Watching from Below: Racialized Surveillance and Vulnerable Sousveillance

KELLY ROSS

KIANGA MWAMBA HAD STOPPED AT A RED LIGHT IN BALTIMORE, Maryland, on 30 March 2014 when she witnessed police officers beating a man in handcuffs and began recording the incident on her phone ("Kianga Mwamba"). Feidin Santana was walking to work in North Charleston, South Carolina, on 4 April 2015 when he saw a police officer holding a man down on the ground. Like Mwamba, Santana began recording the incident on his phone and captured video of Michael Slager, the white officer, shooting Walter Scott, the black man, to death as Scott ran away ("Walter Scott"). Mwamba and Santana exposed the operation of state power, providing visual evidence of its agents acting illegally: they watched from below. These two examples of bystanders recording video of police brutality exemplify what Steve Mann has called "sousveillance"—replacing the French prefix *sur*, "above," with *sous*, "below." Sousveillance inverts the power relations of surveillance such that the entity observing and recording is "**not** in a position of power or authority over the subject of the veillance" (3).

While Mann's theory of sousveillance offers a corrective to Michel Foucault's excessive reliance on watching from above, it does not address the question of visibility. For Foucault, famously, "[t]he Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (201–02). However, both surveillance and sousveillance can be conducted openly (e.g., by a security guard) or invisibly (e.g., with a hidden camera). A security guard at a bank is a visible surveillant, while a bystander openly filming police brutality is a visible sousveillant; a hidden camera operated by a corporation to watch its workers is nonvisible surveillance, while a hidden camera operated by a worker

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to document abusive labor practices is nonvisible sousveillance. Through its dependence on Foucauldian panopticism as a universally explanatory theory, surveillance studies has collapsed two separate issues: the power relations between watcher and watched and the visibility or nonvisibility of the watcher.[1] The crucial difference is that whereas the visible surveillant is shielded by power, the visible sousveillant is put at risk.

Recognizing, contra Foucault, that the "one [who] sees everything" can also be "one [who is] totally seen" allows us to understand the special risks for sousveillants of color, who are already more vulnerable because of their hypervisibility. Imani Perry critiques this race blindness in surveillance studies, arguing:

> The fact that so many surveillance studies critics have sounded the alarm bell about the loss of privacy in the contemporary surveillance society might seem to suggest that there is no particular need to distinguish people of color in a conversation about privacy rights in the United States. . . . Although we all should be concerned with the terms upon which surveillance practices are being extended generally, racialized practices of surveillance are significantly different from general practices of surveillance. (91)

Similarly, Simone Browne argues that racialized surveillance aims to keep people of color "in a state of permanent illumination," making them "hypervisible racial subject[s]" (67, 54).[2] As Perry and Browne show, people of color bear a far greater burden of surveillance and its harms. Building on Browne's pathbreaking work in "locat[ing] blackness as a key site through which surveillance is practiced, narrated, and enacted" (9), this essay examines the simultaneous operation of surveillance and sousveillance, both predicated on racial hypervisibility.

As people of color, Mwamba and Santana are hypervisible. Lacking the protection of panopticism's unverifiable observer, they both see and are seen. The officers Mwamba was filming quickly turned their attention to her, confiscating her phone and arresting her for assaulting an officer and resisting arrest. When Mwamba was released on bail the next day, the police returned her phone with the video deleted. Although Santana maintained a greater degree of nonvisibility during his sousveillance—Slager did not notice him filming—he became the target of death threats when his name was made public after he released his video anonymously (Laughland and Swaine). Arrests like Mwamba's and death threats like those directed at Santana, as well as police harassment, are common experiences among those who film police brutality (Laughland and Swaine; Kaurin). The practices of racialized surveillance that continue to place sousveillants of color at heightened risk have their roots in the surveillance infrastructure of the slave system. The persistence of racial hypervisibility links the current use of visual technologies and biometrics in racial profiling to the surveillance of enslaved people in the nineteenth century.

Ex-slave narrators including Charles Ball, Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Jacobs, who sousveilled the slave system for white readers, took different approaches to the problem of the sousveillant's visibility. Ball, whose real name was Charles Gross, never became visible, writing under a pseudonym—the nineteenth-century version of an anonymizing smart-phone app—and from outside the institutions of the abolitionist movement in the United States. Just as Ball describes his covert sousveillance throughout his narrative, *Slavery in the United States* (1836), he remained nonvisible even as his narrative was widely circulated and reprinted throughout the decades leading up to the Civil War. Douglass, on the other hand, was visible both on the lecture circuit and in his signed public writings. In his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), he provides eyewitness testimony to advance

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the abolitionist movement's aim of convicting slavery in the court of public opinion. To understand Douglass's theory of sousveillance, though, we must examine the revisions he made to his 1845 *Narrative* in his second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855). In *My Bondage and My Freedom*, over which he exercised greater authorial control, he emphasizes the value—and risk—of sousveillance. Whereas in the *Narrative* he highlights the devious overseer Covey's nonvisibility and enslaved people's constant visibility, in the 1855 text he revises many scenes to reverse those positions, demonstrating his awareness of sousveillants' heightened vulnerability and the importance of attaining nonvisibility even as he was becoming one of the most recognizable men in the United States. Finally, in Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), also written pseudonymously (under the name Linda Brent), the garret in which the narrator hides, which she calls her "loophole of retreat," illustrates the problem of becoming immured in the panopticon (114). Jacobs achieves nonvisibility, not just to her enslavers but to her beloved children as well. Her racially assigned status as slave inverts the conditions of incarceration, turning the panoptic observer into the prisoner. Jacobs's narrative demonstrates that the experience at the center of the panopticon differs drastically depending on the race of the observer. The parallels between nineteenth-century slave narratives and contemporary police-brutality videos illustrate the need to understand sousveillance and visibility across a long historical period.

Racialized Surveillance and the Problem of Visible Sousveillance

In *Theorizing Surveillance*, David Lyon, one of the foremost contemporary surveillance scholars, acknowledges, "The panopticon refuses to go away" (4). Kevin D. Haggerty goes further, arguing that

> the panopticon is . . . easily the leading scholarly model . . .for analysing surveillance. . . . [T]he panopticon has also become oppressive . . . , directing scholarly attention to a select subset of attributes of surveillance. . . . [A]nalysts have excluded or neglected a host of other key qualities and processes of surveillance that fall outside of the panoptic framework. The result has been that the panoptic model has been over-extended to domains where it seems ill-suited, and important attributes of surveillance that cannot be neatly subsumed under the "panoptic" rubric have been neglected. (23)

Though the slave system presents many situations in which power and surveillance operate in ways that can be illuminated by Foucauldian panopticism, it is overall a domain to which panopticism is ill suited.

Specifically, Foucauldian analysis does not adequately acknowledge either the simultaneous operation of surveillance and sousveillance or the brutality of the slave system. Enslaved persons were subject to a system that aimed to exploit their labor through comprehensive surveillance and discipline. In "Racialized Punishment and Prison Abolition," Angela Y. Davis succinctly distinguishes between the penitentiary and the slave system:

> If, as Foucault insists, the locus of the new European mode of punishment shifted from the body to the soul, black slaves in the US were largely perceived as lacking the soul that might be shaped and transformed by punishment. Within the institution of slavery, itself a form of incarceration, racialized forms of punishment developed alongside the emergence of the prison system within and as a negative affirmation of the "free world," from which slavery was twice removed. . . . As white men acquired the privilege to be punished in ways that acknowledged their equality and the racialized universality of liberty, the punishment of black slaves was corporal, concrete, and particular. (99)

While enslavers and the society that benefited from their economic system did employ

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disciplinary methods, these forms of punishment were buttressed by "racialized forms of punishment" that were "corporal, concrete, and particular." Indeed, these racialized corporal punishments often enhanced disciplinary methods, as branding or scarring did by ensuring more effective identification of fugitives.[3]

My argument is not with Foucault; he acknowledges that "the disciplines . . . were different from slavery because they were not based on a relation of appropriation of bodies; indeed, the elegance of the discipline lay in the fact that it could dispense with this costly and violent relation by obtaining effects of utility at least as great" (137). Rather, I am responding to the way in which a more-or-less Foucauldian panopticism has become the standard model for surveillance, such that it obscures more historically contingent and situation-specific theorizations. Nevertheless, by elaborating "the elegance of the discipline" and remaining mute on the "appropriation of bodies," Foucault initiates a tradition of silence about the ways in which race inflects surveillance and punishment. As Davis points out, "the tendency to treat racism as a contingent element of the criminal justice system . . . results in part from its marginalization in histories and theories of punishment. If the category of race rarely appears in Foucault's analyses, so it is also generally absent in the leading contemporary [prison] abolitionist texts" (102).

Recent work in surveillance studies and visual-culture studies has begun to address this overreliance on panopticism and to trace the historical development of surveillance practices, paying particular attention to the centrality of race. Christian Parenti and Browne, both trained as sociologists, have examined the history of surveillance in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century United States and come to similar conclusions. Parenti argues that "the surveillance infrastructure of colonial America began . . . with the . . . accounts [and inventories] of the slave master" (15), and Browne contends that to grasp early American surveillance we must read the 1789 plan of the slave ship *Brookes* alongside Jeremy Bentham's 1791 *Panopticon* in order to "mak[e] visible the many ways that race continues to structure surveillance practices" (11). Mapping numerous eighteenth- and nineteenth-century racialized surveillance practices onto modern surveillance technologies, these theorists remind us that the panopticon is just one technology among many. The manifold surveillance practices aimed at identifying, watching, and controlling blackness cannot be reduced to the model of panopticism, with its focus on an unseen and unverifiable observer leading to the internalization of discipline.

We can broadly group racialized surveillance practices into three overlapping categories: visual surveillance (including search and seizure), biometrics, and identity documents.[4] In the antebellum slave system, visual surveillance encompasses figures such as overseers (whose very name emphasizes their surveillance function), members of slave patrols, and slave catchers, as well as institutions such as slave markets and statutes such as lantern laws. Sally Hadden documents the authority of slave patrols to "hun[t] runaways, loo[k] for weapons and stolen goods in slave cabins, questio[n] slaves they met on the road, and br[eak] up slave meetings. Patrollers could detain and question whites while performing these duties, and enter their homes without warrants" (40). In her survey of lantern laws in the early United States, Browne explains that New York City in 1713 prohibited "Negro or Indian slaves" from appearing in the street after sunset without a lit lantern or candle (78). These laws enforced the visibility of black bodies: the lantern was a "technology that made it possible for the black body to be constantly illuminated from dusk to dawn, made knowable, locatable, and contained within the city" (79). These visual-surveillance practices, aided by the technology of the period, aimed to make blackness utterly visible.

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The second two categories—biometrics and identity documents—sought to render blackness legible and trackable. Branding and scarring from corporal punishment were two of the most widespread ways that enslavers marked the bodies of African Americans. These markers were used to identify enslaved African Americans in documents such as slave passes, cargo inventories of slave ships, truancy and runaway notices in newspapers, wanted posters, and plantation ledgers. For example, a notice in the 15 January 1845 edition of the Baltimore paper *The Sun* describes the "NEGRO MAN LORENZO, who [calls] himself LORENZO BIRK": he is "of a nutmeg color, about 23 years of age, and 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high, stammers when spoken to, has a tooth out in front, a scar on one of his wrists, occasioned from a burn when small" ("Advertisement").[5] The detailed biometric description of fugitives in runaway notices constitutes the technology of visual identification and documentation in the prephotographic age. Analysis of top-down surveillance, however, must be supplemented by an attention to practices of watching from below.

Mann's work on the directionalities of veillance offers a more capacious theory of surveillance, one that takes into account the practices of people who are not in power (fig. 1). In place of the binary relation that many commentators assume exists between surveillance and privacy (or antisurveillance), Mann posits an eight-point compass describing the "Veillance Plane." In this model, situations can be plotted according to the degree to which they enable or obstruct observation and the power relations between the observers and the observed.[6] However, Mann, who advocates for more sousveillance using body cameras and other wearable technologies to remedy our current "inequiveillance" between watching from above and watching from below, focuses primarily on the right-hand side of the veillance plane. Building on Mann's theory, Browne puts race at the center of this practice of watching from below, adding the modifier *dark* to the race-neutral term *sousveillance*. For Browne, the concept of dark sousveillance encompasses both a "critique of racializing surveillance" that foregrounds "black epistemologies of contending with antiblack surveillance" and the "freedom practices" that aim to evade and subvert racialized surveillance. One of the key advantages that a more historically specific theory of surveillance, such as dark sousveillance, has over panopticism is that it makes visible the "freedom practices" that Browne highlights instead of privileging the practices aimed at maintaining existing power relations. Whereas Browne focuses on "strategies . . . of undersight" by which enslaved people evaded surveillance and punishment (21), however, I examine moments when sousveillants look back at their enslavers but simultaneously make themselves visible.[7] Because these sousveillants already occupy positions of hypervisibility as objects of racialized surveillance, their sousveillance renders them especially vulnerable.

Visible and Nonvisible Sousveillance in Slave Narratives

Ball's *Slavery in the United States* illuminates the transition from eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century slave narratives, which were often sponsored and published by evangelical-Christian organizations and emphasized religious conversion, to those

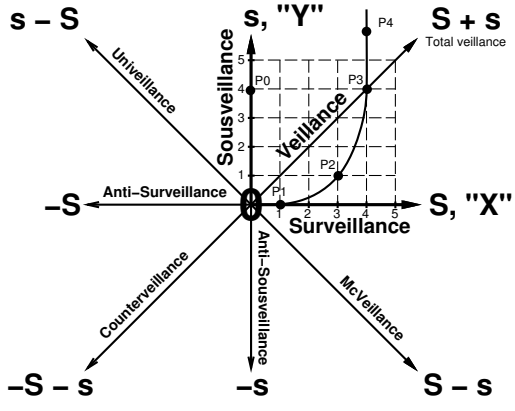


FIG. 1
Steve Mann's eight-point compass showing the directionalities of the Veillance Plane.

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that were published after the rise of what Trish Loughran calls "the abolitionist culture industry" in the mid-1830s (238). Slave narratives from this later period focused on "exposing the evils of the Southern plantation . . . [through] detailed evidence" (Gould 19). One of the primary strategies that the abolitionist culture industry used to indict the slave system was the "slavery on trial" trope, as Jeannine DeLombard has shown. From the mid-1830s onward, the abolitionist movement figured "the slavery controversy as a criminal trial," enslavers "as perpetrators and defendants," white abolitionists as lawyers, and the United States public as jurors (26, 1). According to the legal logic of this abolitionist strategy, African Americans were both victims of and eyewitnesses to slavery's criminality. Their testimony, delivered through slave narratives and abolitionist lectures, proved the case against enslavers, but their position as witnesses was subordinate to that of the white activists—the editors and amanuenses of the antislavery movement—who advocated on their behalf. As Douglass reported in *My Bondage and My Freedom*, the white agents of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (MASS) told him, "Give us the facts, . . . [and] we will take care of the philosophy" (266).

Though this understanding of slave narratives as witness testimony has been ingrained in our minds by abolitionist print culture, Ball's narrative—first published before the "slavery on trial" trope was firmly established—offers another way to view the contribution of ex-slave narrators. Ball frames his narrative not as legal testimony but as a document of sousveillance that provides intelligence on the slave system. Ball presents himself as a spy for white readers who cannot access Southern spaces and see slavery for themselves, and he dwells on the reciprocal relation between surveillance and sousveillance throughout *Slavery in the United States*. The first page of Ball's narrative asserts that social surveillance by the population of free states keeps enslavers in the border states in check: "experience has taught me, that both masters and mistresses . . . if not observed by strangers, would treat their slaves with the utmost rigour" (*Slavery* [1836] 5). The ameliorating effect of this surveillance is a point repeated by numerous ex-slave narrators through the subsequent decades, including Douglass (*My Bondage* 110). Yet Ball goes on to state that "[p]eople of the northern States, who make excursions to the South . . . know nothing of the condition of the southern slaves" because they stay in the cities or the homes of large planters rather than penetrate the slave quarters to see slavery in situ: "To acquire this knowledge, the traveller must take up his abode for a season, in the lodge of the overseer, . . . or spend a year within view of the rice swamps . . . and witnes[s] the execution of [the overseer's] decrees." Though social surveillance provides a check on owners, who have pretensions to gentility, Ball indicates, it has not gone far enough in scrutinizing their agents. By opening his narrative with this commentary on the efficacy of surveillance and promising "faithfully and truly, to present to the reader" the facts about slavery (*Slavery* [1836] 6), Ball asks readers to view slave narratives as documents of sousveillance—intelligence dossiers—that will allow white readers to infiltrate the spaces, such as the overseer's lodge and the rice swamps, normally inaccessible to them.

Neither Ball nor his white amanuensis, Isaac Fisher, uses the "slavery on trial" trope in the first edition of the narrative. The second edition of *Slavery in the United States*, published in 1837 as part of the antislavery book series the Cabinet of Freedom, on the other hand, places Ball's portrait of himself as a spy in tension with the later editors' depiction of him as a witness. Whereas Ball and Fisher were not "closely tied to the abolitionist circles of Philadelphia, New York, or Boston" (Roy 517), the editors of the second edition were affiliated with the institutional heart of the abolitionist movement, the American Anti-

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slavery Society (AASS).[8] These editors overlaid a new frame of legal discourse onto Ball and Fisher's original. The Cabinet of Freedom edition added a new introduction that engages in the authenticating strategies typical of post-1830s slave narratives[9] and that frames Ball's narrative in the language of the law, noting that enslaved people "are prohibited from entering a Court of Justice as suitors, or even as witnesses against any individual whose complexion is not coloured like their own" (Introduction v).[10] In contrast to Ball's sousveillance trope, the witness trope of the later editors casts slavery as a national crime.

Throughout his narrative, Ball uses the language of espionage, figuring himself as a sousveillant. While he is running away, for example, he relies on auditory sousveillance "to get information concerning the country I was in, by placing myself in some obscure place in the side of the road, and listening to the conversation of travelers as they passed me" (*Slavery* [1837] 419); after eavesdropping on the conversation among a party of slave patrollers, he states, "From these people I had gained intelligence, which I considered of much value to me . . . , and I determined from this moment, so to regulate my movements, as to wrap my very existence, in a veil of impenetrable secrecy" (403). His narrative—and his successful escape from slavery—indicates that he is able not only to invert the position of watcher and watched (or eavesdropper and speaker, in this case) by watching from below but also, by hiding "in some obscure place," to make himself nonvisible. He thereby protects himself from the retribution that he would incur if his sousveillance was discovered. After publishing a document of sousveillance in which the narrator makes the slave system visible and himself nonvisible, thereby inverting the position of watcher and watched, Ball attained nonvisibility in his own life. Unlike ex-slave narrators such as Douglass, who were affiliated with the institutional antislavery movement and provided eyewitness testimony both onstage and in print, Ball disappears from the public record, maintaining nonvisibility.

Douglass published his first autobiography under the auspices of the MASS, in 1845, when the abolitionist campaign to try slavery in the court of public opinion was in full swing. William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, both important white abolitionists active in the AASS and the MASS, framed Douglass's *Narrative* as eyewitness testimony against the slave system.[11] To advance the goal of convicting the slave system, Douglass focuses on enslavers' panoptic surveillance, such as the "slavebreaker" Covey's ubiquitous eye. Cynthia Nielsen argues that the *Narrative* demonstrates "the interiorization of the panoptic gaze and the subsequent creation of a new subjectivity, the slave subject" (255).[12] Building on Nielsen's work, Felix Haase delineates the way in which enslaved people internalized panoptic surveillance, contending that Douglass's literacy ultimately allows him to realize "the traversal of spatial boundaries and the deconstruction of metaphorical ones" (72).[13] These readings of the *Narrative* complement the work of historians and historical geographers including Terrence Epperson and Theresa Singleton, who have argued that the spatial layout of the plantation system was itself panoptic. Accounting for Douglass's Foucauldianism *avant la lettre*, J. B. C. Axelrod and Rise B. Axelrod assert, "It seems likely . . . that Douglass was familiar with the work of Jeremy Bentham" (125). Douglass's references catch our attention because we have been trained in a Foucauldian framework, and thus we are inclined to notice Douglass uncannily predicting Foucault's theory.

Readings like Nielsen's and Haase's, which emphasize Douglass's engagement with the ocular disciplinary practices of enslavers in the *Narrative*, underscore the problem Douglass aimed to rectify in his second autobiography. Recognizing that he had been too simplistic in depicting the slave system's power

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relations as characterized by rational, efficient discipline in the 1845 *Narrative*, Douglass in the 1855 *My Bondage and My Freedom* deconstructs his earlier descriptions of panopticism and revises his portrait of surveillance in the antebellum slave system to show that disciplinary panopticism is an inadequate model of power relations in the slave system. If Douglass was familiar with Bentham's writings, that is, he recognized the limitations of their applicability to the slave system in a way that Foucault did not. In *My Bondage and My Freedom*, which significantly revises and expands the *Narrative*, Douglass recalibrates his characterization of surveillance in the antebellum slave system, anticipating the recent shift toward more historically specific theories of surveillance that I outlined in the first section of this essay.[14] In between the two autobiographies, Douglass distanced himself from the white-dominated MASS, freeing himself to theorize about the slave system's power dynamics rather than merely testify against enslavers.[15] Douglass's revisions shift narrative focus from panoptic surveillance to the sousveillance practiced by enslaved men and women. Concomitantly, the second autobiography reveals Douglass's awareness of the need for sousveillants to attain nonvisibility.

One example that makes clear Douglass's overall pattern of revising the *Narrative* to emphasize sousveillance rather than disciplinary surveillance occurs in a section about the enslaver Colonel Lloyd's garden. Explaining in the *Narrative* how Lloyd protects his fruit from the "hungry swarms" of enslaved people, Douglass states:

> Lloyd kept a large and finely cultivated garden . . . , [which] was probably the greatest attraction of the place. . . . Its excellent fruit was quite a temptation to the . . . slaves . . . , few of whom had the virtue or the vice to resist it. Scarcely a day passed, during the summer, but that some slave had to take the lash for stealing fruit. The colonel had to resort to all kinds of stratagems to keep his slaves out of the garden. The last most successful one was that of tarring his fence all around; after which, if a slave was caught with any tar upon his person, it was deemed sufficient proof that he had either been into the garden, or had tried to get in. In either case, he was severely whipped by the chief gardener. This plan worked well; the slaves became as fearful of tar as of the lash. They seemed to realize the impossibility of touching *tar* without being defiled. (38–39)

By implying that Lloyd was outwitting devious enslaved people, Douglass's use of the word *stratagem* casts Lloyd's injunction as a clever scheme and obfuscates the brutal whipping that undergirds the "stratagem." Furthermore, as Douglass goes on to explain, the "plan worked well" because the enslaved people internalized the discipline: they stayed not only out of the garden but away from tar altogether for fear of being "defiled." The Edenic allusions and the moralizing language of "virtue and vice" and "temptation" in this example of self-policing imply that the enslaved people are wrong to steal from Lloyd, who is ironically associated with God.[16] While in later writing Douglass insists that stealing is a principled act of everyday resistance, in this passage of the *Narrative* he aligns stealing with internalized discipline.

In *My Bondage and My Freedom* Douglass replaces this passage with a description of enslaved people looking back at the Lloyds. Instead of suggesting that Lloyd outsmarted enslaved people through his disciplinary mechanism, Douglass's description of Lloyd's garden in his 1855 autobiography recasts the white family as voracious "consumer[s]"—reduced from people to mere "appetite[s]"—intelligently watched by the people they enslave (and whose labor they consume [82, 81]). Instead of tempting the enslaved people, "the fertile garden" of *My Bondage and My Freedom* provides "the blood-bought luxuries" that glut the Lloyds' table (82, 81). At the end of the detailed list of produce (e.g., "tender asparagus, the succulent celery, and the delicate

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cauliflower; egg plants, beets, lettuce, parsnips, peas, and French beans, early and late; radishes, cantelopes, melons of all kinds"), Douglass figures the Lloyds as inert flotsam on the sea of "high life": "all [this food] conspired to swell the tide of high life, where pride and indolence rolled and lounged in magnificence and satiety" (82). The enslaved "men and maidens," on the other hand, actively "stand" and "watch": "Behind the . . . elaborately wrought chairs, stand the servants, men and maidens. . . . Some of these are armed with fans . . . , others watch with eager eye, and with fawn-like step anticipate and supply, wants before they are sufficiently formed to be announced by word or sign" (82). Douglass's language of foreknowledge—his declaration that these "servants" can "anticipate . . . wants before they are . . . announced"—indicates that these enslaved people can predict the Lloyds' behavior.

While Douglass notes that these house servants are eagerly watching the Lloyds in order to better serve them and to maintain their position in the "black aristocracy on Col. Lloyd's plantation," his next paragraph reminds the reader that the perspective from which one views the scene is crucial: "Viewed from his own table, and *not* from the field, the colonel was a model of generous hospitality." As readers know, thanks to Douglass's testimony, the luxury of the Lloyds' table conceals the "sorrow and hunger-smitten multitudes of the quarter and the field." By raising this issue of perspective, Douglass encourages the reader to imagine what this ability to "watch with eager eye" and "anticipate" behavior might lead to in the hands of enslaved people who are not among the "favored few" (83). Indeed, Douglass's description of some house servants as "*armed* with fans" brings a note of submerged aggression to their portrait, a note that Douglass amplifies as he depicts enslaved people who are more committed to resistance. Deleting a passage about the internalization of disciplinary power and replacing it with a passage that emphasizes perspective and the careful watching of enslavers by enslaved people, Douglass shifts his narrative's focus from surveillance to sousveillance.

Throughout the second autobiography, Douglass adds passages that make his enslavers visible, inverting the power relations of slavery's surveillance system. Delineating the habits and personalities of a particular enslaver on the Eastern Shore, where Douglass grew up, Douglass states, "He did not think that a 'chiel' was near, 'taking notes'" (189). Adapting the line "A chield's amang you, taking notes" from Robert Burns's "On the Late Captain Grose's Peregrinations thro' Scotland," Douglass aligns himself with the spying Grose, who will record all the flaws he sees among the Scottish people and print them in his book. Douglass includes minute physical descriptions of his enslavers, which evoke the visual inventories found in runaway-slave notices. For example, Covey, Douglass reports, "was not a large man; he was only about five feet ten inches in height . . . , short necked, round shoulders; of quick and wiry motion, of thin and wolfish visage; with a pair of small, greenish-gray eyes, set well back under a forehead without dignity, . . . and floating his passions, rather than his thoughts, in sight" (153–54). This description of Covey's "floating passions" emphasizes enslaved people's ability to discern enslavers' mental and emotional states based on sousveillance. Turning the sousveillant eye on the white subject, Douglass's visual inventory of Covey reminds readers that Douglass and, by implication, his fellow enslaved men and women are sousveilling their enslavers as intensely as they are themselves being watched.

However, Douglass does not merely invert the power relations of watcher and watched by depicting instances of sousveillance in *My Bondage and My Freedom*; he also addresses the issue of the sousveillant's visibility. In a passage he adds to *My Bondage and My Freedom* concerning his first enslaver, Captain

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Anthony, Douglass narrates a detailed description of watching the "wretched" Anthony when Douglass was a child, beginning, "Even to my child's eye, he wore a troubled . . . aspect." Douglass asserts that Anthony "little thought that the little black urchins around him, could see, through those vocal crevices, the very secrets of his heart. Slaveholders ever underrate the intelligence with which they have to grapple" (62). Douglass's awkward mixing of visual and aural language here ("see through those vocal crevices") suggests the sensory scope of sousveillance. Anthony's obliviousness to the looks of black children corroborates bell hooks's claim that "[i]n white supremacist society, white people can 'safely' imagine that they are invisible to black people since the power they have historically asserted . . . accorded them the right to control the black gaze" (168). Whereas Anthony incorrectly imagines himself to be invisible, Douglass notes that he used his ability to "see . . . [and understand] the old man" to avoid excessive punishment by making himself scarce when Anthony was in a violent mood. Douglass's sousveillance allows him to attain protective nonvisibility.

Douglass's revisions to the Covey section of the *Narrative*, on the other hand, demonstrate Douglass's awareness of hypervisible sousveillants' vulnerability. In the *Narrative*, Douglass states, "I reached Covey's about nine o'clock; and just as I was getting over the fence that divided Mrs. Kemp's fields from ours, out ran Covey with his cowskin, to give me another whipping. Before he could reach me, I succeeded in getting to the cornfield" (67). In this passage, Douglass focuses on his ability to escape the whipping. In the corresponding passage in the 1855 text, Douglass invokes the disciplinary machinations he earlier associated with Covey only to undermine this relationship:

> I reached Covey's about nine o'clock; and just as I stepped into the field, before I had reached the house, Covey, true to his snakish habits, darted out at me from a fence corner, in which he had secreted himself, for the purpose of securing me. He was amply provided with a cowskin and a rope; and he evidently intended to tie me up, and to wreak his vengeance on me to the fullest extent. . . . I, however, darted back into the woods, before the ferocious hound could get hold of me. (171–72)

Adding the description of Covey "darting out" from a corner where he had "secreted himself," Douglass thus begins the passage by figuring Covey as an unseen panoptic surveillant using cunning and guile to discipline the enslaved workers. This is the Covey of the *Narrative*, whose description fits so well with our Foucauldian framework. Immediately, however, Douglass undermines this psychological discipline by emphasizing Covey's intention to seek "vengeance"—a word that connotes brutish violence rather than intellectual deception—and by depicting him as a "ferocious hound," the bloodhound used by overseers and slave catchers to run down fugitive slaves. Placing panopticism and violence side by side, Douglass exposes the true source of Covey's power: his ability to inflict brutal physical violence on the enslaved workers without fear of retribution. Remove this underlying foundation of violence and "snakish" cunning is futile.

Moreover, Douglass's 1855 expansion of his escape from Covey directs our attention to the visual politics of the scene.[17] Douglass's additions repeatedly emphasize his nonvisibility and his ability to look back at Covey to "see his angry movements" (Douglass, *My Bondage* 172). Whereas the 1845 version simply states that "as the corn was very high, it afforded me the means of hiding" (67), Douglass expands this description of hiding and watching from below in the 1855 text:

> I . . . buried myself in a thicket, where he lost sight of me. The corn-field afforded me cover, in getting to the woods. But for the tall

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> corn, Covey would have overtaken me, and made me his captive. He seemed very much chagrined that he did not catch me, and gave up the chase, very reluctantly; for I could see his angry movements, toward the house from which he had sallied, on his foray. (172)

Douglass underscores his nonvisibility in the next paragraph, drawing attention to the passage with an abrupt switch in verb tense from past to present: "Well, now I am clear of Covey, and of his wrathful lash, for the present. I am in the wood, buried in its somber gloom, and hushed in its solemn silence; hid from all human eyes." If, as Nielsen and Haase argue, Covey's power in the *Narrative* depends on his "nonvisibility" and enslaved people's "constan[t] visib[ility]" (Haase 77), then in *My Bondage and My Freedom* Douglass has emphatically reversed those positions. His own nonvisible sousveillant eye now watches from below as Covey displays his emotions through his physical gestures. These examples of sousveillance augment the impact of Douglass's declaration that, at the beginning of his fight with Covey, he "steadily gaz[ed] my interrogator in the eye" (*My Bondage* 178). His sousveillance has led to this exchange of direct looks.

An addition to another oft discussed scene, the whipping of Aunt Esther (Hester in the *Narrative*), further indicates the increased attention Douglass places on the importance of nonvisibility for sousveillants in *My Bondage and My Freedom*. In the *Narrative* version, which Saidiya Hartman calls "one of the most well-known scenes of torture in the literature of slavery" (3), Douglass describes being "so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight [of Anthony whipping Hester], that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over. . . . I had never seen any thing like it before" (*Narrative* 34). Here, Douglass is so overwhelmed by the horror of what he has just witnessed that he flees from the unprecedented sight. In *My Bondage and My Freedom*, on the other hand, Douglass alters the scene so that he is already in the closet, sleeping, when the whipping begins and is awakened by Esther's "piteous cries" (66–67). Douglass remains nonvisible in his closet, spying on Anthony without being seen: "My sleeping place was on the floor of a little, rough closet, which opened into the kitchen; and through the cracks of its unplaned boards, I could distinctly see and hear what was going on, without being seen by old master" (67). He then narrates the horrors of the whipping, recasting his language to focus on Esther's experience rather than on Anthony's, which he focuses on in the *Narrative*. Whereas in the *Narrative* Douglass hides himself in order to avoid seeing, in *My Bondage and My Freedom* he remains hidden so that he can watch from below and look back at Anthony's "awful criminality." Again, Douglass has reversed the positions of visibility and nonvisibility to depict the subversive potential of nonvisible sousveillance.

Writing five years after Douglass published *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Jacobs in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* relates perhaps the most famous example of sousveillance in the slave-narrative genre. After reaching a moment of crisis in her years-long struggle with Dr. Flint, her tormentor and enslaver, Jacobs hides for seven years in her grandmother's nine-foot-by-seven-foot garret. Though she remains concealed in North Carolina, Jacobs employs subterfuge to convince Flint that she has fled the South, such as having a friend heading to New York secretly carry letters from Jacobs to Flint and postmark them to make it appear that Jacobs has mailed them from New York. Jacobs spies not only on her own enslaver but on the larger surveillance system of slavery, through a hole she bores in the wall with a gimlet. Eavesdropping on "many conversations not intended to meet my ears," she sousveils "the patrols and slave-hunters conferring together about the capture of runaways" (117, 148). Jean Fagan Yellin highlights Jacobs's

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espionage, noting that Jacobs "uses her garret cell as a war room from which to spy on her enemy and to wage psychological warfare against him" (xxx). Literally watching from above as she peeps out from her attic perch, Jacobs inverts the slave system's typical power relations of the watcher and the watched.

Whereas Douglass deployed his sousveillance to attain nonvisibility at strategic moments (to avoid whipping, to evade pursuers), Jacobs's sousveillance requires her to become utterly and unremittingly nonvisible. Michael Chaney and Michelle Burnham both emphasize that Jacobs's "loophole of retreat," which Chaney calls an "'architectural apparatus,' a panopticon" (175), conceals Jacobs while allowing her to observe undetected: "The garret that Jacobs conveys through metaphors of the camera obscura affords invisibility from plantation systems of optic domination via a one-inch diameter peephole" (148). Burnham points out the horrific suffering that Jacobs endures during her years of captivity, asserting that "Jacobs escapes such surveillance only by going into a captivity that in many ways enacts the condition of slavery on a hyperbolic scale" (58). In her windowless garret, which makes "day and night . . . all the same," Jacobs is unable to stand or "move in an erect position," and her food is "passed up to [her] through a trap-door" (Jacobs 114–15). Indeed, though the chapter in which Jacobs introduces her garret is called "The Loophole of Retreat," she shifts to the language of imprisonment in the following chapter (118), and the chapter after that she titles "Still in Prison." As the ultimate sousveillant, Jacobs remains nonvisible within the slave system, but her nonvisibility is so exaggerated it incarcerates her in the very center of the system she sousveils.

Why would Jacobs endure this unimaginable double captivity for seven years? Jacobs is impelled not merely by the need to evade a pursuer or to gather intelligence on the slave system but also by love. She makes herself nonvisible in her "loophole of retreat" to increase her power over those she watches so that she can effect her children's sale to their white father, Mr. Sands, and prevent their abuse by her malevolent enslaver, Dr. Flint. Recognizing that Flint will never stop using her children as leverage to force Jacobs to become his concubine, she goes into hiding in the hope that Flint will eventually give up on finding her and agree to sell her children. The expense of tracking down Jacobs drains Flint's resources and obliges him to sell Jacobs's brother and children to a speculator, who is secretly employed by Mr. Sands. Despite Jacobs's agony, she declares, "I tried to be thankful for my little cell, dismal as it was, and even to love it, as part of the price I had paid for the redemption of my children" (123). Indeed, she bores the peephole because she longs to see her children, not because she wishes to spy on her enemy, and most of the information she gathers has to do with her children's health and safety. Perversely, Jacobs's captivity at the center of the panopticon demonstrates that the simultaneous operation of surveillance and sousveillance places the racially hypervisible sousveillant in a double bind. While nonvisibility confers power, it also prevents Jacobs from being seen by the very people she cares most about: her children. Jacobs's narrative also demonstrates the importance to sousveillance of collaboration. In order to remain nonvisible (and thus protected), Jacobs must rely on a network of friends and family to keep her alive and to make arrangements for her, such as when Jacobs persuades her grandmother to go to Sands and remind him of his promise to emancipate their children (138). Without this extensive familial support, Jacobs would have to emerge from her hiding place and become visible—and thus vulnerable—to the slave system's surveillance.

Jacobs sousveils for others' benefit, motivated by an ethic of care and by the pain of seeing her family and children suffer. Of the three ex-slave narrators I have discussed, Ja-

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cobs is most like the bystanders who record videos of police brutality today. Like Mwamba and Santana, Jacobs placed herself in harm's way to protect others. Mwamba's case clearly shows the dangers of visible sousveillance: officers falsely arrested her and allegedly destroyed the record of her sousveillance, which would have exculpated her and damaged them. Her visibility as an African American woman made her a target. However, thanks to software operating invisibly in the background of her phone to automatically back up photos and videos, she inadvertently saved a copy of the video that disappeared while she was in jail ("Kianga Mwamba"). The charges against Mwamba were dropped after her attorneys gave the video to the Baltimore Police Department's (BPD) Office of Internal Affairs, and the department later settled a civil suit with Mwamba over her claims of assault and illegal arrest, paying her sixty thousand dollars (Wenger). No criminal charges were filed against the officers either for falsely accusing Mwamba or for using excessive force against a detainee. Because Mwamba and her recording were already visible to the BPD at the scene of the police officers' brutality, she was vulnerable to the BPD's reprisals. However, the automatic backup of her footage made the BPD officers visible as well, and Mwamba was able to leverage her watching from below to counter the police narrative. Mwamba's case demonstrates how technology can protect sousveillants, despite their visibility.

Whereas Mwamba's video allowed her to avoid punishment but did not force any reform of the police department or even recognition of its wrongdoing, Santana's greater nonvisibility allowed him to deploy the visual record of his sousveillance strategically and effect both justice and reform. An officer who arrived after the shooting eventually noticed Santana and told him to stop filming and to wait at the scene, but Santana left and—fearing for his safety—did not share his footage with the police or the media. After Santana learned that Officer Slager was claiming Scott tried to take his Taser, though, Santana shared the video with Scott's family. Three days after the shooting, having retained legal counsel, Santana allowed *The New York Times* to publish his video on its home page without naming him as the videographer. The video went viral, disproving Slager's claim that Scott tried to take his Taser and suggesting that Slager tried to frame Scott by dropping his Taser near Scott's body. Slager was convicted of murder and received a twenty-year prison sentence in December 2017. Moreover, the FBI and the Justice Department investigated the shooting, and "South Carolina's governor signed . . . a bill requiring all law enforcement officers in the state to wear body cameras" ("Walter Scott"). Nevertheless, Santana's vulnerability once his anonymity was removed affirms the danger that visible sousveillants face.

Two documentary filmmakers investigating reprisals against sousveillants who publish their videos on social media report, "Current social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have done little to protect ordinary citizens who take the brave step to divulge sensitive information about government abuses. Authorities trawl social media posts and syphon smartphone metadata to track, harass and arrest activists" (de Guzman and Olive). Sousveillants' vulnerability has led activist-minded software engineers to develop smartphone applications such as Mobile Justice, CameraV, and ObscuraCam, which encrypt and protect data stored on the phone and anonymize the identity of the person who shot the video.[18] These innovative digital solutions render sousveillants nonvisible, demonstrating that there are many technologies beyond the panoptic "machine" for dissociating seeing from being seen. These twenty-first-century solutions to the problem of racial hypervisibility demonstrate that surveillance and sousveillance continue to operate simultaneously. For Mwamba and Santana, as well as nineteenth-century ex-slave narrators,

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sousveillance is not race-neutral. Our theories of surveillance should not be either.

Notes

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1. I use the terms *nonvisible* and *nonvisibility*, rather than *invisible* and *invisibility*, to emphasize the sense that the nonvisible is inconspicuous or concealed, as opposed to merely overlooked or unnoticed.

2. Browne calls this hypervisibility "black luminosity" (67). See also Wallace's concept of "spectragraphia" (30).

3. Wiegman has asserted that in the slave system "the disciplinary power of race . . . must be read as implicated in both specular and panoptic regimes" (39). In his "counterhistory of visuality," Mirzoeff advances a similar argument: "The ordering of slavery was a combination of violent enforcement and visualized surveillance that sustained the new colonial order of things. I call it here 'oversight,' meaning the nomination of what was visible to the overseer on the plantation. . . . While this may appear as a contradiction between traditional spectacular punishment and the discipline that Foucault argues succeeded it in the modern period, the modernity of oversight was precisely its combination of enforcement and discipline" (49–50).

4. In his analysis of plantation slavery in the Atlantic world, Mirzoeff categorizes surveillance practices differently, under the headings "mapping, natural history, and the force of law" (57): "Oversight combined the classifications of natural history, which defined the 'slave' as a species, with the spatializing of mapping that separated and defined slave space and 'free' space. These separations and distinctions were enabled by the force of law that allowed the overseer to enforce the slave codes" (10).

5. Wood analyzes the runaway-slave image that preceded many notices.

6. In the compass, *McVeillance* refers to "the installation or using of surveillance cameras [by businesses such as McDonald's] while simultaneously prohibiting people from having or using their own cameras, hand-held magnifiers, smartphones, or the like," and *univeillance* denotes "one-party consent," such as when a participant in a telephone conversation records the call without notifying the other party or parties (Mann 7).

7. Browne does discuss one case of an enslaved man named Sam who rolls his eyes when spoken to, noting that this is an example of "facetiness," from the Jamaican term "facety," meaning "subversive acts of looking and talking back" (72). Similarly, Wallace analyzes these types of "resistant looks" in Frantz Fanon and James Baldwin. hooks articulates a two-part model of "black looks," arguing, "Spaces of agency exist for black people, wherein we can both interrogate the gaze of the Other but also look back, and at one another, naming what we see" (116).

8. The Cabinet of Freedom was created by Lewis Tappan, a member of the American Anti-slavery Society, and published in New York by John S. Taylor. Although not technically an AASS publication, the Cabinet of Freedom was edited by two members of the AASS, Gerrit Smith and William Jay, and "the AASS and Taylor worked closely together in the production of printed documents." Like other books in the series, *Slavery in the United States* benefited from "large-scale distribution through the channels of the AASS and auxiliary societies" (Roy 527, 532).

9. Ball's existence is verified by two white men, and the author of the introduction (perhaps Smith or Jay) seeks to prove Ball's veracity by quoting from newspaper articles that discuss incidents similar to those Ball experienced, including the lynchings of African Americans accused of murder and the trial of a white overseer who has killed an enslaved man under his supervision and is required to compensate the enslaved man's owner but suffers no further punishment for the murder (Introduction).

10. The introduction is unsigned, but Roy has argued that it is written by William Jay (531).

11. DeLombard's comparative reading of Douglass's *Narrative* and *My Bondage and My Freedom* focuses on the author's transition from "a testimonial to a prosecutorial posture" (103).

12. Similarly, J. B. C. Axelrod and Rise B. Axelrod argue that Foucauldian panopticism illuminates the Covey section of the *Narrative*. However, they focus on how to use this insight pedagogically. Tuhkanen, on the other hand, contends that Douglass's *Narrative* primarily portrays subjugation in a Hegelian framework, though "the spectacle of the punishment is supported by other strategies of subjugation—strategies which seem to correspond to the Foucauldian concept of disciplinary power: Covey's strategy partakes in both spectacle and panopticism" (96). While I agree with Tuhkanen, I argue that comparing the *Narrative* with *My Bondage and My Freedom* allows us to more precisely understand the stakes of the various modes of surveillance and countersurveillance that Douglass emphasizes. That is, Douglass himself theorizes surveillance, so it is not simply a matter of applying subsequent theories of surveillance to his texts.

13. Erik Nielson also argues that enslavers relied on a "Foucauldian model of surveillance-based control" (111), but he goes on to analyze the ways in which the trope of wilderness in slave spirituals functioned as a way to evade the panoptic surveillance regime of enslavers.

14. For detailed treatments of Douglass's revisions to the 1845 *Narrative* in *My Bondage and My Freedom*, see Andrews; Sundquist; Matlack; and Levine. Levine offers

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the most thorough account of Douglass's autobiographies, arguing that "[r]evision, rather than completion, was among Douglass's highest values as an autobiographer" (2). His and the other readings tend to focus on the development of Douglass's subjectivity and authority in *My Bondage and My Freedom*.

15. For detailed accounts of Douglass's break from the Garrisonians, see Andrews; Levine. See Levine on Douglass's British tour.

16. Rudoff reads the Edenic allusions in this passage—where Lloyd's construction of the "garden trap" is a "reincarnat[ion of] a biblical scene in which Lloyd plays the role of God"—as an example of Douglass's commentary on biblical justifications of slavery (230).

17. I agree with Jarenski that "[t]he most cogent analyst of nineteenth-century visual culture may be Frederick Douglass" (119), though I focus on Douglass's insights into the surveillant dimension of visual culture. Blackwood argues that "scholars have not fully appreciated the connections between antebellum African American writers' rhetorical sophistication and their participation in, commentary on, and both resistance and capitulation to a larger antebellum discussion about visual representation" (94).

18. Livestreaming events and posting videos through proxies are additional ways that videographers have sought to protect themselves. Bair shows how to record and release videos to maximize their social-justice potential.

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