



EVERYONE IS CONSTANTLY UPDATING: SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM IN
GARY SHTEYNGART'S *SUPER SAD TRUE LOVE STORY*

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Abstract

This article intervenes into the new architecture of surveillance capitalism with by, tracing the novel to the recent debates in the field of data extraction, algorithmic government, and digital commodification. Although studies of the novel tend to focus on dystopian futurity, techno-consumerism and neoliberal precarity, there has been limited focus on the operation of surveillance capitalism. To remedy this research gap, the article explores how the narrative constructs the normativity of pervasive monitoring, affectometreology and anticipatory datafication in an instrumentarian social design. The study takes a methodical approach of applying Zuboff's theoretical framework along with close reading and textual analysis to examine how the novel uncovers the extraction imperative as it continuously plunders intimate human experience into behavioral surplus. The analysis shows that the text is anticipating the development of prediction products, as well as behaviour markets where sentiment, enthusiasm, consumers' interpersonal relationships are made quantifiable and acted out through the process of computing optimization. Additionally, it is stated in this article that Big Other is an all-pervading digital architecture, which is conceptualized to restructure the subjectivity, autonomy and social interaction in an asymmetrical pattern of knowledge acquisition and behavioral modification. The study's focus upon technology's entanglements and the economic procedures of extraction interfere with the existing paradigms of literary research in the areas of contemporary surveillance discussion, technocriticism, and postdisciplinary literary theory. Surrounding it, the article introduces the novel as a critical intervention revealing the epistemic, political and affective impacts of surveillance capitalism in the algorithmically mediated digital era.

Keywords: surveillance capitalism; extraction imperative; behavioral surplus; prediction products; behavioral futures markets; Big Other; instrumentarian power

Introduction and Background

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally reconfigured contemporary social, economic, and affective relations through the emergent architecture of surveillance capitalism. According to (2019), surveillance capitalism operationalizes the extraction imperative by converting human experience into behavioral surplus subsequently transformed into prediction products for behavioral futures markets. Within this instrumentarian architecture, Big Other functions as an omnipresent computational apparatus that enables continuous monitoring, behavioral modification, and asymmetrical knowledge accumulation. by critically anticipates these techno-economic transformations through its dystopian representation of algorithmic governance, commodified intimacy, and digitally mediated subjectivity (Shteyngart, 2010).

Research Problem

Existing scholarship on predominantly foregrounds dystopian consumerism, neoliberal precarity, and technological alienation while insufficiently interrogating the novel through the conceptual architecture of surveillance capitalism. Consequently, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to how the text dramatizes the extraction imperative, behavioral surplus, prediction products, behavioral futures markets, Big Other, and instrumentarian power as interconnected mechanisms of algorithmic governance and behavioral modification.



Research Objectives

Core Research Objective

- To investigate the operational architecture of surveillance capitalism in through .

Supporting Research Objectives

- To interrogate how the extraction imperative and behavioral surplus restructure interpersonal relations, emotional subjectivity, and digitally mediated identity formation within the novel.
- To analyze the functioning of prediction products, behavioral futures markets, Big Other, and instrumentarian power as mechanisms of computational control and behavioral modification.

Research Questions

Core Research Question

- How does represent the operational architecture of surveillance capitalism through Zuboff's theoretical framework?

Supporting Research Questions

- In what ways does the novel depict the extraction imperative and behavioral surplus as mechanisms of affective commodification and algorithmic mediation?
- To what extent do prediction products, behavioral futures markets, Big Other, and instrumentarian power shape subjectivity, autonomy, and social interaction within the narrative?

Central Argument

This article argues that anticipates the contemporary architecture of surveillance capitalism by dramatizing the extraction imperative through continuous behavioral data extraction, predictive computation, and algorithmic commodification. The novel exposes how behavioral surplus is transformed into prediction products for behavioral futures markets while Big Other and instrumentarian power systematically restructure autonomy, intimacy, and subjectivity within digitally governed socio-economic systems

Literature Review

Opening Paragraph

Consolidation of surveillance capitalism has reshaped of understandings of power, subjectivity, and digital mediation in computational society in new and radical ways. New research by the platform studies movement examines the platforms' architectures as a way to co-opt and process human experiences into extractable behavioural data for predictive economic processes. In this context, emerges as an important literary expression of algorithmic governance, affective commodification and technologically mediated form of social life. The book predicts an increasing focus on extracting, the adding up of behavioral surpluses, and predictive infrastructures in the era of surveillance capitalism. Interdisciplinary research into surveillance, platforms, datafication, therefore, offers a key theoretical background for analyzing the novel's dystopian projection of a digitally mediated subjectivity and instrumentarian power.

Supporting Argument 1

The idea of the surveillant assemblage by Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson (2000) proposes to rethink surveillance as a system of distributed, rhizomatic and multiple data-extraction systems that are not limited to institutions or technologies. Their framework is especially important for the study of the disappearance of disciplinary systems from traditional and the emergence of complex computing systems that can continuously harvest behavioral data surveillance capitalism. This conceptualization further relates with Zuboff's extraction



imperative, which reconceptualises “human traces” as being “fragmented” at the same time that they are also being “deprived” of their human nature. This conceptualisation is also related to Zuboff’s notion of “extractive imperative”, where partial traces of human actions are being “fragmented” and at the same time “deprived” of their “human nature” to become “behavioural surplus” for predictive economic operations. “” inhabits the assemblage-like conditions achieved by the permanent visibility and digitized social interactions representing the assemblage of communicative technologies, predictive analytics, and the algorithmic monitoring conditions of subjecting human behavior to valorization and commodity.

Supporting Argument 2

Building on Foucauldian disciplinary theory, Gilles Deleuze theorises societies of control, which attempt to state that society’s authority is now practiced in a flexible state of technological modulation instead of strict institutional control, that is, within an open circuit (Deleuze, 1992). The shift from discipline to control is of particular relevance to surveillance capitalism because of algorithmic systems that constantly surveil, classify and shape human behavior through predictive computation. Zuboff’s ideas of prediction products and behavioral futures markets are similar to what Deleuze calls perpetual modulation and informational circulation: the constant adjusting of behavior of subjects by instrumentarium promised by a ubiquitous digital scoring system, the technologically mediated intimacy, and the constant evaluation of behavior by computer information in accordance with market-driven predictive demands.

Supporting Argument 3

David Lyon (2007) developed the focus on the surveillance society and made the monitoring of people increasingly “normal” a central part of the everyday technological infrastructure. In Lyon’s conception, surveillance is now a socially normal means of governance, consumption, and security in digitally-mediated societies. This formulation stands in important parallel to Zuboff’s idea of the Big Other, an all-pervasive computer-mediated infrastructure in regular social interaction. The cultural condition that makes the extraction imperative and the accumulation of behavioral surplus possible – the surveillance society – now exists. The structures of algorithmic visibility in institutional settings are developed through the internalization and universal acceptance of algorithms as modes of social sustained involvement, emotional recognition, and economic value, as can be seen with characters who willingly self-expose to systems of surveillance.

Supporting Argument 4

The notion of “Liquid Surveillance” introduced by Zygmunt Bauman and David Lyon focuses on the ubiquitous, vast, and highly flexible types of surveillance structures that are found in modern times, or the “baby-boomer’s” world of late modernity (Bauman and Lyon, 2013). Liquid surveillance is an attractive, act of participation, a seductive appetite, an interactive and digitalized process that affects the body without being as strict as a disciplinary institution. From this point of view, Zuboff’s argument is further validated: that a form of repression in surveillance capitalism is not actual but rather instrumental architectures to engage in voluntary acts of disclosure of behavior. The extraction imperative is therefore ‘intermingled’ with consumer culture and emotionally hooked onto connectivity and digitalization. The surface intimacy of technologically mediated connections and the paradoxical emotional insecurity it generates; the obsession with online visibility as a compel and the ongoing algorithmic harvesting, extraction and anticipation of information sources that make up the social bodies of liquid surveillance: these are some of the characteristic characteristics of this form of intimacy.



Supporting Argument 5

Nick Couldry and Ulises A. Mejias further developed the concept of data colonialism as a way of understanding how the present-day computational capitalism exploits human life as a source from which to extract and monetise without end (Couldry and Mejias, 2019). What they discuss is clearly an extension of Zuboff's extraction imperative because it holds that extractive machinery is not just for collecting information, but is for colonizing social life, using power-imbalanced computing configurations. Couldry and Mejias (2019) position their work *The Costs of Connection* in opposition to a view of connection that is dominated by extractive digital architectures which turn lived experience into behavioral surplus. This argument is taken up in more recent work by Mejias and Couldry (2024), discussing the growth of predictive authority in the hands of platform corporations, brought about by the mass appropriation of data and infrastructure. The two works shine new light here on the colonial nature of everyday computational extraction, and how it is captured through behavioral futures markets. Intimacy mediated by technologies and sociality controlled by algorithms expose the vulnerability of emotional experience to be captured by prediction, commodification and government.

Supporting Argument 6

Jathan Sadowski (2019) has introduced the notion of data capital, identifying data as a vital economic asset in today's computational-capitalism. According to Sadowski, data extraction is no longer a peripheral commercial operation, but the means by which digital firms accumulate and control, as well as predict, as they pursue their authority. Both of these ideas could be said to complement Zuboff's theory of behavioural surplus and his projections of prediction products, in that they picture human activity as raw material for the purposes of algorithms monetising. In , social interactions, consumer preferences, emotion performances are continuously measured and translated into measurable information goods. The novel thus predicts the foundations of subjectivity that are being remediated by surveillance capitalism's economic designs, based on predictive computation and behavioural optimization.

Supporting Argument 7

Nick Srnicek's influential idea of platform capitalism is one that looks at the role of digital platforms as "intermediate" units that might be expected to extract, process and capture flows of data in modern capitalism (Srnicek, 2017). Indeed, using network effects and the "fuel" of ongoing behavioral data collection, the platforms build their economic strength, which leads us back to Zuboff's ideas about 'behavioral futures markets' and 'predictive economic infrastructures'. Platform capitalism thus entails a fundamentally unequal form of computational control, in which companies have new and unparalleled powers to predict and manipulate behavior. , a digitally mediated environment, shapes communication, intimacy, and identity through everyday technological interfaces in ever-present and all-over social environments, where platformed architectures have benefited from the normalization of behavioural surveillance, predictive analyses and instrumentarian power in everyday life.

Supporting Argument 8

Frank Pasquale's notion of black box society reflects the transparency of algorithms that have come to dominate, in an increasingly pervasive way, economic, political and social life through the blinding capability of hidden computational processes (Pasquale 2015). Algorithmic opacity elicits important asymmetries in knowledge and responsibility, allowing corporations to have predictive, intangible influence over people and institutions," argues Pasquale. This is in full agreement with the concept of Big Other as Zuboff characterizes it, as an "epistemic inequality (based) architecture of computational manipulation. In an algorithmic society, characters are still subject to black-box evaluation systems and categorizations that determine



the social value and economic viability of the characters. Thus the novel reveals how to keep the subjectivities, visibilities and means of participation under control in digitally mediated environments through the unobtrusive work of predictive mechanisms. The novel therefore sheds a light on how subjectivity, visibility, and means of participation are controlled through the operation of inherently predictive mechanisms that appear as no-that.

Contradictory Argument 1

The issue of systemic digital risk by Dean Curran is also partly subtly countered by Zuboff's take on Surveillance Capitalism, looking at the technology of rendering the digital landscape as a systemic practice that is not only economically driven but also presents peculiar systemic risks as situated technology in network society (Curran, 2023). While the focus has been rightfully on corporate behavior and its effects, excessive attention on behavioral extraction can dampen other structural threats like infrastructural issues, cybersecurity risks, and overall technological uncertainty. While Zuboff highlights the power of the instrumentarian and certainty of predictability, Curran argues that the consequences of digital systems often go beyond institutional control. However, this critique does not lack any productive aspect as it also shows the technologically saturated environments such as systemic social fragmentation, informational excess and instability in the face of algorithmic behavioural control.

Contradictory Argument 2

Although surveillance capitalism has achieved some explanatory power, it can still be countered by the concept of a techno-feudalism, which argues that in today's digital economies, "overtime, digital economies are becoming more and more like neo-feuds featuring infrastructural monopolies and rent-seeking (than just a system of predictive behavioural extraction)" (Morozov, 2022). Morozov thus wonders whether, with its focus on behavioral surplus and prediction products, Zuboff's description of the "political-economic dynamics" induced by digital monopolies is sufficiently comprehensive. His participation turns the spotlight on three topics: owner concentration, infrastructural dependency and platform sovereignty. The task of developing an analysis of, however, is compatible with the analytical focus of Morozov as despite these theoretical uncertainties, the narrative focuses on technological mediation of social hierarchies, the economic precarity, and digital asymmetries.

Concluding Paragraph

These academic engagements collectively show that surveillance capitalism is something that is more than just a technology; it is a diffused computational architecture that mediates subjectivity, sociality, and economics by predictive extraction and algorithmic management. The exclusive emphasis on predictive-economic readings is tempered by what can be called contradictory accounts that highlight and foreground system technological instability and techno-feudal monopolization, alongside Zuboff's notions of 'instrumentarian power', 'behavioural surplus', 'Big Other', and 'extraction imperative'. Yet, as contemporary literary dystopias engage in a critical narrative of these architectures, existing literature has been silencing this powerful literary space that examines the affective, epistemic and ontological repercussions of computational capitalism.

Research Gaps

Epistemological Gap

The current literature on surveillance capitalism largely focuses on sociological, political-economic and technological frameworks, and undermines its analysis of the production of alternative epistemologies of computational governance and predictive extraction by literature. Rarely, then, attention has been paid to the problem of the critical restructuring of knowledge production, of "algorithmic visibility" and of "commodifying behavior" in dystopian fiction



where the algorithms are untracked by those they run for. Considering therefore dystopian fiction, where the algorithms are not tracked by the people who run them, limited attention has been devoted so far to the critical reconfiguration of the modes of Knowledge production, of the manner of “algorithmic visibility” and of the way of “commodifying behaviour” in dystopian fiction.

Ontological Gap

Surveillance capitalism scholarship does not question the ontological constitution of subjectivity, intimacy and “humanness” in digitally mediated environments from a computational architecture perspective. Literary illustrations of affective fragmentation, the existential precarity and technologically mediated selfhood under instrumentarian power and algorithmic governance are often overlooked in the existing analyses that focus on institutional structures and data extraction.

Theoretical Gap

While the framework of surveillance studies is used at great length in mobilizing Zuboff's project, there is not much interdisciplinary synthesis between surveillance capitalism, platform capitalism, data colonialism and literary technocriticism. Theoretical frameworks often, as a result, remain conceptually liminal and do not adequately explore the simultaneous, and often intersecting, effects of the extraction imperative, the behavioural surplus and the behavioural futures markets on the dystopian literary depictions of computational capitalism.

Methodological Gap

Previous research defined as 'studies' has mostly taken a sociological, media-theoretical or a political-economic perspective and largely ignored the 'close reading' and textual analysis as powerful tools for grasping surveillance capitalism, given its analysis of literary texts. The studies previously carried out mostly adopted a sociological, a media-theoretical or a political-economic perspective, with comparatively few concentrated on close reading and textual analysis as powerful tools for grasping surveillance capitalism, given their analysis of literary text. The lack of academic focus on “affective representation,” symbolic structures, and narrative form as means to critique algorithmic governance and predictive architectures has resulted in a paucity of work focused on these elements of dystopian fiction.

Addressing Research Gaps

The challenge of addressing the Epistemological Gap

To fill this epistemological void, the present study focuses on literary fiction as a potentially critical mode of knowledge production that can challenge predictive computation, algorithmic visibility and behavioral extraction. The article shows how generates alternative epistemic understandings of the architectures of surveillance capitalism and of computational governance through close reading.

Handling the Ontological Gap

The article underscores its ontological deficiency while elucidating its ways of shaping the subjectivity, intimacy, emotionality, and interpersonal relationships in digitally mediated environments in the context of surveillance capitalism. The study examines the power of the extraction imperative and the human as instrumentarian, which enables the redesign of human life into ongoing resources of information for the computational architectures, through Zuboff's framework.

Addressing the Theoretical Gap

This study aims for this current theoretical lacuna by transcending the boundaries of a single domain and combining elements of surveillance studies, platform capitalism studies, data colonialism theory, and literary technocriticism. This article combines dimensions of these



systems to more fully conceptualize their working as a relation within dystopic literary depictions of surveillance capitalism.

Help fill in the Methodological Gap

In this study, the methodological gap will be filled by bringing alternative methods of close reading and textual analysis into the investigation of the algorithmic regime of the government and the computational extraction of narratives. In contrast, this methodological approach highlights the critical role of literary analysis in making visible affective commodification, predictive infrastructures and digitally mediated subjectivity beyond the traditional approaches within the sociological and technological frameworks of surveillance capitalists' architectures.

Final Conclusion

The literature shows that surveillance capitalism is a kind of architecture of computation that alters behaviors, subjectivity, and social interaction via predictive extraction and algorithmic mediation. This study constructs itself with help from the interdisciplinary theories of scholarship and literary technocriticism, thereby making itself a significant dystopian gesture, a gesture that reveals epistemological and affective effects of instrumentarian computational power.

Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically informed by theory of the emergence of an economic paradigm or architecture based on the abstraction, computation and monetization of human experience, called surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019). The extraction imperative has emerged as an integral part of this architecture, by which corporations collect behavioural information as a result of the normal social conduct, communication, consumption, and feelings of people. These data are converted into a proprietary informational asset called "behavioral surplus," which exceeds what is needed to operate the system and is diverted instead to predictive computational systems, Zuboff believes. As such, behavioural surplus is used as an initial and economic asset to create prediction products which can predict future human behaviour and also influence it.

These products are traded in the behavioral futures markets in which companies jockey for "predictive certainty" about the actions of a single and a collective agent (Zuboff, 2019). In this sense, surveillance capitalism recon frames human experience based on algorithmic optimization, datafication and behavioural modification. In this context, Big Other becomes an everywhere computational platform/machine that is embedded in infrastructures, devices, and platforms and normalizes the perpetuation of monitoring and the accumulation of knowledge in an asymmetrical way. Zuboff then aims to re-formulate the concept of instrumentarian power as a new form of power that functions not by way of ideology nor by sovereign authority, but by the atomization of behavioral tuning. Given the dystopian social reality towards which it points, this theory is well suited to analyzing the novel, which foresees a dynamic society dominated by machines that predict. This theory has proved itself useful in analyzing the novel because it predicts a dystopian social order, in which affective commodification, digitally mediated subjectivity and computational surveillance act as a governing mechanism.

Methodology

This article draws on post disciplinary and interdisciplinary outlook and sensibilities, which embrace Surveillance Studies, Science and Technology Studies (STS), Critical Data Studies (CDS), Digital Political Economy, Media and Communication Studies, and platform capitalism. Methodologically, textual analysis and close reading are used to analyze the depiction of surveillance capitalism in represents using narrative structure, characterization, technological imagery and digitally mediated social relations. Specifically, the extraction



imperative, the behavioral surplus, the prediction products, behavioral futures markets, the Big Other, and the instrumentarian power is analysed as part of the dystopian architecture of the novel. This cross-disciplinary methodological approach allows the analysis to uncover how literary works in various ways comment on algorithmic governance, platform related capitalism and computational behavioral manipulation. However, the study is based on one main corpus and mainly concentrates on Zuboff's theoretical outlook which can hinder further comparative discussion with other theo- or technocritical theoretical angles.

Analysis

In the dystopian cosmos of anticipates the path towards the rise of computational capitalism is indicated by an unsettling portrayal of a technologically mediated life, an algorithmic visibility, and a stratified social order ordered by data. Humans merge with the digital, the quantifiable and the constant connectivity in the novel. Shteyngart develops a hyper-mediated sociability, the ways in which identities, intimacies and social legitimacy are constantly negotiated and negotiated through technical conventions like the “*appärät*” (multi-functional gadget whose interface is used to display consumers' desires, their ranking, their current history, etc., actively recorded in public context [Shteyngart, 2010]). Therefore, the novel foregrounds the “normalization” of monitoring behavior in surveillance infrastructures and indicates how they shift all aspects of our lives into the realm of “extractive computational governance,” a form of state-created control mechanisms. As a result, the novel presents the normalisation of surveillance technologies that are infrastructure tools regulating behaviour in everyday life by turning it into “extractive computational governance,” a form of control technologies established by the state. As theorized by surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019) is an emerging economic structure based on the extraction imperative of appropriation where a human experience becomes free raw material which is submitted as input to data processing and predictive calculation. In this architecture, behavioral surplus is converted into prediction products which are traded in behavioral futures markets intended to predict and influence future behaviors. Zuboff also theorises the Big Other as an omnipresent computation scene that emerges from understandings and innovations of algorithmic environments of perpetual monitoring and behavioural modification that come to shape daily life. Hence, instrumentarian power is realized indirectly by way of automated behavioral tuning, not of manifested force. critically centers this entire surveillance capitalist process in its portrayal of intimacy mediated by digital tools, computation and the regulation of social life by technology.

Extraction Imperative

In, the pulling of objects is the basis for "all the ways of sociality, technology, and visibility between people. The extraction imperative is the never-ending demand of surveillance capitalism to subjugate human experience through a collection of behavioural data, which is subsequently used for predictive economic operations, writes Zuboff (2019). This architecture speaks ahead of itself in Shteyngart's dystopian setting, where he encountered “*appärät*”, a wearable computer that was ever present, gathering, projecting, and disseminating personal data. It is intended to measure the device "publicly" emotions, sexual appeal, buying power, social status and so on and turns everyday life into an "extractable informational resource. Formality penetrates private experience and means that as characters continually come into relation with digital interfaces the private experience becomes structurally bound up with computational visibility and behaviour capture.

The novel reiterates, and simultaneously undermines, the intimate relationship with other people that is being superseded by information collection and algorithms reveal themselves. Throughout the novel, the intimate relation with other people is being replaced by information



collection and algorithms being transparent. Lenny Abramov's feelings of being hyper-visible through technology are starkly different from younger characters who fully embrace surveillance as a "form of life. What is lacking with Lenny Abramov is a sense of discomfort around the hyper-visibility he experiences when using tech, whereas the younger characters willingly incorporate surveillance as a "form of life." Eunice Park has a need to constantly give herself away and to shorten her means of communication, compulsively broadcasting the pieces of her life on Global Teens. For instance, messages on social networking sites like u look hottt and miss u lol (Shteyngart 2010) illustrate the way emotional language is broken into bite-sized chunks fit for social networking and for rapid consumption. The condition, then, of communication is organized in terms of extractive visibility and algorithmic participation. The novelty of this commodity logic of affective life further strengthens the extraction imperative. Humans reveal no intrinsic privateness since once more, each resolving move, choice and feeling shift can be recorded and assessed by the machine. Systematic categorizations based on the "hotness" of scores and on the profile of consumers made with the help of the technological systems are permanently assigned to characters. The volume of quantification speaks to the transformation of experience into data flows which can be used to make predictions that can be monetized, as in "surveillance capitalism. Shteyngart thus illustrates the very intimate ways in which computational capitalism invests in language, in embodiment, in feeling. In this way, Shteyngart reveals the intimate character of the ways capitalism computes intimacy, language, embodiment and feeling. However, this architectural dystopia calls into question the beginnings of a society where the human subject is conceived and treated, in its entirety, as a material to be continually appropriated with information and subjected to algorithmic governance (Zuboff, 2019).

Behavioral Surplus

The behavioral surplus occurs as on-going transformation of personal interpersonal behavior, emotions and social performances into information that goes beyond the communication service. Zuboff, 2019, defines behavioral surplus as a kind of "behavioural data mining" that is distilled from human experience, but is then used for economic forecasting processes that humans are not aware of or consenting to. Shteyngart foresees this in environments suffused with technology where people will provide an enormous amount of behavior information in a voluntary manner. "äppärät" constantly monitor physiological signals, consumer tastes, sexual appeal, and interactions between people, changing everyday lives into a constant repository for information and extractible data. Thus, human behaviour is per se a infinite computational resource that is algorithmically processed and that is also economically valued.

The affective communication is used to create surplus informational value especially in the novel. The informational surplus arising from the affective communication is one of the digital culture of the novel. The logic of perpetual disclosure is internalized among fans of Eunice Park through "abridged" emotional performances conducted to trigger visibility by writing for algorithms. A casual snapshot of such speech offers such expressions: "ROFL," "OMG," and "High net worth individuals only" (Shteyngart, 2010), which all reveal a linguistic environment that is becoming more geared toward fast, fleeting digital transfers and data capture than any real possibility of interpersonal intimacy. Communication is no longer just a social exchange but production of behaviours circulating computational infrastructures. Every encounter will then leave behind informational residues that can be interpreted in behaviour, pre-categorized and monetized.

Clearly, Shteyngart illustrates that behavior that is in excess of communication goes far beyond the explicit message, and the behaviors are felt and psychological as well as said. Individuals



are continually assessed on their appearance, strengths, spending reading, and emotional reactions that are gathered by instrumentation of the user as they operate through technological platforms. The biometric measures, attractiveness, spending habits, emotional responses are automatically gathered as they interface with technology, persistently measuring a character. Lenny's knowledge of human beings being "rated" and openly divided by the algorithmic representability of subjectivity illustrates how subjectivity as a concept can be further deconstructed into informational abstraction. Surveillance capitalism thus converts the inner experiences of the human person into the data streams of a particular disposition that can be traded predictively. It is a novel that thus shows us how by restructuring the social ontology from behavioural surplus there are already no longer any inherent distinctions between the private experience and computational visibility. "Often construed through a dystopian lens, Shteyngart's novel reminds us of a society in which emotional life, the body, linguistic expression, and embodied identity become constant resources for information driven content and predictive economic practices, overseen by algorithmic systems of behavioral control (Zuboff, 2019)."

Prediction Products

In the context of, prediction products arise from technological systems that aim not just to document behavior, but also to forecast and categorize, and model behavior based on such predictions, in order to influence it. "Prediction products" are "proprietary computational products created from behavioral surplus sold to forecast human behavior with greater certainty" (Zuboff, 2019). In congregate technologies that constantly assess and at all times measure people based on measurable patterns of desirability, consumption, sexuality and socio-economic value, Shteyngart's dystopian society anticipates this architecture that predicts. The "apparat" is not just a conduit for communication, but a device that could become a predictive machine with the power to make personal data into predictive judgments about how to engage with others and how people are supposed to act.

This is especially discerned in this novel's public ranking systems that happen in real time. Characters are continually sorted by using algorithmically derived metrics, such as "fuckability", wealth, and emotional allure. Evaluable systems can be considered primitive representatives of prediction products in that they represent sets of structures that guide future interactions based on computational evaluation of behaviour from previously experienced interaction sequences. People don't have to meet each other face-to-face anymore; they just meet each other in informational 'precogs' that are already constructed by tech systems. Therefore, interpretation, done by algorithms, comes before Human perception itself. The transformation of identity into predictive categorization is a result of surveillance capitalism's programming of social knowledge to be sold as marketable certainty.

By getting people to act out in ways that are rewarded by the algorithm, Shteyngart illustrates here another way that prediction products shape emotional and relational actions. Eunice Park's obsession with being seen, having numbers, and being "digital" sheds light onto how predictive systems unconsciously manipulate one's presentations and affective expression. GlobalTeens develops shortened versions of emotional expression, and performative communication, as algorithmic systems value legibility, speed, circulation and visibility. This is described in terms of 'images are everything' and the compulsion of ranking practices (Shteyngart 2010), and it reveals an increasingly culture-centered culture based on predictions instead of on genuine intimacy. Prediction products thus do not only anticipate an action, but actually mold the context in which future action comes into being that may become socially and economically "intelligible".



It sketches out the dystopian architecture that tells us how predictive computing logic changes human relationships, through surveillance capitalism. Behavioral knowledge is turned into anticipated commodities, subjectivity is redescribed algorithmically as expected entities, and data-based social predictions and forecasting (Zuboff, 2019) is algorithmically produced.

Behavioral Futures Markets

Implicitly, in the speculation of behavioral futures markets, there exist socio-economic systems to commodify the knowledge of predictive behaviour and make human behaviour themselves work as a marketable form of informational capital. Behavioral futures markets are the economy sphere where prediction products, based on behavioral surplus, are exchanged for predicting and/or influencing future human actions (Zuboff, 2019). In a dystopian society predating Shteyngart's imagined world, the court comes up with the answers: economic credibility, interpersonal desirability, civic legitimacy—in all three, the judge is the king. Human beings more and more become predictive profiles, whose values in the future rely on their capacity to keep being behaviorally legible in computational systems.

The ranking and scoring systems drove by money-heterodox multiples of the novel's desirability are modelled on the functioning of behavioral futures markets. The economic value, emotional appeal and consumer suitability of characters is constantly evaluated by algorithmically-generated indicators being displayed by the “*äppärät*”, which reveals their value publicly. These do not simply point in the direction of current identity; rather, these predict social and economic identity. In this way, interaction in the future becomes predictively planned by means of informational systems that can predict the possible relationship, consumer outcome. People then live and move inside a market-based surveillance system, the knowledge about their intimacy, recognition, and socio-economic value given as computational anticipation.

The novel's economic downturn and commercialized society augment this critique. This is one of the most paradoxical conditions: uncertainty at one extreme, and greater scrutiny of data at the other, as if the aim of predictive capitalism was to deny uncertainty while extracting more and more data. This predictive logic is internalized by characters, which always adapt their behavior to keep being desirable to algorithms and visible with respect to the market. Eunice's ongoing worry about social class and the surplus of her ‘wired’ appeal illustrates how the logic of surveillance capitalism promotes the self-optimization for the prospective financial capital gains. Important phrases like “Everybody rated everybody” and perpetual worries about “credit poles” and “the credibility of money” (Shteyngart, 2010) reveal a society ruled by predictive market rationality rather than by free democratic social relations.

Behavioral futures markets instead thus make human lives turns into a speculative economic exercise organized via algorithmic expectation and behavioural forecasts depending on information. The novel is a critical study that lays bare the way in which surveillance capitalism reimagines social ontology, the future possibility of human beings as commodity-value, predictability. By depicting this dystopian world in this way, Shteyngart makes us aware of the widespread dehumanizing of social existence that takes place within computers which are incentivizing our anticipation itself and whose purpose is to serve economic motivations instead of people (Zuboff, 2019).

Big Other

In the era of autonomy and social life, Big Other manifests itself as a presentational state of computation that is always on, always with us, always in between us, a computational field that regulates our social life all the time, mediated by algorithms, monitored, and amplified through a visibility of the user. For Zuboff, the Big Other is the “distributed digital architecture” that is



in place now and will gradually supplant the traditional system of institutional surveillance by automatic systems of “ubiquitous computational monitoring” that are “seamless in daily life” (Zuboff, 2019). The novel's techno saturated social world, in which communication, intimacy, consumption, and identity construction are shaped by digital devices, platforms, and assesses systems, offers Shteyngart a model of what he sees as the "future of self-presentation. In this technologically saturated society, in which communication, intimacy, consumption, and identity building are governed by digital devices, by platforms, and by systems of evaluation, Shteyngart expects to see such an architecture in the "future of self-presentation. Surveillance is no longer seen as an exceptional intervention of the State, but it is normalised and creates the infrastructure of everyday encounters.

The “*apparat*” is the strongest symbol of Big Other in the novel, as it is constantly taking in and banging out or sharing the personal data and information it receives. There is no privacy for characters because biometric information, emotions, shopping habits, and ranking values are reluctantly subjected to technological analysis at all times. By making human subjectivity always visible, present, and subject to algorithmic processing, the device ruptures any possible separation between the public and the private sphere. Lenny Abramov's "strangeness" within this over-surveilled landscape is indicative of his failing to adjust easily to the culture that has incorporated surveillance into its everyday life. Younger characters, however, respond enthusiastically to the computational transparency as a prerequisite to social relevance and affective participation.

Finally, Shteyngart depicts Big Other in the 24-hour availability of GlobalTeens, the digital world that promotes self-exposing to the end and encourages brief communicative exchanges. Immediacy of language, emotional simplicity, algorithmic visibility redefine language itself. The architecture and experience of such spheres is built upon euphoric, digital, fragmented-form expressions, continuous streams of digital updates, and obsessions with ranking, developing an environment in which there is voluntary participation in regimes of surveillance instead of obvious coercion. Attitudes like “Everything should be rated”, or the ongoing monitoring of “hotness” measures (Shteyngart, 2010), communicate a new culture that is more and more reliant on algorithmic assessment and transparency in information.

Big Other is therefore not just technological components, it is an epistemic order that restructures perception of reality, identity and social legitimacy. The power of surveillance capitalism lies in the fact that mere computing surveillance now emerges as an emerging presence everywhere, even in interactions among individuals and societal common spaces themselves. The reason why surveillance capitalism is gaining total control is that computing surveillance enters into everyday life without barring, as well as the relations of the individuals themselves and into the common areas of society. With this dystopian framework of architecture, Shteyngart reveals the normalized laws of digital systems, the extraction of behavior, the algorithmic management of that behavior, and the reification of surveillance to the point it becomes not only environmentally ubiquitous but also socially invisible. This dystopian form of architecture exposes how digital systems are normatively distributed, how behavior is extracted from them, how that behavior is algorithmically governed, and how surveillance is reified to become socially indispensable and culturally desirable (Zuboff, 2019).

Instrumentarian Power

In ., instrumentarian power is defined in terms of technologically mediated systems which are able to shape, regulate and optimize human action without the use of overt physical control. Zuboff sees instrumentarian power as a new form of a power modality involving computational systems that track, forecast, and manipulate the human population at mass scale (Zuboff, 2019).



In contrast to sovereign and disciplinary power, instrumentarian power operates through tuning of behaviour, algorithms of nudging, and the feedback of information throughout the regular technological setups. In this dystopian world, where the computational systems are permanently watched and evaluated in one's lives, and subtly defines one's emotional level, relation to the social, and own aspiration to the social reality, Shteyngart prefigures this change. The novel shows that instrumentarian power works best with a degree of voluntary consent and affective reliance on digital technologies. Characters end up taking algorithmic assessment for granted, and the performance of the self-becomes increasingly reliant on the rankings, public visibility, and computational attractiveness. The "äppärät" is a machine that constantly alters behaviour through constant real-time judgements of attractiveness, financial worth, social fit. Accordingly, behavioral conformity becomes a phenomenon that is not coerced but desired psychologically, for a breath of algorithmic approval and social recognition. People self-regulate in preparation for computation in these ways they are reproducing surveillance capitalism's regulatory logic.

Shteyngart takes this critique further when he uses saleable language, intimacy and emotionality. Through Eunice Park's hyperactivity of use of instrumentarian systems, the length of communication can be seen to be short, direct and to make things more emotionally simple. The term "Low net worth individual" (LNWI) (Stewart, 2004), "hotness rankings", and compulsive image-sharing practices (Shteyngart, 2010) are among the many expressions that show how often these technological infrastructures are subtly influencing perceptions and social aspirations through behavioral conditioning. Human interaction more and more follows algorithmically rewarded patterns, privileging the performative and reflective intimacy of consumption and display over 'authentic relationality'.

The novel further suggests that instrumentarian power operates through anticipatory governance rather than retrospective punishment. Computational systems continuously guide future behavior by structuring environments of participation, desirability, and informational visibility. Surveillance capitalism therefore achieves domination not by prohibiting conduct but by engineering the conditions under which behavior becomes socially intelligible and economically valuable. Through this dystopian representation, Shteyngart exposes how computational governance restructures subjectivity itself, transforming individuals into behaviorally modifiable entities continuously calibrated according to predictive economic imperatives and algorithmic systems of control (Zuboff, 2019).

***Super Sad True Love Story* as a Literary Cartography of Surveillance Capitalism**

Gary Shteyngart's 2010 novel *Super Sad True Love Story* serves as something of a forerunner to the exposition of "surveillance capitalism" that Shoshana Zuboff describes. In telling the story of a near-future New York in which the Apparat device and the GlobalTeens social network take over the city, Shteyngart makes a prediction about the unchecked appropriation of human experience as a kind of raw material, rich in behaviors that can be harvested. This article seeks to consider the novel's departure from basic dystopian imagery to its depiction of an actual regime of surveillance capitalist praxis, in which the following six mechanisms are closely coupled and play together as a single mode of algorithmic rule: the extraction imperative, behavioral surplus, prediction products, behavioral futures markets, Big Other, and instrumentarian power.

The Extraction Imperative: Surveillance as Structural Necessity

The extraction imperative is the basic logic for the business model of surveillance capitalism; the tendency to focus on the economies of scale in data extraction for high institutional survival. In *Super Sad True Love Story*, this imperative can be seen in the form of the Apparat, which is



the only socially and economically required interface device. Zuboff (2019, p. 87) argues that the extraction imperative changes the paradigm of the market from transactional to parasitic in which the user becomes a source of behavioural data and the value of these data are determined through transaction.

Lenny Abramov, Shteyngart's main character, is constantly collecting data. Designed to capture as much data as possible, from looks to biophysical qualities, the GlobalTeens platform brings all human characteristics of the product under quantifiable market measurements. The Credit Pole publicly reveals people's net worth and "hotness" ratings without permission and characters take no part in these ratings. Zuboff (2019, p. 65) describes it as "taking without asking," made possible in the novel through the process of ranking that is virtually pervasive. All privacy walls between public data stream and private self are ultimately wiped away, as the person or individual is just another node in a predatory information architecture.

Predicting and their creation of behavioural surplus

The core of the surveillance capitalist value chain is the behavioural surplus: surplus data that is gathered by overt and invisible machines that we use to improve the service experience, but we are unaware of it. In the novel, this is created with the hyper-expressive GlobalTeens interface. The Apparat is not only a conduit for communication; it carries along the energetics of the communicator: his face, his heart rate, and the tonal quality of his voice, which convey his next step in the conversation. Zuboff (2019, p. 75) refers to it as "collateral data," and in the case of Shteyngart, it's the Apparat that can sense a person's anxiety. The platform generates a stream of emotional metadata as Lenny engages with the screen—and catches it, uncompromising, unafflicted, without ever saying thanks or asking it to watch. When watching a screen, Lenny is effectively offering unpaid behaviour as a work of service.

This disaggregation of the raw surplus is then used to churn out prediction products, wildly profitable models of what an individual will do now, soon and later. In the novel, these are represented by Credit Rankings and Hotness ratings which change continuously. These are not historical figures, but rather the estimations of whether someone becomes a value to the state and the bull market in the future. In his book, Zuboff (2019, p. 96) points out that there are business customers with an interest in knowing what will happen, who are selling prediction products. The novel is a dramatization of this, as when the characters are greeted in the shops with the banner that matches their buying power and the Credit Pole immediately determines their social and economic viability at the entrance to a club. The prediction product takes away the individual user's ability to social mobility and rejig him or herself into something else — the system continues to normalise the future self of the user.

Behavioral Futures Markets and the Big Other

The behavioral futures markets are the system that makes up the futures price market of prediction products; they are the market for the anticipation of human behavior. Zuboff (2019) calls such markets 'fact auctions,' in which companies and state actors trade certainty to surveillance capitalists who aim to reduce risk and boost control. In the book, this is translated into reality by the fusion of the United States Credit Board and private retail outlets. The subject of the 'social contract' is no longer the character, but an 'asset' of a portfolios of risks protected, gambled – protected by actors who are not visible to the naked eye. The Sovereign Research Corporation factors in Lenny's eating habits and stress level to alter his life expectancy, and hence, play games with the health of his future. Such markets require a constant flow of behavioral surplus in order to be accurate, which perpetrates a cycle of people acting in ways that satisfy the known demand of the markets for predictability.



The Big Other is the technological logic of surveillance capitalism that operates under this architecture but with a distributed, sensory-actuarial logic, as opposed to the single, authoritarian view on Big Brother. The Big Other is a deceptive machine to watch people, who is not particular, who does not exert force to punish their own deviation from social norms, but simply exiles them socially, economically, from society. In Shteyngart's novel, the Big Other is the Apparat network itself closed but omnipresent, determining the social conditions of reality using the medium of the omnipresent Credit Poles, and the retail-industrial infrastructure. Without being "pinged," no one, not really, because the digital architecture's extraction of behavioral surplus appears natural and inevitable, and creates a new social order, one that is based on continuous supervision of the human subject. Eunice Park's characters will need to constantly engage in a process of self-curation simply to not be flagged by algorithms, rather than because they are under attack by state actors: they self-curate because the algorithm is doing it for them, as part of the terms and conditions of social inclusion.

Instrumentarian Power: Behavioral Modification Without Coercion

The power of the instrumentarian is the pinnacle of the surveillance capitalist idea, in which one observes, and actively influences the behavior of the other, for the ends of conformism. Zuboff (2019, p. 352) distinguishes it from the twentieth-century totalitarian regimes which were obsessed with possessing the soul through fear. Instrumentarian power is a remote and indifferent power which "only tunes and herds" the human subject toward profitable end result. In *Super Sad True Love Story*, this power flows through the more imperceptible, but undeniable pushing of the Apparat. The device doesn't determine Lenny's ideas it provides for a place for him to think, to make selections in line with the economical demands of the Credit Board and Global teens network.

This is an aspect of them that is found most clearly in the novel's characterization of the social hierarchy as the requirement for survival. Credit Poles is not a reflection of any passive state from the moment youth come into contact with the sensors, they adjust their posture and dialogue accordingly, so that the Big Other is always riding on their performance. At the out of the system level, it doesn't matter why a particular individual conforms, just that he/she does. The power of the Apparat to send notifications causing a sense of fear or conformity creates a reinforcement regime that implants a side of the students, to be able to respond in an expected way and serve as a data provider.

Of greatest importance, however, is the novel's examination of the breakdown of personal agency when the algorithms driving instrumentalization rely on feedback loops from outside the person. The force of printed books, reminders of a pre-instrumentarian time of unchecked thought, is against Lenny. It is an inefficiency that the state is against. Apparent social power muddles from a gentle push on the shoulder to banishment – in the novel's second half, the riots show, instrumentarian power can be both soft (push on the shoulder) and hard (exclude from social existence). It is the emergence of Zuboff's (2019, p. 398) computational social contract versus a democratic social contract.

Discussion and Synthesis

This earlier analysis has illustrated the operation of *Super Sad True Love Story* as a literary cartography of the computational architecture of surveillance capitalism. They are six mechanisms that can operate in combination, building on each other in a system of algorithmic governance. The novel supports Zuboff's claims on asymmetrical knowledge relations established based on the extraction imperative and expands upon his claims by foregrounding the affective and existential impacts of predictive governance in close relations between human life.



One of the game-changing things about this novel is its depiction of technologically mediated subjectivity the characters grow ever more defined by metrics that assess emotional "legitimacy" and socioeconomic "relevance. The Apparatus actionless steps over the distinction between communicating, distributing, and computing monitoring and platformises objectivity itself. Human relationships are assessed by indicators of visibility, lists of hotness rankings, and markers of consumer compatibility that transform emotional lives into emotional values – demonstrating how the notion of behavioural futures markets transcends into fields of affectivity and relationship.

Finally, Shteyngart throws up glaring paradoxes of surveillance capitalist society. Characters are experiencing isolation, emotional disintegration, and precarity in spite of this promise of hyper-connectivity and empowerment. The narrative challenges the techno-utopian and deterministic approach to the centrality of technology, showing how different kinds of senses and bodies can coexist with algorithmic systems of predictive regulation. The novel illuminates this dynamic with characters who cannot conceive of the future without its digital measurements, but most important, it signals the loss of the “right to the future tense” as Zuboff (2019, p. 512) warns, as “a condition” is experienced when “the measure of reality has become the measure of people.”

Conclusion

The results of this analysis bear out this interpretation and support a close examination of the entire computational system of "surveillance capitalism" in the medium-length fictional narrative of *Super Sad True Love Story*. The extraction imperative reprograms human experience as continuously prosperous behavioral data, behavioural surplus feeds predictive systems, predictive products circulate in behavioural futures markets and interact with human activity before it happens, and the normalizing function of the Big Other de-institutionalises surveillance as necessary infrastructure, instead of direct coercion as a matter of human power. These mechanisms combined show that surveillance capitalism is not a thematic aspect of the novel, but rather a structural aspect that permeates the construction of the narrative world, character subjectivity, and affective life in the novel. In Shteyngart, a fictional diagnostic, this possibility of independent action is substituted by the reaction to information encountered in the digital sphere, diagnosis was a warning about a society going through a shock of the modern, a modern society that was, at best, technically advanced but humanly depleted since any experience of humanity was "commodorized".

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