Socio-Culdian: A Foucauldian Exploration of Traditional Surveillance in Saadat Hasan Manto's Short Stories

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ABSTRACT: *This study explores the omnipresence of surveillance in mid-twentieth-century society by analyzing Saadat Hasan Manto's selected short stories through Foucault's concept of Panopticism. Manto, vividly, portrays the power dynamics of his time, reflecting deeply ingrained surveillance mechanisms rooted in cultural norms. By examining the societal structure, politics, and class, the study not only uncovers traditional surveillance techniques but also highlights how such dynamics reinforce the sociocultural gaze of the era. Through a New Historicist approach, the qualitative study shows that the surveillance mechanisms portrayed in Manto's stories are not only restricted to mere physical institutions, as ascribed by Foucault, but have far-reaching impacts on the contemporary issues of privacy, power, and social control. Thus, this study underscores Manto's portrayal of surveillance and its significance in today's digitally mediated socio-cultural landscape.*

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In modern times, surveillance practices have become an inextricable part of our daily lives, encompassing both traditional and digital methods. These practices raise important questions regarding privacy, control, and societal dynamics. Given their far-reaching implications for individuals and communities, this study emerges in response to the pressing need to explore surveillance and its impact, grounded in history. Moreover, the socio-cultural gaze within the literature framework allows for a unique vantage point to comprehend the changing nature of control, power dynamics, and individual agency. It shows how "punishment as a spectacle is replaced by invisible surveillance" (Nieuwenhuizen 5) or in other words, "disappearance of punishment as a spectacle." (Foucault 8) Engaging with the theoretical concepts of new historicism, the study aims to enrich the discourse on surveillance, providing a more comprehensive and holistic perspective on this complex and ever-evolving phenomenon

Over the last few decades, this field has been dominated by the social sciences, with little contribution from the humanities and literature, especially in terms of the discipline being acknowledged. "The relationship between humans and surveillance has been continually explored in dystopian literature and film since the twentieth century, as surveillance technology has become an important part of human existence." (Hinchliffe 4) Classic Western literary works like Orwell's 1984 (1949) and Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 (1953) and other popular figures like Poe, Godwin, Dickens, Simenon, Christie, Black, Collins, Balzac, Voltaire, and Doyle have been extensively analyzed in the context of surveillance and its societal impact. This period is often called as "Golden Age of detective fiction." (Yaseen and Burfat, 466) Manto's stories (2008, 2012, 2019) for this study represent a distinctive approach. His works take an implicit route in crime fiction, delving into the darker and more intricate facets of socio-cultural constructs. He employs themes of crime and transgression to dissect societal norms and human behavior, often concealed beneath layers of silence. This implicit approach furnishes an absorbing and culturally enriched viewpoint on crime and surveillance, contributing a one-of-a-kind narrative to the realm of surveillance

studies, in contrast to other authors, both classical and contemporary, who opt for a more explicit narrative when dealing with crime, mystery, and transgression.

The etymology of surveillance reveals its components as 'sur' (from above) and 'veillance' (to watch). While people often associate surveillance with Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in public places, such as airports, highways, and workplaces, discussions of surveillance predate the ubiquity of electronic eyes in public and private areas. Foucault's assertion that "our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance" underscores the enduring presence of surveillance in our social fabric. This presence spans from classic monitoring practices rooted in power and control dynamics to the profound transformations brought about by information and communication technologies (ICTs) since the 1960s. These developments have expanded the meaning and substance of surveillance (Galič et al. 16).

Moreover, the term "Panopticon," a fictitious architectural concept devised by Jeremy Bentham, embodies this idea, enabling a single observer to monitor all prisoners within the panopticon without the inmates' awareness of being under scrutiny. This notion is not only well-known but also highly controversial. In Orwell's 1984 (1949), this panopticon finds itself in the form of Big Brother—an electronic panopticon employed for "dictatorial governance" (Fatima et al. 134). Foucault further solidified this concept when he coined "Panopticism" in his book Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1975/1995). It explores the history and evolution of punishment, surveillance, and societal control. The panopticon serves as a powerful model of authority and social organization, finding application in various settings, including asylums, prisons, and broader social contexts. As stated, "The power in the hierarchized surveillance of the disciplines is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machine." (Foucault 177).

Surveillance transcended mere physical observation; it encompassed the suppression of indigenous cultures, traditions, and

languages, and, most significantly, the regulation of economic activities. Divisions and hierarchies were a direct result of the monitoring role played by local elites or intermediaries. This study serves as a cautionary tale, underscoring the price individuals pay when relinquishing personal freedom in exchange for the allure of convenience and constant connectivity. As aptly noted by Wrong, "Men are deprived of the very capacity for cherishing private thoughts and feelings opposed to the regime, let alone acting on them." (23) Thus, the sociocultural gaze furnishes a unique lens through which writers can dissect the complex web of power, sway, control, and human behavior. It offers a captivating backdrop for the exploration of the dark recesses of criminality and the relentless pursuit of justice. Therefore, this distinction signifies that Manto's narratives (2008, 2012, 2019), firmly rooted in the sociocultural constraints of twentieth-century subcontinent, represent a different era of surveillance.

This literature review explores the existing scholarship on Manto's works (2008, 2012, 2019) focusing on surveillance, socio-cultural dynamics, and technological control. It examines perspectives such as realism, cultural trauma and transhumanism. Firstly, realism, comprising different artistic currents in civilizations, rejects imaginative fantasies and ideals in favour of realistic and close observation of the complexities of life, as portrayed in the article, "Manto as a Realistic Observer on the Depiction of Partition: A Study of Manto's Selected Short Stories." The authors argue that Manto has painted reality as he "paints life" in his short stories in a raw and untouched form, and "if it is unendurable and unacceptable that means the society we live in is oppressive and intolerable." Moreover, he is not a follower of any ideology or movement, he represents the "natural depiction of facts like an x-ray". (Bashir et al. 1105) The storytelling techniques, use of diction and tone, and his themes of atrocity and violence during the given Indo-Pak partition make him a person true to life. His characters are ordinary men and women who do not plunge manhood into an appalling cataclysm but, they are full of sadness and emotionally catastrophic that they ultimately smell like a bloodbath. Themes of

displacement, identity crisis, violence, and dark humour make his short stories masterpieces of realism.

Similarly, Jalal (2017) in her essay, "He wrote what he saw - and took no sides," underscores Saadat Hasan Manto's unique contribution to the understanding of history and the partition of India. She argues that Manto, drawing from his first-hand knowledge of the era, skillfully, has done a "deft blending of reality and imagination" in his works, effectively merging fictional and historical narratives. In doing so, he transformed the historical narrative into a rich source for historians studying the partition. Manto's approach, according to Jalal, treats partition solely not as an isolated event but as "a process with neither an end nor a beginning." (12) Therefore, for Manto, partition is seen as an integral part of a stretched drama that offers glimpses into both the best and worst aspects of human nature. This perspective reimagines the partition as a multifaceted and evolving phenomenon imbued with realism, providing a unique lens through which to examine this critical period in South Asian history.

Deepening the roots of realism through the most marginalized community of Postcolonial India, Halim's (2023) essay shows double marginalization of diasporic women. Gender-based violence, strict patriarchal control over women's lives, and denial of justice are themes in Manto's short stories. Halim's analysis of Sakina in "Khol Do" (1948/2008) is a marker of the trauma she endured. This traumatic experience of partition in the form of sexual violence makes her an unconscious, subjugated female who cannot comprehend the context of the doctor's words to open a window; she opens up the string of her trousers. This means it "affected her down to a cellular level." (13) In addition, Ishar Singh in "Cold Meat" is a conscious young man, but his consciousness heightens when he comes to know that he has done sexual activity with a corpse rather than a living woman. It turns his consciousness into guilt and remorse, leaving him with a great sense of failure in front of his love, Kulwant Kaur. Here he exactly resembles that corpse whom he brutally raped, "a corpse with all her entrails spilt out." (14) Thus, through Sakina and Ishar Singh, Halim shows the

adaptability of a woman in society, and her treatment as an 'other' discourages any chance of social mobility and struggle for free will. Through these interconnected analyses, we gain a multifaceted view of Manto's contributions to literature, addressing themes of societal turmoil, identity struggles, empathy, and the lasting impact of historical events on the human psyche and relationships.

The study opts for a qualitative approach that provides a deeper understanding of real-world problems. Specific passages from Manto's selected short stories (2008, 2012, 2019) are textually analyzed to investigate traditional surveillance in the guise of sociocultural gaze. Thus, using a qualitative lens, the study focuses on how social phenomena rely on the behavioral, historical, and political experiences of human beings. The primary data contains a specific set of stories selected from Manto's translations. They include Manto: Selected Stories (2008) translated by Aatish Taseer, Bombay Stories (2012) translated by Matt Reeck and Aftab Ahmad and Manto: The Essential Stories (2019), translated by Muhammad Umar Memon. On the other hand, secondary sources consist of published materials, research articles, journals, websites, and critiques that provide crucial information regarding traditional and digital surveillance practices. Moreover, an inspiring, and thought-provoking Bollywood movie "Manto" (2018) by Nandita Das featuring Nawazuddin Siddiqui and the Pakistani biographical drama film "Manto" (2015) by Khoosat are also used as secondary sources for this research.

Greenblatt's influential work Renaissance Self-Fashioning (1980) established New Historicism, which rejects the notion that literature exists independently of its socio-political context. Instead, it relies on Derrida's theory—which believes that literary writings encapsulate broader socio-political dynamics—to show how literary texts connect to their cultural and historical contexts. By situating literature within a complex web of power relations, this approach gives importance to marginalized voices, cultural artefacts, and daily life. Foucault created notions of discourse, power, knowledge, and the human subject that are vital for New Historicist analysis. Rather than an objective account of events, he

critiques history as a subjective narrative created by those in position of power (185). The concept of the panopticon, whereby a "panoptic gaze" disciplines individuals through rendering them visible to authority figures and therefore regulating their actions, is a prime instance of how authority works through surveillance (184). This stare establishes a deindividualized surveillance system in which individuals, knowing that they could be noticed, enhance the power of the system without taking decisive action.

This study demonstrates how Manto's works reflect the longstanding importance of surveillance in shaping identity and behavior through the use of Foucault's Panopticism. The panoptic gaze functions as a control mechanism by emphasizing the ways in how authority is exercised through cultural and historical narratives as well as in physical locations. As a result, the relationship between New Historicism, surveillance, power, and identity in Manto's writing has become clearer due to this research framework.

This study explores, via the lens of gazes, the traditional surveillance methods portrayed in Manto's stories (2008, 2012, 2019). It draws from Foucault's Panopticism and New Historicism's theoretical frameworks, examining how Manto depicts different types of surveillance gazes, including the patriarchal, colonial, sexual, religious, cultural and hesitant gazes, and how these affect people's behaviours and identities in the socio-political context of colonial and postcolonial India.

Manto's portrayal of women stands in stark contrast to the prevalent sexual objectification of society that isolates her body parts from her complete and complex being. Rather than reducing them to mere objects of desire, Manto never saw a woman "as a sexless object or the one who dig her sexualities in the grave," (Jha 314) Through the lens of new historicism, Manto's depiction of sexual harassment of women reflects the broader socio-cultural contexts of his time, shedding light on the power dynamics, societal norms, and moral constructs that governed women's lives during the partition era in India. "Women never had either real power, not

mystic prestige" (Beauvoir 108) She is an object of desire for men merely the through a gaze. This gaze, even today, has not liberated women socially.

The story that shows this sexual surveillance is found in Manto's story "Khol do" (1948/2008). The story portrays the male aggression over the dishonoured body of the protagonist Sakina. She was a girl who got separated from her father, Sirajuddin, when a special train for Amritsar departed during partition. Sakina's father searched for her but couldn't find her. After six days, he met eight people with a lorry and guns, who assured Sirajuddin that they would help him. Sirajuddin told them a description of Sakina as he helplessly says, "She's fair and very beautiful. She is about seventeen. Large eyes, black hair, there's a big beauty spot on her right cheek. She's my daughter. Please find her. Your God will reward you." (Manto 44) The volunteers patrolled Amritsar and found Sakina after recognizing her from the beauty spot on the cheek. These eight men are a real description of what Foucault refers to, "The gaze is alert everywhere: 'A considerable body of militia, commanded by good officers and men of substance." (Foucault 2) This gaze made those men comfort her in the best possible ways by giving her food, milk and a coat to cover her breasts. The traditional gaze to find Sakina has been changed to an erotic one the moment they found her as those men exercised power over Sakina in an unverifiable way. It means that Sakina, the inmate, "never know whether she is being looked at any one moment; but she must be sure that she may always be so." (Foucault 6) It became evident when Sirajuddin asked them one day if they had found Sakina and they said, "We will, we will." (Manto 45) Days later, she was brought to the camp hospital where people enquired that they had found her "unconscious near rail tracks." (44) The sexual gaze that surveilled Sakina's body for many days has transformed her into such an individual that when the doctor asked Sirajuddin to open the window, she feebly "undid her salwar and lowered it" by just listening to the words, "open it." (Manto 45)

The conclusion of the story stuns the reader with the degree of barbarity permitted to run free. Foucault argues that "it does not

matter who exercises power"; it is the "automatic functioning of power" that is the real culprit. Even if the actions of those so-called voluntary men and searching committees are discontinuous, "the perfection of power" through the form of an "embedded gaze" (Schulsser 339) ensures its automatic functioning throughout the clamor of 1947. (Foucault 6).

Within the historical context of mid-twentieth century India, the patriarchal gaze and subaltern surveillance intersect in the complex web of power that shapes society as a material existence. The patriarchal gaze reflects the hegemonic control exercised by men in society, especially women. Originally coined by postcolonial theorist, Spivak (1945), the term "subaltern" denotes the socially, politically, and economically disenfranchised individuals or groups who exist at the margins of society. Based on this, subaltern surveillance, refers to the monitoring and regulation of marginalized groups by those in positions of power. So, when the patriarchal gaze starts to impose narrow standards of femininity and beauty and legitimizes the surveillance and policing of women's bodies and behaviors, it gives rise to "sexual debauchery of the patriarchal society where women are treated as 'sex toys' instead of human beings." (Hussain 6)

The story that chases the themes of patriarchy and subalternity set against the backdrop of colonial and postcolonial India's shifting power dynamics is vividly explored through the experiences of a prostitute named Sugandhi, in Manto's "The Insult." (1942/2012) Her interactions with male characters like Seth and Madho reflect the oppressive surveillance and control mechanisms inherent in a patriarchal society. As the story unfolds, she decides to abandon her avaricious so-called friend Madho after feeling rejected by one of her clients. Despite her exhaustion, she gave in to the demands of the pimp Ram Lal and consented to meet Seth in his car at 2:00 am, as in the story, "Sugandhi lifted the edge of her sari in her hand and stepped up to the car's doors with her sleepy eyes." (Manto 46) With a look of contempt and a flick of his torch, Seth dismisses her with a "Yuhkk", (47) expressing his distaste. Without saying anything, "he took the car off down the alley." In a patriarchal

society, the panoptic model manifests through constant monitoring and regulation of behaviours that conform to gender norms. Women, for example, are often subject to scrutiny regarding their appearance, behaviour, and roles, which reinforces their subordinate status. When Sugandhi asks Ram Lal to bring that customer upstairs to her room, he says, "No, no he won't come. He's a gentleman. He was even anxious about his car being in the alley." (46)

These double standards and the gaze followed by its verbal manifestation, yuhkk faced by Sughandi is one example of this male patriarchal mindset which infuriated her and then set a cycle of anger in motion. (Pathan 2) The person who faces this furore is another character with the same patriarchal mindset, Madho. He was using her by brainwashing her that she would be his woman, his wife, one day. Due to his flattery, Sugandhi always "had such a strong effect that for several moments she felt like a head constable's wife." (Manto 44) It means, that a woman who is full of love could love any of her customers is being questioned by a man who would "strip her clothes right off her back." (Authors 10) These kinds of men always put women into shackles of sycophancy. The insulting gaze by Seth and the seemly sympathetic gaze of Madho, surveilled her body and made her conform to what they wanted, thus maintaining the overall dominance of patriarchal structures. However, Sugandhi's defiance against the patriarchal forces set against the historical context of a society grappling with gender and class issues during the colonial and early postcolonial periods highlights the pervasive influence of the panoptic model, where the patriarchal gaze and internalized surveillance continually reinforce her subaltern status. As she says, "You son of a bitch! Are you trying to impress me? Am I at your beck and call? You fucking bum, who do you think you are?" (Manto 55)

Ethnic surveillance describes how racial and ethnic identities are being scrutinized and monitored under the larger social, political and historical contexts. In Manto's stories, ethnic surveillance is evident in the way societal norms and prejudices monitor and control individuals based on their racial and ethnic identities. His

characters, especially Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims often face scrutiny and judgment not only because of their gender or social status but also due to their racial and communal affiliations. "Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus were all redefined by the process of Partition: as butchers by or as devious others: as untrustworthy and anti-national; but perhaps most fundamentally, as Sikhs and Muslims and Hindus alone." (Pandey 8)

One such story is "Mozelle" (Manto,1979/2012) in which Manto's lively and independent Jewish protagonist lives in Bombay during the heightened communal violence between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslim communities. Trilochan, a Sikh man, falls in love with, Mozelle, but she refuses him for his staunch religious and conservative beliefs. Her 'Jewish gaze' and 'cultural gap' make her insult Trilochan in every way possible. She tells him, "You are a Sikh! Idiot! Who told you we were together? If you're so concerned about having a lover, go back to wherever you're from and marry some Sikh girl. I don't care what you say, I'm not changing." Sometimes, she just waves him off in front of "worthless Christian boys" by saying that "You're a Sikh. You can't understand these delicate matters." (163) Mozelle knows that Trilochan loves him but she challenges him to shave his beard and let his hair down. According to a Sikh custom, long hair symbolizes their spirituality and connection to God. But Trilochan "conforms" to Mozelle's ethnic gaze and gets his hair cut and beard shaved. Manto describes this transformation as "he kept his eyes clamped shut throughout the proceedings" and "he felt a strange coldness after leaving the barber shop." (165) In the story's climax, Mozelle asks him to remove his turban to rescue him and his fiancé from communal violence, but Trilochan refuses to do so. Mozelle thinks logically as she is well aware of the forthcoming danger, but she, herself, falls prey to the ethnic and religious surveillance in the form of deep-seated prejudices of Muslims and Sikhs. According to Foucault's surveillance and disciplinary practice, Trilochan is to be punished because he has deviated from his cultural and religious norm but here, in the story, Mozelle becomes a victim of the "omnipresent and relational power" (Galič et al. 18) that is embedded and pervasive in all social relations. While rescuing

Trilochan and Kaur, she falls for the 'inescapable power relations' of the mob and dies. While dying, she removes Trilochan's turban, "Take it away—this religion of yours." (177) by shuning the surveillance, she becomes a victim of. As Manto reflects, in the past, people wore different religious caps for safety during riots, underscoring how visible signs of religion and ethnicity have become tools of control:

In earlier riots, when we left home, we would carry two caps. A Hindu topi and a Rumi topi. When passing through a Muslim mohalla, we would put on the Rumi topi, and when walking through a Hindu mohalla, the Hindu topi. In this riot, we also bought Gandhi topis. These we kept in our pockets to be pulled out wherever needed. Religion used to be felt in the heart, but now, in the new Bombay, it must be worn on the head.

Therefore, this racialized and ethnic surveillance enforces power structures by perpetuating stereotypes and ensuring that marginalized groups remain under control, highlighting the pervasive influence of the panoptic model in maintaining societal hierarchies. From a New Historicist viewpoint, Manto's works illustrate how literature can both reflect and challenge the power structures of their time, offering insights into the socio-political dynamics and their impact on individual identities.

Masculinity, its foundation and its doubts are what makes the hesitant gaze. The internal conflict and the uncertainty a man feels about conforming to the traditional gender roles give rise to a lack of confidence and ambivalence. A man might feel that he is not fulfilling the traditional masculine roles such as being strong, assertive, or successful. He might be grappling with aspects of his identity that do not align with traditional notions of masculinity, leading to frustration and violence.

"Khushiya" (Manto,1940/2012) is one such story that is based on a pimp falling prey to the hesitant gaze. He is shown sitting on the platform of a car repair shop at night. Khushiya thinks back on his meeting that very morning with one of "his girls," (7) Kanta. She

acknowledged his voice and, still partially undressed, opened the door for him. Khushiya was "dumbfounded" and appalled as he was "unexpectedly confronted with a naked woman." What most surprised him was her response: "When you said it was you, I thought, what's the big deal? It's only my Khushiya, I'll let him in…" As he mulls on the incident throughout the day, he realized "a whore, too, could be attractive…but Kanta was not at all ashamed of her nakedness. Why was that?" (6) He can only conclude that being her pimp has made him nearly asexual. In Literary Radicalism, Gopal (2005) formulates the problem: "What happens when the male gaze is rendered neutral by the refusal of the female figure to recognize it as such?" (92) It leads Khushiya to become an "object of information not a subject in communication." (Foucault 5) He becomes the victim of the internal surveillance that brings him under profound discomfort. The repair shop where Khushiya was sitting symbolizes the masculine power due to masculine activities in that place but Manto describes the station as being filled with "clutter of tyres and miscellaneous parts." (5) This clutter and spare parts are metaphors for Khushiya, who likewise sees himself to be a spare part, cut off from a social norm that presumes he has an unquestionable masculine authority, which maybe a bit far-fetched. Khushiya's only job is to sell out girls, he does not fit into the specified categories like public versus private, labour versus desire, or day versus night. He is entrenched in the sea of otherness when his private identity as a male and potential sexual partner is undermined by Kanta's encounter.

This hesitant gaze acts as a panopticon that pressurizes him to conform to masculine norms and he starts feeling sexual feeling for Kanta. He wonders how much of Kanta's humanity remains, just as the prospect of transforming a woman into a sexual partner in prostitution is the very basis for her reduction to a less-than-human stage: "For Manto... to deny sexuality was to deny humanity" (Gopal 93). The narrative closes with a somewhat mysterious incident in which Kanta encounters Khushiya in the guise of any other clients. She is stunned to see Khushiya in the car and asks him if he has the money. Khushiya addresses the driver and says, "Okay, Juhu Beach. Kanta is abducted by Khushia, and "never again did

anyone see Khushiya sitting on the stone platform in front of the auto supply store." It's possible that he quit his work and started dating her, even though he might have just gone to kill her out of annoyance or become her customer. This supports the New Historicism viewpoint by showing how men, who develop in roles of power, rage, and patriarchy, are shaped by the social and cultural norms of their day. The Panopticon metaphor emphasizes how these guys continue to be watched—not just by society, but also by their own wary eyes, which reflects their moral issues and internal conflict. As these men grow to recognize the "otherness" of women, they also become aware of the systemic gender norms and their role in upholding them. This realization causes them to become more conscious of ethics and compelled to change their conduct while challenging and modifying their traditional notions of what it means to be a man.

Therefore, surveillance tactics have become an inseparable aspect of modern life, including traditional and digital methods. The socio-cultural gaze (conventional surveillance) within the framework of new historicism in Manto's fictional stories (2008, 2012, 2019) offered an unusual viewpoint on the changing nature of control, relations of power, and individual agency. By engaging with the theoretical principles of Foucault's panoptic theory, the study shed light on the disciplinary practices of sociocultural gaze on its individuals. It manifested how human behavior is homogenized by the techniques of disciplinary practices, especially surveillance, providing a more packed and holistic view of this complex and constantly shifting phenomenon.

While Manto's works do not explicitly address notions like 'gaze' or 'surveillance,' their underlying themes indicate an extensive understanding of these components, demonstrating the depth of his imagination and its ability to address profound societal issues. As he stated, "The world should not make one understand, on the contrary, one should try and understand the world," leaving it to the reader to discern what is good and bad (Butt 6). The analysis examines the various traditional surveillance techniques used by Manto including ethnic, sexual, patriarchal, hesitant, religious, and

ethnic surveillance. His unwavering dedication to truth is unmistakable; he is known as a nonconformist whose writings aroused debate and unease in historical discourse. Despite being punished with obscenity for his daring tales, Manto kept continuity in presenting his vital points. Mustansar Hasan Tarrar, who grew up next door to him in Lahore, recalls how his parents warned him not to read Manto's stories, which only fueled his desire to do so. Tarrar had read them all by the age of 14 (Butt 7). Manto's stories, noted for their rawness and sincerity, exposed society's fundamental problems without hiding them behind a veneer of beauty.

In linking these insights to future research, this research provides a fertile ground for future scholars to consider how evolving surveillance technologies and changing socio-political landscapes will continue to influence literature and the human condition through the intersection of power, technology, and personal autonomy. The present world is marked by the age of Artificial Intelligence. Undoubtedly, it is best used by good people and worst used by bad people, and the line that separates them is blurred. We can argue that Artificial Intelligence is the best technological advancement that can ever happen to humankind in the fields of health, business, infrastructure, mobility, earth and oceanic observation. But the systemic consequences of this AI as the death of creativity, loss of privacy and autonomy, constant surveillance and scrutiny, black data, fraud, embezzlement, and many more haunt the prospects of AI today. Philip Aston claims that the digital welfare state is either already a reality or is emerging in many countries across the globe. In these states, systems of social protection and assistance are increasingly driven by digital data and technologies that are used to automate, predict, identify, surveil, detect, target and punish.

Therefore, in the present technologically advanced society, the general public, especially young girls and boys, experience a variety of negative consequences, including worry, despair, chronic stress, and suicide. This paper lays the groundwork for future scholars to investigate how different uses of technology can elude

public scrutiny and inspection. Researchers can also investigate the unique vulnerabilities that women confront, particularly when it comes to pornography and online harassment. Building on these findings, future research could propose measures that mitigate these negative consequences and promote safer, more supportive digital environments.

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