

Panoptomically Incorrect
[transcript]

Stephanie Negriff
California State University, Northridge



Can you see everything or nothing?

Like Hoovers' Ol' Gs

You always get your man

But can you find me?

Every ride has watching eyes

From epidermis to aster

Every public space I am girded

Like chattel to master

Every second I feel the invincible stare

Of your persistent, uncomfortable gaze

But for what purpose than to make aware

Life's inexhaustible maze.

In dressing rooms, really!

Must reflections make me think twice?

If you must watch my every move,

some perspective would be nice.

Does your gaze have interest,

or is it just a ruse?

For discipline or punishment

Or merely to confuse?

Bentham's grand utility

Could prosper in the end

By striking a position

Progressively more feminine.

All seeing, but not knowing, coercing, controlling
Missing biases that divide,
Thought essential in hegemonic realms
women less likely abide.

A woman's vision spans far beyond
A world of youth and fashion,
with resolve and toughness through words and stance,
with nuanced judgments and compassion.

Panoptic gravity pulls toward a hell
To which all humanity must surrender
A world that fears it is always being watched
matters not how the watchers gender.

Freedom from surveillance,
To think, speak, write, move, dance
Peace without assailants

And no technological askance.

At least a little peace and solitude
when I am safe and sound at home
please cut out those digital scams
that prey when I think I'm alone.

My beautiful body matters
It contains all that I possess
What it does and with whom
Should matter more to me and to you less.

So, Mr./ Ms. Panopticon, whichever suits you best,
Stay out of my comfort zone
Just stop it. Relax. Chill.
Let me take care of the rest.