

**THE PRIVACY PARADOX AND THE  
QUESTION OF AGENCY: A STUDY OF  
SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM IN  
MCNAMEE'S *ZUCKED: WAKING UP TO  
THE FACEBOOK CATASTROPHE* AND  
GREENWALD'S *NO PLACE TO HIDE***

**BY**

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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
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**Thesis Title:** The Privacy Paradox and the Question of Agency: A Study of Surveillance Capitalism in McNamee's *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* and Greenwald's *No Place to Hide*

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## ABSTRACT

**Title: The Privacy Paradox and the Question of Agency: A Study of Surveillance Capitalism in McNamee's *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* and Greenwald's *No Place to Hide***

This study explores the concepts of privacy and agency by reading Roger McNamee's *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* (2019) and Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide* (2014). I examine the selected texts by deploying Shoshana Zuboff's approach to "**Surveillance Capitalism**" and Sherry Turkle's concept of the "**Privacy Paradox**". I argue that collecting information in the name of privacy is a strategy of surveillance. This is how the privacy paradox refers to the notion that social media, tech platforms, and state intelligence agencies offer the illusion of privacy and agency while, in fact, they are doing surveillance. The information of consumers is shared to the advertising companies and state agencies either for capitalist interests or security purposes. Resultantly, the agency and privacy of the consumers are compromised in many ways. Furthermore, this research lies in the qualitative paradigm. Its research design is interpretive and exploratory in nature. Hence, I use Catherine Belsey's "Textual Analysis as a Research Method" to analyze the selected texts in terms of the relationship between surveillance capitalism and the notions of privacy and agency. I find that tech companies and state agencies hack the brain, modify behavior, exploit human information, manipulate by creating the fear of staying behind, and trace every virtual footprint. This study contributes to the production of knowledge in the domain of Surveillance Studies.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS / SHORT FORMS

App	Application
FB	Facebook
<i>NPH</i>	<i>No Place to Hide</i>
PP	Privacy Paradox
SC	Surveillance Capitalism
SM	Social Media
Tech	Technology
<i>Zucked</i>	<i>Zucked</i> is not the abbreviation of the entire title of the memoir; it is only the short form of <i>Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe</i> .



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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my beloved mother, Munazza Siddiqui, my dear father, Mushtaq Ahmad, for their love, devotion, and unlimited sacrifice, and my life partner, Abdul Waqar Safdar, for believing in me, for checking on me, and for motivating me.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This research examines Roger McNamee's *Zucked: Waking Up to The Facebook Catastrophe* (2019) and Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide* (2014). To critically analyze the selected memoirs, I have drawn upon Shoshana Zuboff's concept of "surveillance capitalism" and Sherry Turkle's ideas of "privacy paradox" and "agency" as my theoretical props. Government and the corporate sectors commodify and keenly observe human experience in the present age. The state and tech companies mine human information for capitalist gains and give the illusion of privacy to the consumers, which is quite a paradox. This study, therefore, explores how capitalism and power work in collusion with each other to use people's private information and give the illusion of privacy and agency while surveiling them.

The rise of technology has made surveillance quite easy. Tech experts have designed social media apps in a way that people constantly interact with them and find pleasure in using them. Consequently, most often they compromise on their privacy and share their private information to enjoy pleasure. While negotiating with social media platforms, their family members are not aware of their virtual engagements, nor do they know the outcome of sharing their information. The more they spend hours of days and nights in the search bars of Facebook<sup>1</sup>, Google, and other such spaces, the more they surrender their information to technologists. Therefore, to understand the link between surveillance, privacy, and agency, it is necessary to first investigate these concepts.

It is instructive to elaborate the concept of privacy and surveillance capitalism before I explain the larger argument of this study. Also, it is important to mention here that the idea of an agency is intertwined with the notion of privacy. Privacy is the right to control personal information, and agency allows one to make independent choices, at the same time, protect their autonomy. It is also important to mention here that this study discusses the agency of consumers and citizens and not the agency of McNamee

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<sup>1</sup> Further on, I will write FB instead of Facebook

and Greenwald. Since I have deployed Turkle's concept of privacy as one of my reading props, it is in order if I graduate to her definition of privacy by routing my discussion through other critics' positions on privacy. In the opinion of Alan Weston, privacy is "the claim of an individual to determine what information about himself or herself should be known to others" while Charles Fried claims that "privacy [. . .] is the control we have over information about ourselves". On the other hand, Alan Solove discusses privacy in six points. He states that privacy is "(1) the right to be let alone, (2) limited access to the self, (3) secrecy, (4) control of personal information, (5) personhood, and (6) intimacy" (Qtd in Lukács 258). Through this discussion, we see that privacy refers to control over personal information, and how much a person wants others to peep in their personal life.

Privacy is an age-old but ever evolving process. The idea of privacy has always been there whether it was ancient ages or renaissance humanism. According to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, privacy is "the state of being alone and not watched or interrupted by other people". The concept of lock and key signifies the idea of privacy which has been in use since early ages. The idea of secret letters and meetings also highlights the notion of privacy. In Renaissance Humanism, it was related to individualism and personal space. With the dawn of digital age, it has evolved, and it relates to data erosion. Conclusively, the idea of privacy has always been there in one form or the other, but it is extensively breached and misused in the digital age.

In the technological world, users compromise their privacy by sharing excessive information on social media platforms. The information includes pictures posting on SM accounts, tagging friends with whom they are hanging out, and mentioning minute details of their lives. According to my understanding, privacy refers to control over personal information and how much the person wants others to peep in one's personal life.

After a brief view of other critics on the idea of privacy, let me turn to Sherry Turkle's<sup>2</sup> concept of privacy. In her book, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from*

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<sup>2</sup> An American Sociologist and a professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology. She has written several books on human relation with technology.

*Technology and Less From Each Other* (2011), she discusses how privacy is an illusion and becomes a paradox when tech companies and state agencies breach it in the name of security and agency. Turkle argues that privacy in virtual space is an intricate concept. Most often, consumers are unable to understand it. She argues, “in this curious relational space, even sophisticated users who know that electronic communications may be saved, shared, and show up in court, succumb to its illusion of privacy” (188). She expands her claim by saying that people believe whatever they are sharing because of their agency, which gives them a sense of privacy as well. In online communications, they believe that they have an agency to hide the undesirable part of their existence. At the same time, they have control to present themselves as much as they like. She further notes, people think no-one judges or mocks their ideas when they share them anonymously. It saves them from fear of rejection and embarrassment. Unknowingly, by sharing their information with the world, they are compromising on their privacy.

The idea of privacy in the digital world seems delusive and reflects the concept of privacy paradox. In the digital age, probably nothing is private. People are identified with IP addresses. Further, Turkle builds on the concept of agency and says, “stalking” is a new kind of agency where people exactly do not know who is looking at their information. At one place, she claims people believe that there is no private thing and nothing much to share. There is nothing entertaining in their lives, and they are “kind of boring” (255). Moreover, Turkle voices the opinion of one of the research participants who says introverted and shy people may easily communicate on the screen. Screen is an escape and if Google and Facebook demand any information, they do not resist giving. This is because life, without these technologies, is impossible.

With the rapid emergence of technologies, it is necessary to understand surveillance to further build on the concept of privacy. I have used Shoshana Zuboff’s<sup>3</sup> concept of surveillance as one of my reading props to examine the selected memoirs. It is in order if I graduate to her definition of surveillance by routing my discussion through other critics’ positions on the idea. Surveillance is an age-old process. It has prevailed in society since the early days of human existence. As Locke stated,

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<sup>3</sup> Shoshana Zuboff is an American author, psychologist, philosopher, and a scholar. Her main works revolve around digital revolution, psychological individuality, and human development in the digital era.

“surveillance is an ancient social process. It has always been a component of institutional routines and human sociality” (qtd. in Ball et al. 1). Surveillance is broad term, and it deals with the idea of collecting human information. In the words of David Lyon, surveillance is “any collection and processing of personal data, whether identifiable or not, for the purposes of influencing or managing those whose data have been garnered.” (qtd. in Ball et al. 344). With technological advancement, government and corporate sectors not only collect information, but rather they sell it to accumulate and generate capital.

In the modern world, government and tech companies may trace the digital presence of human beings and footprints through technology. These platforms have the power to surveil human beings through the information he/she shares about him/herself. In the present world, people feel it is ‘new’ normal to post about their lifestyle, but they are unaware of the fact that national and international governments and corporate sector surveil, monetize, and sell their data on regular basis to create advanced business models. This information includes their search histories of all social media accounts and search engines. The online purchases they make, the kind of pages and channels they like, the videos they watch, the location they search, and vice versa. Google, apparently quite friendly, saves all minute details and search history of the users for its own profit making. Hence, in this dissertation, my focus is not on surveillance alone, rather my focus is on surveillance capitalism.

The term, “Surveillance Capitalism” was first used by Shoshana Zuboff, in her article, “Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization”. She defines surveillance capitalism as big data. She says that big data is the “foundational component in a deeply intentional and highly consequential new logic of accumulation” (75). Zuboff sees surveillance capitalism as a new economic order in that human information is sold uninformed for commercial purposes. She builds the concept of surveillance capitalism by creating an analogy between industrialization and surveillance capitalism. She argues that the former destroyed mother nature and the latter gradually will destroy human nature.

Mark Weinstein<sup>4</sup>, in his Ted-talk, “The Rise of Surveillance Capitalism”, claims, “We are participating in the greatest socio-economic experiment in human history: it is called surveillance capitalism. Surveillance capitalism is the monetized business model in which everything we do, morning, day, and night, is tracked, analyzed, and monetized. On the other hand, Jonathan Cinnamon is of the view that “every actor, event, and transaction can be made visible and calculable” (610). Both the critics state that every single move of ours is monitored and analyzed. The memoirs under consideration largely talk about surveillance tools and how *big brother(s)* are not only keeping an eye on the world but it also seems that they are generating capital out of the extracted information.

The memoirs under consideration largely talk about the surveillance tools and how *big brother(s)* are not only keeping an eye on the world but it also seems that they are generating capital out of the extracted information. One of the memoirs, *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe*, is set at different places as the story unfolds over years but mostly it is set in Silicon Valley, California. In Silicon Valley, California, Facebook is headquartered. Roger McNamee is a businessman and an investor. He believes in the technophilic nature of technology and is always ready to invest in it. McNamee is one of the profound supporters and an investor of Facebook initially. He also worked as a legal advisor of Mark Zuckerberg a couple of times. McNamee has co-founded many firms including venture capital, elevation partners, private equity, silver lake partners, and many others.

The other memoir, *No Place to Hide*, is set in Hong Kong. Glenn Edward Greenwald, commonly known as Glenn Greenwald, is narrating his whole experience of getting the sensitive documents of NSA and CIA through the most wanted whistleblower of American history named Edward Snowden. Greenwald is an American author, journalist, and a lawyer by profession. He has worked with famous American newspapers including *Salon* and *The Guardian*. Besides, he has founded certain renowned online platforms such as *The Intercept* and *Substack*. He is deeply

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<sup>4</sup> Mark Weinstein is an internet marketer and a social media privacy visionary. He launched a social media network “MeWe” in which no human information has been collected

concerned with privacy, surveillance, and issues of cyberspace. In 2020, he was accused of cybercrime. After a few months, the charges were dropped.

The rationale behind choosing these texts is that both memoirs, *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* and *No Place to Hide*, engage with the questions of privacy, agency, and surveillance capitalism. The memoirs discuss how privacy is an illusion in the age of tech culture and raise consciousness about how private data and information are continuously being watched and sold out. This is why I have selected these memoirs.

## **1.1. Locating Primary Texts in the Tradition of Surveillance Literature**

To affirm the authenticity of the research, it is to locate the selected primary texts in the tradition of creative surveillance literature, especially memoirs and fiction. It is here pertinent to mention that the idea of privacy subsumed under the umbrella of surveillance. Hence why, I locate my study within surveillance studies to address the key ideas of my research. Surveillance is not a new phenomenon. It has been practiced for several centuries but in different ways. In the early ages, when man was unaware of the advances of technology and its impact, surveillance happened at that time too. Spies, disguised as natives and sometimes beggars, used to collect information. Later, that information was used for many purposes including political purposes and defense. In the modern world, CCTV cameras, GPS locators, Google maps, and IP addresses are used to gather information and to surveil masses.

I have delimited my discussion of surveillance literature to the twentieth and twenty-first century memoirs and fiction because the instances of state surveillance and the use of technology figure more in the literature of these times. Furthermore, it is pertinent to mention that the selected primary texts are memoirs. Hence, the first two works which I discuss in the following paragraphs are memoirs and the later ones are novels. I could have discussed more memoirs, but I was looking for life narratives relevant to my argument. The writers discuss the notion of surveillance, privacy, agency, and security at different levels.



Edward Snowden's *Permanent Record* (2019) is a memoir that tells the story of his life. He discusses the memoir into three key sections in which he recounts the story of his childhood, his career in the intelligence community, and the decision to reveal the NSA's mass surveillance program. Snowden recounts since childhood he was good with computers and the internet. He learnt coding and became highly skilled at hacking, which eventually led him to work for the U.S. government. He joined the CIA and later the NSA, where he worked as a systems administrator and cybersecurity expert.

During this time, he began to learn more about the extent of surveillance programs, particularly how the U.S. government was collecting massive amounts of data on both American citizens and people around the world. He decided that the public had the right to know about the NSA's mass surveillance activities, because he believed NSA violates privacy rights and overstepped legal boundaries. In 2013, he released thousands of classified documents to journalists, exposing the global surveillance network operated by the NSA and its international partners. Throughout *Permanent Record*, Snowden discusses the rise of surveillance capitalism, the breach of privacy in virtual space, and the consequences of a world where personal data is constantly collected and monitored. The memoir serves as a personal account of the events that led to one of the biggest intelligence leaks in U.S. history, and a broader critique of government surveillance and its impact on civil liberties.

Barton Gellman's *Dark Mirror: Edward Snowden and the American Surveillance State* (2020) is a memoir that recounts Gellman's involvement in the groundbreaking revelations about the NSA's mass surveillance programs. He offers a personal narrative of the ethical, legal, and personal challenges he faced. He, further, states he is one of the journalists whom Snowden trusted to expose the U.S. government's extensive data collection. The memoir reflects on the dangers of unchecked government surveillance which creates the tension between privacy and national security. He also recounts his experience of being monitored. Through his account, Gellman critically examines the implications of a world where privacy is continually breached by both the state agencies and corporate sectors for their interest.

Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924) discusses the theme of surveillance. Zamyatin satirizes Russian society by creating a dystopian world in the novel. He creates analogy

between machines and human beings by naming them as codes. In Zamyatin's dystopian world, no one may do anything of their choice, at the same time, they are not even allowed to feel emotions. As D-503, the protagonist of the novel, falls in love with a revolutionary character named I-330, resultantly, the former is lobotomized, and the latter is executed to ensure harmony in society.

Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) also vividly covers the theme of surveillance at two levels. Initially, he sheds light on government surveillance and unveils the idea of self-surveillance as well. In the novel, Kafka discusses how the protagonist of the novel, Joseph K has been arrested for an unknown crime. He is constantly monitored, and his information is observed by the authorities. As it is stated, "someone must have traduced Joseph K... for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning." (3). The arrest and the torture have made K. unstable mentally and weaken him physically. As a result, he becomes disturbingly self-conscious. He starts judging his actions critically, and keeps on questioning his thoughts, behavior, and ideas.

George Orwell's *1984* (1949) is a masterpiece that foregrounds the theme of surveillance. He also creates dystopian society to highlight the prevalent atrocities of surveillance. It is set in the fictional future city Oceania. The novel reveals how the government observes and monitors every moment of the citizens. The protagonist of the novel, Winston, claims: "every sound you made was overheard... every moment scrutinized" (5). The surveillance takes place through telescreens that the government has installed in all the houses. Telescreens are the devices that record every single move of the citizens. They not only record voices but also, they recognize facial expressions of the citizens as well. At the other place, it is stated, "Winston kept his back ... to the telescreen... he knew, even back can be revealing" (5). Orwellian surveillance has led to the next level where citizens are further surveilled in the form of informants. The duty of informants is to observe any sort of deviation that occurs in society.

Robert Ludlum's *The Bourne Identity* (1980) is the spy-thriller and explicitly discusses the themes of surveillance. The series critically sheds light on overreach of government and how the government is constantly monitoring the citizens without their consent. Throughout the series, Bourne is trying to save himself from murder. It is stated in the novel, "the airport and the train station would be watched. And the car he had

taken from the man he had killed - who had tried to kill him - would be the object of a search” (126). Ludlum has artistically surveilled his protagonist, Jason Bourne, with multiple technological devices such as tracking devices, wiretapping, and satellite imagery. It has created an atmosphere of fear and paranoia because of constant surveillance.

Additionally, John Twelve Hawks’ *The Traveller* (2005) contains contemporary themes related to technology, surveillance, and privacy. All through the novel, the characters try to rescue themselves from the organization named Tabula. The organization is not only surveilling the citizens but also trying to control them. Moreover, novels like Cory Doctorow’s *Homeland* (2013) discuss multiple types of surveillance such as government surveillance and corporate surveillance and how these institutions exploit the privacy of consumers. At the same time, Caleb Crain’s *Overthrow: A Novel* (2019) also analyzes the themes of government and media exploitation and breaching of privacy. It is here where the selected primary texts, *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* (2019) and *No Place to Hide* (2014), may be located within the tradition of surveillance literature.

## **1.2. Situatedness of the Researcher**

In a developing country like Pakistan, surveillance capitalism is a rapidly emerging phenomenon. On Monday, July 1, 2024, thecurrent.pk posted on Instagram that “the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) had ordered telecom operators to finance, import, and install a system enabling mass surveillance of citizens’ data”. Through surveillance, a state may monitor terrorist activities, corruption, and many other crimes, but the surveillance of a common man raises questions of privacy and agency. With modern technology and the emergence of AIs, anyone may easily trace human digital presence, manipulates it, and may use it in terrorist activities. Anyone may access the private information of the desired person, including chat history, emails, files, audios, photographs, and even the locations one visits may be traced. In Pakistan, people and sometimes opposition through wiretapping leaks audios and videos of politicians and other significant people. Afterwards, the affected person faces the backlash of masses and oppositions and goes through the media trial. Being a Pakistani researcher, I think that the law enforcement agencies should not only make

proper rules, but also make sure to implement them, to overcome the issue of surveillance capitalism.

Adding to the discussion, if government looks after the surveillance tools and ensures the positive use of those tools, it may be quite beneficial for national security. Moreover, it may lead to technological revolution in the country as well. At the same time, I believe technological research is quite rare in Pakistan and in the initial stage. Hence, these topics demand exploration and researchers need to properly work on this area of research while handling it carefully. This is why, despite the presence of state surveillance in Pakistan through surveillance cameras on the roads and other technological devices, there is not much research on surveillance capitalism in Pakistan. Therefore, I felt the need to carry out this research project; research in this direction in Pakistan is rare. by analyzing the texts that engage with surveillance. I intend to make it a guideline for present and future researchers to keep the technological developments human friendly and promote a positive view of technology in the country.

### **1.3. Delimitation**

This study is delimited to the analysis of two surveillance memoirs, Roger McNamee's *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* and Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide*. I examine debates revolving around privacy, agency, surveillance, and capitalism. This project focuses on how these concepts are interlinked, and how the illusion of privacy is created. Though I refer to a good number of secondary sources, I have deployed Shoshana Zuboff's concept of "surveillance capitalism" and Sherry Turkle's idea of "privacy paradox" as lenses to examine my primary texts. Furthermore, I have also incorporated Catherine Belsey's essay, "Textual Analysis as a Research Method" to analyze my primary texts. Moreover, as this research lies under the qualitative paradigm, I analyze the selected memoirs rather than collect data from social media platforms.

### **1.4. Thesis Statement**

In the selected texts, Roger McNamee's *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* and Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide*, the idea of privacy works explorably as an illusion and a tool for surveillance. On the pretext of providing privacy,

agency, and security, the organizations like NSA (National Security Agency) and Facebook surveil the masses. Shoshana Zuboff's concept of "surveillance capitalism" and Sherry Turkle's idea of "illusion of privacy" support the reading of primary texts.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

1. What are the major manifestations of surveillance capitalism in the selected texts?
2. How and to what end do NSA and Facebook mine information and surveil the consumers in the selected texts?
3. How does privacy figure as a paradox in relation to agency and surveillance in the selected texts?

### **1.6. Chapterisation**

I have divided the thesis into six chapters. I have introduced my study in the first chapter and provided a rationale for it. I briefly explain the theoretical underpinnings of my study and methodology I use. Moreover, I have discussed my argument and stated my controlling research questions. Also, I talked about the delimitations and significance of the study. The second chapter, "Literature Review", helps locate the current study in the already existing scholarship and find research gaps in the available critical sources. I review critical scholarship related to my study. This chapter also connects my research with the previous inquiries and vindicates it by pointing out the gaps thereof.

In the third chapter, I give a detailed rationale of my "Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology". This chapter revolves around the theoretical props I employ for my dissertation. In addition, I discuss my research methodology and theoretical lenses to analyze my primary texts. It is hereby necessary to mention that I do not apply theoretical lens on my selected primary texts but rather use it as reading props to foreground the notion that the research is not done in isolation. In Chapter 4 and 5, I do analysis of my primary texts. I divide the analysis on a thematic basis. In the 4th chapter, I explore the theme of surveillance in the primary texts, *Zucked: Waking*

*Up to the Facebook Catastrophe*<sup>5</sup> and *No Place Hide*<sup>6</sup> by deploying the method of textual analysis.

Likewise, in the fifth chapter, I examine the theme of privacy. This analysis provides answers to the questions which this research has raised. In the last chapter, “Conclusion”, I conclude the whole discussion based on my analysis. It presents a comprehensive overview of my research project and the findings of my study. At the same time, I write recommendations for future researchers.

### **1.7. Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it attempts to intervene in contemporary surveillance studies by critically analyzing surveillance memoirs. The continuous surveillance of organizations and the tech industry raises questions regarding privacy and agency. The present research amalgamates the concepts of surveillance capitalism and illusions of privacy and agency. Besides, in Pakistan, the genre of memoir in respect to surveillance is not explored properly.

Furthermore, the research is significant because one of the memoirs, *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe*, unfolds the growth of today’s tech giant, Facebook, from zygote stage to the present era. Moreover, this text has not been explored extensively. The other text, Greenwald’s *No Place to Hide*, presents details about Edward Snowden, a whistleblower, who uncovered extensive surveillance state agencies in the US, particularly NSA. Therefore, what makes my study significant is its investigation of how the illusion of privacy and the question of agency get enmeshed under surveillance capitalism.

In the next chapter, I locate my study in the critical literary scholarship available on/around my field of study. I also point out research gaps in the available critical scholarship to justify my point of intervention.

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<sup>5</sup> Henceforth, I have used *Zucked* instead of *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* across my dissertation.

<sup>6</sup> After this, I have used *NPH* instead of *No Place to Hide*

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter presents a critical review of major work done in the field. The purpose of literature review is to situate the study in contemporary critical scholarship. Also, it finds out the research gaps thereof. This two-fold purpose of literature review creates space for my intervention. As the project under analysis revolves around the concepts of privacy, agency, and surveillance, I analyze books, articles, essays, and documentaries present on the subject. This review is arranged thematically, and I discuss how theorists have used the concepts, and how they evolved over time.

My literature review comprises three sections in which I assess the literature available on surveillance capitalism, privacy, and agency, also review the critical scholarship available on my primary texts and selected theoretical underpinnings. In the first section, I critically reviewed the works already done on one of my theoretical frameworks, Surveillance Capitalism. In the second section, I explored the scholarship available on my other theoretical prop that is Privacy Paradox. After that, I have assessed the primary texts and examined the literature to find researchable gaps present in them. The discussion in this chapter helps contextualize this dissertation and assists me to avoid repetition in the study. Besides, it has also helped identify gaps and, at the same time, it has strengthened the validity of my work. In the end, I wrap up the discussion and conclude it. The major subheadings of literature review are as under:

- Critical Sources on Surveillance Capitalism
- Scholarship on Privacy, Agency, and Privacy Paradox
- Works Already Done on Primary Texts

#### **2.1. Critical Sources on Surveillance Capitalism**

This project lies under surveillance studies; therefore, it is necessary to explore the concept of surveillance from multiple critical perspectives. Although my major surveillance theorist is Shoshana Zuboff, I am also discussing the works of other theorists to pave my route towards Zuboff. According to dictionary.com, surveillance is a “continuous observation of a place, person, group, or ongoing activity in order to

gather information”. Michael Foucault’s book, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* translated by Alan Sheridan clarifies the background of surveillance. The term is used initially as a tool to torture prisoners by making them frightful through constant watching. The government and courts use the strategy of surveillance even “in the execution of minor criminals” (78). Michael Foucault further states, surveillance is an “effort to adjust the mechanisms of power...of individuals...their everyday behavior, their identity, their activity, and their apparently unimportant gestures...” (77). It suggests that surveillance is a tool to gather (minor) information without the consent of the individuals and modify their behavior according to government’s benefit.

Moreover, within surveillance studies, this dissertation particularly focuses on surveillance capitalism. With the rise of technology and constant presence of social media platforms, surveillance capitalism has become a new emerging phenomenon. *The Social Dilemma*, a 2020 documentary drama on Netflix, directed by Jeff Orlowski, highlights the downsides of social media. In the documentary tech nerds, who formerly worked in the famous tech companies such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (modern day’s X), Pinterest, Apple, and many more, have been interviewed. They discuss how SM has deeply engraved in our lives. SM companies have designed platforms in such a way that users spend most of their time on them and resultantly they get a chance to extract data more.

Alongside the interviews, the docudrama highlights the impact and total dependence of youth over social media apps. The documentary presents the rise of SM platforms and shows how they exploit. It further explores how tech companies play tactics to keep the users glued to their screens. Moreover, it discusses algorithm addiction, mining information, filter bubbles and fake information, surveillance capitalism, and manipulation of mental health. Not only this, but it also causes political instability and spread hate among different communities, “Recently in India, Internet lynch mobs have killed a dozen people...” (5:13 - 5:18). Adding to the discussion, social media reinforces our beliefs and manipulates us which resultantly causes hate. It is basically not us who are watching things out of our own interest, but it is them who keeps us glued for the sake of “engagement, growth, and advertisement” (19:00 - 19:15). In the opinion of Arthur. C. Clarke, “any sufficiently advanced technology is



indistinguishable from magic”. (22:05). Tech companies are magically performing from consumers the actions that generate capital for them. In the documentary, it is claimed that tech platforms do not sell our data, they make models that predict our actions (17:40 - 17:55). This docudrama creates space for my intervention. This paper argues that government and corporate sectors surveil masses in the name of security and to generate capital. On the other hand, the documentary builds discussion around the idea of robots and avatars. It states tech industries gather information to create avatars. Those avatars predict the future actions and plans of human beings.

Cinnamon Jonathan, in his article, “Social Injustice in Surveillance Capitalism”, also talks about surveillance capitalism. He connects the idea of surveillance capitalism with social injustice. Cinnamon argues that in surveillance capitalism, “power is sharply concentrated in the hands of the small number of Web companies, retailers, and data brokers” (610). According to him, the control of companies over consumers’ information is a type of social injustice. He considers the separation of the user with his/her personal information and later the accumulation of those details is not only an economic and social injustice but also a democratic threat. He is of the view that the misuse of information also leads to cultural misrepresentation when that is processed algorithmically.

Cinnamon is of the view that the misuse of information also leads to cultural misrepresentation when that is processed algorithmically. Further in the article, “Beyond surveillance capitalism: Privacy, regulation and big data in Europe and China”, Brett Aho and Roberta Duffield compare Europe’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and China’s social credit system (SCS). They claim that these systems were introduced after the emergence of surveillance capitalism. They further unveil how the countries like Europe and China are trying to move beyond the notion of surveillance capitalism.

The notion of surveillance capitalism is also studied with the lens of feminism. Heather Suzanne Woods in her article, “Asking more of Siri and Alexa: feminine persona in service of surveillance capitalism” claims that AI is strengthening gender roles and stereotyping women. Woods argues Siri and Alexa have quite a “feminine persona”. These robots strengthen the ideology of “homemaking, care-taking, and

administrative “pink collar” labor.” (336). According to Woods it's a new form of domesticity.

Angelo Moro et al. in their article “Control in the Era of Surveillance Capitalism: An Empirical Investigation of Italian Industry 4.0 Factories”, discusses the forms of control and discusses how the technology has increased surveillance in workplaces and social domains. According to the researchers, initially surveillance started in China. The Chinese government collected information of its citizens to discipline them. Additionally, if they performed their duties well, they would be rewarded. Moro et al. claim that governments accumulate this data for monetary purposes. They argue those who are in power accumulates information through “illegal penetration”, afterwards, do the intensive profiling of individuals through their information, style of texting, conversation topics, and collects all the minor information that does not sound minor to consumers.

Afterwards, the data miners create dummy profiles of individuals with the gathered data and sell that to other advertising companies, “who then attempt to manipulate individual behavior through targeted advertising.” (4). This suggests that the advertising companies have an eye upon every move of consumers from private conversations to Facebook comments, from photos till the files, from google search to incognito search, precisely, through technology the advertising companies penetrate the blood and soul and have know-how about every cell of users’ existence. Moreover, Moro et al. further comments that google, through consumers’ profile, knows everything about them but at the same time gives the illusion of agency by giving them this belief that the consumers are purchasing and looking for things that interest them. “[Google] should know what you want and tell it to you before you ask the question” (Qtd in Moro 4). They are of the view that electronic control enables the real time tracking of the employees, hence, it enhances the quality of work.

In his article, “Data Colonialism, Surveillance Capitalism and Drones”, Faine Greenwood has discussed one of the techniques of data accumulation of humanitarian and development workers through drones. Their privacy has been breached without their consent and their still images and photographs during work have been captured. Not only this but the drones “are equipped with GPS receivers and can geotag the

images they collect, which can then be processed into geographically accurate maps.” (93). This suggests officials not only collect their physical data but also trace their location.

Furthermore, Faine has built comparisons between historical colonialism and data colonialism. He states, in ancient times, territories and resources had been captured for profit but now “data is the new oil” (96) and a valuable resource. Faine comments that currently social media and telecom companies treat human social life as a source of raw data, “human social life as an open and ownerless source of raw data” (97), and the advertisement companies heavily rely on that data for sales. To strengthen his argument, Faine also quoted Zuboff in his article, “surveillance capitalism is a logic that... claims human experience as a free raw material” (97). Throughout the article, he states data extraction is a new form of colonialism, and it has given surplus value to the corporations in the monetary gains. This article has touched upon the perspective of surveillance through drones.

In the article, “Artificial vision, white space and racial surveillance capitalism”, Nicholas Mirzoeff discusses the idea of racial surveillance. Mirzoeff is of the point that coloniality has created the odd concept of white space. He states that white space is formed through the erasure of existing human beings from their homelands which he called racial surveillance in the article.

Christian Montag and Jon. D. Elhai in their article, “On Social Media Design, (Online-)Time Well-spent and Addictive Behaviors in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism”, claim spending a lot of time on social media impacts the psychological well-being of the users, but unfortunately social media companies intentionally create the designs that enlarge the users’ presence on the platforms. The researchers argue that with instant gratification, the users and companies get a chance “to build social capital via social media”, but at the same time, addictive behavioral patterns are also observed among the consumers (610). They link “social media disorder” with gaming disorder and state that WHO has framed diagnosis of the issue since 2019.

At the same time, the researchers argue that long use of SM platforms does not indicate addictive behavior. Moreover, the researchers state that the owners of tech companies argue that they do not want users to spend all their time on social media,

hence, to limit time on SM platforms certain tools have been introduced. Montag and Elahi concluded their article by claiming that these “time-keeping features are used to distract society from their own responsibility with the platforms they created’ (614). The online presence of the users helps SM companies to finance their taxes and to pay their employees.

The reviewed articles explore diverse themes such as how governments and tech companies penetrate in the personal information of an individual, afterwards, they sell information for monetary purposes. This happens to control citizens and consumers in multiple areas of life. Further researchers discuss addictive behavioral patterns related to capitalism, they unfold racial surveillance, surveillance through drones, gender stratification and stereotyping through AI, cultural misrepresentation through surveillance, algorithm addiction, mining information, filter bubbles, fake information, and manipulation of mental health. On the other hand, my dissertation states, information which tech companies and government collect to ensure privacy to the consumers is an illusion and cater for monetary purposes. Consumers are just given the illusion of privacy and agency; tech companies breach privacy and sell individual information. It further explores the theme of surveillance capitalism via the argument that corporations first give the illusion of agency and privacy to the consumers. Afterwards, they ask them to share their private information for security reasons, but that information is being collected for the sake of capitalism and all the activities of the consumer are being observed alongside to accumulate capital.

In this section, I have reviewed surveillance in general and surveillance capitalism in particular. I have discussed how the concept of capitalism came into being and later evolved to the point of surveillance capitalism. The reviewed works are important for my thesis as they discuss the impact of surveillance and capitalism over people and society. The proceeding part is on the idea of privacy.

## **2.2. Scholarship on Privacy, Agency, and Privacy Paradox**

Privacy is quite a subjective term, and it varies from person to person. I have chosen Sherry Turkle’s concept of privacy as a theoretical reading prop. Instead of reading that in isolation, I reviewed the position of other theorists too and then shifted to my primary theorist. In Raymond Wack’s book, *“Privacy: A Very Short Introduction”*

Westin states that privacy is the claim of “individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about them is communicated to others” (57). James Rule argues that “privacy is a highly variable concept, one that is used to serve diverse social values and purposes.” (Qtd in Ball et al 16). In the light of discussion, privacy is quite a comprehensive idea, and it cares for the diverse social values.

Elena Zehelva and Lise Geetor, in their article, “To Join or Not to Join: The Illusion of Privacy in Social Networks with Mixed Public and Private User Profiles” discuss the notion of privacy and claim that many social media platforms including “Facebook, Orkut and Flickr” (531) provide privacy to its users. These platforms give consumers the choice to keep their personal information private. Some users avail themselves of the opportunity, while a few are fine with sharing their private details with others. They make the point that privacy is illusionary. This is because, even if a Facebook account is private, it shows other people the pages users like, the groups they join, and their mutual friends. As a result, anyone could reach users through these details. Ari Ezra Waldman claims that “Recent literature shows that individuals do not make rational disclosure decisions online” (Qtd in Waldman 105). This article builds on the idea that the concept of privacy is just an illusion as already mentioned.

Ari Ezra Waldman in his article, “Cognitive biases, dark patterns, and the privacy paradox” argues that “individuals do not make rational disclosure decisions online” (105) rather the designs of apps have been made in such a way that the users disclose their information without even their consent. Waldman states, data brokers are everywhere who collect information without the consent of people. Additionally, he has given four steps through which tech companies steal human information. He suggests the first step is anchoring where users rely on information present on their feed and do not leave the platform for a long time, resultantly, their information has been looked upon and traded. Moreover, the other step is framing in which multiple opportunities have been given to the consumers and they share all the personal information to avail those opportunities.

The third way to steal the information is by giving “hyperbolic discounting”. In this, slight discounts have been given in exchange for certain information. To get the

discounts, tech companies ask for private information and users give that in innocence. The fourth manipulative technique is the availability of over choice. Over-choice impacts on the privacy of users when they choose out of so many given things. It helps companies to investigate the data of consumers. This way the paradox of privacy has been given and consumers' personal information has been traded.

Ruwan Bandara et al. discussed the privacy paradox in a different way. They averred; social structures are designed in such a way that requires disclosure of information. For instance, in online shopping and networking, it is essential to provide transaction and location details. Consumers accept that their privacy has been breached and their content has been looked upon, but they compromise on it. This is the idea of the privacy paradox for Bandara et. al. Moreover, they have noted that decisions are not made analytically and in a logical manner rather they are the result of “emotional, immediate, and experience-based” (2) They further claim, for most of the users' privacy is an abstract idea, they do not know in which ways their privacy may be breached. Hence, they do not consider the breach.

In addition to the discussion, data collection is a technique to assist consumers in a better way by providing a checklist of the information once a user confirms his/her fingerprint or face may be recognized. Veronica L. Nabbosa focuses on “risks against benefits”. She states that multiple technologies have been used to keep human information secure such as fingerprints, face and voice recognition apps, and handwritten signatures but that information is generally sold to data vendors which is ethically wrong. At the same time, she puts in the world of digitalization, tracking technologies and AIs have been made at the loss of “dignity and goodwill” (22). Veronica concluded the discussion by claiming that there are lots of negative utility of information that is taken to assist consumers. This article explores the positive and negative usage of data collection.

In the articles, the researchers discuss the idea of privacy in multiple ways. The articles explore the notion of privacy paradox in relation to psychological, emotional, cognitive behavioral patterns, and unfold the positive and negative usage of data collection. Also, they discuss how the apps have been designed in quite a manipulative way where the information of consumers has been traded without their consent in

unknown ways. On the other hand, I argue, the consumers have been given a sense of privacy but that is a paradox. This is because, in the name of privacy, sensitive information has been collected that is later used to fulfill capitalist gains.

### 2.3. Works Already Done on Primary Texts

In this part, I explore the literature available on my primary texts: *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* and *No Place to Hide*.

James Poulas creates an analogy between televisual, Google, and Facebook in his article. He claims initially the “televisual” (social media platforms) were introduced with the hope to prevail democracy but the whole idea failed. In the same way, McNamee's belief regarding Google and Facebook failed as he says, “we suffered from a failure of imagination” (Qtd. in Poulas 87) and digital technologies have impacted on our social and psychological lives a lot.

In his review, "Reviewed Work(s): *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* by McNamee", Felix Haas argues that an advertising-based business model that modifies human behavior is not only a threat to human privacy but also a threat to democracy. Haas believes that McNamee has written this whole book to build upon the idea that technology will serve human beings and not vice versa.

He is of the view that *Zucked* is not a scientific study of Facebook rather it shows the profound concerns of a person regarding technology that is embedded in the users' veins like blood. The present study investigates how tech companies have been playing the role of omniscient seer and creates the illusion of privacy. This privacy paradox is played to veil the surveillance going on at the large scale. It further builds on how the user information is extracted and sold for commercial purposes without their consent. Hence, the existing literature has looked upon the different perspectives of the primary text.

Many scholars have reviewed the primary texts through different perspectives. Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide* (2014) has received appreciation and backlash. In their article, “Privacy in the Digital Age”, Nuala O'Connor and Alethea Lange have talked about the NSA and Snowden affair. They tried to discuss how one may see privacy in the digital world, as the article claims “this article discusses... what privacy

means with respect to the entire digital world” (17). In the opinion of the authors, in the digital world, privacy is about how human beings may shape their identity online by sharing the content of their own choice.

As Connor and Lange put it, “digital privacy is about the ability to shape one's own online identity and decide when, how and where to share parts of that identity with people, companies or other selected entities” (18). The article keeps on suggesting that the freedom to create a digital identity is equivalent to privacy in the digital space. Possibly, my intervention in the available literature is that I claim privacy is used as a tool to gather the consumers' details. It claims that the illusion of privacy is created by giving an agency to human beings to create their digital identity. Once they get comfortable in their digital space, their information is extracted, mined, accumulated, and sold out that strengthens the capitalist ideology.

Henry Ferral's “Big Brother's Liberal Friends” is significantly different from the current research as Ferral's article is bringing in limelight the anti-Snowden community. Ferral is discussing how Snowden and Greenwald have faced backlash from the community supporting the NSA. They have claimed that Snowden and people like him “neither respect democracy nor understand political responsibility” (25) and are further titled as “Manicheans and zealots” (26). Ferral has mentioned three prominent names in this regard including Wilentz, George Packer, and Michael Kinsley. This study discusses how capitalists play upon the notion of privacy and spread surveillance to make capital. (Anti-Snowden is a self-made word.)

In Richard Porton's “Birth of a Whistle-Blower: An Interview with Laura Poitras”, Poitras and Cineast are discussing a documentary called *Citizenfour* that talks about espionage, NSA affair, and Snowden. In the interview, Poitras claimed that she was filming surveillance, and interference of the NSA in the lives of masses, even before the revelations of Snowden. In the interview, she wanted to voice whistleblowers by talking about surveillance and the abuse of the government. She further mentions that she was also harassed and continuously watched by the government. Unfortunately, she was unaware of the reason, and she put “why I was placed on a watch” (48). By the end, she mentioned, Snowden's revelations have evolved the whole documentary. It has become a strong and validated introduction of the documentary. My intervention,



probably, in the existing sea of knowledge is that I am exploring how the illusion of privacy is created. Tech giants have provided mankind with their customized digital world and make them feel empowered. Sadly, the masses are unaware of the hidden agenda.

In his article, “Edward Snowden, Frenemy of the State”, Tarzie argues that Snowden’s whistleblowing is “pseudo-dissidence” and “propaganda” (348) rather than whistle blowing. He further argues that Snowden’s revelation is strengthening the idea of mass surveillance and that it is not for the masses. He further claims that Snowden has not only revealed inauthentic information, but he has also lied to his working partners, Laura Poitras, Glenn Greenwald, and Ewan McAskill. In the article, Tarzie mentions Snowden checked in in Mira Hotel on 1st June, but he claimed he had been there since 20th of May.

Mél Hogan and Tamara Shepherd, in the article, “Information Ownership and Materiality in an Age of Big Data Surveillance” have compared the offline and online data storages of Sealand and NSA’s Utah Data respectively. They further tried to unpack the argument that may a person fully rely on an offline server. This question was put while keeping in mind the mass surveillance issues enclosed by Snowden and the other whistleblowers. Online servers do not genuinely provide freedom; privacy and private information of a person is at risk. By the end, they reach the conclusion that Sealand has also failed because of the materiality and because of the tech companies’ “promise of the cloud to facilitate the management of private data” (20). In the following study, I investigate how the concept of privacy has been played upon and masses are surveilled to fulfill the interests of capitalists.

In their article, “Our Transparent Future” Daniel C. Dennett and Deb Roy have created the analogy between the emergence of the world and the emergence of digital technology. According to the scholars both the events take place at the “speed of light” and with the “wave of light”. As light has given transparency to the world, the same way social media has given transparency to the world. Further, they have discussed that transparency has the power to destroy the reputation of anyone. They mention the NSA and the Snowden affair and the damage it has created.

Even Snowden's revelation was not like traditional whistleblowing. This transparency may have hazardous effects that may destroy the world. This article touches upon the Snowden perspective in quite a unique way as it tries to convey the damage that social media may create. Social media has created the hype of the Snowden affair and the world's most secret, and the strongest military felt the need to defend itself on different grounds.

Richard Kilroy, in his article, "No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. Surveillance State. By Glenn Greenwald, New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2014", has reviewed Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide*. He appreciated Greenwald and Guardian for their dauntless behavior. He further declared Snowden as a patriot and not a traitor. Later, he emphasized that the issue of surveillance that Greenwald, Barton, Snowden, and Poitras have tried to bring to the limelight should be considered seriously. Moreover, the journalists should investigate the government timely, but secrecy should be observed. However, the current research is underlining how the mayhem of statistics is shared by the users and mined by the agencies. While the users are kept in the dark and are not fully aware of its collection. It further expands the discussion towards capitalism and combines it with mass surveillance.

Current research is debating the idea of pseudo-privacy. Companies like Facebook, Google, and Instagram etc. give the illusion of an agency by providing free of cost and customized apps to its users. As a result, the user feels very wanted and empowered. Consequently, he shares all the private stuff on these platforms. Are the users naive to think they use the products and apps without paying anything in return? They might be the product. As the selected texts suggest, the tech companies peep into our personal information, surveil us, and sell the statistics for capitalist purposes. My intervention in this study is that government and corporate sectors use privacy as a tool of collecting users' information.

To conclude, the review of critical sources in the foregoing pages helps find gaps and creates space for my intervention in the available literary scholarship. Surveillance is a form of control and human information is the new oil in the world of capitalism. The selected critical sources suggest that tech platforms may exploit data to get growth, engagement, and advertisement. Further, critics have discussed the idea of

surveillance on moral, ethical, and humanitarian grounds. Through drones, GPS trackers, and locators, the state agencies and corporate sectors collect information about human beings without their consent, which is a threat to democracy.

The studies highlight that several researchers have worked on the idea of surveillance, capitalism, privacy, and agency. At the same time, each study is a bit different from my dissertation and I have underlined the gaps already in my review of the critical sources. I have reviewed resources on privacy in which researchers argue that Facebook is lying to its consumers regarding privacy. Facebook displays the pages users like the groups they join and the mutual friends (even) of the accounts that are private. Moreover, tech platforms design social structures, such as online shopping and networking, in a way that requires disclosure of information. It further manipulates human beings by offering them opportunities and they share their information to grab their chances. In addition, a lot of users' information is collected such as fingerprints, face and voice recognition apps, and handwritten signatures but that information is generally sold to data vendors which is ethically wrong. My literature review in the foregoing pages shows that there are tangible research gaps in contemporary critical scholarships in surveillance studies. I explore the concept of surveillance capitalism in relation to privacy and agency. Furthermore, I argue that in the name of privacy and security, the state and the corporate sectors ask for sensitive information. Afterwards, they sell that information to generate capital. The next chapter discusses the theoretical underpinnings of my study along with research methodology.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the preceding chapter, I reviewed critical sources on surveillance studies and research works done on my selected primary texts. My review helps contextualize my study in contemporary scholarship and finds out the research gaps available in the existing research. My literature review also provides insights into the theoretical support I need for the analysis of my primary texts. It further helps devise the research methodology for my dissertation. This chapter comprises two parts: in the first part, I explain and rationalize my theoretical framework and, in the second, I elaborate my research methodology. Thus, this chapter is divided into the following two parts:

- 1) Theoretical Framework
  - (a) Shoshana Zuboff and Surveillance Capitalism
  - (b) Sherry Turkle's Concepts of Privacy Paradox and Agency
- 2) Research Methodology
  - (a) Textual Analysis

#### 3.1. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework of this study combines Shoshana Zuboff's concept of "Surveillance Capitalism" expounded in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* and Sherry Turkle's ideas of "Privacy Paradox" and "Agency" theorized in *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less From Each Other*. I deploy my theoretical ideas positions with Catherine Belsey's: *Textual Analysis as a Research Method* idea of textual analysis to critically analyze the selected texts closely. Together, I have used this framework to investigate my primary texts.

Being a Marxist writer, Zuboff critically discusses the new form of capitalism, that is surveillance capitalism. She highlights how every aspect of human existence has been surveilled by security agencies and social media platforms. She argues human existence has become information and a pawn to be traded upon. On the other hand, Sherry Turkle underlines how modern technology compromises privacy and agency. At

the same time, she explores the connection between human beings and technology, and how technology manipulates the users that. It further explores how users believe they start believing have agency in digital space, because their online existence is more private than their social life and. Therefore, they are ready to compromise on their privacy. The ongoing discussion states how Shoshana Zuboff and Sherry Turkle build their respective ideas which I use as a theoretical support of this study. First, I discuss the concept of surveillance capitalism and then I elaborate on the idea of privacy paradox and agency.

### **3.1.1. Shoshana Zuboff and Surveillance Capitalism**

Zuboff looks at “surveillance capitalism” as a contemporary economic order in which human experience is used as a commodity to sell. She discusses the concept in the following words:

A new economic order that claims human experience as free raw material for hidden commercial practices of extraction, prediction, and sales [. . .]. A parasitic economic logic [. . .] of behavioral modification; [. . .]. A rogue mutation of capitalism [. . .]. The foundational framework of a surveillance economy [. . .] a new instrumentarian power that asserts dominance over society [. . .]. An expropriation of critical human rights that is best understood as a coup [. . .] an overthrow of the people’s sovereignty. (8)

According to Zuboff, “surveillance capitalism” is "an expropriation of critical human rights that is best understood as a coup from above: an overthrow of the people’s sovereignty" (8). She quotes Larry Page in which he states google wants to give simply beautiful experiences to its users. She further builds on the idea by putting that that experience has been given by expropriating human information whether it is “searches, e-mails, texts, photos, songs, messages, videos, locations, communication patterns, attitudes, preferences, interests, faces, emotions, illnesses, social networks, purchases, and so on” (127). The aim of Google is to gather all this information in raw form and then convert that into data and make it beneficial for the advertisers as much as possible. Zuboff uses “extraction architecture” (127) for the gathering of data.

Zuboff emphasizes that Google is a “shape-shifter” (127) but in every shape its only task is to observe human behavior and she uses the term “behavioral surplus capture” to explain the idea. She notes that unfortunately under this economic order we have no control over our behavior, “we are exiles from our own behavior, denied access to or control over knowledge” (100). She states that surveillance is being done through each minor thing that we do not consider. For instance, cars, mobile phones, video, photo, tagging, location, posting of private pictures, posting events, family pictures, fights, favorite memes, and so on. Each of the actions has been thoroughly observed and used to improve the product strategies and advertising techniques. Google claims that the company’s only goal is “customer satisfaction” but she claims it is not primarily customer satisfaction rather it is “advertisers’ satisfaction” (127) for which Google is working and has introduced almost 150 tools and devices.

Not only this, but surveillance capitalism is also "a parasitic economic logic" (8) in that human beings are a product and the commodity to sell. In the modern world, only that person or organization is successful whose data is unreadable or at least hard to decipher, “societal future in which market power is protected by moats of secrecy, indecipherability, and expertise” as Zuboff noted in the book (100). At the same time, continuous surveillance for commercial interests leads to behavioral modification. Zuboff puts, “social media content and behavior may be used to capitalize on targeted revenue-generating opportunities with mapping rules from personality to behavior.” (262). It is one of the worst surveilling strategies in that human behavior and personality has been manipulated and forcefully altered for the sake of capitalist purposes. She further compares surveillance capitalism with a viral disease by claiming viral disease surveillance capitalism prevails quickly in the tech world.

The initiators of the idea are the tech giants of today, Google and Facebook. Later, many other platforms like Microsoft, Apple, and Amazon deployed the same strategies in their products. She further builds the idea of surveillance capitalism on Marxian saying. She cites Marx’s opinion: capitalism is a “vampire that feeds on labour” (16). According to Zuboff, surveillance capitalism is feeding upon every aspect of human existence. She called “repetitive sin” the process of accumulation of human data (100).

Zuboff articulates that how initially Google and Facebook have put “crazy” investments in start-ups that were not getting any profits at large in order to gain the traffic, audience, and the information that has been posted on those platforms, “Google paid \$1.65 billion for a one-and-a-half-year-old startup that had never made any money and was besieged by copyright-infringement lawsuits: YouTube” (102). Resultantly, Google tied all of its advertising strategies into YouTube and may legally look up all the data and searches that have been made on YouTube. Initially, Google received quite a backlash on the act but, within a few months, the results and traffic were drastic. Afterwards, Mark Zuckerberg paid “astronomical” prices to platforms like WhatsApp “19 billion” and Oculus “2 billion” to take hold of the most of SM platforms, and today, he is unaccountable for his actions and massive manipulation and human data extraction. Shoshana Zuboff’s idea of surveillance capitalism provides ample insights for my selected primary texts; therefore, I have chosen this concept as one of my reading supports to investigate this study. The proceeding paragraphs discuss Sherry Turkle’s ideas of privacy paradox and agency.

### **3.1.2. Sherry Turkle’s Concepts of Privacy Paradox and Agency**

This construction privacy paradox and agency are terms I deduced after reading Sherry Turkle. I have used term “agency” in reference to privacy. The term explores the ability of an individual to control his/her personal information. I would still like to say that Turkle has talked of privacy paradox and agency in her book, and I do not want to take credit away from her. In her opinion:

The self-shaped in a world of rapid response measures success by calls made, e-mails answer red, texts replied to, contacts reached. This self is calibrated on the basis of what technology proposes, by what it makes easy. But in the technology-induced pressure for volume and velocity, we confront a paradox. We insist that our world is increasingly complex, yet we have created a communications culture that has decreased the time available for us to sit and think uninterrupted. As we communicate in ways that ask for almost instantaneous

responses, we don't allow sufficient space to consider complicated problems [. . .]. In this curious relational space, even sophisticated users who know that electronic communications can be saved, shared, and show up in court, succumb to its illusion of privacy. (Turtle 166, 188)

These sayings of Turtle have helped me formulate my own term privacy paradox which is a theoretical position of this study too. In her book, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, she discusses how privacy is an illusion and raises the question of agency when human beings are constantly monitored. She states, "Privacy has a politics. For many, the idea "we're all being observed all the time anyway, so who needs privacy?" (Turtle 262) She unfolds the argument by stating privacy is quite a complicated concept for the consumers. The consumers use their social agency on social media platforms and share their personal information as they think it keeps their confessions private, "I get the private out of my system. . . I put my unhappiness onto the site" (236) but in some cases the users are unaware of the fact or ignore it that "most Internet sites keep track of who has visited them" (232). Social media platforms gather all sorts of information as to which kind of person one is, which kind of food one likes, about one's education, family, social life, political and religious beliefs, conclusively, through stalking or surveillance every minor information may be accumulated.

Moreover, they use their social agency to get others' personal information, to download their posts, their pictures or videos, and stalk them for no reason. People feel that they have an agency over the information of others. Stalking is a new normal. Turtle notes, "stalking may not be breaking any rules, but it has given young people a way to invade each other's privacy that can make them feel like spies" (252). At the same time, the consumers feel agency and power. They believe they have agency and control over the information of the person they stalk. Not only this, but they also have agency in sharing the part of information they desire to show the world, Turtle states, "you stare at a screen on your desk or in your hand. It is passive, and you own the frame; these promise safety and acceptance. In the cocoon of electronic messaging, we imagine the people we write to as we wish them to be; we write to that part of them that makes



us feel safe” (258). The users feel in the cocoon of digital presence, they have agency to investigate the data people are sharing about their lives and may control what do they want to show the world about themselves. They are unaware of the fact that through manipulative strategies they have been shown the things which interest and profits platforms.

The users exercise their social agency and put on their thoughts, photographs, events, confessions, and every minute detail while considering SM platforms private and by having this illusion that they are just sharing the part of information they want to show the world. At the same time, “confessional sites are often taken as therapy and they are not” (237), the users ignore the fact that these sites are getting wealthier on their conflicts and clashes and amount of information they feed to these sites. Consumers are using their agency by sharing every kind of information on social media sites either directly or indirectly. The information includes contact addresses, banking information, academic presence, pictures, and all the things that are not even considered private are analyzed. Turkle articulates that the idea of having agency and privacy is so instilled in users’ mind that one of her participants says she is running two blogs, one is private, and the other is public, and she has authority to share the details of her choice in both spaces.

Turkle further notes that tech companies are also providing the illusion of safety. By safety she means electronic communications save us from humiliation. The humiliation which one feels because of his/her under-confidence, and the weak edges of personality that keeps him/her insecure. She further builds on the paradox of electronic messaging as it “promises safety and acceptance” (258) but that is just hyper-real safety and acceptance. Adding to the discussion, SM platforms also offer social validation in a way that these platforms make users feel special by showing their memories of the previous year, by wishing the users their birthdays, congratulating on their weddings, and sorrowing on divorces and this way these platforms grasp the attention of the users. She notes, technology offers “remembrance and validation” and she observes that in “a new issue of *The New Yorker* shows a man and woman at the summit of a ski slope. He is using his digital camera; she is on her cell phone” (302). It

suggests that the consumers are so glued to technology that even in nature they stick to their devices instead of filling the soul with purity and humbleness.

With the passage of time, it is observed that people have shifted most of their things, data, and information online. For instance, initially, we use a phone number diary for keeping our contacts safe. At the same time, birthdays, events, thoughts, recipes, feelings, day to day events, to-do lists have been noted in a diary. Slowly, SM platforms have taken the place of diaries. We stopped noting birthdays any longer because Google and FB are reminding us of the important events of our lives. Consumers, particularly, teenagers feel they enjoy more privacy in virtual space as nobody is eventually interested in their lives, “Who would care about me and my little life?” (264). Conclusively, Social Media platforms have manipulated its users in such a way that they feel safe while staying online. Sherry Turkle explores the idea of privacy in reference to agency and foregrounds the instances when privacy is nothing more than an illusion, delusion, and a lie. This is why she is relevant and is one of my critical theorists. In the next section, I will discuss the research methodology I incorporate in my dissertation.

### **3.2. Research Methodology**

This research lies in the qualitative paradigm. Its research design is interpretive and exploratory in nature. Since qualitative analysis is non-generalizable, it suits my project. Because of the subjective nature of the qualitative analysis, I add voice to the overall argument of my thesis. In this section, I discuss Catherine Belsey’s “Textual Analysis as a Research Method”. The method helps find answers to the research questions. It is further used to explore texts that are qualitative in nature. While explaining the textual analysis as a research method, she claims it “involves a close encounter with the work itself” (Belsey 160). It reflects that she is aware of the significance of the primary texts.

However, in emphasizing the superiority of the text itself, she does not ignore the importance of knowledge outside the text as she says, “interpretation always involves extra-textual knowledge” (163). This comment reflects that the textual method is different from the notion of close reading. As text is the most important thing for the scholars of close reading to mine meanings, Belsey in the textual method, does not deny

the importance of the secondary sources. Even her focus is on the primary texts. She believes the extra textual information strengthens the analysis of the project. These extratextual resources may be secondary resources like books, articles, auto/biographies, reviews, newspaper op-ed, and even knowledge based on personal experiences. In this research, I try to analyze my primary texts by using Belsey's strategies that she has discussed in her essay. Additionally, I incorporate external critical sources to strengthen my claim and to establish grounds for discussion.

My theoretical framework and research methodology provide me with the right kind of theoretical and methodological context to analyze my selected texts in the next chapter. In the upcoming chapter, I discuss the theme of surveillance capitalism in the selected memoirs with the help of Belsey's Textual method and use the selected theoretical framework as a reading prop.

## CHAPTER 4

### **DATA IS THE NEW OIL: SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM IN *ZUCKED: WAKING UPTO THE FACEBOOK CATASTROPHE* AND *NO PLACE TO HIDE***

*If you're not paying for the product, then you are the product.*

Daniel Hövermann, *The Social Dilemma*

In this chapter, I analyze the theme of surveillance capitalism in Roger McNamee's *Zucked* and Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide*. Surveillance Capitalism, in Shoshana Zuboff's words, is a "rogue mutation of capitalism" (8) which means an abnormal accumulation of human information in the current age. This chapter explores how government and corporate sectors engage in the act of surveillance, particularly, I foreground the surveillance done through Google, Facebook, Amazon, YouTube, NSA, and FIA.

Surveillance capitalism is my larger concern, that is why it looms over my study. First, in chapter 4, I would like to discuss both the memoirs to analyze how surveillance capitalism figures in those texts. It is pertinent to note that McNamee's memoir is a thoroughly capitalist surveillance memoir whereas Greenwald's memoir is largely about state surveillance that caters to power dynamics but what comes out of my discussion towards the end is that even state surveillance is geared towards capitalist profit making. The overarching concept of this study is surveillance capitalism, whereas the idea of privacy and agency subsumes under it which I discuss in the next chapter.

Shoshana Zuboff views these platforms as "petri dishes to examine the DNA of surveillance capitalism" (29). In this study, I propose that surveillance has been done in the name of privacy but the major reason behind this is accumulation of capital. Tech companies and social media platforms gather sensitive information and afterwards use that for capitalist purposes. This concern raises questions about privacy and agency. This is because the consumer believes he/she is sharing information out of his/her own will but that might not be the case and result of constant privacy breach and behavioral modification.

Additionally, Belsey's assertion that "interpretation always involves extra-textual knowledge" stabilizes grounds for one to explore the impact of surveillance capitalism on personal, social, and mental health of the consumers (Belsey 160). Therefore, it is useful to address the context of the memoir which influenced the author to create such work. To do so, I have discussed the background of the authors of the selected memoirs.

Roger McNamee, one of the key supporters and investors of Silicon Valley, has undergone a dramatic transformation. Initially, McNamee, not only invested in Fb; rather he mentored Zuckerberg too. Over time, he has become a vocal critic who later wrote a book to highlight the abuse of users' information. He started becoming disillusioned when he observed the increasing power and influence of tech companies. He was quite concerned about privacy, misinformation, and the addictive nature of social media platforms that he started vocalizing the issues.

In his book, *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe*, he indicates the brutal truths of the social media giants and how it impacts the fabric of society. In the memoir, he narrates all the incidents which transformed him from an enthusiastic supporter to a disillusioned observer. McNamee argues that Facebook has prioritized growth and profit over user well-being, contributing to the spread of fake news, polarization, and mental health issues. Further, he voiced several other such issues in which clients' privacy has been compromised. McNamee's journey from tech visionary to critic highlights the unchecked corporate power. Over time, McNamee's voice remains a significant force in the ongoing concern of surveillance and privacy and their role in society.

On the other hand, Glenn Greenwald is a journalist and author renowned for his investigative work on government surveillance programs. In journalism, he tries to expose mass surveillance conducted by the United States and other government agencies such as NSA and FIA. He explores themes such as privacy, civil liberties, and the role of technology in modern society. Greenwald's career took a significant turn when he collaborated with Edward Snowden, a former NSA contractor, to reveal classified documents. The documents detail the agency's vast surveillance programs.

He published the documents in The Guardian and raised the intensively sparking debates about national security and individual privacy.

The disclosures exposed programs such as PRISM, which allowed direct access to user data from major internet companies, and the bulk collection of phone records. Greenwald's reporting highlighted how these programs not only target suspected terrorists but also encompass millions of innocent civilians. Greenwald's work plays a crucial part in raising public awareness about the horrors of unchecked government surveillance. As a result of his reporting, reforms regarding privacy have been introduced. Additionally, he demands the protection of whistleblowers too and considers them an important part of any country. Greenwald's revelations have made governments accountable in front of masses and forced them to be more transparent about their activities. At the same time, he has encouraged and empowered individuals to protect their privacy.

Surveillance is one of the important themes within these memoirs. Throughout the memoirs, McNamee and Greenwald discuss how surveillance has been embedded in our lives. They have discussed multiple surveillance tools within the primary texts too. In this section with the help of Belsey's Textual Analysis, I am exploring the theme of surveillance within the memoirs. For this, I have subdivided my analysis into the following subheadings:

- 1) Manipulation through Brain Hacking
- 2) Social Validity, Reciprocity, and Nomophobia
- 3) *[M]ove fast and break things*
- 4) Multidimensional Chess
- 5) Filter Bubble

#### **4.1. Manipulation through Brain Hacking**

Manipulation, which McNamee puts as “brain hacking”, is one of the key strategies of surveillance (McNamee 96). Manipulation is a key factor in the selected memoirs and has been done in multiple ways. Consumers' information has been looked upon and in most of the cases they are not even aware of that, “NSA counts all the telephone calls and emails collected everyday around the world...” even without the

consent of users. (Greenwald 138). Through the internet, we may gather personal information because tech platforms “filter domestic phone calls” and get to know about consumers' political and religious affiliations through the information one shares (Greenwald 145). At the same time, most of the users of technology are unaware of the fact that, “the platforms have poisoned political discourse in ... the world” (McNamee 90) to get more engagement and to gather the capital. Moreover, through social apps users may get minute details about each other, for instance, the likes and dislikes, hobbies, foods, games, and schooling etc. “Years of Likes, posts, shares, comments... taught Facebook’s AI how to monopolize our attention” (McNamee 75). The more you get information about someone the more you know which kind of decisions the person makes in his/her life.

With the rise of data collection, human beings have been manipulated on their weaknesses, shortcomings, and the things they are insecure about. McNamee in *Zucked* puts, “there are ten tools that platforms use to manipulate the choices of their users ... *that are related to* menus, news feeds, and notifications” (Italicized mine 84) Sellers use these insecurities against them, target their sensitive issues, and manipulate them to get benefit from the situation or by selling the product, “user control is an illusion” (McNamee 84). Greenwald notes that NSA collects information from “the servers of ... Service Providers... Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, ... Skype, YouTube, Apple” (Greenwald 37). FB has pushed this surveillance to the next level by introducing a feature of tagging and commenting that is again brain hacking. In tagging, more people engage on the post, “each tagged photo brings ... huge trove of data and metadata about location” and users spend more time on the post (McNamee 86). The more users stay on social media platforms the more tech companies get a chance of observing and collecting data of the consumers.

Tagging has also elevated the modern trend of e-commerce which compels tech users to purchase things on the spot. Ari Ezra Waldman states, consumers “do not make rational ... decisions online” (105). Further, for the sake of transaction again certain information is needed. Bandara et al. articulate consumers “at times readily divulge their personal information, accept being tracked and profiled” (2) to make the transaction successful. There is another technique of manipulating users by giving

them the fear of lagging behind which McNamee says, “fear of missing out (FOMO)” (McNamee 87). McNamee states that the consumers have been manipulated on emotional grounds and Mark Zuckerberg has cashed this fear in the form of the notification button. Consumers are sending their personal information to SM platforms even when they are not active by constantly checking the notifications and clicking them. Whenever a consumer clicks any notification his/her information may be collected from that click.

This constant checking of phones because of notifications leads to one of the greatest harms that tech companies have done to its consumers is the shortage of focus span. Through manipulation, surveillance, and illusion of privacy the focus span of individuals has been damaged in quite the worst way. Moreover, multiple researchers claim notification work like dopamine which causes the feelings of happiness. This is why people of different ages are addicted to their phone screens and keep on waiting for the next notification.

In addition to this, human beings have been kept in constant surveillance and illusion at the same time through manipulative strategies. Greenwald, in *NPH*, states that to investigate the criminals “government ... remotely activate cell phones and convert them into listening devices” (60). At the same time to ensure security, this action of the FBI is considered “legal” (60). Kerr and Scharp say to sell the services advertisers are even “manipulating every conceivable minute detail of their customers’ lives.” (The End of Vagueness: Technological Epistemicism, Surveillance Capitalism, and Explainable Artificial Intelligence 586). Human beings and particularly the tech consumers are quite in a vulnerable state. The studies suggest that their information is at risk, and they are psychologically manipulated.

Privacy is not a new concept. Since the early days, human beings have always been concerned about their privacy and security. In the modern world, the emotions of consumers have been manipulated by giving them the fear of insecurity and being left out in the world. Afterwards, government agencies picked up this fear of security and started manipulating and surveilling common people for security reasons. Moreover, it is considered normal to collect any kind of personal information in the name of security issues. This information includes chatting history, documents, pictures present within



phone, banking information, transaction of funds, and all the information shared on social platforms and saved in cloud spaces as well. This information has been collected through different legal or illegal means. Within the memoir, Greenwald highlights that the CIA always wants to know the financial status of the people who are interested in coming to the USA. For this, once a CIA officer entrapped a banker, encouraged him to drink and drive and got him arrested. Afterwards, he rescued him and demanded sensitive information in exchange for the rescue. Under the next heading, I discuss how constant surveillance modifies human behavior and, resultantly, they come across the issues of social validation and nomophobia.

## **4.2. Social Validity, Reciprocity, and Nomophobia**

Communication, flow of information, level of connectivity, social interests and values have changed with social media. At the same time, the methods of reinforcement and social validation have also been altered. The minds of consumers have been manipulated in such a way that most of the time they are sharing their private information to validate themselves in the eyes of the world. Sherry Turkle says:

Today, cell phone in hand, other-directedness is raised to a higher power. At the moment of beginning to have a thought or feeling, we can have it validated, almost pre-validated. Exchanges may be brief, but more is not necessarily desired. The necessity is to have someone be there. (176-7)

Moreover, when someone validates their information, they feel obligated and reciprocate their information as well. McNamee notes, “Zuck and his team pushed users too hard to disclose and share more information” (51), by using multiple strategies such as manipulation, social validation, reciprocity, and by using filter bubbles.

Social validation has become quite an essential part of modern technology. FB has introduced multiple ways to ensure social validation and reciprocity in the form of status and story posting, notifications, messenger, picture tagging and by introducing like and share buttons. In the opinion of Sherry Turkle, “Technology does not cause but encourages a sensibility in which the validation of a feeling becomes part of establishing it, even part of the feeling itself” (177). Whenever a consumer puts a story,

status, or post on any social media app; he/she keeps checking the phone whether someone has liked one's post or left any comment. It is also observed that when the consumer's idea has not been validated after a long time of sharing the post, he/she feels sad and in some cases the person deletes the post.

By introducing these things, Mark Zuckerberg remains successful in catching the audience's attention. Sherry Turkle notes, "Some are even gratified by a certain public exposure; it feels like validation, not violation" (263). The consumers have started spending most of their time on the SM platforms and the more they spend their time on the platform the more data may be collected easily. Through the idea of social validation, tech platforms manipulate users' feelings and collect their data through like-button, picture tagging, and other such features.

Social media platforms have introduced so many features and apps in no time that people have been fascinated by them and keep on spending more of their time on the platform to gain the know-how of the program. This continuous engagement and idea of social validation has given the consumer dopamine rush, and they started enjoying their social media presence and the connections which they build online with people and communities. This results in a lot of fake ids even the over-time use has created people unstable physically as most people complain headaches and sight issues, "Internet use was seemingly linked to a reduction in face-to-face contact, increased social isolation, stress, depression and sleep deprivation" (O'Reily 2) not only this people come across mental instability as well.

At the same time, consumers have built an unknown relation with the techno world that they think if they do not watch the screen or use their apps even for a minute they will lag behind the world and be unable to understand the new happenings of the world. McNamee has named it "fear of missing out (FOMO)" or Nomophobia (87). Due to this fear of lagging behind, users keep on checking their smartphones and even enable the notifications too in order not to miss any information. This constant checking of phones and stickiness to screens have badly impacted the concentration and focus of human beings. The focus span of the children and adults is impacted. At the same time, scientists notice that the brains of children are not utilized properly, "they may not develop appropriately into adulthood" which is dangerous for their well-being. Hence,

continuous surveillance and manipulation have exploited human existence in many ways.

In social media platforms, people interact on the platforms, share their private information and wait for validation but this kind of reciprocity and validation is not observed with the surveillance that happens through government agencies. The kind of social reciprocity shown in *No Place to Hide* is that the continuous invasion in the privacy of people's life makes Snowden feel connected and he decided to be a whistleblower to affirm reciprocity. Hence, he showed "solidarity with the pro-privacy, anti-surveillance cause" (Greenwald 39). Moreover, Snowden feels it is his responsibility to make people aware of what is happening in their name.

He states, "my sole motive is to inform the public as to what is done in their name that which is done against them" (40). Adding to the discussion, Snowden validates his idea by talking about this intense surveillance to Greenwald, "the remarkable volume of top-secret documents that Snowden passed on to me", Laura Poitras, and *Guardian* (9). This is another kind of social reciprocity which may be observed in the memoir Snowden chooses Greenwald and Poitras because they have been following the surveillance stories of NSA for a long time. Hence, Snowden felt to choose them, "as his first contact person", (9) and they are reliable sources to communicate his ideas.

Adding to the discussion, the idea of nomophobia may also be observed in the text. Throughout the text the environment of tension may be sensed. The moment the USA comes to know about the whistleblower, he, his family, his friends, and any other social relation would not be secured. Hence, Snowden started cutting himself from his social circle to protect them. Further, he kept thinking about the safe shelter, "his first priority, he said, was to ensure his physical safety from US interference" (77) he would find once NSA knows he is the one behind the grand leak of confidential documents. Emerging technologies are bit experimental in nature; hence, it keeps on changing. The forthcoming section discusses this philosophy under the heading of "move fast and break things" which is used by McNamee in his memoir *Zucked*.

### 4.3. *[M]ove fast and break things*

It is here pertinent to mention that Roger McNamee has used this term to present the idea of corporate surveillance. I, in this study, explore the idea in reference to state surveillance as well. Every second, the news and information are changing on social media platforms. The over-flow of information often conceals surveillance, and consumers forget their privacy concerns with every change that takes place in the technological world. On the other hand, government agencies, particularly NSA, are also moving quite fast in breaching the rules and accumulating the information of not only American citizens but of people living around the globe without their consent and know-how. Snowden revealed documents of the FISA court and tried to elaborate how the “passive surveillance system works” (Greenwald 41). Hence, in the post-post-postmodern world, the people are under multi-layered surveillance.

Facebook, Google, Twitter, and Amazon are platforms that started poking their noses in the affairs of people and accumulating every possible information. Those details have helped social media platforms to enhance their business models. As a result of keen surveillance and collection, Zuck became one of the leading tech nerds and got fame in no time as he adapted the theory of move fast and break things. To make FB a strong social platform, Zuck and his team have tried multiple things and made numerous experiments. Facebook has introduced a bundle of apps to keep users online. This is an exploitative strategy, at the same time, an experiment to understand technology and to gather clients’ details.

Later in 2008, an app called Facebook Connect was introduced which allows users to sign up for other accounts with Facebook. This has made users happy as it is convenient, and they must memorize only one strong password, but they are unaware of the fact that “Facebook tracks them many places around the web” (57). This has led to catastrophe as users “noticed that Facebook knew surprising things about them” (58). To fulfill its monetization concerns, FB started catching the attention of its users and provided them with different sorts of entertainment in the form of products. One such example is “Messenger”. (62). On the other hand, Google is fully aware of the purchase attention of the users as users fully rely on Google for searching for the desired product.

They mention their priorities, price range, size, and purpose and the information are saved.

During those experiments, the information of the users has been breached in many ways as McNamee quoted Eli's saying regarding FB and Google, "the platforms were pretending to be neutral, but they were filtering content [...]" (McNamee 61). Moreover, McNamee claims "Google knows more about purchase intentions [...]" (McNamee 62). The phrase offers experimentation and exploitation. It may be interpreted at multiple levels. For instance, social media platforms and national security agencies are breaking and manipulating algorithms for capitalist purposes or security reasons.

Initially, the hacking of algorithms is an experiment, and the agencies are unaware of the results. But in no time, the platforms which manipulated and broke the algorithm are among the few of the first companies which got success in the technological world. Hence, to move fast they have broken certain rules and regulations and breached the privacy of patrons. At the same time, prospects' privacy has been breached in diverse ways as McNamee claims initially the clients' details have been gathered through "profile data " and the company ran ads to bring traffic on the site (66). This too is experiment and exploitation. Afterwards, FB convinced multiple organizations to set up their stores on the platform and promised them to bring organic growth to their sites. Resultantly, FB has earned from advertising. Out of a sheer experiment, FB and google have become million-dollar industries in no time.

After this venture, Facebook started gathering data of the prospects from different platforms and allowed advertisers to exploit that data. With constant experimentation and exploitation, FB has flourished its targeting agency fully and every now and then it introduces new tools and apps to enhance its growth in the users. Through multiple advancements and by introducing tools and apps consistently, social media platforms have gathered a lot of patrons' details and with the passage of time and by interpreting and re-reading human information repeatedly FB and Google are advocating "AI as a replacement for human activity" (94) as we let google and AIs to do things on our behalf such as writing papers or asking for paraphrasing and

summaries and even AI has potential to do creative works and create more intricate designs.

Keeping the phrase of breaking and moving, FB and Google have tried to play with the election campaign too and the results of “Russian Elections” (97) have been manipulated at a large scale. Hence, in order to turn election results in their favor, the Obama government and many other political parties “embraced technology” (98) for not being left alone. This way the government does not interfere in the affairs of the technological industry by not imposing “new regulations on tech” (98) and tech platforms investigate details of their clients without their consent. The exploitative and experimenting nature of Facebook even makes McNamee believe that it has helped Russians to spread “mischief” in the American elections too (100). Later, McNamee and team got to know that Russians have spread “disinformation” (101) through FB groups which benefitted Trump because he was campaigning around “immigration, white nationalism, and populism” (101). This way, the users use their political agency and voice their opinions. At the same time, consumers utilize their political agency in favor of some political party and become the reason of defeat for the opposite party. By following this rule, tech platforms and Facebook “knows more about user attention than anyone” (103) and at the same time, these platforms play a key role in spreading hate speech and disinformation by using strategies such as “brain hacking” and “social interference” (103).

Government agencies like the NSA have also used the strategy of moving fast but in a passive way. Instead of directly surveilling the citizens, NSA is directly in contact with SM platforms, and it collects the server data of “Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, Paltalk, AOL, Skype, YouTube, Apple” (37). This data is collected and decoded by Five Eyes, “the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand” (40).

Conclusively, America along with other four countries not only surveil their own citizens but also, they keep surveilling people residing all along the globe under the veil of security. Greenwald in *NPH* states that all the information shared by Snowden is “real and original” and “new massive data repositories” have been built and deployed worldwide to accumulate human information (41). French philosopher Jean

Jacques Rousseau stated that “Man is born free, but everywhere in chains” but the postmodern man is shackled in the chains of the internet and each trace whether it is a political status or meme, his picture or check in location, his search history and his online presence is meticulously observed, decoded, and used in the name of security through surveillance cams and SM platforms. Unfortunately, he may not sleep with his own will. His whole schedule is decided by these platforms. Shoshana Zuboff in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* claims that “means of production serves means of behavioral modification” (330). Resultantly, human behaviors have been modified by repeatedly engaging with machines.

#### 4.4. Multidimensional Chess

Social Media platforms and user data are like the game of chess. In chess, there is not any hidden strategy; rather each move is just an experiment, the same way, SM platforms (especially FB and Google) and government agencies (NSA and CIA) are playing multidimensional chess<sup>7</sup> with patron information and privacy where they themselves are unaware of the consequences but doing multiple experiments in different directions to enhance the power, business model, and the sales. At the same time, chess represents power which may be communicated in this way that technology and government has more power over user privacy than of his/her own self. Zuboff has used the term “instrumentalization” to explain the concept. She claims that it refers to the “puppet [...] that renders, interprets, and actuates human experience” (331).

The information shared on Facebook and Google has been consumed by zillions of consumers every minute, unfortunately, that information even has been shared without authentication. This way, these SM platforms have got control over the information and have got power to share the information which these platforms want as McNamee says in *Zucked*, “Facebook provides advertising support ... to execute their mischief” (100). Additionally, the personality of consumers is also observed through his/her social media presence. Zuboff notes, “With the ability to infer a user’s personality, social media websites, e-commerce retailers, and even ad servers may be tailored to reflect the user’s personality traits” (258). This is how the tech platforms

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<sup>7</sup> The expression is used by McNamee in his memoir *Zucked*.

consider the privacy of clients as a pawn to be traded upon. Not only this, tech platforms and government agencies have authority over manipulating or erasing data by entering the “deadly viruses” in the system (McNamee 180).

Social media apps and government agencies are playing multi-dimensional chess by surveilling patrons’ information in a way which benefits their business models. Due to this over accumulation of data, “financial services businesses have the ability to defraud their customers” (180). Technologists have benefited more than the masses because they have learnt the art of creating and dealing with artificial intelligence. These tech nerds are cashing in this knowledge in diverse ways and, resultantly, many white, gray, and black collared tech jobs have come to surface. Most of the search engines gather human information but Google gathers the most, “Google’s surveillance engine gathers more data on users than any other company” (180). At the same time, SM platforms and government portals accumulate all the minute details of users. The information includes personal information, professional information, and banking information.

This leads to extensive exploitation. The exploitation and surveillance have occurred on a large scale and “the plague of surveillance abuse is hardly unique to American history” (Greenwald 11). This is because the users and the citizens are unaware of the fact that their data has been surveilled. Further it is used for capitalist purposes, enhancing business models, creating AIs, and strengthening businesses. “Facebook has benefited most from exploiting the lack of awareness and regulations of business practices” (McNamee 180). Technology companies have taken the benefit of innocence, and the platforms keep on introducing the apps and keep trying to grasp the attention of the audience. At the same time, they keep on introducing the features that let people spend more and more time on the screens and they keep glued to their screens. The more patrons remain glued to screens the more their data may be collected. Resultantly, the business model of apps has been improved through the collected data.

Moreover, the reason for claiming SM platforms as multi-dimensional chess is that FB, Google, and other platforms have exploited consumers in every direction. For instance, with the rise of these apps, a lot of disinformation has prevailed as “Facebook has become the most important platform for news and politics” (McNamee 181). People



share FB posts and gather information from Google without authentication. At the same time, it has modified human behavior at large and they spend more time sticking to screens in “fear of missing out” (McNamee 87). Moreover, it spreads “hate speech” on its platforms and resultantly “Rohingya continue to suffer and die” (McNamee 181). It is not wrong to say that FB has been controlling our lives directly or indirectly in many ways and its business model knows more about us than our own self.

Facebook has started controlling the lives of users significantly without bringing the matter into the limelight. It has changed the sleeping and working routines of the patrons. People keep on scrolling FB mindlessly and waste most of their valuable time on the platform. This irregular scrolling has impacted on the mental health of consumers and resultantly the focus span of many individuals has affected. McNamee also notes that “Facebook has become a preferred tool for controlling the citizenry” (181) and through control governments get the power in the modification of citizens behavior.

It may also be said that the SM platforms have ended democracy to a certain extent and prevailed anarchy. The platform does not follow the laws and regulations of technology and spread misinformation, algorithmic bias, and campaigns of disinformation. Facebook, Google, and government agencies are “eroding the foundations of liberal democracy” (McNamee 185) and affecting public health, breaching their personal space and restructuring the “global economy” without underlining the details. (McNamee 185)

The continuous surveillance has led to the final stage of checkmate where consumers have lost all the control over their data. The world of the internet has extensively invaded every sphere of human existence and Sophocles says, “Nothing vast enters the life of mortals without a curse” (Qtd in *The Social Dilemma* 0:21). This new technology has become the curse for human existence as it has not only surveilled, manipulated, and breached the information but the constant surveillance has killed the human presence and creativity. The collection of human data has given birth to the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The AI models have been created by observing, manipulating, decoding, and experimenting with the information which users give on SM platforms. This data could be from quite basic to significant.

The creation of AI is one of the greatest threats to society, “social media artificial intelligence engines... pose the greatest threat to society” (McNamee 184) because it has taken away many jobs of people. Initially AIs have taken away the jobs of pilots and photographers with the arrival of drones but the recent updates such as Chat GPT, Gemini, and Meta AI have risked the jobs of creative and content writers, poets, photographers, designers, developers, and so on. Moreover, through SM platforms people have bounded in romantic relationships “A recent study found that 57% of US teens had begun relationships online” (Reilly et al. 2) but AI has pushed it to another level as people may simply change their voices with a single click and may manipulate and harm anyone in the name of fun. At this stage, AI “behavioral prediction” has reached the maturity where it knows and predicts what the user is going to watch next, it has “highly bandwidth connection directly into the cerebral cortex of more than 2 billion human beings” (McNamee 184). This is quite an alarming situation and unfortunately people have lost control over their privacy, their creativity, and their lives.

Government agencies are playing multi-dimensional chess by surveilling not only users through telecom agencies and surveillance cameras but also NSA accesses the information of multiple social media apps such as Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Amazon, and Twitter etc. Adding to the discussion, these agencies do not only accumulate the information of US citizens and “no individual warrant is needed” to breach privacy. NSA and CIA also collect the information of people living across the globe and it “is then empowered to target any foreign nationals” (Greenwald 113).

#### **4.5. Filter Bubble**

We use many filters in our daily lives from filtering coffee and filtering thoughts to filtering people sometimes too. The internet that once offered democracy and access to diverse information has now become a complex monopoly of filter bubbles and filters the user information too. The term “filter bubble” was first used by internet activist Eli Pariser in his book *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You* in 2011. Pariser used this term to introduce the personalized online environment where the users start seeing the content on their feed which they interact with initially. This happens

when the cookie, cache, and data of chat history get accumulated, and a filter has been created to show the personalized information.

Most of the time, the users are unaware of the fact that their online presence has been filtered for diverse reasons. The content they post on social media platforms is filtered for monetization purposes and to enhance the business models of social media platforms. Most of the time, users do not know that their content is used for “monetizing” purposes, and “Google has become a gatekeeper between content vendors and users” and sells patron data for capital reasons which the platform gathers from the search history (McNamee 61). The collection of data has given birth to Artificial Intelligence (AI). In the past few years, tech-scientists have been extensively working on the creation of robots and other artificial intelligences. Agencies like Google, Facebook, and NSA use clients’ data to further enhance the world of AI.

In the name of privacy and protection, the government gets filtered information of the individuals including Facebook chats, emails, and even Google searches. It is stated that NSA and FIA are extracting information from “nine leading US internet companies, extracting audio and video chats, photographs, emails, documents, logs”, and so on (Greenwald 117). On the other hand, being a social-media user, we all must have observed that whatever we talk about near our gadgets regarding something, surprisingly, the same kind of things we start seeing on our YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, X, and different other platforms. “Eli had an insight that his Facebook and google feeds had stopped being neutral.” (McNamee 60). Eli further argued that these platforms are “filtering content in a way that is invisible to readers... and users are entrapped in a filter bubble” (McNamee 61). The users get the impression that they are getting the results out of their own will but, unfortunately, this is not the case. The platforms have continuously filtered the information, and their artificial intelligence has become mature enough to suggest the same kind of pictures, videos, and posts that we use to absorb in our day-to-day life.

Social media platforms are filtering information in multiple ways. Google and Facebook have made their algorithms in such a way that those algos start understanding the preferences of the users and afterwards share the relevant content with them. Consumers believe that they are watching content out of their own will but that is not

the case. Shahrom in his article, “Understanding Social Media Algorithms” argues that algorithms “consider engagement, relevance, recency, and popularity to curate a personalized feed for each user” and then show the filtered content. It is widely noted that search engines do exploitation even if it spreads disinformation. It is observed that “when a user watches a regular 9/11 news video, YouTube will then recommend 9/11 conspiracies” (McNamee 81). This way users spend a lot of time on social media platforms and resultantly these platforms “generate the most profit” (81). Hence, McNamee widely discusses how algorithms have curated news feeds by strengthening the already existing beliefs and conspiracies.

One of the consequences of filtering information is the spread of extremism and polarization. Facebook allows to spread disinformation and conspiracies if it is getting revenue as “filter bubble... is a driver of revenue” (McNamee 82). Facebook filtered information and during American elections it allowed “Russians to execute their mischief”. It has raised further questions about how Russians know about their target, “did they acquire a database” because they are willing to invest dollars in advertisements (McNamee 100). Later, it is known that Russians have disseminated disinformation and hate by using the technique of advertisement through FB and FB promoted their content to benefit economically.

Filter bubbles have also impacted democracy by reinforcing conspiracies and limiting exposure to multiple viewpoints that are present on the internet. As McNamee claims social media platforms “have poisoned political discourse in democracies around the world” (90). It is not wrong to say that technology is not harming rather it is their use, financial gains of tech entrepreneurs, and monetization that is harming people. To make their business models enhanced, tech entrepreneurs have changed the relationship between humans and technology. In the modern world, instead of technology serving human beings “it is humans who are in service to technology” (McNamee 90).

In this chapter, I have analyzed the theme of surveillance capitalism in *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* and *No Place to Hide*. Surveillance is one of the important themes within these memoirs. Throughout the memoirs, McNamee and Greenwald discuss how surveillance has been embedded in our lives. They have

discussed multiple surveillance tools within the primary texts. With the help of Belsey's Textual Analysis, I have explored the theme of surveillance within memoirs.

Both the memoirs analyzed in this chapter raise the questions of surveillance and its impact on social and psychological life and well-being of the consumers. I have analyzed that privacy is a tool of surveillance. Under its illusion, tech companies and social media platforms gather sensitive information and afterwards use that for capitalist purposes. To build discussion around the argument, I divided this chapter into further sub-headings and explored how the state and corporate organizations manipulate and exploit consumers to generate revenue. Moreover, their privacies are like pawns of chess surveilled, collected, and further sold. Not only do they exploit consumers but also create the fear of nomophobia in their hearts. The next chapter examines the notions of privacy and agency in digital era.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE PRIVACY-AGENCY ILLUSION IN THE SELECTED TEXTS

*Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me the truth.*

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

In this chapter, I explore the themes of privacy and agency in Roger McNamee's *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* and Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide*. I employ Sherry Turkle's idea of privacy, and how it creates the illusion of agency, as a reading prop to examine the selected memoirs. Instead of looking into Turkle's idea in isolation, I have also brought in the positions of other theorists on privacy to build the discussion. Ball et al. claim that "privacy [...] is an extension of the panopticon's tower, a coupling of Bentham's act of watching with capturing or otherwise registering a history of behavior" (24). This idea of privacy is applicable in digital space too. Tech companies and government agencies continuously investigate the virtual lives of people. These platforms trace, monitor, and analyze every single footprint. This constant surveillance leads to behavior modification that is somehow like the notion of panopticon<sup>8</sup>. Turkle, in her book, explores the idea of privacy by investigating relationship between human beings and technology. Throughout the book, she examines how human beings have started feeling more convenient with technology and robots. At the same time, they accept the illusions that technology offers.

Sherry Turkle expands her argument by saying that social media platforms have given people "Second Life" in which they have agency to present themselves the way they like. In that life, they are "richer than they are in first life and a lot younger, thinner, and better dressed" (1). Turkle further argues, technology is seductive as it offers "illusion of companionship and privacy" (1). I am exploring the theme of privacy and its illusion, because the chosen memoirs wittily raise the questions of agency, privacy, and surveillance. At the same time, it highlights how virtual presence of the user is a complex interplay of information, manipulation, and control. I have proposed that

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<sup>8</sup> The term "panopticon" is first used by Jeremy Bentham in 1791.

privacy is a tool of surveillance. Under its chimera, tech companies and social media platforms gather sensitive information and afterwards use that for capitalist purposes. This concern raises questions about privacy and agency. Consumers believe they are sharing information out of their own will but most often that is not the case. I have explored the theme of privacy in McNamee's *Zucked* and Greenwald's *NPH* by using Belsey's "Textual Analysis as a Research Method" as a research method. To critically engage with the text, I do not only examine the primary texts in depth but also, I go through the literary scholarship available on the subject.

The memoirs extensively discuss how through technology corporate sectors and state agencies compromise on the privacy of users in many ways. McNamee states in *Zucked* that, "Google made a list of the most important things that people did on the web, including searches, browsing, and email. ... Every app gathered data that Google could exploit" (38). The selected memoirs meticulously highlight how corporate, and government provide the illusion of control to users over their personal information. The memoirs further reveal how the collection and control of personal data creates a power imbalance between individuals, corporations, and governments. To discuss the idea of privacy, I have sub-divided this chapter. To discuss into the following sub-headings:

- 1) Pawn to be traded
- 2) Bottomless Bowl
- 3) Foot in the door
- 4) Exploitation and Addiction
- 5) Privacy: No Longer a Social Norm
- 6) The Five Eyes

### **5.1. Pawn to be traded**

Roger McNamee claims that tech companies and government agencies monitor and monetize the information of people every now and then that their "privacy would become a pawn to be traded to accelerate growth" (52). Social media platforms and Government agencies provide an illusion of privacy to their patrons but surveil them to accumulate capital and gain power. For this, these companies want to engage users on the platforms as much as possible. Hence, they introduce new apps and new features among the existing apps. Consumers use their socio-economic agency and try those

apps and features in which they compromise their privacy and time. This is because they believe they have nothing to hide. Also, the users think they have an agency in online conversations, because “it is a place to reflect, retype, and edit. “It is a place to hide’” (Turkle 187). To gather data on the platform, Zuckerberg has introduced the feature of “Facemash that allowed users to compare photos of two students and choose which was hotter” and “twenty-two thousand” people had watched the photos in the first hour of release (50). People spend a lot of time on this activity. Benjamin Franklin, in “Advice to a Young Tradesman”, writes that “time is money” (1) which can be dealt with literally in the digital age. The more users spend their time on apps, the more profit tech companies will generate. Hence, it can be said that users are using their social and economic agency. The aforementioned example suggests that many users had compromised their privacy while using their agency in just the first hour of feature update.

Afterwards, “Facebook launched Beacon, a system that gathered data about user activity on external websites” (55). This suggests that under the veil of updates, these apps collect all sort of personal information as Facebook “pushed users too hard to disclose and share more information” (McNamee 51). Afterwards, the companies sell this information to marketers and data scientists without the consent of client. Through the gathered information, tech nerds create AIs and later tech companies use these AIs for behavioral modification and extension of their respective businesses.

Through the assistance of AI, they try to glue people from their screens. Technologists want users to spend most of their time on social media. For this, a lot of information is shared on SM, in *The Social Dilemma*<sup>9</sup>, it is claimed that “There is no one bad guy in social media, we have gone through the information age to disinformation age (5:35). To enhance screen time, Facebook, Google, and other such platforms introduce sibling apps every now and then to keep the users active on the platform. The more users spend time on the screen, the more they utilize their economic agency. To play with the minds of users, Facebook introduces a new feature of history clearing, “a tool for seeing and erasing the browsing data the company has accumulated on you” (McNamee 183) but unfortunately the app still uses and collects metadata to

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<sup>9</sup> The documentary highlights the manipulative side of SM.



enhance its business model. The feature has attracted the attention of the audience at large and people started searching for key terms which they once felt afraid to search.

With the passage of time, Google and Facebook know the desire, sexual behaviors, needs, insecurities, and politics of users more than their parents. Weinstein explains the idea of watching and monetization in his Ted-talk, “The Rise of Surveillance Capitalism”. He claims, “everything we do morning, day, and night is tracked, analyzed, and monetized” (0:58). Hence, “user privacy would become a pawn to be traded to accelerate growth” (McNamee 52). Adding to the discussion, not only corporate sectors are accumulating human data rather on the pretext of national security, but government agencies are also gathering consumers’ data extensively not only the data of their citizens but unfortunately this has spread globe wide. Greenwald notes that “British and French empires both created specialized monitoring departments to deal with the anticolonial movements” but later these governments were well-known for “intrusion in personal lives” (12).

This suggests that data accumulation in the name of privacy is just a veil to hide the main reason that is social power and control. Most of the time, the data is gathered to satiate political desires as it is stated, “governments place the NSA’s desires above the privacy of their own citizens” (Greenwald 171). The reason behind putting this claim is that NSA is connected to the servers of corporate platforms, and it collects every minute detail of its citizens and foreign citizens as well. It collects the information through these servers, “Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, Paltalk, AOL, Skype, Youtube, Apple.” (Greenwald 37).

Adding to the discussion, platforms like Facebook and Google and government agencies like NSA and FIA mass surveil through internet and internet is a place that does not only deal with one domain of life rather it is heart of all the activities:

It is not merely our post office or our telephone. Rather it is the epicenter of our world, the place where virtually everything is done. It is where friends are made, where books and films are chosen, where political activism is organized, where the most private data is created and stored. It is where we develop and express our personality and sense of self. (Greenwald 14)

In today's world, people use their phones for multiple purposes. For instance, they do a ride through their phone, order food from it, make purchases, transact money, search their issues on Google and other such places. These platforms collect this information, sell it like a pawn of chess, and get capital in return. Under the next heading, I explore the concept of privacy and agency in reference to the notion of bottomless bowl. This expression indicates how government and corporate sectors are blindly accumulating human information and violating their privacy rights. To further discuss the idea, I investigate the theme of bottomless bowl in the next section.

## **5.2. Bottomless Bowl**

It is here pertinent to mention that this expression McNamee has used for collection of data done by corporate sectors. I intervene by using the idea for state surveillance as well. Bottomless Bowl is an expression used to indicate unlimited and inexhaustible information through multiple social media platforms that is further exploited by the government and the corporate sectors. The term was first used by Brian Wansink to understand consumers' psychology and consumption behavior. In the experiment, participants were given a bowl of soup to consume. "The soup apparatus was housed in a modified restaurant-style table in which two of four bowls slowly and imperceptibly refilled as their contents were consumed" leading to participants consuming significantly more soup than they would have otherwise. This experiment highlighted how easily people may be influenced into consuming more than they need. (Wansink et al. 93). McNamee has used the expression "bottomless bowl" for the newsfeed of Facebook. Here in this study, it discusses how corporations and government agencies operate in virtual space, engage users on social media through multiple strategies, and collect and exploit user data.

Roger McNamee has tried to create an analogy between over-consumption of food and over-consumption of information shared on social media platforms. Consumers absorb information throughout the day without having the affirmation of authentication. This is because, "Users trust them, despite an abusive relationship. (McNamee 220). He has used the expression "bottomless bowl" for the newsfeed of Facebook. It indicates unlimited and inexhaustible information through multiple social media platforms. I explore the concept of bottomless bowl to foreground the excessive

information available on social media. People keep on consuming information, resultantly, these platforms gather more individual data. The platforms not only gather the information they post, but rather it traces out from where and when the information has been posted. McNamee notes, “The real value resides in metadata-data about data-which is where we call the data that describes where the user was when he or she posted, what they were doing, with whom they were doing it [. . .] and more” (62).

People think they have social agency over the information they are consuming, but most often, they lose control of time while doing continuous scrolling. Anthony Eid notes, “users are losing track of time when scrolling online” (McNamee 11). Facebook is constantly drawing in user data by introducing new features and services every now and then. The reason behind introducing these apps is to accumulate as much data as possible to generate capital out of that. Unfortunately, users thoughtlessly pour in their personal information on multiple social media platforms unaware of the fact that it may be exploited and misused.

Moreover, in the context of government surveillance, the term bottomless bowl is an expression to highlight the collection of human information in digital repositories in the name of security. Facebook and NSA use their bottomless bowl technique to create extensive profiles of its consumers and citizens. As it is stated in *NPH*, “NSA, Global Access Operations, had collected data on more than 3 billion phone calls and emails...” (Greenwald 138). The state and corporate sectors track the interests, behaviors, physical, emotional, and mental states of its consumers. This information is collected through social media profiles, “telephone calls, emails, online chats, online activities, and telephonic metadata” (Greenwald 145). In addition, the users are unaware of the fact that their any kind of interaction such as posting, liking, commenting contributes in piling Facebook’s and state’s information. This information is then monetized through targeted advertising and influences their purchasing decisions. Edward Snowden, in *Permanent Records*, argues that “our user data was turning vast profits for the companies, and the government pilfered it for free” (152). However, the potential for misuse extends far beyond thereof.

Bottomless bowl may be considered as an emblem of privacy deterioration in virtual space. In digital age, “trust is more important than privacy” (Belanger & Crossler

1021). With the dawn of the 21st century, human beings have started depending on technological devices to engage with the world around. Resultantly, they start compromising on their privacy every second. With infinite information, NSA has become the most powerful agency in the world, and Facebook and Google become tech giants of the century. Together these platforms are running the world at their fingertips. With this, the reality of the world and the concept of privacy have also changed.

The bottomless bowl, in the context of government surveillance, raises serious concerns about the balance between security and privacy for not only American citizens but people living across the world. As Greenwald notes, the unit had collected data on more than 97 billion emails and 124 billion phone calls from around the world (Greenwald 138). This surveillance was not only a violation of privacy but also a threat to democracy. Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide* provides a powerful illustration of the concept of the bottomless bowl. The memoir foregrounds how government surveillance programs may create a digital panopticon, where citizens are constantly watched and monitored. Moreover, the government collects data from the servers of corporate sectors as well.

### **5.3. Foot in the door**

Foot in the door is a psychological convincing tactic in which theorists believe granting small requests will lead to granting a bigger request afterwards. In this research, I have used this term to discuss the role of notifications and basic information that is needed to enroll in any social media platform. Further, I have explored it in reference to government agencies and how they have started surveiling in the name of security and later use that information to hold power.

This technique is connected to privacy in a way that it asks for more and more personal information with the passage of time. Social media platforms use this technique in the form of notifications. Every now and then, a user receives a notification from the platform providing information this contact has uploaded a new picture or do you know XYZ, and thousands of other such notifications. Moreover, the apps advertise and try to engage users with emails too, “who wouldn’t want to know they have just received an email, text, friend request, or like” (McNamee 85). For instance, if a user does not open the message, he/she has received it, Facebook notifies it through email.

Afterwards, one starts scrolling Facebook and spends hours on it. One even shares information that highlights his/her political, social, and personal beliefs. Resultantly, the platform remains successful in infringing privacy by engaging him/her on the app and manipulating the user's mental health at the same time.

In *Zucked*, Roger McNamee explores how Facebook collects and exploits the personal data of its users through the foot-in-door technique. He details how the platform started with simple requests, information and interface such as name and email. He states, Facebook's "each page provided a photo with personal details and contact information. There was no news feed and no frills... many features were missing" (51). This seemed like a harmless request. Afterwards, gradually, the platform starts asking for more information.

As users became more engaged with the platform, Facebook start asking for additional information, "Zuck and his team push users too hard to disclose and share more information" (McNamee 51). This includes their likes, interests, and even the content they share. Over time, Facebook has introduced a feature named "Facebook Connect, a product that allows users to sign into third-party sites with their Facebook credentials" (McNamee 57). A lot of users like this offer because it saves time, and at the same time, users feel they are exercising their agency and signing up their platforms out of their own will. After some time, "Facebook acquisitions would enable photo-sharing and the importing of contacts. Such acquisitions made Facebook more valuable to users", but they are unaware of the fact that through these features, Facebook may now access the information and activity of connected apps too (McNamee 58).

Not only does Facebook collect data but also Google monitors users' activities on its platform. Afterwards, these platforms create detailed data of their users. It is continuously monitoring their behavioral patterns, preferences, engagements, and social interactions. With the help of this information, the platform has made "AdWords" which is "a scalable advertising model on Facebook" (McNamee 57). Facebook collects vast amounts of information through AdWords to target customers and influence their decisions. This gradual collection of data led to significant privacy concerns. Users were often unaware of how much information they were sharing and how it was being used. McNamee's book shows how the "foot-in-the-door" technique allowed Facebook

to build a detailed profile of its users without them fully realizing the extent of data collection.

In *No Place to Hide*, Glenn Greenwald discusses the broader implications of government surveillance and privacy. Greenwald highlights how similar principles apply to state surveillance. He explores how not only American citizens and foreigners are surveilled. He, further, finds that government officials talk more about “killing Arabs than liberating anyone” to get power (Greenwald 64). He points out that government officials’ privacy has been violated too. “When you go online at the CIA, you must check a box for a Consent to Monitoring Agreement, which basically says that everything you do is being recorded and that you agree that you have no expectation of any privacy whatsoever. You end up checking this box so often that it becomes second nature” (Snowden 103). Governments might start with minor surveillance measures, such as tracking phone metadata or monitoring internet traffic for security purposes. These initial measures may seem justified to the public.

Over time, these surveillance practices may expand. What started as monitoring for terrorist threats may grow to include a much broader range of activities and individuals. As surveillance programs grow, they may begin to intrude into private aspects of people’s lives. This could include accessing personal communications, social media accounts, and other private data. Greenwald’s memoir shows that once surveillance practices are in place, it’s difficult to control how they evolve. He states, “every day NSA works to identify electronic communications that are not being collected and stored and then develops new technologies” (141). This may lead to significant privacy invasions and potential abuse of power. He illustrates that the principles behind the “foot-in-the-door” technique apply not just to businesses but also to government actions. Small steps in surveillance may lead to larger and more invasive practices.

Both *Zucked* and *No Place to Hide* shed light on how the “foot-in-the-door” technique impacts privacy. McNamee’s *Zucked* shows how social media companies gradually collect more personal data from users, while Greenwald’s *No Place to Hide* highlights how government surveillance may expand over time. In both cases, the incremental approach to data collection or monitoring may lead to significant privacy

concerns. Understanding these concepts helps us recognize the importance of protecting our personal information and being aware of how it is used. Through these techniques, users get addicted, and their information is exploited which I have discussed under the next heading.

#### **5.4. Exploitation and Addiction**

The modern internet is based on “implicit bargain” in which users get free access of apps in exchange of their privacy (0:04). The government provides (illusion of) privacy and corporate sectors customize features in apps with users’ preferences. Resultantly, they show behavioral modification and addiction. The memoirs explore how digital platforms and government surveillance not only exploit personal details of consumers but also contribute to addictive behaviors. It further raises concerns about privacy and agency. In *Zucked*, Roger McNamee investigates how Facebook mines user data for financial gains. He states, “Apps created by Fogg’s students were particularly adept at monopolizing user attention” (93). He further highlights how these platforms breach privacy by collecting extensive data of its users, including personal details, browsing habits, and social interactions. For the accumulation of data, it is necessary that the users glue to their screens as long as possible.

To fulfill this purpose, multiple entertainment tools have been introduced. “Parents have long complained about kids watching too much television, listening to music night and day, or spending too much time playing video games” (McNamee 92). At the same time, the users feel they are getting involved in these activities on their own and exercising their agency, but they are unaware of the fact that this continuous engagement with the smart devices is a result of thorough observation and monitoring of their behavior and, afterwards, they get to see the content which interests them. In a Ted-talk, it is claimed that the breach of privacy is “spiraled out of control” (0:47). As a result, they spend long hours of days and nights scrolling on social media apps. Also, the users’ information is exploited as these platforms, because they build detailed user profiles by engaging them on the platforms in multiple ways.

The reason behind this engagement and accumulation of information is exploitation for advertising reasons. Tech companies maximize revenue by continuously monitoring individual preferences. The exploitation of privacy is evident

in Facebook's business model. McNamee notes, "user data is feeding artificial intelligences whose objective is to manipulate the attention and behavior of users without their knowledge or approval" (171). By constantly collecting and analyzing data, Facebook may sell highly targeted advertising to companies. "Facebook's policy of allowing third-party app vendors to harvest friends lists, its tolerance of hate speech, its willingness to align with authoritarians, and its attempts to cover up its role in the Russian election interference are all symptoms of a business that prioritized growth metrics over all other factors" (171). This monetization of user data raises concerns about how personal information is used without explicit, ongoing consent from users. He also discusses how Facebook's algorithms exploit user data to influence behavior. "Today these rights to privacy, knowledge, and application have been usurped by a bold market" (Zuboff 14). The platform uses data to shape what users see in their feeds, which may affect their opinions and actions. This manipulation exploits users' personal data to enhance engagement and drive profit.

Facebook's design affirms agency, but it contributes to user addiction. Sherry Turkle argues, "television's [. . .] is an opiate, or a numbing kind of thing [. . .] And you may find yourself satisfied in doing that"" (228). Facebook's algorithms are designed to maximize user engagement. Features like scrolling and personalized content keep users hooked and encourage them to use the platform for a longer period. This addictive design is one of the significant strategies to increase ad exposure that helps in generating revenue. "Facebook gave advertisers access [. . .] to data captured inside the platform. [It] also enabled advertisements in the News Feed. [. . . which . . .] leveraged Facebook's user experience (64). The platforms are designed in such a way that they are "trained to track the movement of human beings" and analyze user behavior (Turkle 84). Constant tracking allows us to create highly engaging content. This manipulation triggers users psychologically and makes it difficult for users to disconnect. The addictive nature of social media, fueled by data-driven algorithms, keeps users returning and sharing more personal information.

The state too breaches the privacy of human beings that Greenwald foregrounds in *No Place to Hide*. Governments collect users' data from the servers of the corporate sector and exploit surveillance technologies to collect vast amounts of data. Greenwald



states, “We had evidence that would indisputably prove all that the government had done to destroy the privacy of Americans and people around the world” (49). The scope of surveillance includes monitoring communications, internet activity, and even private conversations. Also, there is no one to question state’s activities, because it is quite easy to “divorce power from accountability” (67). Under the guise of national security, “a high-level cyber operative [. . .] hacks into the military and civilians’ systems of other countries, to steal information, or prepare attacks without leaving a trace” (69). The exploitation of privacy prevents the public from fully understanding or controlling how their data is used.

State surveillance has become so common that individuals become desensitized to privacy violations. This normalization is slowly diminishing public concerns and resistance to privacy invasions. Everyone including, “American public was an equally target for the secret surveillance” (Greenwald 139). Also, the knowledge that one is being constantly watched may influence behavior, creating a form of psychological control. People might modify their actions and communications out of fear of being surveilled. Both selected memoirs illustrate how exploitation and addiction are intertwined with privacy concerns. *Zucked* foregrounds the theme of exploitation in context to the monetization of personal data by social media platforms, while *No Place to Hide* explores the theme of state surveillance. Also, the memoirs show how personal information is used to exert influence and generate profit and to get power.

### **5.5. Privacy: No Longer a Social Norm**

In the digital era, the concept of privacy has changed. To enjoy comfort and pleasure, human beings have started compromising on their privacy in certain ways. The rise of social media platforms has normalized the sharing of personal information. Initially, users are cautious about their information and hesitant to reveal details online, but over time, sharing personal information has become a norm. People do not shy away from sharing their pictures, photographs of food, their beloved ones, the places they visit, and many more. “[...] on social-networking sites such as Facebook, we think we will be presenting ourselves, but our profile ends up as somebody else—often the fantasy of who we want to be” (Turkle 153). This gives the illusion of agency to the consumers, and they feel they are revealing the information they want to share with the

world and holding what they do not want to tell the world. In the virtual world, social media has become an integral part of our daily life, resultantly, the privacy expectations have diminished as well.

Social media platforms are designed in such a way that they encourage sharing of personal information and continuous engagement of the consumer with already existing data. McNamee states, “Amazon, Google, and Facebook all have monopoly power that [. . .] disadvantage users” (117). Moreover, it offers personalized feeds that is the result of preferences ones make, “Google made a list of most important things people did on the web, including searches, browsing, and emails” (McNamee 38). Also, it allows third parties to sign up with Facebook credentials. This way users keep on sharing minor information on platforms which later lead to the sharing of important information as well. The design of these platforms exploits the natural human inclination to connect and share, which further leads to a reduced emphasis on maintaining privacy.

Social media companies, particularly Facebook and Google, have built their business models around collecting and monetizing user data. It is a big revolution in the life of human beings and Sophocles claim, “Nothing vast enters the life of mortals without a curse” (Qtd in *The Social Dilemma* 0:27). These platforms offer free services in exchange for personal information. The social media platforms gradually shift the social norm of valuing privacy and make people comfortable in sharing private information. With the passage of time, users become more willing to sacrifice their privacy for the convenience of free access to services and the perceived benefits of social media engagement. These platforms notice every aspect of human existence and make it a commodity, even, “The food we eat, the water we drink, the artifacts we make and use, the social relationships we engage in, the ideas we bring forth, the time we expend, and even the DNA that determines so much of who we are have all been thrown into the capitalist cauldron, where they are reorganized, assigned a price, and delivered to the market” (Rifkin 8). McNamee explores this concept through the “foot-in-the-door” technique which illustrates how excessive data collection leads to a gradual erosion of privacy. Social media platforms have made users accustomed to sharing

small amounts of information initially, afterwards, they start demanding much more overtime. It reflects a broader cultural shift away from privacy as a social norm.

Greenwald also discusses how widespread surveillance practices have become normalized in many societies by exploring “lawlessness and radicalism of the NSA” (48). The extensive monitoring of communications and internet activity has shifted the perception of privacy from an expected right to a negotiable and obsolete concept. This normalization reflects how surveillance has become a standard part of the digital landscape, altering societal expectations about privacy, and “the [American] government had done to destroy the privacy of Americans and people around the world” (Greenwald 49). The knowledge of being under constant surveillance affects how people behave. Greenwald points out that individuals modify their behavior due to the fear of being watched, which demonstrates how privacy norms have shifted. The disseminating nature of surveillance means that privacy is no longer a given but something that individuals must actively manage and protect.

He also foregrounds how the secretive nature of surveillance programs intensifies the decline in privacy norms. Edward Snowden in *Permanent Record* argues, “It was as if I were dispersed—with parts of my life scattered across servers all over the globe—and yet intruded or imposed upon” (152). The secretive nature of government surveillance programs means that citizens are often unaware of the extent to which their privacy is being invaded. This lack of transparency contributes to a diminished sense of privacy as people become desensitized to the idea that their personal information is being monitored and collected. The absence of clear, public oversight and accountability for surveillance practices may lead to a reduced emphasis on privacy as a social norm. When surveillance is hidden from public view and justified as necessary for security, privacy concerns may become less prominent in public discourse, further eroding privacy expectations.

McNamee’s examination of social media and Greenwald’s analysis of government surveillance both show how privacy expectations have shifted. In the case of social media, privacy norms are undermined by design choices and business models that prioritize data collection and user engagement. In the context of government surveillance, privacy is diminished by the normalization of monitoring and the lack of

transparency. Both authors discuss how these changes impact individual behavior. In *Zucked*, the addictive nature of social media leads to a gradual erosion of privacy as users become more comfortable with sharing personal information. In *No Place to Hide*, the awareness of surveillance alters behavior, with individuals potentially self-censoring due to the constant threat of being watched. Together, these memoirs highlight the complex interplay between technology, surveillance, and the changing landscape of privacy.

## 5.6. The Five Eyes

Glenn Greenwald uses the term “The Five Eyes” to reflect the intelligence alliance of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This alliance plays a significant role in global surveillance and violates the privacy of people not only living in America but globe wide. In my study, I have also discussed the idea of five eyes in relation to social media platforms as well. In the world of social media, “Google, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter are [the five eyes that are] currently doing more harm than good” (McNamee 200). These alliances share intelligence and collect data from around the world, which includes intercepting communications, monitoring internet activity, and gathering metadata. At the same time, they argue to provide agency and privacy, but Snowden provides, “clear proof that NSA officials had lied to congress, directly and repeatedly” (Greenwald 122). The extensive network is designed to surveil which allows for the massive collection of personal information from individuals, both within and outside of these countries.

The surveillance capabilities of the Five Eyes alliance have profound implications for privacy, “the vast majority of the files in the archive were designated “top secret”. Most of those were marked “FVEY” [. . .] they were approved for distribution only to NSA’s closest surveillance allies [. . .]” (Greenwald 136). Greenwald discusses how the alliance’s surveillance programs often operate without transparency which leads to significant privacy invasions. The collection and analysis of data on a global scale means that individuals are subject to monitoring without their knowledge and consent. The activities of the Five Eyes alliance are conducted under a veil of secrecy. Greenwald highlights how the public is often unaware of the full extent

of surveillance programs, which are justified under the guise of national security. This secrecy contributes to a lack of accountability and diminishes the protection of privacy.

The Five Eyes countries share intelligence with each other, which bypasses national legal restrictions. For example, if one country's laws are stricter regarding data collection, another member of the alliance may collect the data and share it without any legal constraints. This data-sharing mechanism enhances the invasion of privacy, as individuals are monitored and analyzed across borders. The surveillance practices of the Five Eyes alliance result in the mass collection of data from countless individuals. This broad and indiscriminate data collection includes emails, phone calls, and other forms of communication, all of which are utilized to identify potential threats. This level of surveillance fundamentally undermines the notion of personal privacy. Greenwald notes that the knowledge of such extensive surveillance may have a chilling effect on free expression. People may avoid discussing sensitive topics out of fear that their communications are being monitored. This effect further illustrates how the Five Eyes surveillance practices impact individual freedom and privacy.

While Roger McNamee's *Zucked* focuses primarily on the impact of social media platforms like Facebook on privacy, there is some indirect discussion of surveillance and its effects, which may be related to the broader context of Five Eyes activities. On the other hand, Greenwald's *No Place to Hide* explores how states and state agencies are involved in surveillance. Both the selected memoirs discuss how social media, and the state collect and exploit personal data for targeted advertising and other purposes. They foregrounded the theme of surveillance and their secretive agendas and features which are used to accumulate individual data. The themes of privacy erosion and data exploitation discussed in *Zucked* and *No Place to Hide* are applicable to the context of global surveillance. McNamee's insights into how social media platforms gather and use personal data may be seen as part of the broader surveillance ecosystem that includes government agencies and alliances like Five Eyes.

McNamee and Greenwald exploration of corporate data collection and government surveillance underscores how personal data is increasingly vulnerable to both private and public sectors. Most often the information shared on these platforms is free, and Daniel Hovermann states, "If you are not paying for the product, then you

are a product”. McNamee’s exploration is relevant to understanding the context of global surveillance practices, including those of the Five Eyes alliance. Overall, both memoirs contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how privacy is compromised in the digital age. *No Place to Hide* offering a specific critique of the Five Eyes surveillance practices and *Zucked* providing insights into the broader surveillance landscape involving both corporate and government actors.

This chapter is subsumed under surveillance studies and explores the theme of privacy with reference to agency. This study highlights how consumers use their political, social, and economic agency. I further explore how privacy is violated by using different techniques. My analysis leads to the concluding discussion of my argument in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

To conclude my research, it is necessary to recapitulate my whole discussion and explain how this study has productively intervened in the contemporary scholarship on surveillance capitalism. I have examined Roger McNamee's *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe* (2019) and Glenn Greenwald's *No Place to Hide* (2014) by deploying Shoshana Zuboff's concept of "surveillance capitalism" and Sherry Turkle's idea of "privacy paradox" in relation to agency. Also, I have incorporated Catherine Belsey's essay "Textual Analysis as a Research Method" to examine my primary texts critically. By extensively analyzing my selected memoirs, in chapter 4 and 5 respectively, I have reached some important findings and recommendations.

This study is based on the premise that under the illusion of providing security and taking care of privacy, the corporate sector and government agencies ask for sensitive information. It includes national ID cards, banking details, profession, parentage, marital status, postal addresses, and foreign visits, among other things. Later, that information is sold to generate capital and get power. With the help of a theoretical framework, I have explored that corporate organizations and the state do surveillance and breach privacy without the consent of consumers. On the other hand, people are unaware of the fact that their privacy is compromised in a certain way. The research has attempted to demonstrate how corporate sector and state agencies do surveillance through manipulation and the modification of human behavior. At the same time, the agencies consider clients' information as pawns of chess that are fully in their control. Adding to the discussion, I find that consumers have also come across multiple psychologically concerned behaviors. For instance, addiction to screen, nomophobia, social validation, and fear of missing out (on social media platforms) are some of the behaviors that are observed. This stance provides room to explore the concepts of surveillance and privacy from social, physical, and mental perspectives.

For understanding connection between surveillance, privacy, and agency, this study tried to find answers to three controlling research questions, and I did critical analysis of selected texts for the findings of the study. The three controlling questions

were: (1) *What are the major manifestations of surveillance capitalism in the selected texts?* (2) *How do NSA and Facebook mine information and surveil the consumers in the selected texts?* (3) *How does privacy figure as a paradox in relation to agency and surveillance in the selected texts?* Although not generalizable, the findings of the study are pertinent to my thesis statement and research questions.

To address the first question, I explored my primary texts with the theoretical prop of “surveillance capitalism” proposed by Shoshana Zuboff (See section 3.2.1, p. 27 - 9). *The major manifestations of surveillance capitalism* in McNamee’s *Zucked* and Greenwald’s *NPH* are (1) behavioral modification, (2) exploitation and sharing of human information to advertising companies, (3) the corporate sector brain hacks, (4) manipulation of the fear of staying behind, (5) monitoring and monetizing virtual footprints, (6) putting surveillance cameras, wiretapping communications, intercepting calls, messages, and emails, turning phones into remote listening devices, and (7) accumulating information from the servers of corporate sectors.

I tried to find an answer to my second controlling question in chapter four and five by analyzing the selected texts. My second finding is that *NSA and Facebook mine information and surveil the consumers in multiple ways*. Facebook mines information by introducing different features, apps, and strategies (see my discussion in (See section 5.2. p. 53 - 55). On the other hand, NSA excavates information through surveillance cameras, computer and phone hacking, turning phones into listening devices, and collecting information from the servers of corporate sectors (see my discussion in ch. 4, 41– 2).

Roger McNamee illustrates how through multiple techniques, FB sticks its users on the platform. If they stay on screen, their information is monitored and monetized. Every time customers want to walk away from their phones, notifications divert their attention, and they start scrolling again (see my discussion in ch. 5, 57 – 60). Also, filtering information, adding to fear of nomophobia, providing excessive details are a few other strategies of mining information. The state also strategizes to gain power through monitoring and analyzing citizens’ data. The government agencies surveil and manipulate at two levels. They accumulate data of citizens from the servers of most of the tech companies. Greenwald underlines in *NPH* that the state gathers details (of



citizens) from tech companies (see my discussion in ch. 4, 41 – 2). In return, the state does not impose any law and order on those platforms.

McNamee foregrounds the fact that human information collected on social media platforms is exploited and shared to advertising agencies. The corporate sector exploits clients, and then it provides a space where patrons feel that they have an agency. As a result, they start sharing their details on these apps without knowing that (their) every single message is read and decoded and is sold like a pawn of chess. It may be any minute information ranging from checking-in in any restaurant on any given day to the clothes one has worn that day. It saves and looks at every detail and traces out digital footprint one leaves in the virtual space. I further find that NSA examines the computers of other countries, eavesdrops, and wiretaps national and international communications to acquire power. The selected memoirs clearly reveal how Facebook and NSA mine data. The corporate sectors surveil their customers to enhance their business models and create AIs and other technologies. On the other hand, the state surveils citizens to accumulate wealth and power.

Moreover, I have argued that this surveillance is done under the illusion of privacy. The third question of my study is related to this claim. The question inquires as to how *privacy figures as a paradox in relation to agency and surveillance*. To answer this question, I have deployed Sherry Turkle's idea of the "privacy paradox" as a critical lens (see my discussion in ch. 3, 29-30). My findings related to the third question are that tech platforms and government agencies gather information in the name of privacy and security. Users believe that they are exercising their agency by spending time on social media apps and posting stuff out of their own free will (but that is the result of brain hacking and filtering of information). Most often, clients are unaware of the behavioral modification and tactics tech companies use to gather their information. In addition, most often, citizens are unaware of the secretive strategies of the state surveillance; hence they feel it agency too. In line with this argument, I find that users and citizens believe they do not have anything to hide; they, therefore, comfortably post their pictures and other personal information online. With an ever-increasing surge in digital technologies, surveillance capitalism is an emerging genre in the contemporary posthuman world. It will have great scope in the immediate future.

Keeping this in view, I give my recommendations and suggestions for future research possibilities in the next section.

### 6.1. Recommendations for Future Research

Surveillance capitalism is a developing domain in literary studies and is impacting all other disciplines. Future researchers may explore it in relation to other works of literature. For instance, William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* (1992), Dave Eggers' *The Circle* (2013), A.J. Finn's *The Day Before Midnight* (2016), and Hanya Yanagihara's *The People in the Trees* (2013) offer the themes that are embedded in technology. These novels foreground how corporations control vast amounts of human information, control virtual reality, and invade the privacy of consumers. These works of fiction and their themes are slightly different from the themes explored in my chosen memoirs.

Future researchers may triangulate surveillance capitalism with other variables and further explore the neighboring and adjoining areas of this study. For instance, Luis Suarez-Villa's theoretical idea of "techno-capitalism" may be explored in the texts. Also, Antoinette Rouvroy's and Tania Bucher's concept of "algorithmic governance" is a super demanding idea through which the researchers may explore the role of algorithms in the world of meta. The theme of techno-capitalism may be explored in *The Player of Games* by Iain M. Banks (1988) and *The Diamond Age* by Neal Stephenson (1995). In addition, Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future* (2020) and M.T. Anderson's *Feed* (2002) investigate the impact of technology on human relationships, identity, and consciousness, and how algorithms shape our perceptions of the world.

Besides, the idea may be investigated in various other disciplines as well. These theoretical props may be intertwined with sociology, psychology, economics, cultural studies, legal studies, and many more. Future scholars may also find how digital era has shifted the idea of privacy and societal norms. Furthermore, they may study the impact of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and biometrics. This theoretical lens may also be deployed to examine the ethical concerns and their potential to mitigate the challenges posed by technology.

Furthermore, in this dissertation, my main emphasis was on Facebook and NSA in my texts. Pertaining to this line of thought, future scholars may explore other social media apps and government agencies to investigate what are the tactics that they deploy to extract human information. At the same time, it may be explored within film studies. For instance, Andrew Niccol's movie *The Truman Show* foregrounds the theme of exploitation, manipulation, data extraction, and how the whole life of protagonist is an illusion created through technology. Themes revolving around technology are significant in the modern world, hence, my research may be used as a model in the field of Surveillance fiction that I have intertwined with privacy and agency. I hope the suggested texts are examined for academic investigation by future scholars, and my dissertation serves as a reference and lead for further research.

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