

## Enframing Humanity: A Heideggerian Analysis of Technological Control in Dave Eggers's The Circle

A J Alazzawi<sup>1</sup>  , S A Jasim<sup>1</sup>  

<sup>1</sup>Department of English, College of Arts, University of Mosul, Mosul, Iraq

### Article information

#### Article history:

Received 25/11/2024

Revised 28/12/2024

Accepted 25/6/2025

#### Keywords:

Enframing  
Autonomy  
Surveillance  
Technology  
Heideggerian

#### Correspondence:



Ahmad Jasim Mohammad Alazzawi  
ahmed.alazzawi@uomosul.edu.iq

### Abstract

This research examines the portrayal of technological control in Dave Eggers's *The Circle* from the perspective of Martin Heidegger's concept of enframing. Heidegger contends that contemporary technology is not merely a collection of instruments, but a method of revelation that reduces humanity to a standing reserve. Thereby reducing people and nature to resources that can be manipulated by demonstrating how technology perceive people and the environment as resources that can be used for financial gain. The novel's portrayal of a society that is governed by algorithmic decision-making, datafication, and surveillance is indicative of Heidegger's apprehensions regarding the dehumanizing effects of technology. This research also illustrates the impact of technological domination on the loss of individual autonomy and authentic existence, as characters relinquish their agency to a comprehensive digital system. Utilizing the perspectives of Heidegger, Hubert Dreyfus, and Don Ihde, the study contextualizes "The Circle" within extensive philosophical discussions on the interplay between technology and human identity. It also exemplifies the novel's critique of contemporary technological practices by illustrating their influence on human identity and existential authenticity. The objective of the investigation is to demonstrate that Heidegger's critique of technology, particularly his concept of enframing, provides a potent framework for comprehending the more profound philosophical implications of Eggers's dystopian world.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69513/jnhf.v3.i2.a16> ©Authors, 2025, College of Education, Alnoor University.  
This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## تأطير الإنسانية: تحليل هايدجري للسيطرة التكنولوجية في رواية الدائرة لـ ديف إيجرز

احمد جاسم العزاوي   وشيماء عبدالعلي جاسم    
قسم اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية الآداب، جامعة الموصل  
المستخلص

يتناول هذا البحث تصوير السيطرة التكنولوجية في رواية "الدائرة" لديف إيجرز من منظور مفهوم التأطير عند مارتن هايدغر. يرى هايدغر أن التكنولوجيا المعاصرة ليست مجرد مجموعة من الأدوات، بل هي أسلوب كشف يُختزل البشرية إلى احتياطي دائم. وبالتالي، تُختزل البشر والطبيعة إلى موارد قابلة للتلاعب، وذلك من خلال توضيح كيف تنظر التكنولوجيا إليهما كمصادر يمكن استخدامها لتحقيق مكاسب مالية. إن تصوير الرواية لمجتمع تحكمه عمليات صنع القرار الخوارزمية، والتحويل إلى بيانات، والمراقبة، يدل على مخاوف هايدغر من الآثار اللاإنسانية للتكنولوجيا. كما يوضح هذا البحث تأثير الهيمنة التكنولوجية على فقدان الفرد استقلاليتته ووجوده الحقيقي، حيث تتخلى الشخصيات عن سلطتها لصالح نظام رقمي شامل. ومن خلال وجهات نظر هايدغر، وهوبرت دريفوس، ودون إيد، تضع الدراسة رواية "الدائرة" في سياق نقاشات فلسفية مستفيضة حول التفاعل بين التكنولوجيا والهوية الإنسانية. كما يُجسد هذا البحث نقد الرواية للممارسات التكنولوجية المعاصرة، مُبيناً تأثيرها على الهوية الإنسانية والأصالة الوجودية. ويهدف البحث إلى إثبات أن نقد هايدغر للتكنولوجيا، وخاصة مفهومه عن التأطير، يُوفر إطاراً فعّالاً لفهم التداعيات الفلسفية الأعمق لعالم إيجرز الديستوبي.

## Introduction

Dave Eggers's dystopian novel *The Circle*, which was published in 2013, explores the consequences of technology and social media companies unprecedented wielding power. *The Circle* is a novel that takes place in the United States, where a single technology corporation has gained control of the internet. The company is situated on a vast campus known as the Circle, which provides its employees with a variety of benefits, including complimentary lodging and meals, as well as an infinite array of social events. The narrative centers on Mae Holland, a young woman who secures employment at the Circle. Mae's sense of privacy and autonomy is ultimately compromised as she becomes more deeply enmeshed in the company's all-encompassing ethos as she advances within it. The circle's motto, "Secrets are Lies, Sharing is Caring, Privacy is Theft" (1) encapsulates the Circle's objective to eradicate privacy and render all information publicly. *The Circle* is a work that is highly pertinent to the current discussions regarding human identity, technology, and privacy, as it directly addresses the ethical, social, and philosophical issues that have arisen in the digital era. *The Circle* is a reflection of the contemporary tensions between the demands of a highly interconnected, data-driven world and personal privacy. Eggers critiques the universal nature of technology in contemporary society, with a particular emphasis on its influence on social behavior and relationships. The objective of this investigation is to explore the potential of Martin Heidegger's concept of enframing to conduct a critical analysis of the role of technology in Dave Eggers's *The Circle*. In particular, the study will examine the manner in which the novel portrays technology as a force that redefines human existence, diminishes individuality, and ultimately results in the loss of authentic being.

Martin Heidegger was a German philosopher whose work concentrated on the implications of technology and the essence of being. Heidegger critiques contemporary technology in his essay "The Question Concerning Technology," contending that it is not merely a collection of instruments, but a method of comprehending and engaging with the world. He presents critical concepts, including enframing (*Gestell*), which is the predominant method by which contemporary technology discloses the world (2). Modern technology challenges nature and humans to present themselves as resources to be controlled, in contrast to older technologies that may disclose nature in a more respectful manner. Additionally, he addresses the concept of standing-reserve, which is the process by which contemporary technology converts

all objects into resources that can be utilized for a specific purpose, including humans (2). Heidegger emphasizes the importance of authenticity, which involves engaging with the world in a manner that recognizes our true selves rather than becoming engrossed in the impersonal demands of technology. Enframing is a term used in Heidegger's philosophy to describe the manner in which technology imposes a particular worldview, in which all things, including human beings, are viewed as resources that can be optimized and controlled (2).

## Theoretical Framework: Heidegger's Philosophy of Technology

Heidegger in his "Question Concerning Technology" contends that enframing is a mode of revelation; however it is apart from the technical artifacts and practices commonly linked to technology. Heidegger asserts that enframing is not only an aspect of the assembling process of rods, pistons, or other components. It is not the technological endeavor itself. Enframing is the manner in which technology discloses the world to us, seeing all entities, including people, as standing-reserve (*Bestand*). It is essential to note Heidegger's distinction between enframing and technological objects or activities. Although the physical components of technology such as rods, pistons, and chassis which are typically associated with the term "Technology," but they are not represent the essence of technology according to Heidegger. The fundamental nature of technology is enframing, which is a mode of revealing that forces everything—people and nature into a framework where they are viewed as resources to be exploited. Enframing is the sole mechanism by which technological activity, such as the assembly of a machine, is influenced. Enframing is the foundation and starting point of all technological endeavors. It is a method of conceptualizing or organizing the world that transforms everything into a potential resource that can be used and manipulated. Heidegger also contends that technological activity, such as the assembly of machinery or the use of technology in daily life, does not initiate enframing; rather, it serves a reaction to it. The challenge presented by enframing creates the illusion that certain behaviors or activities are natural or essential. Heidegger posits that enframing operates at a more fundamental, profound level than any specific technology. Rather than the instruments themselves, it is the essence of modern technology that defines it. Heidegger posits that the risk is that enframing restricts human's perception of the world. The man is presented paralyzed in perceiving nature. In spite of people introduced as an autonomous entities with

intrinsic value, but they are no more than managed resources. As Heidegger states:

Enframing means the gathering together of the setting-upon that sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the actual, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. Enframing means the way of revealing that holds sway in the essence of modern technology and that is itself nothing technological. On the other hand, all those things that are so familiar to us and are standard parts of assembly, such as rods, pistons, and chassis, belong to the technological. The assembly itself, however, together with the aforementioned stockparts, fall within the sphere of technological activity. Such activity always merely responds to the challenge of enframing, but it never comprises enframing itself or brings it about (2).

Heidegger offers a significant critique of modern technology, asserting that it is not simply a neutral instrument employed by people but a manner of disclosing the universe. This kind of disclosure, termed enframing (*Gestell*), enforces a certain worldview that converts all entities, including nature and humanity, into standing-reserve (*Bestand*). Heidegger emphasizes the distinction between two categories of technology: traditional technology, exemplified by "a windmill or a wooden bridge" (2), which engages with nature in a respectful manner, and modern technology, which compels nature to provide resources in a regulated fashion. Traditional technology harmonizes with the natural order, but modern technology perceives nature as a resource to be exploited, reducing it to mere standing-reserve. Heidegger's principal assertion is that contemporary technology transcends being a simple instrument; instead, it influences human's understanding of reality. This concept deviates from traditional instrumentalist perspectives on technology, which regard technology as neutral and solely fulfilling the intentions of its user. For Heidegger, technology discloses the world in a specific manner, presenting everything as a resource for manipulation. Heidegger posits that contemporary perceptions of a forest have shifted from recognizing it as a vibrant ecosystem to regarding it merely as a source of timber or a venue for economic exploitation (2). This mode of enframing extends beyond the natural realm, encompassing human beings, who are increasingly perceived as resources within technological frameworks. According to Heidegger, modern technology diminishes all entities to standing-reserve (*Bestand*), wherein everything, including humans, is evaluated solely by its utility. Consequently, nature, individuals, and culture are treated as objects to be optimized, a transformation that erodes their intrinsic value,

relegating them to mere resources.

In *Questioning Technology*, Andrew Feenberg elaborates on Heidegger's philosophy, particularly the concept of enframing in contemporary existence. He acknowledges the importance of Heidegger's enframing theory but criticizes its determinism, claiming that it ignores the possibility of social effects and human action in the development of technology. Feenberg contends that by addressing the social and political structures that control its use, technology may be democratic and that it is possible to steer technological growth toward more ecological and ethical goals (3). In his 1987 book *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life: A Philosophical Inquiry*, Albert Borgmann expands upon Heidegger's notion of enframing by introducing the "device paradigm," which posits that technology conceals the inherent complexity of the world behind simplistic, utilitarian devices. Borgmann concurs with Heidegger's claim that modern technology presents the world in a manner that obscures its profound reality, thereby hindering authentic human engagement with it (4).

Don Ihde, a prominent philosopher of technology, critiques Heidegger's singular perspective on technology in his book *Heidegger's Technologies: Postphenomenological Perspectives*. Ihde posits that Heidegger's notion of enframing may be too gloomy, neglecting the many, bodily interactions individuals make with technology. Ihde contends that technological mediation does not invariably lead to the reduction of entities to standing-reserve, highlighting that individuals can cultivate more complex interactions with technology that encompass creativity and ethical involvement. Considering a phenomenological perspective, Ihde's theory of technology emphasizes on the way people interact and perceive technology. Ihde identifies two fundamental relationships: embodiment relations and hermeneutic relations. Technologies, in embodied interactions, serve as extensions of the body, therefore enabling people to engage with the environment in improved ways (5). Ihde contends that technology is multi-directional and may both restrict and improve human experience. Seeing technology as ingrained in daily life, his approach shows a more neutral perspective. Unlike Martin Heidegger, modern technology alienates people from more true ways of life by imposing a manner of thinking that reduces persons to simple utility. His criticism reduces human autonomy and hides different ways of being, therefore influencing humans understanding of the world and ourselves. Unlike Ihde's balanced perspective, Heidegger cautions that by imposing a mechanical

viewpoint, technology reduces human's capacity to interact with the world meaningfully. Although both Ihde and Heidegger acknowledge the transforming potential of technology, they evaluate it in different ways. Emphasizing interaction and agency, Ihde's phenomenological approach holds that people co-shape their experience with technology. Depending on the way it is applied, he regards technology as both empowering and restricting. On the other hand, Heidegger adopts a more deterministic perspective, implying that technology pushes a certain manner of exposing the world that overwhelms human freedom and causes estrangement (5).

In his book *New Romantic Cyborgs: Romanticism, Information Technology, and the End of the Machine* 2017, Mark Coeckelbergh introduces Heidegger's concepts to the realm of contemporary artificial intelligence and robotics. His critique of enframing is based on the backdrop of artificial intelligence, and he contends that the technological mechanisms that control the modern society now foster a reductionist and utilitarian perspective of humans and the environment. His thoughts are consistent with the depiction of technological control in *The Circle*, in which the system diminishes the agency of humans and puts them to continuous observation. The technology has an impact on the waste management of the environment. When it comes to the humanity, human must be aware on how to interact with nature and ecosystem, and how technology directly or indirectly affects the lives and plants (6).

Hubert Dreyfus, a prominent philosopher of technology, expands upon Martin Heidegger's critique of technology to examine the influence of contemporary Artificial Intelligence on human decision-making. In *Being-in-the-World* a Commentary on Heidegger's *Being in Time*, Division, Dreyfus emphasizes that human intellect is profoundly embodied and practical, a quality that AI is unable to fully replicate, drawing from Heidegger's concept of being-in-the-world. He critiques the idea that human decision-making can be reduced to computational logic, arguing that technological systems fail to capture the depth of human experience that results from interaction with the world. Dreyfus contends that AI systems, regardless of their level of sophistication, are devoid of the intuitive, non-rational comprehension that accrues from lived experience, a form of knowledge that humans acquire through their involvement in social and physical environments (7). Dreyfus cautions that an excessive dependence on technology can lead to the alienation of individuals from their authentic selves, in accordance with Heidegger's pessimism. He contends that humans are

at risk of losing their sense of agency when technology mediates decision-making processes. This is consistent with Heidegger's concept of enframing (*Gestell*), which posits that contemporary technology teaches individuals to perceive themselves and the world as resources that can be optimized. Dreyfus expands this concept to artificial intelligence, positing that data-driven systems promote a detached, mechanistic form of reasoning that undermines the embodied and meaningful aspects of human existence (7).

This paper intends to bring together Shoshana Zuboff's surveillance capitalism and Heidegger's concept of enframing to offer a nuanced analysis of the novel. In her work *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2019), Shoshana Zuboff contends that contemporary technologies have created a new economic system in which human experience has been treated as data. Zuboff elucidates that corporations generate profits by extracting behavioral data from individuals in order to influence their actions, thereby compromising personal privacy (8). This is consistent with Heidegger's concept of enframing, as individuals in *The Circle* are not regarded as individuals with intrinsic value, but rather as resources that the organization must monitor and manage. Zuboff's idea also emphasizes the hazards of surveillance becoming normalized, which is indicative of the culture in which humans internalize the notion that privacy is obsolete. Zuboff posits that technological systems that promise convenience and social acceptability but undermine fundamental freedoms compel individuals to participate in surveillance-driven systems, and performative transparency. This research attempts to make a connection between these insights and Heidegger's apprehension regarding the potential for technology to restructure human existence by treating individuals as resources. Here, it is crucial to note that both Zuboff and Heidegger investigate the manner in which technological systems manipulate and control individuals, reducing them only objects that can be controlled. As Paul Gyllenhammer raises serious concerns regarding the possibility of misuse while highlighting the significant implications of living under continual observation. He comments on the widespread use of surveillance methods, such as the installation of video cameras in public areas, governmental surveillance of people across the world, and cyber-surveillance methods that monitor internet activity (9).

Analysis of *The Circle* through Heidegger's Enframing In *The Circle*, Dave Eggers creates a dystopian scenario where the main business epitomizes the all-encompassing influence of technology on human life.

Heidegger's idea of enframing provides a critical framework for analyzing the depiction of technological control. In *The Circle*, characters are transformed into standing-reserve, diminished to data points and behavioral patterns, reflecting Heidegger's assertion that contemporary technology reduces creatures, including humans, to simple resources governed by the principles of efficiency and control. Mae Holland is the protagonist of the novel, a fresh university graduate seeking to establish her position in the world. She is from a little village in California and originates from a middle-class working family. Mae's life is irrevocably transformed when her college friend, Annie, offers her a position at the Circle, a prominent technology firm. She is currently at the very top of the technology sector and occupies a prestigious position among her colleagues. Mae's experiences in the Circle company provide her with acknowledgment and validation, although this is achieved at the expense of her relationships and privacy. She gets alienated from her parents, her former lover Mercer, and her best friend Annie as the Circle gradually envelops her under its ideological framework.

In *The Circle*, Eggers depicts Mae's character transformation to demonstrate the way technology can reduce individuals to standing-reserve status, a concept that is derived from Martin Heidegger's philosophy of technology. Mae's identity and sense of self-worth become intertwined with data production and participation in surveillance systems as she incorporates herself into the Circle's technological ecosystem. Mae's personal growth in the novel serves as an illustration of the mediums that individuals can internalize the technological logic of enframing, thereby becoming active participants in their own commodification. Mae is portrayed as an individual with her own thoughts and sense of privacy. However, as she becomes more deeply involved with the Circle, she gradually loses these aspects of her individuality. Her character develops through the novel starting from a subject with agency to an object of The Circle's technological system; this transformation is clearly marked by certain incidents in the novel such as, the first step in her reduction to quantifiable data by agreeing to swallow a health monitoring chip that tracks her vital signs and activities. She also becomes obsessed with her PartiRank which is a term used in the novel as a way to track one's online social involvement at the Circle, including how much you "like," comment on, or talk to other co-workers; "At five p.m. the chute closed and Mae worked on her PartiRank forty-five minutes, bringing it from 1,827 to 1,430, a process entailing 344 comments, posts, and almost a thousand smiles and frowns" (1). Mae then

agrees to wear a camera that broadcasts her life 24/7, effectively eliminating her privacy. This decision marks her complete surrender to the Circle's ideology of total transparency.

Through a deep analysis of Mae, she is strongly motivated by the company's commitment to community and joins the Circle with the goal of achieving professional success. Nevertheless, Mae's sense of self is increasingly shaped by the technological framework of the Circle as she grows more involved in the organization's totalitarian work environment. Social validation at the Circle is assessed by engaging in a variety of online activities. This establishes the groundwork for her transition to standing reserve, as her value is increasingly determined by her contributions to the organization's data-driven culture. Mae's self-worth is inextricably linked to her online metrics, including the number of followers she acquires and the activities in which she participates in the system, as she grows within the Circle.

It takes into account zings, exterior followers of your intra-company zings, comments on your zings, your comments on others' zings, your comments on other Circlers' profiles, your photos posted, attendance at Circle events, comments and photos posted about those events basically it collects and celebrates all you do here. The most active Circlers are ranked highest of course. (1)

This research intends to establish a foundation in this context; Mae is valued as a resource for generating data, rather than as an individual with intrinsic worth, as exemplified by Heidegger's concept of standing-reserve. The company's algorithms, which promote performance, mediate her relationships and perpetually quantify her behavior. This transformation demonstrates the Circle's technological apparatus's role as a mechanism of enframing, which compels individuals to perceive themselves solely in terms of utility. Mae's growing reliance on external validation through metrics is consistent with Heidegger's preoccupation with the way in which technology obscures authentic ways of being by framing existence solely in terms of functionality (2). Mae loses her ability for autonomous thought and real experiences as she gets increasingly captivated with the Circle's surveillance system. In a society where enframing rules, Heidegger suggests that individuals become unable to consider other ways of life (2). Mae's embrace of the Circle's motto "Secrets are lies and Privacy is theft" (1) shows the way the company's principles take front stage in her perception of identity replacement. Mae's growing reliance on the Circle's technologies to define her relationships and choices

clearly shows her loss of autonomy. Her intimate events with her family are also aired for public view, therefore removing any feeling of personal authenticity.

As indicated by McKenna, 2023(10), the Circle illustrates the method the idea of freedom of speech has been warped in the social media sphere. The Circle manipulates free speech as a rhetorical device to defend the company's brutal data gathering methods rather than defending it as an individual right. In addition to embodying many of the traits of surveillance capitalism, the Circle is a prime example of Heidegger's description of the enframing nature of technology. According to McKenna, The Circle is a prime example of surveillance capitalism and Heidegger's idea of enframing, in which technology reinterprets human connections and ideals for the purposes of exploitation and control (10).

It is vital to recognize that Mae exemplifies standing reserve not only as a result of her value in terms of her participation, but also as a resource for the company's surveillance network. The Circle's data acquisition processes are facilitated by her consistent engagement, which contributes to the company's objective of establishing a totalizing control system. This is indicative of Heidegger's apprehension that contemporary technology dehumanizes individuals by binding them to its logic, rendering them mere components of a mechanistic system that does not allow for freedom (2). Mae has completely adopted the Circle's worldview, signifying her total change into standing-reserve. She no longer scrutinizes the ramifications of the company's monitoring; instead, she actively endorses it. Her deprivation of privacy, autonomy, and genuine identity underscores the perils Heidegger attributes to enframing: a reality in which individuals become indistinguishable from the technology they utilize, diminished to mere resources subject to surveillance and optimization (2). Eggers illustrates Mae's transformation, extending Heidegger's concept of the invisibility of enframing. Heidegger contends that enframing is harmful not because of its intrinsic evil, but because it obscures alternative modes of existence, so constraining human freedom by constricting reality to notions of efficiency (2). Mae consciously conforms her identity to the system, rendering herself oblivious to the limitations it puts on her existence.

Evgeniia V. Kashulina's examination of surveillance in *The Circle*, goes deeper into its philosophical foundations using Heidegger's idea of enframing. While Kashulina insightfully compares Eggers' work to classic dystopian novels, It is possible arguing that *The Circle* symbolizes a more subtle type of

totalitarianism. The examination of the Circle's utopian language and digital technologies undermine personal agency, entwining human identity with a technical framework that promotes control over freedom. It is crucial to highlight the procedure that The Circle underscores Heidegger's cautions on the dehumanizing effects of technology. In contrast to the oppressive rulers found in traditional dystopias, the Circle's totalitarianism is accepted by its citizens, illustrating the allure of surveillance capitalism. This transition from coercion to agreement is a key change in the dystopian genre, demonstrating how contemporary technology practices affect society structures and human existence.

Mae's growing reliance on the Circle's electronic mechanisms demonstrates how her need for approval inside the all-pervasive digital framework takes precedence over her interpersonal connections, including those with her parents and friends. It is crucial to underline that the novel's indictment of how technology commodifies personal ties and redefines the fundamental nature of human interactions is exemplified by Mae's quest for external approval. In this situation, Mae turns into a standing reserve in the system that is appreciated for her capacity to provide information and uphold the Circle's supremacy rather than for her true nature. Building on this, It is possible to argue that Mae's emphasis on being "seen" is indicative of a larger cultural movement in which digital platforms commodify interpersonal connections. The transition from interpersonal relationships to performative exchanges is similar to the way technology reinterprets relationships as chances for social capital rather than genuine contact. Expanding upon Shohel Rana's analysis in "Normalizing Surveillance in Dave Eggers' *The Circle*", which posits that privacy is crucial for personal fulfillment and critiques the normalization of monitoring as a means of societal control. Rana emphasizes the necessity of private areas for fostering personal significance. Nevertheless, the novel implies that privacy is rendered questionable, because it suggests that privacy depicts a world in which the quest for complete transparency is viewed as a moral ideal. This reduces the importance of privacy by redefining it as a barrier to collective trust. I expand on Rana's interpretation by including Martin Heidegger's notions of Enframing (Gestell) and standing-reserve. In the narrative, surveillance corresponds with Heidegger's concern that technology obstructs alternative modes of being and comprehension. The Circle illustrates a uniform existence in which uniqueness is deemed a burden, and those who oppose transparency are ostracized. This illustrates

Heidegger's apprehension that technology reconfigures human existence, transforming individuals into mere resources for surveillance and data extraction, lacking inherent meaning.

Eggers's endeavor to regulate all facets of existence embodies Heidegger's critique of instrumental rationality. Heidegger contends that current technology converts all entities into "standing reserve" to attain technological efficiency. Likewise, the Circle's fixation on monitoring and control exemplifies the diminishment of persons to mere resources, wherein they are anticipated to fulfill the company's objectives of complete visibility and dominance, rather than maintaining their intrinsic worth. The Circle depicts an incessant drive for documentation. As Mae transforms into an instrument, data to be administered, she is compelled to divulge every facet of her existence to the public. This approach embodies Heidegger's concept of enframing, wherein all entities are transformed into data for system optimization. Eamon Bailey is one of the "three wise men" that manage The Circle and serves as the public representative of the corporation and resides in an unassuming residence with his spouse and children. He asserts that "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" (Eggers 40) highlighting the conviction that nothing should elude the Circle's scrutiny under the pretext of responsibility. Eggers critiques the dehumanization of individuals and the suppression of authentic happiness that invariably results from technological systems that promise utopian perfection by eliminating privacy. This is in close agreement with Heidegger's cautionary essay that regard beings as trivial tools for achieving technological objectives, neglecting the authenticity of existence. Eggers perfectly depicts a society in which technology is employed to establish a world that is transparent, devoid of ambiguity, and where personal space is preserved. The Circle's fixation on complete surveillance is indicative of their conviction that perfection can only be attained by quantifying everything. Nevertheless, this need for perpetual engagement results in emotional emptiness, as individuals relinquish personal autonomy and genuine relationships in favor of metrics within the system.

Paramaguru Raj and P. Tamilselvi's "Foucauldian Resistance in Dave Eggers' *The Circle*" provides an engaging examination of dystopian literature through the perspective of Michel Foucault's idea of resistance. They successfully demonstrate the way of power relations in the novel are perpetuated by technical expertise, while simultaneously emphasizing the

fragmented character of opposition outside the circle. Using Foucauldian concepts, Paramaguru Raj and P. Tamilselvi examine how resistance is distributed into a coherent force, allowing the firm to retain its control. This paper concentrate on expanding this by incorporating Heidegger's idea of technological framing to investigate the philosophical depth of Eggers' critique. It is essentially to point out that, although Foucault's framework demonstrates how power consolidates by exploiting disunity, Heidegger's concept of enframing provides insight into the ontological transformation that technology imposes on human life. It is argued that The Circle's lack of cohesive opposition is a sign of the larger problem of technological determinism. In a time when technology increasingly controls human lives, the study emphasizes the need to recover both individual and community autonomy.

Pivotality is intended to emphasize the kayak scene in which Mae momentarily escapes the Circle and reestablishes a transient sense of personal freedom and autonomy. Mae experiences a sense of liberation from the oppressive expectations of the Circle's surveillance apparatus as she kayaks across the water without any monitoring device; "In the kayak, out on the water, with no one watching, she felt a sense of calm and liberation, like she was finally unseen, untouched by the company's totalizing grasp" (1). This experience is in striking contrast to the digital personality she has established within the Circle's system, where each action is monitored. This moment underscores the importance of ambiguity, which "the Circle" perceives as a threat but is crucial for personal well-being. Mae's fleeting departure underscores the significance of existing outside of technological control, where life can unfold naturally without constant scrutiny.

It is essential to emphasize the kayak scene in this research, as it represents a conflict between the Circle's totalizing system and personal autonomy. Mae is able to experience a moment of authenticity as she floats on the water, liberated from the oppressive pressure to conform to digital expectations. Nevertheless, this period of autonomy is short-lived. Mae's regret regarding her loss of connection to the Circle is indicative of the challenge of resisting the temptation of technological control, even when it dehumanizes individuals; "And knowing she was being watched, that the Circle was, overnight, the most-watched workplace in the world, reminded her, more profoundly than ever, just how radically her life had changed in only a few months" (1). Heidegger's critique that technological systems can shape individuals to internalize the need for continuous engagement is underscored by this inner conflict,

which reveals the psychological grasp of the Circle's ideology: Mae has been conditioned to view autonomy as a violation of community values. The kayak scene is consistent with Heidegger's concept of enframing, which denotes the manner in which contemporary technology converts all objects into standing-reserve resources that can be utilized. Mae's escape in the kayak in the Circle temporarily disrupts this framework, enabling her to experience life on her own terms rather than being subjected to a technological instrument. Nevertheless, this autonomy is unsustainable in the world of the Circle. Heidegger's apprehension that a society is virtually impossible to return to authentic ways of being once it is thoroughly entangled in technological enframing is reflected in Mae's eventual return to the Circle. (Heidegger, 1977, 126) Personal freedom is stifled by the unwavering imperative to participate, resulting in a limited opportunity for authentic pleasure.

In Betiel Wasihun's work, "Surveillance and Shame in Dave Eggers's *The Circle*," she examines the complex interplay between shame and surveillance society. Wasihun emphasizes that digital platforms cultivate a paradoxical dynamic, wherein monitoring prompts social media users to participate in self-exposure. She utilizes the concept of the "Funopticon," a whimsical reinterpretation of Bentham's panopticon, wherein people engage in their own visibility by confounding conventional notions of shame. It is acknowledgeable that Wasihun's assertion on the interconnection of shame and surveillance; nevertheless, it is intended to further clarify this perspective by including Heidegger's notion of enframing. It is arguable that the Circle's fixation on visibility diminishes individuals to mere standing-reserves. The removal of private places fosters guilt and deprives individuals of genuine life, confining them to a performative cycle governed by technology systems. Consequently, shame functions as both an emotional and a structural element of the Circle's monitoring system.

Eggers emphasizes the full integration of technology, identity, and privacy. He describes the way technology, as represented by color-tagging and surveillance cameras, is used to classify individuals, reducing them to "anomalies" inside a larger system. According to Heidegger, enframing reduces humanity to a "standing reserve" a resource that exists just for use. Similarly, *The Circle*'s approach views people as data points to be controlled rather than individuals with distinct experiences and identities. This is exactly what Heidegger cautioned against: when technology begins to "reveal" the world and its inhabitants through numbers and anomalies, humans lose their ability to

experience being honestly. Individuality has been replaced by an external definition imposed by technology, transforming humans into objects within the system rather than independent creatures with agency. This also reflects Eggers' criticism of technology methods that purport to improve security while undermining privacy and autonomy. Eggers highlights the limitations of ethical discourse surrounding technology. Privacy regulations act as a weak barrier in an area where human value has already degraded. Following Heidegger observation, in a society dominated by technical frames, ethical issues frequently take second place to efficiency and control. In Eggers' apocalyptic vision, privacy concerns are reduced to technicalities rather than manifestations of deeper, existential rights.

"See, this way the cameras are just part of it. The color-tagging tells you who's anomalous, so you only have to pay attention to that particular anomaly. Of course, the catch is whether or not this violates any privacy laws" (1).

Eggers carefully depicts the severe repercussions of technological dominance, in which the quest of omniscience becomes the primary goal, attained through increasingly widespread surveillance. Eggers represents the transformation that the Circle's technology enacts on society, following Heidegger's idea of enframing: it reconfigures human identity into a system-controlled life where privacy and true being are obsolete, and "all-seeing, all-knowing" (1). It is obvious that the circle represents the way technology changes not just our environment but also our perception of existence itself, confining humans under surveillance.

Following Heidegger, authenticity is gained in accepting life's complexity and the "unknowable" parts of personal experience. In *The Circle*, Eggers illustrates the destruction of authenticity by substituting a monitored life in which every person's existence is governed by a system that defines and controls it from the outside. In corresponds to Heidegger's caution that improper use of contemporary technology reduces freedom and autonomous being, this system stifles potential autonomy rather than enhancing human individuality. As it was previously discussed, technology increases societal constraints and dependencies, creating a situation where people feel pressured to use technology in order to live up to inflated expectations. Eggers expresses this through Mae Holland's growing involvement in the Circle's system; "But the tools you guys create actually manufacture unnaturally extreme social needs. The technologies do more than just meet a desire for connection; they generate a new need for

ongoing involvement, changing personal connections and social interactions into commodities that can be watched. This demonstrates the way modern technology practices shape human identity, making it reliant on external confirmation. It is critical to emphasize that the Circle's tools create "unnaturally extreme social needs" that degrade individuals by replacing actual human connections with algorithmically managed interactions. This artificial social framework causes a loss of existential authenticity, which Heidegger defines as the ability to live according to one's own true ideals while being compelled to satisfy the system's expectations for continual involvement rather than pursuing one's own unique goals.

Eggers comprehensively critiques the inherent risks of centralized technology control while reflecting The Circle's rhetoric of outward participation. Eggers draws attention to the fundamental truth that, since individuals are forced to participate in technologically imposed frames, systems frequently encourage compliance rather than true individuality; "The goal is to make sure that everyone who works at the Circle can weigh in on issues that affect their lives—mostly on campus, but in the larger world, too" (1). The Circle's technology forces people to follow its rules and change who they are to meet its requirements for constant visibility. Instead of being independent individuals with the capacity for genuine self-expression, this decreases workers to "standing-reserve" resources suited for the system rules. A personal point of view, it is believed that The Circle's focus on universal involvement is an example of the way technology systems influence human behavior under the pretense of empowerment. In addition, the criticism examines the way the promise of inclusion turns into a means of establishing hegemony through technical means. Under the guise of cooperation, the system imposes involvement as a kind of control rather than encouraging genuine individual empowerment. Additionally, it is arguable that these systems reinterpret what it means to be "informed," bringing these ideas in connection with the requirements of technology efficiency rather than genuine human inquiry.

Through a deep examination of the novel, it is discovered that The Circle perfectly captures the company's basic philosophy, which frames monitoring and transparency as ultimate commodities. At the same time, the circle enforces a totalitarian mindset in which privacy is completely destroyed; "all that happens must be known" (1). Eggers examines the way of technology methods legitimize intrusive surveillance under the guise of advancement and

security. Building on this examination, it is arguable that The Circle exposes the negative aspects of transparency and the ability to know everything, hence criticizing its alluring rhetoric. It emphasizes the way of the need for universal exposure threatens the fundamental human right to privacy, which is important for individual autonomy. The Circle eliminates areas for reflection and resistance by limiting life to what can be observed.

### Conclusion

As it is indicated in the discussion of The Circle, Dave Eggers has attempted to use Martin Heidegger's criticism of contemporary technology to examine into the fundamental philosophical ramifications of a dystopian future. Through an analysis of the idea of enframing, the research shows the way the Circle's comprehensive technology system redefines human identity, diminishes uniqueness, and compromises existential authenticity in order to achieve of control and transparency. The research concludes that The Circle critiques technology as a tool and a way of being, a system that turns people into standing-reserves that are only appreciated for their productivity and data. Through Mae Holland's journey, the novel demonstrates the catastrophic effects of such technology enframing on individual autonomy and the capacity to live genuinely. The dehumanizing possibility of a hyperconnected, surveillance-driven future where individuality is absorbed by the communal gaze is highlighted by Mae's growing estrangement from her parents and partner. The research supports Heidegger's caution that the core of contemporary technology is its ability to shape the world, which is in perfect harmony with Eggers's criticism. The Circle is a powerful warning that advancements in technology have the potential to turn human life into a commodity. Extending the study analysis, it is contended that although Heidegger offers a strong foundation for comprehending the philosophical ramifications of technological control, other modern viewpoints can counterbalance his pessimism. With their focus on the interaction between humans and technology as well as surveillance capitalism, philosophers like Don Ihde and Shoshana Zuboff provide more levels of understanding into the ways people might resist the reductive tendencies of technological framing. Ultimately, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the intersection of technology, identity, and existential authenticity. It underscores the need for awareness as it is navigated as an increasingly technologized world. According to Heidegger's philosophy, Eggers' novel is an urgent call to reconsider the procedures of technology functions in

human life as a tool that enhances rather than defines who humans are. It also came to the conclusion that The Circle offers a warning about the dangers of technology progress and promotes a return to more natural ways of being while struggling the demands of technological enframing.

**References:**

- 1.Eggers D. *The Circle: A Novel*. New York, NY: Alfred A. 2013
- 2.Heidegger M. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper & Row. 1977
- 3.Feenberg A. *Questioning Technology*. Routledge. 1999.
- 4.Borgmann A. *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life: A Philosophical Inquiry*. University of Chicago Press. 1984.

- 5.Ihde D. *Heidegger's Technologies: Postphenomenological Perspectives*. Fordham University Press. 2010
- 6.Alazzawi A J M. Toxic consciousness in Ann Pancake's novel *Strange as This Weather Has Been*". *Adab Al-Rafidayn*. 2019; (79):13–26.
- 7.Dreyfus H.L. *Being-in-the-world: A commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*. MIT Press. 1990
- 8.Zuboff S. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. New York PublicAffairs. 2019.
- 9.Gyllenhammer P. Sartre and Heidegger on Social Deformation and the Anthropocene". *Sartre Studies International*. 2018
- 10.McKenna III P J. Meet the New Boss: Dave Eggers's *The Circle* and the New Digital Totalitarianism". *College Literature*. 2023.