



## POST-HUMANISM: THERAPEUTIC SELF, BIO-TECH SURVEILLANCE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC MODIFICATION, AND AMERICAN FICTION

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### Abstract

This study explores the cultural implications of quantified-self influenced by technological advancements projected in contemporary American novels with reflection on the potential contemporary alterities in human existence in form of technology and surveillance. It takes into account the dominant influence of natural and social sciences and the transformative impact of quantitative methods. The research also examines the historical and cultural persistence of the quantified self in American society. Although subjectivity has been a part of American culture since Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography (1791), this argument contends that the quantified self is a global phenomenon. This paradigm focuses on how individualism, the quest of economic self-improvement, and the beliefs in progress, self-control, and self-possession are affected by technology. Consequently, the concept of the quantified self can be linked to theoretical discussions surrounding 1) subjectivity shaped by economic factors, 2) post-humanism, and 3) knowledge cultures in the information age.

**Keywords:** Subjectivity, Post-humanism, Therapeutics, psychiatry, Economy, Self, Bio-Technology.

### Introduction

This research examines the diverse ways in which literature addresses different facets of the quantified self, taking inspiration from Gary Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story* (2010). It looks at how dispersed agency, knowledge systems' potential, its constraints, and economic mechanisms are interdependent. Fictional texts serve as essential systems of second-order observation that provide insights on the effects of numerical self-description methods. Furthermore, by emphasizing the qualitative dimensions of human experience, they function as epistemic counter models to the relational, modular, and combinatory logic of the database (Manovich 2001; Hayles 1999). By doing thus, these texts inside, in M. Foucault's terms both "technologies of the self" and (re-)establish human agency.

### **Self as Subject Formation under Digitalization:**

The self as a concept rooted in numerical and statistical models, represents a specific form of subject formation and a cluster of experiences. It can be connected to theoretical discourses on 1) economy-driven subjectivity, 2) knowledge cultures in the information age, and 3) post-humanism. The self in these factors is deeply ingrained in US-American self-definition, reflecting a notion of possessive individualism that has circulated globally alongside distinctive economic orientations. The nexus between a particular form of US-American neoliberalism and subject formation that incorporates elements of the iconized self is crucial for understanding the increasing phenomenon of globalization, digitalization, and the process of transforming of bodies.

The digitalization of various social domains has led to the growing popularity of quantified conceptions of the self. Mobile technology, in particular, has facilitated the trend of personalization in applications. However, computing a non-quantifiable entity reveals the paradox of viewing knowledge as an economic resource in tech-age of information characterized by post-industrialism. Digital media on one end exposes that knowledge as collective process cannot be easily predicted or attributed to individuals. They on other end put forth the potential for collecting, generating, and accessing knowledge through extensively programmed high-end databases. Scholars like Nora Young argue that the extreme focus on the body in contemporary digital culture is a response to the disembodiment and de-contextualization that is experienced in constant digital communication and self-monitoring. Self-tracking here operates as an adaptive reaction to the pathologies of disembodiment in digital culture, with the body serving as a means to repair the illusion of a persistent, documented individual self in a disembodied world.

### **Self, Human body, Metrics and Tech Discipline Tracking:**

Throughout history, there have been many quantitative methods of self-knowledge because people have always been curious to learn all there is to know about the world and about themselves. Scientific archives reveal that similar notions about the self being quantified have existed for a long time. The concept of thematization of the self, physical experience measures, self-monitoring, and personal reporting are a few examples (Hahn/Schorch 2007: p. 56). This illustrates the continued use of self-tracking techniques, such as the usage of ancient forms such as notebooks, diaries, autobiographies, and private letters that might be used as archives of early Protestantism and Calvinism, particularly Puritanism. It is evident that a medium is needed in order to evaluate oneself and get an outside perspective, even when the focus is on inner experiences. With the advent of modernity, there was a significant shift away from introspection and towards the externalisation of the self via reliance on media or technology. This implies that all forms of self-monitoring are dependent on and affected by the medium or technology used. The foundation of all self-tracking techniques is this inherent duality. Therefore, the historical shift towards individualism and the increasing reliance on devices that resist human control, such as computers, must be considered in order to understand contemporary self-constitution via self-tracking.

Primary technology that enabled and promoted self-tracking was writing. Writing provides a medium to externalize and store thoughts, feelings, and experiences, allowing for the creation of a coherent self and identity, often constructed retrospectively in autobiographical writing. Writing and the individualism as process are closely intertwined for scholars (Ong. 1982: p.11). The wake of individualism in social organization is connected to the emergence of bourgeoisie in Europe during modern times. The printing press's groundbreaking innovation, the Reformation movement, and a profound shift in the social, political, and economic spheres all had an impact on this ascent. Two examples of the relationship between economics and individuality are the concurrent rise of double-entry bookkeeping and autobiography as data organisation genres. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), in which the protagonist records his experiences and belongings while being alone and isolated on the island, is a prime example of literature illustrating this link. Although the idea of modernization has been criticised and relativized, individualization processes are essential to the North Atlantic and European versions of modernization, which are increasingly seen as non-linear processes that are not exclusive to the West (Eisenstadt 2000: p.67).

The digital revolution, particularly the advancements in information processing technology, has facilitated the accumulation and analysis of vast amounts of data, making it more accessible and affordable for individuals. Big Data has made it possible to evaluate the world economy, environment, and statistical relationships in a useful way by enabling people to get valuable insights from their own data. Cultural studies and cultural theory have not received much attention in Big Data research, which usually describes its consequences as applications of modern technologies and concentrates on media and economic ideas. Academics like Klaus Mainzer (2014) contend that in order to assess the possibilities and limits of big data within the context of knowledge history, discussions around it need to be rooted in historical context. Other critical perspectives on big data come from social and media studies, and works like "Big Data: Analysen zum gesellschaftlichen Wandel von Wissen, Macht und Ökonomie" (Reichert 2014) and "Critical Questions for Big Data" by Danah Boyd and Kate Crawford (2012) serve as examples of the risks, blind spots, and problematic assumptions associated with it.

A cultural and literary studies perspective allows diagnostic and descriptive analyses by considering social implications, prognoses, and potential behavioral models. The "subjectivity" as a concept becomes central in this context, emphasizing how individuals approach and experience the world as thinking, acting, and feeling subjects. As subjectivities constantly evolve, an examination of contemporary subjectivity must consider the globalized technological, and biomedical progress that constitute it.

### **Humanity; Economic, Ecological, and Technological Beings:**

The discussion surrounding the effects of technology over the body and knowledge has increasingly been explored under the lens of critical post-humanism. In this perspective, a human being is not viewed as an independent, autonomous and rational entity. Human body is perceived as a node within intricate networks of economic, ecological, media-related, and technological agencies. Post-human subjectivity emerges at the conjoining of the body, technology, and non-human actors, as articulated in Bruno Latour's concept of Actor-Network Theory.

From a post-humanist standpoint, subjectivity is understood as a convergence of human and non-human knowledge, shaped by external influences and reliant on information-based and economic models. Post-humanist theories also delve into the implications of the melding of biotechnology and economic interests pursued by global corporations, raising bio-political discussions on human life and ethics. Comprised of such complex blend of economic, informational, and post-humanist dimensions, the mechanized metered self operates within a complex framework of contextual and discursive factors that necessitate examination within the realm of social practice. Anchored in a tech-culture closely tied to discourses, actors, and networks shaping society and individuals, the metered self gets layered under Big Data technology.

### **The Quantity, metered Self and Fictional Texts:**

A crucial cultural role for fictional writings may be found in this deep analysis of the geometry of the self, quantity, and commodity. They mimic and represent human agency within fictitious, closely related cultures that support scientific methods. The US has always experienced severe technical modernization, which is interesting to note because it suggests that Americans tend to view technological advancements secondhand. Particular epistemological countermodels are offered by fiction texts in addition to the quantified self. The relational, modular, and recombinatory epistemology of databases and the more linear and open aesthetic of narrative fiction differ structurally, as recent studies in the domains of digital humanities, post-humanism, and new media have highlighted. Thus, fictional texts—particularly novels—represent alternative forms of knowledge by emphasizing the qualitative hermeneutic elements of the human experience and exploring the difficulties, coping mechanisms, and novel ways of creating meaning. Under specific social, economic, and philosophical constraints, literature's reflecting quality makes it a useful tool for examining the intricate relationships and dynamics of quantified subject models.

### **The Relationship between the Metrics, Digitized self and American culture in Texts:**

The relationship between the metrics, digitization, self and American culture can be explored by examining contemporary self-tracking practices through tech gadgets. Understanding the cultural and social context in which these practices are embedded is essential, as they represent specific and contingent social phenomena. A significant reference point in the development of American culture is Puritanism, a Calvinist form of Protestantism. As early as the seventeenth century, public exposure of personal thought projection and physical experiences was a common practice within Puritanism. Rituals of public confession and self-examination were integral to Puritan practices, aiming to achieve sanctification and acceptance within the congregation. Journal keeping and constant self-questioning served as important tools for self-scrutiny in this context. The Protestant movement sought to eliminate authorities that could mediate between individuals and God, emphasizing personal responsibility for behavior. This process encompassed every aspect of life, pursuing continuous personal observational practices, and obligatory journal writing.

These parameters were expanded by the Enlightened America, which produced self-tracking techniques, as shown by Benjamin Franklin. Franklin (1791) spoke in his Autobiography about keeping a chart to track his daily progress in upholding his own set of values. His self-discipline monitoring techniques might be seen as early examples of self-monitoring as they exemplify rigorous self-disciplining. Franklin's method concentrated on morals and virtue, whereas modern self-tracking is more interested in self-improvement and body modification. People began to see the future as something that can be actively changed, leading to the emergence of the idea of a flexible self as a project of enlightenment and self-perfection. This viewpoint supports the notion of the human actor as a self-transforming being capable of deliberate, controlled activity. The ideas of individuality as a fresh notion arising from a new experience and the dynamic character of American society are also highlighted in Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835–1840).

Digitized self dominates American fiction since the time of Puritanism. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) offers one of the early explicit references to self-monitoring through the protagonist Gatsby's list of daily tasks aimed at self-improvement. The novel critiques the belief that discipline and self-monitoring can lead to the remaking of oneself, highlighting the importance of considering the larger societal context. More recent works of fiction, such as Richard Powers's *Gain* (1998), David Foster Wallace's *The Pale King* (2011), and Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003), explore the relationship between economized as well as the quantified conceptions of the human body. These novels implicitly expose the metrics of self as a paradoxical space where personal self-realization intersects with institutional instrumentalization.

Contemporary novels, such as Dave Eggers's *The Circle* (2013), Robin Sloan's *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore* (2013), and Joshua Cohen's *Book of Numbers* (2015), engage with the quantified self in the context of a neoliberal information age. These works depict worlds where numerical self-knowledge and surveillance become intertwined, raising questions about the dangers and consequences of self-quantification. They also explore the interplay between numerical digitized knowledge and the quests of individuals of their beliefs in the age of tech. These novels critically negotiate a new media ecology that prioritizes numerical and data-driven knowledge while recognizing, affirming, and criticizing established networks of human and non-human action, cognition, and power.

### **Self-tracking and Digital Devices:**

Various aspects of self-tracking under tech and metric apparatus within the context of American culture under examination offer valuable insights. It is crucial to analyze the cultural and social implications and identify the cultural continuities associated with these practices, which are specific and contingent. Puritanism, a Calvinist version of Protestantism, serves as a significant reference point in the development of American culture. Even in the early seventeenth century, it was common to publicly reveal private thoughts and intimate experiences. Puritanism demanded public confession, remorse, and cleansing to become a virtuous member of the church. When one

recognises humans' inherent sinfulness, self-reflection becomes necessary to examine one's behaviours and ideas. Journal keeping and constant self-questioning are employed as effective tools for self-reflection. Protestantism's departure from Catholicism involved eliminating authorities that could question personal behavior and intervene between individuals and God. Consequently, continuous self-inspection and journal writing become obligatory as they encompass every moment and aspect of one's life.

This evolution assumed unprecedented dimensions during the American Enlightenment, epitomised by Benjamin Franklin, which marked the transition from Puritanism to modern modes of thought. In his *Autobiography* (1791), Franklin talks about how, as a young boy, he kept a chart to record his daily progress towards upholding the virtues he set as personal goals. His techniques and control schemes might be considered typical cases of self-monitoring, constituting a rigid self-management framework. Self-perfection is the goal; the self is seen as both a tool to be utilised and a moldable thing. Young emphasises the relevance of Franklin's techniques in the present context by pointing out that his methodical approach serves as a practise of contemporary self-accountability. According to Young (Young 2012: p. 35), Franklin's exacting method may be seen as a mechanical manual for the modern self-tracker. Franklin's approaches and contemporary ones diverge primarily in that the former emphasise physical appearance and self-shaping (ibid: 36). According to Young (ibid: 42), the methods we use now to track and document individual behaviours are remnants of comprehending oneself in relation to time centuries ago, which were made possible by easily accessible monitoring devices. It is imperative that we embrace the concept of a flexible self, which is seen as an Enlightenment experiment in human agency and perfectibility. People think they have the ability to actively influence the future because they see it as flexible and changeable. Young cites Charles Taylor, who addresses the growing idea of the human agent as someone who can modify oneself by deliberate and controlled behaviour (ibid: 191; Taylor 1989: p. 159). From this perspective, *Democracy in America* (1835–1840) by Alexis de Tocqueville is also an important piece of literature. He draws attention to the fact that Americans often repeat the same behaviours and are unsettled and constantly changing. Laws, opinions, and fortunes, according to Tocqueville, are constantly subject to change (ibid: 536). The word "individualism" is introduced to the English language by him, or rather by his translator, who characterises it as a fresh thought that leads to a distinct experience (ibid: 446).

### **Surveillance, Metrics and Self in American Literature:**

Since the age of Puritanism, the idea of the quantified self has been addressed and implied in US-American literature. *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925) has one of the first open allusions in American literature. Using a list evocative of Benjamin Franklin's methodology, this modernist tale explores the topic of self-monitoring while criticising the 'American Dream'. Gatsby, the main character of the book, is raised in poverty and obscurity. In an attempt to become better, he makes a daily to-do list that includes things like getting up early, reading, and working out. Gatsby uses this list as a self-control tool. Even if he succeeds in escaping poverty and accumulating a sizable amount of fortune, he is unable to achieve social prestige. In order to increase his riches and influence, he also turns to illicit operations like bootlegging. Because it recognises the importance of the setting, the book questions the idea that self-monitoring and discipline may lead to a total transformation of oneself, in addition to criticising the American Dream. Fitzgerald's book does, however, end on a more upbeat note, reaffirming in its moving epilogue that America is a place of possibility and optimism.

The link between quantifiable human body notions and economization is explored in novels such as David Foster Wallace's *The Pale King* (2011), Richard Powers' *Gain* (1998), and Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003). The quantified self distinguishes between institutional instrumentalization and individual greatness, despite the fact that it is seldom mentioned. In current literature, we refer to the quantified self-less as "informational" as opposed to "economic". Probably the most well-known is Dave Eggers' 2013 novel, *The Circle*. The young heroine, Mae, lives in a dystopian society of numerical self-knowledge in the neoliberal digital age, where she becomes more and more

enmeshed in a deadly interaction between self-quantification and monitoring. Both Robin Sloan's *Mr. Penumbra's 24-hour Bookstore* (2013) and Joshua Cohen's *Book of Numbers* (2015) discuss the importance of epistemology and knowledge related to numbers and fiction. Since they portray themselves as the "other" of technology and new media, Liu (2007) refers to them as "narratives of new media encounter" (p. 8). The works in question aim to align with a new media ecology that emphasises data and statistics, while simultaneously identifying, validating, and scrutinising distributed systems of human and non-human action, consciousness, and power.

***Super Sad True Love Story* (2010) and Impact of Quantified self-technology:**

Analyzing Gary Shteyngart's novel *Super Sad True Love Story* (2010), which belongs to a collection of contemporary US-American novels explicitly, explores the impact of quantified self-technology within the realms of biotechnology, digital media, and economics. By drawing connections between biological aging and the shift from print to digital media, the novel establishes a relationship between the quantification of personal data and notions of human agency and value. The main character of the narrative, middle-aged Russian American Lenny Abramov, battles depression. He is attempting to build a genuine connection with Eunice Park, a young Korean American woman who is deeply ingrained in the shallow materialistic world of internet consumer culture, while simultaneously navigating the political, social, and economic breakdown of the United States. However, Eunice's wish to resurrect Lenny with her youth is as futile as his employer Staatling-Wapachung Corporation's promise to use life-extension science to produce immortality.

Eunice, a member of the media-savvy generation dubbed "inforgs" (Floridi 2010: p. 9), obsessively shops online using her data-streaming mobile device to combat her feelings of uncertainty and bewilderment in the dystopian and politically unstable United States. The term "äppärät," which is absurdly funny, mocks the device's use as a "technological extension [...] of our bodies" (McLuhan 2001: 5). A clever variation on Foucault's concept of the apparatus, the äppärät refers to the deliberate creation of discourses, institutions, and laws that exert control over individuals and knowledge. According to Foucault (1980: 194–96), it refers to "a set of strategies of the relations of forces supporting, and supported by, certain types of knowledge." Digital data full of connections, data, images, maps, projections, sounds, and fury make up the information generated by the äppärät (Shteyngart 2010: p. 4). It continually gathers, maps, scans, and assesses environmental data from the user. However, despite having so much information, the narrative finishes with "a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing," as the Macbeth intertextual reference indicates (Act 5, sc. 5). The äppärät becomes a technical interface, absorbing contextual information together with human consciousness, and reducing experience to immediately understandable code that is rendered entirely meaningless. Lenny minimises the younger generation's dependence on media, pointing out that the world they really need is already here, beeping and flashing wherever they look and demanding all of their attention and strength (Shteyngart 2010: p. 84). Lenny critiques the way in which the äppärät is used in the media to both enhance and amputate parts of the human body. Enclosing both the physical and emotional aspects of human consciousness within the technological apparatus of its own epistemology, and reducing human perception to binary information readable by intelligent machines, the äppärät symbolically represents the increasingly informational processes of knowledge production driven by search engines. Shteyngart's äppärät provides an illustration of how quantitative self-knowledge may not only lead to (self)alienation but also act as a vehicle for data surveillance and political discrimination.

A person's identity and value in Shteyngart's dystopian society are established by their data "profile," which reduces personal information to a database that is generated automatically by the äppärät: "Lenny Abramov, New York, earned \$289,420 over a blood pressure of 120. An O- blood. Thirty-nine years old; projected life expectancy is eighty-three years (47 percent of life gone, 53 percent remaining). Illnesses: high cholesterol, depression, etc. (ibid: p. 88)

In Gary Shteyngart's novel *Super Sad True Love Story*, the protagonist Lenny's credit score and health history are connected in a dystopian society dominated by neoliberalism. In this case, credit data and digital health data are equally useful since they both contribute to determining an individual's level of well-being and ability to defend the United States against threats from outside. Understanding and mapping the human body primarily using natural science observational methods—such as measuring and tracking—is central to the quantified-self notion. However, it is easy to decontextualize this data and extrapolate potentially incorrect conclusions from it. This reduces personality to a set of statistics by displaying Lenny's financial and health information both in absolute terms and in relation to the population's statistical average. Just as a person's physical appearance is determined by their state of health, so too is their character, defined by their credit score. Digital media's modular logic makes it simple to dissect, compile, retrieve, and compare this timely and pertinent data, enabling a quick assessment of an individual's worth in relation to the population. Being young and successful offers the most potential for consumer capitalism in this society, which values well-being and productivity in "individuals".

Homogeneity ignores the ambiguous and hidden forms of embodied human experience and activity that resist the binary logic of statistics, as well as the complexity, multifacetedness, and process-oriented character of human identity. Steven Shaviro cautions that individuality is in danger because "I myself am only an effect of this miniaturising process and the network induces mass replication on a miniaturised scale" (p. 13). This is because "selfhood is an information pattern, rather than a material substance."

In a world characterized by numerical calculations and trackable data, *Super Sad True Love Story* captures a nostalgic yearning for inherently human attributes that defy the systematic binary logic of access and non-access. Interestingly, the novel's title, *Super Sad True Love Story*, ironically references the quintessential human emotion of love. Lenny, the protagonist, briefly discovers what he considers to be "true love" in his relationship with Eunice, despite love being dehumanized and reduced to functional definitions that emphasize its physiological aspects. As Lenny's boss Joshie argues, love becomes a physical process that is beneficial for pH, ACTH, LDL, and other bodily functions (p.64). Although the novel explores posthumanist themes, it ultimately conveys a resolutely humanist message when Lenny reconsiders his initial decision to never die. This decision carries significant weight within the overarching plot, evoking associations with the theory of transhumanism, which posits that humanity is in an ongoing process of evolution. Transhumanism advocates for facilitating this evolution through technological, medical, and chemical means (Transhumanist FAQ). Thus, in the novel, the term "post" in "Post-Human" (p. 3) implies the transcendence of humanity beyond its current fragile state, lending significance to Lenny's initial choice. As a "Life Lovers Outreach Coordinator (Grade G) of the Post-Human Services division" (ibid: 3), Lenny's role involves promoting and selling a service that promises indefinite life extension. This promise is based on advancements in biomedicine and technology, offering methods to modify, repair, and transform the human body. When presenting their product to potential customers, Lenny explains the potential benefits and opportunities that arise from these advancements. His three-dimensional image shows millions of autonomous nanobots in his well-preserved, squash-playing body extracting nutrients, supplementing, delivering, playing with building blocks, copying, manipulating, reprogramming, replacing blood, destroying harmful bacteria and viruses, monitoring and identifying pathogens, reversing soft-tissue destruction, preventing bacterial infection, and repairing DNA. (p. 122)

In this part of *Super Sad True Love Story* examines life, death, and sickness in the US medical-industrial complex in this chapter. It shows the body as a vehicle that science can repair, enhance, and preserve (p. 3). Having a mediocre body in a culture that demands brilliance is no longer impossible for individuals with good credit and money. All aspects of life and society are quantified in this scenario. The "Life Lovers Outreach division" (122), which welcomes consumers, needs plenty of quantitative data to collect, assess, and test. Protagonist Lenny wants to join the scheme and live forever. He checks himself as he tests his customers. This involves regular fitness and stress

assessments and public reporting of methylation, homocysteine, hormone, fasting insulin, triglycerides, mood, and stress indicators (56). Quantification mandates healthy living for workers and customers. This includes meticulously calculating calories, fats, and trans-fats, and abstaining from alcohol and other harmful substances. This drive for immortality creates "a curious array of post-mortal odours, of which sardine breath is the most benign" (53). This shows that constant bodily monitoring confuses life and death.

As the story progresses, the critique of quantification and posthumanization becomes more pronounced in *Super Sad True Love Story*. While initially Lenny and his contemporaries seem to adapt to this reality, Lenny highlights the reality that even high net worth customers can be deemed "Impossible to Preserve" (16). The rigorous testing conducted by Lenny follows its own logic, requiring individuals to prove their worthiness of cheating death through Post-Human Services. Only 18 percent of applicants qualify for the company's product, a deliberate decision made by Lenny's boss, Joshie Goldman (151).

Joshie embodies trans-humanist ideals and represents the mindset dominating society in the near future. Influenced by golden age science fiction, he views Lenny's humanist perspective as a hindrance to his success. According to Joshie, relying on humanities and cultural values, and the Fallacy of Merely Existing, holds Lenny back from achieving his goals (65). Joshie's philosophy is rooted in the need to sell and the desire to benefit personally from his company's revolutionary procedures. He willingly undergoes various body modifications, transforming into a younger version of himself with new muscles and obedient nerve endings. Joshie even contemplates the removal of his own heart, considering it an "idiotically designed" muscle (293).

The implied criticism of a culture driven by quantification and post-humanization is underscored by the contrasting fates of Joshie and Lenny in *Super Sad True Love Story*. Joshie, the fervent anti-humanist, suffers from severe side effects of life extension treatments, reducing him to a helpless state and acknowledging the damaging consequences of his company's procedures. His final words reflect the realization that nature cannot be overcome (327). This exposes the fallacy in Joshie's prioritization of selling his product over proper development, testing, and consideration of consequences. The novel warns of the dangers inherent in an economically driven science that pushes the boundaries of humanity without considering the repercussions. Furthermore, *Super Sad True Love Story* suggests that there are benefits to embracing "ignorance is bliss," challenging the notion that more knowledge is always better. The novel highlights the limits and precariousness of knowledge about one's own body, emphasizing the value of non-information and the right to not-known as crucial for maintaining agency (Wehling 2009: 96). Lenny, increasingly frustrated by the intrusive nature of constant data streams from multiple devices, seeks solace in Italy, yearning for a pre-digital silence and a place where old age is not despised (Shteyngart 2010: 326). However, he discovers that even in this refuge, globalization and the influence of American culture are eroding traditional values, as he witnesses the Italians embracing youth slang and empty data obsession (Shteyngart 2010: 326).

Lenny might not have found the peace he was looking for, but at least temporarily, he is given a break. For a while at least, no one said anything, and he had been blessed with what he needed the most. It was their "silence, black and complete" (329). *Super Sad True Love Story* and the other novels discussed in this context propose an alternative form of knowledge: the knowledge of knowing when to disconnect from the constant stream of data. The novel's conclusion offers a sense of closure and suggests the importance of finding moments of respite from the overwhelming influx of information, mapping, and constant availability of data. It emphasizes the significance of knowing when to stop and unplug from the incessant flow of data that surrounds us.

### **Conclusion:**

*Super Sad True Love Story* examines how a data-driven society affects human experience and identity. The book challenges quantified self-movement and analyses how an informational knowing society affects humanism. It uses language and neologisms to emphasise the need for fresh language in digital media while satirising its emptiness and unoriginality. The narrative contrasts



children's pure language with informational overload, exposing the loss of innocence and parental direction. America's political and economic downfall and media-driven hyper-capitalism's dehumanising logic are criticised. The longing for stillness in the face of this overwhelming knowledge is interpreted as a wish for the end of fiction, but the book also investigates how storytelling may restore national identity. It claims that literature might address digital information gaps and examines American quantification beliefs and practises. *Super Sad True Love Story* warns against a quantified culture and stresses the need of serious contemplation before adopting it.

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