

# Dave Eggers: The Circle

## What is this?

The following are my unstructured study notes for the novel "The Circle" by Dave Eggers (Paperpack Edition, Penguin 2014, ISBN 978-0241970379).



The notes were created with classroom discussions in mind about the consequences and implications of increasing social-media use. So you can take them as they are but need to put in some more work before they can be used in class.

— *Andreas Kalt*

## Mini-Camera presentation (p. NN)

- discussion about the implications

## LuvLuv presentation, Mae's Information gets shown on the stage (p. 117)

- Discussion about the difference between individually posted information and aggregate information
- Research: What of that is already possible today?

## Discussions with Mercer (p. 130, p. 257 ff)

- Mercer argues that social media have changed people for worse, has turned people into teenagers
- Discussion about this position

## Serious talk about Mae's participation (p. 175 ff)

All voluntary, but at the same time socially enforced

## **Delusion of control through superficial numbers (p. 191 ff)**

## **Congresswoman wears a camera at all times (p. 205 ff)**

- “to go transparent”

## **Subtle feeling of pressure and coercion (p. 211 ff)**

- Talking to Kalden, he disapproves of the constant camera on the congresswoman
- Mae is reluctant to leave without being seen by her supervisors
- Before she goes with Kalden she takes a few pictures and posts them to show herself being social (p. 217)

## **Energy needs of data storage (p. 220 f)**

- environmental implications of widespread use of digital devices and cloud storage

## **Talk with Eamon Bailey – privately and on stage (p. 276 ff)**

- Slogan in three Parts (p. 303). Cf. George Orwell: 1984

## **Mae is transparent (p. 307 ff)**

- Mae talks to her viewers (p. 309) — vlogging?
- Mae is not transparent - she is used as a marketing device.
- Later: her parents' home is also transparent (p. 323)

## **Completion (p. 311)**

- Ideas of completion (fulfilment?) - hopes to find in an online service what one can't find in real life

## **Keeping up appearances (p. 322)**

- When you're always being watched you have to fake appearances and turn to your inside world for recreation → siehe auch George Orwell: 1984

## Private meetings (p. 335)

The leaders of the health companies meet in private — why?

## Student measurements (p. 342 f)

- Illusion that complete measurement of learning will improve learning or even improve personal skills of students.
- “Where was this 20 yrs ago? My kids would have gone to Yale”

## Mae goes to Francis’ dorm room (p. 378)

- Francis is sorry that he recorded the sex that the two of them had, “I couldn’t believe that I was with you. And there was some part of me that assumed it would be the only time. I wanted to remember it” – Is recording something really the best way of remembering a special moment?  
→ smart phone photos everywhere, vgl. [Ein schöner Moment leuchtet das Leben hindurch](#)

## Mae learns about some people’s negative opinion and meets Annie (p. 410)

- Narrative perspective: stream of consciousness?

## Mae is completely taken in by the ideology

- Even Mercer’s death and Annie’s breakdown don’t make her question it

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