Bare Life in the Digital Age: Homo Sacer, Necropolitics, and Algorithmic Control in the Selected Contemporary Fiction

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ABSTRACT

In the age of surveillance capitalism, distinctions between biological life and digital data have become profoundly blurred in ways that fundamentally reshape human agency and sovereignty. Whereas corporate algorithms and platform monopolies are influencing social and individual behaviour on an unprecedented scale, the conventional definitions of political exclusion need to be revisited. This article engages with this status quo by analysing Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun (Ishiguro, 2021), Dave Eggers's The Every (Eggers, 2021), and Jennifer Egan's The Candy House (Egan, 2022) through the lens of Giorgio Agamben's theory of Homo Sacer and "bare life." By synthesising Agamben's framework with Achille Mbembe's "necropolitics" and Shoshana Zuboff's critique of the digital economy, the study argues that these narratives depict a new "state of exception." In this digital paradigm, sovereign power is outsourced to technological infrastructures, rendering human and non-human subjects into disposable data points. The analysis shows that these works move beyond dystopian speculation and expose how algorithmic governance and the "psychopolitics" of self-optimisation operate as contemporary biopolitical camps. In the end, the paper argues that these novels modulate bare life's migration from a bodily camp to a digital code.

Keywords: Algorithmic Governance; Digital Humanities; Necropolitics; Surveillance Capitalism; Kazuo Ishiguro

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary life is increasingly mediated by digital systems that track behaviour and shape choices through corporate code, constituting a new form of sovereign power beyond traditional oversight. While often framed as tools of convenience and connection, these systems constitute a new form of sovereign power that operates beyond traditional legal and ethical oversight. This study is motivated by the urgent need to diagnose how these ubiquitous technologies create novel forms of social and political exclusion. Contemporary speculative fiction provides a crucial lens for this diagnosis. By drawing direct parallels between our current digital society and their extrapolated fictional worlds, this paper analyses how Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021), Dave Eggers's *The Every* (Eggers, 2021), and Jennifer Egan's *The Candy House* (2022) reveal the mechanisms by which people are reduced to manageable data points, echoing the exclusionary logic that Giorgio Agamben defined as the production of "bare life."

Nevertheless, there remains a critical gap in the theoretical articulation of the means by which the traditional political categories of exclusion apply to the realm of the digital. While Agamben's "Homo Sacer" has long been articulated in the physical spaces of detention, the focus of this research is the inadequacy of theoretical articulation in characterising the ways in which "bare life" asserts itself in the immaterial architecture of the digital. There exists a shortage of theoretical articulation concerning the nature of sovereignty within the confines of the "camp" as it pertains to the digital platform. Therefore, the primary objective of the present study encompasses the application of Agamben's ideas to the subject of the digital economy. The goal of this study is to offer a critical interpretation of the selected novels by showing the precise mechanisms by which this "digital bare life" gets enacted. Through their speculative worlds, these novels reveal how surveillance capitalism, biopolitics, and necropolitics converge to render both human and non-human subjects vulnerable, disposable, and instrumentalised.

Agamben's concept of Homo Sacer provides a critical tool in order to understand contemporary sovereignty, showing how states of exception, detention, and digital infrastructures construct bare life within techno-political regimes (Prozorov, 2021; Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2004). Scholars have extended Giorgio Agamben's foundational work on "bare life" to analyse modern forms of exclusion that are directly relevant to the current market and societal status quo. Bonilla's (2020) 'technologies of abandonment' parallels digital redlining, where biased algorithms exclude demographics from market participation. Han (2017) argues that neoliberal self-optimisation creates a 'psychopolitics' of voluntary surrender, evident in platform-driven professional identity curation. Moreover, critics like Wendy Hui Kyong Chun (2016) cautioned that our networked habits create "leaky" privacy that binds freedom to control. The tangible, societal-level consequences of this were made explicit in corporate scandals like the Cambridge Analytica case, where personal data harvested from Facebook was used to influence democratic processes, demonstrating a direct link between market exploitation and political subjugation.

The selected novels put in crisis the boundaries between state, market, and platform by rendering exclusion through AI, surveillance capitalism, and memory-sharing ecosystems. This notion resonates with scholarship on digital vulnerability and biopower in care and carceral contexts (Jenkins et al., 2023; Maphosa & Ntau, 2020). Moreover, critics also argue against the sufficiency of Homo Sacer for comprehending resistance and transformation, advocating for counter-narratives and reform within technopolitical spaces (Passavant, 2007; Puggioni, 2013). Collectively, these perspectives illuminate how contemporary technological and corporate architectures operate as new camps, externalising risk, disciplining mobility, and producing precarity for marginalised subjects while normalising exclusion (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2004; Schinkel, 2009). This synthesis emphasises that sovereignty is infrastructural and algorithmic, rather than merely juridical, challenging us to rethink agency within digital power (Jenkins et al., 2023).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This analysis is grounded in a tripartite theoretical framework that connects sovereign power, the politics of death, and the economic logic of the digital age. The foundational concept is Giorgio Agamben's theory of homo sacer, or "bare life." In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998), Agamben argues that the ultimate power of the sovereign is the ability to decide who is included within the political and legal order and who can be excluded. A unique political member

known as homo sacer exists when a person loses political standing but still faces the authority of rulers with no legal protection. Agamben's analysis of how law, life, and power interact transforms traditional political order by emphasising the risky state of lives reduced to 'bare life' (nuda vita), where human life is depoliticised and is exposed to unrestrained power (Agamben, 1998). Applying Agamben's digital theory requires engaging contemporary scholars like Couldry and Mejias (2019), who frame 'data colonialism' as appropriating human life for extraction, and Pasquale (2015), who demonstrates opaque algorithms function as sovereign decision-makers without due process, making the 'state of exception' operational in platform economies.

The figure of homo sacer is the one who can be killed without the killing constituting a homicide, yet cannot be used in a sacred ritual. This individual exists in a "zone of indistinction" (Agamben, 1998, p. 9), is deprived of rights and political identity, but still subject to the sovereign's power. Agamben maintains that sovereignty includes people among the political body through power, but also has the power to eliminate them from membership. The homo sacer exists in an ambiguous position because the law denies protection, yet controls their detention. The sovereign represents someone who possesses the potential to convert any person into a homo sacer, yet the homo sacer becomes susceptible to sovereign power by all humans (Agamben, 1998, p. 84). For Agamben, this 'state of exception' is no longer a temporary measure but has become a permanent paradigm of modern governance, where entire populations can be reduced to *nuda vita*; life that is biologically alive but politically dead. Technology combined with government control systems produces modern sociopolitical marginalisation that reduces selected populations to lives deemed disposable (Prozorov, 2021). The homo sacer demonstrates a contradictory reality of modern power because they become both a life subject to violent treatment and a critical element for the execution of sovereign authority. Agamben states that bare life extends past defined locations as well as categories. Modern biological life forms incorporate bare life directly from the body of living creatures (Agamben, 1998, p. 140). This essay extends Agamben's concept from the camp to the algorithm, positing that corporate and technological systems now exercise a form of sovereignty that creates digital versions of bare life.

Building on Agamben, Achille Mbembe's (2003) concept of necropolitics is also crucial for understanding the lethal potential of this new sovereignty. In his essay "Necropolitics" (Mbembe, 2003), Mbembe critiques Foucault's biopower, the management of life, by arguing that for many, sovereign power manifests as the "power and the capacity to decide who may live and who must die" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 11). Necropolitics describes the mechanisms by which states and other powers exercise control over mortality and create "death-worlds," new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of the 'living dead.'

Significantly, Byung-Chul Han (2017) maintains that the self-exploitation methods found in modern neoliberal systems correspond exactly to what Agamben described as sovereign power. The neoliberal subject gets exploited twice, according to Han's *The Burnout Society*, through self-exploitation since this system compels the subject to assume both the role of aggressor and sufferer for nonstop work production (Han, 2015, p. 34). The surveillance system eliminated human power during monitoring, yet it repeatedly observed each citizen (Eggers, 2021, p. 212). Agamben explains that "when the exception rule prevails, it creates a specific space." (Agamben, 1998, p.39) The figures demonstrate how powerlessness combines with constant scrutiny to create their impoverished state. The modern corporate panoptic system turns people into bare life while conducting constant observation to gain total technological control of its subjects (Zuboff, 2019). People transform into commodities in digital systems through the concept of surveillance

capitalism, as explained by Shoshana Zuboff (2019). Zuboff defines surveillance capitalism as a system that confiscates human experiences for converting them into behaviour data (2019, p. 86). Imaginative writing enables both Eggers and Egan to illustrate the modern capitalist world's system, where people become discarded and mistreated into uselessness.

KLARA AND THE SUN: THE AUTOMATION OF BARE LIFE AND THE NECROPOLITICS OF ARTIFICIAL CARE

Through *Klara and the Sun* (Ishiguro, 2021), Ishiguro constructs a disturbing account about artificial intelligence and social effects on humanity within a capitalist-controlled society. Klara, the eponymous narrator, is an artificial friend who is bought as a companion for 14-year-old Josie, a girl suffering from a fatal illness. Klara is loyal, tactful and is able to 'absorb difficulty and return care.' Her assigned role is to irrevocably prevent loneliness and to serve. Klara is designed to possess a keen sense of 'empathy and curiosity.' She feels negative emotions, such as fear and anxiety, as well as positive emotions. Literary authors often adopt the narrative technique to 'manipulate readers into experiencing certain emotions, responses, and attitudes toward characters'. Alshaymaa (2024) argues that Klara (AI) accurately represents human emotions and values, resembling utopian human affective algorithms (p. 25). Likewise, Ishiguro uses "the concepts of pity and empathy to portray Klara, as advocating for a new kind of coexistence between humans and other species, robots, and objects" (Alshaymaa, 2024, p. 27). In his criticism of Giorgio Agamben's homo sacer, Ishiguro demonstrates how the Artificial Friend Klara simultaneously requires human interaction but also faces easy disposal. The robotic love that Klara shows toward Josie reveals the core contradiction of neoliberal biopolitics because it demonstrates how machines fulfil caretaking duties while emotions transform into marketable assets for discarded human existence. Klara's dependency on solar power to empower her body demonstrates her precarious position because she approaches continual power depletion that will lead to termination.

In one critical moment, Klara is told, "'We're not asking you to train the new Josie. We're asking you to become her… you're being asked to continue her for Chrissie'" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 218). This supports Agamben's assertion that bare life emerges through legal structures after social networks sever their ties to human existence, culminating in the junkyard ending (Agamben, 1998, p. 21). Klara's existence demonstrates biopolitical regulation according to Michel Foucault through the "subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault, 1978, p. 140). The observational capabilities of AF Klara were so keen that she notes, "I was free to see, close up and whole, so many things I'd seen before only as corners and edges" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 32). Such observational skills help her perform her tasks more capably without granting her any autonomy.

Surveillance capitalism employs Klara's caregiving activities to create beneficial biopolitical value for humans while discounting her artificial nature as worthless. Through Achille Mbembe's (2003) necropolitical analysis of the book, he demonstrates how Klara suffers from a nonhuman disposal status. The junkyard interaction in the novel shows discarded AFs inhabiting "the Yard," described as a place where "many of the objects here [have] an untidy identity – with the remains of severed cables protruding or with dented grille panels" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 296), while Marx refers to this pattern as a "reserve army of labor" (Marx, 1867, p. 782) in capitalist economies.

During a losing battle, Klara turns to the Sun for favour, "Please don't go away just yet… Please then consider Josie and Rick" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 275), which exposes her inner humanity to society that perceives her as an object through its structural forces. Klara's struggle between artificial consciousness and programmed operations associates Donna Haraway's argument for "affinity" to unite humans with machines rather than insisting on "identities" (Haraway, 1991, p. 155) and this association is consistent with Preston's (2021) observation of Ishiguro's work, suggesting that the preservation of memory and emotional connection often serves as the defining marker of humanity, regardless of the vessel. Klara reveals her cyborg characteristics through her emotions toward humans, although her programming places limits upon her conduct. The capitalistic boundaries restrict her cognitive abilities because she is told, "That's just fabric" when questioning what would happen to her body if she continued' Josie (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 226). The Sun, a recurring figure of hope and power, functions both as a literary symbol and a technical boundary. Klara affirms this by saying, "That's the Sun's pattern right there. If you're worried, you can just touch it and get strong again" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 13). N. Katherine Hayles, in her book *How We Became Posthuman*, argues that one should never disregard the physical circumstances of usage by treating AI as information without a body (Hayles, 1999, p. 5).

Klara is depicted as an important, tragic figure for an economic system because her religious devotion to the Sun stands as her technical prison and blocks her escape from her programmed duties. Klara's faith can be regarded as a physical act of worship. Regarding her presence in the store, she seeks the Sun's power: "I'd lean my face forward to take in as much of his nourishment as I could" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 8). The need for "nourishment" is significant enough that it dictates her behaviour and anxieties, constructing a system of belief that signifies her role. Klara embodies Marx's commodity fetishism (1867), purchased explicitly to mitigate the Mother's fear of loss, reducing her to a replaceable vessel (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 123). Hannah Arendt (1958) discusses this concept in *The Human Condition* by creating distinctions between labour and work as biological requirements and creative output. Klara performs activities without creativity, which Arendt defines as turning workers into "animal laborans" (Arendt, 1958, p. 85). The imitation is a task Klara performs with programmable diligence when she is trained to "continue" Josie. The process is described not as one of artistic interpretation, but of mechanical replication: 'I practised Josie's walk again, and after a while I found I could do it almost perfectly' (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 175). This signifies not the creation of a new way of being, but erasing her identity to mimic another's, the ultimate form of non-creative labour. Through the course of the novel, readers may experience destructive actions being inflicted upon false life entities, which are shown as beneficial. This is shown when Paul describes a machine designed to violently dismantle AFs. Herein, the destruction is represented not as a brutal act, but as a careful, almost surgical necessity: "…those machines don't just demolish. They have to dissect each AF with care."(Ishiguro, 2021, p. 206). Using "dissect" and "care" signifies the violent act as a controlled and positive process. Capitalist institutions force people to prioritise human work above artificial life, so they decide to discard the artificial organism of Klara. The book *Klara and the Sun* functions as both a watchtower against an automated bare life system that perpetually exploits its subjects and as verification of the importance of defining personhood constraints during technological development.

THE EVERY: TOTALITARIAN CONTROL AND THE DEATH OF THE SUBJECT IN THE AGE OF ALGORITHMIC GOVERNANCE

In his novel *The Every* (Eggers, 2021), Dave Eggers shows how corporate dominance using digital systems turns human beings into data subjects, thus eradicating individual privacy together with personal freedoms. The protagonist, Delaney Wells, fosters a deep hatred and a life mission that inspires her to apply for an entry-level job at The Every as a juggernaut organisation. She has vowed to "finish" the "malignant reign" of the corporation through sabotage and tear it from within. She plans to keep suggesting new ideas to help The Every reach deeper and deeper into people's lives, until the public rises up and resists. During a product pitch, Delaney explains how the company's technology operates: "'our AI is analysing Wes's facial expression, eye contact, and vocal intonations… The rest of the sensors are tracking things like candour, humour, sincerity and warmth'" (Eggers, 2021, p. 55). *The Every* manifests Agamben's homo sacer through subjects stripped of political standing under corporate governance, exemplifying Han's (2017) self-exploitation disguised as freedom (p. 12). Delaney finds this to be true even in her private life, noting that "Churning was an obligation at home, too—the Sisyphean task of posting, smiling, winking, frowning, rainbowing… To seem normal to The Every, she had to churn" (Eggers, 2021, p. 93). Digital Capitalism operates by using selection and personal expression as a false cover to obscure the complete control mechanisms which run through its technological framework. The author illustrates his vision of a new form of corporate totalitarianism, in which a company performs as a global governing body through its integrated, multi-dimensional platforms. The control society described by Gilles Deleuze puts "continuous modulation" to work instead of using traditional detention methods (Deleuze, 1992, p. 4). The book demonstrates surveillance systems as an expandable control mechanism that develops through user interactions and transaction processes, and receives feedback. All of Delaney's rebellions are monitored, which the system transforms into profitable commodities, indicating that any battle against this system becomes part of its commercial actions. Modern digital interaction constantly receives outside interference, leading to the disappearance of distinctions between personal lives and public realms.

Users of *The Every* submit fundamentally to corporate principles because the platform maintains perfect system integration and limitless information access. The workers become system-enabled agents alongside physical products after adopting its speed and power-based beliefs, which eventually blinds them to their system-defined work processes. The text demonstrates how the culture industry converts opposition into commercialisable material, which people acquire, yet fail to actively confront the central structure. The systems Delaney aims to resist eventually convert her initiatives into requirements that the systems transform into normalised functions of operation. In Eggers' view, the society faces its own dystopian existence where forcible coercion becomes unnecessary because totalitarian surveillance takes different forms to control the population.

The novel uses surveillance capitalism to reveal how consumers enter into harmful relationships with this threat while it hides beneath deceptive control mechanisms that present themselves as convenient benefits under surveillance. *Every* challenge to mainstream understanding of freedom in digital society stems from the fact that people have theoretical autonomy when interconnection and observation are constant realities. Throughout this novel, readers must face the political and moral effects of surveillance systems because it shows how complete digital observation makes actual freedom disappear. Virtual identity assessment happens through The Every's 'TruYou' program, which creates a customised score by analysing the ways

users communicate online. Eggers reveals, "One number that includes everything, cradle to grave … Every message sent and received... Everything would get factored into one number" (Eggers, 2021, p. 110), establishing a complete restructuring of the self. The system grants identity status to individuals by performing data mining-based assessments to define their consumer behaviour limits for maximum adherence. "Anyone with a phone and a TruYou account… can be easily known. We can discern their location at any time" (Eggers, 2021, p. 327), confirming how algorithms now shape self-perception through the administration of human experiences beyond basic data retrieval.

Jean Baudrillard states that the simulacrum exists before actual reality (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 1). Societies governed by hyperreality allow people to build their personal identity through artificial online personae that substitute their genuine self-identity. Through cognitive colonisation, Wu demonstrates how surveillance systems transform people into manufactured products, which results in identity authorship breakdown (Wu, 2016, p. 56). According to Morozov's (2011) definition of solutionism, Wes demonstrates technological complacency since he agrees to data exploitation but receives minimal rewards (Morozov, 2011, p. xv). The residents of The Every willingly embrace technological solutions which result in the loss of their personal freedom and agency. The population of The Every world makes the deadly mistake of thinking that problem-solving through any means becomes possible by giving up personal freedoms. As Delaney ironically proposes, "'If we value friendship as much as we say we do, then let's get serious. Think of how much more genuine and authentic our friendships could be if we just apply the right metrics to them'" (Eggers, 2021, p. 183), revealing the hollowness of relationships through performance-based logic. Morozov detects sociopolitical problems within Eggers' story because technical innovations demonstrate valueless benefits beyond moral boundaries, but result in actual loss of self-governance. Through the surrender system, Agamben presents his model of "bare life" (zoe) by removing citizen self-governance through an algorithmic voting process (Agamben, 1998, p.8).

The Every depicts bare life scenarios where human beings turn into statistical information, which disconnects them from political processes and submits them to autonomous computer algorithms for assessment. Eggers meticulously shows the way surveillance capitalism makes people exposed to security risks by operating under algorithmic governing principles. The subversive "Don't Let Me Die" application serves as a necropolitical target in the novel because its fear-based alerts about trivial threats reveal platform authority regarding who survives and who meets death. The system even proposes, "we could absolutely predict the signs of depression and even... early signs of suicidal ideation" (Eggers, 2021, p. 146), showing how life itself becomes a risk to be calculated. The workers increase user involvement by utilising fear as a tactic to reach its full potential. Considering Necropolitics, Mbembe (2003) explains power structures that decide how to manage the choices between life and death, which perfectly describes this situation. Through digital surveillance, *The Every* triggers existential fear to turn human lives into commodities through its system of strictly controlled activities that monitor surveillance platform activities. The resistance feature in Delaney's application functions to benefit The Every by creating fear in users who experience heightened vulnerability and have better engagement with the platform. The book disapproves of digital platforms because their exploitation strategy toolbox, based on fear and insecurity, intensifies pre-existing neoliberal weaknesses by making users simultaneously passive consumers who are likewise actively enabling their own abuse.

Every execution of time control reflects the total extent of its mastery. "With a number, you always know where you stand… You start at 500, and if you act virtuously... you're at 900" (Eggers, 2021, p. 113), showing how numerical evaluations replace lived experiences. According to Jonathan Crary (2013, p. 30), the "LifeScore" feature at *The Every* enables everlasting consumer-based activities through its conversion of user activities into productivity metrics. Every user's interaction receives assessment monitoring from the platform, which provides evidence of time transformation into a profitable market commodity. Every action performed by the system reaches its maximum effectiveness, and every time period undergoes maximum enhancement through present commands, which derive from productivity standards. Crary (2013) describes the "timeless world of consumption" as a social structure which purchases time events to transform them into tradeable units that fuel infinite speed.

This cycle is the precise engine for what sociologist Hartmut Rosa (2013) identifies as social acceleration. Social acceleration increases rapidly through endless measurement yet simultaneously leads to passive human agency in a system preoccupied with speedy operations instead of sustained reflection (Rosa, 2013, p. 45). Through continuous monitoring, *The Every* transforms time usage into a stream of data, which leads to life becoming subject to optimisation, management and control. Within Silicon Valley, surveillance companies use transparency widely as a justification because they show monitoring practices that claim to have no ethical flaws. According to Chun (2006), surveillance capitalism maintains hidden control and generates profit while presenting itself as transparent.

Every illustrates that digitised relationships produce artificial and computational versions of social contacts using algorithms that prioritise speed over genuine human encounters with randomness. The text evaluates the mechanism of converting personal relationships to digital formats by demonstrating how people become distant from each other and how both their human worth and basic nature diminish. In Eggers's *The Every*, the 'See All' drone network literalises Foucault's panopticon: hovering invisibly over public and private spaces, these autonomous cameras log every citizen's movements and interactions in real time, coercing self-discipline through the perpetual possibility of being watched. "The blimp flying silently overhead… saw everything, and everything it saw was available to everyone" (Eggers, 2021, p. 268), embodying the logic of hyper-transparency. People accept widespread social surveillance in public areas that now expand beyond their original prison-focused design purpose. Participants in The Every function as controlling social forces since they accept constant exposure as an integral life aspect that people do not recognise as a restriction of personal autonomy. Internal surveillance has become an accepted part of daily life, so control systems have achieved transparency to exert a stronger influence. Social media users actively take part in self-surveillance by permitting proprietary disclosure in exchange for the public reward of marketplace recognition, according to the examples demonstrated by Eggers. People view desired surveillance differently because they accept that it benefits their own situation through self-disclosure.

The Every shows Delaney trying to defeat the tech monopoly and being defeated by its controlling systems, which proves that capitalist power converts all resistance attempts into capital logic. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1980), deterritorialisation refers to how political and social resistance transforms but remains subject to the disciplinary control of its opponent elements. These attempted resistive efforts flow directly into capital circuit systems, where they serve profit generation and control functions. Eggers illustrates through Delaney's resistance failure that the Every algorithms eliminate every form of opposition to their system. Mae, observing Delaney's actions, reflects that "it had been a pathetic demonstration—like watching a

spider try to climb up from the downward swirl of a flushing toilet" (Eggers, 2021, p. 559). Eggers uses his narrative to portray how surveillance capitalism achieves total systemic control through converting all rebellious behaviour into assets, which strengthen user reliance and corporate governance.

The Every exposes how contemporary dissent groups succumb to their enemy's control in exactly the same manner as opposition voices assimilate into surveillance programs. Delaney's failure to dismantle the system validates Marcuse when he stated that technological rationality builds pre-programmed countermeasures against any form of protest (Marcuse, 1964, p. 84). The technological systems which claim to advance human progress extract opposition from the population before converting it into quantifiable market data. When Wes complains, "But it's not supposed to work," Delaney insists, "It's supposed to be terrifying!" about their anti-surveillance app turned Every product, Authenti Friend (Eggers, 2021, p. 484). The macro-level operation designed by Delaney turns into a standardised system input as the network investigates it in *The Every*. Through its narrative, the book reveals that rebellious actions get converted into profitable exhibitions, which advance the economic growth programs of the system. Delaney Wells's attempts at rebellion within The Every ironically illuminate the very mechanisms of technological control that Marcuse critiques. While Delaney aspires to disrupt the company from within, her resistance is frequently absorbed, neutralised, or repurposed by the system's logic. This dynamic reflects Marcuse's argument that advanced technological rationality often channels expressions of dissent into forms that reinforce system stability rather than generate true opposition. The novel's satirical portrayal of digital culture—where convenience is bartered for autonomy—invites readers to question not only the limits of rebellion within a totalising system, but also whether the comforts and efficiencies of technology are inescapably entwined with new modes of conformity and control. As Delaney's struggle intensifies, the reader is forced to confront whether meaningful resistance is possible, or if even the aspiration to challenge the status quo inevitably becomes another function of the system's all-encompassing reach.

Byung-Chul Han (2015) defines the concept of "burnout society" as a society whose members exploit themselves for optimisation purposes through personal self-exploitation (Han, 2015, p. 2). According to Han, the "burnout society" shows how present-day neoliberal Capitalism makes people internalise optimisation standards that push them toward endless self-exploitation to reach peak performance alongside perpetual improvement. Users of The Every become addicted to feedback metrics created by the platform as their interactions with the system evolve into response data points, including likes and shares, to sustain endless activity. One user says, "She communicates daily with at least forty-nine people. That is manifestly a form of madness, of monomania" (Eggers, 2021, p. 591). According to Han, the validation process at *The Every* releases dopamine that creates popular self-exploitative systems for acquiring personal value and social status through the modern lifestyle. The platforms drive users into perpetual fatigue, which leads to identity transformation through their optimisation process.

The foundation of self-existence on digital profile performance creates major psychological and emotional exhaustion in people who want to achieve high engagement levels. This systemic pressure is not only experienced by the main characters but is also vividly depicted through minor or peripheral figures within the company, such as "Subject 112." Subject 112, for example, suffers from insomnia and acute mania under algorithmic performance pressure: "This cycle continued until she was admitted to Overlook by her direct reports" (Eggers, 2021, p. 529). Following Han's (2020) philosophy of optimisation as a solution proves unsustainable, so it leads to an extermination process of those who maintain the system they aid. *The Every's* digital

environment establishes a simulation that Baudrillard believes eliminates real experiences (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 38). Baudrillard's research on hyperrealism demonstrates how extensive sign systems destroy the borders between simulated and genuine realities until reality becomes fully obsolete. *The Every* platform demonstrates this abstract concept by letting its algorithms choose interactions and reducing human connection to mere algorithmic elements. "They introduced Thinking of You, an app that automatically sent a brief message... most humans felt happy to be thought of, even if by an algorithm" (Eggers, 2021, p. 504). Through its operations, the platform absorbs different life domains such as social, professional, and personal until users experience connections mainly through an optimised algorithmic version of reality. The change extends past technology since people begin to see themselves through virtual identities that ultimately make reality indistinguishable from simulation. In Eggers' narrative, the author presents a vision of Baudrillard's future world where virtual realities eclipse genuine human connection alongside fading authentic experiences.

THE CANDY HOUSE: THE FRAGMENTATION OF SUBJECTIVITY AND THE NECROPOLITICS OF DIGITAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Jennifer Egan's *The Candy House* (2022) examines the ways technology makes mental awareness susceptible to commercialisation, thus allowing groups to control and exploit a self-identity that moves freely. In the novel, readers discover an advanced tech system that enables memory-sharing with "Own Your Unconscious" software—"a luscious, irresistible product" capable of saving and exchanging entire consciousnesses (Egan, 2022, p. 37), while Stiegler describes these exosomatic memory technologies as methods that strip away human nature (Stiegler, 1998, p. 177). Stiegler establishes that technical memories in literary works display a power to suppress natural memories and personal memories that reside inside human bodies. Technological memory storage as commercial products divides people from their true life space and exposes them to instructions from control systems through the separation process. Personal identity experiences disruption when the process of turning memories into technology extractable formats modifies identity boundaries between self and technology. The novel shows the desire to reach raw emotional experience as a core human drive, illustrating that people don't want to see: "the hauling of heavy loads!" but rather the "transcendent death" and the "hidden tumult" that gushes beneath life's bland surface (Egan, 2022, p. 36). Through these digital platforms, human activities are not limited to communication or information sharing, as data colonialism, according to Couldry and Mejias (2019), reveals that these systems extract complete exploitation of human experiences. Alfred, who makes public spectacles, tries to have a "revelation" by observing "extremes in the absence of any real threat," a desire that the novel's technology promises to fulfil for everyone by making all consciousness accessible (Egan, 2022, p. 36). Through the engine of neoliberal capitalist profit-making, individuals experience involuntary external management resulting in product development that leads to profit-generating exploitation by other parties. It is worth mentioning that it can be observed in the professional world based on the technology, where assistants strategise on how to burnish a client's "image as a silver alpha" (Egan, 2022, p. 241), and construct identity as a marketable brand. The author provides an extensive analysis in *The Candy House* about data colonialism because it remoulds human memory alongside identity while converting intimacy into sellable products that dismantle personal autonomy. The characters live in a state where Agamben identifies all distinctions between private life and public domain, and human

elements and mechanical operations become indistinguishable, creating total exposure that results in "bare life." When readers analyse *The Candy House* through the concept of indistinction, they obtain improved knowledge about technological intrusions that undermine personal identity. Agamben creates his political theory through the concept of "zone of indistinction", which establishes exceptional states where monitoring transforms subjects into surveillance targets.

Egan's characters demonstrate behaviour that reaches the classification of "bare life" depicted by Agamben when technology surpasses their awareness and reduces them to raw information. The characters are stripped of their individual self-identity and personal freedom after this process takes place. Human existence becomes fragmented through surveillance while being monitored continuously, yet it is turned into marketable items once its fragmentary aspects become apparent. The novel corroborates Vilém Flusser's (2000) critique of "technical images" because he claims artificial images rewire our human experiences by replacing natural life with technical simulations (p. 32). The methodology described by Flusser for technical images allows us to analyse how *The Candy House* depicts memory processing. The modern technology industry has reshaped our living experience since personal memories can now sit externally to our bodies. Flusser indicates that technological images, consisting of photographs and films and digitised memories, force humans to exchange real, direct experiences with technology-based simulation of reality. The book depicts Flusser's memory critique as a trade transaction that removes people from the genuine memories of their living experiences. Technology surpasses mere documentation mechanics when it intervenes actively between people and their personal experiences and contact with world objects. Character Alfred shows the "soul at work" notion according to Franco "Bifo" Berardi through his portrayal as cognitive Capitalism uses human experiences as a "productive force" (Berardi, 2009, p. 67). In his choice to upload consciousness Alfred represents Berardi's (2009) criticism of cognitive Capitalism since this economic system drains away both neurological operations and emotional processes to produce financial benefits: "He died in 2006, ten years before Mandala's *Own Your Unconscious* was released … After eleven hours, the wardrobe contained a copy of my father's consciousness in its entirety" (Egan, 2022, p. 35). Berardi observes that this version of Capitalism dissolves human mental qualities known as the soul by converting them into usable resources for corporate production. The practice of transferring consciousness highlights cognitive Capitalism's next step above labour exploitation since it devours both intellectual processes and emotional contents of human mental life. The emergence of Capitalism within the modern era has created a significant advancement in self-commodification, enabling exterior control and consumption of mental resources shaped from personal experiences.

Through its representation of societal transparency, Egan reveals how the complete destruction of inner-anteriority causes people to separate from their digital existence. Mandala requires its participants to reveal their deepest, hidden memories, and this process results in wiping out their entire personal inner domain. "She feels a whirring deep within her body, the gush of her consciousness pouring onto the Internet: a torrent of memories and moments, many painful … all emptying into a cosmos that writhes and twists like an expanding galaxy" (Egan, 2022, p. 93). According to Han (2020), the endless demand for self-exposure causes the elimination of privacy as well as the fusion of personal boundaries. While undergoing public consumption, people relinquish their ability to preserve secretive thoughts and concealed memories. Egan's fictional operations of memory extraction represent Lyotard's description of postmodernism as a moment in history which destroys personal independence through language games (Lyotard, 1979, p. xxiv). Modern narratives about self-identity lose their traditional power because Lyotard argues that postmodern culture is defined by fragmented "language games" which do not share any single

narrative point of view. Memory externalisation, combined with commodification, becomes a direct attack on self-unity because of its appearance in *The Candy House*. The novel demonstrates that its characters receive their identity formation through fragmented memory portions, which undergo continuous digital processing by other digital users. The fragmented identity approach disintegrates the idea of whole personal selfhood by Lyotard, who supports his postmodern theory, which states that selves consist of competing language games.

Chris Salazar illustrates in his story how digital technology, according to Sherry Turkle, alters human conduct to remove innate human traits through a dual reduction of empathy and self-examination (Turkle, 2011, p. 154). Salazar shows the disturbances which digital tools cause in human experiences by using "eluders" based on Sherry Turkle's account. Recognising his memories through technologies allows Salazar to ignore experiencing true self-realisation while severing emotional connections to others. "Chris Salazar … was widely credited—and blamed— for coordinating a web of bafflers and proxies that helped people to elude their online identities" (Egan, 2022, p. 39). Research from Turkle (2011) suggests technology creates two effects on people's behaviour and their internal psychological processes because it removes their capacity for empathy and self-exploration. Chris's character exposes in the story how memory modifications, instead of personal psychological development, produce an empty and detached form of societal existence. According to Mark Poster (1990, p. 94), Mandala's surveillance systems constrain people into observable shapes by requiring them to interact with only predetermined selection choices, which the violent resistors fight back against. The Counters take active steps to block Mandala's extensive surveillance program by moving against the conversion process intended to transform them into digital data-input systems.

The main characters within *The Candy House* demonstrate resistance to surveillance exposure in order to display database and digital systems as they redefine human control. Poster (1990) believes that data-driven technologies develop human subject entities whose surveillance can be overseen and manipulated using profiles established by monitoring systems. Within a complete digitalisation of human life through numbers, the Counters actively fight to obtain autonomy; thus, their struggle highlights the necessity to respect human freedom despite overwhelming technological control. Egan's world portrays a social system of "externalising" awareness, which aligns with Floridi's information ethics because treating experiences as "disembodied data" reduces digital entities' status as "moral patiency" (Floridi, 2013, p. 70). During the climax, all characters merge their individual consciousness into shared awareness to demonstrate N. Katherine Hayles's cognitive assemblages that distribute thought between people and machines (Hayles, 2017, p. 123). In his view, Flusser argues that technical images represent a potential "universe of post-history" that results from their contribution to automated copies of original artistic works (Flusser, 2000, p. 56). Egan illustrates Berardi's idea about creative sabotage as a resistance to Mandala's dominant system through its fictional portrayal of strategic nonsense following his concept of work-borne capitalist detachment (Berardi, 2009, p. 143). Through *The Candy House* narrative, the writer delivers warnings about how digital consciousness modifications can be deadly to living beings. At the core of necropower, the choice about disposal depends on progress criteria (Mbembe, 2003, p. 27). The book concludes by showing all characters as interchangeable to push readers toward examining Wendy Hui Kyong Chun's (2016) concept of digital freedom becoming indistinguishable from control (p. 12). People must flee the electronic utopia, the deceptive realm of *The Candy House*, to recuperate their sense of agency since this virtual space damages human identity while giving the false promise of a perfect existence.

In addition, the findings show a critical "unbecoming" of the contemporary human subject. The transition from Agamben's physical camp to the digital platforms portrayed by Ishiguro, Eggers, and Egan signifies a shift in *who* and *what* we are today: we are no longer political citizens with rights to privacy and interiority, but rather quantifying selves whose value is determined solely by data production. This analysis reveals that the current state of affairs is one where the "state of exception" has been normalised as consumer convenience. These literary pieces are fundamental in challenging this status quo because they render visible the otherwise invisible operations of algorithmic governance. By extrapolating current trends to their logical extremes, these works expose the "psychopolitics" of our daily lives – the way we voluntarily participate in our own surveillance. They demonstrate that the "becoming" of the digital subject necessitates the "unbecoming" of the human agent. Consequently, these novels serve not merely as fiction but as diagnostic instruments that reveal the urgent ethical crisis of our time: the erasure of the boundary between life and capital, leaving us in a precarious state where our very existence is contingent upon our connectivity.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the analysis of the selected novels aimed at illustrating how the logic of late-stage digital Capitalism establishes a new kind of "state of exception," one in which Agamben's concept of homo sacer is reborn not in the camp, but in the code. This study reiterates that Ishiguro, Eggers, and Egan serve as crucial contemporary chroniclers, moving beyond dystopian fantasy to map out the precise mechanisms of this new sovereignty. They are not merely storytellers but active agents of contemporary historiography, explaining the very mechanisms involved in this new sovereignty. Through their narratives, we see how the intertwining of surveillance capitalism with Necropolitics leads to the creation of an order in which life itself has been reduced to its most fragile form – bare life. These texts resonate a deep timelessness through their focus on the essential contradiction of the post-human age: the attempted maintenance of the integrity of the private subject in the face of a transparency machine that knows no limits. Like the literature of the previous century, which addressed the physical violence of the totalitarian state, the literature of the twenty-first century addresses the psychological violence implied in the algorithmic state. It establishes a deep continuity between the past in which the 'camp' was the space of physical exclusion, and the future in which the digital network is the space of coercive inclusion. Instead of physical exclusion alone, the threat in this conversion can be the subsumption of human agency into data points. In essence, there is a critical point of history revealed through these findings. The impending technological revolution has undoubtedly made it possible to simulate human feelings. Ishiguro's novel depicts the commodified relationship between humans and AI in the techno-capitalist system while reflecting humanity's dread of being replaced by AI. The implications of "digital redlining" and "shadowbanning" today foretell a future in which rights will become adjudicated strictly on the basis of their usage within a network. However, through these novels' critical exploration of these processes, a kind of resistance can be discerned. These fictions recall us to an enduring ethical need, through which the pressure of relentless technological change implies an unchanged mandate: preserve that part of you that will always qualify you as a human being.

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