

A FOUCAULDIAN READING OF DAVE EGGERS'S *THE CIRCLE*

Derya ışıık¹

Abstract

Post-Modernism has begun after modernism. In the post-modern period, the post-structuralists have been interested in many fields such as sociology, anthropology, and linguistics, etc. Michel Foucault, who is one of the French post-structuralists, published his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* in 1975. In this work, he analyses the social mechanisms and defines the theory of Panopticism, which was first put forward by Jeremy Bentham. The term of Panopticism can be explained as a feeling of being followed by an invisible eye metaphorically confining people and oppressing them due to the continuous observation, discipline and punishment that it brings about. Therefore, an individual has to be under control as if s/he were always watched. *The Circle*, which was published in 2013 by American author Dave Eggers, is a dystopian novel. The novel is based on the experiences of a young girl, Mae Holland and the situation of technology in today's world. In this novel, Eggers portrays an oppressive system which controls the people through the hidden cameras. This paper will shed light on the similarities between Foucault's theory of Panopticism, which is introduced and discussed in his *Discipline and Punish*, and Dave Eggers' dystopian novel *The Circle* by revealing Eggers' criticism on how surveillance is applied through technology in today's world.

Keywords: Post-Modernism, Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Prison*, The Theory of Panopticism, *The Circle*, Dave Eggers.

DAVE EGGERS'İN ÇEMBER ADLI ROMANI ÜZERİNE FOUCAULTCU BİR OKUMA

Öz

Post-Modernizm, modernizmin ardından başlamıştır. Postmodern dönemde postyapısalcılar sosyoloji, antropoloji ve dilbilim gibi pek çok alanla ilgilenmişlerdir. Fransız post-yapısalcılardan Michel Foucault, 1975 yılında *Disiplin ve Cezalandırma: Hapishanenin Doğuşu* adlı eserini yayımladı. Bu çalışmada sosyal mekanizmaları analiz etmekte ve ilk olarak Jeremy Bentham tarafından ortaya atılan Panoptisizm teorisini tanımlamaktadır. Panoptisizm kavramı, ortaya çıkardığı sürekli gözlem, disiplin ve ceza ile insanları metaforik olarak hapseden ve onları baskı altına alan görünmez bir gözle takip edilme hissi olarak açıklanabilir. Dolayısıyla bireyin her zaman izleniyormuş gibi kontrol altında olması gerekir. 2013 yılında Dave Eggers tarafından yayımlanan *Çember* distopik bir romandır. Roman, genç bir kızın, Mae Holland'ın deneyimlerine ve günümüz dünyasındaki teknolojinin durumuna dayanmaktadır. Bu romanda Eggers, insanları gizli kameralarla kontrol eden baskıcı bir sistemi resmetmektedir. Bu makale, Foucault'nun *Disiplin ve Cezalandırma*'da tanıtılan ve tartışılan Panoptisizm teorisi ile Dave Eggers'in distopik romanı *Çember* arasındaki benzerliklere, Eggers'in günümüz dünyasında gözetlemenin teknoloji aracılığıyla nasıl uygulandığına ilişkin eleştirisini ortaya çıkararak ışık tutacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Post-Modernizm, Michel Foucault, *Hapishanenin Doğuşu*, Panoptisizm Teorisi, *Çember*, Dave Eggers.

¹ Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı, Kocaeli Üniversitesi, isikderyaa@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6924-4754>.

Introduction

The Circle was published by American author Dave Eggers in 2013. *The Circle*, as a dystopian novel, reveals how a system becomes the oppressive one through technology. The Circle is an internet company whose opportunities are good for employees. The novel centres around a young girl, Mae Holland, therefore, the readers encounter her experiences throughout the novel. Through *The Circle*, the situation of the technology in today's world along with the importance of social media are portrayed by Eggers. However, this company, which is good at the digital world, spreads in nearly every field of life such as politics, health, education by trying to know everything about everyone. People are subjected to constant observation and control through the cameras. Moreover, some people like Mae and Olivia Santos, a congresswoman, carry cameras on their bodies. The idea underpinned by the company shows the aim of the company which is interfering with the lives of the people because the company supports the idea that everything should be known. Considering the significance of knowing for the company, surveillance is used as a discipline system in the novel. In a way, the characters in the novel become the prisoners in their own lives because of oppression which is an outcome of the surveillance. This paper analyses *The Circle* by Dave Eggers in the light of Foucault's panopticon theory, which is based on Bentham's panopticon model, since the novel portrays surveillance which is used as a system via cameras and affects people's lives markedly as Foucault indicates in his *Discipline and Punish*.

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), a British philosopher, designed his theory of surveillance in the eighteenth century. From the point of Bentham, this design can prevent undesirable behaviour which are either forbidden or immoral. The panopticon model is a circular prison with cells around the external walls and there is a watchtower at the centre. Due to this design, all prisoners can be observed by a security guard, however, they cannot see the guard. Consequently, the prisoners behave as if they were being watched all the time (J. Miller and R. Miller 3). The situation of the inmates, in which they do not know if they are watched or not, results in controlling themselves. Self-control and self-governance are the outcomes of this model and they became the keywords underlying Michel Foucault's panopticism theory.

Michel Foucault (1926-1981) was one of the most outstanding post-structuralists in the 1970s. Foucault analyses the evolution of power, the social mechanisms as well as penal systems in *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), therefore, he touches on discipline and punishment in modern society. According to Foucault, surveillance is used in modern institutions in order to control and govern people. In a way, it is a discipline system in modern society. People begin to control and govern themselves as if they were followed by an invisible eye. Moreover, surveillance as a discipline increases productivity as people, who feel under observation, work efficiently (Cook 111). Such a condition is similar to the situation of the prisoners in the panopticon model designed by Bentham since both groups have to control themselves due to the fear of being watched and caught. The outcomes of Bentham's prison-like structure such as self-control and self-regulation underlie Foucault's panopticism theory. Considering Foucault's interpretation of Bentham's Panopticon, it is possible to analyse Eggers's *The Circle* in the light of this theory because characters's lives in Eggers's novel is similar to the situation of the prisoners in Bentham's theory. This article aims to analyse the ways in which the feeling and mechanisms of surveillance are criticized in Dave Egger's *The Circle* in the light of Foucault's theory on panopticism. From the point of Foucault's Panopticism theory, people start to control themselves because of the feeling of surveillance in *The Circle*.

Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon Model

Jeremy Bentham designed the Panopticon model in the late 1790s. It is a circular prison which has cells around the external walls and a watchtower in the centre. A security guard can watch all the inmates thanks to the watchtower. However, the inmates are not able to see the guards because of the one-way windows. The inmates should control their behaviour since they cannot be sure if they are being watched or not by the security guard. In this sense, they regulate their behaviour due to the fear of being observed and punished. Furthermore, according to Bentham, power applied to the prisoners should be visible and unverifiable (Foucault 200). To clarify, the inmates should see the central tower, however, they should not know from where they are observed. They are not able to see even the

shadow of the guards since this model is designed in this way. Bentham's model is not only a type of institutional building but also a system of control due to the fact that this type of building leads to control over people and regulation of their attitudes. It consists of an annular building, a tower for the inspector and cells in which there are prisoners. Moreover, this model could be used for prisoners, patients, workers and school children according to Bentham. This structure results in people's isolation and regulation due to observation. "The essence of [the plan] consists, then, in the centrality of the inspector's situation, combined with the well-known and most effectual contrivances for seeing without being seen" (Bentham and Bozovic 43). Thanks to the structure of the building, the inspector can see the inmates, however, the inspector's not being seen by them, which creates self-control. In this sense, being controlled all the time makes people feel regulated. In a way, owing to the circular model of the building, all the prisoners can be watched at the same time. The fear of being punished results from the feeling of observation prevents the immoral or illegal behaviour of the inmates, therefore, the panopticon model designed by Bentham shows that it leads to mental pressure. Although Bentham made an effort throughout the years in order to design and develop this model as a social reformist, the panopticon model was never built. In a way, "individuals learn to look at themselves through the eyes of the prison guard" (Turkle 248), because of the outcomes of being observed such as self-discipline and self-regulation. The reason underlying this situation is self-control since the idea of being watched results in the feeling of being observed no matter there is a guard or not. Therefore, it is obvious that continuous surveillance is employed to prevent any kind of chaos, violence and evil as seen along these lines:

According to his utilitarian philosophy, trying to achieve 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people', Bentham saw punishment as evil in itself, allowed only if it excluded greater evil. In regard to the prison-Panopticon, the specific architecture thus also served the goal of prisoners' liberation from more overtly coercive forms of institutional violence, which were common at the time (Galič, Timan and Koops 11).

Bentham, as a founder of Utilitarianism, aims to achieve happiness. Therefore, he regarded punishment as evil as it has been stated in the quotation above. As a consequence, he aimed to prevent the negative behaviour of the inmates through his Panopticon model by means of control. The inspector is at the position of "seeing without being seen" (Bentham and Bozovic 10), as a result of this position the inmates cannot be sure if they are observed or not by the inspector. As it is stated, "It is precisely the inspector's apparent omnipresence that sustains perfect discipline in the panopticon, that deters the prisoners themselves from transgressing" (Božovič 29). Being in the centre of the building leads to the opportunity to watch everywhere. Therefore, the presence of the guard affects and restricts the inmates' behaviour by means of surveillance.

Michel Foucault and His Panopticism Theory

As a social theorist, Foucault mostly puts emphasis on the social issues in his works by exemplifying restrictions and regulations from history. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, which was published by Foucault in 1975, deals with the evolution of power throughout the years. Foucault stresses discipline and punishment in modern society by exemplifying penal systems such as execution and incarceration. In this book, he reveals the history of the prison system. "Physical pain, the pain of the body itself, is no longer the constituent element of the penalty" (Foucault 11). Here, Foucault indicates that physical pain is not applied as a penalty anymore. What he tries to reveal here is that penalty is related to preventing people's or prisoner's actions by exemplifying from the history of the prison. Similarly, surveillance is applied as a discipline in modern society. The fear of being caught and punished resulted from observation restricts people's actions and behaviour. Furthermore, surveillance helps the productivity and efficiency increase because people under observation cannot escape from working according to Foucault. In a way, he analyses social mechanisms in history. In the part of Panopticism of the *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, he firstly refers to a plague in the seventeenth century in order to show how surveillance was used as a discipline because he touches upon the processes of the quarantine. The tragic lives of people in modern society is similar to the situation of prisoners in Bentham's Panopticon model because observation is used as a method of discipline and affects people psychologically for both groups from the perspective of Foucault. For

example, there are CCTVS, also known as video surveillance, in most of the places such as banks, stores, shopping centres, etc. CCTVs lead people to be more careful about performing immoral or illegal actions. To clarify, if a driver thinks that there is a camera which observes her/him, the driver will be more careful in order not to break the speed limit. Otherwise, s/he will be caught and punished. However, people generally feel that as if they were being watched no matter there is a camera or not because surveillance brings about oppression. As Hope indicates, “Largely influenced by a growth in new communications technology and data-processing systems, the form, reach (both temporal and spatial) and purposes of surveillance have changing much in recent years” (361). In today’s world, new systems of communications and data systems are part of surveillance because people have been used to be observed through these systems which link with cameras.

As a result of the feeling of being followed by an invisible eye, self-control, self-regulation and self-governance come in view. As Foucault states that in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, “Bentham’s Panopticon is the architectural figure of this composition” (200). No matter the inmates are watched or not, they always should feel under observation and surveillance according to Bentham. Similarly, in modern society people behave as if they were being watched. Both the inmates in the panopticon and people in modern society have to regulate their behaviour due to the fear of being caught. As Foucault states, the individual in the Panopticon model of Bentham is “alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible” (200), therefore, the individual is always visible despite isolation in a cell. In this work, he shows how modern states enforce their authority psychosocially rather than physically since discipline is based on the ground of observation and examination in modern society.

***The Circle* by Dave Eggers in the Light of Michel Foucault’s Panopticism Theory**

The Circle is based on an oppressive system which changes people’s lives. The novel is written in third-person narration and most of the events happen at Circle Campus, in California. The readers see how a system becomes oppressive through technology. *The Circle* centres around a young girl Mae Holland who is at the age of twenty-four. She begins to work there in the department of customer experience with the help of her close friend Annie Allerton who deals with the issues of the company in other countries. The internet company has three chief executive officers who are known as three wise men. Ty Gospodinov is the one who founds and designs the initial system of the company. Although the youngest one of three wise men is Ty, known as “brilliant management master” (Eggers 15), he is not seen so much in the community. Eamon Bailey, who is funny, is the public face of the company by drawing the attention of the people since he speaks in a lyrical and grounded way. The last of the three wise men is Tom Stenton, who is in the early fifties, describes himself as Capitalist Prime.

There are other characters such as Francis, who can be regarded as Mae’s flirt and tries to save the children, Mae’s Parents, Mae’s ex-boyfriend Mercer and other employees in the company. Mae’s life changes after she begins to work here. In comparison with her old business office, she is surprised because there are lots of opportunities for the employees. For example, Mae’s father has multiple sclerosis and the Circle absorbs his insurance just because of his being of Mae’s parent. The Circlers attach importance to social media so much. According to Mae, this situation is also interesting. The Circlers gives an account about where they are, what they are doing, etc. Moreover, there is participation rank among the employees. This rank is determined by their likes, dislikes, frowns, comments and shares. The main reason underlying the importance of social media is the desire to know everything. One of the slogans of the company is that “all that happens must be known” (40) and as a result of this aim of the company, the Circlers try to share every moment of their lives through social media accounts. Although Mae initially has difficulty in adapting the system of the Circle, she is able to get used to it in the progress of time. Furthermore, she becomes the one who supports the system of the company by sharing every moment of her life with millions of people.

Instead, he put all of it, all of every user’s needs and tools, into one pot 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 (16).

This quotation is about the system that Ty invents. Everything about the person is in one account, therefore, there are no more identity thefts, multiple user names, and false passwords. The system that facilitates the use of the Internet is called TruYou because everything is connected to one another. This kind of system changes the internet in one year; furthermore, TruYou is the beginning of the oppressive system. Another example which reveals the effects of this system and the aim of the company is LuvLuv. LuvLuv is created by one of the employees whose name is Gus Khazei. It is search machinery for the dates, it means that the people who want to get information about their dates in order to impress them can use this app. They can learn everything about their dates such as their likes, dislikes, favourite restaurants, favourite food, favourite place etc. via social media and the internet because everything about people can be reached through social media. In a way, most of the knowledge about people are reachable. When Mae witnesses the features of LuvLuv, she is disturbed because Francis, her flirt, is the one who is volunteer to use this app in front of the audience.

As the novel progresses, it can be observed that the system goes further because the goal of the company is to observe people and know everything. This system interferes with politics and education along with health and economy. For example, when Bailey makes a speech to the crowd, he talks about SeeChange cameras. These cameras are put somewhere in the world and people can watch what is happening there through them. Through these cameras, people can watch the protests in Egypt and no one is able to notice the camera. Although they can observe the protests in detail, anyone cannot see it because of the hidden position of the cameras. The cameras are not only easy to hide but also cheap. Bailey says that about SeeChange cameras: “Who would commit a crime knowing they might be watched any time, anywhere?” (40) Thus, it is obvious that the main goal of the company is to observe people which is related to Foucault’s claims that surveillance is a discipline system in modern society. If the people thought that they were being watched, they would have been more careful about their behaviour due to the fear of being caught and punished. Similarly, Bailey in the novel states that no one can commit a crime if s/he thinks that there is a camera around him/her. In a way, the feeling of being followed can prevent illegal and immoral behaviour of people according to the Circlers in the book. In other words, belief in being observed can regulate the behaviour of people.

“It is. And now,” the doctor said, tapping Mae’s wrist monitor, “now it’s active. It’ll collect data on your heart rate, blood pressure, cholesterol, heat flux, caloric intake, sleep duration, sleep quality, digestive efficiency, on and on. A nice thing for the Circlers, especially those like you who might have occasionally stressful jobs, is that it measures galvanic skin response, which allows you to know when you’re amped or anxious. (88)

As it has been stated before, the company has a different system in every area and one of these fields is health. Here, the doctor of the company gives a sensor to Mae and she swallows it. The sensor is so small that Mae cannot recognize it while drinking it. After the doctor activates the wrist monitor of Mae, the wrist monitor begins to collect data on her heart rate, cholesterol, blood pressure, step count, etc. Thus, Mae as a Circler begins to get used to living with the chips. Although these chips are used for health, the aim of the company is to collect every information about people. As a result of the desire to know everything, the Circle begins to affect politics as well. In front of the crowd, Tom explains how the company interferes in politics by inviting a congresswoman, Olivia Santos, to the stage since she begins to carry the camera on her body from now on. When Tom asks her this question: “So you’re saying that every conversation, every meeting, every part of your day will be broadcast?” (117) She answers it by saying: “Yes. It will all be available on my Circle page. Every moment till I sleep.” (117) This conversation between them shows that Olivia begins to share every moment of her life via her Circle page as a political personality. Putting on a camera like a necklace to share her life with people makes her transparent in the eyes of the Circlers. After her, political personalities feel under pressure since most of the people want them to be transparent. In a way, clarity becomes more of an issue due to the system of the Circle. It is considered that the politicians, who do

not share their lives, hide something from society because they are in the shadows unlike Olivia in the eyes of the people. Considering Foucault's panopticon theory, the political personalities are like in the prison in the book as people want them to be observable all the time. They want to see what they are doing, whom they are meeting and what they are talking, etc. Living with a camera has an effect on the Circle campus. The cameras are placed in common rooms, cafeterias, hallways, work areas and outdoor spaces at the Circle campus. Not only the political personalities but also the people at the Circle Campus begin to live with cameras. People, who are observed, have to be more careful in order not to do illegal or immoral acts. As Foucault comments about the individual in the panopticon model of Bentham in *Discipline and Punish*, "He is seen, but he does not see" (200), similarly in the Circle, the individuals are seen via cameras. One can analyse that Foucault's theory is mostly based on the concept of being watched because he generally focused on its consequences, such as self-discipline and self-control, and how they affect people psychologically. To clarify, people think that they are under observation all the time when there is no camera from the perspective of Foucault. Therefore, they try to behave morally and lawfully. Moreover, as he states that the surveillance system is used to increase productivity because people work efficiently under observation, the cameras also are placed in the work areas at *The Circle*.

The aim of the company leads to Mae's transpiration after these situations. One night she takes a canoe without the permission of the canoe's owner since she loves canoeing. However, the existence of a camera in the place, where she takes a canoe, causes the police to catch her. Although she knows the people who are the owner of the canoes, she is regarded as a thief. This situation results in her wearing a camera. There should not be secrets in life according to Bailey who says that "But my point is, what if we all behaved as if we were being watched? It would lead to a more moral way of life. Who would do something unethical or immoral or illegal if they were being watched?" (161) His idea of being watched and observed is related to Foucault's theory because the aim of the company is similar to the discipline applied in modern society in accordance with Foucault's perspective. According to Bailey, surveillance is a kind of an obstacle for the crimes and immoral behaviour because if the people feel as if they were being observed, they cannot attempt to do unethical or forbidden attitudes. Thus, Mae and Bailey take a decision about Mae's becoming transparent. In front of the crowd, she explains that she begins to wear a camera like a necklace like Olivia Santos. She and Bailey create the slogans about clarity as follows:

SECRETS ARE LIES

SHARING IS CARING

PRIVACY IS THEFT (168).

These slogans summarize the ideas of the Circle company since from the point of the circles hiding even the slightest information from other people is theft. Everything should be known and shared with other people from the point of these people. Therefore, clarity and transparency play a fundamental role in the novel. Thus, Mae becomes transparent because every moment of her life is watched by millions of people. She has only three minutes to stay silent when she is in the toilet. The interesting situation about the transpiration of Mae is the fact that she is pleased with being watched. "And she found it freeing. She was liberated from bad behavior. She was liberated from doing things she didn't want to be doing, eating and drinking things that did her no good" (181). She is more careful about her behaviour because she knows that she is observed through a camera. As a result, she cannot do whatever she wants. For example, she cannot eat anything that she wants in order to avoid the criticisms of the people, therefore, according to her, this situation makes her healthier. Moreover, she thinks that makes her a noble one as well, so one can observe the significant influence of constant surveillance and discipline over the lives of these characters, who can be associated with the prisoners in Panopticon:

The Panopticon is a highly efficient instrument for controlling and influencing individual behavior, as the assumption of being observed is often sufficient to induce the expected behavior. In other words, the Panopticon principle creates self-discipline, that is, the observed person exercises behavioral self-control (without necessarily internalizing the norms of the observer) (Jacobs and Herackeous 114).

As it has been stated, panopticon leads to self-control because the feeling of being observed requires more attention for behaviour. The system in *the Circle* is like a panopticon because surveillance as a part of this system influences people's behaviour. For example, Mae cannot eat a brownie because of observation; furthermore, the only place where she can talk to Annie without the camera is the toilet. In the light of Foucault's panopticism theory, she regulates her behaviour due to this awareness. Her situation is related to self-control which results from surveillance as Foucault states that people control themselves in modern societies. Observation has a huge impact upon her life inevitably in terms of relationships and lifestyle. To clarify, her family tries to avoid her after they are watched having a sexual relation in Mae's camera. Mercer, who is an ex-boyfriend of Mae, also tries to stay away from her because he is against the desire of the Circlers. He sends a letter to Mae by expressing his opinions, which sets an example for his ideas about the system of the Circler. Mercer explains this in a letter to Mae: "You and your ilk will live, willingly, joyfully, under constant surveillance, watching each other always, commenting on each other, voting and liking and disliking each other, smiling and frowning, and otherwise doing nothing much else" (Eggers 201). Here, Mercer refers to a keyword surveillance since the life that Mae prefers to live is like a prison according to him. He is against this system throughout the book because he thinks that Mae and other people like her are under surveillance. All they care about is sending likes, dislikes, frowns to one other. Moreover, this system leads to the death of Mercer. As Gouck argues, "The Circle, as is particularly evident in the death of Mae's ex-boyfriend. As he is relentlessly pursued by Mae's all-seeing technology, Mercer literally drives himself into a valley of destruction" (59). As it has been stated that, Mercer dies because of Mae's all-seeing technology. Although he tries to avoid this kind of a life in which people live under the control of technology, Mae wants to find him through The Circle's technology and cameras as a representative of a person who wants to know everything. When he escapes from the drone, he drives himself into a valley and dies. Considering Foucault's comparison between Bentham's panopticon model and the discipline employed in modern institutions, the characters in the novel also live like they are inmates. Showing everything about them on social media, and sharing every minute of their life with people via cameras make them prisoners in their own lives. In the novel, the importance of social media is also emphasized through The Circle's system. Sharing every information and every moment about their lives with their followers causes their lives to be observed. From the perspective of Foucault, this is a system which facilitates surveillance because the lives of people are followed via it and they begin to control themselves. Unlike the Circlers, Mercer is against this system due to regarding it as an oppressive system. Although Mae's life changes because of transpiration, she insistently considers it as a good opportunity. For example, towards the end of the book, she thinks that:

The tear was not knowing. Not knowing who would love her and for how long. The tear was the madness of not knowing—not knowing who Kalden was, not knowing Mercer's mind, Annie's mind, her plans [...] It was not knowing that was the seed of madness, loneliness, suspicion, fear. But there were ways to solve all this (Eggers 253).

This quotation makes Mae's ideas about knowing clear. From her perspective, not knowing is like a tear since it is the reason underlies madness, suspicion and fear. As a circler she thinks that knowledge is a basic human right (167), therefore, they should know everything. The novel shows how a system becomes oppressive through technology and surveillance. The company spreads its aim which is knowing everything by watching people around the world by influencing almost every field in life such as politics, education and health. As Foucault says, surveillance leads to self-governance and self-control in society. However, this situation is an obstacle for the privacy. For example, the people who live with cameras live under control because they cannot do whatever they want. As it is outlined, "[s]urveillance has spilled out of its old nation-state containers to become a feature of everyday life, at work, at home, at play, on the move" (Lyon 13). Similarly, in the novel, people can encounter cameras everywhere such as campus garden, cafeteria, and offices. Surveillance's being a part of everyday life affects people's lives by restricting their behaviour. In the novel, they can find a criminal through cameras in ten minutes. Similarly, in modern society this system helps the criminals be caught, however, observation and surveillance are obstacles for the privacy of the people in the novel. Although Mae has difficulty in getting used to sharing everything on social media at the

beginning of the novel, she becomes the significant part of the Circle by completing the circle because she prefers to reveal Kalden's identity who hides his personality until the end of the novel as a supporter of the goal of the Circle.

Conclusion

Michel Foucault, in his work *Discipline and Punish*, analysed discipline and social mechanisms by exemplifying these concepts from history. From the point of Foucault, discipline is based on surveillance and observation rather than a physical penalty. In this respect, the idea related to the possibility of being watched paves the way for self-control and self-regulation which appear as a consequence of Bentham's Panopticon model as well. Foucault points out that surveillance has become the system of discipline in modern society because ubiquitous cameras cause people to control their behavior. Therefore, people act with the feeling of being constantly watched. *The Circle* (2013) by Dave Eggers reveals how discipline is based on surveillance in modern society through a company by concentrating on technology, the digital world, and social media in today's world. Mae, the central character, adopts the aim of The Circle which is the ability to know everything. As Foucault states in *Discipline and Punish*, observation and surveillance underlying discipline play an important role in disciplining and dominating people who experience a metaphorical confinement due to the extreme practice of control and discipline. In a way, people become prisoners in their own lives because of oppression resulted from observation. Therefore, *The Circle* by Dave Eggers reveals how surveillance is used as an instrument of discipline in a society and portrays how people in modern society become accustomed to the feeling of constant observation after a period and, more importantly, they accept this situation in his novel. Throughout the novel, it is revealed that this repressive system gradually permeates every field of people's lives; moreover, it moves on with technology, which is very significant in the lives of people in today's society. The lives of the characters are observed through cameras, hence, they cannot do what they want. As a result, they live like the inmates who are under control. He reveals that surveillance becomes the desire of people since their aim is to share their lives with everybody through social media because the most central character of the book supports the company's desire of knowing every information about everyone in the end of the novel. According to Foucault, this situation of people in modern society is related to getting used to the feeling of being observed. This feeling of being watched significantly affects people's lives both in the novel and in life. Therefore, Eggers's text can be analysed with Foucault's Panopticism theory, which is related to the situation of today's world. An analysis of *The Circle* from Foucault's perception reveals that the feeling of being watched in the novel has a profound effect on people's lives psychologically.

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