Close Reading Workshop Activity

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Read closely the following excerpts from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1995. Print.) and use the strategies we discussed to mark up each paragraph. We have provided a general list of questions (A-E) to answer in the first example, which we will discuss and use for the second example. Use these questions as a guideline for the last three.

"Bentham's Panopticon is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then is to place a supervisor in the central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy" (Foucault 200).

A. List the main points/write a topic sentence for this paragraph
B. List of unknown words/concepts to look up
C. How do the ideas of the paragraph connect to broader/modern issues
D. Evaluate evidence/description: Does the paragraph convince you of a position or are you able to visualize the object/subject?
E. Further questions

"This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, at which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the center in periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead – all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism" (Foucault 197).

A. Why the space works as a tool of discipline because of constant surveillance
B. Periphery, hierarchical
C. Government surveillance, data mining, social media, constantly being watched
D. I can imagine the lack of privacy and how that might be used as a punishment
E. How does privacy affect a dead person? Why are there dead people among the rest?

"Treat ' lepers' as 'plague victims', project the subtle segmentations of discipline onto the confused space of internment, combine it with the methods of analytical distribution proper to power, individualize the excluded, but use procedures of individualization to mark exclusion – this is what was operated regularly by disciplinary power from the beginning of the nineteenth century in the psychiatric asylum, the penitentiary, the reformatory, the approved school and, to some extent, the hospital" (Foucault 199).

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

"The constant division between the normal and the abnormal, to which every individual is subjected, brings us back to our own time, by applying the binary branding and exile of the leper to quite different objects; the existence of a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising and correcting the abnormal brings into play the disciplinary mechanisms to which the fear of the plague gave rise" (Foucault 199).

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

"It is polyvalent in its applications; it severs to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work. It is a type of location of bodies in a space of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruction of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons" (Foucault 205).

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.