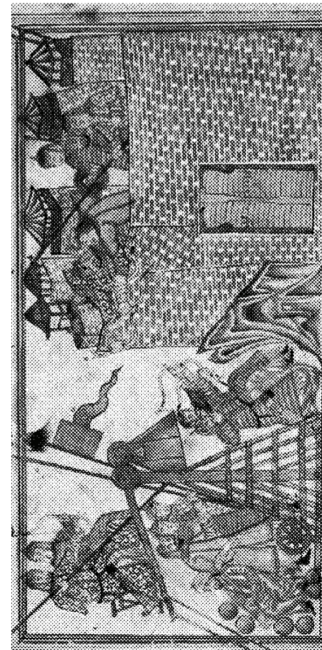
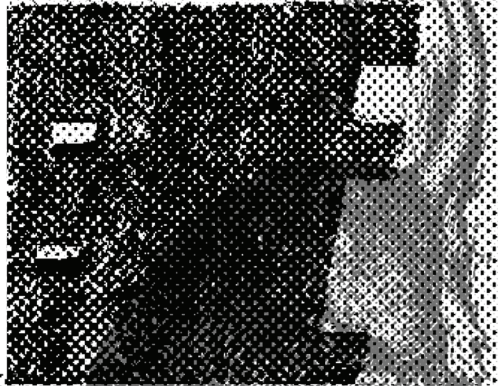
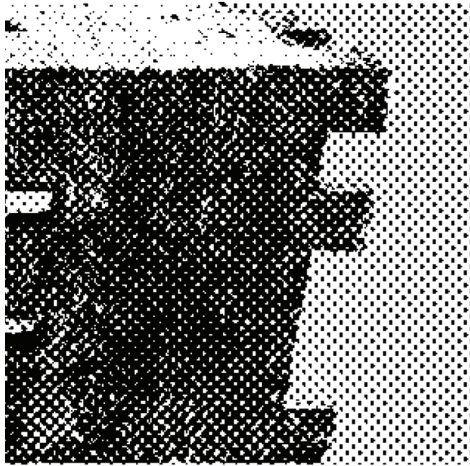


## DISEASE / CONTROL

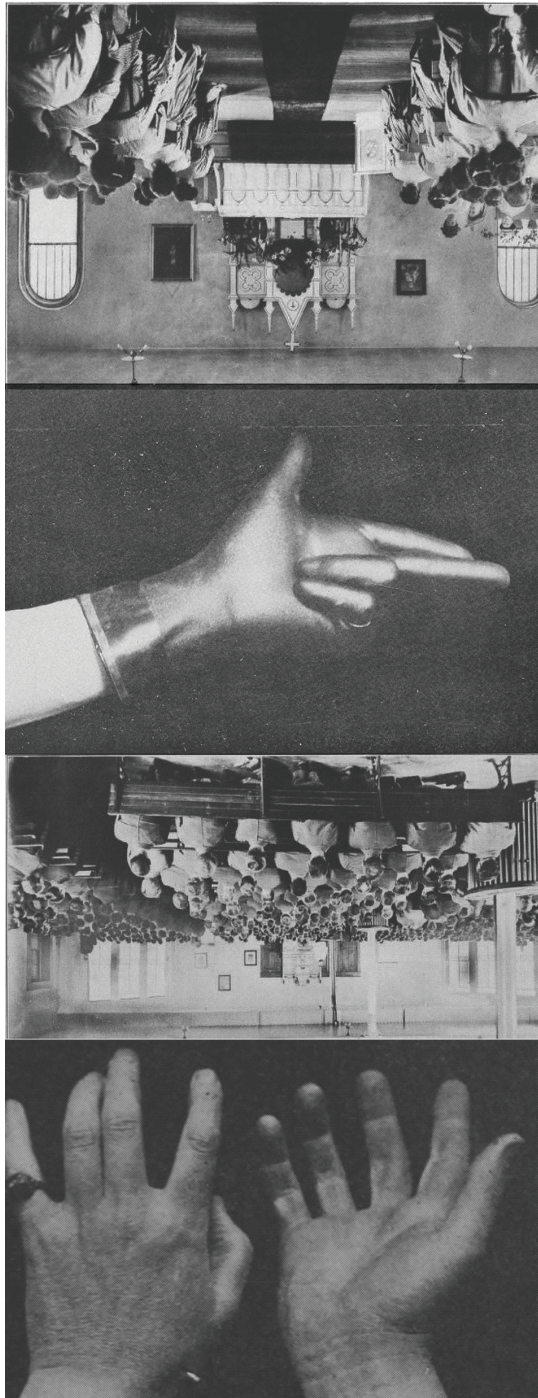
*Andy Broadey,  
Félix de Rosen,  
& Richard Hudson-Miles*



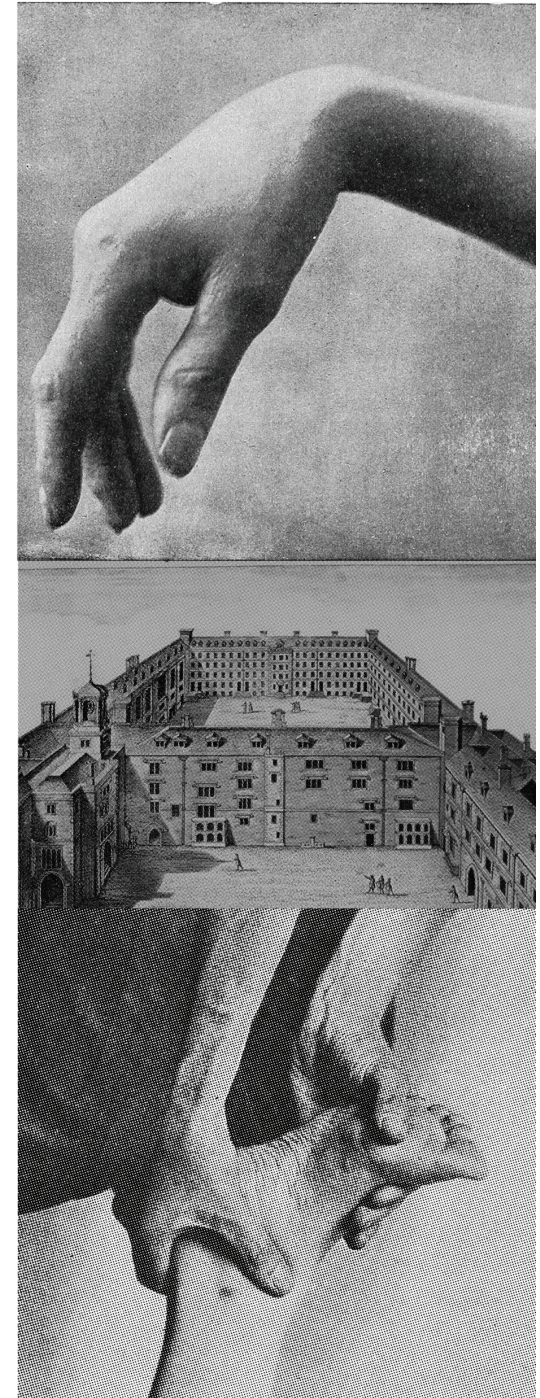
Because of its highly visible and disfiguring effects, leprosy was feared throughout the Middle Ages. Its mark was that of a malevolent evil, presumed to be as contagious as the disease itself. As Foucault ([1977] 1995, 198) argues, this disease gave rise to “practices of exclusion” such as leper colonies in which the afflicted were left to their doom and society, purged of this pestilence, could imagine itself pure. Spinalonga is a beautifully sunny Cretan island that was fortified by the Venetians in 1578 as a defense against the Ottoman threat but also as a base for the military to protect trade routes. From 1903–57 the island was used as a leper colony, one of the last active in Europe. Despite entering into the fortified compound through a door ominously named “Dante’s Gate,” the lepers were given sustenance, medical aid, and social-security payments. This social care was a significant advance over the previous treatment of lepers, around Crete or elsewhere, who had been forced to live in exile or hide in the darkness of caves.



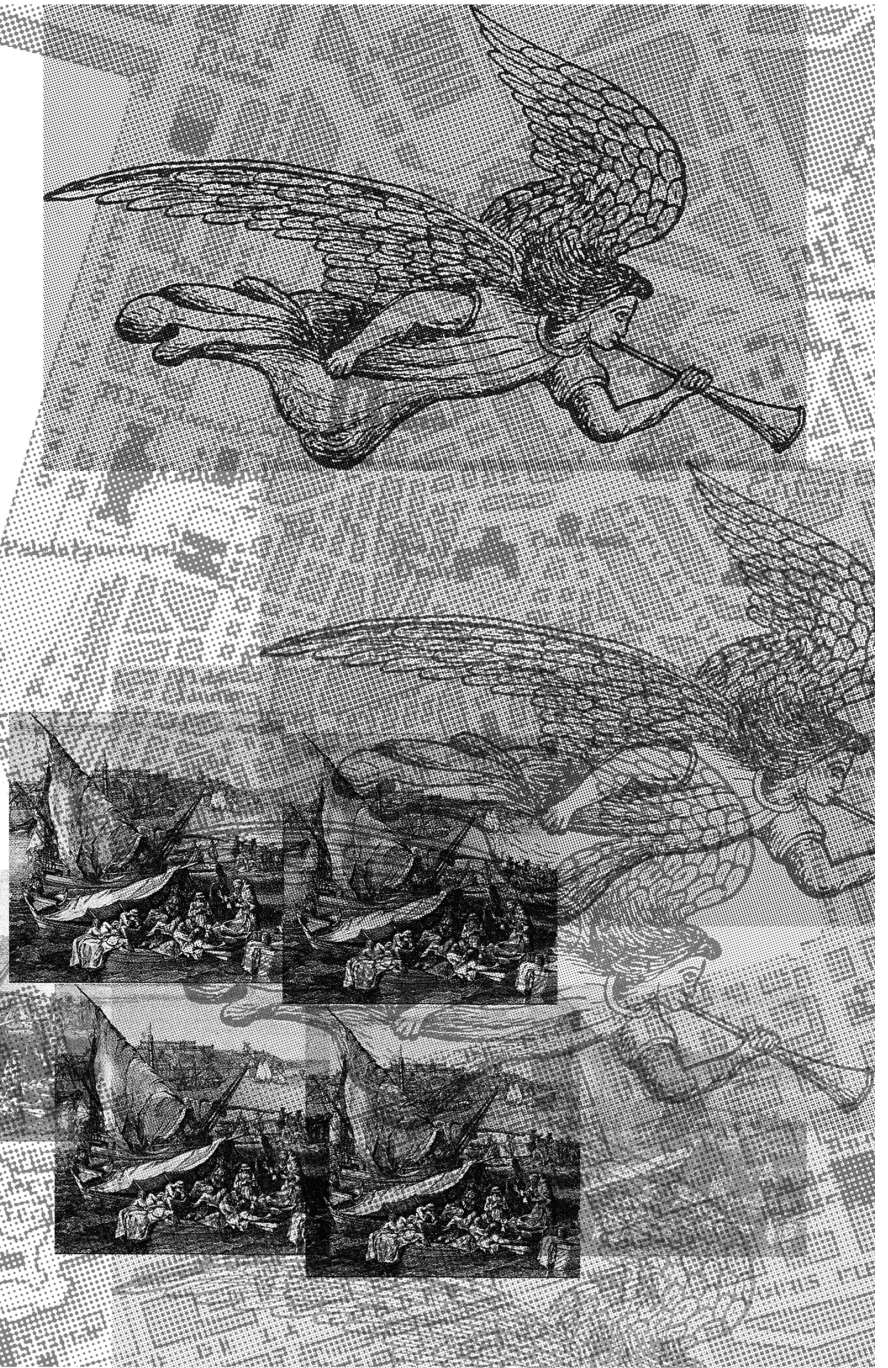
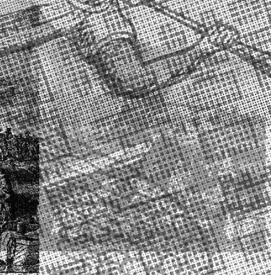
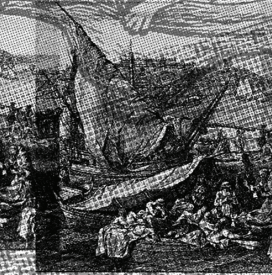
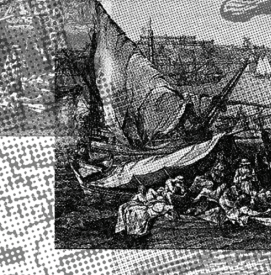
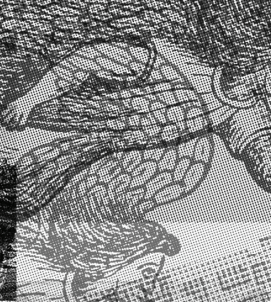
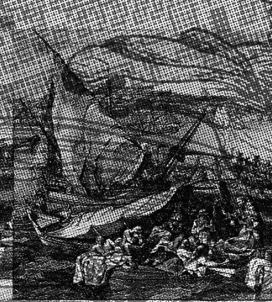
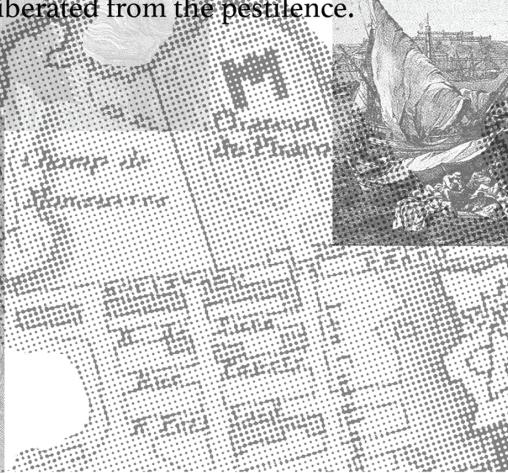
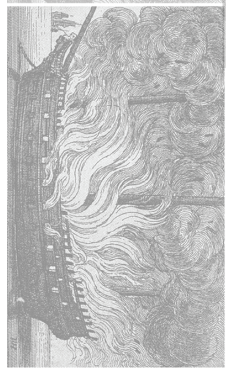
Coming from the East, the “Black Death” reached the shores of Italy in 1348 and eventually would kill over twenty-five million people, an estimated third of Europe’s population. Also known as the “Pestilence” or the “Great Mortality,” this disease was the worst pandemic ever to afflict humanity. Likely named after the black-blue swellings that appeared on the infected or the black rats that carried and transmitted the disease, this name also betrays a general logocentrism within Western culture—recognized by Georges Bataille’s ([1929] 1985, 20–3) essay “The Big Toe” but still evident today—that demarcates whiteness as the index of justice, light, and the good and darkness as that of evil, maleficence, and disease. A paranoid and apocryphal tale designed to demonstrate the baseness of the Mongols recounts how they sacked the city of Kaffa by catapulting the diseased and dying over the city walls. Giovanni Boccaccio, resident in Venice during the time, found inspiration in these dark times for his *Decameron* (1353), a book of one hundred stories told by a group of ten young white Florentines to pass the time as they escaped the darkness of the city for two weeks.



The “Great Confinement,” analyzed by Foucault ([1965] 1988, 43) in *Madness and Civilisation*, refers to the mass institutional incarceration of the criminal, the poor, the insane, and the unemployed across Europe in the seventeenth century. In London this found its expression through the establishment of four “Houses of Correction”: Bridewell, London (1553); Clerkenwell, Middlesex (1616); Southwark, Surrey (1724); and Tothill Fields, Westminster (1618). The latter was condemned as unsafe and unhealthy and moved to Hangman’s Acre, St. George’s Field (1772). Though these institutions were paid for by a tax, the public was also encouraged to support these institutions through voluntary donations. The “Justices of the Peace” used these Houses of Correction as a way to avoid the bureaucracy of formally charging petty criminals; the inmate demographic mainly consisted of prostitutes, thieves, and the “loose, idle and disorderly” ([www.londonlives.org/](http://www.londonlives.org/), 2020). Inside, convicts were forced to work, usually beating hemp, the idea being that hard work would improve the moral fiber of inmates and leave them with no time or energy for deviant activity. Gradually, society recognized the folly of these institutions wherein petty criminals associated with the murderous, the immoral, and the insane in a melting pot that amplified deviance rather than correcting it.



On 25 May 1720, the Grand Saint-Antoine, a three-masted French merchant ship, sailed into the port of Marseille. Since departing from Lebanon two months earlier, nine of its passengers had died. Following protocols designed to prevent disease outbreaks, Marseille's health bureau ordered the ship, its passengers, and its cargo of precious silks to be held in quarantine on a nearby island. However, under pressure from silk merchants eager to bring their commodities quickly to market, the bureau allowed the early transfer of the cargo to the mainland. On 20 June, a woman died abruptly in downtown Marseille, an area of narrow streets and dense housing. She was the first victim of community transmission of the Great Plague of Marseille, a pandemic of bubonic plague caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*. By the middle of August, the death count had reached more than one thousand per day. By then, the wealthiest had fled, along with many government officials. Bodies were left on the streets, and prisoners were forced to carry them toward mass graves. Fearing the spread of the pandemic, King Louis XV sent thirty thousand soldiers to enforce a strict quarantine over the entire region. Fifty miles north of Marseille, he requisitioned local villagers to build a seventeen-mile-long drystone wall to prevent escape. As Foucault ([1975] 1995, 198) recognized, spatial measures brought in to combat the spread of the plague—such as curfews, barriers, and other forms of civilian lockdown—combined with new forms of “hierarchy, surveillance, observation, writing” to generate a new political dream of a perfectly disciplined society. Nevertheless, every year the Basilica of the Sacred Heart holds a special mass honoring a promise made in 1722 to annually give thanks if the city were liberated from the pestilence.



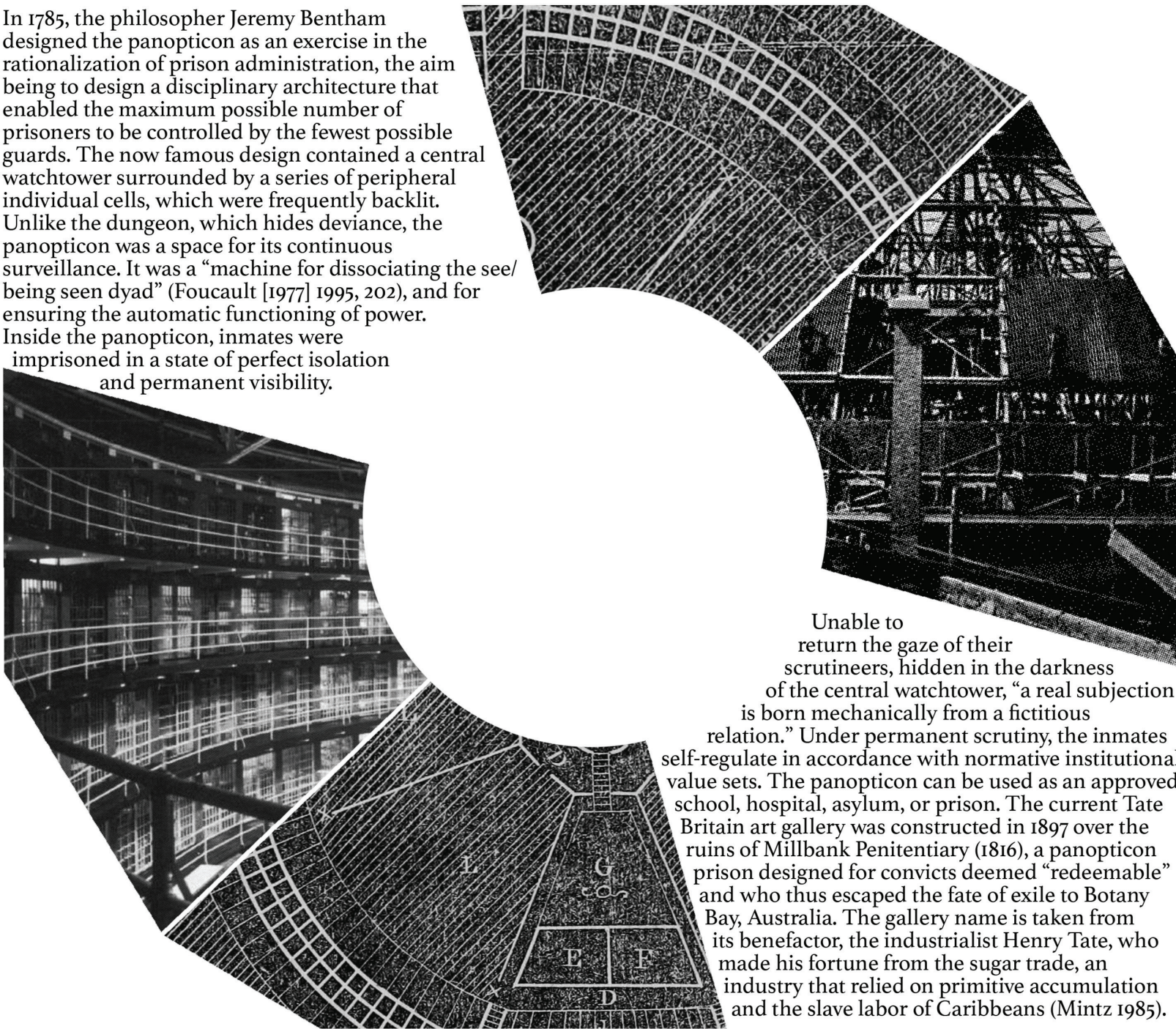


Paris is known globally as La Ville-Lumière, the “City of Light,” a name that currently seduces tourists but can be traced back to the reign of the “Sun King,” Louis XIV. In order to spread his magnificent light and sovereign power to all corners of the city, the king appointed Gabriel Nicolas de la Reynie as the first lieutenant general of the Paris police on 15 March 1667. De la Reynie established the world’s first modern police force, whose primary objectives were the protection of the bourgeois areas of the city and the repression of its slums. A key tool in this regard was light: the streets and bridges were filled with lanterns, making them easier to police, and citizens were also encouraged to light their windows with candles to expose the criminality that hid in Paris’s dark, medieval alleyways. More extreme was Napoleon III’s cure for this labyrinthine, dark, and uncontrollable city architecture. He appointed Georges

Hausmann to bulldoze wide thoroughfares through the medieval center of Paris, creating less places for criminals to hide but also allowing easy access to the city center for his military in case of a popular rebellion against his dictatorship. Hausmannization started a process of gentrification that forced the poorer classes to the periphery of the city, preserving the center as a sanitized bourgeois and upper-class zone. The contemporary spectacle of Paris illuminated is therefore also a performance of political power and a celebration of society surveilled. Its grands boulevards, which now host a variety of designer boutiques to titillate the desires of both tourists and the Parisian bourgeoisie, are simultaneously the spaces of affirmative culture and discipline.



In 1785, the philosopher Jeremy Bentham designed the panopticon as an exercise in the rationalization of prison administration, the aim being to design a disciplinary architecture that enabled the maximum possible number of prisoners to be controlled by the fewest possible guards. The now famous design contained a central watchtower surrounded by a series of peripheral individual cells, which were frequently backlit. Unlike the dungeon, which hides deviance, the panopticon was a space for its continuous surveillance. It was a “machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad” (Foucault [1977] 1995, 202), and for ensuring the automatic functioning of power. Inside the panopticon, inmates were imprisoned in a state of perfect isolation and permanent visibility.



Unable to return the gaze of their scrutineers, hidden in the darkness of the central watchtower, “a real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation.” Under permanent scrutiny, the inmates self-regulate in accordance with normative institutional value sets. The panopticon can be used as an approved school, hospital, asylum, or prison. The current Tate Britain art gallery was constructed in 1897 over the ruins of Millbank Penitentiary (1816), a panopticon prison designed for convicts deemed “redeemable” and who thus escaped the fate of exile to Botany Bay, Australia. The gallery name is taken from its benefactor, the industrialist Henry Tate, who made his fortune from the sugar trade, an industry that relied on primitive accumulation and the slave labor of Caribbeans (Mintz 1985).



The recent death of George Floyd at the hands of a racist police force has renewed discussions about their fitness for purpose. Though beyond the “overtone window” of the liberal mainstream media, the current politics of the street is forcing them to engage with contemporary activist calls to defund the police, calls that also question the historical legitimacy of the police per se.

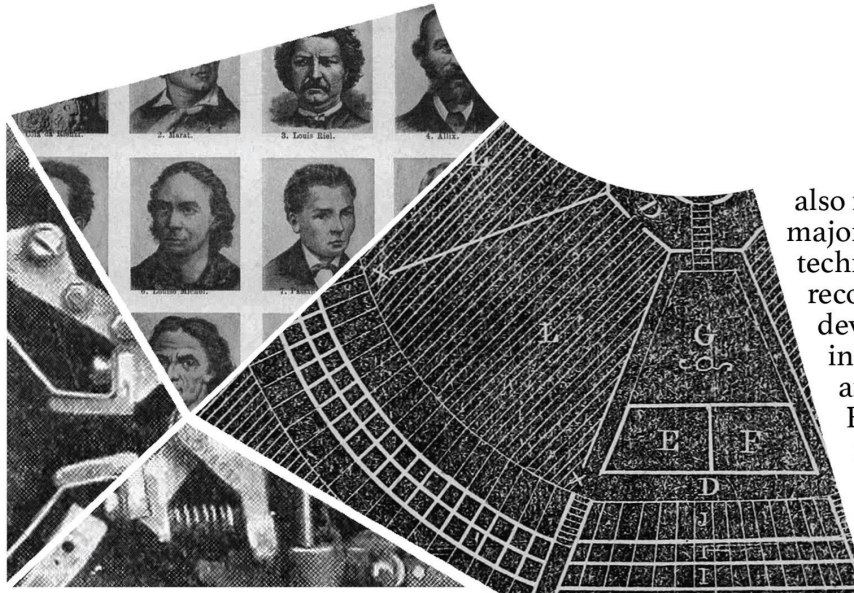
Dominant-hegemonic ideology has naturalized the existence of the police within society, disguising the fact that this repressive state apparatus (Althusser 1971, 142–3) is a relatively modern invention. The first formal U.S. police force was established in Boston in 1838, primarily to protect mercantile capitalism. Boston merchants successfully argued that police costs should come from the public purse, as the police operated for the common good. However, the call for an organized police force in the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came primarily from the South, especially from those with a historical vested interest in the slave system. In the UK, shortly after the military repression of unarmed civilian demonstrators at the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, the police force was invented in 1829 by Robert Peel to suppress the threat of an increasingly organized industrial proletariat. A secondary function of the police force was to control the public space of the city, which the proletariat needed for mass rallies, and to clear commercial spaces of the undesirable characters that might otherwise affect commercial trade or the general spectacle of the city.



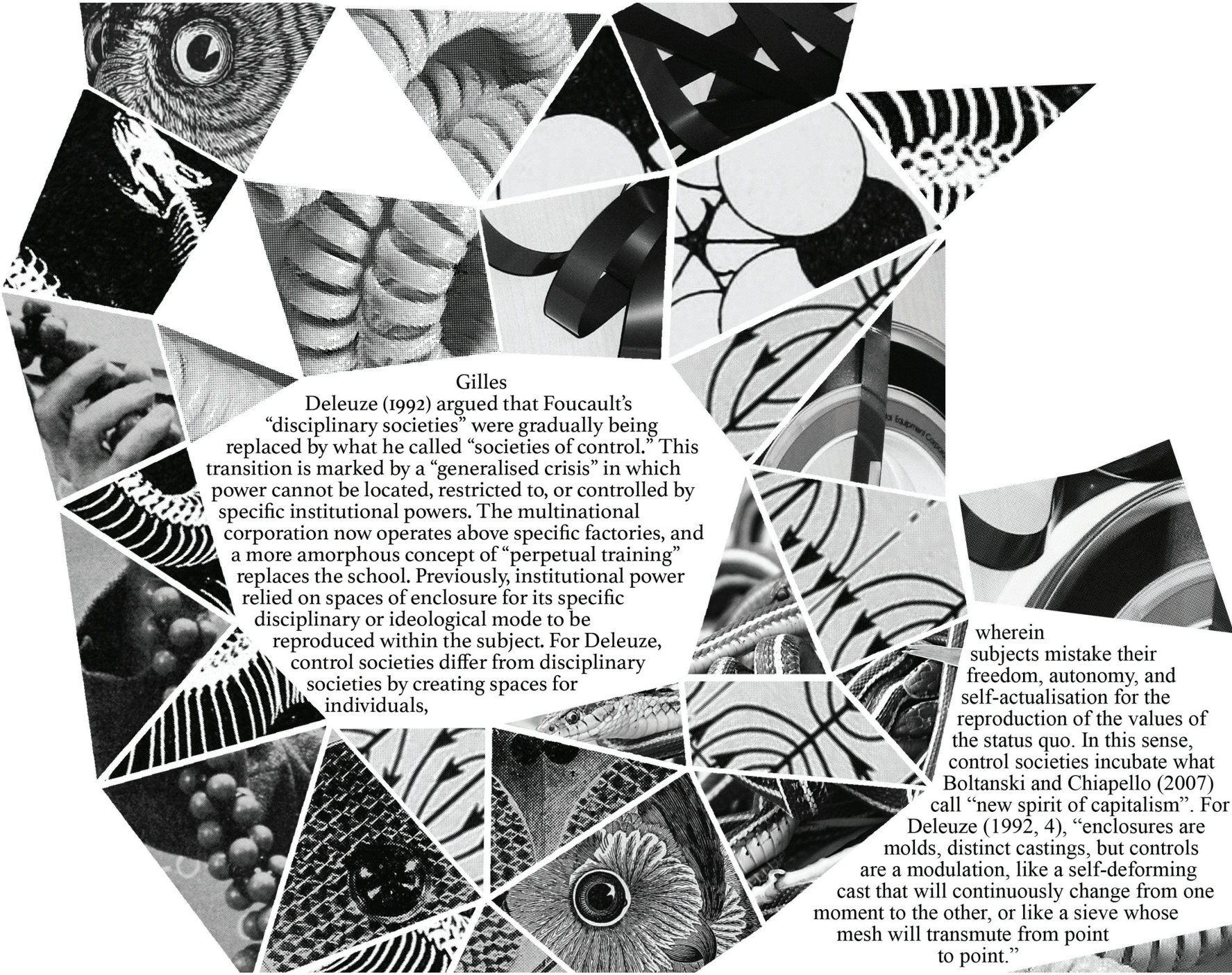
For Foucault ([1975] 1995, 209), “Panopticism is the general principle of a new ‘political anatomy’ whose object and end are not the relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline.” It is

the discipline-mechanism: a functional mechanism that must improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, a design of subtle coercion for a society to come. The movement from one project to the other, from a schema of exceptional discipline to one of a generalized surveillance, rests on a historical transformation: the gradual extension of the mechanisms of discipline throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their spread throughout the whole social body, the formation of what might be called in general the disciplinary society.

Between the years 1860–1909, Cesare Lombroso took thousands of portrait



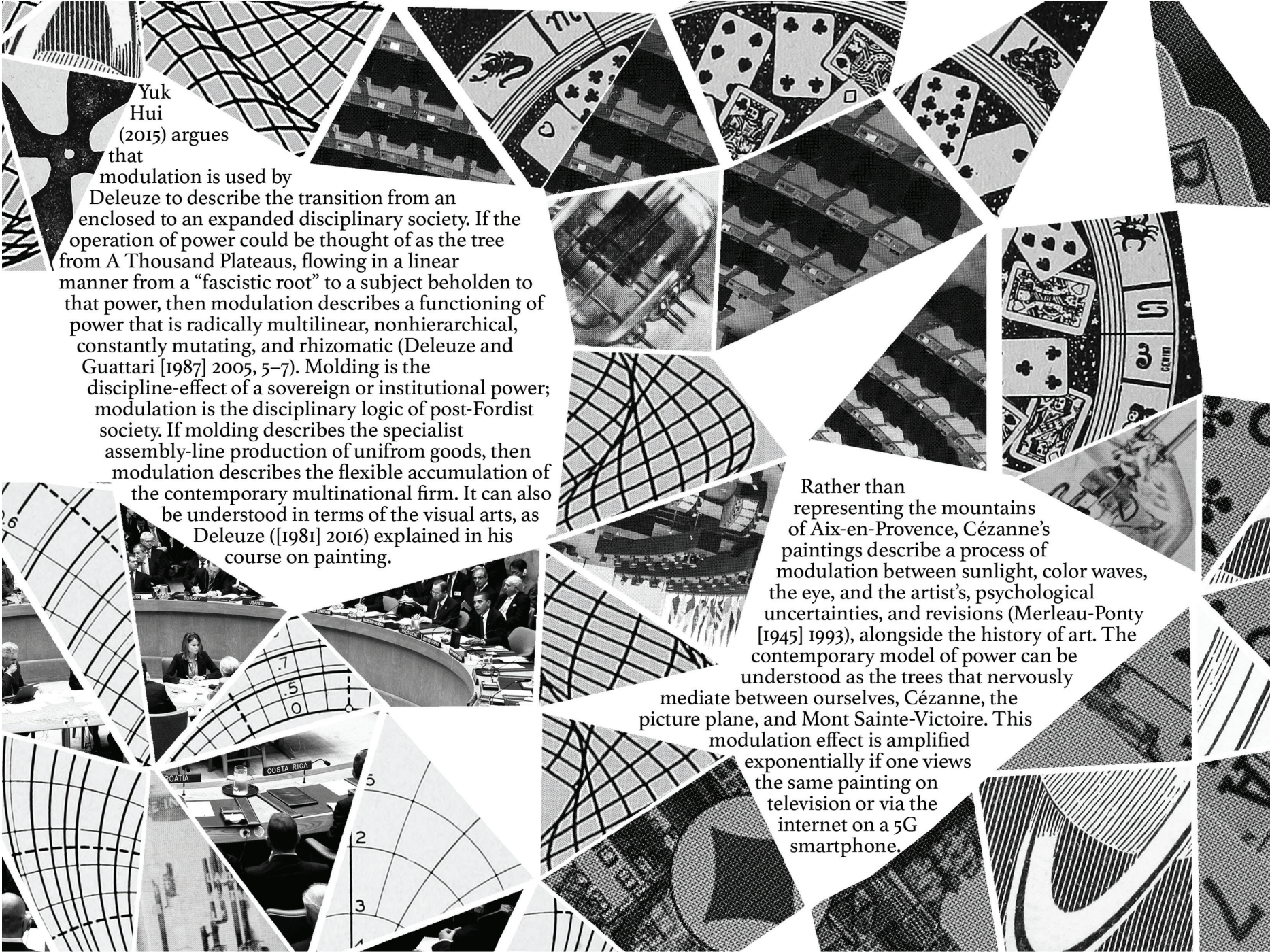
photos of individuals who were considered socially deviant in order to develop his theory of social atavism: the idea that criminality could be identified by physiognomy. Phrenologists regularly made death masks of hanged criminals as demonstrable proofs of their theses. These methods quickly gained favor with the police force, and Lombroso’s photos were even used as evidence to convict in courts. Subjects included murderers, the insane, ethnic minorities, lesbians, and others deemed abnormal. Lombroso’s work is widely regarded as pioneering modern criminology, but it also marks the advent of panoptic surveillance society. The majority of contemporary police work relies on surveillance technology for convictions. The NYPD currently uses facial recognition databases to identify suspects and also uses “mobile device forensic tools” to access metadata from mobile phones, including search histories, location, encrypted communications, and biometric data such as fingerprints or face ID’s. The Brennan Center for Justice has recently made a freedom of information request to the NYPD to disclose information related to their use of such data to develop “predictive policing” technologies to prevent future crime, in a similar manner to the hi-tech methods employed by the privatized police force in Paul Verhoeven’s film *Robocop* (1987).



Gilles

Deleuze (1992) argued that Foucault's "disciplinary societies" were gradually being replaced by what he called "societies of control." This transition is marked by a "generalised crisis" in which power cannot be located, restricted to, or controlled by specific institutional powers. The multinational corporation now operates above specific factories, and a more amorphous concept of "perpetual training" replaces the school. Previously, institutional power relied on spaces of enclosure for its specific disciplinary or ideological mode to be reproduced within the subject. For Deleuze, control societies differ from disciplinary societies by creating spaces for individuals,

wherein subjects mistake their freedom, autonomy, and self-actualisation for the reproduction of the values of the status quo. In this sense, control societies incubate what Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) call "new spirit of capitalism". For Deleuze (1992, 4), "enclosures are molds, distinct castings, but controls are a modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point."



Yuk  
Hui  
(2015) argues  
that

modulation is used by Deleuze to describe the transition from an enclosed to an expanded disciplinary society. If the operation of power could be thought of as the tree from *A Thousand Plateaus*, flowing in a linear manner from a “fascistic root” to a subject beholden to that power, then modulation describes a functioning of power that is radically multilinear, nonhierarchical, constantly mutating, and rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari [1987] 2005, 5–7). Molding is the discipline-effect of a sovereign or institutional power; modulation is the disciplinary logic of post-Fordist society. If molding describes the specialist assembly-line production of uniform goods, then modulation describes the flexible accumulation of the contemporary multinational firm. It can also be understood in terms of the visual arts, as Deleuze ([1981] 2016) explained in his course on painting.

Rather than representing the mountains of Aix-en-Provence, Cézanne’s paintings describe a process of modulation between sunlight, color waves, the eye, and the artist’s, psychological uncertainties, and revisions (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 1993), alongside the history of art. The contemporary model of power can be understood as the trees that nervously mediate between ourselves, Cézanne, the picture plane, and Mont Sainte-Victoire. This modulation effect is amplified exponentially if one views the same painting on television or via the internet on a 5G smartphone.

12

March 2020 represented a shift from the “control” to the “delay” phase of the UK government’s COVID-19 strategy. The UK’s arrogant exceptionalism resulted in the lessons of Central Europe being ignored. Prime Minister Boris Johnson boasted that he would continue to shake hands with the general public, only to contract the virus himself. At the time of writing, the UK’s COVID-19 death toll has passed 40,000, the worst in Europe. In a postcontrol society of digital modulation, the notion of centralized “control” is purely ideological. The UK government’s vain attempts to perform power through the daily spectacle of organized press briefings only highlights Deleuze’s “general crisis” of decentralized power beyond governments, institutions, and ideological state apparatuses (Althusser 1971, 142–3). At these propaganda briefings, color-coded lecterns signify the relative status of the social emergency.

The disembodied talking heads of experts, one of whom broke his own lockdown guidelines to pursue an extramarital affair, are projected on video monitors to demonstrate responsible social distancing. Scared of appearing like the party of big government, these new restrictions are presented as “guidelines,” not “laws,” a message that has not reached the police, who routinely harass individual members of the public. This bathos is embodied in NHS Nightingale Hospital, London, named to play on notes of nationhood and wartime pluck. Seven Nightingale Hospitals were constructed in the UK. Their gargantuan scale was designed to symbolize a government taking charge of a social crisis. Originally planned to have 4,000 beds, NHS Nightingale London treated just fifty-four patients before closure on 15 May. Kept in hibernation, “just in case” of a second spike, Nightingale is a monument to an incompetent Conservative government. Its mute speech articulates the distance between the spectacle of power and its real-world effects. Here, Foucault’s (1977, 198) dream of a perfectly ordered society recedes into a generalized crisis of mismanagement.

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