1. AI, BIG TECH AND THE LOSS OF FREE WILL IN DAVE EGGER'S *THE EVERY*

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses The Every by Dave Eggers, a dystopian satire that critiques the growing influence of artificial intelligence, digital surveillance, and corporate monopolies on human life. As a sequel to The Circle , the novel follows Delaney Wells, an idealistic former forest ranger who infiltrates The Every, a powerful tech giant that seeks to eliminate unpredictability and discomfort from society through extreme digital control. Eggers analyses how AI-driven algorithms shape human behavior, how social media manipulates emotions, and how the pursuit of a "perfect" digital society leads to the erosion of privacy, individuality, and free will.Using satire and exaggeration, The Every presents a world where surveillance is normalized, ethical concerns are dismissed in favor of convenience, and technology dictates even the smallest aspects of daily life. This paper examines the novel's engagement with key issues in digital humanities, including AI ethics, social media influence, post-digital literature, and identity in digital spaces. It also situates The Every within contemporary discussions on technological overreach, drawing parallels with real-world concerns about Big Tech's impact on democracy, human autonomy, and the future of digital communication.

Keywords: *dystopian satire, AI ethics, social media influence, post digital literature, digital society , erosion of privacy, digital surveillance.*

Dave Eggers is an American writer, editor, and publisher known for his satirical and socially conscious novels that critique contemporary issues such as technology, media, and corporate power. Born in 1970, Eggers gained recognition with his memoir A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius published in 2000, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. He is also the founder of McSweeney's, an independent publishing house, and co-founder of several educational and humanitarian initiatives. His novel The Circle published in 2013 explored the dangers posed by digital surveillance and corporate control, themes which he expands in The Every published in 2021. Also published on 5th October, 2021-the Every-is a sequel to the Circle and pays much more attention to the implications of AI-driven surveillance, social-media manipulation, and loss of autonomy in a technologically-cumbered world. Through satirically sharp and exaggerated situations, Eggers stretches out to critique the monopolization of digital spaces by tech giants and vent against the unchecked power of AI and Big Tech.

This paper discusses *The Every* by Dave Eggers, a dystopian satire on the increasing power of AI, digital surveillance, and corporate monopolization over human autonomy. It follows Delaney Wells, a challenging former forest ranger; through infiltration of *The Every,* a vast techno-corporation that aims, by means of total digital control, to wipe out uncertainty, chaos, and pain in human existence. Within this framework, Eggers questions how AI-driven algorithms shape human behavior, how social media plays with our emotions, and how building a "perfect" digital community creates the backdrop for erosion

of privacy, individuality, and free will. In short, the novel presents a haunting vision of a future where technology controls every minute detail of life, bringing intractable ethical concerns with it regarding increasing influence under Big Tech.

The book depicts a world wherein surveillance has become normalized, where ethical considerations have been cast aside in exchange for a perception of convenience, and where individuality seems to constantly be violated through the lens of corporate algorithms. This paper engages with the work's interrelation with AI and computational linguistics, with added attention devoted to AI's influence over human identity, decisions, and agency. This will be couched in timely discussions on technological overreach, namely, the connection to real-world issues of Big Tech's beatification of democracy, human agency, and the foresight of digital communication. The novel crisscrosses with contemporary discussions regarding AI ethics, the mining of digital narratives, and the role of social media in challenging and shaping public discourse.

At its core, *The Every* critiques the absolute control that Big Tech had over human thought and behavior. In this light, AI is described as a watcher as well as a shaper of human feelings, actions, and desires. The algorithms of the Tau akinRest app have been studying human interactions in order to start predicting how people will behave; it then reduces unpredictability by guiding people toward "optimal" choices. Computational linguistics plays an important role since AI-based tools of language analysis ascertain emotion, predict desire, and lead the user toward certain outcomes. The book criticizes how AI-led recommendation systems shape public debate in a way that favors conformity and weakens independent thought. This bears a certain contemporary relevance with our fears of predictive analytics, targeted ads, and algorithmic manipulations dictating what consumer goods we buy, what news we read, and even how we vote.

The Every presents that surveillance is something of big concern. AI systems nowadays are learning to see people's thoughts, feelings, and actions, paving the way for a utopia wherein privacy doesn't really have a chance of survival. The company tries to propagate the idea that when everything is transparent, the society becomes much safer and more efficient, but this is one of the things Eggers criticizes, considering such transparency as an erosion of the most basic liberties. The surveillance technology monitors every detail of existence, from conversations through all aspects of body language, managing the individual to be obedient to the company's standards. After all, social media further validates this control through rewards for conformity and punishing dissent. In this world, AI does not merely watch. It enforces, forcing people toward choices recommended by the corporate. This reiteration is, of course, resonant with the modern debates about data privacy, government surveillance programs, and policing through AI.

The facialities done by the fact that artificial intelligence is capable of removing personal choice is most striking in The Every. The company believes that uncertainty and unpredictability are inherently in the way of human development. Therefore, AI decision-making processes are at the center of everyday life-from what people eat to whom they bond with. The more people rely on AI to dictate their behavior, the less autonomy they enjoy. Critical and rational thinking gradually crumbles as people are trained to defer to AI rather than to themselves. Eggers presents a dystopian future that highlights the scarcity of free will but may also pose the question of whether AI is good for society as a whole or simply enables humans to passively go through their own existence. Such passive dependence on AI, clothed in the garb

of convenience, is alleged to slowly corrode individual autonomy, according to the novel.

Satire and exaggeration make for Eggers' critique of such a society, one that is run by artificial intelligence. There are AI-based mobile applications that monitor users' moods, prescribing compliant emotional responses just to ensure they don't feel any discomfort. Algorithms mechanically prescribe what books to read based on "scientific optimization," thus obviating choices in personal literature preferences. These people who have scored on some digital ranking according to how well they follow the AI's recommendations, and the need to conform remains inescapable. With the irony derived from the array of absurd-yet-believable scenarios, Eggers issues a warning about the tenuousness of unbounded power in technology: satirically, one cannot trust the assumption that an AI should manage all aspects of human life. This ironic world is set in contrast to one which wishes to optimize human experience, yet robs people of what makes them human: imperfection, capriciousness, and emotional richness.

These important ethical questions around the impact of AI on individuality and personal freedom raised in *The Every* would have readers questioning, in an AI regime, if human identity could be maintained, what happens when an AI does the dictation of morality and social behaviors, and how people are forced to consider if free will is sacrificed for the sake of convenience. While providing a way to accomplish things easier, Eggers posits, AI creates a homogenous society that discourages independent thinking. This idea mirrors real-life fears of opinion formation driven by AI, exposure limitation to different viewpoints, and conformity Due to their questioning of the AI's recommendations, dissidents are subtly punished, marked as anomaliess in the novel while the direct integration of the AI into their lives is rewarded as social approval. This echoes concrete worries regarding the echo chambers formed by the algorithms of social media. Here, the algorithms feed users specific information to reinforce pre-existing beliefs with ever-diminishing exposure to opposing viewpoints.

Moreover, Eggers critiques on the ethical ramifications of this AI bias and corporate domination over knowledge. In *The Every*, AI systems determine what information can be seen and what voices should be amplified. These thorns of censorship and power that corporations possess to control the narrative online may be troubling, indeed. The novel mirrors nowadays real-life arguments about algorithmic bias, where the AI systems take the bias of their creators and, instead of leveling the inequalities, reinforce them. Additionally, it concerns itself with the monopolization of digital information where only a select few really powerful corporations run what a person reads, watches, and believes. This theme has gained importance in the debates surrounding digital publishing and open-access scholarship as the availability of knowledge becomes increasingly dictated by corporate interests rather than a common good.

There is yet another critical issue explored in *The Every* the emotional manipulation effected by social media and digital platforms. The novel lays bare the wide-ranging array of ways that algorithmic-driven systems affect the public's emotional well-being, as it curates certain content which, in turn, ignites specific reactions. It goes head-on against the theory that social media finally brings a sense of connection to us, but instead persuades us to dependence through a cycle of people whose lives become constantly hinged on the approval of one another. This very concern comes to life in the modern context of what social media can do towards the issue of addiction, wherein groups of people are actually willingly participating in engagement with others without understanding that the medium of such interactions is designed purely to exploit the psychology of human nature by profits. Yet, it is the same technology that has become an

emotional crutch in the novel, preventing people from enjoying real human contact.

Eggers' novel aligns with current debates about Big Tech's power, like the Cambridge Analytica scandal, where AI-driven data reports materially swayed political elections, and ongoing debates concerning AI bias and discrimination with machine-learning models perpetuating existing social biases. The critique is also grounded in arguments around today's AI regulation and the ethical development of AI. In paralleling The Every to the tech woes, Eggers builds a literary critique of our MFA-created digital culture that begs the reader to critically consider the omnipresent expansion of AI in his daily life. This novel ultimately serves as a cautionary tale on the slippery slope into the abyss of powers not controlled by humans.

The Every gives a blistering critique of AI's role in shaping the way humans behave and the growing influence of Big Tech corps. The novel warns about the perils of living in an AI society where one gets accustomed to surveillance, relinquishes individuality and free will turns obsolete. Through satire and exaggeration, Eggers brings to the fore the moral dilemmas of living in an AI-centric world, pressuring readers to question just how much control they are willing to give away to AI. Through the lens of *The Every,* the urgency for ethical AI development, digital autonomy, and the protection of human agency from automation seems dire now. As we continue to trudge along the path of AI development, the novel reminds us to safeguard against everything that may turn out against the interests of humanity by serving it.

Eggers leaves a strong message for the readers: In chasing convenience, humanity may be losing human essence. The novel questions the very notion that progress is necessarily good, suggesting the contrary: that without proper oversight, technological progress may mean giving up on one's freedom and control. As AI continues to mould itself into the fabric of daily living, The Every begs for readers to ponder one really important question: where do we draw the line between assistance by technology and control by technology? Through these questions, Eggers's novel adds to the wide-ranging debate about AI ethics, digital surveillance, and the future of human agency in an increasingly algorithmic world.

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