

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Why Read a Book	2
II.	Why Read Dave Eggers' <i>The Circle</i>	3
III.	A Book and Its Author	4
IV.	A Way to Approach the Text	5
V.	Continuing the Conversation	8

WHY READ A BOOK?

We can learn what is in any book on Huffpost.com or Amazon, hear what others think on Twitter, listen to a TedTalk if we want to learn from cutting-edge thinkers. So why sit with a thick paper tome when it's far easier to get our information and entertainment in other forms?

One answer is precisely because it is easier, and noisier, to learn and be entertained via digital and truncated means. Technology keeps us connected, linked, always visible, always able to see and be seen. Sometimes this connection, this being linked, on, and seen is valuable, worthwhile and even politically efficacious. Sometimes.

But if all we ever do is check status updates, skim articles, and read summaries of other peoples' ideas while listening to music and texting our friends, something valuable gets lost. That something goes by many names: concentration, solitude, space for reflection, intimacy, and authenticity. Reading a book, we hope you'll learn at Boston College if you don't already116 (sit) 16 (wi549 (116 (sit) u1 y) (C)(e) 75

Second, most books are old. This is not a disadvantage: this is precisely what makes them valuable. They stand against the conventional wisdom of today simply because they're not *f m* today. Even if they merely reflect the conventional wisdom of their own day, they say something different from what you hear all the time. But the great books, the ones you find on a syllabus, the ones people have continued to read, don't reflect the conventional wisdom of

A BOOK AND ITS AUTHOR

As a member of the class of 2018, each of you will have the opportunity to read *The Circle* and to welcome author Dave Eggers to Boston College to discuss his work.

Eggers is an author, editor, and educational activist known for his breadth of writing ability, including short stories, novels, and biographies, as well as his work with McSweeney's publishing house (www.mcsweeneys.net), which he founded. A Pulitzer Prize finalist for *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* and a National Book Award finalist for *A Hologram for the King*



A WAY TO APPROACH THE TEXT

As you enter into this Jesuit, Catholic University, we will ask each of you to engage in conversation, to live together, and to share your life with one another. As members of the Class of 2018, your conversation will include this book which invites us to consider how we engage with the world around us in today's society.

In *The Circle*, the experience of humanity is brought to the fore with the idea that, "All that happens must be known" (p. 67). With the ever-increasing desire to share information, with multiplying screens and chat rooms, to the point of complete "transparency", the human condition is on full display. Several of the characters, including Mae, seek to be fully "transparent", but despite this commitment, still feel a tension in wanting to turn off the cameras at times. This full transparency does not allow for an interior life, where one can reflect on one's actions. Instead, the transparency creates an inner conflict that is never resolved because of the lack of reflection.

In examining our own human experience, we can also learn more about our relationship with God. In his piece, "Living Conversation," (Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education. Fall 1995: 21-27.), Father Michael Himes, a professor in the Boston College Theology Department, writes, "God does not think being God is anything to be grasped; God empties himself and becomes human like all other human beings..."

If one makes this claim of the Incarnation--and it is one whopping great claim to make--then this principle inevitably follows: whatever humanizes, divinizes. That is to say, whatever makes you more genuinely human, more authentically, richly, powerfully human, whatever calls into play all the reaches of your intellect, your freedom, energy, your talents and creativity, makes you more like God. This is how we encounter God in our incarnational tradition: not "out there" somewhere, but here being human along with us. Whatever makes you more human makes you more like God."

Saint Ignatius was convinced that God deals directly with us in our experience. This conviction rested on his profound realization that God is "working" in every thing that exists. The Jesuit model of discernment involves three key movements: be attentive, be reflective, be loving. These movements invite us to observe what is happening in the world around us – in our own lives and the lives of others – to reflect on the meaning of these experiences, and to take the information that comes out of that reflection to determine how we are going to act.

5. Mae has an ex-boyfriend, Mercer, who is outwardly and repeatedly critical of

CON

Pa e T

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress

T e S e Da

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean—

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

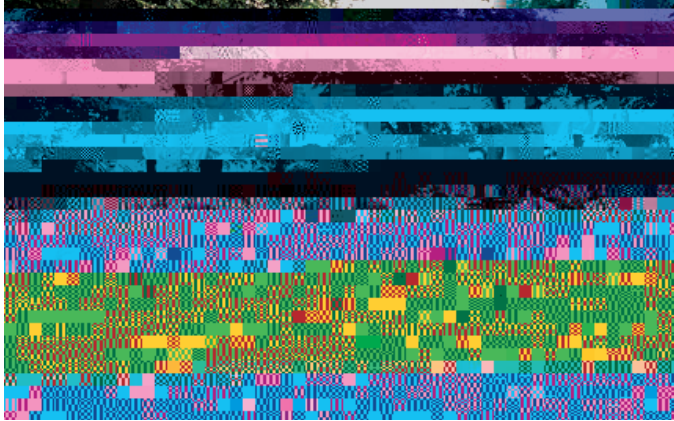
Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

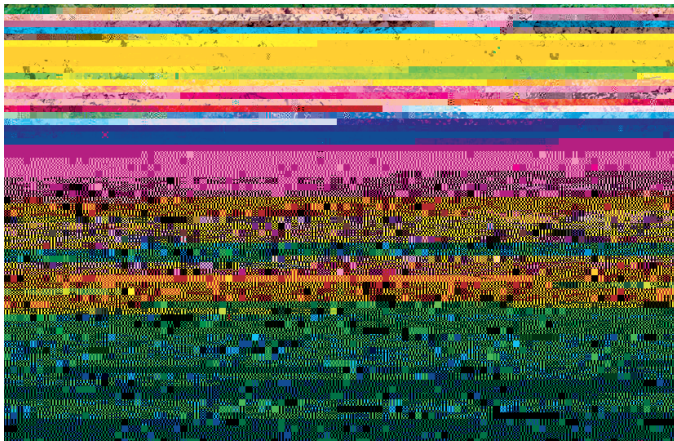
T e e, a a d
e d a d ec 

—Mary Oliver, "The Summer Day," from *The Tenth Muse and Other
Adventures: Poems and Essays*. © Beacon Press, 2008.

COMING FULL CIRCLE

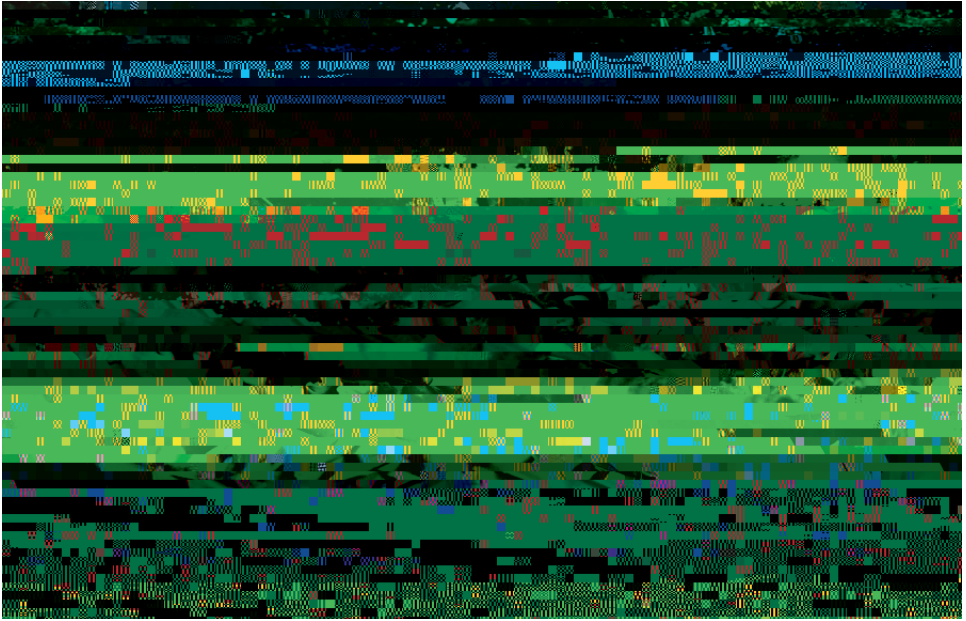


First Flight First Year Convocation



Graduation Lineup on Linden Lane.

As you enter into your first year of college, it is important to examine the decisions that you make while here at BC. Taking time to reflect upon your motivations, your desires, and your fears will give you a better perspective on your life—where you came from, where you are presently, and where you are heading. Boston College hopes to partner with you during this time through the Pre-14c



Torch lighting during First Flight Procession.
