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The Liquid Self in the Age of Digital Surveillance: Technology and Identity in Leila Lalami's *The Dream Hotel* :Analytical Study

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Abstract:

In an era defined by digital technology and data collection, contemporary fiction is a crucial source of knowledge about the human implications of surveillance. This paper is based on the ideas of liquid modernity proposed by Zygmunt Bauman and the theory of surveillance in the modern world to discuss how modern technology transforms subjectivity, autonomy, and the capacity to make moral choices. This analytical study examines novel *The Dream Hotel* 2025 by Leila Lalami using key theories of surveillance to evaluate the implications of algorithmic governance, predictive surveillance, and institutional control on identity, relationships, and individual agency in the novel. The researcher chose this novel because it vividly portrays the fluid and changing nature of identity , making it suitable for studying the concept of the liquid self. The importance of this research lies in its contribution to understanding the psychological, moral, and social implications of algorithmic control, as indicated in the contemporary literature. This research uses qualitative analysis that relies on textual analysis to examine the experiences of characters, narrative forms, and thematic representations of surveillance. The findings of this research show that identity in the new is constructed from the outside through algorithmic assessment, data mining, and behavioral categorization. The self is "liquid," constantly reshaped and recreated in digital assessment frameworks. This research highlights the effects of surveillance on minority identities and how acts of resistance are attempts to regain autonomy. This research reveals that literary works, when analyzed from the perspective of surveillance discourse, demonstrate the human cost of predictive government and the potential for agency in a technologically regulated world.

Keywords: Technology – Surveillance – Identity - Literary Analysis – Algorithm



1- Introduction

Laila Lalami is a Moroccan-American author, essayist, and educator born in 1968. She was a fellow to study in the UK, acquiring an MA in languages after completing her licensing degree in Morocco. She was born to a middle-class family in Rabat, Morocco. She was taught French and standard Arabic in her elementary school and spoke Morocco's Arabic at home. She says she writes her own stories in French as she had previously only read French as the only child literature that existed to her as a child in Morocco. She has mentioned that although she has a supportive family concerning writing and has a reading diet comprising a wide variety of genres, she felt she ought to make a living from something else. Lalami earned her license in English at Mohammed V University in Rabat. She also earned a fellowship from the British Council in 1990 to pursue her studies at a UK-based school, and she graduated with an MA in linguistics at University College London. She returned home after her studies and worked temporarily as a commentator and journalist. She moved to California, USA, in 1992 to pursue a course of study at the University of Southern California, where she earned a PhD in linguistics. To remain active in the study of language, including analysis, she selected linguistics. Her experiences made her ponder about French and Arabic usage in Morocco. Her work had been influenced partly by Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said. She became aware of the "code-switching" she, along with her family, and a few native Moroccans from the upper class practiced while switching from one language to another. She opined that writing professionally in English "opened my eyes." (Lalami, 2009). Lalami's most recent novel, *The Dream Hotel*, was published on March 4, 2025, through both Pantheon Publishers and Bloomsbury Publishers in America and Great Britain respectively. The novel is set in a scary near-future surveillance culture and focuses on Moroccan American Archivist Sara Hussein as she is incarcerated in a 'retention facility' for her dreaming and its translation into evidence of her predicted violent intentions through algorithms. Through her interaction with arbitrary rules and regulations in this erstwhile children's school turned prison facility, Lalami tackles privacy in a world dominated by data mining and predictive justice systems. The



novel is hailed as "chillingly original" and "eerily close" to our world and is already getting starred reviews and a nomination as a Women's Prize for Fiction longlist member for 2025. The novel was also chosen as Jenna Bush Hager's Today Book Club option (Lalami, 2025). The novel is speculative fiction set in a near-future America influenced by the potential outcomes of today's AI growth. Since the Super Bowl terrorist attack where 100 people were shot on live television, the Risk Assessment Administration uses gadgets such as Dream saver, a wearable technology that records and analyses residents' dreams, using complex AI algorithms that monitor each person's likeliness to commit a crime.

The concept of Liquid modernity or identity is reflected in *The Dream Hotel* novel used to describe that identity is no longer fixed but constantly changing due to technology. The concept, derived from the idea of liquid modernity advanced by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, takes on a special significance within the context of dynamics between identity and novel. (Kirca, p186). The disintegration of these aspects, coupled with the dominance of individualization, insecurity, and fluid relationships, is the defining feature of the era of liquid modernity in stark contrast to the "solid" form of modernity that is associated with permanence in relationships and the existence of norms. The antiquated relational and organizational frameworks have become irrelevant in the contemporary era, thereby giving rise to a society where individuals take responsibility for managing their own lives in response to the prevailing opportunities and threats (Bauman, 2000:199). The idea of the liquid self, which has its roots in the concept of liquid modernity by Zygmunt Bauman, takes on a special significance in the context of the relationship between identity and *The Dream Hotel*. According to Bauman, identity itself has increasingly fragmented, flexible, and externally determined qualities rather than any necessary governance by its own integrity (P 199). As Bauman emphasizes, the individual within the digital culture must now contend with fluid identities, temporal relationships, and technology effects that reshape the terms of personal definition and performance on an ongoing rather than an intermittent basis. This fluidity is perceived by the main character in Lalami's story as both a potential freedom and a weakness. She defines herself not on the basis of what is inside her but on the



secrets of judging systems which categorize and judge her all the time. This illustrates Bauman's view that the postmodern self is external rather than internal (P 199). In the current digital age, this liquidity has shifted from being primarily social to being largely technological. Contemporary surveillance systems radically transform identity by reducing human experiences to data. David Lyon (2003; 2007) argues that current surveillance practices operate through classification and social sorting, reducing individuals to profiles based on aggregated data rather than actual experiences. Surveillance practices do not view individuals in a traditional way; instead, they detect data patterns. The concept of the "surveillant assemblage" developed by Haggerty and Ericson (2000) explains this shift by describing surveillance as a decentralized hybrid of biological, behavioral, psychological, and financial data that is disaggregated and reassembled for governance and control. Bauman (2000) emphasizes that identity has been constructed in terms of its flux, fragility, and volatility. It can better be described as an endless process of self- construction. It is the nature of modern life to be lived in a manner that is irregular, with changes occurring on a daily basis. To maintain the ever-changing and never-permanent environment. The character's identity depends not on the presence but on the unseen terms and mechanisms through which her identity is evaluated, judged, and constructs its own interpretation in the netherworlds of unknown discretion and technological omnipotence: rather than inhering in any personal or mapped presence or essence whatever, the fragmented presence simply exists in the state of witnessing its own interpretation through the amplifying glass and circumstances imposed by technological omnipotence outside any personal control (Bauman, 2000). The distinction between thought and the determining presence outside collapses. The fact emerges that within the terms of the all-pervasive digital observation that home to the fragmented disparate pieces of the postmodern self provides ineffective terms whatsoever for its personal regulation but only its regulation in accordance to various terms outlined and mandated within the context of the data to be controlled. Lalami's literary works embodies the spirit of contemporary anxiety. In *The Dream Hotel*, the author explores the impact of technology on our lives by taking



the expansion of our understanding of knowledge building, algorithmic governance, and data mining to the future. The implications are both political and existential. The reader is forced to think not just about the governance of such technologies, but also about the nature of self in a space where our inner selves are no longer sacred. Digital surveillance significantly influences the formation of identities in modern culture. Present-day surveillance is more than visual observation; it includes data mining, computer analysis, and prediction modeling. David Lyon identifies the nature of surveillance as a practice of societal sorting, which includes the categorization of societies through informational sorting (Lyon, 2007). Lyon, (2007:1) states that "Surveillance studies is about seeing things and, more particularly, about seeing people. But paradoxically, people are not what most surveillance sees today". The Concepts such as 'ambient intelligence' and 'ubiquitous computing' describe a near future where 'daily life scenarios are continuously monitored by computing and networking technologies in everyday environments'. This phenomenon changes from an extraordinary phenomenon to an integral part of the cultural environment. The expansion of surveillance is intricately linked with Shoshana Zuboff's theory of "surveillance capitalism" because this economic order considers experiences as raw data, which is used with the intention of predicting and changing human behavior (Zuboff, 2019). This technology has the ability to check, record, and analyze human behavior, including human thoughts, to predict future behavior. It is worth noting that these technologies not only monitor but also preempt, judging individuals on the basis of predicted actions, as opposed to past ones (Foucault, 1977). In *The Dream Hotel*, Laila Lalami extends this logic to an extreme but plausible situation. The novel imagines a state that imprisons citizens according to computational predictions derived from dream records. Surveillance now enters the psychological sphere and dissolves the boundary between thought and action. This type of predictive governance is exactly optimism in the sense of Michel Foucault: the individual internalizes surveillance and disciplines himself, or herself (Foucault, 1977). Unlike more traditional forms of optimism, however, the dystopia of Lalami's creation operates through invisible, automated



systems that claim neutrality and objectivity. Scholars also asserted that computer systems not only illustrate what exists, they also provide social identities. This is well explicated by Cheney-Lippold (2011) through the concept of algorithmic identity, which demonstrates the creation and construction of identity through coding, categorizing, and rendering human beings readable to computers. This supports Lalami's concept of the possession of knowledge through technology, wherein devices such as the Dream Saver enable the conversion of private events into quantified data that holds neither emotion nor story. Lalami's insight into predictive governance highlights the same struggle that exists when this process is impossible to interpret, much like what Pasquale (2015) suggests when algorithms are hidden behind secrets and used to make crucial decisions without being accountable to the public. Scholars such as Browne (2015), Gandy (2009), Eubanks (2018), and Benjamin (2019) show how data-driven governance is a means of reproducing racial, gender, and socioeconomic biases while claiming objectivity. The history of surveillance technology lies in the surveillance and control of racialized bodies. In *The Dream Hotel*, Sara Hussein, a Moroccan-American Muslim woman, is one such example of the biased allocation of algorithmic suspicion. While claiming to be objective, her identifying features are fed into the risk model, showing how predictive governance maintains structural privilege while appearing neutral. Technology within novel *The Dream Hotel* does not simply serve as a passive tool but rather as an active agent of identity construction. The Dream Saver technology translates human experiences into quantifiable and unambiguous data, stripping them of all emotional and contextual content. Thus, technology assumes the role of epistemic authority as it defines what is to be conceived as true about the individual. "Dream Saver" is not a standard scientific term. It is most often used in fiction or metaphorically to describe a technology, system, or idea that preserves, records, or protects dreams (or human aspirations). In literary contexts, it usually symbolizes memory control, identity, or digital surveillance (Walker, 2017). The novel also reveals the converging aspects of state surveillance and power in the role that private companies are playing in data gathering and sentence management. This is similar to the concerns that the public is



expressing about private state security systems and the lack of public monitoring of algorithms in governance (Zuboff, 2019). Although the novel shares themes about freedom and subjectivity, this novel focuses on surveillance as it is embedded in social systems. A critical interpretation of the novel is linked to Sara Hussein's identity as a Moroccan-American Muslim woman. Critical surveillance scholarship asserts that surveillance systems do not remain objective; instead, they tend to embody racist, sexist, and geopolitical biases inherent in the implementation of such systems. Lalami's Story Shows how computational systems exacerbate these inequities while presenting a neutral rhetoric. Sara's name, appearance, and upbringing all weigh in on her classification as a risk subject despite officials' insistence of neutrality through data-driven means. The particular interaction underlying this detail shows well how the liquid self is experienced differently. The majority and underprivileged, identification becomes highly unstable under technological scrutiny (Wilkoff, 2025). This Study proposes an extension of Bauman's theory, and that is the concept of the algorithmic liquid self. The novel is important because dramatizes real concerns: It shows that algorithmic systems do not merely predict behavior but actively shape identity and autonomy (Andrejevic, 2020). This research argues that the liquidity in the contemporary world is increasingly produced by computational systems, contrary to Bauman's theory that ascribed identity fragmentation to the weakness of social institutions. Identity changes not only because of the instability of society but also because of the algorithms of the algorithmic system that constantly reinterpret, predict, and reclassify the self. The self is made flexible both in the social and algorithmic realms, and its meaning is constantly redefined by data extraction and predictive analytics. This study examines the significance of *The Dream Hotel* as a literary critique of the phenomenon of digital surveillance and predictive control. By situating the novel in the context of surveillance studies, algorithmic identity, and liquid modernity, this paper argues that Lalami's novel reveals a new kind of liquidity that is technologically induced, where identity is always in a state of instability as it is subjected to the scrutiny of data analysis. This paper also argues that this liquidity is not evenly distributed, as it

affects marginalized bodies in particular ways within the context of predictive control.

2- Literature Review

Recent academic discourse regarding novel *The Dream Hotel* contextualises the novel within current discussions of digital surveillance, algorithmic governance, and the fluidity of identity (the liquid self). The following studies show how technology changes people's sense of self, their ability to act, and their freedom in late modernity. Surveillance is treated in contemporary literary scholarship as a structuring logic that reshapes narrative identity itself, rather than just a theme. A basic theoretical framework for understanding the narrative and mediated construction of identity rather than a fixed or autonomous essence of self is offered by Eakin's work in life writing studies. As Eakin describes in her piece "Mapping the Ethics of Life Writing," "Any life narrative project is shaped by social norms, power relationships, and moral responsibilities to others. The genres of life narrative thus rely on narrative practices which integrate one's own story with pre-existing narrative frames of interpretation" (Eakin 2004). Hence, narrative methods which unite personal narrative with pre-existing narrative frames of interpretation underlie identity construction. While Eakin's theoretical premise can be readily applied within fictional narrative towards illustrating self-construction through narrative technique despite primarily dealing with autobiographic narrative, Eakin's study remains relevant in a theoretical manner with contemporary fiction dealing with surveillance studies because of this particular theoretical premise's emphasis on narrative constructions of self-vulnerability towards appropriations and reinterpretations in different contexts. According to Braidotti (2017) which develops the case for posthuman critical theory in the context of the Anthropocene, understanding it both as the convergence of posthumanist and postanthropocentric discourses and their evolution in a fundamentally new and more complicated direction. Taking a cartographic approach to the posthuman, the article surveys recent scholarly production in the field and argues for the need to rethink subjectivity as a collective assemblage that includes human and nonhuman actors, technological mediation, animals, plants, and the planet as a whole.



Based on a monistic ontology derived from critical Spinozism and Deleuzian vital materialism, the article advances the case for posthuman ethics as affirmative compositions of transversal, manifold, and collaborative practices of becoming-posthuman. Hinchliffe (2021) states that utopian theorists often discuss the advantages in reading utopian fiction to recreate and rebuild a better world, but dystopian fiction is generally dismissed. This is, in my view, mistaken since dystopian fiction, like utopian fiction, identifies problems in the present, inspires action and resistance and in the twenty-first century often provides solutions for bringing about positive change through collective action. Both utopian and dystopian literature, as forms of speculative literature concerned with world building, are implicitly sociological. These writings can thus be exploited by sociologists and others working outside the arts and humanities. The role of speculative fiction is important in the discipline of surveillance studies not only because surveillance is a key trope in these literary works but also because its formal properties provide us with the terminology, imagery, and emotions associated with being observed. Thus far, 21st-century utopian and dystopian fiction has not been considered in any sustained way within the field of surveillance scholarship. Analysis of utopian and dystopian fiction within this field has also focused on texts set in the global north and created by authors from the global north. In light of the profusion of dystopian surveillance novels written in and outside the global north in recent years, the failure thus far to engage these texts represents a missed opportunity. While Kelly (2022) focused on film, literary, and interactive media incorporating a personalized approach to surveillance in order to criticize actual practices. According to Bell (2024) proposed a new theory to describe a skepticism towards digital technology in fiction in recent years, using and developing the idea of 'post-digital'. "This article gives a critical analysis of the way in which 'postdigital' has become a discourse in aesthetics, critical theory, and literary studies. " The definition of postdigital fiction will focus on digital/nondigital mixing in digital culture, undermining digital technology's universalism. With examples drawn from print fiction and digital fiction, the article examined how a postdigital approach can be articulated in both thematic and visual terms.



The article argued that ethics in a postdigital realm are becoming increasingly evident in narrative fiction. A recent critical review published in *The Harvard Crimson* (2025) examines how Lalami constructs a dystopian world where identity is no longer self-determined but algorithmically produced through data aggregation. The study emphasises the concept of “risk scores” derived from behavioural and psychological data, including dreams, which redefine individuals as probabilistic threats rather than autonomous subjects. It argues that surveillance technologies dissolve the boundary between inner and outer self, thereby producing a fluid, unstable identity aligned with Bauman’s “liquid modernity.” A contemporary literary analysis (*Chicago Review of Books*, 2025) examines the psychological effects of widespread surveillance, arguing that constant monitoring fosters self-doubt and internal fragmentation. The protagonist’s uncertainty about her own thoughts demonstrates how surveillance technologies infiltrate the subconscious, transforming identity into a source of anxiety and instability. The study concludes that Lalami depicts the self as fluid, monitored, and externally validated, aligning with postmodern theories of identity dissolution in digital environments.

3- Research Gap

Despite numerous investigations into digital surveillance, algorithmic governance, and data-driven identity formation, these topics are predominantly explored within the realms of sociology, media, or surveillance studies, with little direct interaction with literary theory. The literary depictions of surveillance, which delve into the inner workings of emotions, thoughts, memories, and dreams, as well as the narrative consequences of such surveillance on self-identity, have largely been neglected. This study seeks to fill this void by offering a literary theoretical analysis of Laila Lalami's *The Dream Hotel*, which examines how digital surveillance undermines narrative agency by converting internal experiences into algorithmic data. By emphasizing the ethical and narrative intricacies of identity within the context of relationships and technological control, this research adds to the existing body of literature on surveillance fiction studies.

4- Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it addresses an essential gap in the areas of literary analysis, identity theory, and the study of surveillance, which have received relatively little attention in literary studies. Although digital surveillance has received extensive attention in sociology, media research, and critical data research, the phenomenon of digital surveillance in the context of literary portrayals of subjectivity and identity construction has received relatively less attention. This study integrates surveillance and literary theories into a unified paradigm. This study encourages an interdisciplinary approach that broadens the scope of modern literary studies. This study is of particular relevance because it centers on the idea of 'identity' as an evolving and data-driven construct that is impacted by systems of surveillance. The use of a conceptual framework of social sorting, algorithmic identity, and datafication helps us understand how literature acts as a guide in understanding the emotional, psychological, and existential effects of living in a state of constant surveillance, a reality that is often lost or ignored in other forms of academic study that are not literature-based. Literature is not only a reflection of technological evolution but also a major site of analysis regarding its effects. This study evaluates contemporary fiction's engagement with power, technology, and governance by analyzing surveillance as a central narrative component. This paper highlights the capability of fiction to demonstrate the subtle mechanisms surrounding surveillance that affect existence associated with everyday life. This research makes a critical contribution to the fields of literary criticism and the examination of surveillance because it showcases how fiction can improve the value of identity in a data-driven society.

5- Theoretical Framework

5.1 Modernism, Post Modernism and the Liquid Self

Modernism is an attitude of rejection towards the past, which is marked by dogmatism, convention, moral norms, and habit. Modernism is concerned with the present and the idea of perpetual innovation. Modernism celebrates the need for continuous innovation and goes against traditional norms, values, and rituals. The conception of modernism is the transition from dogmatism to reason and rationality as



manifested in scientific, educational, medical, and legal reforms, as well as in artistic and technological innovation, constitutes this project of modernity. According to Bauman notes that “Modernity was born with the intention of throwing aside the legacy, burden and rubble of the past and making a fresh start” (2022, p. 41). Modernity appears as a forced adaptation to a new and unparalleled circumstance rather than a deliberate 'initiative' “Modernity emerged as a forced reaction to the collapse of the old world (a type of order that did not even need to see itself as an ‘order’, let alone a project), and there was no alternative to this reaction. Modernity can be told as a long and inconclusive story of escape from the great terror that emerged with the collapse of the old world” (p. 106). The Liquidity its mean the “process of change that human life depending on political realities. Liquidity also refers to what is temporary and therefore not permanent, is what is happening at this moment, and not what will occur in the future” (Palese, 2013, p. 191). Contrary to modernity, when the nation-state monopolized power, the postmodern period experienced deregulation and desegregation of the social system with the result being the creation of a liquid reality. People in the postmodern civilization have more time than before. As people’s income rises as social agents, they value education and training. The social security system in the welfare state relieved social agents' need for collective solidarity. This increased social mobility and reduced the ties between people. Social agents are now able to determine their own individual lives, whereas before, they had to live up to societal norms. Solidity and liquidity are ideas that pertain to two different periods. The postmodern age is an age of liquidity, while the modern age is an age of solidity (Sharlamanov and Kostovska, 2024). In a postmodern society, values lose their meaning, stability is being replaced with fluidity, and social structures are being rendered unclear and dynamic. Nothing is predictable, including the contexts and behaviors of the self in its long and short term. The transition from modernism to postmodernism is complex, having to do with many aspects of culture, philosophy, and art (Ozata, 2025). Bauman asserts that modernity is an end, but rather an endless process of adjusting to an ever-changing reality. Thus, modernism is the transition from the old to the modern method of thinking. Berman notes that "The



modernization process, having engulfed the world, encompasses the entire planet, and the modern world culture of modernism scores sensational triumphs in art and intellect," (Berman, 1982, p.17). The shift from modernism to postmodernism requires constant interaction and transformation extending the manner in which people view and understand reality. The definition of postmodernism is offered in different situations such as culture, condition, fashion, project, discourse, phenomena, and style (Malpas, 2005, p. 22). According to Palese (2013) the liquid self indicates the fluid and impermanent nature of self, which is affected by consumer culture, social expectations, and the desire for inclusion in a connected and divided social system. Liquid selves do not have a predetermined goal or follow a linear logic (Filiciak, 2003). Liquid selves are characterized by the projection of abstract identities, reflecting the uncertainties of social and cultural processes. The breakdown of social structures prevents long-term planning and action. Social agents are limited to completing short-term projects. According to Bauman (2007), the structure is fragmented and oriented horizontally rather than vertically. In the liquid society, the relationship between individuals and society has evolved. Social agents must constantly transform and seek their identity in order to function in society. In this regard Elliott (2014) states that individuals create floating identities to avoid relying on a strong identity foundation. Social agents' lives are not predetermined, but rather a series of projects they take on to fulfill their responsibilities. Social agents shape their own identities, careers, norms, and values. Turkle (1997) explored "a 'decentered and multifaceted sense of self' that the Internet enables." This is in line with Turkle's conceptualization of a "liquid self." She initially saw this as an evolutionary progress that empowers humans to explore and rebuild their identities. Her perspective in "Alone Together" swings to criticizing "how technology has changed and impoverished our sense of connection" (Turkle, p 2).

5.2 Digital Surveillance

Surveillance studies represent a diverse and trans-disciplinary community of scholars from social sciences, arts, and humanities, focusing on the complex processes of surveillance. Here is a definition: Digital surveillance stress refers to the psychological and emotional strain



experienced by workers subjected to persistent, technology-mediated monitoring of their (Mizuyama, 2025, p 67). This field highlights the empirical, theoretical, and ethical implications of surveillance as a fundamental social-ordering process, involving the collection, analysis, and application of information within various domains of governance. The effects of surveillance are often challenging to isolate, as they are integrated into daily life. Additionally, reactions and resistance to surveillance manifest at grassroots, artistic, and activist levels, illustrating its historical presence in institutional routines and human social interaction (Locke, 2010, Lyon et al, 2012). In the same time Lyon et al. (2012) state that surveillance is “is an ancient social process. It has always been a component of institutional routines and human sociality”. It became the dominant organizing practice of late modernity over the last 40 years. Any critical understanding of surveillance starts from here. Innovation in infrastructure, technology and data handling has made vision and other senses more readable. This has produced core changes in the power relations, identity, institutional practices, and interpersonal interaction, of the same order as industrialization, globalization, and urbanization. According to Wang and Tucker (2017, p: 147) describes Surveillance system as it “observes the behavior of people and objects in a context that may be real or virtual. The surveillance system classifies behaviors by means of attributes, and identifies people and objects with those attributes” A surveillance system consists of the following elements and processes: 1. Entity. It is anything that exhibits behavior in space and time. 2. Observable Behavior. Approaches used when gathering information about observed behaviour. 3. Attribute: Techniques for assigning and identifying characteristics within behavior data. 4. Identity methods produce data that establishes context for entities (Wang and Tucker, 2017). Wang and Tucker (2017) assert that the process of surveillance is a system that relies on or constructs identity instead of mere observation. Individuals have multiple identities that can be juxtaposed using technological systems. The authors define surveillance as comprising behavior observation, property recognition, or identity management. The authors highlight the dynamic role of identity in technological surveillance. Lyon states that “The concept of surveillance

is central to a contemporary understanding of the digital world” (2022: p 2). It is based on the collection, analysis, and use of personal information in order to create profiles regarding individuals with their behaviors, preferences, and activities. This process of "making visible" by means of surveillance technologies often constructs identities from data rather than any direct observation of real bodies. Surveillance has impacts on identity issues through social sorting, which is the approach taken towards sorting people into groups based on their data. This then influences treatment based on such categorization, and much too often these end up reinforcing inequities in society based on class, ethnicity, and gender. The algorithms employed in this system may inadvertently perpetuate biases, including racial profiling and gender discrimination, as evidenced in facial recognition technologies (Lyon, 2022). Therefore, surveillance can also shape self-understanding and conduct. The knowledge of being watched might lead individuals to modify their behaviour, which has been called a "looping effect": "Surveillance modifies identity and behaviour". These dynamic underlines the interaction of monitoring and self-perception in a digital society. There is an intensified interconnection of surveillance methods with notions like "data justice" and "digital citizenship" that intend to critically weigh the evidential and political effect of data gathering on individual and collective identities. These ideas foster justice, openness, and accountability in the use of surveillance technology to protect individual interests and personal autonomy from pervasive data-driven practices (Lyon, 2022:12).

5.3 Race , Identity , Surveillance

According to Fiske (1998) surveillance targets the "abnormal." It is divided into four sections: the slave pass, the rogues' gallery, the census, and the biometric body, which highlight both extraordinary and everyday acts of radicalizing surveillance. This concept refers to practices that define racial norms and often lead to discriminatory outcomes. Fiske's analysis of public surveillance reveals that it acts as a technology of whiteness that delineates urban spaces, restricting Black mobility. This illustrates how past surveillance practices inform current racial zoning and the perpetuation of racial boundaries. Racializing surveillance is viewed as a means of social control that changes with the passage of time

rather than retaining a static racial structure. This type of surveillance is an example of the perpetuation of "Othering" practices that originate from European colonization in the United States, where whiteness is privileged in social interactions. It employs a wide array of means to reinforce racial distinctions and, as a consequence, the very notion of race. While the discourse centers on the notion of race, it is vital to recognize its interrelation with class, gender, sexuality, geography, and other dimensions of identity. The methods discussed can be employed in other contexts as well, including racial classifications in the census process and the use of biometric markers in identification documents, commonly associated with discriminatory practices (Lyon, 2003). The theory of social sorting developed in the earlier study on surveillance carried out by Lyon helps to explain the way in which surveillance technologies sort individuals according to race,

"Social sorting refers to the mechanisms through which surveillance systems use information about individuals to sort them into different categories of value or opportunity. Such mechanisms have important implications for the life chances or mobility of individuals or groups"(Lyon, 2003).

The process is not only technical in nature; it is deeply political and social in nature as well because it is the reflection of inequalities in society, including race, that are reflected in the way in which data is processed. Contemporary systems of surveillance are historically linked to racial governance. According to Simone Browne (2015), the heritage of transatlantic slavery has shaped the ways in which modern systems of surveillance operate, where branding, passes, and slave patrols were the primitive forms of racial surveillance and control. Browne introduces the concept of "racializing surveillance," where surveillance not only observes race but also produces it. Racializing Surveillance is a study of the relationship between surveillance and racial hierarchies, perpetuating racial discrimination and oppression. Browne (2015) explores the historical context of racializing surveillance, tracing it back to the transatlantic slave trade, where enslaved black people were surveilled. This includes Slave Ship Stowage Plans, which treated people as cargo; branding, which is a form of contemporary biometric surveillance; slave



passes, which limited the movement of slaves, similar to the stop-and-frisk policy of today; and Lantern Laws, which mandated the visibility of slaves at night. Browne argues that these historical systems paved the way for contemporary surveillance systems that target racialized communities. Moreover, she also discusses the idea of dark surveillance, which illustrates how marginalized communities push back against surveillance through their own surveillance practices, reclaiming their visibility and agency. Racializing Surveillance, is a crucial tool for analyzing the continued application of surveillance as a means of maintaining racial inequality. The colonial regimes in Europe employed documentation systems like internal passports, identification papers, cartographic projects, and registration schemes to monitor and control colonized populations. These documentation systems were not neutral administrative tools but rather tools of racial control. The colonial powers-controlled labor, repressed opposition, and maintained racial order through registration, classification, and mobility control (Breckenridge, 2014). In South Africa, pass laws became a notorious example of this kind of surveillance. Starting in the nineteenth century and intensifying during apartheid (1948-1994), Black South Africans were required to carry passbooks (dompas) that documented their employment status and legitimized their stay in urban areas. Insufficient documentation can result in arrest, fines, or deportation. These laws strictly controlled movement, denied entry to economic opportunities, and reinforced racial segregation (Breckenridge, 2014). The role of surveillance technologies in maintaining the racial order of apartheid was so critical. Identification systems, fingerprint records, and population categorization techniques enabled the government to racially identify people and practice geographical segregation. According to Breckenridge (2014), South Africa was one of the pioneers of biometric research, using fingerprinting and other identification techniques extensively to control the Black population. Such technologies reveal the deep historical link between modern surveillance systems and colonial and racial domination. Psychological inquiries demonstrate how the self is formed in terms of interpersonal interactions, in digital space, the user is performing in a gigantic play-exhibiting, observing, ruling, and erasing time, space, and



intersubjectivity. With datafication comes the broadening of this dynamic, which elicits more expansive analysis. Individual behavior, turned into a form of scriptable data, drifts through the networks where it is acted out and monitored. The information may congregate to portraits. Continuously created regressive patterns of a self can recur (Sapino, 2021). Lyon et al. assert that “identity is not a thing or an essence; it is not something that we have. It is, rather, something that we do, a process of identification. In that process, there is always at least the possibility of change, no matter how modest or potentially awkward” (2012: 159). The definition of surveillance as social sorting put forward by David Lyon provides the crucial groundwork for understanding the relationship that may obtain between surveillance and identity. Lyon conceives that risk, value, or desirability profiles are used through the implementation of surveillance systems to classify individual human beings (Lyon, 2003). The main hero of the novel is Sara Hussein, and the essence of her identity crisis in a digitalized world of surveillance. She no longer constructs her identity internally but through algorithms, data tracking and institutional observation, which is now externally mediated. The division she speaks of is a division between: “I exist in fragments—what they record, what I remember, and what I try to hide.”(P.93). Technology does not just watch Sara as it reconstitutes her life. The self that she records is more authoritative than her lived experience, which is in agreement with postmodern theorizing of liquid identity when the self is in constant flux and undergoing constant reshaping. Identity here is no longer just recorded but rather constructed as per the procedure for classification that relies not just on individual identity but furthermore on interests. The mechanism of sorting is central to digital forms of surveillance. Humans are constantly assessed and reassessed within the digital ranking system (Lyon, 2007). The concept of “algorithmic identity” is introduced by Cheney-Lippold (2011). He argues that digital technology produces identities as a result of probabilistic calculations, not based on fixed characteristics. The algorithmic identity is fluid, linked, and often ambiguous, depending on the various possible futures signaled by data, not actual experiences of the individual. This marks the shift from representational identity to predictive subjectivity, where



individuals are governed by their predicted behaviors and risks. The datafication process adds complexity to the formation of identity under the monitoring environment. According to Van Dijck (2014) argues that "digital technologies transform social interactions into quantifiable data, generating 'saved' identities in addition to or in place of 'embodied' ones." The "data doubles" have the ability to operate independently of the object to be observed in order to evaluate it without the need to interact with it. Thus, the identity is fragmented in different databases or infrastructures/institutions, thereby adding complexity to the fluidity of identity under the monitoring environment. As the analysis by Lupton (2016) on the Quantified Self illustrates, the uncertainties in the process of identification through surveillance are also important. While the use of digital surveillance technologies provides self-consciousness and empowerment, they are associated with the establishment of systems of surveillance that are linked to the definition of identity in terms of quantities. According to Ruppert (2011) a discusses the relationship between identity and surveillance in relation to population measures and identification methods. It highlights that modern surveillance systems, which also include biometric databases and transactional data monitoring, shift the focus from the traditional identifiers of name, gender, and ethnicity to behavior, movements, and transactions. This shift represents a movement from personal identifications to objective and descriptive categories based on behavior and pattern. Systems of surveillance, such as biometric passports, e-Borders schemes, and data systems, enable governing agencies to watch and judge individuals and groups. Often, it limits an individual's ability to dispute and negotiate their data, and it creates an "interpassive" situation where the data subjects are involved in a data transaction but lack the ability to define their own identities themselves "Identification practices consist of various combinations of categories that define what is often referred to as 'data doubles'" (Ruppert, 2011: 220). Such systems produce "data doubles" in which classification, biographical, biometric, and transactional data are aggregated, and data doubles are used to judge and rate the performance and behavior of the individual.

6- Methodology

This research uses a qualitative interpretative approach based on theoretical literary analysis to investigate the connection between digital surveillance and identity formation. The chosen literary text is perceived by the research as a cultural and discursive space in which modern forms of surveillance are artistically depicted and critically explored. The research uses textual analysis based on interdisciplinary theoretical approaches rooted in identity theory and surveillance studies. The research is structured as a theory-driven textual analysis, using close reading and conceptual analysis. Surveillance is perceived as a thematic component and a structural feature that impacts narrative subjectivity and self-representation. This approach enables the textual analysis to investigate how identity is constructed, fragmented, and regulated within the narrative through the use of surveillance practices. The analysis is guided by three interrelated theoretical frameworks: 1- Surveillance theory, specifically the notions of social sorting, data redundancy, and algorithmic governance. These notions provide analytical tools for understanding how surveillance systems are used to classify people and create externally governed identities. 2- Digital and Algorithmic Identity Theory argues that identity is a dynamic, probabilistic, and data-driven process, rather than a static or self-defined one (Cheney-Lippold, 2011; van Dijck, 2014). This approach studies the effects of behavioral data, predictive analysis, and surveillance systems on character identities. 3- Liquid Modernity and the Liquid Self are derived from Bauman's theory of modern subjectivity, which is marked by fluidity, instability, and constant transformation due to changing social and technological conditions. This approach allows the analysis to recognize surveillance as a tool that increases the fluidity of identity by freeing the self from harsh social or moral constraints. Together, these approaches enable a complex reading of identity as simultaneously narrative, technological, and political.

7- Literary Analysis

The way surveillance is presented in *The Dream Hotel* novel highlights it as a process of identity formation and control, rather than just the act of surveillance. The use of data collection, behavioral surveillance, and



predictive evaluation is typical of the surveillance presented in the novel, which is characteristic of "social sorting" where individuals are sorted and controlled according to the data generated about them, rather than the stories they tell about themselves (Lyon, 2003). According to Lyon (2003), social sorting is one of the important control and monitoring practices in *The Dream Hotel*. To effectively sort and monitor the residents of the facility based on their perceived risk level, compliance, and other information, the latest technologies are employed. In this case, it is not who the person is that important, but rather who they are in terms of understanding them in relation to power structures, "The algorithm is holistic. It considers two hundred sources. Legal and financial, of course, but also familial, educational, reputational" (Lalami, 2025: 305). The algorithm in the novel is a predictive tool employed by the likelihood Assessment Administration (RAA) to calculate the probability of an individual perpetrating a future crime. The algorithm considers data from over 200 sources, such as legal, financial, family, educational, reputation, and very private data such as dreams, texts, fights, internet searches, behavior, biometrics, social media, and even dreams. The algorithm does not only extend the monitoring of the individual's behavior but also includes their social networks and symbolic capital with the integration of reputational and family data. This is also in line with the fact that Amoore established that the distinction between personal accountability and group risk is blurred with the use of predictive surveillance, with identity being a distributed phenomenon with association rather than autonomy (Amoore, 2013). The individual is therefore monitored not just on the basis of their behavior but also on the basis of their associations. This is again highlights the lack of control the protagonist has over his self-definition in the text. Any possibility of counter-narrative or self-explanation is overshadowed by the power of the algorithm to draw from "two hundred sources." Identity is no longer something that the individual may perform or narrate; it is now calculated and imposed on the individual. This is again supports Ruppert's theory of the "data double" in which the lived self is subordinated to the aggregated digital self as the primary goal of governance (Ruppert, 2011). The surveillance systems, it is claimed, have access not only to social behavior and digital traces but



to the biological basis of the self. The narrative positions surveillance at the intersection of datafication and biopolitics by referencing DNA, which is the most personal indicator of biological identity. Identity is no longer formed through the narrative of self, moral intention, and experience but is instead assumed to be inscribed in the body itself, waiting to be decoded by computational systems. Though the predictions are shown to be objective and scientific, the novel also points to the biases, intrusiveness, and consequences of the use of such technology, "The algorithm knows so much about her already, going all the way down to the nucleic acids that twist in a helix inside her cells. Is it so strange that it has identified her true nature? "It was an accident," (Lalami, 2025: 308). This indicates what Michel Foucault called the emergence of biopolitics, whereby living processes are subject to regulation (Foucault, 1978). The fact that *The Dream Hotel* claims that the algorithm is able to know who the subject is down to the nucleic acids continues the notion that racial differences are biological and can be seen using technology. Monitoring system can regard race as something biological rather than social construct, justifying discrimination as scientific objectivity. The degree to which the algorithm is sure that it has found the real personality of the protagonist is similar to the concept of patriarchy in which females lack epistemic authority over their own identities. The woman subject appears inexplicable to herself and open to the system, which claims to have a better understanding. The factual claim by the subject, It was an accident, attempts to provide her acts with purpose, contingency and agency of morals, but the algorithmic form ignores the narratives and feelings. According to the feminist theories of surveillance, these technologies excessively discipline the female bodies by measuring, monitoring, and regulating them(Magnet , 2011). This process is further enhanced by the idea of the liquid self as described by Bauman. The protagonist understands that her identity is something which has been molded by the ambiguity and vulnerability which surround her. However, the algorithm performs its function in a completely contradictory manner by establishing the essence of her identity, which goes against the dynamic nature of her identity. The idea of "discovering her true nature" locks her into one particular way of



thinking and reduces her dynamic personality to a static risk assessment profile. The contemporary world is characterized by power asymmetries; individuals are forced to be dynamic and adaptable, while organizations consolidate their power through meticulous classification schemes. The story shows the impact of the algorithm's predictions, leading to false arrests, such as the one involving Sara Hussein, who was arrested for a crime she had not committed. The algorithm performs its function as an entity which cannot be accessed by the user for inquiries, giving it a sense of mystery which leads to concerns of spying and the loss of individual freedoms,

“Not crazy, Sara thinks. In fact, it’s the opposite of crazy; it’s the parasitic logic of profit, which has wormed its way so deeply into the collective mind that to defy lucre is to mark oneself as a radical, or a criminal, or a lunatic. Entire generations have never known life without surveillance.” (Lalami, 2025: 280).

Surveillance is depicted as a routine economic logic driven by the extraction of profit rather than being an extraordinary or dictatorial act. The narrative highlights how the surveillance sustains itself through daily life by converting human behavior, attention, and identity into resources for profit by describing this logic as "parasitic.". In this regard, surveillance capitalism, as defined by Zuboff (2019), which refers to a system in which human experiences are used as a raw material for data mining, forecasting, and financial gain. In *The Dream Hotel*, economic conditions that make surveillance necessary and inevitable are used, rather than security conditions. The idea that those who oppose profit-based surveillance are "radical" or "criminal" reveals how capitalist ideologies have seeped into social norms. The fact that opposition itself has been made pathological reveals a system in which conformity is seen as legitimate. The novel does not present surveillance as an excess of technology, but rather as an essential feature of our world. Lalami demonstrates this with her discussion of identity and how it is constructed in systems that equate moral legitimacy with economic value. The novel explores the themes of algorism and surveillance as tools of control and oppression, with a focus on their dehumanizing effects on people ,

“Wherever they go they are watched from lenses on the ceiling, their behavior scrutinized for the slightest infraction, their conversations monitored for clues of intent. A nod, a whisper, a joke: under the right circumstances, anything can be made into something sinister, to bulk up their files. At night their dreams are collected from their Dreamsavers, offering more evidence of all that is murky and suspicious in their natures” (Lalami, 2025: 97).

In *the Dream Hotel*, the scope of observation expands from observable actions and public spaces to include unconscious actions, private speech, and even the private domain of dreams. The novel's objection to algorithmic interpretation is demonstrated in the transformation of "commonplace activity" to "something sinister." The interpretation of meaning is being imposed, rather than being contested in a social context. Algorithmic governmentality, as defined by Rouvroy and Stiegler (2016), is the disregard of morality and intentionality in favor of correlation and probability. In this system, intent merely has to be inferred, rather than being proven. In order to legitimize control and incarceration, the surveillance state uses the data it has collected to generate suspicion in the past. The novel demonstrates blurring of the distinction between public and private by making dreams subject to interpretation by surveillance systems, suggesting that nothing in the self is safe from bureaucratic scrutiny. The novel explores the ethical consequences of such systems, emphasizing their detrimental effects on liberty, privacy, autonomy, and dignity, as well as their perpetuation of inequality and their leading to a dystopian future, “That the rules don’t have to make sense. That no matter how unjust the system is, she is expected to submit to it in order to prove that she deserves to be free of its control” (Lalami, 2025: 111). Algorithmic systems are often black boxes, and the underlying logics are beyond the understanding of the ruled, thereby making it difficult to challenge the rules (Pasquale, 2015). The rules that are followed in the novel are irrational and illogical, yet they are authoritative. Irrationality turns out to be a means of power because the system needs to obey the regulations. The fact that submission is required in order to get the freedom portrays that freedom is a conditional good. It has led to self-regulation and humiliation as dictated by the need to



submit. The opening up of the character in the novel faces the society in which control is self-serving, laws are beyond challenge and justice is submissive to control. Sara Hussein is a complex heroine. Her encounter with algorithmic surveillance reveals her weakness and resilience in the face of her Madison facility. Her identity goes through constant changes due to confinement, surveillance and control. This is an indication of the psychological impact of constant surveillance. Sara's background, which includes her relationships, culture, and experiences of freedom and mobility, is always influencing her identity, despite the efforts of the monitoring system to erase it through labeling and behavioral modification, "Being surveilled all the time, even in her sleep, has made her unsure what to believe about herself; she no longer knows how to separate her emotions from the expectations that others have about them" (Lalami, 2025: 139). The constant monitoring process at *The Dream Hotel* creates a new emotional landscape for Sara Hussein in which there is a blurring of the line between her own emotions and the expectations of society. In this sense, her own self is no longer a cohesive narrative driven by her own experiences; it is a site of negotiation driven by her perceptions of expectation and limitation. In the context of liquid modernity, Bauman describes a sense of identity that is always fluid and cumulative, always open to change and reinterpretation. Sara's emotional life is characterized by unpredictability; this is a sense of subjectivity driven by fluidity, not continuity. In a dynamic social construct, the individual's identity must be controlled and altered according to responses to external forces. Liquidity is further enhanced by monitoring to the degree to which the distinction between individual experience and institutional evaluation is eliminated. Sara's inability to distinguish between her emotions and environmental evaluations leads to an individual identity which is inherently and perpetually contingent. Sara's individuality is not eliminated but rather splintered and disseminated by the disparate forces of individual perception and external classification. Sara's emotional states are located within a zone of ambiguity and represent a sense of self which is constantly and inevitably collapsing and reforming under pressure,



“She returns to her meal, and after a minute becomes aware that her husband is watching her from the corner of his eye. She is not herself anymore, she knows. Or not her old self, at any rate. As time passes, she grows restless, waiting for device check there is no bell but a silence that now feels like mercy.” (Lalami, 2025: 317).

The example of Sara's self-perception shows that identity fragmentation is not limited to institutional life but also occurs in personal life. The awareness of surveillance has now gone beyond technical means and includes human relations as well. The look of the husband represents the duty of observation, turning this personal interaction into a symbol of systemic surveillance. Observation has become an ambient phenomenon, part of everyday actions and interruptions. The recognition of Sara's new identity shows a split between old and new self, fitting in with Bauman's idea of a liquid self. The continuous self is no longer accessible; the old self is only available as a reference, unable to be fully restored. There is a new self, defined by the awareness of irreparable loss. Dignity is considered a quality that can be taken away if one is under surveillance for a long period of time. Self-respect does not decrease because of any transgressions, but rather because of the prolonged process of being evaluated, distrusted, and restricted. The ultimate goal of surveillance is to take away the moral agency of the individual by gradually replacing self-evaluation with the evaluation of others. This is a process rather than a stressful event:

“She’s still stuck here, still marked as a questionable. And in the meantime, she’s been depleted of her dignity. Only in the last few weeks has she been able to regain some measure of self-respect. To give it up now would endanger her survival.” (Lalami, 2025: 296).

The long process involved in the restoration of self-respect further highlights the vulnerability of identity in such circumstances. The restoration of self-respect and dignity is a labor-intensive and cognitively demanding process. This further suggests that authenticity is not something inherent, and it demands considerable effort to achieve it. Such a dilemma is reminiscent of the theory of liquid modernity, in which identity is not permanent and must be defended at all costs from those

who attempt to destroy it. Self-respect is fleeting and can be lost in difficult circumstances,

“She wants to be free, and what is freedom if not the wresting of the self from the gaze of others, including her own? Life is meant to be lived, to be seized for all the beauty and joy to be wrung out of it; it isn’t meant to be contained and inventoried for the sake of safety. And to be clear, it’s not your dreams alone,” (Lalami, 2025: 306).

It is obvious that the question of survival rather than freedom and equity is the dominant one. This adaptation shows that the subject has internalized the logic of surveillance while retaining some of their identity as a means of survival. The identity is no longer based on the notions of happiness and self-actualization but rather on the essential needs that allow one to exist. The fluid self is the safeguarding shape. Sara's self is marked by instability, deterioration, and rejuvenation. Sara's character is defined by her refusal to fully embrace computational rationality, not in a rebellious sense but through her focus on the qualitative nature of existence. Sara views life as a plenitude, something that cannot be fully contained, categorized, or secured without diminishing its value. Sara's sense of self is not tied to institutional validation. “Life is intended to be experienced, to be embraced for all its beauty and joy; it is not meant to be restricted and cataloged for the purpose of security.” (Lalami, 2025: 306). The surveillance and control of Sara's life reduce joy and spontaneity to questionable assets; however, Sara's intrinsic belief system rejects a lifestyle that prioritizes security over significance. Sara's identity, shaped by a life under constant surveillance, is rooted in a feeling of existence. Sara's thoughts demonstrate the intrinsic paradox of monitoring, which, in its quest to protect the essence of existence, undermines the fundamental significance of this experience. The novel, through the character of Sara, demonstrates the concept of monitoring as an attempt to control not just the human body and actions but also the fundamental conditions of human experience, “All those pages she wrote about the memories her dreams brought up, the hopes she nurtured, her desires and frustrations with this place, he’s read everything. She feels light-headed, has to steady herself against the doorjamb.” (Lalami, 2025: 243). Sara's bodily sensations, as



evidenced by her dizziness and need to rebalance her equilibrium, show the bodily effects of such exposure. In contemporary times, surveillance goes beyond mere observation and focuses on the interpretation of individual data to predict, classify, and control individuals (Lyon, 2007). Sara's internal world becomes amenable to external influences, leading to a blurring of the lines between internal identity and external control. Personal stories, emotions, and intentions are reduced to information profiles that exist independently of the individual, termed "data doubles" (Ruppert, 2011). Sara's dreams and thoughts are no longer reflective of her real-life experiences but have been reduced to data amenable to institutional analysis. This is due to the duplication, abstraction, and evaluation of the ego through texts meant for individual reading and interpretation, thus creating a sense of alienation. Life writing is an ethical process through which people negotiate their identities and self-understanding; however, this foundation is undermined when there is no ownership through authorship (Eakin, 2004). Sara's realization that her inner thoughts are monitored makes her writing an act of exposure rather than creation, thus increasing the vulnerability of her identity in the face of surveillance. The dynamic self has no haven; it must always adapt. This feeling of dizziness is a good example of the eradication of Sara's inner haven; the self has no place to hide without being monitored, judged, or intervened with. The meaning of home, associated with stability, intimacy, and physical presence, is re-created as an elusive phenomenon that is present only in the realm of memory and imagination. Home for Sara is no longer physical but mental. This illustrates how her emotional and physical roots are being undermined while she is under institutional control. "Home feels so remote to her these days that it's become less a place than an idea, whose expanse she can hold in her mind but no longer inhabit." (Lalami, 2025: 243). The reason for this feeling of being apart from everyone and everything is the surveillance, which blurs the lines between private and public space. This means that, with surveillance in every part of life, the home is no longer a safe space in which one can be apart from people watching. Modern surveillance alters the way people relate to one another by incorporating monitoring into their daily lives, which renders spaces that are usually associated with



privacy and independence less useful. Being in a liquid state changes places from stable bases to mental points instead of places where you can stay for a long time. Sara's experience shows how people's minds have been torn away from material and emotional stability and are now having to handle a world where stability has been replaced by uncertainty (Bauman, 2000). The novel demonstrates the ways in which the tracking of change is not only a matter of tracking a change in behaviour, but also a matter of tracking a change in the way in which people interact with each other in space and time. Sara does not feel a sense of belonging in her home because it is located in a remote area, but it is also a matter of a structural change that makes it unsafe for her to be there. Displacement, in this sense, is an internal state in which belonging is only an idea and the self is in a state of memory and loss. Sara and Elias have a complex relationship. Prior to Sara's detention at Madison, they were close and loved each other, and they had twins "This impulsiveness was a source of recurring tension between them, even though it was what had drawn Sara to Elias in the first place" (Lalami, 2025: 42). Before Sara got in trouble at Madison, they were close and loved each other, raising their twins and enjoying family life, but their relationship was stressed by her long detention, which caused distance and tension. Elias became the single caregiver and breadwinner, which added stress to his life. He was also angry that Sara couldn't follow Madison's rules, since he thought that following them was the key to her freedom. Elias still cared about Sara and visited her and sent her emergency goods when she had to leave her home because of a wildfire, "If her husband was keeping an eye on the Perris fire, and had time enough to ship her some emergency supplies, then why wasn't the CRO prepared?" (Lalami, 2025: 219). Showing how the burden of each individual is different from the failure of institutions. Elias' alertness reveals how the government's defenses are not functioning properly, demonstrating how individuals must make up for the failure of institutions. This makes the situation more complicated for Elias, who is, on one hand, a support system for Sara, and, on the other hand, the system that is holding her back. The fact that he is relying on the rules as a solution to the problem is a testament to the coercive nature of the system, which makes rules seem like the only logical approach, even



when it is obvious that the rules do nothing to protect the person or do what is right. In this sense, the relationship is one where all these concepts intersect. This is how the surveillance state impacts close relationships, transferring the responsibility from the government to the citizens. But Sara felt increasingly distant from Elias and thought that they were drifting apart because he was speaking to her less frequently and in a more professional way:

“These gaps and silences rankle her; they’re starting to coalesce into a noisy and disturbing realization: Elias is growing apart from her. The last time they spoke there was none of the flow that there should be between partners, only the rancor of two people who find themselves jointly embroiled in a case that has dragged on unnecessarily for months.” (Lalami, 2025: 90).

Sara seeing Elias as "growing apart from her" is a progression from being physically apart to being emotionally apart. There is a lack of "flow" in the discourse, would argue that instead of closeness, there is an undertone of caution, fatigue, and bottled wrath. Instead of a spectacular separation, there is a gradual and disconcerting disintegration of emotions that is happening without a confrontation. Sara's role as a wife is altered to a conditional role based on her compliance measures. Another factor influencing Elias's identity is surveillance, which turns him into another controlling agent. Elias's increasing emotional detachment is a good example of how he has internalized the rationality of the institution, making compliance the primary way of engaging rather than empathy. The absence of personal relationships is actually the result of the fluidity of the relationships created by surveillance and leads to identities characterized by instability, conditionality, and the possibility of loss. Moreover, the nature of the relationship after Sara's release continued to be characterized by discord and reevaluation. Compassion and watchfulness are exhibited in the response shown by Elias as he showed concern for Sara's health. The nature of the relationship between the two continued to be difficult as Sara struggled with the emotional aftermath of her confinement. Despite the difficulties that they were facing, they were able to show some moments of compassion and intimacy, such as hand-holding, that helped in the rekindling of the love between them:



“Thank God,” he says as they embrace. “I was so worried. Are you all right? ” I’m okay, I’m okay,” she replies. “I’m sorry about the stink.” “Don’t worry about that.” He rubs her arms, as if to make sure she’s really there, standing in front of him. “I’m just glad they brought you back” (Lalami, 2025: 232).

However, their relationship remained marked by conflicts and re-exploration. Elias showed care and attentiveness by demonstrating concern for Sara's health and well-being. Nevertheless, their relationship seemed strained as Sara struggled with the emotional impact of her detention. These acts of kindness prove the strength and weakness of the relationship at the same time. Holding hands and being close to each other physically can help in the short term, but it can also prove that the terms of the relationship have been altered by the detention, making the relationship an ongoing adjustment. The scene indicates that there is still care in the relationship, but it is mediated by the trauma, the surveillance, and the uncertainty. This is in line with the major theme of the novel, which is the effect of governmental control on the relationship even after physical reunification. Their relationship evolved as they coped with the psychological wounds and issues that arose from Sara's journey to rebuild her life and her trust in herself “Years passed before Omar crawled up from the abyss of grief, and by then Sara’s relationship with him had become tainted” (Lalami, 2025: 232). With all his patience and understanding, the bonding between them seems fragile since Sara is still struggling to cope with the psychological aftermath of what happened, highlighting the challenges of rebuilding their relationship after such a long separation “Years passed before Omar crawled up from the abyss of grief, and by then Sara’s relationship with him had become tainted.” (Lalami, 2025: 148). Sara’s relationship with Omar may be defined by anticipation, adaptation, and progression of deterioration, not dissociation. Sara’s position within this particular scenario dynamically demonstrates emotional resilience, not retreat. The self that emerges after exposure to loss on an extensive scale can no longer be defined by shared presence but has become represented by adaptability to absence. Possible identity within this scenario is dynamically relational, dependent upon both irreparable and irretrievable factors “The last time they spoke there

was none of the flow that there should be between partners, only the rancor of two people who find themselves jointly embroiled in a case that has dragged on unnecessarily for months.” (Lalami, 2025: 90). The first problem is that surveillance makes Sara mentally guarded; she cannot easily trust Elias and connect with him. In the context of "liquid modernity," it demonstrates the weakness of modern ties, which do not have the structures to deal with long periods without becoming unclear and weaker as they slowly dissipate, as opposed to terminating completely. It becomes difficult to keep the emotional aspect of the relationship going. The discomfort exhibited by Sara is indicative of the way people feel as they navigate the ties that provide no emotional comfort or security, but only the presence and the meaning that is still unclear. Elias has retained Adam Abdo, a junior associate lawyer, who is going to defend Sara in her retention procedures “Elias chose him because, though still a junior associate with Kreidler & Campwalla, he made up for his relative inexperience with his training at a civil rights litigation clinic” (Lalami, 2025: 120). He has a calming voice as well as a lack of experience, but his knowledge from a civil rights litigation clinic helps him cover up for that lack of experience. Elias believes in the innocence of Sara, but he is struggling to get her out, facing a lot of problems in her way

" She's been frustrated with his failure to secure early-release motions, but she's always been grateful that he believes in her innocence. When she talked to him about the hearing, he sounded pretty confident about her chances though he called them “our chances. From where Sara sits she can see he's drawing the room they're in, complete with its wooden cup boards and vintage light fixtures. His hand moves with the confidence of an experienced draftsman. How did he end up adjudicating retention cases?” (Lalami, 2025: 120).

He tells Sara that it is very important for her to comply, so she is released at a low risk. Adam is seen as a well-intentioned lawyer but not quite able to deal with the complexities of the retention procedures “He tells her it's crucial that she keep her record clean, that she stay out of trouble, that she follow all the rules, because once they go before a judge, Abdo is confident he can get her out” (Lalami, 2025: 233). Sara's legal counsel,



Adam Abdo, oversees Sara's process through the surveillance-intense system of retention. He emphasizes the significance of compliance to Sara by indicating to her that for her to be granted release, she needs to adhere to the system's regulations and ensure her risk level stays low. He faces challenges, though, since the RAA system's process is unclear and still a "black box" that no legal counsel can gain access to, Adam's position highlights the vast amount of power yielded by data-based systems and monitoring, which often leaves people with little alternative but to fall under such systems,

“The strange thing, the amazing thing, really is that we’ve managed to find work-arounds to surveillance: we speak in whispers, look for camera blind spots, pass contraband through toilets or showers, even as we know that breaking the rules may lengthen our confinement. And I have broken the biggest rule of all, she realizes: trying to escape this place.” (Lalami, 2025:205).

The decisions Sara is required to make have also often involved her weighing her independence as a person with her dignity and self-respect as well as her duty to other people, making her feel extremely burdened and conflicted, “An impossible choice, if it can even be called a choice. No matter what she decides, she has to leave people behind, her family or her friends, and carry the guilt of it with her forever. What should she do? The CRO is pressing the tablet into her hands” (Lalami, 2025:311). This conflict between resistance and submission stems from her desire to fight against an unfair system despite her realizations that doing otherwise - adhering and abiding by the system - might actually increase her chances of getting released. She wants to exercise her independence and get her agency back, and as such, she made decisions such as quitting her job and starting a *strike* “It’s what she tried to do for months, minding her business, following every rule, trying to appear more compliant, more deserving of freedom than others stuck in this place” (Lalami, 2025:296). There is, however, also some danger involved with her actions. Even after she is released, she feels bad about the fact that she failed to take others with her and recognizes that being free is a tough journey that requires cooperation and collaboration. She also feels frightened and suffers from the aftereffects of her decision, which is driven by desperation, anger, and

dedication to what is good and right. Toya is a woman currently detained at the Madison, a Short-Term Forensic Observation Facility. Toya is a former insurance claims adjuster who was retained after her risk level increased based on thoughts of incinerating her residence for insurance purposes. Toya is a realistic and supportive person who assists Sara Hussein in overcoming the difficulties of their detention “After his footsteps recede down the hallway, Toya helps Sara get out of the makeshift straitjacket. “At least he didn’t write you up”, she says consolingly” (Lalami, 2025:110). Significantly, Toya's help counters the way in which surveillance tends to make individuals feel alone. The system seeks to make prisoners into individuals, each with their personal risk profile, but with this act, Toya restores Sara's humanity because she touches, helps, and comforts her. In this way, Toya demonstrates a counter-surveillance disposition, in which people survive by supporting one another, rather than merely following orders. It must be noted that while Sara is more vocal in opposing computerized control, her willingness to face the risks of the system also attests to this in a more subtle manner. Toya's role makes that line between fight and submission quite ambiguous. She neither puts up full resistance nor accepts surveillance; instead, she diffuses the intended impact of the surveillance by making it easier for other persons to deal with. In so doing, she shows that solidarity among people who are being watched doesn't always come from big protective actions of keeping people's respect in a system that is meant to take it away. Toya is one of the women who went on protest against the harsh conditions at the center. One of the things they did was refuse to work for Safe-X, even though it was dangerous “The cards have gotten thin from use, but no one has enough money for another deck. “The outbreak messed up her schedule,” Sara continues, “and now six of us aren’t working.” Imagine if more people went on strike,” Toya adds” (Lalami, 2025:283). Toya faces many challenges as being forced to bargain for such basic things as cigarettes, not being allowed to use the commissary, and even facing retaliation for her resistance “But Emily has been locked out of the money for her art supplies, Toya for her cigarettes” (Lalami, 2025:294). These punishments aim to be boring. Apart from the fact that the punishment seems not to be the usual punishment, it is



actually very severe. For instance, the punishment of not allowing Emily to have art supplies also being unable to have her cigarettes shows how systems of surveillance use people's needs as a means to control and disunify the people. According to Palese (2013) the contemporary systems of punishment work through biopolitical calibration, which means that they control things like comfort, danger, and access instead of punishing people in big ways. Emily Robbins is one of the major characters in this novel. She is Sara's roommate at Madison. She is a creative individual, as she likes spending time drawing comic books that revolve around her fantasy character, Rina Campoy, who happens to have an obsession with fire. The stories she draws are based on feeling alone and seeking a connection with other people, but this is somehow comparable to her own struggles in terms of relationships and her own individuality. Madison is a tough place, but her creativity is her way of fighting back at difficult circumstances, whether it relates to her not having art supplies or needing to share her own paper. Toya's bargaining for cigarettes demonstrates how identity and freedom are destroyed when people are constantly monitored. Her desire has become a site of government, complete with data points and measures that can always be stripped away, but passing time also demonstrates Toya's refusal to completely buy into the logic of this system. She is not internalizing the knowledge that being deprived is justified, nor does she buy into the logic that being deprived is actually a form of revenge. This again illustrates Lyon's argument that individuals are more likely to respond to monitoring if they perceive systemic punishment as a result of their personal failure rather than a political problem,

“The idea seems to appeal to Emily, though she worries about paper, which she has been rationing ever since she lost access to the commissary. They talk about other practicalities, like whether they should use ink or erasable pencil, collate with staples or yarn. Ever since the strike began, they’ve had to adapt to limited resources, a constraint that, paradoxically, has made them more creative.” (Lalami, 2025: 298).

The limited materials available at the Madison facility, where simple things like paper and art supplies are hard to get. Emily's worry about limited paper shows how surveillance governments get involved in the

little things of daily life, controlling not only behavior and movement but also imagination. The process of making art depends on bargaining, math, and limited supplies, which is similar to how institutions keep things in. under surveillance, imagination shifts from being able to do a lot of things to being able to do very specific things. This means that everything matters much more. Emily has a very complicated, problematic past: she went to jail as a teenager for assault and violence, which influences her perception of authority and compliance. She is reluctant to join Sara's strike but eventually becomes one of Sara's avid followers in the battle against the oppressive system at Madison. Her feistiness, resourcefulness, and sense of humor enable her to bear Madison's strictures while offering moments of humor and bonding with Sara and others: "She has no idea what her roommate's training involved, for example, or what licensing it required, but she does know that Emily began her training as a seventeen-year-Old inmate in Lassen County, while serving a three-year sentence for assault and battery" (Lalami, 2025: 94). Emily Robbins can be conceptualized as one of those people who grew up in "liquid modernity," where the lives of individuals are fragmented, unstable, and set on a trajectory by early-life exposure to the power of government. Incarceration during her teenage years situates her within a social structure that, according to Bauman, "does not provide opportunities for secured avenues of improvement, readmission, or moral normalization" and is instead characterized by "early labeling, uselessness, and working practices that emphasize management over care" (Bauman, 2000; 2004). In the liquid modernity, social structures provide no support. Instead, they try to control risk in harsh ways in the short term. The relationship between Emily and Sara changes as the story continues because they get closer as they have similar problems or experiences to deal with. Therefore, because she is a devoted friend and nice person, she becomes a crucial element in the resistance movement. In this, it highlights the importance of creativity and pulling through adversity together "But Emily reaches across the table and touches Sara's arm. It's going to be okay, the gesture says. Don't be afraid, we're all in this together. Whatever happens, don't be afraid" (Lalami, 2025: 299). Focusing on working together goes against the concept of private risk in Madison's



formulas. The way the suppression system works is based on the principle of isolation, encouraging individuals to work alone, not in groups, and using fear to encourage people to follow the rules. This line of reasoning is cut short by the actions taken by Emily, demonstrating relational present. People don't get together to fight; they get together because they are vulnerable and feel comfortable when they're around each other. Within the liquid modernity framework, this describes the weak strengths which emerge in conditions of instability. Bauman (2000) argues that with liquid life, long-term social relationships break down in favor of temporary alliances based on conditions rather than permanency. Emily and Sara's relationship is reminiscent of this because it is situational, precarious, and forged in conditions of pressure, but is ethical. Since she is loyal and friendly, she becomes a vital element in this resistance movement, demonstrating how vital it is to be creative and supportive of one another when things go wrong:

“It's a protective gesture, a fatherly gesture, perhaps the first she has seen, or allowed herself to see, in decades. This is also what Madison has given her, even as it has taken so much from her, the knowledge that she isn't alone, that she doesn't have to be. She wants to help her friends get out of Madison. She wants to sever her ties to OmniCloud. She doesn't know how to navigate this new road, but she knows she has to try, and that she can only do it alongside others.” (Lalami, 2025: 322).

The "protective" and "fatherly" act represents "an expression of embodied solidarity, which directly counteracts the isolating logic of the Madison system based on its surveillance, data-extraction, and risk-management principles." Following this line of reasoning, Palese (2013) states that the algorithmic systems process by deconstructing individuals as data, regulating them through prediction, personalization, and control." Such systems are detrimental to the concept of community as they force individuals to view vulnerability, fear, and responsibility as personal rather than collective or political issues. The concepts of race and racism form essential themes and issues in the work. The story focuses on the various issues dealing with prejudices, surveillance, and even data-based algorithms targeting specific communities, especially the disadvantaged, and minorities too. Sara Hussein, the protagonist, has been wrongly

imprisoned owing to the algorithmic analysis used for evaluating her risk level, incorporating many bias factors itself:

“How can they admit this late in the process that she was detained not because her dreams showed that she was planning ..., but because an RAA agent who was intent on putting her in her place seized on her nightmares? Now a crime has to be identified. And if not identified, then manufactured. That is why they’re digging into her past, all the way to her childhood. They have nothing else. “You’re saying I’m a danger to my husband, even though he himself has denied it?”

“Well,” Bradley says, and returns to scrolling on his tablet.” (Lalami, 2025: 309).

Sara's detention is the outcome of racially discretionary power, not the result of technology's predictive objectivity. The idea that Sara was not caught because of a legitimate threat but, in truth, "because a RAA agent exploited her nightmares" points to how monitoring technology increases feelings of bias while concealing them under the cloak of objectivity and safety. Fiske's (1998) analysis of the concepts of racism and power clearly aids in the comprehension of the former. Fiske (1998) affirms that racism flourishes not only through open hostility but through institutional practices that presume guilt and disorder in race individuals, especially when such dispositions are perceived and addressed by entities in power. The narrative deconstructs the illusion of algorithmic impartiality. In spite of the depicted impartiality of predictive systems, human interpretation, conditioned by racial bias, is considered to be crucial to its functionality. In turn, according to Lyon (2003), there is a prominent feature of existing surveillance technologies, namely, their capacity to intensify existing inequality that originated from being institutionally integrated into racist systems, as reflected in Sara's arrest and depiction of racism fear projected onto marginalized groups, converting vulnerability into criminality. Sara's identity as a Muslim woman and her seemingly "questionable" actions only speak to how perceptions and prejudices can lead to discrimination. The perceptions Sara has about her family history and her mother's experiences with being monitored by the state apparatus

in Morocco speak to themes associated with issues of race, identity, and oppression:

“What a bizarre thing to say. Is she expected to behave exactly the same as every other woman in their database, or else she’ll arouse suspicions? She is Sara Tilila Hussein. She’s never pretended or even wanted to be anyone else. But that is the trouble. The merchants of data who’ve spent decades building a taxonomy of human behavior find outliers troublesome. By definition outliers aren’t predictable, which also means they’re not profitable.” (Lalami, 2025: 309).

The systems of surveillance are continuing the present power dynamics because their very essences are instituted based on the dominant paradigms and assumptions, and these are reflected in their systems of categorization and tracking. Sara’s name and physical difference guarantee her evaluation not against any general criterion, but against one implicitly defined as white, complacent, and emotionally aware. Sara’s inability to fit into any of these norms is not recognized as diversity, but deviance (Lyon, 2003). After being detained for more than a year at Madison, Sara Hussein is released and returns to her family, which consists of her husband Elias and her two children, Mohsin and Mona. Sara reflects on the importance of unity and the relationships that she was able to build with the other women during her days at Madison,

“But what they don’t see, what they can never truly see unless they had been, like her, confined and controlled, is that isolation is the opposite of salvation, that she owes her release to the women who joined together to say no , Freedom isn’t a blank slate, she wants to tell them. Freedom is teeming and complicated and, yes, risky, and it can only be written in the company of others.” (Lalami, 2025: 321).

Here, Sara's release is not viewed as a positive outcome of the surveillance system but becomes an assault on the very concepts the security system is built upon. The security system divides individuals under the guise of security, a practice known as isolation. Sara's freedom was not due to compliance, openness, or a computational solution; rather, "the women who united to assert their dissent." Solidarity can be the only thing that can overcome a system based on keeping quiet and keeping apart. The powerful think they can "see" everything through data,

cameras, and prediction tools. However, they cannot "see" what is being created through relationships formed by people who are locked away. According to Lyon (2003), surveillance produces a distorted vision of society that values being seen over knowing and having control of caring. The story of Sara confirms that what is not surveilled, mutual aid, shared vulnerability, collectively expressed courage is what enables subversion. Sara makes a choice to be there for her friends who were still in custody and to start her new life while still maintaining her new relationships and the struggle for justice ,“The road ahead is still uncharted. She wants to watch her children blow out the three candles on their birthday cake. She wants to help her friends get out of Madison” (P, 322). Lalami unfolds this story by alternating chapters with time before and after Sara’s incarceration—framed by authorities in the novel as merely retention. As the women’s autonomy and basic human dignity are systematically and repeatedly stripped away from them, their memories and interior lives are all they have. In one of her daydreams, Sara remembers a trip to Yosemite’s Mirror Lake. The memory of that lake reminds the reader that Sara’s privacy and freedom—her ability to tell her own story—have all but disappeared. “Like a fortune-teller reading tea leaves, the algorithm made up stories as it was going along, until it found one that was plausible enough to please its audience”(P ,306-307). Sara can never escape analysis by AI. And it’s impossible not to relate her loss of privacy to our own. *The Dream Hotel* is not about Sara finding her independence or discovering her identity, as might be expected, but rather about her declaring that she will not operate within the system of the retention Centre, or ultimately the government and corporations that control her life. Sara eventually finds a kind of justice, but it is an unsatisfying kind of justice because it reminds us that there’s no escape from the invasion of tech. Given Lalami’s topic and our current reality, which is a mere second-hand tick from the world of *The Dream Hotel*, it can’t conclude with comfort. Home feels “so remote to [Sara]...that it’s become less a place than an idea, whose expanse she can hold in her mind but no longer inhabit”(P,225). Liquid Identity and Surveillance: Its Impact on the end of the novel. The ending was heavily influenced by the factor of liquid identity and surveillance, which introduced a number of

themes dealing with dehumanization, control, and resistance. Generally, the aspect of liquid identity played a critical role in reducing people to data pieces and risks rather than giving them a level of humanity and individuality. Sara's release into freedom had been established on an algorithm's dictate. Even after the release, the effects of being under surveillance and being classified into a number of groups influenced Sara's relationships and self-definition. Her experiences with surveillance made her feel afraid and in control. The book ends with unresolved tension and a critique of how technology and data can be used to oppress people.

9 - Contribution of the Study

This study enhances the discipline by integrating literary analysis with sophisticated surveillance theory, illustrating that fiction provides a robust framework for comprehending algorithmic control beyond mere sociological abstraction. It employs the notion of algorithmic identification in literary texts, elucidating how tales unveil the emotional and psychological ramifications of classification grounded in statistical frameworks. Additionally, it explores the concept of liquid modernity via the perspective of computational power, presenting the notion of the “algorithmically liquid self” as an identity perpetually redefined by data mining and predictive analytics. The study incorporates viewpoints on racial and algorithmic prejudice, demonstrating how technological systems can perpetuate and maintain inequity despite seeming impartial. Ultimately, it reevaluates collective resistance as a potent force capable of undermining surveillance systems, highlighting the significance of unity in combating fragmentation.

Conclusion

This research employs the concepts of liquid modernity, algorithmic identity, and modern surveillance theories to explore the story of *The Dream Hotel 2025* novel to demonstrate how Lalami's book redefines identity as a location of digital governance. Through the application of liquid modernity, identity in the book is not presented as uncertain and not developed through the experience of the story. In fact, fluid, always reassessed, and determined through the external environment of the digital world. The research demonstrates the importance of data



collection, classification, and reasoning in the fundamental surveillance processes in the story. Algorithmic systems do not merely survey people; while, generate and shape them, transforming identity into a statistical entity governed through the lens of reasoning. The novel presents a picture of surveillance that is decentralized and consists of various streams of biometric, behavioral, and emotional information that amalgamate and present authoritative representations of an individual. This is in consonance with theorists' ideas of algorithmic identity, where subjectivity is reduced to data patterns and statistical inferences. The figure of Sara Hussein character is a prime example of how notions of technological neutrality are actually a facade for epistemological violence that is present in prediction algorithms. The main character Sara is imprisoned, not due to any actual act of misconduct, but due to a prediction of potential misconduct. This means that the algorithm is not just evaluating Sara; it is actually replacing her self-perception and reality with its own. Sara's narrative ultimately highlights the psychological and existential impacts of predictive surveillance. Although her physical freedom is regained, her sense of self remains divided and is influenced by the system's constructed narrative of mistrust. The novel depicts digital surveillance as a technology that shapes identity itself, producing narrative authority, social belonging, and affective attachment as contingent on exposure or invisibility. The resonance of this situation reaches beyond the novel: intrusions into contemporary political and public life widely reproduce similar patterns of identity formation and erosion. Discussions of identity-related topics—autobiography and the self, fictional characters and personality, or virtual identities—cannot, therefore, remain confined to the individual domains of literary stylistics, character portrayal, or media studies, but must engage instead with the civic and social stakes of modern subjectivity. As surveillance mediates self-conception and status, authorship and desire, connectivity and withdrawal, and voice and silence, literature itself emerges as a crucial locus for examining the implications of such structures. The researcher suggests implementing more ethical norms and legal instruments to restrict the authority of the system of algorithmic surveillance and provide some transparency in data gathering and utilization. The human



agency should also be prioritized by incorporating human control in the AI decision-making systems to avoid having people being transformed into predictive data profiles. Moreover, the research demands increased awareness among the population and digital literacy in order to make people comprehensively read and oppose the manner in which surveillance technologies define identity and limit individual freedom. This paper suggests that more interdisciplinary research combining literary analysis and digital ethics is needed to explore the ways that algorithmic surveillance transforms identity and agency in the modern fiction. It also implies that the application of critical frameworks to demonstrate the data-driven determinism and focus on the human autonomy, privacy, and moral responsibility in technological systems are needed. Also, the comparative narratives explored in the future can be the way to comprehend how various cultural settings react to the pressure of surveillance and the formation of the liquid self. Suggestions for future research may situate *The Dream Hotel* alongside *The Every* and *Clara and the Sun* to explore how emerging technologies reshape subjectivity and emotional life in contemporary fiction. It may also be compared *The Dream Hotel* with *The Memory Police* to explore how systems of control and enforced forgetting reshape personal identity and the fragile boundaries of the self under surveillance. The conclusion serves as a reminder that the novel's greatest concern is that, in a system of predictive control, freedom is precarious and identity is always subject to technological redefinition. The critique is of predictive surveillance as a tool of algorithmic governance rather than passive surveillance. The identity is constructed as being shaped externally through data extraction and probabilistic modeling. The narrative unmasks the premise of technological neutrality by showing how algorithmic governance enforces epistemic violence. This is why it is a relevant study in the modern society since it raises the most critical issues concerning identity and technology and provides the effective solutions to these problems. It advises that governments should have stringent privacy legislation, technology firms should become ethical and schools should create awareness about digital identity. Moreover, citizens should be responsible for safeguarding their personal information and the policy makers should

remain transparent and accountable in the use of their data. Finally, it is necessary to balance technology and human values to retain the individuality and protect society against the adverse effects of digital surveillance.

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الهوية السائلة تحت المراقبة الرقمية: التكنولوجيا والهوية في رواية فندق الأحلام ليلي العلمي : دراسة تحليلية

ا.م.د معتر طارق شاكر محمود العزاوي

جامعة ديالى / كلية التربية المقداد

مستخلص البحث:

في عصر تهيمن عليه التكنولوجيا الرقمية وجمع البيانات، يعدّ الأدب الانكليزي المعاصر مصدراً حيويّاً لفهم التداعيات الإنسانية للمراقبة. يستند هذه البحث على أفكار الحداثة السائلة التي طرحها زيجمونت باومان ونظرية المراقبة في العالم الحديث، لمناقشة كيفية تحويل التكنولوجيا الحديثة للذاتية والاستقلالية والقدرة على اتخاذ الخيارات الأخلاقية. وتتناول هذه الدراسة التحليلية رواية "فندق الأحلام 2025" للكاتبة ليلى العلمي، مستخدمة نظريات أساسية في مجال المراقبة لتقييم آثار الحوكمة الخوارزمية والمراقبة التنبؤية والسيطرة المؤسسية على الهوية والعلاقات والفاعلية الفردية في الرواية. تكمن أهمية هذا البحث في مساهمته في فهم التداعيات النفسية والأخلاقية والاجتماعية للسيطرة الخوارزمية و كما تشير الأدبيات المعاصرة. يستخدم البحث تحليلاً نوعياً يعتمد على التحليل النصي لدراسة تجارب الشخصيات والأشكال السردية والتمثيلات الموضوعية للمراقبة. تُظهر نتائج البحث أن الهوية تُبنى من الخارج عبر التقييم الخوارزمي، والتنقيب في البيانات، وتصنيف السلوكيات. الذات «سائلة»، تتشكل وتُعاد صياغتها باستمرار ضمن أطر التقييم الرقمية. يبرز البحث تأثيرات المراقبة على هويات الأقليات وكيف أن أعمال المقاومة تمثل محاولات لاستعادة الاستقلالية. يبين هذا البحث أن الأعمال الأدبية، عند تحليلها من منظور خطاب المراقبة، تكشف تكلفة بشرية للحكم التنبؤي وإمكانية الفاعلية في عالم تُنظمه التكنولوجيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تكنولوجيا - مراقبة - هوية - تحليل أدبي - خوارزمية.