

the aristocratic sportsmen's code brought British big-game hunters to the front lines of empire building, in part, by positioning the uncivilized, wasteful savage as a binary opposite.

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The Circular Cage of Dress: Subjecting the Upper-Middle Class Victorian Woman to the Panoptic Gaze

The nineteenth-century upper-middle class American woman was imprisoned by yards and yards of cumbersome layers of clothing, bound by tight corsets and the dragging weight of long heavy skirts. The Victorian women's clothing, in particular the corset, can be interpreted as a structure that in very concrete and real ways confined and constricted their bodies. This paper explores the lived female experience of how fashionable dress acted as a structure of containment in disciplining Victorian women. Panoptic mechanism serves as a framework for analysis in this study and it utilized in two distinct ways. The first is dress as a physical structure of containment that disciplined Victorian women, just as Jeremy Bentham's prison walls did a prisoner. Panoptic mechanism is then used as a metaphor for fashionable dress.

The idea of the panopticon comes from Jeremy Bentham's plan for reforming prison architecture. A Panopticon is an architectural structure with a central tower with windows facing divided cells located within the surrounding structure of buildings. The prisoners could be viewed at all times and thus would perceive themselves to be under the constant surveillance of a guard. The belief that they were watched would result in the prisoners imposing discipline upon themselves, making them active participants in their own supervision. Foucault adopted Bentham's principles of the Panopticon as a new discipline of modern social control. Applied as a new surveillance-power Foucault understood the panoptic mechanism to be capable of disciplining bodies.
