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Privacy, Surveillance and the Individual in Dave Eggers' Novel *The Circle*

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Abstract

This BA paper focuses on the examination on how the invasion of privacy effects the actions, behaviour and choices of the individual in Dave Eggers' novel *The Circle* (2013). The development of the protagonist will be the main premise for the discussion of how the intrusion of privacy deprives the individual of voluntary confession, subjects to compulsory self-incrimination and control one's behaviour according to the imposed. The theoretical frameworks chosen for the analysis section include D. J. Solove's definition of privacy as the contextual term, Ch. Fried's moral analysis of the need of privacy together with R. S. Gerstein's understanding of privacy as a right against compulsory self-incrimination, and M. Foucault's notion of surveillance, complemented by R. A. Clarke's notion of dataveillance. The outline of the analysis is divided into three parts. Firstly, explaining the definition of the right to knowledge in opposition to the right to privacy. Secondly, showing how the company establishes the right to knowledge through surveillance and dataveillance leaving the individual vulnerable for objection. Finally, analysing the change of Mae's attitude towards privacy proving that when one is deprived of privacy, one is deprived of control to define oneself, and thus becomes a subject that internalises the power that observes.

1. Introduction

A ‘hyphenate—novelist-publisher-activist; journalist-entrepreneur; graphic designer—screenwriter-husband-father’¹ – there are various names that apply to Dave Eggers (b. 1970). Moreover, Eggers is an education activist and an advocate for change in modern education system. With his hope for change in 2002, together with the educator Nínive Clements Calegari, he established a non-profit organisation, called *Valencia 826*, to help under-resourced students to improve their writing skills. Nowadays the organization is known as *826 National* and other eight chapters are located in several U.S. districts. To help struggling young writers, Eggers has also founded the *McSweeney’s* publishing house, which was established in 1998 together with the publishing of the literary journal *Timothy McSweeney’s Quarterly Concern* (Hamilton 2010: 11-12).

Despite his interest and active participation in many spheres, Dave Eggers is unmistakably best known as an author. While studying journalism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, at the age of 21 Eggers lost both of his parents and was left to take care of his 8-year-old brother. After the loss, the author dropped out of the university and together with his younger brother moved to California, where he started his career as a writer and editor for various publications. Eggers’ first breakthrough as an author was back in 2000, when he released his memoir *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, depicting the experience of raising his little brother after the deaths of their parents. Various critics praised the memoir for being ‘self-conscious, eclectic, casually postmodern, eager to please, not bothered about giving offence - and endlessly ironic’². His other works include a biography *Zeitoun* (2009), novels *You Shall Know Our Velocity* (2002), *What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng* (2006), *The Wild Things* (2009), *A Hologram for the King* (2012), *The Circle* (2013), many children’s books, short stories and screenplays.

Writing both fiction and non-fiction, Eggers has developed a versatile writing style. At first, after the publication of his memoir *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000) Eggers gained both praise and criticism. The book was criticised for being ‘too obsessed with self-promotion’ and the author for being ‘the most vocal and persistent in his claims for attention’ (Hamilton 2010: 30-32). However, at the same time, the memoir was acknowledged for the way in which Eggers sought to find an honest connection with the readers through his ability to play ‘around with the definition of truth telling’ (Hamilton 2010: 40-50). Thus, his memoir was labelled as a ‘narrative of new sincerity’, which endorses ‘authentic “aliveness” as superior to

¹ Kahn, H. 2014. *Dave Eggers Unplugged*. Available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/dave-eggers-unplugged-1417620930> [Accessed on 19th December, 2020]

² Begley, A. 2000. *Come to the cabaret*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/jul/15/biography> [Accessed on 19th December 2020]

any artificial experience' involving 'global travel, physical escape and self-discovery via nature' and Eggers himself understood 'new sincerity' as an innate characteristic of life (Hamilton 2010: 52-53).

His second work, *You Shall Know Our Velocity* (2002), was met with less divided and opposing critique. According to the critics, in the novel Eggers 'thrives on the creation' of moments of 'surprise and delight in his readers, invoking a spirit of communal fun designed to triumph over the banality of commodity exchange' (Ibid. p. 75). The novel could be also understood as an allegory of Eggers' struggles with his own success and experiences in the literary field (Ibid. p. 83).

The writer has also 'pioneered the form of "autobiography-by-proxy"', which means working in collaboration with the people whose biography will be used as a material for the story (Ibid. p. 91). Two books, *Zeitoun* (2009) and *What Is the What* (2006), were inspired by other people's 'first person testimony' and in both works Eggers aims to 'stand for a broad ranging charitable enterprise' (Ibid.). The writer decides to 'erase himself as an author of the story' and suggests the new strategy of vocalising the voices of others by writing and exploring 'ideas about suffering and hope while being immune from critical attacks on his own' personal life (Ibid. pp. 92-93). This technique was welcomed by critics as proving his maturity as a writer (Ibid. p. 92).

In his later works, Eggers favours 'consideration, tradition and simplicity' and he turns away from promoting himself to investing his identity in 'social and political significance' (Ibid. pp. 80-87). He focuses greatly on the collective 'we' and his work 'encapsulates the interests, concerns, attitudes, experiences and sensibilities of this ill-defined "we"' that combines individual responsibility and collective action, which allows to make 'tangible contributions to the lives of others' (Ibid. pp. 90-96). Additionally, Eggers' stories investigate the 'dim corners of the world and give form to the experience of many of his readers' who are confronted by 'distinct versions of contemporary life' themselves (Ibid. p. 94).

Evidently, Eggers understands writing as a 'force for change, a means of self-realisation' (Ibid. p. 84) and after many years on the literary horizon, Eggers tried his hand in the genre of dystopian fiction. *The Circle* (2013) was his first venture into the genre and this novel will be the focus of this BA paper.

The Circle (2013) is a dystopian novel set in a near future and follows the events that unfold in the life of a young woman named Mae Holland, after she joins a powerful and increasingly influential Internet and high-tech company 'the Circle'. 'The Circle's' initial function is to combine all of people's online interactions into one account called *TruYou*. The company uses novel technology, such as wide distribution of cameras and wireless monitoring gadgets to

gather data about each person and the purpose of that is to create a more accountable and efficient society by increasing transparency in the spheres of the government, business, and the personal lives of people.

At first, the company is described as ‘heaven’ (Eggers 2013: 3) by Mae herself because it provides social and individual benefits for its employees’ wellbeing, such as numerous free time activities, the highest quality health insurance and various social events to increase the spirit of community. Even though Mae is impressed with the ideas ‘the Circle’ promotes, she does not often participate in the events, nor does she always use the benefits the company provides. After some time, Mae is encouraged to become more involved in the community of the company and the main way to do so is to be constantly active on social media by posting online about her private life. She agrees and her rankings in the company start increasing. However, one night she is caught illegally kayaking and after ‘the Circle’ finds out, she is publicly shamed in front of all the company. As a result, she is made to accept to become the face of transparency in the company. One year later, Mae is surveilled by millions of people: all her daily activities are visible to the whole world and her privacy is nullified. Meanwhile, more and more people of various social groups are pressured to give up their privacy.

The novel has gained a considerable amount of critical reception, particularly in the way it tackles the topics of surveillance and power. For example, Nieuwenhuizen (2016) in her thesis compares Orwell’s *1984* and Eggers’ *The Circle* in terms of different types of surveillance present in both novels, and how surveillance in these novels affects the process of governing people. As the author claims, these two novels perfectly illustrate the shift of surveillance from ‘noticeably present to hardly distinct, and from oppressive to something we eagerly agree to’ (Nieuwenhuizen 2016: 4). Nieuwenhuizen draws her analysis on Michel Foucault’s concept of *disciplinary societies* and Gilles Deleuze’s *societies of control*, explaining that societies of control are not controlled by enclosure (differently from *disciplinary societies*), but rather are free-floating and liberating (2016: 3). Nieuwenhuizen notes the shift of control evident in *The Circle*, whereby ‘the methods of control have also intensified, and surveillance has become more precise’ (Ibid.).

Similarly to Nieuwenhuizen, Gouck (2018) places great importance on the Panopticon-like surveillance present in the novel and introduces the notion of ‘New-Panopticism’, again heavily drawing for support on Foucault and Deleuze, as well as Bentham and Sartre. The author explains that ‘New Panopticism’ is ‘a result of the contemporary conflation of the physical and the digital (although it is largely situated in the digital), and has subsequently influenced a new mode of surveillance which infiltrates the body and encourages behaviour as performance’ (Gouck 2018: 57). Gouck argues that the establishment of physical and digital Panopticism is

already evident from the first pages of the novel, when Mae describes the architecture of the company's building, which is made of glass and lets Mae to be "all-seeing" while also being seen', while digital Panopticism is evident in the online accounts of *TruYou* that make people 'disembodied and machine-like' (2018: 60-61).

The research of Nieuwenhuizen and Gouck mainly concentrates on and analyses the aspect of surveillance present in the novel. However, a novel study by Maurer and Rostbøll (2020) focuses on the aspect of power and its models in *The Circle*. The scholars discuss the design of digital democracy 'Demoxie' that is presented in the novel. According to the authors, 'demoxie embodies a dangerous cocktail of corporate and governmental power' because voting becomes mandatory for every citizen through their *TruYou* accounts (Maurer & Rostbøll 2020). The notion of transparency of citizens, together with their voting right are named as beneficial to democracy; however, as portrayed in the novel, if pursued 'without discrimination, and with no deeper understanding of their purpose, can turn into their opposites', destroying democracy and giving rise to totalitarian regime (Ibid.). Hence, the authors conclude that 'the line between utopia and dystopia' becomes thin and *The Circle* is an evidence of blurring that line (Ibid.)

On the other hand, scholar Aardema (2014) emphasizes another aspect of power evident in the novel - the power gender roles play in controlling society. Aardema argues that in dystopian fiction, where technology is depicted as a tool of control and restriction, usually only male figures are in control of *that tool* and 'the other' that is affected by it are often female figures (2014: 40). According to the author, this is evident in *The Circle*, where the Three Wise Men are responsible for the establishment of the company and control the technology *TruYou* that collects everyone's data. Contrary, women, as Mae herself, work in the departments, such as Customer Experience, that require 'emotional labour' and are expected to be 'nice, friendly and emotionally available' (Ibid. p. 40). The scholar adds, that none of the female figures are in power and they mainly function as 'the other' observed by the males (Ibid.). Thus, Aardema continues arguing that 'Eggers presents just a one-sided view of what it means to live in the world of the Circle and ignores the fact that the implications of the present ideology, which maintains the binary hierarchical gender relations, are different for men and women', causing difficulties for a reader to identify with the main character (2014: 43).

Overall, these studies focus heavily on the types of power in the novel: first, power that is enabled through surveillance, then a new model of power called *Demoxie*, which blurs the line between democracy and a totalitarian regime, and the power enabled by only one gender. Yet, none of the mentioned scholars seem to pay attention to the violation of privacy as a form of control over the individual. Nieuwenhuizen (2016) and Gouck (2018) do talk about the control

of the individual, but the tool for such control that they discuss in their research seems to be disciplinary power enabled through surveillance.

In this BA paper, an attempt will be made to explain how depriving the individual of the right to privacy affects one's actions. More precisely, the development of the protagonist Mae will be analysed within the frame of a process of depriving the individual of privacy and voluntary confession. The following research question will be investigated in the present BA paper: how does the invasion of privacy affect the individual and what effect does it have on one's actions, choices and behaviour? In order to answer this question, first, the notion of privacy will be explained as being contextual, relying on Daniel J. Solove's theoretical research. Then, Charles Fried's moral analysis of the need for privacy will be introduced to emphasise the importance of privacy for one's humanity. Fried's ideas will be complimented by Robert S. Gerstein's notions of voluntary confession and the right against compulsory self-incrimination. Finally, the notions of surveillance by Michel Foucault and dataveillance by Roger Clarke will be discussed as tools to invade an individual's privacy in order to objectify and transform a person.

2. Privacy and Its Intrusion

The main objective of this BA paper is to investigate the effects invasion of privacy has on the individual. The theoretical background for this analysis will be divided into three parts. First, the definition of privacy will be discussed relying on Daniel J. Solove's conceptualizing of the term privacy as being contextual and plural, rather than universal. The moral analysis of privacy as the right to the control of the information about oneself will follow and it will be explained based on Charles Fried's theorising. Robert S. Gerstein's concepts of voluntary confession together with the right against compulsory self-incrimination will compliment moral analysis of privacy. Finally, Michel Foucault's notion of surveillance will be complemented by Roger A. Clarke's notion of dataveillance and presented as the tool to invade the privacy of the individual.

2.1 Defining the Notion of Privacy

In the age of technological advancement and the rise of social media companies, the discussions about privacy are more than ever urgent and important. Oxford English Dictionary describes the term *privacy* as a 'state in which one is not observed or disturbed by other people' or as a state 'of being free from a public attention'³. However, Daniel J. Solove in his article *Conceptualizing Privacy* (2002) argues that 'dictionary' attempts to describe *privacy* as a universal definition are too general and reduce the understanding of the notion to 'a set of neutral conditions that apply to all matters we deem private' (2002: 338). The author claims that privacy is contextual and should be conceptualized from 'particular contexts rather than in the abstract' ones (Ibid. p. 338). Hence, it is not surprising that in the introduction of his work, the scholar starts off describing *privacy* as a 'sweeping concept' that encompasses '(among other things) freedom of thought, control over one's body, solitude in one's home, control over information about oneself, freedom from surveillance, protection of one's reputation, and protection from searches and interrogation' (Ibid. p. 334). The description of the term seems to be inclusive of various contexts and lays groundwork for a wider discussion on the process of defining the term *privacy* by Solove himself.

The first attempt to define *privacy* occurred back in 1890 in the US, when Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis composed their article *The Right To Privacy* and defined *privacy* (2002: 346 quoted in Solove loc. cit.) as the "right to be let alone". The authors of the definition emphasised the value of privacy, which was phrased as 'the peace of mind or the relief afforded' to not have any publications about a person (Ibid. p. 346). The authors also noted that modern

³ OED: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/privacy>

inventions and enterprises had already invaded person's privacy to the extent that one became subjected to mental distress and pain, which is greater than physical harm (Ibid. p. 346). Even though the first attempt to define privacy seems quite plausible, Solove criticises it for being too general and not informing 'about the matters in which' one 'should be left alone' (2002: 347).

The second attempted conception of privacy that Solove discusses is called 'limited access to the self', which recognizes 'the individual's desire for concealment and for being apart from others' (2002: 347). This conception, according to Solove, should not be understood as equivalent to solitude because it extends more broadly than 'a form of seclusion', 'embracing freedom from government', press and other interferences (2002: 349). According to Solove, this theory was conceptualized by a number of theorists, but at its core it does not really differ from the understanding of *privacy* as the 'right to be let alone' since it, again, 'provides no understanding of the degree of access necessary to constitute a privacy violation' (2002: 349-350).

The third common conception of privacy is that it is understood as secrecy, concealing certain matters from others (Ibid. pp. 338-351). Solove claims that this definition of privacy is problematic because it views privacy as 'coextensive with the total secrecy of information', which flows not from the interest to be free from any type of coercion, but rather from the interest to keep secrets and facts that could be harmful to others and gain power over them. (2002: 352-353). Yet, when people seek to protect their privacy, they are not interested in 'total nondisclosure', but they rather are interested in 'selective disclosure', which means choosing by themselves to whom and what information to share (Ibid. p. 354). Therefore, defining secrecy as the 'common denominator of privacy' concludes this type of conception of privacy as being too narrow and not sufficient in the understanding of the notion of privacy (Ibid. p. 355).

For Solove, all of the mentioned attempts to define the term *privacy* are either too broad or too narrow. However, the scholar does not deem these theories/concepts as irrelevant, but by discussing them separately Solove tries to prove that on their own, without particular context, they are not sufficient enough to conceptualize the term *privacy*, since it cannot be defined as a universal concept and rather heavily depends on the context.

Solove continues to argue that to understand what it means to be 'private contextually' certain practices have to be explored, since privacy 'should be conceptualized contextually as it is implicated in particular problems' (2002: 339). According to the scholar, when one protects one's privacy, one 'must protect against disruptions to certain practises', which include 'interference with peace of mind and tranquillity, invasion of solitude, breach of confidentiality,

loss of control over facts about oneself, searches of one's person and property, threats to or violations of personal security, destruction of reputation, surveillance, and so on' (Solove 2002: 375). Hence, privacy becomes 'a dimension of certain practises and aspects of life' that needs to be protected (Ibid. p. 375). Solove emphasises that 'not all privacy problems are equal'; hence, the 'abstract value to privacy' cannot be ascribed because its value differs 'depending upon the kind of problem or harm' one is 'safeguarding against' (2007: 421). Privacy becomes a tool for protection 'against a related set of problems' that relate in different ways, but resemble each other because they are a set of daily practises that have to be defended (Ibid. p. 421).

2.2 The Need for Privacy

The predominant scholar that has been defending the need of privacy since the 1970s is Charles Fried. In his work, *Privacy: A moral analysis* (1968), Fried proposes the reasons why people feel that invasion of the right of privacy 'injure them in their very humanity' (1968: 203). Fried claims that people have a moral right to privacy, which is 'entitled equally, by virtue of their status as persons' and 'forbids the overriding of their most fundamental interests for the purpose of maximizing the happiness or welfare of all' (1968: 205).

The first reason why privacy is essential to a human being, according to Fried, is because it liberates one (1968: 210). While keeping private, a person controls shared information and knowledge about oneself (Ibid. p. 206). This understanding of privacy could be seen as related to 'secrecy', however, Fried argues that 'privacy is not the absence of information about us in the minds of others; rather it is the *control* we have over information about ourselves' (2002: 206-209). The author also emphasises that privacy does not simply mean 'control over quantity of information abroad', but rather that it enhances the modulations in the quality of shared knowledge, which means that certain details can be chosen to be modulated and kept private (Ibid. p. 210). This is especially important when an individual favours things that are 'unpopular or unconventional' (Ibid.). If a person thought that their every move or word reflecting these unpopular interests were public, he or she would encounter a 'fear of disapproval' that can keep one 'from doing or saying things' that contrary would be done if one 'could be sure of keeping' personal interests to themselves or to those who approve the same tastes (Ibid. p. 211). In other words, when the privacy of an individual is invaded, one's choices of actions become more restricted by the others who do not agree with one's choices.

Nonetheless, according to the scholar, privacy does not function for the purpose to secure personal liberation in isolation, but it functions in the context of relationships, which define people as human (Ibid.). The relationships could be both platonic and romantic, but they all include 'the initial respect for the rights of others' and the 'voluntary and spontaneous

relinquishment of something' (Ibid. p. 211). This *something*, according to Fried, is 'the title to information about oneself conferred by privacy' and choosing to share this information to a certain degree with other people creates intimacy (1968: 211). The information about oneself includes one's emotions and feelings, actions or beliefs (Ibid. p. 211). Yet, the scholar also argues that a person has the right to choose not to share this *something* with anyone and the partner in the relationship has to respect this choice (Ibid.). If both sides in a relationship are comfortable with personal privacy, it creates trust (Ibid. p. 212). Fried argues that the relationships of trust are important because through them people express their humanity and that trust is impossible if a person is not provided 'a right to act without constant surveillance' (1968: 212). Trust in its fullest form, according to Fried, 'is reciprocal' because if one is not trusted, one cannot trust oneself or 'learn to trust' (1968: 213).

The importance of privacy is vital in a relationship for another reason and that is the possibility of error (Ibid. p. 212). As Fried explains, there are thoughts that, if expressed, may be understood as 'a hostile act' because they might be 'wounding' (1968: 212). However, before being expressed they are just 'mere unratified possibilities for action' and only become enabled, adopted by a person, chosen as a part of oneself and even drawn into 'relations with others' when shared with all (Ibid. p. 212). This means that without expressing the 'hostile' thoughts and keeping them in private a person does not act upon them, does not give significance to them. For example, one might think of a 'wounding' action against a person one does not agree with, however, if one does not express that idea, does not share it with anyone, the idea remains without significance, just an 'error' and will not determine the one who thought of the action. The expression of possibly 'wounding' thoughts can lead to allowing complete access to the individual or, more specifically, the individual determined by one's error, and takes away the freedom to not only define one's 'relations to others', but also to define oneself without the expressed error (Ibid.). Errors are an inevitable part of human nature and privacy protects this 'possibility', or even right, 'of error', and if one is denied of this right, one is denied of an aspect of one's humanity (Ibid. p. 213).

Fried also adds that by choosing not to express one's errors or certain private matters a person also gets a right to protect oneself against humiliation if certain degrees of a relationship falls short, especially if a third party intrudes (1968: 208). This means that if a person has the means to control those degrees together with the information about oneself it helps to maintain basic dignity (Ibid. p. 211).

It is important to mention that Fried understands that the control of the information about oneself in an actual society is 'relative' and 'qualified', because it is limited by 'the rights of others' to enhance 'property or bodily security' (1968: 211). However, the rights of others

should not control it, because when one pursues interests with the aid of or in the presence of others, one 'must risk the invasion of privacy' (Ibid. p. 211). Therefore, Fried proposes that *some* information and aspects of one's environment requires to be acknowledged and justified as remaining private (1968: 214). People must be granted 'a feeling of security in control over that information' (Ibid. p. 219).

Robert S. Gerstein in his work *Privacy and Self-incrimination* (1970) also emphasises that an individual should be able to control 'a special sort of information', which would give one 'a privilege against compulsory self-incrimination' (1970: 248-249). Gerstein argues that a person, who made an immoral decision or action ought to have a right to confess 'the bare recital of facts about' the decision or action in a voluntary confession (1970: 249). The process of voluntary confession is considered, in Gerstein's terms, a confession without 'the admission of wrongdoing, the self-condemnation, the revelation of remorse' and a 'matter between a man and his conscience' (1970: 249). It is important to mention that the scholar emphasises that a person 'who is guilty of violating any section of the penal code' cannot be granted a right of voluntary confession because such a person would commit any crime without 'moral compunction' (Ibid. p. 249). Only people who to 'one degree or another feel themselves to be part of the same moral community with those whose interests they have injured' can be involved in the process of voluntary confession because they 'see the violation as a moral issue' (Ibid.). Traditionally, voluntary confession has roots in religious experience and 'its private character has been emphasized in this context' (Ibid. p. 251). The real confessions in 'early church' included person's awareness of 'the sinful' act and this awareness, which was described 'as the greatest suffering which can be endured', affected the individual greatly and was understood as 'a total change of heart and way of life' (Ibid.). The element of 'the penitent' was essential in the process of personally accepting one's wrongdoing willingly because it was motivated by 'the hatred of sin' and 'a desire for a new life' (Ibid. p. 252). If the confession was 'motivated by fear of disgrace', it was considered invalid and in this process the compulsion of any third party had no say (Ibid.).

Therefore, Gerstein concludes that a person needs someone trustworthy to confess voluntarily to, because it is not possible 'to know oneself and to grow as a person unless one has the opportunity to be and act oneself to at least some other person or people' and it shows 'a symptom' of a healthy personhood or 'means to achieve it' (1970: 252). Yet, the scholar remains critical and claims that not in every relationship a person can confess to the other, because there are such people who 'would not have the "moral capital" needed' to create trust, which is required in any relationship, whether it is 'of love or religious faith' (Ibid. p. 252).

These people would also be ready, at any instance, to expose partner's 'wrongdoings to the public' and relationships of 'confidence' would not work if one party puts no importance in the action of confiding (Ibid.).

In contrast, Gerstein proposes that when compulsory self-incrimination occurs and others judge a person for his/her action or decision, invasion of privacy lies in being judged by the third party before having a right to be judged by oneself firstly (1970: 249-250). The reason why it is important is every individual's judgement and moral decisions about "“what I ought to do” or “what I ought to have done”" (1970: 250 quoted in Gerstein loc. cit.), especially involving 'a conflict of obligation', are special and cannot be universalised. This is because for an individual to find out what things are 'right or wrong' 'involves more than knowing the general circumstances or general principles of morality' - it also involves knowing 'something about' oneself and this 'something' can be found 'by careful consideration of the nature' of one's 'moral character and inclinations' (Ibid. p. 250). When this information is revealed to the public, it happens 'in the process of self-incrimination' and the ones that judge a person put upon him/her 'the publicly displayed stigma of publicly determined guilt' (Ibid. p. 251). In such a case, a person is deprived of a choice to reach a moral conclusion about one's actions by oneself, and is forced 'to make public the judgement by which he has condemned himself in conscience' (Ibid.). This moral conclusion is only revealed 'to those to whom the person involved is the closest' and it helps to form 'the basis of relationships of love and trust' (Ibid.)

2.3 Surveillance: the Invasion of Privacy

One of the methods to invade person's privacy, control and incriminate him/her is through surveillance. Michel Foucault explored the many ways in which surveillance enables discipline in his work *Discipline & Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (1975). Foucault developed his discussion of disciplinary power made available through constant observation by referring to the architectural design of a prison – the Panopticon - introduced by Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century (1975: 200). It was based on the principal that the prison should be a circular building divided into cells that have two windows: one on the outside, which 'allows light to cross the cell from one end to the other', and one on the inside, which faces the windows of a 'tower' at the centre of the architectural structure (Ibid. p. 200). The tower, 'pierced with wide windows that open into the inner side of the ring' opens to the windows of the cells and in it there is a supervisor (Ibid.)

This mechanism 'reverses the principle of dungeon' and every individual is seen by the supervisor, but cannot see the one that supervises them (Ibid.). Hence, the individual becomes the 'object of information, never a subject in communication' (Ibid.). A perfect disciplinary

building would give possibilities for 'a single gaze to' observe everything continuously, record and judge every action and every offence (Ibid. p. 173).

The main outcome and effect of the Panopticon is to 'induce' in the person 'a state of conscious and permanent visibility' which pressures individuals before any offences, mistakes or even crimes are committed (Ibid. pp. 201-206).

According to Foucault, such Panoptic mechanism of constant surveillance could be integrated in 'any function' of a person's everyday life: from education, medical treatment to production and punishment (1975: 206). It is evident that this system 'compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes' and seeks to set up 'the Norm', which is 'established as a principle of coercion' (Ibid. pp. 183-184). Indeed, surveillance enables 'the norm' and becomes this 'normalizing gaze', which differentiates and punishes individuals based on 'the two opposed values of good and evil', and 'all behaviour falls in the field between [...] good and bad points' (Ibid. pp. 180-184). The distribution could be understood as 'ranking' into two polarising ends and has two roles: 'it marks the gaps', emphasises the skills 'and aptitudes; but it also punishes and rewards' (Ibid. p. 181). Hence, this 'ranking system' becomes in itself both a reward and a punishment because it gives the awards when rewarding and reverses the awards when punishing (Ibid.).

Moreover, disciplinary power, which is enabled through surveillance, is even more efficient than the physical one, because the one upon whom the power is exercised internalizes its constraining force (Ibid. p. 203). This means that the person subjected to visibility and knowing it 'assumes responsibility for the constraints of power' and unconsciously lets the power 'play [...] upon himself' (Ibid. p. 202). In this way, a person 'inscribes' oneself 'in the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles' and becomes 'the principle of his own subjection' (Ibid. pp. 202-203). In other word, the person becomes not only the observed one, but also the one who constantly observes oneself. This type of surveillance avoids physical confrontation because it is not 'added on from the outside', but rather is 'subtly present in' people to 'increase their efficiency by itself increasing its own points of contact' and 'always decided in advance' by those upon whom it is exercised (Ibid. pp. 203-206).

Under panoptical surveillance, the subjects have no privacy and this ensures 'the hold of the power that is exercised over them' (Ibid. p. 187). This type of observation objectifies people and dominates over them by arranging them as objects to 'assure the exercise of power even in its lowest manifestations' (Ibid. pp. 187-189). Therefore, Foucault claimed that people are entering the time of 'infinite examination and compulsory objectification' (Ibid. p. 189). Every observed person becomes a 'case', since surveillance 'captures and fixes them' (Ibid.). This 'case' enables the individual to be 'described, judged, measured, compared with others' in one's

‘very individuality’ and even ‘corrected, classified, normalized and excluded’ (Ibid. p. 191). Thus, the process of surveillance becomes the process of fixing of ‘individual differences’ and indicates a rise of a new ‘modality of power’, which links a person’s individuality to the ‘the status to the features, the measurements, the gaps, the ‘marks’ that characterize’ and make a ‘case’ (Ibid. p. 192). The individual becomes ‘registered’ in forms of ‘behaviour, attitudes, possibilities, and suspicions – a permanent account of individual’s behaviour’ (Ibid. 214).

The widespread technology of surveillance and observation does not only ‘extract knowledge’ about people or work at the level of representations ‘in what one thinks one knows’, but rather work at the level of being able to transform the knowledge about a person into an ‘investment’ (Ibid. p. 185). Nowadays, this process is far more efficient than in the past. In fact, the pervasive surveillance that Foucault discussed in his work could be further elaborated upon in a contemporary context as *dataveillance*, a concept introduced and most precisely defined by Roger A. Clarke in his article *Information Technology and Dataveillance* (1988). Dataveillance is a type of surveillance especially present nowadays, when the usage of social media is at its peak.

According to Clarke, dataveillance is ‘the systematic use of personal data systems in the investigation or monitoring of the action or communications of’ a person (1988: 500). One type of dataveillance is *personal surveillance*, which means surveillance of personal data of an identified person (Ibid. p. 500). The people whose personal data is observed are called *data subjects* and the reason for their monitoring is that they have attracted attention of the observer (Ibid. pp. 500-504). The investigation of the data usually has various reasons: from ‘disqualifying a person from employment’ to suspicion that a person ‘has committed a crime or a misdemeanour’ (Ibid. p. 504). This type of data surveillance can be beneficial because it can ensure security of people, their property and even provide financial benefits ‘from the detention and prevention of various forms of errors, abuse, and fraud’ (Ibid. p. 507).

However, the number of dangers is greater. Firstly, personal dataveillance does not provide the information about people, but rather data that relates to them and this enables ‘significant likelihood of wrong identification’ (Ibid.). Moreover, dataveillance does not provide context to the data, which is essentially important when dealing with matters related to people that are complex and sometimes even atypical (Ibid. p. 508).

To understand the circumstances fully most often requires additional data (Ibid.). In the original context the data quality may be enough and fair, but when used outside of its context, the data quality decreases, ‘the probability of misinterpreting’ increases and it can present a distorted ‘case’ about a person (Ibid.). When a third party takes upon a right to investigate personal data

without its context and subject's knowledge, it establishes 'unnecessary distrust between individuals' and the third party (Ibid.). In addition, it can help to learn 'sufficiently embarrassing facts about a person to assist in discrediting' one 'in the eyes' of the others or buy one's 'silence or agreement' (Ibid. p. 504). This way data surveillance give rise to 'acute unfairness' and even a possibility to blacklist a person 'over a matter that is [...] in dispute', which 'tends to deny' people 'the ability to redeem themselves' (Ibid. p. 508).

After discussing the theoretical premises of the importance of privacy and surveillance as the means to invade it, the following part of this BA paper will focus on the analysis of Dave Eggers' dystopian novel *The Circle*.

3. Analysis

The analysis of this BA paper will fall into three sections. Firstly, the theoretical grounds for the right to knowledge that is expounded by the company 'the Circle' in the novel will be discussed in an opposition to the right to privacy, which was supported by Fried and Solove's ideas discussed in the theoretical section of this paper. Secondly, surveillance together with dataveillance will be investigated as the panoptic mechanisms behind the right to knowledge, pressuring the protagonist to turn to compulsory self-incrimination, which stands in opposition to voluntary confession. Finally, the individual, Mae, will be analysed as a subject upon whom the invasion of privacy is exercised, paying particular attention to the way her attitude towards privacy changes throughout the novel.

3.1 The Right to Knowledge

In the novel, the right to knowledge is expressed as the need to know everything. The character that has the most to say about the right to knowledge is Eamon Bailey, one of the Three Wise Men who are named 'the founders of the company' (Eggers 2013: 19). Even though Bailey is not the *mastermind* behind the establishment of 'the Circle', he is one of the predominant characters who constantly promotes the idea of *transparency* and believes privacy to be theft, which needs to be omitted in order for people to lead 'a more moral way of life' (Ibid. p. 290). Bailey claims 'that everyone should have a *right* to know everything, and should have the *tools* to know anything' (Ibid. p. 286).

The company's need to know everything could be even seen as deliberately exaggerated and obsessive. This is evident when they take upon a project to count the sand in the Sahara. The need for such project is questionable, but the Three Wise Men claim that the company is doing this to check if it could be done at all and the workers in 'the Circle' understand it as 'a show of strength and demonstration' that thanks to 'the Circle' leaves 'no earthly question [...] unanswered' (Ibid. p. 238). This shows to what extremes the need to know everything is taken. In the novel, the right to knowledge is opposed to the right to privacy, which was proposed by Solove and Fried in the theoretical section. According to Solove (2002: 375), our certain practises must be protected from disruption and Fried argues (1968: 206-211) that people have the right to privacy for the reasons of personal liberation and establishment of humanity through relationships. However, in 'the Circle' everyone seeks to know everything, almost no areas excluded. Privacy appears to be a key issue, seeing as the company invades it throughout the novel.

As mentioned previously, a person is understood to have a right to privacy because it liberates one (Fried 1968: 210). According to Fried, in this case liberation is in the sense that a person

can control the information that is shared about him or her to avoid being judged for liking or being part of something that might be unconventional (1968: 206-210). One of the first episodes in the novel when the control of personal information is taken from its owner is when LuvLuv, an application that provides an in-depth online search about a potential romantic partner, is presented in front of the whole company on stage (Eggers 2013: 120). Mae gets to experience first-hand what it feels to lose control over the information that is shared with all. During the presentation, her romantic interest at the time, Francis, volunteers to participate in the demonstration and puts Mae on the spot by trying to 'scan the web' to find information about her interests, allergies, foods she loved, etc. (Ibid. pp. 122-124). Before Francis even gets on the stage Mae feels 'dizzy' and 'terrified' (Ibid. p. 121); when her name is introduced 'her face [is] in her hands, her eyes peaking from under her trembling fingers' (Ibid. p. 122). While witnessing the scene 'she [has] first hidden behind her hands, and then sunk to the lowest possible place in her seat' (Ibid. p. 124). Mae's reaction to the situation indicates a feeling of utmost distress, when a person is exposed. She seems like a terrified animal who looks for an escape. In the scene, it is evident that Mae is robbed of the right to modulate the quality of knowledge that is shared about her. This contradicts Fried's claim that a person should be provided a choice to modulate certain information about oneself (Fried 1968: 210).

Moreover, this scene depicts other consequences that privacy violation has and that is in terms of Mae and Francis' relationship. As stated previously, Fried indicated that privacy is essential in relationships because when one shares voluntarily some private information with the other, it creates intimacy and trust (1968: 211). However, a person must be granted a choice not to share certain information, leave it to oneself and the partner must respect this choice (Ibid. p. 211). In contrast, Francis choosing to reveal Mae's personal information with the entire company contradicts this theorising and demolishes any possibility of trust in their relationship. The invasion of Mae's privacy without her permission leaves the relationship deprived of two main elements that are essential – intimacy and trust. The relationship is deprived of intimacy because information about Mae was shared on stage without her agreement and of trust because both sides were not comfortable with personal privacy.

After the presentation, Francis explained himself as only sharing the online information that was posted by Mae herself (Eggers 2013: 125). However, Mae is the one who thought that 'if Francis wanted any or all of that information', he could have asked her (Ibid. p. 125). Even though Mae understands that the information presented during the presentation is 'openly offered' by her, she still feels uncomfortable with her partner not giving her a choice to share the information with him specifically and taking a step further by sharing it with others in the

company. This shows the clash between the characters' preferences about the right to knowledge about each other and it is not surprising that after the demonstration Mae feels disgusted with Francis, and is 'sure she'd never [wants] to see that wretched face again' (Ibid. p. 125). The ability to trust the partner is destroyed and, as a result, Mae never looks the same at Francis, until her own attitude towards the right to knowledge changes.

These scenes provides the first glimpse into the ways the understanding of privacy in the novel opposes the ideas expressed by Fried. However, one of the most important scene related to this issue, where Bailey expresses straightforwardly the right to knowledge and obligation of becoming 'all knowing', is when Mae comes face to face with him after being caught taking a kayak without the permission of the store owner. In the scene, Mae and Bailey have a discussion on whether privacy is necessary.

Evidently, Bailey understands privacy as 'secrecy' because he asks Mae 'when is a secret a good thing?' (Eggers 2013: 281). This already shows Bailey's determination to employ the notion of privacy as a universal term, which obviously raises concerns because understanding privacy as secrecy means understanding it as a 'total secrecy of information' which comes from the place of hurting or keeping power over others (Solove 2002: 352). This is exactly the way Bailey defines keeping information about oneself from others – as the nature of secrets, which is 'cancerous', enables 'antisocial, immoral and destructive behaviour' and is 'better for the keeper of the secret', but not for the people around him or her (Eggers 2013: 283-289).

However, according to Solove, this understanding of privacy is problematic because when people seek to protect their privacy they are interested in 'selective disclosure' rather than 'total disclosure', meaning that they themselves prefer to choose what to share or not (2002: 354).

In a similar manner, Mae tries to respond to Bailey by saying that by keeping some things 'secret' one 'can protect someone's feelings', which could be linked to Fried's proposition that not everything has to be shared with others in order to avoid hurting them (Eggers 2013: 281). However, Bailey asks Mae to provide an example when it is tolerable to keep something from a friend or a family member, and Mae is unable to do that (Ibid. p. 282). The reason behind Mae's inability to answer might be because Bailey is trying to push Mae to give a universal answer and, as Solove argues, that is not possible with privacy, since it is contextual and requires attention to specific cases in order to determine when protection against privacy invasion is needed (2002: 334-339). It is hard for the protagonist to think of an example so fast because the provision of an example would require a longer discussion and critical thinking. Despite the fact that in the scene she is not given the possibility to any of those and is often interrupted by Bailey while trying to establish her viewpoint, she still feels 'that there are definitely things' one does not want others to know (Eggers 2013: 283).

Her next argument for keeping certain information private is that it protects a person from the embarrassment of ‘screwing up’ (Ibid. p. 283). The protagonist emphasises this point by repeating that some things, even if just a few, are done ‘alone’ for a reason and that reason is that others might not understand or ‘change the perception of them’ (Eggers 2012: 288). This illustrates Fried’s argument that privacy helps to protect some ‘errors’ committed by a person, which if shared could humiliate him or her (Fried 1968: 211-213). A person should be given a choice to keep these ‘errors’ or embarrassing actions to oneself because it not only helps a person to develop one’s self-awareness in the eyes of others, but it helps to grow and improve as a human being who learns from one’s mistakes before being defined, judged or incriminate by others (Gerstein 1970: 253). This seems to be the notion that Mae is defending, and exemplifies her point that for these reasons people keep certain things, for example, what they do in the bedroom, private (Ibid. p. 288). However, Bailey emphasises that what others’ want to know should be prioritised because they are entitled to it and the shame of embarrassment would be demystified and disappear in that way (Eggers 2013: 283-284). Bailey argues that revealing these intimate ‘secrets’ people will improve their lives in two ways. Firstly, they will understand that the behaviour that was kept ‘secret’ is harmless, everyone engages in it and hence it ‘loses the power of shock’, which omits shame (Ibid. p. 283). Secondly, ‘even better’ as noted by Bailey, if ‘society decide[s] that this behaviour’ is something people would ‘rather not engage in’, having the power ‘to know who’s doing it’ should ‘prevent the behaviour from being engaged in’ (Ibid. p. 283). As a result, knowing everything will not only take away the right to control the information about oneself, but it will also limit and restrict individual’s behaviour by the rights of others, since they will be the ones to decide which behaviour is accepted and which is not.

Mae also does not seem too convinced because her phrases of agreement with Bailey are not absolute. In her answers she adds ‘I guess’, numerous times ends her sentences with the word ‘but’ and after telling Bailey she understood him, ‘she wasn’t sure she did’ (Ibid. pp. 282-289). The described scenes perfectly illustrate the morale behind the company’s understanding of the right to knowledge in opposition to the right to privacy. In the following part of the analysis the ways in which the company establishes the right to know everything will be discussed, which is through constant and unlimited surveillance.

3.2. Establishment of the Right to Knowledge

As mentioned previously, surveillance is the primary tool to intrude people's privacy in the novel. The way surveillance is used by the company corresponds with Foucault's discussion of the panoptic mechanism of surveillance as a means to control the individual. In the novel surveillance is extensive: it ranges from visual surveillance to medical and people's online data observation.

Foucault claims that the mechanism of panoptic surveillance functions in the way that every individual is observed without knowing who the observer is, which allows the observer to continuously record and judge the actions of the individual (1975: 173-200). This process enables to establish 'the norm', which differentiates people into polarising categories of 'good' and 'bad', and the observed one internalises the effect of such power because one starts to observe oneself and act accordingly to 'the norm' (Ibid. pp. 180-202).

The first time surveillance is presented as a tool to invade people's privacy in order to control them is when Bailey introduces the novel technology called SeeChange. This technology promotes mass surveillance all around the world using the placement of small, 'lollipop' like cameras (Eggers 2013: 62). As argued by Bailey, this technology would help to improve people's everyday lives because people would have access 'to everywhere' they 'want to be – home, work, traffic conditions', to everyone they care about any time they want (Ibid. pp. 63-64). The size of the cameras is so small that the observed person is unaware of being observed:

"Let's have a Camera 8 in Cairo". A live shot of a street scene appeared. [...] a pair of police in riot gear standing in the distance. "They don't know we see them, but we do. The world is watching. And listening. Turn up the audio". Suddenly they could hear a clear conversation, in Arabic, between pedestrians passing near the cameras unawares (Eggers 2013: 65).

This proves that the technology of SeeChange is almost invisible which raises a concern that it can violate the right to privacy of people upon whom the surveillance is imposed because they lose control over the information about themselves without knowing that this right is taken from them. According to Foucault, this not knowing of when one is being observed is precisely what holds the power over the observed and influences a person's choice to act or not act in a certain way (1975: 201-206). The next comment by Bailey perfectly illustrates this point. He explains that 'the not-knowing will prevent abuses of power' because 'there would be instant accountability' since the actions will be seen by whomever and this is especially important in the countries where war crimes are happening (Ibid. p. 67). Moreover, he argues that everything the company does is to know 'the previously unknown' and insists 'that all that happens should be known' (Ibid. pp. 63-67). Bailey even presents a slogan 'ALL THAT HAPPENS MUST BE KNOWN',

which reminds of a slogan that could be seen in a totalitarian state, and invites ‘the audience to commit it to the memory’ (Eggers 2013: 67). Bailey concludes his speech by saying that this mind-set will not allow ‘the majority of human thought and action and achievement and learning to escape as if from a leaky bucket’, basically leaving a person no choice or possibility to escape such power (Ibid. p. 68).

The company also exercises surveillance that is not related to visual recording by observing medical records and bodily functions of a person. This process happens in two ways: firstly, all the previous records about the Circler’s health is transferred to the company’s database called ‘the cloud’ and, secondly, before the first examination in the company’s private clinic the worker is asked to drink a liquid which contains a sensor (Ibid. pp. 152-154). This ingested sensor ‘collects the data about [one’s] heart rate, blood pressure, cholesterol, heat flux, caloric intake, sleep duration, sleep quality, digestive efficiency’ and many more bodily processes that could determine whether a person is stressed, overworked, need more water and so on (Ibid. pp. 154-155).

Despite the evident advantages of this type of surveillance, what is alarming is the fact that the person is not told about ingesting the sensor when drinking the liquid (Ibid. p. 154). For example, Mae is told after the procedure, once the sensor is already ingested by her (Ibid.). This fact shocks Mae because after ingesting the sensor she asks in disbelief whether she has ‘already swallowed it’ and whether the sensor ‘is already in’ her (Ibid.). It is evident that Mae is not satisfied with someone else taking control of her body in their own hands, which also implies the lost control of the information about oneself. Moreover, it proves that ‘the Circle’ expands the notion of surveillance beyond the physical observation through cameras; the company also wants to know everything about the things that are not visible to the human eye, i.e. the bodily functions of a human body. This type of surveillance is beyond the one described by Foucault, because it is internalised not only mentally, affecting one’s actions, but also physically.

The third type of surveillance the company practises is dataveillance, or the surveillance of people’s data. From the first day at the company, Mae is requested to share her driver’s licence, birth certificate, fingerprints and all of her contacts, accounts, and information previously present on her personal phone and computer (Ibid. pp. 40-43). Moreover, all of her information is ‘backed up in the [company’s] cloud’ and servers, where it will remain forever (Ibid. p. 43).

By sharing such a great amount of data with the company she works for, Mae leaves herself vulnerable and open to the process of dataveillance, which can lead to the manipulation of a person or even incrimination when that data is explored without the

knowledge of the data subject (Clarke 1988: 508). Mae experiences the effects of her data surveillance when she is asked on the carpet by her supervisor for not attending the Portugal brunch organised by one of her colleagues. During the meeting, Mae is asked whether she went to the brunch, but Mae does not seem to have the slightest idea about the event and her expected presence there (Eggers 2013: 108). After the meeting, her friend Annie explains that the reason she was invited is that there is information on her *TruYou* profile that she has visited Lisbon (Ibid. p. 110). Mae herself has even forgotten this fact, but the information that was transferred during her first day at work added this past event to her account and created an assumption about her, based upon which she was sent the invitation to the brunch (Ibid. p. 111). This is an example of dataveillance creating a ‘distorted image’ of a person because not the whole context to the situation was provided (Clarke 1988: 508). After finding out, Mae feels ‘weirded out’ because an implication about her was made without her knowledge (Eggers 2013: 111). Moreover, Mae also learns that her friend Annie was asked to listen to the conversation of the people involved in the situation, which, again, surprises the protagonist and makes her feel uneasy (Ibid. p. 109).

Another example of dataveillance being used as a tool to control and incriminate a person is when Senator Williamson initiates an investigation into ‘whether or not the Circle acts as a monopoly’ (Ibid. p. 173). The senator’s initiative is met with disdain within ‘the Circle’ and Annie informs Mae that there is nothing to worry about, because the Senator is already facing certain challenges (Ibid. 174). Mae is not told what kind of challenges these are, but later on, it becomes known that the Senator is under the investigation ‘for half-dozen things, all kinds of ethical violations’ based on the searches and downloads ‘found on her computer’ (Eggers. p. 206). The scene instantly motivates a thought that the data about the Senator was manipulated in a way to discredit and frame her, so that she would not question the operating of the company. After this, the Senator is not mentioned again in the novel supporting the argument indicated before.

Moreover, after the incident, others who start ‘shouting about the supposed monopoly of ‘the Circle’ or company’s unfair monetization of the personal data of its users’ are accused of some criminal or deviant behaviour (Ibid. p. 240). They are put on investigation based on the ‘number of unspeakable searches [...] executed [...] and reams of illegal and inappropriate materials’ stored on their computers (Ibid.). In both examples it is evident that the data about the people was manipulated by the third party to create ‘a case’ for the investment in order to ‘buy their silence’ to not criticise ‘the Circle’ (Clarke 1988: 504). In other words, dataveillance provided distorted material that could be

manipulated by the third party to blackmail those who are not in agreement with the former.

Such extensive surveillance perfectly enables the panoptic mechanism of control. People under such surveillance are objectified and become the victims of self-incrimination. One of the examples in the novel of self-incrimination is presented in the dialogue between Mae and Bailey, when she is caught after the kayaking incident. As it was analysed previously, during their discussion Mae was defending the right to privacy and Bailey was objecting to her arguments and establishing the importance of the right to knowledge. Towards the end of their discussion, it is evident that Bailey is succeeding in influencing Mae and proving his point. It is important to mention that at the end of majority of the counterarguments Bailey adds the phrases ‘don’t you agree?’, ‘you follow?’, ‘right?’, ‘you see?’, ‘do you see how this is?’, ‘you see what I mean?’, ‘can you imagine’ (Eggers 2013: 284-291). The repetition of these phrases can be understood as rhetorical tools to strengthen his point and subtly suggest Mae what answers she should provide. And Mae does provide these answers – she nods, agrees with him and, finally, everything Bailey says ‘[makes] sense’ to her (Ibid. p. 287).

Coming closer to the end of their conversation, Bailey becomes more unmediated and suggests the answers to Mae directly. For example, he asks her if there is something specific Mae would like to tell him and the protagonist instantly knows that the question refers to the previous visit she had with Annie into Bailey’s office, but has promised her to not tell anyone about (Ibid. p. 290). Mae ‘knew, instantly, that lying was not an option’ and told Bailey she has been already in the office, but promised Annie to keep it a ‘secret’ (Ibid. p. 291). The following comments ‘I don’t know’, ‘I didn’t know what to do’, ‘I didn’t see either way as being ideal’, ‘I get in trouble either way’ seem to show fear and uncertainty about herself (Ibid.). When Bailey asks whether Mae feels ‘relief’ after sharing her ‘secret’, she answers - ‘relief’ (Ibid.). It is evident that Mae was subjected to Bailey’s subtle coercion. Her responses sound like ‘automatic responses’ to commands and she is not provided a choice to reach an agreement about the importance of privacy with herself first (Gerstein 1970: 253).

The notion of compulsory self-incrimination is in direct opposition to voluntarily confession, which happens when, according to Gerstein, people are given the right to reveal his/her actions, decision or thoughts committed in private (1970: 249-250). In the novel, Mae confesses voluntarily numerous times. This happens most often in *Book I* when she communicates personal details about her life or feelings to her friend Annie. One of the examples of voluntarily confession could be when she thanks Annie for the

possibility to work in the Circle (Eggers 2013: 44). She hugs her very tightly and starts crying, showing her emotions voluntarily in front of the person she trusted (Eggers 2013: 44). However, when her supervisor comes in she instantly wipes her tears and composes herself in front of the eyes of the other (Ibid. p. 45). This shows that Mae is comfortable to show her personal emotions only to the person she trusts and it corresponds with Gerstein's proposition that a person is in need of someone trustworthy to confess voluntarily to in order 'know oneself and grow as person' (1970: 252). Another example of voluntarily confession happens when Mae tells various times Annie about her encounters with her second romantic interest – Kalden. After each encounter, Mae reaches out to Annie to tell at least some details about her interest, their meeting and when she does not hear from him in some time, she shares her disappointment with Annie (Ibid. pp. 193-226).

The importance of personal relationships to Mae is especially clear after she becomes transparent and tries to contact her family, Annie, and her ex-boyfriend Mercer, but none of them reply or answer (Ibid. p. 375). She wants to share with someone the feeling of a 'tear' inside her, the 'tear' that was clear, loud and reminded her of a 'scream muffled by fathomless waters, that high pitched scream of a million drowned voices', but there was no one to share this feeling, or maybe even pain, with (Ibid.). Without the people she could trust and voluntarily share her 'confession' with, Mae is deprived of a right to reach a moral conclusion about herself, which also helps to form relationships 'of love and trust' (Gerstein 1970: 251).

After discussing the tools of privacy invasion by the company and how it can give rise to self-incrimination and deny of voluntarily confession, the last part of the analysis will be focused on Mae's transformation as an individual when her privacy is taken from her.

3.3. The Transformation of the Individual

Evidently, the goal of privacy invasion enabled through surveillance is to objectify and transform the individual according to the wishes of the one who intrudes. Success in this process leaves the individual objectified and transformed according to 'the norm' (Foucault 1975: 83-184). In the novel, Mae is the perfect example of a success of such process and certain stages of her transformation can be traced.

At first, Mae has control of her privacy and protects it. For example, she practises a hobby, kayaking, that no one knows about and she does not share it with anyone. When she is told that there are kayaking groups in 'the Circle', she is surprised, yet, still not sure if she would like to join them (Eggers 2013: 187).

While kayaking, Mae is often alone and sees no one, except the wildlife (Ibid. pp. 80-82). During the first kayaking episode in the novel Mae founds herself sobbing when she was far from the shore (Ibid. p. 82). She cries because she feels helpless to aid her ill father, whose health deteriorates day by day in front of her and mother's eyes (Ibid.). Mae feels better after some time alone and experiences that 'it [feels] good to cry, to let the shoulders shake, to feel the hot tears on her face, to taste their baby salt, to wipe snot all over the underside of her shirt' (Ibid. pp. 82-83). When private and not observed by others, Mae lets herself be vulnerable and expresses the emotions and pain she is feeling. Moreover, after crying she sits still in the kayak, 'feeling the vast volume of the ocean beneath her' (Ibid. p. 83). She knows that there is another world hidden underneath the water, 'but not knowing where, or really anything else,' feels 'at that moment, strangely right' (Ibid.). It is obvious that Mae enjoys the not knowing and thinks that it is 'plenty' enough to just stay 'in the middle of the bay' with 'nothing to do or see' (Ibid.). Moreover, she initially also does not feel comfortable with people sharing all their thoughts with her. For example, when she meets Francis, he says that her voice is 'so far the best thing about her', which is followed by 'a troubling pause' and Mae feeling as if she was slapped (Ibid. p. 35). This is an example how a thought, if expressed, is given significance and hurts a person; hence, for this reason Fried argued that some thoughts should be kept private, especially those that could be 'wounding' to the other (Fried 1968: 212). Mae responds to Francis' remark that she finds him 'strange', but Francis blames the fact the he does not have parents as an excuse for him being 'unfiltered' (Eggers 2013: 36). In another scene, when they meet for their first dinner together, Francis admits that she 'saved [him] so much inner turmoil' since he has never made the first move, but 'it usually takes a woman weeks to figure out she'll have to take the initiative' (Ibid. p. 116). This information makes Mae feel as if 'being clubbed' and it '[complicates] her feelings about Francis, who seemed so sweet one moment and so strange

and unfiltered the next' (Eggers 2013: 116). The reaction and thoughts that come to Mae might indicate that she is not comfortable with knowing all of her partner's thoughts.

Moreover, this knowledge of everything about the partner destroys the possibility of intimacy and trust because while Francis shares everything about himself, Mae does not want to know everything about him. This is also evident after their intercourse, when Francis asks her to rate his performance and Mae pleads Francis to not ask these things because 'it takes the enjoyment out of' the act for her (Ibid. p. 380). However, Francis objects that the 'not knowing takes enjoyment out' for him (Ibid.). This again shows the characters' opposing understanding about what information and the amount of it should be shared between each other. This, again, deprives the relationship of a possibility to reach the level of trust and intimacy and only functions on the superficial level (Fried 1968: 211).

During Mae's third kayaking episode, when she takes the kayak without the knowledge of the shop owner, she travels to the Blue Island, which is described as 'strange, jagged, never visited' (Eggers 2013: 264). Her wish to travel out of the marina and see the island that is isolated gives the reader an impression that she herself tries to invade someone's privacy and she even asks herself 'what was it about her that made her this curious' to visit a place that 'no one dared or bothered to visit' (Ibid. p. 267). By trying to search for an answer she concludes that the fact that 'no one could see her, and no one would ever know she was' there, except she, motivated her (Ibid. p. 268). However, when she reaches the place and climbs up the stone she sees 'for the first time a nest, resting in the tree's upper boughs' (Ibid. p. 269). She tries to look into the nest to see what is inside, but is not successful and thus thinks of touching it, but does not dare to do so, because she understands that by touching she 'would upset the equilibrium of scents and construction' of whatever that is inside the nest (Ibid.). This scene might carry great symbolic meaning. Here, Mae seems to be aware that the intrusion of something that should not be intruded could cause disharmony or even ruin it; hence, she concludes that for her it is 'enough to be aware of the million permutations possible around her' and that she 'really could not know much at all' (Ibid. p. 270).

However, this conclusion does not stick with Mae for long because after returning to the shore she is instantly caught by the police for taking the kayak without permission. What follows is the previously discussed dialogue with Bailey, which causes Mae to accept to become transparent, meaning that she will be wearing a camera on her neck as a necklace, which will provide view to 'everything that Mae [sees]', and share it with the world (Ibid. pp. 304-308).

By becoming transparent Mae's everyday routine is recorded, she is obliged to be constantly observed by others and her main task becomes to 'provide an open window into the life at the Circle, the sublime and the banal' (Ibid. 310). Her duties include 'touring of various

departments' of the company, 'the introduction of new products, either Circle made or Circle endorsed', presentation of different activities possible to practise on the company's campus (Eggers 2013: 309-310).

Theoretically, Mae is allowed to go wherever she wants, yet 'the Additional Guidance office [likes] to check in from time to time' where she is heading and give her directions (Ibid. p. 321). This is evident in the scene when she is instructed to show the feeding time of the shark, which was caught and brought to the company's campus by one of the Three Wise Men. During the scene, she is given constant instructions where to turn the camera lens, which angle to focus on or when to talk about certain matters (Ibid. pp. 308-321). This shows that Mae's actions are limited not only by being constantly observed, but also by being directly instructed to act in a certain way. This also happens to the Circlers that encounter Mae because they have to behave, or attempt to, 'as if no one is watching them' and this is considered 'part of their job at the Circle' (Ibid. p. 310). According to Foucault, surveillance indirectly alters people to behave according to 'the norm' because the knowledge of not knowing when they are watched creates this effect; yet, in the scenes it is evident that Mae and the workers are also pressured directly to act in a certain manner (Foucault 1975: 183-203). This point could be further justified by the following comment in the novel that if 'the Circle' is to 'be a company espousing transparency, and the global and unending advantages of open access' those working for the company '[need] to be living the ideal, always and everywhere, and especially on campus' (Eggers 2013: 310). Yet, at first the protagonist learns to manipulate her behaviour in front of the panoptic gaze. For example, when she needs a few minutes to think or 'let her mind wander' she focuses the lens of the camera on 'a game or demonstration or speech' for her watchers to watch (Ibid. p. 322). This technique is described as 'the ability to look to the outside world utterly serene and even cheerful, while, in her skull, all [is] chaos' (Ibid.). The 'skill' acquired by Mae shows that she is aware of being constantly observed and controls her actions to follow 'the norm', despite not being fully in accordance with the 'the norm' that she is supposed to follow. Her attempt to secure at least a few minutes of privacy for her thoughts proves this argument.

However, it is evident that the constant surveillance takes a toll on Mae and she starts to internalise the power established by surveillance. She starts to alter her behaviour and choices believing that the surveillance does her good. For example, when reaching for a chilled brownie as a snack, she stops herself because she sees her hand reaching for it, and 'seeing what everybody would be seeing, she [pulls] back' and takes packet of almonds (Ibid. pp. 328-329). Or when she feels a headache 'by eating less chocolate than usual', she reaches for an aspirin pill, but, again, seeing 'what everybody else would see' she feels 'desperate and wrenched' and decides to 'do without' (Ibid. p. 329). This shows evident power surveillance has upon her, yet,

what is more, Mae believes this makes her 'liberated from bad behaviours' and freed from 'anything immoderate' (Ibid.). She does not question the established power privacy invasion has upon her; she seems to be giving in to it and accepting 'the norm'. This example also provides evidence how the power established by surveillance ranks individual behaviour into 'good' and 'bad' (Foucault 1975: 180-184)

Moreover, she becomes transparent even while sleeping. After 10 p.m. transparency is optional until early morning, however, Mae leaves the cameras and wrists monitors on, so that the footage gathered of, for example, her 'movements during sleep [might] be valuable someday' (Eggers 2013: 332-333). The decision to be transparent entirely seems to reflect Bailey's idea of the transparency, when there are no private matters, no 'secrets' and everything is known to benefit in the creation of a society leading a 'moral way of life' (Ibid. p. 290).

Furthermore, Mae neglects the need for her thoughts and feelings to be private. Whenever, she feels 'the tear growing inside of her, opening quickly' and spreading 'a fathomless blackness [...] under her', she pours some sake to help her relax, forget and sleep better (Eggers 2013: 333). This shows the need of privacy remains, however, chooses to ignore it completely.

The shift in Mae's attitude toward privacy could be seen as directly related to the control of the information about herself. The more control she loses about her own privacy the more control she has over others. Mae's followers are subconsciously influenced by her purchases, 'will power' to moderate herself and opinions expressed in the company's surveys (Ibid. pp. 228-229). She is even called a 'a role model' and 'mothers [say] that their daughters looked up to her' (Ibid. p. 229). Despite the fact that her own choices and behaviour are altered because of the state of being observed, she feels that the responsibility to the company, 'the clients and partners, to the youth' to be an inspiration by doing the 'right thing' and staying 'within the bounds of moderation', keeps her days 'grounded and fuelled' (Ibid.). Mae enjoys being in control of the lives of others and this is also emphasised by the fact that she likes to hear herself pronouncing her own name, which makes 'her [feel] stronger' and 'a more indomitable version of herself' (Ibid. p. 330-331). This shows the full internalisation of the panoptic system when one is subjected to the power established by constant surveillance, one assumes the 'responsibility for the constraints of power' and becomes not only the observed, but of the observer as well (Foucault 1975: 202). The actions of such a person is decided in advance and person acts automatically according to 'the norm' set up by the establisher of the panoptic mechanism (Ibid. pp. 203-206).

At the very end of the novel, Mae becomes the one who represents the panoptic mechanism. In her last encounter with Kalden, who is revealed to be one of the Three Wise Men, Mae stands in favour of the right to knowledge and the Wise Man stands in favour of the right to privacy.

Their discussion reminds the one Mae had with Bailey, yet this time she takes the position Bailey defended and the establisher of the company is the rebel to argue against the privacy invasion. When Mae is asked whether ‘everyone should be tracked, should be watched’, she answers that ‘everything and everyone should be seen’ and to do so everyone needs to be watched (Ibid. p. 485). Mae’s words seem to echo those of Bailey’s and she becomes the perfect example of a person subjected to the successful establishment of panoptic system.

4. Conclusions

The aim of this BA paper was to demonstrate the importance of privacy to a person's behaviour and the consequences deprivation of it has on the individual in Dave Eggers' dystopian novel *The Circle* (2013). The transformation of the protagonist Mae was used as a premise to analyse the process of depriving the individual of privacy.

In the analysis part of this paper is evident that company 'the Circle' understands privacy as theft and tries to omit it every way possible. It also celebrates the right to knowledge and full transparency of people's everyday life, leaving no areas unobserved. This stands in opposition to the right to privacy, which means leaving certain practises private can liberate a person, help to build relationships and avoid humiliation.

Evidently, the right to knowledge in the novel is established through numerous types of surveillance to store information about people's behaviour, actions, bodily functions, and personal data. It was shown that constant surveillance takes away the right to control the information about oneself and enables the panoptic regime that transforms and alters people's behaviour according to the wants of the observer. Moreover, successful process of panoptic mechanism integration pressures the individual to internalise the power exercised upon one.

By being exposed to continuous surveillance, the protagonist undergoes the transformation that is sought by the panoptic system. At first, she defends privacy of certain contexts, enjoys it while practising a hobby in the wildlife and feels 'uneasy' about people who share too much information about themselves. However, after she is put under continuous surveillance, Mae voluntarily allows herself to be monitored even in her sleep, drinks sake to 'calm' and neglect her thoughts and believes that 'everything and everyone should be seen' in order to secure the right to knowledge. Mae becomes an exemplary person of the panoptic system who has great control over the lives and choices of others. She internalises the power practised upon her to its minute forms because she herself becomes a vocal defender of the system.

All in all, the novel allows to observe the ways invasion of privacy is established and how it affects the attitude towards privacy. It shows a transformation of a person that stood on the other side of the spectrum and enjoyed the benefits of the right to privacy turning into a firm believer of the ideology that everything should be known and everyone should be seen.

But what is left after 'all things are known'? To answer this question and conclude this BA paper it can be beneficial to pay attention the length of the chapters of the story. *Book I* is the most extensive chapter in the novel where Mae still has control over her information. *Book II* is the chapter almost twice shorter than the previous one, showing Mae becoming transparent and gradually losing control of her information. Finally, *Book III* consists of only 3 pages, proposing a conclusion that there is nothing left to tell when everything is known.

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6. Summary in Lithuanian

Privatumas, sekimas ir individas Dave Eggers romane „Ratas“

Šiame bakalauro darbe nagrinėjamas Dave Eggers distopinis romanas „Ratas“ (2013), skiriant ypatingą dėmesį privatumo problematikai. Kūrinio siužetas vyksta netolimoje ateityje ir seka įvykius jaunos moters Mae Holland gyvenime, kai ji prisijungia prie įtakingos Interneto kompanijos pavadinimu Ratas. Kompanijos pagrindinis tikslas yra apjungti žmonių virtualias veiklas į vieną socialinio tinklo profilį pavadinimu TikrasisTu (ang. *TruYou*) ir sukurti atsakingą bei veiklią visuomenę, skatinant visus tapti „skaidriais“ (ang. *transparent*). Šiam tikslui pasiekti kompanija naudoja naujausias technologijas, bevielius stebėjimo įrankius bei sensorius, kurie be pertraukimo nešiojami arba nuryjami, jog būtų galima rinkti duomenis ne tik apie individo išorinę veiklą, bet ir stebėti vidinius kūno procesus.

Romano analizė buvo suskirstyta į tris dalis. Pirmoje analizės dalyje pristatomas kompanijos suvokimas apie „teisę žinoti“ (ang. *the right to know*) ir noras apnuoginti visas privačias gyvenimo sferas. Tai oponuoja Daniel J. Solove privatumo suvokimui kaip kontekstualiam konceptui, kuris privalo būti saugomas priklausomai nuo aplinkybių, ir Charles Fried moralinei sąvokos analizei, įrodant privatumo svarbą individo savęs pažinimui bei santykių formavimui.

Antrojoje dalyje aptariami būdai kaip siekiama panaikinti privatumą, įtvirtinant „teisę žinoti“ bei transformuoti ir kontroliuoti individo elgesį pagal „normą“ (ang. *the norm*) remiantis Michel Foucault stebėjimo (ang. *surveillance*) sąvoka, papildyta Roger A. Clarke teorizavimu apie privačių duomenų stebėjimą (ang. *dataveillance*). Šioje dalyje pateikiama kaip nepertraukiamas stebėjimas gali skatinti savęs apkaltinimą, remiantis Roberst S. Gerstein suvokimu apie privatumo suvokimą kaip teisę apsisaugoti nuo savęs apkaltinimo (ang. *self-incrimination*), kas prieštarauja individo teisei į savanorišką „išpažintį“ (ang. *voluntary confession*).

Trečioje dalyje analizuojama pagrindinės knygos veikėjos Mae požiūrio į privatumą transformacija. Mae pavydžiu Eggers parodo, jog privatumo nebuvimas gali apibūdinti individą, jo/-s veiksmus, elgesį ir pasirinkimus, tačiau remiantis ne stebimojojo norais ir prioritetais, o stebėtojo suvokimu kaip individas turėtų elgtis.