Critical Literary Studies

P-ISSN: 2676-699X E-ISSN: 2716-9928

Vol. VIII, No. 1, Series 15

Autumn and Winter 2025-2026

CLS ACADEMIC JOURNAL https://cls.uok.ac.ir

UNIVERSITY OF KURDISTAN https://uok.ac.ir

Article Type: Original Research

Page Numbers: 163-176

Article History:

Received: 22 February 2025

Accepted: 28 September 2025

Published: 6 October 2025

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22034/cls.2025.64124

Author Details:

1. Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran. delbandy@semnan.ac.ir

Hamlet Under the Digital Gaze: Surveillance, Narcissism, and the Fractured Self in Postmodern Adaptations

Omid Delbandi[1]

Abstract: Since its creation, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has served as a mirror to the anxieties of its time. Though various analyses of the contemporary film adaptations have routinely addressed themes of surveillance, the precise psychological effects of this surveillance on the protagonist are still under-examined. This paper addresses this lacuna by examining how Michael Almereyda's (2000) and Gregory Doran's (2009) film adaptations of *Hamlet* present the protagonist's tragic flaw as not indecision, but rather a pathological narcissism engendered by a postmodern culture of surveillance. The paper contends that these films utilize the omnipresent camera—both diegetic and non-diegetic—to create a Hamlet whose self is fragmented by the inexorable gaze. This perpetual watching, coupled with a cultural movement toward hyper-subjectivity, engenders a pathological narcissism that becomes integral to his personality. The results and findings in this article demonstrate that these adaptations employ strategies such as mise-en-abyme not merely to condemn surveillance, but to diagnose a specifically postmodern malaise wherein the self is caught in a feedback loop of self-recording and performance, ultimately leading to a questioning of the nature of identity in an era of digital mediation.

Keywords: CCTV; Gaze; Mise-en-Abyme; Pathological Narcissism; Surveillance.

Citation: Delbandi, O. "Hamlet Under the Digital Gaze: Surveillance, Narcissism, and the Fractured Self in Postmodern Adaptations", *Critical Literary Studies*, *8*, 1, 2025, 163-176. doi: 10.22034/cls.2025.64124

1. Introduction

For over four centuries, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has served as a cultural measure, with each successive generation of production projecting its own terrors upon the Prince of Denmark. Post-war productions, for instance, saw fit to explain his melancholy in the language of Freudian psychoanalysis or existential dread, while Cold War-era productions concentrated on the political paranoia of a spy-ridden state. The twenty-first century, however, introduced a new social fixation: the development of an omnipresent surveillance culture. Postmodern screen adaptations by Michael Almereyda (2000) and Gregory Doran (2009) identify with this period, reframing Hamlet's tragic flaw as indecision into a characteristic narcissism. This paper argues that the phenomenon is not so much narcissism, but a specific, pathological condition encouraged directly by the psychological and technological imperatives of the postmodern surveillance state.

Whereas considerable academic work has thoroughly explored the topic of surveillance in these productions, some interest has predominantly centered on a political or social critique of state power and privation of privacy. This article extends the argument further by shifting the locus of analysis from the external apparatus of surveillance to its internal, psychological impact. The argument is that Almereyda and Doran present the audience with a Hamlet whose self is fundamentally remade through a pathological narcissism—a sickness born of the intense interplay between the external gaze of surveillance technology and the internal hollowness created by the collapse of traditional social forms. This narcissism, in other words, is less of a vice than a symptomatic response to a world in which being is rendered contingent on seeing.

In order to build up to this claim, the argument of this paper will proceed in three stages. To begin with, it will establish theoretical foundation in the guise of Foucauldian surveillance theory and postmodern pathological narcissism, delineating the critical framework from which the remainder of the analysis will proceed. What follows is a literature review which will situate this research in context with the existing scholarship on these films, describing the unique contribution of this paper to the discussion. Finally, the content of the paper will consider how the films employ the motifs of the mirror and the camera in a strategic manner in order to visually represent Hamlet's narcissism. Lastly, this analysis will demonstrate that such changes offer a harsh and unsettling critique of the condition of the self in the 21st century, where identity is increasingly performed for, and validated by, the unforgiving eye of the camera.

2. Theoretical Framework: Postmodernity, Surveillance, and Pathological Narcissism

As one embarks on a critical analysis of postmodern times, the theoretical framework has to be founded on two interdependent concepts: the apparatus of the surveillance state and the emergence of pathological narcissism as the defining psychological feature of the postmodern subject. These theories are borrowed from Michel Foucault's theory of disciplinary society and cultural and psychoanalytic writers such as Slavoj Žižek and Christopher Lasch, whose research illuminates the psychological implications of being under surveillance and the collapse of symbolic power.

The concepts of Surveillance today are greatly owed to Michel Foucault's understanding of the panopticon. Though surveillance has existed throughout history in some capacity, Foucault discovers that there is an underlying shift in its shape and effect in the modern world. *In Discipline and Punish*, he uses the spatial model of the panopticon as a figure for how disciplinary power operates through internalized surveillance. This procedure ensures power is maintained not by active domination but by inducing in subjects a "state of conscious and permanent visibility" which "assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault 201). The hallmark of the modern state of surveillance, thus, is not overt domination but internalized compliance. In the postmodern era, this paradigm has been technologically instantiated and extended through the development of computer-based monitoring systems, CCTV networks, and the commodification of data on what Shoshana Zuboff describes as "surveillance capitalism." For Zuboff, under the new dispensation, "surveillance capital produces not only a new market form but a new species of power," with users both being a source of profit and a target of control over behavior (Zuboff 8).

This process of external control crosses over with an internal psychological state that theorists recognize as typical of the postmodern age: pathological narcissism. All ages in history have had some measure of narcissistic tendencies, theorists such as Slavoj Žižek and Christopher Lasch speak of a specific form of narcissism enabled by the disintegration of collective formations and the advent of mass media technologies. Žižek outlines the way in which the disintegration of "symbolic authority"—once the firm web of cultural prohibitions, bans, and institutions of legitimation—has led to a "loss of subjectivity." Instead, subjects are ensnared by hyper-reflexivity and performative identity, more and more reliant upon external approbation to construct a unified self (Wood 36). He contends that the postmodern self, which finds no anchorage in the symbolic order, is a performer without an audience, whose self-worth is engineered by the gaze of others.

Christopher Lasch's renowned book *The Culture of Narcissism* corroborates Žižek's contention with clinically and culturally educated explanation of how late capitalist society induces pathological narcissism. To Lasch, pathological narcissist "depends upon others to validate his sense of self" and lacks "a secure sense of identity," always requiring validation and fearing he will be exposed and critiqued (Lasch 10). This pathology, Lasch argues, is a byproduct of a culture in which appearance outweighs substance, and performance over authenticity. In such a world, the self is no longer formed through interior development or moral character but instead created by images and projected selves. Lasch identifies this situation directly with technological mediation, citing modern individuals are "more concerned with how they appear than with what they are" (Lasch 14).

This union of internalized surveillance and pathological narcissism is a feedback circle: the perspective provokes the narcissistic craving for validation, and the narcissism legitimates and even celebrates the view. Žižek states that in this type of society, "the subject becomes its own spectacle," ever-present and increasingly incapable of distinguishing between authentic self and mediated image (Wood 36). The camera, which was once thought to capture truth, has become an alienating machine. Caught in this loop, the postmodern self is a state of being not defined by inner coherence or moral intent but by the perpetual necessity to perform, to be seen, and to be an image.

Together, these theories — Foucault's theory of panopticism, Žižek's symbolic breakdown theory, Lasch's account of narcissistic pathology, and Zuboff's critique of digital capitalism — form a rich hermeneutic. They allow us to understand the individual not simply as a passive recipient of power but as an agent in a system in which identity is both produced and constructed by technology, psychological necessity, and the disintegrating promise of stable subjectivity. Here, the self is no longer perceived as an essence in search of expression but as a perpetual performance under the condition of institutional surveillance, market demand, and internalized demands of spectacularization.

While Foucault reveals how control is exercised through the subtle menace of being watched, Žižek discloses the psychological rift opened up by collapsing ideological structures, Lasch exposes the cultural shift towards self-promotion as a defense against alienation, and Zuboff demonstrates how technological systems take advantage of this vulnerability. Collectively, they draw a subject stuck in a feedback loop: performing in

order to be seen, watching oneself perform, and ultimately losing any awareness of an unmediated self. This integration of theoretical orientations enables an advanced reading of cultural texts that challenge identity in a hyper-visual and digitally controlled culture.

3. Literature Review: Situating the Narcissistic Hamlet

Surveillance has continually been the mode of engagement with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, or certainly with the political duplicity and performativity of the Elsinore court. Two authors who have explored the pervasiveness of visual regimes in stage and film adaptations are Mark Thornton Burnett and Elizabeth Klett, tracing the way in which directors deploy the gaze to highlight themes of control, betrayal, and watching. Klett goes further to argue specifically that surveillance becomes both a narrative and aesthetic strategy in Almereyda's and Doran's films, noting that the characters are "both the objects of the camera's gaze and the wielders of that gaze" (Klett 104). This dual function makes power dynamics harder to maintain in the classical sense and highlights the fluidity between the watcher and the watched.

Sebastian Lefait's critical discussion of Gregory Doran's production sets it in the emerging culture of surveillance in post-9/11 Britain. He describes Doran's employment of CCTV as a reaction against growing fear of the state and visual omnipotence, noting that the production reflects a period of heightened government surveillance policies. Lefait contends that the production reveals a world where "identities are spread on diverse screens," and where visual mediation destabilizes ontological certainty (Lefait 136). The omnipresence of cameras in Doran's Hamlet thus becomes a metaphor for a society obsessed with security yet plagued by identity fragmentation. Both Klett and Lefait therefore offer useful models for thinking about the cinematic *Hamlet* in terms of external systems of observation and control, particularly how visual technologies mediate relationships between selfhood, performance, and institutional authority.

These political and technological analyses of surveillance are prone to underestimating the psychological and ontological stakes of being constantly observed. This is in agreement with what Shaina Hammerman argues in her media and interiority scholarship, "The panoptic gaze does not merely repress—it reshapes subjectivity, often aligning selfhood with visibility" (Hammerman 92). Few scholars have, however, taken this next step and used such analysis to apply it to *Hamlet* translations and adaptations. The shift from the mirror of the stage to the lens of the screen introduces a subtler form of control—one that invades not only the body but also the mind, encouraging the subject to internalize the gaze and perform accordingly.

Critique of Hamlet's identity has leaned upon psychoanalytic, existential, or performative theory. For example, Ernest Jones infamously explains Hamlet's indecision as a result of unresolved Oedipal conflict, suggesting that his hesitation stems from unconscious guilt over his desire for his mother and rivalry with his father (Jones 90). Subsequent critics such as Margreta de Grazia and Jacques Derrida have directed attention towards the instability of language and the fluid nature of meaning in the play, the frustration of Hamlet with discovering truth within a world of rhetorical indeterminacy and deferred meaning. While these views undoubtedly abundantly account for Hamlet's self-reflexive behavior and philosophical subtlety, they primarily predate or discount the effect of digital surveillance and media technology on identity formation. They are rich in psychological and textual detail but are susceptible to discounting the way in which the self increasingly is becoming shaped by visual writing, technological mediation, and performativity feedback loops in a postmodern world.

The subject of narcissism in *Hamlet* has similarly garnered astonishingly little discussion, despite being profoundly relevant when situated within the context of mediated self-performance. While certain aspects of narcissism are occasionally evoked—most notably Hamlet's self-dramatization—there has been scant study investigating pathological narcissism as a structural offshoot of technological surveillance. Christopher Lasch's "culture of narcissism" theory, in which the self is split and outsourced in images, presents a critical intersection between identity theory and media studies that has yet to be applied to Shakespearean film adaptation with any rigor (Lasch 10–14).

This paper attempts to fill that gap by combining surveillance theory and psycho-social theories of narcissism in an analysis of *Hamlet*. It employs the theoretical work of Michel Foucault, Slavoj Žižek, Lasch, and Zuboff not only to define external forms of domination, but to analyze how these pressures affect psychological identity in film form. Unlike earlier research aimed at institutional machinery or dramatic conventions, this article turns inward and traces the evolution of a postmodern Hamlet marked not by introspection or moral struggle but by a voracious need to perform his identity in front of the lens.

By situating Almereyda's and Doran's versions in this cultural and psychological context, the paper takes the current scholarship in new directions. It contends that the tragedy of the modern Hamlet lies not only in his inability to act, but in his inability to exist authentically—at least outside the scope of a visual regime that simultaneously

confirms and fractures his identity. His identity is no longer formed through inner conviction or moral struggle, but through the need to be visible, recorded, and confirmed by mediating technologies. In this regard, Hamlet emerges as an icon of the postmodern subject: overexposed, decentered, and increasingly detached from an integral inner life.

4. Analysis: Surveillance, Narcissism, and the Postmodern Self

This section discusses how Michael Almereyda's (2000) and Gregory Doran's (2009) filmic interpretations of *Hamlet* deploy visual motifs such as mirrors, moving camera shots, and monitoring technology in order to remake the hero's inner life. In these updated accounts, the focus shifts away from classical patterns of self-knowing—where the self is unveiled by introspection and ontological questioning—to a postmodern condition shaped by pathological narcissism and mediating subjectivity. The screen, mirror, and camera serve more than decoration: they are psychologic tools that construct the self of Hamlet. These tropes extend Hamlet's inner world into an external technological space where performance is a condition of existence at all times. Rather than discovering truth within, these Hamlets are more dependent upon visual confirmation from the outside in, delivering soliloquies to cameras and mirrors that also work as surveillance and surveillance instruments of self. The result is a protagonist negotiating his identity incessantly under the weight of an overpowering gaze.

The aforementioned shift is commensurate with the broader cultural change cited by authors such as Lasch and Zuboff, wherein identity is no longer stabilized through interiority but over visibility and commodified self-presentation. Within late capitalist culture, people are increasingly being formed through screens—tested on social media, followed by algorithms, and monitored by institutions. Hamlet, in these transformations, is made to symbolize this change: his interior is fragmented onto various surfaces, and his self becomes entangled with acts of technological monitoring. When he watches himself on CCTV or records his thoughts into a camcorder, the question is no longer "Who am I?" but "Who am I seen to be? These adaptations anticipate the breakdown of a cohesive interior self and expose the psychic expense of living in a world where the self is already an image—juddered, cut, and refracted through the camera lens."

4.1. From Mirror to Camera: Imaging the Fragmented Self

In earlier adaptations of *Hamlet*, such as the 1996 film by Kenneth Branagh, mirrors are a predominant element in the visual lexicon. Hamlet's introspection is realized in reflections, representing the self still capable of internal coherence. Branagh stages "To be, or not to be" in a hall of two-way mirrors, evoking at once self-reflection and the

clandestine gaze of others. These mirrors visually represent Hamlet's existential crisis: the image he sees is himself, yet it is overlaid with doubt, fear, and duplicity. Sarah Hatchuel has noted that in Branagh's film, "the palace of Elsinore is turned into a world of mirrors," intensifying "the paranoia of a narcissistic and luxurious world" (106). In this adaptation, mirrors signify both self-reflection and entrapment, embodying Hamlet's inner turmoil and the suffocating surveillance under which he exists.

Almereyda's *Hamlet*, on the other hand, replaces the mirrors with a handheld camera. The camera, unlike a mirror, is not a passive reflector but an active recorder. Hamlet, as played by Ethan Hawke, obsessively records himself, and he utilizes the camera to conduct self-reflection. In one of the more striking sequences, he delivers soliloquies directly to the camera, taping and replaying his image on a TV screen. The immediacy of this recording of himself renders introspection itself a performance, foregrounding the shift from inner life to mediated self. David Foster Wallace has referred to this culture as a culture of "Total Noise"—one where the desire to record comes to dominate what is being recorded. The camera is no longer a tool of self-discovery, but of endless self-surveillance.

Doran's *Hamlet*, starring David Tennant, also uses CCTV images as part of the mise-en-scène, with Hamlet speaking to security screens as to confessors. Tennant's soliloquies are often played under the mechanical gaze of the CCTV, highlighting that Hamlet's identity is constantly being recorded, judged, and fragmented by visual media. The replacement of the mirror by the camera is thus not merely technological but ontological: it marks a shift from a self-centered self to one whose very existence depends on being seen. The mirror reflects what already exists; the camera creates a record, an interpretation of the self-edited for other eyes. In Almereyda and Doran's adaptations, Hamlet does not simply question his position in the world; he broadcasts that questioning, turning it into spectacle. Identity is based upon being watched and recorded, bringing to mind Jean Baudrillard's remark that "we live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning" (Baudrillard 79).

4.2. Surveillance and Selfhood: The Digital Panopticon

Foucault's panopticism theory underlies the visual composition of both films. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes the panopticon as a mechanism of control whereby individuals internalize the power gaze, inducing "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201). In Doran's adaptation,

the Elsinore court is crawling with surveillance cameras. Characters are subject to constant observation, and Hamlet is both rebellious and drawn to this gaze. He does not merely evade being watched; he co-opts it, becoming surveillant of himself.

This dual role recalls Elizabeth Klett's formulation of Hamlet as both "the object of the camera's gaze and the wielder of that gaze" (104). Filming himself, Hamlet occupies the position of the watcher. Yet, the video that he views becomes a form of internalized control. Surveillance is no longer from the outside; it is self-imposed. The modern Hamlet is not a revolutionary fighting against surveillance but a participant in his own observation. This is in keeping with Zuboff's argument in The Age of Surveillance Capitalism that "surveillance capital produces not only a new market form but a new species of power," one in which the individual is complicit in his or her own commodification (8).

The handheld camera, the CCTV footage, and the edit suite are all tools by which Hamlet produces his self-image. This self is not complete but fractured, cut into sequences, looped in replays, and defined by digital aesthetics. Almereyda emphasizes this in a scene where Hamlet watches footage of his deceased father and Ophelia, intercut with his own soliloquies. The juxtaposition creates a digital palimpsest of mourning, obsession, and narcissism. As Hatchuel observes, "screen duplications involving Hamlet's amateur recordings tend to take place in two ways. They are either narcissistic… or nostalgic" (112). This dichotomy emphasizes the tension between Hamlet's desire to know himself and his inability to escape the mediated self.

4.3. Pathological Narcissism and the Postmodern Condition

The narcissism depicted in these films is not classical vanity but what theorists such as Slavoj Žižek and Christopher Lasch describe as pathological narcissism: a desperate attempt to secure the self in the midst of the absence of symbolic authority. This obsessive self-recording exemplifies Žižek's concept of the 'loss of subjectivity,' as Hamlet attempts to stabilize a fragile identity in a world without the grounding of a symbolic order; the collapse of the "symbolic Father"—the pillars of social and moral order—creates a gap wherein the subject becomes trapped in an infinite spiral of reflexivity (Wood 36). In such a world, the self is no longer grounded in ethical or communal frameworks, but in its image. Hamlet's obsessive self-recording becomes a means to freeze a tenuous identity.

Hamlet's compulsive use of the camera aligns perfectly with Lasch's model, as he clearly "depends on others to validate his sense of self… and lacks the capacity for self-reflection" (*The Culture of Narcissism* 10). He films himself not only to monitor but to confirm. His soliloquies become performative confirmations of being: "I film, therefore I am." The pervasiveness of surveillance technology abets and heightens this impulse. Hamlet's subjectivity is no longer defined by introspection but by spectacle. His tragic flaw is no longer indecision but the impossibility of existing outside the gaze, outside of performance. As Hatchuel suggests, the camera is an "engine of self-objectification" that turns Hamlet's grief and uncertainty into spectacle to be consumed (112).

Doran's Hamlet consistently speaks over the CCTV lens in a manner circumventing the other characters and addressing his monologues to an invisible but ubiquitous audience. This cinematic choice makes Shakespeare's introspective prince an actor whose life is increasingly sustained by exposure. Hamlet's world becomes a virtual confessional booth; soliloquy, previously an inner sanctuary, is now broadcast content, and bereavement is performed publicly. The speech act is no longer towards understanding but towards verification—Hamlet performs his misery not to internalize it but to make it true externally. In *The Ticklish Subject*, Slavoj Žižek terms this condition the postmodern "loss of subjectivity," a state in which the subject no longer anchors identity in but is "a void filled out by the symbolic mandate of the Other" (Žižek 313). Hamlet's gazing into the camera therefore signifies a turn: it is no longer in search of existential reality, but a frantic call to be noticed in a world where selfness can only be real through its projection. His tragedy thus is not just in uncompleted action, but in being unable to separate inner self and outer show.

4.4. Scene Analysis: "To Be or Not to Be" and the Crisis of the Image

One of the most overt examples of this pathology occurs in the staging of "To be, or not to be." In Almereyda's film, Hamlet delivers this soliloquy while scanning the aisles of a Blockbuster video store, speaking into his handheld camera. The unfamiliarity of the setting increases the feeling of detachment from mainstream power and serves to highlight the commodification of self. Amidst the recordings of virtual life, Hamlet inserts his own image into the stream. The soliloquy, no longer a private act but a public one, is recorded by multiple cameras and returned to the audience.

In Doran's production, the action of the scene takes place in front of a mirror upon which a CCTV camera is suspended. The double gaze — both that of the self and that of the machine — creates a claustrophobic environment of surveillance. Hamlet seems suspended between introspection and observation, reconceiving the soliloquy as a

struggle not just with being but with being seen. The presence of the CCTV camera upsets the balance of the monologue: no longer a meditation on life and death, it is now a negotiation of self within the framework of surveillance.

These scenes encapsulate the development of Hamlet from a philosophical figure seeking truth to a postmodern subject decentered by the very media that portray him. The camera no longer reveals reality; it produces a simulacrum. Hamlet's gaze into the lens is not a quest for knowledge, but a plea for validation in a world where identity is constructed, not discovered. As Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation* contends, "simulation threatens the difference between the 'true' and the 'false,' the 'real' and the 'imaginary'" (Baudrillard 3). Hamlet, in this sense, is not a truth-seeker but an image curator.

With these cinematic devices, Almereyda and Doran do not merely update Hamlet; they diagnose a cultural condition. The adaptations reveal how the culture of surveillance and mediation in the digital age rewrites the self, transforming introspection into narcissistic spectacle. Hamlet becomes a figure of the postmodern subject: watched, watching, and ultimately consumed by the desire to self-document. As Klett argues, "these Hamlets foreground and interrogate the claim that surveillance can 'find where truth is hid'" (104), ultimately suggesting that the truth itself might no longer be recoverable in a world saturated with images.

Pathological narcissism here is less a fault to be cured than a syndrome to be diagnosed. It is symptomatic of a culture in which being watched has become a substitute for being real. The tragic flaw of this Hamlet is not that he does not act quickly enough, but rather that he acts only when the camera is rolling. His identity is formed not through action or moral conflict but through mediated performance. As such, the postmodern Hamlet is less a victim of surveillance than a complicit participant in his own commodification, a character whose existential crisis is filmed, edited, and replayed in endless loops of digital self-fashioning.

5. Conclusion

Michael Almereyda's and Gregory Doran's productions of *Hamlet* not only shift the location of Shakespeare's play but also map its psychological reality to the postmodern world. In situating Hamlet in a culture of pervasive surveillance, they are able to render visible the uncomfortable effect of being in a society that is constantly watching. This paper has argued that the greatest contribution of the films is their recognition of pathological narcissism as the ultimate destination of this surveillance culture. This is a radical departure from the traditional interpretations of the character. Hamlet in the

postmodern era, suspended between the external, disciplinary gaze of CCTV and the internal, compulsive need to self-document, embodies the anxieties of the modern self. His tragic flaw is now longer indecision and depression, but a narcissistic desire with an airbrushed, mediated self, a disease bred directly of his surroundings.

The visual shift from the self-reflexive mirror of earlier adaptations to the recording lens of the handheld camera lies at the center of this reinterpretation, a revolutionary shift from internal thought to external performance. As the analysis has shown, the camera becomes no longer an instrument for revealing truth but an engine for self-objectification. It stands as a defense against a world in which traditional sources of identity have collapsed to the point that Hamlet is able to construct a stable, albeit artificial, self. In this, the films provide a prophetic and searing critique of our own time, in which the terms of the social media and the imperatives of the surveillance capitalism lead toward an analogous retreat into an existence curated online. The self becomes a brand to be curated, constantly performed for an unseen and sometimes brutal digital public.

These changes mean that in a world where the possibility of being seen is the destiny of being, the self becomes hollowed out, its authenticity sacrificed to the demands of ceaseless performance. The tragedy of this new Hamlet is not his failure to perform but his failure to be in existence beyond the edge of a screen, his existence diminished to the controlled images he constructs. In the coming years, such films provide a useful lens through which to consider our own expanding mediated relationship with technology and invite us to consider the heavy psychological cost of existence under electronic watch. They challenge us to consider what becomes of identity when no longer confined within, but assembled from the recorded fragments of our own performativity, with later adaptations and media scholars left grappling with the increasingly blurred line between self and screen.

Funding:
There is no funding support.

Authors' Contribution:
The authors have written the article in a complete collaboration.

Conflict of Interests:
This research does not conflict with personal and/or organizational interests.

References

Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser, University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Burnett, Mark Thornton. "To See My Father in My Mind's Eye': Surveillance and the Filmic Hamlet." *Screening Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Mark Thornton Burnett and Ramona Wray, Edinburgh University Press, 2006, pp. 31-52.

---. "'To Hear and See the Matter': Communicating Technology in Michael Almerayda's *Hamlet* (2000)." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2003, pp. 48-69.

De Grazia, Margreta. *"Hamlet" without Hamlet*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf, Routledge, 1994.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1995.

Hamlet. Directed by Gregory Doran, performances by David Tennant, Patrick Stewart, Penny Downie, and Mariah Gale, BBC, 2009.

Hamlet. Directed by Michael Almereyda, performances by Ethan Hawke, Kyle MacLachlan, Diane Venora, and Julia Stiles, Miramax, 2000.

Hammerman, Shaina. *Silver Screen, Hasidic Lens: Media and Modernity in the Brooklyn Hasidic Community*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Hatchuel, Sarah. *Shakespeare: From Stage to Screen*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Jones, Ernest. *Hamlet and Oedipus*. W. W. Norton & Company, 1949.

Klett, Elizabeth. "The Heart of the Mystery: Surveillance in Michael Almereyda and Gregory Doran's Films of *Hamlet*." *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2013, pp. 102-115.

Lasch, Christopher. *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*. W. W. Norton & Company, 1979.

Lefait, Sebastian. “This Same Strict and Most Observant Watch (1.1.71)”: Gregory Doran’s *Hamlet* as Surveillance Adaptation.” *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2013, pp. 1-23.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet. The Norton Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., edited by Stephen Greenblatt, W.W. Norton, 2008.

Wallace, David Foster. “E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction.” *A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again: Essays and Arguments*, Little, Brown and Company, 1997, pp. 21-82.

Wood, Kelsey. *Žižek: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Continuum, 2012.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*. Verso, 1999.

Zuboff, Shoshana. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. Public Affairs, 2019.