การถูกคุกคามความเป็นส่วนตัวผ่านทางสื่อสังคมออนไลน์ : เมื่อความเป็นส่วนตัวกลายเป็นสาธารณะในนวนิยายของ เดฟ เอกเกอร์ส เดอะเซอร์เคิล

Privacy Threats through Social Media: When Privacy Becomes Public in Dave Eggers' The Circle

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บทคัดย่อ

      บทความวิชาการนี้มุ่งวิเคราะห์วิธีการคุกคามความเป็นส่วนตัวของบริษัทเดอะเซอร์เคิล ซึ่งเป็นบริษัทที่มีความล้ำสมัยทางเทคโนโลยี แต่งโดย เดฟ เอกเกอร์ โดยการพยายามล้างสมองให้ประชาชนเห็นประโยชน์ของการแลกเปลี่ยนความเป็นส่วนตัวกับความเป็นสาธารณะ การวิเคราะห์ครั้งนี้นำกระบวนความคิดในเรื่องสังคมที่ไม่พึงปรารถนาและลัทธิเผด็จการ รวมทั้งแนวคิดจิตวิทยาเรื่องทฤษฎีความต้องการของมนุษย์ของอับราฮัม มาสโล มาประยุกต์ใช้เพื่อให้เห็นถึงวิธีการคุกคามได้ชัดเจนยิ่งขึ้น บริษัทได้ใช้แนวความคิดและวิธีทั้งหมดห้าอย่างด้วยกันที่จะสามารถเข้าถึงความเป็นส่วนตัวของผู้ใช้สื่อสังคมออนไลน์ ได้แก่ 1. ใช้ความสะดวกสบายในการขโมยความเป็นส่วนตัว 2. มีตัวตนผ่านทางสื่อสังคมออนไลน์เพื่อ

ทำให้ไม่พลาดการติดต่อสื่อสาร 3.ความลับคืออาชญากรรมต่อสาธารณชน 4.แบ่งปันข้อมูลส่วนตัวเพื่อแสดงความโอบอ้อมอารีและความอุทิศตนต่อสาธารณะ 5.ความโปร่งใสนำไปสู่ประชาธิปไตยที่แท้จริง ด้วยกลวิธีดังกล่าวทำให้พวกเขาไม่ได้ตระหนักว่าบริษัทคุมคามความเป็นส่วนตัว

คำสำคัญ: การถูกคุกคามความเป็นส่วนตัวทางสื่อสังคมออนไลน์ *เดอะเซอร์เคิล* สังคมที่ไม่พึงปรารถนา ลัทธิเผด็จการ ทฤษฎีความต้องการตามลำดับขั้นของมาสโลว์

Abstract

This academic article aims to analyze Dave Eggers' *The Circle* focusing on the strategies of privacy theft of the powerful advanced technological company, The Circle. They attempt to brainwash people by showing them the benefits of turning their privacy into publicity. The concept of dystopia, totalitarianism and Abraham Maslow's hierarchy needs' theory are applied in this discussion. The company employs five different concepts and ways to gain their authority through privacy theft: firstly, using convenience as a tool to steal people's privacy; secondly, being visible by public is the way of keeping communication; thirdly, secrecy as a crime to publicity; fourthly, sharing information as the generosity and devotion to the world; fifthly, transparency leads to the true democracy. With all those effective strategies above, people do not realize that the company completely controls their privacy.

Keywords: privacy threats through the use of social media, *The Circle*, dystopia, totalitarianism, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

Introduction

In the Digital Era, it cannot be denied that the Internet had the great influence on humans' life. Moreover, social networks are a significant tool to search for information, find friends or people who share the same interests (Chewae et al, 2015,p.1 and Wüest, 2010,p1). Social networks arrive in diverse types depending on their "particular geographic location like Orkut in Brazil, Vkontakte in Russia, or Mixi in Japan". There are social networks that are popular around the world such as Facebook and Twitter (Wüest, 2010, p1). Additionally, Wüest (2010, p2) addresses that 95% of the company allows their employees to be on social networks since they see it as the channel for their business benefit. People nowadays enjoy participating in social media such as Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and so on. They are paid attention to and also being recognized by the publicity. They love being complimented, watched, and followed by people who both are friends and strangers. They love the feeling of being in the limelight. They are gradually addicted to social media. They display their private life whenever they can. Sometimes the netizens do not realize that they reveal their privacy more than necessary. Accordingly, some people are resistant to use social media due to their privacy concerns (Mushayt, 2013,p.53).

Shah Mahmood (2013,p.47) points out that human connectivity via online social networks surprisingly become phenomena. People around the world share their information and personal data on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and Google+. What they usually share is about their personal preferences,

perspectives, relationship, and actions through videos which draw attention to "the government, advertisers, and criminals".

Although there are many advantages to social networks, there are also some dangerous aspects of using social networks sites. According to Arpita Banerjee et al (2014, p.1), various kinds of threats occur to the social networking sites: baits, follower scams, impersonation of celebrities and friends, Koobface, phishing, and advanced fee scams. The internet users, thus, worry about their privacy on social media. The issues of privacy on social media have been the main concern for the users lately. According to, internet users have the right to hide or reveal their personal data on the internet. Nevertheless, some users are willing to share their personal information to make a new relationship with strangers.

Exposing too much of one's privacy makes people know every corner of one's life which will finally make one frustrated. Social media plays with the human's psyche. The enhancement of advanced technology in the digital period can transform privacy into the publicity at the fingertips. People are excited by these phenomena. They are embraced by the fast news from their family and friends. They are contented for being connected with them. They are eager to know what is going on around the world in just one slide. Nevertheless, it is disputable whether turning privacy into publicity is the best answer for humans nowadays. This argument is reflected in the novel of *The Circle* by Dave Eggers. This book illustrates how technology takes control of the world and the one who has the power of technology can conquer the world. Dave Eggers' *The Circle* awakens people to be aware of the

intrusion of their privacy in this online era. This novel reflects the lives of people nowadays that they cannot live without social media. Their addiction to social media is increasing more and more without their realization.

Mae, the protagonist of this story, leaves the boring job at the local utility to pursue her dreams at The Circle, a promising technological company that provides all kinds of facilities to their colleagues. It is established by the Three Wise Men, Ty, Bailey, and Stenton. This company, however, uses its advanced technology as the means to control both its employees and people around the world through the use of their online systems and projects such as Zing It and Search Soul. Additionally, Mae is chosen to be the pioneer who let others watch her in almost 24 years except when she goes to the toilet and goes to sleep. Nevertheless, there is another character, Mercer, Mae's ex-boyfriend, who totally disagrees with Mae's thoughts and The Circle. He thinks that people spend too much time with social media. He does not do anything with social media because he thinks it is not genuine. He prefers having a real conversation.

Eggers demonstrates that in the advantages of social media it lies the privacy threat by those who are the technological experts. These experts want to manipulate the world through access of people's personal information. Furthermore, the dark side of technology is presented through The Circle's innovative online systems that allow people to be a part and recognized by the virtual community. The Circle knows very well how to gain people's secrets y not letting

them notice it. The company's manipulation over the world is associated with the dystopia and Totalitarianism.

Dystopia is the depiction and prediction of the future world that is tyrannized by the government. The government will distract its citizens from its "oppressive societal control" by giving them "the illusion of a perfect society" that is "maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral or totalitarian control". The dystopian world is also illustrated through "an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system". Characteristics of a dystopia society are using "propaganda to control the citizens of society". Secondly, "information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted". Thirdly, "A figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society". Fourthly, "citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance". Fifthly, "citizens have a fear of the outside world". Sixthly, "citizens live in a dehumanized state". Seventhly, "the natural world is banished and distrusted". Next, "citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad". Lastly, "society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world" (ReadWriteThink, 2006). While dystopia is the society one lives in, totalitarianism is the way to manage society to be compliant with the state.

Totalitarianism is "the form of government in which the national government takes control of all aspects of both public and private life". The government aims to eliminate the boundary between the government and society. Additionally, the state anticipates all the

citizens to believe and follow all the ideology and the set of beliefs strictly (Totalitarianism).

The methods of totalitarianism involve police terror, indoctrination, propaganda and censorship and religious or ethnic persecution. For police terror, the leader of the states employs terror and violence to supervise their residents. They also spy on their citizens. If they find anyone who violates their policies, they will "use brutal force and even murder to achieve their goals" (Totalitarianism). Second, the government indoctrinates their people by teaching them particularly the young people to uncritically believe in their ideology. According to the propaganda and censorship, "Totalitarian states spread propaganda, biased or incomplete information used to sway people to accept certain beliefs or actions. Control of all mass media allows this to happen".

All kinds of media must be allowed to display by the government. People, therefore, usually receive incorrect information. Anyone who opposes the information obtained from the states will be punished or killed. Lastly, for the religious or ethnic persecution, the state will generate "enemies of the state to blame for things that go wrong" (Totalitarianism).

As a result, the novel is the reflection of the dystopian world that employs totalitarianism as the means to administer the entire world. Notably, the employment of technology is an outstanding method to brainwash people. Additionally, the interesting part of *The Circle*'s presentation is that people around the world are inclined to be parts of The Circle's virtual network and not aware of being

monitored and dictated. They seem to be willing to give up their privacy and easily offer it to the company without any forces. The Circle's subtle and intelligent means of ruling over the world is, thus, astonishing to investigate. Besides, the company plays with the human's psyche. They know very well what humans' needs are so that they can offer them what they need to lure them to be loyal to the organization and divert their attention away from being authorized.

Aside from the above, the psychological approach is an important way to examine how The Circle victimizes people both their employees and the netizens around the world to accept the company as the undeniable part of their daily lives. The first interesting topic of psychological approach is about human needs. Due to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Hayes,2017,p.126), humans needs consist of seven-stage model which respectively begins from the need of biological and physiological(food, warm, shelter), safety (to be secure, safe, out of danger), love and belongingness(to be accepted, to belong), esteem (achievement, competence, respect from others), cognitive (to know, understand, explore) aesthetic (beauty, symmetry, elegance), and self-actualization needs(develop and express oneself to the full. The needs can be mainly divided into two main types: "deficiency needs" and "growth needs. "Deficiency needs start from physiological to esteem needs while "growth needs" embark from "cognitive needs to "self-actualization needs"(McLeod,2018). According to Marlow's theory (Hayes,2017,p.126), humans need to attain their needs from each layer respectively. Some researchers (Hayes,2017,p.126) argue that humans' needs do not have to happen only one layer at a time. One can

achieve several layers simultaneously. This paper will scrutinize whether those needs have to be satisfied one at a time and in order or not. Consequently, dystopia, totalitarianism and psychology approach will be mainly discussed in this article.

Here, *The Circle* is the technology company whose slogan is sharing information to keep the world from harm. Although the leader of The Circle tries to convince the Circlers how beneficial it is to share personal matters and eliminate the secrets from society. This article, therefore, discusses whether what The Circle perceives is right or wrong and whether The Circle has the good intention or the bad intention to manipulate the world.

In the novel *The Circle*, the sophisticated technological company called The Circle plays an important role in threatening social media users. The Circle is the representative of the Digital Era's authority who exploits all the information in this world through the use of the social network to control the world. This form of power which is unaware to most people is led to Totalitarianism. Although it is not stated directly and clearly that this company has been doing this, the narration of its worldwide network and its influence on the users around the world is the explicit evidence. And what reason for knowing every single piece of information in this world if not for gaining an absolute power. As invented by the Three Wise Men, Bailey, Ty, and Stenton, The Circle deploys the wisest way to rise to the power. It plays the role of the giver, who introduces the brand new and cutting-edge technology to people's lives that will make their lives a lot easier. Moreover, The Circle acts as a hero who comes to rescue humans from

chaos and disturbance in society. It demonstrates people to perceive how safe they will be in the arms of The Circle. All people have to do is sharing their privacy and their lives will be protected. This company is clever enough not to make people see this action as privacy theft since it offers so many benefits from contributing their matters to the public.

Barabási (2014, p.372) addresses that what makes *The Circle* outstanding is not about the dystopian society this novel illustrates but it is about the endeavor the engineers in The Circle have. They arise with various kinds of innovations and projects that attempt to save the world by having no crime and storing information in one place and making people live in better condition. The Circle is the combination of "a Google-Amazon-Facebook-Twitter mash-up".

Sokol (2018, p.61) declares that Mae's sense of self is lost in The Circle's leading-edge technology. She becomes alienated from the real world. She is driven into the "privatized isolation of the idyllic campus". She is alienated from "the material world"- the physical world and indulges herself into "the immaterial world"- the social media that strips the sense of self from Mae. She turns her back to the physical world. She lives most of her life in the campus. She spends most of her time on screen- in the world of number with the survey answering, The PartiRank, Conversion Rate and the Retail Raw which she needs to get the high scores to reach the high rank that will identify her in social media. She, hence, identifies herself with numbers. The Circle transforms Mae into the object that can be "trackable, quantifiable and there are able to be exchanged within the markets of

the capitalist economy. The Circle quite literally transforms Mae into a commodity through her rankings and her transparency".

To see the pictures of how The Circle steals people's privacy through the use of social media by the methods respectively elaborated below.

Using Convenience as a Tool to Steal People's Privacy

The Circle sees the need for people's basic needs: physiological needs and safety needs as their main concern to make people both their employees and the netizens appreciate and be loyal to the company. The company provides its employees with the incredible welfare. Firstly, the company makes itself look appealing by giving the undeniable benefits to its employees such as incredible health care to the workers and their families, luxurious dormitory, excellent facilities, and great natural environments. The company attempts to establish their own land as a paradise so that their inhabitants will find comfort and never want to leave. When Mae first steps into the land of The Circle, she is amazed by what she sees in front of her: "MY GOD, Mae thought. It's heaven. The campus was vast and rambling, wild with Pacific color, and yet the smallest detail had been carefully considered, shaped by the most eloquent hands" (Eggers, 2014, p.1).

As seen above, Mae has the first impression with The Circle's environment so much that she wants to be a part of it: "Mae was making her way through all of this…, trying to look as if she belonged" (Eggers, 2014,p.1). Mae's colleague, Josiah, also gives her a tour around the company on her first day at work to see what facilities the

company has. The company wants to make it as a paradise by distracting their employees with those considerable benefits the firm offers for them: "There was a tour of the health center, There was a tour of the emergency clinic…A tour of the organic gardens…There was a tour of the mini-golf area, the movie theater, the bowling alleys, the grocery store…"Eggers, 2014, p.29). Moreover, the dormitory is for everyone who works late at night and is so tired to go home and for people who are exhausted from the party. With all the comfort and shelter they have, those employees will devote their time to the company. Spending most of their time in the company's residence, making it easy for The Circle to monitor their employees' behavior and intrude into their private lives. In the working building, they have censors: "the elevator knows who one is by reading one's ID card: "Yeah, everything's on sensors," Renata said. "The elevator reads you ID, and then say hello" (Eggers, 2014,p.6). Besides the censor at the elevator, the company pries on their workers by giving them the brand new smartphones and tablets and that they have to transfer all the data from their old devices to the new ones given to them:

> Okay, Now everything you had on your other phone
> and on your hard drive is accessible here on the
> tablet and your new phone, but it's also backed up
> in the cloud and on our servers. Your music, your
> photos, your messages, your data. It can never be
> lost. You lose your tablet or phone, it takes exactly
> six minutes to retrieve all your stuff and dump it on
> the next one. It'll be here next year and next century.

(Eggers, 2014,p.43)

The Circler makes their staff members so fascinated with the organization's brilliant online system that they do not realize that their privacy is stolen already.

   The Circle has the way of turning privacy sharing into the method of expressing one's true self without hiding one identity through the use of TruYou, the money system that allows people to use only one password. Then they can buy anything in just one click. Ironically, The Circle promotes this system as the tool to avoid privacy theft. In fact, the company itself is the thief who can get access to everyone's account online. The users have to exchange their personal information with this convenience. Once the personal matters are shared, it can be worldly traceable. This kind of convenience makes them neglect seeing the faults in this system.   It also prevents internet users from annoying problems such as forgetting multiple passwords:

    ...and invented TruYou—one account, one identity, one
    password, one payment system, per person. There were
    no more passwords, no multiple identities. Your devices
    knew who you were, and your one identity—the *TruYou*,
    unbendable and unmaskable—was the person paying,
    signing up, responding, viewing and reviewing, seeing and
    being seen. You had to use your real name, and this was
    tied to your credit cards, your bank, and thus paying for
    anything was simple. One button for the rest of your life
    online (Eggers, 2014, p.21).

The Circle is enormously successful with its scheme. The commercial sites are the very first target of employing it. This system, then, spreads to ordinary internet users worldwide. From the above, this organization attempts to offer humans' basic needs according to Marlow's hierarchy of needs with the first second layers: needs for food, shelter, and safety. Apart from the great convenience they give to their members, the company makes people both their workers and the internet users feel secure: the organization gives their staff the great welfare and gives the netizens the safety to their online system. From this stage, the dystopian world is presented through The Circle's establishment as the "illusion of the perfect society" by using "technological and totalitarian control".

Being visible by the public is the way of Keeping Communication

The Circle plays with the need of being accepted in the society through sharing one's information, feelings, and thoughts through The Circle's social network. People who contribute their information will be worldly noticed and admired. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the next layer from the physical needs is the needs of belongingness and being accepted. The company knows perfectly well that not everyone can be easily visible and accepted in real life. The Circle, however, tries to make visibility and acceptance virtually possible for everyone worldwide. Being visible in the virtual world is very meaningful for shy and introverted people. It lessens their awkwardness and nervousness to communicate with the others. Keeping communication via The Circle's social network is, thus, one thing that those people are eager to do.

Furthermore, the company brainwashes people that being publicly recognized by the world is the way to keep communication continuing and that communication is a crucial part of everyone's daily life. Here, the slogans at the campus are introduced: "Communication. Understanding. Clarity" (Eggers, 2014, p.47). Using propaganda is another important way of totalitarian control to indoctrinate and gradually influence people. The company makes its employees, The Circlers, absorb in this idea that they have to communicate through The Circle's social media tool, the zing, to let other people know what they are doing, feeling, thinking at the moment. Keeping one's life to oneself is not acceptable in the territory of The Circle. As a result, private life in The Circle's campus is hardly found. Amazingly, the Circlers tend to accept this rule without any argument. Revealing oneself to others, receiving others' information is what happens on the campus and it becomes their routines.

As The Circle's major aim is communication, the Circle is seriously upset that Mae does not share her information about her father's MS disease and kayaking experience to The Circlers. Sharing information about MS disease is significant since Denise, one of The Circlers, points out that there are some groups at the Circle related to the MS disease and that would be helpful to Mae, her parents and others who are related to this disease. The company indoctrinates its employees to see the importance of sharing one's own experiences in every angle of life as a way to access the groups with mutual interests or problems.

Mae irritates The Circle again for not contributing her kayak experience online. She goes kayaking because she wants to spend some time alone excluding from social media and people. She enjoys being on the lake and appreciates the nature around her. Unfortunately, what she does is known by The Circle and they are not happy with Mae for not sharing her time with her family and her hobby with anyone else on social media. The company cannot tolerate this and have serious conversation with her like she commits the crime. The Circle has been clever with persuading its employees to see the brilliant side of sharing their private information with others without the feeling of being intruded. The Circle makes her see the benefits of sharing information to be connected all the time. If she shared the information about kayaking and the nature she sees on the lake to the social media, she would find other Circlers who are also interested in kayaking as well. There is, hence, the web of information from posting and zinging information on the social media all the time.

Superficially, it is marvelous to discover that there are a lot of people out there having the same interest as one and might be able to get the further connections from others or join the groups with the same interests. People naturally need some time to dissociate from social life to be with themselves and to be able to rest and think more clearly. Naturally, people cannot perpetually socialize. It will make them exhausted from too much knowledge and information. Additionally, they will feel uneasy about being known for his/her every move. Eggers creates another character that completely disagrees with the Circle's plans. The author conveys to the audience that not

everyone enslaves to social media. Mercer is a good example of the anti-social media person who realizes that physical communication is still needed and privacy is the thing to treasure. Additionally, he cannot tolerate the company's scheme since it is too much for him to endure.

The Circle goes to the extreme for this scheme. Ridiculously, Mae is convinced by its thoughts and goes along with it by sharing what is going on with her life through the live streaming almost twenty-four hours except when she goes to the bathroom and sleeps. The Circle urges people to be visible and keep communicating with others but what happens with the Circlers is that they are not physically visible and hardly communicate with people around them. On the contrary, they are virtually visible and communicate through social media instead.

From the above, The Circle enables to watch people around the world especially its colleagues without any hard effort at all. As long as they know what people are doing, it is easy for the company to manage its online system and its business. The Circle clearly uses the Totalitarian way by spying on people to gain the authority here. People also overlook that their freedom is increasingly restricted which is one of the important characteristics of the dystopian world.

Secrecy as a Crime to Publicity

The Circle gives a serious concern to human's need for safety and security which is associated with Maslow's safety needs, the deficiency needs. Knowing that The Circle can give the citizens safety and keeps them out of danger makes the company looks like God. People adore them for creating such a happy place for them. The

company, therefore, creates the SeeChange camera, a small and inexpensive camera, that allows everyone to see the beautiful scenery and what happens around the world. Bailey rhetorically announces to the world that people should be able to watch and being watched what is occurring to them to reduce one's paranoia, worry, and crime. He gives the example that his wife would not worry when he goes away on his business trip if she can see what he is doing through the camera. He also points out that people will not commit bad deeds if they are being watched. For example, male workers will not watch pornography while working if he knows he is being watched (Eggers, 2014, p.290).

People's freedom is eliminated from being watched. Nevertheless, they are not aware of this threat because they are lured by the virtual freedom that makes them overlook their lack of physical one. Naturally, people are curious so they are thrilled to be able to watch and pry into other people's lives without realizing that they are treated as social media's victims as well.

Additionally, Bailey psychologically persuades Mae to think that hiding one's secret will only give them the depression. Their depression deprives of the inability to burst out their undercover matters. Having secrets causes one to feel guilty. Bailey convinces people especially Mae to believe that having secrets is a sin since one has to torture oneself with those secrets. Although Mae becomes the celebrity through her live camera almost all day long except when she goes to the bathroom and her sleeping time, she does not realize that

she sometimes feels uncomfortable for being publicly watched almost all the time.

Mercer is the obvious example of anti-social media who is the guinea pig of The Circle when Mae gives the demonstration of the SoulSearch project. Mercer hide from social media but Mae still attempts to find him by asking people around the world to help to search for Mercer and to show to the social media users where he exactly is. Mercer is angry and runs away again but this time he has a car accident and finally dies. On the contrary, publicity is a crime itself. As seen, nobody seems to understand and give him some space or even leave him alone. What the users do is to cheer out for people to be able to catch him. They tend to see this as a game and get excited to see Mercer being hunted. Unintentional cruelty has been inside the social media's users when they are watching something horrible through live streaming and do not empathize with the victims or what happens. This kind of savage circumstance occurs again when people are watching the octopus and seahorses at The Circle's aquarium are being eaten by the shark through Mae's camera. Nobody, however, seems to pay much attention to this tragedy. Consequently, watching and being watched is a crime to individuality. Creating an "enemy of the state" to blame on the things that go wrong is, thus, another method of Totalitarianism.

The Circle raises the issue of the need of safety to create a project called SoulSearch. The Circle uses security as one of their main concerns. It convinces people that if they can locate everyone in this world through the help of people who keeps informing about the

person who is wanted whether they are the thieves, terrorists, stalkers, missing people, or long lost friends through the project called SoulSearch, people will be safe from the danger. The advantages of this project make people overlook the disadvantages of this project. If this project is launched, nobody will ever find peace again because they will be spotted everywhere they go. With this project, there will be no privacy anymore. One cannot get away from the crowd or be alone. He/she will be paranoid all the time whether someone is watching him/her. Privacy entirely disappears.

Sharing Information as of the Generosity and Devotion to the World

Bailey plays with the esteem needs to make people especially Mae realize that sharing her knowledge to the world would help those who lack the opportunity to see it themselves. Their giving is a great devotion that would be appreciated around the world. Bailey also raises the topic of human right to know all the knowledge in this world to the Circlers: "Knowledge is a basic human right. Equal access to all possible human experiences is a basic human right" (Eggers, 2014, p.301). He attempts to make them sympathize with the disable that cannot experience the real world like others. Sharing information will make them be able to see like other people. Bailey tries to close the gap between being the disable and seeing the world. The Circle, thus, makes one think that sharing knowledge is their crucial responsibility. As seen above, Mae is condemned for not sharing her experience of seeing the lake and nature while she goes kayaking. She soon feels guilty and realizes that "SHARING IS CARING".

All these thoughts and perceptions of The Circle distract the Circlers from it disadvantage for not having one's privacy. Here there is the irony again when Bailey claims that "Knowledge is a basic human right. Equal access to all possible human experiences is a basic human right" (Eggers, 2014, p.301). We humans do not have to have equal access to all possible human experiences. If that saying happens, then it means they are curious about others' personal matters which is not their own business. They can survive without knowing other privacy. Furthermore, intruding one's privacy is not generosity but cruelty.

Transparency Leads to the True Democracy

Bailey raises one of the sensitive issues that can capture people's mind which is democracy. As we all know, true democracy is hard to find in any democratic country. There are often the corruption included and justice can rarely be found. This problem surely gives citizens a nuisance. Creating the Demoxie project, the voting system that is tied to Tru You's system, therefore, is something people have been looking for. This voting system allows everyone to know the results immediately after voting. And if someone does not participate in voting, his/her device's screen will be freezing until he/she completes the vote. Transparency from the government is what people have been looking for. As a result, this plan is undoubtedly interesting since it allows everyone to see what the politicians are doing all day long. This project, however, does not satisfy the government. Notably, The Circle asks for transparency with the government whereas the company itself including the founders, The Three Wise Men, has never made themselves transparent. Again, they

distract people's attention from the company to the government instead. As seen from this project, the government will lose the power over its citizens but the authority will be in the hands of The Circle instead. The company will have the absolute power by having all the data and information related to politics. Using democracy as the target to pursue the power over the state by letting people know what happens with the politicians is the clever way to gain the impression and trust from the citizens.

Conclusion

The Circle employs various way of Totalitarianism to become the dystopian world, to manipulate the world through technology and social media. Yet, those means are not exactly similar to those characteristics of the Totalitarian world. The company uses technology and social media as the police who keep an eye on people's every move. It, however, does not employ the savage ways to punish those who oppose The Circle's doctrines. The rebels will become alienated from society and are harshly criticized by the citizens instead. Nevertheless, other techniques resemble those of Totalitarianism. People are propagandized to believe in The Circle's ideology. Furthermore, the company gives false information to people: the organization tempts people to only look at the advantages of using social media and they are tremendously successful in doing such a thing. Moreover, people who disagree with the company's doctrine will be harshly criticized by other citizens who heartfully worship them. Aside from controlling the world with totalitarian ways, the company's great concern still includes human's basic needs. They seem to fully

acknowledge that if they can fulfill people's needs, they will gain admiration, appreciate, trust and popularity which will finally lead them to the absolute power.

With those techniques of convincing and wisely dominating society, the company employs five different concepts and ways to gain their authority through privacy theft: firstly, using convenience as a tool to steal people's privacy; secondly, being visible by public is the way of keeping communication; thirdly, secrecy as a crime to publicity; fourthly, sharing information as the generosity and devotion to the world; fifthly, transparency leads to the true democracy. As seen, what happens in *The Circle*, mirrors our society today that people mostly spend their time on social media without recognizing its advantages or its dark side.

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