

**"You Need to Participate Online": A Cybercultural Approach  
to Digitalization and Social Networking in Dave Eggers's *The  
Circle***

A paper Submitted by

**Rana Elsayed Abdelaziz Ghanem**

An Assistant Lecturer of English Literature,

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Kafrelsheikh University

**Abstract**

Depending on cybercultural theories, this paper investigates cyberculture in general and the effect of digitalization and social networking in particular in contemporary fiction. The paper provides a comprehensive theoretical coverage indicating the history and development of cyberculture in the field of literary studies. Thus, it highlights the remarkable role of notable cybercultural critics whose works tackle technological developments. Further, the paper focuses on the digital aspects and the effects of the internet and communication technologies on the literary narrative. Accordingly, a cybercultural critical reading of Dave Eggers's *The Circle* (2013) is provided in order to find out how the role of digitalization and social networking is represented in the novel. More specifically, the paper argues that, although some novelists have recently praised the role of technology on humanity in their works, Eggers's *The Circle* warns us against the negative effects that some particular advancement technologies may have upon humanity. The paper focuses on the role of some technologies such as surveillance devices and social media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, on contemporary society. Although these technologies allow the characters in the novel to overcome any physical boundaries that have previously faced them enabling them to lead more active social life, they could

negatively affect human beings. The massive use of social networks and surveillance devices in contemporary societies leads Eggers to look not only at the positive effects of new technologies but also at their essential defects.

**Keywords:** Cyberculture, cybernetic technologies, digital Life, social

Networking, surveillance Devices, Dave Eggers, *The Circle*.

## Introduction

Technology has greatly influenced humanity in general and literature in particular. The effect of progressive technology has become an essential theme in most of the recent fictional works. Over the last two decades, the concept of Cyberculture has developed within literary studies to handle the relationship between technology and literature. In the twentieth century there is a great change in the relationship between man and technology. Technology is not controlled by the human any more, it becomes able to control the human. Therefore, the human becomes like a model for technology, not only the controller of it. Such technological developments encourage researchers to investigate the digital and cybercultural aspects in the literary works. The main objective of this research is to investigate the vital role of the advanced technologies focusing on the aspects of digitalization and social networking in the novel. Moreover, it investigates how the writer expresses the human's anxiety towards such cybernetic technologies in *The Circle*.

## A Theoretical Framework

In fact, the term 'cyberculture' has become one of the most prominent terms in literary studies. The prefix (cyber) refers to cultural issues related to “cyber-topics” such as cybernetics, computerization and digital revolution. Originally, the term

*cyberculture* has been used to refer to hackers' subcultures and their connection to the literary genre. It can be regarded as an expression describing groups of computer network users. In addition, the term refers to cultural practices of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Historically, the oldest concept of cyberculture refers to the initial discussions of topics related to new media and the first computer and network users in the 1980s and early 1990s. Mark Dery, in his *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century* (1996), identified cyberculture with "computer-age subcultures". He perceived cyberculture as an initiation of a futuristic regeneration of society.

Pierre Lévy, a widely known French humanistic philosopher, offers his conceptual framework in his *Cyberculture* (2000). Lévy's framework represents one of the most powerful and most famous explorations of cyberculture. Lévy employs the term *cyberculture* to refer to the Internet as to a cyberspace. Lévy argues that the spread of the Internet new forms of knowledge transform not only the ways we manipulate information, but the society itself. Thus, cyberculture is synonymous with this change. For him, it refers to the "set of techniques (material and intellectual), practical habits, attitudes, ways of thinking and values that develop mutually with cyberspace" (Lévy 2000: 15). For Lévy cyberculture increases the possibility of "creating a virtual participation on your own self (universality) in a way that is different from the identity of meaning (totality)" (107). Lévy's vision links the future directly to the spread of digital technologies.

Margaret Morse, the American theoretician of media, defines cyberculture in her book *Virtualities: Television, Media Art and Cyberculture* (1998). She approaches

cyberculture as an emerging predicated phenomenon. Like Lévy, she defines cyberculture as a set of cultural practices that enable us to deal with new forms of information and communication technology. Morse argues that computer networks strengthen the model of information distribution in one hand, and they change the nature of information itself in the other hand. In this way, computer networks supplement this with an interpersonal level of communication. In this case, communication is realized via digital information within computer networks. According to Morse, “information is impersonal and imperceptible, knowledge stripped of its context in order to be transformed into digital data” (1998: 5). Thus, the digital information requires a subjective level of cultural uses of technology in order to be created. This interface between culture and technology creates space for uniqueness and imagination. And it is the cultural level that Morse terms cyberculture.

The social anthropologist Arturo Escobar offers a wider concept of cyberculture. In his essay “Welcome to Cyberia: Notes on the Anthropology of Cyberculture” (1996), Escobar explains that cyberculture involves “cultural constructions and reconstructions on which new technologies are based and which they, conversely, contribute to shaping” (11). This approach highlights the belief that technologies emerge out of particular cultural conditions helping to create new social and cultural situations. Nonetheless, Escobar claims that cyberculture should be defined by its “relation to computer and information technologies, which “are bringing about a regime of *technosociality*” (112). Moreover, Escobar receives cyberculture as a cultural mode which involves “the realisation that we increasingly live and make ourselves in techno bio cultural environments structured indelibly by novel forms of science and technology... Despite this novelty, however, cyberculture

originates in a well-known social matrix, that of modernity, even if it orients itself towards the constitution of a new order – which we cannot yet fully conceptualize but must try to understand” (112).

Cyberspace is a term shaped by William Gibson in his novel *Neuromancer* (1984), where he considered it as a graphical representation of data abstracted from every computer in the human system. Through the global interconnection of computers, cyberspace describes the non-physical atmosphere created by computer systems and the people who use them. A huge number of people have a role in the cyberspace due to the massive spread of communication technology especially social networks of interactive communication by which millions of people share messages via e-mails, chats, blogs and the like. In fact, social networks enable their users to share ideas and information that enable them to face different situations. Mostly important, by being online it is possible to achieve useful actions such as buying, selling, studying for a degree, reserving tickets and searching for a job

In their study *Cyberculture, Cyborgs and Science Fiction Consciousness and the Posthuman*, William S. and Haney II argue that the person's experience and pure consciousness may be under threat from posthuman biotechnology. Posthumanists seek to extend human experience by physically projecting the mind through telepresence and other forms of prosthetic enhancements. The posthuman condition could, in the long term, undermine human nature, defined as the effortless capacity for transcending the mind's conceptual content. The study gives a direction to practice patience and develop pure consciousness of the human in order not to fall a prey to the biotechnological power. Accordingly, each person must choose for himself

between the technological extension of physical experience between the mind and world and the natural powers of human consciousness.

In their *A Study on Role of Social Networks in Formation of Cyberculture*, Habibzadeh et al. focus on social network sites and their effect on social relations through the emergence of web. Thus, the study examines the role of social networks in forming cyberculture. It reveals that the cultural creativity of the users of social networks in forming cultural values resulted from cyberspace and cultural innovation have led to the formation of cyberculture. In addition, the cyber identity of virtual social networks has affected the formation of cyberculture. The emergence of social network sites created a new form of online life in the cyberspace. As a result, the culture and relations between people become very different from their traditional forms before the internet.

Carmen Laguarda in her study *Transhumanism in Dave Eggers' The Circle: Utopia vs Dystopia, Dream vs. Nightmare* reveals that some writers of fiction have recently warned about the detrimental effects of some technologies on human beings. Dave Eggers' *The Circle* is a novel that deals with the possible dangers of transhumanism. The novel gives particular emphasis on social media devices. The study explores some strategies in the novel in order to set the debate over human enhancement technologies. Mostly important, it argues that through a series of narrative strategies that make readers realize the dehumanization that social media tools bring about, Eggers highlights the need to adopt a critical stance towards these technologies. Further, the study reveals that through merging the voice of the narrator with the protagonist's perspective using free indirect discourse, Eggers can convey the

possibilities of social media tools and surveillance devices described in the novel for implementing transhumanist aims. He pays a great attention to the ways in which these technologies help to build an interconnected, safer and more democratic society. Although the novel may appear to celebrate transhumanist values, some textual strategies are developed to make the reader realize that he should distance himself from the Circle and its transhumanist approach. By picturing a dystopic society in which new technologies can narrow human freedom and privacy leading humans to neglect true human relationships and most of the physical aspects of their lives, *The Circle* stresses the need to adopt a new critical approach towards such technologies avoiding the temptations of the fantasies of disembodiment and virtually.

Thus, cybernetic technologies can be considered as a new digital source to develop dialogue between cultures more easily. Cyberculture is thus involved with habits and ways of thinking performed in the social networking life. Cyberculture provides a place (cyberspace) for all cultures, peoples and organizations to communicate with each other. This communication can be achieved, for example, by creating online groups related to their interests and issues they are concerned about. In this manner, cyberculture constructs a global online world for people from different places of the world where they can communicate their ideas, show their thoughts and share their experiences. That is to say, cyberculture is an umbrella term describing a set of issues. Cyberculture includes modern technological practices, attitudes, ways of thinking and ways of communication that grow as the result of the internet world. In this global connected world, people from different places with different cultures, values and customs can participate and communicate easily by using social networks. Social networking gives them an access to global worlds through publishing their

ideas on blogs or websites. Accordingly, when people share their thoughts, they allow others to know their news and to communicate with them. As a result, people who are geographically far away from each other, can be technologically closer by sharing messages and information through the multiple social networks available.

Accordingly, human relations with cybernetic technologies take a number of forms, including fictional representations of those relationships. Sometimes technology is a primary component of the narrative and may be a source of tension for some human characters in the narrative. Occasionally, technology is simply part of the background of a realist narrative that plays no role in the development of the plot. Sometimes the characters, whether humans or posthumans, try to manage using technology in their lives. Equally important, the characters are, sometimes, created by technology within the narrative and this is represented in Dave Eggers' *The Circle* (2013).

### **Dave Eggers' *The Circle***

Dave Eggers (1970) is an American writer, editor, and publisher. He has published his remarkable novel *The Circle* in 2013 depicting the life of a young worker at a famous technology company. It reflects Eggers' concerns with issues of technological developments in the world. The novel circles around Mae Holland, a recent college graduate, who finds a job at the Circle, the most powerful technology company in the world, with help from her friend Annie. The circle is created and run by three “Wise Men” Tom Stenton, a cruel businessman, Eamon Bailey, a likeable public figurehead and Ty Gospodinov, a genius technological inventor. The circle involves all aspects of online interactions including: social media, business or personal communication, medical information and saves them into a single online identity called a TruYou. In



addition, the company has been growing to contain all the other information that exists across the world. The company uses technological innovation to create a more efficient and accountable society by increasing transparency in government, business, and personal lives. The circle adds more developments to its network. Cameras are everywhere and biological functions are monitored wirelessly. At first, Mae begins to work in Customer Experience and is concerned about her privacy. Afterwards, she rises in the ranks, gaining access to more screens of information and getting sucked into the arguments for full transparency. Thus, her parents and her ex-boyfriend, Mercer, become increasingly horrified by the new rejection of privacy. She, also, becomes romantically involved with two men, an awkward coworker called Francis and a mysterious man calling himself Kalden. Kalden warns her of the dangers of "completing" the Circle or making everything known to everyone so superficially and with no respect for the individual's privacy. After Mae is caught illegally, she becomes a subject for public shaming in front of the whole company accepting a role as the primary "transparent" face of the Circle. She becomes world-famous and rejects Kalden's concerns. As a result, she loses her identity and becomes a cyborg. Afterwards, more government officials and more people are pressured to give up their privacy becoming transparent so that the rest of the world can keep tabs on their morals.

Focusing on the Circle's social media tools and surveillance devices and paying attention to some of the stylistic devices used by Eggers in the novel, this paper aims to explore how the novel illustrates the debate over cybercultural technologies of contemporary digital life. Eggers, creatively, portrays the massive usage of cybernetic technologies such as social media tools and surveillance devices

in the novel. These technologies are increasingly used by human beings in contemporary society. The novel is engaged with both present and future opportunities offered by these technologies. Accordingly, Eggers offers an apparently accurate picture of what our technologies and our society as a whole could be like in the succeeding few years.

### **Cybernetic technologies in *The Circle***

Set in the nearby future, the novel tells the story of a young woman named Mae Holland who starts working at the Circle, one of the most highly honored and innovative technological companies in the world which has incorporated Facebook, Twitter, and Google "grew the company into the force that subsumed Facebook, Twitter, Google, and finally Alacrity, Zoopa, Jefe, and Quan"(17). The company devises a united operating system that combines Internet search and social media practices trying to control all the searches and message exchanges in the country. In addition, the company seeks to develop new technologies for increasing human capabilities and improving society. The Circle is created and run by three men known as the Three Wise Men. Ty Gospodinov, a genius inventor and the founder of the company who "devised the initial system, the Unified Operating System, which combined everything online that had heretofore been separate and sloppy—users' social media profiles, their payment systems, their various passwords, their email accounts, usernames, preferences, every last tool and manifestation of their interests" (16). Tom Stenton, the most aggressive one of the Wise Men. Eamon Bailey, the most beloved one of the Wise Men who is responsible for realizing the company's vision of universal interconnectedness.

Mae begins working in the Customer Experience department interacting with clients who have questions about Circle products. She starts making her way up to the top of the company admiring with the possibilities offered by the innovative services and technologies developed by the Circle. The circle combines all aspects of online interactions including: social media, business or personal communication, medical information and saves them into a single online identity called a TruYou. Like most internet users, Ty himself was tired of remembering different online identities, entering many passwords and credit-card information, so he intended to design a code to simplify all of this. With aid of the other two Wise Men, who created ways to obtain funds for Ty's invention, which is described as "one account, one identity, one password, one payment system, per person. There were no more passwords, no multiple identities. Your devices knew who you were, and your one identity—the *TruYou*, unbendable and unmaskable—was the person paying, signing up, responding, viewing and reviewing, seeing and being seen... One button for the rest of your life online." (17). Thus, the person's TrueYou helps him to control his digital actions and facilitate his online activities.

Depending on TruYou, Eggers indicates that "The era of false identities, identity theft, multiple user names, complicated passwords and payment systems was over. Anytime you wanted to see anything, use anything, comment on anything or buy anything, it was one button, one account, everything tied together and trackable and simple, all of it operable via mobile or laptop, tablet or retinal" (17). Most internet users, largely, and most TruYou users, mainly, who seek digital effectiveness are excited with the results of the TruYou invention. They no longer have to memorize many accounts or passwords "Most TruYou users, most internet users who simply

wanted simplicity, efficiency, a clean and streamlined experience, were thrilled with the results. No longer did they have to memorize twelve identities and passwords... Now the messages they did get were focused and accurate” (17). Thus, the invention of the online identity "TruYou" becomes a must for all the Circle's employees and customers. Mae indicates that the social media tools are the backbone of the company.

### **Surveillance Technologies**

While working in the customer experience department, Mae is interested to attend the Circle's parties and social events. In addition, she attends the company's presentations directed by Eamon Bailey. During one of these presentations, Eamon introduces a technological program called "SeeChange" cameras which is a system of surveillance cameras that allow the Circle's users to watch anything on Earth at any time. He explains "So then the internet happened, and here and there some geniuses set up cameras on the beaches. We could log on and get some pretty crude images of the waves at Stinson Beach... The technology was pretty primitive. Streaming technology still is. Or was. Until now"(32). Bailey justifies the necessity of using these surveillance cameras for being " cheap, and easy to hide, and they need no wires. So, it hasn't been hard for us to place them all over"(34). As a result of these surveillance cameras, Bailey indicates that the company has two main principles, or mottoes "all that happens should be known" (*The Circle* 68) and "knowledge is a basic human right" (303). As a consequence, small wireless surveillance cameras are set up all around the globe. These SeeChange cameras are a developed version of the television cameras that have become a symbol of security in contemporary societies. Beside the known aim of surveillance cameras, one of the vital aims of setting up these cameras

in the novel is to reduce crime rates as Bailey declares "who would commit a crime knowing they might be watched anytime, anywhere?" (67).

However, SeeChange cameras are set up for other innovatory uses in the novel. For example, they help to exceed physical boundaries between people by allowing individuals to benefit from a limitless access to information making any kind of information is easily available for the individuals. In addition, SeeChange cameras can be used politically to protect human rights. Bailey gives the Egyptian Tahrir Square as an example. He reveals that using these surveillance cameras in public squares during protests will prevent any violations in human rights or any abuses of power "Any soldier committing an act of violence would instantly be recorded for posterity. He could be tried for war crimes, you name it. And even if they clear the square of journalists, the cameras are still there... And the not-knowing will prevent abuses of power. You take the average soldier who's now worried that a dozen cameras will catch him... He should worry about these cameras. He should worry about SeeChange. That's what we're calling them" (35).

Bailey, further, wants this surveillance system to domain all over the world in order to prevent crimes everywhere. For him, being surveillanced all the time will politically protect human rights all over the world "with human rights activists the world over. There needs to be accountability. Tyrants can no longer hide. There needs to be, and will be, documentation and accountability, and we need to bear witness. And to this end, I insist that all that happens should be known" (35). He suggests that wearing these cameras and going transparent should be obligatory for all the elected political leaders claiming that it is the right of the citizens to see how their representatives act

and how they spend their times. Thus, SeeChange is a system of confirming transparency in necessary aspects of modern public life.

### Social Media Tools

Mae is enthused to spend more time sharing in social life activities at the Circle. She, also, is encouraged to post online all her activities. Believing in the importance of social media, Mae intends building an online presence in the social media. Mae stresses the importance of social media for one of her company friends by saying "If you visit a coworker's page and write something on the wall, that's a *positive* thing. That's an act of *community*. An act of *reaching out*. And of course I don't have to tell you that **this company exists because of the social media** you consider '*extracurricular*.' My understanding was that you used our social media tools before coming here?" (50). As a result, she spends her time posting online statuses, liking other people's posts and videos. She believes in the importance of being "online" all the time, she tells her friend " But just know, from now on, that being social, and being a presence on your profile and all related accounts—this is part of why you're here. We consider your online presence to be integral to your work here. It's all connected"(50). Consequently, the company ranks its employees according to their online and social media activities.

After a year, the Circle has developed to handle and control all the world's information flow in a virtual way. Mae has become transparent and has been promoted as a virtual tour guide for the company. Hence, being transparent is an essential part linked to her job as a virtual guide. As a result, Mae has to wear a surveillance lens around her chest all the time to allow anyone in the world to see what she sees. Mae, at first, enjoys her transparency because she believes it is a thing

that keeps her honest and active all the time. Being admired with the full transparency, Mae continuously has to be online for her millions of followers and watchers. She, gradually, finds herself growing distant from her friends and family.

Unfortunately, she learns that her family disrespect the Circle refusing the idea of transparency. After her parents agree to accept the company's health insurance, the Circle installs cameras in their home, then they covered them with cloth to block their vision. Mae pleads her parents to uncover the cameras, but Mercer tells her that her parents need to have their own privacy, a thing that Mae considers as ridiculous. Believing in the company's main doctrine appearing in all the company's screens that "SECRETS ARE LIES" (160), Mae tries to convince her parents with the importance of transparency. She indicates "when there's something kept secret, two things happen. One is that it makes crimes possible. We behave worse when we're not accountable" (160). Then, Mae becomes romantically involved with a mysterious man called Kalden who, also, warns her against the dangers of "completing" the Circle or making everything known to everyone so superficially neglecting the individual's privacy. Kalden urges her to speak out against the Circle's policy because it becomes dangerous, oppressive and totalitarian. However, she rejects Kaden's warnings and continues staying up late at night posting online seeking for full transparency.

Agreeing on the company's ideology "SHARING IS CARING"(163), Mae accepts a role as the primary "transparent" face of the Circle. She becomes world-famous transparent person declaring that " I understand that we're obligated, as humans, to share what we see and know. And that all knowledge must be democratically accessible... It's the natural state of information to be free... So what happens if I deprive anyone or everyone of something I know? Aren't I stealing from

my fellow humans"(163). In addition to hanging the surveillance lens around Mae's neck, the company asks her to hang a light camera around her wrist for extra transparency "On her left wrist, she saw her heartbeat; on her right, she could see what her watchers were seeing—a real-time view from her lens, which allowed her to make any necessary adjustments to the view. It also gave her current watcher numbers, her rankings and ratings, and highlighted the most recent and most popular comments from viewers" (167). Accordingly, she becomes one of the most visible Circlers. She, further, believes that transparency can reduce her mistakes and improve her behavior making her as a model for her audience "So many of her watchers... saw her as a role model and inspiration... The customers made her better. And serving them while transparent made her far better. She expected this... when thousands, or even millions, are watching, you perform your best self. You are cheerier, more positive, more polite, more generous, more inquisitive" (175). After being fully transparent, Mae feels more influential than before that's why she is liberated from bad behavior "Since she'd gone transparent, she'd become more noble. People called her a role model. Mothers said their daughters looked up to her, and this gave her more a feeling of responsibility, and that feeling of responsibility—to the Circlers, to their clients and partners"(167). Thus, the transparent Mae becomes like a salve to her online audience losing her own privacy completely. As a result, she loses her identity and becomes a cyborg.

Towards the end of the novel, Mae gets a letter from Mercer explaining that he intends to escape from the surveillance imposed on the citizens by the Circle. Knowing that Mae is surveillanced, Mercer expects that she will read the letter for her audience on the camera. He writes warning her against the dangers of transparency.



Mercer, after a month, sends her an email in which he criticizes the overuse of technology in our life the overdose of information that the Circle's users know. In his email, Mercer stresses the unnecessary of knowing everything “We are not meant to know everything, Mae. Did you ever think that perhaps our minds are delicately calibrated between the known and the unknown?... You people are creating a world of ever-present daylight, and I think it will burn us all alive. There will be no time to reflect, to sleep, to cool... You want these heads of ours to contain everything the world has ever seen? It will not work” (230).

Mostly significant, Mercer believes that the Circle's, and Mae's, desire to know everything about everyone in the world is a kind of sickness and madness. He, also, asks the audience to join him living in any hidden place escaping from the surveillanced atmosphere of the Circle. Subsequently, Mae launches a new Circle program designed to locate escapees. She chooses to establish the program on Mercer sending a team of drones flying after him. In the middle of her rally, Mercer drives his car into a valley in order to escape the drones and, mainly, to escape the surveillance culture of the Circle. As a result, he dies and Mae is distressed, but Bailey persuades her that Mercer is a troubled ruthless young man claiming that his rejection of technology ruins him. Thus, Bailey believes that Mercer is a depressed isolated young man who is not able to survive in a technological word, that's why Mae has no role in his death. Afterwards, more government officials and more people are worried to give up their privacy becoming transparent so that the rest of the world can keep tabs on their morals.

Finally, Mae is introduced to Ty Gospodinov, the lonely one of the Wise Men, and she is shocked to realize that Ty is actually Kalden. In private, he explains that he

has been trying to destroy his own company for many years because he hasn't wanted the Circle to destroy peoples' privacy stressing the idea of " The Rights of Humans in a Digital Age"(259). Neglecting the human's right in privacy, the Circle can be turned into a totalitarian oppressive power. He pleads Mae to use her widespread online influence to disapprove and criticize the company's anti-privacy policy indicating that "We must all have the right to anonymity... Not every human activity can be measured... The barrier between public and private must remain unbreachable... We must all have the right to disappear"(259).Unfortunately, towards the end of the novel, Mae decides not to criticize the company's policy. However, she intends to inform Bailey and Stenton of Ty's rebellious plans. As a result, Stenton and Bailey placed Ty under arrest, or probably killed him, and Mae hasn't seen Ty since then. Finally, Mae cuts herself off from her parents abandoning her old life and surrendering herself, only, to the Circle.

In the final part of the novel, Mae is looking at the screen monitoring her friend's, Annie's, brain waves. She is annoyed that she is unable to know what Annie is dreaming of. Mae believes that the individual's thoughts and dreams are not secrets and they should be known to the world "In a world where everyone could know each other truly and wholly, without secrets, without shame and without the need for permission to see or to know, without the selfish hoarding of life—any corner of it, any moment of it" (263). Accordingly, she decides to tackle this matter at the next meeting of the company. She is convinced that people deserve to know what other people are thinking about and dreaming of. Mae concludes "The world deserved nothing less and would not wait"(263).

## Conclusion

As a contemporary modern society, the cybernetic tools used by Eggers in the novel are a combination of surveillance systems and famous social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter. These tools enable the characters in the novel to create online platforms where they share their views, experiences, thoughts, ideas and preferences. When they find people with similar interests, they become involved in these online communities. Thus, the Circle's innovation of online platform, TruYou, enables them to be easily connected to each other at all times.

Mostly important, the novel further recommends that even democracy can benefit from the technological facilities offered by these social media tools creating more democratic society. In addition, Mae and Bailey, one of the Circle's main administrators, study the possibility of obliging citizens to have an online profile in order to vote in the general elections. This online participation helps the government to reduce the costs of carrying out an election and ensure full participation for all the citizens building a more democratic society.

With the cybercultural aim of improving mankind and developing society by using technology, Eggers stresses the role of surveillance devices and social media tools in creating a more participatory democracy. More specifically, these enhancement technologies help to expand our capacity for citizenship, making electronically facilitated democracy more possible in contemporary societies.

As a result, Eggers ends the novel with a terrifying message: it's implicit that the Circle's succeeding project will be to develop a way to read the minds. That's to say, the Circle will terminate the last refuge of human privacy. If this happens,

humans will be just slaves to the technological power of the Circle, they will not be able to think of anything without the Circle knowing about it. Hence, the novel comes to a dark ending. However, Eggers intends his novel to be a warning tale for readers to repel against the catastrophic ethics of the social networking era.

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## المستخلص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل الثقافة السيريانية بصفة عامة وتأثير الرقمنة وشبكات التواصل الاجتماعي بصفة خاصة على السرد الروائي المعاصر وذلك اعتماداً على نظريات الثقافة الـ "سيريانية" (الالكترونية) . يقدم البحث تغطية نظرية شاملة تستعرض تاريخ ظهور وتطور مفهوم " الثقافة السيريانية" في مجال الدراسات الأدبية. كما يقوم البحث بإيضاح ومناقشة الدور الفعال لنقاد وأدباء الثقافة السيريانية المميزين الذين اهتموا في أعمالهم الأدبية بالتطور والتقدم التكنولوجي . كما يهدف البحث إلى التركيز على الجوانب الرقمية وتأثير استخدام شبكة الإنترنت وتكنولوجيا الاتصالات على السرد الأدبي. وبهذا يقدم البحث قراءة نقدية من منظور ثقافي سيرياني (إلكتروني) لرواية *الدائرة* (٢٠١٣) للكاتب "ديف إيجرز" وذلك بهدف الكشف عن كيفية تمثيل وانعكاس دور الرقمنة وشبكات التواصل الاجتماعي في الرواية المختارة. وبشكل أكثر وضوحاً، يزعم هذا البحث أنه بالرغم من قيام بعض الروائيين مؤخراً بمدح دور التكنولوجيا على البشرية في أعمالهم الأدبية، إلا أن رواية *الدائرة* لديف إيجرز تحذرنا من الآثار السلبية المحتملة للتقنيات التكنولوجية على البشرية. ويقوم هذا البحث بالتركيز على دور بعض التقنيات التكنولوجية كأجهزة المراقبة وأدوات التواصل الاجتماعي، مثل الفيس بوك و تويتر، على المجتمع المعاصر. فعلى الرغم من أن تلك التقنيات التكنولوجية تسمح لشخصيات الرواية بالتغلب على أي حواجز مادية كانت تواجههم سابقاً وتساعدهم على عيش حياة إجتماعية أكثر نشاطاً، إلا أنها يمكن أن تؤثر سلباً على البشرية. وبهذا فإن الاستخدام المكثف لشبكات التواصل الاجتماعي وأجهزة المراقبة في المجتمعات المعاصرة قد دفع " إيجرز" ألا ينظر فقط إلى الجانب الإيجابي لتلك التقنيات الحديثة ولكن إلى عيوبها الجوهرية أيضاً.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الثقافة السيريانية، تقنيات التحكم الآلي (السيرياني)، الحياة الرقمية، شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، أجهزة المراقبة، "ديف إيجرز"، رواية *الدائرة*.