucault's work to Bentham's model.<sup>24</sup> Elmer (2012) points to the manner in which the critiques and theoretical developments of Foucault's concept of panopticism tend to take—at least as a starting point—Bentham's panopticon in the place of Foucault's conception, thus wrongly focusing on the centrality of the act of watching in

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<sup>22</sup> Mark, Poster, *The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 93.

<sup>23</sup> Poster, *The Mode of Information*, 91.

<sup>24</sup> Greg Elmer, "The Panopticon, Discipline, Control," in *The Handbook of Surveillance Studies*, ed. David Lyon et al. (London: Routledge, 2012), 27.

social control. In focusing on Foucault's distinct interpretation of Bentham's model (the "assumption of always being watched"), Elmer notes that it is, in fact, disciplinary mechanisms, as these subtle forms of coercion, thus enacting "a subjectivation of power," are what lie at the core of Foucault's panoptic writing. For Elmer, a subtle reassembling of Foucault and Deleuze offers a fruitful avenue for "critiquing non-sovereign, or better, unquestioned, forms of social and political power—a quiet conformity that is only intensified by its automation, embeddedness and modulation that informs the near-future."<sup>25</sup> Elmer demonstrates the function of the consequent Foucault-Deleuze-inspired trajectory in his *Profiling Machine* (2004) to extend and expand the scope of Gandy's conception of panoptic sort and Roger Clarke's (1988) work on "dataveillance" into the study of the emergence of automated, networked systems of control situated within and afforded by the interconnected communication and information technologies. Clark's dataveillance is one of the earliest attempts at describing the powerful and transformative effect of computerization on surveillance that involves systemic monitoring and investigation of behaviour and conducts based on the information gathered on individuals or groups of people.

Building upon Foucault's creative account of Bentham's panoptic model, Elmer's subsequent text offers an update on Clarke and Gandy's contributions in addressing the prevalence of sorting practices in everyday act of consumption enhanced by automation and real-time networking capabilities of advanced technologies. Elmer engages in a topographic and networked understanding of consumer profiling, datamining, solicitation, and feedback technologies, through which demographic and psychographic information is automatically gathered on consumers, stored in databases, and cross-referenced with other data to prescribe possible near-future relationships for marketing purposes. Elmer's forward-looking and

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<sup>25</sup> Elmer, "The Panopticon, Discipline, Control," 28.

topographic perspective on consumer surveillance consolidates the key aspects of Foucauldian discipline and Deleuzian control to formulate a “diagrammatic” approach to consumer surveillance that emphasises the uninterrupted automatic functioning of the power within the cybernetic dimension of the information driven economy.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, Elmer’s conceptualization of consumer surveillance maps the relationship between Foucault, spatiality, and consumption to demonstrate the functioning of circular and self-governing “panoptic surveillance,” which aims at finding valuable relationships and associations between clusters of consumer data in topographically dispersed “consuming places” as to predict the future. The genius of the panoptic diagram, therefore, is to economize the past, present, and future, as the past becomes the “blueprint” for determining access to possible futures. For Elmer, thanks to the technological developments and innovations and the collapse of production/consumption distinction as a consequence, the increasingly automated and networked consumer feedback techniques are valuable strategic intelligence gathering through which consumers are grouped based on the similarities of their patterns of consumptions and integrated into the production, distribution, and sales “loop.”<sup>27</sup> According to Elmer, the panoptic profiling machine works with the disciplinary systems of reward and punishment to not monitor and conform consumers to social norms, but rather induce them into complying with the solicitation for their personal information in exchange for products and services.<sup>28</sup> In short, the success of the personal information economy can be traced to the ways in which the automated, circular effect of the reward and punishment of the panoptic profiling machine seemingly works between consumers and producers: as the consumers enjoy the “ultimate convenience” of products and services by

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<sup>26</sup> Greg Elmer, *Profiling Machines: Mapping the Personal Information Economy* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2003), 47.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 49.

surrendering their personal information, the producers integrate the “consumer intelligence” into wider networked economies of production, distribution, and sales. Elmer, in fact, expertly extends Foucault’s consideration of space in his formulation of discipline into networked and topographical understanding of contemporary consumer profiling technologies.

Massimo Ragnedda (2011) extends the circular link between consumer surveillance and space that accounts for automated information collection and processing in real time that leads to the construction of consuming bodies and space. In his view, the systematic and methodical use of transactional and personal information about consumer subjects works to build the “new electronic cage” for controlling and managing consumers. Building upon Foucault’s disciplinary panopticon, Ragnedda’s new electronic cage suggests the intensification of consumer surveillance continuously shape and modify consumer behaviour in the present and the future through the process of generating the categories of idealised consuming bodies from large databases. The author sees the new electronic cage as “more all-encompassing and complete, being able to produce a complete profile of citizens and consumers in real time.”<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, surveillance has become increasingly normalized and pervasive, as it actively involves in the process of rationalization, which was once characteristic of the past modernity. Ragnedda argues that the new datafied form of surveillance works to define the threshold for regulating and managing of everyday life, by generating the boundaries of regular/irregular, inclusion/exclusion, and integration/separation.<sup>30</sup> Ragnedda’s assertion of the emergence of a new disciplinary space, what he terms as the “cyber panopticon,” is an admiring attempt to extend Foucault’s spatial logic of discipline to contemporary consumer governance. Yet, his

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<sup>29</sup> Massimo Ragnedda, “Social control and surveillance in the society of consumers,” *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 3, no. 6 (June 2011): 180.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 186.

incorporation of Foucault remains largely superficial. Conversely, Rob Shields' (1992) examination of the spatial governance of the department store hints at the valuable Foucauldian disciplinary power and its spatial strategies. Unlike the above-noted analyses of surveillance, whose main focus lies on datafied form of governance and control, Shields' work introduces a refreshing but very brief explanation of spatial and architectural organization and control of the disciplinary department store that actively works to define the boundaries between the permitted and prohibited, shape consumer behaviour, and entice consumers into buying. As explained by Shields, "Although the promoted image is one of freedom, unfettered impulse buying, and liminality, the reality is one of control, new forms of discipline, and surveillance."<sup>31</sup> Despite its brevity, Shields' claim of the spatiality of consumer governance is a welcoming and inspiring contribution on surveillance, space, and consumption beyond the virtualized consumption spaces.

In "Brandscapes of control? Surveillance, marketing and the co-construction of subjectivity and space in neo-liberal capitalism," David Murakami Wood and Kirstie Ball (2013) develop further the relationship between surveillance, spatiality, and consumption, by extending Foucault's later work on biopolitical governance into the socio-spatial understanding of consumer surveillance apparatus. The authors utilize the marketing term "brandscape," coined by blending the words "brand" and "landscape," as a new mode of governance and control of consumers and consumption that operates through simultaneous construction and reconstruction of space and desiring body. The brandscape plans and fabricates branded spaces that combine ubiquitous surveillance, predictive analytics, and marketing strategies to facilitate and exercise

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<sup>31</sup> Rob Shields, "Social Spatialisation and the Built Environment: The West Edmonton Mall," Research Gate, accessed Jun1, 2021, 12, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238395627\\_Social\\_Spatialization\\_and\\_the\\_Built\\_Environment\\_The\\_West\\_Edmonton\\_Mall](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238395627_Social_Spatialization_and_the_Built_Environment_The_West_Edmonton_Mall); originally published in *Society and Space* 7 (June 1989): 147-164.

greater control over consumer subjects. The functioning of Brandscapes relies on rapid collection, recording, and processing information on consumer behaviour in real time to define categories and virtual profiles in databases accordingly in order to anticipate patterns of purchase and optimize consumer experience.<sup>32</sup> Such brand-oriented spatial arrangements work to enhance positive affective relations with consumers, in order to seduce them into participating in the surveillance system by sharing their personal information that would otherwise remain unattainable.<sup>33</sup> Similar to West and Grusin, Murakami Wood and Ball's turn to affect in their examination of intensification of surveillance coincides with the remodeling of the production processes and the mobilization of novel strategies and techniques in production-consumption to include a new level of emphasis on affect, which in turn has redefined what counts as intellect and intellectual labour in late capitalism.

Nigel Thrift offers a complex picture of contemporary capitalism in that "value increasingly arises not from what is but from what is not yet but can potentially become, that is from the pull of the future, and from the new distributions of the sensible that can arise from that change."<sup>34</sup> This is to say, the functioning of late capitalism is characterized by continuous invention, innovation, process, becoming, and self-production. Maurizio Lazzarato (1996) sees the collapse of production-consumption distinction and the subsequent move from work to never-ending process as to demonstrate the traits of the shift from material to immaterial productive processes and labour activity, beyond workplace. As explained by Franco Berardi, "Capital no longer recruits people, it buys packets of time, separated from their interchangeable

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<sup>32</sup> David Murakami Wood and Kirstie Ball, "Brandscapes of Control? Surveillance, Marketing and the Co-Construction of Subjectivity and Space in Neo-Liberal Capitalism," *Marketing theory* 13, no. 1 (2013): 50-51.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>34</sup> Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*, 31.

and contingent bearers.”<sup>35</sup> In his *Signs and Machines*, Lazzarato further complicates his depiction of the new mode of power, by reviving Guattari’s “machinic enslavement,” considering it the key driving force of late capitalism. In machinic enslavement, productivity of capital depends on the ensemble of the series of humans and nonhumans: on the one hand, mobilizing the pre-individual and supra-individual capacities, functioning outside the body, and on the other, ensuring of the intelligence and physical capacities of machines.<sup>36</sup> In Lazzarato’s account of the move from work to process in contemporary capitalism, “political economy is identical with ‘subjective economy’,”<sup>37</sup> or what Thrift (2005) calls “affective economy.” Considering the activation of consumers and everyday spaces for endless innovation and invention that are key to the functioning of late capitalism, Murakami Wood and Ball’s idea of brandscapes, therefore, is part of the new affective economy and the recent restructuring of producer-consumer and further intensification and extension of surveillance accordingly. Owing the advent of ubiquitous computing and distributed sensor networks, brandscapes is “where the subject is co-constructed with space as a desirous networked body, whose desires and connections are constantly monitored and encoded, such that they can be anticipated and pre-empted through interaction with the brandscape.”<sup>38</sup>

In this way, in Murakami Wood and Ball’s account, the affective experience of these brand-oriented environments ultimately aims to shape consumer behaviour, turning the individual into a “desiring body” and securing repeat purchases accordingly. “Brandscapes,” as explained by Murakami Wood and Ball, “reconstruct the consumer as an affective, desiring,

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<sup>35</sup> Franco Berardi, “Bifo,” *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*, trans. Francesca Cadel and Giuseppina Mecchia (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext, 2009), 192.

<sup>36</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*, trans. Joshua David Jordan (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2014), 45.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Murakami Wood and Ball, “Brandscapes of Control?,” 48.

pleasure-seeking body as they move through consumption spaces.<sup>39</sup> In this way, for the authors, a brandscape demonstrates the traits of “governance of desire,” as it normalizes consumer surveillance into the very structure of daily lives and within social spaces that aims at both the production and management of desire.<sup>40</sup> Murakami Wood and Ball’s socio-spatial theorization of consumer surveillance presents an inspiring account of the active role of space and spatial strategies within consumer governance. Yet, the question surrounding the space of biopolitical remains largely untheorized. In “Michel Foucault and the Smart City: Power Dynamics Inherent in Contemporary Governing through Code,” Francisco Klauser, Till Paasche, and Ola Söderström (2014) make a nuanced contribution on this very issue by returning to Foucault’s own formulation of space and power. The authors rely on the spatial logic of Foucauldian security to conceptualize the emergence of a more intensified form of surveillance, increasingly integrated into the fabric of urban environments, as the technique of “governing through code.” The new “techno-mediated” surveillance apparatus is an ideal characteristic for governance at-a-distance of the complexities and dynamics of everyday life through code.<sup>41</sup> While the authors’ work focuses on the development of smart regulation in the dynamics of urban spaces, the genius of the conception of governing through code in the context of consumption and spatiality is to automate the management of everyday practices and spaces through the quantification and datafication of various aspects of daily lives and constant optimization accordingly. Similar to Murakami Wood and Ball, the authors’ formulation of the new mode of control mitigates the

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<sup>39</sup> Murakami Wood and Ball, “Brandscapes of Control?,” 54.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>41</sup> Francisco Klauser, Till Paasche, and Ola Söderström, “Michel Foucault and the Smart City: Power Dynamics Inherent in Contemporary Governing through Code,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 32, no. 5 (2014): 872.

distinction between offline and online spaces and moves to consider what Murakami Wood and Ball (2014) refer to as the “recombinant” of virtual and material.

While Foucault’s work, particularly his *Discipline and Punish* writing has been highly influential in the major studies in contemporary surveillance, critics of surveillance point to the limitations of Foucault’s work in dealing with the impact of the information and communication technologies, as well as the emerging new social conditions. Lyon (1994) notes that “[t]he perverse irony is that Foucault himself seems to have made no comments about the relevance of panoptic discipline to the ways that administrative power has been enlarged and enhanced by computers, especially since the 1960s.”<sup>42</sup> On the one hand, the panopticon offers key principles to a few numbers of work to draw the relationship between surveillance technologies, spatiality, and consumption, moving beyond the obsessive fixation with corporeal surveillance, guiding the criticisms of Foucault’s work (e.g. Elmer 2004; Ragnedda 2011). Lyon draws attention to the contribution of these studies, which have elevated the concept of “electronic panopticism,” in order to extend the panoptic perspective into the understanding of the impact of contemporary application of communication and information technologies into every aspect of individual lives, as well as the increasing bureaucratic control through information databases.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, critical perspectives on Foucault’s work seemingly view its potential capacity in fostering generalization or simplistic inclination of the society-as-prison metaphor, which often has been embraced for all forms of surveillance. These analyses refer to Foucault’s concept of panopticon as “for all-seeing,” the “moral architecture,” or the “arch-metaphor of modern power,” where “the few” watch “the many,” considered key to transforming and controlling one’s “soul,” such

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<sup>42</sup> Lyon, *The Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994), 67.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 76.

that individuals adjust their conducts “in prescribed directions” (Bauman and Lyon 2012; Haggerty 2006; Lyon 1994; Mathiesen 1997). This view of spatially and architecturally imposed visibility, essentially suggesting that one is always watched, coupled with the hierarchical act of watching, has guided these dominant assumptions to continue emphasizing the salience of total vision in Foucault’s formulation. Such assumptions, therefore, as I demonstrate throughout this chapter, often overlook or even disregard Foucault’s genealogical project of *Discipline and Punish* and his broader studies of power and human subjectivity. More importantly, they use Bentham’s’ logic of panoptic prison in the place of Foucault’s complex formulation of discipline, so much so that Foucault’s lifelong preoccupation with the question of power has been reduced to a few pages of *Discipline and Punish* where he introduces Bentham’s eighteenth-century architectural plans of all-seeing modern prison.

While the above-noted studies indicate that the datafied form of surveillance displays some of panoptic attributes, William Bogard (1996) claims that “the idea of surveillance—or panoptic—alone cannot comprehend the direction being taken by contemporary forms of social control.”<sup>44</sup> In the contemporary “telematic societies,” much of the information strategies and technologies are fluid, dispersed, and invisible, and therefore, Bogard argues that the processes of profiling and surveillance need to be reframed in terms of “simulation,” as a kind of “imaginary panopticon.” Following Deleuze, Bogard notes that the integrated operations between computerized simulation and computerized surveillance manifest the attempts to reach the “fantasy” of total control, thus taking it to its absolute spatial and temporal limits. In Bogard’s view, the idea of “simulation of surveillance” is not a kind of “illusion” of surveillance,

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<sup>44</sup> William Bogard, *The Simulation of Surveillance: Hypercontrol in Telematic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19.

but rather it works to eliminate the difference between the illusion and the real. As Bogard puts it, “The better a simulation, the less awareness there is of the artifact that identifies it as simulation.”<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, Bogard refers to these simulational technological systems in relation to surveillance as “forms of hypersurveillant control.” Such anticipatory simulations have brought new technical capabilities of pre-exposure and pre-recording, prior to the actualization of an event, thus operating as this kind of surveillance in advance.<sup>46</sup> Bogard’s account of “hypersurveillant” control shifts focus away from Baudrillard’s theory of simulation, concerning the lack of distinction between reality and “simulacra” (representation), toward Deleuze’s work, which asserts a distinction between the “virtual,” the “possible,” and the “actual.” The key point here is that for Deleuze, following Bergson, the possible is not real, whereas the virtual is real, but not actual, always involved in the emergence of new potentials. Echoing the anticipatory logic at the heart of both Amoore’s and Grusin’s theorization of contemporary surveillance, for Bogard, the simulation control aims at the spatial and temporal arrangement of the events so that the future is always imaginable and knowable in advance. In “telematic societies,” Bogard writes, the goal is “to solve the problem of perceptual control at a distance through technologies for cutting the time of information to zero.”<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, Gilles Deleuze’s (1992) brief essay, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” locates the question of the emergence of a more intensified form of surveillance beyond Foucault’s discipline and its spatial strategies. Deleuze posits a new mechanism of power in an effort to draw attention to the developments in computers and information technologies and the shift from discipline to “control” among government agencies and corporations alike and on the

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<sup>45</sup> Bogard, *The Simulation of Surveillance*, 31.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

level of the entire society as a consequence. Deleuze's formulation of control marks a departure from Foucault's disciplinary power, which Deleuze sees as primarily relying on molds and fixed spaces of enclosures, toward the emerging networked forms of surveillance that are increasingly unstable, dynamic, and fluid through employing digital tactics and technologies. In his thinking through Foucault, Deleuze emphasizes the mechanism of power that follows upon the sovereign and disciplinary societies in what he calls societies of control. He refers to "control," or "modulation," as fluid, variable, and continuously transforming from one moment to the other.<sup>48</sup> In focusing on the shift from the analog to digital realm, the core of Deleuze's "Postscript," therefore, has to do with machinic technologies and their relationship to particular kind of spaces. Deleuze schematically sets up this techno-spatial correlation in three societies of sovereignty, discipline, and control. Where "the old societies of sovereignty made use of simple machines—levers, pulleys, clocks," and "the recent disciplinary societies equipped themselves with machines involving energy," Deleuze argues that "the societies of control operate with machines of a third type, computers."<sup>49</sup> In Deleuze's view, with the computerized, technological evolution, under the modulatory mode of power, the concepts of individuals and mass become "dividuals" and data.<sup>50</sup> Where disciplinary societies worked in a closed system of the analogical model in molding individual bodies into a mass, dividuals in control societies are involved in the constant and free-floating process of modulation as a result of the deployment of computing technologies. Deleuze sees discipline that tended to restrain by the discrete and enclosing nature of institutions is replaced by the open systems of control model made up of inseparable

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<sup>48</sup> Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (Winter 1992): 4.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

variations that allow for infinite and free movement, while greatly enhancing discipline through maintaining “continuous control and instant communication.”<sup>51</sup>

Contrary to consequent reading, Deleuze’s (1988) former account of Foucault asserts that Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* manages to push past the dualism between matter (institutional structures and arrangements like prison) and functions (punishment), but also the distinction between content and expression, thus eluding the enclosures of the disciplinary panopticon. This is to say, the prison becomes as a way of acting upon the bodies in time and space that is irreducible to content and expression or the seeing/being seen relationship, but rather concerned with continually changing matter and functions taking place in an “informal space.”<sup>52</sup> This informal space, Deleuze argues, is a “diagram,” or an “abstract machine,” that is “[h]ighly unstable or fluid, continually churning up matter and functions in a way likely to create change.”<sup>53</sup> With this, Deleuze tends to detach the panoptic subject, as Elmer argues, “to enable a fluid social and individual field.”<sup>54</sup> Despite the suggestive contradictions and the “underdeveloped” inclination of Deleuze’s proposed key arguments in “Postscript” (Elmer 2012), this assertion of the transition from the old to the new, from the panopticon to more “liquid” forms of surveillance, reflects the idea that underlines a change from the fixed and “solid” spatial structures and arrangement of the past modernity into a new array of flows and open system, which in turn makes social forms highly fluid, flexible, and mobile (Bauman and Lyon 2012).

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<sup>51</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 174.

<sup>52</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 34.

<sup>53</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*, 35.

<sup>54</sup> Elmer, “The Panopticon, Discipline, Control,” 26.

The emphasis on the shift in the modality of contemporary surveillance is evident in Kevin Haggerty's (2006) "Tear down the walls: on demolishing the panopticon," where he stresses the emergence of a new data-driven dispositif. He draws attention to a shift from hierarchical observation of the panoptic model to a new form that is more pervasive, and that surveillance no longer targets exclusively the unmanaged, as those who need to be corrected to fit the requirements of modernity. It rather targets all segments of the population according to their personal information about day-to-day activities, communications, transportations, and transactions. In his narrow reading of Foucault, Haggerty argues that the nuances and dynamics of power involved in the contemporary surveillance systems move beyond the architectural and spatial arrangements of the panoptic model and the human guards as sole supervisory operatives and instead extend into intimate human-technological collaborations, through which "the role of humans increasingly involves monitoring the technologies that scrutinize the behaviours of other people, places, and things, which are positioned at considerable distance."<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, in Haggerty's view, Foucault's thinking around governmentality offers a more promising path to the understanding of contemporary surveillance than the panopticon does. While Haggerty's insistence on Foucault's governmentality and his broader study of power is an attempt to offer a critical distance from the overemphasis on Foucault's panopticism in surveillance studies, it remains largely underdeveloped and limited to a few suggestions, so much so that Foucault's own work offhandedly remains obscure.

Thomas Mathiesen's (1997) extends the discussion of spatiality and surveillance to the everyday media practices and spaces. Mathiesen argues that contemporary surveillance

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<sup>55</sup> Kevin Haggerty, "Tear Down the Walls: On Demolishing the Panopticon," in *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond*, ed. David Lyon (Mill Street: Willan Publishing, 2006), 32.

demonstrates the traits of the process of “synopticism” that works in parallel to panopticism. In his “The Viewer Society,” Mathiesen revisits Foucault’s concept of panopticism to offer a new theoretical framing for understanding the intersection between surveillance practices and the developments of mass media technologies, particularly television, which have been at the core of modernity. In a society in which the television format has introduced dramatic shifts in communications, Mathiesen believes that the actual operation of surveillance involves a reciprocal mode of control, which resides in the reversal of what Mathiesen sees as Foucault’s interpretation of Bentham’s model of panopticon in terms of the unidirectional relationship between the watchtowers and the inmates. According to Mathiesen, where Foucault’s panopticism represents a situation that “the few see the many,” the developments in the context of mass media technologies have afforded an environment where a large number are able to “see the few.”<sup>56</sup> Mathiesen’s synoptic shift suggests the significance of the inverted act of watching in social control that capitalizes on mass media consumers whose behaviour and attitudes are formed and transformed by the media. As Mathiesen’s proposition of “the many seeing the few” suggests, the key effect of mass media essentially involves the situation from below where the media render the consumers disciplined and regulated through the means of self-discipline and self-regulation to ultimately conform themselves to the conditions that make the modernity possible. As Mathiesen puts it,

“the control and discipline of the ‘soul’, that is, the creation of human beings who control themselves through self-control and who thus fit neatly into a so-called democratic capitalist society, is a task which is actually fulfilled by modern Synopticon, whereas Foucault saw it as a function of Panopticon.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas Mathiesen, “The Viewer Society: Michel Foucault’s ‘Panopticon’ Revisited,” *Theoretical Criminology* 15 no.2 (1997): 219.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 215.

In the television-driven society that Mathiesen refers to as “viewer society,” synopticism of mass media, especially television, works as a discipline of consciousness. In other words, Mathiesen’s synopticism demonstrates the significant role of the media space in consumer surveillance that encourages consumer subjects, who are capable of self-regulation, to contribute actively their personal information to databases. Mathiesen emphasizes the intensification and extension of surveillance, as a result of the proliferation of these media technologies, in the following remark: “things are much worse than Michel Foucault imagined.”<sup>58</sup> While Mathiesen’s synoptic thinking is entrenched in the effect of the mass media, his qualitative rearrangement of the practice of watching from the top-down form to the bottom-up form of observation has been adopted by many scholars of surveillance as a support to their own theoretical framings of contemporary surveillance dynamics and database technologies, in an effort to generate conversations beyond the panoptic arrangement of consuming places (Andrejevic 2003; Bauman 1998; Bauman and Lyon 2012; Fiske 1998; Lyon 2006; Haggerty 2006).

One subsequent trajectory of Mathiesen’s synoptic argument posits the democratization and normalization potentials of contemporary surveillance and its technological connections (Fiske 1993; Haggerty 2006; Haggerty and Erickson 2000). This trend argues that recent advances in technology have problematized the hierarchical observation established through the panoptic arrangement, which in turn have moved the practice of watching to the citizens, and as a result, institutions are now subject to public scrutiny. Haggerty (2006) follows the trend of the bottom-up processes of observation to draw attention to the nuances added to surveillance practices and their possible implications, namely the proliferation of the surveillance sites, spatialization of surveillance, and the collapse of the watcher/watched distinction afforded by

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<sup>58</sup> Mathiesen, “The Viewer Society,” 231.

networked communication technologies and interactive media space while the social hierarchies remain intact. In Haggerty's view, the datafied form of surveillance and scrutiny of the powerful "few" by the less powerful "many" are most likely to be exploited and capitalized upon to leverage the resources that will benefit the interests of the powerful groups. While this presupposition remains underdeveloped and untheorized, Haggerty suggest that "If, as seems to be the case, powerful agents become increasingly attuned to the degree of scrutiny to which they are subjected and the reams of information they inadvertently surrender on a regular basis, they will likely develop a self-interest in the politics of surveillance."<sup>59</sup> The compulsive fascinations with the bodily gaze and the democratization of surveillance hierarchies extend into what John Fiske (1993) terms contemporary surveillance as "inverted panopticon." In his examination of the football stadium, Fiske describes the role of the football fans, who are made measurable and knowable through panoptic control in workplace, shifts away from being the objects of surveillance toward becoming the surveillance operatives in the football stadium, by getting involved in monitoring the players, who through the "statistical subjection and total visibility" are turned into "a bobo doll upon which the fans can punch away their frustration."<sup>60</sup> In this way, Fiske's formulation echoes Mathiesen's synoptic argument, in highlighting the effect of technological developments and innovations that, on the one hand, expand the scope of contemporary panoptic gaze, and on the other hand, push the panoptic power toward those who have been the target of its gaze, thus projecting the possible leveling of surveillance hierarchies and the distribution of surveillance within space.

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<sup>59</sup> Haggerty, "Tear Down the Walls," 30.

<sup>60</sup> John Fiske, *Power Plays, Power Works* (New York: Verson, 1993), 84-85.

While the above-noted trend from Mathieson's conception of synopticon hints at the increasing public access to surveillance technologies and the democratizing and participatory impacts of these developments, the 2004 *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched* by Mark Andrejevic extends the discussion of the spatiality of consumer surveillance into the examination of the relationship between media space, mediation, and the role of consumers as labour. Andrejevic offers an alternative reading of the synoptic argument to trace the interactive media potential for surveillance practices in the way in which panopticism and synopticism are merged together as "synoptic panopticism." He coins the metaphor "reality TV" to draw attention to the emergent forms of normalized surveillance in the new era of interactive media space and technologies in the ways in which the functioning of the panoptic monitoring relies on the work of synoptic subjects. With this, Andrejevic posits a new system of control in which the labour associated with panoptic act of watching is becoming increasingly integrated in the labour of being watched.<sup>61</sup> For Andrejevic, the success of the consumer surveillance is indebted and interconnected to the new interactive media formats, which have made possible for consumer media to work closely with producing media, thereby creating convergence between leisure, consumptive, and productive activities. In Andrejevic's view, the surveillance-based interactive economy relies on what business consultant Joseph Pine has termed the blending surveillance with interactivity as "feedback loop of mass customization."<sup>62</sup> On the one hand, it offers a positive picture, or rather the illusion, of democratic participation through building optimized consumer experiences, and on the other hand, it obtains information on consumers' demographic and psychographic characteristics, which in turn is used to further advantage the capitalist gains.

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<sup>61</sup> Mark Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 53.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

In other words, the interactive media technologies afford marketers the deployment of a series of spatial and architectural strategies that aim at creating a qualitative consumer experience while simultaneously capture and record massive amounts of information on consumers.

This synoptic-panoptic perspective suggests that the interactive, individualized and customized marketing strategies have transformed the role of consumers from the one formerly characterized by passively and unproductively absorbing consumption decisions towards one participating actively and productively in these decisions, which leads them to disclose personal information to marketers willingly and cheerfully for the predictive analysis of the patterns of their consumptive behaviours.<sup>63</sup> Where Andrejevic shifts focus toward the reciprocal relationship between the active participation of the synoptic subject and the productivity of surveillant gaze in the interactive media space, Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) ground-breaking work on "liquid modernity" demonstrates the ways in which "the many" are seduced and groomed into the consumer game by the arousal of short-lived desires and volatile wishes to fulfill a subjective sense of "adequacy" that is unlikely to be ever fully satisfied. Intrigued by Mathiesen's formulation, Bauman's conception of liquid modernity pinpoints the significance of a qualitative transformation of social control from the "society of producers" into the present-day "society of consumers" that moves away from what Bauman sees as Foucault's top-down panopticon to bottom-up synopticon. This is to say, the world of consumers is no longer guided by coercion but rather by seduction and temptation and, therefore, not by normative regulation but by needs creation. In this way, consumer surveillance involves consumer subjects in the process of

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<sup>63</sup> Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, 44.

recording and adding their information to databases through the application of seduction strategies in space.

Bauman subsequently extends his idea of liquidity into the new modality of surveillance. In *Liquid Surveillance* (2012), Bauman engages in comprehensive correspondence with David Lyon to bring together his earlier work on “liquid modernity” in a close collaboration with Lyon’s theorization of “surveillance society,” as a way of collaborative thinking about contemporary surveillance. In its core, the authors accentuate the nature of present-day consumer surveillance by revealing the ties between advanced surveillance technologies and the “liquification” of social life and everyday space in late modernity, which is characterized by constant mobility and change and increasing individualization. According to Bauman and Lyon, liquid surveillance can be understood as “less a complete way of specifying surveillance and more an orientation, a way of situating surveillance developments in the fluid and unsettling modernity of today.”<sup>64</sup> In the transition from solid to liquid, as power flows fluidly and more freely “with the speed of electronic signals,” any sort of “barriers, fences, borders and checkpoints” is assumed as “a nuisance” that needs “to be overcome or circumvented.”<sup>65</sup> Understood in this way, Bauman and Lyon see surveillance as increasingly ubiquitous, operating with less friction in open system within the fluidity of liquid modernity, that spreads in unimaginable ways, thereby bypassing the fixed spaces and enclosure of Bentham’s panopticon.

For Bauman and Lyon, liquid surveillance represents a less invasive form of surveillance, especially found in the consumers world, that operates through establishing and monitoring behavioural patterns of the consumers. The interactive spaces afforded by the emergent media

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<sup>64</sup> Bauman and Lyon, *Liquid Surveillance*, 9.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

invite consumers to actively participate while information on user's interest and desire are collected and used to provide service, and simultaneously, "cheerfully [make] consumers aware of how they are surveilled by others."<sup>66</sup> In this sense, consumers willingly add to information databases so that they can enjoy the convenient experience databases offer. In this collaboration, Bauman and Lyon suggest that "instead of necessity chasing its victims, it is now the task of the volunteers to chase the opportunities of servitude."<sup>67</sup> Following Mathiesen, for Bauman, DIY, as a form of self making process, is a synoptic style of surveillance in which the many are seduced into watching the few. It is, therefore, "surveillance without surveillers."<sup>68</sup> Accordingly, the authors claim that today's consumer surveillance that they refer to as "DIY surveillance" signals a shift in the location of surveillance from the managers to the managed, contrasting to the watchtowers over the inmates in Bentham/Foucault's model. As the authors explain, "just as snails carry their homes, so the employees of the brave new liquid modern world must grow and carry their personal panopticons on their own bodies."<sup>69</sup> In other words, Bauman and Lyon's liquid surveillance shows the favourable traits for spatial and architectural restructuring of consumer governance at-a-distance, as it normalizes surveillance practices in everyday consumption spaces. Considering these changes, Bauman and Lyon see Bentham's panopticon has become "post-panopticon."

Following this discussion, literatures in surveillance studies have pointed to the shifting dynamics of contemporary surveillance practices and the emergence of a new modality of governance and management of people. In their theorization, while a considerable attention has been dedicated to the intensification of surveillance in relation to the question of space

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<sup>66</sup> Bauman and Lyon, *Liquid Surveillance*, 114.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 54.

(surveillance-space axis), particularly the nature of interactive media spaces afforded by networked communication and information technologies, there is a small handful of surveillance theories that speak directly to the practices of everyday consumption (surveillance-consumption axis). The perspectives on the architectural and spatial dynamics of contemporary surveillance demonstrate the ways in which space plays a significant role in mediating the mode of ordering and simultaneously the new spaces that are conceived and constructed by the surveillance technologies (Amoore 2013; Andrejevic 2003; Bauman and Lyon 2012; Bigo 2008, Bogard 1996; Ericson and Haggerty 2000; Fiske 1993; Grusin 2010; Haggerty 2006; Mathiesen 1997; Poster 1990). The intensification of surveillance is linked to affective, unconscious or seductive use of everyday media, owing to the collapse of production-consumption distinction, in order to get subjects to participate in their own surveillance by sharing their personal and transactional information. Surveillance technologies serve as rationalizing authority that aim at generating the framework within which the patterns of human behaviour become foreseeable and easy to influence and control. Gandy's (1992) panoptic sort, in fact, demonstrates the functioning of techno-logical consumer surveillance in constraining consumer subjects on the basis of previously generated virtual profiles. A few studies in contemporary surveillance offer Foucauldian perspectives on consumption and space (surveillance-space-consumption axis) that help to demonstrate the spatial strategies crucial to consumer governance (Elmer 2004; Murakami Wood and Ball 2014; Ragnedda 2011). While these studies offer much needed perspectives on the intensification of surveillance by engaging with the discussion of surveillance, space, and consumption, the intersection of these three elements remains largely underexplored in surveillance scholarship, or it is often reduced to the disciplinary panopticon.

As demonstrated in this chapter, there is an obsessive fascination with Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, in particular his conception of panopticism, to either emphasize its continuing relevance for understanding the intensified systems of contemporary surveillance or to take a strong stance against it. Foucault's critics insist on the limitations of Foucault's formulation and that his panoptic model is outdated and fail to adequately grasp the problem of surveillance practices in contemporary capitalist society. The developments in digital infrastructures have transformed how surveillance operates with increasingly decentralized, deterritorialized, and dispersed networks, which has meant it is unbounded from any centralized form of spatial observation like that of panopticon. As argued in this section, on the one hand, these critiques adopt a reductionist approach to Foucault's conception of panopticism to one with an enclosed punitive space and unidirectional gaze from the watchtower and also one that works to repress rather than produce. Hence, they overlook Foucault's primary focus on the self-governing techniques and automatic functioning of power, and ultimately the subjectivation process. On the other hand, the two key opposing accounts of Foucault's work dominated the field of surveillance studies often overlook or at least fail to acknowledge Foucault's influential analysis of power and his thinking around governmentality. Consequently, these scholars seek refuge in Deleuze either to deviate from the all-seeing panoptic model of surveillance through Deleuze's (1988) reading of Foucault or claim Deleuze's (1992) five-page-long "Postscript" as a corrective to the fixed structuring and enclosure underpinning the panoptic model. As a result, Foucault's overarching contribution on the very issue of different modes of governance and their spatial strategies is not fully appreciated and yet to be realized in the examination of contemporary consumer surveillance. In fact, Klauser, Paasche, and Söderström's (2014) Foucauldian investigation of governance at-a-distance of urban system demonstrates the

significance of Foucault's theories to the understanding of the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption. The following section conveys the theoretical framework underpinning my dissertation project by revisiting Foucault's theories of power and governmentality that can be used to investigate the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption.

### **Revisiting Foucault's Power and Governmentality**

My study of the intensification of consumer surveillance over time departs from the dominant interpretation of Foucault's work through the prism of his *Discipline and Punish* (1979). Instead, I turn to his theory of power and his nuanced approach to governmentality, as well as key concepts and arguments from his later lectures on *Security, Territory, Population* (2008). Foucault's theories of power and governmentality provide valuable points of departure for utilizing the surveillance-space-consumption axis to enable the understanding of intensification of consumer surveillance over time across differing modes of space and spatial arrangement.

The Foucauldian turn to genealogical philosophy of subject during the 1970s coincided with Foucault's growing interest in the problematic of power. Foucault never gives a clear definition of power. However, Foucauldian emphasis on the network character of power moves beyond the general tendencies that see power as a centralized force that is simply a property of the state, a particular institution, or apparatus, or as something that is confined to a subject or body. It rather embraces the type of power that is everywhere, pervasive, and dispersed, as it exists only in relationships. In so doing, Foucault shows the positive nature of power that is exercised rather than possessed; it is fundamentally productive rather than coercive in that it transforms human beings into subjects who act. It produces knowledge and designates

relationships between individuals and things. “We must cease once and for all to describe the effect of power in negative terms,” Foucault writes, as a kind of power that aims to exclude, repress, censor, abstract, mask, and conceal. Instead, Foucault, refers to power as a productive force: “it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.”<sup>70</sup> Insofar as Foucault understands power as a network of relations, power is articulated in actions. Foucault locates the exercise of power in its capacity “to structure the possible field of action of others,” the productive capacity of which is characterized by acting upon the acting subjects, individual or collective subjects, according to possible actions which may or may not have already been actualized. As Foucault explains, power is “an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future.”<sup>71</sup> Read in this way, the exercise of power resides in the condition of possibilities that is continually realized in the field of knowledge and discursive and non-discursive practices, and inscribes into and assign values to individual and collective subjects. In this way, Foucault’s conceptualization of power shifts the focus away from the oppressive, violent form toward the more subtle form of domination achieved through the art of government, what Foucault (2007) calls “governmentality.”

Insofar as Foucault’s analysis of power is concerned with techniques, tactics, and mechanisms, and that the exercise of power is a mode of action upon the actions of others, the problematic of power is no longer simply the question of governing an individual body. It is rather concerned with governing the multiplicities of mobile people and things, as well as facing the uncertainty inherent in governing these multiplicities. Following Guillaume de La Perrière,

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<sup>70</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 194.

<sup>71</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” In *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 220.

for Foucault, governmentality is concerned with “the right disposition of things,” in a sense that “it arranges things for an end.”<sup>72</sup> It involves “a sort of complex composed of men and things,” capital, goods, diseases and epidemics, production, and so forth.<sup>73</sup> As this suggests, people and things are characterized, classified and arranged in a relation. The art of government is essentially, as Foucault explains, “to answer the question of how to introduce economy—that is to say, the proper way of managing individuals, goods, and wealth, like the management of a family [...]—how to introduce this meticulous attention [...] into the management of the state.”<sup>74</sup> The art of governing the state, therefore, is situated in the question of economy. For Foucault, the exercise of power is far from being something cohesive and static across different times and in different contexts and societies. In his later lectures on governmentality, Foucault (2007) recognizes that one form of power does not give way to the other form in a simple and orderly chronological succession, but rather it is the relationship among them that changes in a given time and in a given society. This is to say, in thinking through Foucault’s complex approach to power, there is no society of security that has replaced the disciplinary society, which was followed after the society of sovereignty.

In focusing on the problematic of power, Foucault’s genealogical inquiry across the body of his work unfolds three distinct modalities of power and their particular ways of dealing with the problem of regulating and managing multiplicity and addressing the question of future uncertainty. These three modalities of power are: the legal or judicial form of sovereignty that Foucault associates with both classical political philosophy and a form that is reworked and recombined within contemporary systems; the non-juridico-legal framework that Foucault calls

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<sup>72</sup> Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France, 1977-78*, ed. Michel Senellart, et al., trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 98.

<sup>73</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 144.; see also Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population, 1977-78*, 96.

<sup>74</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 94.

discipline as a modern mode of power that was also present in the ancient system; and finally the apparatus of security as a novel modality of sovereignty that does not begin from the present nor does it merely belong to the contemporary system.<sup>75</sup> In contrast to Deleuze's oversimplistic inclination of the three societies of sovereignty, disciplinary, and control that offers predictable and planned chronological succession of elements and totalizing diagnoses of the modalities of power, Foucault's complex conception of power moves beyond the sequential and evolutionist perspective or the paradigm shift approach. In Foucault's own words,

there is not a series of successive elements, the appearance of the new causing the earlier ones to disappear... In reality you have a series of complex edifices in which, of course, the techniques themselves change and are perfected, or anyway become more complicated, but in which what above all changes is the dominant characteristic, or more exactly, the system of correlation between juridico-legal mechanisms, disciplinary mechanisms, and mechanisms of security.<sup>76</sup>

Thinking through Foucault, the reference to these three distinct modalities of power is not the matter of clear historical transition or what Alexander Galloway refers to as a type of historical "prioritization," from sovereignty to discipline to security or Deleuzian control.<sup>77</sup> It is also not meant to designate the origin of each mode of being to a specific type of society dated from a particular period of time, thus naively presenting the emergence of events in a successive, totalizing and planned way. It is rather the complex "history of the correlations" of techniques and technologies among the three modalities of power. This is to say, unlike the dominant surveillance-related interpretation of Foucault's work, which claim a discontinuity between sovereignty, discipline, and security or control (e.g. Bauman and Lyon 2012; Deleuze 1992; Grusin 2010; Lyon 1994; Haggerty 2006; Haggerty and Erickson 2007), Foucault's (2007) lesser

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<sup>75</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 6-7.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>77</sup> Alexander Galloway, "Computers and the Superfold," *Deleuze Studies* 6, no. 4 (2012): 525.

regarded argument in his later lectures on governmentality negates the disappearance of one element for the others. In this way, disciplinary mechanisms do not displace the juridico-legal mechanisms, nor the security framework comes in the place of discipline, but on the contrary, they all work in a complex “system of correlation,” in which the utilization of each technique and technology of power is weighted differently according to a specific enquiry “in different sectors, at a given moment, in a given society, in a given country.”<sup>78</sup>

Stephen Collier (2009) extends Foucault’s new correlational approach to differing modes of governance of multiplicity to what he terms as “topologies of power.” Collier’s topological dimension of Foucauldian power suggests a way to focus “on the broad configurational principles through which new formations of government are assembled, without implying that they arise from some inner necessity or coherence.”<sup>79</sup> According to Collier, the purpose of the topological approach is to bring “to light a heterogeneous space, constituted through multiple determinations, and not reducible to a given form of knowledge-power.”<sup>80</sup> This marks Foucault’s attempt to undermine telos, that is moving beyond the teleological approach to history and the totalizing and epochal claims about flows of power. In other words, different modes of governance diverge gradually rather than substantially or epochally. This gradual divergence demonstrates traits of “internally heterogeneous ‘forms of coherence’” in contrast to basic and discrete “edifices of internal homogeneity.”<sup>81</sup> In this way, the differing characteristic of different modes of governing and managing the multiplicity, as explained by Miller and Rose, is “[t]heir predominant ‘rationalities’ (ways of knowing a phenomenon) and ‘technologies’ (ways of acting

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<sup>78</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 8.

<sup>79</sup> Stephen J. Collier, “Topologies of Power: Foucault’s Analysis of Political Government beyond ‘Governmentality,’” *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, no. 6 (December 2009): 80, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409347694>.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 99.

<sup>81</sup> Klauser, Paasche, and Söderström, “Michel Foucault and the Smart City,” 873.

on it) ... vary in overall focus and emphasis rather than in nature.”<sup>82</sup> The goal is, therefore, to examine the dominant rationalities and technologies, which are distinctive to differing modes of governance, that allows to reveal the dynamics of particular ways of knowing and acting accordingly in dealing with the complexities and dynamics of the multiplicity. In his examination of differing modalities of power, Foucault draws a clear distinction between sovereignty, discipline, and security in how they each approach and treat differently the problem of multiplicities and the emergent uncertainty.

In Foucault’s reading, sovereign power as “living body” of a ruler, rather than a legitimate institutional model, is represented with self-legitimizing and authoritarian characterizations, and that it is the juridico-legal framework of power over “the right to take life or let live.”<sup>83</sup> Sovereign exercises his right to let live as a result of his privilege, as a juridical form of power, to the right to kill, that is the ruler’s right of seizure of “things, time, bodies, ultimately the life of subjects.”<sup>84</sup> Foucault’s concept of the right to kill, by which he refers to as “indirect murder,” as a form of indirect power over subjects, is a metaphor for broader social and political implications of the inclusionary and exclusionary practices to guarantee law and order of the sovereign within his territory and ultimately his own survival. This is to say, the political effectiveness of sovereignty is linked to the effectiveness of its legitimacy in the daily lives of its subjects. Individuals are actively constituted into the collective subject of the sovereign through social contract by pledging to submit to the sovereign power. Subsequently, the individual in the breach of law, in turn, breaks the social contract, and as a result, is excluded from participating in

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<sup>82</sup> Klauser, Paasche, and Söderström, “Michel Foucault and the Smart City,” 873.

<sup>83</sup> Michel Foucault, “17 March 1976,” in *“Society Must be Defended”*: Lectures at the College De France, 1975-76, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 2003), 241.

<sup>84</sup> Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, “Biopower Today,” *BioSocieties* 1 (2006):196.

the sovereign order by being subjected to the penal laws that punish and banish him.<sup>85</sup> For Foucault, the exclusion of the delinquent individual from the collective subject of social contract is in a way his exposure to death. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault's picturesque inscription of the public torture and killing of Robert-François Damiens, who was condemned in 1757 for attempting to assassinate Louis XV with a knife, epitomizes the sovereign's power over life and death.<sup>86</sup> Damien's refusal of obedience to the sovereign subjects him to death without mercy under the penal laws that mutilated, burned, tortured, quartered, and cut his body, and at the end threw his remains onto the fire, while he was still presumably alive. For Foucault, Damiens' public execution is not about punishing the convict body simply for his presumed crime as an individual, but rather it is a demonstration of the ways in which the sovereign exercises his right to take life or let live in a public display of power. In essence, this is a demonstration of his privilege as the sovereign exercising his juridico-legal form of power and his right to kill.

At the same time, the essence of sovereign power exceeds the theatres of power and public displays, in the way it depends on "a fine web of customary conventions, reciprocal obligations and the like," which aims to secure its objectives of prosperity and security in its model of moral economy.<sup>87</sup> For Foucault, the functioning of sovereignty is expressed and articulated within well-defined territorial borders, where the geometric centrality of the capital city to the rest of the territory correlates highly with securing the relationship of the sovereign to the territory. Foucault notes that the sovereign power is concerned not with just an empty territory but rather the multiplicity of people and things within that territory. Foucault draws this "geometric relationship" between the sovereign and the multiplicity in his distinct interpretation

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<sup>85</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 44.

<sup>86</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 3-5.

<sup>87</sup> Rabinow and Rose. "Biopower Today," 202.

of the city plan in *La Métropolitée* written by Alexandre Le Maître in the middle of the seventeenth century to resituate the sovereign power in a fine spatial, economic, commercial, administrative, moral, and judicial networks.<sup>88</sup> Le Maître's city plan, which was never built, organized the difference of social status and wealth within the national territory in the countryside and small towns in relation to the capital city, which was geometrically positioned in the centre of the territory. According to the city plan, the capital city, where the sovereign and groups of high significance to the functioning of power were located, was designated as a place of power toward which the multiplicity of people and things within the territory gravitated. In this way, Foucault's reading of Le Maître's plan underlines the exercise of sovereign power over territory in that the state is organized around the capital city, which works as the distribution point of commercial, administrative, moral, and judicial functions of sovereign power to the rest of the territory. In short, sovereignty manages and regulates the multiplicity through "capitalizing" the territory within which individuals become the raw material from which the legal subjects are constructed, as those who are expected to actively obey the sovereign and the refusal of obedience is prohibited and punished under the jurisdiction of penal laws. Where sovereignty is concerned with certain multiplicity (people, behaviours, activities, and so forth), Foucault sees discipline organizes and manages multiplicity through the processes of individualization.

Foucault contrasts the public display of violence as a form of punishment on the convict body for his refusal of obedience in the case of sovereignty with the modern technique and technology of correction and surveillance in the later part of *Discipline and Punish*. Starting from a discussion of the reformed model of the prison system, Foucault in his genealogy of "the

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<sup>88</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 13-15.

modern soul” presents the path to the formation of modern disciplinary subjects, what he terms “docile,” through the interplay of complex “scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms.” Foucault chronicles the development of a new subtle, calculated technology, penetrating into the fleeting detail of a social field, that works to regulate and control the multiplicity of individuals, and hence to maximize their productive efficiency. This new technology is what Foucault calls “discipline.” Foucault demonstrates the power of discipline in the context of modern prison system as he describes the routines of the prisoners: what time the prisoners will rise, proceed to prayer, bathe, eat, and work. In the final chapter, inspired by the architectural plan for the panoptic building of the eighteenth-century penal reform by Jeremy Bentham, Foucault introduces the concept of panopticism as a modern technology of power. The underlying logic for Bentham’s panoptic plan was to design an environment for efficient observation of occupants within the space of the prison, by which the observer would be able “to see without being seen”; whereas Foucault’s model shifts focus to the inmate, whom would be brought under the assumption of being constantly watched without being able to see, thus “making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements.”<sup>89</sup> For Foucault, the panoptic model is not limited to prisons or inmates. Rather, it would apply to other sectors of the population and extend to the realm of other modern institutions, such as schools, hospitals, barracks, factories, and markets. Conversely, for Foucault, the panopticon serves a metaphor for broader political and economic implications of the functioning of power, emerging as productive, than simply repressive, which aims at producing active, docile bodies. As pointed out by Deleuze in his analysis of Foucault’s work, “the abstract formula of Panopticism is no longer ‘to see

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<sup>89</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 216.

without being seen,' but to impose a particular conduct on a particular human multiplicity.”<sup>90</sup>

The panopticon, therefore, is a transformative means for disciplinary power.

Foucault’s distinct interpretation of Bentham’s panoptic model, what Elmer (2012) terms as “inverted panopticon,” posits the ubiquitous and all-pervasive modern-day forms of “panoptic surveillance,” as a means for individuals to self-regulate and self-monitor their own behaviour and conduct. From this perspective, the system of legal codes, as seen within the technologies of sovereignty, is further incorporated into a new form of internalized disciplinary of soul, operating through the bodies that are self-controlled and self-regulated, and hence no longer require direct supervision and monitoring. Individuals, therefore, become active participants in transforming themselves into disciplinary subjects. Thus, the new disciplinary power becomes even more fluid, dispersed, and omnipotent than the sovereign power. Where sovereignty is exercised within a territory, discipline acts upon the body, as the body becomes the site of meticulous and constant techniques of control and regulation. The body is separated, analyzed, differentiated, and organized into its constituted units, “according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement.”<sup>91</sup> The aim for this productive ordering is to train “the moving, confused, useless multitudes of bodies and forces into multiplicity of individual elements—small, separate, cells, organic autonomies, genetic identities and continuities, combinatory segments.”<sup>92</sup> Where sovereignty involves retributive logic, as a morally intuitive rationale, to express the disapproval of wrongful behaviour and to validate the penal laws and, therefore, the legitimacy of the sovereign, discipline works based on corrective and normative logic that creates and defines norms and the degree of normality upon which individuals are

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<sup>90</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*, 34.

<sup>91</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 173.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 170.

measured, differentiated, ranked, homogenized, and excluded. This is to say, discipline is a hierarchical and dynamic system of norms that starts from a preestablished model, what Foucault terms as an “optimal model.” It aims at specific outcomes that is utilized in the process of individualization, as a means of qualifying individuals who are capable of conforming to this model while marking those who fall outside the model as “abnormal” that are required to be brought into the level of performances through the disciplinary practices.<sup>93</sup> In short, discipline operates to increase both the automatic docility and the possible utility of all the elements, as it tends to maximize speed and efficiency. It does this by “humble” and meticulous procedures of training and correction of individual bodies and possible works of transformation of individuals into productive components to put into action.

Insofar as the panopticon is a means of exercising power, Foucault refers to the panopticon as a “machine” or “machinery” that “automatizes and deindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in certain distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in any arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which they are caught up.”<sup>94</sup> Foucault gives the example of a soldier as something that can be made, through establishing routines and coded activities, correcting posture, imprinting mastery in handling tools and weapons, and most importantly, turning these elements into the “automatism of habit.” For Foucault, the key effect of the panopticon is the automatic and continuous functioning of power. Discipline is a type of power that its presence is evident in every imaginable layer of societal network. For Foucault, disciplinary practices aim at increasing the productivity of the mass and extending the efficiency and intensity of power with the avoidance of loss and at a low-

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<sup>93</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 57.

<sup>94</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 202.

cost, in both economic and political scales.<sup>95</sup> Similar to the case of sovereignty, Foucault complicates further the question of governing the multiplicity associated with the form of discipline by extending it to the disciplinary problem of space. Whilst sovereignty works with capitalization of a territory, Foucault sees disciplinary treatment of a town, rather than a larger territory, as to start from an empty, closed space that is to be internally and meticulously structured, whereupon artificial multiplicities (of streets, blocks, zones, shops, markets, trades, houses, and so forth) are constructed, organized, and subdivided to arrive at a point of perfection.<sup>96</sup> The goal is to allow circulation to take place by preventing in advance phenomena, such as accidents, scarcity, epidemic diseases, and misfortunes from happening. This is to say, unlike sovereignty that involves the system of juridico-legal codes that comprises the prohibited along its punishment, the self-governing discipline works with preestablished optimal model in a well-defined spatial organization to achieve ultimate control over every aspect of life while preventing what is prohibited from becoming a reality in the first place. In contrast, in his late 1970s lectures at the College de France, Foucault (2007) introduces his third form of power, what he calls security, that is no longer prohibits or prevents, but rather predicts.

Foucault's conception of security derives from the question of governing the population in its collective existence rather than training useful bodily forces to be integrated into productive efficiency that is in the case of disciplinary biopower. This is to say, unlike discipline that focuses on the "anatomy-politics" of the human bodies, as a matter of "man-as-body," that operates in an individualizing mode, the apparatus of security, or what Foucault (2003) refers to as "regulation" in *Society Must be Defended*, shifts the focus toward addressing the phenomenon

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<sup>95</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 218.

<sup>96</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 16-19.

of “man-as-species,” or population, which is a new collective subject that is not constructed through social contract, as in sovereignty. For Foucault, the problem of governing individuals at a mass and on a global scale is no longer the capitalization of territory under sovereignty or the distribution of individual bodies into the social space under discipline. Instead, the problem of governing the population, “insofar as man is a living being” and that the population is made of living beings, means that the biological features of this given reality are brought into the level of empirical analysis and rationalistic attempts under the administrative, economic, and political interventions of the government.<sup>97</sup> Foucault’s formulation of biopolitics moves to consider the emergence of a multiplicity of tactics of intervention in life, which works both within and increasingly outside the juridical framework, in dealing with the population and its inherent complex and unpredictable dynamics. For Foucault, the problem of governing the biological multiplicity of individuals, rather than individual bodies, and their complex relations becomes a new object of knowledge that is, as explained by Foucault, directed to the overall biological processes of birth, morbidity, mortality, fertility, longevity, and so forth.<sup>98</sup> This is to say, the apparatus of security operates in a biopolitical mode of governing the population that is bringing the birth, death, reproduction, vitality, and other biological components of human existence that affect the population as masses of bodies into a form of quantification through statistics to help reveal “the possibility of exact knowledge” about what is “taking place.” This in turn works as a means of dealing with and managing the unknown and uncertain events that unfold in the biological multiplicity.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Foucault, “17 March 1976,” 239-240.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 242-243.

<sup>99</sup> Michel Foucault, “7 February 1979,” in *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978--1979*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 282-285.

For Foucault, security apparatus does not intervene directly, but instead works at-a-distance. It plans an environment in relation to “possible events,” that is “the temporal and the uncertain, which have to be inserted within a given space,” where circulations (of people, activities, goods, capital, information, and so forth) take place.<sup>100</sup> This planned space is what Foucault refers to as “milieu.” Security, therefore, focuses on how to govern the circulations of multiplicity—essential to the economic growth—of the influx of the floating people, things, and their intertwined relationships. The emergent uncertainty, therefore, becomes the accepted new reality. According to Foucault, the art of governing the uncertain associated to the apparatus of security is neither to prohibit nor to prevent, but instead to establish “an interplay of differential normalities” which in turn constitutes the norm through the processes of “normalization.”<sup>101</sup> Unlike sovereignty that works on the basis of juridico-legal system of codes to establish a fixed presupposition between the permitted and prohibited, and discipline that works to ensure a certain end to be achieved while preventing the causal elements of any other form from taking place, Foucault sees security as essentially allowing things to take place within the thresholds of acceptable in a social and economic sense.<sup>102</sup> It directs things and their interlinked relations towards constant processes of optimization. In this way, security designates a distinct way of approaching the question of life, in comparison to sovereignty or even discipline, through the intertwined relationships among its mobile components, both humans and nonhumans, and their continual interactions. Subsequently, it is no longer the clear division between the categories of normal and abnormal, but rather security brings the population at the biological level as a given reality into the economy of calculation. This statistical phenomenon, Foucault explains, works

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<sup>100</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 20-21.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 59.

based on the plotting of differential “curves of normality,” which “makes use of certain distributions considered to be [...] more normal than the others, or at any rate more favorable than the others.”<sup>103</sup> Where discipline begins from a predefined normative model to establish the normal, security proceeds from the statistical analysis of the population from which different normal curves of distribution (for example, morbidity and mortality rate of infectious disease according to demographic and geographic variables) are produced to determine and conceive the optimal normal, which in turn works as a form of authority and knowledge to manage and regulate the given population.

Similar to his formulations of sovereignty and discipline, Foucault links security to the problem of space. In Foucault’s reading of the eighteenth-century topographic plan for the town named Nantes in France, the spatial logic of security is no longer limited to the internal structuring an empty space to achieve a state of perfection, as in the case of discipline. Rather, it involves planning a functional space within which the interplay between the different elements of a given reality in their intertwined relations with one another takes place. In Nantes, Foucault defines the movement of these different components among two broad categories: “a set of natural givens—rivers, marshes, hills—and a set of artificial givens—an agglomeration of individuals, of houses, etcetera.”<sup>104</sup> The milieu then responds to the need to ensure the broad sense of moving freely, on the one hand, and to act and regulate at-a-distance the movements and the complex relationships among these components, on the other hand. Take, for example, Vingly’s proposed plan for Nantes in which he drew up the functional structuring of the combination of quays, bridges, and street network according to the circulation considerations of trade, money, people, disease, theft,

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<sup>103</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 63.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

and so forth. For Foucault, the particular genius for the urban plan was the way it worked with different natural and material givens, and simultaneously extended to some form of temporal dynamics in which possible futures, both positives and negatives, came to be incorporated within the present plan.<sup>105</sup> Along with the problems of scarcity and epidemic, the treatment of multiplicities in space by Foucauldian security works with and integrates in a present plan a series of connections with fluctuations of various quantities, variable conditions, and future probabilities. Security, therefore, moves beyond a static state, and instead works to foresee the possibilities of future events. “A good town plan,” Foucault writes, “takes into account precisely what might happen.”<sup>106</sup>

It is worth highlighting the place of time and temporality within the spatial dimensions of Foucauldian conceptualization of power and its relevance for the study of intensification of consumer surveillance. As explained in this chapter, while Foucault’s inspiring position on space underlines its active role in mediating differing modes of governing and managing multiplicities, the theme of time and temporality is of secondary importance to the problematic of space in Foucault’s work. Yet, time and space are inseparable from one another, as evident in Foucault’s formulation of his three modalities of power. The retributive logic of sovereignty focuses on establishing binary system of code that precisely differentiate the permitted from the prohibited and the type of punishment warranted for wrongful act. In this way, the past is the focus of sovereignty and, therefore, is backward-looking. As for discipline, it is more concerned with behaviour alteration and modification, rather than responding to past events, through disciplinary supervision, correction, and control over individuals. As pointed out by Foucault himself, in his

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<sup>105</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 22-23.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

formulation of disciplinary mechanisms in the penal domain, “everything is framed by ... a series of supervisions, checks, inspections, and varied controls that, even before the thief has stolen, make it possible to identify whether or not he is going to steal, and so on,” combined with certain preventive measures to achieved this perfect reality.<sup>107</sup> Accordingly, future, or rather achieving a certain type of future, is the focus of disciplinary techniques. As for the mechanisms of security, however, as noted earlier, the goal is no longer to prohibit or prevent in advance the phenomenon, but to involve a series of possible futures within the present plan so that the phenomenon is foreseeable and knowable in advance. Security, therefore, works according to the anticipatory logic that is forward-looking. As explained in this chapter, in each modality of power, space plays a pivotal role in achieving these goals. Accordingly, Foucault’s articulation of space, that is inseparable from time, offers a promising tool for the study of the changes in the scope and intensity of consumer surveillance and their temporal dimensions across differing forms of spatial and architectural arrangement over time.

In sum, Foucault’s theories of power and governmentality provide a useful conceptual device for the examination of the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption to understand the intensification of consumer surveillance over time across three consumption spaces of the first regulatory public market, Eaton’s department store, and Amazon. His model offers a means to explain the differing modes of governance and modalities of surveillance of consumers and consumption that are conducive characteristics for the dominant rationalities and technologies of power typical of these three spaces. Foucault's model helps illuminate the particular ways of conceiving, reasoning, and defining consumers and addressing the question of uncertainty inherent in their consumption behaviours that are distinctive to these three spaces. The

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<sup>107</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 4.

Foucauldian-inspired trajectory also provides opportunity to look at the differing forms of architectural and spatial organization that work to facilitate the differing modes of consumer governance in these consumption spaces. It can help to identify the spatial strategies within consumer governance across these three spaces that work to shape and manipulate consumer behaviours. My Foucauldian investigation of the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption in these three consumption spaces employs genealogy as a system of inquiry, which I discuss in the following chapter. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 entail my genealogical examination of the intensification question on the surveillance-space-consumption axis across the three spaces of the first regulatory public market, Eaton's department store, and Amazon in key stages of retail development through Foucauldian lens.

## CHAPTER 2: Methodology

As I explained in Chapter 1, I respond to the issue of intensification of consumer surveillance over time by examining the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption in three consumption spaces of the first regulatory public market, Eaton's department store, and Amazon in the light of Foucauldian theories of power and governmentality and his spatial treatment of differing modalities of surveillance. My dissertation project uses Foucauldian genealogy as a methodological approach to guide my Foucauldian analysis of the intensification question across the aforementioned consumption spaces. I consider a genealogical inquiry as a valuable method to account for tracing recurrences and discontinuities of particular ways of knowing and acting on consumers and consumption and forms of space and spatial arrangement to map the historical transformation in the scope and intensity of various modalities of consumer surveillance and their specific spatial strategies. The genealogical undertaking helps identify the key moments in the rationalities and technologies of power that are characteristics for differing modes of governing and managing consumers and consumption. This chapter presents my genealogical methodology for my archival study of the intensification of consumer surveillance. I begin the chapter with a discussion of Foucault's turn to the genealogical mode of inquiry from the beginning of the 1970s that marked his departure from his old archeological method, as a result of his growing interest in the problematic of power. I then outline the method of data collection, justification of case selection, and analysis that are used for my study.

This study embraces qualitative method as its mode of inquiry. Unlike generalizability as one can see in quantitative studies, qualitative studies seek out a rich and detailed understanding of the issues and events that have impacts on people's daily lives. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln define qualitative research as

a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.<sup>108</sup>

In its core, this qualitative research is inspired by Foucauldian genealogical methodology.

Foucault's philosophical interest in the genealogy of knowledge-power relations was gradually developed and finally erupted in his body of work from the beginning of the 1970s, as his earlier texts focusing on archaeology were primarily oriented around the analysis of discourse and tracking the discursive formations. Foucault, in his former role as the archeologist, is known for his devotion to explain why there is an order or why there is a dominant thought system at a given moment by uncovering the formation of the order of knowledge or "episteme" as a product of a distinct historical period that projects its pattern onto the forms of discourse pertaining to that historical period.<sup>109</sup> Foucauldian archeological method is, therefore, not concerned with establishing the deeper meaning or truth underlying discourses but rather with discovering the rules governing the system of thought or knowledge governing discourses at a given moment. Such evasion of the consideration of meaning and truth, according to Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldböck, corresponds with a type of "radicalized phenomenology" that aims at mapping out "the overarching rule systems in the thinking of whole epochs,"<sup>110</sup> rather than establishing the continuous transitions from one episteme to another. Insofar as Foucault's archeological method seeks an alternative historical-critical trajectory, in his *Archeology of Knowledge* (first published

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<sup>108</sup> Gregory Guest, Emily Namey, and Marilyn Mitchell, *Collecting Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013), 3.

<sup>109</sup> David Garland, "What is a 'history of the present'? On Foucault's genealogies and their critical preconditions," *Punishment & Society* 16, no. 4 (2014): 369-370.

<sup>110</sup> Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldböck, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2009), 224.

in French in 1969), Foucault would soon come to admit that his archaeology fails to account adequately for the historical transformations within the spatial and temporal relations, as it tends “to treat history only to freeze it,” so much so that every element is made fixed, motionless, and static through the archeological method.<sup>111</sup> Aside from the treatment of time and history in archaeology in terms of freezing them, the problematic of power is always present in Foucault’s thinking even during the archeological phase; however, it is largely pushed into the background for the purpose of the discursive investigation. In the decade that followed the publication of *Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault’s subsequent texts are no longer primarily grounded in archaeology, but rather they focus on genealogy as a mode of critique in an attempt to adequately locate the problematic of power within discursive and non-discursive practices and the regime of knowledge.

Foucault’s admiration of both archeological and genealogical methods is his attempt to offer valuable methodological devices, operating from two different vantage points, that are capable of conducting historical analyses combined with critical engagement with the present. Where the task of archeology is unmasking the ordered system of thought at a given moment with an emphasis given to historical discontinuities and ruptures, Foucauldian genealogy aims to arrive at a “history of the present” that is to problematize the present-day phenomenon by tracing the historical conditions upon which it is made possible.<sup>112</sup> Foucault describes writing a history of the present in the following remark in *Discipline and Punish*,

I would like to write the history of this prison, with all the political investment of the body that it gathers together in its closed architecture. Why? Simply because I am

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<sup>111</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 183-187.

<sup>112</sup> Garland, “What is a ‘history of the present’?,” 372.

interested in the past? No, if one means by that writing a history of the past in terms of the present. Yes, if one means writing the history of the present.<sup>113</sup>

Genealogy is, therefore, interested in tracking the past records of practices and discourses structured by power relations through which individuals are transformed into subjects to reveal the contingency of conditions that continue to shape the present. It seeks to provide critical inquiry into the production of subjectivity through the intimate relation to the self and different forms of governmentality. In his essay entitled “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” first appeared in French in 1971, Foucault describes genealogy as “gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times.”<sup>114</sup> Insofar as Foucauldian conception of power is not a property of a person, institution, or state, Foucauldian genealogy does not evolve around giving voice to the absent voices, as seen in Foucauldian-inspired post-modernist approach, or giving emphasis to creative ways of evading the reproduction of subject-positions, as in the case of Foucauldian-inspired approach of social constructionism.<sup>115</sup> Foucauldian genealogy also departs from hermeneutic interpretation and Frankfurt School critical theory. Foucault sees these methods as being incapable of offering a historical account of practices and discourses because of their ideal of critical knowledge that posits a positive status of knowledge, depicting it as an objective, emancipatory force, by claiming that human consciousness is capable of transcending the social, cultural, and historical constructs.<sup>116</sup> For Foucault, writing a history of the present is to observe the field of power relations and everything within that field

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<sup>113</sup> As cited in Garland, “What is a ‘history of the present’?,” 368.

<sup>114</sup> Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *The Foucault Reader*, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Vintage, 1984), 76.

<sup>115</sup> Wendy Bastalich, “Reading Foucault: Genealogy and Social Science Research Methodology and Ethics,” *Sociological Research Online*, 14 no. 2 (May 2009), <https://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/2/3.html>.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

from afar for “profound visibility” to allow to investigate the complex historical relations of power, knowledge, and body.<sup>117</sup>

In contrast to the traditional historical method that arrives at the points of finality, interiority, and depth, Foucault’s use of history in his genealogical method, which derives from Nietzsche, moves away from any cohesive diagramming of the field of knowledge-power relations in terms of totalization of history and the ideal of linear progress of events pertaining the traditional historical view.<sup>118</sup> Insofar as genealogy eschews the conception of the pattern of history as a linear progression, Foucault focuses on the transitions of the systems of thought, which his archeological method was unable to take into account. At the same time, while Foucault’s genealogical method takes precedence over the archaeological method in Foucault’s later texts, including the three-volume project of the history of sexuality and the history of penal system and disciplinary surveillance, the trace of archaeology is still evident in Foucault’s genealogical side of analysis. Foucault’s project shows that archaeology is a supplement to genealogy in the ways in which the research engages simultaneously with the isolation of the “long continuities” of meticulous practices and exercise of power and knowledge over bodies and the epistemological discontinuities and ruptures to draw a diagnostic picture of the present. In Foucauldian genealogy, as Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow explain, “Archaeology still isolates and indicates the arbitrariness of the hermeneutic horizon of meaning. It shows that what seems like the continuous development of meaning is crossed by discontinuous formation.”<sup>119</sup>

Insofar as Foucault’s methodological shift moves away from mapping the linear succession of events and thinks beyond restoring the continuous line of progress across the

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<sup>117</sup> Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 107.

<sup>118</sup> Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 76.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 106.

history or searching for the evolution of mankind or the origin of a phenomenon, the goal of the genealogist is to seek discontinuities along the continuities. Foucault rethinks the problematic of temporal relations that he failed to properly establish the ground for during the archeological phase in terms of power and knowledge and their intertwined relations that are not stable but continually distributed and redistributed within what Foucault terms as a “matrices of transformation.”<sup>120</sup> In similar terms to Nietzsche’s genealogical thinking, Foucault’s genealogy focuses on describing the recurrences and discontinuities, tracing repetitions and differences along multiple temporalities with the emphasis given to the contingencies of the present. The shift to the genealogical method, as described by Collin Koopman, is a shift “toward a history of continuity-with-discontinuity or repetition-and-difference: from a solid being or empty nothing toward fluid becoming.”<sup>121</sup> Foucault, in short, sees genealogy as a mode of critique, which is an “effective” history that pushes past the epoch-making of the figure of sovereign in the linear succession of events that gives meaning to history, and instead searches for the struggles, transformations, accommodations, contradictions, contestations, and mutations that form the “events of history” with the focus on providing the diagnosis of the present. Genealogy, Foucault writes, seeks to

maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations—or conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 99.

<sup>121</sup> Collin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 42.

<sup>122</sup> Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 81.

In my study of the issue of intensification of consumer surveillance over time on the surveillance-space-consumption axis, genealogy is an effective archival method that allows for the investigation of the historical transformation in the scope and intensity of the modalities of consumer surveillance and their spatial strategies. It expands on the past records of discursive practices, procedures, and non-discursive practices, concerning various rationalities and technologies of power. My genealogical examination of these archival records helps identify the key moments or the ruptures (to adopt Foucault) pertaining to the dominant ways of knowing and acting on consumers and consumption that are characteristics for differing modes of consumer governance.

To generate a historical-critical understanding of the intensification question, my genealogical undertaking involves the examination of three different forms of consumption space in key stages of retail development. These selected spaces are: the first regulatory public market, Eaton's department store, and Amazon. I trace the discontinuities and recurrences of consumption practices, spatial and architectural structures and arrangements, and procedures that relate to specific rationalities and technologies of power, which characterize differing modes of consumer governance, within and among the three consumption spaces under study. Chapter 3 details the analysis of the two consumption sites of the first regulatory public market, which was established in the newly formed Town of York in the early nineteenth century, and Eaton's department store, which opened its doors to the public in the City of Toronto (the former Town of York) in the late nineteenth century. Conventional historical thinking often claims that the historical roots of the present-day modern consumerism can be traced back to the rise of modern retailing establishments and practices and diversification of goods and merchandise. According to these views, such changes were brought about by the industrial capitalism (see Belisle 2011),

or they can be tied to the intersection of the historical consumer movement and the politics of living wage in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (see, for example, Hilton 2013). Moving beyond these historical accounts of the origin of consumerism and material culture, my genealogical inquiry into consumer surveillance begins from the pre-industrial time. My study of the early and modern forms of consumption and their specific modes of consumer governance focuses exclusively on the Canadian retail landscape. This allows for a more comprehensive and rigorous examination of the phenomenon. As explain by Foucault, “Differences in historical developments and institutions would make a detailed comparative examination too burdensome and any attempt to describe the phenomenon as a whole too schematic.”<sup>123</sup>

The first regulatory public market is a remarkable case. It played a dual role in the pre-industrial Town of York. On the one hand, it had its pivotal economic role, functioning as a point of circulation of goods and merchandise to settlers within the capital city and surrounding townships through establishing new modes of regulation. On the other hand, it served as an important site where both administrative function of the town and the ceremony of punishment for persons accused of deviancy were carried out.<sup>124</sup> From the middle of the nineteenth into the early twentieth century, new images of progressive modernity emerged. Canada’s final decades of the nineteenth century coincided with the introduction of industrialization, coupled with the developments in the technologies of transportation and communication, that led to the increased production and mass retail and, consequently, the establishment of department stores. This, in turn, revolutionized the dynamics of shopping experiences and consumer activity. The

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<sup>123</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 309.

<sup>124</sup> See Charles Pelham Mulvany, *Toronto, Past and Present* (Toronto: Ontario Reprint Press, 1970); Henry Scadding, *Toronto of Old* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966).

department store era gave rise to three household names of Eaton's, Simpson's, and Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), whose nuanced contributions on the economy of consumption followed in the footsteps of earlier major European and American department stores, including the Bon Marché, Harrod's, Macy's, Wanamaker's, and Marshall Field's.<sup>125</sup> Of particular interest to Chapter 3 is the case of Eaton's department store and, more specifically, the institutional techniques and technologies that constituted the new consumption practices and new modes of consumer governance, combined with its specific modality of consumer surveillance. Eaton's maintained the strongest competitive advantage and the largest market share of any key retailer, such as Simpson's and HBC, in Canada well into the 1950s, when the post-war years brought new competition and challenges.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, Eaton's pioneered many retail innovations in Canada, from cash only policy to money-back guarantees and from free browsing to frequent sales, which in turn transformed dramatically the economic and social transactions and customer activities.

Conversely, Canada itself is an interesting case here since it experienced much more abrupt industrialization, expansion of market, and demographic transformation than the European counterparts because of the experiences with colonialism and all factors essential to consolidate support for its metropolitan growth. This is to say, the course of metropolitan evolution between North America and Europe followed divergent patterns of fourfold characteristic of economic growth, concerning the evolution of manufacturing, transportation, financial maturity, and market institutions. According to Fredrick Armstrong, the appearance of marketing institutional arrangements and developments of the manufacturing phase provided

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<sup>125</sup> Donica Belisle, *Retail Nation: Department Stores and the Making of Modern Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 19.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

strong base for the improvement of metropolitan communication in Britain.<sup>127</sup> In North America, however, as explained by Armstrong, “Since many advances in technology preceded the opening up of the interior of North America, they were naturally applied immediately in newly opened areas, thereby telescoping the stages of metropolitan evolution.” He adds that “new ideas and processes were constantly being adopted while cities grew.”<sup>128</sup>

Data for this part of my genealogical project are drawn from various primary source documents, including archival collections, original records, and digital databases from the Archives of Ontario, the Toronto Public Library, the Library and Archives Canada, as well as governmental literature, such as census data, statistical releases, and archived government records. The archival sources comprise, but are not limited to, documents, records, microfilms, moving images, photographs, and maps. While the study primarily relies on primary sources, data are also collected from secondary sources, including scholarly literatures on the Canadian history and urban and economic developments in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century Toronto. My analysis of these historical records is organized in a chronological fashion to track the significant events of history, identifying the “emergence” and “descent,” to adopt Foucault, of the series of complex relations, minor shifts, small details, and even those “absent” instances and “unrealized” moments. In other words, it aims at revealing the key moments in the rationalities and technologies of power pertaining to specific modalities of consumer surveillance and differing modes of governing and managing consumers and consumption across these spaces.

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<sup>127</sup> Fredrich Henry Armstrong, *A City in the Making Progress, People & Perils in Victorian Toronto* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1988), 37.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 37-38.

Following the discussion of the first regulatory public market and the rise of modern department stores, Chapter 4 directs the genealogical account of consumer surveillance toward the rise of interactive online retailing. I particularly look at the case of Amazon. Amazon hold a monopoly position for online retailing, so much that there is hardly any competition in this monopoly. In fact, Amazon’s dominance of the online retail market has been further reinforced by the global COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent preventive measures and challenges in dealing with the spread of the novel virus and the emergent uncertainty. According to the report released by Facteus, a provider of business intelligent solutions from financial data, consumer spending on Amazon continues to grow at 70 per cent, at the time of writing this dissertation, compared to consumer spending at the same time period in 2019, and it is also at a much higher growth rate than its rival Walmart that is up only 6 per cent.<sup>129</sup> Amazon has revolutionized retailing by making online shopping faster and more convenient for customers, generating a feeling of anytime, anywhere, anything service. It has transformed from an online bookseller into a powerful online retail giant in the new millennium. Yet, Amazon is more than an online format of a department store. It also offers a wide range of services, from cloud computing to music streaming to virtual assistants and smart home devices. Similar to Eaton’s that pioneered many retail innovations during the rise of the department stores, Amazon is one of the most powerful actors in taking the lead in the online retail market. According to the 2017 survey result by *The Verge*, among the top five tech giants—Amazon, Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook—

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<sup>129</sup> “Insights on Changing Consumer Spending: Facteus Insight Report on Consumer Spending and Transactions (FIRST),” Facteus, accessed August 15, 2020, <https://www.facteus.com/reports/first-report-7-15-2020>.

Amazon achieves the highest score in consumer satisfaction and trust, so much so that the survey finds “people trust Amazon almost as much as they trust their bank.”<sup>130</sup>

Data for this part of the genealogical project are collected from various primary source documents, including records and materials available on Amazon.com and its affiliates, Amazon’s privacy and legal policies, guidelines and regulations pertaining to Amazon’s service offerings, patent applications filed by Amazon, interviews with Amazon executives completed by news outlets, letters from Jeff Bezos, the Chief Executive Officer of Amazon, to shareholders, behind the scene computing information and programming instructions, as well as intelligence and analytics of market, business, and technology releases. In line with the first part of the genealogical inquiry, the method of organization for my analysis of these sources follows the chronological pattern to reveal the key moments pertaining to the specific ways of knowing and rationalizing and particular ways of programming and acting on consumers. My examination of these underlying principles seeks to reveal the differing modes of governing and regulating consumers and consumption that are typical to Amazon.

Following this discussion, my dissertation project employs genealogy to explore the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption across three consumption spaces of the first public market, Eaton’s department store, and Amazon in the light of Foucault’s theories of power and governmentality, and his thinking around space. My genealogical undertaking helps reveal the historical transformation in the scope and intensity of differing modalities of consumer surveillance, by tracing discontinuities and recurrences of particular ways of knowing and programming consumers and consumption and certain forms of space and spatial arrangement

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<sup>130</sup> Nick Statt, “Amazon is the ruthless corporate juggernaut people love,” *The Verge*, October 27, 2017, accessed August 15, 2020, <https://www.theverge.com/2017/10/27/16552614/amazon-popularity-user-survey-prime-echo-trust>.

across the three consumption spaces under study. Foucault's conceptualization of governmentality as differing modes of governing and regulating the multiplicity and the uncertain provides a useful means for my project as it enables understanding dominant ways of knowing and acting on consumers that characterize particular modes of consumer governance and modalities of consumer surveillance across these three spaces. By utilizing Foucault's model, I identify different controlling methods and processes, including codes of conduct, correction, supervision, constant observation, statistical instruments, probabilistic calculation, and algorithmic devices contribute as forms of articulating, reasoning, conceiving, and rationalizing consumers and their behaviours and establishing the idea of normativity across the three consumption sites under study.

In the light of Foucauldian articulation of the active role of space in the exercise of power, my work explores spatial and architectural structures and arrangements typical of these three consumption spaces that promote and reify particular ways of knowing and acting on consumers and consumption. I extend the concepts of spatiality and spatialization to tracing various spatial strategies across these three consumption spaces that actively work to regulate and control consumption and modify and shape consumer behaviour. In my genealogical investigation, I identify different forms of space and spatial organization, both the virtual, physical and their recombination that—directly or indirectly—participate in monitoring, supervising, quantifying, and rationalizing consumers and consumption. Through this project, I discover the intensification of consumer surveillance over time across various forms of consumption space and spatial arrangement, as the methods and processes contributed to the ways of knowing and acting on consumers become more complicated and further articulated. For example, advances in information and communication technologies enabled the connection of

production and consumption, real-time information solicitation, and just-in-time marketing that might otherwise remain unattainable. My genealogical project reveals the key moments pertaining to the dominant rationalities and technologies of power across the three consumption spaces under study. As demonstrated in my analysis of the three spaces in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, the key moments are: “marketization of space,”<sup>131</sup> “standardization of consuming bodies,” statistification of consumers,” virtualization of consumption”<sup>132</sup> and “hybridization of consumer spaces.” Ultimately, each of the three consumption spaces of the first regulatory public market, Eaton’s department store, and Amazon provides for a distinctive, qualitative framework that fosters critical understanding of the intensification of consumer surveillance over time.

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<sup>131</sup> Rodrigo Castilhos and Pierre-Yann Dolbec (2018) describe the term “marketization of space” as the space that is formatted by market actors for commercial interests. I borrow the concept to describe the changes in the rationalities and technologies of power as a result of the creation of the first regulatory public market in the newly formed Town of York in the preindustrial period. See Rodrigo B. Castilhos and Pierre-Yann Dolbec, “Conceptualizing Spatial Types: Characteristics, Transitions, and Research Avenues,” *Marketing theory* 18, no. 2 (2018): 159.

<sup>132</sup> The terms “virtualization of consumption” has been mobilized to describe the changes in the economy of consumption as a result of the globalization process and advances in networked information and communication technologies. See Helena Grinshpun, “The City and the Chain: Conceptualizing Globalization and Consumption in Japan,” *Japan review*, no. 24 (2012): 169–195; Olga Filipiak, “New Trends in Consumption in Contemporary Society. Sociological Reflection,” *Rozprawy Społeczne* 12, no.4 (2018): 22–27, <https://doi.org/10.29316/rs.2018.33>; Marcin W. Staniewski and Tomasz Szopiński, “Trends in the Use of Cyclical Payment Channels by Polish Households,” *Transformations in Business & Economics* 13, no. 3 (2014): 235-250.

### **CHAPTER 3: The Birth of Modern Retail and Consumer: From the First Public Market to the Eaton's Department Store**

“I wish to add my mite towards expounding & interpreting the Almighty, & his laws & works, for the most effective use of mankind; and certainly, I should feel it no small glory if I were enabled to be one of his most noted prophets (using this word in my own peculiar sense) in this world.”<sup>133</sup>

—Mathematician Ada Lovelace on the first mechanical computer in 1843

My dissertation project reacts to the issue of the intensification of consumer surveillance over time and across differing forms of consumption space and spatial arrangement. As I explained in Chapter 2, for this study, I employ a genealogical methodology as a system of inquiry to investigate the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption that allow for understanding the historical transformation in the scope and intensity of modalities of consumer surveillance across three different consumption spaces of the first regulatory public market, Eaton's department store, and Amazon. Chapter 1 is devoted to discussing the theoretical consideration underpinning my study that is informed by Foucault's conceptions of power and governmentality and his formulation of space. This chapter involves my analysis of the two consumption sites of the first regulatory public market and Eaton's department store on the surveillance-space-consumption axis. My investigation of these two spaces traces the changes in the ways of knowing and acting on consumers and consumption and differing forms of spatiality and spatial and architectural structure that are characteristics for particular modes of governing and regulating consumers and consumption. Through this chapter, my genealogical undertaking reveals the key moments pertaining to the dominant rationalities and technologies of power within and across these two consumption spaces.

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<sup>133</sup> James Essinger, *Jacquard's Web: How a Hand-loom Led to the Birth of the Information Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 275.

The two consumption sites I discuss in this chapter mark key period of retail development. The regulatory public market was the first controlled consumption space that was formed in the newly formed Town of York (the present City of Toronto), the capital of upper Canada, in the early nineteenth century. Eaton's department store was established in the City of Toronto in late nineteenth century. Eaton's was a significant modern retail establishment, as it pioneered innovative shopping practices and spatial strategies in Canada. The chapter tracks and examines the past consumption practices, architectural and spatial structures, and procedures in the light of Foucauldian model to provide insight into the modes of consumer governance and modalities of surveillance across these spaces. At the same time, it is important to note here that this chapter is not intended to offer another historical examination of the rise of Eaton's department store or the rise of Canadian consumer society in general (Belisle 2011; Kopytek 2014; McQueen 1998; Santink 1990), nor is my intention to return to representational or ideological accounts of material culture and consumerism (see, for example, Hilton 2003; Warsh and Mallek 2013). Instead, the chapter is part of my genealogical undertaking to investigate the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption in the two consumption spaces of the first public market and Eaton's department store through the Foucauldian lens to understand the intensification of consumer surveillance over time.

The organization of this chapter is inspired by Foucault's utilization of his three differing modalities of power in his brief analysis of the problem of criminality where he expertly demonstrates the historical changes in the rationalities and technologies of power as they became more complex and "perfected." Subsequently, it demonstrates the transformation in the modalities of surveillance and techniques of governance and regulation of crimes and criminals

over time.<sup>134</sup> I borrow Foucault's modulatory approach to the differing modes of governing the problem of criminality for my examination of the above-noted consumption spaces on the surveillance-space-consumption axis. The differing modes of consumer governance revealed based on my genealogical investigation of the first public market and Eaton's are broadly categorized into three sections, what I call modulations. In other words, following Foucault, consumption is being "modulated in three stages."<sup>135</sup> In these three modulations, my examination of the differing modes of governing consumers and consumption across the two consumption spaces under study also engages key historical transformations in economic production, city-building plans, demographic changes, and technological innovations, outside these consumption spaces, that contributed to the emergence of new problems and situations. The goal is to detect the ruptures in rationalities and technologies of power in response to these problems and situations that characterize differing modes of governance and modalities of consumer surveillance across these consumption spaces.

The first modulation looks at the formation of the first public market during the pre-industrial time and its relation to the urban development. By its very nature, the first public market appeared as an essential part of urban functions for economic, administrative, and judicial purposes. My discussion of public displays of punishment and torture in the first public market is a deliberate attempt to evoke Foucault's articulation of the spatial logic of sovereignty, as evident in the picturesque opening of his book *Discipline and Punish* (1979). The first twelve paragraphs draw a gruesome description of the 1757 public torture and killing of Robert-François Damiens, whose body was mutilated, burnt, branded, and ultimately chopped into

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<sup>134</sup> Foucault, *Security, Population, Territory*, 4-9.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

pieces before the public.<sup>136</sup> The fact that these early corporeal punishments were carried out in open spaces had its roots in the most effective way to ensure the submission of sovereign's subjects to his power. Accordingly, my analysis considers the spatiality of the public market, situated within the capital, that worked as a significant site for the distribution of sovereign's law and order, as well as goods and merchandise, according to the artificial system of order. The second modulation looks at the formation of Eaton's department store and a whole series of standardized practices and procedures, along with its specific spatial structure and arrangement. My discussion includes Eaton's particular use of space and other regulatory methods to shape consumer behaviour and generate knowledge. The third modulation looks at the same institutional structure after the Second World War when Eaton's increasingly capitalized on new classificatory techniques and statistical calculation to manage consumers. I identify the deployment of systemic collection and processing of information about consumers to get more insights about them. Ultimately, my archival examination reveals the key moments in the rationalities and technologies of power pertaining to differing modes of consumer governance and modalities of surveillance within and across these spaces.

### **3.1 First Modulation: The Emergence of Generalized Regulatory Retailing**

#### *3.1.1 Public Display of Punishment: The Uncanny Picture of the First Regulatory Public Market During Pre-Industrial Period*

In 1804, York resident Elizabeth Ellis was condemned for "being a nuisance" and sentenced to six months imprisonment, during which she was brought to stand in the pillory on display for two hours at a time on two consecutive market-days. During this time, public humiliation of convicts was carried out in the first public market of the Town of York. The town,

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<sup>136</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 3-6.

in early years, under the old English judicial penalty exercised prohibition in the form of repression of deviant behaviour, coupled with a series of exercises, including stocks, pillories, caning and floggings, branding, as well as hanging in the public market.<sup>137</sup> Punishments in this location worked to enhance the visibility of the public spectacle of punishment and torture of the convict's body before the crowd who were mainly there for the purchase and sale of goods and merchandise. In the same year, another convict by the name Campbell, accused of using "seditious words," received the same corporeal punishment by being put on the pillory on public display in the marketplace. Stocks and pillories remained in use during market-days until the Town of York was incorporated as the City of Toronto in 1834.<sup>138</sup> Further, the open spatial layout of the public market formed the common site of urban function that would also serve as a central point for practices of whipping and branding with a hot boiling iron inflicted on body parts of the convict to project the most profound effect on the spectators. In one of many of these instances, the *Gazette and Oracle* of December 1st, 1798, the town's sole newspaper at the time, recounts: "Last Monday William Hawkins was publicly whipped, and Joseph McCarthy burned in the hand, at the Market Place, pursuant to their sentence."<sup>139</sup> Similarly, Henry Scadding, growing up in the early nineteenth century Town of York, recalls once witnessing such event at the Market Square:

the horrid exhibition of a public whipping in the case of two culprits whose offence if forgotten. A discharged regimental drummer, a native African, administered the lash. The sheriff stood by, keeping count of the stripes. The senior of the two unfortunates bore his punishment with stoicism, encouraging the Negro to strike with more force. The other, a

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<sup>137</sup> Valerie Hauch, "Once Upon A City: St. Lawrence Market at centre of Toronto's history since 1831," *Toronto Star*, December 17, 2015, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/12/17/once-upon-a-city-st-lawrence-market-at-centre-of-torontos-history-since-1831.html>.

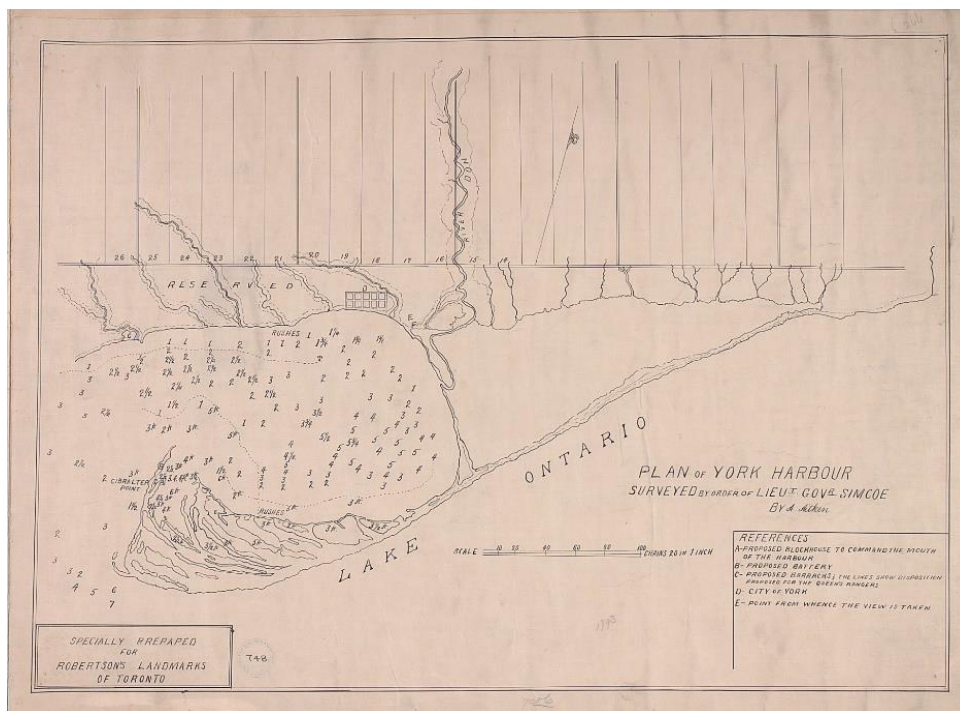
<sup>138</sup> Charles Pelham Mulvany, *Toronto, Past and Present* (Toronto: Ontario Reprint Press, 1970), 144.

<sup>139</sup> Henry Scadding, *Toronto of Old* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966), 17.

young man, endeavored for a little while to imitate his companion in this respect, but soon was obliged to evince fearful cries the torture endured.<sup>140</sup>

These images of physical torture and public humiliation offer an uncanny glimpse of the first regulatory public market in the pre-industrial Town of York, which was designated as the capital of the district of Upper Canada in 1793.

### 3.1.2 The Creation of the First Regulatory Public Market in Relation to the Disciplinary Town



**Figure 1:** 1793 plan of York harbour by land surveyor Alexander Aitken

The first market, came to be known as “Market Square” (the present St. Lawrence Market), was assigned by the newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor Peter Hunter in 1803 on a five-and-a-half acres block, known as “Market Block.”<sup>141</sup> The block was added to the expansion

<sup>140</sup> Scadding, *Toronto of Old*, 17.

<sup>141</sup> Armstrong, *A City in the Making Progress, People & Perils in Victorian Toronto*, 34.

plan of the original town plat of 1793 laid out by land surveyor Alexander Aitken (Figure 1).<sup>142</sup> Looking at the early cartographic image, the town was thought of in terms of a simple grid of ten blocks, consisting of two rows and five columns made of equal size squares, situated on the east of Yonge Street and bounded by four streets. The geometric architecture in a basic grid pattern was set up in precise proximity to the Don River running on the east side, the harbour and peninsula to the south, and on the west, the Garrison or military reserve, thus, following Foucault, “being reutilized at this time as a fundamental instrument of discipline.”<sup>143</sup> The plat was then stretched across the west-east axis that led to the addition of the “new town” extended in the west of the pre-existing town site to the edge of the Garrison, and later along the north-south axis that pushed the grid town up to Lot (Queen) Street (Figure 2).<sup>144</sup> The result of the northern-western extension was that Yonge Street, running vertically from the shores of Lake Ontario as far north as Lake Simcoe, was pushed to the centre of the new expanded plat. The street was appointed as the major artery, connecting the town to the northern parts of Upper Canada.<sup>145</sup> Consequently, the construction of the street during the pre-railway years played an imperative commercial role for two-way trade and land transports, through which goods and commodities were transported in bulk by freight wagons with enormous loading capacity from the lake ports to be distributed widely to local marketplaces and stores. Merchants, as explained by G. de T. Glazebrook et al., “carried their goods into the country, selling either wholesale to

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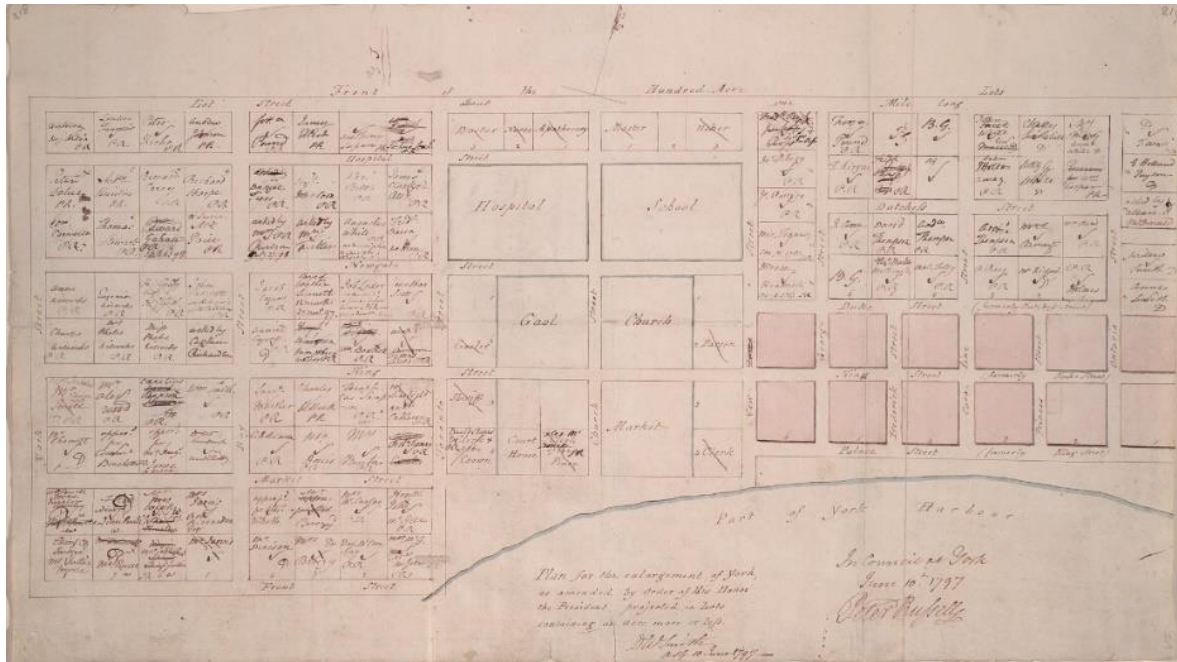
<sup>142</sup> “Plan of York harbour surveyed by order of Lieut. Govr. Simcoe by A. Aitken. [1793],” Toronto Public Library, accessed July 27, 2020, <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDC-MAPS-R-6&R=DC-MAPS-R-6>.

<sup>143</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 15.

<sup>144</sup> “Plan for the enlargement of York, as amended by Order of His Honor the President projected in lots containing an acre more or less,” Toronto Public Library, accessed July 27, 2020, <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDC-MAPS-R-135&R=DC-MAPS-R-135>.

<sup>145</sup> G. P. de T. Glazebrook, *The Story of Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 53.

village stores or retail to settlers. One imaginative firm sent a freight wagon three times a week on Yonge Street as far as Lake Simcoe, 33 rutted, muddy miles to the north.”<sup>146</sup>



**Figure 2:** 1797 Plan for the Enlargement of York

Following Foucault’s analysis of a disciplinary type of town, as in Richelieu, in the physical expansion of Toronto, while Yonge Street served its commercial and economic purposes, it was set out as a central road that divided the rectangular geometric structure of the town into two rectangles of the “old town” to the east and the “new town” to the west of Yonge Street. The two rectangles were subdivided into other rectangles or blocks of various sizes by the grid of straight, wide and narrow streets, running parallel to and at right angles to Yonge Street. These blocks would continue into other subdivisions of a series of lots that would be assigned to number or name of the lot owner as an identifier. In this way, the rectilinear street grid marked a well-calculated, ordered town, functioning on the basis of a lot-and-block system, to allocate and

<sup>146</sup> G. P. de T. Glazebrook et al., *A Shopper’s View of Canada’s Past: Pages from Eaton’s Catalogues, 1886-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), iii.

regulate the distribution of people and things according to residential, commercial, administrative, and judicial purposes. Such a system set out a hierarchical relationship between streets, housing, trade, and so forth. For instance, commercial house lots occupied full blocks along King Street, where merchants lived in less costly row buildings with a number of floors, built of red bricks, and held shops on lower levels.<sup>147</sup> The King blocks, combined with other ones along Yonge Street, were considered as the main commercial heart of the pre-industrial town. The two streets, due to their commercial significance, were served by the local improvements to be macadamized and their sidewalks to be planked,<sup>148</sup> which in turn facilitated and enhanced the movements of goods and prospective shoppers within the regulatory town. On the contrary, parallel to King Street, houses with the view of the lake situated in a designated block for residential zone along Front Street showed a distinct depiction of high social status and wealth.<sup>149</sup>

Conversely, on the east of Yonge Street and between the old and new towns, the enlargement town plan reserved a large rectangle, within which a set of six blocks, for the most part, was laid out in public functions. One block, in particular, in the said area, located in the lower part of Church Street, looking south-east from the corner of King Street, was appointed as “Market Block.” The block was flanked by two other blocks considered for the construction of the first church on the north side of the market and the first courthouse on its west. The church was adjacent to the block that would be designated for the town’s first gaol. Farther north, below Lot Street and two blocks north of the market, were the two remaining blocks that would be kept for the first state school and public hospital. Such an imposition of a formal “partitioning grid”

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<sup>147</sup> Armstrong, *A City in the Making Progress, People & Perils in Victorian Toronto*, 23.

<sup>148</sup> Glazebrook, *The Story of Toronto*, 67; see also Barbara Sanford, “The Political Economy of Land Development in Nineteenth Century Toronto,” *Urban History Review* 16 no. 1 (June 1987): 22, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017943ar>.

<sup>149</sup> Armstrong, *A City in the Making Progress, People & Perils in Victorian Toronto*, 31.

on the town, in short, according to Foucault, demonstrates an essential characteristic of the disciplinary mechanism, which “belongs to the order of construction” in order to deal with and maintain the hierarchical and functional effects of the distribution of multiple elements within the well-planned, controlled space. In other words, Foucault sees the disciplinary diagram of the town as the “constitution of an empty, closed space within which artificial multiplicities are to be constructed and organized according to the triple principle of hierarchy, precise communication of relations of power, and functional effects specific to this distribution.”<sup>150</sup>

### *3.1.3 The Economic Significance of the Public Market and the Introduction of Basic Regulatory Techniques*

With the drastic change in the urban topography of York as it expanded and transformed from the 1790s town into a city in 1834, along with the growing population of nearly ten-thousand inhabitants, the consideration for the construction of the new market was regarded as an economic imperative to address the demands of the town’s inhabitants. In this way, the first organized and fixed market came to play a leading part in affording convenience to the growing population and, in general, the economic life of the town, which primarily depended, for the most part, upon the short-life of general stores, specialty shops, and local markets that often came and went. The constitution of the market was imagined in terms of a well-calculated arrangement of smaller rectangle within the geometric structure of the town that would be bounded by four streets along all the four sides. This is evident from the proclamation of November 3rd, 1803, in which Hunter drew up a precise and meticulous deliberation of the plan for the new market,

“commencing at the south east angle of the said plot, at the corner of Market street and New street, then north sixteen degrees, west five chains seventeen links, more or less, to

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<sup>150</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 15.

King street; then along King street south seventy-four degrees, west nine chains fifty-one links, more or less, to Church street; then south sixteen degrees east six chains thirty-four links more or less to Market street; then along Market street north seventy-four degrees east two chains; then north sixty four degrees, east along Market street seven chains sixty links more or less, to the place of beginning.”<sup>151</sup>

The market was assumed to be held regularly once a week on Saturdays throughout the year at the said location, in which goods and services were exchanged or sold. It was later provided with wooden shambles, situated in the middle of the square and confined within oaken pickets, running around the east, south, and west sides of the block with three openings at each side. The closed and controlled space of the wooden market was “set apart for exposing publicly for sale, cattle, sheep, poultry and other provisions, goods and merchandize brought by merchants, farmers and others for the necessary supply of the Town of York.”<sup>152</sup> Supplementary to Hunter’s original plan and in accordance to the town’s legislative act of 1814, the Court of Quarter Sessions introduced codes of conduct and hence a new mode of regulation of consumption, indicating at what times and on which days they could go to the market, how they should proceed to exchange for goods and services, and what type of goods could be exchanged, thus permitting and prohibiting certain type of products, requiring actors in transaction to follow certain forms of conduct, and the type of punishment for the breach of these regulations. In addition, a clerk of market was appointed in the role of market police to supervise and manage the operation of the market and the enactment of what is permitted and what is forbidden. The new codes of conduct, for instance, prohibited particular type of agricultural produce and animal products, such as vegetables, eggs, butter, meat, poultry, and fish to be distributed and sold outside of the market between the hours of 6 A.M. and 4 P.M., and further, required product

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<sup>151</sup> Mulvany, *Toronto, Past and Present*, 142-3.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 142.

weights to be measured accurately, using the market weighting machine.<sup>153</sup> Copies of such regulatory system of codes along with a basic timetable for the market operation were to be put on public display in the surrounding townships and in York at the door entrances of church and courthouse.<sup>154</sup>

The market went under further development in 1831 when the wooden building was replaced by a large and spacious red-brick structure of quadrangular layout with arched gateway entrances at each side. The new building occupied the entire Market Block. In addition to its commercial arrangement, a large space above the main entrance of the new building was designated to host political debates, as well as general meetings to discuss issues concerning the town.<sup>155</sup> Fifteen years after the Town of York was incorporated as the City of Toronto, the demolition of the brick structure ensued from the damage done during the 1849 great fire gave rise to the construction of St. Lawrence Hall and Market in the form of an L shaped complex with a consideration of its aesthetic-functional coherence.<sup>156</sup> Aside from its market purposes, the addition of the hundred feet in length by thirty-eight feet six inch wide hall provided the city with a large area used for public purposes, such as exhibitions, meetings, concerts, and entertainments, with the capacity to accommodate one-thousand people. In addition, prior to the establishment of the permanent City Hall, the St. Lawrence location, on its south side, housed the administrative function of the municipal government, as well as the police operation.

Accordingly, the ground floor was set out for the market and police station while the second floor included municipal offices, such as “the offices of the Mayor and City Treasurer, and the

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<sup>153</sup> Glazebrook, *The Story of Toronto*, 59; Robertson, *Robertson's Landmarks of Toronto*, Volume 1, 64

<sup>154</sup> J. Ross Robertson, *Robertson's Landmarks of Toronto: The Collection of a Historical Sketches of the Town of York* (Toronto : J. Ross Robertson, 1908), 61, <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDC-LANDMARKSTORONTO05ROBEUOFT&R=DC-LANDMARKSTORONTO05ROBEUOFT>.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*, 62-64.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

city council chambers.”<sup>157</sup> The market maintained its administrative and political relationships with the rest of the city until 1899 when the city’s growing municipal government required its own administrative building, and as a result, the administrative operation of the municipal government was relocated to the new City Hall at Queen and Bay streets.

There was, of course, the economic relationship between the market and the city, in a sense that the highly regulated market operation was key to ensuring the food supplies required to feed the population. Conversely, the market became the distribution point of a wide range of products and manufactured articles, ranging from agricultural produce and animal products to second-hand books and from children toys to cheap jewellery and perfumery.<sup>158</sup> In the absence of mass-market retail, within the walls of the public market formed the essential common site, in which network of artisans and merchants, including grocers, butchers, dry-goods vendors, jewellers, and craftsmen gathered under one roof to set up lines of shops, as well as to organise auctions. This, in turn, established a vibrant and dynamic trading centre for market activity into which population from the town and the immediate surrounding townships were drawn. The market also created a space for farmers from the countryside to sell their produce. Farmers and their families from nearby countryside travelled to the town in wagons with a load of agricultural produce, meat, dairy produce, and livestock for sale or trade with other goods, such as groceries, hardware, drugs, and clothes.<sup>159</sup> The regulatory market, in short, gave rise to the conditions upon which a great institutional shift would soon be possible. It worked, on the one hand, as the vital point of shopping concentration, where explicit, general regulatory techniques first appeared to

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<sup>157</sup> “(Really) Old City Hall in the Digital Archive,” Local History and Genealogy, Toronto Public Library, January 31, 2018, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/local-history-genealogy/2018/01/really-old-city-hall-in-the-digital-archive.html>.

<sup>158</sup> Mulvany, *Toronto, Past and Present*, 144.

<sup>159</sup> Glazebrook, *The Story of Toronto*, 37.

shape the conditions of possibility for certain economic actions and transactions and allow for commodity flows. On the other hand, it maintained the hierarchical distribution of goods and merchandise as it restricted or reduced competition over the exchange of commodities and services, by remaining well supplied. The market became the site of economic exchange between the city and the surrounding countryside. Interesting point about early commerce during the early part of the nineteenth century is that it functioned within a network of trading systems, which involved the idea of extending and maximizing the commercial developments, many of which were established within the spatial structure of the local market. It should be emphasized, however, that there was no institutional consumer subject during the pre-industrial period.

Relatedly, in the early years of the market, monetary economy existed to a very limited extent. Instead, early commerce accepted bartering as a common and widespread method of trade exchange for buying and selling across the colony. While the number of town's inhabitants continued its upward trajectories, the vast majority of the population lived in the countryside and rural areas, and that the economy during this time was dominated primarily by the agriculture sector, as well as other natural resources, such as lumber and coal.<sup>160</sup> Bartering economy of this period meant that people obtained their food, furniture, and other essential supplies for life by entering into barter transactions with shopkeepers and merchants from nearest towns and cities for direct exchange of goods and services from one another, rather than requiring payment in cash as a mode of retail exchange. Given that the majority of the population lived and worked in farmlands, agricultural produce, livestock and animal products, and other associated items worked as the most usual means of exchange for goods and services. Such reciprocal practices in

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<sup>160</sup> "Canada goes urban," Statistics Canada, modified May 5, 2018, accessed February 1, 2019, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2015004-eng.htm#def1>.

retail trade, in large, trace their lineage from the fact that during the early part of the nineteenth century, currency was significantly in short supply, and hence money was an insignificant medium of exchange and measurement.<sup>161</sup> As a result of bartering practices prior to the establishment of banking system, money seldom played a role as a common measure of value of goods and, therefore, sale was carried out on the basis of credit. Consequently, the level of prices of products and merchandise tended to be high, which in turn gave rise to an improvised system of bargaining and haggling over prices. York was provided with banking facilities in 1818 with the introduction of Bank of Montreal and Bank of Upper Canada, in order to help with money supply of the town and the circulation of currency. “At that stage, however,” as explained by Glazebrook, “these were agencies rather than branches and appeared not to have attempted a general banking business.”<sup>162</sup> As a result, the combination of goods, credit, and cash, in large, continued to work as the basis of the system of exchange for other goods and services.<sup>163</sup>

The discussion in this modulation, as part of my genealogy of consumer surveillance, has focused on the formation of the first regulatory public market within the well-planned spatial and architectural dynamics of the emerging disciplinary capital city and its demographic expansion. The introduction of the first public market marked a key moment, what I call “marketization of space,” in the rationalities and technologies of power that characterized specific mode of governing and regulating consumption. The market, whose operation was facilitated and reinforced through the disciplinary grid structure of the city, was a central point of distribution of goods and merchandise to the urban population and the surrounding countryside. At the same time, the primary relationship of the first public market to the rest of the territory was defined in

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<sup>161</sup> Glazebrook et al., *A Shopper's View of Canada's Past*, iii.

<sup>162</sup> Glazebrook, *The Story of Toronto*, 37.

<sup>163</sup> Belisle, *Retail Nation*, 20.

terms of spatial logic of sovereignty. On the one hand, it fulfilled the commercial and economic purposes of the city that were conditioned by the system of code and rigid binary division between the permitted and prohibited, working as basic controlling techniques. On the other hand, the first regulatory public market played a significant role in the spatial distribution of laws and orders. The public market, in the face of the economic and demographic transformations, brought about a contingent moment at which a new institutional framework of consumption came to being.

## **3.2 Second Modulation: The Body Politics and the Formation of Consumer**

### *3.2.1 The Arrival of a New Industrial Framework and the Economic and Demographic Transformations*

The final decades of the nineteenth century well into the early part of the twentieth century marked the rapid growth of industry and large stocks of merchandise that came in part through the development of complex machinery and the introduction of factory system. This, in turn, led to an unprecedented increase of wealth, urban population, as well as the rise of mass retail. The British North America Act of 1867 (the present Constitution Act) established the new Dominion of Canada as one united and domestically self-governing federation, under which the federal government was given full jurisdiction over trade and commerce, banking, currency and coinage, as well as navigation and shipping. In addition to the new Act and later provisions, the Conservative governments set out policies and regulations, such as “protective tariffs, transcontinental railway, and sponsorship of immigration,” which aimed at promoting the integration of provincial economies into the national market. Supplementary to these regulations, the introduction of the National Policy of 1878 embraced further protection for the Canadian manufacturers and entrepreneurs to seek opportunities within the domestic industrial economy,

resulting in the growth of industries and hence competition.<sup>164</sup> For this reason, many prominent retailers, such as Timothy Eaton and Robert Simpson, saw potential in the emerging Canadian consumer society, thus beginning to explore the idea of department store and new retail mechanisms. Toronto was the centre of these revolutionary consumption practices.

Aside from the physical transformations of the city, Toronto followed the pattern of industrial development, resulting in a massive economic expansion and progressive transition. During this period, the city expanded its industrial manufacturing that created a high demand for labours for numerous and varied occupations in factories,<sup>165</sup> which in turn stimulated urbanization. As a result, the total influx of urbanized population continued to grow rapidly, and Toronto's residents swelled over 370,000 by 1911.<sup>166</sup> Conversely, the late nineteenth century Ontario witnessed increasing manufacturing capacity and innovations in agriculture machinery, which expanded the production of consumer goods and farm products.<sup>167</sup> The implications for industrialization meant the growing reliance on machinery processes and hence the emergence of a new type of labour force, as the shift in the composition of goods from the local agricultural and commercial market into large-scale manufacturing trade took place. As explained by Craig Heron in his examination of the living condition of steelworkers during this period, the new labour was one that facing not "individual entrepreneurs who headed up local businesses, but rather powerful corporations with unprecedented resources to control the productive capacity of the country."<sup>168</sup> Subsequently, the growth of industrial capitalism dramatically transformed work and afforded a new attitude toward life. The so-called age of mass production with its significant

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<sup>164</sup> Margaret Conrad et al., *History of the Canadian Peoples* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), 72-74.

<sup>165</sup> Glazebrook, *The Story of Toronto*, 196-7.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 190.

<sup>167</sup> Conrad et al., *History of the Canadian Peoples*, 79-80.

<sup>168</sup> Craig Heron, *Working in Steel: The Early Years in Canada, 1883-1935* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 9.

human-machine power brought with it, on the one hand, the prosperity to drastically increase the productivity of the worker and, consequently, the total volume of manufactured goods produced, and on the other hand, the shift in the economy of consumption which harboured a new type of self-regulatory consumer subject to demand and consume these mass-produced commodities and services. Corresponding to the new means of production was the evolution of giant department store establishments, which introduced growth and diversification of product lines.<sup>169</sup> These transformations resulted in the deployment of a wide range of regulatory mechanisms that would dramatically change the retailing domain, resulting in establishing monopoly on the commodity circulation. These department stores were acknowledged as critical to the distribution and sale of manufactured articles and, more importantly, to the construction of modern consumer subjects with a sense of complacency.

### 3.2.2 Modern Department Store and the Formation of Standardized Commodity Exchange

Sixty-six years after the establishment of Toronto's first public market, the announcement of the grant opening of Timothy Eaton's first store in the rapidly growing city, appeared in *the Globe* of December 9th of 1869, that captured the signs of commercial progressiveness and retail reform (Figure 3).<sup>170</sup>

Founded two years after the 1867 Confederation, the new store



Figure 3: Announcement of the opening of Eaton's first store in *the Globe*, December 9, 1869

<sup>169</sup> Donica Belisle, *Retail Nation*, 19.

<sup>170</sup> T. Eaton Co., *Business Sold*, December 9, 1869, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1, Microfilm MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

replaced J. Jennings small business and opened its physical doors to the public on the southwest corner of Yonge and Queen Streets on December 8, 1869. Eaton drew up his overarching guiding principles for the operation of the newly dry-goods enterprise under the name The T. Eaton Company, otherwise known as Eaton's. These key items, which drastically shifted the purchasing power, were: "We propose to sell our goods for CASH ONLY"; and "In selling goods, to have only one price" (emphasis in original).<sup>171</sup> The introduction of both one-price provision and cash policy was a departure from the existing practices associated with bartering and credit sales, which tended to give rise to higher prices and uncontrollable risks, toward a model that would afford price control, in both selling and buying, and consequently, the prohibition of haggling over prices, especially control of the possibility of subsequent debt. These regulatory practices sought to ensure predictable price reduction and make reliable forecast over what would come in and out of the store, which in turn established a system of supervision over prices and sales returns that would lead to the generation of surplus cash from the predictability offered by such standardized methods.<sup>172</sup> The advantage of the imposition of money on exchange afforded Eaton's the regulation of consumer pricing. In this way, money as the new method of payment became an effective measure or medium of exchange through which the circulation of commodities with a concrete price would take place. The function of money was seen as intermediary instrument that created a simple form of standardized transaction and carried purchasing power.

Conversely, by reviving Marx's theory of money commodity, as pointed out by Geoff Pfeifer, "commodities become stand-ins for capital itself and at the same time, a means from

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<sup>171</sup> Archives of Ontario, Business Sold.

<sup>172</sup> Belisle, *Retail Nation*, 18-19.

accumulating capital.”<sup>173</sup> Contrary to the traditional barter system in which goods were exchanged directly for other goods, in the new monetary system of selling-buying, following Marx’s money-commodity-money circuit, the conversion of money into commodities and, simultaneously, its opposite, the conversion of commodities back into money would lead to constant flow of capital. The advantage of this M-C-M circuit, therefore, is defined by the calculation of proportion between the quantity of money and the exchange of commodities in the capitalist market, independent of and outside their use-value. In this way, as explained by Pfeifer, “the abstraction that attends the exchange-value of the commodity form is anything but mere idea, or thought.” This is to say, the commodity abstraction “is a ‘real abstraction’ that has material form (in the commodity itself, and in the material act of exchange) and has material consequences in the social world and not just in the minds of individuals.”<sup>174</sup> In other words, the production of real abstraction of exchange-value does not come from the inside of the subject, but rather it is generated from a coupling or assemblage, from which subjective emotion and objective reason later arise. It was, therefore, a great moment in the retail domain when Eaton’s realized the implication of monetary signs in creating indefinite new possibilities, by converting all values into abstract monetary equivalence, from which profit could be extracted. Monetary signs intervene directly in the material flows, in the way that, as pointed out by Maurizio Lazzarato, “they are power signs because instead of representing something they anticipate it, create it, and mold it.”<sup>175</sup> In other words, and the new monetary transaction and the standardized system of payment became controlling methods for Eaton’s, which enabled it to interminably

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<sup>173</sup> Geoff Pfeifer, “The Question of Capitalist Desire: Deleuze and Guattari with Marx,” *Continental Thought & Theory: A Journal of Intellectual Freedom* 1, no. 4 (2017): 258, <http://dx.doi.org/10.26021/236>.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, 257.

<sup>175</sup> Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, 85.

regulate and manipulate consumers' behaviour and entice them to spend and buy more with pricing strategies and anticipatory discounts.

### *3.2.3 Disciplinary Retailing Mechanisms and Cultivation of Pleasure and Convenience for Consumption*

Aside from his controlled exchange mechanisms, Timothy Eaton presented an alternative shopping experience, by promoting free browsing and encouraging customers to examine stocks without the obligation for purchasing.<sup>176</sup> Accordingly, the advantage of encouraging browsing behaviour was to keep customers within the spatial arrangement of the store longer, insofar as these spatial strategies would help promote and enhance customer movement in the store and hence interaction with products that would maximize the possibility to purchase and, consequently, increase sales. From this perspective, the economy of duration was incorporated into the spatial dynamics of consumer purchase journey, as a means of reinforcing the more time spent in store, the more money likely spent. The emphasis on encouraging customers to browse and linger was intended to shift the attention away from the general perception that regarded shopping as mere economic transaction and toward a new set of behaviour that endorsed shopping as leisurely experience, as a form of social interaction.<sup>177</sup> Moreover, Eaton distinguished himself from retailing competitors by promising standardized quality services for all customers with various type of needs, regardless of their socioeconomic status. One year after having established these guiding principles, in 1870, the dry-good retail store introduced its longstanding policy of “Goods satisfactory or money refunded,” by which customers were

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<sup>176</sup> Archives of Ontario, Business Sold.

<sup>177</sup> Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 296.

served with the promise of fine-quality stocks or money-back and exchange guarantee.<sup>178</sup> In other words, if shopping was to present itself with the advantages of pleasure, convenience, and ease, the obstacle that made the purchase less appealing needed to be reduced. Take Eaton's remark about its mail-order satisfactory service, for example: "Remember you [shoppers] run no risk. Simply because we take all the risk. We throw our goods open to your inspection in your own home and if not satisfactory you may return them to us at our expense, without cost to you... we will refund your money, we paying all transportation charges, the purchaser then takes no risk."<sup>179</sup> The equivalence between shopping and leisure, in short, involved the configuration of a whole series of forces, by nurturing and training the ones that drove individuals to make purchases and, simultaneously, reducing or diminishing those correlated with the reluctance to shop. In this way, these internal mechanisms that meticulously attended to the qualification, behaviour, desire, and habits of individuals pressured bodies and forces to conform to ideal image of buying customers. Discipline, as pointed out by Foucault, "dissociates power from body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection."<sup>180</sup> The implementation of these disciplinary retailing mechanisms was ground-breaking at the time to the extent that Eaton had to expand his single dry-good store to a multi-storey construction in 1883. The result was the emergence of the first department store in Toronto and in Canada generally.

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<sup>178</sup> T. Eaton Co., Timothy Eaton Story, 1992, Eaton's Square Deal Program, Eaton's Advertising Planning and Marketing Department seasonal and specialty broadcasting records, F 229-423, B381459, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>179</sup> T. Eaton Co., No. 82 - Fall-Winter 1907-08, 1907, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-34, MS 898 reel 5, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>180</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 138.

From the first day of the establishment of his retail business, the emphasis on the regulation of prices, import, and stock turnover prompted Eaton to break away from the wholesale sector, thus eliminating the role of the middleman and, instead, establishing buying sites, known as Buying Office, in different parts of the world. In this way, Eaton laid emphasis upon buying merchandise directly from manufacturers in large, predictable orders and at lowest possible cost than the market price. Thus, following Foucault's analysis of the problem of scarcity in the disciplinary system, the deployment of the series of preventive measures and supervisions aimed at avoiding negative events in advance, before their occurrence.<sup>181</sup> In the Fall and Winter Catalogue of 1892-93, Eaton described his retailing business as "importing retailers," whose general frameworks were twofold: "first, to get the best and choicest goods direct from the makers; second, to have the lowest prices."<sup>182</sup> Consequently, Eaton extended the system of control over consuming bodies by offering his own expertise to consumers and imposing upon them what he viewed as fine quality, novelty, and fashion-forward style in his extensive selection of merchandise for the improved self and normative behaviours. Shopping, therefore, was no longer only for basic necessities and essential items to make ends meet, but rather it was an interminable search for a more improved and socially acceptable self through consumption. It was defined as constantly seeking scientifico-disciplinary expertise from the retailer and consuming his products to conform to predefined, desiring bodies. In the early years, Eaton took advantage of the developments in steamships and railway system and made frequent trips to Europe and the United States to purchase goods from suppliers; however, the growing business demanded the establishment of the first buying office in London in 1893, followed by the

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<sup>181</sup> Foucault, *Security, Population, Territory*, 32-33.

<sup>182</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1892-93, 1892, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1, MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

opening of one in Paris in 1898, Manchester and New York in 1911, Zurich in 1912, Belfast and Leicester in 1913, Yokohama in 1918, and Kobe in 1919.<sup>183</sup> Each location became a distribution point of specialty manufactured articles, ranging from women's fashion and accessories coming from Paris to silk and brocades offered by Yokohama, and from laces and gloves imported from Zurich to linens presented by Belfast.<sup>184</sup> By 1982, Eaton's grew its product selection from every corner of the earth, bringing about broad assortments of merchandise in its line of products from the United States to all the way east to Japan, and from Iceland to as far south as Argentina.<sup>185</sup>

Eaton's essentially established itself as a conglomerate, by involving numerous business operations and services and, consequently, diversifying and widening its participation in the market. The 1890s expansion witnessed the introduction of Eaton's factories, by seeking to venture into manufacturing of a wide range of goods under the trademark Eatonia, and later house brands, including TECO, TruLine, and Viking, to be sold solely in its own department stores. Beginning with a small workshop, which comprised merely eight sewing machines and located next to the store, Eaton's factories eventually grew in numbers, appearing in four cities of Toronto, Hamilton, Montreal, and Guelph, and increased in specialty operation, manpower, and electric power machineries to seek an active part in manufacturing production.<sup>186</sup> Each factory operation specialized in manufacturing distinct items, including Toronto where men's and women's apparel, furniture, and picture frames were produced, Hamilton mostly used for knitwear and undergarments, Montreal presented men's clothing and gloves, and Guelph for

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<sup>183</sup> T. Eaton Co., Buying Offices – Miscellaneous, Eaton's Archives Office subject files, F 229-162-0-476, B253781, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>184</sup> T. Eaton Co., Achievement: The Story of a Store, [motion picture film], 1980, Sound and moving images documenting Eaton's history, F 229-401-03, DVD 139, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>185</sup> T. Eaton Co., Buying – Miscellaneous, 1982, Eaton's Archives Office subject files, F 229-162-0-475, B253781, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>186</sup> T. Eaton Co., The EATON Organization is growing with Canada, 1924-1926, Catalogue - Advertising, Eaton's Archives Office subject files, F 229-162-0-479, B253781, Archives of Ontario.

manufacturing stoves and furnaces. This new feature, by seeking to keep the output for in-house distributing operations, cut out expenditures, concerning bookkeeping and marketing associated with non-Eaton's customers,<sup>187</sup> as well as supported controls over sales and tariff on imports. Subsequently, Eaton's was no longer merely a dry-goods importing retailer, but rather managed its cycle of production-to-consumption, which in turn became a remarkable source of economic value and rise of capital. Eaton's expanded further, by opening its first branch department store in Winnipeg in 1905, followed by more stores in other parts of the country.<sup>188</sup> Aside from its spatial expansion, the ideal functioning of Eaton's must be understood beyond its expansive multi-commercial-industrial form. Eaton's was more than a distribution point of a wide range of mass-produced standardized merchandise. It actively participated in the behavior alteration and modification of consumers, compelling them to purchase and consume actively and cheerfully and conform to predefined, desiring bodies, as the socially acceptable self. The crux of Eaton's power in shaping consumer behaviour, from the very beginning of its operation well into the first half of the twentieth century, was the great use of various subtle and meticulous disciplinary tactics to enhance the productivity and utility of consuming bodies. The new form of spatial arrangement analytically observed, trained, assessed, and regulated bodies, controlling their movements and interactions with products to ultimately shape and nurture ideal consumption behaviour and maximize the possibility of consumer purchase. In essence, the very architectural structure of Eaton's first department store became the disciplinary mechanisms for continuous monitoring and supervision of consumers and consumption.

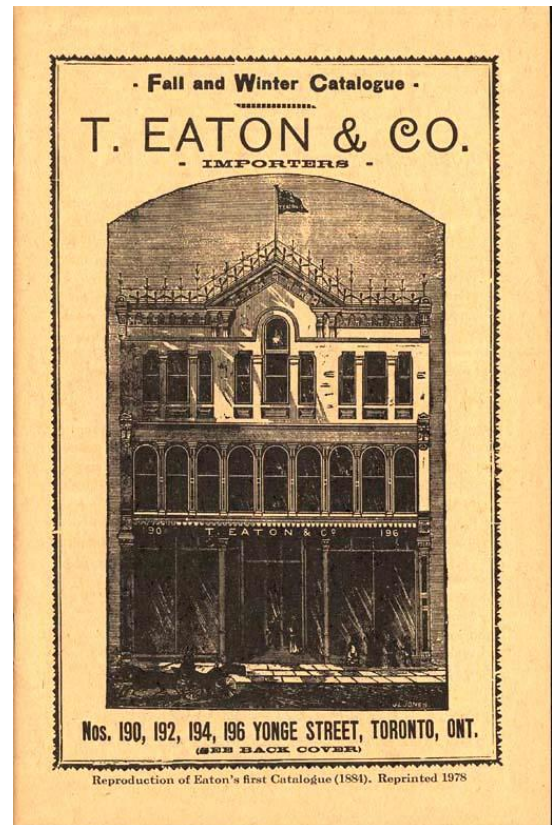
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<sup>187</sup> Bruce Allen Kopytech, *Eaton's: The Trans-Canada Store* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014), 57.

<sup>188</sup> T. Eaton Co., History - Articles - Staff Magazines – Western, Eaton's Archives Office subject files, F 229-162-0-655, B253787, Archives of Ontario.

### 3.2.4 The Composition of the Retail Establishment Within the Disciplinary Urban Space

The cover of Eaton's Fall and Winter Catalogue of 1884 marked a notable sight of Eaton's panoptic architecture (Figure 4).<sup>189</sup> The drawing was of a new purposed-built shopping complex to which Eaton moved his growing operation from the first dry-goods store in August 1883. The 1880s marked the era of general prosperity and growth. Eaton's innovative methods of retailing afforded the business to continue to flourish rapidly to such an extent that the space, comprising a frontage of 24 feet with a depth of 60 feet, despite the 1876 rare side extension of the store and its later addition of the second floor, was no



**Figure 4:** The cover of the first Eaton's Catalogue Fall-Winter, 1884

longer adequate for Eaton's achievements and its ambition for greater expansion, and as a result, Eaton sought new quarters.<sup>190</sup> The original site, confined within Queen Street to the north, Yonge Street to the east, and Knox Church to the west side, reached its constraints for the possibilities of further development on any of these directions.<sup>191</sup> Subsequently, Eaton's relocated to new premises, occupying a large area along the lower west side of the city's main artery, Yonge Street, which by then, along with King Street, was realized as a shopping district. The property

<sup>189</sup> "Eaton's Catalogues Through the Years," Ontario Government, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, accessed July 27, 2020, <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/eatons/catalogues.aspx>.

<sup>190</sup> T. Eaton Co., *Eaton's – The Story of a Store*, [motion picture film], T. Eaton Company building and expansion records, F 229-404-0-99, DVD 134, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>191</sup> T. Eaton Co., *Golden Jubilee, 1869-1919: A Book to Commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the T. Eaton Co. Limited* (T. Eaton Co, 1919), 47.

Eaton acquired for the proposed expansion housed a structure, comprising three lower stores, which Eaton proceeded to demolish in order to build a single multi-floor structure. The new purpose-built store with two upper floors and a basement floor created a coherent whole, rather than an afterthought, that would serve as a continuous hierarchical and functional space, where the spatial distribution of bodies and things would be carried in relation to one another.

In 1886, the new department store, covering the total floor space of over twelve times greater than the original location, was served by the great advantage of many industrial design innovations and modern facilities, as well as a noble location, being situated in the heart of downtown metropolitan area.<sup>192</sup> They were intended to locate and organize several chronological series of movements and actions, by breaking them down into parts and then adding them up in a whole ensemble to ultimately lure consumers into activities that lead up to purchase and production of consumption. Considering the site of the new department store, it was presented on the west side of Yonge Street, just north of its intersection with Queen Street, with which James and Albert Streets cutting across at right angles.<sup>193</sup> Facing the opposite side, just south of Queen Street, where the former Eaton's store was located, Robert Simpson established his first department store with further expansion two years after Eaton's removal. From 1890 well into 1910, Eaton's was stretched further to the west side, as well as acquired additional sales space on the north side, by taking over two additional blocks, thus bringing up its total number of blocks along the west side of Yonge Street to three.<sup>194</sup> Where the pre-industrial commercial affairs were designated to an area along several King Street blocks, containing fairly solid line of small shops topped by the homes of the merchants, in the new arrangement, similar to the public market, one

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<sup>192</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter, 1886-87, 1886, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-2, Microfilm MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 305.

single shopping establishment, comprising multiple number of departments, extended to the entire blocks of buildings on Yonge Street. “The ideal,” as explained by Richard Dennis, “was to obtain an ‘island site’, an entire city block, with entrances and plate-glass windows on all sides.”<sup>195</sup> Subsequently, the area in which the emerging department stores with their immense square feet of consumption space were located came to form a commercial zone, which cultivated the status for the domination of most urban commercial activities.

Thinking in terms of the disciplinary configuration of the city, the spatial significance of the consumption site was imagined according to its precise relationship to the artificial multiplicities of elements. As Foucault points out, “more trade means more circulation and greater need for streets and the possibility of cutting across them.”<sup>196</sup> Laying out the commercial zone into a tightly spaced streets grid of the orthogonal geometric city was determined by the circulation considerations. The effect of being located in a higher road density imposed greater traffic frequencies and pedestrian movement. Eaton’s was in close proximity to a number of internal rectilinear streets and intersections, supported by effective technologies of public transport systems, thus ensuring the continuous flows of people and commodities into and out of its store. Three lines of horse-drawn streetcars, fronting Eaton’s department store, sought an active mode of connectivity that would dramatically increase the possibilities of the economies of distance, efficacy, convenience, and flow.<sup>197</sup> The continuous, uninterrupted main roads on which these streetcars operated came to serve traffic flow to go from the railroad systems built on the outskirts of the city all the way to the doors of the retail house. Subsequently, the continuity of the land transport allowed urban stroller and out-of-town commercial travellers to

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<sup>195</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 302.

<sup>196</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 16-17.

<sup>197</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter, 1886-87.

move more frequently and conveniently and greater distance into the site of the retail establishments.

### 3.2.5 *The Panoptic Experimental Space of Department Store and Spatial Distribution of Bodies and Things*

While the regulatory urban grid plan and public transport systems brought Eaton's in a closer personal contact with customers, the architectural arrangement of the department store itself became the instrument of the production of consumption. The new diagram, following Foucault, was assumed in terms of "the calculation of openings, of filled and empty spaces, of passage and transparencies."<sup>198</sup> In more general terms, the establishment of articulated, artificial spacing and placing for disciplinary experiments were concerned with locating, distributing, and regulating people, commodities, and their complex relations, and ultimately emphasizing uninterrupted, self-regulatory retailing operation. The Eaton's three-storey edifice, comprising a total frontage of 52 feet on Yonge Street and a depth of 340 feet, installed large plate-glass windows, covering the entire fronts and sides of the door entrances of the building, which would allow light to illuminate throughout, as well as maximize the visibility of its particular products for sale.<sup>199</sup> The addition was regarded as a noble method of disciplinary retailing mechanisms, and Eaton was among the first modern retailers to embrace it in his establishment.<sup>200</sup> The window displays, fronting the public streets, would highlight tastefully curated merchandise along with prices clearly marked, operating according to the laws of optics to create a point of fascination, as a site of "aesthetic attraction," for the city stroller walking by the store.<sup>201</sup> In this

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<sup>198</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 172.

<sup>199</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1887-88, 1887, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>200</sup> Kopytech, *Eaton's: The Trans-Canada Store*, 37.

<sup>201</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 302.

way, this spatial arrangement of products, which worked to shape consumer behaviour, created a site of wonder for the strolling spectator to take pleasure in the act of seeing without being seen. Following Walter Benjamin's figure of modern archetype, the "flâneur" is mesmerized and contaminated by "phantasmagoria" of the modern experiences and environments. Acquainted with the department store in his passage through the artificial urban space of the industrial modernity, the flâneur is depicted as a self-less observer, by abandoning his individual existence and admiring and absorbing displays of commodities. "The flâneur," Benjamin writes, "is the observer of the marketplace. His knowledge is akin to the occult science of industrial fluctuations. He is a spy for the capitalists, on assignment in the realm of consumers."<sup>202</sup>



**Figure 5:** Eaton's window displays, 1918

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<sup>202</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 427.

Eaton's window displays operated through a selection of grouping products, certain arrangement, certain colour schemes and lighting strategy, and meticulous framing of these products, such as mannequins in different poses for the representation of clothes (Figure 5).<sup>203</sup> Accordingly, such a calculated opening to the department store with the advantage of electric illumination served as a key vantage point to which the traffic flow from the outside and the inside store traffic would converge. Moreover, the provoking Christmas displays, featuring lifelike animated characters, were later installed that played a significant role in establishing the thematic disposition and certain representation of products to be enjoyed by their visitors during the pre-television years.<sup>204</sup> The spectator is subjected to this visual spectacle insofar as she consumes images of products, fashion trends, information about sales, and competitive price range, assessing and evaluating the self through these predefined images of the idealized, desiring bodies. The individual identifies herself with the projected content and expression, so much so that, following Deleuze-Guattari's (1987) account of the act of watching television, "in the very particular situation of a subject of the statement that more or less mistakes itself for a subject of enunciation; the technical machine is the medium between two subjects."<sup>205</sup> She is molded into a useful representative of the industrial economy and its predefined social norms, as a folded self-seeing consumer subject in this new picture of normal implicated in the material artifacts. In this way, the product displays worked as taste-making mechanisms to construct a new way of life fabricated in the image of machinery of production.

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<sup>203</sup> "Remembering the T. Eaton Company on August 20: Snapshots in History," Local History and Genealogy, Toronto Public Library, August 20, 2016, accessed July 27, 2020, <https://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/local-history-genealogy/2016/08/remembering-the-t-eaton-company-on-august-20-snapshots-in-history.html>.

<sup>204</sup> "Your Eaton's Christmas Memories," Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, Ontario Government, accessed June 21, 2019, <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/eatons/memories1.aspx>.

<sup>205</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 458.

The spatial frame served as a device of optic that made consumers as parts of the commodity supply chain, speedy dynamics of the fashion cycle, and competitive pricing strategy, what Alfred Sloan, the Chief Executive Officer of General Motors Corporation, termed as “planned obsolescence,” to continuously transmit the anticipatory images of diversification in novelty for an updated, improved lifestyle. Where the Fordist strategy emphasized standardization and price reduction, Sloan’s revolutionary proposition focused attention on upgrading consumer preferences by the implementation of the whole set of artificial givens to the usefulness and functionality of products. This, in turn, played a crucial role in forcing customers to change dated products with the ones of the newest and latest style.<sup>206</sup> The advantage of the Sloanian model for the industries, as noted by Carlos Medeiros, “was not only to defend market share and sales volume... but also to create new markets and plan their growth.”<sup>207</sup> In this way, the perceptual fascination provoked by the spatially and artistically arranged “ready-made” merchandise goods can be understood as a commercial disciplinary mechanism, which aimed at breaking up and decoding previous practices and traditions, by promoting and mobilizing desire to make good choices for an updated, improved self, that were guided by and invested in the market value and for market growth, through interminable product innovations.

Eaton’s spatial structure was established on the premise of not only serving the commercial ends but, more importantly, to allow wide range of internal regulation and control over individuals, movements, time, and actions, by the applications of numerous disciplinary mechanisms, in order to produce desire for their commodities and secure purchase. Where the public market brought different merchants and products under one roof in a space of enclosure,

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<sup>206</sup> Carlos A. Medeiros, “High Wage Economy, Sloanism and Fordism: The American Experience During the Golden Age,” *Alfred P. Sloan: Critical Evaluations in Business and Management*, ed. John Cunningham Wood and Michael C. Wood (London: Routledge, 2003), 287.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*, 288.

the new retail enterprise reworked and reconfigured the spatial structure, by meticulously dividing and subdividing it into different smaller sections, known as departments. Such spatial partitioning made it possible to arrange and organize multitudes of people, things, and movements and regulate their relations, which in turn permitted positive elements that would promote and maximize activities leading up to purchase while prevented in advance negative elements that challenged this particular outcome. Eaton was first to incorporate the novelties of industrial luxury in one building in order to enhance the hierarchical and functional effects of all elements in his retail establishment.<sup>208</sup> Having the advantage of the recent technology of architectural glass and iron, large light-wells, spaced throughout, were added within the volume of the structure to extend the natural light, coming from the enormous skylights arrangement designed in the roof, through every floor. Benjamin, in his reading of the nineteenth-century Parisian arcades made of glass and iron, explains, “It is the peculiarity of *technological* forms of production (as opposed to art forms) that their progress and their success are proportionate to the transparency of their social content (Hence glass architecture)” (emphasis in original).<sup>209</sup> This is to say, these materials and constructions contributed to the reinforcement of the artificial order and a whole new set of behaviour and consumption practices. In addition, such calculated openings allowed for ventilation and provision of the air that circulated in the interior spaces, and to remove dangerous mixtures of noxious fumes, diseases, epidemics, and so forth. The new controlled consumption space was further illuminated by the installation of novel technology of electric lighting that amplified public health and safety and reduced hazards, contrary to the traditional gas lights.<sup>210</sup> Echoing Foucault’s analysis of Bentham’s panoptic institution, the

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<sup>208</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1886-87.

<sup>209</sup> Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 465.

<sup>210</sup> Joy Santink, *Timothy Eaton and the Rise of His Department Store* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 97.

complete lighting and proper ventilation facilitated and maximized control over consuming bodies who were caught up in a disciplinary experiment that aimed at constraining them subtly and analytically to shape their behaviour in order to entice them to make purchases.

In addition to the lighting considerations, other modern amenities, including high white lofty ceilings with supporting columns lining the walls and “the ample sweep of floor,” extended through the entire building, accommodated prospective customers with a positive sense of spaciousness and convenience in the consumption space. In his description of such arrangements, Eaton said: “Everything is looked for your comfort in shopping, making it a pleasure rather than a drudgery.”<sup>211</sup> Expanding upon the idea of shopping as a pleasurable and leisurely experience, these means of attractions worked to plug the consuming bodies into temporal and spatial partitioning in which individuals were moved through a series of qualifying stages that subjected them to analytical spatial observation and correction aimed at molding them into potential buyers to make purchases. The emphasis on the role of spatial and temporal arrangement to regulate consumer behaviour meant that Eaton’s introduced a number of programs and services within its establishment, which were organized according to analytical segmentation of time and space, that involved a series of uninterrupted activities to facilitate and extend the duration required for securing consumer’s act of purchase. “The ‘seriation’ of successive activities,” Foucault writes, “makes possible a whole investment of duration by power... the possibility of accumulating time and activity, of rediscovering them, totalized and usable in a final result, which is the ultimate capacity of an individual.”<sup>212</sup> Such disciplinary arrangements of time and space were imposed on services, including ladies’ waiting-room, parcel storage, in-store coffee rooms, and restaurant,

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<sup>211</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1886-87.

<sup>212</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 160.

that Eaton's gradually added in order to extend the duration of in-store shopping experience and keep customers in store longer. Take Eaton's waiting-room, for example, a space that was designated at the south corner of the store to welcome women customers, travelling from outlying areas to the Eaton's downtown location. Writing to these shoppers, Eaton stated:

“Here you can leave your parcels and get a cheque for them free of charge, send your telegrams, telephone, ask questions, leave your over garments, umbrellas, anything. Should you have too many parcels, there are trunks from 90c. to \$10 in the basement quite convenient. So much for your parcels. Now you want to wash, arrange your toilet, and take a rest. Take the elevator to the second floor, and right south of the freight elevator you will find a nicely curtained waiting-room, a clean toilet room, with towels, soap, etc. Other waiting-rooms are scattered throughout the building for your convenience. These rooms are yours; we give them to you. Wash as often as you please; wait as long as you like. Get thoroughly refreshed before you start your shopping.”

These disciplinary efforts aimed at bending consumer behaviour to make purchase. In short, beneath the iron and glass roof, the retail establishment was no longer simply to serve as a shopping destination for everyday essentials, but rather it was a calculated and well-planned architectural and spatial structure and arrangement that worked to keep people inside for as long as possible and increase the duration of shopping journey to shape consumer behaviour and lure them into buying products. The department store presented a miniature image from the “phantasmagoria” of the modern city that formed a functional space within which individuals were brought under analytical spatial observation. Consumers enjoyed the leisurely and pleasurable experience of shopping, while they became subjected to disciplinary correction and regulation prodding and enticing them to buy. “This phantasmagoria,” as explained by Benjamin, “in which the city appears now as a landscape, now as a room, seems later to have inspired the décor of department stores, which thus put flâneur to work for profit.”<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 21.



1887-88 drew up a detailed spatial layout of the retail house (Figure 6).<sup>214</sup> The architecture was L-shaped plan, containing fifty merchandise departments, located on three floors, with a wide range of articles to select from. The ends on both sides, aligned to the south-west, were punctured with door entrances, fronting Yonge and Queen Streets. An open space, immediately at each entrance, was designated as the transition zone area, what Paco Underhill (1999) terms as “decompression zone,” which worked as a collector point to accommodate smooth conversion of traffic flow from the outside into the retail environment. The sales floor featured long corridors, extending the entire block of the building, which regulated and controlled the customer traffic, by both breaking up and spatially distributing and rearranging individuals and their movements. These corridors, in a sense, resembled the assembly line conveyers very much. Individuals were moved down the assembly line, as one of the parts, from one fixed station to the next station, from one department to the next department, until they passed through all stages to become completed and persuaded buying customers to make purchases. Lining both sides of these corridors were the variety of departments, divided by their designated stations, like a series of small, invisible “cells,” in which bodies, movements, and actions were meticulously broken down, oriented, and adjusted. Each department presented certain product category with which the customers, confined to the cell for a specific time period in the duration of store stroll, came to contact. Aside from the disciplinary time, as explained by Foucault, “In organizing ‘cells, ‘places’ and ‘ranks’, the disciplines create complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical. It is places that provide fixed positions and permit circulation; they carve out individual segments and establish operational links.”<sup>215</sup> Take, for instance, a small part of the ground floor, walking down the corridors, just beyond the entrance, at the north-west

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<sup>214</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1887-88.

<sup>215</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 148.

corner was the first department, which was laid out for the sale of napkins. Adjacent departments were linens and cottons, facing embroideries and ribbons, and farther down were laces and handkerchiefs, just across the cotton department. Between these subdivisions ran three main corridors, which joined together immediately after the middle departments, just before the next departments. One can then see multiple openings, paths, and places meticulously set out through the consumption space of the department store to direct individuals from the entrance to the first department, followed by other departments, guiding individual consumers to move from one side of the corridor to the other and back to the first side. In short, bodies, their gestures, and their movements were captured and brought under detailed and analytical spatial observation and control to be adjusted and modified, to be decelerated and accelerated, within the well-planned and preestablished spatial arrangement of the store. The law of velocity made individuals' commercial interactions with products seamless, so much so that, as noted by Eaton, even "A child can shop safely in this store."<sup>216</sup>

The effect of this spatial arrangement was to ensure that the customers to proceed through the successive stages, whose advantage was to maximize the points of contact between individuals and a wide range of saleable merchandise in order to regulate and manipulate their behaviours and entice them to buy. The well-defined institutional architecture simultaneously worked to eliminate the possibility of any form of irregularity and confusion in each moment of time. All these serializations, as explained by Foucault, form an "analytical-practical grid that tries to establish the minimal elements of perception and the elements sufficient for modification."<sup>217</sup> The ground floor accommodated a wide range of other product lines that was

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<sup>216</sup> John M. Bassett, *Timothy Eaton* (Don Mills, Ont.: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1980), 24

<sup>217</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 56-57.

categorized and assigned to certain areas of the store on the basis of their associations and similar attributes. These products were spatially arranged and distributed into different departments, such as hosiery, silk, silverware, books, girl's furnishing, men's and boy's boots, and so forth. The second floor integrated men's, women's, and children's clothing with a variety of articles, whereas the third floor incorporated house furnishing, cabinet, carpet, flooring, and other related items. Additional departments, such as baby supplies, games, and trunks and valises, were added later to the basement floor, which was also equipped with full lighting and ventilation.<sup>218</sup> To direct the customer flow from the ground floor to the upper floors, two hydraulic elevators and widening staircases were installed. The purpose of the novel technology of transportation, as expressed by Eaton, was to only carry the customers up, as it "float up smoothly and noiselessly to the second and third floors, a distance of 65 feet."<sup>219</sup> Consequently, walking down the stairs gently coerced customers to pass through store displays and showrooms, as it maximized the duration of browsing and points of contact with products. Accordingly, this spatial arrangement allowed for, on the one hand, better distribution of people in the preestablished order throughout the entire consumption space, and on the other hand, the configuration and multiplication of temporality for the great exposure to the most merchandise, and therefore, a better progression of the desire to purchase. Under Eaton's image of free browsing and individual choice with no obligation to buy was a disciplinary machinery that invested in assigning individuals and movements to places and duration, in order to shape and manipulate their behaviour to complete a purchase.

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<sup>218</sup> T. Eaton Co., Spring-Summer 1888, 1888, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>219</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1886-87.

In addition, regular inspectors, in the role of salespersons, were assigned to each department to engage with customers and increase their interactions with display materials, by giving “helpful advice” and making suggestions, in order to entice them to purchase. In its early years of operations, according to the records, Eaton’s incorporated a “shopping service” into its business model.<sup>220</sup> Corresponding to this new supervisory service, salespersons, aside from their role in attending to and regulating customer behaviour and desire and keeping them under surveillance, were responsible for filling out the invoice and transferring it along with the customer and product to the next department. “The transfer system” was a revolutionary retail bookkeeping at the time, which was then replaced by a new arrangement that required customers to pay for items before moving from one department into another.<sup>221</sup> Although it is unclear when these transitions took place, according to the records, as early as 1887, the traditional system was replaced by a new model, which allowed a more automated and standardized type of transaction and recording of customer purchase, rather than direct supervision and management of an individual customer. This model incorporated an efficient transfer system and material handling, by installing overhead conveyors belts, made of iron and partly brass, throughout the retail establishment.<sup>222</sup> Accordingly, each floor integrated conveyor operations to collect customer’s purchases. The packages along with cash were placed in one basket and moved from one department to another. The baskets were then transported to a central station on the same floor. The main cashier station, situated on the ground floor, was built on a high platform to carry out the final stage of transaction and purchase delivery to customers. Elevating “7 feet above the floor, and ... 123 feet long by 6 feet wide,” it was “fitted up with cash desks and counters for

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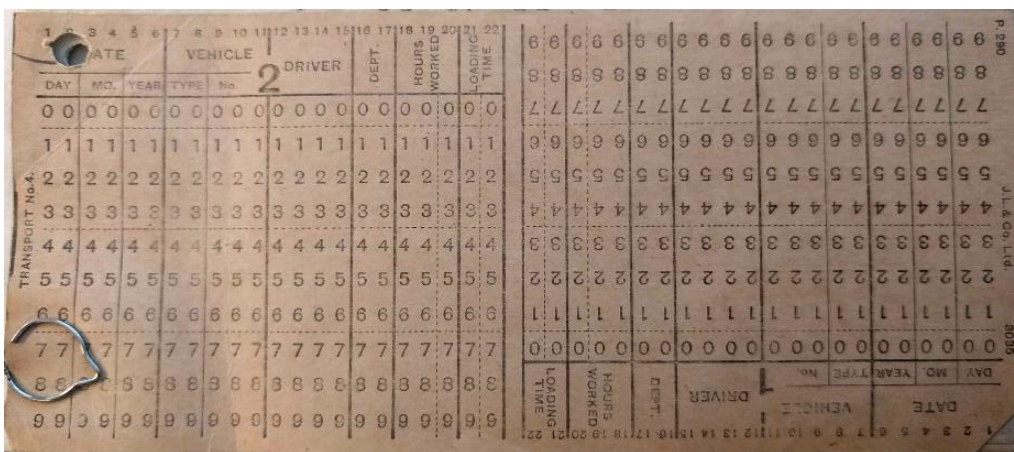
<sup>220</sup> T. Eaton Co., Eaton First in Canada, 1992, Eaton's Square Deal Program, Eaton's Advertising Planning and Marketing Department seasonal and specialty broadcasting records, F 229-423, B381459, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1887-88.

tying up packages.”<sup>223</sup> By the 1890s expansion, Eaton’s established a more efficient and centralized cash carrier system, by adding the technology of pneumatic tubes to move payments from each department to the basement where central cash office was located. The same system was then used to return the change to customers.<sup>224</sup> Consequently, contrary to the public market, Eaton’s established a functional space to allow the circulation of people, commodities, and capital through the disposition of minute details in a series of successive stages to create a seamless and convenient experience of shopping. The disciplinary series of economic control over consuming bodies and consumption eventually became more complicated as a result of the establishment of statistical regulations in retail operation.

### 3.2.6 Statistical Instruments Within the Institutional Framework



**Figure 7:** Eaton’s Early 1920s punch card

By the late 1880s, Eaton’s integrated basic accounting techniques and statistical instruments into its business model to measure and keep track of all its expenses. The application of statistical calculation to total expenses and profits afforded Eaton to estimate and identify

<sup>223</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1887-88.

<sup>224</sup> Santink, *Timothy Eaton and the Rise of his Department Store*, 143.

general characteristics of the performance of his business, which were then used as a benchmark against what is acceptable and unacceptable to prevent any deviation from its business plan. As explained by Joy Santink, “A complete record of all expenses involved in the running of a large dry goods store allowed those in charge to arrive at a wholly accurate appraisal not only of the business as a whole, but of each department.”<sup>225</sup> Conversely, a series of reports from the Sales and Expense Office show that between 1921 and 1958, Eaton’s securely made use of mathematical support to keep track of year-over-year total sales and mail-order sales, as well as perform comparative assessments of daily sales between various stores and the percentage change for different merchandise products in year-over-year sectional sales.<sup>226</sup> In addition, the advantage of statistical spreadsheets afforded Eaton’s to collect and record retail sales data for its wide range of merchandise to estimate its sales growth rate from year to year. The application of these quantitative analyses of sales forecasting shows that Eaton’s kept track of sales for various products over five years between 1927 and 1932 that measured the percent change and quantitative variations in year-over-year sectional sales within and between different categories of products.<sup>227</sup>

Prior to the introduction of digital computers, Eaton’s benefited from the punched card technology for its large data processing purposes. The records show that punched cards applied in the administration of what came in and out of the store in the early decade of the twentieth century, as early as 1921 (Figure 7).<sup>228</sup> With the improvements of the technology and its

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<sup>225</sup> Santink, *Timothy Eaton and the Rise of his Department Store*, 142.

<sup>226</sup> T. Eaton Co., Eaton's Sales and Expense Office sales journals and miscellaneous sales and expense records, 1921-1958, F 229-87, B294509, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>227</sup> T. Eaton Co., Sales & Stocks, Toronto & Montreal, 1927-36, Eaton's Sales and Expense Office sales journals and miscellaneous sales and expense records, F 229-87, B294509, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>228</sup> T. Eaton Co., Business Machines - Part I: Correspondence, 1915-28, Eaton's General Office files, F 229-54, B294605, Archives of Ontario.

technical and statistical capabilities, starting from 1925, there was a growing interest in establishing a standardized system of registry to record, keep track of, and assess activities oriented around circulation of goods and services, both selling and buying.<sup>229</sup> Lars Heide, in his historical examination of punched card applications from end of the nineteenth century until the Second World War, explains that the technological innovations attracted and mechanized bookkeeping operations in the years between the two world wars.<sup>230</sup> Similarly, Eaton's ventured onto punched card system used in a mechanical accounting to compile statistical data pertinent to its business, from purchases to sales and from expenses to payrolls. For instance, all products along with their detailed information, such as the date of order, selling price, and date of arrival to each department, were punched, recorded, and sorted in the stock file. As a result, any stock shortage could be traced, detected, and prevented.<sup>231</sup> Once the sale was made in each department, the corresponding cards were moved from the stock file to the sold file, and simultaneously the price on the sale was compared to the price punched in the card. As a result of this comparison, as indicated by the records, "The cards are now used as sales records and are tabulated to give the daily sales of each section, and department. A further sorting under prices will give the sales classified under prices, in sections or as a whole."<sup>232</sup>

The same series of records indicate the attempt made to compile total annual sales and compare the sales growth rate to an identical period in the prior year, which in turn offered the advantage of quantitative reading of probable sales revenue for the following year.<sup>233</sup> From these records, it is also evident that Eaton's followed closely any irregularities or fluctuations projected

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<sup>229</sup> Archives of Ontario, Business Machines - Part I: Correspondence.

<sup>230</sup> Lars Heide, *Punched-Card Systems and the Early Information Explosion, 1880-1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 164.

<sup>231</sup> Archives of Ontario, Business Machines - Part I: Correspondence.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Archives of Ontario, Sales & Stocks, Toronto & Montreal.

from the comparison between the annual growth rates, and consequently, one can extrapolate that these values were incorporated into preparing and planning for the possible sales of the year ahead. Such rationalities in the form of mathematical analyses with the advantage of predictive power were indicative of new mechanisms of security that, according to Foucault, “instead of a binary division between the permitted and the prohibited, one establishes an average considered as optimal on the one hand, and, on the other, a bandwidth of the acceptable that must not be exceeded.”<sup>234</sup> In this way, all aspects of retail operation gradually became increasingly quantifiable, datafiable, and actionable, in order to generate the exact knowledge (to adopt Foucault) about what is taking place within the retail establishment through statistical calculation.

Aside from the forward-looking assessments and statistical regulation of merchandise coming in and going out of the store, number of transactions made in the departments, and growth rates, Eaton’s also established basic statistical methods to calculate its store conversation rate. It gathered, recorded, and measured data from daily in-store operation associated specifically with foot traffic into the retail establishment and number of purchases made by customers. D.M. Allen, Eaton’s employee in the Sales and Expense Office, for example, was responsible to collect information about the number of store traffic, that was to count how many customers entered the store and visited every department each day.<sup>235</sup> Allen also collected and recorded information about the time of the day customers visited the store, such as morning and afternoon counts, characterized and categorized by the geographical location of the stores and the number of transactions made within that time period. This was to conduct comparative

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<sup>234</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 6.

<sup>235</sup> T. Eaton Co., Sales Statistics, D.M. Allan’s Binder, Eaton’s Sales and Expense Office sales journals and miscellaneous sales and expense records, F 229-87, B294509, Archives of Ontario.

assessments of total door counts between different Eaton's stores in different locations and at different times of the day, as well as to draw a comparison of store traffic and sales numbers between Eaton's and its competitor Simpson's.<sup>236</sup> One can, therefore, see that the adoption of statistical instrument allowed Eaton's to establish possible future strategies and techniques to attract potential customers into its stores and forecast and improve future sales accordingly through the utilization of methodical and systematic quantification, datafication, and documentation of store traffic and act of purchasing.

In short, on the one hand, Eaton's worked to bring customers to self-conformity to interminably and actively chase and buy its products, by involving varied disciplinary techniques to meticulously attend to and modify consumers' behaviours, qualifications, and habits. On the other hand, Eaton's began to realize the extraordinary opportunities afforded by mathematical forms of gathering intelligence and producing knowledge about consumers and consumption, that would have been otherwise unavailable to the retailer. However, these statistical techniques largely remained less prominent until the establishment of Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Department in 1952. The addition of the new department coincided with the proliferation of datafied form of consumer surveillance in the period after the Second World War, as these mathematical tools became perfected and more complex and further expanded and extended into the datafication and quantification of consumers' behaviours and preferences to generate knowledge about them and estimate their purchasing patterns. I will return to the use of statistical instruments and quantitative approaches to consumers and their consumption behaviours in the third modulation of this chapter.

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<sup>236</sup> Archives of Ontario, D.M. Allan's Binder.

### *3.2.7 The Addition of Mail-order Catalogue Service and Maximization of Points of Contact with Consumer Subjects*

Eaton's success story moved beyond its brick-and-mortar stores, by spatially extending and distributing its services to consumer spaces with the help from its mail-order catalogues operation. The catalogue addition in turn multiplied Eaton's points of contact with consumers beyond the geographical limitations, as it expanded communication channels to reach people who were unable to go to the physical stores. In addition, it made technique governance of consumers and consumption more complicated and geographically dispersed. Thanks to the advancements in the technologies of rail roads shipping and the integration of both mail and telephone ordering, Eaton extended his retail business to the formal introduction of mail-order catalogue service in the fall of 1884, ten years prior to its Canadian competitors. The emphasis on such operation underlined the philosophy of "A department store at your fingertips."<sup>237</sup> Accordingly, the catalogue operations focused attention on two type of customers: on the one hand, it worked to encourage urban dwellers to visit the store by informing them of appealing prices, merchandise for sale, and valuable details about the stock, and on the other hand, it tried to reach the rural customers by bringing Eaton's enormous range of dry-goods merchandise to choose from at their doorstep. With the picture of its newly established department store on the cover as its sole illustration, Eaton printed his first small thirty-two-page long booklet to be distributed free to the visitors to the anural Toronto Industrial Exhibition (the present Canadian National Exhibition).<sup>238</sup> The black-and-white catalogue compiled a broad selection of goods in stock that was divided into different sections, along with competitive prices and a brief information of the merchandise, followed by ordering instructions, thus promoting the illusion of

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<sup>237</sup> T. Eaton Co., Catalogue Appraisal Program, March 17, 1967, Catalogue Development, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253208, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>238</sup> Archives of Ontario, Timothy Eaton Story.

choices curated in the form of artworks for the consumer subjects. The publication travelled home by the out-of-town visitors at the Toronto fair, and soon fed into the outpouring of requests, coming from all over the country. The following Spring, a six-page flyer was distributed to Eaton's existing customers in order to promote the new addition of mail-order department.<sup>239</sup> The catalogue operations grew and became more sophisticated, sending out regularly two picture books, Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer editions, per annum along with smaller specialty catalogues on request. Early Eaton's catalogues soon increased in length and began to incorporate ink and pen illustrations with detailed descriptions of the store, each department, as well as merchandise, featuring, beside clothing and latest trends in fashion, a wide range of products, including a selection of baby gear, games, bicycles, musical instruments, books and bibles, medical supplies, farm equipment, silverware and glassware, groceries, furniture, and appliances. By 1896, the catalogue operations generated considerable sales, in the way in which Eaton's was delivering over 200,000 parcels annually to customers.<sup>240</sup> Twenty-one years later, by the fall and winter of 1905-06, the page count of the catalogue reached near 300 pages, which included three index pages, carrying more than 1500 merchandise.<sup>241</sup> Eaton's catalogue held to the familiar names the "homesteader's bible," the "family bible," and the "wishing book," claiming its position as one of the most read publications,<sup>242</sup> which captured the public's imagination and exceeded customers material expectations. Given that the majority of the population resided in isolated rural and remote communities and, consequently, had limited access to urban centres, Eaton's catalogue became the primary source of exposure to the outside

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<sup>239</sup> "Canadian mail order catalogues - history," Library and Archives Canada, accessed June 15, 2019, <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/postal-heritage-philately/canadian-mail-order-catalogues/Pages/catalogues-history.aspx>.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> T. Eaton Co., No. 71 - Fall-Winter 1905-06, 1905, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-30, Microfilm MS 898 reel 5, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>242</sup> Archives of Ontario, Eaton First in Canada.

changing world in the face of the growing industrial economy. The significance of Eaton's catalogues, therefore, was more than being simply a shopping guide or price check. It rather played a key disciplinary role in shaping consumer behaviours and ensuring their conformity to the predefined social norms through presenting new images of the idealized desiring bodies to the consumers.

The 1908 classic novel *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery (complete e-book edition released in 2015) engages a distinct way of projecting the idea of Eaton's attempts to exercise control over consuming bodies and promote self-evaluation through the images of idealized bodies and lifestyles that were curated in the pages of mail-order catalogues for the eager out-of-town customers. Staged in the fictional town of Avonlea in Prince Edward Island, the chapter begins with Anne waking up on the sunny September morning of her wedding day, recollecting joyful childhood memories in the little room where she grew up and embracing the final hours of her transition from youth and girlhood to wifehood. Later that morning, despite Anne's neighbour Mrs. Rachel Lynde's cynical attitude towards Eaton's catalogues she considers "the Avonlea girls' Bible," by deflecting them from "studying the Holy Scriptures" on Sundays, Anne's friend Diana associates the magnificence of the wedding day, or perhaps the beginning of a new life, with the promise of high-value and fine-quality attached to Eaton's good name, saying "you couldn't have had a finer one if you'd ordered it from Eaton's."<sup>243</sup> This example demonstrates how people, even in a narrative fiction, placed reliance on Eaton's knowledge and expertise in what the retailer thought fit best within the diverse range of ready-to-wear items to further the branding of the normalized, acceptable self. In the pursuit of becoming

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<sup>243</sup> Lucy Maud Montgomery, *The Collected Works of Lucy Maud Montgomery: 20 Novels & 170+ Short Stories, Poems, Letters and Memoirs* (e-artnow, 2016), chap. IV, Kobo.

the desiring bodies through material consumption, Eaton's promise of the "liberal guarantee" and "goods satisfactory or money refunded" for everyone worked to entice customers to continue making purchase for newer and more novel items.<sup>244</sup> From the first day of its operation, in its effort to expand its capital, Eaton's realized the significance of establishing an effective system of equivalences between its name and distinct characteristics, in such a way that commodities in their association with Eaton's, regardless of their use-value, came to motivate customers to make repeat purchases at Eaton's. Such promises were reiterated in Eaton's catalogues. In the proclamation of 1887, "Our name is a warrant," Eaton stated:

"Our goods have made for us a name. Our standing in the community is a guarantee for the quality of our wares. We cannot afford to misrepresent. How well we have carried out the spirit of these principles in dealing with our customers we prefer that they should say. We refer to all that have dealt with us."<sup>245</sup>

Similarly, Richard Dennis in his examination of the establishment of the department stores in the age of modernity, following William Leach, explains that this creative communication method or branding transformed the relationship between retail establishments and customers, in the way in which they focused no longer merely on commercial transactions, independent of any level of commitment, but acquiring customers trust and loyalty.<sup>246</sup> In this way, Eaton's found potential profitability in building long-lasting relationships with consumers through establishing brand consciousness in them, in order to secure their loyalty for repeat purchases at Eaton's. The increased awareness of Eaton's products and its brand positioning helped to retain profitable customers and increase the likelihood of repeat purchases. At same time, the shift toward long-term consumer relations was crucial to Eaton's operation as it made

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<sup>244</sup> Archives of Ontario, No. 82 - Fall-Winter 1907-08.

<sup>245</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1887-88.

<sup>246</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 316.

profitable consumers more accessible, which in turn intensified Eaton's control over consuming bodies, by continuously imposing upon them particular identities and lifestyle through its diverse ready-made products. The resulting cognitive and emotional connection to consumers transformed the role of Eaton's to a knowledgeable expert at aiding consumers with the products, providing instructions on their usage, suggesting options to fulfill consumer needs, and offering them particular identities and lifestyles. As explained by Dennis, "Customers attempted to construct new identities for themselves, based not only on what they wore or what they owned, but also on where they did their shopping."<sup>247</sup> While consumers developed self-identification with Eaton's products, images, and status on the level of consciousness and representation, Eaton's acted upon and capitalized on "desire" that worked beyond and before subject-object binary. It would be assembled in the socio-economic interactions to generate a material motive, established in material artifacts to be obtain in exchange for payment. "Deterritorialized desire," as explained by Lazzarato, "bears with it an 'economy of possibilities' and an autipoietic (self-productive subjectivity)."<sup>248</sup> Understood this way, desire for the improved self became the driver for continuous anticipation and acquisition of little newer than new and little better than good products. Considering desire as "the creation of new potentialities," desire must be constantly territorialized in the consumer subject to actively assess and improve herself through consumption of products suggested to her by the retailer. Borrowing Mark Seem's remark in his introduction of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, "The flows and productions of desire will simply be viewed as the unconscious of the social production. Behind every investment of time and interest and capital, [is] an investment of desire, and vice versa."<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 316.

<sup>248</sup> Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, 52.

<sup>249</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), xviii.

### 3.2.8 *Disciplining Consumption and the Addition of Basic Forms of Profiling and Information Solicitation*

The examination of the first sixty years into Eaton's catalogue operations demonstrates the continuous effort not only to bring people into greater contact with the immense and varied stock, but more importantly to instill in them a new system of dependencies, so as to generate constant desire to buy more products, irrespective of individual needs. Around the time the industrial economy emerged, the majority of family units relied heavily on the domestic production of food, clothes, and wide range of other products for their domestic consumption.<sup>250</sup> Women were largely responsible for performing the housework to produce these household items. In addition, the shift from the pre-industrial to the industrial economy coincided with the spread of the households whose standard of living depended on wages. Though these wage-earning families made up a relatively small portion of the total population in the early part of the industrialization, by the end of the nineteenth century, with the growing number of manufacturing employment opportunities, the vast majority of the households in both urban and rural areas became wage dependence. This led to the increased rate of labour force participation, largely the work of men, and consequently reinforced further division of domestic labour in the family, which became primarily female oriented. According to Bettina Bradbury's (1995) analysis of the domestic division of labour in the rising working-class families in the nineteenth century, women continued to be responsible for the majority of domestic production of clothing and foodstuff. This was part of the effort to keep the family expenditure down. The extent to which the value of female unpaid household work contributed to major savings and household finances increased women's participation in paid work by using their sewing, knitting, and

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<sup>250</sup> Conrad et al., *History of the Canadian Peoples*, 94.

fabric-making skills for cash to raise their family revenues when necessary. In this way, women, by working from home, found employment opportunities as tailor or dressmaker to make and mend clothes for others, and as a result, the majority of women's and children's clothing continued to be custom-made well into the twentieth century. Drawing from the Ontario annual budgets of 1873, Bradbury reports that shoes and clothes were only consisted of fourteen per cent of all family expenditures.<sup>251</sup> Accordingly, despite the availability of industrially manufactured, ready-to-wear garments, especially for men, that were offered in large volume and at low cost, these items were often considered as luxury goods for which public demands remained relatively low.<sup>252</sup> At the same time, Joy Santink points out that the department stores, like Eaton's, responded enthusiastically to the new business opportunity at the expense of dress goods, so much so that they became the major distribution point for the mass-produced ready-made clothing.<sup>253</sup> To be more specific, it was in fact the disciplinary practices, which were facilitated by mail-order catalogues, led to the change in consumer attitude toward ready-wear clothing and, consequently, a gradual transition from home-made to ready-made wares.

Eaton's ready-made clothing collection was mass-produced in finished condition by the powered machinery of the factory system. The introduction and proliferation of these finished products in the marketplace relied on two new mechanisms of "technology push" and "market pull." According to Cornelius Herstatt and Christopher Lettl, while technology push implies "a situation where an emerging technology or a new combination of existing technologies provides the driving force for an innovative product and problem solution in the market place," market

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<sup>251</sup> Bettina Bradbury, "The Home as Workplace," in *Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*, ed. Paul Craven (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1995), 447.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>253</sup> Santink, *Timothy Eaton and the Rise of his Department Store*, 131.

pull suggests that customer needs in the marketplace drive the product or process innovation.<sup>254</sup>

The two strategies are two sides of the same coin. Technology push works in parallel with market pull toward incremental innovation. In this way, on the one hand, the developments in the industrial machine power allowed factory-made clothing, produced in large quantity and standardized size, to be pushed down onto the marketplace, irrespective of whether or not these new products reflected the customer needs. On the other hand, Eaton's ventured into diversification and further expansion of the lines of ready-to-wear in response to the market demands. Accordingly, where technology push brought with it the need for change in consumption behaviours, as a result of the introduction of these innovations, market pull used marketing techniques and strategies, such as mail-order catalogues and consumer feedback, to recognize the demands of the market. Early Eaton's catalogues featured a full line of dressmaking accessories and trim supplies for making clothes, including textile, cashmere, silk, ribbons, lace, buttons, wools and yarns, flannel, and linen, which satisfied the traditional practice of handmade clothing production. In the Fall and Winter catalogue of 1884-85, ready-to-wear selection was limited to a few specialty items, such as gloves, hats, jackets, hosiery, and shoes, which often required high level of workmanship. Other ready-made options listed were underskirts, nightdresses, undergarments, and boy's and men's furnishing, such as shirts and underwear.<sup>255</sup> Three years later, ready-to-wear clothing was further expanded by the introduction of boy's outerwear, made up in various sizes. During this time, Eaton's launched ready-made outerwear for men with a minor innovation to test the market. These products did not specify available sizes, which suggests that garments were not fully finished, and consequently required

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<sup>254</sup> Cornelius Herstatt and Christopher Lettl, "Management of 'technology push' development," *International Journal of Technology Management* 27, no. 2-3 (2004): 156, <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTM.2004.003950>.

<sup>255</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1884-85, 1884, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-1, Microfilm MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

customers to indicate the type of suits, whether morning or sack coat, and send breast measure for coat and vest, as well as waist measure and pants length from the inside crotch seam to the bottom of leg.<sup>256</sup> The extent of such ready-made offering for boys and men increased throughout the 1880s, and by the fall of 1892, played a role in the establishment of men's ready-made department. Eaton's made these manufactured finished products accessible to customers of all socioeconomic background and presented them in a better quality and at a cheaper price than custom-made clothing.<sup>257</sup>

Despite the success in the adoption of ready-made clothing for men, the ready-to-wear market did not reach the same level of demand for women until the end of the century. The following passage from Eaton's Fall and Winter Catalogue of 1893-94 describes women customers' scepticisms and resistance toward product upgrading:

As a matter of fact a woman can't afford to kick a sewing machine and clutter up the room at home making underwear for the little you pay here for the finest. You are our real competitors in this respect. We've to get you into the notion of buying ready-made. Take it straight through and through, the stock is simply incomparable. Each search sees a betterment of quality; each sale helps to make lower prices.<sup>258</sup>

Before the addition of ready-made clothing for women, Eaton's introduced ready-to-wear dresses for children to test women's response and to tap into women's desire to purchase these products. The limited collection of ready-made dresses offering for women in Eaton's Fall and Winter Catalogue of 1894-95 required customers to send bust measure and dress length from front the neck to the bottom of skirt when ordering, which was an indication of not only possible alteration to be made on the premise, but more importantly the ways in which Eaton's aimed at

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<sup>256</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1887-88.

<sup>257</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1892-93.

<sup>258</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1893-94, 1893, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-6, Microfilm MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

gathering and assessing information and identifying consumer purchase behaviour, in order to ensure the certainty and success of its innovation.<sup>259</sup> By the fall of 1897, Eaton's achieved a high deal of success with the collection of made-to-order garments for women, available in different styles and in assorted, standardized sizes.<sup>260</sup> The advantage of the technology push and market pull, therefore, must be understood as a way of disciplining and measuring the consuming bodies and altering consumption behaviours. They worked as a way of selling expertise to individual consumers, shaping and nurturing particular needs and desire, and creating demands for a more improved and socially acceptable self for better fitting into the new society.

Ready-to-order invention seemed to be able to draw strength from the effective use of early forms of consumer profiling, solicitation, and feedback, in the way in which they worked to offer insights into how consumers felt about the ready-to-wear addition. It is possible that the gradual launch of ready-made clothing for children, women, and men, in fact, relied on basic solicitation for information about consumers in exchange for products, which in turn worked as basic datafied form of consumer profiling and intelligence gathering technique for documenting and recording personal and transactional information about consumers and evaluating them to get a sense of how well the ready-made innovation did in the marketplace in general. Consumers were required to identify themselves as a recipient of goods and services, by completing "order form" when placing an order, which included information, such as name, address, shipment, Eaton's deposit account or amount of remittance, balance due on previous order, and detailed information about each product (size, length, width, catalogue number, price, and so forth).<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1894-95, 1894, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 2, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>260</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1897-98, 1897, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-14, Microfilm MS 898 reel 3, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>261</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1923-24, 1923, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-69, Microfilm MS 898 reel 15, Archives of Ontario.

The fact that upon each shipment, Eaton's sent a postcard to individual consumers suggests that the result of the assessment of consumer purchase behaviours was captured, documented, and recorded in their account records, containing information about their past purchases, billing information, and transaction information.<sup>262</sup> The postcard included information about the order number, amount receipt, expenditure, and balance holding to credit from last order. In this way, following Foucault, Eaton's operation, combined with the new intelligence gathering technique, created an uninterrupted disciplinary observation and assessment of individual consumers and their consumption behaviours, as "the means of correct training," which placed the individuals in a "field of documentation."<sup>263</sup> Such standardized form of information solicitation and profiling techniques made consumers visible, identifiable, actionable, and profitable, which in turn expanded the scope and intensity of governance of consumers and consumption.

In addition, Eaton's extended its knowledge production of consumers into the use of other forms of intelligence gathering to collect and record some degree of feedback from consumers. For example, Eaton's made use of feedback techniques for customer complaints. Catalogues prompted further consumer relationships and engagement by asking "If you have any complaint to make, write us immediately upon receiving goods," and assuring them that efforts would be made to handle the problem immediately to enhance their satisfaction.<sup>264</sup> Customers were also coopted as the mouthpiece of the retail establishment to share and distribute their knowledge of the field of consumption to others. "If you receive more than one of our catalogues," as noted in Fall and Whiter Catalogue of 1898-99, "do us a kindness by placing the

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<sup>262</sup> T. Eaton Co., Catalogue - Business Forms - Postcards to Customer, 1907-1910, Eaton's Archives Office subject files, F 229-162-0-491, B253781, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>263</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 189.

<sup>264</sup> T. Eaton Co., No. 41 - Fall-Winter 1898-99, 1898, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-16, Microfilm MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

extra copy in the home of one of your neighbours.”<sup>265</sup> In this way, to expand the number of acquisitions, the loyal customers, who were already known to Eaton’s and received catalogue on a regular basis, were assigned with the task. It involved simple supervision to promote Eaton’s mail-order service, distribute catalogues to those who were not on Eaton’s customer list, and initiate new customers into the routines of the retail establishment by forming the “club order plan” to order with their neighbours and make savings on their order.<sup>266</sup> Accordingly, such a practice passed surveillance down the retailing relationship. In addition, the catalogue encouraged customers to write and inquire about a particular ready-made article or any other merchandise they needed and could not be found in the catalogue.<sup>267</sup> Whether new products were added to catalogue according to customers requests, the fact that customers were asked to send a sample and full description of items not listed in catalogue, as well as willingness to pay, indicates that some forms of general collection, recording, and assessment of information about consumers were in place for better understanding consumer purchase behaviours and preferences. Eaton’s basic information solicitation and feedback techniques, in short, functioned as new ways of knowing, reasoning, and conceiving consumers and consumption based on the information extracted and recorded from them, as a means to determine the similarities and differences between “cases” and inform future actions accordingly. The case, as explained by Foucault, “is the individual as he may be described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality; and it is also the individual who has to be trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded, etc.”<sup>268</sup> In this way, the individual consumers became subjected to the

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<sup>265</sup> Archives of Ontario, No. 41 - Fall-Winter 1898-99.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1887-88.

<sup>268</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 191.

field of constant monitoring, documentation, and categorization of information about their behaviour and activities, as part of the knowledge production efforts.

### *3.2.9 Disciplinary Normalization Project and the Techniques of Self-Regulation*

The economic rationality and innovation equipped the individual consumers with a sense of freedom and illusion of individual choices, but in reality, their representation and consciousness, as well as their desire were already enmeshed in the production of the predefined social norms. Following Foucault, the power of discipline assigned the consuming bodies into a place to determine who they were, and subsequently, how their choices were to be recognized. Their behaviours and activities associated with purchase were monitored, evaluated, and manipulated, according to their progress, that was determined by the recency and frequency of their act of purchase. Consumers were promised some form of reward, as a form of gratification for their loyalty to the Eaton's brand and completion of their repeat purchases. These rewards included appealing prices, free catalogues, latest fashion, discounts on shipments, and special sales on mail-order on weekly Bargain Day on each Friday.<sup>269</sup> On the other hand, the information gathered from consumers about their preferences, choices, body measurements, and past purchase in exchange for commodities became part of continuous efforts to generate knowledge about individual consumers and their consumption behaviours.

Conversely, with the retailer being elevated to the status of an expert, who knew what was socially acceptable and what was considered abnormal, Eaton's invested in a whole series of disciplinary supervision, inspection, and correction, as forms of enforcement and judgment of

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<sup>269</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1887-88., and T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1889-90, 1889, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

normality/abnormality, to mold consumers to the image of the normal. Individuals could express their new identity and lifestyle through the consumption of the novelties in ready-to-order items that were selected for them by the retailer. Central to this disciplinary normalization project was the process of progressive training, and Eaton's mail-order catalogue played a key role in evoking conformity of individuals to these predefined norms. The introduction of ready-to-order clothing lines, assembled and sold in finished condition and standardized sizes, brought with it the need for a change in consumer behaviours, activities, and qualifications. The ready-to-wear addition capitalized on the desire for improved self, as it became the proxy for the new self with the socially acceptable, normative behaviours. Although early catalogues gave simple, general training with regard to the bodily sizing and measurements, the records indicate that it was not until the mid-1890s, when catalogues carried full instructions on how to self-measure for men's and boy's suits and outerwear. It was as part of disciplinary practices to constitute individual consumers capable of measuring up to the level of skills and qualifications required for self-evaluation and self-regulation, as to constantly observe and examine bodily fit according to the predefined, standard sizing. Customers were required to articulate and record their body shape and size, in order to make the physical property of body observable, conceivable, and assessable, according to the requirements of standard sizing and other specifications.

Eaton's Fall and Winter Catalogue of 1895-96 supplied consumers with "Self-Measurement Card," along with tape measure, which requested customers to indicate all measurements in inches only and to follow exactly these instructions to optimize a close individual fit and hence to avoid any occasions for confusion (Figure 8).<sup>270</sup> Customers were expected to provide detailed information about style for coat and overcoat, measurements from the back of the collar seam to the waistline, from the centre of back to shoulder, and from shoulder to elbow, elbow to hand, inside seam of arm, as well as chest and waist measures. In ordering vest, customers were required to send measurements of the length from centre back of neck to bottom in front, and to measure pants length along the outside seam from waist to heel of boot and inside seam from crotch to heel of boot, around waist, thigh measure, and knee and bottom measures. Since the garments were sold in standard sizes, customers were expected to document and report any deviations, abnormal bodily qualities, and peculiarity of body figure, including "high shoulders, long or short neck, round back, head forward," and any other variables that were not included in the predefined standard body dimensions.<sup>271</sup> Thus, the concept of ready-made transformed the act of consumption into meticulous observation and disciplinary regulation of the self and the

<b>Self-Measurement Card.</b>	
Name .....	.....
Address .....	.....
Date .....	189.....
<b>Coat</b> —Style, morning, single or double-breasted .....	
Collar to waist .....	whole length back and skirt .....
.....	centre of back to shoulder .....
.....	shoulder to elbow .....
.....	elbow to hand .....
inside seam of arm .....	.....
chest .....	waist .....
<b>Vest</b> —Length from centre back of neck to bottom in front .....	
chest .....	waist .....
<b>Pants</b> —Length of outside seam from waist to heel of boot .....	
length of inside seam from crotch to heel of boot .....	around waist .....
around seat .....	thigh .....
knee .....	bottom .....
<b>Overcoat</b> —Same as coat.	
<b>Remarks</b> —Give any peculiarity of figure, such as high shoulders, long or short neck, round back, head forward, etc.	
Describe as nearly as possible what you require, giving all measurements in inches. Samples of men's suits and overcoats sent on application. Go exactly by these instructions, and you will have the best services of the store at your command.	

Figure 8: "Self-Measurement Card," 1895

<sup>270</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1895-96.

<sup>271</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1895-96, 1895, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 2, Archives of Ontario.

introduction of the notions of fit, self-measurement, and self-evaluation. It also brought a degree of freedom and expression of one's identity and lifestyle that were found in the images of material artifacts.

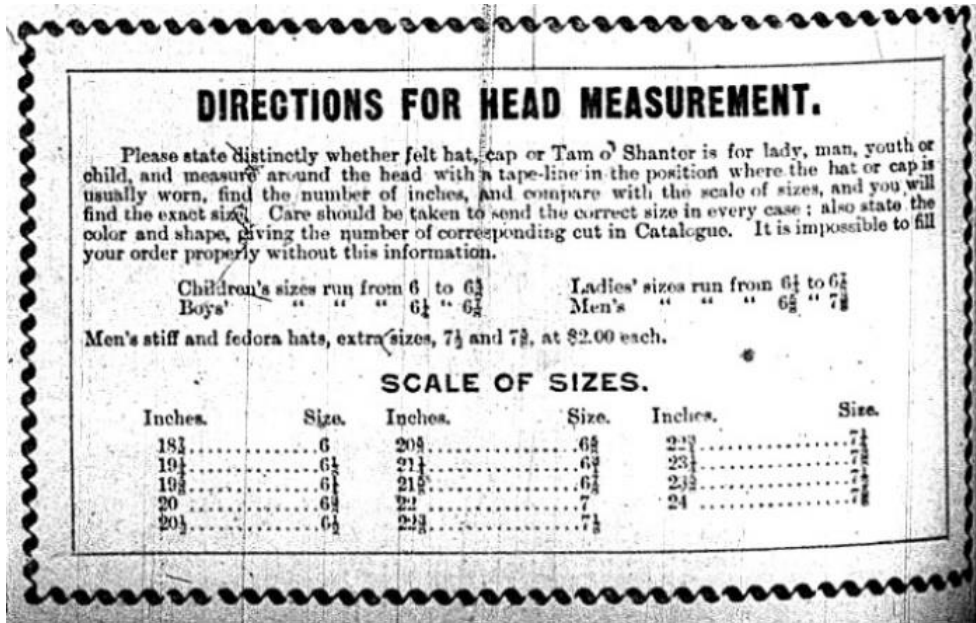


Figure 9: "Direction for Head Measurement," 1900

Similarly, Eaton's catalogue carried detailed instructions and diagrams aimed at training and preparing customers for self-mastery, autonomy, and capabilities to describe and measure correctly their bodies according to the standard sizing and specification used to assemble the ready-made products, such as shoes, headgear, wigs, gloves, and children's garments. In ordering hats, for example, customers were instructed to send the correct size of their head, by placing a tape-line around the head, resting in exact position where the hat sat, without pulling it too tightly for perfect fitting (Figure 9).<sup>272</sup> The individual measurements were then required to be compared with Eaton's hat sizing chart, supplied at the bottom of the instruction, in order to

<sup>272</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1900-01.

determine the correct hat size.<sup>273</sup> Similar to men's ready-to-order addition, Eaton's catalogue, despite facing women's reluctance to ready-to-wear innovations, attended to the habits, behaviours, and qualifications of women customers through a successive series of training in the final decades of the nineteenth century well into the twentieth century. It was as part of the continuous efforts to ensure of consumers' conformity to the preestablished standard sizing and fitting, in order to fulfill the purchase. The whole natural progress of body faculties, from head to toe, and rigorous instructions and meticulous training at successive stages constructed and modified the consuming bodies for perfect fitting and correct skills and qualities sufficient for ordering the mass-produced, standardized material artifacts.

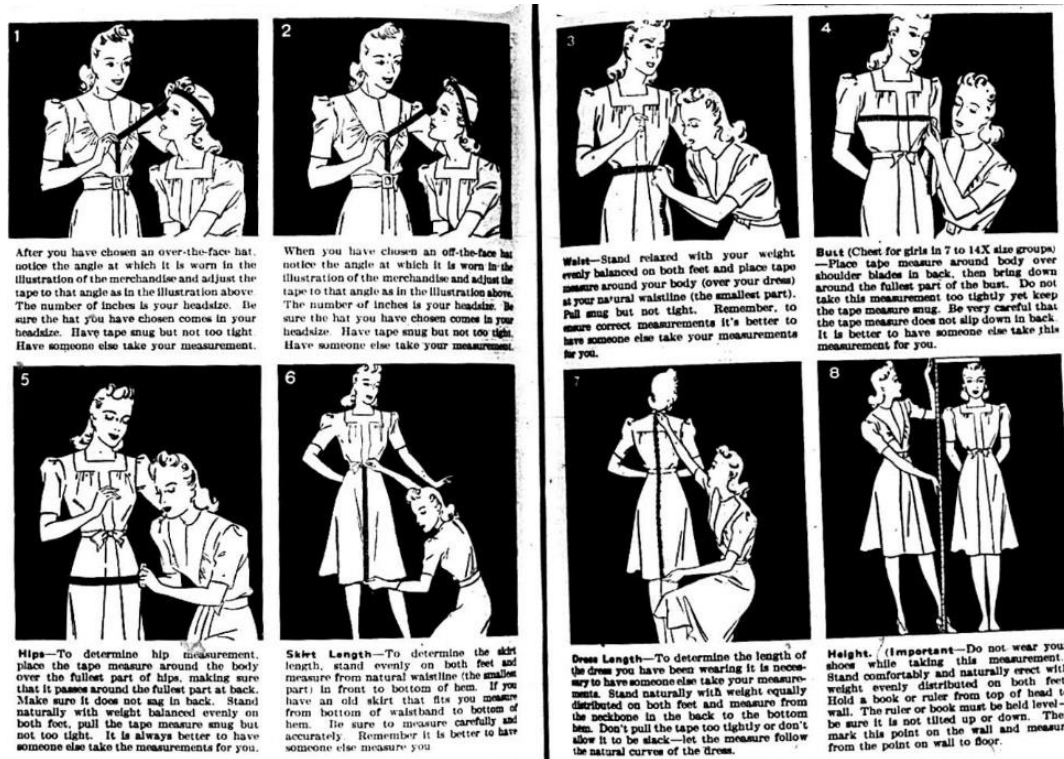


Figure 10: A schematic diagram illustrating how to measure for a good fit, 1943

<sup>273</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1900-01, 1900, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-20, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 4, Archives of Ontario.

Eaton's Spring and Summer Catalogue of 1943-44 carried two-spread "Measure to Ensure a Good Fit," along with diagrams, for infants', children's, women's, and men's wear, which offered a precise and clear anatomy of specifics to form a close operational coordination between parts and faculties of human body, arranging the relations between body and measuring tools and instruments. Such a self-mastery was to improve and enhance the accuracy and

efficiency of assessment and measurements to achieve a perfect fit.<sup>274</sup> Correct measurement,

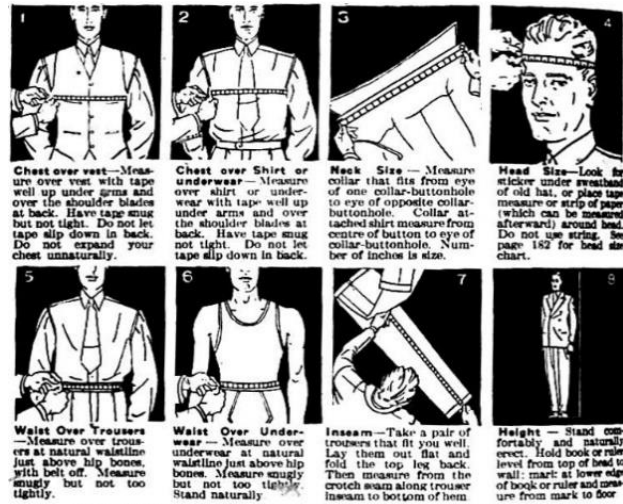
for instance, required a meticulous observation and recording of all elements, as well as breaking down the activity into

"parallel series" (to adopt Foucault) (Figure 10).<sup>275</sup> Customers were instructed to "Stand naturally with weight equally distributed on

both feet and measure from the neckbone in the back to the bottom hem. Don't pull the

tape too tightly or don't allow it to be slack—let the measure follow the natural curves of the dress." In measuring height, customers

were directed to keep the same posture, and "Do not wear your shoes while taking this measurement ... Hold a book or ruler from



**THIS INDEX INDICATES THE MEASUREMENTS TO BE TAKEN TO FIND YOUR SIZE**

Article	Type	Please take all Measurements Indicated Below	No. refer to drawings above	For Size—use Measurement or see Chart on page indicated
BATHROBES	Men and Boys	Chest	2	Boys 157—Men, No. of inches
BELTS	Men and Boys	Waist	5	No. of inches in size
BLOUSES	Boys	Chest	2	See page 157
BREECHES	Men and Boys	Waist, height and weight	5 and 8	No. of inches in size
BREVET SHORTS	Men	Waist	6	No. of inches in size
CAPS	Men and Boys	Head	4	182
COLLARS	Men	Neck	3	No. of inches in size
COMBINATIONS	Men and Boys	Chest	2	No. of inches in size
DRAWERS	Men and Boys	Waist	5	No. of inches in size
HATS	Men and Boys	Head	4	182
JACKETS	Men and Boys	Chest, height and weight	1 and 8	Boys 157—Men, No. of inches
NIGHTROBES	Men	Neck	3	No. of inches in size
OVERALLS	Men	Waist and inseam	5 and 7	No. of inches in size
OVERALLS	Boys	Chest	2	No. of inches in size
OVERCOATS	Men	Chest, height and weight	1 and 8	No. of inches in size
OVERCOATS	Boys	Chest, height and weight	2 and 8	Order by size—see page 157
PYJAMAS	Men and Boys	Chest	2	No. of inches in size
SHIRTS	Men and Boys	Neck	3	No. of inches in size
SHIRTS (sport)	Boys	Chest	2	No. of inches in size
SHORTS	Men and Boys	Waist	6	No. of inches in size
SLACKS	Men and Boys	Waist and inseam	5 and 7	No. of inches in size
SUITS	Men	Chest, waist, height and weight	1, 5 and 8	No. of inches in size
SUITS	Boys	Chest, waist, height and weight	2, 6 and 8	Order by size—see p. 157
SWEATERS	Men	Chest	2	No. of inches in size
SWEATERS	Boys	Chest	2	No. of inches in size
TROUSERS	Men	Waist and inseam	5 and 7	No. of inches in size
TROUSERS	Boys	Waist	5	No. of inches in size
UNDERSHIRTS	Men and Boys	Chest	2	No. of inches in size
WINDBREAKERS	Men and Boys	Chest, height and weight	1 and 8	No. of inches in size

Figure 11: Measurement chart, 1943

<sup>274</sup> T. Eaton Co., Summer 1943, 1943, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-147, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 27, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>275</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1943-44, 1943, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-148, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 27, Archives of Ontario.

top of head to wall. The ruler or book must be held level—mark this point on the wall and measure from the point on wall to floor.”<sup>276</sup> For the bust measure, the customer was instructed to constitute different relations with the tape measure and provide different information about body dimension. All self-measurements taken were expected to follow the instructions thoroughly step-by-step, and to yield to the chart of sizes to ensure measurements were completed, in order to avoid potential mistakes when ordering the garments (Figure 11).<sup>277</sup> While consumer subjects enjoyed the liberating experiences afforded by the ready-to-wear clothing, the obtained information about their self-measurements was sorted, analyzed and compared with other similar information, which in turn worked to rationalize and improve the relationship between supply and demand.

Customers were motivated by the promise of the better and newer version self that can be achieved through consumption of these ready-to-wear products at affordable price for everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status. The advantage of ready-made women’s coat in self-assessment and self-improvement, for examples, was noted to be “more striking and exclusive novelties each season... a large element of comfort and style in garments of moderate cost. The rich can be satisfied with Parisian and ‘sample cloaks’ to choose between, while those who’re economically inclined can get stylish wraps and jackets at a minimum of expense.”<sup>278</sup> These products aimed at updating the bodily image to make it more presentable and acceptable in the public, according to the preestablished model of normativity. At the same time, those incapable of following the overall rule were subject to disciplinary penalty. Individuals, who failed to provide correct measurement instructions or adequate information necessary for filling order,

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<sup>276</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1943-44.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> T. Eaton Co., No.28 - Fall-Winter 1894-95, 1894, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-8, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 1, Archives of Ontario.

faced mild punishment, by expecting delayed delivery, given that they were forced to repeat the same steps and correct their mistake, in order to receive their merchandise. Yet, Eaton's primarily operated on the basis of establishing positive consumer engagement and profitable long-term relationships with consumers, by using policies, including consumer satisfaction guarantee or full refund and the easy and convenient return policy. Subsequently, Eaton's took up and reworked the original, standardized system of payment to create a new convenient payment system in order to add some form of reward in exchange for purchase and entice consumers into making repeat purchases.

### *3.2.10 Convenient Payment Processing and the Disciplinary System of Rewards and Punishments*

By the turn of the new century, Eaton's took the obvious next step and introduced the "deposit account" system that would allow customers to perform faster, easier, and more convenient transactions. Before the implementation of the new payment option, customers were responsible to send their letters by registered mail, which offered protection and safety of payment by providing official receipts of their mailing, as well as recording the destination address. Accordingly, customers were instructed to supply money when sending requests for merchandise via mail by post office order, express money order, or bank draft for purchases valued at one dollar and over.<sup>279</sup> In this way, the promotion of the deposit account, otherwise known as D.A., afforded Eaton's to bypass banks and engage in direct interaction and financial transaction with its customers. Prior to its official commitment to the new program in 1904, Eaton's involved a great deal of careful consideration concerning the economic feasibility of the

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<sup>279</sup> T. Eaton Co., No. 37 - Spring-Summer 1897, 1897, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-13, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 3, Archives of Ontario.

deposit account operation into its business. The main source of inspiration for this innovation started from a trip to Macy's department store in New York to enquire into the use of deposit account, which had been in place for nearly two years. According to Santink, Macy's established the non-monetary program as an alternative to purchasing with cash and, in turn, paid customers interest rates of four per cent on their account balance per annum, as well as annual bonus of two per cent on the gross amount of Christmas purchases that were made.<sup>280</sup> Such an initiative by its American counterpart led Eaton's to recognize the significance of the use of deposit account, as a profitable disciplinary technique, in its business model, and consequently to introduce the new Customer's Deposit Account Department in its retail establishment.

Transactions pertained to the deposit account were described as "An immense convenience when ordering by mail, doing away with the necessity of enclosing money, post-office order or cheque, and affording a monthly statement of your expenditures—Can be used also when shopping in the Store."<sup>281</sup> Subscriptions to these accounts were made easily and readily available to all customers with no service charge by simply submitting a completed and signed application and initial deposit. Once the account was created, customers were assigned with personal D.A. number to which they were charged when requesting their orders upon the verification of their identification based on the recorded signature. Conversely, deposit accounts allowed customers to send deposits at any sum and make unlimited number of purchases as long as they had sufficient funds in their accounts. Customers received itemized statement of account at the end of each month that kept track of the number of goods purchased and cash deposits made into the account. Two years after the establishment of the deposit account system, Eaton's

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<sup>280</sup> Santink, *Timothy Eaton and the Rise of his Department Store*, 225.

<sup>281</sup> T. Eaton Co., No. 130 - Spring-Summer 1919, 1919, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-58, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 11, Archives of Ontario.

new operation reached over seven hundred subscriptions, and by 1914, the number increased to 4,500 active account holders.<sup>282</sup> Unlike the monetary transaction, while deposit account afforded customers to enjoy the convenience and security of everyday purchases by mail, phone, or telegram, the significance of the new easy and simple transactional arrangement lied in the way in which it worked to serve as a dual characteristic of disciplinary reward and punishment. Customers were awarded points, or more precisely interest at five per cent rate on average balance up to one-thousand dollars and interest at three per cent on funds over one-thousand dollars per annum, that were credited to their account.<sup>283</sup> Such “value-giving” measures were oriented toward characterization, assessment, and classification of customers according to their estimated economic quantities and values. “By the play of this quantification,” as pointed out by Foucault, “this circulation of awards and debits, thanks to the continuous calculation of plus and minus points, the disciplinary apparatuses hierarchized the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ subjects in relation to one another.”<sup>284</sup> In this way, the creative use of disciplinary form of rewards in the deposit account operation correlated directly to maximize consumer spending and purchase and, consequently, attain their satisfaction and loyalty. The new disciplinary technique worked positively to encourage consumers to earn more rewards in exchange for purchase, by making deposits and withdrawals more available, easier, and more accessible than the traditional money order process.

The emphasis on more convenient system of payment, as to add some degree of rewards for purchase to shape consumer behaviour and lure them into buying worked as a crucial factor for inspiring Eaton’s to venture into the introduction of “Eaton Account,” as a new method of

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<sup>282</sup> Santink, *Timothy Eaton and the Rise of his Department Store*, 225.

<sup>283</sup> Archives of Ontario, No. 130 - Spring-Summer 1919.

<sup>284</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 181.

payment. The date on which the alternative payment method was officially launched is uncertain, but my finding shows that Eaton's was formally encouraging customers to open an Eaton Account, as well as reporting the growth of the number of subscriptions from the mid-1960s.<sup>285</sup> Eaton's competitor Simpson's department store, however, introduced similar alternative transaction program nearly fifteen years earlier in 1949 under the name "Revolving Credit accounts."<sup>286</sup> The technique of using the Eaton Account card for purchases incorporated the characteristic of disciplinary reward and punishment, making it possible to attract and retain consumer behavioural loyalty, similar to the deposit account; however, its terms of use were fundamentally different from those of deposit account. While Eaton Account offered the convenience of a deposit account, it allowed customers to make purchases from catalogue or any Eaton's store on credit, thus making it more similar to a credit card.<sup>287</sup> Despite Timothy Eaton's initial opposition to credit trading in the traditional barter system, the retail house found immense opportunities and profits in pursuing the new credit operation, and that such technique had more purchasing power than money to entice consumers to buy.

In promoting the account, Eaton's emphasized primarily the promise of convenience, rather than the burden of credit. Conversely, individual consumers were motivated to subscribe to Eaton Account for payment in return for the anticipation of being rewarded with free and flexible access to the money that they were given for shopping, rather than use their own money. It required no service charge for the amount they owed during the thirty days grace period.

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<sup>285</sup> T. Eaton Co., Recommendation for future development of catalogue sales arising from the Eaton catalogue study in Ontario, November 1967, Catalogue Development, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253208, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>286</sup> T. Eaton Co., Changes in retail distribution metropolitan Toronto, 1949-57, June 10, 1958, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>287</sup> T. Eaton Co., Fall-Winter 1975, 1975, T. Eaton Toronto catalogues, F 229-1-0-351, Microfilm, MS 898 reel 58, Archives of Ontario.

Accordingly, customers were held responsible to fulfill the promise to reimburse their credit balance in full at the end of each month or at least pay five per cent of balance for spending up to four-hundred dollars and 3.7 per cent of balance on purchases valued at four-hundred dollars and over in order to avoid penalty.<sup>288</sup> Negligence and abandoning responsible use of the account and failure to fulfill monthly minimum payments in a row were subject to disciplinary penalty, by making customers to pay for such disobedience and disorderly behaviour with higher interest rates and bad credit standing. Aside from the contractual agreement of creditor-debtor relation to which Eaton's customers were liable to pay back their debt, following Lazzarato's diagnosis of debt crisis, the credit-debt nexus can be linked to what Lazzarato calls the "machinic enslavement." While consumers enjoyed the convenience that Eaton account offered, combined with the promise of reward in exchange for purchases, information produced by and gathered from their transactions was put to work with a series of statistical formula, credit metrics, and mathematical oriented language, as interchangeable parts making up the financial system assemblage. The information, in turn, was processed, rated, estimated in the machinic assemblage to determine the economic worthiness of consumers. In this process of enslavement, Lazzarato notes that "the financial assemblage has transformed the subject into a currency that acts as 'capital,' into money that generate money."<sup>289</sup>

The discussion in this modulation, as part of my genealogical examination of consumer surveillance, has focused on the development of Eaton's department store and the emergence of meticulous, institutional and standardized form of monitoring, regulating, and managing consumers and consumption. The arrival of the modern department store signalled the key

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<sup>288</sup> Archives of Ontario, Fall-Winter 1975, 1975.

<sup>289</sup> Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, 48.

moment, what I call “standardization of consuming bodies,” in the rationalities and technologies of power that characterized a particular mode of consumer governance. In this mode of governing consumers and consumption, despite the stark contrast between the first public market and Eaton’s, the system of code of the permitted and prohibited still existed, but it was reworked and multiplied within the framework of corrective practices and normalizing judgement to shape and influence consumer behaviour. Eaton’s served as the guarantor of the socially acceptable and what was considered to be normal, by capitalizing on varied techniques of monitoring, inspection, training, and assessment of consumer behaviour, as a means to get consumers to conform to these predefined norms. Eaton’s facilitated consumers finding meaning through interminably offering access to novelty in the ready-to-order items through which consumers come to express their new identity and lifestyle. Most importantly, the genius of Eaton’s was its creative use of space in relation to mobile consuming bodies and their interactions with products that worked as a means to target and correct these moving bodies in order to maximize the duration of browsing and the possibility of exposure to the products accordingly to secure purchases. The spatiality of surveillance and control over consuming bodies reached consumers beyond the architectural structure of the department store and in their home environments, as the mail-order catalogues system expanded the scope and intensity of observation, correction and varied forms of control, regardless of the physical distance. Additionally, Eaton’s understood the significance of establishing long-term relationships with consumers, leading to repeat purchase. Accordingly, Eaton’s invested in a series of qualitative changes in consumer experience, including rebranding shopping as a form of leisure and pleasure, creating more convenient, routinized shopping, establishing standardized system of payment, and maximizing points of consumer contact for better consumer engagement. Simple information solicitation and feedback

techniques were introduced, as a means to generate knowledge about consumer behaviour. While Eaton's began to realize the benefits of statistical instruments for management of consumers, it was not until the period after the Second World War when it began the systematic use of these instruments. The standardized framing of consumers and consumption in the face of the expansion of market and growing competitiveness suggested the contingency upon which a new mode of consumer governance was made possible.

### **3.3 Third Modulation: Governing Consumer Population and the Use of Statistical Probability**

#### *3.3.1 In the Face of Market Expansion and Competitiveness and the Problem of the Uncertain*

The decade following the Second World War marked the beginning of a new era that was defined by the economic expansion, fueled by fast-growing business investment, high productivity growth, and technological innovations. The combination of the free-market political climate and the periodic active role for federal government intervention as a result of the Keynesian model sustained a remarkable level of economic development along with a high rate of employment, and by 1960, Canada's Gross National Product (GNP) was recorded at 36.287 billion CAD, two times as high as the previous number of 18.006 billion CAD for the year of 1950.<sup>290</sup> This direction was ultimately indicative of the roaring success of the Canadian economic prosperity reaching a peak growth higher than the original 1920s expansion plan that was temporarily challenged by the war outbreak. Meanwhile, the post-war period witnessed a population shift from rural settings to urban centres and, simultaneously, the spread of urban dwellers outward, moving from the downtown into the suburban areas. Similarly, in the prosperous post-war decades of the 1950s and 1960s, the new economic boom added a dramatic

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<sup>290</sup> Conrad et al., *History of the Canadian Peoples*, 319.

increase in consumption and an unprecedented surge of competition between retailing establishments, as well as the emergence of smaller specialty stores and shopping centres to keep up with the growing material demands of customers. Such competitive changes, in turn, helped to revamp the image of consumer capitalism and economic productivity, and as noted by Margaret Conrad et al., “between 1946 and 1956 output increased by 5.3 per cent a year and consumption by 5.1 per cent.”<sup>291</sup> The path to the rapid post-war economic recovery imported the condition of uncertainty over Eaton’s competitive position in retail distribution, and as a result, it led Eaton’s to inevitably channel attention toward understanding the key factors ensued from these developments, which had contributed to the decline of Eaton’s share of purchases. The goal was to explore any prospect of improving sales and expand Eaton’s status quo in the growing market.

According to the Controller’s Office records from the year of 1949 through the 1950s, Eaton’s found itself in an uncertain situation that, despite the economic boom and the rise of customer expenditures, its share of the market for various products had been dropping fairly steadily since after the end of war. Four factors were identified for Eaton’s recessions and some short-term boom. The most notable change was the geographic movement of the migrant and non-migrant population to different parts of the city and beyond the urban boundary thanks to the proliferation of automobile. In the case of Toronto, for instance, the records essentially underlined the fact that many Eaton’s regular customers, who had grown up with the retail establishment, abandoned the urban way of living and, instead, chose to live in the new outer suburbs during the 1950s. For Eaton’s, such changing mobility status meant that these customers made travel less frequently to the downtown area, resulting in “a decrease in the proportion of

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<sup>291</sup> Conrad et al., *History of the Canadian Peoples*, 345.

purchases of convenience items, particularly, made in the downtown area.”<sup>292</sup> While Eaton’s regular customers moved away from the downtown, the urban centres attracted new groups of people, including large numbers of immigrants, who were less familiar with the goods and services Eaton’s offered. The result was Eaton’s disadvantage in terms of the market share performance, especially in the downtown area. On the contrary, Eaton’s share of the market gained ground in north Toronto due to the improvement of the public transportation systems and the addition of parking, which facilitated circulation of people and goods and commutes to this area.

Furthermore, Eaton’s faced new competitive changes imposed by Simpson’s department store, as well as the arrival of neighbourhood stores and shopping centres. The decade after the post-war saw Simpson’s to enthusiastically explore and adopt creative programs and strategies, including the establishment of Simpson’s Basement Store that carried lower-priced lines, introduction of Revolving Credit account, and extension of shopping hours, which often caught Eaton’s by surprise.<sup>293</sup> These nuanced retailing activities increased Simpson’s participation in the post-war booming economy by expanding the market in lower-income families, which in turn afforded Simpson’s to maintain its competitive advantage and to generate concerns over its possible future outperformance. Meanwhile, Eaton’s found a strong competition from the establishment of shopping centres that shifted the concept of shopping for certain types of material artifacts away from the downtown into neighbouring areas to offer the convenience of proximity to the new growing suburban population. Eaton’s records note that “these shopping centres have gained a significant share of the market for convenience merchandise and for some

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<sup>292</sup> Archives of Ontario, Changes in retail distribution metropolitan Toronto.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

types of apparel, but not importantly in shopping material artifacts like furniture, household appliances or better apparel.”<sup>294</sup> Aside from these economic changes, Eaton’s also began to notice a shift in consumer purchasing behaviours. For example, Eaton’s reported unexpected increase in sales of television receivers in the Toronto stores that appeared at a higher rate than other major appliances combined.<sup>295</sup> In short, the common element that tied these four key factors together was the uncertainty surrounding the shifting dynamics of consumer behaviours and preferences that appeared to have overarching impact on Eaton’s losses and some unexpected gains.

### *3.3.2 Statistical Calculation: Generation of Consumer Segments and Management of the Uncertain Futures*

Amid the emergent uncertainties and the possible risks, Eaton’s realized that it could no longer rely primarily on its own expertise and disciplinary techniques to exercise control and influence over consumer behaviour. Instead, it found the benefits of quantification and datafication to comprehensively understand consumers and their consumption behaviours. Consequently, the decade after the end of the Second World War well into the early part of the 1970s involved a series of studies to record, identify, quantify, classify, and measure consumers’ behavior and their motivations to purchase through statistical calculation, resulting in the production of new knowledge and well-defined categories of customers according to the estimated values. Where pre-war Eaton’s primary focus centred on controlling consumer bodies through disciplinary spatial strategies and normalization techniques, the post-war Eaton’s extended its retail model into adopting new ways of reasoning, analyzing, conceiving, and

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<sup>294</sup> Archives of Ontario, Changes in retail distribution metropolitan Toronto.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

rationalizing consumers and their consumption behaviours to address the unpredictable dynamics of consumers. The combination of sociology, psychology, mathematics, and economy engaged with business administration offered unprecedented opportunities for the application of interdisciplinary marketing techniques and expert opinions and judgements into comprehensive assessment, calculation, and processing information about consumer' past purchase, preferences, habits, tastes, and phsychographic and demographic information to gain insights into their behaviours. Eaton's records refer to marketing research as a "know-how" technique, whose key objectives are defined as:

(1) To develop methods of measuring performance in areas both of merchandising and non-merchandising operations, and to present to management a periodic review which will tell which departments require attention and in what directions. (2) To develop information that will aid all levels of management to make soundly-based decisions relating to improvement of operations.<sup>296</sup>

Eaton's use of marketing research and analysis stemmed from accepting the fact that consumers were inherently complex and unpredictable insofar as consumer buying decision process was regarded as irrational, emotional, and psychological in nature, rather than rational and logical.<sup>297</sup> As a result, control and management of the complexities and unpredictable dynamics of consumers and their consumption behaviours could no longer be achieved, in most parts, according to Eaton's own expertise and a set of predefined and rigid spatial arrangements and normalization techniques. Accordingly, marketing research and statistical calculation became effective instruments of control of consumers and consumption. In the decade of the 1950s through the 1960s, Eaton's began its partnership with Canadian Facts, Canada's oldest

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<sup>296</sup> T. Eaton Co., Review of Marketing Research, May 11, 1966, Economic Forecast, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>297</sup> T. Eaton Co., The Changing Pattern of Family Spending, February 29, 1956, Economic Forecast, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario.

marketing research organization. This partnership led to a series of systematic and methodical consumer survey research, as a key motivational research technique to gather and record information from customers about their habits and activities associated with shopping, as well as their demographic information to help reveal consumption patterns for future marketing and business purposes.<sup>298</sup> Consumer surveys, which were conducted by numerous questionnaires and interviews, via phone and in person, processed and analyzed detailed information gathered from customers about their product preferences, service preferences, and shopping location preferences, frequency of purchase, willingness-to-pay, as well as age, gender, occupation, income, education, family size, and so forth, thus resulting in gaining insights into where, when, how, why, and for what individual consumer proceeded to purchase. In the early days of the electronic computer development, the technology of punched card tabulating machine continued to play a significant part in processing and analyzing large-scale information, as this technology coded, punched, sorted, and analyzed the recorded consumer information faster and with more efficiency. The first consumer survey was established in 1949 in response to the changes in retail distribution across the city of Toronto in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of “how the store’s share of the market in different districts of the city and suburbs changed.”<sup>299</sup> With the growing significance of mathematical science and opinion-based survey research, all these efforts led to systematic monitoring, recording, and categorizing consumers to anticipate their desires, needs, and purchase patterns through these calculations. Three years later, in 1952, Eaton’s formally established the Economic and Marketing Research Department that replaced the former Economic Office. The new department became primarily responsible for conducting

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<sup>298</sup> T. Eaton Co., Toronto Consumer Survey, December 21, 1959, Toronto Consumer Survey, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>299</sup> Archives of Ontario, Changes in retail distribution metropolitan Toronto.

consumer surveys and varied marketing research, such as new product and service tests, as well as providing short range retail sales and market forecasts. The remainder of this chapter looks closely at a few studies that were conducted by Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Department with special focus on their methods, key findings, future recommendations, and economic forecasting, as a means to establish new ways of rationalizing, reasoning, analyzing, and conceiving consumers and consumption and new ways of acting on them according.

### *3.3.3 First Example of Statistical Assessment of Consumer Segments: Catalogue Buying*

Between 1952 and 1967, Eaton's in conjunction with Canadian Facts carried out a series of successive studies to assess its mail-order catalogue readership and determine the future developments of its catalogue efforts and sales accordingly. On 17 March 1967, Eaton's drafted and developed the Catalogue Appraisal Program to determine whether the catalogue business, which was originally established on the philosophy of "A department store at your fingertips," still served as a relevant merchandising device to the existing Eaton's retailing apparatus or rather was no longer compatible with the developments in the Canadian post-war economy. During this time, Eaton's was alarmed by the fact that its catalogue business in its present form was losing a foothold in the current urban consumer market, similar to the ones of its competitors both in Canada and the United States, including Sears-Roebuck, Montgomery-Wards, and Penny's. Conversely, the report from earlier consumer survey study of 1952 revealed that Simpson's mail order operating system had built fresh competitive advantage by making substantial progress in the large urban centres while Eaton's mail order sales held a stronger status in rural areas.<sup>300</sup> Accordingly, given the growing urban population, for Eaton's, the key

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<sup>300</sup> T. Eaton Co., Mail Order Survey, December 1952, Catalogue Development, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253208, Archives of Ontario.

question that followed was “are we trying to merchandise by way of a vehicle that may have been more suited to the 1920s and 1930s, or can it become a profitable vehicle by making major adjustments in our approach?”<sup>301</sup> In focusing on the issue of uncertainty and its implications, the Catalogue Appraisal Program emphasized the significance of conducting statistical analyses and purposeful solicitation of information about consumer characteristics attitudes and purchasing behaviours to determine the patterns of catalogue buying and estimate the likely future of catalogue operation and other programs associated with catalogue buying accordingly. The goal for this probabilistic approach was, therefore, to tackle the questions of how to detect and track potential catalogue buyers based on their demographic profiles and attributes, and accordingly how to measure catalogue readership and effectiveness of present communication and catalogue distribution to these customers.<sup>302</sup> In a general sense, by expanding on past relevant studies, the research program sought to calculate the patterns of purchasing to construct knowledge about consumer behaviour related to catalogue buying. These studies aimed at anticipating the future catalogue operation, as to determine whether it would continue to generate sales. As a result, a six-month-long catalogue study was carried out that focused on collection and analysis of information about consumers and their purchase behaviour to identify the factors that contributed to catalogue buying, making inquiries on the sales trends of the past five years since 1961 to estimate probable growth and potential directions of Eaton’s catalogue.

For the purpose of the above-mentioned study, a quantitative consumer survey research was conducted, using structured interviews, to obtain information about consumer characteristics, shopping habits, attitudes, preferences, and characteristics, such as age, income,

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<sup>301</sup> Archives of Ontario, Catalogue Appraisal Program.

<sup>302</sup> Archives of Ontario, Recommendation for future development of catalogue sales.

occupation, education, family composition, and nationality, drawn from both urban and rural areas. The study built on the earlier research survey of Fall 1953, which focused on particular area of catalogue sales and purchasing according to both demographic and geographic classifications to determine future strategy for catalogue distribution. A sample of 2,392 female heads of households was collected, sorted, and analyzed on the basis of recency and frequency of ordering, expenditure cycle, and record of previous purchasing associated with continuous or sporadic catalogue usage.<sup>303</sup> The key objective was to essentially identify the factors that differentiated three potential categories of heavy users, rejectors, and non-users of catalogue, according to their psychographic, demographic, and geographic information, rather than the data set representing the entire catalogue female buyers. Where heavy users were regarded as customers whose previous records demonstrated consistency of purchase “during each of the last three consecutive 6 months periods prior to January 1st 1967 and bought at least \$3.00 worth of merchandise in the last period,” the rejectors were classified as “dropouts.”<sup>304</sup> This group of people did not make any purchase for two consecutive seasons prior to January 1967 unlike their past record of purchasing in the previous seasons.<sup>305</sup> The third category of non-users was the group of people who had not shopped at either Eaton’s or Simpson’s for the duration of past five years and, consequently, tended to be relatively disinterested in catalogue buying. Both heavy users and rejectors, therefore, were considered to be extreme values, on the opposite sides of the thresholds of the acceptable. Between these two extremes were the normal distribution of a wide range of Eaton’s catalogue buyers was anticipated in terms of expenditure, characteristics,

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<sup>303</sup> T. Eaton Co., Eaton’s Mail Order Catalogue Study, Ontario, Volume 1 Report, Summer 1967, Catalogue Development, Eaton’s Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253208, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

attributes, and activities related to shopping. The assumption was that the most probable occurrences would be situated around the highest point on the overall curve.

Considering some of the findings, the study reported that the heavy users and the rejector group were inclined to buy from both Eaton's and Simpson's catalogues, and both groups had been buying from catalogues for over ten years. Among these housewives, however, all heavy users had looked through the last two recent catalogue editions while the number of readerships of Eaton's dropped in the rejector group and instead increased for Simpson's catalogues. Similarly, the findings showed that the high majority of heavy users had received their own copies of catalogues while fewer catalogues were received directly by rejectors and, as a result, a significant portion of this group borrowed copies. Accordingly, the report revealed that the "average" rejector had the knowledge and attributes associated with catalogue buying, and "equally long customer's history as the average heavy user" and it was recommended that this group could not "be screened as poor potential on this basis alone."<sup>306</sup> Conversely, catalogue customers with Eaton's account demonstrated greater tendencies to spend considerable amount at Eaton's, similar to those who owned accounts at Simpson's. In other words, the account ownership helped to gain customer loyalty and to increase catalogue purchases.<sup>307</sup> Similarly, the study showed that, in all three categories, housewives, between the age groups of 35 and 44, who made the middle-class bracket and equally had younger children, represented to be more likely willing to purchase from catalogues, and consequently, were classified as better potential customers.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Archives of Ontario, Eaton's Mail Order Catalogue Study, Ontario, Volume 1 Report.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

Accounting for probabilities, therefore, meant developing certain kind of screening metrics, such as Eaton's account subscription, family size and number of children, and demographic indicators for potential purchase to determine future direction for separating the potential catalogue buyers from relatively poorer ones. Take, for example, the category of the abnormal, situated outside of the thresholds of the acceptable, was understood as the unfavourable Eaton's catalogue users. The category was assumed to include a considerable number of individuals, who potentially could be brought in line with catalogue buyers, as a way of disciplining, influencing, and controlling their catalogue buying behaviours and turning them into profitable catalogue buyers. At the same time, considering the issue of cost, this group of women was regarded as being the least unfavourable, given women's lack of interest in and demand for catalogue buying, which would require considerable financial resources and lengthy measure for their behavioural alteration to transform them into profitable buyers. Having this group outside of the normal distribution, the study perceived a portion of non-users to have the potential to be influenced and controlled, depending on whether they had previous catalogue experience. Accordingly, the report notes that "It is not therefore, suggested that general promotion be completely abandoned, but that the most immediate and potentially profitable expansion appears to be in developing known catalogue buyers at various levels."<sup>309</sup> The statistical instrument, therefore, helped to determine the patterns of purchasing and create the profiles of catalogue consumers. It becomes clear that tackling the problem of consumers and their consumption behaviours, posed by Eaton's current catalogue operation, did not simply involve the imposition of disciplinary techniques. Eaton's rather made use of the mechanisms of security that, according to Foucault, "work not only on natural givens, but also on quantities that

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<sup>309</sup> Archives of Ontario, Eaton's Mail Order Catalogue Study, Ontario, Volume 1 Report.

can be relatively, but never wholly reduced, and, since they can never be nullified, one works on probabilities.”<sup>310</sup>

#### 3.3.4 *Second Example of Statistical Assessment of Consumer Segments: Shopping Patterns*

In addition to the understanding of key factors that influenced catalogue buying through statistical calculation, Eaton’s, in a joint cooperation with Canadian Facts, carried out a series of consumer survey analyses on consumer shopping patterns and willingness to purchase. The population shift from city centres to suburbs and the growing competitive nature of retail field hinted at the uncertainty inherent in consumer purchase behaviours, raising questions about the type of products they bought, where these purchases were made, and what factors contributed to their purchasing decisions. As a result, a four-month long study was conducted in 1966 to empirically trace consumer shopping behaviour and habits.<sup>311</sup> A total number of 2,800 personal structured interviews, supplemented by telephone questionnaires, with female (or male) heads of the family unit was completed, focusing on individual consumer decisions, pertaining to whether to purchase, willingness to pay, and where to purchase, according to the geographic and demographic segmentations. The 1966 study expanded on the past consumer survey report of 1965 that drew a competitive picture between Eaton’s and Simpson’s for various types of merchandise categories.<sup>312</sup> The study comparatively looked at market share performance between Eaton’s and Simpson’s downtown stores, shopping centres, neighbourhood stores, and

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<sup>310</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 19.

<sup>311</sup> T. Eaton Co., Outlines of Methods, Toronto Consumer Survey, June 1966, Toronto Consumer Survey, Eaton’s Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>312</sup> T. Eaton Co., Toronto Consumer Survey, Market Share Result, May 1966, Toronto Consumer Survey, Eaton’s Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario. Similar studies used statistics, analyzing consumer shopping habits through demographic, psychographic, and geographic classifications to estimate Eaton’s competitive position. T. Eaton Co., Consumer Research Project, June 17, 1948, Eaton’s Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario; and T. Eaton Co., Toronto Consumer Survey, April 13, 1956, City Surveys - Unit & Dollar Purchases by Stores, Eaton’s Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario.

discount stores to forecast Eaton's future competitive position and those of its important rivals in the hypercompetitive market. The respondents were identified and classified according to a number of common characteristics, including age, average income, economic status, education level, place of residence, marital status, family size, children possession, appliance ownership, account ownership, and newspaper readership. Subsequently, two types of household questionnaires were designed, depending on whether the head of the household was women or men in the family, even if it consisted of one person, and the type of items purchased in the period leading up to the date of the interviews.<sup>313</sup> In addition to identifying existing customer base, the study evaluated Eaton's current goods and services by recording and analyzing respondents' past purchase behaviours, including types of purchased items, number of items, store's location, methods of ordering, frequency and consistency of participation, price-line, and possession of Eaton's account. Similarly, other consumer survey studies helped to identify and generate the profiles of potential consumers, as those who would likely shop at Eaton's. They conducted numerous statistical analyses of household incomes in relation to consumer willingness to pay for a wide range of products, from clothing to appliances and from furniture to household items,<sup>314</sup> as well as the subjective tastes of individual consumers in purchasing, in terms of style and fashion trends, according to demographic and geographic classifications.<sup>315</sup> Understood in this way, the infeasibility of targeting the entire consumer population meant embracing statistics as the instrument of control to categorize consumers into groups and distinguish between these groups according to their estimated consumption patterns to determine

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<sup>313</sup> Archives of Ontario, Outlines of Methods, Toronto Consumer Survey.

<sup>314</sup> T. Eaton Co., Consumer Survey Toronto, 1961-1966, Catalogue Development, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253208, Archives of Ontario.; and T. Eaton Co., Toronto Consumer Survey, retrieved from Toronto Consumer Survey 1959-66, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>315</sup> T. Eaton Co., Customer Preference Clinics - Dresses - Summer 1955, 1955, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253208, Archives of Ontario.

ways of acting on them for future marketing purposes. Accordingly, following Foucault, these probabilistic calculations of consumers and their consumption behaviours worked as a means of generating knowledge about consumers by using their personal and transactional information and determining future directions and actions through these statistical findings.

### *3.3.5 Third Example of Statistical Assessment of Consumer Segments: Teenage Shopping Habits*

Relatedly, with the economic growth and population increase, Eaton's sought a statistical approach in determining possible expansion of its target market. In 1964, a youth survey study was conducted to inquire about statistical understanding of the teenage shopping habits and trends to determine whether this group of population could be a potential profitable niche market for future sales growth. In the report, Eaton's acknowledged the fact that "It is well recognized that the teen market is one of the fastest growing markets available to us. To fully capitalize on the consequential sales potential available, it is necessary to have a thorough working knowledge about this market."<sup>316</sup> Data obtained from male and female teenagers of ages thirteen to nineteen aimed at categorizing the respondents according to their common characteristics, such as when and where they most likely shopped, how often they shopped, with whom they shopped, what type of products they purchased, newspaper readership, television and radio ownership for Eaton's brand awareness, as well as education, personal interests and after school activities. The findings of the study determined the consumption patterns of teenagers and forecasted the growth of sales potential in teen market by 1970 accordingly. The findings also projected possible shift in shopping trends and spending, given the fact that the study anticipated higher future probability of this group of population to be pursuing higher education than the previous

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<sup>316</sup> T. Eaton Co., "The Youth Study," 1964, Eaton's Economic and Marketing Research Office research files, F 229-165, B253206, Archives of Ontario.

generation on the basis of past studies.<sup>317</sup> Statistics, therefore, worked as a means to estimate patterns of normalities for this specific target market to anticipate future actions concerning products and services to cater to the shifting customer demographic and demands. In short, these new techniques afforded basic anticipatory capabilities in that they identified future events before they even took place, resulting in the further intensification of consumer surveillance. In this way, the post-war Eaton's marked the key moments, what I call "statistification of consumers," in the rationalities and technologies of power that demonstrated the traits of a specific mode of consumer governance through statistical calculation.

To summarize, this chapter involved my genealogical inquiry into the intensification of consumer surveillance on the surveillance-space-consumption axis across two consumption spaces of the first regulatory public market and Eaton's department store in key stages of retail development along multiple temporalities. The first regulatory public market was established during the pre-industrial period, and it was meticulously planned and located within the grid structure of the newly formed Town of York. It introduced the key moment, what I called marketization of space, pertaining to the specific mode of consumer governance. The economic functioning of the market capitalized on basic regulatory techniques, as it worked within the binary system of code to prohibit and punish certain conducts. The public market was marked as a significant spatial structure for the distribution of goods and merchandize, working within the urban grid system, to the urban population and the surrounding countryside. The regulatory techniques and practices within the field of consumer surveillance were further intensified as a result of the creation of modern department stores, like Eaton's. The formation of Eaton's department store signalled the key moment, what I called standardization of consuming bodies,

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<sup>317</sup> Archives of Ontario, "The Youth Study."

in the rationalities and technologies of power that characterized the development of standardized and routinized practices to excise control over consuming bodies and consumption. Eaton's involved a whole series of disciplinary techniques to bring in consumers to attain improvement to their bodies, by constantly adhering to the predefined images of desiring bodies constructed by the retailer. Eaton's established a qualitative environment through cultivation of pleasure in consumption, addition of convenient system of payment, creation of reward system, and multiplication of consumer points of contact to extend influence over consumer behaviour. The department store was a disciplinary laboratory, as a surveillant experimental space, within which consumers were subjected to constant monitoring, inspection, correction, and other forms of control while they enjoyed the illusion of individual freedom and choice.

In the face of markets expansion, growing competition, and suburbanization, the post-Second World War Eaton's realized it could no longer rely predominantly on the techniques of supervision, correction and disciplinary normalization to mold consumers into the images of novelty that were imposed upon them in the ready-to-order products. Given the unpredictable dynamics of consumers and their consumption behaviours, the new situation also could not be addressed by using primarily the binary system of code, as a means to permit some conducts while prohibit others. Eaton's instead turned to statistics as the new instrument of control to acquire knowledge about consumer behaviour and identify future actions through statistical findings from the recorded information about consumers. The post-war Eaton's, therefore, signalled the new moment, what I called statistification of consumers, in the rationalities and technologies of power that characterized new mode of consumer governance based on increasing quantification and datafication of consumers. Eaton's involved rigorous and systematic monitoring, collection, recording, and processing transactional and personal information on

consumers to categorize them into groups and differentiate between these groups based on their estimated values. Such statistical categorization allowed Eaton's to find useful consumption patterns in order to gain insights into consumer behaviour and identify the limitations and conditions associated with consumption practices for different purposes, ranging from future catalogue operation to strategies for shifting consumer demands. Accordingly, the statistical mode afforded a sense of readiness, as a means of anticipating future consumption patterns and marketing-related strategies and actions. The moment of statistification of consumers, therefore, was crucial to the changing dynamics of consumer surveillance, as it extended the scope and intensity of constant monitoring, documenting, and categorizing into the field of quantification. This meant that the functioning of modern department stores depended on both qualitative and quantitative explorations of consumers and their consumption behaviours. On the one hand, Eaton's established panoptic experimental spaces and maximized points of consumer contact to maintain influence and control over consumers. On the other hand, the statistical addition was appropriated for the goal of recording and categorizing consumers into identifiable and actionable groups, allowing for an effective spatial distribution of consumers in such a way that their unpredictable nature was tamed and anticipated.

Responding to the issue of intensification of consumer surveillance over time and across different forms of space and spatial arrangement, my examination of the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption through the Foucauldian lens demonstrates that the intensification question cannot be reduced simply to the pervasive computing phenomenon. As I demonstrated in my analysis of the public market and Eaton's, the key moments of marketization of space, standardization of consuming bodies, and statistification of consumers marked the changing dynamics of consumer surveillance, as the dominant techniques of consumer

governance shifted from the centralized regulation of consumption to the control over bodies through internalization of regulations to the spatial distribution of consumers through quantification and datafication. These moments are the indications of continuous extension of spatiality and spatialization in attaining systematic and methodical monitoring, documenting, and categorizing consumers and consumption and hence knowledge production. Returning to the case of Eaton's, despite its both trans-continental and global achievements, in the final decades of the twentieth century, Eaton's faced with new challenges and growing competitions from the Bay and Sears, as well as the arrival of multinational retail giants like Walmart. These challenges coincided with the development of the new interactive online retailing. Where post-war Eaton's involved a great deal of marketing methods and strategies to gain insights into consumers and their consumption behaviours and hence manage the uncertain, the last two decades of Eaton's operation suggest a less convincing picture of such efforts. As demonstrated by Rod McQueen, the poor management of the last generation of Eaton family in the final decades of Eaton's operation resulted in the lack of interest "in finding of the consumer panel that had been established to elicit shoppers' views, preferring family's own instincts instead."<sup>318</sup> As a result of these internal and external challenges, Eaton's sales continued to decline, and consequently, it could no longer compete in the shifting retail market landscape, so much so that by August 1999, nearly 130 years after its establishment, Canada's first and largest department store chain declared bankruptcy.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Rod McQueen, *The Eatons: The Rise and Fall of Canada's Royal Family* (New York: Stoddart Pub, 1998), 205-206.

<sup>319</sup> "End of Eaton's," filmed May 18, 1999 at the National, CBC Archives, video, 5:00, <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/end-of-eatons>.

## CHAPTER 4: The Rise of Amazon and Consumer in the Age of Me-Commerce: From Digital Innovations to AI Revolution

“Once the characteristic numbers are established for most concepts, mankind will then possess a new instrument which will enhance the capabilities of the mind to a far greater extent than optical instruments strengthen the eyes, and will supersede the microscope and telescope to the same extent that reason is superior to eyesight.”<sup>320</sup>

—Philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)

In the previous chapter, my examination of the two consumption spaces of the first regulatory public market and Eaton’s department store on the surveillance-space-consumption axis demonstrates historical changes in the scope and intensity of consumer surveillance over time. As such, my analysis identifies differing modes of consumer governance within and across these spaces that correspond with three key moments of marketization of space, standardization of consuming bodies, and statistification of consumers. These moments demonstrate the extension of spatialized observation and categorization from centralized regulatory framework of consumption to the influence and control over consuming bodies to the organization of consumers through statistical calculation. As part of my genealogical undertaking, this chapter details my analysis of Amazon on the surveillance-space-consumption axis through Foucauldian theories of power and governmentality and his thinking around spatiality. Similar to the previous chapter, my examination of Amazon traces the historical transformation in the ways of knowing and acting on consumers and consumption and forms of space and spatialization pertaining to particular modes of consumer governance. Through this chapter, I reveal the moments that are key to the changes in the scope and intensity of the modalities of consumer surveillance and

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<sup>320</sup> Tim Crane, *The Mechanical Mind: A Philosophical Introduction to Minds, Machines and Mental Representation*, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 79.

compare them to the key moments I identified in Chapter 3 in my examination of the first regulatory public market and Eaton’s department store.

Began as an online book selling experiment in 1994, the creation of Amazon and the interactive online form of retailing marked a major stage of retail development. At the time of writing this dissertation, Amazon is a key player in the retail economy, as it is considered being one of the top five global e-commerce retailers.<sup>321</sup> The success of Amazon and its operation is inseparable from the advances in information and communication technologies. Accordingly, the organization of this chapter is inspired by Klaus Schwab’s (2016) thinking around the two forms of industrial revolution, working as a way to describe the degrees of changes inflicted by digitization and the rise of new technologies on human life. In Schwab’s account, where the “third industrial revolution” began with the introduction of computers and electronics, and that it was later powered by the ubiquitous always-on media technologies, the arrival of the fourth industrial revolution is coincided with the new technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and the Internet of Things. Schwab sees the impacts of new technologies as not limited to changes in communication, production, and consumption. Instead, these technologies are transforming what it means to be a human. As explained by Schwab, the modern-day societies are moving towards “the fusion of these technologies and their interaction across the physical, digital and biological domains that make the fourth industrial revolution fundamentally different from previous revolutions.”<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Nina Angelovska, “Top 5 Online Retailers: 'Electronics And Media' Is The Star Of E-commerce Worldwide,” *Forbes*, May 20, 2019, accessed July 10, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ninaangelovska/2019/05/20/top-5-online-retailers-electronics-and-media-is-the-star-of-e-commerce-worldwide/#1904188b1cd9>.

<sup>322</sup> Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2016), 12.

Considering these technological changes along with their economic impacts, and insofar as Amazon's operation is largely indebted to advances in technologies, this chapter is divided into two modulations. My first modulation looks at the rise of Amazon and the formation of virtual consumption space that coincided with the neoliberal mode of governance at-a-distance and the collapse of production-consumption distinction. My discussion of Amazon looks at the role of the new virtual space and a whole new techno-mediated techniques and processes in the management and governance at-a-distance of consumers and consumption. The second modulation continues with the case of Amazon and its use of AI as the new instrument of control over consumers and consumption. I discuss the production of new forms of spatiality and spatialization, as a means to achieve new forms of monitoring and tracking consumers and their consumption behaviours. Through these modulations, I identify the key moments pertaining to particular modes of consumer governance, and map the discontinuities and recurrences of specific ways of knowing and acting on consumers and various forms of space and spatial arrangement.

#### **4.1 First Modulation: The Milieu Politics and Personalizing Consumer**

##### *4.1.1 The Neoliberal Mode of Governance at-a-distance*

The final decades of the twentieth century marked a critical turning point in the political-economic rationality, whose dominant characteristic did not fully follow the pattern of complete *laissez-faire* from the classical liberal conviction of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, it advocated the ideal of constant configuration of the market and favoured competition as a key driving factor of economic prosperity. Following Foucault (2008), whereas the classical liberalism involved market economy and state politics as two distinct entities, in the new doctrine of economic order, the exercise of the political power was deemed to serve actively

constructing the optimal conditions for the market. The two domains seemed no longer to be discrete, as explained by Foucault in his analysis of ordoliberal governmentality, “There will not be the market game, which must be left free, and then the domain in which the state begins to intervene, since the market, or rather pure competition, which is the essence of the market, can only appear if it is produced, and if it is produced by an active governmentality.”<sup>323</sup> This new type of governmentality, therefore, demonstrates the trait of governance at-a-distance. Along with Foucault, many scholars, including David Harvey recognize the overwhelmingly significance of the transition that occurred in the global economy, coupled with the emergence of the new configuration of the political and social fields that ensued from the crisis of the 1970s and the era of conservative politics of Reagan-Thatcher. They accord these changes to the new phenomenon which goes under the name of “neoliberalism.”

In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Harvey (2005) moves beyond the tendency that marks the dissemination of the neoliberal doctrine as merely a political ideology and, instead, locates the concept in the formation of a new type of society with real and practical effects. Neoliberalism, according to Harvey, “is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.”<sup>324</sup> According to Harvey, under the neoliberal thinking, in the society that is chiefly governed and regulated by the competitive market mechanisms and hence preconditioned by individual and commercial autonomy, the state interventions in the economy is set to be reduced and practically eliminated. Subsequently, in

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<sup>323</sup> Michel Foucault, “7 February 1979,” 121.

<sup>324</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.

this process of deregulation and, consequently, the promotion of individual responsibility, “the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly democracies) for their own benefits.”<sup>325</sup> In this way, as viewed by Harvey, the neo-liberalization, whose goals primarily include privatization, marketization, individualization, and limited government power, that is believed to be the prevailing trend in the world today, plans an infrastructure in which investments and self-realizing and self-determining markets are secured by the promotion and proliferation of communication and information technologies for the interest of the logic of capitalist profit. These technologies, as explained by Harvey, seek “to accumulate, store, transfer, analyse, and use massive databases to guide decisions in the global marketplace.”<sup>326</sup> In other words, the neoliberal principles are conducive characteristics for governance at-a-distance, which is conditioned by the networked, computerized form of collecting, recording, and processing large volumes of data.

Following this trend, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri recognize something similar in the contemporary forces of capitalism and the rise of the current global market regime in what they call the passage of sovereignty from the modern notion of imperialism, which was sustained by the expansion of the boundaries of the nation-state, into a new “network power,” as a new global form of sovereignty in the age of “Empire.” In Hardt-Negri’s account of the shift from territory to deterritorialization, this new modulatory mode of power “is distributed in networks, through mobile and articulated mechanisms of control,”<sup>327</sup> operating on a global scale, or

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<sup>325</sup> Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>327</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2001), 384.

perhaps, in what Harvey refers to as “time-space compression.”<sup>328</sup> Contrary to the modern sovereignty, Hardt and Negri’s formulation of Empire, which echoes Deleuze’s conception of control, is never completely fixed, but rather is open and expansive, organized around fluid, deterritorializing forms of social control based on modulations. It functions through “hybrid identities,” mobile norms, and “flexible hierarchies.”<sup>329</sup> In this way, the network sovereign system capitalizes on orienting and maintaining a new form of global order and demands fluid, flexible, and hybrid subjects. Similar to Harvey, Hardt and Negri’s emphasis on the role of networked information and communication technologies, alongside the globalization processes, points to the emergence of the global information infrastructure which has been accompanied by the restructuring of the productive processes and distribution mechanisms. The new information economy highlights the key shift from the production of material artifacts confined within factory walls to a new model of “biopolitical production” that functions within the production subjectivity and affects all aspects of life, at all levels of biological, technological, social, and economic domains.<sup>330</sup> In other words, the tendency towards deterritorialized information networks blurs the longstanding distinction between the consumptive and producing practices and, instead, involves collective cooperation, constant communication, and continual interactivity in the dynamics of feedback loops, thus creating a convergence between the role of producer and consumer, what Edward Comor (2011) terms as “prosumer.” In the shift to the informationalized industrial production, as explained by Hardt and Negri, “The great industrial and financial powers thus produce not only commodities but also subjectivities. They produce

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<sup>328</sup> Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 4.

<sup>329</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, xii-xiii.

<sup>330</sup> Michael Hard and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004): 94.

agentic subjectivities within the biopolitical context: they produce needs, social relations, bodies, and minds—which is to say, they produce producers.”<sup>331</sup>

#### 4.1.2 *The Emergence of Concierge Economy*

Simultaneously, the development of information and communication technologies, combined with the growing emphasis on the informational activities and information systems in the so-called third industrial revolution, has presented a handful number of terms, including informational economy, gig economy, knowledge economy, immaterial economy, affective economy, platform economy, surveillance economy, collaborative economy, and sharing economy (for example, Elmer 2004; Frenken and Schor 2017; Fuches 2010; Gandini 2019; Hardt 1999; Hardt and Negri 2000; Lazzarato 1996; Powell and Snellman 2004; Richardson 2015; Srnicek 2017; Zuboff 2019). The network logic of information and communication technologies was fueled by the rise of the 1990s internet bubble and the subsequent developments in cloud computing services in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Such technological changes, coupled with the neoliberal principles of free market and individual freedom, led to the new waves of “creative destruction” and reconfiguration of the traditional form of institutional frameworks, divisions of labour, working practices, and practices of consumption.<sup>332</sup> The reconfiguration of productive and consumptive activities was considered as crucial to accumulation strategies of informational capitalism and uninterrupted flow of market transactions. In this way, the active participations of online users in such activities as producing and uploading content for open-source sites and social networking services, playing, developing,

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<sup>331</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 32.

<sup>332</sup> Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 3.

and modifying games for multinational game industries left behind digital trails for potential marketing use and profit (Comor 2011; Deuze 2007; Fuchs 2009).

Along with Lazzarato (1996), Hardt and Negri mobilize the term “immaterial labour” to bring attention to the shift to informational capitalism, whereby the proliferation of computing and interactive communication technologies has transformed the rationalities and activities of work into new practices of producing nonmaterial outputs in the new forms of service, cultural content, knowledge, and affect.<sup>333</sup> In this way, in the move toward the immaterial production that reinforces continual exchange of knowledge and information between producer and consumer, knowledge, information, and affect become the key economic factors in productivity and system of value generating potencies. In the informational capitalism, the term “platform” points to the role of space and spatiality in relation to immaterial production, given that digital platforms, such as Amazon offer a perfect spatial structure to which different types of users, including buyers and sellers are drawn and encouraged to interact while every single activity that is taking place within platform is being quantified and datafied for knowledge production (Srnicsek 2017). This marks a new type of economy, what the Chief Executive Officer of Cintrifuse Pete Blackshaw refers to as “concierge economy,”<sup>334</sup> that offers on-demand access to curated products and services, based on collecting and processing massive amounts of information on users in real time. For the moment, I wish to focus on the rise of Amazon and the implications of its concierge mindset for the relationship between consumers and consumption practices. I will return to the spatial logic of Amazon, as well as specific ways of knowing and acting on consumers and consumption pertaining to particular mode of consumer governance.

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<sup>333</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 290.

<sup>334</sup> Pete Blackshaw, “The Concierge Economy,” filmed December 2017 at TEDxHSG, video, 18:00, [https://www.ted.com/talks/pete\\_blackshaw\\_the\\_concierge\\_economy\\_](https://www.ted.com/talks/pete_blackshaw_the_concierge_economy_)

#### 4.1.3 Amazon in the Monopoly Position for Various Online Services

Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, began his dot-com business venture in 1994 in the newly, evolving world of computer met by the Internet architecture. Whereas Eaton originally established his retail operation within the walls of a physical department store and eventually expanded its consumer reach through maximizing its points of consumer contact with the mail-order catalogues addition, Bezos found an immense world of opportunity afforded by the Internet and first launched his business as primarily an online catalogue enterprise for books. The advantage of selling books on the Web, Bezos believed, was the unlimited access to a great selection of books than any other product categories, as well as a wide range of customers, combined with the limitless and open space of virtual bookshelves to display books to customers than any offline physical bookstore could afford.<sup>335</sup> “With that huge diversity of products you could build a store online that simply could not exist in any other way,” as explained by Bezos, “You could build a true superstore with exhaustive selection, and customers value selection.”<sup>336</sup> For the next decade, Amazon continued to rapidly expand the scope of its services from books only into the addition of a wide selection of other offerings, ranging from music and videos to e-cards and auctions, home improvement, beauty goods, baby products, video games, gift items, apparels, electronics, and computer and office, so much so that it eventually gained the status of the original vision of its business to become the “everything store.”<sup>337</sup> Accordingly, the growing disruptive Amazon machine, which survived the collapse of the dot-com bubble in 2000, soon became a key leader over the Web and claimed its competitive ground as “Earth’s biggest

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<sup>335</sup> “1997 Letter to Shareholders,” Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019, [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/Shareholderletter97.pdf](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/Shareholderletter97.pdf).

<sup>336</sup> Brad Stone, *The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013), 26.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

selection.”<sup>338</sup> In addition to the third-party sellers, by 2009, Amazon extended its operation by launching its own private labeled brands initially under the name “Amazon Basics,” and it gradually widened its offering from everyday items to the addition of range of devices, including Kindle, Fire TV, Fire Tablet, and the most notable the Echo device.<sup>339</sup> I will return to Amazon’s Echo devices in the succeeding modulation of this chapter. Accordingly, Amazon.com, along with its affiliates, was no longer simply an online retailer. Instead, Amazon became the seller, the middleman, the platform, and the marketplace.

Amazon, however, evolved into more than just an online department store. Contrary to the retail operations of its offline predecessors, like Eaton’s, Amazon had the advantages of digital technologies, combined with the network structure of the Internet. As a result, it further sustained its technological footprint by launching of Amazon Web Services (AWS) in 2006 that was its cloud-based service offering. The new addition offered a wide range of services, including cloud storage, networking, databases, analytics, mobile, compute capability, and soon internet of things (IoT), machine learning, and artificial intelligence. Amazon rented out its cloud computing products to companies, which worked as an additional source of revenue for Amazon.<sup>340</sup> Accordingly, Amazon attracted a whole set of new customers, from individuals to businesses and from academic institutions to government agencies to enjoy the “flexibility, scalability, and reliability” of on-demand cloud AWS products on the basis of a pay-as-you-go model with increasing capabilities to collect, store, and analyze data. In just the first year of its

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<sup>338</sup> “2003 Annual Report,” Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019, [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/Annual\\_Report\\_2003041304.pdf](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/Annual_Report_2003041304.pdf).

<sup>339</sup> “Amazon.com Introduces AmazonBasics,” Press Release, The Amazon Blog, September 19, 2009, accessed August 15, 2019, [https://press.aboutamazon.com/news-releases/news-release-details/amazoncom-introduces-amazonbasics\\_](https://press.aboutamazon.com/news-releases/news-release-details/amazoncom-introduces-amazonbasics_).

<sup>340</sup> Nick, Srnicek, *Platform Capitalism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2017), 30-31.

establishment, the cloud business service reached over 240,000 subscribers,<sup>341</sup> and nine years later, the number quadrupled and increased to more than million active customers adopting cloud computing resources.<sup>342</sup> The AWS extended its marketplace into a diverse range of customers, ranging from companies like Adobe, Kellogg's, and General Motor to organizations like NASA and Dow Jones, and from non-government initiatives like Global Citizen and People in Need to media providers and services, such as Netflix, *The Guardian*, and *The Globe and Mail*.<sup>343</sup> In addition, Amazon in partnership with the United States federal government launched a new AWS cloud offering in a new region called GovCloud in 2013, which was limited to the U.S. intelligence community only.<sup>344</sup> It was later extended to all government agencies with the addition of AWS Secret Region. The cloud adoption by these government customers sought to operate workloads across the four levels of security classifications, ranking from unclassified to top secret, on Amazon's AWS cloud system.<sup>345</sup> One can clearly see the digital dependency of these businesses and agencies on Amazon's cloud platform.

Accordingly, the cloud-based service became instrumental to widening Amazon's reach over the Web onto a new scale of domination and, consequently, into gaining a growing advantage in economic concentration. The new service offering, as explained by Nick Srnicek, afforded Amazon "direct access to whole new datasets (even if some remain occluded to the

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<sup>341</sup> "2006 Letter to Shareholders," Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019, [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/2006.PDF](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/2006.PDF).

<sup>342</sup> "2014 Letter to Shareholders," Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019, [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/AMAZON-2014-Shareholder-Letter.pdf](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/AMAZON-2014-Shareholder-Letter.pdf).

<sup>343</sup> "AWS Customer Success," Amazon AWS, accessed August 15, 2019, [https://aws.amazon.com/solutions/case-studies/?nc2=h\\_ql\\_ny\\_livestream\\_blu\\_](https://aws.amazon.com/solutions/case-studies/?nc2=h_ql_ny_livestream_blu_)

<sup>344</sup> "2013 Letter to Shareholders," Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019, [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/2013-Letter-to-Shareholders.pdf](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/2013-Letter-to-Shareholders.pdf).

<sup>345</sup> AWS Public Sector Blog Team, "Announcing the New AWS Secret Region," Amazon AWS, November 20, 2017, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://aws.amazon.com/blogs/publicsector/announcing-the-new-aws-secret-region>.

platform).”<sup>346</sup> According to Synergy Research Group, Amazon maintained more than one-third of the cloud market by 2018, far ahead of other competitors like Microsoft, Google, and Alibaba.<sup>347</sup> More importantly, with the addition of varied online services, Amazon increasingly gained control over the networks of social, cultural, commercial, financial, economic, administrative, and political operatives and their content production and distribution. In other words, the constant production, distribution, circulation, and exchange of the social, commercial, economic, and governmental information became highly contingent and dependent on the space that Amazon constituted and regulated. In short, the transformative Amazon effect involved structuring toward a network conglomerate, thus invoking the type of a network Empire. The success of Amazon, as explained by Stacey Mitchel, the co-director of Institute for Local Self-Reliance, in an interview with CNN, “is not the matter of being big, but it is also the structure of its power.”<sup>348</sup>

#### *4.1.4 Transformations in the Consumer-Retailer Relationship*

Consistent with its model of unlimited on-demand access to personalized products and services, combined with the strategies of market pull and technology push, as I explained in the previous chapter, key to the functioning of Amazon was the creation of a circular link between conception and innovation that was spatialized and distributed in networks. As explained by David Nieborg and Thomas Poell, “Products and services offered and circulated via digital platforms are contingent in the sense that they are malleable, modular in design, and informed by

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<sup>346</sup> Srnicek, *Platform Capitalism*, 31.

<sup>347</sup> “Cloud Revenues Continue to Grow by 50% as Top Four Providers Tighten Grip on Market,” Synergy Research Group, July 27, 2018, <https://www.srgresearch.com/articles/cloud-revenues-continue-grow-50-top-four-providers-tighten-grip-market>.

<sup>348</sup> Raul Vucetic, “The Age of Amazon - Full Story - How Jeff Becomes Worlds Richest Person,” YouTube, August 17, 2019, video, 1:07:09, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bulJChM9m0>.

datified user feedback, open to constant revision and recirculation.”<sup>349</sup> This was to attain certainty of continuous and uninterrupted flow of conception and innovation, making opportunities for the most relevant products, services, and content to meet and match with the interests and preferences of their diverse customer sets, “consisting of consumers, sellers, developers, enterprises, and content creators.”<sup>350</sup> In the light of this growing emphasis on innovation and hence constant search for a more effective everyday creativity achieved through the restructuring of production and consumption, Amazon focused on establishing personalized relationships with consumers,<sup>351</sup> in order to enhance consumer engagement and manage their consumption behaviours.<sup>352</sup> Amazon capitalized on the role of the interactive functioning of virtual space, in order to ensure immediate interactions and communication with consumers through various inseparable channels. As I explained in my analysis of Eaton’s branding strategies in the previous chapter, the emphasis on establishing ongoing positive relationships with consumers was key to securing repeat purchases. At the same, the technological advantages of digital platforms like Amazon, along with the coupling of production and consumption, meant that consumers were actively involved in the creation of products they consumed and the services they were offered (Andrejevic 2003; Murakami Wood and Ball 2013; Pridmore 2012). The traditional business model Nigel Thrift (2007) describes as being radically reinvented and oriented toward indulging the motifs of invention, innovation, process, becoming, and self-production. For Thrift, following Paolo Virno, capitalism constantly searches for “sources of profits” by relying on a series of novel practices for “tapping in to the full range of powers of the

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<sup>349</sup> David B. Nieborg and Thomas Poell, “The platformization of cultural production: Theorizing the contingent cultural commodity,” *New Media & Society* 20, no. 11 (2018): 4276.

<sup>350</sup> “2011 Annual Report,” Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019, [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/269317\\_023\\_bmk.pdf](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/269317_023_bmk.pdf).

<sup>351</sup> West, “Amazon: Surveillance as Service,” 29.

<sup>352</sup> Bauman and Lyon, *Liquid Surveillance*, 104.

human body rather than just labour ... and making it into a preindividual thing that can be operated on.”<sup>353</sup> In this way, the body itself becomes the source of potentiality.

From the very beginning, Amazon aligned the metrics for success across its entire organizational operations with the consumer success metrics, owing to the distributed and deterritorialized capacities of the networked information and communication technologies. In this way, moving beyond the geographical and territorial limitations, the genius of Amazon was to capitalize on personalization mechanisms, just-in-time production processes, and varied techno-mediated techniques to engage consumers in the curation of the products and services they were being served. Contrary to pre-war Eaton’s whose expertise was privileged as a way of evoking control and influence over consuming bodies and nurturing certain type of identity and lifestyle through consumption, Bezos’ vision was to offer personalized experience to consumers based on collecting and processing consumer information about their past consumption behaviours (Stone 2013). He referred to personalization as the mechanism that would “accelerate the very process of discovery.”<sup>354</sup> In his first annual letter to Amazon shareholders in 1997, Bezos introduced his longstanding principle of consumer-centricity for his concierge-oriented model.<sup>355</sup> This presented new controlling techniques that worked to regulate and manage consumers and consumption. As I explained in the previous chapter, pre-war Eaton’s capitalized on spatial strategies and normalization to attain discipline and conformity of consumers to the social norms that had been already established for them. For example, my analysis of ready-to-wear clothing demonstrated the ways Eaton’s made use of mail-order catalogues, detailed

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<sup>353</sup> Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*, 233.

<sup>354</sup> “Amazon’s original 1997 letter to shareholders,” The Amazon Blog, accessed August 30, 2019, <https://blog.aboutamazon.com/company-news/amazons-original-1997-letter-to-shareholders>.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*

instructions, and diagrams, as a means of monitoring, inspection, and correction to get consumers to conform to the predefined images of the acceptable. Ready-to-wear clothing, therefore, became the disciplinary arbiter of one's appearance that worked to distinguish the acceptable from the unacceptable that was required to be brought to the level of self-conformity. Accordingly, Amazon's move toward customer-centricity was an indication of a whole new set of relationship with consumers and their participation in the production process.

Building upon Hardt and Negri's (2001) reading of the shift from Fordism to Toyotism, the consumer obsession approach, in fact, indicates the broader restructuring of the relationship between supply and demand, due to constant degrees of communication and communicability within and across the entire productive processes. Similar to the Fordist model, Eaton's operation, particularly prior to the Second World War, relied on large-scale production and distribution of homogenous products to large homogenous markets, according to a "static perception." At the same time, Eaton's use of statistics in the period immediately after the war complicated the rigid and controlling relationship of the supply chain with the market demands. Eaton's involved systematic monitoring, documenting, and categorizing consumers through statistical calculation to gain insights into consumer behaviour and anticipate future consumption patterns accordingly. However, the earlier methods of information collection and processing were confronted with some degrees of restrictions and limitations, due to the static and independent nature of communication channels and the disadvantages of the analog technologies. As Hardt and Negri put it, the Fordist structure was spatialized and organized around a more restricted or perhaps "a relatively 'mute' relationship" between factory and market."<sup>356</sup> Due to these challenges, the qualitative processes of disciplinary influence over consumers and the

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<sup>356</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 290.

quantitative statistification of consumer behaviour remained largely discrete or at a minimum required minimal reciprocal relationship in real time.

In the case of Amazon, however, the vitality of consumer obsession to its operations, pointed to the reversal of the prior information exchange relationships, as in the case of Eaton's. As such, the principle of consumer obsession focused on establishing real-time and direct interactions and engagements with consumers to lure them into participating in the process of collecting, recording, and adding information to databases and crafting their personalized experience. Due to the remodeling of the production and consumption, Hardt and Negri argue that with the rise of Toyotism, factories benefited from automation and manufacturing innovation to constitute a new spatial and temporal relationships between maintaining "zero stock" and the just-in-time production system through the rapid and direct communications and interactions with the market.<sup>357</sup> The concept of the zero inventory was to determine the actual production quantities based on the actual orders received from the market, in order to establish a direct relationship between supply and demand and prevent overproduction. In a similar way, with the shift toward deterritorializing information exchange, Amazon's principle of consumer obsession meant that customer could get the items that were needed at the exact time and in the exact moment that were needed. In other words, the demands of consumers were to drive the production and circulation of products and service offerings through both qualitative and quantitative processes.

The shift to new concierge economy, therefore, coincided with the transformations in the relationship between the consumer and the retailer. This new concierge mindset, Lazzarato

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<sup>357</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 290.

explains, involves “the integration of the relationship between production and consumption, where in fact the consumer intervenes in an active way in the composition of the product.”<sup>358</sup> In other words, the restructuring of the production-consumption relationships sparked changes in the orientation of consuming bodies in the production-consumption relationship from turning into docile bodies towards becoming a link in the circular connection of conception and innovation. Consumption, therefore, was no longer just about consuming products or achieving improvement to bodies. The very act of consumption became “productive in accordance with the necessary conditions and the new products. Consumption is then first of all a consumption of information.”<sup>359</sup> The changes in the consumer-retailer relationships emphasized the role of virtual space and spatial organization of Amazon in enhancing consumers’ participations and browsing the virtual environment and simultaneously achieving constant monitoring and tracking of their consumption behaviours in real time. In what follows, I consider the changes in Amazon’s use of space and spatial strategies to regulate and manage consumers and consumption.

#### *4.1.5 Techno-mediated Space of Consumption: Simulation of Shopping and Convenient Virtual Browsing*

The examination of forms of space and spatialization during the first twenty-five years of Amazon’s operation demonstrates that the development plan for the Amazon online services relied increasingly on a functional, interactive space that worked to promote and enhance seamless browsing, as it facilitated the capacity to navigate from point to point. The interactive space simultaneously worked to mediate the effective information retrieval. As I explained in the

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<sup>358</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato, “Immaterial Labour,” in *Radical Thoughts in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 141.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

previous chapter, Eaton's disciplinary logic of space and spatialization involved construction of artificial spaces in terms of subdivisions and hierarchization, as a means to achieve the perfection of movement of people in relation to things through maximizing the duration of browsing in store and extending consumer exposure to products to secure the purchase. While the space of Eaton's characterized Foucault's disciplinary panopticon, the virtual space of Amazon followed the spatial framework of Foucauldian security. Amazon's use of space and spatial strategies worked to allow the circulation of goods, services, and information to take place within a series of probable events embedded within the space. For Foucault, the idea of the freedom of circulation, which resonates strongly with the neoliberal rationalities of the economic mobility and individual entrepreneurial freedoms, becomes security metrics that condition "the possibility of movement, change of place, and processes of circulation of both people and things."<sup>360</sup> Following Foucault's analysis of a security type of town, the security apparatus seeks to take into account the complex and aleatory interactions of mobile bodies and things, by planning an urban milieu "in terms of events or series of events or possible elements, of series that will have to be regulated within a multivalent transformable framework."<sup>361</sup> The constant tendency towards readiness about the future developments always underway characterizes the neoliberal mode of governance at-a-distance. This phenomenon is even more pronounced in the production of the techno-mediated forms of space and spatialization as it integrates certain attributes and activities that are associated with shopping in the physical environment into the virtual space, distributed across the media formats of the digital, mobile, personal, and virtual.

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<sup>360</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 48-49.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

The diagram of the early interface design of Amazon.com from the mid-1990s shows the spatial architecture that involved limited usability, display of information, and content production, as the functioning of space relied heavily on the hypertext links because of the absence of diverse graphic forms (Figure 12).<sup>362</sup> At the same time, the interface presented the simulation of the activities of browsing in



Figure 12: Amazon's first website, 1995

the physical bookstore, as such activities that were first introduced by modern department stores like Eaton's. The digital simulation of browsing was achieved through refashioning and automating the features and activities that were associated with previously existing print mail-order catalogues to create and fabricate a multidimensional and fluid spatial arrangement of information, distributed in networks. The information interface presented opportunities to structure and classify details essential to purchasing books in an interactive fashion to simulate the familiar habits of shopping in the techno-mediated environment. The site presented a primitive search engine and tailored-customer solutions that were actually refashioned the attributes of real salespersons in physical stores to create a seamless, interactive shopping experience with little human intervention. The keyword-based search engine operation also borrowed the features of mail-order catalogues that indexed massive databases of books under the combination of authors, titles, and subject areas, aiding consumers at finding information on

<sup>362</sup> "Amazon.com Design History," Version Museum: A visual history of your favorite technology, accessed November 2019, <https://www.versionmuseum.com/history-of/amazon-website>.

Amazon's online catalogue (Figure 13).<sup>363</sup> Contrary to its analog counterparts, however, the search operation was not restricted to the fixity and rigidity of print media and their spatial structure. Instead, it benefited from the fluidity, flexibility, and interactive functioning of the virtual environment. The new search

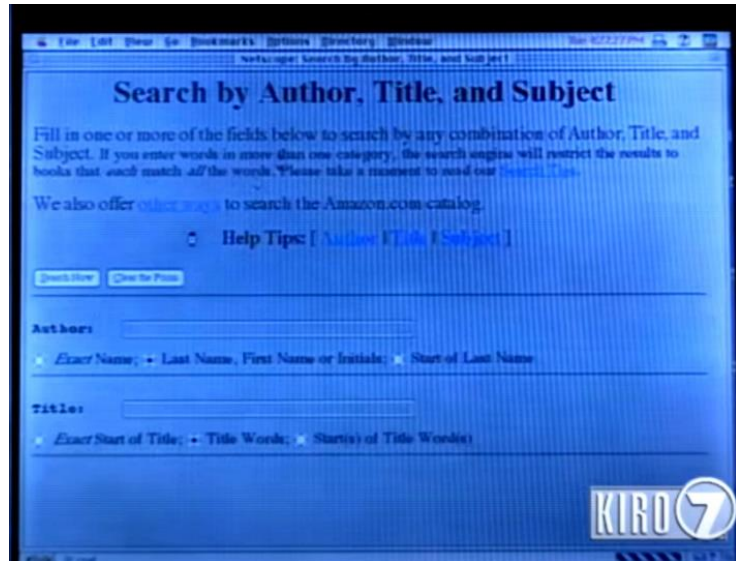


Figure 13: Amazon.com page for basic search, 1997

mechanism borrowed the qualities of a friendly salesperson to assist customers with their search of items and offer faster results based on the information provided by them. This automated feature, as noted by Amazon News Release of 1995, “makes it possible for customers to find titles after a few minutes of searching, without ever leaving their desks. Instead of hours chasing down phone numbers and driving all over town to specialty bookstores, customers order online and books are delivered directly to their doors via UPS or Airborne Express.”<sup>364</sup>

Additionally, the “Eyes & Editor” feature transferred Eaton’s basic techniques of information solicitation and consumer feedback into automated and personalized format of notification performance that was managed and controlled by “automated search agents.” The automated feature worked as a basic line of direct communication and information exchange with customers that invited them to contribute information about particular titles of their interests

<sup>363</sup> KIRO 7 News, “Amazon.com story from Feb. 4, 1997 (KIRO 7 Seattle),” YouTube, February 25, 2016, video, 02:36, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmTNWynx7VQ>.

<sup>364</sup> “World’s Largest Bookseller Opens on the Web,” Press Release, The Amazon Blog, October 24, 1995, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://press.aboutamazon.com/news-releases/news-release-details/worlds-largest-bookseller-opens-web>.

to databases in exchange for the promise of receiving automated notification by e-mail upon the availability of new releases. In addition, the human editorial team was actively involved in offering recommendations to customers during their browsing, by generating detailed reviews of books hand-selected based on intuitive decisions.<sup>365</sup> This was, in fact, a stark contrast between the earlier method of recommendation that was achieved based on human intuition and later personal form of recommendation mechanism that eliminated the human role and instead was generated by predictive analytics and algorithms. Notwithstanding the limited personalized relationship with consumers in Amazon's early years, the early interface offered illusion of browsing, coupled with ease of access to information on personal computers within the comfort of home environments through refashioning and automating activities associated with shopping in physical stores. Amazon's second-generation interface, however, further perfected the simulation of browsing and shopping in physical stores and, therefore, improved consumer experience. The new consumer-friendly interface, replete with text and graphic integrations, began to take shape toward the end of the century and remained relatively intact until 2015.

The interface borrowed more features and activities associated with the department stores to further extend the familiar routines and activities of the



Figure 14: 2002 Amazon.com homepage

<sup>365</sup> Stone, *The Everything Store*, 133.

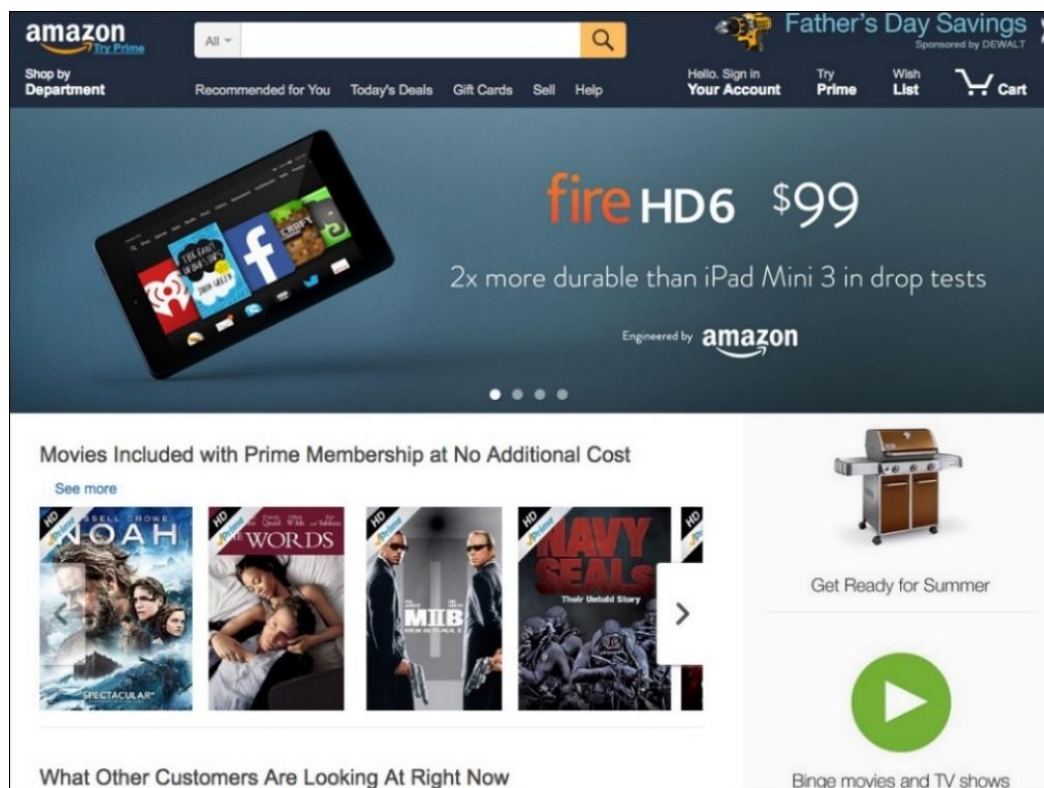
shopping into the hypermediated media space, resulting in delivering a seamless and convenient consumer experience. For example, the topography of the Amazon's interface from 2002 featured computer generated graphics of product categories and automated, standardized buttons, including virtual Shopping Cart, Wish List, and 1-Click ordering that were adaptive and responsive, according to individual consumer's profile, which worked as the virtual image of the consumers generated using databases of characteristics (Figure 14).<sup>366</sup> These automated self-service capabilities brought together the 1970s DIY (Do It Yourself) movement. These features in turn cultivated convenient browsing and shopping experience through reducing the number of clicks, eliminating the salesperson, and removing cashier's intervention. In other words, the roles of the human salesperson and cashier were extended into the automated buttons of Shopping Cart, Wish List, and 1-Click ordering. Accordingly, the new automated DIY tools worked to optimize consumer browsing and participation, allowing them to "find, cancel, or modify orders," by simply using these automated buttons. Bezos describes the DIY virtual shopping in the following remark, "to find an order, just make sure you are signed in and recognized by the site, and do a regular search on any product in your order. When you get to the product's detail page, a link to your order will be at the top of the page."<sup>367</sup> Accordingly, these automated tools were presented to customers as methods of optimization and management of their own shopping experience. In addition, the new feature of "Look Inside" translated the qualities of a familiar habit of reading and browsing physical books into techno-mediated activities of browsing pages from any book prior to purchase. In this way, consumers were allowed to navigate freely through the virtual bookstore, search for specific words and phrases from any book, and view high-

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<sup>366</sup> Version Museum, "Amazon.com Design History."

<sup>367</sup> "2001 Letter to Shareholders," Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019, [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/2001\\_shareholderLetter.pdf](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/2001_shareholderLetter.pdf).

resolution digital images of pages within the choices and options that were available to them by Amazon search algorithms, in collaboration with optical character-recognition software.<sup>368</sup> More importantly, the brilliance of the second-generation of Amazon's interface was the addition of personal recommendation and personalization mechanisms. As early as 1998, Amazon emphasized the significance of delivering algorithmically different type of shopping experience to consumers in a more personalized way, based on the statistical quantification of consumer browsing and purchases, compared against similar recorded data in real time (Brandt 2011; Stone 2013).



**Figure 15:** 2015 Amazon.com homepage

Amazon's third-generation interface embarked a new kind of information architecture, as early as 2015, to offer customers incomparable ease of use for highly fluid and individualized

<sup>368</sup> Stone, *The Everything Store*, 197.

interactions and exchange with products, service, and content that worked toward fostering seamless and uninterrupted experience of browsing (Figure 15).<sup>369</sup> The ease of navigating from a hyperlink to another, reading and participating in reviews, and finding everything from the latest deals to product listings and from descriptions to competitive prices were achieved through algorithmically personalized recommendation, personalization, and just-in-time marketing and across diverse media formats distributed in networks. The new design seems to animate the disciplined arrangements of the 1900s Vienna Secession and the functional logic of the 1950s International Typographic Style in the digital forms to support real-time interactions and transactions that would be unimaginable in any other medium. The spatial arrangement of automated and standardized features and activities generated the idea of expectancy or a sense of anticipation over their particular functions while they simultaneously disciplined consumers to self-manage and participate in the process of browsing. In her analysis of social media platforms, Jose van Dijk (2013) points to the politics of automated features and activities that are associated with social activities, such as “friending,” “liking,” “connecting,” and “following” which have been extended into automated and standardized buttons. For van Dijk, these buttons, in fact, are controlling devices for algorithms that help to standardize input data to make it easier to find behavioural patterns. They also work to capture and extract affective responses from consumers.<sup>370</sup> This underlines the significant role of spatiality and spatial strategies in evoking influence and control over consumer behaviour and achieving consumer surveillance.

Bezos extended the idea of virtual browsing into the integration of the concept of mobility and interface. The addition of Kindle E-reader in 2007 was a significant experiment in

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<sup>369</sup> Version Museum, “Amazon.com Design History.”

<sup>370</sup> van Dijk, José. “‘You have One Identity’: Performing the Self on Facebook and LinkedIn.” *Media, Culture & Society* 35, no. 2 (2013): 202.

portable interface and cloud collections of unlimited titles. The portable device combined the new adaptive and mutable capabilities of web design across diverse networked media forms with continual communications between multiple applications and interfaces to offer a seamless, mobile experience of browsing to the customers. The reading device featured a “paper-like electronic ink display” that used a wireless network similar to cell phones, by presenting both mobile and personal activities of browsing, purchasing, downloading, and reading e-books from Amazon Kindle Store.<sup>371</sup> In this way, browsing became mobile, as advances in media technologies extended activities associated with browsing into the network of interactive screen space on desktop, mobile web, and Amazon mobile app that created liberating and uninterrupted consumer experience, moving seamlessly from one interface to another. Such hypermediated spaces allowed consumers to search among and zoom in on unlimited product categories and scroll through information displays, and traverse within and between hyperlinked pages, by recognizing and responding to the bodily gestures, including touch, clicks, or mouse-over, can be viewed as to involve forms of what Richard Grusin calls “affective feedback loops” with media. These feedback mechanisms, as explained by Grusin, “translate human intention or agency into some form of action or activity that is distributed across, and is only possible through, our media technologies, even as these technologies have no independent agency of their own.”<sup>372</sup> In this way, the capacities to browse freely within the techno-mediated environment, moving around from one feature to another, navigating through a vast collection of interconnected pages, going from one interface into another involved affective feedback loops that the consumer subjects formed with their everyday media forms themselves.

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<sup>371</sup> “2007 Annual Report,” Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019, [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/2007AR.pdf](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/2007AR.pdf).

<sup>372</sup> Grusin, *Premediation*, 100.

The concept of affect is regarded as a pre-personal, uncontained bodily intensity, which comes prior to experience. Affect is an unmediated intensity that is not yet realized. Brian Massumi sees affect as autonomous for its infinity and openness, which is unbounded of any confinement, as it does not originate in any body.<sup>373</sup> The pre-subjective autonomy of affect functions as this kind of temporal priority to and potential capacity for activation, both “to act and be acted upon.”<sup>374</sup> Further, affect is not irrational, but rather takes place at a different level of “intelligence.”<sup>375</sup> Insofar as affect consists of some kind of pre-personal and unconscious “thoughts” prior to cognition and intention, affect is subject to politics, so much so that it can be “engineered” to produce a changing effect on politics. Such “political engineering” of affect, as Thrift explains, “is able to act as a dark force which is part and parcel of the new liberal settlement.”<sup>376</sup> Accordingly, this demonstrates the significant role of space in maintaining positive affective relationships with consumers, to adopt Grusin, in order to secure their continual “affective participation” in the circular link between conception and innovation, crucial to Amazon’s concierge-run operation. Consumers’ affective participations in the interactive, virtual space can be viewed as what Thrift (2004) calls “technological unconscious.” Rethinking of everyday habits as those practices that are shaped and manipulated by the techno-mediated techniques, Thrift’s idea of unconscious technological formations of everyday, is a “bending of bodies-with-environments to a specific set of addresses without the benefit of any cognitive inputs.”<sup>377</sup> This is to say, the diverse interconnected media formats and media functions afforded Amazon to plan a space, combined with techno-mediated features, activities, and techniques, to

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<sup>373</sup> Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 35.

<sup>374</sup> Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg “An Inventory of Shimmers,” in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>375</sup> Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*, 178.

<sup>376</sup> Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*, 241.

<sup>377</sup> Nigel Thrift, “Remembering the Technological Unconscious by Foregrounding the Knowledge of Position,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22, no. 1 (2004): 177.

cater a seamless and convenient experience to consumers, resulting in generating and circulating positive affect. Such positive affective relations, in fact, worked to encourage individual consumers to navigate willingly through pages, search for favourite products, read and post reviews, make purchase, download their favourite Kindle books, and stream or download Amazon music or Prime movies and TV episodes. While the techno-mediated space proliferated interactions and transactions, by making them affectively pleasurable, these activities become the very sources for information collection and processing.

Conversely, the virtual experience of browsing through the interlinked pages of Amazon was generated by the communicative and communicable dynamics of diverse media formats. The optic experience of looking into the department store through plate-glass windows and walking through the front door was projected on Amazon homepage through the multiplicity of glossy digital screens and supported by a wide range of applications and functional options across the interconnected media forms and technologies. Borrowing Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin's formulation of "remediation," the functioning of Amazon's techno-mediated space relied on the law of transparent immediacy that seemed to conceal any trace of mediated act and instead made one's immediate interaction with products and services in real-time seamless or what was felt as "a sense of presence."<sup>378</sup> The tendency toward naturalizing the interactions with products, services, and content in the virtual space is clearly apparent in Bezos' remark about the development plan for reinventing the five-hundred-year-old mass-produced book industry since the Gutenberg Bible into the new form of Kindle in the following,

At the beginning of our design process, we identified what we believe is book's most important feature. It *disappears*. When you read a book, you don't notice the paper and

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<sup>378</sup> Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000), 22.

the ink and the glue and the stitching. All of that dissolve, and what remains is the author's world. We knew Kindle would have to *get out of the way*, just like a physical book, so readers could become engrossed in the words and forget they're reading on a device. We also knew we shouldn't try to copy every last feature of a book—we could never out-book the book. We'd have to add *new capabilities*—ones that could never be possible with a traditional book (emphasis in original).<sup>379</sup>

Accordingly, the imaginary of window served not simply as a metaphor but a calculated, functional opening through which individual consumers came to experience the “real” performance of reading, viewing, browsing, and purchasing across the virtual, digital, personal, and mobile media formats. Following Rob Shields's (2003) articulation of the virtual, the windowed displays, resonating “mirror images,” are nothing but virtual that in essence are not actual but nevertheless always real that suggests the potential for reflecting and reproducing the real actual. “The image is virtual in that,” as Shields explains, “it suggests a potential mirror-world on the other side of the glass, an early precursor of the power of simulation.”<sup>380</sup>

Accordingly, the physical experiences of walking down the store aisles, moving from one department to another, interacting with a wide range of products and diverse displays, being guided by a salesperson, and going to the cash register were translated into automated features and mediated in a series of potential interactions, unfolding in real time and real senses through consumer interventions.

#### *4.1.6 Planning a Functional Space and Spatialization of Consumption According to the Probabilistic Logic*

While Amazon produced and maintained affective relations with consumers that was achieved through spatial and functional structuring of features and activities particular to create a

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<sup>379</sup> “2007 Letter to Shareholders,” Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019, [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/2007letter.pdf](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/2007letter.pdf).

<sup>380</sup> Rob Shields, *The Virtual* (London: Routledge, 2003), 7.

seamless experience of consumer browsing, it reconciled the economy of circulation with a series of techniques for consumer surveillance and governance at-a-distance embedded within this space. The decentralized and distributed networked architecture of the Internet has frequently found an affinity to the properties of “rhizome” in Deleuzio-Guattarian account (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Thinking of the spatial structure of the Internet through the one of rhizome, Mark Poster explains:

“Whereas mechanical machines are inserted into hierarchically organized social systems, obeying and enhancing this type of structure, the Internet is ruled by no one and is open to expansion or addition at anyone’s whim as long as its communication protocols are followed. This contrast was anticipated theoretically by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari especially in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), in which they distinguish between arboreal and rhizomic cultural forms. The former is stable, centred, hierarchical; the latter is nomadic, multiple, decentred—a fitting depiction of the difference between hydroelectric plant and the Internet.”<sup>381</sup>

If, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, the tree pertains to fixed points of emission and a hierarchical structure, the rhizome then corresponds to the connection of multiple points and an a-centred, nonsignifying, and anti-hierarchical structure. A rhizome, as explained by Yuk Hui, is basically “a cartography which does not follow any predefined structure; a rhizome is imminent to itself, as in the case of a map being a map at its own disposal.”<sup>382</sup> At the same time, describing the Internet as one decentralized and nonsignifying system and reducible neither to any premediated structure may run the risk of referring to the Internet as “one-all encompassing network of power.”<sup>383</sup> The security techniques of statistical quantification and datafication of consumers and consumption behaviours are not new phenomena. As I demonstrated in the

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<sup>381</sup> As cited in Ian Buchanan “Deleuze and the Internet,” in *Deleuze and New Technology*, ed. Mark Poster and David Savat (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2009) 152.

<sup>382</sup> Yuk Hui, “The New Polices of the New Media,” in *The Digitized Imagination: Encounters with the Virtual World*, ed. Nalini Rajan (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009), 94.

<sup>383</sup> Alexander Galloway, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 30.

previous chapter, these techniques were widely used by the modern department stores, and later extended into the functioning of Amazon. This is to say, the history of these techniques and technologies in relation to the Internet is different in a given industry, in a given society, or at a given moment (to adapt Foucault). As explained by Alexander Galloway, “there is not one Internet but many internets, all which bear a specific relation to the infrastructural history of the military, telecommunications, and science industries.”<sup>384</sup>

The capacity of Amazon to personalize and individualize consumer experience on the Internet and differentiate them from one another, through statistical quantification and classification systems, combined with multiple mandates and operatives points to the fact that there is not simply one decentralized structure, but rather more distributed “horizontal meshworks” that are highly controlled and irreducible to one central point.<sup>385</sup> Amazon’s techno-mediated spatial structure is much more than an open structure or a liberated line of flight related to the rhizomatic tendencies. Rather, it involves a reversal of the relationship because, in line with Foucault’s conception of the milieu, mobile bodies and things are allowed to move seamlessly only within a series of probable events and potential scenarios, bearing on a distributed control underpins them, while data are obtained from their immediate and intimate interactions and transactions. Put it simply, the very act of browsing works as a valuable source of information to create a new form of knowledge in dealing with the unpredictable dynamics of consumer behaviour. This is to say, the more one searches and navigates the Amazon environment, the more one becomes searchable and trackable. In the techno-mediated space of Amazon, while consumers enjoy the seamless and friction-free browsing experience, their data

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<sup>384</sup> Galloway, *The Exploit*, 30.

<sup>385</sup> Alexander Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), 24-25.

trails become part of the mathematical calculation to anticipate their next move, next click, next purchase, and so forth. The crux of Amazon's operations has less to do with the idea of connection and more to do with browsing, which according to Ian Buchanan is similar to the manner in which Google has opened up a world of opportunity where people can find almost anything on the Internet.<sup>386</sup> The politics of the Amazon-effect, therefore, needs to be understood within the circular link between the milieu of convenience and liberation and the milieu of continuous automated surveillance and control. The political implications of the networks are not merely symbolic, and as noted by Galloway, "we're tired of rhizomes ... one must critique the logics of distributed networks themselves ... that the materiality of networks—and above all the 'open' or 'free' networks—exhibits power relations regardless of powerful individuals."<sup>387</sup>

The seamless operations of Amazon's architectural arrangement involved a whole series of computational components and instructions that enabled continuous interactions between consumers and Amazon's products and services. These interactions and transactions are individually personalized in an immediate, automatic fashion, according to consumers' profiles. Following Foucault's articulation of the spatial logic of security, the smooth digital space, within which Amazon operated, was no longer limited to the internal spatial divisions and partitioning to arrange and distribute consuming bodies and their movements to arrive at a point of perfection, as in the case of Eaton's. Rather, it involved a spatial structure in which the interplay between mobile people and things took place within a series of probable scenarios.<sup>388</sup> As I demonstrated earlier, in line with Hardt and Negri's reading of Toyota production system, or Toyotism, Amazon.com and its affiliates strived toward structuring a dynamic, interactive and

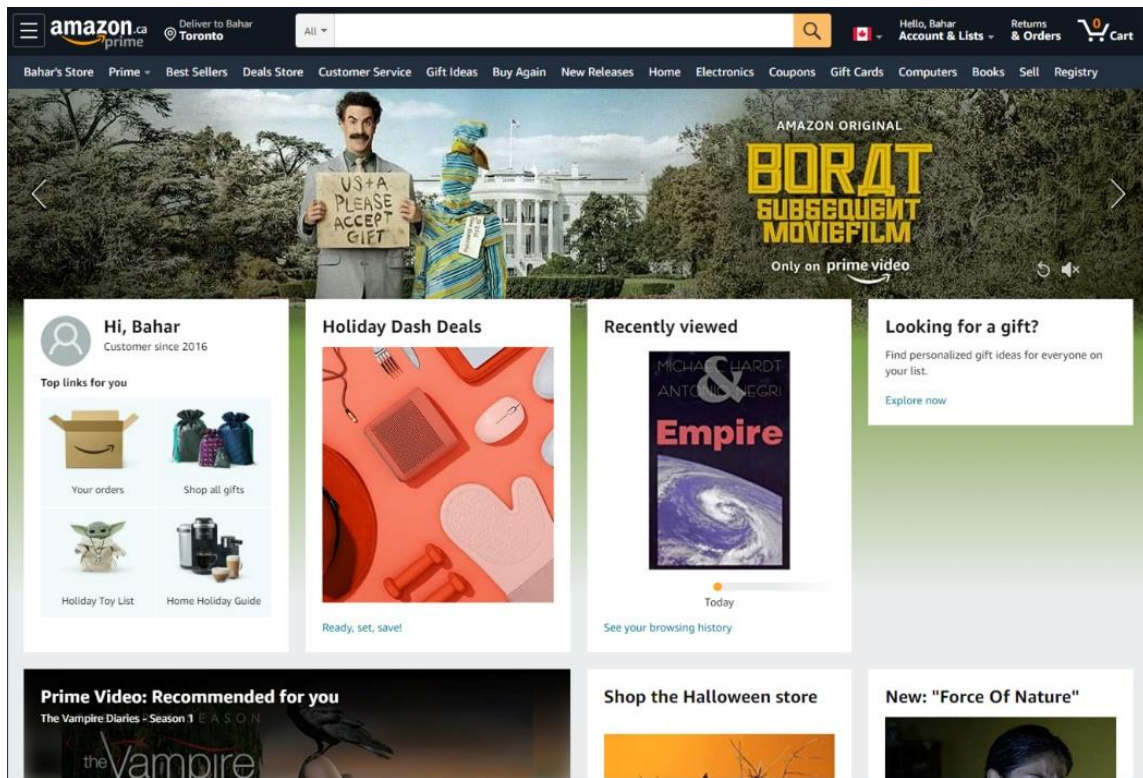
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<sup>386</sup> Buchanan, "Deleuze and the Internet," 155-156.

<sup>387</sup> Galloway, *The Exploit*, 153.

<sup>388</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 21.

communicative space that facilitated and enhanced the ubiquity of seamless and frictionless browsing experience between and across multiple channels and, simultaneously, provided just-in-time consumption in a personalized fashion at anytime and from anywhere. At the same time, delivering such experience relied on a sophisticated and complex programming, operating with dynamic coded writings, that was essentially concealed from the medium of the screen.



**Figure 16:** Screen capture of author's Amazon.ca homepage, November 2020

The present Amazon Web content (Figure 16) is built on the standardized system known as Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) alongside other technologies, such as Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and scripting languages like JavaScript. Although exactly how these software programming languages work with coded components in the technical bases is beyond the scope of this dissertation and that the precise details of the technical development are not significant, it remains essential to highlight the ways in which these computational operatives plan, fabricate,

and dictate human actions. On the one hand, the coded writings work collaboratively with one another and, simultaneously, communicate directly with user's browser on how to render text, image, animation, and other forms of content for a particular Web display upon human inputs through requesting access to the Amazon website. Where HTML uses markup tags to define the organizational structure and meaning of the Amazon web page, CSS describes the presentation and aesthetic dynamics of a document written in HTML while JavaScript is concerned with functions and behaviour of the dynamic elements in the web page.<sup>389</sup> These coded elements work to give schematic suggestions or perhaps instructions directly to the browser on end users' devices assigned with a specific Internet Protocol (IP) address on how to display information with which the individual consumers comes to interact. At the same time, however, the development plan for the Amazon web page embodies much more than the issues of content display. While the technical components work behind the scenes and communicate directly with one another—from the backend server all the way to a range of personal devices—to structure and manage what is being visualized and how it is being displayed or reloaded in response to bodily gestures, the codes also work to premeditate future potential scenarios. These range of scenarios include, but not limited to, possible interactions with diverse forms of content, possible next clicks, next touch, next mouse-overs, scrolling, and also possible navigation throughout one page or from one page to another, possible response to recommended products, and possible purchase of a recently viewed item before they are actualized in the present. The Internet works “as a space of virtuality,” Grusin writes, “where links and networks are already laid out to enable users to navigate only according to possible paths.”<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> “HTML: Hypertext Markup Language,” Mozilla, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/web/html>.

<sup>390</sup> Grusin, *Premediation*, 47.

```

1369
1370 <div id="02ivpBj5Fdw2EBbsUURCxg" class="a-cardui hud-dashboard-card-v2" data-a-card-
type="basic">
1371 <div class="a-cardui-header">
1372 <h2 class="a-spacing-small truncate-1line">Recently viewed</h2>
1373 </div>
1374 <div class="a-cardui-body">
1375 <a class="a-link-normal hud-dashboard-card-v2-image-link"
href="/gp/product/B005HWK8ZS?pf_rd_p=46535598-d2e0-4bc4-8392-
182d8c1e93fc&pf_rd_r=PQV7N857P08VTZZGP32K">
1376 <div class="a-image-container a-dynamic-image-container hud-card-image-redesign-
container">
1377 
1378 </div>
1379 </a>
1380
1381 <div class="a-section a-spacing-top-small hud-dashboard-card-timeline-decorator">
1382 <div class="a-section a-spacing-micro">
1383 <div class="a-section a-spacing-none hud-dashboard-card-timeline-dot"></div>
1384 <div class="a-section hud-dashboard-card-timeline-line"></div>
1385 </div>
1386 <div class="a-section hud-dashboard-card-timeline-date">Mon, Sep 16</div>
1387 </div>
1388 </div>
1389 <div class="a-cardui-footer">
1390 <a aria-label="footerAltText in Timeline" class="a-link-normal truncate-1line"
href="/gp/history?pf_rd_p=46535598-d2e0-4bc4-8392-182d8c1e93fc&pf_rd_r=PQV7N857P08VTZZGP32K">See
your browsing history</a>
1391 </div>

```

**Figure 17:** Screen capture of the source code behind author’s Amazon.ca homepage, September 2019

In this way, the behind-the-scenes attempts involve the logical breakdown of possible human functions into well-defined and step-by-step interactions with products and services. This is to say, Amazon maintains control over consumers and consumption through the space where consumers freely and actively browse and search for products and services within a series of probable events. The hypertext markup with the attribute `<href>` render text and graphic image to hyperlink.<sup>391</sup> These hyperlinks are integrated within the coded instruction to optimally increase positive elements, including more liberating browsing from one page to another page or from one point to another point within a page, extending the economy of duration of browsing and interacting with displayed information and features while reducing negative elements, such as inconvenience, frictions, and browsing away from the page with no production of further

<sup>391</sup> “HTML `<a>` href attribute,” w3schools.com, accessed August 17, 2019, [https://www.w3schools.com/tags/att\\_a\\_href.asp](https://www.w3schools.com/tags/att_a_href.asp).

browsing. Take, for example, the HTML markup `<a class="a-link-normal hud-dashboard-card-v2-image-link" href="/gp/product/B005HWK8ZS?pf_rd_p=46535598-d2e0-4bc4-8392-182d8c1e93fc&pf_rd_r=PQV7N8S7P08VTZZGP32K">` in the source code behind my Amazon.ca homepage (Figure 17). It will transform the thumbnail image of Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, which I have recently viewed, to the hyperlink to the item detail page where I will be able to find detailed information about the book, read other consumer reviews, possibly post a review, possibly continue browsing other books suggested by recommendation algorithms, possibly search for a new product category, possibly make purchase with the help of 1-Click service, and many other possible events that have already been premediated. Amazon's techno-mediated spatial structure resembles with Thrift and Shaun French's vision of the regulatory software operation, by referring to it as "deferred." Software, as explained by Thrift and French, "expresses the co-presence of different times, the time of its production and its subsequent dictation of future moments."<sup>392</sup> Similarly, extending Foucault's conception of security into the "techno-mediated regulation" of the smart city, Klauser, Paasche, and Söderström underline the emergence of a new phenomenon, what they call "governing through code," as a new way of governing and orchestrating everyday life, that is increasingly automated, temporal, and

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<sup>392</sup> Nigel Thrift and Shaun French, "The automatic production of space," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 27, no. 3 (September 2002): 311.

performative, and “is produced by and in turn produces specific classifications and ordering of reality.”<sup>393</sup>

```
155 <script>
156     window.GWI && GWI.AssetUtil && GWI.AssetUtil.load(
157     [{"type":"image","src":"https://images-na.ssl-images-
amazon.com/images/G/15/kindle/dp/2019/0002849/CA-EN/2_EchoPlus_Temp_Str_v2_082219_gateway-
tagline-desktop_1x._CB439178886_.jpg"}]
158 );
159     window.P && P.register('preload');
160 </script>
161 <title>Amazon.ca: Low Prices - Fast Shipping - Millions of Items</title>
162 <meta name="description" content="Canada's largest online retailer. Free Shipping on eligible
orders. Easy Returns. Shop now for Electronics, Books, Apparel & much more. Try Prime for free.">
163 <meta name="keywords" content="Amazon.ca, Online Shopping, Kindle, Books, Music, Movies, DVDs,
Electronics, Health, Beauty, Watches, Home & Garden, Tools, Video Games, Baby">
164 <meta name="google" content="nositelinkssearchbox">
165 <meta name="google-site-verification" content="dzs854Esqo2wKksPzTwy_Jdxg1UaZLstx96p7XUDXY4">
166 <link rel="canonical" href="https://www.amazon.ca/">
167 <meta http-equiv="content-type" content="text/html; charset=UTF-8">
168 <meta property="fb:app_id" content="164734381262">
169 <meta name="twitter:card" value="summary">
170 <meta name="twitter:site:id" value="20793816">
171 <meta property="og:description" content="Canada's largest online retailer. Free Shipping on
eligible orders. Easy Returns. Shop now for Electronics, Books, Apparel & much more. Try Prime
for free." xmlns:og="http://opengraphprotocol.org/schema/">
172 <meta name="msvalidate.01" content="4893BCF332FB7ADE299364913D9F1B26" /><script
type="text/javascript">
173 window.P && P.when('A','ready').execute(function(A) {
174     var $ = A.$;
175     $('feed-carousel').first().addClass('first-carousel');
176     P.register('gw-first-carousel');
177     if($('#desktop-ad-atf').height() === 0) {
```

**Figure 18:** Screen capture of the source code behind author’s Amazon.ca homepage, September 2019

Additionally, the network of codes is not limited to managing and fabricating continual browsing and interactivity only within the Amazon’s spatial structure and its internal use. They also work to connect Amazon hub and its internal network of hyperlinks to external search engines, most notably Google Search, aiming at redirecting users surfing the Web to Amazon website.<sup>394</sup> Take, for example, the HTML tag `<meta name="description" content="Canada’s largest online retailer. Free Shipping on eligible orders. Easy Returns. Shop now for Electronics, Books, Apparel & much more. Try Prime for free.">` from the source code of my Amazon.ca homepage (Figure 18). The specialized `<meta>` tag provides meta description that is not for

<sup>393</sup> Klauser, Paasche, and Söderström, “Michel Foucault and the Smart City,” 878.

<sup>394</sup> It is important to note here that in addition to the technical components, according to Ian Buchanan, Amazon compensates Google to direct certain product searches to Amazon’s website. See Buchanan “Deleuze and the Internet,” 156-157.

Amazon's visible page but "machine parsable," meaning that it is readable by the machine only.<sup>395</sup> This machine-readable element defines informative and generative snippet for the page that Google search algorithms and Googlebots may use, combined with many other means of information, to match up against user's query in order to generate search results.<sup>396</sup> Accordingly, these predefined armies of code work to optimally increase the possibility of Amazon's visibility and "being clicked" in the overcrowded Web environment and, consequently, greater traffic frequencies of users being redirected from Google to Amazon.<sup>397</sup> It is important to note here that Google Search uses diverse factors to regulate and hierarchize search results. Yet, the investigation of these ranking mechanisms is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and that numerous scholarly works have been dedicated to understanding the ranking function of Google Search.<sup>398</sup> The important point here is that Google Search has become one of the primary sources of entry for massive number of Web users to search for information to which Amazon seeks to be connected in such a way that the flow of these potential consumers and their browsing can be guided, continued, and integrated into the internal operations of Amazon. In short, the act on the milieu and its diverse supply chains of human and nonhuman elements, of consumers and of products, services, and content, involve not simply constructing, correcting, and modifying consumptive activities according to a preestablished and fixed optimal framework, but rather a series of connections with a series of possible events and future probabilities as to optimally

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<sup>395</sup> "HTML <meta> Tag," w3schools.com, accessed August 17, 2019,

[https://www.w3schools.com/tags/tag\\_meta.asp](https://www.w3schools.com/tags/tag_meta.asp).

<sup>396</sup> "Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Starter Guide," Search Console Help, Google, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/7451184?hl=en>.

<sup>397</sup> "Improve snippets with a meta description makeover," Webmaster Central Blog, Google, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://webmasters.googleblog.com/2007/09/improve-snippets-with-meta-description.html>.

<sup>398</sup> For example, Cheng-Jye Luh, Sheng-An Yang, and Ting-Li Dean Huang, "Estimating Google's search engine ranking function from a search engine optimization perspective," *Online Information Review* 40, no. 2 (2016): 239-255; Michael P. Evans, "Analysing Google rankings through search engine optimization data," *Internet Research* 17, no. 1 (January 2007): 21-37; and Amy Langville and, C. D. Meyer, *Google's PageRank and beyond: the science of search engine rankings* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006).

adjust and enhance the frequency for browsing and possible purchase. The law of optimization, therefore, takes into account the dynamics of techno-mediated commercial interactions between multiple human and nonhuman elements and their very temporal contingency.

#### *4.1.7 Controlling Personalization Mechanisms and the Experience of Uniqueness from Cluster*

The functioning premise of Amazon lies in the ways in which Amazon continuously seeks out the demands of the consumers to determine the production and circulation of products and services, as opposed to imposing upon them the options that it assumes to work best, as in the case of pre-war Eaton's. As I demonstrated earlier in this modulation, Amazon's longstanding vision of consumer obsession promotes and reinforces a kind of on-demand, concierge-based approach that draws on the "start with the customer and work backwards" motto,<sup>399</sup> which in turn works to involve consumer's preferences in the circuit of production and consumption. The shift towards incorporating consumer preferences into the production and circulation of products and services resonate with Foucault's formulation of security as being "centrifugal," rather than "centripetal" discipline, meaning that security continually expands and incorporates new elements in ever-widening circuits.<sup>400</sup> The emphasis on the concierge-based approach, therefore, means to integrate techniques and practices into consumer experience to entice consumers into submitting information associated with their preferences, desires, tastes, and consumption behaviours to databases. The recorded data are crucial to the functioning of platforms to find behavioural patterns of consumers/users that allow predictions of future consumer/user behaviour (Andrejevic and Burdon 2015; Murakami Wood and Ball 2014; van Dijk 2013). The architectural and spatial dynamics of Amazon's personal recommendation and

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<sup>399</sup> "Leadership Principles," Amazon job, Amazon, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://www.amazon.jobs/en/principles>.

<sup>400</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 45.

personalization are effective controlling techniques to get consumers to participate in the processes of collection and recording of their personal and transactional information.

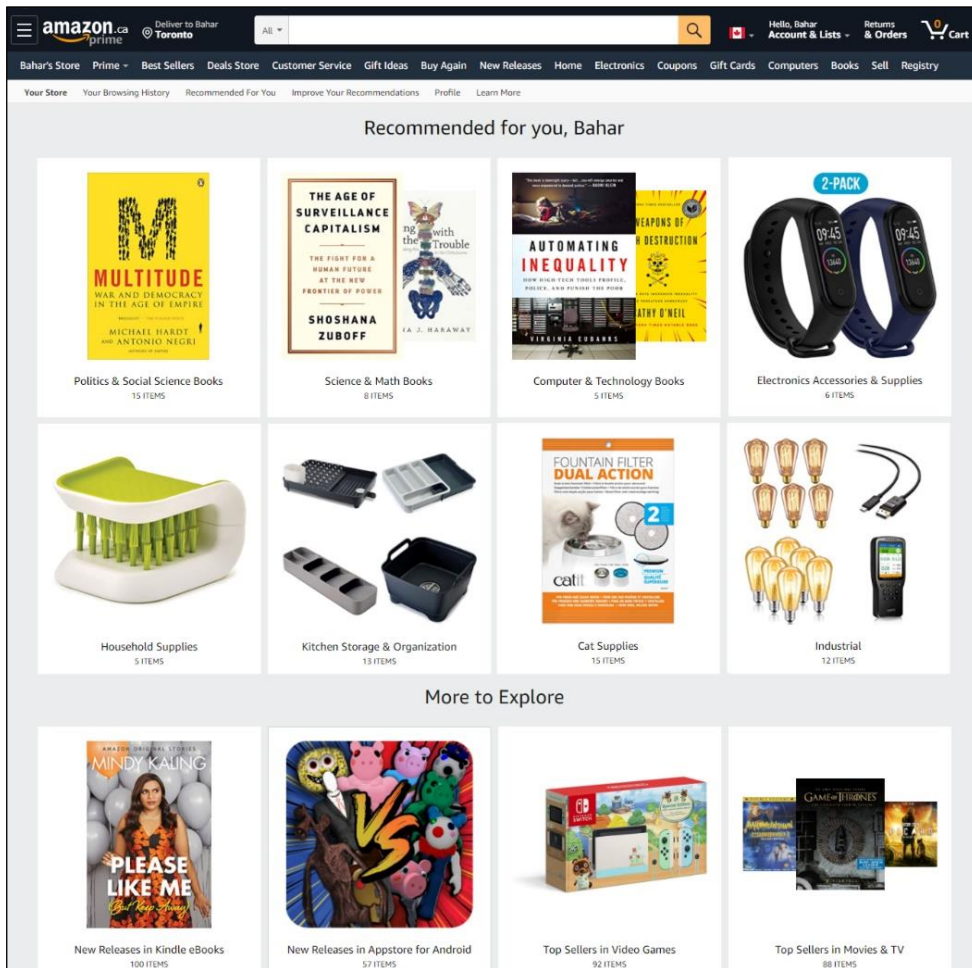
The first point of entry is Amazon personal account that works as a method of automated identification and identity verification technique. Whether by popping up on the first page of Google search results, or getting its URL typed directly into the address bar of user's Web browser, or simply being accessed through its mobile app and other network devices, Amazon constantly invites Web users to visit and enjoy the experience of browsing and interacting with its wide range of features, products, and services in the techno-mediated, interactive space. The continual efforts to direct the online traffic flow to platforms, as van Dijk explains, aim at extracting large quantities of personal and behavioural data from users for automated data mining processes.<sup>401</sup> Once inside the space of Amazon, consumers are required to register for an Amazon account or simply log in to their personal account if they already have one to be able to use any of the features and services Amazon offers: "to make a purchase or to take advantage of such Amazon.com features as Your Profile, Wish Lists, Customer Reviews, and Amazon Prime," and to access such services as 1-Click ordering, Recommendation for You, personalized advertisements, and items stored in the Shopping Cart while browsing.<sup>402</sup> The identification system holds personal and transactional information on the individual consumers about login username and password, e-mail, cell phone number, valid name and address for orders, alerts, history of orders, valid payment methods, and so forth. The personalized shopping experience, gained from having a personal account and willingly adding information to databases, endows

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<sup>401</sup> Van Dijk, "You have One Identity'," 202.

<sup>402</sup> "Amazon Privacy Notice," Help & Customer Service, Amazon, last modified August 29, 2017, accessed August 17, 2019, [https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?ie=UTF8&nodeId=468496#GUID-1B2BDAD4-7ACF-4D7A-8608-CBA6EA897FD3\\_\\_SECTION\\_467C686A137847768F44B619694D3F7C\\_](https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?ie=UTF8&nodeId=468496#GUID-1B2BDAD4-7ACF-4D7A-8608-CBA6EA897FD3__SECTION_467C686A137847768F44B619694D3F7C_)

the individual consumers with ideal freedom to discover, browse, choose, and purchase, as well as the illusion of limitless choices, packaged specifically for them, according to their uniqueness.



**Figure 19:** Screen capture of author’s Store page on Amazon.ca and personalized recommendations, November 2020

The account holder is promoted into the role of the potential buyer to enjoy personalization, personal recommendation, and just-in-time consumption, in exchange for their personal and transactional information. This correlation between shopping and personalization, as explained by Brent Smith of Amazon and Greg Linden of Microsoft, is “as if you walked into a store and the shelves started rearranging themselves, with you might want moving to the front,

and what you're unlikely to be interested in shuffling further away."<sup>403</sup> In this way, the personalization and personal recommendation mechanisms mimic the attributes of the friendly salesperson, who really knows the customer and remembers what she likes to aid the customer with her search and make good recommendations. Take, for example, one's distinct, personalized experience on Amazon's homepage (Figure 16). It appears to communicate directly to the account holder, who has already submitted to the rules of the game, welcoming her back to the site with a personalized message "Hello, Bahar." The page involves a number of hyperlinks to personalize recommendations of products in Amazon's catalogue that are algorithmically selected for her, based on her past browsing and purchasing behaviours. Each hypertext-enabled item provides the customer with more choices, based on the estimated consumption patterns, that she otherwise might not have considered and more personalized recommendations that work to optimize consumer experience and increase the likelihood of customer's progress to complete purchase (Figure 19). The hyperlinked pages for browsing and viewing product details, shopping carts, e-mail notifications, and many other interactive controlling features work to offer multiple levels of personalized recommendations across multiple channels that is different for each individual consumer.<sup>404</sup> Subsequently, the liberating effect of discovering, browsing, and shopping appear to embody the unlimited access to products and services, combined with the personalized curation of one's uniqueness in databases.

The advantages of personalization, personal recommendation, and just-in-time consumption present opportunities for evoking greater control over consumers and their consumption behaviours through creating a friendly and curational environment that intensifies

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<sup>403</sup> Brent Smith and Greg Linden, "Two Decades of Recommender System at Amazon.com," *IEEE Internet Computing* 21, no. 3 (May-June 2017): 12.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

consumer participation and engagement. The DIY tools, along with their known behaviours, invite consumers to navigate through the interactive space, moving from one page to another, and explore the choices that are algorithmically curated for them, based on their consumption patterns. Products are presented in a much wider range that generate the expectation for a wider price range. The subtlety of the difference between the products and prices that are selected for consumers works to extend the duration of browsing and interaction with products. Consumers are appointed into the mouthpiece for the retailer to rate products and services and share their expertise with other potential customers by submitting reviews in the Customer Reviews section with their public profile username. “Word of mouth,” Bezos believes, “remains the most powerful customer acquisition tool we have.”<sup>405</sup> Accordingly, the individual consumer is given meaning by her openness to serve others while being served in the dynamics of Amazon virtual space. Amazon’s emphasis on personalization, personal recommendation, and just-in-time consumption is key to its concierge-based operation, as these mechanisms work to proliferate consumer interactions and transactions within the techno-mediated space of Amazon. While consumers enjoy the liberating effect of these mechanisms on their shopping experience on a personal level, their very act of browsing becomes the critical source for gathering and recording information about them. In short, consumer information is a form of currency: the individual can enjoy the convenience promised by the features, products, and services on Amazon in exchange for their personal information.

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<sup>405</sup> Amazon, “1997 Letter to Shareholders.”

#### *4.1.8 Automated Forms of Quantification and Datafication of Consumer Browsing in the Qualitative Environment*

The delightful, consensual transactions, for which consumers willingly and actively give up personal and transactional information, means that Amazon continuously works to quantify and datafy every interaction and transaction take place within the techno-mediated space to find consumption patterns for future predictions. Such effects are, in fact, key to Amazon's concierge-based model to essentially calculate and anticipate the changing dynamics of consumer demands. The recorded data on consumers, as explained by Amazon, are formatted and processed "for such purposes as responding to your [customer's] requests, customizing future shopping for you, improving our stores, and communicating with you."<sup>406</sup> At the same time, statistical quantification and datafication of consumers are hardly the computer phenomenon. As I explained in the previous chapter, statistical techniques were largely and methodically used in post-war Eaton's to categorize consumers into groups and anticipate their future behaviours. At the same time, Eaton's relied heavily on survey and interview as two key methods of data collection. The technological advantages, however, have allowed Amazon to promptly and easily extract data on consumption behaviours and preferences in real time and from multiple sources, regardless of consumers' awareness, in order to draw insights from the recorded data.

While consumers actively participate in browsing products from page to page, writing reviews, proceeding to purchase, and updating databases with their personal and transactional information, Amazon uses nonhuman technical operatives, embedded within its spatial structure, as a means to collect and process consumer information, by continually tracking and tracing

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<sup>406</sup> Amazon, "Amazon Privacy Notice."

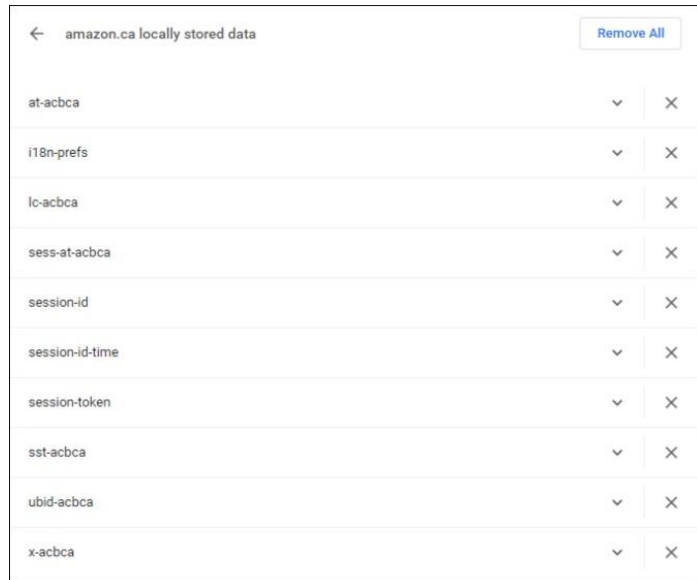
every consumer interaction, beyond consumer awareness. Software tools, such as JavaScript work to collect information in consumer interactions with products and services on Amazon webpage.<sup>407</sup> The recorded consumer data is analyzed and cross-referenced with relevant data gathered from other consumers' interactions, based on similar characteristics, in order to calculate the patterns of consumer engagement with products, services, and content and anticipate consumer behaviour. Software, therefore, creates opportunities to construct knowledge about online consumer activities, measuring how consumers navigate the site and interact with different features and applications associated with that site. It allows Amazon to estimate whether the online display products and services are rightly positioned within the page that work to direct and manage consumer navigation from one point to another. These calculated and calculating techniques work to quantify and datafy every detail associated with consumer interactions with content and the time spent on the webpage. The recording information includes, "page response times, download errors, length of visits to certain pages, page interaction information (such as scrolling, clicks, and mouse-overs), and methods used to browse away from the page."<sup>408</sup> It seems that such techniques of automated quantification and datafication of consumer interactions allow Amazon to detect potential consumers and continuously optimize consumer engagement through the quantification of their online activities.

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<sup>407</sup> "Changes to Amazon.ca Privacy Notice," Help & Customer Service, Amazon, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://www.amazon.ca/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=202056900>.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid

Additionally, Amazon uses small identifiers known as “cookies” (Figure 20), along with other technologies such as “web beacons,” to be stored directly on consumer’s device that can obtain varied types of information from the individual consumer and their devices.<sup>409</sup>



**Figure 20:** Screen capture of Amazon.ca cookies from author’s Chrome Settings, September 2019

When the consumer accesses Amazon’s server from her personal device, by hovering the mouse over or tapping the

hyperlink or Amazon mobile app or simply typing the URL in the browser, the small information is sent from Amazon to the browser to be stored on the device, in order to remember certain information as instructed. At the same time, David Kristol notes that user’s browser automatically visits Web servers on user’s behalf, without the need for human intervention or knowledge, to store cookies used by these Web servers on user’s device. A cookie, as explained by Kristol, “is the piece of information that the server and client pass back and forth. The amount of information is usually small, and its content is at the discretion of the server.”<sup>410</sup> The additional cookies capabilities, therefore, work to create a kind of bilateral communication between devices on the user’s end and Amazon’s server, in a way that they maintain continual interactions and transactions between the two sides, beyond human consciousness. On the one hand, these predefined operatives obtain technical information, including IP address, browser

<sup>409</sup> “Internet-based ads,” Help & Customer Service, Amazon, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=202075050>.

<sup>410</sup> David M. Kristol, “HTTP Cookies: Standards, Privacy, and Politics,” *ACM Transactions on Internet Technology* 1, no. 2 (November 2001): 154.

type and versions, operating system, time zone setting, and login and password information associated with the specific customer and her device. The stored information, in turn, works as a form of reward, allowing individual consumers to stay logged into her Amazon personal account on each visit and gain access to personalized content, personal recommendations, 1-Click service, items stored in Shopping Cart, and many other personalized features and activities (Appendix, Figure 16). Blocking cookies on the user's end means the prohibition of one's access to the rewarding and convenient experience of browsing, promised by these technical operatives and, simultaneously, any type of access to personalized features and activities.<sup>411</sup>

On other hand, cookies-enabled browsing works to constantly monitor, collect, and record information about individual consumption behaviours, preferences, and purchases. This information is then used in conjunction with data that are obtained in a similar manner from other consumers for anticipation of consumption patterns and subsequent determination of probable direction in terms of future offerings. For example, Amazon with the help of cookies gathers information on consumers about their purchase history.<sup>412</sup> The obtained information is then processed and analyzed in conjunction with similar recorded information from other consumers to determine the common patterns in relation to specific products that are ranked as the most purchased items. This information is then relayed to customers within the Amazon's Top Sellers feature and displayed to potential customers to entice them to purchase these products.<sup>413</sup> Additionally, Amazon process the recorded data to match third-party providers, including advertisers, publishers, and social media platform companies, with likely consumers.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> Amazon, "Amazon Privacy Notice."

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

<sup>414</sup> Amazon, "Internet-based ads."

Accordingly, these third party advertisers and publishers become increasingly dependent on functional and analytical space of Amazon (Nieborg and Poell 2018; Srnicek 2017). Customers may also receive cookies from other backend servers on their browser once they visit Amazon's website that, in addition to its internal network of hyperlinks, contains hyperlinks from third-party advertisers. The subsequent information obtained about consumers may then be used by these advertisers to process and measure the effectiveness of their advertising strategies and personalize content items.<sup>415</sup>

Amazon's use of the personalized recommendation mechanism in its operation is highly instrumental to creating a qualitative environment for virtual consumption through the anticipatory prediction of the likely items that the consumer may purchase in real-time generated by probabilistic statistical calculation. The sophisticated item-based collaborative filtering was launched in 1998—that is currently in use—that aimed to facilitate a finer anticipatory model of recommendations to match consumers to likely items in Amazon's catalogue through calculating patterns of purchasing those items associated with other similar consumers. Both traditional mechanisms of user-based collaborative filtering and "cluster model" involved the simple probabilistic assumption of similarity between customers based on their similar purchase patterns to recommend items to them for purchase.<sup>416</sup> On the contrary, the item-based approach represents a reversal of this probabilistic calculation. Whereas the user-based collaborative filtering worked previously to match users to other users with similar interests, in order to select catalogue items to recommend to the target customers, the item-based collaborative filtering algorithms arrive at an item-item axis to estimate probable correlations between each paired

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<sup>415</sup> Amazon, "Internet-based ads."

<sup>416</sup> Greg Linden et al., "Amazon.com Recommendation: Item-to-Item Collaborative Filtering," *IEEE Internet Computing* 7, no. 1 (January-February 2003): 77.

items and the frequency of purchases in order to conceive mappings of similar items for each item from the catalogue. This, in turn, generates “similar items table.” As explained by Smith and Linden, “for every item  $i_1$ , we want every item  $i_2$  that was purchased with usually high frequency by people who bought  $i_1$ .”<sup>417</sup> The similar items table is then processed and examined in conjunction with customer purchase history, such as the information obtained from the shopping carts, to estimate the probable correlations between the likelihood that these items would be of interest to the target consumers. Accordingly, the recommendation algorithms compare individual past purchases, browsing, and other personal information with the item-item similarity mappings to generate personalized recommendations for the given consumers.



**Figure 21:** Author’s description page of Hardt and Negri’s *Empire* and item-to-item recommendation, September 2019

<sup>417</sup> Smith and Linden, “Two Decades of Recommender System at Amazon.com,” 13.

The possibilities of a real-time scalability for generating a qualitative environment within which consumers enjoy personalized recommendations, as explained by Gregory Linden, Jennifer Jacobi, and Eric Benson in the patent application of collaborative filtering, benefit from the fact that “the relatively computation-intensive task of correlating item interests is performed off-line, and the results of this task (item-to-item mappings) stored in a mapping structure for subsequent look-up.”<sup>418</sup> Take, for example, Hard and Negri’s *Empire* that I have recently viewed on Amazon.ca (Figure 21). The book has already been related to other books through similarity matching of their descriptions or content in conjunction with the frequency of purchases obtained from other consumers. Once I click on *Empire*, the recommended books appear immediately in real time on the book’s detail page, as a result of the probabilistic statistical calculation of the item lists from similar items table in correlation with my past purchases, searches, and other personal information. The probabilistic model of recommendations, therefore, works to anticipate consumer behaviour, through creating purchase patterns of similar items and comparing them with individual preferences, past purchases, and browsing history. In this way, consumers appear as both being catered by and to cater others, thus becoming an essential link to the circuit of production and consumption.

In short, whereas Eaton’s attained loyalty by offering appealing purchase prices, flexible payment options, special sales, and attractive shipping fees and using general methods of information solicitation and feedback techniques, the genius of Amazon, empowered by advanced technological capabilities, is to get the demands of consumers to determine the production, distribution, and circulation of products and services to ultimately guarantee their

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<sup>418</sup> Gregory D. Linden, Jennifer A. Jacobi, and Eric A. Benson, “Collaborative recommendations using item-to-item similarity mappings,” U.S. Patent 6,266,649 B1, filed September 18, 1998, and issued July 24, 2001, <https://patents.google.com/patent/US6266649B1/en>.

satisfaction and loyalty. In other words, Amazon is able to change the static relationship between the qualitative approach to consumer experience and the statistical quantification of consumption behaviours. While consumers enjoy the convenient personalized browsing and shopping, Amazon involves automated monitoring, recording, and analyzing data in every interaction taking place to find useful consumption patterns and optimize consumer experience. Building upon Foucault's conceptions of disciplinary rewards and punishments, the "moment of solicitation" Elmer identifies "as a particular form of exchange" that "is characterized by a divulgence of personal information in return for varying degrees of pleasure or the possibility or promise of" some forms of rewarding offerings.<sup>419</sup> Consumers actively participate in contributing their personal and transactional information to databases in exchange for the convenient experience Amazon offered. The recorded information is packaged and assembled with the information obtained from other customers to be processed, measured, estimated, related, and classified to ultimately ensure the automated functioning of the production-consumption circuit. Thus, in line with Foucault's conception of security, Amazon optimally manages and fabricates consumption behaviours through the utilization of statistical calculation of probabilities to estimate consumers' preferences and purchasing patterns and anticipate the possible outcomes of consumer behaviours on the basis of the information it obtains and analyzes from consumers in real time.

The discussion in this modulation, as part of the genealogical inquiry into the intensification of consumer surveillance, has centred on the development of the on-demand and interactive model of retailing, in particular the case of Amazon and the emergence of the virtual form of consumption space. The virtual uprising in consumption marked the key moment, what I

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<sup>419</sup> Elmer, *Profiling Machine*, 77.

call “virtualization of consumption,” in the rationalities and technologies of power that characterized the techno-mediated mode of governing consumers and consumption. Unlike Eaton’s whose information exchange relationship between the qualitative disciplinary processes and quantitative statistical analyses of consumer behaviour was restricted due to the technological disadvantages, the addition of technological complexity to the new concierge-based model created opportunities for the restructuring of the production-consumption relationships through constant and immediate communication and information exchange with consumers across multiple channels, distributed in networks. The changes in the dynamics of retailer-consumer interactions coincided with Amazon’s continual attempt to critically explore varied controlling techniques and mechanisms to involve consumer preferences, desires, and purchases to determine the production and circulation of products and services. As I demonstrated throughout this modulation, space and spatialization were crucial to boosting consumer interactions and transactions for acquiring new knowledge about their consumption patterns in real time. The interface technologies presented the digital simulation of shopping across varied range of personal, digital, virtual, and mobile formats to invite consumers to browse freely through the online catalogue and its diverse product categories and navigate seamlessly from one hyperlinked page to another. Features and activities associated with shopping in physical stores like Eaton’s were refashioned and translated into DIY automated buttons that served for the purposes of self-management and self-surveillance and as a means to enhance consumer affective participation and exchange of their personal and transactional information for products and services.

While Eaton’s spatialization worked according to the spatial partitioning of consumers and their movements so that they could be managed and disciplined, Amazon’s spatial

arrangement resonated with the spatial logic of Foucauldian security. The spatial architecture of Amazon incorporated a series of probable scenarios, and consumers could navigate within these possibilities that had already been premediated, resulting in securing uninterrupted and continuous browsing that was key to the functioning of production-consumption circuit. While consumers enjoyed the liberating and convenient effect of browsing personalized products and services, along with their comparative prices, the very act of browsing, produced via spatialization and spatial techniques, became key to information collection and processing consumer behaviour. Technical operatives embedded within the space, played a critical role in the new automated forms of control and monitoring, as they automatically captured data in consumer interactions that in turn were sorted, analyzed, and cross-referenced with other recorded information from other consumers to anticipate future consumption patterns and optimize consumer experience. The result of automation via the techno-mediated space, along with the collapse of production and consumption, meant further intensification and extension of consumer surveillance. The virtual form of consumption in the face of constant urge to find new sources of information, beyond the existing virtual environment, offer the grid for the understanding of the growing reliance on AI-based consumer surveillance and governance of everyday consumption.

## **4.2 Second Modulation: Emergence of Intelligent Milieu and Personalized Things**

### *4.2.1 Artificial Intelligence and the Disruptive Innovation*

In today's so-called fourth industrial revolution, the exponential development of emerging computers more and more resonates with the classic visionary of a formal model of intelligent computing system that was originally put forward by Alan Turing, who many consider as the father of computer science. Turing's (1950) nuanced contribution, especially in his

stimulating essay, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence,” suggests the possibility of creating a functioning computer system that is capable of simulating intelligence at a human level, and that such a system can automatically learn from its experience. The quest for what is associated now with artificial intelligence (AI)—the field that was first established by John McCarthy at the Dartmouth Summer Research Project in 1956—stems from a long history of *man’s* ambition to create an extension of himself, a machine with full human, as well as supra-human, capacities that are characterized by language, perception, reasoning, and learning (Henderson 2007; Nilsson 2009). AI enables machines to simulate or replicate human expertise in reading, comprehending language, responding, recognizing people and objects, learning, problem solving, and so forth.

Accordingly, the second decade of the twenty-first century has witnessed a handful number of curious experiments in the technology-enabled capabilities and advanced analytics, including artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things (IoT), which in turn have provided the network of opportunities to the reshaping of everyday consumption practices. The second week of February 2011 was of significant importance with IBM computing system named Watson competing against human opponents on the American television quiz show Jeopardy!. Intrigued by the idea of machines beating humans in their games, similar to Alan Turing’s 1950 proposal of the “imitation game,” otherwise known as the “Turing Test,” the challenge for the IBM research team DeepQA was to build an advanced question-answering (QA) computer system that would be equipped with the real-time capabilities of comprehending, processing, reasoning, and responding to human natural language questions and content. Mastering the field of QA on the level of natural language, as pointed out by the IBM research team, “is one of the most challenging in the realm of computer science and artificial intelligence, requiring a synthesis of information retrieval, natural language processing, knowledge representation and reasoning,

machine learning, and computer-human interfaces.”<sup>420</sup> Playing human games like Jeopardy demands the intelligent QA machine, equipped with human-like capabilities, to accurately and logically understand and determine itself the intended meanings of the questions the human is asking through the rule-based parsing, statistical calculation, and classification computation in order to extract the precise, correct answers to the given questions. The IBM team trained Watson with diverse categories of information from multiple reference materials, including encyclopedias, dictionaries, thesauri, newswire articles, and literary works, to derive correct answers to various question classes. Additionally, Watson relied on its immense speed and memory and the network of databases, taxonomies, and ontologies, such as dbPedia, WorldNet, and Yoga, on which it made sense of the complex relationship between information and, consequently, identified, processed, and classified content from the given information.<sup>421</sup>

The Watson system worked through the parsing of questions into their constituent parts in order to identify statistically the “logical forms, semantic role labels, conference, relations, named entities, and so on, as well as specific kinds of analysis for question answering.”<sup>422</sup> The team of language analysis algorithms was integrated into Watson that worked simultaneously to associate the question its human competitor asked with the statistical probability of the best possible correct solution to the given problem. In other words, when higher number of algorithms led to the same answer independently from different directions, it meant a higher confidence score in increasing the likelihood of the found answer to be the correct answer to the

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<sup>420</sup> David Ferruci et al., “Building Watson: An Overview of DeepQA Project,” *AI Magazine* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 60, <https://doi.org/10.1609/aimag.v31i3.2303>.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

raised question.<sup>423</sup> Accordingly, the statistical computation in the QA field came to work with multiple possibilities, rather than one single correct solution, which then involved the ranking mechanisms to determine and recommend the best possible outcome while eliminate other possible options. The Watson project, however, cannot be viewed simply as AI playing human games and reduced neither to an isolated event. It is reminiscent of the continual efforts of the past in building machines capable of mastering the complexities of the human intelligence. One experiment that presented itself in the 1960s was Eliza. It was one of the early chatbots developed in the MIT Artificial Intelligence Laboratory by Joseph Weizenbaum. Eliza ran on the set of rules and instructions of the script with which it was able to simulate conversation with the humans through natural language. The technical accomplishment of Eliza, as explained by Weizenbaum, was its capacity to having convinced the human of its human-like understanding and empathy.<sup>424</sup> Fast-forward to 1997, IBM's chess-playing computer Deep Blue famously claimed victory against the world's champion Garry Kasparov. The advantage of the computing chess-player was its enormous speed in processing and analyzing the vast number of probable chess moves and determining which move would be the best possible outcome.<sup>425</sup>

The continual fascination with the complexities of human intelligent capabilities and translating them into the skills of the machine, combined with the disruptive innovations in cloud computing, IoT, and the emerging network capacity (i.e. the rise of 5G), has provided unprecedented innovation opportunities. It has fueled the recent wave of experiments in the

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<sup>423</sup> Clive Thomson, "What is I.B.M. Watson," *New York Times*, June 16, 2010, accessed October 17, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/20/magazine/20Computer-t.html>.; see also Ferruci et al., "Building Watson: An Overview of DeepQA Project," 74.

<sup>424</sup> Joseph Weizenbaum, *Computer Power and Human Reason: From Judgment to Calculation* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1976), 189.

<sup>425</sup> Trips Reddy, "Why it matters that AI is better than humans at games like Jeopardy," I.B.M., June 27, 2017, accessed on October 17, 2019, <https://www.ibm.com/blogs/watson/2017/06/why-it-matters-that-ai-is-better-than-humans-at-their-own-games>.

areas, from deep analytics to natural language understanding and from visual perception to machine-to-machine communications, in not only AI research labs but can be found in real-life scenarios. Powerful digital platforms, including Amazon, Apple, Google, Facebook, and Microsoft have taken over the lead role to experiment with AI solutions in new products and services, making opportunities for the drastic transformation of existing market. These technologies are becoming increasingly embedded within consumer spaces, from the home environment to the physical stores. At the same time, it is important to have a realistic view of the consequences arise from AI innovations, as these technologies are still in their early stages of development, and that their potential economic and political impacts are yet to come. As explained by Benjamin Cheatham et al. at *McKinsey Quarterly*, “Although the widespread use of AI in business is still in its infancy and questions remain open about the pace of progress, as well as the possibility of achieving the holy grail of ‘general intelligence,’ the potential is enormous.”<sup>426</sup> Additionally, the study conducted by the McKinsey & Company estimates that AI technologies will generate an additional thirteen trillion US dollar value annually by 2030.<sup>427</sup> It is important to note here the new wave of technology-enabled capabilities are rapidly improving, and many of the radical innovations by Amazon, including Amazon Go and Alexa that are discussed in this modulation may be outdated in the very near future. Nonetheless, the impact of these technologies on the human life signals the key changes in the scope and intensity of consumer surveillance.

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<sup>426</sup> Benjamin Cheatham et al., “Confronting the Risk of artificial Intelligence,” *McKinsey Quarterly*, April 2019, accessed on October 17, 2019, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/mckinsey-analytics/our-insights/confronting-the-risks-of-artificial-intelligence>.

<sup>427</sup> Jacques Bughin et al., “Notes from the AI frontier: Modeling the impact of AI on the world economy,” McKinsey & Company, September 2018, accessed October 17, 2019, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/artificial-intelligence/notes-from-the-ai-frontier-modeling-the-impact-of-ai-on-the-world-economy>.

#### *4.2.2 Cashier-less Amazon Go: Intelligent Forms of Monitoring, Recording, and Sense-making of What is Taking Place in Physical Store*

In January 2018, Amazon presented its first brick-and-mortar store called “Amazon Go.” Founded in Seattle, the new AI-enabled store was radically and fundamentally different from its traditional counterparts. Amazon Go was the first automated, physical grocery and convenience store where customers were provided with a more convenient, simpler, much faster, and also more seamless interactions and transactions associated with a shopping trip. It sought to reduce unproductive friction points as much as possible and, particularly, eliminate cashier registers and self-checkout stations. Consistent with his ideal of consumer centricity and on-demand, concierge-based model, Bezos describes his vision for the cashier-less Amazon Go store in his 2018 letter to shareowners in the following remark that essentially highlights the reconfiguration of features and activities associated with shopping in the physical stores:

For many years, we considered how we might serve customers in physical stores, but felt we needed to invent something that would really delight customers in that environment. With Amazon Go, we had a clear vision. Get rid of the worst things about physical retail: checkout lines. No one likes to wait in line. Instead, we imagined a store where you could walk in, pick up what you wanted, and leave.<sup>428</sup>

At the time of writing this dissertation, in addition to Seattle, the number of Amazon Go has reached the additional twenty-five store locations available in only the United States in three cities of San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City. In the promotional video of Amazon Go, the unconventional purchase process is being described as “Just Walk Out” shopping experience, meaning that consumers no longer need to stop at the checkout lines, but rather they can enjoy the convenience of grabbing the items they want and just walking out of the store.<sup>429</sup> Consumers

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<sup>428</sup> “2018 Letter to Shareholders,” Annual reports, proxies and shareholder letters, Amazon, accessed October 30, 2019. [https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc\\_financials/annual/2018-Letter-to-Shareholders.pdf](https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/annual/2018-Letter-to-Shareholders.pdf).

<sup>429</sup> “Amazon Go,” Amazon, accessed October 17, 2019, <https://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=16008589011>.

are required to download the Amazon Go app to their Android or Apple mobile devices and scan its Quick Response (QR) code on electronic turnstile upon each entry to the store, so that they can enjoy the convenient experience Amazon Go offers within the spatial arrangement. In this way, the individual is responsible to first identify herself as a potential consumer—a willing, cooperative partner in her own surveillance—by using her Amazon Go app that is signed into her Amazon personal account, in which her personal information is stored.

The QR code appears to embody a dual function. On the one hand, the QR code that is generated by the Amazon Go app on personal mobile device works as an identity verification tool to open the security automatic swing barrier gate, thus allowing one's access to the internal operation of the Amazon Go store. Deleuze certainly foresaw the power of governing through code in his formulation of the control mechanism in 1992 when he revived Guattari's analysis of an imaginary city in which one's movement and access are permitted or prohibited, owing to the personal "(dividual) electronic card." Subsequently, Deleuze extrapolated that "what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person's position—licit or illicit—and effects a universal modulation"<sup>430</sup> On the other hand and more importantly, thanks to the advances in the IoT capabilities, the QR code works as an initial personal identifier that is sent from the mobile device to Amazon's central "management inventory system" and used, simultaneously, to identify and detect the customer. Once the customer is identified, the management inventory system instantly has access to the complete virtual image of her personal and transactional information. Additionally, the payment information associated with the personal account "may

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<sup>430</sup> Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 7.

be checked to” automatically “confirm that the payment instrument is valid and may be used by the user to pay for any items picked by the user.”<sup>431</sup>

When the customer passes through the barrier gate and becomes a part in the internal operation of Amazon Go, her body, along with its minute features, including movements, gestures, and attributes becomes the object of real-time, analytical monitoring so that they can be quantified, analyzed, and categorized in different perspectives and aspects, which in turn can be used to learn about what the body is doing at that exact time in that exact moment. The techno-mediated architectural arrangement of the store allows the customer to browse freely from aisle to aisle, interact with the items, and transfer any items they want from the store shelves directly into their shopping bag. At the time the items are picked up from the shelves by the customer, the picked items are automatically and instantly identified and added to the customer’s virtual shopping cart without the need for human haptics inputs, such as click, touch, tap, and swipe. If the customer transfers the items back to the shelves, they are automatically and instantly removed from her virtual shopping cart. Once the customer is detected to be exiting the barrier gate, she is charged automatically for the items in her shopping cart without having to wait or otherwise be delayed in cashier lines. Simultaneously, the electronic receipt is sent directly to the customer’s Amazon Go app, indicating the description of the items bought and the price purchase.

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<sup>431</sup> Gianna Lise Puerini, Dilip Kumar, and Steven Kessel, “Transitioning Items from a Materials Handling Facility,” U.S. Patent 10,176,456 B2, filed September 24, 2014, and issued January 8, 2019, <https://patents.google.com/patent/US10176456B2/en?q=Transitioning+Items+Materials+Handling+Facility&oq=Transitioning+Items+from+a+Materials+Handling+Facility>.

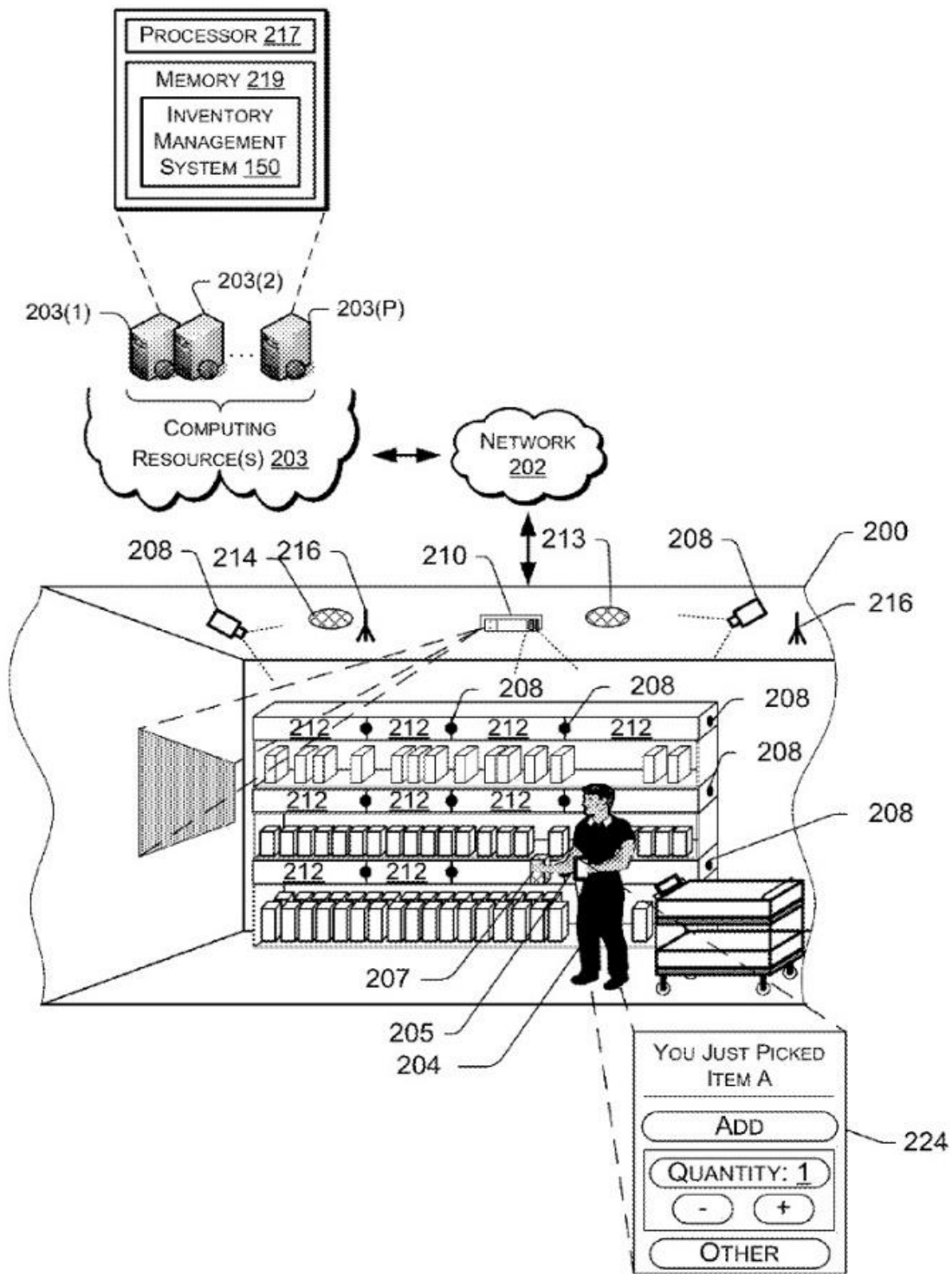


Figure 22: A schematic diagram illustrating a system that tracks and identifies every movement of the customer

While consumers enjoy the speed and convenience of a seamless and frictionless in-store shopping trip with no affirmative input required from them, the complex and sophisticated behind-the-scenes surveillance operations, which provide individual consumers with such simplicity and ease of use, work with a complex AI technology network, or what Amazon calls “Just Walk Out Technology.” The AI system includes computer vision, deep learning algorithms, and sensor fusion that one can essentially find in the complex operations of a self-driving automobile.<sup>432</sup> Put simply, these technological capabilities simplify and organize the shopping process that consumers desire by automating every interaction and transaction associated with the in-store shopping experience. The spatial structure of Amazon Go is equipped with an immense quantity of camera units that are mounted on the ceiling and assigned to capture and record the events on motion from multiple viewing angles in every corner throughout the store.<sup>433</sup> The system of watchful overhead cameras facilitates real-time and constant monitoring, documenting, and categorizing every bodily movement, gesture, and attribute in consumer interactions with the items. According to the patent application filed in early January 2019 by Amazon, the cashier-less store concept uses the network of typical RGB cameras and depth sensing cameras that are equipped with the computer vision techniques, including motion detection and object recognition to make sense of the behavioural patterns of consumers through bodily gestures and movements in consumer interactions with items on the store shelves to anticipate any irregularities and thefts.<sup>434</sup> Simulating human’s natural and biological abilities of seeing and perceiving, these AI-powered capabilities work to learn about what is taking place, by obtaining real-time information from images of the events that the

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<sup>432</sup> Amazon, “Amazon Go.”

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

<sup>434</sup> Puerini et al., “Transitioning Items from a Materials Handling Facility.”

cameras capture, similar to the transition of information from human's eyes to brain. The patent notes that the cameras work to capture images of every activity taking place in the store, from the items stored on the shelves to the customers stepping into the store, picking items from the shelves, placing items back into the shelves, and walking out the store with the picked items.<sup>435</sup> The critical role of the technology in offering intelligent forms of monitoring, recording, and categorizing is echoed in Bezos' remark about the new store concept: "We had to design and build our own proprietary cameras and shelves and invent new computer vision algorithms, including the ability to stitch together imagery from hundreds of cooperating cameras."<sup>436</sup>

To be specific, when the consumer extends her hand to reach the items on the shelf, the cameras document a series of images of the customer's hand just as it is entering the shelf area, followed by a series of images of the targeted hand just as it is leaving the area (Figure 22).<sup>437</sup> The observed image data are then sent to the "computing resource(s)," where the images are processed and analyzed comparatively, in order to determine whether the hand picked the item from the shelf or placed it back into the shelf. According to the Amazon patent, the comparative analysis of the two sets of observed image data considers the skin tone colour of the detected hand and the pixels that best match the identified skin tone to determine the changes between the two images.<sup>438</sup> Additionally, item recognition, simultaneously, is conducted on the captured images to assist identifying and classifying different items in the images in order to determine the likelihood of the detected item corresponding with the item actually picked from the shelf. The inventory management system retrieves relevant information about the customer, such as

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<sup>435</sup> Puerini et al., "Transitioning Items from a Materials Handling Facility."

<sup>436</sup> Amazon, "2018 Letter to Shareholders."

<sup>437</sup> Puerini et al., "Transitioning Items from a Materials Handling Facility."

<sup>438</sup> Ibid.

past purchase, to increase the likelihood of correct identification of the item in relation to the identified customer once the system determines the items as matching that customer's characteristics.<sup>439</sup> In addition to the observed image data, information is gathered from multiple sensors, including pressure sensors, infrared sensors, and volume displacement sensors. For example, the pressure sensors, located in the shelves, work to keep track of the exact weight for each item and, subsequently, the displacement of these items. In this way, echoing the learning capabilities of IBM Watson, by “combining multiple inputs,” as explained by the Amazon patent, “a higher confidence score can be generated increasing the probability that the identified item matches the item actually picked from the inventory location and/or placed at the inventory location.”<sup>440</sup> When the system determines with high confidence that the customer picked the identified item, the inventory management system transfers the item to the virtual shopping cart associated with the identified customer.

In addition to object recognition, the patent suggests the use of biometric software, such as facial recognition to process and map the data extracted from the body about height, weight, face, and other distinct bodily features to identify and verify the identity of the customer.<sup>441</sup> In this way, all bodily characteristics, movements, gestures, and body postures become increasingly quantifiable and identifiable to anticipate the patterns of consumer behaviour inferred through these affective markers, as the customer is freely browsing in the frictionless environment, going seamlessly from aisle to aisle and moving from items to items. In short, the sophisticated and intelligent analytical techniques, combined with the capabilities of machine-to-machine communication, embedded within the physical space of Amazon Go intensify and multiply the

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<sup>439</sup> Puerini et al., “Transitioning Items from a Materials Handling Facility.”

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

forms of data collection and processing, with the power to observe streams of data in every consumer interaction in real time to discern patterns of consumer behaviour through bodily gestures and movements and in turn anticipate anomalies and irregularities in future interactions. Accordingly, where early Amazon's production of knowledge of consumers and consumption was limited to the virtual space and spatialization, the inhabitation of the new technologies in the physical space of Amazon Go makes accessible new unlikely sources from which massive quantities of consumer data can be extracted, that would be otherwise unavailable to Amazon. The integration of smart surveillance technologies into the physical space represents less invasive forms of data collection and processing that no longer depends on consumer active participation, nor is it bounded to the virtual space. This spatialization of data collection and processing resonates with Mark Andrejevic and Mark Burdon's (2015) articulation of the emergence of a new type of society, what they call the "sensor society" that refers to the increasing "passive-cation of interactivity" and passive forms of monitoring, recording, and categorizing consumers, owing to the comprehensive sensing networks. While Andrejevic and Burdon's study primarily focuses on the proliferation of pervasive computing and distributed sensors, their formulation helps to understand the spatiality of the new consumer surveillance technologies that are becoming increasingly embedded within consumer spaces, including the home environment.

#### *4.2.3 Alexa: Heightening AI Intimacy in Domestic Spaces and Datafication of Consuming Voices and Mundane Routines of Everyday Life*

In addition to the physical store, Amazon has extended the applications of the new technologies to the domestic space. In late November 2014, Amazon revealed its first-generation smart speaker called "Echo" that was powered by Amazon's conversation-based virtual assistant

“Alexa,” resided in the AWS cloud. In the 2019 letter to his shareowners, Bezos noted that his vision for the development of Alexa-powered Echo device was originally inspired by the QA computer system from the science fiction television series *Star Trek*.<sup>442</sup> The iconic Original Series (1966-1969) created by Gene Roddenberry, in fact, foresaw the machine that had the intelligent capabilities of comprehending, reasoning, and responding to the human voice inquiries. Staged in the fictional spacecraft USS Enterprise in the twenty-third century, the computer in its basic machine-synchronized voice worked to simulate conversations with the crews to help access information during their five-year mission to explore the galaxy for possible civilizations and “to boldly go where no man has gone before.”<sup>443</sup> Almost forty-five years after the production of the popular series, owing to the strategy of technological push, Bezos ventured into the strange new world (to adopt *Star Trek*), where the non-fictional humans came to experience two-way human-machine conversations at home as a result of the introduction of Amazon Echo, along with its rivals Google Home in 2016 and later Apple’s HomePod in early 2018. With the advent of these virtual assistants, consumers no longer simply just used media devices to communicate but rather became increasingly engaged in conversation with the devices themselves, thus establishing intimacy and affective relationships with these devices. According to the 2018 report released by the research group CIRP, Amazon’s Alexa-enabled only four years into its operation, Echo became the most in demand smart speaker among the American consumers. Echo has continued to play a leading role to the present day, thus maintaining a strong footprint in the smart speaker market and claiming the market share of seventy per cent.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Amazon, “2018 Letter to Shareholders.”

<sup>443</sup> “*Star Trek: The Original Series 1966 - 1969 Opening and Closing Theme*,” YouTube video, 2:06, “TeeVees Greatest,” published April 27, 2016, accessed October 26, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIQsrVW6Ji4>.

<sup>444</sup> John Koetsier, “Amazon Echo, Google Home Installed Base Hits 50 Million; Apple Has 6% Market Share, Report Says,” *Forbes*, August 2, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkoetsier/2018/08/02/amazon-echo-google-home-installed-base-hits-50-million-apple-has-6-market-share-report-says/#1a379673769c>.

Smart speakers have drastically transformed the spatial and architectural dynamics of consumption and consumer surveillance.

Created on the operative premise of engaging in conversations with consumers naturally and seamlessly through human voice and in consumer spaces, Alexa allows consumers “to ask questions and make requests.”<sup>445</sup> In other words, the natural language processing is what makes Alexa unique that is its ability not just to identify user’s voice but to comprehend user’s intent and responds to it accordingly. As demonstrated in the collaborative report between WPP and IBM, conversation bots, such as Apple’s Siri and Microsoft’s Cortana “are more powerful—or ‘smart’,” meaning that “they can understand not just the words a customer uses but also grasp their intent,” thus allowing “the bot to provide far more useful responses, tailored to each user’s needs.”<sup>446</sup> While Alexa offers consumers a frictionless and convenient experience by using human natural language, it involves complex behind-the-scenes operations that constantly anticipate the wakeword. After the wakeword is detected, the audio data associated with user’s speech are converted to text data representative of that specific speech, which is readable by the machine, and sent to the cloud to be processed and analyzed. It uses parsing and tagging of words and sentences as part of natural language processing to interpret the user’s intent of the voice requests.<sup>447</sup> The speech recognition process, combined with the natural language understanding processing technique, is performed instantly, and the appropriate response—with

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<sup>445</sup> “Alexa and Alexa Device FAQ,” Help & Customer Service, Amazon, accessed October 17, 2019, <https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=201602230>.

<sup>446</sup> “Smart Shopping: How Artificial Intelligence is Transforming the Retail Conversation,” 9

<sup>447</sup> Amazon, “Alexa and Alexa Device FAQs.”; also see Dennis Francis Cwik, “Methods and Systems for Detecting Audio Output of Associated Device,” U.S. patent 10,091,545 B1, filed January 27, 2016, and issued October 2, 2018.

different arrangement of words from the past responses to the similar requests—is immediately sent back to the user.

The functioning of Alexa improves over time according to the logic of machine learning. Voice recordings of consumer commands are tagged, classified, annotated, rated against Alexa’s interpretation of the intended inquiries, and fed back into the system to further train Alexa’s voice recognition and language analysis algorithms, in order to enhance and enrich Alexa’s future performance. “Training Alexa with real world requests from a diverse range of customers,” as explained by Amazon, “is necessary for Alexa to respond properly to the variation in our customers' speech patterns, dialects, accents, and vocabulary and the acoustic environments where customers use Alexa.”<sup>448</sup> Such training of Alexa relies on supervised learning process that, as noted by Matt Day et al. in *Bloomberg*, requires human agents who are tasked to listen to the voice recordings of users requests to improve Alexa’s natural language understanding. The *Bloomberg* report, however, is skeptic of this manual training process, through which humans are listening to one’s private conversations, thus raising concerns over the issue of privacy.<sup>449</sup> Nonetheless, Amazon promises that it has “strict technical and operational safeguards” to protect customer’s privacy and prevent any possible abuse of the system.<sup>450</sup> At the same time, the advantages of convenience and ease offered by voice interface technology equally mean that individual consumers often overlook the issue of privacy stoked by such technology and the way their personal data are used by Amazon for its own operations and profits. As explained by Emily West, citing Shoshana Zuboff, the average consumer is indifferent about

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<sup>448</sup> Amazon, “Alexa and Alexa Device FAQs.”

<sup>449</sup> Matt Day, et al., “Amazon Workers Are Listening to What You Tell Alexa,” *Bloomberg*, April 10, 2019, accessed November 1, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-10/is-anyone-listening-to-you-on-alexa-a-global-team-reviews-audio>.

<sup>450</sup> Amazon, “Alexa and Alexa Device FAQs.”

“what tech companies can learn from our data traces, how disparate forms of data can be combined for the purpose of social and economic discrimination, or the extent to which aggregated personal data has economic value for platform companies.”<sup>451</sup>

The conversation-based home service Alexa is equipped with such concierge-based capabilities as setting alarms and timers, creating calendar reminders about upcoming events, playing favourite playlists at six volumes, reporting weather and traffic updates, reading news, streaming favourite podcasts, playing games, making phone calls, sending and playing messages, and tracking recent Amazon orders. In addition to offering organizational skills to plan and manage daily activities, as well as automating and making much of basic repetitive tasks more personalized and tailored to each individual lifestyle, Amazon’s virtual assistant also allows “voice shopping,” by helping consumers to find products and services through natural voice directly from Amazon’s online catalogue.<sup>452</sup> It also gives consumers access to other goods and service providers—varies by countries—in the areas, from food and drink to travel and transportation and from health and fitness to business and finance. Alexa can assist the Amazon Prime account holders through voice interaction to order pizza with their favourite toppings from Pizza Hut, find recipe ideas and food recommendations using Best Recipes skill, or simply order an Uber to enjoy a night out with friends.<sup>453</sup> Take, for example, the Best Recipes skill developed by Hellmann’s and Best Foods. The customer is first required to activate the Best Recipes skill on her Alexa device, by either enabling the skill online in the Alexa app from the Alexa Skills

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<sup>451</sup> West, “Amazon: Surveillance as Service,” 30.

<sup>452</sup> “10 ways Alexa makes life easier,” Prime Insider, Amazon, accessed June 3, 2021, <https://www.amazon.com/primeinsider/top-alexa-tips>.

<sup>453</sup> “Pizza Hut,” Alexa Skills, Amazon, accessed October 19, 2019, <https://www.amazon.com/Pizza-Hut/dp/B01MSXEPMC>; “Best Recipes,” Alexa Skills, Amazon, accessed October 19, 2019, <https://www.amazon.com/Unilever-Best-Recipes/dp/B01MRISWRV>; “Uber,” Alexa Skills, accessed October 19, 2019, <https://www.amazon.ca/Uber-Technologies-Inc/dp/B01AYJQ9QK>.

store or simply asking Alexa to enable the Best Recipes skill. After the skill is activated in Alexa, the customer is able to use the new service and make her request, prefaced by a “wakeword”; for example, “Alexa, tell Best Recipes I am hungry.”<sup>454</sup> Following processing and comprehending the voice command, Alexa transforms from the promotional device for consumer engagement with the brands into a personal cooking assistant, offering personalized recipe suggestions, according to available ingredients, and narrowing the results to breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Moreover, thanks to the advances in IoT, Alexa-enabled Echo offers consumers additional convenience in the home environment, through functioning as a “smart home hub” to activate and control a diverse range of internet-connected everyday household and electronic devices in response to the voice command. These smart home devices include, but not limited to, thermostats, televisions, microwaves, ovens, vacuums, light bulbs, switches, door locks, and security systems. Additionally, Amazon Smart Plug promises transforming almost all household electronics and appliances to smart things, by connecting them to Alexa-powered devices for control through human natural voice or automatically in Amazon’s Alexa app.<sup>455</sup> In this way, the helpful home assistant, through connecting and controlling everyday smart objects, works to automate much of repetitive tasks, daily routines, and partly decision-making, thus streamlining consumer daily habits and practices. As demonstrated by Prem Natarajan, Amazon’s vice president of Alexa AI, the Alexa user can enjoy the convenience of her personalized Alexa-activated afternoon routine that opens the blinds, provides information about the weather and news, turns on the electronic kettle, and streams favourite playlists in response to a customized

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<sup>454</sup> Amazon, “Best Recipes.”

<sup>455</sup> “Amazon Smart Plug,” Amazon, accessed October 19, 2019, [https://www.amazon.com/Amazon-Smart-Plug-works-Alexa/dp/B01MZEEFNX\\_](https://www.amazon.com/Amazon-Smart-Plug-works-Alexa/dp/B01MZEEFNX_)

single phrase, such as “Alexa, good afternoon.”<sup>456</sup> It works to set a pleasant scene for the user when she arrives home from work. Alexa will “do everything except take off your shoes,” says Natarajan.<sup>457</sup> Accordingly, human daily habits are becoming increasingly integrated in and regulated by voice interface technology.

With the growing interest in service offerings via voice, Amazon has reached over 80,000 Alexa skills and extended its voice-driven capabilities into daily lives through further geographical expansion. “Since that first-generation Echo, customers have purchased more than 100 million Alexa-enabled devices,” as explained by Bezos in his 2019 letter to shareowner about the impact of Alexa on consumer behaviours and everyday act of consumption. Bezos continues by saying that “customers spoke to Alexa tens of billions more times in 2018 compared to 2017.”<sup>458</sup> The liberating effects of home automation with Alexa integration present unprecedented opportunities for Amazon to inspire consumers to outsource much of their familiar and repetitive daily activities and habits to Alexa to experience far more convenience, ease, and comfort. Amazon entices consumers into integrating the virtual assistant into their home environment, by continually adding more skills and better and more improved capabilities to Alexa that are often framed in making home “simpler, smarter, and safer.”<sup>459</sup> Given that consumer information is crucial to Amazon’s on-demand, concierge-based model, the addition of conversation-based home service Alexa, which can capture and understand what the consumer is

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<sup>456</sup> Matt McFarland, “I spent 53 minutes in Amazon Go and saw the future of retail,” CNN Business, October 3, 2018, video, 4:27, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/03/tech/amazon-go/index.html>.

<sup>457</sup> McFarland, “I spent 53 minutes in Amazon Go and saw the future of retail.”

<sup>458</sup> Amazon, “2018 Letter to Shareholders.”; see also “Supported Alexa Features by Country for ‘International Version’ Echo Devices,” Help & Customer Service, Amazon, accessed August 19, 2019, <https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=202207000>.

<sup>459</sup> “New ways Alexa makes life simpler and more convenient,” About Amazon, Amazon, September 25, 2019, accessed on October 30, 2019, <https://blog.aboutamazon.com/devices/new-ways-alexa-makes-life-simpler-and-more-convenient>.

saying, presents Amazon with access to unlimited consuming voices in domestic spaces, as a means to generate unexpected and comprehensive insights into consumer behaviour. These virtual assistants are normalized forms of consumer surveillance, as explained by West, that are “‘always on’ listening devices,” as part of Amazon brand strategies to extend the scope and intensity of its consumer reach and, therefore, its data collection and tracking processes to consumer spaces, particularly the home environments.<sup>460</sup> Given that Alexa is an auditory technology, rather than a visual device, this in fact shows the reconfiguration of the role of everyday spaces and architectural structures in monitoring and documenting consumers and consumption, as a fundamental means to produce knowledge through capturing and making sense of ambient voices.

Resonating with Andrejevic and Burdon’s conception of passive-cation of interactivity, the domestication of surveillance technologies captures not just voice data generated in its interactions with the consumers but the streams of personal and private details about consumers, regardless of their active participation. As I explained in the previous modulation, the early Amazon primarily capitalized on consumer active browsing through its online catalogue, meaning that products and services offered by Amazon were contingent on reinforcing forms of active participations of consumers. The inhabitation of virtual assistants in consumer spaces, however, enables Amazon to collect diverse range of seemingly irrelevant information pertaining to mundane routines of everyday life, regardless of consumer participations: what time the individual wakes up, proceeds to work, eats, exercises, finishes work, returns home, sleeps; and also her food and drink preferences, tastes, favourite music, movies, podcasts, restaurants, reading habits, eating habits, likes and dislikes, favourite temperature, travel destinations,

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<sup>460</sup> West, “Amazon: Surveillance as a Service,”29.

banking, home appliances, daily chores, workout routines, daily routines; whether she drinks coffee in the morning, how often she eats fast food, whether she leaves the lights on when she is away, who she meets, how she commutes, which routes she takes, how she spends her spare time, how often she vacuums or uses the microwave, and so forth. Given the capabilities of AI technologies and machine learning techniques in making sense of large volumes of data, the addition of new categories of information to existing databases presents opportunities for generating unexpected “patterns of correlation,”<sup>461</sup> from which new forms of knowledge about consumer behaviour are produced, that might otherwise remain unavailable to Amazon. Such capabilities of the new technologies suggest the shift from “systematic” to “opportunistic” forms of monitoring, documenting, and categorizing consumers (Andrejevic and Burdon 2015), whereby streams of unconscious and affective markers from daily routines, habits, and mundane activities that constitute the fabric of daily lives become the new component parts in the production-consumption circuit.

Alexa demonstrates the traits of passive forms of monitoring and gaining of unexpected knowledge, as the AI voice assistant has the capabilities to communicate with the user on the level of human natural language within human natural environment. The growing interests in AI voice applications in consumer spaces must be understood as part of Amazon’s continuous efforts to enhance positive affective relations with consumers, in order to capture and extract more data from them. Consistent with Grusin’s formulation of affective feedback loop, the increasing flexibility and naturalness in interactions with Alexa-enabled devices through human natural language involves the affective relationship the consumer establishes with Alexa, by

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<sup>461</sup> Mark Andrejevic and Mark Burdon, “Defining the Sensor Society,” *Television & New Media* 16, no. 1 (2015): 21-23.

maintaining a loop through which she engages seamlessly in conversation with the intelligent machine. In fact, the affective and effortless aspects of human language contribute to the passivication of interactivity, as consumer interactions with the AI auditory technology in domestic spaces increasingly become more banal and mundane, in contrast to browsing in virtual space. In a recent wave of recognizing the growing popularity of AI voice assistants, intruding steadily into millions of homes, some feminist scholars have alluded such devices as Alexa to reproduce and reorient the idealization of gender roles and the gendered and racialized biases associated with the domestic work, such as the figure of housewife/mother and housekeeping (Schiller & McMahon 2019; Strengers & Nicolls 2018; Woods 2018) and the figure of the good, obedient domestic servant (Phan 2019). Marxist feminist scholar Kylie Jarrett, who coined the term “digital housewife,” highlights the conjunction between the consumer labour and the unpaid domestic labour, which was traditionally designated as women’s work, in the immaterial production for the social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.<sup>462</sup> While I revived, along with Lazzarato, Hardt and Negri’s immaterial production to underline the shift in the restructuring of the productive processes toward service-oriented practices in the previous modulation, I have been deliberately hesitating to use the term labour to describe consumer and consumption. Moving beyond the Marxist theories of consumer labour and valorizing and alienating effects of home automation and, instead, turning to affect, I have sought to highlight the double logic of milieu: the consolidation between the convenient and frictionless consumer experience in different forms of spatial arrangement, on the one side, and particular forms of monitoring and generating knowledge about consumers and consumption, on the other side. I have argued and continue to argue that Amazon capitalizes on the affective relations with

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<sup>462</sup> Kylie Jarrett, *Feminism, Labour and Digital Media: The Digital Housewife* (New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2016), 1-2.

consumers to spatially extend its access to more consumer data from newer and unexpected sources that have not been previously accounted for in order to generate new forms of knowledge about consumers.

Along with the instantaneous communicative and communicable dynamics of human-machine voice interaction in real time, Alexa establishes intimate relationship with the user, as pointed out by West, “due to the affective nature of the human voice and the real-time experience of personalization in domestic space.”<sup>463</sup> The language the human learns and uses to communicate, mostly generated orally through speaking,<sup>464</sup> is now comprehended, reasoned, and spoken by the machine to engage in a direct and intimate type of conversation with the consumer. Accordingly, one can extrapolate that the communication between the human and machine, through using simply human natural voice, deepens the affective relationship with voice interface technology, far beyond the features and practices associated with the virtual form of consumption space. The attractive naturalizing effects of voice interaction with Alexa contributes to the successful normalization of surveillance in domestic spaces, as it appears to be opportunistic by continually capturing and extracting most personal and private information on consumers from new sources, regardless of their active participations. Having access to the most intimate and private information on consumers, the AI voice technology, combined with machine learning and advanced analytics, can construct more comprehensive forms of knowledge of consumers and anticipate their behavioural patterns. Given that AI is capable of gaining more complete portrait of consumers, similar to people who know the individual consumer well (e.g.

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<sup>463</sup> West, “Amazon: Surveillance as Service,” 31.

<sup>464</sup> Charles Stangor and Jennifer Walinga, “10.3 Communicating with Others: The Development and Use of Language,” BCcampus Open Textbooks, accessed October 30, 2019, <https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontopsychology/chapter/9-3-communicating-with-others-the-development-and-use-of-language>.

friends, intimate partners, and parents), the goal of Alexa appears to be the projection of the personality judgement of the consumers than consumers' perception of the self.

If we look to social psychology, key to the accuracy of personality judgement is to tap into different data sources to obtain as much useful information as possible (Funder 2012; Letzring 2008; Letzring & Human 2014; Vazire 2010). The individual assesses and makes judgement about people's personality traits, some more visible than the others, which are "patterns of thought, emotion, and behaviour that are relatively consistent over time and across situation."<sup>465</sup> The "Big Five" personality traits include extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness, and ego-resiliency.<sup>466</sup> Some aspects of one's personality are often invisible to the self but observed by others. Simine Vazire and Erika Carlson refer to these hidden sides of personalities as "blind spots," which are omitted from one's judgment of the self. The authors argue that a good judgement of personality characteristics requires a complete picture of how humans see themselves and are viewed by others who are closest to them.<sup>467</sup> One can extend the accuracy of personality judgement made by humans into the accuracy of personality judgment made about humans by computer-based models based on their digital participations on social networking sites, in particular Facebook. According to the study conducted by Wu Youyou, Michal Kosinski, and David Stillwell, with the advances in machine learning, computer systems can achieve high level of accuracy in personality judgement, surpassing largely their human counterparts. The overarching result of the study, as pointed out

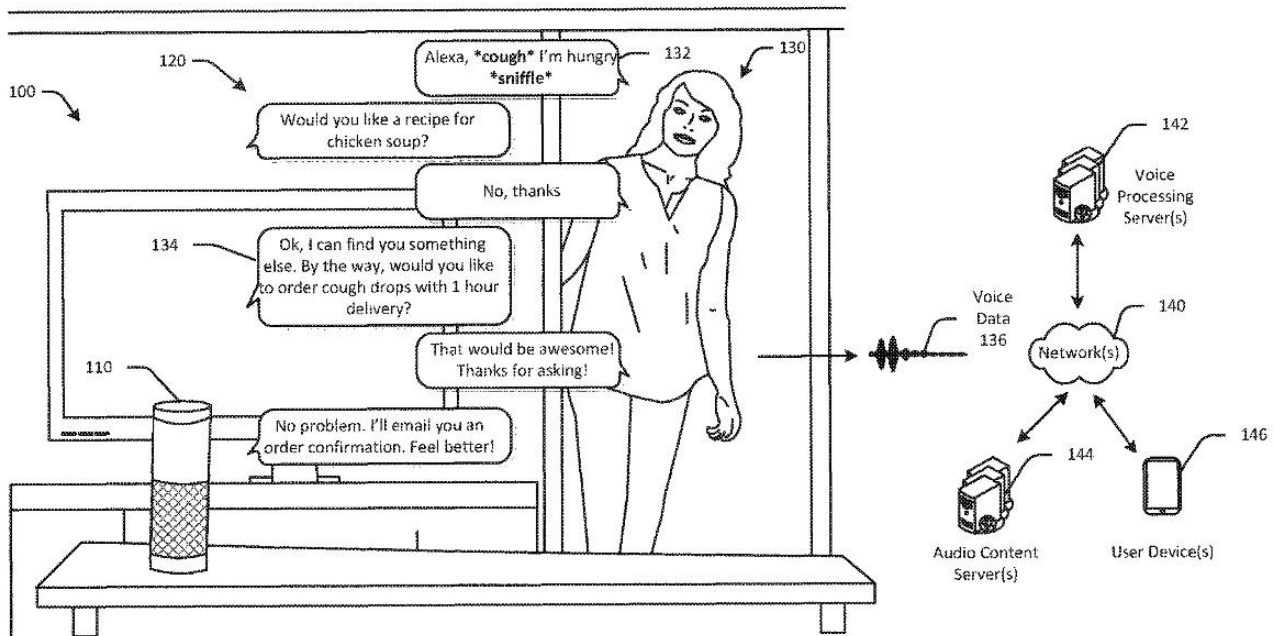
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<sup>465</sup> David C. Funder, "Accurate Personality Judgement," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 21, no. 3 (2012): 177.

<sup>466</sup> Tera D. Letzring and Lauren J. Human, "An Examination of Information Quality as Moderator of Accurate Personality Judgement," *Journal of Personality* 82, no. 5 (October 2014), 448.

<sup>467</sup> Simine Vazire and Erika N. Carlson, "Others Sometimes Know Us Better Than We Know Ourselves," *Current directions in psychological science: a journal of the American Psychological Society* 20, no. 2 (April 15, 2011): 106-107.

by the researchers, is that computer-based models are by far better judges of user’s personality characteristics than those who know her well, such as family members, friends, spouse, and colleagues, so much so that with the computer-based models, “people’s personalities can be predicted automatically and without involving human social-cognitive skills.”<sup>468</sup> Consistent with the findings of Youyou and her team, one can extrapolate that Amazon’s spatial extension of its access to data into domestic spaces presents opportunities for capturing and documenting affective details in ambient voices and mundane routines of everyday life, which in turn works to ensure the generation of a more complete profile of the consumers and anticipate future behaviours.



**Figure 23:** A diagram illustrating voice-based determination of users’ real-time physical and emotional needs

<sup>468</sup> Wu Youyou, Michal Kosinski, and David Stillwell, “Computer-Based Personality Judgments Are More Accurate Than Those Made by Humans,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS* 112, no. 4 (January 27, 2015): 1036.

Given that AI is still in its infancy, the question then becomes, what lies ahead for the future Amazon AI-enabled home services, continuing with the case of Alexa. In his interview with CNN, Natarajan of Alexa AI at Amazon maps the road ahead in the following remark:

Achieving what Alexa is right now is a super hard challenge. Going from that to the future, I would like Alexa to respond to your mood, your sentiment, your feelings, as expressed in your speech. The one key advantage we have is we now have so much more data. So, is it a big challenge? Yes. Are we up to that challenge? Heck, yes!<sup>469</sup>

Whereas Bezos' original vision for Alexa was inspired by the QA computer system from the television series *Star Trek*, the future Alexa concept appears to resonate with the intelligent humanoid machine in the 2014 film *Ex Machina*, capable of detecting consumers' feelings, responding appropriately, and convincing consumers of its human-like feeling and empathy. The patent application filed by Amazon in October 2018 reveals the idea of machine simulating emotional intelligent capability to detect the physical and emotional state of the user.<sup>470</sup>

According to the patent, conversational AI devices like Amazon Echo would monitor and predict user's physical and emotional characteristics from processing the audio input of the user, analyzing its pitch, pulse, voicing, jittering, and harmonicity. The appropriate response would be then sent back to the user based on the determination of specific physical or emotional condition, combined with the associated profile about user's age, demographic, past browsing, and so forth. Take, for example, the concept of Alexa detecting a specific abnormality in user's audio input, such as cough or snuffle after the wakeword (Figure 23).<sup>471</sup> The patent describes future Alexa as

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<sup>469</sup> CNN Business, "I spent 53 minutes in Amazon Go and saw the future of retail," video 4:27, October 3, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/03/tech/amazon-go/index.html>.

<sup>470</sup> Huafeng Jin and Shuo Wang, "Voice-based determination of physical and emotional characteristics of users," U.S. patent 10,096,319B1, filed March 19, 2017, and issued October 9, 2018, <https://patents.google.com/patent/US10096319B1/en?q=Voice-Based+Determination+of+Physical+and+Emotional+Characteristics+of+Users&oq=Voice-Based+Determination+of+Physical+and+Emotional+Characteristics+of+Users>.

<sup>471</sup> Jin and Wang, "Voice-Based Determination of Physical and Emotional Characteristics of Users."

to be able to determine the likelihood of the detected abnormality, associated with sore throats, and therefore, automatically recommend recipe for chicken soup or placing an order for cough drops. The patent notes that Alexa will detect emotional states, such as “happiness, joy, anger, sorrow, sadness, fear, disgust, boredom, [and] stress.”<sup>472</sup> In this way, the patent alludes to novel ways of matching customers with products and advertisers, as well as recommending and ordering items that will move beyond the existing recommendation features in online shopping experience. The example demonstrates that AI-enabled devices will play a critical role in enhancing consumer engagements with brands. At the same time, such unprecedented innovation opportunities in home services and personalized recommendations raise alarming form of automated and machine-generated profiling and discriminatory practices that are based on stereotypical assumptions about race, class, gender, and so forth. As demonstrated in the Amazon patent, for example, “a fine dining restaurant advertiser may be excluded from presenting an audio advertisement to a user that is interested in fast food.”<sup>473</sup>

Conversely, whereas the existing Alexa operation relies on detecting the wakeword to process the subsequent audio input of the user, the patent application filed by Amazon in May 2019 hints at the reversal of this word arrangement. The patent reveals Amazon’s eager experiment in improving and enhancing speech processing capabilities of Alexa-enabled devices like Echo, matching it up with the flexibility of humans’ use of syntax. As described in the patent, “user may not always structure a spoken command in the form of a wakeword followed by a command... While such phrasing may be natural for a user, current speech processing

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<sup>472</sup> Jin and Wang, “Voice-based determination of physical and emotional characteristics of users.”

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

system are not configured to handle commands that are not preceded by a wakeword.”<sup>474</sup>

Accordingly, the advanced voice processing system will be able to capture user’s audio input prior to the detection of the wakeword. On the one hand, the proposed voice processing technique raises the privacy concerns that Alexa would be able to constantly listen to one’s private conversation without being awakened. On the other hand, and more importantly, the developments in AI voice technology must be viewed as part of Amazon’s ongoing efforts in capturing and collecting more data on consumers from new sources, by removing all barriers and lessening frictions to gain unlimited access to every detail pertaining to everyday life. The inhabitation of Alexa in domestic spaces, therefore, is the collapse of the virtual-physical distinction that asserts the significance of the new spatial organization in making sense of consumer behaviour through capturing and extracting affective markers from consumers about most mundane and banal aspects of everyday life. Manuel Castells’ (2016) concepts of “space of places” and “space of flows,” concerning urban structure, are useful here to further explore the hybridization between the virtual and physical spaces. Castells defines the space of places as the physical environments where people inhabit while the space of flows refers to computerized system that allow networked interactions.<sup>475</sup> In Castells’ view, urban environments are structured by the interplay between these two opposing logics. The AI integration into everyday spaces, however, collapses this model, as it blurs the distinction between the virtual and physical spaces, resulting in the hybridization of these spaces. The AI addition to the economy of consumption marks the key moment, what I call “AI inhabitation in consumer spaces,” pertaining to the dominant rationalities and technologies of power that characterize the shift to normalized and

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<sup>474</sup> Kurt Wesley Piersol and Gabriel Beddingfield, “Pre-wakeword speech processing,” U.S. patent 10,192,546 B1, filed March 30, 2015, and issued January 29, 2019, <https://patents.google.com/patent/US10192546B1/en>.

<sup>475</sup> Manuel Castells, “Space of Flows, Space of Places: Materials for a Theory of Urbanism in the information age,” *The City Reader* 6th edition, ed. Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (London: Routledge, 2016), 233-34.

opportunistic forms of datafication and quantification of consumers and consumption. This allows for further intensification and extension of consumer surveillance.

To summarize, this chapter extended the genealogical examination of the intensification of consumer surveillance on the surveillance-space-consumption axis through the Foucauldian lens into Amazon in key stages of retail development. The formation of Amazon coincided with a series of eager internet-based experiments in creating on-demand and concierge-style consumer service by involving radical transformations in the consumer-retailer interactions. It signalled the key moment, what I called virtualization of consumption, in the rationalities and technologies of power that characterized particular mode of governance at-a-distance of consumers and consumption that relied on capturing and recording consumer information in real time and gaining knowledge of consumption patterns accordingly. Amazon systematically and methodically worked to produce interactive forms of consumption space that promoted and reified consumers' active participations through immediate communications and information exchange with consumers via multiple channels and varied techniques of personalization, recommendation, and just-in-time consumption, owing to the advances in networked information and communication technologies. The spatial architecture and arrangement of Amazon worked according to the probabilistic logic to attain certainty of uninterrupted and continuous consumer browsing while the very act of browsing was subjected to systematic and automated forms of quantification and datafication to anticipate patterns of consumer behaviour. The constant flow of consumer information worked to secure the continuous functioning of the production-consumption circuit that was key to Amazon's key principle of consumer centricity and on-demand, concierge-based operations.

Amazon's forms of monitoring, documenting, and knowledge production of consumers and consumption have been further intensified as a result of the integration of AI technologies into everyday physical spaces that marks the key moment, what I called AI inhabitation in consumer spaces, pertaining to the new mode of consumer governance at-a-distance. As I explained in the second modulation, artificial intelligence introduces an additional technological complexity to machines having human-like intelligent capabilities, combined with advanced analytics, and progressively improving their performance through learning processes. Where early Amazon primarily focused on constructing virtual spaces that mediated increased participations of consumers for the generation of knowledge, the AI addition presents new opportunities as these technologies are embedded within the familiar structures of existing consumer spaces, from the physical stores to the home environment, and increasingly recedes into the background of mundane practices and activities of everyday life. The mundaneness and familiarity of AI-activated spaces, combined with the capabilities of these technologies, demonstrate the traits of passivation of interactivity, as these new spatial arrangements eliminate all frictions and make available streams of consumer information from unexpected sources to discern. Consumer AI applications offer comprehensive sense-making capabilities to find behavioural patterns of consumers and anticipate irregularities through affective and unconscious markers, including bodily gestures, movements, postures, and distinct attributes, as in the case of Amazon Go. As I explained in the second modulation, the addition of AI virtual assistant Alexa has further extended the scope and range of consumer surveillance into the home environment. The affective nature of language processing that is used in the interactions with Alexa heightens intimate relationships with consumers and can in turn consolidate the normalizing potential of consumer surveillance in domestic spaces. Alexa opens up avenues for

collecting large quantities of personal details on consumers from ambient voices and mundane routines and activities to detect lifestyle patterns of consumers and construct more complete profiles of them. AI inhabitation in consumer spaces, therefore, indicates the intensification of consumer surveillance and the shift towards the emergence of opportunistic and normalized forms of monitoring, documenting, and categorizing consumers and consumption.

Reacting to the intensification of consumer surveillance over time, my examination of the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption through Foucauldian lens mapped the historical transformation in the scope and intensity of consumer surveillance along multiple temporalities and across differing forms of space and spatiality. My study identified five key moments that marked the intensification of consumer surveillance over time. As I explained in the previous chapter, where the formation of the first regulatory public market signalled the marketization of space, and pre-war Eaton's marked the standardization of consuming bodies, the post-war Eaton's demonstrated the statistification of consumers. As I demonstrated in this chapter, the creation of Amazon revealed the key moment of virtualization of consumption, as Amazon created a virtual space to secure continuous browsing through its catalogue while the act of browsing worked as a valuable source of consumer information that was brought under systematic and methodical forms of monitoring and generating knowledge about consumers and consumption in real time. The AI adoption in consumer experience indicates the key moment of AI inhabitation in consumer spaces that marks the shift from systematic and methodical consumer surveillance to normalized and opportunistic forms of monitoring, recording, and categorizing consumers and consumption. As I explained in the second modulation of this chapter, the new modality of consumer surveillance is increasingly embedded within the structure of everyday spaces and mundane activities of everyday life. This allows Amazon to

capture and extract large quantities of data from unexpected sources that have not previously accounted for. The new AI-activated spatial arrangement indicates the collapse of the online-offline distinction, as it demonstrates the traits of the two worlds—the one of the brick-and-mortar that holds it together, projecting familiarity and mundaneness, and the online operation that works with real-time monitoring and sense-making of personal information to construct more comprehensive forms of knowledge about consumers and consumption.

## CONCLUSION

The point of departure in this dissertation was the intensification of consumer surveillance over time across differing forms of space and spatial arrangement and, therefore, seeking a critical and nuanced understanding of this phenomenon in the light of history. Contemporary conceptualizations and theoretical developments of datafied form of surveillance focus primarily on the current technological innovations with little consideration of the historical conditions upon which changes in the scope and intensity of the modalities of consumer surveillance came to being. The intensification question is often reduced to the computer phenomenon. Accordingly, I employed Foucauldian genealogical methodology as a system of inquiry to investigate the past modalities of consumer surveillance and the historical transformation in the rationalities and technologies of power to reveal the changing dynamics of forms of monitoring and gaining of knowledge about consumers and consumption along multiple temporalities, by utilizing archival records. Conversely, contemporary surveillance studies generally respond to the question of the intensification of surveillance by focusing on the surveillance-space axis or surveillance-consumption axis, and many of these studies look at the role of space and spatiality in surveillance practices through the prism of Foucauldian disciplinary panopticon. As a result, the investigation of the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption remains largely underdeveloped and Foucault's inspiring account of the spatial dimensions of the exercise of power has not been fully appreciated. Accordingly, my dissertation built upon Foucault's theories of power and governmentality and his thinking around the differing forms of space and spatiality to examine the intersection of surveillance-space-consumption to understand the intensification of consumer surveillance over time.

My genealogical examination of the intensification of consumer surveillance on the surveillance-space-consumption axis through the Foucauldian lens looked specifically at three consumption spaces in key stages of retail development: the first regulatory public market during the pre-industrial period, Eaton's department store in the industrial economy, and Amazon that coincided with the rise of information economy. My genealogical undertaking traced the discontinuities and recurrences of consumption practices, spatial structures and arrangements, and procedures pertaining to dominant rationalities and technologies of power that characterized particular modes of governing consumers and consumption that were distinctive to these three spaces. Accordingly, these three spaces provided for unique qualitative frameworks to help reveal the historical conditions upon which the intensification of consumer surveillance over time were made possible. My genealogical examination of these three spaces identified five key moments pertaining to differing modalities of consumer surveillance: marketization of space, standardization of consuming bodies, statistification of consumers, virtualization of consumption, and AI inhabitation in consumer spaces.

My genealogical project demonstrated that the creation of the first regulatory public market in the newly formed Town of York during the pre-industrial period marked the key moment of marketization of space that related to the emergence of basic techniques of regulation and management of consumption. As I showed in my study, the economic and commercial functioning of the town and surrounding countryside relied heavily on the spatial and architectural arrangement of the public market that functioned within the well-planned urban grid structure that allowed spatial distribution of goods and merchandise within the town and to the countryside. My genealogical project revealed that the market functioned within the binary system of code that defined precisely which conducts were permitted and others that were

prohibited and a set of punishments for people who broke it. These controlling techniques worked to secure the centralized authority of the market over the circulation of goods and merchandise within the territory. My findings also revealed that there were no institutionalized efforts in evoking control over consuming bodies until the emergence of the department stores. My genealogical project showed that the arrival of modern department stores like Eaton's fostered new techniques of governance of consumers and consumption that involved meticulous and routinized practices of observation, inspection, and correction. This was the indication of further intensification and extension of the scope and range of consumer surveillance.

My genealogical undertaking demonstrated that the development of Eaton's and the emergence of a whole new procedural and institutional practices to exercise control over consumer behaviour and consumption marked the key moment of standardization of consuming bodies. My findings revealed that Eaton's capitalized on the techniques of disciplinary normalization to get consumers to conform to the predefined images of novelty that were crafted meticulously by the retailer in the diverse ready-made products through which consumers could express their new identity and lifestyle. Eaton's involved a set of qualitative changes in consumer experience through the standardization and routinization of price regulation, commodity exchange, and payment while consumers enjoyed the illusion of freedom and choice, in order to maintain control and influence over consumer behaviour. My findings proved the claim about the significance of space to the exercise of power, as the spatial and architectural arrangement of Eaton's played an active role in constant monitoring and correcting moving bodies in relation to products to extend their interactions and secure purchases accordingly. The addition of mail-order catalogue system expanded the spatial strategies of control over consuming bodies beyond the boundaries of Eaton's architectural site. As I demonstrated in my

study, Eaton's was far from a structural and functional coherent arrangement. The period following the end of the Second World War presented the growing emphasis on the complexities and unpredictable dynamics of consumer behaviour and the subsequent turn to the statistical instruments, as a means of exercising control over consumers and consumption. As I demonstrated in my analysis of the post-war Eaton's, the new statistical mode marked the key moment of statistification of consumers that extended the scope and intensity of consumer surveillance, as a result of the shift towards systematic and methodical forms of monitoring, documenting, and categorizing consumers and their consumption behaviours through statistical quantification and datafication. These statistical techniques, in turn, offered new forms of knowledge about consumer behaviour by capturing and processing personal and transactional information about consumers to categorize them into identifiable groups and assign them spaces, in order to anticipate their future consumption patterns. The advances in the information and communication technologies and the subsequent transformations in the retailer-consumer interactions presented opportunities for the intensification of consumer surveillance.

My genealogical project identified the creation of on-demand, concierge-style retailing in the case of Amazon and the emergence of virtual forms of spatial arrangement as the key moment, what I called virtualization of consumption, that characterized techno-mediated governance at-a-distance of consumers and consumption. Unlike Eaton's restricted consumer information exchange due to the technological limitations, my findings demonstrated that Amazon capitalized on both qualitative and quantitative processes to involve consumers' preferences, desires, and past purchases in the production-consumption circuit, through constant and immediate communications with consumers across multiple channels. As I showed in my study, Amazon constructed virtual space that worked according to the probabilistic logic to

ensure continuous and uninterrupted consumers' active participations through virtual browsing its catalogue that had previously featured in the architectural structure of Eaton's. While consumers enjoyed browsing products and services that were algorithmically curated for them based on their uniqueness, the virtual browsing was automatically captured and datafied on the systematic level and in real time that worked as a means of automatically generating knowledge about consumers and finding predictive patterns of their behaviours. My genealogical project demonstrated that the AI uprising in consumption practices marked the key moment of AI inhabitation in consumer spaces that characterized new mode of governance at-a-distance of consumers and consumption. Amazon's AI adoption presented the shift from systematic and methodical towards opportunistic and normalized forms of monitoring and documenting consumers and consumption. My findings showed that the new technological advantages allowed Amazon to extend spatialized observation and recording of consumers beyond the virtual space and into the existing consumer spaces, from the physical stores to the home environment. This indicated that the banality and familiarity of the new AI-activated spatial arrangements, coupled with AI human-like capabilities, removed all barriers and presented whole new categories of consumer information, captured from unexpected sources that had previously been unattainable to be added to existing databases. My genealogical undertaking drew attention to the sense-making abilities of AI to find new behavioural patterns through affective markers, including bodily gestures, movements, postures, physical attributes, and even the sound of human voice. Such capabilities, as I demonstrated in my study, allowed Amazon to construct more comprehensive knowledge of consumers and even anticipate consumers' emotional state and physical wellbeing. Indeed, AI inhabitation in consumers spaces provided for the further extension and intensification of the modalities of consumer surveillance.

In closing, my archival examination of the intensification of consumer surveillance on the surveillance-space-consumption axis across three consumption spaces of the first public market, Eaton's department store, and Amazon identified five key moments pertaining to differing modalities of consumer surveillance. These key moments were: marketization of space, standardization of consuming bodies, statistification of consumers, virtualization of consumption, and AI inhabitation in consumer spaces. Indeed, as I demonstrated in my study, these key moments were the indications of the intensification and extension of consumer surveillance over time. My genealogical project revealed that spatialization and spatiality were a recurring issue in differing modalities of consumer surveillance in these key moments. Yet, the spatial techniques of consumer governance were changed and became more complex over time, as they were centralized, internalized, distributed, virtualized, and domesticated to continuously extend and intensify the scope and range of monitoring, documenting, and gaining of new knowledge about consumers and consumption. Indeed, this continual spatial expansion of consumer surveillance was part of long-standing efforts to manage and secure the unpredictable dynamics of consumer behaviour, by making all aspects of consumers' life identifiable, quantifiable, actionable, and even foreseeable. As I demonstrated in my genealogical project, where the moment of marketization of space introduced the centralized regulation of consumption and formatting space through market, the shift to the moment of standardization of consuming bodies evoked control over bodies through internalization of regulations and expectations. The moment of statistification of consumers marked spatial distribution of consumers through statistical quantification and datafication whereas the shift to the moment of virtualization of consumption refashioned and extended browsing into the networked virtual space for automated quantification and datafication of consumer behaviour in real time to attain

control over consumers and consumption. The moment of AI inhabitation in consumer spaces presented the normalization and domestication of consumer surveillance in everyday spaces, as the distinction between the virtual and physical spaces became increasingly blurred.

My genealogical project demonstrated that in the new AI-activated spatial arrangements, the frictions were lessened, all the barriers were removed, convenience was heightened, and all behaviours and their intensity were captured and processed for the production-consumption circuit. The integration of AI with its human-like capabilities into the familiarity and mundaneness of everyday spaces and daily activities made available streams of new personal and private details in these existing spaces to the retailers and brands to construct more complete profiles of consumers and anticipate their future behaviours. Indeed, AI inhabitation in consumer spaces meant the certainty of continuous monitoring and control over consumers, far beyond the architectural structure of Eatons and the virtual space of Amazon could have ever achieved. AI inhabitation in consumer spaces, in short, presented opportunities for the proliferation of data access points, extension of pre-existing relationships, amplification of new knowledge, and ultimately intensification of value extraction that would have been otherwise unavailable to retailers and brands. The moment of AI inhabitation in consumer spaces fostered further extension of the scope and intensity of consumer surveillance.

Finally, the driving force between the three spaces of the first regulatory public market, Eaton's department store, and Amazon is the quest for incorporating a better and more efficient modality of capturing, rationalizing, and interpreting consumers' needs, desires, and preferences. One of the questions that emerged from this study relates to the question of adequacy of the techniques and technologies in dealing with the complexities of the given multiplicities. It is, therefore, recognizing the fact that past ways of knowing and acting on consumers and

consumption have failed, to one degree or another, to fulfill this quest. Such an admission suggests a continual search for and, in fact, failure to adequately assess and incorporate what it means to be human and manage the unpredictability and whimsical nature of human behaviours and machine themselves. Future research can examine the technological failures of consumer profiling to better understand what drives success.

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Some limitations of my study are as follows: first, part of this study was completed during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and as a result, the completion of my dissertation was impacted, to some degree, due to the movement restrictions and quarantine introduced by the governments to slow the spread of the virus. These preventive measures led to the closure of all university campuses, libraries, and public places, which in turn brought challenges, such as access to books and publications that were only available in print. Second, some archival records of Eaton's, related to the topic under study, in particular records after the 1980s until Eaton's bankruptcy, were unavailable or destroyed. As a result, the analysis of this study does not include records of Eaton's related to the topic under study after the 1980s. Lastly, given that Eaton's is no longer around, I had access to key details of their marketing and business strategies and research at the Archives of Ontario. In contrast, given that Amazon is still operating at the time of writing this dissertation and Amazon is a private company, access to similar documents was limited to the information shared by Amazon. I contacted the office of its CEO Jeff Bezos to seek for more information; however, they responded that sharable information had already been made available to the public. Yet, patent applications filed by Amazon, combined with Amazon's documents and regulations offered rich sources of data collection.

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